

Sudbury Center Improvement Plan

Interim Report



Prepared for:

The Sudbury Center Improvement Advisory Committee

Prepared by:

The Cecil Group Team

June 21, 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Planning Context.....	3
Plan Initiation.....	3
EVALUATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS.....	3
History.....	3
Archeology/ /Historic Resources.....	4
Existing Land Use.....	6
Civic Institutions.....	7
Traffic and Roadway Conditions.....	7
Open Space and Environmental Resources.....	10
Infrastructure Summary.....	11
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS.....	11
COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	12
Summary of Community Goals.....	13
Community Objectives.....	13
RECOMMENDED DESIGN PROCESS.....	16

APPENDIX

Workshop Participants Notes Recorded on Aerial Plots and Existing Conditions Plans

INTRODUCTION

Planning Context

The Sudbury Center Improvement Plan (the plan) has been undertaken by the Town to establish a coherent direction for the treatment of this key district and to focus expenditures on those elements that will best address functional issues without damaging the visual character of this historic location.

The plan is being developed by a consultant team composed of The Cecil Group, Inc., a professional planning and design firm, SEA Consultants, Inc., transportation planners and PAL, Inc., a historic resources consultant. The plan is being developed in cooperation with the Sudbury Center Improvement Advisory Committee (SCIAC / the Committee) a volunteer stakeholder group established by the Board of Selectmen to direct the planning process and to provide a liaison with the larger community.

The Interim Report outlines the progress of the planning effort to date and identifies the historic context of the district, existing site conditions, traffic operations and community goals and objectives and proposes a design approach for the Sudbury Center Improvement Plan.

Plan Initiation

During the initial phase of the project, meetings were held with the Committee to establish an approach and schedule for the work and its process for its execution. The consultant team conducted several site visits and collected baseline information on the area such as surveyed plans, aerial photos and assessor's data. Team members conducted interviews with stakeholder groups and town agencies, undertook historic research, collected traffic counts and analyzed data.

Community Visioning Workshop

The team attended a public Visioning Workshop on May 31st, 2006 hosted by the Committee to understand the issues, sensitivities, and wishes of the larger community. At the workshop, the team described initial impressions of Sudbury Center's existing conditions and the opportunities the district held as well as constraints that should be overcome. The meeting allowed the community to express its feelings on the priority order of the issues and objectives for the project.

EVALUATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

History

The rolling topography above a rich flood plain flanking the Sudbury River offered excellent hunting, fishing and gathering opportunities for the native population during the Pre-Contact Period. The area was probably settled by the Nipmucks, an inland rather than a coastal tribe. Diseases brought by the first European explorers decimated the coastal and inland tribes in the early Seventeenth Century and eliminated whole settlements allowing English farmers to settle on agricultural land. First farms in this period were sited on well-drained terraces overlooking the river flood plain with some limited settlement on the rocky upland areas. Farming was a subsistence operation with limited local exports of farm products and lumber to East Sudbury – now called Wayland. Trails cut by the native population became early roads, but poor access and fear of the native population constrained the rate of settlement.

In April, 1676, farms in the area were attacked and burned by native raiding parties during King Phillip's War. Even with the conclusion of this conflict, settlement expanded only slowly. After 1720, the radial road pattern evident today in Sudbury Center was established and an estimated 500 people lived in Sudbury by the time of the American Revolution. The Town Hall was built on land owned by First Parish Church on the west side of Concord Road in 1845 and The Grange Hall was built in 1846. Farm products continue to be consumed locally until transportation in the area improved with the arrival of the railroad in 1871.

With the construction of the Old Colony Railroad connecting Concord to Framingham through Sudbury, the opportunity to ship agricultural products to the markets of Boston, Worcester and Concord was created. Sudbury's population did not increase markedly during this period, but some consolidation of small homesteads into larger farms occurred. Some of this consolidation took the form of small country estates established by wealthy Bostonians near Sudbury Center.

In the Early Modern Period (1915 – 1940), colonial roads were upgraded to accommodate motor vehicles, market farming continued to increase in economic value and the number of residents began to increase during the 1930's. Town Hall was destroyed by fire in 1929 and was rebuilt in its current location (1932).

The completion of Route 128 in 1951 and The Massachusetts Turnpike in 1965, increased automobile ownership combined with FHA mortgages accelerated the rate of suburbanization after World War II. As farmland began to be converted to residential subdivisions, Sudbury's population began to rise sharply – 1,750 residents in 1940; 7,500 residents in 1960 and 17,160 residents in 2004.

