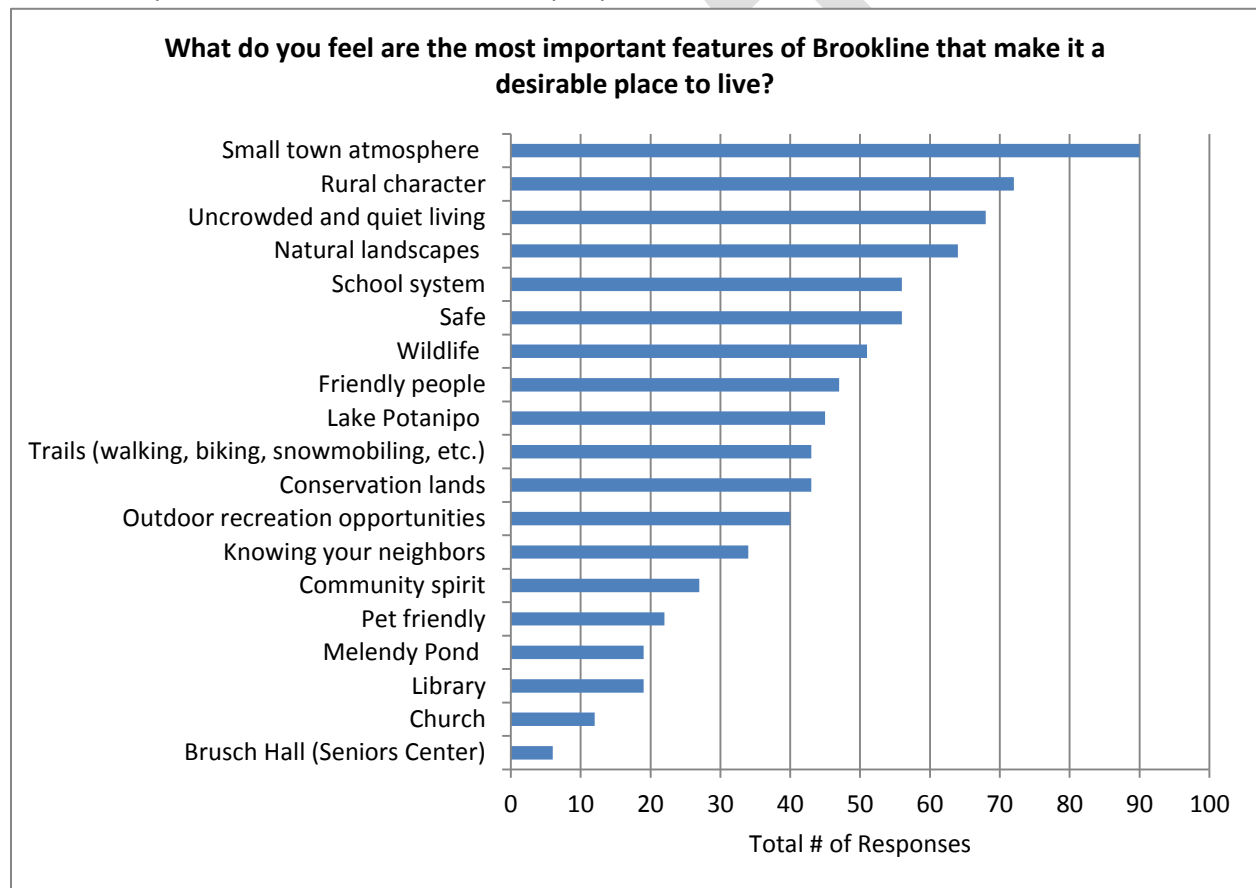


**SECTION 1—INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Community Design chapter of a Master Plan is to identify the positive attributes that make up a community and recommend guidelines, goals and/or policies for buildings, neighborhoods, historic districts, town centers and transportation corridors that will enhance, promote and preserve those attributes. Those recommendations can then guide development, redevelopment or restoration of specific areas within the community.

**SECTION 2— COMMUNITY DESIGN VISION**

The chart below displays results from the 2010 Master Plan survey question “What do you feel are the most important features of Brookline that make it a desirable place to live”. Clearly, Brookline’s small town atmosphere and rural character are very important to its residents.



