



Upton Center Visioning Project

REPORT
MAY 2, 2019

PREPARED BY:

Dodson & Flinker

40 Main Street, Suite 101
Florence, MA 01062
www.dodsonflinker.com

this page left intentionally blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| INTRODUCTION | p. 1 |
| PREVIOUS STUDIES & RELATED PROJECTS | p. 5 |
| HISTORY OF UPTON CENTER | p. 17 |
| UPTON'S PEOPLE AND ECONOMY | p. 25 |
| OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS | p. 33 |
| KEY PARCELS | p. 43 |
| REGULATORY ANALYSIS | p. 55 |
| COMMUNITY CONSENSUS BUILDING | p. 65 |
| VISION | p. 89 |
| APPENDICES | p. 103 |

this page left intentionally blank

INTRODUCTION

Upton Center has experienced a slow decline in vitality over the past decades. Foot traffic has declined. Businesses have come and gone. The Holy Angels church, an anchor institution in the area, shut its doors. Several buildings have been removed and not replaced. Others suffer from deferred maintenance and/or vacancy. The number of civic events in the Center has declined. Property values in Upton Center, and by extension tax revenues, have not kept pace with other parts of the town. The Knowlton-Risteen Building, which is home to the Library and Historical Society Museum,

is showing its age and has significant inadequacies. Vehicle traffic on Route 140 has increased, compromising the safety of the area and making it less hospitable to pedestrians.

Despite these challenges, Upton Center is still recognized by the people of Upton as one of the hearts of their community. They appreciate long-time businesses like the Country Sooper and Rose Garden Pizza. They welcome the new businesses that have recently opened. They are proud of the Town Hall and its recent renovation. They value the history of the Center as evidenced by classic New England buildings and the common. They recog-

nize that Mill Pond and Center Brook bring life to the area.

While Upton Center has seen better days, the Town of Upton currently has an **unprecedented opportunity to reimagine and revitalize the Center**. Five factors have coalesced to create a window of opportunity for major improvements, if the Town can agree to a plan of action and act quickly.

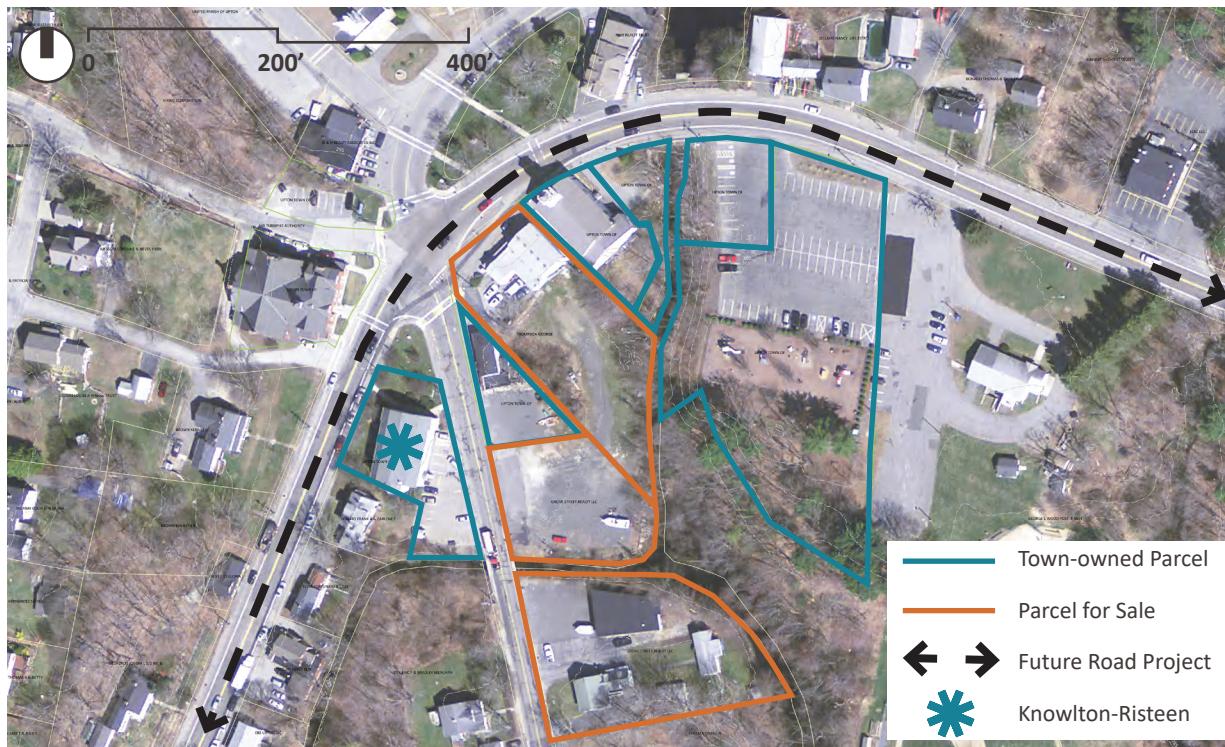
First, a **large swath of land** in the Town Center along Main Street and Grove Street is under the control of the Town and just one other land owner who is currently offering their properties for sale.

Second, **Route 140** is scheduled to be resurfaced by MassDOT. This project could involve transformative improvements to intersections and sidewalks in the Center.

Third, the Town is currently considering how to deal with inadequacies of the Knowlton-Risteen Building. Either improving the building, or building a new **Library and/or Community Center** in Upton Center could have a catalytic impact on the area.

Fourth, the state **economy is strong** and there is large demand for housing, in particular apartments located in walkable centers.

Fifth, a large number of Town residents and members of its government agree that the Center should be a focus of Town attention and they have worked together over the past four months to agree upon a clear **Vision for revitalization of Upton Center**.



Map of Upton Center showing Town-owned Parcels, parcels owned by the Thompson family that are currently for sale, and the location of Route 140 (aka Main Street and Milford Street)

This project is the result of months of groundwork by the Town's Economic Development Committee followed by an intensive visioning process led by Dodson & Flinker, professional town-planning consultants. Between January and April, 2019, the Town held a listening session attended by over 130 residents, a day-long visioning workshop attended by over 60 residents, and four meetings of a Working Group made up of over 40 volunteers.



A packed house at Town Hall for the Listening Session held on January 23, 2019. Participants in meetings throughout the project represented a broad cross-section of Upton residents, including some very young ones!

Image Source: Town of Upton Twitter

The results of this project represent deep conversation among town residents about their hopes and fears for Upton Center balanced by a professional assessment of the physical and economic opportunities and constraints that will shape the area.

The process that Upton has undertaken and the resulting Vision for Upton Center is a crucial step for the Town. It will help synchronize the actions of various public and private bodies and ensure that all are aiming toward a common destination.

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The report first presents background information about past planning efforts related to Upton Center and related projects. This information represents the collective wisdom of past groups of Upton residents and their consultants. It also tells us what is happening in Upton already that can be tied into revitalization efforts. Next the report describes the area's opportunities and constraints, including physical, legal, cultural, and economic factors. It documents the process that residents went through to arrive upon the Vision. It shows the consensus-based Vision for Upton Center. Finally, it lays out Goals for the Center and Actions the Town can take to achieve those goals.

PROJECT AREA

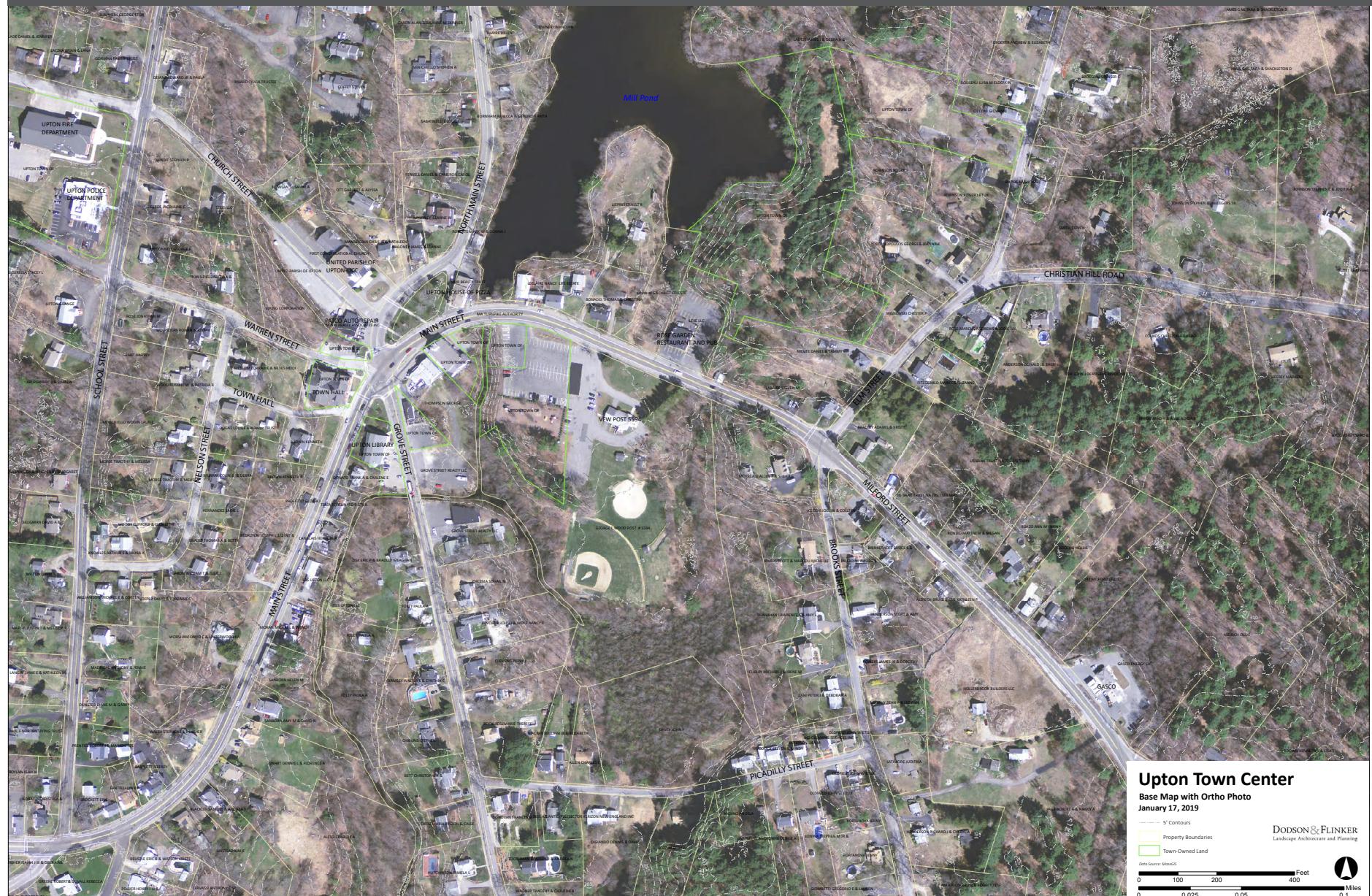
Like most neighborhoods, Upton Center does not have hard boundaries.

According to residents, Upton Center stretches along Route 140 from about Country Sooper to about the parking lot adjacent to the VFW or the Rose Garden Restaurant & Pub.

Beyond the core, Upton Center also includes adjacent residential neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are a crucial part of the Center. Because neighborhood residents can walk to the center (if they are provided with safe and comfortable ways to do so), they have different use patterns and needs for the Center, than people who visit it primarily by car. They also are more immediately impacted by changes in the Center than other residents of Upton.

This project focused primarily on what we call "the heart of Upton Center"—the area encompassing the Town Common and the ring of public-serving buildings around it, as well as Grove Street, and the town-owned property at 0 Milford Street. This focus area was selected because Town residents view it as the primary opportunity zone—it is a compact recognizable place where improvements to buildings, streets, and open spaces can have a transformative impact on the town's economy and quality of life while maintaining the historic New England character that is the Center's primary asset.

UPTON CENTER



THE HEART OF UPTON CENTER



PREVIOUS STUDIES & RELATED PROJECTS

PREVIOUS STUDIES

The visioning process for Upton Center builds on previous planning reports for the Town of Upton. We reviewed reports from the following past projects: 2005 Upton Master Plan, 2007 Open Space Project, 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2012 Housing Production Plan, 2018 Complete Streets Privatization Plan. These plans can be seen as the collective wisdom of previous groups of Upton residents and their consultants who have grappled with key issues facing Upton and how to improve the community.

Past plans were relatively consistent in their recommendations for Upton Center. Collectively, they say:

- The Center is a key area for mixed use development
- Improve streetscape—sidewalks, crosswalks, intersection improvements, amenities
- Develop shared parking
- Encourage diverse housing types, and affordable housing
- Revise zoning
- Establish uniform signage, styles, materials, etc.

Summaries of relevant previous plans follow.



Mixed-Use



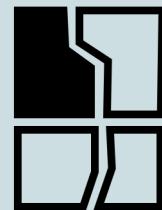
Improve Street



Shared Parking



Diverse Housing



Update Zoning



Add Amenities

Plans Reviewed: 2005 Upton Master Plan, 2007 Open Space Project, 2012 Housing Production Plan, 2019 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan

Icon Credits: Mikicon, Viktor Fedyuk (Tim P), bmijnlieff, Icon Fair, Christian Baptist, Jose Manuel Rodriguez; Mixed use by Tara Swart from the Noun Project; Parking by bmijnlieff from the Noun Project

2005 Upton Master Plan

A Master Plan is one of the fundamental guiding documents for Town policy. Created by the Planning Board, it offers a broad evaluation of land use, housing, economic development, natural resources, open space and recreation, transportation, public services and facilities, and implementation. The Master Plan sets a detailed action plan to guide the activities of Town Boards, Committees, and staff toward shared goals. Generally, municipalities update their Master Plan about every 10 years. While Upton's Master Plan is due for an update, it nevertheless provides valuable information for this study.

Upton Center was a focus area for the 2005 Master Plan. While several chapters recommended actions related to Upton Center, the Land Use chapter included the most detail. The Land Use Chapter recommended a two-pronged approach to improving the Town Center: "The town center should be improved and enhanced through a combination of **mixed use village scale zoning** and a **town center improvement plan**. Transportation improvements should be sensitive to the unique, **pedestrian scale** of the center and future development should be of a **traditional form** where mixed use and a **diversity of housing** types prevail."

The Upton Center Visioning Project will result in a "Town Center Improvement Plan." The Master Plan recommended that such a plan should include these elements:

- Construct **shared parking** for municipal uses.

- Buffer parking lots from view.
- Ensure design of **state roads and main intersection** aligns with Town's goals.
- Establish uniform **signage** styles, materials, etc.
- Improve **pedestrian paths**, crosswalks, and amenities
- Create a **child-friendly** area
- Install **amenities** such as benches, street trees, landscaping, trash receptacles, and decorative lights.
- **Link** the town center to any existing or planned pedestrian networks.

Since the adoption of the Master Plan, progress has been made in Upton Center. Shared municipal parking was built on Grove Street, the Town Hall was renovated, a playground was constructed, and a project to resurface Route 140 is making its way through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which provides an opportunity to make selected improvements to the road (more on the TIP project can be found below).

2007 Upton Open Space Project

The 2007 Upton Open Space Project was an extensive evaluation of various aspects of Upton's landscape—cultural, historic, ecological, etc. Based on extensive community input, it laid out an action plan for improving Upton's Open Space resources. Action #7 made the following recommendations related to Upton Center:

- Protect **historic district** from Elm Street to West Upton

- Pursue designation as a **historic district**
- Prepare **GIS inventory** of sites
- Seek grants for **streetscape improvements**
- Plan for historically-sensitive improvements to **road corridor**
- Adjust **zoning** to promote **restoration and adaptive reuse**
- **Celebrate** district with tours, maps, outreach

2011 Upton Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) guides the Town's policy related to Open Space and Recreation. If a municipality's OSRP is approved by the Massachusetts Executive Division of Conservation Services (DCS), then the municipality qualifies for several State grant programs, including Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grants, Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grants, and Land and Water Conservation Funds. Approval of an OSRP typically last seven years.

Upton's OSRP did not include specific mention of the Town Center. OSRP.

The Town is currently updating its OSRP.

2012 Housing Production Plan

A Housing Production Plan identifies housing needs within a community, especially affordable housing needs, and identifies strategies for planning and developing affordable housing. Strategies typically include identifying suitable locations for affordable

housing, and eliminating barriers to the creation of affordable housing. If a municipality's housing production plan is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and the community meets targets for affordable housing production consistent with the plan (creation of affordable units equaling .5% or 1% of total units in the Town within a calendar year), then the municipality's Zoning Board of Appeals may deny a "Comprehensive Permit" aka a 40B permit. Approval of Housing Production Plans lasts or five years; Upton's Housing Production Plan expired in October 2017.

The 2012 Housing Production Plan:

- Identified the Town Center as a **preferred location for new affordable housing**
- Recommended allowing **multi-family** homes by-right in Town Center
- Recommended promoting **mixed-use development**, including in the Town Center

2018 Economic Development Committee (EDC) Core Principles for Revitalized Upton Center

Upton's EDC is stewarding the revitalization of Upton Center. In 2018, they developed core principles for that effort. The Working Group and Public input process for this project will confirm or revise these core principles:

1. Vibrant

- Create a re-invigorated and welcoming Upton Center
- Provide reasons for people to come to Upton Center

2. Diverse

- Include mixed-use retail and residential
- Encourage small/home businesses to locate in Upton Center
- Town Hall and possible Community Center

3. Walkable

- Improve traffic flow—work with state on roundabout
- Improve pedestrian safety, sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting
- Future-Connect to Heritage Park, Pratt Pond

4. Retain New England Look and Feel

5. Reflect Historical Nature of Upton Center and Town Values

The EDC's core principles were reviewed and refined over the course of this Visioning Process.

RELATED PROJECTS

Route 140 Resurfacing

A major resurfacing project for Route 140 is scheduled for 2021. The project is on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which “is a federally-required planning document that lists all highway, bridge, transit and intermodal projects in the Central Massachusetts planning region that are programmed to receive federal-aid funding.”¹ Projects on the TIP follow a pre-defined process established by MassDOT. The process includes opportunities for public comment at significant design milestones.

The road will be resurfaced Route 140 from Williams Street to Brooks St/Elm St. Because it is in urban area, MassDOT will produce full design plans for the project and may consider some sidewalk or bike facility improvements and/or intersection improvements, consistent with MassDOT’s current approach to context-sensitive design and complete streets. The total anticipated project budget is \$9,550,000. Design for the project has not begun yet. Project updates can be found at <https://hwy.massdot.state.ma.us/projectinfo/projectinfo.asp>. The MassDOT project number is 608490.

There are two other TIP projects active in Upton. A 2019 project will reconstruct High Street and Hopkinton Road. Phase II of reconstruction of Hartford Avenue North and High Street is scheduled for

1. CMRPC, <http://cmrpc.org/tip>

2020. MassDOT also has a project number for “Culvert Replacement: Route 140 at Unnamed Tributary to Center Brook.” The location of this project was unknown at the time of writing. The project is in the design phase and is not on the TIP.

Complete Streets

The Complete Streets Funding Program is a MassDOT program that distributes up to \$400,000 per year to cities and towns for improvements to streets for “all modes”—pedestrians, bicyclists, freight, transit, emergency responders, etc. There are three steps to the program: 1. adopting a Complete Streets Policy; 2. creating a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan that describes projects, estimates their costs, and prioritizes them; 3. making a funding request to MassDOT for one or more shovel-ready projects not to exceed \$400,000 per year. Design is not an eligible expense, but Chapter 90 funds can be used for design.



Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), 2021

Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, Year 3

plete Streets Policy was approved in 2017. The Prioritization Plan—created by Beta Group working with the DPW and Town Administrator—was approved in January, 2019. The next funding application is due May 1, 2019. Based on the Prioritization Plan, Upton would likely submit for funding for improvements on Pleasant Street near the high school.

Complete Streets improvements for Upton Center are designated for the third year of funding (2022), including:

- Milford Street realignment in front of 1-3 Milford St and upgrades to the corner of Grove Street. The proposal includes replacing the small parking lane in front of the Arcade Block (Nevermind, etc.) with a wide sidewalk/



The confusing intersections at the heart of Upton Center.

plaza with parking adjacent to Route 140. Parking is also added along the north side of the common.

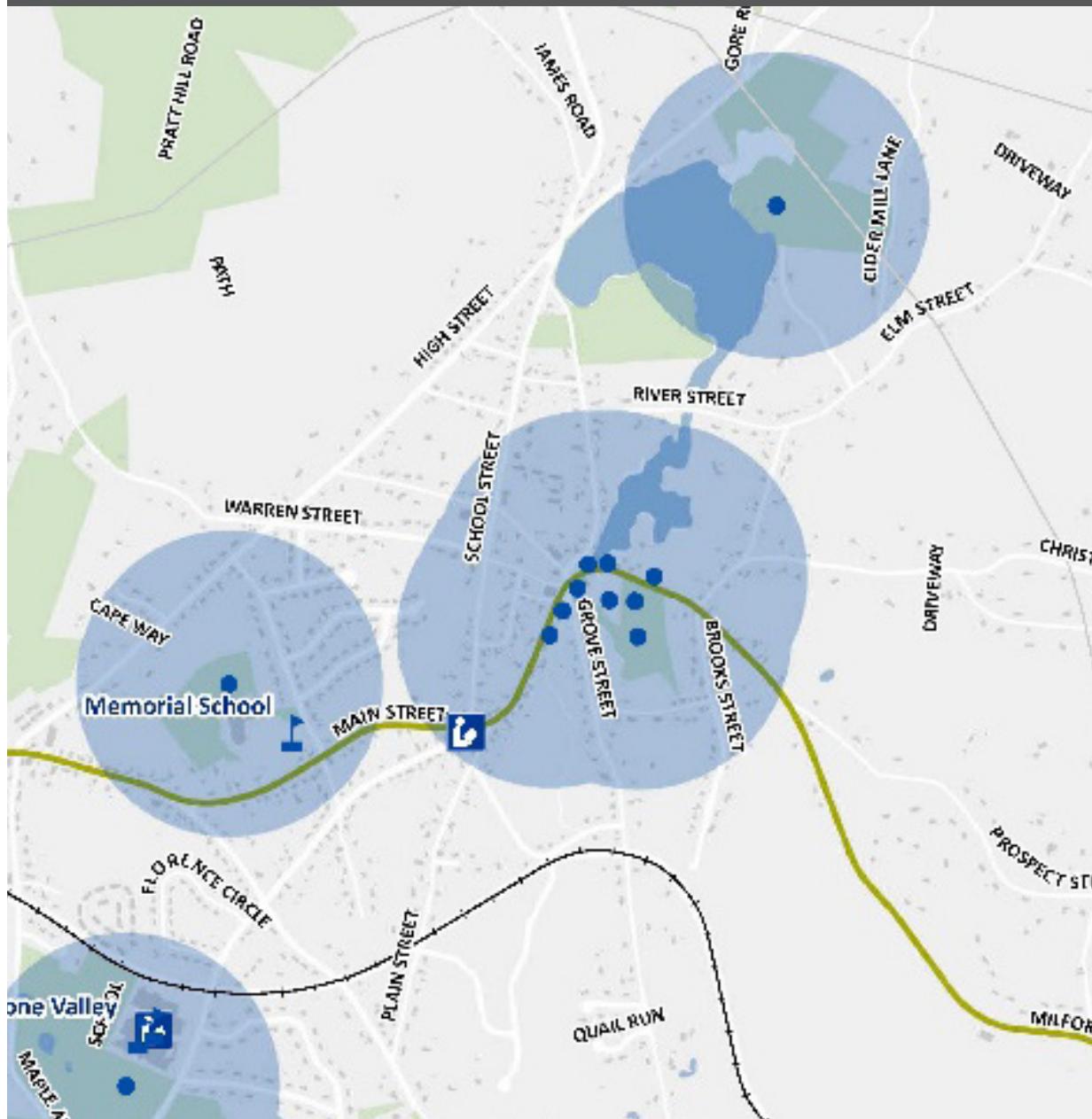
- Adding sidewalks, curb ramps, and parking spaces to Main Street, Church Street and North Main Street from Main Street to 10 North Main Street.

Additional Improvements to streets, sidewalks in Upton Center and surrounding neighborhoods are proposed for funding years after 2022. It is unclear whether the Complete Streets Funding Program will still be funded in 2022 or beyond.



Narrow sidewalks become virtually impassable during winter storms.

2019 COMPLETE STREETS DESTINATION MAP

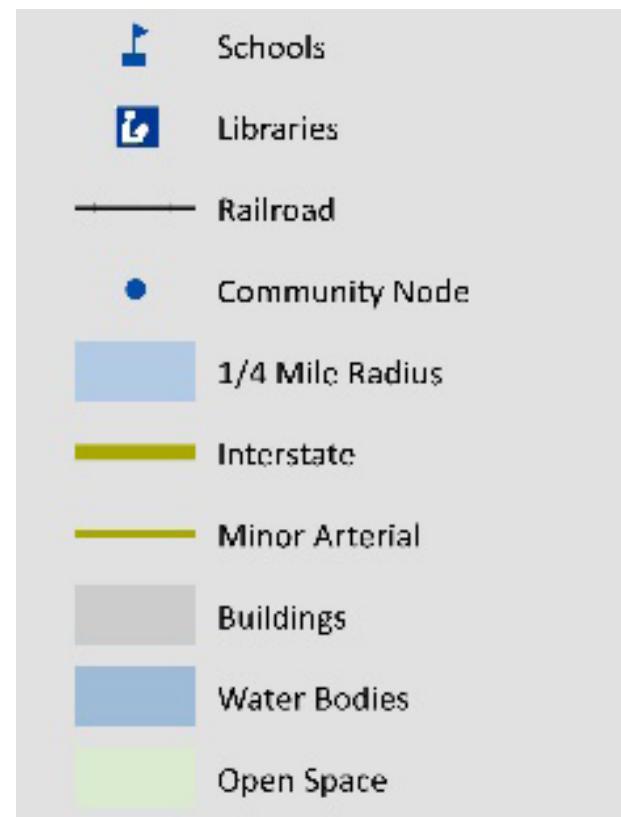


DRAFT

This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only

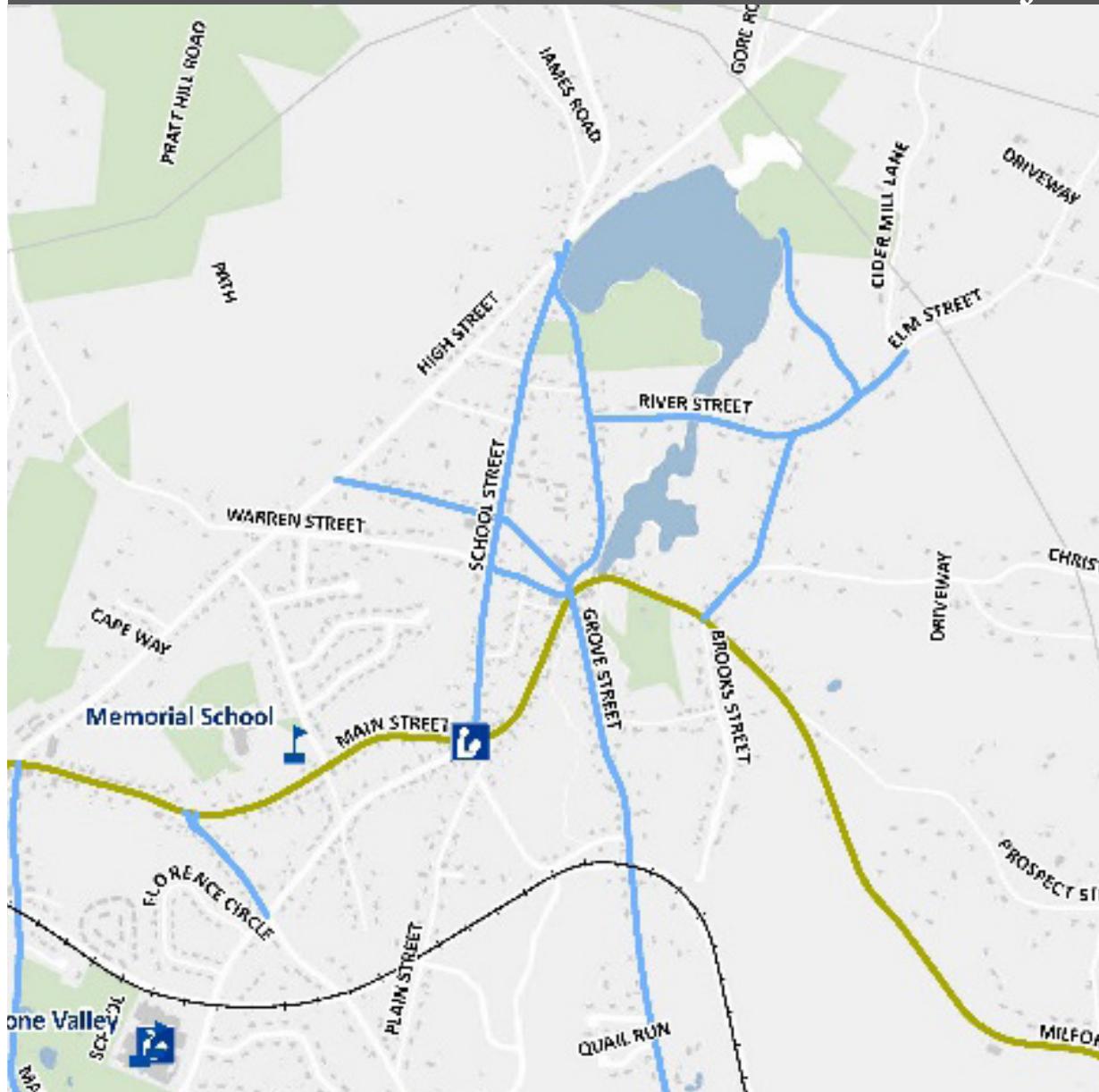


0 970 1,940 Feet



BETA group produced this map showing key destinations in Upton for the Complete Streets Privatization Plan. An estimated walkshed for Upton Center is shown in the center of the map. Residents of this area are a key user group for Upton Center, especially for potential walk-to destinations.

2019 COMPLETE STREETS POTENTIAL PROJECTS MAP



DRAFT

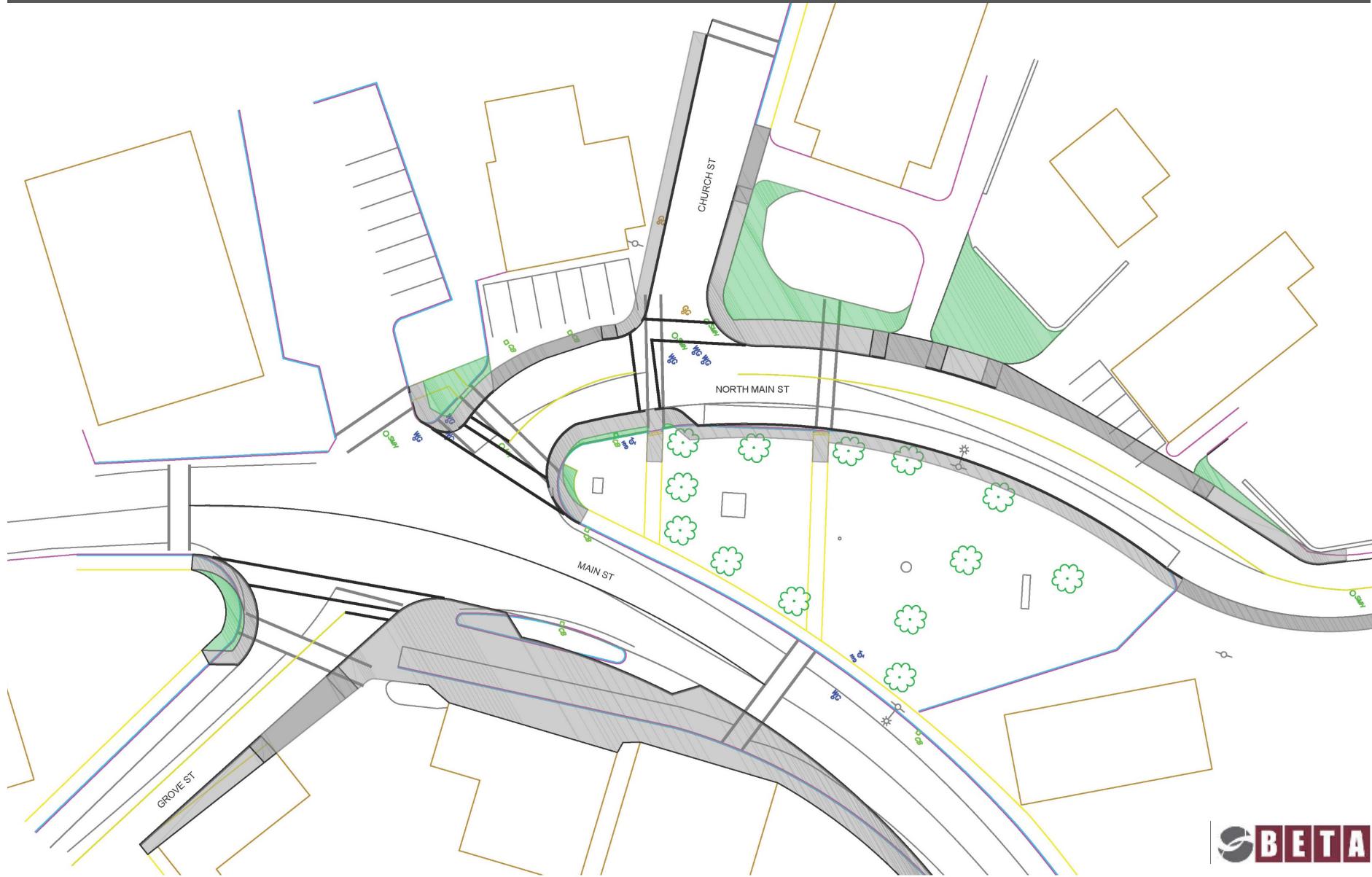
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only

BETA 0 970 1,940 Feet



Streets that the Complete Streets Privatization Plan identified for improvements are shown in blue above. The Plan recommended adding sidewalks and improving curb ramps to these streets so that people could safely walk to the Center and to adjacent attractions like Kiwanis Beach. Most projects shown on this map are proposed for year 4 and beyond. It will take many years to build out a complete sidewalk network around Upton Center.

2019 COMPLETE STREETS CONCEPT PLAN



Concept Plan for complete streets improvements in Upton Center. Sidewalk improvements are shown in gray, greenspace in green, and crosswalk and curb changes in thick black lines. North is to the right on this image. Improvements are limited to local streets, because the MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program does not fund improvements to roads that are eligible for federal aid, like Route 140. Federal-aid eligible projects go on the TIP.

LIBRARY/ COMMUNITY CENTER

The Knowlton-Risteen Building at 2 Main Street is one of the anchor buildings of Upton Center. Originally the Upton Methodist Episcopal Church, it was renovated in 1971 to suit Town functions. Current uses of the building include:

- First Floor—Library: 3,200 square feet for about 30,200 volumes of print, audio, and visual materials.
- Second Floor, Historical Society museum, office for local cable access channel and the historical commission.

- Third Floor—storage for Town departments

The Town has attempted several times to decide how to deal with deficiencies in the building, and whether to renovate it or build a new library/community center for Upton.

Upton Town Library Planning and Design Feasibility Study, 2014-2017 (Tecton Architects)

Between 2014 and 2017, the Upton Town Library Board of Trustees commissioned several feasibility studies for an improved Library building.

In 2014-2015, consultant Mary Braney developed



Upton Methodist Church ca. 1910

a library needs assessment, conducted a townwide survey and developed a program for a library. A program defines building uses and space needs. The program estimated a library for Upton would need 15,000 square feet.

The feasibility study for the library was merged with a feasibility study for a Senior Center in June 2015. The Town hired Tecton Architects who developed conceptual plans and cost estimates for the nearly 20,000 square foot building and evaluated a variety of potential sites. In January 2016, the project was scaled back to a Library, because grant funding was not available for Senior Center construction.

The resulting library-only design was aimed toward meeting the requirements of a 2016-2017 Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program construction grant. The Town was unable to find an appropriate site for the resulting design for a one-story 14,750 square foot library or a two-story 16,000 square foot library. It was therefore unable to apply for the grant.

