



Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

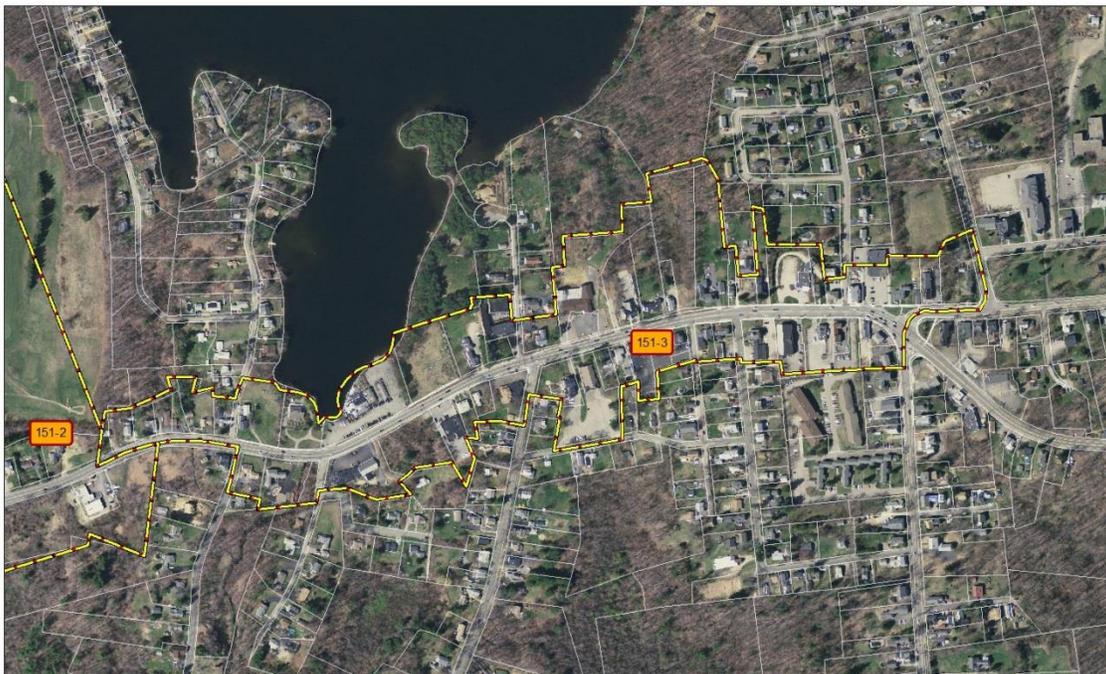
Town of Leicester – Leicester Town Center PDA

Purpose of Analysis

The Leicester Town Center was identified as a Priority Development Area in the [Central Thirteen Prioritization Project](#) completed in 2012 (PDA# 216-7). Priority development areas (PDAs) are areas within a town that have been identified as capable of supporting additional development or as candidates for redevelopment. These are areas on which a town is focusing its energy to promote thoughtful economic development that is closely tied to the community's goals. In addition to being a locally-identified PDA by the Town of Leicester, the Leicester Town Center was one of 46 Regionally-Significant Priority Development Areas.

Map 1: Location

Leicester Town Center PDA Boundary



Using up to 25 hours of technical assistance, the objective of this project is to provide participating communities with a packet of information for a priority development area that can be used to guide them in identifying possible zoning changes, or other grant applications (MassWorks), promotion to developers, as a template for future analysis of additional PDAs, etc. CMRPC staff worked with each participating community to ensure that the technical assistance provided was tailored to the town's specific needs.

The Leicester Town Planner submitted the DLTA Project Request on behalf of the Town of Leicester in February 2014 for "an analysis of the Leicester Town Center Regional PDA." The Town's request was to have CMRPC Staff focus the DLTA technical assistance time on an analysis and recommendations related to issues such as land use,

zoning/permitting, Town Center streetscape and related amenities, and the gateway into Leicester Town Center. CMRPC Principal Planner, Eric R. Smith, AICP, served as the CMRPC Staff Project Manager for this initiative.