Archeological / Historical Resources in Sudbury Center

Predictive Statement: Pre-Contact Period Cultural Resources

The results of background research indicate that the Sudbury center project area is located outside a core area of Native American settlement that was oriented to the Sudbury River. Based on preliminary records search including a review of MHC files, there are no known pre-contact period Native American archaeological sites in the Sudbury Center district. The largest

concentrations of known archaeological sites are located in a core area of Native American settlement along the Sudbury River and its extensive marshes/river meadow in Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge about 1 ½ to two miles east of Sudbury Center. The archaeological sites in this core area span over 8000 years and range in age from the Early Archaic to Late Woodland period.

There are unconfirmed reports of pre-contact period Native American artifacts being found within a crawl space beneath the First Parish Church and near the horse sheds. Two Native American graves are alleged to be in Mt Pleasant cemetery. These reports will need to be researched further through informant interviews.

An environmental setting like that present in the Sudbury Center district could contain isolated pieces of pre-contact period Native American cultural material like chipping debris from making a stone tool or a few chipped stone tools (projectile points, bifacial tool blades) used during hunting,

trapping and other resource collection tasks. These artifacts would most likely occur on well-drained soils near the margins of wooded wetlands or small seasonal streams. There has been a long history of landscape modification during the historic/modern period that could have removed or altered any pre-contact period Native American archaeological sites. For example, the Heritage Park constructed south of the town common and Old Sudbury Road (Route 27) in the mid 1970s modified an area along the borders of a red maple swamp that could have contained the type of small, low visibility Native American archaeological resources described above

In general, the district would be ranked as having low to moderate sensitivity for Native American archaeological sites. Based on the results of background research, the project area has limited potential to contain other, previously unknown Native American archaeological sites. Most of the project area displays extensive evidence of previous disturbance. The few remaining intact sections of the project area have soils that are not well-drained or steep slopes and it is unlikely that any Native American archaeological sites are present in the project area. No zones of high sensitivity for pre-contact period Native American cultural resources were noted within the project area. A few small zones of moderate archaeological sensitivity were noted in the northern end of the project area (First Parish Church lawn) and near the intersection of Goodman's Hill and Concord roads.

The stratification of the Sudbury Center district into zones of sensitivity for pre - contact period Native American archaeological resources is shown in Figure 1.

Predictive Statement: Post-Contact Period Cultural Resources

Based on both background research and a walkover inspection, several parts of the Sudbury Center district project area have the potential to contain subsurface archaeological components associated either with current standing structures or buildings that once stood in the district.

In the center of the district, the open lawn of the First Parish Church property may contain the most intact soil horizons with minimal alteration from landscaping or grading. It could contain archaeological deposits associated with the construction and removal of an earlier 18th century meetinghouse or the construction of the existing church (ca 1797). The former location of the original 1847 Town Hall at the east end of the First Parish Church horse sheds may contain remnants of the foundation or footing for this mid nineteenth century structure.

There is some potential for archaeological remains of public facilities that once stood on the Town Common (SUD HA 19). The open common in the center of the Sudbury Center district once contained a district school and band stand in the nineteenth to early 20th century (?). Shallow footings for these structures may survive within the present common. A granite horse-watering trough and hay scale were also situated on the common in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. A footing or other remains such as wood, ceramic or cast iron pipe that carried water to the trough may survive. The existing town common has apparently been subjected to episodes of landscaping and the survival potential of any archaeological component will depend on the depth and extent of alteration caused by this activity.

The sloping lawn in front of the Loring Parsonage and small portions of the Hosmer House lot (yard areas) may also contain relatively intact subsoils with archeological deposits (domestic refuse) associated with the 18th and 19th century occupancy of these historic standing structures. The small patch of open lawn in the Grinnell Park parcel on the western side of the Old Sudbury Road (Route 27)/Concord Road intersection also has the potential to contain archaeological components. A foundation or footing associated with the 19th century Parmenter/Garfield Store and an attached barn or shed may survive in Grinnell Park depending on the extent of previous grading, filling or other alteration. The two historic properties (Sawin and Bent houses on 1889 map) located west of the First Parish Church consist of standing structures with surrounding yard areas that appear to have remained intact. The front yard areas of these two lots bordering Hudson Road have the potential to contain archaeological deposits associated with 18th and 19th century occupancy of these houses.

In the southern portion of the Sudbury Center district, near the intersection of Goodman's Hill Road and Concord Road, the former location of the 1839 Sudbury Evangelical Church/Music Hall (SUD HA 11) is now occupied by a house (former Morse residence). The former Jonas Tower Blacksmith Shop (SUD HA 18) site is also occupied by an existing house at 285 Concord Road (former Spiller property in 1959). It is unlikely that any archaeological evidence of these two structures (Evangelical Church/Music Hall, Tower Blacksmith Shop) has survived.