Respondents to the survey and participants in the 2010 Master Plan Forum envision a community that can be easily accessed via sidewalks, trails and bike lanes with a robust Town Center and opportunities for social gathering. And while residents have a vision for Brookline that includes basic services such as grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores and restaurants, the majority of respondents to the survey feel commercial or industrial developments and buildings should be designed in keeping with the rural character of the town and that adequate buffers and setbacks for these types of businesses be required by the town.

**SECTION 3—DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY**

Edward E. Parker’s book on the history of Brookline provides insight into how the community was developed over time.

*“From the foregoing, the writer feels warranted to make the statement that in the year 1773 the population of Raby was not over, and probably considerably under, one hundred and thirty-five (135). The town was still in the log cabin period of its existence, not more than two framed building having been erected. Its only public building was a log pound. It had neither meeting house nor school house; the schools, when there were any, being kept in private dwellings in which, also, religious gatherings assembled and the town meetings were holden.*

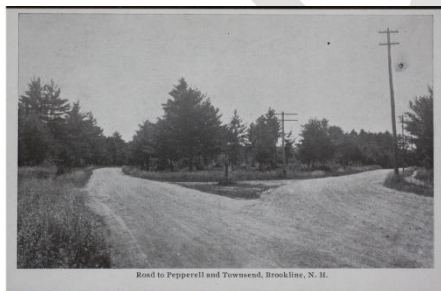
*The public highways, what few there were of them, were at all times of the year, in a wretched condition and at certain seasons almost impassable. There was not a horse vehicle in town. Traveling was performed on horseback, in the saddle and on the pillion, or by the lumbering and springless ox carts. The surface of the township was still covered with primeval forests; unbroken, save here and there, at long intervals apart, by the small clearings of the settlers; of whom the majority were engaged in farming, or at least they imagined they were...There were no grist-mills in town, and no store that deserved a name.”<sup>1</sup>*



FIRST MEETING-HOUSE—1791

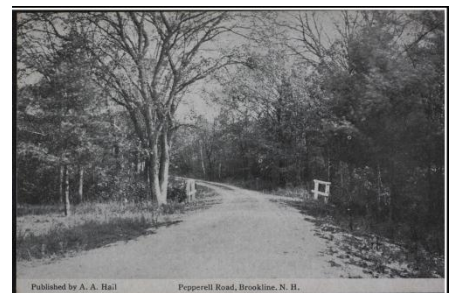
In the mid to late 1700s, a primarily agrarian Brookline held its first public meeting, saw the construction of its first public building (a pound to hold cattle) and its first meetinghouse. The Congregational Church was organized, and a Town Common deeded “to the selectmen and their successors forever for the use of the town the land on which the old meeting-house now stands “.<sup>2</sup>

Appropriations for public school teachers were made, with school being held in private dwellings until the late 1780s, when four school houses were constructed – one each in the northwest, northeast, center, southeast regions of the developing community.



Road to Pepperell and Townsend, Brookline, N. H.

As stated in the Transportation and Historical and Cultural Resources chapters of this plan, there were two primary roads when the town was established: the “Great Road” entered from Pepperell, Massachusetts and continued north and west across the Nissitissit River, and the second road was from Hollis via Proctor Hill into town and then south to Townsend, Massachusetts. In 1769, citizens voted to



Published by A. A. Hall Pepperell Road, Brookline, N. H.

<sup>1</sup> Edward E. Parker, History of Brookline, Formerly Raby, Hillsborough County, NH, with Tables of Family Records and Genealogies (Town of Brookline, New Hampshire, 1914) 78

<sup>2</sup> Parker, 123

appropriate funds for “the use of highways” and selected their first highway surveyor; in 1771, the first road was accepted as a public highway - “the road leading out from Campbell’s brook and mill to Townsend line.” As the community grew, additional roads were accepted as public highways, including



POUND BRIDGE—1914

the “Highway West of the South Cemetery”, and the first bridge over the Nissitisset River below its outlet from Lake Potanipo was constructed.

In the early 1800s, the town was still in the “log cabin period”, with a dozen framed houses, one of which was the first meeting house. According to Parker’s book, *“The ‘village’ of the present time was not in existence. It was not even thought of...*

*the road, including the present village Main street, for the entire distance named, was for the greater part of the distance bordered by dense forest growth.”* (Parker, pg. 293-4). This dense forest growth supported a strong lumbering industry, with eleven sawmills constructed in the town by the mid-1800s.

Additional roads were laid out, including roads running easterly from Main Street and westerly from the Lake. The Second, Third and Fourth Pond Bridges were also constructed, and the highway on the west side of Meetinghouse Hill straightened.