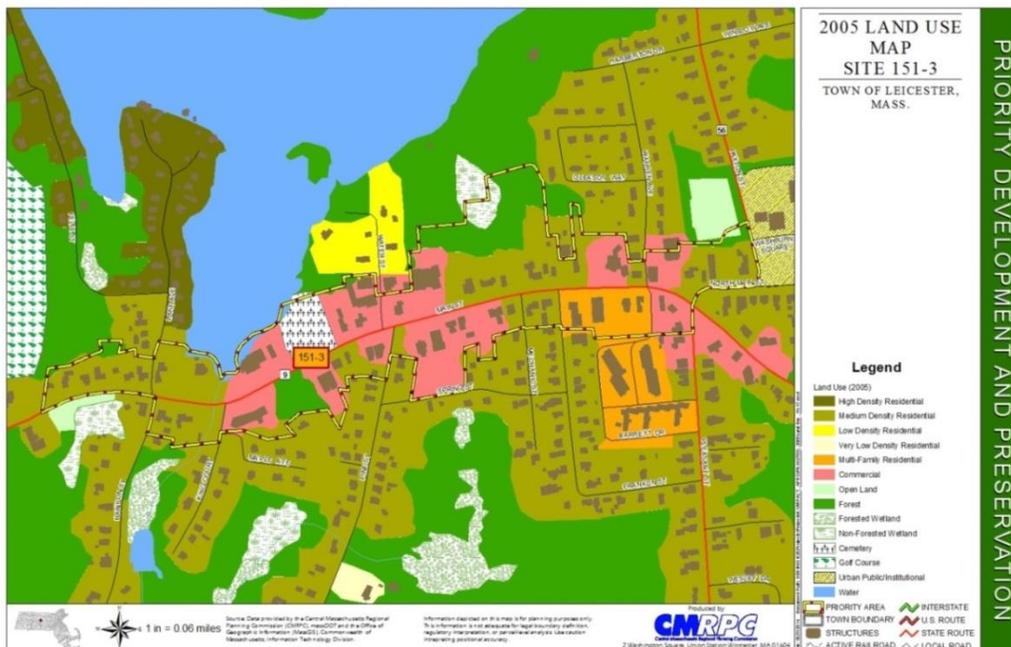
Infrastructure

Water and sewer are available in the study area. Water is provided by the Leicester Water Supply District (LWSD) district. According to the 2009 Master Plan, there was capacity for about 120,000 gallons per day of drinking water in their system in 2008. Most of the LWSD service area is sewered; therefore sewer is also available within Leicester Town Center PDA. According to the 2009 Master Plan, there were restrictive amounts of additional capacity. The LWSD was reserving the remaining 30,000 gallons per day sewer capacity for commercial development for Route 9 to the west of the Leicester PDA as of 2008. But as most of the development within this PDA is intended to be infill or redevelopment, the sewer status should not be seen as a constraint. However, CMRPC suggests that any planned redevelopment of the Watson Mill (9 Water Street) consider wastewater usage rates for potential users and check with the LWSD accordingly for any capacity issues.

Land Use

Existing land use shows two commercial clusters within the PDA. The first is the cluster of businesses in at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 56. Moving west the next cluster is around the Watson Mill area, including Affordable Windows and Doors Co., Inc. (1152 Main Street), the plaza with Subway/Post Office (1199 Main Street), the plaza with Northeast Pizza and Cheoy Lee’s III Chinese restaurant/Vet office and the Castle Restaurant. In this area, also found on the south side of Main Street is Mike’s Donuts, St. Pius X Catholic Church and the Morrison Funeral Home. CMRPC Staff observed how west of the Castle Restaurant and the Northeast Pizza Plaza, the CBD is more residential in nature. The Town should assess if they really want to continue encouraging Commercial-based development more to the west. There are a few single-family homes in this area, which are actually a prohibited use in the CBD, as indicated on page 4.

Map 2: Existing Land Use

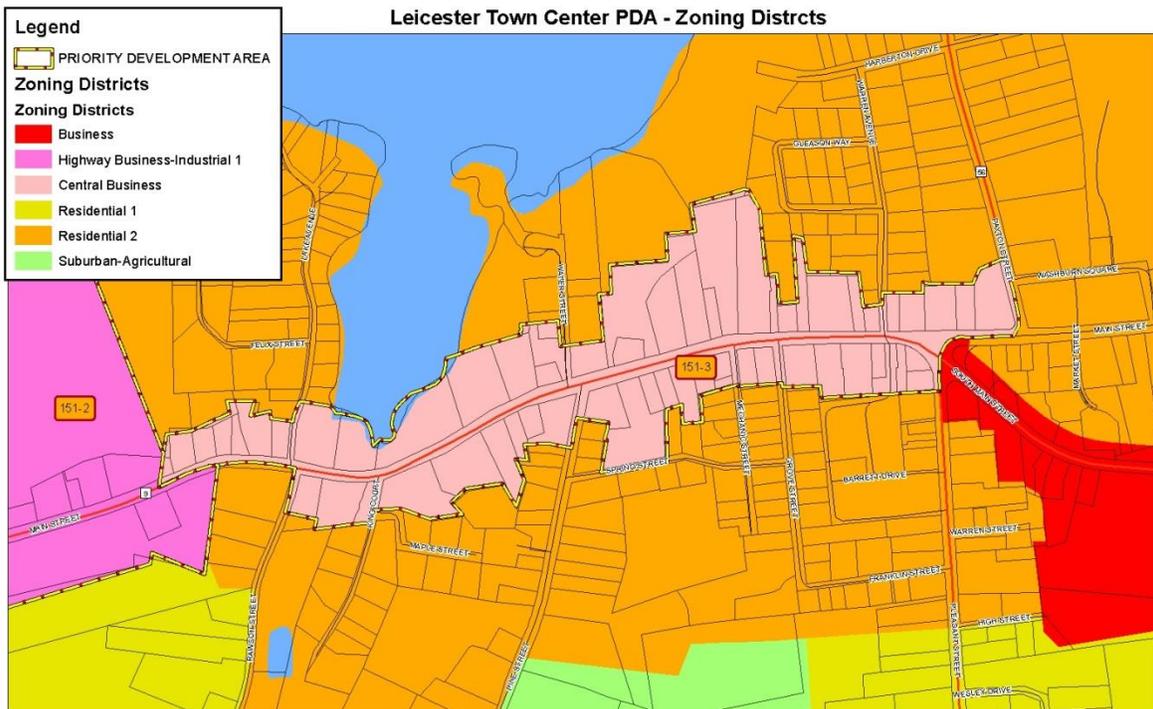


A second land use conflict with existing zoning is found on west side of Route 56, south of Main Street. There are two lots on Pleasant Street just south of the CBD boundary, zoned R-2, but currently used commercially and assessed as such by the Leicester Assessors. More on this land use/zoning conflict is found on pages 5 and 6.