At the northern end of the Sudbury center district, the fieldstone foundation for the Mary B. Hunt House (SUD HA 32) formerly located on the north side of Concord Road just outside Mt Pleasant Cemetery may be a potentially important archaeological resource but has been partially buried by the recent cemetery expansion. MHC has required an archaeological dig at the site. The well associated with the house is still visible.

The stratification of the Sudbury Center district into zones of sensitivity for historic/modern period archaeological resources is shown in Figure 2.

Summary and Recommendations

The archaeological sensitivity assessment determined that most of the Sudbury Center district project area consists of modified land that has contained a mix of residential, commercial and civic structures since the early eighteenth century. The construction and demolition or removal of these buildings and other facilities likely resulted in varying degrees of alteration to the original topography. However, there are parts of the project area with some probability to contain archaeological deposits associated with either pre-contact period Native American or post - contact/historic period cultural resources.

Further archaeological investigation of the Sudbury Center Improvement project area may be needed depending on final design of proposed changes to the intersection of Concord and

Hudson/Old Sudbury roads (Route 27). If any zones of high to moderate archaeological sensitivity will be affected by the proposed improvements, then these portions of the project area should be subjected to an intensive (locational) archaeological survey.

The Revolutionary War Cemetery and family tombs bordering both the north and south sides of Concord Road in the northern portion of the Sudbury Center Improvement project area should be avoided.

Existing Land Use

Sudbury Center is located on an upland plateau near the geographic center of Sudbury and is linked to adjacent towns by Route 27 and Concord Road. The center is a largely residential district with many attractive, historic, single-family, wood-frame structures on landscaped lots. The town center is also distinguished by several important civic and religious institutions of outstanding historical, architectural and visual merit.

A few industrial, commercial or retail establishments exist just west of the town center.

Civic Institutions

Sudbury Town Hall - After Town Hall was destroyed in a fire in 1929, it was rebuilt (1932) in the Greek Revival Style. Public parking is available behind Town Hall and is accessible by a one-way drive on the north side of the building.

Grange Hall – Also demonstrating some Greek Revival elements, the Grange Hall was originally built in 1846.

The Hosmer House, close to the intersection, was once the site of the local post office and general store. The oldest structure in the center is the Loring Parsonage.

Churches - First Parish Church and its associated carriage shed is a landmark structure on a beautifully grassy knoll overlooking the center. Its steeple and clock is visible from most of the roads approaching the area.

The Presbyterian Church, built in 1896, is graced by a memorable spire and forms a gateway to the center for visitors approaching the center from the north.

Traffic and Roadway Conditions

Efficient traffic flow and safety are both important components of a good transportation network and a ‘walkable’ community. Sudbury residents have made clear their concern about the volume and speed of traffic in the center and for the safety of pedestrians on streets in the center.

Roadway / Sidewalk Configuration - The intersection of Concord Road, Hudson Road and Old Sudbury Road in Sudbury Center is not a typical four legged intersection. Hudson Road and Old Sudbury Road both run east-west. Concord Road which runs north-south does not properly align at the intersection; it shifts to the east as you travel north through the intersection. Concord Road on the north side has a triangular island that allows two-way traffic on both sides creating an independent intersection about 200 feet southeast of the main intersection.

The pedestrian route in the area is not well signed and confusing to a newcomer. There is a meandering sidewalk that travels through the study area. If walking from Hudson Road to Concord Road north, the existing sidewalk brings you east along Hudson Road, southeast through the park on the corner of Hudson and Concord, crosses Concord about 150 feet south of the intersection, north up Concord to the intersection, east on Old Sudbury Road, crosses Old Sudbury at the Town Hall, through the Town Hall parking area, along the back side of the cemetery and back onto a sidewalk on Concord Road north of the intersection.

Traffic Data Collection - Considering the site characteristics of Sudbury Center, it has been determined that the study area is defined by the area bounded by Concord Road, Hudson Road, Peakham Road and Old Lancaster Road. This area covers the operation of the intersection at the historic center and the available informal bypass via Old Lancaster and Peakham Road.

Manual turning movement (MTM) counts were collected at the following five intersections. Weekday counts have been collected between the hours of 6:30 AM – 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM. Weekend counts have been collected between the hours of 10:00 AM – 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM.

1. Concord Road / Old Sudbury Road / Hudson Road
2. Concord Road / Old Lancaster Road
3. Hudson Road / Peakham Road
4. Hudson Road / Maynard Road
5. Peakham Road / Old Lancaster Road

Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATR) have recorded the average daily traffic (ADT) over a 24-hour period at the following six locations.

