

Oxford Center Downtown Preservation Plan Existing Conditions

Prepared by Dodson Associates, Ltd.
463 Main Street, Ashfield, Mass., 01330
June 2007

Downtown Oxford is experiencing strain due to pressures from surrounding development. Chief among the concerns is traffic congestion during peak hours of flow and the resulting dangerous situation for vehicular and pedestrian travel through the center of town. Parking is currently sufficient in town. There are approximately 260 (23%) public parking spaces and 845 (77%) private parking spaces. Additional public and private spaces will be necessary as development continues. On-street parking is currently available, but there is a general feeling among business owners that additional on-street parking is needed and that a reduction in the number of on-street parking spaces would make their businesses less viable. The streetscape along Main Street maintains an historic character with mature street trees, new plantings, and colonial-era homes. Sutton Avenue and Charlton Street do not have quite the same character due to a lack of mature trees, a few buildings in disrepair, and architectural inconsistencies. The single-story Cumberland Farms building is the first thing that everyone sees when entering town from the east and does not fit with the character of most of the other buildings in town. There is a vibrant mix of residential and commercial use of space in Oxford Center that should be preserved and enhanced. Sidewalks in the center of Oxford provide ample pedestrian access to residences, services, and businesses. Sidewalk surfaces are not, however, in uniformly good condition. Development opportunities exist in the form of the vacant lot at the corner of Fremont and Charlton streets and underdeveloped lots including the former fire station.



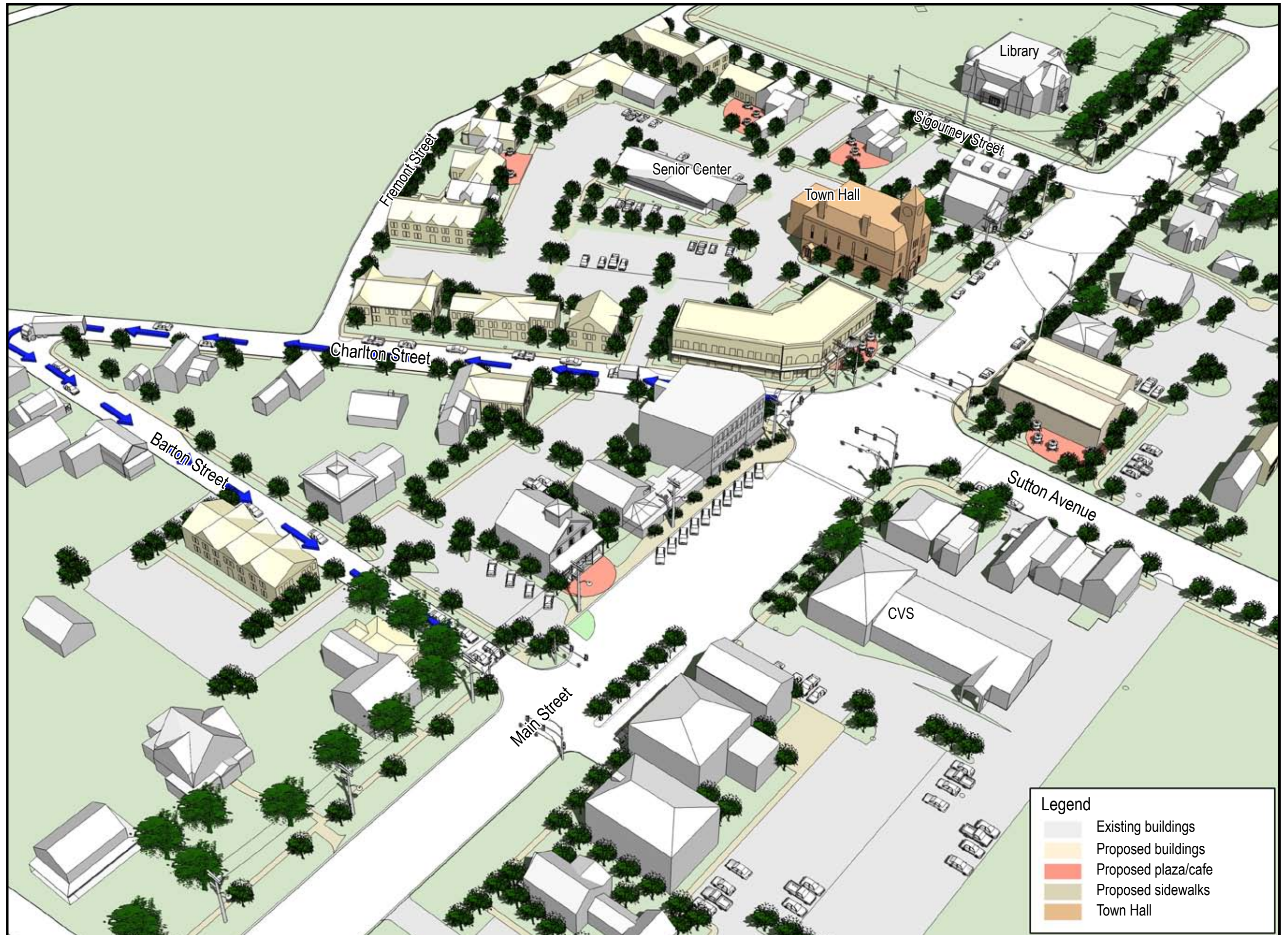
Legend

- Buildings proposed for removal
- Proposed new construction
- Town Hall
- Existing sidewalks