Zoning

The Leicester Town Center PDA boundary is entirely within the Town’s Central Business District (CBD) Zoning District (see Map 3 below). In fact, the CBD boundary equals the PDA boundary. The Town adopted the Central Business District in May 2006. The purpose of the CBD is to “*encourage development and redevelopment of Leicester Center while preserving the area’s pedestrian-oriented characteristics, mixed uses, and existing structures of historical significance.*”

Map 3: Zoning in the Study Area



As noted in the 2009 Mater Plan, the area was previously zoned Business (B) and Residential-B (RB). The B district was only 200 feet wide (100 feet on either side of Route 9). The Central Business District (CBD) rezoning eliminated the split zoning of properties abutting Route 9. In addition, the CBD provides greater protection of historic structures through a Special Permit process. Most uses within the district require a Special Permit from the Planning Board.

However, it does appear that that the Town simply adopted the CBD with the same dimensional requirements of the Business District, as indicated the Table 1 on the following page. CMRPC conducted a dimensional assessment of the lot sizes of the fifty-nine (59) existing parcels in the CBD. Almost half, or 27 of the 59 (45.76%) parcels, are less than 15,000 square feet (which is about a third of an acre) and are nonconforming lots. One recommendation for the Town to consider is adjusting dimensional requirements so that more CBD parcels are conforming. Case studies from the towns of Spencer and Ashburnham are provided on pages 12-13 as each community has made the zoning better fit the characteristics of their respective Town Center (Spencer) and Village Center (Ashburnham).

Table 1: Leicester Zoning Dimensional Requirements

ZONING DISTRICT	MIN. LOT AREA (Sq. Ft.)	MIN. LOT WIDTH (Ft.)	MIN. FRONT YARD (Feet)	MIN. SIDE YARD (Feet)	MIN. REAR YARD (Feet)	MAX. HEIGHT OF BLDG (Feet/ Stories)	MAX. BLDG COVERAGE (%)
CBD	15,000	100	25	10	25	35/ 2½	30
B	15,000	100	25	10	25	35/ 2½	30
R-2	20,000	125	25	15	25	35/ 2½	30

The Town does have a separate set of dimensional requirements for Multi-Family development, which is found in Table II of the Town’s Zoning Bylaw.

Any development/redevelopment within Central Business District must comply with the Business District Site Development Standards, which are located in Section 5.8 of the Town’s Zoning Bylaw.

Residential Use Assessment: No Single-Family Residential is permitted. Multi-Family and Senior Village are allowed by Special Permit (SP). But the 10-acre minimum requirement for a Senior Village development could limit opportunities of such types of development in the Leicester Town Center, with its existing smaller lot sizes. To help promote new mixed-use developments, “Mixed Use Developments” are permitted in the Leicester Town Center. New developments that are between 1-3 units and are in a vertical mix (defined as “An integration of commercial and residential uses in a single building in which the residential uses are located above the ground floor”) in design are allowed by-right; Such developments that contain four (4) or more units and vertical in design and any horizontal mixed-use (defined as “an integration of commercial and multifamily residential uses in a development comprised of two or more buildings on the same lot, or in a single building where residential use is on the ground floor”) are allowed by SP.

Commercial Use Assessment: As stated in the purpose section, most uses in the Leicester Town Center require a Special Permit. A couple of by-right uses include “Farmer’s Market” and “Medical Marijuana Treatment Center” (but the latter would have to meet performance standards of Section 5.15). Among the uses that are allowed by Special Permit include: “Place of Assembly”, “Retail”, “Antique/Gift Shop”, “Office”, “Bank”, “Hotel/Motel”, “Restaurant”, “Gasoline/Service Station” (however in actuality prohibited in the Leicester Town Center, as the Town Center is within the Town’s Water Resources Protection District, as discussed below), and “Car Wash”. CMRPC Staff does not believe that a car wash is an appropriate use for the pedestrian and destination-oriented Town Center and recommends that car washes be designated a prohibited use in the CBD.

Industrial Use Assessment: Both “Storage warehouse and gravel” and “Sand or stone removal for commercial venture” are all currently allowed by Special Permit. CMRPC Staff does not believe that any of these uses are appropriate in CBD and recommends that these two industrial land uses be designated a prohibited use in the CBD.

Transportation Use Assessment: A “Trucking depot” is allowed by Special Permit. CMRPC Staff does not believe that this uses is appropriate in CBD and recommends this use to be designated a prohibited use in the CBD.

The Town of Leicester’s Parking Space Requirements are built into the Business District Site Development Standards referenced earlier (Section 5.8 of the Zoning Bylaw). The Standards provide the Planning Board flexibility in determining an appropriate number of parking spaces based on the proposed development. CMRPC Staff believes this flexibility is a good thing, especially for redevelopment and/or mixed use development opportunities. During the November 5th Public Workshop, the lack of existing parking, especially in a shared, centralized location, where one could park and walk to multiple establishments, was identified as a constraint. See pages 10-11 for further discussion of parking in the Village Center.

