

# Vision Plan for Rt. 13 & 130 Town of Brookline, NH

Prepared by: Nashua Regional Planning Commission

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September 2008



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Fall of 2007, the Town of Brookline decided to partner with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission to embark on a visioning project as part of the Integrating Transportation and Community Planning (iTRaC) program.

- The Town of Brookline pursued a visioning process for the Route 130 and Route 13 corridors as well as connections between the two including, Cross Street, South Main Street, Meetinghouse Hill Road and Bond Street.
- As growth and future development continue to occur in southern NH, it is likely that the town will continue to face increasing pressure for commercial development along this corridor. This is an ideal time for the town to complete a visioning exercise and develop a future outlook for the corridor and strategies that can be incorporated into the town's Master Plan for addressing future development.
- Once complete the town can choose to incorporate the results into the update of the Visioning Chapter of the Town's Master Plan.

A subcommittee was formed and included the following members: Sarah Marchant, Valerie Maurer, Ron Pelletier, Tad Putney, Tom Quarles and Ann Somers. The project goals include:

- Utilizing a widespread public outreach effort to obtain input from residents throughout town;
- Conducting a visioning process to determine what town residents would like to see in the future along the NH 13 and NH 130 corridors and their connections to the town center; and
- Obtaining input from residents on what uses they would like to see permitted within the study area; and the potential for mixed use zoning.

This visioning process built upon the work already completed in the NH 13 Access Management Study, the NH 130 Corridor Study, Smart Growth Audit and the Regional Build-out Analysis.

- The project assessed the current status of the town, including development of a community profile (see Appendix B) and an analysis of current trends.

The committee developed a number of surveys to determine what town residents want to see along these corridors as the town changes and grows in the future. The following four surveys were developed:

- Zoning Survey;
- Visual Preference Survey;
- Town Center Survey; and
- Transportation Survey.

A town wide **Visioning Meeting** was held on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at RMMS where all four surveys were available.

- The meeting was advertised via the following means: local newspapers; town website; key locations in town; cable access; direct mailing to all town residents; Yahoo Group list-serve; and local reader boards.
- Over 100 people attended on a Friday evening.
- All of the survey data collected at the visioning meeting have been compiled and brief summaries of each survey are provided below.
- The complete survey findings are provided in Chapters II - V later in this document, and Appendices F - I. I also provided a detailed list of all individual comments provided by respondents.

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**Zoning Survey Results (see page 7 for specific details)**

- A total of 160 respondents completed the zoning survey. The high number of respondents was due to its availability throughout town prior to the meeting.
- The concept of mixed use development was widely supported throughout town, with 121 (78%) respondents indicating that mixed use development should be allowed
- At least half of the respondents indicated that commercial development was appropriate for the entire Route 13 corridor, with considerably less in favor of commercial development along Route 130 and the town center.
- Results indicated that industrial development would be appropriate along southern Route 13, and to a lesser extent along northern Route 13, followed by central Route 13.
- Finally, 84% of respondents indicated that energy efficient design was very important or important.

**Visual Preference Survey Results (see page 11 for specific details)**

- A total of 85 respondents completed the visual preference survey.
- Results show that mixed use development is widely supported throughout the study area, with a focus on smaller scale residential structures along Route 130 and a variety of architectural styles along Route 13 and the town center.
- Industrial development is deemed most appropriate for Route 13 and is not supported in the town center or Route 130.
- All levels of commercial development are supported along Route 13, small scale commercial is considered appropriate for Route 130, and a village market or restaurant is supported in the town center.
- Side and rear parking is viewed as appropriate throughout town. Front parking is deemed most appropriate along Route 13, and to a lesser extent Route 130, but not in the town center.

**Town Center Survey Results (see page 14 for specific details)**

- A total of 75 respondents completed the town center survey.
- The town center is most frequently described as including the Town Hall, Library and Village Store, and to a lesser extent the fire station, RMMS, Lake Potanipo and church.
- An overwhelming majority (63) of respondents indicated that they would prefer to walk between destinations in the town center, followed by 36 respondents interested in bicycling.
- Additional professional services and gathering places such as a coffee shop, small restaurant, gazebo for concerts, a park, and retail shops, would create a more vibrant town center and a destination unto itself.
- Respondents want to maintain the existing center's open space and natural beauty as well as historic buildings and New England charm into the future.