The first public library was established in 1823 and the town’s first fire engine was purchased in 1826. The first official post office, located in the residence of the first postmaster, opened and in subsequent years, was located in dwellings, the village hotel and in several stores on Main



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING-HOUSE—1839

Street until a separate building was constructed in the late 1800s. The first Congregational Meetinghouse was constructed in the 1830s.

In the mid-1800s, Brookline had seven school districts and seven school houses located throughout the town. By the end of the 1800s, the town voted to have one school district with four school houses: one on “the Plain”, one-half mile south of the Congregational Meetinghouse; a second located in the “Pond district” on the west side of the highway to Mason; a third located in “the fork in the road formed by the highways to Milford and Greenville”; and a fourth school in the village.



VILLAGE SCHOOLHOUSE—1854



DANIELS ACADEMY BUILDING

In the late 1800s, a Methodist Church and Society was organized, and a Methodist meeting house built. The Brookline Public Library was formed and housed initially in a store at the west end of the

village Main Street, then moved to the village school house, and moved again into the Daniels Academy Building in the 1900s.

In the 1870s, Main Street was straightened and the first appropriation for the construction of concrete



sidewalks was granted in 1890, with the sidewalk constructed on the east side of Main Street in the village. In the following years, additional funds were appropriated with sidewalks constructed on the east and west sides of Main Street; on the west side of Bond Street, from its junction with Main Street to the railroad depot; from the Congregational meetinghouse northerly to the “residence of Widow Eddy Whitcomb”; the “street running easterly from Main Street near Tarbell’s store, on its west side for the entire length; and on “the highway to Townsend” in South Brookline.<sup>3</sup>

After three previous unsuccessful attempts in the early and mid-1800s to bring the railroad into Brookline, the Brookline Railroad Company was formally opened for public traffic in 1892. The “Brookline and Pepperell Railroad” is described by Parker as follows:

*“It connects with the Peterborough and Shirley railroad, a branch of the Fitchburg railroad, at West Groton, Mass. From West Groton, it follows the west side of the Nashua river to Pepperell, Mass.; thence, turning at nearly a right angle, it follows up the west bank of the beautiful Nissitiset river to its terminus in Brookline, on the shores of Muscatanipus pond.”<sup>4</sup>*



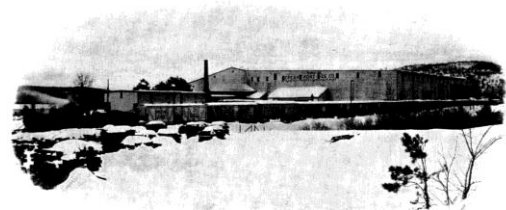
RAILROAD BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER BELOW THE POND



RAILROAD DEPOT AT VILLAGE

In 1893, the Brookline and Milford Railroad was incorporated by legislative act and a railroad was to be built “from some convenient point on the Brookline railroad in Brookline to some convenient point in the town of Milford; with the right to connect with the Brookline railroad in Brookline and the Wilton road in said town of Milford.” This line was built as described and opened to public traffic in 1894.<sup>5</sup> The Brookline Station became a significant center of commercial and social activity.

In 1890, the Fresh Pond Ice Company relocated from Massachusetts to Brookline, on the south shore of Lake Potanipo. Most of the ice sold by the company was transferred via rail to Cambridge and Somerville, Massachusetts. Mr. Parker states that “It was owing to his



FRESH POND ICE COMPANY PLANT

<sup>3</sup> Parker, 375

<sup>4</sup> Parker, 370

<sup>5</sup> Parker, 373

[*Thomas S. Hittinger, the company's superintendent*] as much perhaps as to the efforts of any other one man, that this town finally obtained its railroad” (Parker, 376-377). In 1935, the ice house burned down and the following year, the railroad closed down.