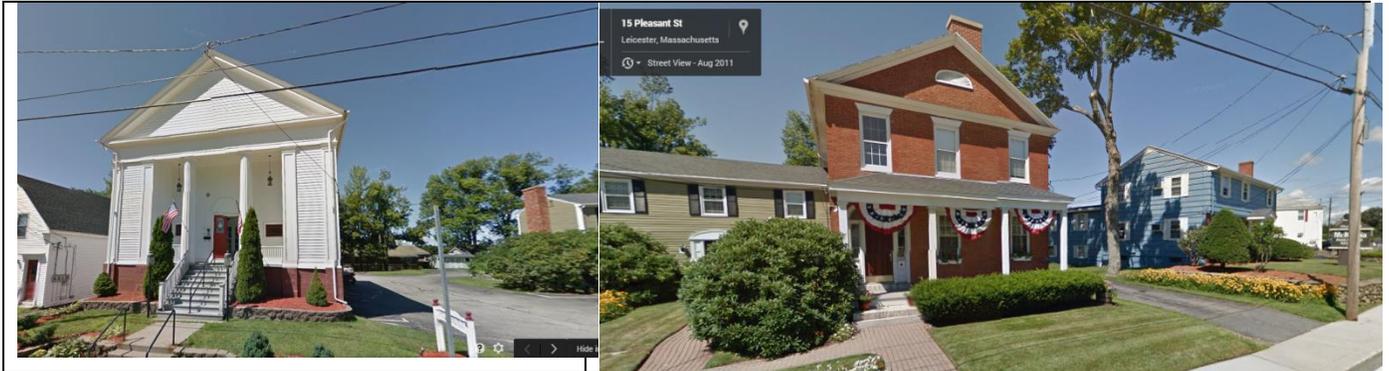
Contained within the Business Site Development Standards are Landscaping and Screening Requirements, which are “Five (5) feet along the side of a lot with road frontage” and “Ten (10) feet where non-residential use abuts residential use.” CMRPC supports the idea having an increased buffer for business uses that abut residential uses. There is a requirement for “large” parking areas (more than 35 parking spaces) to have landscaped islands. The Zoning Bylaw authorizes the Planning Board to adopt Design Standards. However, as of 2014, the Board has not adopted any such design standards. CMRPC recommends that the Board do so. The Leicester Planning Board has adopted a set of parking regulations and landscaping regulations, which define and guide landscaping and buffer construction. Design standards can assist in the review of new development and redevelopment in areas of building height, proportion, shape and relationship to other buildings.

The Town of Leicester Zoning Bylaw contains an innovative zoning tool known as the Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (AROD), which is Section 5.10. CMRPC believes that the AROD is a planning tool that could be utilized for the Watson Mill and/or the Old Municipal Building (1078 Main Street). According to Section 5.10(B) *“The following shall be eligible for conversion: (1) A municipal building located in any zoning district if it was used for not less than fifteen (15) years for municipal use. (2) Any existing structure having not less than 10,000 square feet constructed more than sixty (60) years ago and historically part of a mill complex. (3) Any existing structure used for one or more of the following religious uses for not less than fifteen (15) years: churches, convents, schools, rectories, and parish halls.”*

Water Resource Overlay District: Located within Section 7.1 is the Town’s Water Resource Overlay District, which has the purpose *“to prevent the contamination of those areas within Leicester that contribute ground or surface water to existing or planned public water supplies.”* One prohibited use, as was noted above, is a “gasoline station, auto or boat repair or body shop.” CMRPC believes that such a use is not appropriate within the CBD anyway. Map 4 on the following page shows the location of the Water Resources Protection Overlay District, which covers almost the entire CBD, except the far western side, which is the area noted to be primarily residential in nature.

Land Use-Zoning Conflicts: When CMRPC Staff met with the Town Planner and Town Administrator to scope out the work for this Project, we became aware of some land use / zoning-related conflicts in the area of Route 56 (Pleasant Street) and Route 9 (Main Street). There are two lots on Pleasant Street, just south of the CBD boundary and located in an area that is zoned R-2, but used commercially and assessed as such by the Leicester Assessors. These are 8-10 Pleasant Street (given a land use code of 013 by the Leicester Assessors, which is mixed Residential and Commercial use) and 16 Pleasant Street (given a land use code of 325 by the Leicester Assessors, which is a small retail and services store under 10,000 square feet). CMRPC learned at the November 5th Workshop that 16 Pleasant Street has a Lighting Store that was permitted as a gift shop. Some of the workshop attendees expressed their frustration at the lack of enforcement against the property owner for the lighting store use.

Photos of these buildings are provided below. Of note, 4 Pleasant Street (the blue building to the right of 8-10 Pleasant Street in the photo below) is an insurance office in a structure that looks residential in nature but being used commercially and is located in the CBD. CMRPC provides a recommendation at the end of the Report regarding rezoning of these two parcels.