It is important to note that one of the two final sites evaluated was the Town-owned land on Milford Street with parking and playground (adjacent to the VFW). The site was rejected because of “inefficiencies of the two-floor concept, the difficulty of accessing town sewer, and the disruption to the existing parking and playground.”¹

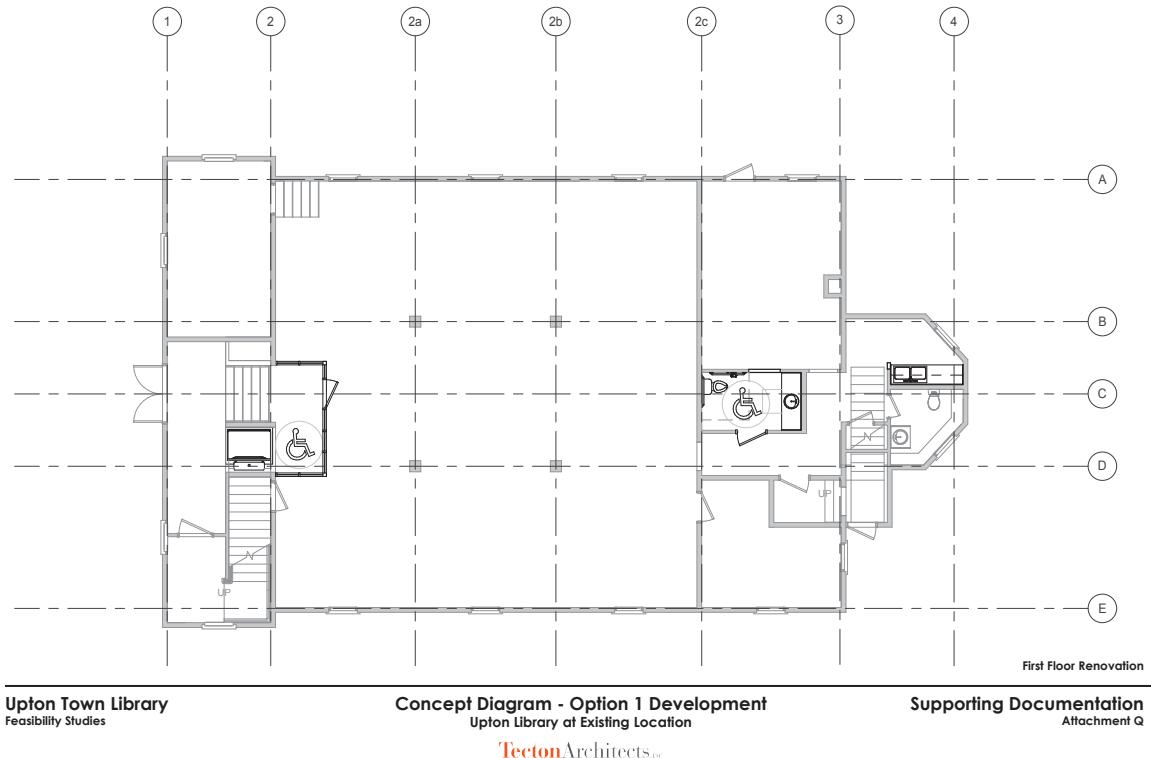
The Town then commissioned a second study, by

1. Tecton Architects, Upton Town Library Planning and Design Feasibility Study, June 2014-July 2017

Tecton Architects to evaluate the existing conditions of the Knowlton-Ristein building and proposed two options for renovating it to better accommodate the existing uses of the building.

Key Takeaways of the Study included:

- “A tour of the building revealed many program and accessibility inadequacies that needed to be addressed”
- The “observable existing structural system is in very good condition, with no evidence of significant deformations, deteriorations, or distress” outside of the following items:
 - First Floor: the majority of first floor framing can handle library loading. The rear bay is suitable only for office loading without reinforcing. The study recommended reinforcing the rear bay.
 - Second Floor: Framing is unsuitable for office or library use. Currently live load capacity is 25 pounds per square foot (psf). 150 psf is required for library loading. Study recommendation: sister 2x12 wood joists along existing 2x10 joists and a pair of steel channels bolted on each side of the 8x10 girders
 - Granite Columns and Footings: Significant settlement on second and third floors. “In combination with undersized existing footings, these granite posts do not have the capacity to support the second and third floors.” Recommendation: remove granite columns and footings and replace with new steel posts and sufficiently sized footings.



The study proposed two options for renovating the building.

Cost estimate: \$3,263,219

(See images on following page)

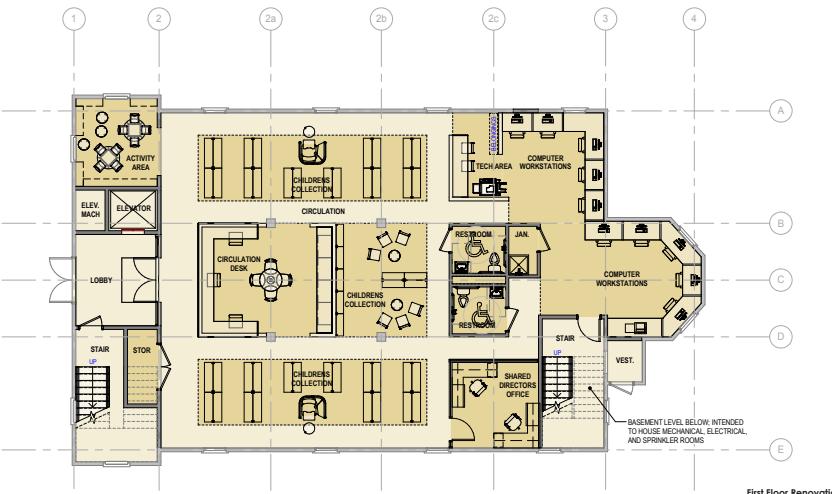
Option 1, Minimal Renovation

Addresses accessibility and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance

Cost estimate: \$210,220

Option 2: Full Renovation of all three floors

Provides full library services that would satisfy the Town's current and future needs

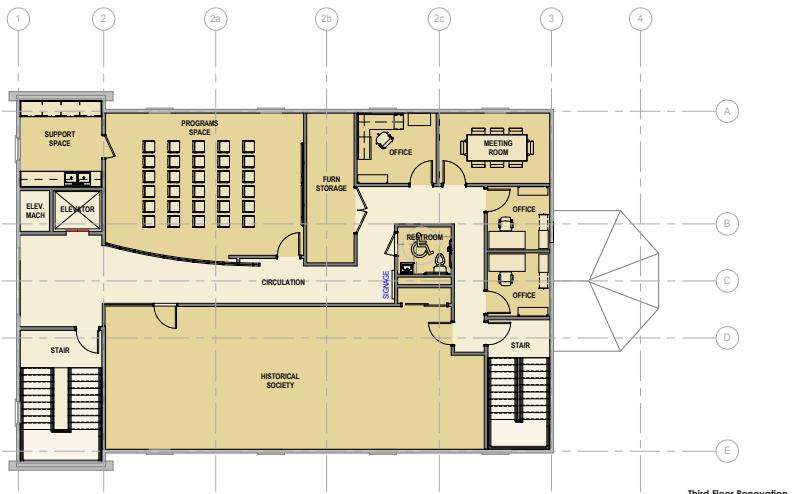


Upton Town Library
Feasibility Studies

Concept Diagram - Option 2 Development
Upton Library at Existing Location
TectonArchitects,pc

Supporting Documentation
Attachment R

Option 2, Floor 1

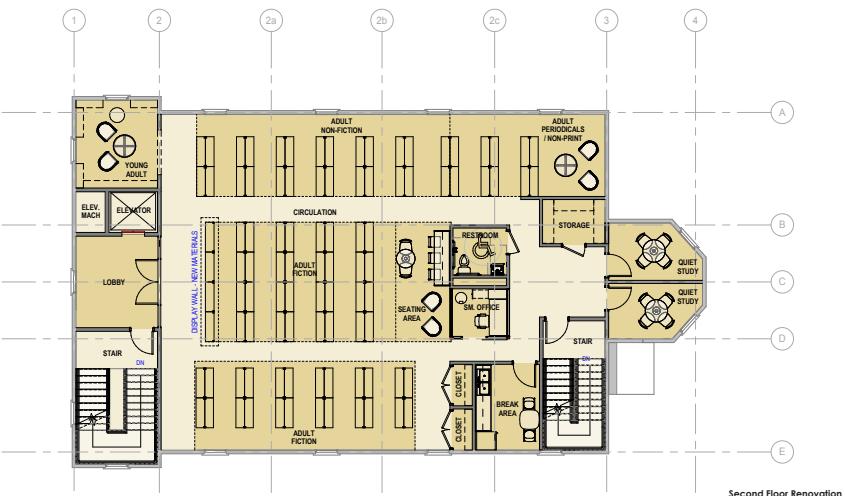


Upton Town Library
Feasibility Studies

Concept Diagram - Option 2 Development
Upton Library at Existing Location
TectonArchitects,pc

Supporting Documentation
Attachment T

Option 2, Floor 3



Upton Town Library
Feasibility Studies

Concept Diagram - Option 2 Development
Upton Library at Existing Location
TectonArchitects,pc

Supporting Documentation
Attachment S

Option 2, Floor 2

Municipal Community Center Feasibility Study and Design Plans (currently active)

Upton is in the process of completing a feasibility study and design plans for a community center which would house blended services of the Library and Council on Aging. The consultant team for that project is T2 Architects with Dodson & Flinker (also the authors of this report). Work on the feasibility study was ongoing at the time of publishing this report.



The Knowlton-Ristein Building houses the Town's Library. Originally a church, it was converted to Town use and renovated in the 1970's.



Entrance to the Knowlton-Ristein Building.
Because it has stairs, this entrance does not meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

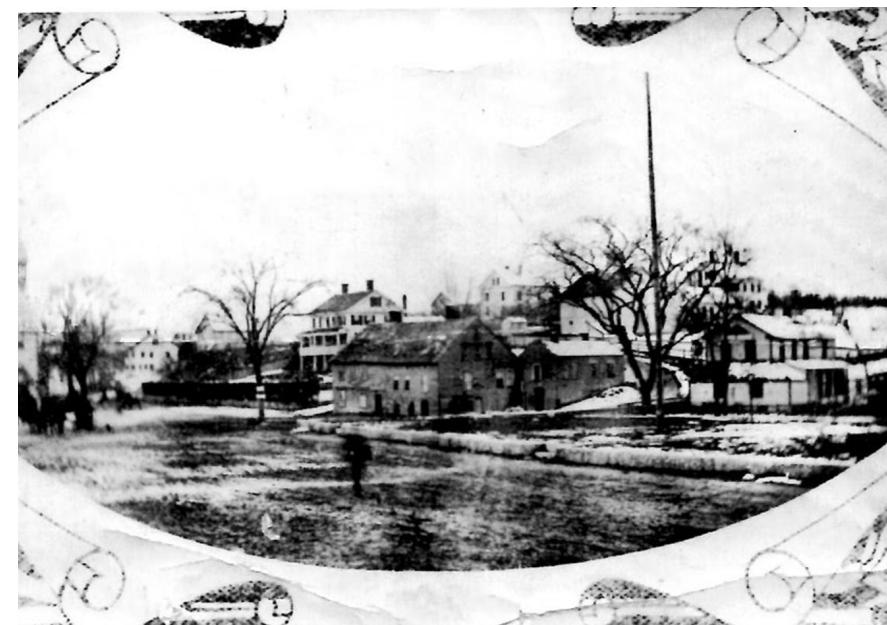
HISTORY OF UPTON CENTER

TOWN CENTER HISTORY

Upton Center developed during the second half of the 18th Century. By 1771, the area contained the Town's second meeting house at the eastern end of the common, a corn and sawmill, several shops in what is now known as the Arcade block and additional shops along Grove Street.¹ By the late 19th century, Upton Center had arguably reached its high point with three churches ringing the common, the completion of the current Town Hall and diverse businesses lined up along Main Street, Grove Street, and North Main Street.

Since then, a good number of the Center's buildings have been demolished, including the Grist Mill and the Second Meeting House which was moved across the Milford Street to between the former Holy Angels Church and Center Brook, went through several uses and was eventually removed. The Common itself has been reconfigured several times through its history. The oval shape it had in the late 19th Century has been transformed into more of a triangle to accommodate a wide curve in Route 140 that speeds traffic through Upton Center. Historic buildings have been modified too. The Knowlton-Risteen building lost its steeple, the original shape of its windows and acquired a gambrel roof when it was converted to municipal use in the 1970's. The Arcade Block was once a three

1. Bair, Tom. 2019. "The Early Development of the South Side of Upton Common." Upton-Mendon Town Crier, February 1, 2019. <http://www.towncrier.us/pdf/mendon-upton/UTC 19.02.01.pdf>.



Upton Town Center, 1882. Southwick Tavern, in the middle of the image, was replaced by Town Hall



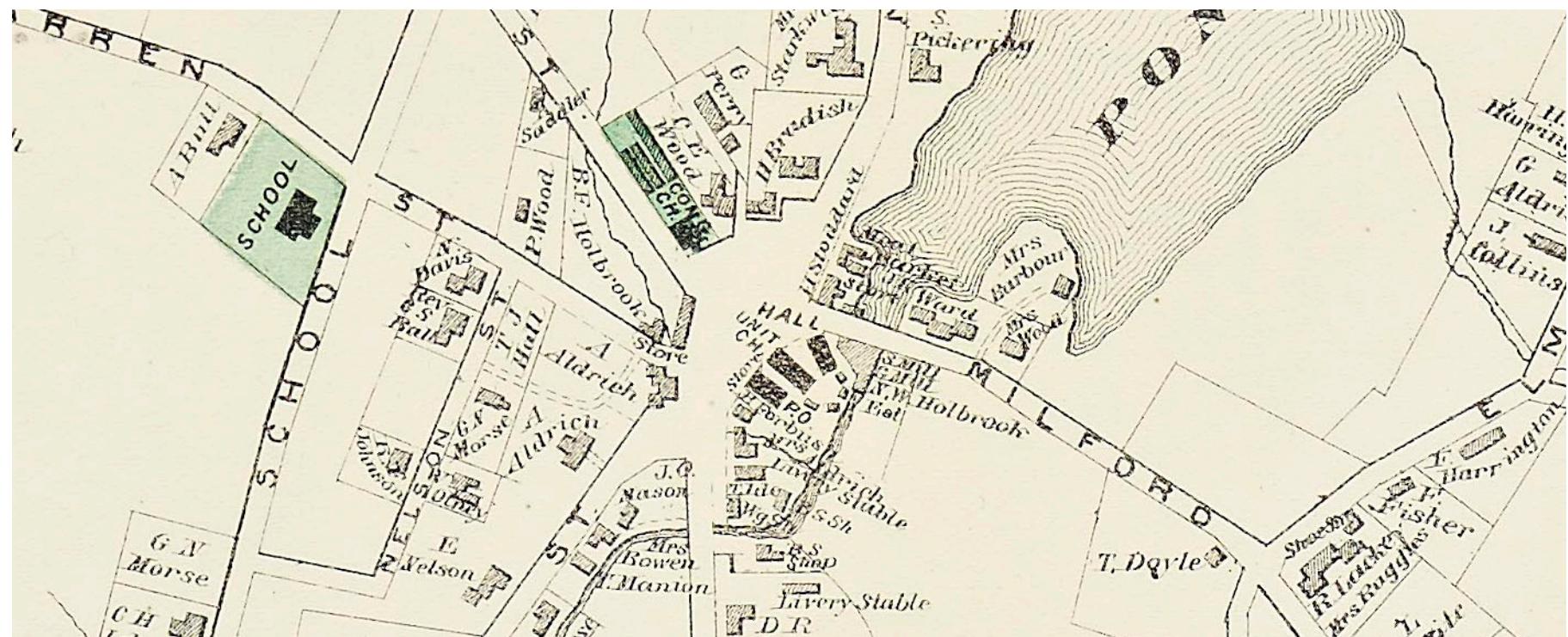
Upton Town Center, 1888



Upton Town Center, 1908



Upton Town Center, 1919



Map of Upton Center in 1870. Six streets flow into a large undifferentiated area at the center of town surrounded by buildings. Milford Street approaches from the west and enters the center in a straight line, unlike the current curved configuration.

story building. Its third floor was removed in the late 1900's. The Fiske Building (site of Upton House of Pizza and Colonial Liquors) originally had a broad front porch, attractive wood siding and trim, and windows on the west side of the ground floor. All are now removed or covered. There was once a three story building attached to the north side of the Fiske Building's north side where the small parking lot and dumpster now sit.

Today, Upton Center is evidence of both how places stay the same and how they change. The historic ethos of the place is obvious to all. Less obvious is that the history is the result of generations of Upton residents modifying the center to accommodate the needs of their times. Industries have come and gone. The grist mill, blacksmith shop, and box manufactory have been replaced by liquors, pizza, and massage. Transportation systems have changed. Horse livery stables were once common in the area. They were replaced by a trolley and then streets designed for motor vehicles. The changing role of religion in the town has been reflected in changes to buildings—the second meeting house was removed from the common after the separation of church and state, the Methodist church was converted to a library, Holy Angels Church has been decommissioned and is currently vacant.

Histories of individual properties follow. These histories were provided by Ellen Arnold and Donna Desjardins, members of the Working Group. Information used was compiled from several sources including the Upton Center North District application, 1984 MHC Surveys, Upton Heritage, and the 1935 Upton History.

Upton Common

The Upton Common is the centerpiece of Upton Center and the core of the Upton Center Historic District. The establishment of the Common as a center of Upton activity solidified during the 19th Century. With the addition of the two commanding Greek revival churches facing one another, and, an ever-changing influx of businesses, the area became known as Central Square. Eventually, the Common became a grassy triangular park populated by several impressive monuments. These include a Civil War monument added in 1890, a World War One monument added in 1921, and a combination monument honoring World War II, Korean, and Vietnam soldiers added in 1984. An iron fountain, now used as a planter, is thought to have been donated by the Women's Temperance Union as a reminder to drink water, not alcohol. "Blessed are the Merciful" is inscribed on the bowl.

The Common has been thoroughly used and enjoyed by Upton residents throughout the years. Cattle shows were held until 1942 and the Common has hosted a variety of well-attended public events.

Upton Town Hall (1 Main St)

Upton Town Hall was originally dedicated in 1884. It is one of two buildings in town that have been listed individually on the National Historic Register. Using Community Preservation Funds the town completely restored and updated the building. They worked with Mass Historic Commission to make sure the work conformed to National Register standards. Today we have a town hall that

everyone can be proud of and is the cornerstone of the Square. Visitors and people passing by easily recognize that Upton cares for its historic legacy.

Knowlton-Risteen Building (2 Main St.)

Knowlton-Risteen Building was built in 1876 as a Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1970, they joined with the Congregational Church to form United Parish. At that time the building was acquired by the town and work was done that significantly changed the exterior appearance. This included changing the roofline and removal of the steeple and bell tower. After the town remodeled the building, the library moved here from the Town Hall. The Upton Historic Commission was assigned space that Upton Historical Society uses for their museum.

An original round window with a daisy design was destroyed in a hurricane in the 1950's. The round stained glass window that is there today was created in 1957 by local artist, Carl Paulson using a design referred to as "I am the Vine". Carl's design greatly increased the strength of the window and provides a unique and beautiful work of art that enhances the Town Common today.

Although it is a non-contributing building to the National Register status due to the 1970's renovations, it holds a prominent place on the Common.

The Arcade Block (1 Milford St.)

The "Arcade Block" is the historic name for the building located at 6 Milford St. Built in 1836, it currently houses several apartments on the second level with storefronts on the ground floor. The

building is privately owned and located between two town-owned properties, the former Holy Angels Church and a Town parking lot. As the present owners have indicated a willingness to sell this property, it is the center of much discussion.

The Arcade has undergone numerous uses and physical changes over the years. Upton's Post Office was in the building until 1885 and then again in 1921. A dry goods store was located here along with a Community Store, a florist, a Barber Shop, and other business at various times.

In the early 1900's, a connecting shed-roof arcade was added making it one long building as we see today. The third floor was removed in the late 1900's which made it ineligible to be a contributing building for the National Register designation. With its apartments and businesses, the Arcade is a reflection of the mixed-use concept so popular today. Many hope to duplicate this concept as part of the revitalization process.

The Fiske Building aka the Lesure Building (6 Milford St)

The Lesure Building (also known as the Fiske Building) at the east end of the Common is a privately owned building occupied today by Upton House of Pizza and Colonial Liquors. Built in 1874 by James Lesure it frames the end of the "Square." A previous building, built in 1848, burned in a fire and Mr. Lesure purchased the property to build the existing building for his drug store. It is a contributing building to the National Register District.



Fiske Building showing original porch, trim and attached building to left of image.

Churches on the Common

Holy Angels Church and United Parish are the bookends of the Common. Both buildings were built in 1848, facing each other across the Common. The two buildings feel massive in size when you are standing on their steps, but when you look at either church from the other church you get a sense of scale and balance that anchors the Common. Both are contributing buildings to the National Register District.

Holy Angels Church located at 1 Milford St on the South side of the Common was built by the First Unitarian Society. The Unitarians moved to West Upton in 1874 and this building was purchased for use by the Catholics in 1875. The church was renamed Holy Angels and served the Upton Catholic community until May 2011. At that time they joined with St Michael's in Mendon in the newly built St. Gabriel the Archangel Church on Mendon

St in Upton. After Holy Angels closed it was sold to a private party and eventually to the Town of Upton.

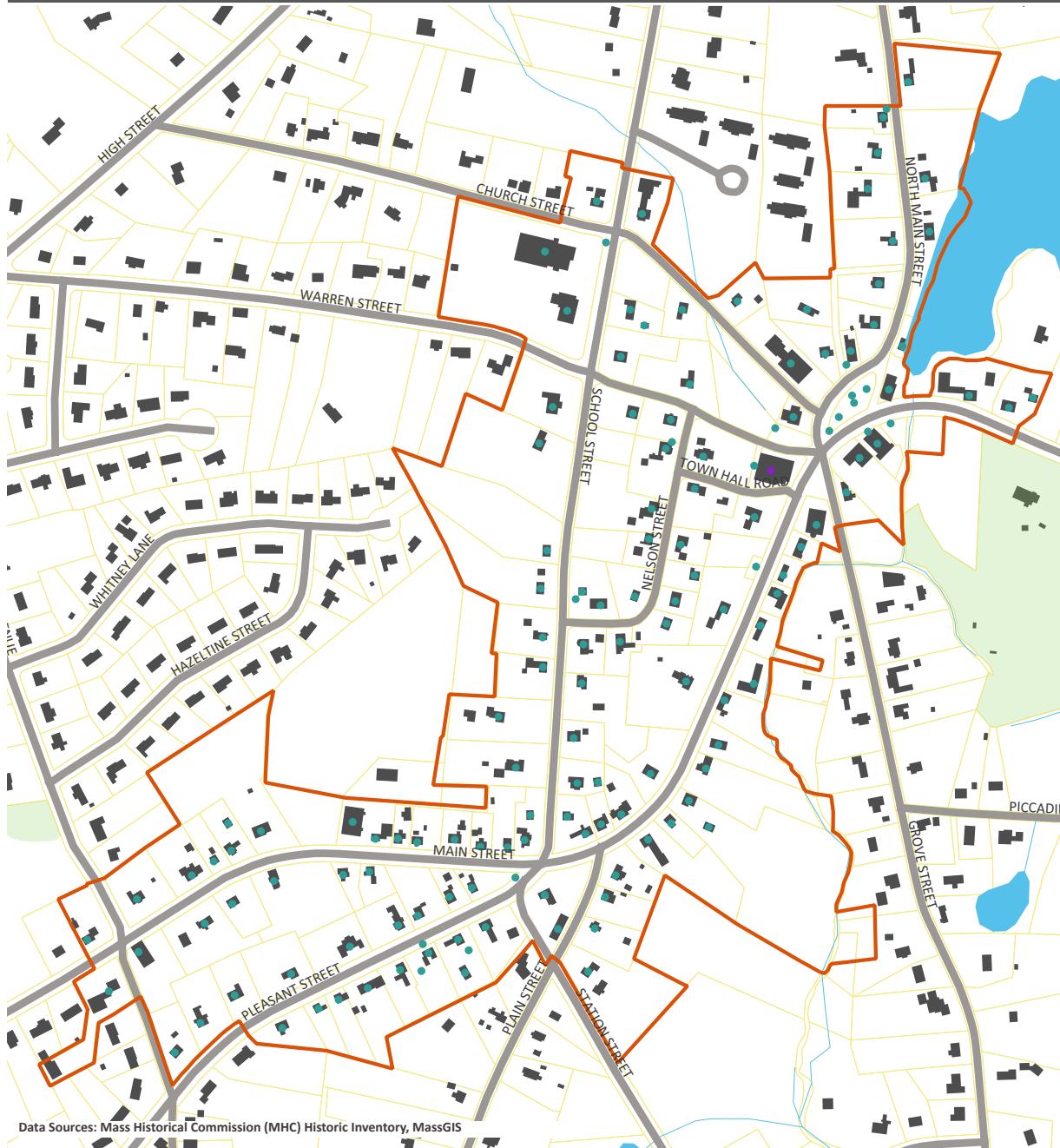
The double height stained glass windows seen from Milford Street were added in the 1970's to fill the façade bays.

United Parish Church at 1 Church Street on the North side of the Common, was built by the Congregationalists as the third structure used by the first parish. It is a Greek revival building with a steeple that was destroyed by the 1938 Hurricane. After fundraising, that gained national attention and support, the steeple was replaced. The 1868 steeple that was erected in 1957 was a gift from the Oxford Methodist Church. The town clock was replaced on the steeple in 1957. On January 15, 1970 the Congregational Church joined with the Methodist Episcopal Church to become United Parish.



Central Square with Upton Parish Church to left of image

HISTORIC REGISTER DISTRICT AND FEATURES



Upton Center is designated as a National Historic District. Within the district, almost all of the properties have been inventoried and contain features listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Town Hall is also listed as a National Register Individual Property and is subject to a Historic Preservation Restriction.

Listing as a National Historic District (also known as a National Register District) qualifies work on registered features to receive federal tax credits for historic preservation. National Register listing does not limit the use of a property or alterations to it, except that it provides protections from some state or federally funded, licensed, or assisted projects.

Regulating Historic Preservation

Demolition Delay Bylaw

Upton has a Bylaw that governs “Preservation of Historically Significant Buildings.” Any building that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or that has been found to be eligible to be listed, or that was 75 or more years old when the bylaw was adopted, may be subject to demolition delay by the Upton Historical Commission. A building permit for demolition of such a building will be referred to the Historical Commission for a determination. If, after a public hearing, the Historical Commission determines that the building is “preferably preserved,” then demolition cannot happen for 12 months, during which the Commission will work with the property owner and others in an effort to preserve the building. At the end of the 12 month period, demolition can proceed.

Local Historic District

Upton has not established any Local Historic Districts. A Local Historic District is a specific kind of local bylaw which is authorized by state statute 40C. A Local Historic District bylaw establishes a review process for changes to structures within the district that are visible from a public way. A Local Historic District is different from a National Historic District. A Local Historic District creates a regulatory review process to ensure changes to buildings are compatible with the district, while a National Historic District does not establish review authority or processes. Like other bylaws, a Local Historic District bylaw must be adopted at town meeting.

Other Ways to Regulate Historic Preservation

While a Local Historic District is specifically tailored to regulate historic preservation, some communities use other forms of regulation to ensure that modifications to buildings and new construction are compatible with historic places and buildings.

Zoning bylaws can establish design standards which are typically reviewed via site plan and/or special permit review. Zoning review can be in place of other forms of historic preservation review or in addition to it. The value of using zoning to review historic considerations is that it can streamline project review and incorporate it into a review of other factors which may impact historic preservation like considerations of site design, signage, and building use. On the other hand, many projects do not trigger zoning review (including most renovations) and zoning is prohibited from regulating building materials which is often an important part of historic preservation.

Some communities adopt a standalone design review bylaw, which can include review of historic compatibility. The local bylaw typically establishes a design review board. The design review can be tailored to local needs and can consider building materials. Northampton, Massachusetts, for example, established a standalone design review bylaw for its downtown area in the early 1990's. The design review is based on set of design guidelines which form the basis of a negotiation between the board and project proponents. Northampton's bylaw has been effective at ensuring compatible renovations and new development in the downtown.

Funding Sources

Projects that undertake historic preservation area may be eligible for several funding sources, including local Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds, federal tax incentives, and highly-competitive grants from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund.

Most preservation funding sources require compliance with design and construction standards and review processes which may increase costs, sometimes exceeding the money that comes in through the funding source. On the other hand, adding historic preservations to the “funding stack” can increase the viability of some projects. Construction projects that receive funding from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, and some projects funded by the Community Preservation Act are required to enter into a permanent preservation restriction and a maintenance agreement (preservation restrictions are sometimes called preservation easements).

While historic preservation can be complex, it results in unique and highly valued places. Historic preservation can increase property values throughout a neighborhood, and can contribute to the desirability of a place for business development. This is particularly true for store-based retail businesses many of whom are finding that providing a unique experience helps them compete with Internet sellers. Likewise, many restaurants and service businesses find that success depends on the setting of the business, not just product quality, convenience, and price.

The Value of Upton's History

Upton residents value the history of Upton Center—both the physical evidence of that past and the cultural history of Upton as a small lively town. Members of the Working Group identified the following principles for respecting the history of Upton Center.

- Historic character is part of our Town's identity, its heritage, and our sense of home.
- Upton has a fabulous architectural heritage that is nationally unique, increases property values, is a draw for new residents, visitors and business patrons
- Historic character is crucial to Upton Center's sense of place.
- Upton should strive to preserve the essence of the history of the Center, especially the key anchors: the Town Common, Upton Parish Church, Holy Angels Church, the Knowlton-Risteen Building, the Town Hall, and the Fiske Block (Upton House of Pizza/Colonial Liquors).
- Changes to Upton Center should take cues from historic precedents, including a variety of building scales that accommodate a variety of uses; a focus on people instead of cars; an attractive and safe pedestrian realm.
- New and renovated buildings in the Center should take cues from historic buildings located there, including: building size, shape and proportions; window and door proportions and placement patterns; roof shape, pitch, and direction; trim and detailing; and the relationship of buildings to the street and common.

- Old buildings with updated interiors can give a unique sense of place. Examples in Upton include the Town Hall & Mill House.

Note: the bullets above are a composite summary of points made by working group members and residents of Upton over the course of the visioning process.

Prioritizing Historic Preservation

While most residents of Upton like the historic character of the Center and support historic preservation in the abstract, residents prioritize historic preservation, as compared to other goals, differently. For some, historic preservation is the highest priority for the Center. For others, other goals are more important, for example stimulating new development and growth of the tax base. This tension was evident throughout the visioning process. As revitalization of Upton Center proceeds citizens and voters of Upton will likely have to make numerous decisions related to historic preservation. These decisions will require people with different viewpoints to listen carefully to each other, be respectful, and to work toward common understanding. The consensus-based working group process used for this project is one model for how to carry this out.



UPTON'S PEOPLE AND ECONOMY

UPTON'S POPULATION

Median Age: 41.3

Total Population: 7,770

Household Composition

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Total Households: | 2,733 |
| Family households: | 2,082 76.2% |
| Nonfamily households: | 651 23.8% |

Household Size

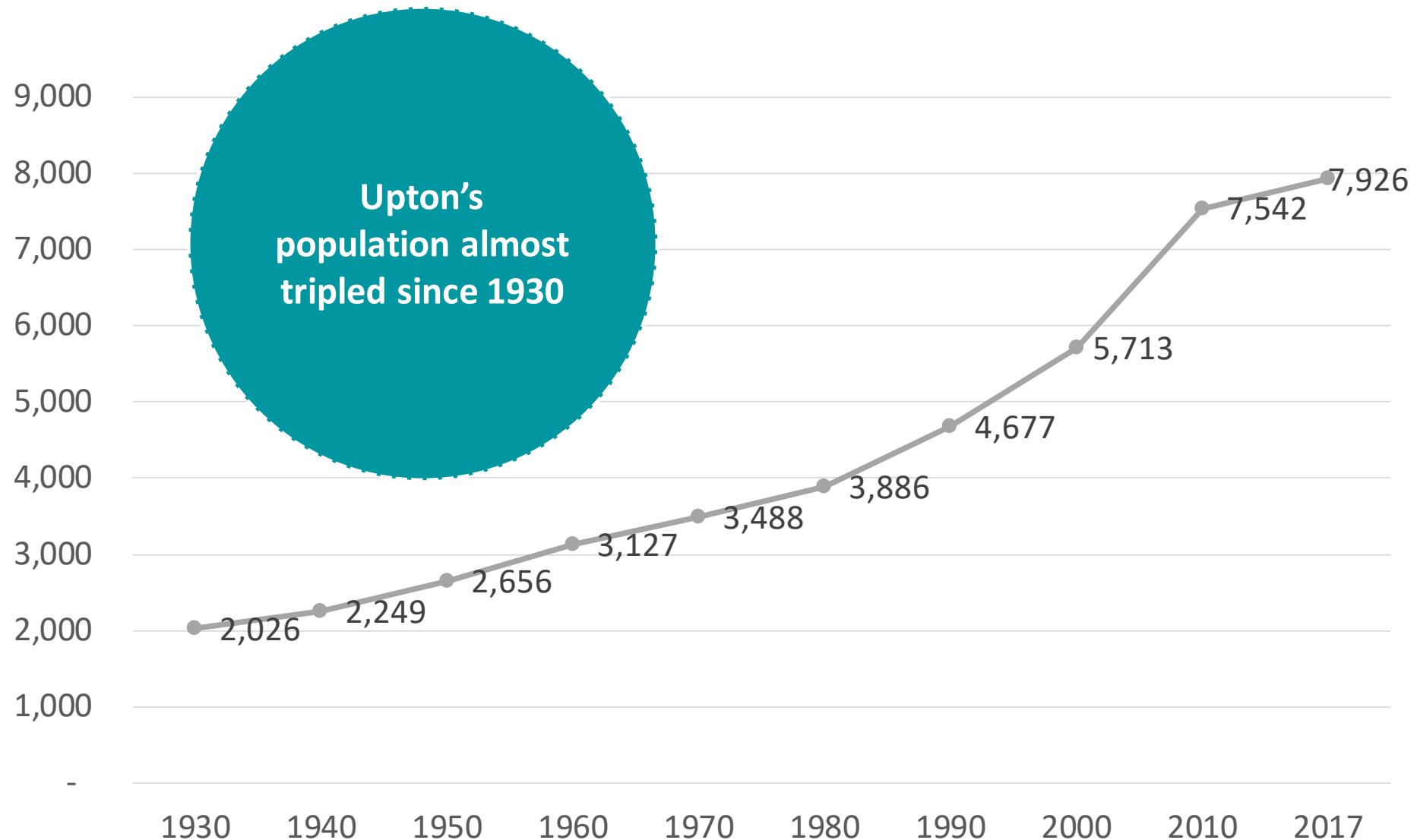
| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Average household size: | 2.76 |
| Average family size: | 3.2 |

Housing Type

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Occupied housing units: | 2,733 100% |
| Owner-occupied units: | 2,289 84% |
| Renter-occupied units: | 444 16% |

| | | | Worcester County | Upton | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
| | Race | | | | | |
| | White | | 711,768 | 87.0% | 7,508 | 96.6% |
| | Black or African American | | 50,737 | 6.2% | 48 | 0.6% |
| | American Indian and Alaska Native | | 6,179 | 0.8% | 12 | 0.2% |
| | Asian | | 44,488 | 5.4% | 435 | 5.6% |
| | Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | | 1,095 | 0.1% | 233 | 3.0% |
| | Some other race | | 28,449 | 3.5% | 122 | 1.6% |

Source: 2011-2017 ACS.