(*Photos in this section from Parker's book as well as from the Brookline Historical Society's photo website <http://brooklinenh.phanfare.com/9999/>*)

#### **SECTION 4—BROOKLINE'S POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES**

Brookline's rural character and small town charm make it a desirable place to live for its residents. Several chapters of this Master Plan detail attributes that make Brookline a unique place. The Cultural and Historic Resources Chapter of this plan provides information on many of the features that contributed to the development of the community which can still be seen today, including the Train Depot, now a private residence; the Milford Street School (Brown Schoolhouse); and the AA Hall Store, currently the Village Store. That chapter also lists unique cultural sites in Brookline, including Andres Institute of Art and Sculpture. The Natural Resources Chapter discusses Brookline's water bodies, including Lake Potanipo and the Nissitissit River; conservation lands, including the Talbot-Taylor Wildlife Sanctuary and Palmer Wildlife Preserve; and various rare plants, animals, and wildlife habitats. The Transportation Chapter provides information on Brookline's scenic roads (North Mason and Averill Roads) as well as a map of existing and planned sidewalks, biking and walking trails. Please refer to these chapters for more information on the positive attributes that contribute to Brookline's rural character and charm.

#### **SECTION 5—EXISTING REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

Brookline's existing Zoning and Land Use Ordinance specifies road frontage, setback and building requirements (e.g., maximum building height is 35 feet) for the Industrial and Commercial Zone as well as for the Residential and Agricultural Zone. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance details requirements for signage “to preserve the aesthetics and rural character of Brookline” and outdoor lighting “to preserve the rural atmosphere and dark skies of Brookline”.<sup>6</sup>

Communities are enabled by State legislation to designate roads other than state highways as Scenic Roads to prevent their elimination. This Law protects such roads from repair or maintenance which would involve the cutting or removal of medium and large-sized trees, except with the written consent of an official body. The large trees and stone walls that line many rural roads are irreplaceable and contribute heavily to the New England character of the region's towns. As previously stated, Brookline has designated North Mason and Averill Roads as Scenic Roads.

The town's 2009 Subdivision Regulations contain sections on Open Space Design and Trees and Plantings (“Due consideration shall be given to the preservation of existing features, trees, scenic points, and

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<sup>6</sup> Town of Brookline Zoning and Land Use Ordinance, <http://www.brookline.nh.us/documents/Regulations/planning%20board/zoning/2011%20Brookline%20Zoning%20Ordinance.pdf>, March 2011

other natural historic resources within subdivision”),<sup>7</sup> and its Non-Residential Site Plan (NRSP) Regulations require that the development of these sites give due regard “to the preservation of existing features, trees, scenic points, brooks, streams, rock outcroppings, water bodies, other natural resources, historic landmarks, stone walls, and other significant features”. The NRSP Regulations state that parking facilities shall be designed to ensure pedestrian safety and access and require landscape plans that are “appropriate to the context of a small New England Town”<sup>8</sup>. Appendix J<sup>9</sup> to the NRSP Regulations list the following construction design goals:

- Promote attractive commercial, industrial (and multi-family) developments,
- Encourage high quality building design which maintains aesthetic character of a rural community,
- Bring forward alternatives to corporate franchise prototypes,
- Blend building design layout with other outside features (landscaping, signage, lighting, etc.) to produce attractive commercial environment,
- Avoid monotonous and bland buildings typical of strip commercial developments,
- Facilitate an atmosphere that integrates the needs of pedestrians with those of drivers.

In addition, Appendix J lists Planning Board preferences for architectural design details, including:

- Colors that reflect a traditional New England palette are preferred.
- Neon tubing used as a feature, accent or trim on buildings is discouraged.
- Pedestrian amenities are encouraged, such as: benches, bike racks, sidewalks along building façades with customer entrance, and walkways connecting transit stops, parking lot crossing or street crossings.
- Create a sense of entry into the site and into major businesses within the site through landscaping, façade treatment and signage.

The town provides illustrations/examples of architectural, parking and pedestrian access designs as a supplement to the NRSP Regulations.<sup>10</sup> Those guidelines are provided on the following pages.

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<sup>7</sup> Town of Brookline Subdivision Regulations, <http://www.brookline.nh.us/documents/Regulations/planning%20board/2009%20Subdivision%20Regulations%20June%2018%202009.pdf>, June 2009

<sup>8</sup> Town of Brookline Non-Residential Site Regulations, <http://www.brookline.nh.us/documents/Regulations/planning%20board/2009%20NRSP%20Regulations%20June%2018%202009.pdf>, June 2009

<sup>9</sup> Town of Brookline Non-Residential Site Regulations, Appendix J, <http://www.brookline.nh.us/documents/Regulations/planning%20board/2009%20NRSP%20Regulations%20Appendix%20June%2018%202009.pdf>, June 2009