1. Concord Road just north of the town center
2. Concord Road just south of the town center
3. Old Sudbury Road just east of the town center
4. Hudson Road between Peakham Road and Concord Road
5. Peakham Road
6. Old Lancaster Road between Peakham Road and Concord Road

The study area was observed numerous times during field visits and the data collected was analyzed to determine the operations of each intersection.

NOTE: Accident data has not been obtained yet – it will be analyzed when received.

Observed Study Area Traffic Patterns

General Traffic Conditions: Area roadways all converge on the Sudbury Center intersection of Concord Road with Old Sudbury Road and Hudson Road creating a “choke point” for most local traffic. Weekday peak periods were observed on average at 7:30 A.M. in the morning and 4:45 P.M. in the evening. Near peak levels are seen over much of the day. Both peak hours feature similar levels of traffic, with the morning slightly higher. Weekend peak hour traffic is approximately 70% of that experienced during the weekday peaks.

Use of Old Lancaster Road as a bypass: When congestion begins to occur at the Sudbury Center intersection, traffic starts to spill onto the less heavily traveled local roads to avoid the intersection. This is borne out through comparison of the weekend peak, when the intersection

handles approximately 90% of the area traffic, with the weekday peak, when the intersection handles approximately 75% of the area traffic accompanied with an increase in demand on the minor streets. Significant increases of approximately 150 vehicles per hour are apparent along Old Lancaster Road eastbound during the morning and westbound during the evening.

Hudson Road Congestion: The Hudson Road link between Maynard Road and Concord Road carries a significant volume of commuter driven demand during the peaks. This demand is approximately 1200 vehicles per hour on one direction, 600 on the opposite direction, alternating with the commute. This creates a tendency for Hudson Road to be queued over the entire length of this link at times, particularly during the morning peak. This in turn, significantly impacts the operation of the downstream intersections.

Other observations: All locations studied exhibited levels of driver frustration evidenced by aggressive operating. There is active recreational pedestrian presence in the area. Pedestrian accommodations at each of the locations need significant improvement.

Concord Road/Old Sudbury Road/Hudson Road Intersection

The Sudbury Center intersection today is controlled with what appear to be pre-timed traffic signals. These pre-timed signals operate one phase for each directional axis, with a slight advance provided for the northbound and eastbound approaches. The intersection handles significant through volumes on each approach and a high volume of northbound and eastbound left turns. There is also a secondary roadway in front of Town Hall that serves additional turning movements between Old Sudbury Road and Concord Road to the north.

Several problems were observed at this intersection. The post-mounted equipment appears old and mismatched, and inadequately positioned. Physical space for turning movements within the intersection is limited and awkward, creating difficulty for motorists, indecision and excessive slowing of movement, causing inefficiency in intersection. Pre-timed signals are incapable of taking advantage of fluctuations in demand, as newer signals using roadway detectors are. The left turn demand is consistently high for both the northbound and eastbound approaches. A significantly high volume of 407 vehicles were counted making the eastbound left turn during the morning peak. There is currently a lack of pedestrian signals, which is a deficiency that will likely need to be remedied with any proposed future improvements. Inclusion of pedestrian signals, however, will decrease the efficiency of the signals by taking away time currently used to process vehicular movements. Traffic tends to form queues of at least ten vehicles on the northbound, southbound and eastbound approaches during the morning and weekend peak periods, and on all approaches during the evening peak. Traffic also exhibited many incidences of directional confusion, evidenced by the observance of many turnaround maneuvers using the secondary roadway in front of the Town Hall. Turning movements to driveways in the vicinity of the intersection are also reported to create backups also negatively affecting intersection performance.

Concord Road/Old Lancaster Road/Union Avenue Intersection

Issues at this intersection center on the awkward geometrics and disproportionate demand. This intersection is controlled with stop signs on the Old Lancaster Road and Union Avenue approaches. The geometric characteristics feature an offset between the intersecting roadways and a skewed or curved approach angle for the Concord Road north-westbound approach. The skewed and offset geometry creates difficult sight lines for drivers and unpredictable turning movements. This intersection featured the most significant display of driver frustration of the

intersections studied. Union Avenue delivers similar and often higher volume than the Concord Road north-westbound approach and receives consistently higher volumes from Concord Road southbound. Union Avenue exhibits a failing level of service in each of the peak periods. This leads to excessive queuing, which then creates additional demand and necessitated restrictions on Pheasant Avenue. Old Lancaster fails in the morning peak, likely due to the additional demand introduced by vehicles using Old Lancaster to bypass the Center intersection.