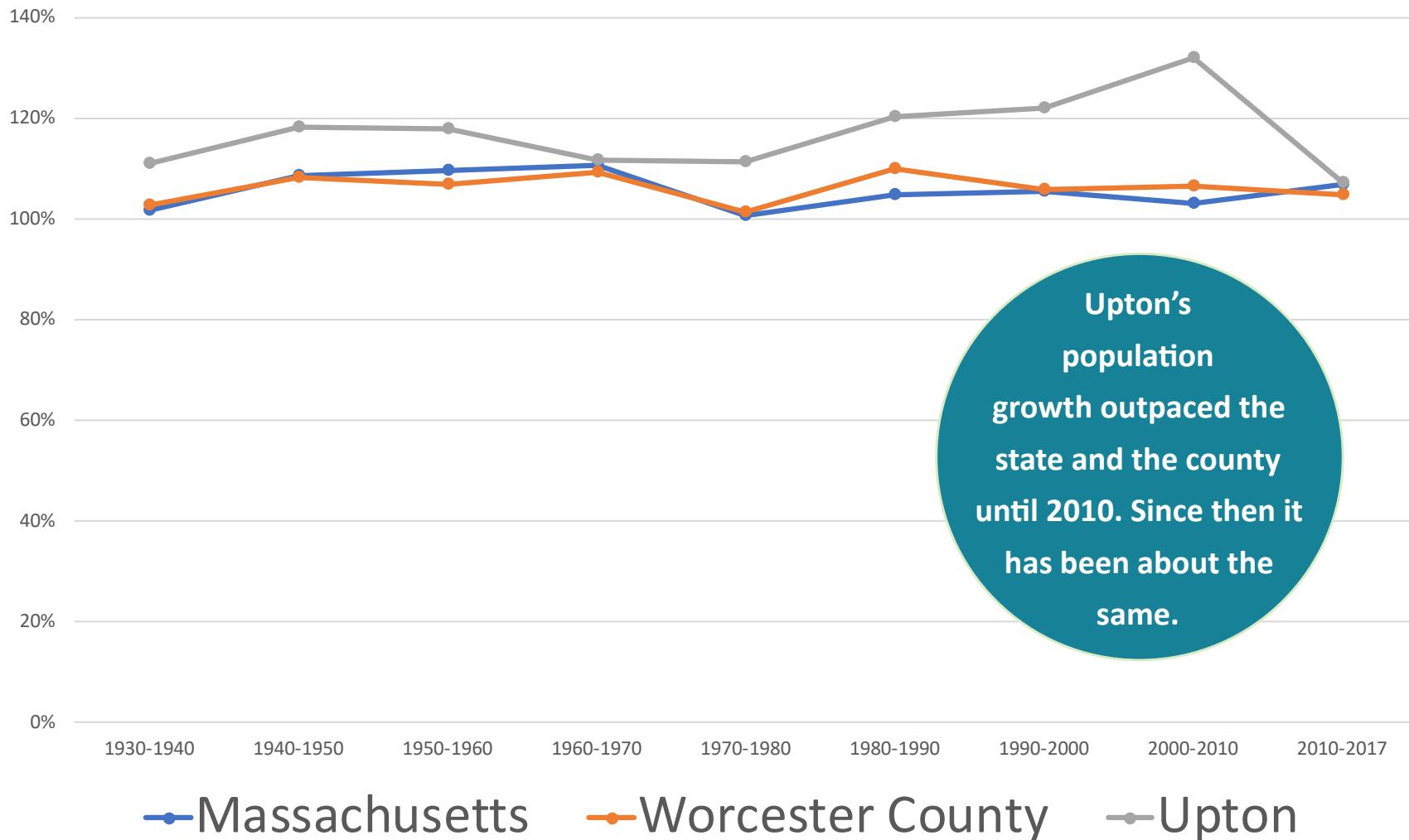


Source: US Census via Donahue Institute

Note: 1930-2010 data is from Decennial Census

2017 data is an estimate from ACS.

Percent Growth in Population



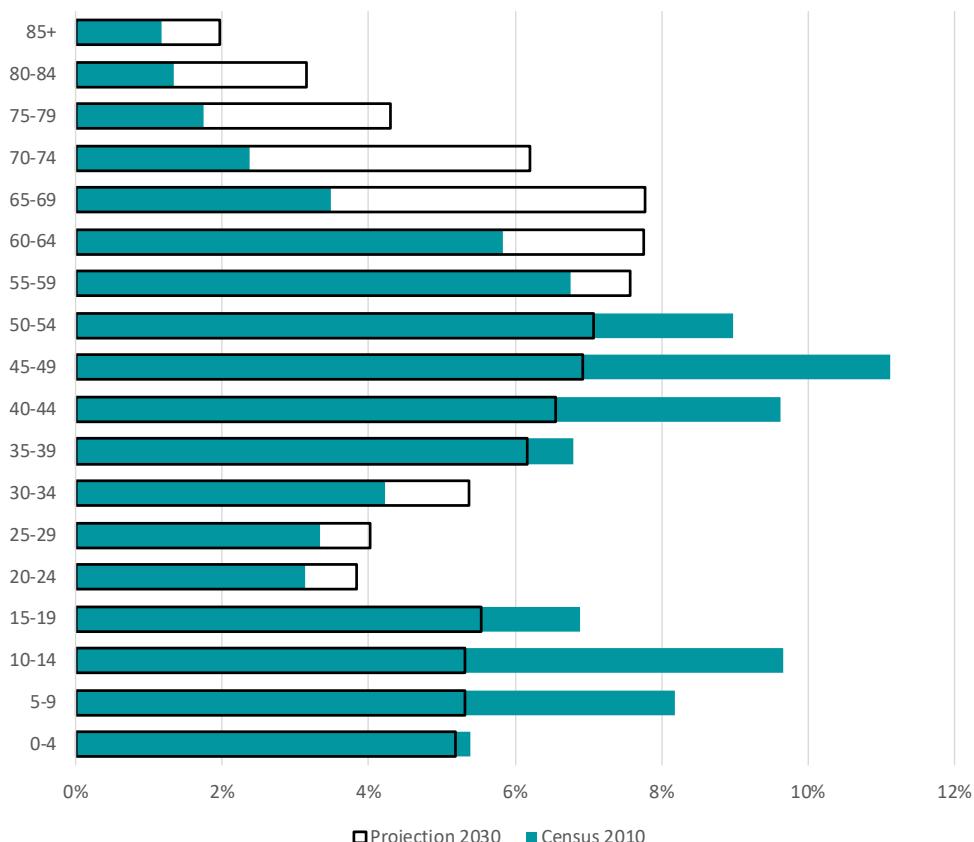
Source: US Census via Donahue Institute

Note: 1930-2010 data is from Decennial Census

2017 data is an estimate from ACS. Percent growth for 2000-2017 extrapolated based on 2017 estimate

Projected Population Growth and Distribution, According to UMass Donahue Institute

Projected Change in Distribution of Age Groups



Expected Change

- ↑% Older Adults
- ↑% Young Adults
- ↓% Middle-aged
- ↓% School-aged

2030 Projection: 12,000 people

according to Donahue Institute, but their projection for 2015 was about 1,000 people over the 2017 ACS estimated count

Source: Umass Donahue Institute

Projected Population & Employment Growth, According to Central Mass Regional Planning Commission

| | Census* | | | CMRPC Projections** | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------------|---------------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | 2000 | 2010 | % Growth | 2017 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 |
| Population | 5,642 | 7,542 | 34% | 7,880 | 8,030 | 8,230 | 8,520 | 8,850 |
| Households | 2,042 | 2,733 | 34% | 3,050 | 3,180 | 3,290 | 3,550 | 3,440 |
| Employment | 1,071 | 1,010 | -6% | 1,020 | 1,030 | 1,030 | 1,040 | 1,040 |

- Population: “medium growth”
- Employment: “low growth”
- Expected net addition of 500 households between 2017 and 2030

Source: CMRPC Regional Transportation Plan, 2012

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

The Mendon-Upton Regional School System has a very good reputation and is one of the draws for new residents of Upton. It is one of the reasons that Upton has a relatively high proportion of family households and maintains relatively high property values compared to most neighboring communities.

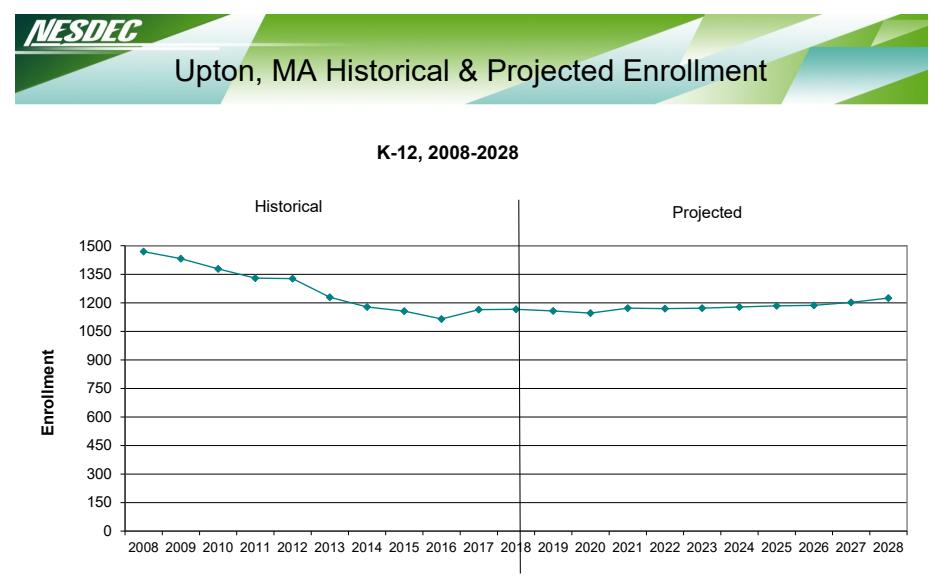
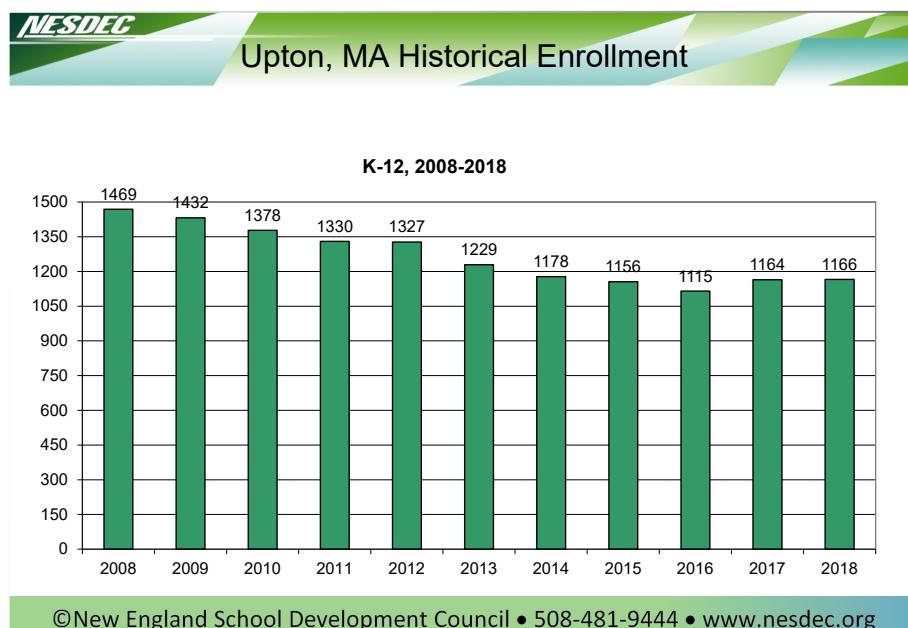
Data provided by the school district, shows that Upton's school enrollment declined from 2008 to 2016 and has increased slightly since then. Enrollment is projected to continue to grow moderately (5%) over the next 10 years reaching 1225 students in 2028. Even with that growth, enrollment in 2028 is projected to be about 15% below the enrollment

in 2008. Enrollment from Mendon showed a larger decline over the past 10 years and is expected to continue to decline over the next 10 years. Combined, school enrollment in the district is projected to be down 20% over the 20 year period.

of municipal services needs to be considered. Often the key question is whether a municipal service is at a tipping point; will more development require a new staff person, or a major capital outlay? Or will it simply use excess capacity while spreading the tax burden over a larger population?

School enrollment has a complex relationship with per pupil costs because schools have both large capital costs (buildings) that cannot respond quickly to changes in enrollment, while staff and faculty costs can respond quickly, but often through a difficult political process. Meanwhile, school costs are paid for largely by property taxes and state funds, both of which are related to population.

The upshot is that estimating the potential fiscal impacts of future development in Upton Center is complex. Both potential tax revenue and the cost



UPTON'S ECONOMY

Tax Rate

\$17.31/\$1000

Ranked #101 out of 342 cities and towns

Average Travel Time to Work

Upton: 34.9 minutes

Worcester County: 28.7 minutes

Massachusetts: 29.3 for MA

Increased 4 minutes since 2010

Household Income

Upton: \$119,392

Worcester County: \$69,313

Massachusetts: \$74,167

21% of households make more than \$200,000

Percentage of People whose income is below the Poverty Line: 4.8%

Less than ½ of the rate for Worcester County or Massachusetts

Employment by Industry

Similar to state and County

Retains significant manufacturing employment (14.1%)

Poverty Rates

Worcester County: 11.1%, Massachusetts: 11.1%

Poverty rate for population 65 and over is 10.4%--higher than state or county, but the margin of error is very large.

Source: Tax info from patch.com; Other info from 2017 US Census ACS

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The physical characteristics of Upton Center provide opportunities and constraints for its future. The center was established in a relatively flat area near the geographic center of the Town. Overtime, the center has remained relatively small with close spacing of buildings, likely because expanding outward is constrained by factors like hills, wetland and floodplains. Route 140 and the five roads it intersects with have long defined the Center, as has Center Brook which flows southward from Mill Pond through the Center.



Center Brook and its floodplain along Grove Street seen from the steep slope next to the VFW playground.

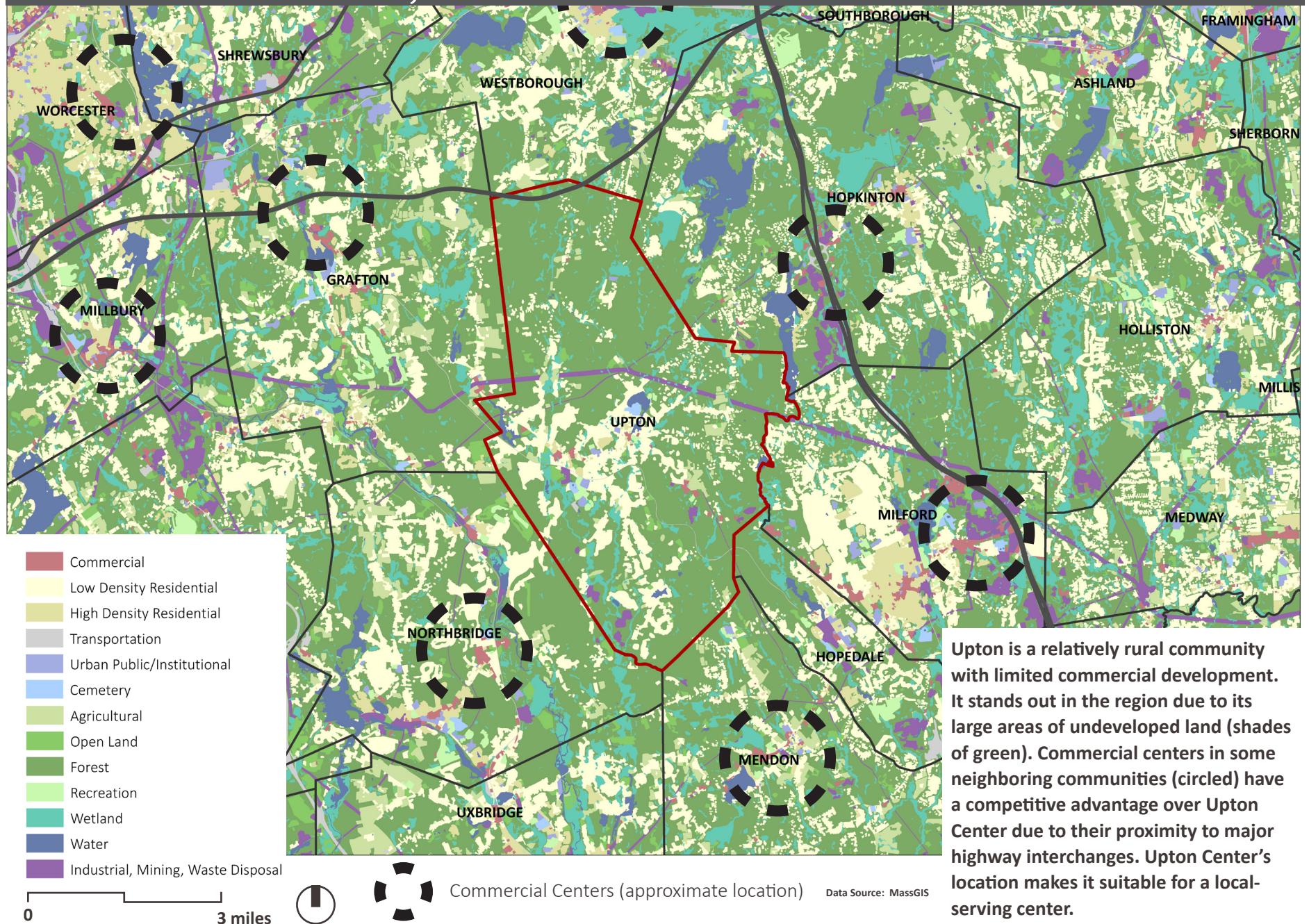


Aerial view of Upton Center in 2017. (Source: Pictometry)

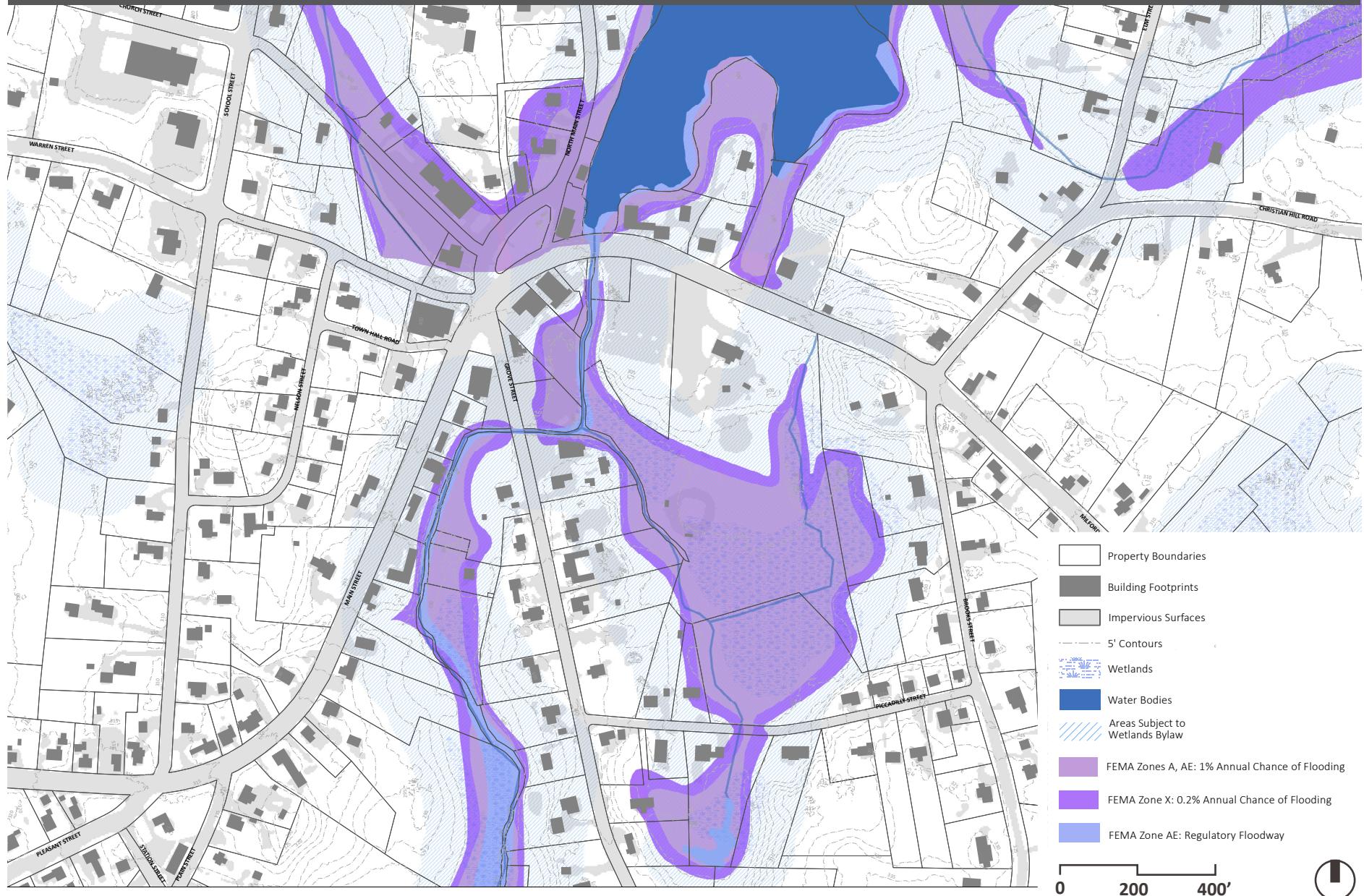


Route 140 curves through the Center and is lined by historic buildings and the Common.

REGIONAL CONTEXT, LAND USE

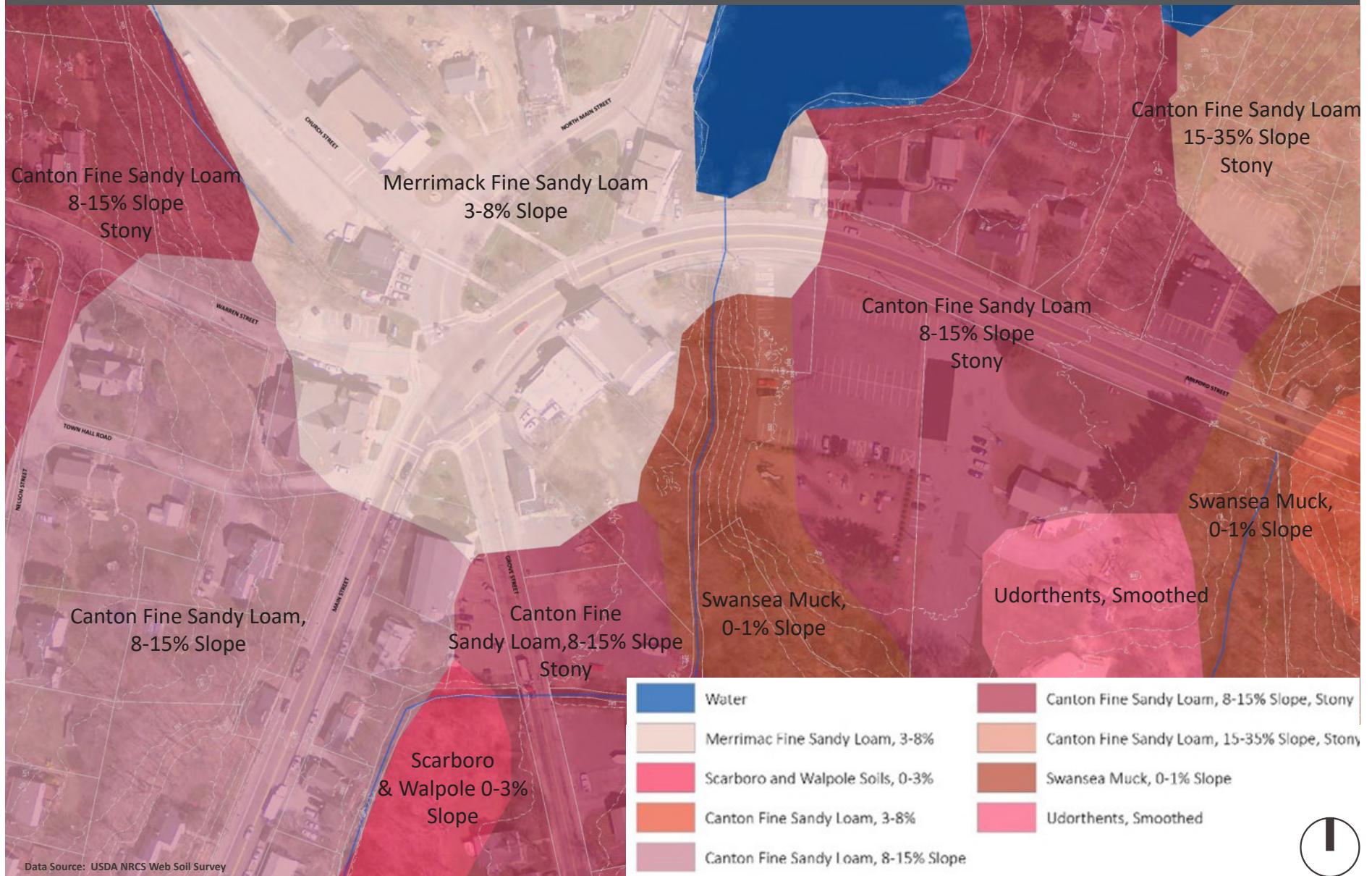


WATER RESOURCES



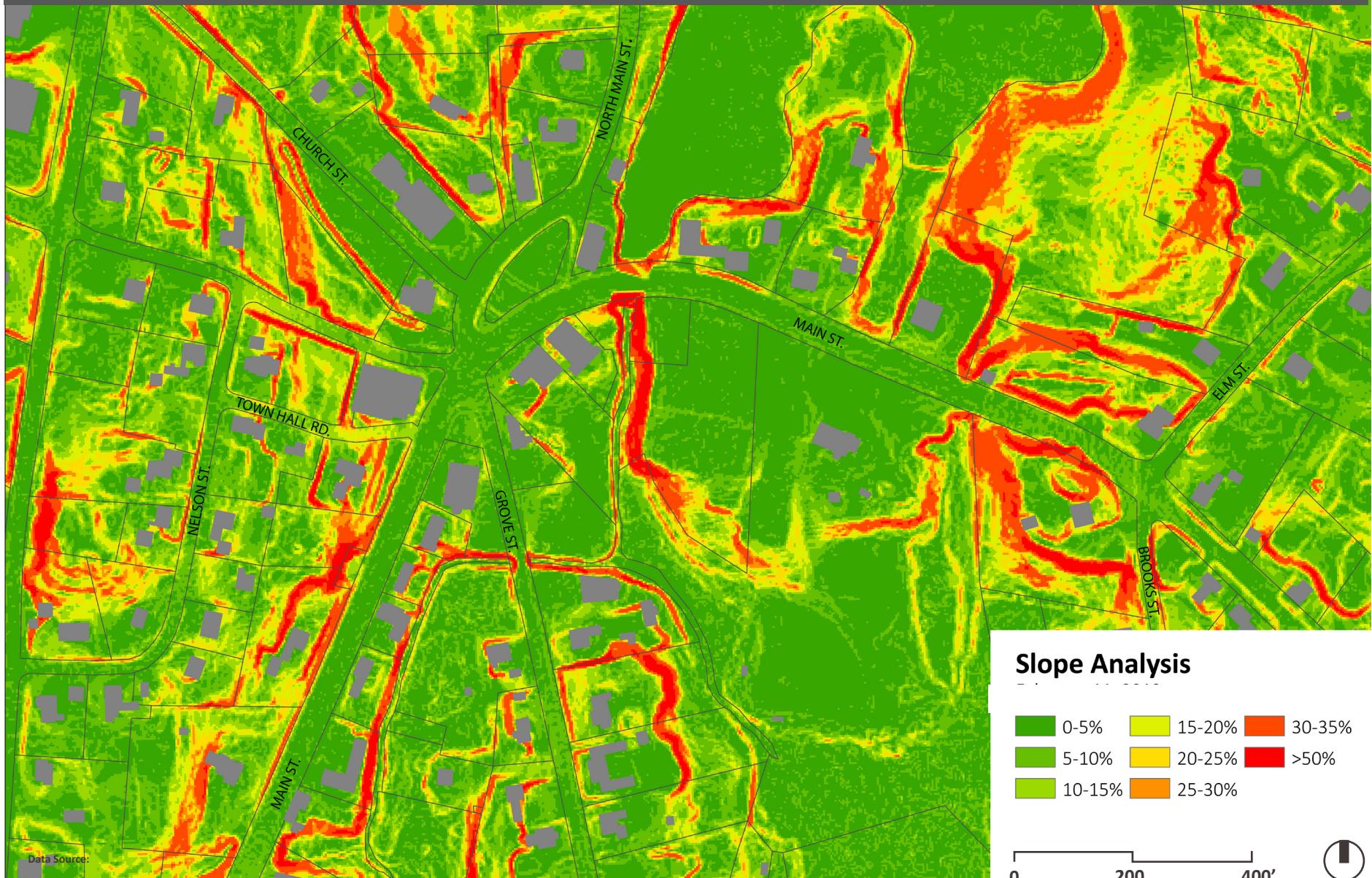
Mill Pond sits north of Upton Center and flows under Route 140 into Center Brook. Another tributary to Center Brook arrives from the north of Church Street and enters a culvert near the former auto repair shop. Floodplains border the stream corridors and a large wetland complex sits south of the VFW.

SOILS



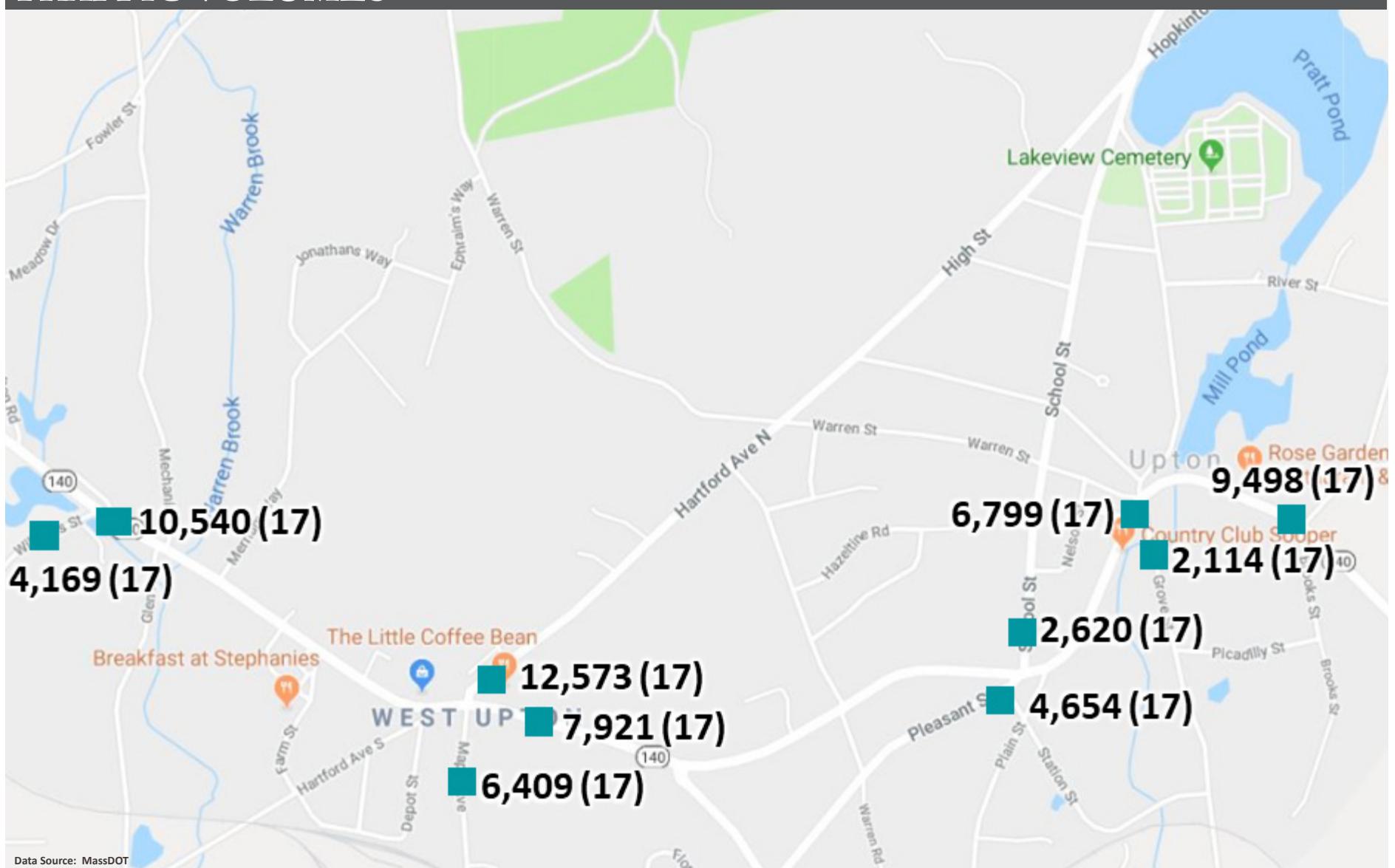
Merrimack Fine Sandy Loam soils in the heart of Upton Center are well suited for development. Swansea Muck and Scarboro & Walpole soils may constrain development due to ponding, depth to saturated zone, and subsidence. These soils are found adjacent to streams south of Route 140. The majority of soils in the Center are Canton Fine Sandy Loam, which can constrain development due to depth to saturated zone, slope, and/or bedrock.