<sup>10</sup> Town of Brookline NRSP Design Guidelines Illustrations, <http://www.brookline.nh.us/documents/Regulations/planning%20board/2009%20Illustrations%20-%20examples%20for%20NRSP%20Designs2.pdf>, June 2009

**Town of Brookline, NH**  
**Non-Residential Site Plans -Design Guidelines Illustrations**  
**For Commercial / Industrial District**  
**Supplement to the Non-Residential Site Plan Regulations**

**Arcade**

A covered walkway consisting of a series of arches supported by columns or piers; a building or part of a building with the series of arches open to the street level; a roofed passageway, especially one with shops on either side

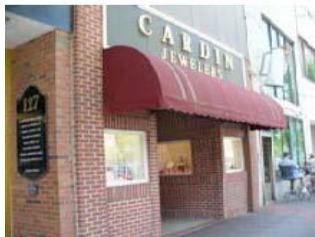
*(Definition: NRPC; photos: Wikipedia and Sarah Marchant)*



**Awning / Canopy**

A roof-like structure, often made of canvas or plastic, that forms a shelter over a storefront, window, door or deck

*(Definition: NRPC & photo: NRPC and Sarah Marchant)*



**Cupola**

A small structure that sits on a building roof; often featuring architectural elements such as domes or other ornamentation

*(Definition: NRPC; photos: Milford Heritage Commission and Sarah Marchant)*



**Display Window**

A store window, typically facing the street, used to display merchandise for sale in the store  
 (Definition: NRPC & photos: NRPC and Sarah Marchant)



**Dormer**

A vertically set window on a sloping roof; the roofed structure housing such a window  
 (Definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photos: NRPC and Sarah Marchant)



**Gable**

A ridged roof with at least two slopes on each side which forms a triangular wall segment at the end of a double-pitched roof  
 (Definition & photo: NRPC)



**Overhang**

A projecting upper portion of a building such as a roof or balcony  
 (Definition & photo: NRPC)



**Portico**

A major porch, usually with a triangular, pediment roof supported by classical columns  
(*Definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: This Old House*)

**Wall Plane**

The wall plane is the exterior surface of a wall along the front and sides of a building. In order to minimize the mass and scale of larger structures and to encourage pedestrian-scale development along the public way, the impact of the wall plane should be reduced in height and width. Combined with architectural features and landscaping, the proportions of larger structures can appear to be more in scale with the context of the surrounding area.

(*Definition: NRPC, photo: Milford Heritage Commission*)



**Low Impact Development (L.I.D)**

A bioretention filter consists of a grass buffer strip, a sand bed, a ponding area, an organic layer or mulch layer, planting soil, and plants such as leafy shrubs. These filters look like beds of shrubbery and can be placed as islands on parking lots. They use soils and woody and leafy plants to remove pollutants from storm water runoff. Runoff from large paved surfaces like parking lots passes first over or through a sand bed, which slows the speed of the flowing water. It also distributes the water evenly along the length of the ponding area. The