Peakham Road/Hudson Road Intersection

This intersection features delays and queues resulting from interaction with the heavily burdened Hudson Road link. This “T” intersection is controlled with a stop sign on the Peakham Road approach. There is a driveway with insignificant volume located immediately opposite to Peakham Road, and one located immediately east of Peakham Road (Village Green). Peakham Road exhibits a failing level of service in each of the peak periods and long queues during the morning and evening peaks.

Maynard Road/Hudson Road Intersection

This is another intersection featuring delays and queues from interaction with the Hudson Road link compounded with increases in turning traffic directly proportional to the use of Old Lancaster Road as a bypass of the Center intersection. This “T” intersection is controlled with a stop sign on the Maynard Road approach with one lane for each turning movement. The Maynard Road left turn exhibits a failing or near failing level of service in each of the peak periods and long queues during the morning and evening peaks. Maynard Road right turn volume increases proportionately during the morning peak with the apparent use of Old Lancaster Road as a bypass. A similar increase is seen in the evening for the left turns from Hudson Road onto Maynard Road.

Peakham Road/Old Lancaster Road Intersection

This intersection is controlled with a stop sign on each approach, performing reasonably well with the exception of the morning peak. This period exhibits heavy demand from Peakham Road northbound and higher eastbound volume resulting from the morning use of Old Lancaster Road as a bypass. As a result of this characteristic, the morning eastbound and northbound approaches operate with a failing level of service.

Open Space and Environmental Resources

Public Open Space Facilities - Heritage Park is a well-maintained recreation space that wraps around the southeast quadrant of the center behind the Hosmer House. The park is a gardenesque facility with lawns, a pond wetlands, fern beds and flowering trees that is an attractive community asset in all seasons.

Grinnell Park at the southwest corner of the intersection, is centered on the town’s memorial to its war dead. The space consists of a sloping lawn panel crossed by a sidewalk and defined by flowering trees and shrubs. The property is maintained as a public garden by a volunteer community group.

The field and playground at the Noyes Schools is the only active recreation facility in the district and is heavily used by youth baseball teams and their parents and friends who come to observe

the games in warm weather. This facility brings more activity to Sudbury Center than perhaps any other except church services on Sunday.

The Town Common is actually located on land owned by the First Parish Church. Though surrounded by roads and driveways, the tree-shaded green is an attractive forecourt setting for Town Hall and the Grange Hall and is well used on important civic or ceremonial occasions.

Established in 1716, the Revolutionary War Cemetery is on the east side of Concord Road and is the site of many of the earliest burials in the town. Some of the ornately carved slate headstones are excellent examples of colonial funerary art.

Mount Pleasant Cemetery is located west of Concord Road, just north of First Parish Church. The cemetery is situated at the top of a drumlin overlooking the center. The Revolutionary War Memorial was erected in 1896 and is in a picturesque setting on the slope of the drumlin also facing the center. Old Town Cemetery and New Town Cemetery are located nearby.

Wetlands – A small stream south of Old Sudbury Road flows through Heritage Park and drains to Hop Brook and ultimately to the Sudbury River. A small pond is located in Heritage Park and adds an important visual amenity to that facility.

Tourism Assets – Many subtle elements in the center may be of interest to tourists. The entire historic district is an attractive visual complex that exhibits a strong sense of place unmarred by discordant elements such as overhead wires and inappropriate lighting. The Hosmer House is a popular destination for residents and tourists when it is open to the public during holiday periods. A program of shade tree planting to enhance fall color at selected locations could one day, make Sudbury Center a brief stop on the autumn foliage tour.

The historic cemeteries are in very good conditions and are interesting links to our colonial past. Many visitors come to New England and the towns west of Boston specifically to see heritage sites. The fact that Sudbury sent many men to Concord in April 1775, relates directly to this interest and could be emphasized.

Infrastructure Summary

Water Supply - The public water supply system is maintained by the Sudbury Water District. The system, which is available to all properties in Sudbury Center, is adequate under current demand conditions, in regard to pressure, supply, and quality.

Drainage - Sudbury Center is in the Sudbury River drainage basin. Land in the center slopes in all directions from a high point in Mount Pleasant Cemetery near Concord Road to various small brooks and drainways and ultimately to the Sudbury River. Storm drainage does not appear to be a significant problem in the center, except for a few locations with local ponding during significant storm events.

There is evidence of some roadside erosion on both sides of Concord Road near First Parish Church and on the south side of Old Sudbury Road due to a lack of curbing at these locations.