SLOPE ANALYSIS



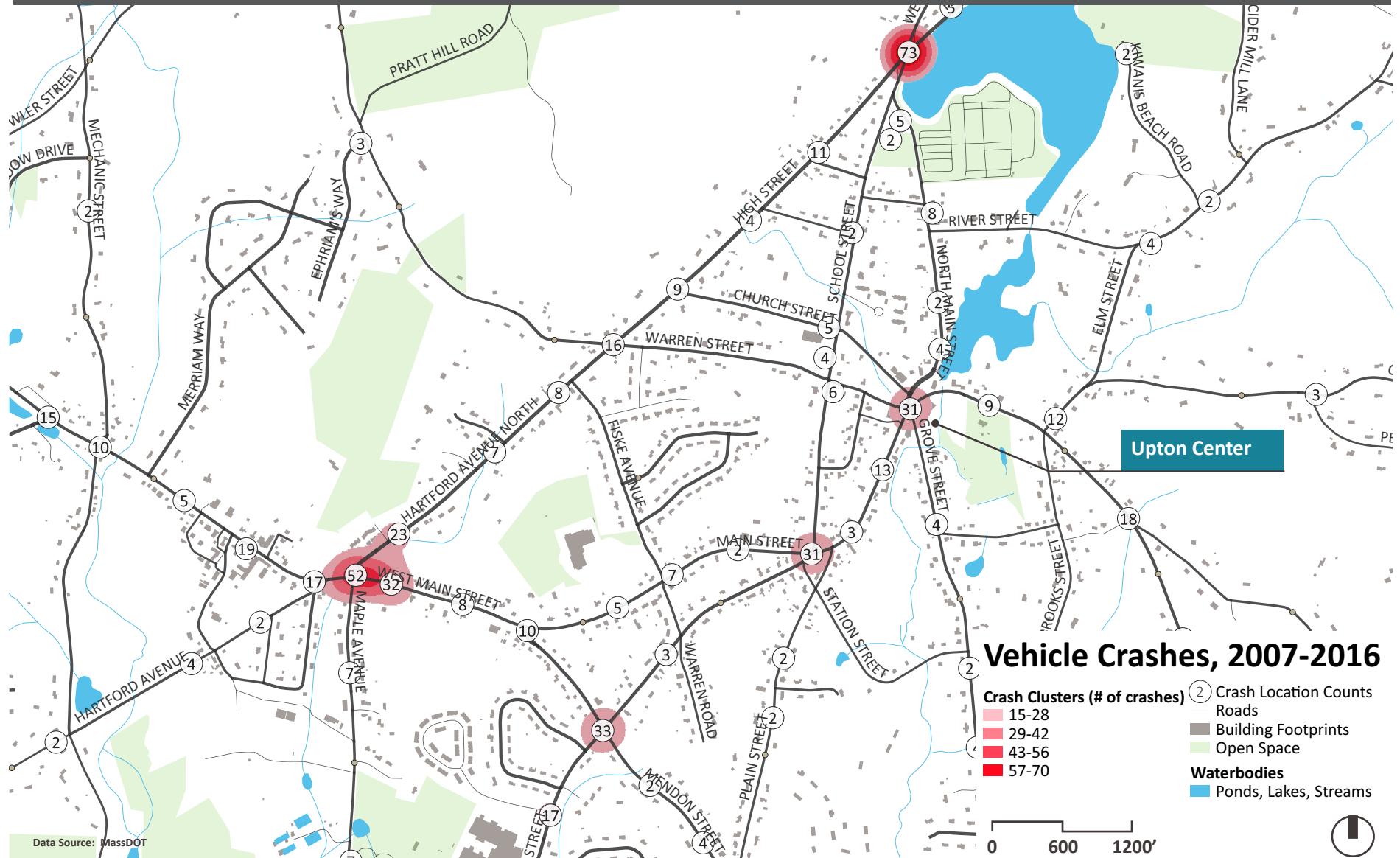
An analysis of slopes shows that much of the heart of Upton Center is not constrained by slopes (shades of dark green). However, bands of steep slopes along stream corridors on the south side of Route 140 divide the VFW/Town parking from the Grove Street area. Steep slopes running parallel to Route 140 south of the Town Hall create shallow developable areas on the east side of the road and steep front yard hills on the west side.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES



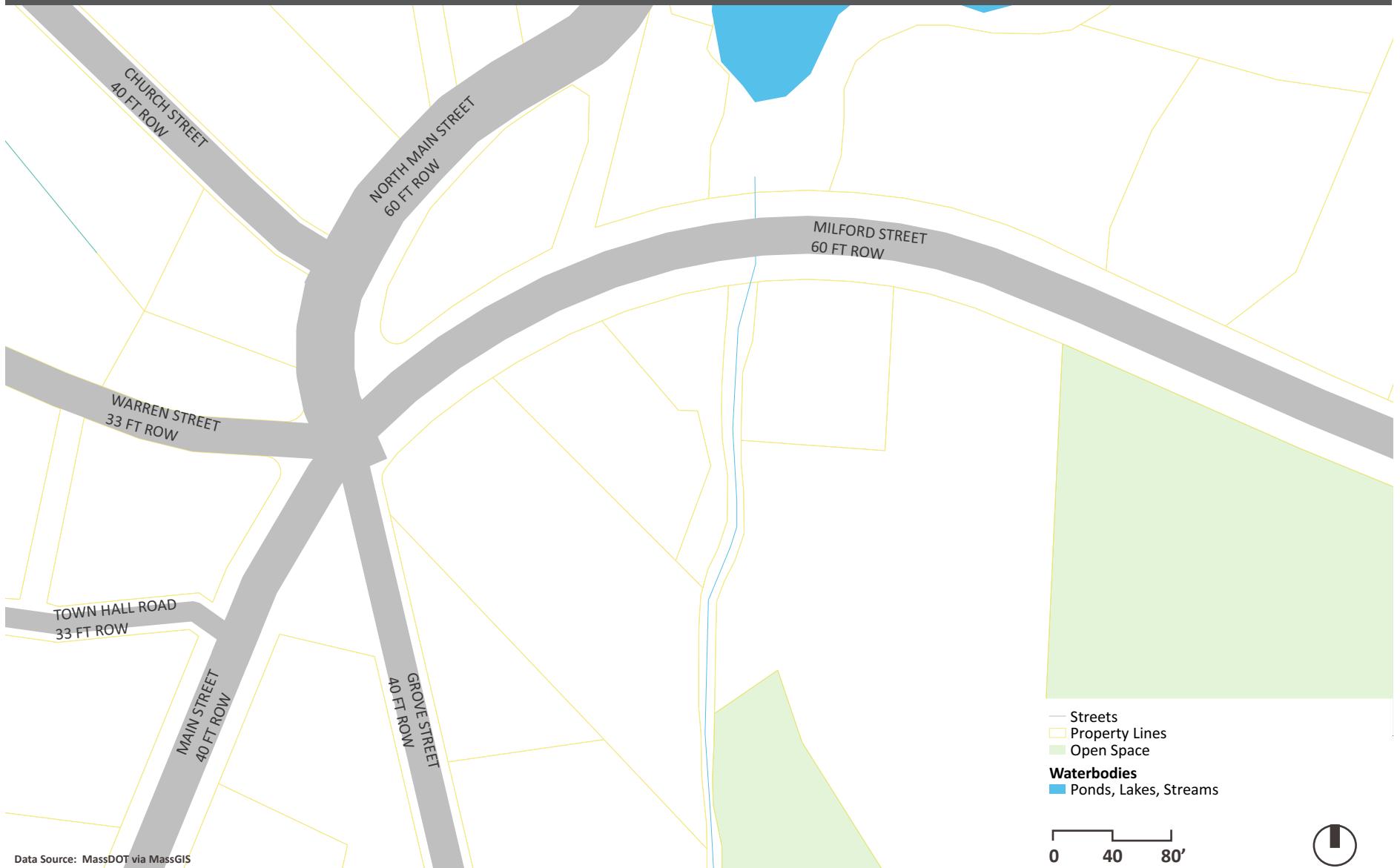
Route 140 in the vicinity of the Center sees 7,000 to 9,500 vehicles per day. That makes for a busy feeling road, especially since traffic is concentrated in morning and evening commutes. It is enough traffic to warrant attention from some auto-oriented uses, like a small convenience store. Grove Street and School Street have light traffic. Hartford Road in West Upton has more traffic than Route 140 indicating that it is a primary commuter route. That may explain why West Upton has become more of a commercial center than Upton Center.

TRAFFIC COLLISIONS



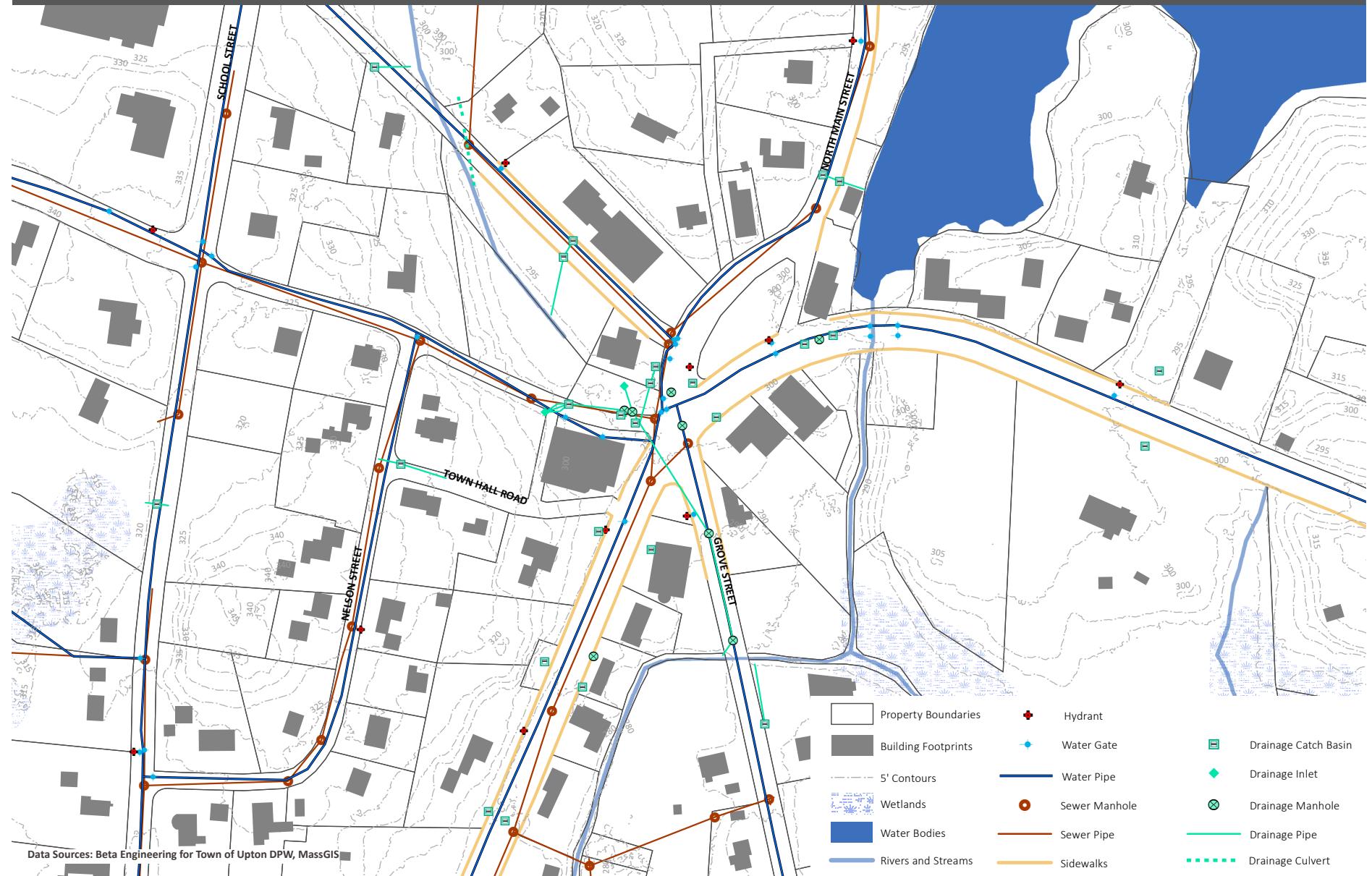
There is a wide-spread perception that Upton Center is a dangerous place to drive and walk. Over the past 10 years, there have been about 31 motor vehicle crashes near the intersection of Main St (Rt 140) and Church St/Grove St—the fourth highest count for a location in Upton. The number of crashes reflects the area's relatively high traffic volumes. The configuration of the intersection may also contribute. There were no reported crashes with pedestrians or bicyclists in the area in the past 10 years. None of Upton's crash clusters make the list of the top 200 crash clusters statewide.

STREET RIGHT OF WAYS



The right of way for a street determines how much space is available for travel lanes, sidewalks, tree belts, and other features. In Upton Center, right of way widths vary from relatively narrow streets like Warren Street and Town Hall Road to moderately wide streets like Milford Street. The right of way widths shown are from MassDOT data available through MassGIS. They are a reasonable starting place for discussions about streetscapes, but will need to be verified before any in-depth design or planning work is undertaken.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

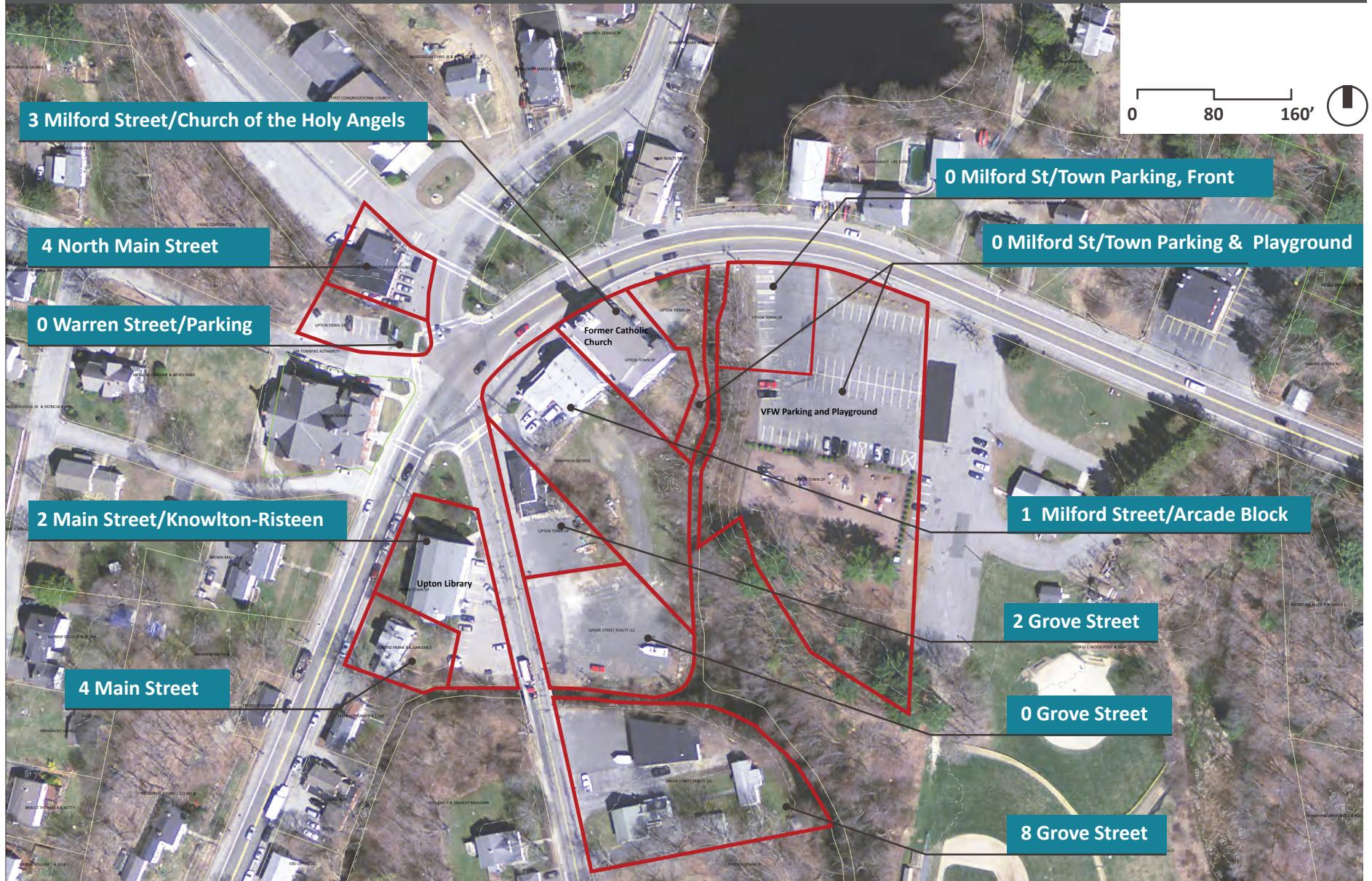


Town water is available throughout Upton Center. There is currently no sewer on parts of Grove Street or on Milford Street west of Church Street. There is a project before the Planning Board that proposes 160 houses that would entail extending sewer service up Route 140.



KEY PARCELS

KEY PARCELS - OVERVIEW MAP



KEY PARCELS

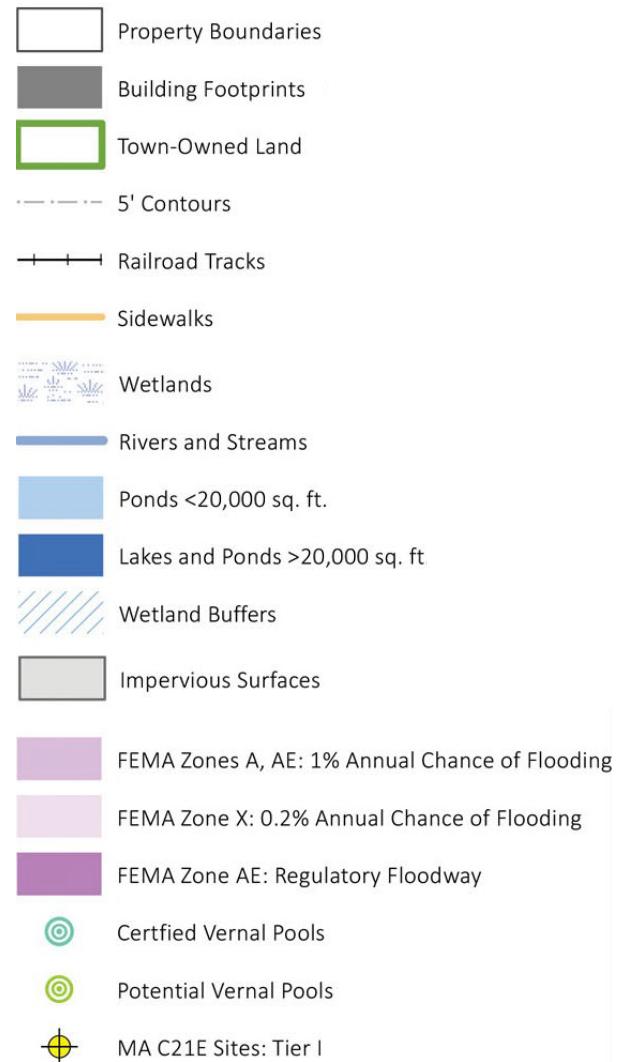
Community input and site analysis identified the following parcels as key focus areas for Upton Center Visioning:

1. 0 Milford Street (Two parcels containing Town Parking, Front & Rear, Playground, and land west of Center Brook adjacent to Holy Angels Church)
2. 3 Milford Street (Church of the Holy Angels)
3. 4 North Main Street
4. 0 Warren Street (Town Hall Parking)
5. 2 Main Street (Knowlton-Risteen Building, Library, etc.)
6. 4 Main Street
7. 8 Grove Street
8. 0 Grove Street
9. 2 Grove Street (Parking)
10. 1 Milford Street (Arcade Block)

The information in the tables on the following pages comes from the Town of Upton's Assessors database. Property and building values are "assessed value" which do not necessarily reflect the replacement value of a building or the sales value of a property.

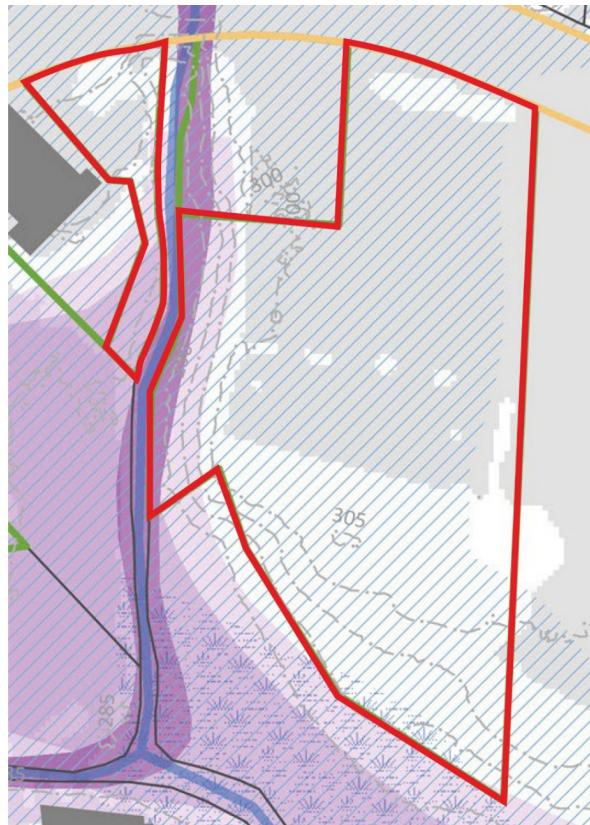
Virtually all of the key parcels are subject to Upton's Wetlands Bylaw. To avoid redundancy, we have not noted this fact on each of the individual parcel descriptions that follows.

Key for Maps on Following Pages



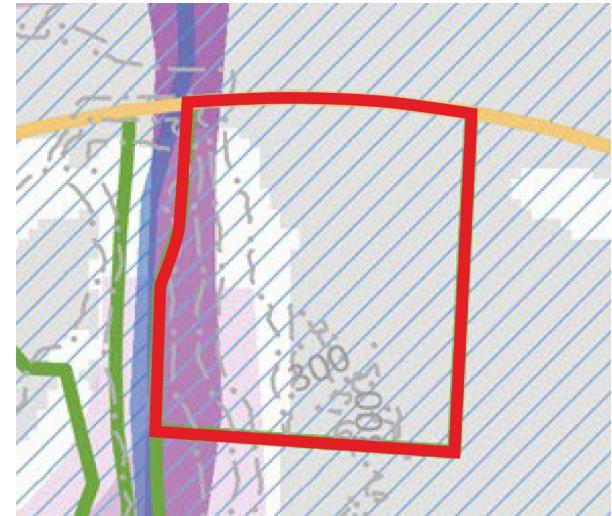
Town Parking/Playground

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Ownership | Town of Upton |
| Use | Parking, Tot lot, Vacant |
| Parcel Size | 74,062 sq ft |
| Building Size | N/A |
| Year Built | N/A |
| Land Value | \$142,400 |
| Building Value | N/A |
| Total Value | \$142,400 |



Town Parking, Front

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Ownership | Town of Upton |
| Use | Parking Lot |
| Parcel Size | 10,584 sq ft |
| Building Size | N/A |
| Year Built | N/A |
| Land Value | \$108,200 |
| Building Value | N/A |
| Total Value | \$108,200 |



The two Town-owned parcels on the previous page are located at 0 Milford Street next to the V.F.W. They contain Town Parking and the Veteran's Memorial Playground. The playground is actively used by children and parents and is viewed as one of the strengths of Upton Center. Town parking is used by the VFW for popular outdoor events and by attendees of sporting events that take place on the adjacent V.F.W. Ballfields.

Steep slopes and the Center brook bisect the property and divide it into western and eastern portions.

The eastern portion of the site which is made up two parcels, has the largest contiguous area of high and dry land in Upton Center making these parcels a prime redevelopment opportunity for the Center. These parcels have good visibility on Milford Street (Route 140), making them suitable for commercial uses like retail, services, or restaurants.

The western portion of the property used to be occupied by the "G.A.R Hall" and a Grist Mill. A monument on the site recognizes its history. The site has good views of Center Brook and stone work along its banks. The sound of the Brook masks traffic noise creating a pleasant and relaxing environment. The western portion of the parcel is limited by its size and odd shape. It would be more viable for reuse if combined with the Holy Angels Church parcel.



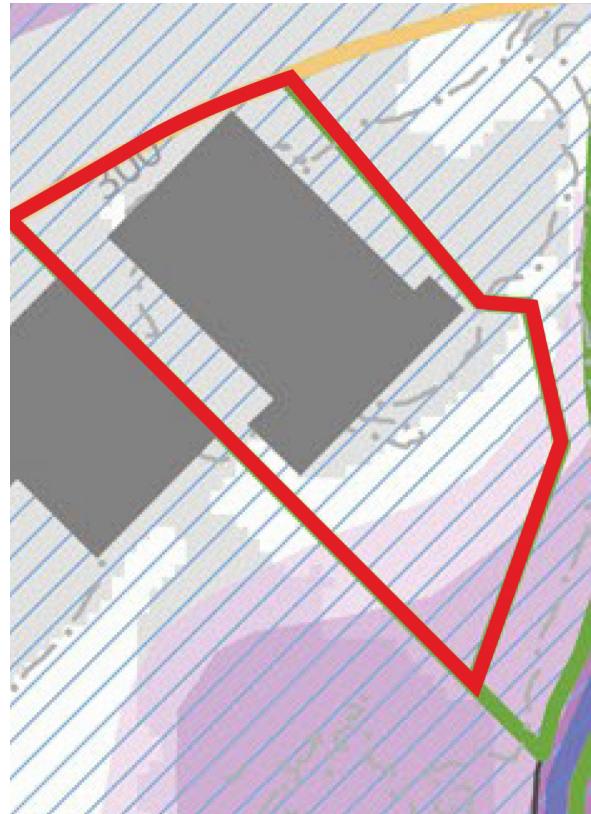
Veterans Memorial Playground with the steeples of Upton Center in the background

Church of the Holy Angels

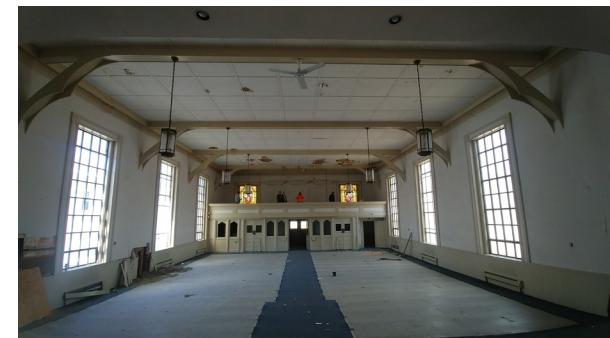
| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Ownership | Town of Upton |
| Use | Vacant |
| Parcel Size | 11,061 sq ft |
| Building Size | 7,662 sq ft |
| Year Built | 1800 |
| Land Value | \$90,700 |
| Building Value | \$122,700 |
| Total Value | \$214,300 |

Formerly Holy Angels Church, this building and land are owned by the Town of Upton. The building is currently vacant. The lot slopes steeply from Route 140 toward the Center Brook. The back corner is within the 100-year floodplain. This site has good visibility on Route 140. There are limited opportunities for parking on the site, due to steep slopes.

A plan to redevelop the church into three residential units with parking in the basement was put forth in 2015.

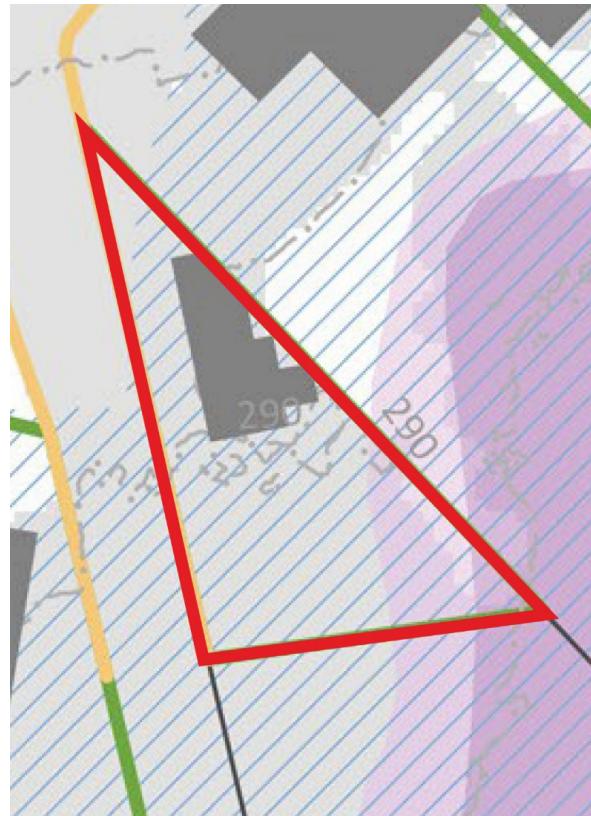


Criterim Engineers recently conducted a structural evaluation of the building for the Town. They found that the building was structurally sound. They estimated that stabilizing the building, including remediation of asbestos and lead, would cost about \$78,000. A full structural renovation would cost around \$552,000. The estimate for the full renovation does not include electrical, plumbing, sprinkler, HVAC systems, etc. The consultant's very rough, order of magnitude, estimate for a full renovation of the building was \$1,500,000, depending on future uses, finishes, etc.



Interior of Holy Angels Church
(Source: Mike Penko)

| 2 Grove Street-Parking | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Ownership | Town of Upton |
| Use | Parking Lot |
| Parcel Size | 9,081 sq. ft. |
| Building Size | N/A |
| Year Built | N/A |
| Land Value | \$77,700 |
| Building Value | N/A |
| Total Value | \$77,700 |

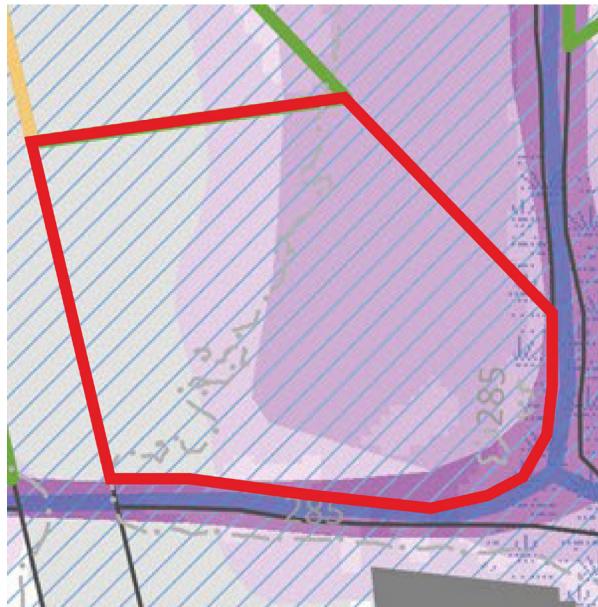


This triangular shaped lot is owned by the Town and used for parking. Its shape limits redevelopment opportunities. It would have greater use and value if combined with an adjacent lot, especially 1 Milford Street (the Arcade Block). The southeast corner of the lot is within 100-year and 500-year floodplains.



0 Grove Street

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Ownership | Grove Street Realty Inc. |
| Use | Vacant |
| Parcel Size | 17,991 sq. ft. |
| Building Size | N/A |
| Year Built | N/A |
| Land Value | \$104,700 |
| Building Value | N/A |
| Total Value | \$104,700 |



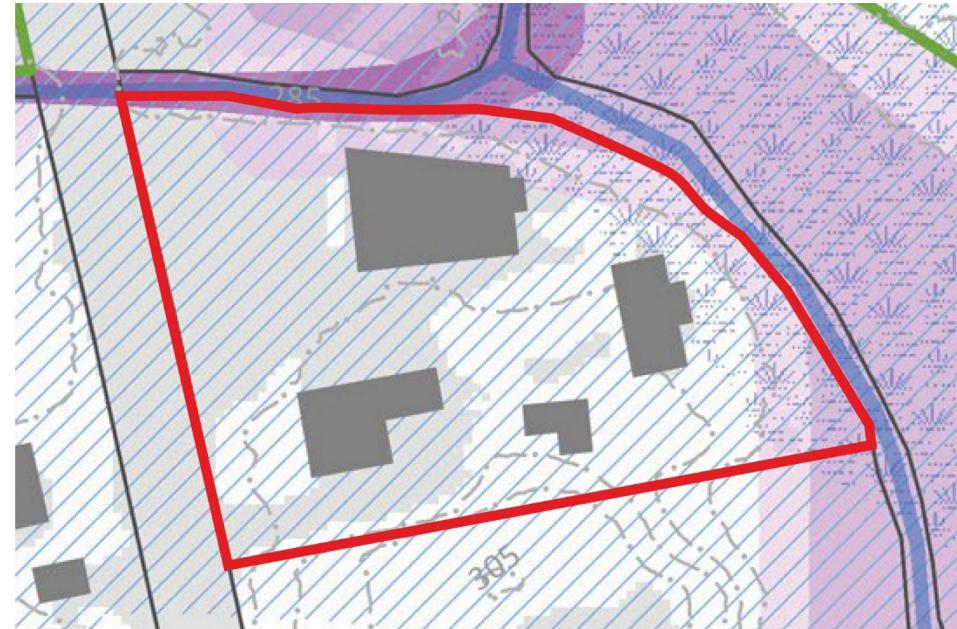
This vacant lot contains developable land along its Grove Street edge. About half of the site is within a 100-year floodplain and additional land is within a 500-year floodplain. Center Brook runs along the west and south boundaries of the site. The site contains a gravel parking area used for vehicle storage. It previously held a bulk storage facility with four above ground storage tanks of 25,000 gallons each.

It is under the same ownership as 8 Grove Street. It is currently for sale.



8 Grove Street

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Ownership | Grove Street Realty Inc. |
| Use | Mixed Use |
| Parcel Size | 34,846 sq. ft. |
| Building Size | 5,445 sq. ft. |
| Year Built | 1962 |
| Land Value | \$112,000 |
| Building Value | \$293,800 |
| Total Value | \$412,900 |

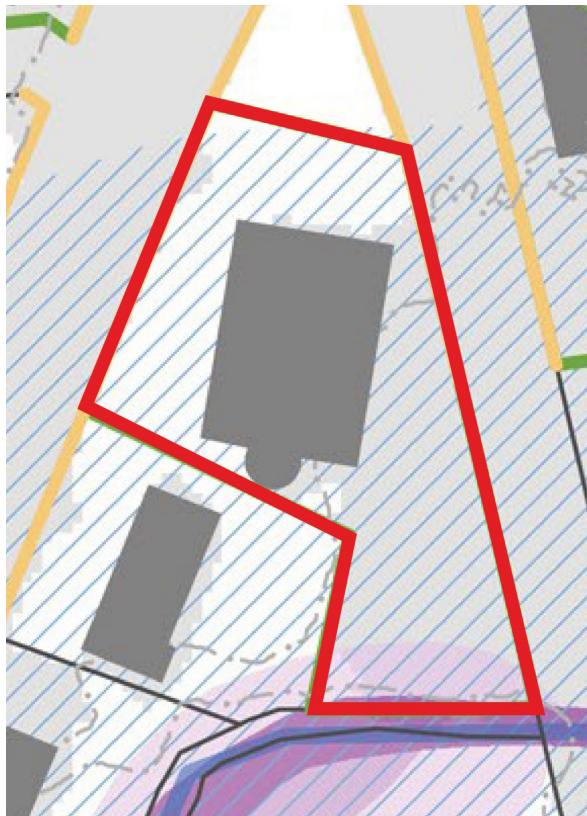


This parcel contains a commercial garage, a house with two dwelling units and an office, and an additional free standing dwelling unit. It is bordered by Center Brook and associated wetlands and floodplains on its north and east sides. It is under the same ownership as 8 Grove Street. It is currently for sale.

The property was evaluated for soil contamination in 2013 by Soilutions, LLC. The “ASTM Phase II subsurface investigation” did not find evidence of contamination that exceeds allowable levels.

2 Main Street-Library

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Ownership | Town of Upton |
| Use | Library, Historical Soc. |
| Parcel Size | 16,000 sq. ft. |
| Building Size | 7,086 sq. ft. |
| Year Built | 1900 |
| Land Value | \$108,200 |
| Building Value | \$980,500 |
| Total Value | \$1,091,800 |



The Knowlton-Ristein Building houses the Town Library, Historical Society Museum, and offices. It was originally a Methodist Church and was renovated for town use in the 1970's. See more information about this building in the section about the ongoing Library project or the section about Upton's history.

It appears that a stream once flowed across this property. A culvert on the south end of this property exists into the Center Brook just west of the Grove Street Bridge. It likely contains the former stream. Library staff and patrons report problems with water intruding into the building from below and resulting issues with mold.

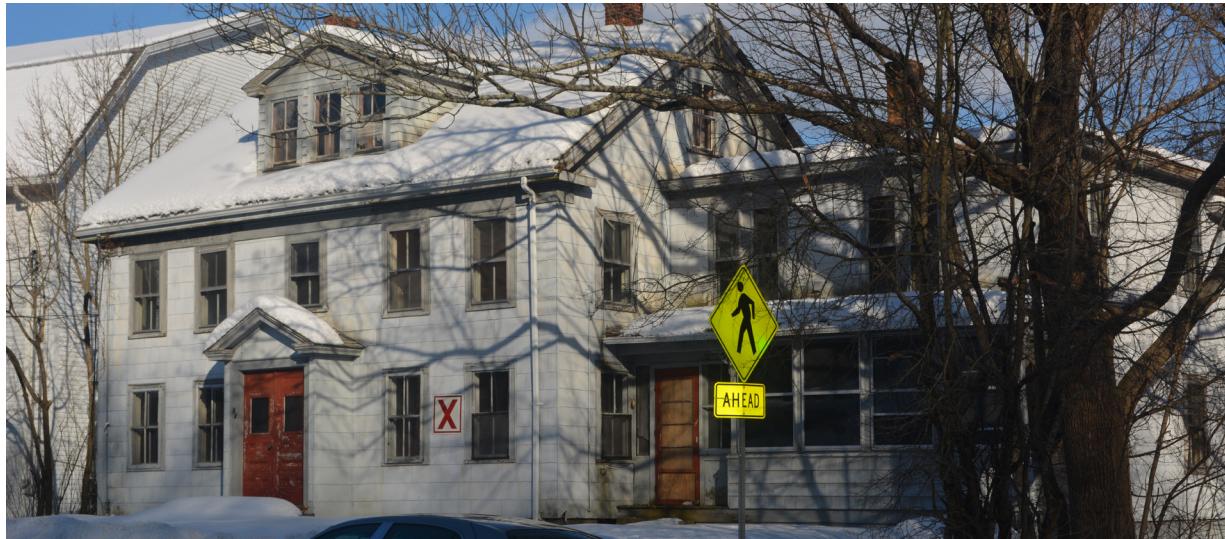


4 Main Street

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Ownership | Frank & Carlene Donato |
| Use | Vacant Multi-family |
| Parcel Size | 7,541 sq. ft. |
| Building Size | 2,460 sq. ft. |
| Year Built | 1840 |
| Land Value | \$111,600 |
| Building Value | \$37,000 |
| Total Value | \$148,600 |



This parcel contains a multi-family house that is condemned. The owner has offered to sell it to the Town.



0 Warren Street-Parking

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Ownership | Town of Upton |
| Use | Parking |
| Parcel Size | 6,315 sq. ft. |
| Building Size | N/A |
| Year Built | N/A |
| Land Value | \$49,600 |
| Building Value | N/A |
| Total Value | \$50,000 |



This small, narrow lot is owned by the Town and used for parking for Town Hall. There is a stream that enters a culvert just northeast of the property. The culvert likely flows under this property, passes under Route 140 and the Knowlton-Ristein Building and then empties into Center Brook.