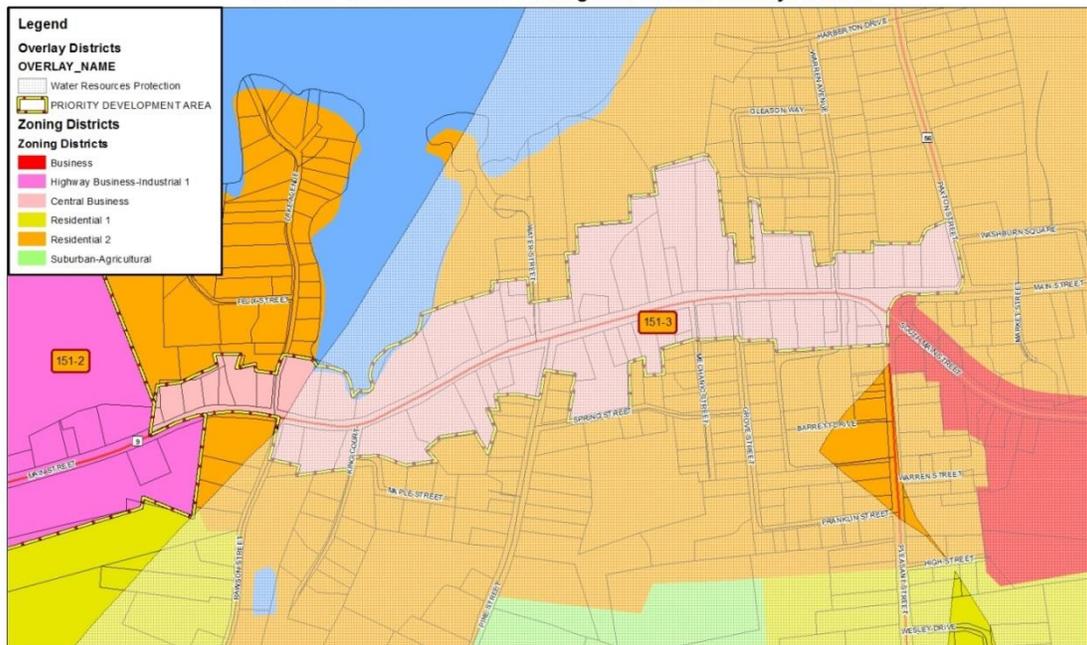


16 Pleasant Street

8-10 Pleasant Street to the left with 4 Pleasant Street to the right

Map 4: Zoning Districts including Water Resources Overlay

Leicester Town Center PDA - Zoning Districts with Overlay Districts



Planning in Study Area

Although the Leicester 2009 Master Plan was prepared after the Town had adopted the Central Business Zoning District, the following Economic Development Goal and Objectives give continued credibility of the importance of the Town having planning and development resources focused in the Leicester Town Center:

Economic Development Goal: *“Encourage mixed-use development with a variety of small-scale retail businesses in a more pedestrian-friendly town center, while promoting large-scale retail businesses and office parks in*

targeted areas away from the town center, and supporting the preservation of historic structures and the redevelopment of underutilized older structures.”

Economic Development Objectives:

- Consider changes to zoning bylaw, site plan design standards, and roadway design to encourage additional pedestrian scale development in the Central Business District to maintain its attractiveness to pedestrian traffic.
- Pursue state and federal programs to facilitate the redevelopment of underutilized properties.

Since 2007, the Town of Leicester has participated in two Route 9 Corridor Plans:

- The December 2007 Route 9 Corridor Study, MS Transportation Systems, Inc. This Project was initiated by the Leicester Planning Board.
- CMRPC’s August 2010 Route 9 West Corridor Profile (this Profile covered Route 9, west from Worcester through Leicester and to the Spencer Town line with East Brookfield).

Given the Town’s interest in having CMRPC provide recommendations related to streetscape improvements in the Leicester Village Center and providing suggestions to facilitate bringing more of an historic character and pedestrian friendliness to the Town Center along Route 9 through such measures as signage, street lamps and increased crosswalks, coupled with the fact that the Town Center’s Main Street is Route 9, CMRPC Staff reviewed the two Corridor Studies as part of this PDA assessment. Key findings are incorporated within the “Development Suitability, Opportunities and Constraints” section that follows.

Historic Resources-related documents reviewed were the December 1997 Historical Structure/Site Inventory prepared by Susan McDaniel Ceccacci and two reconnaissance reports: a) the 2007 Leicester Reconnaissance Report, prepared as part of the Blackstone Valley / Quinebaug-Shetucket Landscape Inventory under the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program and b) the 1983 Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Reconnaissance Survey Report.

Development Suitability, Opportunities and Constraints

One of CMRPC’s findings during the Leicester Town Center PDA Assessment is that the Leicester Common National Register District boundary ends on the eastern side of the CBD. There are a number of historical buildings and sites within this PDA. If the Leicester Town Center PDA was included in within the National Register District, property owners could get benefit of tax credits for property rehabilitation (see the following link for additional information: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>.) Speaking to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), CMRPC learned that the Town needs to submit updated photos for the sites assessed in the December 1997 Historical Buildings/Places Inventory Survey. According to MHC, the inventory just needs to be updated with current photos and then can be resubmitted for National Register District consideration. This update will ultimately require support of the property owners in this area if the area is to be designated a National Register District.

Some of the historic buildings located within this PDA include: Watson Mill (which could be considered for potential MassDevelopment Planning and/or Financial Assistance to assist in rehabilitation and redevelopment), the Leicester Public Library, and the Town’s School Administration Building (Town-owned property is eligible for real estate predevelopment services from MassDevelopment). The Rawson Brook Burial Ground is an example of an historical site within the PDA.

Section 106 protection: At the November 5th Public Workshop, Leicester Historical Commission Chairman, Don Lennerton, noted that although the historic buildings, sites and monuments in this PDA are not part of the National Register District, they are still afforded “Section 106” Protection. Section 106 is a provision of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act that “requires federal agencies to consider the effects of projects that carry out, approve, or fund on historic properties...Section 106 review encourages, but does not mandate preservation.”¹ Some of the types of development that would require Section 106 review include housing and infrastructure projects approved under U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or U.S. Department of Transportation, as well as construction or demolition of cell towers, post offices and banks.



Watson Mill

Residential Market Demand Opportunity: There is market demand for residential development in this PDA, based on a recent national survey. According to a recent *Better Cities and Towns* e-newsletter article, “a [recent national survey](#) by TransitCenter found a big, unmet desire for mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods. TransitCenter is interested, they report, because the kind of neighborhood a person lives in is the primary factor in who takes transit. But mixed-use doesn't necessarily mean cities. About 18 million people--or six percent of the nation--would like to live in mixed-use suburban neighborhoods, but currently don't. About 10 percent of Americans would like to live in mixed-use small towns, but don't. That gap will create a flow of people moving to fulfill their unmet desires.”² More residents living in the Leicester Town Center could then correspond to an increased market demand for commercial and service uses.