Sidewalks – Where they exist, sidewalks are generally narrow and are constructed of bituminous concrete without curbs. Sidewalks in Sudbury Center exist only on:

-
-
- The south side of Hudson Road west of the center
 - The south side of Old Sudbury Road east of the intersection
 - On the east side of Concord Road south of the intersection

Crosswalks – Crosswalks are painted on the road surface and normal wear has rendered them indistinct. The crosswalk at the center intersection is located well behind the stop line on Concord Road and is hazardous due to inadequate sight distance for motorists and pedestrians alike.

Lighting – Outside of the center street lighting consists of highway-type lights (‘cobra head’) mounted on wood utility poles. Close to the center, ornamental, incandescent lanterns in the ‘colonial’ style light the walks and road edges.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In an effort to understand the issues and concerns of key district stakeholders, members of the consultant team interviewed:

- Sudbury Police Chief - Peter Fadgen
- Town Clerk - Barbara Siira
- Peter Noyes School Principal - Annette Doyle,
- Sudbury Day Organizer - Lisa Barth
- 4th of July Parade Marshall - Joe Bausk
- Memorial Day Parade Marshall - Peter Harvell,
- Sudbury Historical Society - Lee Swanson
- First Parish Church

Unsurprisingly, these residents cited traffic volume and operational issues such as turning movements as principal concerns.

Traffic Volume -

- A large component of traffic volume is local traffic
- Many parents drop off their children at the 700-student Noyes School. Traffic volume drops “by half” when school is not in session
- A high school game day can cause a mile backup on Concord Road
- West-bound traffic can back up Old Sudbury Road as far as the Methodist Church during the morning rush hour (7:30 – 9:15 AM) and afternoon rush hour (3:00 – 5:30 PM)
- Eastbound traffic on Hudson Road can back up to the synagogue during the rush hours
- Typically, only three northbound vehicles on Concord Road wishing to turn west on Hudson Road can pass through the intersection on a single signal phase. When this happens some motorists continue north through the intersection, turn right in front of Town Hall and west on Old Sudbury Road through the intersection
- Misalignment of the intersection causes some traffic “friction”
- If the Village Green development is converted to residential condominiums, vehicles in the parking lot will find it very difficult to exit onto Hudson Road
- A considerable volume of traffic cuts through Old Lancaster Road to Peakham Road during rush hours

Safety -

- Eastbound vehicles on Old Sudbury Road in the morning drive on the right hand grass verge to get around parents turning into Noyes School driveway from Old Sudbury Road
- Northbound vehicles on Concord Road also drive on the right hand grass verge to get around parents turning into the First Parish Church lot
- Crosswalks are poorly marked – Crosswalk at the center intersection is a particular hazard
- Sidewalks in some locations are in poor repair

COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Overview

The Committee felt that it is important that the plan be rooted in the specific values of Sudbury residents. They further felt that a critical element of the planning process must be to solicit public opinion and to discuss the goals to be pursued and objectives to be accomplished in achieving a Sudbury Center that reflects their values.

The Visioning Workshop was hosted by the Committee on May 31, 2006 from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. at the Sudbury Town Hall. At this workshop, the consultant team presented an overview of the existing conditions in the center, observations on the issues to be resolved and opportunities to be realized in developing the improvement plan. After the presentation, approximately 90 workshop attendees divided into four workgroups to identify issues in the study area and goals and objectives for the improvement effort.

The community's recorded goals and objectives will serve as the guiding principles for the design recommendations developed as part of the improvement plan.

Summary of Community Goals

From comments made by the stakeholders and with the guidance of the Committee, a list of project goals was developed and subsequently refined. Goals reflect the principal issues and concerns of Sudbury residents and provide direction on the preferred approach to the design of improvements needed within the district. The goals for the Sudbury Center Improvement Plan should be considered as the broad strategy for attaining a successful outcome in the eyes of the community.

- *Preserve and protect historic, cultural and natural resources in the center*
- *Improve safety and accessibility for all those that use Sudbury Center*
- *Improve traffic flow, but not traffic speed, through the center*
- *Protect the existing scale and visual character of the center*
- *Establish a clear sense of the town center as a civic location*

Community Objectives

The objectives for the improvement plan should be thought of as the specific tactics (or the road map) for attaining the plan goals. After lists of potential improvements were assembled, each

workshop participant was provided with seven *green dots* to identify his or her most important objectives. Through this “budgeting” process, the most important improvement plan objectives were identified, - *i.e. the ones with the most green dots*.

Participants were also provided with one black dot. The black dot was placed next to a specific action the individual felt was incompatible with community values and should be ‘vetoed’.

All of the objectives identified below have been divided into specific categories that roughly correspond to the goals. The categories include heritage / preservation, pedestrian safety, circulation, open space and visual character. The following lists summarize the objectives that were discussed during the workshop. The items gathering the most votes are shown in **bold**.