REGULATORY ANALYSIS

ZONING

Zoning is the primary legal control on development in a Town. As such, it is one of the most powerful tools a community has for placemaking and shaping development. When zoning is aligned with community goals, it steers development toward desired outcomes and enables rapid, predictable permitting. When zoning is at odds with a community's vision for a place, it can make it difficult or impossible for desirable development to occur.

Zoning is created and enforced at the Town level based on a state-enabling legislation (Chapter 40A). The Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Zoning Enforcement Officer administer Upton's zoning.

Zoning works by dividing a community into zoning districts (also called zones). Within those districts, zoning standards say what "uses" are allowed, how big lots must be, how far buildings must be set back from lot lines, how much parking is required, etc.

The heart of Upton Center is in the General Business (GB) zone (district). That is surrounded by several residential districts: SRA, SRB, SRC.

Like many historic village centers across Massachusetts, Upton Center shows a relatively high percentage of "non-conforming" lots. The lots were created before the current zoning was enacted and one or more of their dimensions (lot size, frontage, setbacks) are smaller than current requirements. (See the maps on following pages). On the one hand, these lots are "grandfathered" in that they

can continue to exist. On the other hand, being non-conforming makes redevelopment more onerous, or impossible. Further, new development is not allowed to replicate the historic pattern of development of Upton Center with relatively small lots built close to the street. Details of non-conforming uses and structures are described further below.

The General Business district does allow a diversity of uses that are in keeping with a Village Center. However, there are some details that warrant further consideration, such as requiring a special permit for residential development, and a detailed list of commercial uses that may preclude some businesses from being established, especially new forms of businesses that weren't contemplated when the zoning was written.

Parking requirements are one of the most fundamental determinants of the development potential of an area. When parking requirements are set too high they result in excess underutilized pavement, and reduce the potential useful (and tax revenue-yielding) footprint of buildings. In general, Upton's parking requirements are higher than current best practices.

Further detail about key zoning requirements in Upton Center follows.

Non-Conforming Uses & Structures

Non-Conforming Use

- May continue, but if abandoned for 2 years

loses protection

- Change in a non-conforming use requires a special permit from ZBA. Must not be substantially more detrimental than existing nonconforming use

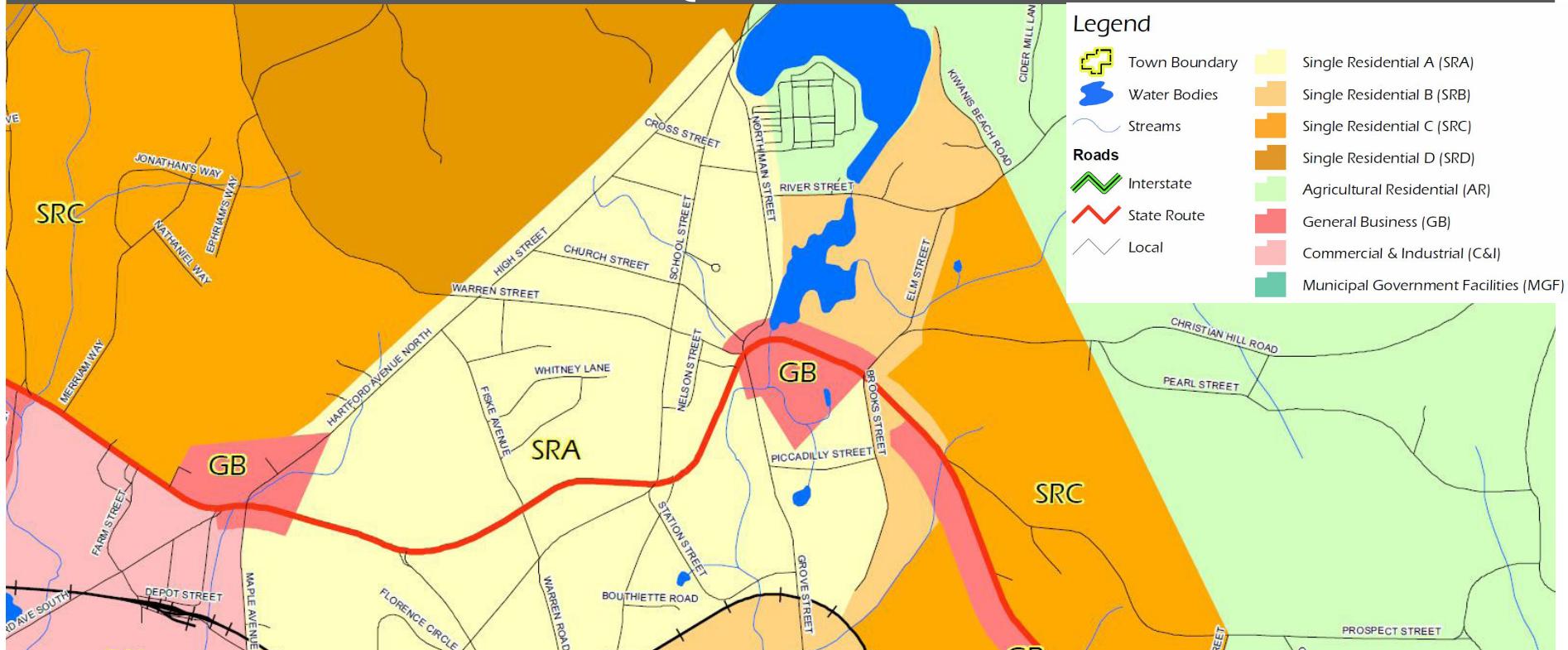
Non-conforming Structure

- May continue, but if abandoned for 2 years loses protection
- Reconstruction, extension, alteration, change requires a special permit from ZBA. Must not be more detrimental than existing nonconforming structure

Single-family and Two-family non-conforming structures. May be reconstructed, extended, altered or structurally changed if Building Inspector determines that change doesn't increase non-conforming nature of the structure. Deemed to not increase non-conformity if:

- Alteration to a structure located on a lot **with insufficient area** which complies with all current setback, yard, building coverage, and building height requirements,
- Alteration to a structure located on a lot **with insufficient frontage** that complies with all current setback, yard, building coverage, and building height requirements.
- Alteration to a structure which encroaches **upon one or more required yard or setback areas**, where the alteration will comply with all current setback, yard, building coverage and building height requirements.

ZONING & DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS



| | Minimum Lot Dimension (Note 1) | | Minimum Setback Requirements (Note 6) | | | Maximum Building Height | | Max % Coverage Including Accessory Building |
|----------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| District | Area Square Feet | Front Linear Feet | Front Linear Feet (Note 2) | Side Linear Feet (Notes 4 & 9) | Rear Linear Feet (Notes 5 & 9) | # of stories | Height Linear Feet (Note 8) | |
| GB | 15,000 square feet | 100' | 30 | 10 50' if abuts another district | 20 50' if abuts another district | 2 | 25 | 40 |

Reconstruction is allowed after catastrophe or demolition

Uses Allowed in the GB District

- **Residential:** if allowed, requires a special permit
- **Businesses:** mostly allowed including retail, personal services, eating establishment, offices, banks. But bylaw lists the specific business types allowed and the list is not all-encompassing.
- **Recreation:** mostly not allowed, or by special permit
- **Industrial, Manufacturing, Storage:** mostly not allowed
- **Municipal uses:** allowed
- **Community center:** allowed
- **Site plan review:** required for >2,000 sq. ft. area or change of use for municipal, institutional, commercial, industrial, or multi-family (4+ units)
- **Site plan review:** required for construction or expansion of 10+ car parking lots

Parking Requirements

Parking must be on site or within 300' of a building. The minimum number of spaces required is set based on the type of use.

- **Retail:** 1 per 180 sq ft of ground floor, plus 1 per 360 sq ft of upper floor area
- **Restaurant, theater, assembly:** 1 per 180

sq ft of ground floor, plus 1 per 360 sq ft of upper floor area OR 1 per 3 seats, whichever is greater

- **Mixed use:** sum of various uses

Upton's parking standards require more spaces than current best practices. They result in excess pavement that is out of character with a Village Center. Excess pavement also causes stormwater issues. In addition, requiring excess parking increases project costs, and reduces the land available on a site for other functions, like building area or greenspace.



Floodplain of Center Brook adjacent to the Library parking at 2 Grove Street.

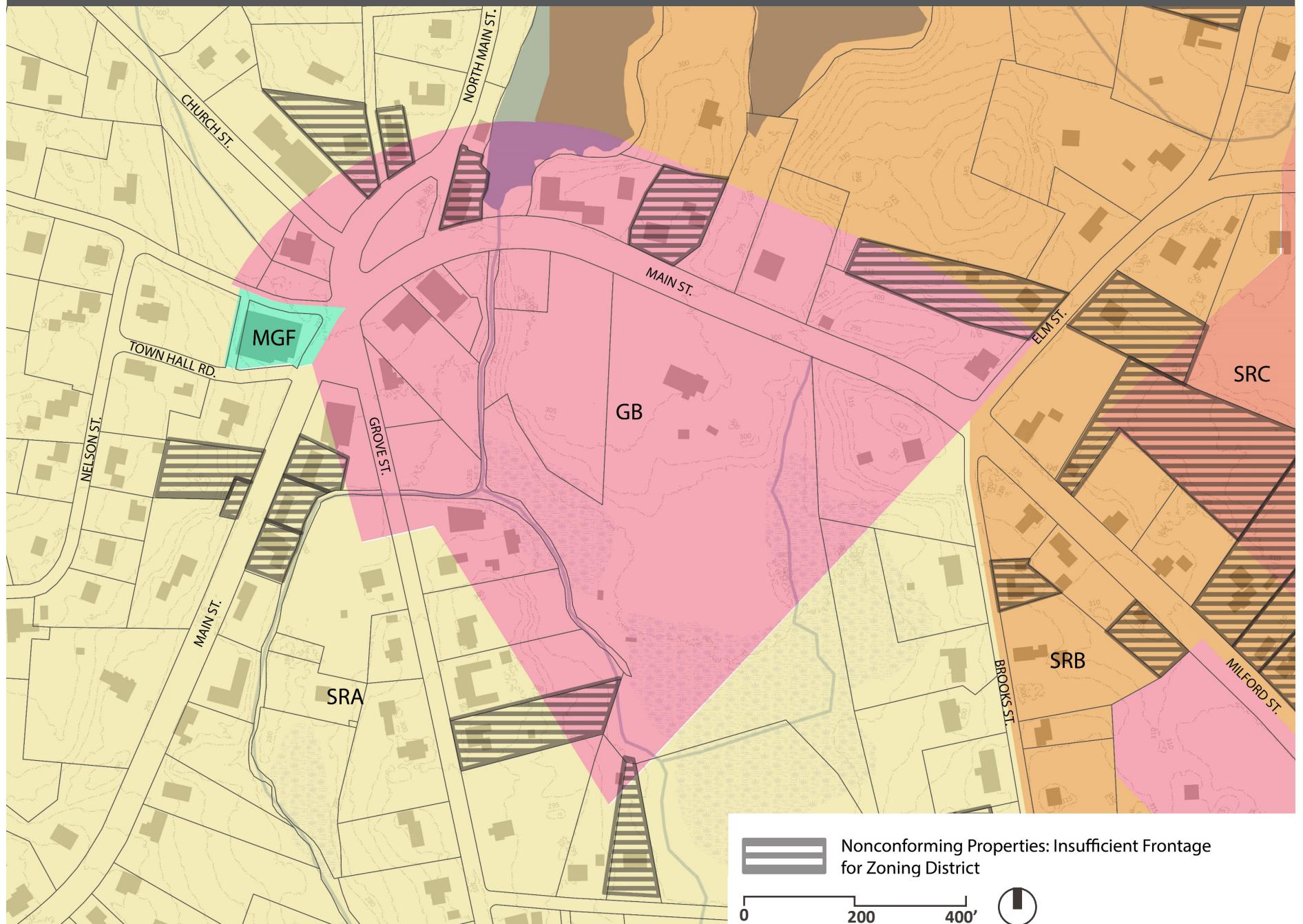
Floodplain Overlay District

Upton's zoning has an overlay district that applies to all areas designated as Zone A or AE. That includes parts of the Village Center. See the floodplains map on page 62.

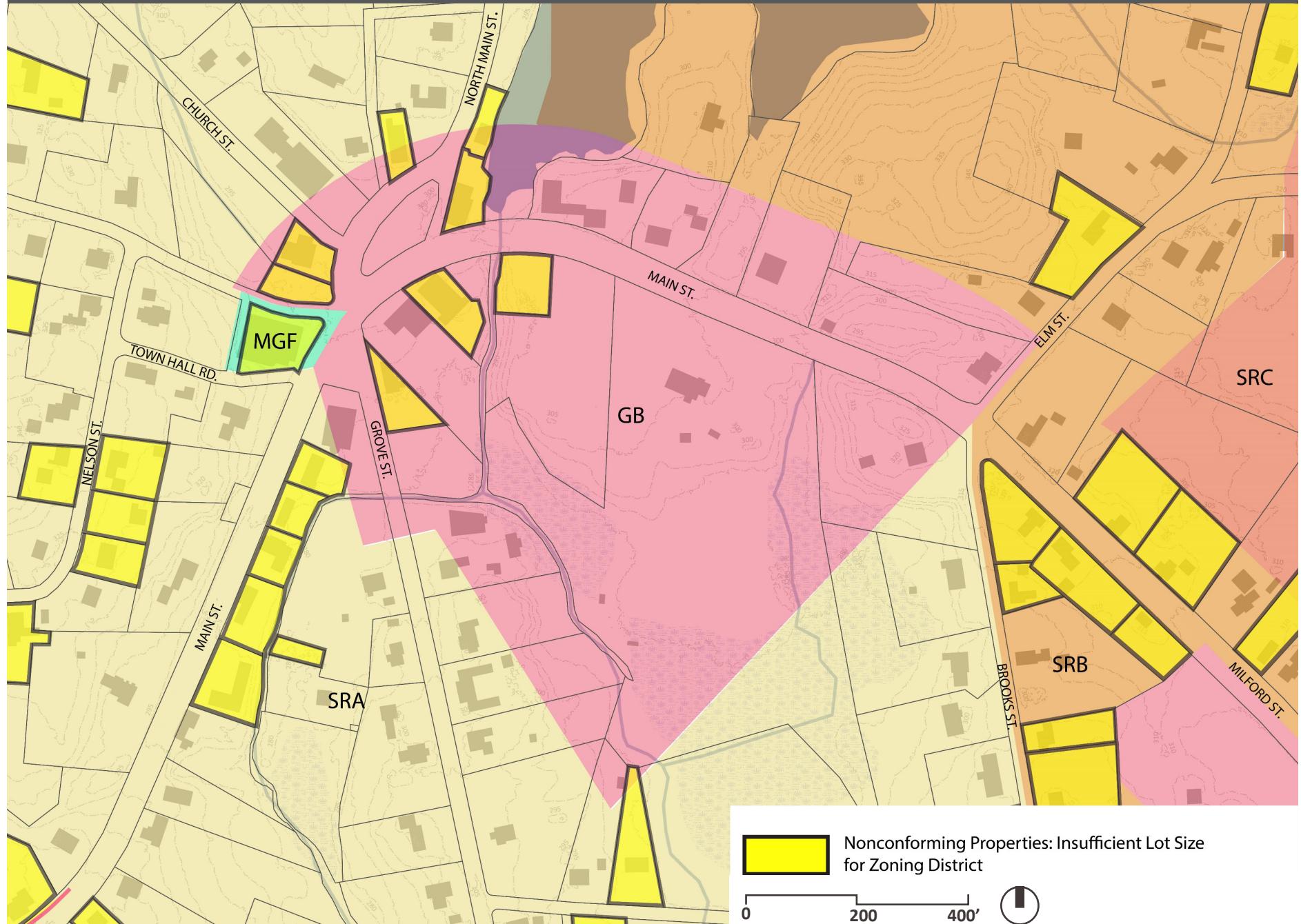
All encroachments, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements to existing structures, and other developments are prohibited unless certification by a registered professional engineer or architect is provided by the applicant demonstrating that such encroachment will not result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.

In Zone AE, if a watercourse has a designated regulatory floodway, then encroachment is prohibited if it would result in an increase in flood levels in the community during base flood discharge.

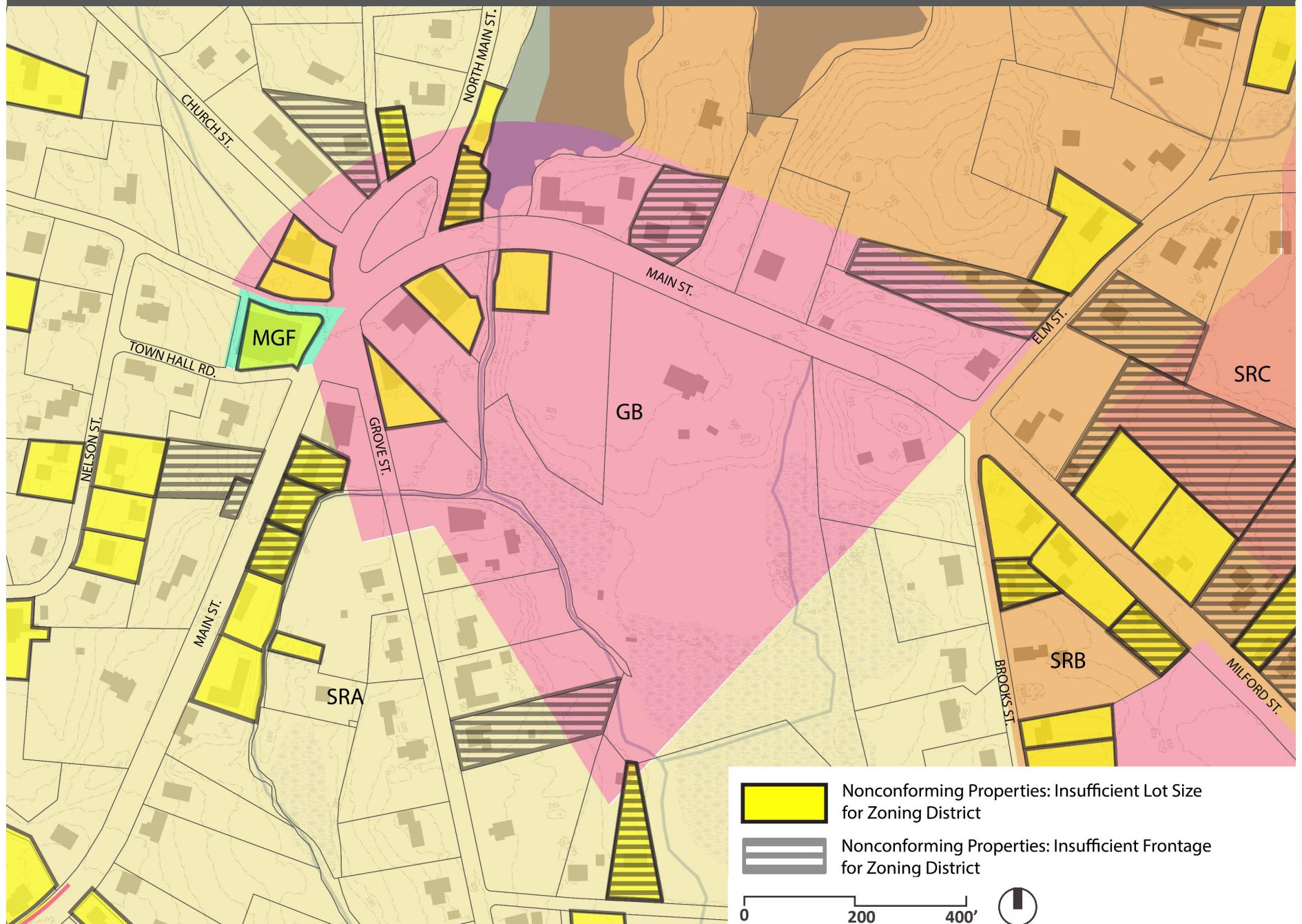
NON-CONFORMING PROPERTIES: FRONTAGE



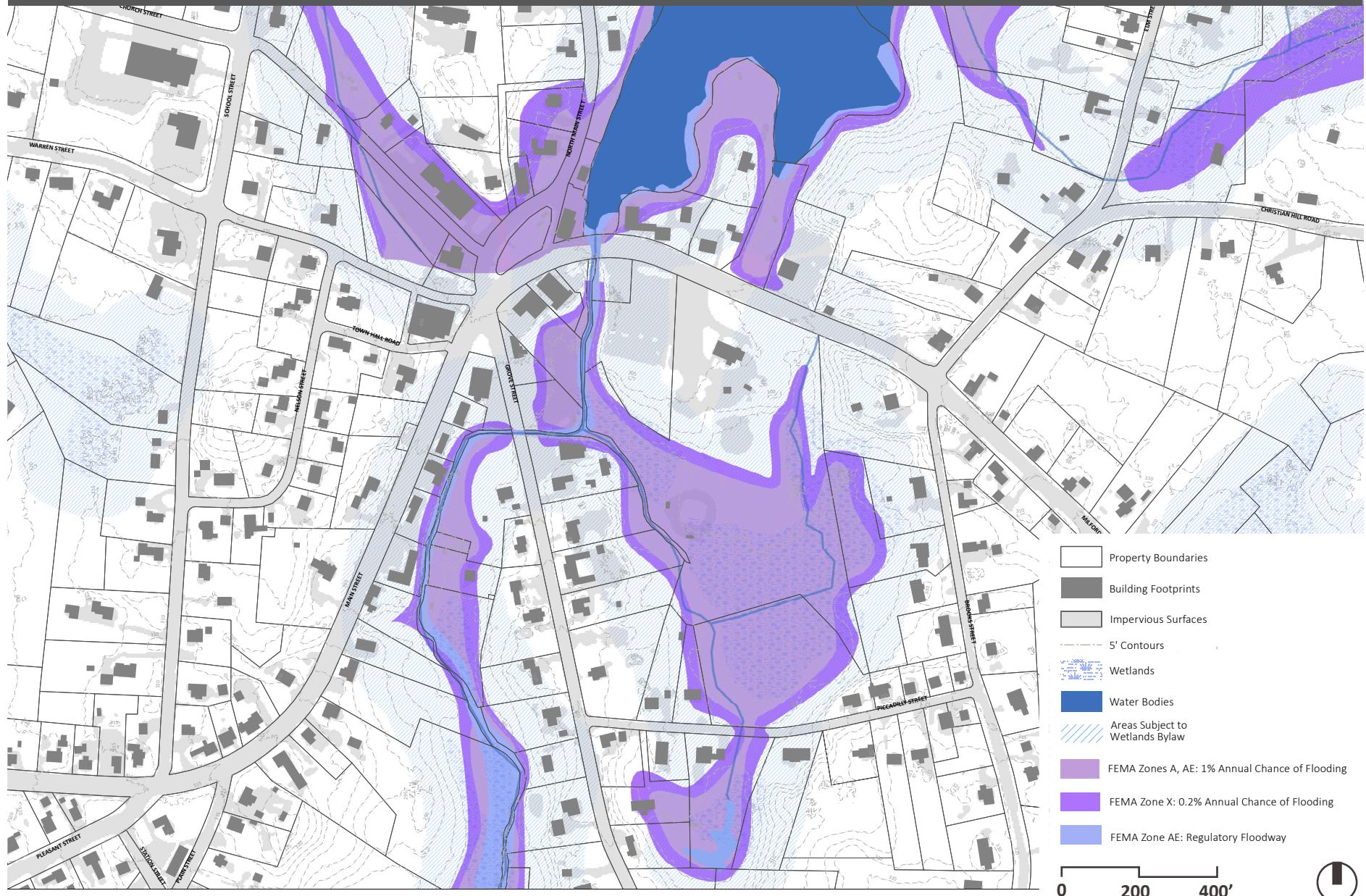
NON-CONFORMING PROPERTIES: LOT SIZE



NON-CONFORMING PROPERTIES: LOT SIZE & FRONTAGE



FLOODPLAIN AND WETLAND REGULATIONS



Upton's Wetland Protection Bylaw gives the Conservation Commission jurisdiction over a variety of water resources in Upton, including wetlands, rivers, streams, intermittent streams, 100-year floodplains, and vernal pools. Nearly all of the land in the core of Upton Center fall within this jurisdiction.

Wetlands Regulations

Areas shown with a diagonal hatch on the map on the previous page fall within the jurisdiction of Upton's Wetlands Protection Bylaw. That includes virtually the whole core of the village center. Upton's Wetland Regulations stipulate that areas within 100 feet of a pond or 200 feet of a perennial stream/river are presumed to be a "no building zone." The regulations set a 50' no building zone around wetlands on residential lots and 75' on commercial/industrial lots.

It does not appear that Upton's Town Center has been designated as a "Densely developed area" for the purpose of the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act, which would reduce the riverfront area set by state law from 200' to 25'. In any case, Upton's local wetland bylaw can and does regulate the full 200' riverfront area as a resource area.

Because much of these areas in Upton Center were previously disturbed, the Conservation Commission has indicated it might exercise some leniency in applying these standards. In a letter to the Economic Development Committee, on March 18 2019, the Conservation Commission said the following:

"All of the lots along Main Street and along Grove Street,¹ including the Thompson property, are subject to review by the WPA and the Bylaw. The Commission would likely expect a redevelopment

1. Meaning, 4 and 2 Main Street; 1, 3 and 0 Milford Street, and 8, 0, and 2 Grove Street]

| Type of Project/Resource | No Disturb Zone (ft) | No Building Zone (ft) |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Freshwater/Isolated Wetlands | Residential Lot | 30 |
| | Commercial/Industrial | 30 |
| | Septic System | 100 |
| | Driveways/Utilities Other Roads/Drainage | 30 (except for permitted crossings) |
| Vernal Pool Resource Area | 0 | 30 |
| Ponds | 100 | 100 |
| Rivers and Streams | Perennial Stream/River | 100 |
| | Intermittent Stream | 30 |
| | Driveways/Utilities Other Roads/Drainage | 30 (except for permitted crossings) |

Upton's Wetland Regulations

project to result in some habitat restoration within the Riverfront Area and no or limited expansion of the built environment in the 100 ft. Riverfront Area unless justified by a project specific alternatives analysis and restoration of degraded areas is provided. The Commission would consider recent historical conditions, including the footprint of the building at the corner of Route 140 and Grove Street

which was recently demolished and replaced with a parking area. Given the highly disturbed nature of the study area, the proximity of existing structures to Center Brook, and redevelopment provisions in the WPA, the Commission would likely waive the no build/no disturb setback requirements promulgated in the Bylaw regulations. Restoration of at least a 15 ft. wide vegetated riparian zone along

the top of bank would be desirable. Some intrusion closer to the river for public recreation use would be allowable for parkland amenities such as a trail, picnic table, and foot bridges, especially if they can be designed to meet the criteria to be allowed as a WPA limited project. Limited projects do not need to comply with many WPA performance standards. A trail and boardwalk to connect Heritage Park to the town center through Parcel 29-019.01 on Main Street would also be viewed favorably, so long as wetland impacts were largely avoided by locating the trail and boardwalk along the east (Rose Garden) side of the parcel. Some activities such as placing Center Brook in a culvert to make land for

development would be very unlikely to be permitted by the MA DEP, the Commission, or the Army Corps of Engineers."

See the Appendix for the full letter.



Mill Pond (below left), Center Brook wetland behind 8 Grove Street (below middle), Center Brook between 8 Grove Street and 0 Grove Street (below right)



COMMUNITY CONSENSUS BUILDING

COMMUNITY INPUT: IDENTIFYING KEY ISSUES & LOCATIONS

The recommendations of this project are based on a robust process of community engagement that took place between January and April of 2019. Work was guided by a “Working Group” of over 40 volunteer residents of Upton who were situated as advisors to the Economic Development Committee. In addition, public input was solicited at two well-attended community meetings: a Listening Session on January 23, 2019 and a half-day workshop on March 23, 2019. The public process is described in greater detail below.



**Breakout group discussion at the first
Community Meeting**

Community Meeting #1

The kickoff Community Meeting for this project was held on January 23, 2019. Over 130 people attended. The map on the following page shows areas that participants identified as strengths (green), weaknesses (red), and opportunities (yellow). Participants valued Upton Center’s historic character and destinations like Town Hall, the Library, the Playground, the common, and businesses. Weaknesses include sidewalk gaps and deficiencies, the confusing intersection at the heart of the town, a lack of convenient parking, and the feeling that the Center does not have enough destinations or activities to create a critical mass. Key opportunities include potential trail connections between the playground and Grove Street, and potential for a trail north to Heritage Park, potential reconfiguration of the main intersections, and several underutilized parcels, which are called out below and described on subsequent pages.

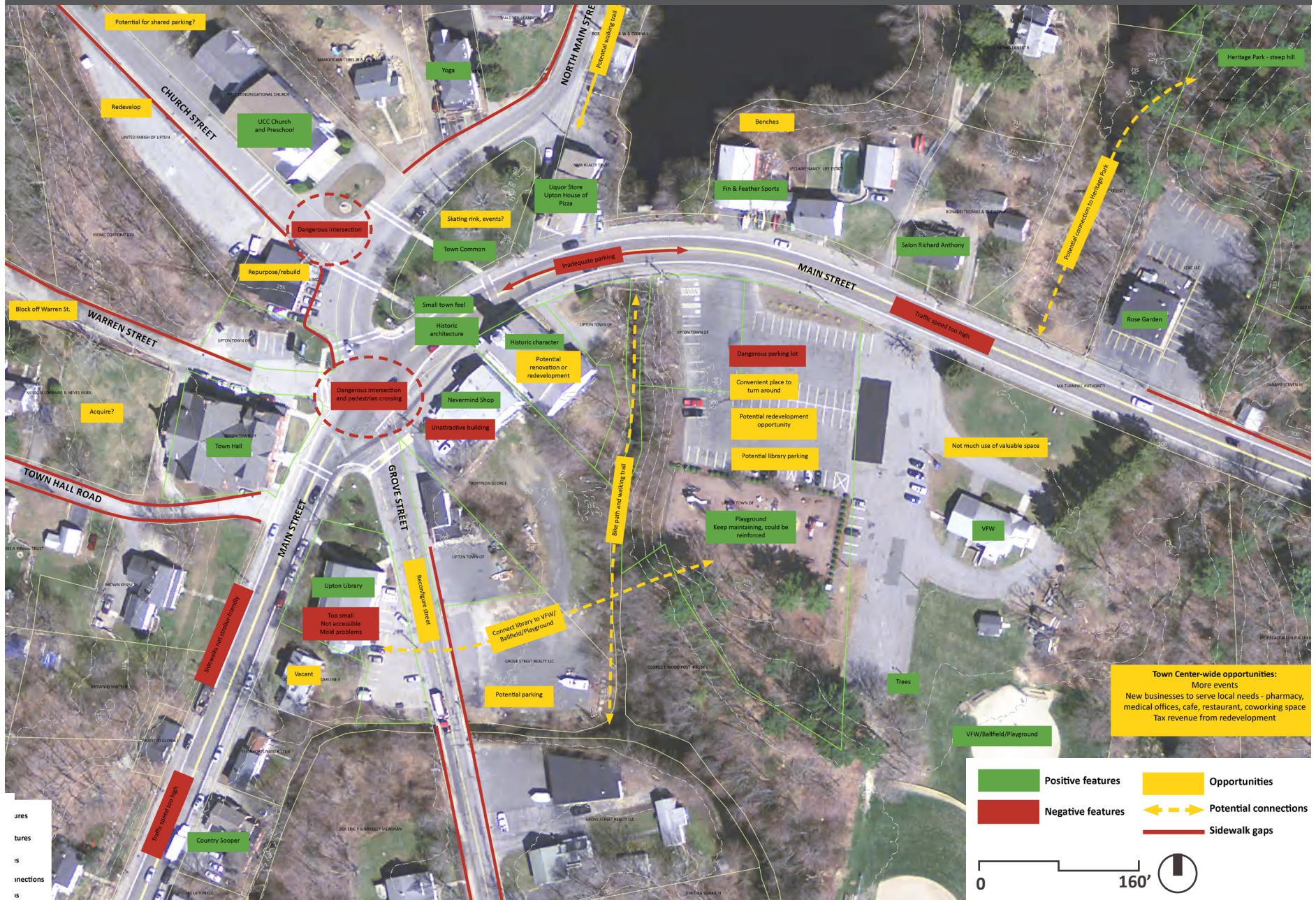


**A participant shares the results of a breakout
group discussion at the first Community Meeting**

Several themes arose from the first Community Meeting.

- Upton Center is the heart of civic life in the Town
- Some elements are in place for a vibrant center: the Common, some sidewalks, historic buildings, municipal functions, existing businesses
- There is an opportunity to offer more to do for people who already come to Upton Center.
- The good elements of the Center are fragmented by inadequate transportation system with fast and frequent traffic on Route 140 bisecting the center. The area could be better knit together by improving the sidewalk network, adding paths, and street reconfigurations
- The Center provides an opportunity to expand the Town’s tax base
- The Center provides an opportunity for additional places to residents to live, work, and play

COMMUNITY MEETING #1 INPUT



Working Group Process

A working group was established to guide the project. Over forty citizens volunteered to participate and met four times during the project. Over the course of the four meetings, the Working Group reviewed detail information about the project area, debated its best use, and guided the development of a vision for Upton Center.

The working group represented a broad cross-section of interests and groups in Upton, including:

- Active Military
- Boomerang Residents (people who grew up in Upton, left, and have returned)
- Business Owners
- Cable Committee
- Community Preservation Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Council on Aging
- Design/Construction Industry
- Disability/Access
- Economic Development Committee
- Electronic Voting Committee
- Families with school-aged children and younger children
- Fire Department/Association/EMS
- Friends of Upton State Forest
- Historical Commission
- Library Trustees
- Library Users
- Long-Time Residents
- New Residents
- Nipmuc Alumni
- Open Space Committee

- Park Users
- PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)
- School Council
- Seniors
- Sports Boosters
- Sports-facilities users
- Technology Committee
- Town Center residents, abutters and neighbors
- Upton Historical Society
- VFW members
- Young People

zoning, and/or design guidelines for Upton Center, and/or the creation of design plans for public realm improvements.



Visioning Workshop

About 50 residents of Upton participated in a six-hour Visioning Workshop on March 23, 2019. The Workshop solicited public input on key topics for the future of Upton Center through a series of interactive stations. Participants weighed in on Design Strategies for Architecture, Historic Preservation, and Public Spaces; Design Strategies for Traffic & Streetscapes; Open Space, Recreation & Neighborhood Connectivity; Economic Development, Marketing & Branding; Activating Upton Center: Destinations, Amenities, Events, & Places to Live; Ideas for a New Municipal Community Center and Library; and used a three-dimension model to develop ideas for a master plan for the area.

Meeting notes from the Visioning Workshop can be found in the Appendix to this report.

The results of the Visual Preference Survey from the Visioning Workshop follow. These results will be useful for guiding the development of future

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS FROM VISIONING WORKSHOP

Residents of Upton participated in three Visual Preference Surveys about building massing and design, public realm elements, and existing buildings at the Upton Center Visioning Workshop on March 23, 2019. Participants were shown a series of images for each topic. They were asked to put a green dot on images showing elements that are appropriate precedents for Upton Center, and a red dot on elements that are not. Results are summarized below and the full results follow.

Building Massing and Design

The Buildings Visual Preference survey presented buildings with a range of massing, heights, roof forms, architectural styles, and materials. The survey was designed to elicit feedback about appropriate building forms for Upton Center. Based on the results of the Visual Preference Survey, the participants preferred two-story to two-and-a-half story buildings, though some 1-story buildings were deemed appropriate or had an equal number of positive and negative votes and one three-and-a-half story building had an equal number of positive and negative votes. Participants appeared to respond to building materials with a preference for wood siding. Color seemed to be influential with white buildings preferred. Buildings with gable roofs facing the street and complex peaked roof forms generally were ranked higher than flat roofed buildings or buildings with gables parallel to the street--though there are exceptions to this. Buildings with a high quality trim work--especially

in historic forms--were ranked highly. Brick buildings appear to have been viewed as inappropriate.

Public Realm

Participants reacted positively to almost all of the public realm images. The only images in which inappropriate votes outnumbered appropriate votes showed a foodtruck, a splash pad, and a sidewalk adjacent to a three story brick building.