**Transportation Survey Results (see page 17 for specific details)**

- A total of 83 respondents completed the town center survey.
- The top rated overall priority was improvements to the school zone and pedestrian amenities (including access to Lake Potanipo).
- Within this category three items were very closely ranked as the top priority: **1)** Removing the passing zone at RMMS; **2)** Upgrading crosswalks with crossing signals, raised pavement, bright pavement markings and crosswalk signs; and **3)** Adding a crosswalk from Meetinghouse Hill Rd. to Mason Rd. for pedestrian access to Lake Potanipo.

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### Action Items

The overall findings from all four surveys identified these **six common themes**:

- Maintain and enhance the community character and the New England look for existing and new commercial, retail, industrial, residential and mixed use development.
- Enhance the town center to create a center for the community and a viable place for public events.
- Expand and define the town center to make it into a destination.
- Provide additional amenities to town residents and encourage appropriate development along Route 13, and if appropriate, along Route 130 and the town center.
- Traffic and Safety
- Energy

The visioning process was followed up by a pilot Study Circle process.

- This process involved three groups of approximately 10 people meeting weekly for about 5 weeks.
- These groups developed recommendations which fell into six broad categories. The recommendations are found in Chapter VI and Appendix E.
- The Study Circle recommendations were broader in scope than the results from the visioning surveys. Where appropriate, the Study Circle recommendations have been incorporated into the six categories above.

Within the six themes, the iTRaC committee developed a detailed list of potential action items. Once developed, the committee reviewed all of the action items and underwent a prioritization process that evaluated each action item based on project impact and feasibility. The detailed action items are found in Chapter 1. Key action items were then selected for further analysis and prioritization. They are as follows:

#### 1 - 3 Years

- Develop an Economic Development Group
- Create a Town Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Map and Action Plan
- Create a Traffic and Safety Committee

#### 3 - 5 years

- Develop a Town Center Master Plan
- Develop a Town Center Overlay District to Permit Mixed Use Development
- Establish a Town Center Committee
- Review the Sign Ordinance

#### 5 - 10 Years

- Amend the Zoning Regulations to Permit Mixed Use Zoning Along NH 130 **outside** of the town center

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## CHAPTER I. ACTION ITEMS

The following action items are recommended from the iTRaC committee and are based upon both the survey findings and results from the study circles.

### THEMES

#### 1). **Maintain and enhance the community character and the New England look for existing and new commercial, retail, industrial, residential and mixed use development.**

##### Action Items

- Develop design guidelines either throughout town or specific to Route 13, Route 130 and the town center.
- Analyze the existing sign ordinance to determine if it could be enhanced.
- Explore the feasibility of permitting period lighting in addition to downcast lighting.

#### 2). **Enhance the town center to create a center for the community and a viable place for public events.**

##### Action Items

- Research the viability of a town center committee.
  - Work towards encouraging town events focused in the center.
  - Develop a multi-year plan for a park or town green with a playground and a gazebo for outdoor performances and town gatherings.
- Implement aesthetic amenities such as benches, period lighting, banners and landscaping.
- Determine locations for gateways and locational signs within the town center.

#### 3). **Expand and define a town center to make the center into a destination.**

##### Action Items

- Develop a town center master plan that expands and defines the center.
  - Enhance the town center with sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks as identified in a town wide bicycle and pedestrian plan (see number 5).
- Develop a town center overlay district to permit mixed use development allowing professional offices and small retail establishments in existing residential structures.
  - Conduct a public outreach campaign about mixed use development.
- Promote the establishment of a local Farmer's Market.

#### 4). **Provide additional amenities to town residents and encourage appropriate development along Route 13, and if appropriate, along Route 130 and the town center.**

##### Action Items

- Develop an Economic Development Group, which includes local business owners and regional and state resources to guide and promote the location of additional amenities along Route 13.
  - Create an Economic Development Plan.
  - Create a package of materials for distribution to prospective businesses to facilitate the development process.
  - Designate a staff person to address economic development questions and issues.
  - Research grant opportunities
  - Coordinate economic development efforts with existing regional / state resources.

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- Encourage additional businesses and professional offices to locate in Brookline reducing the need for residents to travel to Milford and Nashua as often.
- Amend the zoning regulations to permit mixed use zoning along NH 130 outside of the town center.