Heritage / Preservation

Green Dots:

- **Preserve rural character (23)**
- **Protection of historic assets and spaces should be given high priority when assessing roadway alignment alternatives (18)**
- Village green historically had retail and if it becomes residential where will you go to get the paper (7)
- Develop “Sudbury History Trail” - self-guided walking tour (6 green, 2 black)
- Protect cemetery headstones from Concord Road traffic (5)
- Develop program to interpret historic assets (2)
- Encourage tourism and visitors from adjacent areas through promotion and marketing of Sudbury’s village character and heritage events (2)
- To extent possible, identify visible and buried historic assets (1)

Black Dots:

- **Encourage tourism and visitors from adjacent areas through promotion and marketing of Sudbury’s village character and heritage events (18 black)**

Open Space

Green Dots:

- **Create linked open space system connected by pedestrian walks (16)**
- Inventory open space resources in the center to determine role, usage, and opportunities (6)
- Preserve and protect ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands (4)
- Preserve and protect heritage areas such as cemeteries (4)
- Increase public awareness of open space assets in the center (3)
- Develop appropriate open space signage system (3)
- Review existing individual spaces in center for opportunities to enhance the larger spatial experience (1)
- Coordinate efforts of town departments and citizen interest groups on maintenance and promotion of open spaces (1)

Black Dots:

- Increase public awareness of open space assets in the center (1)

Circulation

Green Dots:

- **Recommend roadway alignment and cross-section improvements to improve traffic movement, but not traffic speed (21)**
- **Recommend signal phasing changes, if appropriate (18)**
- **Recommend possible alternate entries/exits for local traffic destinations/generators (12)**
- Review schedules of local traffic generators for congestion impacts (9)
- Study existing roadway conditions, assess peak flows, movements and directions (8)
- Improve traffic flow in Sudbury Center (8)
- Recommend signage and striping improvements to improve flow (5)
- Main problem is cross left turns on Route 27 (3)
- Improve traffic lights – do in phases if it is not economically feasible to do the improvements all at once (2)
- Review curb cuts in center for possible consolidation (1)
- Improve traffic flow on Sudbury Center roadways (1)
- Turning issues (0)

Black Dots:

- Review parking regulations, if appropriate (3)
- If you increase capacity they will come (1)

Pedestrian Safety

Green Dots:

- **Improve convenience and safety for pedestrians through better sidewalks and more visible crosswalks (22)**
- **Review utility of traffic calming techniques, such as textured crosswalks (15)**
- Acknowledge community gathering spots in pedestrian circulation system (6)
- Align sidewalks with desired movements of pedestrians (4)
- Wheelchair, stroller, and cycling needs should to be addressed (4)
- Add destinations (4)
- Kids need crossing guards at all major road crossings! (3)
- Cycle-ability – town does not provide bussing for children who live less than two miles from the school (3)
- Improve walk-ability in Sudbury Center (5)
- Make sidewalks universally accessible (1)

Visual Character

Green Dots:

- **Preserve the spatial character and simple landscape design of an early Nineteenth Century agricultural community (30)**
- **Relocate unfortunate visual elements, such as signal control box / transformer (17)**
- **Individual home owners should be encouraged to install appropriate walkway and carriage lights (12)**
- **Street lights should be adequate to enhance safety in public places; should be appropriately scaled and should provide visual detail in daylight (10)**
- Enhance the character of the Town Common as a civic place (9)

-
-
- Implement streetscape improvements, including the addition / removal / up-limbing of trees, repairing of walls in the center, at the cemeteries and on the approach roads (8)
 - The Town should encourage a holistic approach to lighting in the town center including Town Hall, driveways and parking lot lights (7)
 - Look for opportunities to organize the spatial experience in the center with simple landscaping – screen parking lots, reinforce pedestrian routes and shape important places (7)
 - Review regulatory signage for opportunities to reduce impact on visual assets in center (6)
 - Look for opportunities to create view corridors by very selective removal of ‘volunteer’ trees (5)
 - Preserve opportunities for planting islands/edges/pocket gardens (5)
 - Preserve Sudbury Center’s visual character (4)
 - Rehab Town Hall, Flynn Building (1)
 - Make more tourist friendly (signs and trail) (1)
 - Make town center a center for town programs/activities – ex. Summer concerts, festivals, theater (comment on the side that the school has these facilities) (1)
 - Address new cemetery road (0)

Black Dots:

- Street lights should be adequate to enhance safety in public places; should be appropriately scaled and should provide visual detail in daylight (2)
- Look for opportunities to create view corridors by very selective removal of ‘volunteer’ trees (1)

A complete list of workshop participants’ notes written on the workshop aerial photos and existing conditions plans may be found in the Appendix

RECOMMENDED DESIGN PROCESS

This section describes an approach to developing improvement alternatives that are intended to achieve Committee's goals for the Sudbury Center area. The improvement plan recommendations will be focused on reducing congestion and improving safety on center roads, preserving the visual character of the district and support "walk-ability" in the center.