Based on the visual preference survey results and other input during the meeting, residents of Upton desire significant improvements to sidewalks and the public realm in Upton Center. They would like wider, higher quality sidewalks with attractive pavement materials, amenities like benches and decorative lights. In addition they would like more plants in the public realm, whether those are in a tree belt between the sidewalk and the street, lush curbside planters, hanging planting baskets, or on the common. An image of a pedestrian bridge was the highest ranked image likely reflecting support for the idea of a bridge between Grove Street and the VFW/Town Parking Lot. Images of sidewalk dining also received many positive votes. Bike infrastructure in the form of a separated bike path and bike parking was deemed appropriate. Finally, images showing outdoor events and use of public space (concert, yoga) received positive votes.

The strong support for public realm elements indicates that improvements to the public realm

should be a high priority for Upton Center revitalization. As mentioned elsewhere, there are two potential implementation opportunities for these improvements—the TIP project for Route 140 and MassDOT’s Complete Streets Funding Program. In addition, Upton could consider using Town funds to improve the public realm. Public realm improvements may well be necessary to bring the Upton Center up to a level where a developer feels comfortable investing in the area. Finally, some public realm improvements can take place during redevelopment by private individuals. Often zoning sets requirements or incentives for public realm improvements associated with development projects.

Existing Buildings

The survey of existing buildings indicated that participants value three of the four “anchor buildings” in Upton Center: Town Hall, the Parish Church, and Holy Angels Church. The Fourth Anchor, the Knowlton-Risteen Building received more positive than negative votes but fell below many other buildings in the center. Participants showed a preference for small buildings, on the scale of single-family residential structures.

Recent buildings generally received more negative votes than positive, including the VFW, Rose Garden Pizza, and a garage on Grove Street. The Fiske Block (Upton House of Pizza/Colonial Liquors) also received a large number of negative votes, possibly

due to its siding materials and signage, or its uses. Its massing is not dissimilar to the most highly ranked existing building, a Victorian house on Milford Street.

Implications

It appears that residents of Upton are very sensitive to the physical appearance of buildings and the public realm. They have high standards for building design with a preference for residential-scale architecture, wood structures, historic styles, and refined trim. Upton should develop a form-based code and/or architectural design standards for Upton Center to ensure that future development fits the vision that residents have of their town. Often design guidelines are included in zoning codes, but zoning can not regulate building materials in Massachusetts. Because participants appear to respond strongly to materials, Upton may wish to pursue a stand alone design review bylaw. This approach has been used for the Central Business District in Northampton, MA.

It does not appear that all residents of Upton value all of the historic structures in the Center. Building condition, and the use of a building appear to influence participants appreciation of it. In addition, participants appear to respond strongly to materials. Buildings whose originally materials have been covered or removed are sometimes deemed inappropriate.

The Knowlton-Risteen Building was discussed in several sessions during the Visioning Workshop. The results of the visual preference survey plus

those conversations indicate that most residents of Upton do not desire to retain that building at all costs. Many people voiced that they would like to retain the stained glass window for any future library, but that the building as a whole may be at the end of its useful life.

Public opinion about Holy Angels Church appears to be more divided. While many workshop participants said that they do not see a reason to retain the building if it does not meet the needs of the Library or other Town uses, others feel strongly that the building is a key anchor of Upton Center. The visual preference survey indicates a strong affinity for the building.



BUILDING MASSING & DESIGN, VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

Appropriate

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|---|------|-------------|-----------------|
|  | 12 | 13 | 1 |
|  | 11 | 12 | 1 |
|  | 8 | 9 | 1 |
|  | 7 | 8 | 1 |
|  | 5 | 9 | 4 |
|  | 4 | 5 | 1 |
|  | 4 | 6 | 2 |

Neutral

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|---|------|-------------|-----------------|
|  | 0 | 7 | 7 |
|  | 0 | 2 | 2 |

Not Appropriate

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|---|------|-------------|-----------------|
|  | -1 | 4 | 5 |
|  | -4 | 3 | 7 |
|  | -4 | 2 | 6 |
|  | -4 | 1 | 5 |

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|---|------|-------------|-----------------|
|  | -6 | 2 | 8 |
|  | -6 | 1 | 7 |
|  | -7 | 1 | 8 |
|  | -8 | 1 | 9 |
|  | -8 | 1 | 9 |
|  | -8 | | 8 |
|  | -10 | | 10 |

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|---|------|-------------|-----------------|
|  | -10 | | 10 |
|  | -11 | | 11 |
|  | -12 | | 12 |
|  | -12 | | 12 |

PUBLIC REALM, VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

Appropriate

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|-------|------|-------------|-----------------|
| | 15 | 16 | 1 |
| | 13 | 13 | |
| | 13 | 13 | |
| | 13 | 13 | |
| | 12 | 12 | |
| | 12 | 12 | |

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|-------|------|-------------|-----------------|
| | 11 | 12 | 1 |
| | 10 | 10 | |
| | 10 | 11 | 1 |
| | 10 | 11 | 1 |
| | 9 | 10 | 1 |
| | 7 | 7 | |
| | 7 | 8 | 1 |

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|-------|------|-------------|-----------------|
| | 6 | 7 | 1 |
| | 6 | 6 | |
| | 6 | 6 | |
| | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| | 2 | 6 | 4 |

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|-------|------|-------------|-----------------|
| | 1 | 5 | 4 |

Not Appropriate

| Photo | Rank | Appropriate | Not-Appropriate |
|-------|------|-------------|-----------------|
| | -2 | 3 | 5 |
| | -5 | 2 | 7 |
| | -8 | 1 | 9 |

EXISTING BUILDINGS, VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

| | | | |
|--|----|----|---|
| | 17 | 17 | |
| | 14 | 14 | |
| | 12 | 12 | |
| | 12 | 14 | 2 |
| | 12 | 14 | 2 |
| | 11 | 11 | |

| | | | |
|--|----|----|---|
| | 11 | 11 | |
| | 6 | 8 | 2 |
| | 6 | 8 | 2 |
| | 5 | 8 | 3 |
| | 5 | 10 | 5 |
| | 4 | 10 | 6 |

| | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
|  | 2 | 2 | |
|  | -3 | 5 | 8 |
|  | -5 | | 5 |
|  | -5 | 4 | 9 |
|  | -6 | 3 | 9 |
|  | -6 | 5 | 11 |
|  | -7 | 10 | 17 |

| | | | |
|---|-----|---|----|
|  | -11 | 3 | 14 |
|  | -14 | | 14 |

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PUBLIC INPUT

Input from the two community meetings and the Working Group process is summarized below. Key takeaways are grouped into topics that arose as the key issues and opportunities for Upton Center.

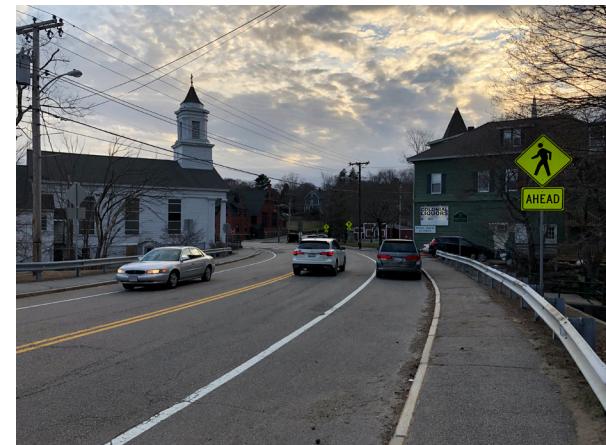
Activating Upton Center: Destinations, Amenities, Events, & Places to Live

- Residents of Upton would like the center to be a more active place, a recognizable town center where they can go to do things, meet people, and run into friends.
- The lack of a town center significantly reduces quality of life for the Town's residents. Residents need to leave town for most basic goods and services (increasing time spent in the car and decreasing time for other life activities). Without a town center, residents lack opportunities to make social connections with other residents of Upton.
- Residents would like to keep their dollars in Upton and support the local economy, but there are not enough opportunities to do so.
- Adding more places to live in Upton Center, more businesses, more events and activities, improved open spaces and connections between them, and more municipal services would bring more people to the area on a daily basis. Those people would make Upton Center more vibrant.

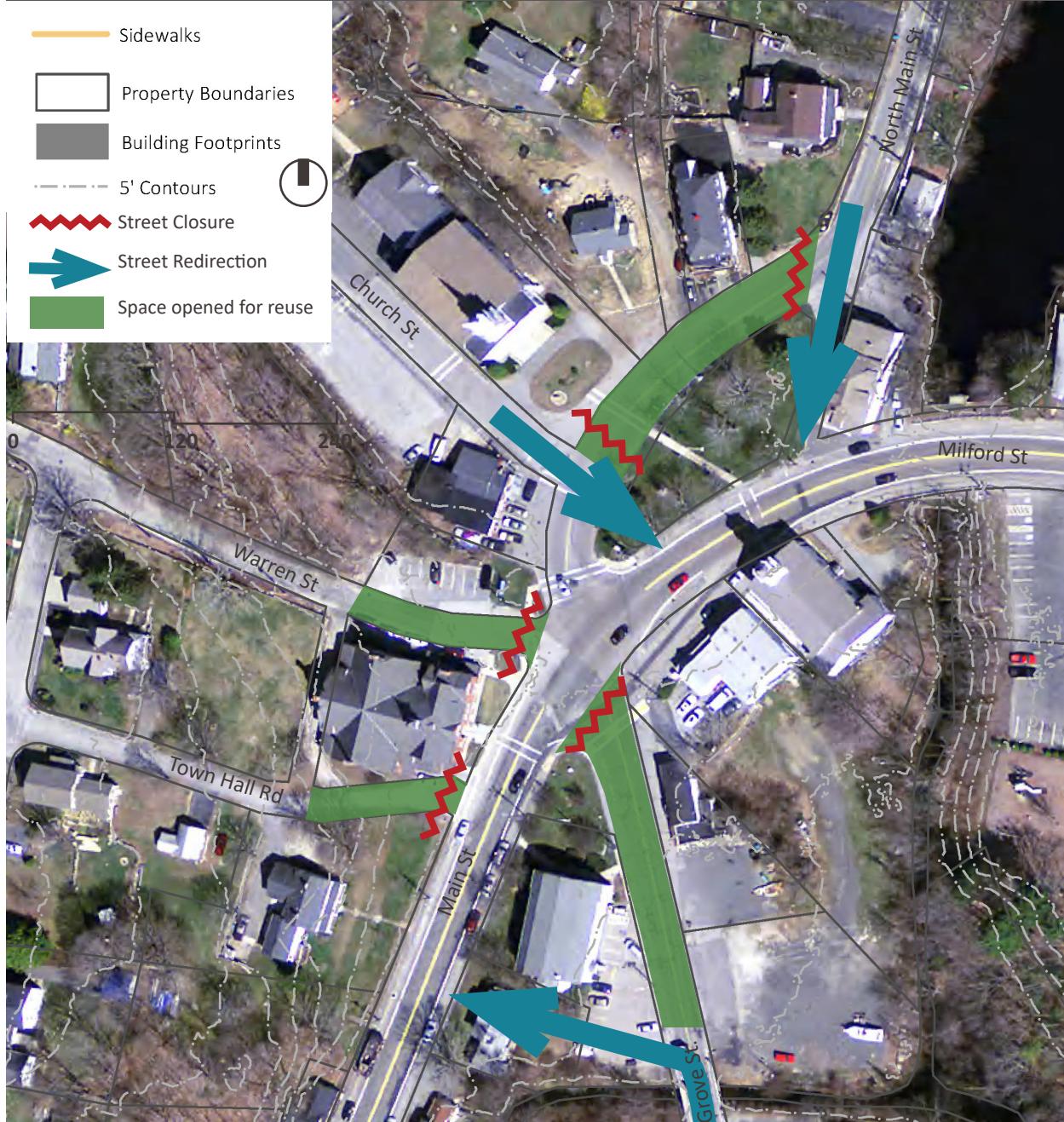
Traffic, Streetscapes and Public Realm

- Slow traffic entering Upton Center.
- Improve intersections in Upton Center.
- Improve the walkability and accessibility of the Center by improving sidewalks and crosswalks.
- Improve the Center's streetscapes with benches, street trees, plants, attractive lighting, art, signage, etc.
- Improve bike facilities within the center including providing safe and comfortable bike lanes and adding bike parking.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities to adjacent neighborhoods, West Upton, Heritage Park, Kiwanis Beach, and Upton State Forest.
- Explore options for simplifying the main intersection in Upton Center, including: realigning Grove Street, closing Warren St, realigning North Main St, or a roundabout.
- Strong support for public realm improvements.
- Preference for "green" (vegetated) public realm.
- Interest in bicycle facility improvements.

The graphics on the following pages illustrate schematic design alternatives for improving Traffic, Streetscapes, and the Public Realm that were developed based on public input throughout the process.



TRAFFIC AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, CONCEPT #1



Close and Redirect Streets

The intersections at the heart of Upton Center are simplified by closing Warren Street and Town Hall Road to through traffic from Main Street. Grove Street is redirected south of the Library. Its current intersection with Main Street across from the Town Hall is closed. N. Main Street is returned to its original roadbed at the east end of the common. Church Street is straightened to intersect directly with Main Street.

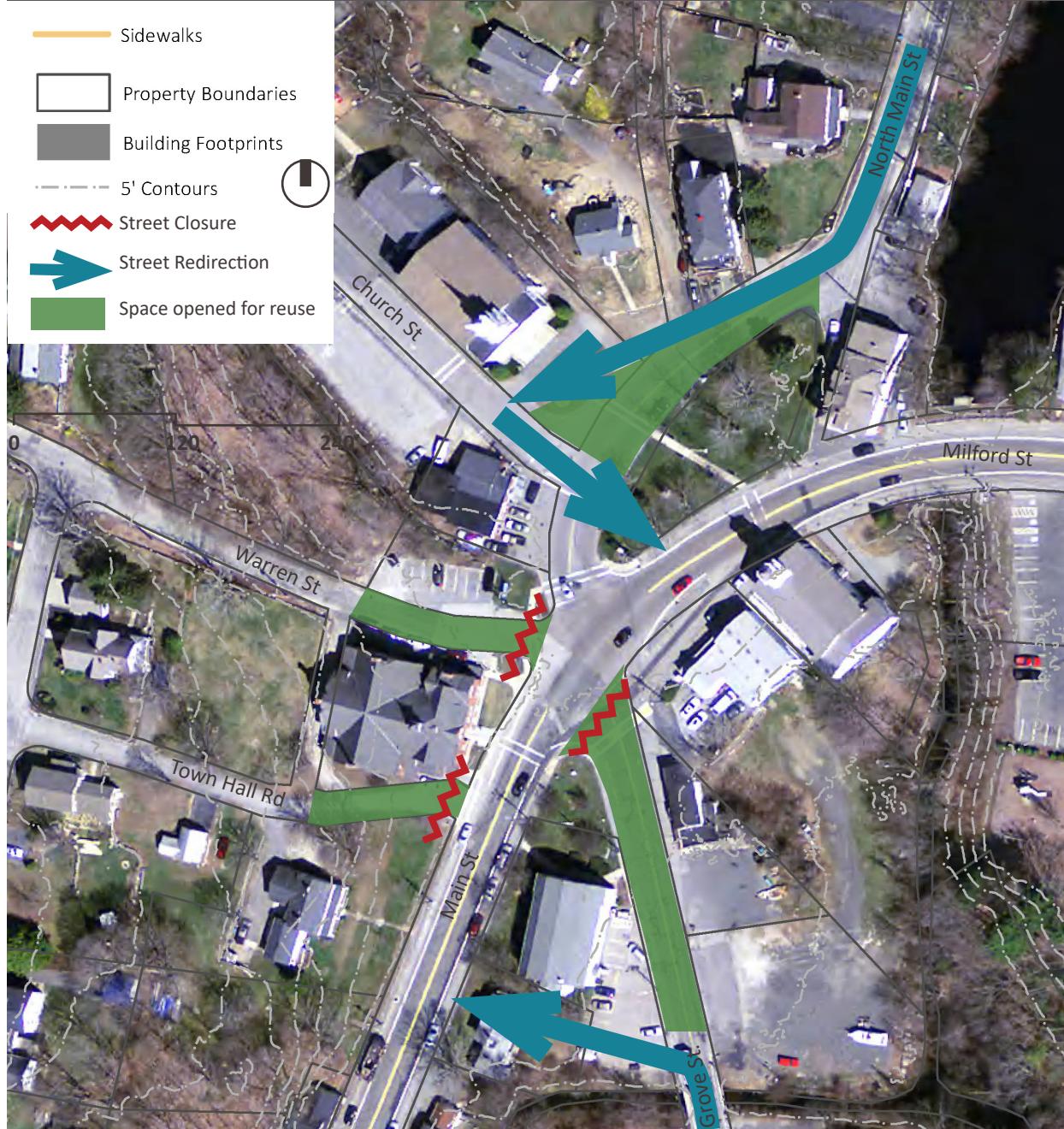
Pros

- Eliminates conflicts between cars entering Route 140 from Warren Street and North Main Street.
- Improves sight lines for cars entering Main Street from Grove Street
- Opens space on Grove Street, Warren Street, and Town Hall Road for new uses: parking, redevelopment, open space.
- Eliminates difficult crossing from Grove Street to North Main Street and vice versa
- Shortens crossing distances for pedestrians at intersections of Church St and Main St and Grove St and Main St by reducing required turning radii at intersections.
- Adds space to the common.

Cons

- Concentrates traffic on fewer streets.
- Reduces convenience of access for residents in the immediate area.

TRAFFIC AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, CONCEPT #1B



Close and Redirect Streets

The intersections at the heart of Upton Center are simplified by closing Warren Street and Town Hall Road to through traffic from Main Street. Grove Street is redirected south of the Library. Its current intersection with Main Street across from the Town Hall is closed. N. Main Street is redirected to the north and intersects with Church Street at a right angle. This allows the common to expand to the north. Church Street is straightened to intersect directly with Main Street.

Pros

- Eliminates conflicts between cars entering Route 140 from Warren Street and North Main Street.
- Improves sight lines for cars entering Main Street from Grove Street
- Opens space on Grove Street, Warren Street, and Town Hall Road for new uses: parking, redevelopment, open space.
- Eliminates difficult crossing from Grove Street to North Main Street and vice versa
- Shortens crossing distances for pedestrians at intersections of Church St and Main St and Grove St and Main St by reducing required turning radii at intersections.
- Adds space to the common.

Cons

- Concentrates traffic on a few streets.
- Reduces convenience of access for residents in the immediate area.
- N. Main redirection requires use of land of three parcels on N. Main St.

TRAFFIC AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, CONCEPT #1



Roundabout 1

This concept adds a roundabout in the center of Upton. The roundabout occupies the center of the intersections of Church St, Milford St, North Main St, and Main St. A roundabout could improve vehicular safety of the intersections at the heart of Upton. It will also significantly improve safety and convenience for pedestrians. The roundabout location shown provides good alignment for roads entering the roundabout, and will slow traffic in the center of Upton arriving from all directions. However, this roundabout location occupies much of the land of the common.

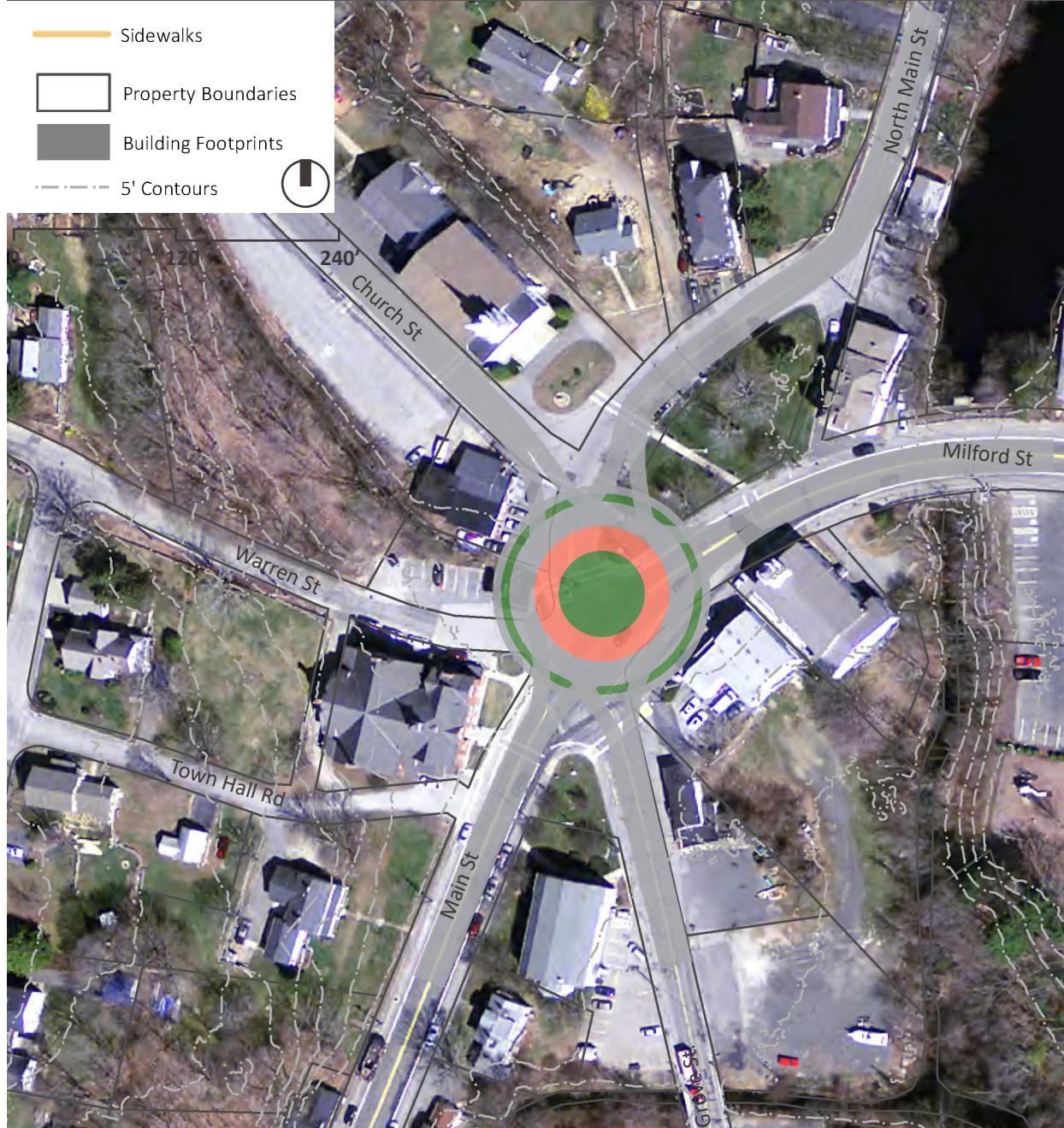
Pros

- Good alignment of roads entering roundabout
- Slows traffic from all directions
- Adds new space outside of roundabout that can be used for open space, redevelopment, and/or parking, but that space may not be that useful.

Cons

- Greatly reduces the size of the common
- Grove Street cannot enter the roundabout safely. It would need to be redirected.

TRAFFIC AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, CONCEPT #2



Roundabout 2

This concept adds a roundabout at the south end of the common. It can accommodate all of the roads that currently intersect in the center. Traffic is slowed entering Upton from the west, north and south. It will not be slowed as much in the vicinity of the Fiske Block (Upton House of Pizza/Colonial Liquors) as with a more central roundabout location. Pedestrian circulation will be much safer with a roundabout than with the current intersection design. In this design, the common remains largely intact and will be more accessible because the sidewalk circumnavigating the roundabout will provide direct access to the common.

Pros

- All roads in center can intersect at the roundabout
- Does not significantly reduce the size of the common.
- Warren Street can remain open or be closed as desired.

Cons

- Requires use of land on the Auto repair parcel, Arcade Block and the Town owned parcel at the corner of Warren and Main which currently has parking for Town Hall.

TRAFFIC AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, CONCEPT #3



Roundabout 3

Pros

- Good alignment of roads entering roundabout
- Size of common is expanded
- Grove street could enter roundabout
- Increases visibility of businesses on North Main Street

Cons

- Truck turning movements entering roundabout from east on Milford St may be difficult
- Traffic speeds within the roundabout may be faster than smaller roundabouts because of large turning radii
- Increases traffic volumes on North Main Street adjacent to roundabout
- Common may be difficult to access

Open Space, Recreation & Neighborhood Connectivity

- Improve the walkability of Upton Center.
- Improve connectivity to existing town parks and open space areas for people walking, wheel chairing, or bicycling.
- Create a path network along and across Center Brook.
- Work toward making the town center a place where people park once and then walk to multiple destinations.
- Improve the Common with additional benches, more plants, and safer connections to the Common from sidewalks on adjacent streets.
- Create other small park spaces in Center.
- Having a more vibrant center overall will increase the use and vitality of the Center's open spaces. For example, add businesses, maintain and expand municipal uses like the library.
- Build pedestrian bridges across Center Brook.
- Interest in outdoor performance/gathering.
- Interest in café seating on sidewalks.

The graphics on the following pages illustrate schematic design alternatives for improvements to Open Spaces and Neighborhood Connectivity that were developed based on public input throughout the process.



Veterans Memorial Playground



V.F.W. Ballfields



The Common



Vacant land next to Rose Garden Pub and Restaraunt that is a potential location for a trail to Heritage Park.



Stonework along Center Brook next to Holy Angels Church

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, & CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

Improve pedestrian and bike facilities to Upton State Forest



Improve pedestrian & bicycle connections from Kiwanis Beach to Upton Center

Improve pedestrian and bike facilities between Upton Center to High St and beyond



Add memorial station

Clean up creek



Add a dogpark

Improve sidewalks and crosswalks throughout center



Add a canoe/kayak launch

Improve common



Add a seating area between Holy Angels Church & brook

Add plants, beautify center. Work with garden club.

Improve sidewalks and bike facilities between Upton Center and West Upton

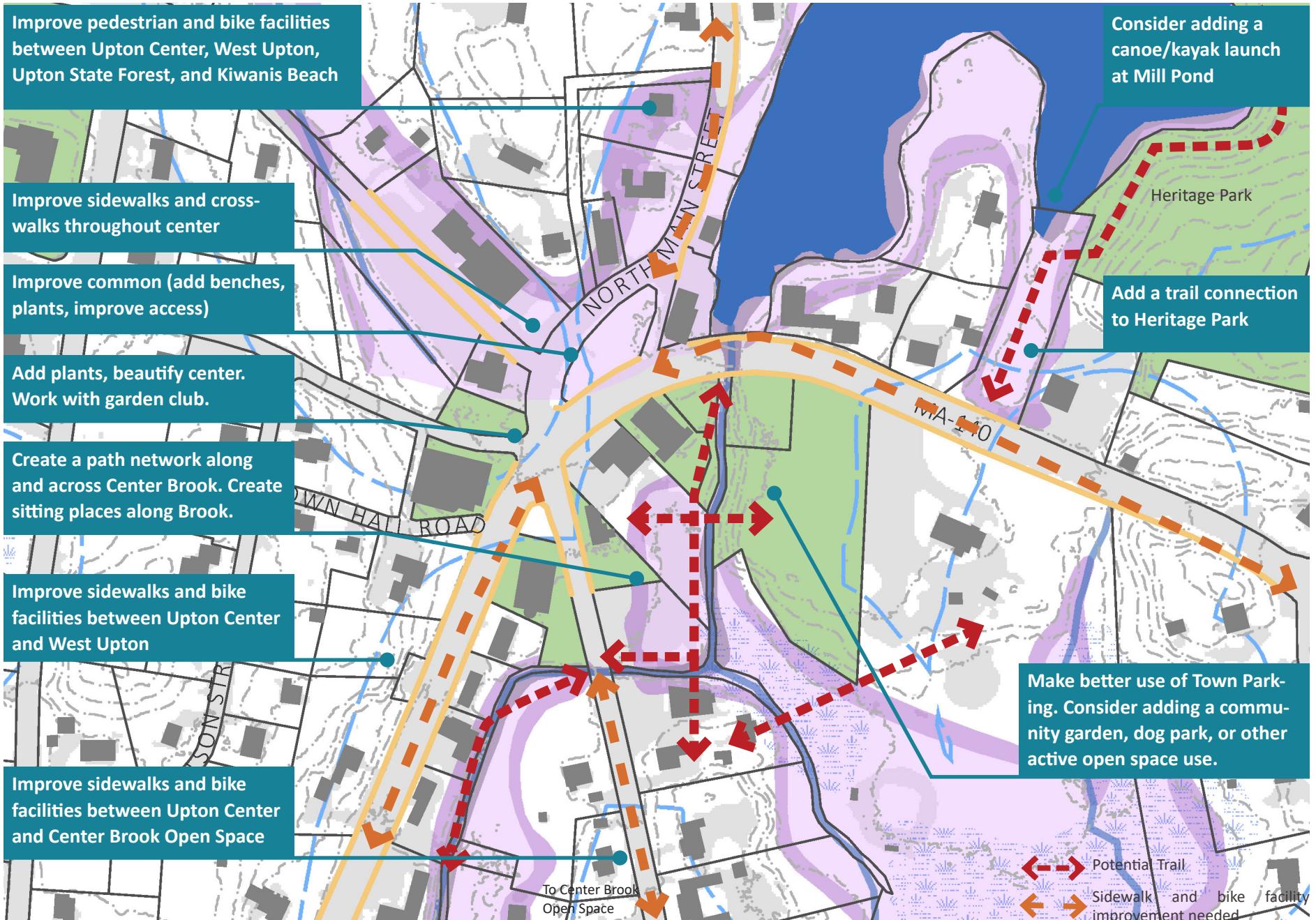
Potential Center Brook Trail from Upton Center to Crosswinds Open Space

Explore potential for trail along rail line

VFW, Town Parking, Playground are underutilized. Consider adding a community garden. Plant trees and garden in front lawn of VFW

↔ → Potential Trail
↔ → Sidewalk and bike facility improvement needed

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, & CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS



Architecture

- Residents prefer small scale buildings for Upton Center: two to two-and-a-half stories are preferred. Three story buildings will be acceptable in some situations. New buildings should not be taller than the tallest historic buildings around the Common.
- Residents prefer historic building forms—especially Greek Revival and Victorian era buildings.
- Residents prefer peaked roofs with gables facing the street and or complex peaked roof forms.
- Residents prefer wood frame buildings with wood siding.
- Residents are sensitive to architectural details, like high quality trim.



Attractive signage, paint choices, flags, and porch furniture improve the curb appeal of a simple building.

Municipal Buildings, including the Library/Community Center and Historical Society Museum

- Municipal buildings like the Library/Community Center and/or the Historical Society Museum are a linchpin for Upton Center. They draw people and will support the viability of businesses in the area. These buildings also reinforce Upton Center as the heart of civic life in Upton.
- The Library and Senior Center are exploring blending services and facilities. Blending the departments provides opportunities for space and service efficiencies and mixing of people of different ages and walks of life. The Library and Council on Aging are looking from input from residents about services and future facilities needs.
- There are several sites that could support a new municipal building including the current town parking lot on Milford Street, the current location of the Knowlton-Ristein Building and 8 Grove Street.
- A municipal building like the Library or Community Center does not need to be on a high visibility street because residents will know where it is. If possible, reserve high visibility sites for commercial uses that require visibility.
- A separate project is underway to develop a program (functional and space needs) for the building and to evaluate potential sites for it.

Economic Development, Marketing & Branding

- Upton Center is a key opportunity for economic development in Upton. It has a lot of potential and currently it is a bit of a drag on the town.
- The Town needs more commercial tax revenue. Upton Center is seen as a key source of that revenue.
- Residents desire a shared work space.
- There is need for an incubator space for new businesses—which could then graduate to the industrial park.
- Prioritize local businesses. Limit big box businesses, CVS, national chains.
- Develop the Center as a reinvented Traditional New England Center.
- Critical Mass of activity is needed—town services are the linchpin.



Underutilized land along Grove Street



Apartment for rent in Upton Center

Housing

- Upton Center currently provides some low-cost apartments. It is home to people who might not otherwise be able to find a place to live in Upton.
- Upton Center is an appropriate and desirable location for new housing
- New places to live should include diverse unit sizes, diverse costs (high end, middle range, low end, subsidized), and diverse forms of tenancy (rental, fee-simple ownership, condominium ownership) for diverse residents (young, old, wealthy, lower income, able-bodied, and disabled).

Historic Preservation

- There are several anchor buildings in Upton Center: Town Hall, Upton Parish Church, Holy Angels Church.
- There are mixed opinions about the

Knowlton-Risteen building. Some feel the building is not worth renovating, though they want to retain the stained-glass window. Others want to retain it at all costs.

- There are mixed opinions about the Fiske Block (the Upton House of Pizza/Colonial Liquors building). Some people don't like it, others value its history.
- There are mixed opinions about the Holy Angels Church. Most people like the way it looks and value it. Some people are willing to replace it if it doesn't have a viable use, while others want to maintain it at any cost.

Master Plan design

- Redevelopment in Upton Center can add vibrancy while improving the character of the Center.
- Redirecting Grove Street south of the Upton Library would improve traffic flow in the Center and open opportunities for redeveloping the northern end of Grove Street
- A Library/Community Center could be located at the existing site of the Library, on Grove Street south of the bridge, or on the Town parking lot adjacent to the VFW
- The most viable locations for redevelopment are along Grove Street from the Arcade Block to the Bridge, and the Town Parking/VFW lot which is the Center's largest contiguous area of land that is outside of regulated floodplains.
- Floodplain regulations will limit

redevelopment adjacent to Center Brook along Grove St. The lower area of parcels along Grove St are best suited to parking or open space. Because parking is needed for any new development, parking appears to be the highest and best use of that land.

- There are opportunities for development of pedestrian paths along and over Center Brook to better knit together the Center and provide connections to natural beauty.
- New development should line up along the street to reinforce the pedestrian realm
- New development can reinforce the elliptical space created by the ring of historic buildings around the common.



Buildings create an elliptical shape around the Common



VISION



SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN UPTON CENTER

Upton has a Window of Opportunity to Reimagine & Revitalize the Center

Five factors have coalesced to create an unprecedented window of opportunity for major improvements in Upton Center:

- **A large swath of land in the Town Center is for sale.** One entity owns three large properties on Main Street and Grove Street: the Arcade Block, 0 Grove Street and 8 Grove Street (1). All three properties are for sale. The Town owns the remaining properties in the area (2), including 0 Milford Street, the former Holy Angels Church, 2 Grove Street, and the Knowlton-Risteen Building. If the town acts quickly, it can ensure that its land and the private land are redeveloped according to a cohesive vision that will set the stage for Upton Center's success over the coming generations.
- **A major project to improve Route 140 is scheduled for 2021.** Route 140 from Williams Street to Brooks St/Elm St (3) will be resurfaced in 2021. This project could involve transformative improvements to intersections and sidewalks in the Center. Over \$9,000,000 of federal and state funding has been allocated for the project. Design for the project has not begun yet.

- **The Town is considering building a Community Center in Upton Center.** The Town is conducting a feasibility study for a new Community Center that would blend the services of the Library and Council on Aging. The Town previously evaluated the feasibility of improving the Knowlton-Risteen Building for Library use. A Community Center or an improved Library in Upton Center could have a catalytic impact on the area.
- **The economy is strong.** Towns across the state are seeing renewed building activity, including mixed-use development and housing. Apartments located in walkable centers are in high demand. Numerous state grant programs favor mixed-use development in existing town centers.
- **Residents of Upton agree it is time to act.** A large number of Town residents have worked together over the past four months to agree upon a clear **Vision for Revitalization of Upton Center.** Over 130 Upton residents shared their concerns, and dreams for Upton Center at a public listening session. Over 60 residents attended a day-long public workshop to sketch out a vision for the Center's future. A Working Group, made up of over 40 volunteers who represent a broad cross-section of Upton Residents, held four intensive meetings to dig into the details of the vision and how to make it reality. Residents identified the following issues and opportunities related to Upton Center:

Upton Center is not Fulfilling its Potential

- **The Center does not meet the daily needs of residents.** Residents appreciate what is in Upton Center—Town Hall, the Library, the Historical Society Museum, United Parish Church, the VFW, the playground, ballfields, businesses, etc.—but they would like more opportunities to do things in the Center. Residents currently drive to other Towns to shop, eat, obtain services and hang out. Residents would like to be keep their dollars local and reduce the time they spend traveling. Residents, especially telecommuters, also cite the need for more workspace in the Town (like a co-working space).
- **The Center is Underperforming Economically.** Much of the land in the Center is vacant and many existing buildings are old and in poor repair. This results in relatively low tax revenues from the Center. Further, the Center lacks attractive commercial spaces that could draw new businesses to Upton or provide a place for existing Upton businesses that want to expand or relocate.
- **The Center provides some places to live, but it could provide more.** Upton Center currently provides some low-cost apartments and is home to people who might not otherwise be able to find a place to live in Upton. It could provide more places to live and more diverse types of housing that reflect

the diverse needs of Upton's residents.