An additional consideration when analyzing commercial development suitability is traffic: the number of cars that travel past the site. CMRPC has identified Average Daily Vehicle Trips (ADT) along this stretch of Route 9 (Main Street) traveling past the site to be in the 17,000-20,000 range. This is significant, providing further

¹ From the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)'s *Protecting Historic Properties: A Citizen's Guide to Section 106 Review*. Additional information and resources on Section 106 is available at <http://www.achp.gov/work106.html>.

² The full article is available at <http://bettercities.net/news-opinion/blogs/robert-steuteville/21350/small-cities-and-towns-are-urban-places-too>

incentive to develop/redevelop the area. Traffic congestion can also be a constraint. This Main St-Route 9 intersection with Water Street/Pine Street is one of three intersections within the Town to have a Level of Service (LOS) of E or worse.³

Walkability was identified by the Town as an important element of the Leicester Town Center. Fortunately most of Main Street/Route 9 has sidewalks. However, there is a lack of safe north/south pedestrian crossings, especially west of Route 56. The fire station signal at Water Street/Pine Street was installed in 2010 but there was no pedestrian enhancements made at this time. The Town should explore with MassDOT the possibility of installing a pedestrian activated signal here. Similar to an intersection in a Main Street of Holden, this signal becomes activated when a button is pushed by the pedestrian. However, given that this intersection is approximately 1,500 feet west of the Route 9/Route 56 intersection, another pedestrian crosswalk should be explored. November 5th Workshop participants were suggesting signals in the area of Dunkin Donuts and the School Administration Building. The 2007 Route 9 Corridor Study had noted that *“Several locations along the corridor are important for pedestrians and have been designated as proposed high visibility crossings, including Pine Street.”*



Intersection of Route 9 and Water Street/Pine Street

³ Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure used to relate the quality of traffic service. LOS is used to analyze highways by categorizing traffic flow and assigning quality levels of traffic based on performance measure like speed, density, etc. Grades are assigned from A (Free Flow Traffic) to F (Congestion). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Level_of_service.



Main Street, Holden: Pedestrian-activated Signal

Sargent Pond: Located on the north side of Main Street, on the western side of this PDA, is Sargent Pond, a 65-acre great pond (Under State Law a “Great Pond” is a pond/lake that is 10 acres and greater). Sargent Pond represents an opportunity as a resource, especially for waterfront dining and passive recreation (fishing) that would bring people into the Leicester Town Center. The Castle Restaurant was marketing waterfront dining during the summer of 2014. In the past there was a Town Beach located here before the (now-closed) Burncoat Pond beach facility was constructed. As observed on the August 5th site visit, the paved area around The Castle Restaurant is being used for access to the waterfront for fishing.



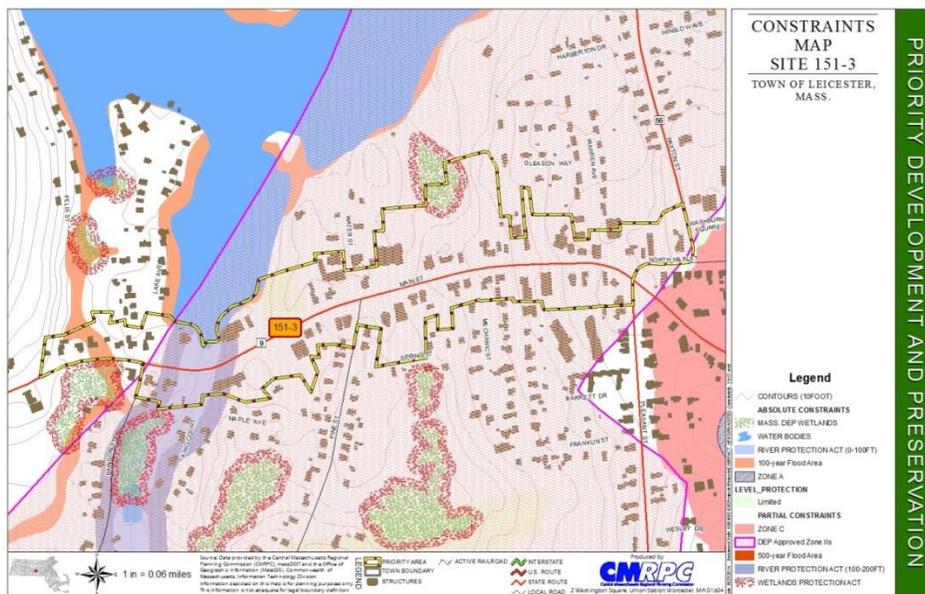
Fishing on Sargent Pond on The Caste Restaurant Property

Fortunately, there are not major environmental constraints preventing development or redevelopment with the Leicester Town Center PDA. As indicated in Map 5 on the following page, the Zone II associated with the drinking water resources and the Town Meadow Brook that flows out of Sargent Pond are most significant environmental constraints within PDA.

Parking As Constraint: – Participants at the November 5th Public Workshop indicated a lack of readily-available parking as a constraint in redevelopment/new development in the Leicester Town Center PDA. On-street parking is currently not allowed on Main Street, given the status of the roadway as State Route 9 and is under the jurisdiction of MassDOT. MassDOT does currently have a policy to not allow on-street parking on its roadways. The Town of Sturbridge had looked into this matter along Route 20, which is the Main Street for their Commercial Tourist District, but was told any design with on-street parking would not be approved.