Oxford Center Downtown Preservation Plan One-Way Loop Concept

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The one-way loop traffic scenario proposed by Cullinen Engineering would make Charlton Street one-way heading west between Main Street and its intersection with Barton Street. Barton Street would then be one-way heading east to its intersection with Main Street. This proposal would lessen the traffic congestion at the intersection of Charlton Street, Sutton Avenue, and Main Street. Additional on-street parking spaces would be possible along Charlton between Main Street and Fremont Street. New medians to alleviate dangerous traffic conditions along Sutton Avenue and Main Street would lead to increased truck traffic through the center of town and down Barton Street. Business owners are concerned about decreased accessibility to their properties that will come with the medians, and residents were generally concerned about the negative impact this scenario would have on residents of Barton Street. Utilities are depicted above ground as they are in the existing conditions with an additional traffic light at the intersection of Barton and Main.



Oxford Center Downtown Preservation Plan Roundabout Concept

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This roundabout scenario is a modification of a roundabout conceived for downtown Oxford by the Massachusetts Highway Department. The roundabout shown has a diameter of 120', whereas the roundabout proposed by Mass Highway had a diameter of 150'. Medians leading up to the roundabout are depicted at their minimum length of fifty feet to provide the greatest possible accessibility to businesses near the intersection. A few on-street parking spaces would be eliminated along Sutton Avenue to make room for the entry and exit lanes from the roundabout, and the diagonal parking along the southwest edge of Main Street would be converted to "back-in" spaces to facilitate re-entry of vehicles into the flow of traffic exiting the roundabout heading south. (It is important to keep in mind that there would be a significant loss of on-street parking if a 150' roundabout, as proposed by MassHighway, was exchanged for the 120' roundabout depicted). The roundabout would allow for the removal of the traffic lights at the intersection of Sutton Avenue with Main Street and Charlton Street. To further enhance the historic character of Oxford Center all utilities are underground.



General Design Guidelines for Downtown Oxford

Architecture: Require at least two-story buildings along the street frontage to enclose the streetscape and provide the level of density and activity appropriate to a neighborhood center. Within interior areas, locate and design buildings to frame and enclose public spaces.

Landscape: Provide for a continuous planting of large shade trees along the street to shade the sidewalk and reinforce the streetscape. In interior areas, break up parking lots with islands planted with large trees, and frame public spaces and building entrances with ornamental plantings.

Climate-friendly design: Locate and design buildings to take advantage of natural heating and cooling. Locate buildings to block cold winds and maximize solar access. Provide sheltered, south-facing entrances wherever possible. Provide green roofs, shade trees, trellises and vines to help cool buildings in the summer.

Open Space: Plan for public parks, squares, and natural areas in key locations. Coordinate planning so that landowners giving up space for parks receive compensation from others who will benefit.

Streetscape: Develop a unified design approach for major streets, with consistent setbacks and continuous sidewalks. Develop a consistent palette of materials and design details for paving, planting, and site furnishings.

Mix of uses: Allow for a flexible mix of residential and commercial uses within buildings, as defined by the needs of the marketplace. In return, require more substantial buildings, designed to be adaptable to many different uses over time.

Building Placement: Along Main and Charlton Streets, new buildings should be constructed at a "build-to line" that creates a maximum setback from the street. In areas off the street, buildings should be placed to help enclose public spaces, screen parking areas, and simplify circulation for cars and pedestrians.

Walkability: Provide for continuous safe, attractive, and comfortable pedestrian routes that encourage people to leave their cars and travel about the neighborhood on foot.

Connecting to Surrounding Uses: Coordinate plans for roads and access points with existing development surrounding the site, so that new roads help to create an interconnected grid of streets throughout the neighborhood.

Roads and Driveway Access: Limit the need for curb cuts by requiring shared driveways and connections across lot lines. Coordinate plans for multiple lots to allow for new streets or alleys that interconnect to provide for continuous secondary access parallel to Main Street and Charlton Street.

Parking: Locate parking lots to the side and rear of structures wherever possible. Break up large lots with planted islands and limit the aggregation of adjoining lots to one or two 60 foot bays.



Oxford Center Downtown Preservation Plan

Masterplan

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463 Main Street, Ashfield, Mass., 01330

Date: June 2007
Scale: 1" = 40'



Legend

- Existing buildings
- Proposed buildings
- Proposed plaza/cafe
- Proposed trees