- **The Knowlton-Risteen Building does not meet the needs of its users.** The Library (4) is not big enough for a community of Upton's size. The building is not fully handicapped-accessible and has structural issues that need to be fixed.
- **The former Holy Angels Church is vacant.** The building (5) is owned by the Town. It requires substantial renovation before it can be put to new use.
- **Upton Center is Losing its Place as the Heart of the Community.** Residents describe how Upton Center used to be the heart of community life in the Town. The closure of Holy Angels Church, a decline in the number of events held in the Center, and the loss of businesses and buildings contribute to the sense that Upton Center is heading in the wrong direction. Without an active, vibrant town center, residents lack opportunities to make social connections, especially connections across age and social groups.

Driving or Walking in Upton Center is Unsafe and Unpleasant

- **Traffic on Route 140 (Main St/Milford St) speeds through Upton Center.** 9,500 cars pass through Upton Center every day. This opens opportunities for businesses that require visibility, but also creates safety issues and degrades the experience of being in Upton Center. Route 140 was designed to move cars through the center quickly—at the expense of safety, walkability, and the

experience of the place.

- **Intersections in the center are confusing and dangerous.** Five roads intersect with Route 140 in the Center, many at odd angles and with poor visibility (6).
- **The Center is not comfortable to walk or bike around.** Sidewalks in the Center are narrow, disconnected and missing in key locations (7). Many sidewalks are not shaded by street trees and lack landscaping and street furnishings. There are no bike facilities in the Center.

The Center has a Rich History and Attractive New England Character

- **The Center is home to a collection of attractive, historic buildings.** The Town Hall, United Parish Church, Fiske Building, former Holy Angels Church, and Knowlton-Risteen Building are arrayed around the Common and are aligned with the shifting views as one enters Upton Center. The design of the buildings is cohesive, reflecting their Greek Revival and Victorian era origins. The classic New England town center design creates a strong sense of place.

The Center's Open Spaces are an Untapped Opportunity

- **Open spaces are one of Upton's strengths, but they are disconnected from the Center.** Upton Center is close to Heritage Park (8)

and Kiwanis Beach but there are no direct paths from the Center to those valuable open spaces. Veteran's Memorial Playground and the VFW ballfields are heavily used, but walking to them from the Center is unpleasant due to narrow sidewalks and the large Town parking lot at 0 Milford Street.

- **The Common is underutilized.** The Common (9) is literally at the heart of Upton Center, but over time it has been eroded by road expansions, cut off by fast traffic, and has not maintained its role as a gathering place for the community.
- **Mill Pond is an overlooked asset for the Center.** Mill Pond (10) is an amenity for the Center but it is largely invisible and inaccessible from the Center.
- **Center Brook divides the Center, while it could unite it.** Currently, Center Brook (11) separates the Grove Street area from the area around the VFW and its floodplains have constrained development in some areas, especially the low area east of Grove Street (12). With forward-thinking efforts, Center Brook could become a unifying force in the Center with the sight and sound of water creating a unique experience.

VISION FOR REVITALIZATION OF UPTON CENTER



Model of proposed vision for Upton Center. Proposed new buildings are shown in tan. Existing buildings are shown in white.



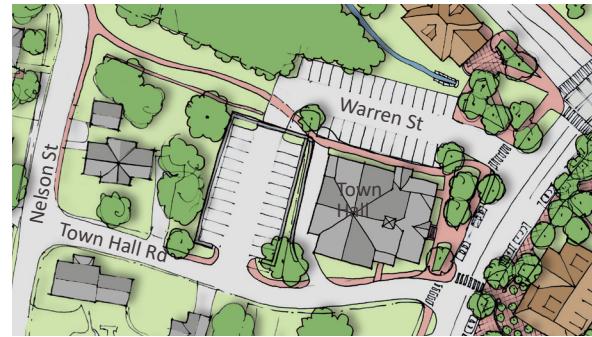
VISION FOR REVITALIZATION OF UPTON CENTER

Slower Traffic, Simplified Intersections, Walkable Streetscapes



1. Reconfigure the north end of Grove Street.

Instead of intersecting with Route 140 across from Church Street, Grove St is shown making a left hand turn just past the bridge over Center Brook and intersecting with Route 140 south of the Knowlton-Ristein Building. (Where the condemned building at 4 Main Street currently sits). This simplifies the complexity of the intersection at the heart of Upton Center and opens land along Route 140 for redevelopment.



2. Close Warren Street.

Warren St is closed and converted into a double loaded parking lot adjacent to Town Hall.



3. Reconfigure the intersection of North Main Street/Church Street and Route 140.

North Main Street is straightened out to intersect with Church Street at a right angle. This increases the size of the Common while providing space for on street parking on both sides of North Main Street. Church Street intersects with Route 140 at a right angle. These changes eliminate the confusing junction of North Main Street and Church

Street while improving sight lines for cars entering Route 140. A raised intersection at the new junction of Church Street and Route 140 increases the visibility of the town's central crosswalks, slows cars entering the Center and makes it easier for pedestrians and wheel chair users to cross Route 140.



4. Improve streetscapes throughout the Center.

Sidewalks are improved throughout the Center with trees, planting beds, and decorative lights. Space for sidewalk cafes and benches are created in front of new buildings. Curb bumpouts at crosswalk locations narrow crossing distances and increase the visibility of pedestrians while on street parking buffers sidewalks from traffic.

New Buildings for Local-serving Businesses, Places to Live, and an Expanded Tax Base



5. **Add two new buildings between Knowlton-Risteen Building & Holy Angels Church.** At approximately 8,600 square feet and 13,000 square feet, the buildings are well situated for ground floor commercial use with apartments above. The buildings have outdoor siting areas and landscaping and are well connected to Town Hall and the Common via crosswalks. Parking is located behind the buildings in a shared lot.

6. **Replace the existing building at 4 North Main Street.** The new 6,400 square foot building reinforces the look of a traditional New England Village Center, frames the southwest side of the Common and provides space for new commercial uses with apartments above. Parking is located behind the building and/or is shared with United



Parish Church. Until the building is replaced, the existing building can remain with a front driveway access off of the relocated Church Street.



7. **Add two new buildings at 0 Milford St.** Together, the buildings provide about 25,000 square feet of space for mixed uses where there is currently a town parking lot. The front building has good visibility on Route 140 and would be appropriate for an active ground floor use like retail, restaurant, or a personal service. The upper stories of

these buildings could have residential or additional commercial space. 54 parking spaces are located between the two buildings. Alternatively, a new Library and/or Community Center could be located on this parcel. The playground is moved but remains on the site.

New Life for Historic Buildings

8. **Renovate and reuse the Knowlton-Risteen Building.** The building is renovated for the Library, other municipal services, or commercial use such as a co-working space, business incubator or offices. Retail could be located on its ground floor.

9. **Renovate and reuse Holy Angels Church.** Potential new uses include a performance space, restaurant, co-working space, business incubator, offices, a daycare facility, and/or a municipal function, like a Community Center or Historical Society Museum. A small outdoor sitting space along Center Brook west of the building takes advantage of views of the Brook and its burbling sound. A footbridge crosses Center Brook to connect with new buildings, the playground, and playing fields at 0 Milford St.

New Community Center

10. **Build a new Community Center on Grove Street (blended Library & Senior Center).** The site can accommodate up to a 15,000



square foot building footprint. Center Brook wraps around the building on the north and east sides. Short-term parking and a van drop off are located on Grove Street. The main parking is located north of the building across a footbridge over Center Brook. A sitting area on the east side of the building has views of an attractive forested wetland and Center Brook. It connects to a boardwalk that crosses the brook and wetland to connect with the playground and playing fields at 0 Milford St. Alternatively, the site could provide places to live, or space for businesses that do not require a high level of street visibility.

Or, build a new Community Center at 0 Milford Street (not shown).

The site can accommodate up to a 15,000 square foot building footprint with adjacent parking and playground. This option is not shown on the drawing.

Or, renovate and/or expand The Knowlton-Risteen for the library (not shown)

Adequate Parking in Convenient



Locations

11. Build a new central shared parking lot on Grove Street. A sizable shared parking lot is located between Center Brook and Route 140, in land that is currently vacant and/or occupied by Grove Street. The parking lot has about 100 spaces. It sits on land that is not feasible to use for new buildings because it is within the floodplain of Center Brook.

12. Expand the parking lot adjacent to Town Hall. Warren St is closed and converted into a double-loaded parking lot (26 spaces) adjacent to Town Hall. A parking deck could be built west of Town Hall on land that is now privately owned. The parking deck could provide about 44 spaces on two levels—the lower level

accessed from the former Warren St and the upper accessed from Town Hall Rd.

- 13. Delineate on-street parking throughout the Center.** Stripe on street parking in the Center to ensure efficient use of these 40+/- spaces.

New Green Spaces and Improved Connections to Existing Open Spaces



14. Create a trail loop along and across Center Brook. A trail loop runs along both sides of Center Brook with footbridges that connect the Grove Street area to the ball fields and playground near the VFW. Sitting areas along the Center Brook trail provide places to rest and relax.

15. Relocate and improve Veteran's Memorial Playground. The playground is moved south of its current location to open space for new buildings. The new location is closer to the VFW ballfields and could be nestled

among existing mature trees. The playground connects to a trail and boardwalk that loops back across Center Brook to Grove Street.



16. Add a trail to connect Upton Center to Heritage Park.

Heritage Park. The trail starts on Milford Street just east of Rose Garden Restaurant and Pub and crosses a wetland parcel to the southern end of Heritage Park. A canoe and kayak launch could be added where the trail meets Mill Pond.

NARRATIVE DESCRIBING THE VISION FOR REVITALIZING UPTON CENTER

The following narrative describes what Upton Center will be like when it is fully revitalized. The vision articulates the goals and preferences described by residents of Upton throughout the project.

Upton Center is a reinvented Traditional New England Village Center and the heart of community life in the Town. A sense of place is created by the attractive mix of old and new buildings that ring the Common. The largest buildings are the historic civic and religious structures that occupy the most prominent positions aligned with views as people enter the town along key roads. Newer buildings have a cohesive look and feel. They are generally small-scale with traditional New England styling, both in color and architecture, reminiscent of the Town's Greek Revival and Victorian era heyday.

New buildings provide spaces for the new restaurants, cafes and local-serving businesses that have opened. Above the businesses, apartments with a range of sizes and costs are home to new and long-time residents of Upton.

Drivers slow when they enter Upton Center on Route 140 and enjoy seeing the place and people out and about. Visitors to the center often park once and stroll around to visit the Library, or

Historical Society Museum, attend an event, buy something to eat, sit on the common or in another small park, or take a longer walk to Heritage Park or Kiwanis Beach. They stroll paths along and across Center Brook, or use sidewalks that are safe, well-connected, and attractive with high quality paving materials, many places to sit, street trees, lush planters, and decorative light fixtures. While in town, residents often run into someone they know. Upton Center expresses the community spirit and rural, small town character of Upton.

GOALS FOR REVITALIZING UPTON CENTER

The working group identified the following goals for revitalization of Upton Center based on listening closely to the input collected in the two public forums and their own discussions. The goals are intended to guide future actions by the Town and private property owners. The goals were developed using a consensus-based process and represent the perspectives of a diverse set of Upton residents. Each goal is carefully worded to balance the diversity of opinions and interests in the Town. The goals are not listed in a priority based order:

- **Activate Upton Center and make it the heart of community life in the Town**
- **Slow traffic and improve intersections in Upton Center.**
- **Improve the safety, comfort and connectivity of sidewalks in Upton Center.**
- **Improve the function of Upton Center's**

- open spaces and connect them to other neighboring open spaces.
- Maintain the Center's village scale and building types. New buildings should be no more than three stories.
- Site the proposed Library/Community Center and Historical Society Museum within walking distance of Town Hall, if possible. If possible, means if there is a site that is adequate to meet the needs of the facilities.
- Attract businesses that meet local needs and that generate jobs and tax revenue.
- Provide adequate parking.
- Provide housing with diverse unit sizes and costs that meet the needs of all of Upton's people.
- Act on the town's strong preference for rehabilitating and reusing the Holy Angels Church.

It is important to note that the Working Group did not achieve a full consensus on the last goal. While a strong majority of Working Group members supported this goal, a small number did not. Those who did not support this goal felt it was not worded strongly enough to guarantee preservation of the building. As Historic Preservation appears to be one of the most fraught issues in town, Upton's residents and leaders will need to continue to have open and honest discussions about historic preservation and how to implement it.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS FOR REVITALIZING UPTON CENTER

Revitalizing Upton Center will require many years of consistent and strategic effort by Upton's leaders, citizens, private groups, and non-profits, supported by local, state, and federal governments. There are many possible actions that can be taken to move toward the Town's goals for the Center. The following Actions were identified by participants in the project or by the Consultants to it. The proposed Actions have not been vetted by the Working Group or another Town body. They are a starting point for discussion.

Actions generally fall into five categories: regulatory changes to allow or incentivize desired improvements to Upton Center; physical improvement to public spaces like streets, sidewalks, parks, trails, buildings, etc; obtaining funding to implement various actions; further study to refine the vision and move toward regulatory changes, physical changes, or funding; and low-cost and short-term improvements that build momentum, such as building social networks, holding events, or temporary beautification.

The proposed Actions are broken down into categories that relate to the Goals. Many actions are cross-cutting in that taking the action will advance several goals at once.

1. Overarching Actions

Because the Goals described below have not been vetted or prioritized, holding that discussion is itself the top priority action for moving forward with the Vision. There are two parts to this.

- First, establish the Vision as the official policy of the Town so that the Select Board and all other boards and Town staff are directed to work towards its implementation. This can be accomplished through a vote at Town Meeting to endorse the Vision.
- Second, establish or empower a Town committee dedicated to improving Upton Center. Currently, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) holds this charge. The Working Group served as an advisory body to the EDC. It could continue in this capacity. Or the Working Group could be established as a more permanent committee. Because revitalization of Upton Center is a big job that impacts diverse interests in the Town, having a sizable working group makes sense. At the same time, the Town body will need to be nimble and efficient to take advantage of time-sensitive opportunities. Regardless of the size of this committee, it is important that its membership is diverse and representative of Upton's citizenry. It is also important that its members have adequate time and skills to do the work that will be required, and the ability to communicate effectively with each other.

2. Actions to activate Upton Center and make it the heart of community life in the Town

- 2.1.** Hold more events in Upton Center
- 2.2.** Encourage the development of local-serving businesses, including restaurants, cafes, ice cream, personal services, grocery or specialty food store, indoor sports/exercise facilities, brewery, craft making space
- 2.3.** Improve the curb appeal of buildings and businesses
- 2.4.** Support walkability improvements
- 2.5.** Support housing efforts
- 2.6.** Add/improve Town facilities—build a Community Center in Upton Center, add (or publicize) public bathrooms
- 2.7.** Take personal and collective actions to make Upton Center welcoming to diverse people.
- 2.8.** Develop a branding and marketing campaign for Upton and Upton Center

3. Actions to slow traffic and improve intersections in Upton Center & Actions to improve the safety, comfort and connectivity of sidewalks in Upton Center

- 3.1.** Work with MassDOT to ensure that the Route 140 TIP project slows traffic, improves intersections and improves sidewalks
- 3.2.** Consider making Upton Center sidewalk

improvements a higher priority for a MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program application

- 3.3.** Explore a MassWorks grant for street improvements, including rerouting Grove Street to open land at its current north end for mixed-use development and/or extending sewer to 0 Milford Street
- 3.4.** Consider use of Chapter 90 funds for street and sidewalk improvements in Upton Center
- 3.5.** Consider dedicating town funds for street and sidewalk improvements in Upton Center
- 3.6.** Revise the zoning for Upton Center to require new developments to make sidewalk improvements

4. Actions to improve the function of Upton Center's open spaces and connect them to other neighboring open spaces

- 4.1.** Incorporate the recommendations of this plan into the current Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update, especially the recommendations regarding creating a trail to Heritage Park, adding paths along and across Center Brook in Upton Center, improving the usability of open space in Upton Center (e.g. the Common), and improving connections to Center Brook Conservation Area
- 4.2.** Incorporate open space recommendations into zoning changes for Upton Center by designating desired pathways and civic

spaces in a “regulating plan” to accompany new zoning language.

- 4.3.** Incorporate open space recommendations into any RFP issued by Town for Upton Center
- 4.4.** Organize volunteer beautification efforts for Town Center
- 4.5.** Develop Upton Center open space project(s) using CPA funding

5. Actions to maintain the Center's village scale and building types. New buildings should be no more than three stories

- 5.1.** Develop design guidelines, design standards, or a form-based code for Upton Center
- 5.2.** Evaluate the best regulatory approach to enforcing design guidelines or design standards in Upton Center: zoning, standalone design review bylaw, local historic district.
- 5.3.** Improve sign regulations in the Town's zoning to encourage attractive pedestrian-scale signs using traditional sign techniques and materials
- 5.4.** Incorporate design guidelines/standards into any RFP issued by Town for Upton Center
- 5.5.** Work with property owners and business owners on façade improvements, business visibility, and/or signage improvements. Consider applying for a Mass Downtowns Initiative grant for technical assistance related to any of these topics.

6. Actions to site the proposed Library/Community Center and Historical Society Museum within walking distance of Town Hall, if possible. If possible means if there is a site that is adequate to meet the needs of the facilities

- 6.1.** Incorporate findings of this project into the current feasibility study for Library and Community Center and any future feasibility studies for municipal buildings.
- 6.2.** Ensure that municipal building feasibility studies recognize that municipal buildings like the Library/Community Center and/or Historical Society Museum are a linchpin for Upton Center. They draw people and will support the viability of businesses in the area. Site selection criteria and evaluation of alternatives should heavily weight the benefits of siting municipal buildings in the Town Center.
- 6.3.** Continue to explore grant funding, public-private partnerships, private fundraising, and other opportunities that can support construction or renovation of buildings in the Town Center for Town uses.

7. Actions to attract businesses that meet local needs and that generate jobs and tax revenue

- 7.1.** Revise the zoning for Upton Center to encourage the kinds of businesses that are desired. Zoning changes should be based on the vision plan and should encourage development that creates an attractive, unique place that supports business success. Use the following zoning techniques: require development to make improvements to the public realm to create attractive streetscapes and open spaces as shown on the Vision Plan; require active ground floor uses and ground floor storefronts along Milford Street from the Knowlton-Risteen building to the VFW, and along North Main Street adjacent to the Common; encourage buildings with spaces that are sized and located appropriately for new unique local businesses; discourage non-local businesses by methods such as not allowing drive throughs, limiting building footprint size, limiting auto-oriented signs, selectively limiting uses that are dominated by national chains, or limiting formula-based businesses.
- 7.2.** Support efforts to rehabilitate and reuse Holy Angels Church, with an eye toward uses that will support the economic viability of the center
- 7.3.** Consider issuing an RFP for some Town-Owned properties in the Center to facilitate

redevelopment of private property on Grove Street and/or the Arcade block.

- 7.4.** Complete an economic development plan for Upton Center
- 7.5.** Apply for the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning Grant with a specific focus of assessing Upton Center's vulnerability to climate related disasters. Include, as an add-on to the grant application, a floodplain study to establish more accurate boundaries of the 100-year floodplain in Upton Center. Depending on the results of that study, submit a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) to FEMA for Upton Center.

8. Actions to provide adequate parking

- 8.1.** Develop adequate parking within the Center that can be shared by public and private uses. Parking should be convenient, attractive and well connected to the center in order to encourage users to park once and walk around the Center.
- 8.2.** Continue to explore closure of Warren Street and development of expanded Town Parking adjacent to Town Hall.
- 8.3.** Explore creation of a parking lot or parking deck behind Town Hall
- 8.4.** Explore creation of a shared parking lot along Grove Street
- 8.5.** Work with MassDOT to ensure that on-street parking is legal on Route 140 within the village center and that is striped appropriately

- 8.6.** Stripe on street parking on both sides of North Main Street
- 8.7.** Revise the Zoning Bylaw to the reduce number of required parking spaces and align parking ratios with contemporary best practices. Consider the following: require not more than 3 spaces per 1000 square feet for commercial uses; require not more than 1.5 or 2 spaces per residential unit; incorporate shared parking factors for uses that require parking at different times of the day
- 8.8.** Revise the Zoning Bylaw to allow off-site parking within 500' of a building if the applicant can demonstrate that the off-site parking is available for their use. Such demonstration could include evidence of a lease agreement and need not be evidence of ownership.
- 8.9.** Revise the Zoning Bylaw to allow on-street parking to count toward parking requirements

9. Actions to provide housing with diverse unit sizes and costs that meet the needs of all of Upton's people

- 9.1.** Require diverse housing types (apartments, condos, town houses, apartments over shops) for diverse residents (young, old, wealthy, lower income, disabled) at a variety of affordability ranges (affordable, market rate) in any RFP issued by the Town related to disposition of the town-owned properties

- in the center
- 9.2.** Revise zoning for the Town Center to allow diverse housing types by right and eliminate barriers to the creation of housing including excessive parking requirements, and dimensional requirements that do not reflect Upton Center's historic development patterns or the Vision for future development in Upton Center
- 9.3.** Explore the use of CPA funds to support the creation of affordable housing in Upton Center
- 9.4.** Reach out to non-profit housing developers about opportunities in Upton Center
- 9.5.** Update the Town's Housing Production Plan

10. Actions to act on the town's strong preference for rehabilitating and reusing the Holy Angels Church

- 10.1.** Continue to evaluate the cost of rehabilitating the Holy Angels Church and funding mechanisms for necessary construction
- 10.2.** Establish a town committee, non-profit organization, and/or public-private partnership to evaluate reuse ideas for Holy Angels Church. Start raising funds and identifying partners to move a viable reuse toward reality. Reuse ideas to explore include, but are not limited to, shared work space, a business incubator, a performance space, restaurant, child-care facility, and/or a municipal function, like a Community

- Center or Historical Society Museum
- 10.3.** As the town evaluates whether to relocate the Library and Historical Society museum from the Knowlton-Risteen Building, simultaneously evaluate reuse options for the building if those town uses vacate it, including taking actions 1 and 2 above relative to the Knowlton-Risteen Building
- 10.4.** Consider using CPA funds for renovation of the Holy Angels Church
- 10.5.** Consider applying for a Mass Preservation Trust grant to renovate Holy Angels Church
- 10.6.** Support efforts to develop design review for Upton Center, including evaluating whether establishing a Local Historic District would be the best approach
- 10.7.** Create a Historic Preservation Plan for Upton Center (can be funded by CPA funds)
- 10.8.** If the Town includes historic anchor buildings in an RFP, consider mechanism to ensure their preservation such a historic preservation restriction or covenant

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

- | | |
|--|----------|
| LETTER FROM CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO EDC | 1 |
| MEETING NOTES | 2 |



TOWN OF UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Conservation Commission

Mr. Gene Bernat
Chair, Upton Economic Development Committee

March 18, 2019

Dear Mr. Bernat:

Given the importance of the redevelopment of the town center to the community the Conservation Commission is providing this information regarding its regulatory role and the town center study area. For purposes of this letter, the study area includes several parcels along Route 140 (Main Street) and Grove Street (Figure 1).

Overview

The Commission administers the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and the Town of Upton Wetlands Protection Bylaw (the "Bylaw"). These laws protect vegetated wetlands, rivers, streams, ponds, lands subject to flooding, and vernal pools. These "resource areas" provide functions and values that are important to the community including, but not limited to, protection of public or private water supply, groundwater recharge, flood control and flood damage prevention, erosion and sedimentation control, protection of water quality, water pollution control, fisheries habitat, wildlife habitat, rare species habitat, and recreation.

The laws and their regulations require the Commission to conduct pre-construction review of certain projects planned in or within 100 feet of wetland resource areas, or within 200 feet of perennial streams and ponds greater than 20,000 square feet in size. The 100-foot area bordering a wetland resource area is known as the "100-foot buffer zone". The area within 200 feet of a perennial stream is defined as the "Riverfront Area" or Riverfront Resource Area. Two Riverfront Area zones are recognized: 0 - 100 ft., and 100 – 200 ft. Bylaw regulations include "No Building" and "No Disturb" setback standards.

All of the parcels in the study area contain Riverfront Area. Some of this Riverfront Area meets the definition of "previously developed" which includes areas occupied by structures or covered with pavement or other impervious surfaces. The WPA regulations waive several of the Riverfront Area performance standards for redevelopment projects. For example, an alternative analysis is not required and work can be located up to the existing limit of development. Redevelopment projects are required, however, to include provisions that will improve the ecological functions/interests of the river.

Work in non-developed portions of Riverfront Area (i.e. areas not covered by buildings/pavement) require a WPA analysis of alternatives and generally must be located at least 100 feet away from the mean annual high water line of the watercourse. In addition, alteration is usually restricted to 5,000 square feet or 10 percent (whichever is greater) of the undeveloped Riverfront Area. If coupled with a Redevelopment Project and provided that at least 1:1 restoration of degraded Riverfront Area is proposed, work that does not comply with these performance standards can be allowed.

The Bylaw does not contain explicit provisions for Riverfront Area redevelopment.

In recent years the Commission has issued three permits, known as Orders of Conditions (OOCs) for work in the study area. The Commission issued an OOC for work within 100 ft. of an unnamed brook as part of the Upton Town Hall rehabilitation project in 2013. In 2016, the Commission permitted the town to construct a parking lot within the 200 ft. Center Brook Riverfront Area as part of a redevelopment project which included removal of a structure at the corner of Main Street and Grove Street. The Commission also issued a permit approving redevelopment of an apartment building at 6 Main Street in 2017. For that project, proposed work was very close to Center Brook and the commission required no change to the existing development (building) footprint.

Wetland Resources in the Town Center Study Area

Center Brook flows through the study area. Center Brook is classified as a perennial stream, based on USGS topographic maps. It is also mapped as a cold-water stream by the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife from the Old Grist Mill Dam outlet to its confluence with the West River. The town center study area is not mapped as Estimated or Priority habitat for rare species by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program.

Center Book has a drainage area of about 4.32 square miles where it crosses Grove Street. At Grove Street, 77 percent of the Center Brook watershed is forested (USGS StreamStats). Three impoundments occur on the brook upstream of the study area, Mill Pond, Pratt Pond, Dean Pond. Mill Pond discharges surface water to the brook over a concrete spillway. During the summer, the surface water discharge from Mill Pond is assumed to be quite warm and probably exceeds Massachusetts water temperature standards to support a cold water fishery. A unnamed stream flows along Warren Street. The stream enters a culvert near Main Street and discharges into Center Book immediately downstream of the Grove Street Bridge. This stream has a drainage area of about 0.28 square miles and, based on StreamStats, is probably intermittent. A second unnamed intermittent stream enters Center Brook from the east near the Thompson Property.

All of the properties under review contain FEMA delineated flood hazard areas (see Figure 2). Virtually all land within the 200 ft. along the west side of the stream is developed with structures, roads, driveways, and paved or unpaved parking areas. Tree canopy along the developed side of the stream is sparse.

Only a narrow fringe of bordering vegetated wetland (BVW) occurs along most of Center Brook between the Mill Dam and Grove Street. Based on Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) wetland mapping and observations, a large area of BVW is present between the Thompson property and the VFW ball fields (Figure 3).

Preliminary Permitting Considerations

All of the lots along Main Street and along Grove Street, including the Thompson property, are subject to review by the WPA and the Bylaw. The Commission would likely expect a redevelopment project to result in some habitat restoration within the Riverfront Area and no or limited expansion of the built environment in the 100 ft. Riverfront Area unless justified by a project specific alternatives analysis and restoration of degraded areas is provided. The Commission would consider recent historical conditions, including the footprint of the building at the corner of Route 140 and Grove Street which was recently

demolished and replaced with a parking area. Given the highly disturbed nature of the study area, the proximity of existing structures to Center Brook, and redevelopment provisions in the WPA, the Commission would likely waive the no build/no disturb setback requirements promulgated in the Bylaw regulations. Restoration of at least a 15 ft. wide vegetated riparian zone along the top of bank would be desirable. Some intrusion closer to the river for public recreation use would be allowable for parkland amenities such as a trail, picnic table, and foot bridges, especially if they can be designed to meet the criteria to be allowed as a WPA limited project. Limited projects do not need to comply with many WPA performance standards. A trail and boardwalk to connect Heritage Park to the town center through Parcel 29-019.01 on Main Street would also be viewed favorably, so long as wetland impacts were largely avoided by locating the trail and boardwalk along the east (Rose Garden) side of the parcel. Some activities such as placing Center Brook in a culvert to make land for development would be very unlikely to be permitted by the MA DEP, the Commission, or the Army Corps of Engineers.

Any impacts to floodplain storage would need to be mitigated on at least a 1:1 volume basis at each elevation. Storm water management would be required, with special reference to standard 7 of MA DEP storm water standards for redevelopment:

7. A redevelopment project is required to meet the following Storm water Management Standards only to the maximum extent practicable: Standard 2, Standard 3, and the pretreatment and structural best management practice requirements of Standards 4, 5, and 6. existing storm water discharges shall comply with Standard 1 only to the maximum extent practicable. A redevelopment project shall also comply with all other requirements of the Storm water Management Standards and improve existing conditions.

Note that MA DEP stormwater management standards are more stringent for cold-water streams. Low impact development stormwater management techniques such as rain gardens, permeable pavement, and roof drains are encouraged.

This information does not preclude the need for future applicants (private or municipal) to comply with the WPA and the Bylaw. The Commission recognizes flexibility is essential and variances from the bylaw regulations and setbacks would likely be required. Informal pre-application consultations with the Commission and its staff are encouraged. A final determination can be made by the Commission only after submittal and review of a permit application (Notice of Intent) by an applicant and public hearings. The MA DEP reviews all WPA permit applications and frequently offers direction to the Commission concerning interpretation of WPA regulations.

Please feel free to contact the Commission should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christine Scott, Chair

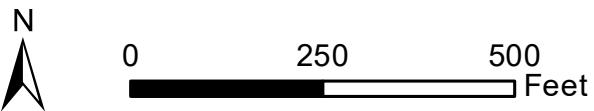
CC:

Town Manager

Municipal Center Feasibility Committee



Figure 1
Upton Town Center
Evaluation Area



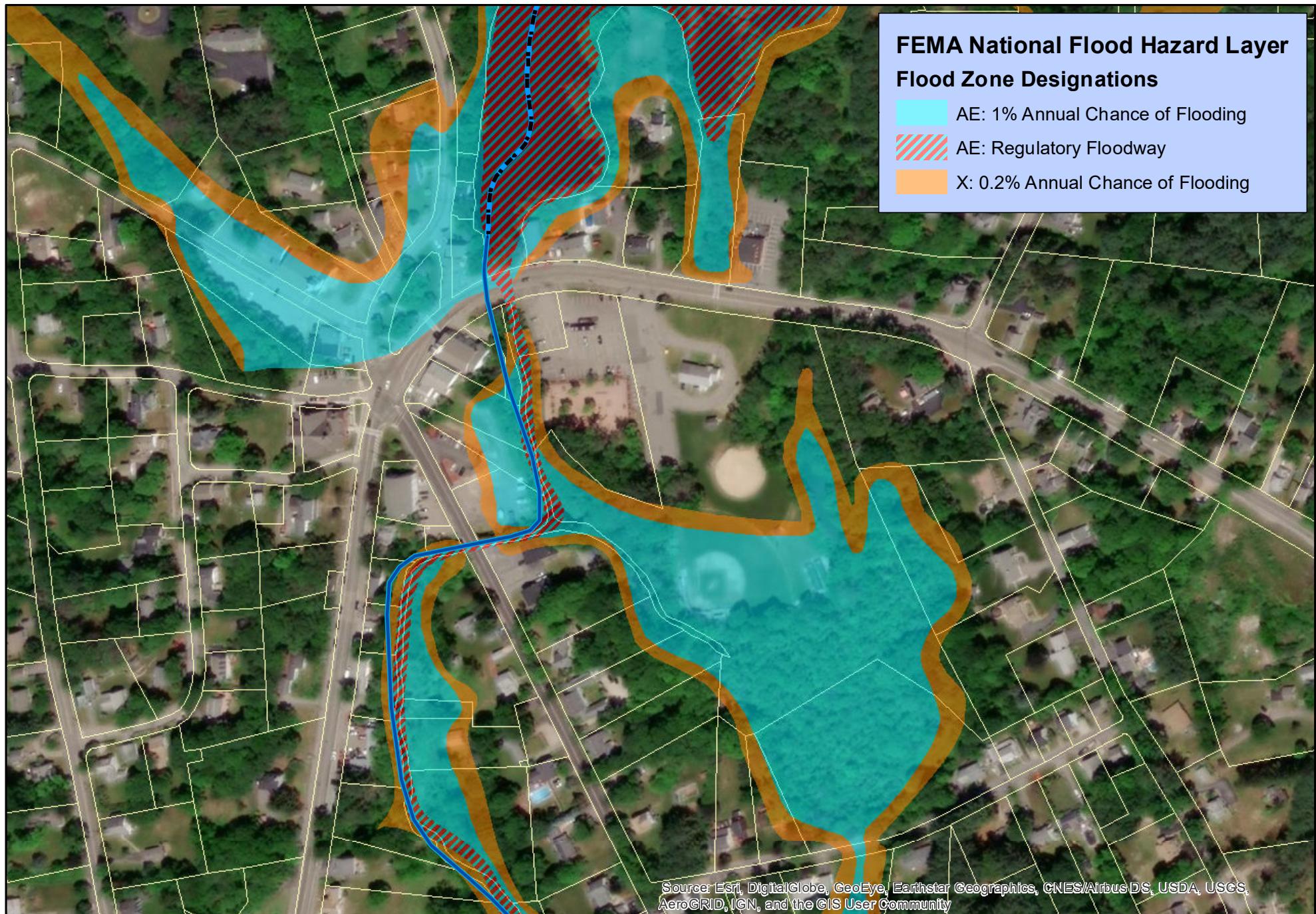


Figure 2
Upton Town Center
Flood Hazards



Figure 3
Upton Town Center
Wetlands and Streams

Upton Center Visioning Project

Meeting Notes—Community Meeting, 1/23/19

Words Used to Describe Upton Center (from icebreaker for break-out group discussions)

| Words Used to Describe Upton Town Center | Mentions | Positive | Neutral/ Unclear | Negative |
|--|----------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| historic | 3 | x | | |
| community | 2 | x | | |
| opportunity | 2 | x | | |
| promising | | x | | |
| quaint | | x | | |
| beautiful | | x | | |
| untapped | | x | | |
| potential | | x | | |
| people | | x | | |
| walkable | | x | | |
| history | 2 | | x | |
| mixed | | | x | |
| old | | | x | |
| country | | | x | |
| common | | | x | |
| town square | | | x | |
| town center | | | x | |
| run down w/potential | | | x | |
| meh | | | x | |
| missed opportunity | | | x | |
| old school | | | x | |
| tired | 3 | | x | |
| cars too fast | 2 | | x | |
| sad | 2 | | x | |
| unaccessible | 2 | | x | |
| stressful | | | x | |
| dilapidated | | | x | |
| uninspired | | | x | |
| nondescript | | | x | |
| lacking | | | x | |
| nonidentifiable | | | x | |
| nonexistent | | | x | |
| ugly | | | x | |
| a mess | | | x | |

| Words Used to Describe Upton Town Center | Mentions | Positive | Unclear | Neutral/ Negative |
|--|----------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| dangerous intersection | | | | x |
| no theme | | | | x |
| undistinguished as center town | | | | x |
| rundown | | | | x |
| have not invested in it | | | | x |
| unwalkable | | | | x |
| unfinished | | | | x |
| missable | | | | x |
| lacking | | | | x |
| mixed up | | | | x |
| underutilized | | | | x |
| empty | | | | x |
| unappealing | | | | x |
| dangerous | | | | x |
| inadequate | | | | x |

Meeting Notes from break-out group discussions

GROUP 1

Boundaries:

- Main St: Main Country Sooper-Bridge by Church or Rose Garden
- Grove St: Thompson ?Oil
- North Main: Body Fix to Cemetery
- Church St: Church
- Warren St: Town Hall
- Speed limit goes down to 30, no real definition (of speed limit boundaries?)