**Bioretention Islands in Parking Lots**

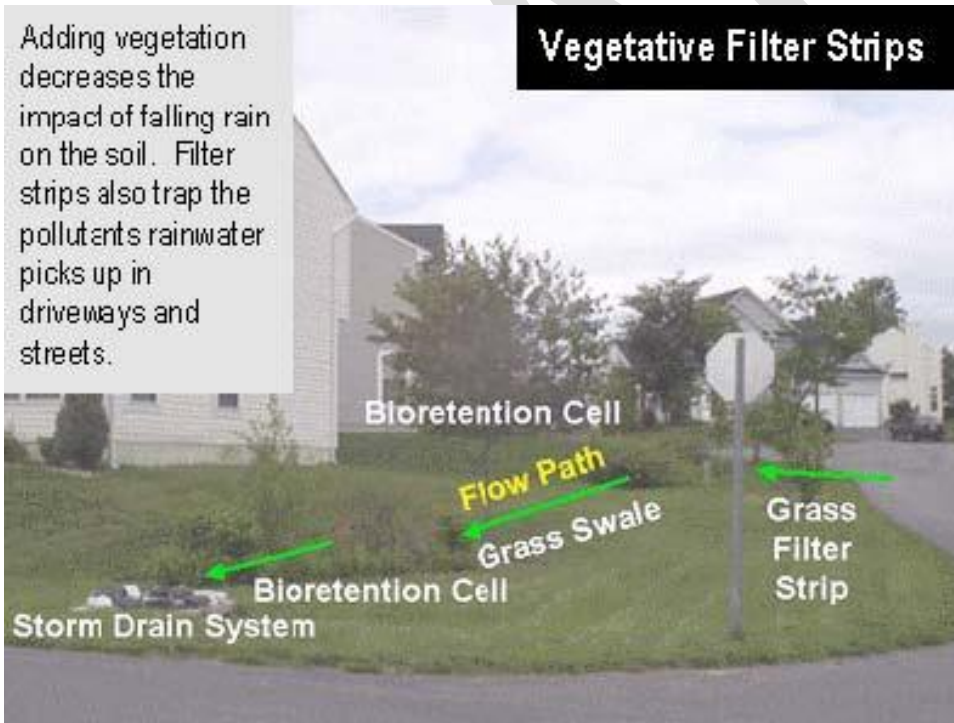


ponding area is made of soil, but it slopes into the center. Water gradually infiltrates the bioretention area, evaporates, and is taken up by the plants.

*Source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Polluted runoff, designing a better neighborhood.*

Adding vegetation decreases the impact of falling rain on the soil. Filter strips also trap the pollutants rainwater picks up in driveways and streets.

**Vegetative Filter Strips**



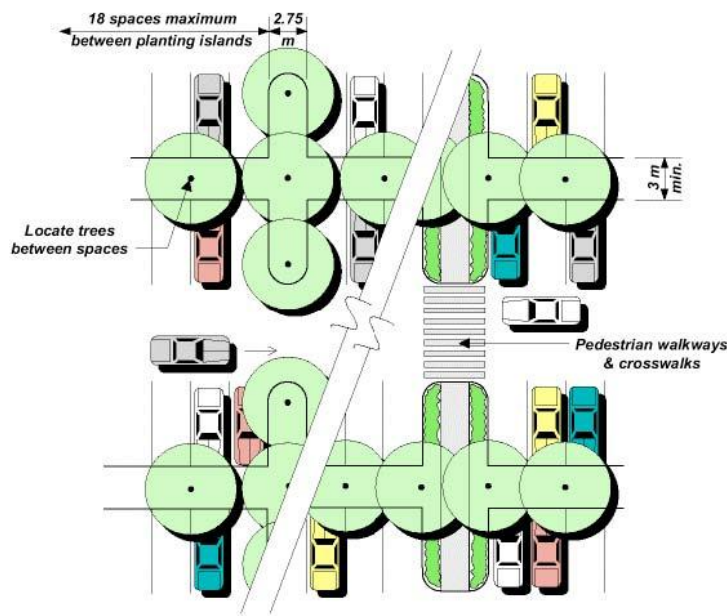
*Source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Polluted runoff, designing a better neighborhood.*

**Parking Design**

**Example of Pedestrian Paving in a Parking Island**



**Planting Islands and Pedestrian Paving** (Source: USAF, Landscape Design)



**Parking pedestrian circulation and landscape** (Photo: Municipal Code, City of Spokane, WA)



## SECTION 6—COMMUNITY DESIGN STRATEGIES

Brookline has incorporated community design strategies into its existing regulations and guidelines, as discussed in Section 5, including preservation of existing natural features and open space, providing for safe and effective vehicular and pedestrian circulation, requirements for signage and lighting, and establishing preferred architectural designs. Additional community design strategies for consideration include:

### Town Entrances/Gateways:

A gateway announces the entry to a distinct place, including residential neighborhoods, historic districts, or downtowns. Gateways provide a shared sense of place for residents and create a memorable and favorable impression on visitors. Furthermore, the addition of a gateway can help build community identity and involvement as residents and businesses work together to negotiate, plan, and build their gateway. Gateways can take a variety of forms, including arches, sculptures, fountains, signage on landscaped plots, or even facades of two corner buildings framing an entrance. The most effective gateway is located where there is a change in land use, such as transitions between commercial, rural, and residential areas or when entering a special location such as a town green, downtown, or waterfront. The gateway serves as a landmark to emphasize the change in character and directs attention to upcoming location.

### Site Design:

Additional considerations for site design beyond what is included in existing regulations may include requiring underground utilities and screening of outdoor storage and loading areas through landscaping or appropriate structural screening (non-residential properties). Scenic views may be protected and enhanced by requiring that new structures be limited to an elevation below the crown line of mature on-site trees; that wooded character of local hillsides be preserved; and where possible, structures be located adjacent to existing tree lines and wooded field edges rather than in open fields.