A couple of approaches could be developed to address the lack of on-street parking and a readily available municipal lot. The first approach is to make use of shared parking, where feasible, realizing it is easier to formalize shared parking during site plan review and special permit application reviews. There is a shared parking example already in the Leicester Town Center. The building with Uncle Sam's Pizza and apartments upstairs (1072 Main Street) does not have its own parking lot. However, Uncle Sam's Pizza shares parking with the Crossroad Marketplace Plaza Parking lot. The signage for this shared parking is confusing so visitors may not be sure they are parking in the right place. Therefore, one recommendation would be to improve signage accordingly.

Map 5: Environmental Constraints in the Study Area



The second approach would be to develop a municipal lot. The Town should investigate the availability of vacant and/or under-developed parcels that may be available for development of parking. One such parcel is a 2-acre parcel in the middle of the Central Business District, on the north side of Main Street, owned by Hannah Joseph (1122 Main Street). There had been some discussions between the property owner and the Town about purchasing this property in the past. Almost all of the Leicester Town Center PDA is within a ¼-mile radius of this parcel, which equates to a five-minute walk (the distance most people will walk without having to resort to using their car).

Map 6: Quarter Mile Radius from 1122 Main Street (Hannah Joseph Property)

Leicester Town Center PDA - Quarter Mile Radius from 1122 Main Street (Hannah Joseph Property)



Final Findings and Observations: CMRPC observed a number of successful redevelopment/reuse examples of older structures converted into commercial use and/or a mix of commercial and residential uses during our Site Visit. A couple successful redevelopment examples are shown in the pictures below.



1103 Main Street: Mixed Commercial Uses



1072 Main Street: Uncle Sam's Pizza and Apartments

CMRPC Staff did not observe many vacant buildings suitable for conversion. One building currently vacant and available for lease is 1113 Main Street.



1113 Main Street: Currently Vacant and Available for Lease

Case Studies:

Luther's Corners, Seekonk: The Town of Seekonk had created a Luther's Corners Village Zoning District to "allow a mix of limited commercial and residential uses consistent with the appearance of the Village; preserve the architectural and historic character of the area; and promote a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood." However, the Town noted that "ensuring the proper mix of land uses is only one way to accomplish the aforementioned goal and needs to be augmented by examining parking and traffic circulation throughout the Village." To address these considerations, the Town had a "Luther's Corners Village Parking and Traffic Circulation Study" prepared in 2012, which analyzed parking and traffic circulation. A number of recommendations, based on observed conditions, have been made, with the goal of improving the village. The State has approved the project and funding, based on the Study's recommendations and is to be completed in 2017. One key points of the plan noted that "Traffic and parking are major obstacles which need to be overcome. Traffic can be mitigated through various measures including modifications to the lane configurations and signal timing/phasing. Parking availability can be improved with enhanced signage directing motorist to existing parking, as well as the potential construction of a community parking lot within the village center."

Ashburnham: The Town adopted their first Village Center Zoning District in 2004. The minimum lot size requirement was initially 25,000 square feet, the same as the Leicester CBD Zoning District. However, when some redevelopment projects were being permitted encountered difficulty, mainly due to requirements to go before the zoning board of appeals for pre-existing nonconforming lot status, the Town worked through a detailed planning process in 2008-2009 and at the May 2009 Town Meeting adopted two Village related districts: Village Center-Commercial (VC-C) for the core area of Main Street (Route 12) and Village Center-Residential (VC-R) for the residential neighborhood surrounding the VC-C. The VC-C does not have a minimum lot size and only a 20-foot frontage requirement. The VC-R has a 10,000 square-foot minimum lot size and 75 feet of frontage.

Spencer: The Town of Spencer adopted a Town Center Zoning District for the Downtown Spencer area. Given the existing build characteristics of the Spencer Town Center that features many buildings that have zero front setback (built right to the sidewalk), small lot size and frontage dimensions, the Town has crafted their Town Center Zoning requirements accordingly. The Spencer Town Center dimensional requirements do not require a minimum lot size, frontage or front setback. The Town does require a 10-foot side and rear setback however.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Zoning-Related

Based on CMRPC Staff's zoning assessment undertaken for the Leicester Town Center PDA Project, a number of zoning-related recommendations have emerged. These are provided for below as follow:

- One recommendation is for the Town to consider adjusting dimensional requirements so that more CBD parcels are conforming. More analysis that could have been done under the Scope of Services of this PDA Assessment is needed. But as noted on page 3, 27 of the 59 (45.76%) parcels identified in the Town Center are less than 15,000 square feet (which is about a third of an acre) and are therefore nonconforming lots. The Town should build on the analysis. CMRPC assistance under DLTA in 2015 could be explored.
- There are a number of zoning use changes to consider: eliminate the "Car Wash", "Storage warehouse and Gravel", "sand or stone removal for commercial venture" and "trucking depot" as allowed uses within the CBD.
- The Planning Board should adopt Design Guidelines. Although more descriptive in nature, the Town of Ashburnham did adopt a set of design guidelines for Ashburnham Village Center in 2004. They were used during recent redevelopments that have produced some quality redevelopment. These can be provided to the Town upon request.
- Expand the CBD Zoning District to include 8-10 Pleasant and 16 Pleasant. However, CMRPC Staff bases this recommendation on the assessment of the existing land uses of those two properties and structures being commercial in nature already. This recommendation is not indicating any support for expansion of the CBD boundary to allow for demolishing of the structures for new building construction. However, if the Town did want to support such new building construction to foster redevelopment, given the lack of parking as identified constraint, the Town should consider the public benefit of getting additional parking (perhaps either shared parking or dedicated municipal parking as part of a condition of any development proposal).
- The Town should assess if the CBD is appropriate for the existing residential land uses along Main Street west of the Castle and Northeast Pizza Plaza. As noted there are a few single-family homes, which are prohibited in the CBD.