What brings you to town?

- Pizza and beer
- Yoga
- To get to the other side
- Library
- Church/Preschool
- Playground
- Town Hall
- Sooper
- Baseball field

What's it like to move through Town Center (car, foot, bicycle?)

Dangers/negatives:

- Tricky driving through
- Lack of street lighting
- No stop signs
- Where do I park?
- No cross walks/crossing signals

Missing:

- Traffic Control
- Lighting
- Places for business
- Town Common
- Place for people to connect
- Playground/BB field

Priorities:

- Generate tax revenue via business
- More community areas
- Extend sewer/water to infrastructure
- Change zoning

On overview map – Likes

- Trees
- Antique Veneer
- Stained Glass
- Town Hall
- Small town
- VFW
- Playground

GROUP 2

Boundaries:

Elm – Sooper to Gasco

What brings you to town?

- Wine/liquor
- Sooper

- Pizza
- Library
- Town Hall
- Salon
- VFW/Ball field/Sports

What's it like to move through Town Center (car, foot, bicycle?)

- Terrifying to go through by walking, biking, even in a car through intersection
- Worst issue: parking problem downtown, no sidewalks in some places
 - ➔ Autoshop/Church

Does anyone want development in Upton? Re: small town

- No affordable housing
- Current parking is private – can town find a way to make public?

Priorities for downtown:

- Center feel like a center
- Walkable
- Businesses that tailor to the constituents
- Pedestrian
- Green space becomes a feature
- How do we relieve traffic on 140?
- Raising sidewalks, roadways to look at ways to slow down traffic
- Flashing lights at sidewalks
- Library:
 - Larger
 - Access issues
 - Mold issues
 - Keep window
 - Historical Society – needs to find a space
- Holy Angels:
 - Structural engineering?
 - Keep façade only?
 - Structure that replaces Holy Angels should be an anchor point
- How do we get people to come downtown?
 - Restaurants
 - Retail, boutiques

Future outlook:

- Shops
- Pedestrian corridor
- Restoration of original character of downtown

- Recreation
- Safer
- Developments – not strip scale . 3-stories
- Family-friendly
- More character
- Village look/colonial
- Continuity
- Go slow
- Think about taxes
- Parking is key

GROUP 3

Historic center vs. Economic center

Keep the old and blend w/ new

What's missing?

- Connecting it all
- Walking trails
- Community gathering
 - o “the old dump”
- Coffee shops
- Hard floor activity space for seniors
- Community center – Library and senior center
- Change Grove Street to come out behind Risteen
- Close off Warren
- Community Center @ 8 Grove
- Community center downtown

GROUP 4

Can you identify the town boundaries?

- No

Why come to town?

- Library

- Food
- Town hall
- Liquor store
- Rose Garden
- Playground
- Businesses

What do you want in the town?

- Pharmacy?
- To stay quaint

What is it like to move through the town?

- Hard to navigate
- Dangerous for cars and pedestrians
- Confusing to navigate
- Traffic patterns need to be looked at by experts

What is missing?

- Pharmacy
- Accessible, larger library
- Accessibility/walkability
- Parking
- Restaurant
- Real downtown feel
- Updated senior center?
- Desire
- Doctors' offices?
- Connect parking spaces with pedestrian bridges

What are the town's current priorities?

- Taxes too high
- More safety
- Property values
- Family friendly
- Maintain character
- Cost analysis for upgrading the church?
- Is the church really historic and original? Want facts

GROUP 5

Boundaries:

- Fisk Ave is the boundary between Upton and West Upton
- Nothing that makes you feel you've arrived
- No strong distinction
- North side of Upton residents spend most of their time in Westborough

What brings you here?

- Town Hall
- Garbage (?)
- Want to use local businesses, but there aren't any!
- Used to be more shops – why did people stop going to stores?
- Becoming a bedroom community, traffic from 5am to 7pm
- Restaurant
- Children trying to carry on at farm – town not supporting it
- How to attract people and make others aware of these resources
- How can we advertise and
- Town common used to have more stuff/happenings but organizers are passing away

Things that do/could bring people here:

- Library
- Gazebo
- Currently meets at
- Sandwiches, ice cream, gifts unique to the area
- Library (not accessible)

Need:

- Safe walking paths
- Be more safe in a car
- Want to come down on Saturday and go for a walk
- Coffee Barn couldn't be more successful
- To draw business you need more traffic
- Need more events throughout the year to bring people downtown

Businesses:

- Need to go slow and steady. Has to support a lot of businesses in a small town. Do it in shops.
Don't want to change it too much
- We are a bedroom community, what does that mean?

GROUP 6

Notes Set A

Boundaries:

- Center of Upton is where Dunkin Donuts and strip mall
- 2 centers? Upton and West Upton
- Town hall area? Map as drawn doesn't include Town Hall?
- Town center includes up to Country Sooper to Rose Garden
- Marked our definition of Town Center in blue on map
- Town center or "downtown" is not known or called Town Center
- Library, Town Hall and playground bring people to town center
- Additional: record shop, baseball field, VFW

What would we look for to improve town center?

- Walkability is important to the definition of town center
- Economic development
- Places for families to gather
- Work place – like Starbucks or library
- Feels like town center is not big enough to do all that we want

Need:

- Shop space
- Taxes are getting high, need business income
- Shared work spaces
- Civic events
- **Don't** need more housing
- Would love to see walkable space to/from civic buildings and activities

Improve the aesthetic of the center

There is no village or historic feel to town center

Notes Set B

- Don't make it too big
- Two centers or one? Which one?
- West Upton = shopping, Town Center = civic
- Need business → \$\$ into town
- Who owns 140 in center of town? Replacement timeline?

Needs:

- Shared workspace – places to connect
- Library
- Events
- Footprint isn't big enough
- Tax base
- School over crowded – capacity?
- Streetscape improvements, shared space

Upton Center Visioning Project

Meeting Notes—Working Group Meeting #1, 2/11/19

Next Steps:

Dodson & Flinker will:

1. type up and share meeting notes;
2. send working group members a draft report including existing conditions material we unable to get to from the powerpoint for 2/11/19 meeting.
3. write a blurb explaining the project process for working group members to use in outreach.

Working Group members will:

1. review the meeting notes;
2. review the Draft report and come to meeting 2 prepared with: a sense of which information they believe in, questions about information they are unsure about, additional information they think they would need to make informed decisions, thoughts about the implications of various pieces of information;
3. Think about what needs should be fulfilled by improvements to Upton Center, what Town values Upton Center improvements should represent, what vision Upton Center should be aiming toward;
4. do outreach for Upton Center Visioning project: talk to friends, neighbors, colleagues about what Working Group is doing. Listen to what other people know about Upton Center, what other people want from the Center

Groups and/or Constituencies that Working Group Members Represent

- Economic Development Committee
- Open Space Committee
- Historical Commission
- Upton Historical Society
- Library Trustees
- Library Users
- Cable Committee
- PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)
- School Council
- Technology Committee
- Electronic Voting Committee
- Disability/Access

- Conservation Commission
- Council on Aging
- Community Preservation Committee
- Friends of Upton State Forest
- Park Users
- Sports-facilities users
- Sports Boosters
- Fire Department/Association/EMS
- Nipmuc Alumni
- Design/Construction Industry
- Business Owner
- VFW members
- Long-Time Residents
- New Residents
- Boomerang Residents (people who grew up in Upton, left, and have returned)
- Seniors
- Young People
- Families with school-aged children and younger children
- Town Center residents, abutters and neighbors
- Active Military

Groups and/or Constituencies that Working Group Members would like additional representation from:

- Older Seniors
- Police/Public Safety
- Educators
- Recreation Committee
- Planning Board/ZBA

Discussion of Past Planning Projects and Reports

Dillon presented an overview of past projects and what they said about Upton Center. These included the 2005 Upton Master Plan, the 2007 Open Space project, and the 2012 Housing Production Plan.

Some participants noted that there they didn't hear much about the recent complete streets project, and generally don't know much about what's in the TIP [According to the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, the TIP, or Transportation Improvement Program, "is a federally-required planning document that lists all highway, bridge, transit and intermodal projects in the Central Massachusetts planning region that are programmed to receive federal-aid funding."] Others thought that publicity had in fact been adequate.

The Upton Economic Development Committee (EDC) is in the process of “trying to gather a bunch of loose balloons” – housing, open space, economic development, etc.- and pull together a coherent plan for revitalizing the center. They recognize the need to reach out to the whole community. “This process is a first.”

There have been three attempts to build a new library. The first was a joint project with Mendon. None of them went forward. The town is in the process of hiring a consultant to prepare a feasibility study for a new library and community center.

Has the 2005 Master Plan been implemented? Not entirely, but components of it have been. The 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan includes a recreation master plan, and consultants from the BSC Group are currently working on an update to the Recreation Plan. There has been no community action on recommendations of the master plan in the areas of housing or mixed use.

We need to remember that Upton Center is part of a National Register Historic District. This does not require preservation of structures, but shines a spotlight on historic sites and provides incentives for preservation activities. The National Register submission includes a detailed inventory of historic resources. Does the town have a demolition delay bylaw? Yes, it provides for a six month delay in demolition of any building over 75 years old so that options for preservation can be considered.

Discussion of Working Group Members' motivation for participating in Town Center Visioning process, the perspectives they bring, and their goals for the process

Summary of Key Perspectives:

- Need to bring the community together.
- Community Center first—invest in a community center to draw people to Upton Center, additional investments will build off of that. Need to make a place where people will want to gather.
- Preserve Historic Look and Feel of Upton Center—preserve key features/anchor buildings, and re-use abandoned buildings. New development should reflect historic vernacular. Aesthetics of New England village are valuable, something to capitalize on. The trolley was really cool, and the center had a hotel, boot factory, theater, etc. – “how can we start going back uphill?”
- Safety First—should be able to safely move through Upton Center, especially on foot. Need to be able to walk downtown with kids, to safely cross 140, to safely access the library.
- Redevelopment for Tax Base—increase tax base by encouraging redevelopment, especially commercial development, more industry and small businesses. “If you make it easier for developers you will attract more business.”
- Lots of previous attempts at business development in Upton Center have failed. Do we need two centers? A series of bakeries, auto shops, florists and other didn’t make it in the Center. What is going to make business growth possible now?

- Civic functions may remain primary attractor to Upton Center, but we can provide reasons for people to stay in area: something to do, venues to run into neighbors.
- If we have a great library people will come. We have the schools. This is a new time: if we invest people will follow.
- There's a lot of underutilized land. How do vacant/open space parcels connect?
- Need to explore a lot of options.
- Start slow and build momentum – beautify first, and don't repeat mistakes. Ideas like shutting off Warren Street are fairly simple to implement.
- Any change will require a toolbox – zoning that removes uncertainty and gets developers interested - that's why we're here.

Presentation of Main Street Trends & Development Examples

Peter presented a series of slides showing trends impacting Main Streets and examples of how development practices have changed in recent years including suburban Main Street Lifestyle Center (South County Commons, RI), new mixed-use town center (Wayland, South Hadley), incremental Main Street redevelopment (Avon, CT, West Concord), and alternative approaches to development via public/private partnerships and “closing the funding gap.”

Discussion of Value of Evidence of History in Upton Center

- Preserve the essence of history—key anchors: Town Common, the three churches, Town Hall, and Pizza Building
- Let's bring it back to what it was – but for a new generation.
- Architecture can take cues from the historic vernacular—different scales that accommodate a variety of uses; a focus on people instead of cars; an attractive and safe pedestrian realm. Doesn't have to be historic – can design contemporary buildings that fit the context – look at Norfolk.
- Evoke buildings that were there, or match what was there.
- Historic character is: identity, heritage, who we are, increases property values, nationally unique, home, sense of place, we have a fabulous architectural heritage.
- Upton Center is recognizable over time.
- Look beyond the ring of buildings around the main intersection. There are opportunities in adjacent areas for adaptive reuse and redevelopment of underutilized parcels (example, across from gas station).
- Upton has revitalized two old buildings, Town Hall and Mill House. Old buildings with new interiors give a unique sense of place... as long as there is a viable purpose for the rehabbed building.

- The downtown was once a true village – how can we return to that? Need to look at Hopkinton and other towns where they require historically-appropriate infill. “How to make it an 18th and 21st Century center at the same time?”

Upton's Needs:

- affordable housing
- Assisted living
- Massachusetts is the most expensive state in the US for childcare, and there is a drought of childcare in town.
- Demographics are changing— Upton is a commuter community, but people want to keep their dollars local. Would like to be able spend money in Upton.
- Need to provide for and leverage the commuter community, the commuter economy.
- Developers are interested in doing projects in Upton Center, but Upton has a reputation as a difficult place to get zoning permits
- What do we have to offer – look at Chronicle piece on Upton.
- Are there local businesses that have expressed an interest in locating in Upton Center? Yes, a few, according to the EDC.

Precedents

- Saint Johnsbury, VT
- Littleton, NH
- European cities and towns
- Arlington, VA—lots of housing to enliven streets and businesses
- Woodstock, VT
- Grafton Center, MA
- Millis Center, MA
- Norfolk, MA
- Not Framingham, MA—lots of housing but empty ground floors
- Not Westborough
- Need examples of churches that have been reused.
- In the center itself, the building at 8 North Main Street is considered a successful historically-appropriate renovation.

Information Needs for this Planning Process:

- More info about economic development opportunities and strategies
- Business retention in places that have undergone similar efforts.

- Need a summary of this process and who's involved that can be shared with a wider audience as we publicize the public workshop on March 23rd.

Upton Center Visioning Project

Meeting Notes—Working Group Meeting #2, 3/04/19

Next Steps:

Dodson & Flinker will:

1. Send out flyer text. Create and send out a nice looking version of flyer
2. Prepare for Workshop

Working Group members will:

1. review these meeting notes
2. Register for the Visioning Workshop on 3/23: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/upton-center-visioning-workshop-tickets-58107128987>
3. Do outreach for Upton Center Visioning Workshop.
4. Read the Preliminary Draft of the Existing Conditions Report. Available for download here: <https://dodson.egnyte.com/f/BOweXlo9tE>

Review of Preliminary Draft of Existing Conditions Report.

Dodson & Flinker presented portions of the Preliminary Draft of the Existing Conditions Report. For each topical area, Working Group members were asked to discuss:

- Do I trust this information?
- What questions do I have about the information?
- What are the implications of the information for planning Upton Center?
- What additional information is needed to make informed decisions?

Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and TIP project for Route 140

Dodson & Flinker reviewed what has been done to date

Working group discussed Goals/Values for Upton Center related to movement of vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.

- Manage speed—start at VFW or before
- Need to think big
- Don't just tweak sidewalks; change street and intersection alignments if necessary. Consider a roundabout. Re-route 140?
- Plan for future growth
- Close unnecessary streets, like Warren?

Community Center + Library

Dodson & Flinker and working group members gave an overview of past and present process for Library/Community Center project. Working group discussion comments:

- Potential use of town-owned land
- Do we want to cram everything together—can the land in Upton Center support all the things we want it to do?
- Town owns 10 acres elsewhere
- Don't forget the historical museum
- Do we cater to cars or foot traffic?
- Local businesses will be supported by walkable uses and community center + library
- Structural engineering assessment for Holy Angels Church will be completed in next few weeks

Regional Context

- Main commercial centers used by Upton residents are Westborough and Milford
- Upton Center is a place for local-serving retail. It isn't going to become a regional commercial center.

Water Resources, Wetland and Floodplains

- The Conservation Commission met with EDC previously. The Commission will expect conditions on a site to improve with redevelopment but will probably not require a 50' buffer.
 - There are no constraints beyond not filling in a stream or floodplain
 - Establish a modest planted buffer—15'?
- Mill Pond and the streams are unique resources. An amenity that can add value to anything.
- Pond is hidden and has no obvious access. Is muddy. Not as nice as Pratt Pond.
- Highlight and provide access to nature
- Restaurants could take advantage of water view
- Upton has a lot of protected open space. Protecting natural resources is not as much of a priority in Upton Center as it is in other parts of town.
- Value of Nature and Open Space
 - Its part of Upton's history
 - Highlight connection to Heritage Park
 - Possible access to Heritage Park through floodplain parcel west of Rose Garden Restaurant

Vehicle Collision Data

What is the date of the collision data?

2014-2016 from MassDOT Crash Portal. <https://services.massdot.state.ma.us/crashportal/>

Various Questions from Working Group

- Where is development happening around town?
- What happens if you do nothing in Upton Center?
- What happens if you move out of Center?
- What about taxes? Why are we doing this?
- What is the cost of doing nothing?

Upton Center Visioning Workshop Planning

Agenda and Promotional materials

- Workshop will be March 23 10AM-3PM
- Dodson & Flinker introduced the proposed agenda for the Workshop and draft promotional materials

Discussion of Workshop Objectives

From Dodson & Flinker

- Share what we've learned about Upton Center and what we've heard so far from the community
- Talk about social, economic and environmental trends affecting Upton
- Discuss shared goals for key issues: economic development, housing, open space, connectivity, public services, etc.
- Learn about what other towns are doing to retrofit their centers for "the New Economy."
- Brainstorm physical planning and design ideas for new homes and businesses, traffic & parking, pedestrian connectivity, parks & greenways and the potential library & community center.
- Identify what kinds of people and activities Upton Center should welcome and support?

From Working Group

- Clarify role of historic preservation in Upton Center
- Identify ways to changes the first impression of Upton Center
- Clarify role of affordable housing in Upton Center
- Clarify role of environmental assets in Upton Center

Upton Center Visioning Project

Meeting Notes—Visioning Workshop, 3/23/19

Intro Presentation

Peter Flinker gave a presentation that introduced work done to date, key questions, and station activities.

Station Activities

Attendees participated in two rounds of Station activities. After lunch there was a report out from each station's facilitator and a full group discussion of each topic. Notes from the Station activities, report outs, and group discussions follow.

Station 1, Modeling a Master Plan

Participants worked with a three dimensional model to envision changes to Upton Center buildings, roads and public spaces

Summary

Several scenarios explored

- Using VFW land+ town parking for a library/senior center (Community center)
- Building a library/senior center along Grove Street
- Build new mixed-use buildngs along vacant land on Grove Street
- Closing end of Grove Street by Route 140 and redirecting to enter 140 south of Risteen Building.

VFW land is used for lots of services and events. Mixed opinions about whether the VFW would be willing to sell it to Town.

Station 2, Traffic and Streetscape

Participants drew ideas on maps for improved traffic and streetscape

Summary

Several concepts for improving traffic in Upton Center were discussed (concepts were developed by meeting participants):

- Close Warren Street

- Reopen the street that used to run from North Main to Rt 140 between the Common and the Liquor/Pizza building. Possibly close North Main between Church and this historic street and expand the Common to the north.
- Install a roundabout at the intersection of Grove/Main/North Main
- Create a new street that arcs south of Route 140 between about the Knowlton-Ristein Building to the VFW lot and back to Route 140.

Station 3, Architecture, Historic Preservation, and Public Realm

Participants completed Visual Preference Surveys related to building massing and design, existing buildings in Upton Center, and Public Realm elements. Then they discussed what the results of the surveys.

Summary

There are several anchor buildings in Upton Center: Town Hall, Upton Parish Church, Holy Angels Church... maybe Knowlton-Ristein Building, maybe Pizza/Liquor building.

United Parish of Upton is a key anchor and should be saved. [Editor's Note: It is currently in use and so there is no threat of it being redeveloped]

There is mixed opinion of which buildings Liquor/Pizza Building between Common and Mill Pond is very historic

Detailed Notes

A lot of discussion was centered on Holy Angels Church. There was one person in each of the two groups that felt strongly that the Church needed to be preserved – one person felt it needs to be preserved because the building is in a historic district and contributes to that. This person also stated that funding might be available to preserve the building. Most of the others in both groups felt the church was not worth preserving.

The other person cited history – and the Civil War statue on the Common. She also believed that Frederick Douglass might have spoken at the church. She also thought that since we are part of the Blackstone Valley Heritage Corridor, that funding might be available to renovate the building [Editor's note: the Blackstone Valley Heritage Corridor does not currently have grant programs due to federal budget cuts].

When the group was asked about which features of the church needed to be preserved, the answer was everything – including the columns, the steeple, and the stained-glass windows. One person who wanted to preserve the church stated that if we only preserved the facade and replaced the rest, that would prevent the town from getting any historic preservation grants. Possible uses of the building include:

- Farmer's market

- Coworking--Shared office space/ incubator space
- Brew pub
- Best use is probably a performance space
 - But where do we park?
 - At the Town Parking next door. Build a bridge over the stream if needed (if sidewalk is inadequate).

We discussed the Arcade Building (Thompson Block) and most agreed it wasn't worth saving. However, there was discussion about creating a building that replicated what the Arcade Building looked like originally – with three stories.

Knowlton-Risteen Building needs significant renovation to meet the needs of the library and its other current uses. Most participants believed that the building itself was not worth saving. If the Knowlton-Risteen Building is redeveloped or removed, people would like to keep the stained-glass window

The Upton Pizza Building – one person was of the opinion that it is the oldest building in the center and for that reason, must be preserved. The general consensus was that it could be torn down if the town owned it.

Everyone agreed that the PATCO Auto body shop building was not worth preserving.

Everyone agreed that 6 Main Street is not worth saving and that the United Parish Church should be preserved.

Regarding the kinds of buildings people seemed to like, one person objected to new brick buildings because the town hall is brick they felt that another brick building would detract from Town Hall. General consensus was in favor of Victorian looking buildings and against buildings that were not "old-looking".

The amenities = everyone wants benches, bike racks, bridges, and walking trails. Not in favor of a splash pad or food trucks.

Station 4, Open Space, Recreation and Neighborhood Connectivity

Participants drew on maps, and used stickie notes and stickers to identify key improvements for Open Space, Recreation and Neighborhood Connectivity

Summary

- Improve walkability of town center
- Reconfigure traffic flow to improve safety
- Expand connectivity to existing town parks and open space areas

- Beautify with plantings, improved sidewalks & by adding benches
- Add businesses inviting pedestrian use
- Develop a town center where people park once and then walk to multiple destinations
- Create other small park spaces in Center—examples, a dog park, or a sitting area in the space between Holy Angels Church and the brook where the dam quiets the road noise.

Detailed Notes

Open Space Session 1

1. Reviewed map of Upton showing floodplain area, wetland zones.
2. “Beautification” discussed.
 - a. Area around Church Street, Parking lot & Steam next to Town Hall & parking lot for United Parish said to have a “lot of trash” and should be cleaned & beautified with plantings.
 - b. Suggested close of part of Warren Street and improving with plantings, trees, clearing of stream bank.
 - c. Existing Sidewalks in poor condition and need to be both expanded and improved. (This was a *repeated* theme)
3. Connectivity
 - a. Direct access to Mill Pond
 - b. Bike trails – much opportunity to add. Discussed along side railroad tracks, roads leading to Kiwanis Beach, Westboro Road, etc.
 - c. Group agreed that connectivity by bike trails and/or walking trails to existing parks and recreation areas a plus for revitalizing center of town and town.
4. Recreation
 - a. Much discussion around parking lot and play area next to VFW. RE: Any possibility to purchase, trade land with VFW to improve parking and expand use/needs of families and children.
 - b. Dog Park – Any possibility? Perhaps Heritage Park, along water areas.
5. Common – How being used?
 - a. Heritage Day, Memorials
 - b. Suggestion to add more benches

- c. Agreement that revitalization efforts need to give pedestrians a reason to come to Town Center. Businesses like coffee shop would increase foot traffic.
 - d. Explore expansion of Town Common.
 - e. United Parish planning on improving approach to entry. Plantings, shortened steps.
 - f. *“Would love to come to town center, buy a smoothie, and take a walk”.*
6. Improve Intersection at Town Hall area. (easy agreement here; did not go into “how” beyond close part of Warren Street)
7. Improve Route 140 Road profile – Legal or Illegal to park along Rt 140?

Open Space Session 2

- 1. Recreation and Open Space
 - a. Need better pedestrian connectivity to Heritage Park. (Discussed feasibility of purchasing privately owned piece of land next to Rose Garden)
 - b. Can changes be made to Mill Pond to allow increased/better use. Weed removal?
 - c. Potential for walk along Center Brook. Would need railroad permission for any trail crossing railroad tracks.
 - d. Ideal: trails allowing eventual connection to the state forest.
- 50,000 people visit the State Forest every year. How can we build on this strength?
- 2. Briefly discussed use of former Holy Angels Church as center for Town activities.
 - a. Lease out for special events/organizations
 - b. Possible location for Historical Society museum
 - c. Grants may be available restore/renovate.
 - d. If renovation done by private developer, could place “Preservation Restriction” on process.
 - e. Library relocation to existing building with additional space provided by next door building. (“Arcade” now owned by Thompson family)

3. In discussing adjacent Thompson property, question came up about use of land as oil company. Trucks, oil tanks on property. Has 21-E been done? Quality of this land would impact any use of town owned properties in that area.

Station 5, Economic Development

Participants discussed economic development opportunities in Upton Center

Summary

Participants would like more economic activity in Upton Center. Upton Center is viewed as a key opportunity for economic development in Upton. It has a lot of potential and currently it is a bit of drag on the town.

Desirable: shared work space is a big need

Restrictions on businesses: no big box, no CVS, no national chains,

Incubator for new businesses—which could then graduate to the industrial park

Reinvented Traditional New England Center

Critical Mass of activity needed—town services are lynch pin.

Session 1

Number of residents in group: 7

Years in Upton: 1, 5, 20, 37 & 70 years

Commute locations: Cambridge, Westborough, Boylston, Waltham

Type of work: Physician, Chiropractor, Teacher, Consultant, Financial Industry

What would you like to see in Upton Center:

Community Garden

Natural Food Store

Performing Arts Center

Shared kitchen for new/growing business

Health/wellness based business

WeWork type business incubator

Physical Therapy

Farmers' Market/CO-OP

Affordable housing units

Less alcohol (if possible)

Retreat space

YMCA or swimming center

Where are you currently spending your money:

Milford/Bellingham Center/Uxbridge Hannafords/Hopkinton/Natick/146 Walmart

Thoughts on the church renovation:

Professional Space

Critical Catalyst to the regrowth

Co-op working space

Any other ideas:

Walking bridge over the brook

Landscape

Connect all the walking area

Better walkability

Session 2

Number of residents in group: 5

Years in Upton: Lifelong, Boomerang, 2 and 5 years

Commute locations: Natick, Stow, Waltham, Upton

Type of work: Landscape, Golf Pro, Military, Professor

What would you like to see in Upton Center:

Community Garden/Farmer's Market Co-Op

Performing Arts Center

Shared kitchen for new/growing business

Coffee shop

Bakery

Affordable housing units

Restaurants

Make it a more social center

Ice cream shop

Dog park

Where are you currently spending your money:

Milford/Westborough

Thoughts on the church renovation:

Reuse if we can but not focus so heavily on it being the catalyst

Critical Catalyst to the regrowth

Co-op working space

Any other ideas:

Connectivity is key

Focus on what all aged resident could utilize
Landscape!

Connect all the walking area

Better walkability

Incorporate the history and make it a community FOR Upton residents

Flexible space

Rose Gardens

Service registry to local trade businesses

Station 6, Activating Upton Center

Participants used post-it notes to develop a list of key elements of active Town Centers, then they prioritized the elements that are most essential to improve in Upton Center.

Summary

Residents of Upton would like the center to be a more active place, a recognizable town center where they can go to do things, meet people, and run into friends.

The lack of a town center is a significant problem for the Town's residents. Residents' quality of life is reduced because they need to leave town for most basic goods and services, and because they lack opportunities to make social connections with other residents of Upton.

Residents would like to keep their dollars in Upton and support the local opportunity, but there are not opportunities to do so

There are lots of ideas for how to activate Upton Center. Big picture categories

- More Organized Events
- Open Space Improvements, dog park, walking paths, updated playground, improved town common, pond access, splash pad or fountain
- Additional businesses, especially restaurants, cafes, coffee shop, ice cream, personal services, grocery or specialty food store, indoor sports/exercise facilities, brewery, craft making space
- Town facilities—build a community center in Upton Center, add (or publicize) public bathrooms
- Streetscape: improve sidewalks, beautify the center, add greenery, add benches, add covered seating, art, signage, calm traffic
- Places to live, add diverse housing types (apartments, condos, town houses, apartments over shops) for diverse residents (young, old, wealthy, lower income) and variety of affordability ranges (affordable, market rate).
- Improve walkability

- Improve the curb appeal of buildings and businesses, develop a cohesive look for Upton Center, make it a unique, attractive place with artsy features. Maintain the rural small town feel, and historic elements
- Make Upton Center welcoming to diverse people. Need to serve all ages and demographics at all events or businesses. Upton's population is segmented and needs a common meeting ground, a place to meet new people, run into people.
- Market Upton and Upton Center—People need to get acclimated to thinking of the Center as a place to go and do things. Need to know what is available now. Consider owning the brand "the most boring town in Massachusetts,"

Challenges in Upton:

- Loss of community from the 1980's
- Hard for new residents to meet people
- Nowhere to go, nothing to do
- Segmented population, the young stay with the young and the old stay with the old. Not much cross-pollination
- Lack of easy parking in Upton Center
- Storefronts are not visible.
- Lack of enforcement of blight bylaws
- Library is limited—hours, selection, missing programs for all ages
- Kiwanis beach is not living up to its potential

Station 7, Library/Senior Center (Community Center)

Participants discussed the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the current Library and Senior Center and discussed possibilities for blending the services and building a new facility for them.

Library/Senior Center (Community Center)

Summary

Library and Senior Center are exploring blending services and facilities. They are looking for input from residents about what they want from the departments and any future facilities for them.

Detailed Notes

Session 1

Long-time residents, knew the problems with the Risteen building and dove into solutions

1. Shared community building
2. Renovate Knowlton-Risteen

3. Look at Holy Angels possibly with an addition for the Senior Center or the Library
4. Build a new building at the Town owned Westborough Road site (8-10 acres)
5. Explore use of the Trask land

Looking for guidance from the Town

Session 2

Younger, newer residents

Discussed what library and council on aging do. Feedback: need to clarify and publicize what town programs exist

These residents often go to other towns for the library because the hours are more convenient, programs are more extensive and facilities are nicer.

Library current has lots of events: children's story time, movie nights, adult book group

Lacking teenage space—a young adult space which most libraries have now.

Senior Center is currently offices plus one room which is shared by multiple conflicting uses. In the one room there can simultaneously be someone providing tax services, meals on wheels, exercise class, and a toe nail clinic. Need more space and separate spaces.

Want to provide services to younger seniors, places to meet people

Work with all Town Departments

Library location poll—Does the Library need to be in Town Center:

15 -it should be in Town Center

5—it doesn't matter if it is in the Town Center

Concern about Town Center location—is there adequate space?

"A goal of Town Center Revitalization is to bring the community together"

United Parish Church is currently functioning as a community center. Can we partner together with the Town.

Upton Center Visioning Project

Meeting Notes—Working Group Meeting #3, 4/01/19

Next Steps:

Dodson & Flinker will:

1. Revise the Vision Plan
2. Work on the Final Report
3. Prepare for final meeting

Review of Project Process

The group discussed the project process.

Gene Bernat gave an overview of why we are undertaking a visioning process:

- The Town owns several properties in the Center that it is not currently using to their highest potential
- The Town does not have the capacity to do redevelopment of those properties
- Adjacent properties on Grove Street are for sale
- The Town could issue an RFP that would enable a developer to consider redeveloping the private properties and the surplus town properties together. The RFP would be based on the vision with details of massing, density, design guidelines, etc.
- Where the zoning is not compatible with the Vision and the RFP, it should be changed.
- Potential developers need to know what the Town wants. What is “yes.”

Identification of areas of consensus

The group worked together to identify topics around which they had achieved a consensus of opinion. They agreed upon the following:

Goals for Revitalization of Upton Center Identified by the Working Group

- Slow traffic in Upton Center
- Improve sidewalks
- Improve the function of existing open spaces and connect to existing open spaces
- Maintain village scale and building types. New buildings should be no more than 3 stories.
- Site the Library/ Upton Center and Historical Society Museum within walking distance of Town Hall, if possible. If possible means if there is a site that is adequate to meet the needs of the facilities.
- Attract businesses that are local serving and that result in positive tax revenue.
- Provide adequate parking

- [Under consideration] Provide housing with diverse apartment sizes and costs that meet the needs of all of Upton's people, including some units that qualify for the state's subsidized housing inventory.

Review of Vision Plans

Vision Statement

Dodson & Flinker shared the following draft of Vision Statement:

Draft Upton Center Vision Statement

Upton Center is a reinvented Traditional New England Village Center and the heart of community life in the Town. An attractive mix of old and new buildings rings the common. The largest buildings are the historic civic and religious structures that occupy the most prominent positions aligned with views as people enter the town along key roads. Newer buildings have a cohesive look and feel. They are generally small-scale with traditional styling. Most are painted white with wood siding and trim reminiscent of the Town's Greek Revival and Victorian era heyday. New buildings provide spaces for the new restaurants, cafes and local-service businesses that have opened. Above the businesses and on the edges of the Center, apartments with a range of sizes and costs are home to new and long-time residents of Upton. Drivers slow when they enter Upton Center on Route 140 and enjoy seeing the place and people out and about. Visitors to the center often park once and stroll around to visit the library, go to an event, buy something to eat, and sit on the common or another small park, or they take a longer walk to Heritage Park or Kiwanis Beach. They stroll paths along Center Brook, or use sidewalks that are safe, well-connected, and attractive with high quality paving materials, many places to sit, street trees, lush planters, and decorative light fixtures. While in town, residents often run into someone they know. Upton Center expresses the community spirit and rural, small town character of Upton.

The working group supported the draft Vision Statement

Vision Graphics

Dodson & Flinker presented several alternative illustrated plans for a Vision for Upton Center.

The group discussed the draft Vision concepts and identified a preferred Vision.

Upton Center Visioning Project

Meeting Notes—Working Group Meeting #4, 4/08/19

Next Steps:

Dodson & Flinker will:

1. Finish the Vision Plan
2. Finish the Final Report

Working Group will:

1. Create a website for the Visioning project
2. Do outreach to build support for the work we've done together

Review of Revised Vision Plans

Vision Statement

The group made minor revisions to the Vision Statement and endorsed it

Vision Graphics

Dodson & Flinker presented refined alternative illustrated plans for a Vision for Upton Center.

The group discussed the draft Vision concepts and identified a preferred Vision.

Goals

The Working Group continued their consensus-based discussion of Goals.

They agreed on the following **Goals for Revitalization of Upton Center:**

- Slow traffic in Upton Center.
- Improve sidewalks in Upton Center.
- Improve the function of existing open spaces and connect to existing open spaces.
- Maintain village scale and building types. New buildings should be no more than three stories.
- Site the Library/Upton Center and Historical Society Museum within walking distance of Town Hall, if possible. If possible, means if there is a site that is adequate to meet the needs of the facilities.

- Attract businesses that are local serving and that result in positive tax revenue.
- Provide adequate parking.
- Provide housing with diverse unit sizes and costs that meet the needs of all of Upton's people.

One Goal was supported by a strong majority of the Working Group, but several members chose to block consensus on it because they felt it was not strongly worded enough to guarantee that Holy Angels Church would be preserved:

- The town has a strong preference for rehabilitating and reusing the Holy Angels Church.

Subsequent to this meeting the consultant for the project modified the goals to improve their wording. The goals were circulated to Working Group members and their comments were incorporated. The final goals are:

- Activate Upton Center and make it the heart of community life in the Town
- Slow traffic and improve intersections in Upton Center.
- Improve the safety, comfort and connectivity of sidewalks in Upton Center.
- Improve the function of Upton Center's open spaces and connect them to other neighboring open spaces.
- Maintain the Center's village scale and building types. New buildings should be no more than three stories.
- Site the proposed Library/Community Center and Historical Society Museum within walking distance of Town Hall, if possible. If possible, means if there is a site that is adequate to meet the needs of the facilities.
- Attract businesses that meet local needs and that generate jobs and tax revenue.
- Provide adequate parking.
- Provide housing with diverse unit sizes and costs that meet the needs of all of Upton's people.
- Act on the town's strong preference for rehabilitating and reusing the Holy Angels Church. [Note: the working group did not achieve consensus on this goal]

Outreach

Dave Gruber gave an overview of the website he plans to developed and solicited help with its creation.