Based on our observations of operation of district roads, we have concluded that three potential road improvement design alternatives are feasible. These three approaches will cover a range of interventions from modest changes that address road restriping, traffic signal improvements and signage changes to significant circulation changes that will include addition of turning lanes, road curb re-alignment and negotiations with abutting stakeholders for land.

Baseline improvements common to all three alternatives will include:

- Signal improvements at center intersection
- Movement of pedestrian crosswalk to location protected by stop line
- Traffic island reconfiguration or removal
- Improved signage and road restriping
- Improved crosswalks on Old Sudbury Road
- Improved sidewalks on Old Sudbury Road, Concord Road
- New crosswalk at First Parish Church
- Increased pedestrian opportunities in the area
- Curbing/shoulder improvements

1. **Alternative A** - This alternative minimizes changes in existing road curblines and will not require additional private land. This could be considered a near-term improvement alternative.

Baseline improvements will include:

- Adjust timing and phasing of existing signal system
- Improved roadway geometry generally within existing curblines
- Movement of pedestrian crosswalk to location protected by stop line
- Traffic island removal or reconfiguration
- Improved signage and repaint road striping
- Improved crosswalks on Old Sudbury Road

Optional improvements may include:

- Thermo-plastic striping at crosswalks
- New crosswalk at First Parish Church
- Improved sidewalks on Old Sudbury Road and Concord Road

-
-
2. **Alternative B** - This alternative includes nearly all of the elements of the first alternative and additionally upgrades the existing road configuration for improved traffic flow, pedestrian safety and convenience. The work will require a modest realignment of some but, not all curblines.

Baseline improvements will include:

- Replacement of pre-timed (existing) traffic signal system at center with a fully actuated signals with roadway detectors and on-demand pedestrian crossing phase
- Increased lane widths on Old Sudbury Road, Concord Road to allow through-traffic to pass vehicles turning into driveways and better accommodation of cyclists
- Narrowed driveway ‘throats’ at Noyes School and Loring Parsonage
- Traffic island redesign for increased pedestrian safety
- Movement of pedestrian crosswalk to location protected by stop line
- Install slope granite curbs at center streets
- Improved signage and road restriping
- Improved crosswalks on Old Sudbury Road
- Improved sidewalks on Old Sudbury Road, Concord Road
- New crosswalk at First Parish Church

Optional improvements may include:

- Development of sidewalks on north side of Old Sudbury Road between center and Noyes School
- Pedestrian actuated signals and textured unit pavers at crosswalks
- Drainage upgrades
- Improved lighting in center
- Landscape planters at island
- Development of Sudbury Heritage Trail

3. **Alternative C** – This alternative involves the reconstruction of much of the paved surfaces in Sudbury Center and parts of other intersections and would require negotiation with abutting property owners such a First Parish Church and other owners near other intersections.

Baseline improvements will include:

- Reconfiguration of center intersection to remove existing misalignment
- Widen Peakham Road approach to Hudson Road intersection
- Installation of traffic signal system at Maynard Road / Hudson Road intersection
- Reconfigure Concord Road/ Old Lancaster Road/ Union Avenue intersection to remove skewed approach angle (under construction presently)
- Replacement of pre-timed (existing) traffic signal system at center with a fully actuated signals with roadway detectors and on-demand pedestrian crossing phase
- Movement of pedestrian crosswalk to location protected by stop line
- Increased lane widths to allow through-traffic to pass vehicles turning into driveways and better accommodation of cyclists

-
-
- Narrowed driveway ‘throats’ at Noyes School and Loring Parsonage
 - Traffic island redesign for increased pedestrian safety
 - Install vertical curbs at center streets
 - Improved crosswalks on Old Sudbury Road
 - Improved sidewalks on Old Sudbury Road, Concord Road

Optional improvements may include:

- Conversion of road in front of Town Hall to narrower pedestrian walk with emergency vehicle passage
- Landscape improvements to Town Common
- Development of sidewalks on north side of Old Sudbury Road between center and Noyes School
- Development of sidewalks on Concord Road at First Parish Church
- Pedestrian actuated signals and textured unit pavers at crosswalks
- Improved lighting in center
- Landscape planters at island
- Development of Sudbury Heritage Trail

Appendix