Parking:

- Work with existing businesses to formalize shared parking agreements and promote such shared parking opportunities through signage. One example is to have signage in the Crossroad Marketplace Parking Lot indicating that the lot can be utilized for parking for patrons of Uncle Sam's Pizza.
- Consider purchase of 1122 Main Street (Hannah Joseph Property) or other properties, if feasible, for use as a Municipal Parking Lot within the Leicester Town Center area.

Streetscape:

- Explore possibility of having a pedestrian-activated signal be incorporated into the existing fire station signal located at Main Street and the Water/Pine Street intersection. Also need to add a striped crosswalk.
- Have a more detailed Main Street (Route 9) Streetscape Plan prepared. Similar studies were done for Sturbridge's Commercial Tourist District (Route 20), which did cost in the \$100K range and the Luther's Corners Parking and Traffic Circulation Study, which was more in the \$16K range. This more detailed study would be able to assess where additional crosswalks could be sited. The Town will also want to initiate conversations with MassDOT, which has been reluctant to allow a pedestrian crossing to be installed in a Route 9 section of Cherry Valley.

Potential grant and funding resources to assist with implementation

State-related Resources:

- Mass. Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant (The Town missed out on FY '15 deadline, which was November 17th). But this is a source of funding to help with the completion of the historic structure inventory for the rest of Leicester Center. But the Town could be prepared for the next year's round by updating the photos associated with property and start to outreach to the property owners, as they do need their commitment. The ultimate goal is to have this area be designated as a National Historic Register District. For more information:
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhchpp/Surveyandplanning.htm>
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI): DHCD's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) offers a range of services and assistance to communities seeking help on how to revitalize their downtowns. The primary mission of the MDI is to make downtown revitalization an integral part of community development in cities and towns across the Commonwealth. MDI's guiding principles are that the most effective approach to downtown revitalization is a holistic one; that it addresses economic and community development needs; and that it provides a framework of interrelated activities that promote positive change in a downtown to keep it healthy and prosperous. For more information:
<http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/funding/massachusetts-downtown-initiative-mdi.html>.

The Town will have missed out on the FY '15 deadline (December 4th). Hopefully the program will continue as it represents a potential funding source for a detailed parking study of this PDA (The State makes use of Nelson Nygaard Consulting Associates, a leading parking management and planning consultant firm), a market study for potential new businesses and even walkability, as the State added this component this year: *"Requests for assistance may address development of recommendations regarding such aspects of downtown walkability as: improving safety at intersections or along main street areas; enhancement of the walking environment through such elements as landscaping and improved maintenance; reviewing the ease of walking routes between destinations such as shops, civic buildings and parking areas; or how increasing walkability can be a tool to create lively public places."*

- MassDevelopment: MassDevelopment's Real Estate Pre-Development Services offer the opportunity for market feasibility analysis and site planning assistance for the old Municipal Building and Watson Mill. For more information: <http://www.massdevelopment.com/real-estate-development/>

Blackstone Heritage Corridor Resources

Leicester is a part of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, which does represent some potential funding opportunities:

- The Blackstone Heritage Corridor has developed a new Partnership Grant Program. Although the Town missed out on an initial round, the Corridor hopes to initiate a second round in the early part of 2015. CMRPC Staff met with the Executive Director, Charlene Cutler, about potential use of the Partnership Grant Funds for implementation associated with the Leicester Town Center PDA, especially related to the streetscape elements. Ms. Cutler noted the grant will not pay for the streetscape plan in its entirety. But can provide a funding source for planning related to heritage signage, walking tours, etc. The grant award ranges from \$5,000 - \$30,000 and does require a 1:1 match. CMRPC Staff will notify Leicester Officials when we become aware of the next grant cycle when it is announced in early near year. http://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/about/news/press-release-new-grant-program.html?utm_source=New+Grant+Program&utm_campaign=Announcement%3A+New+Grant+Program&utm_medium=email
- All of the communities within the Blackstone Heritage Corridor have been designated **Preserve America** communities, making them eligible to receive technical assistance and matching grants related to heritage tourism. Eligible grant activities include research, documentation (e.g., historic resource surveys and National Register nominations), interpretation and education (e.g., signage, exhibits and itineraries), planning, marketing and training. More details about this Program are available from the website: <http://www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/PreserveAmerica/>. However, according to the program status on the website: *“Although not currently funded the program is authorized in legislation.”*

CMRPC-related Resources

DLTA funds will be available in 2015, which can offer the opportunity for CMRPC Staff to build on the dimensional analysis for lots within the Town Center PDA with the goal of determining a set of dimensional standards that would bring more lots in compliance.

CMRPC could also assess more of the Town Center PDA as part of an economic development assessment for the Town of Leicester related to improving access to the Worcester Regional Airport.

CMRPC Transportation Staff may be able to help with some of the streetscape-related planning. Contact Mary Ellen Blunt, Program Manager, at (p) 508-459-3337 or email @ mblunt@cmrpc.org.