### Streetscaping and Landscaping:

Streetscape refers to the elements within and along the street right-of-way that define its appearance, identity, and functionality. These elements include adjacent buildings and land uses, street furniture, landscaping, trees, sidewalks, and pavement treatments. Streetscapes, such as colorful landscaped medians or brick road surfaces with tree-lined shoulders, enhance local aesthetics. They may also serve a functional purpose; awnings in a downtown shopping district filter sunlight, while bike lanes, bike racks, and street furniture encourage and facilitate non-motorized transportation.

Landscaping is more than simply using objects or plants to fill space or create transitions. In commercial and residential development, it often involves a creative and thoughtful design process. An emerging trend is to utilize native plants and trees in landscapes. This eliminates proliferation of invasive species, protects soils, minimizes energy and water usage, provides habitat, and supports the local economy. Looking to nature for guidance is at the heart of integrated landscaping, which is a holistic approach that

incorporates multilayered plant systems. Capturing and treating storm water is another component of good design. Properly placed vegetation can reduce the velocity of runoff and filter sediment and pollutants before they reach surface water bodies.

#### Vehicular Circulation:

Curb cuts should be minimized wherever possible to increase efficiency of traffic flow. When they are necessary, curb cuts should be located a safe distance from street intersections and should not create dangerous situations for pedestrians or motorists. Adequate sight distance should be maintained at all curb cuts.

One or two access points should service clusters of commercial establishments. Commercial establishments should be connected by shared parking areas. Shared access and cross easements should also be encouraged between smaller individual developments. The number of entrances to residential properties from arterial streets should be minimized.

#### Pedestrian Circulation:

The Transportation Chapter of this plan, as well as the Brookline Sidewalk and Trail Connection Plan, recommends sidewalks be constructed to enhance the non-motorized connectivity of the community. In residential developments, sidewalks should be constructed along at least one side of the public right-of-way and should be, at a minimum, 4' wide. Benches, lighting and landscape plantings such as those described above should be integrated into walkways to create pleasant community areas and provide resting areas with shade. Differentiation of paving materials, paved widths, landscaped buffers and lighting layouts should be used to separate pedestrian uses from vehicle uses in street design.

### **SECTION 7—RECOMMENDATIONS**

Many recommendations consistent with the principles of community design are included in other chapters of this Master Plan. The Land Use Chapter specifically recommends the development and implementation of design guidelines as well as a review of the existing sign ordinance. The Cultural and Historic Resources Chapter provides information and recommendations on a number of methods for the preservation and protection of the historic properties that helped shape Brookline. The Natural Resources Chapter contains recommendations that protect and preserve scenic viewpoints and natural resources and encourage land conservation. The Transportation Chapter recommends constructing sidewalks and improving pedestrian facilities, providing paved shoulders for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel, and encouraging land use patterns that promote non-motorized travel within the community.

The Land Use Chapter also recommends the formation of a Town Center Committee. The Committee has been formed and the charter for the Committee lists as one of its purposes: "Review the existing Brookline Design Guidelines for Commercial Development and create Design Guidelines and/or Regulations adapted to the proposed Mixed Use District". The process used by this committee to develop those guidelines may be used as a template for the development of design guidelines for other districts/land uses.

There is also an Elm Tree Project underway in Brookline that was initiated in 2006 and aims to bring the majestic elms that once lined the roads back to the town center, such as those seen in historic photos of Main Street. As of mid-2011, about three dozen elms have been planted along Main Street, Milford Street and Meetinghouse Hill Road. Project sponsors may provide valuable insight on how elm tree plantings could be incorporated into gateway, streetscape or landscape design plans.

In summary, the following table lists recommendations for implementing community design strategies.

General Recommendations	Time Frame
Implement the recommendations from the Land Use, Cultural and Historic Resources, Natural Resources and Transportation Chapters, as well as those made by the	Various; refer to listed Master Plan chapters
Implement recommendations of the Town Center Committee and the Committee to Reforest Main Street	1 – 2 Years
Use existing guidelines and regulations to develop “menu” of community design strategies for different types of development within the community – i.e., residential subdivision, commercial, industrial, municipal, within Neighborhood Historic District (should one be developed) and clearly indicate which are required and which are ‘preferred’	3 – 5 Years
Hold Community Design Charrettes to gather public input on preferred strategies that could be used to develop requirements for the different types of development or focus areas within the community	3 – 5 Years