## 5). Traffic and Safety

### Action Items

- Create a short term traffic and safety committee to identify methods for improving safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles throughout town.
  - Address the feasibility of intersection improvements at South Main Street and NH 13 at the State Line Liquor Store.
  - Address the feasibility of intersection improvements at Route 130 and Cross Street.
  - Address the feasibility of adding a southbound left turn lane on NH 13 at Old Milford Road.
  - Address the feasibility of locating crosswalks on Route 13 at Lake Potanipo and CSDA.
  - Identify intersection improvements to facilitate safe access to Lake Potanipo across Route 13.
  - Implement safety improvements around RMMS to improve safety for school children. (See recommendations in the Town of Brookline Route 130 Plan)
- Create a town wide pedestrian and bicycle map and a multi-year action plan that identifies existing connections and prioritizes future connections throughout town and specifically within the town center including the following:
  - Brookline Chapel.
  - Explore the feasibility of creating a bicycle and pedestrian trail between the town center and Birch Hill, and possibly a separate trail along Route 13.
  - Explore the feasibility of creating a connection behind the old portion of Austin Road and Old Milford Road to create a trail access to the town center and elementary school.
  - Connecting neighborhoods to each other and to town amenities.
  - Explore the feasibility of creating a bicycle and pedestrian trail between CSDA and nearby neighborhoods.

## 6). Energy

### Action Items

- Promote energy efficient design in future town buildings and facilities.
- Install energy efficient street lights with shields.

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Impact - How much impact will this action have?	High		1. Develop a Town Center Master Plan (3-5 yrs)	1. Promote a local farmers market. (In Process)
			1a. Enhance the town center with sidewalks, bike lanes and crosswalks. (3-5 yrs)	2. Establish a town center committee. (3-5 yrs)
			2. Develop a town center overlay district to permit mixed use development allowing professional offices and small retail establishments in existing residential structures. (3-5 yrs)	2a. Develop a multi-year plan for a park or town green with a playground and outdoor performances. (5-10 yrs)
			2a. Conduct a public outreach campaign about mixed use development. (3-5 yrs)	2b. Encourage town events focused in the center. (5-10 yrs)
			3. Amend zoning regulations to permit mixed use zoning along NH 130 <b>outside</b> of the town center. (5-10 yrs)	3. Develop an Economic Development Group. (1 yr)
				3a. Designate a staff person for economic development questions. (1 yr)
				3b. Conduct research on economic development. (1-2 yrs)
				3c. Create an economic development plan. (2-3) yrs
				3d. Coordinate economic development efforts with regional/ state resources. (3+ yrs)
				3e. Research grant opportunities. (3+ yrs)
			3f. Create materials for prospective businesses. (3+ yrs)	
			3g. Encourage additional businesses and offices to locate in Brookline. (3+ yrs)	
High/moderate			1. Create a traffic and safety committee to address improving safety for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists throughout town. (1-3 yrs)	
			1a. Create a town wide pedestrian and bicycle map and action plan. (1-3 yrs)	
Moderate	1. Allowing period lighting (gas lamp look) with downcast lighting. (5-10 yrs)		1. Review the sign ordinance for enhancements. (3-5 yrs)	1. Identify locations for gateways and signs in the town center. (5-10 yrs)
			2. Implement aesthetic amenities such as benches, period lighting, banners and landscaping. (5-10 yrs)	2. Develop design guidelines. (3-5 yrs)
				3. Promote energy efficiency design in current and future town buildings and facilities. (1-3 yrs)
				4. Install energy efficient street lights with shields. (3-5 yrs)
Moderate/Low				
Low				
	Low	Moderate		High
Feasibility - How feasible is it to accomplish this action in our community?				

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# Town of Brookline Strategic Actions Prioritization and Evaluation

## Action Prioritization

### 1 - 3 Years

- Develop an Economic Development Group
- Create a Town Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Map and Action Plan
- Create a Traffic and Safety Committee

### 3 - 5 years

- Develop a Town Center Master Plan
- Develop a Town Center Overlay District to Permit Mixed Use Development
- Establish a Town Center Committee
- Review the Sign Ordinance

### 5 - 10 Years

- Amend the Zoning Regulations to Permit Mixed Use Zoning Along NH 130 outside of the town center.

## Action Items and Key Steps

### Action: Develop an Economic Development Group

- Discussions with Board of Selectmen
- Form a subcommittee under the Board of Selectmen
- Develop group within the next year
- Some committee volunteers have already been identified through the study circle process
- Committee will have the following main objectives: 1) gather information about economic development in other communities; 2) set economic development goals for the town and begin addressing them; and 3) proactively plan for and attract key businesses.
- Barriers include not wanting to grow like Milford; educating the public and obtaining community support for making Brookline more self sufficient.
- Stakeholders may include participants of the study circle groups or, interested residents, business owners and state legislators.

### Action: Create a town wide pedestrian and bicycle map and action plan

- Discussions with Board of Selectmen
- Form a subcommittee under the Board of Selectmen
- Develop group within the next year
- Some committee volunteers have already been identified through the study circle process
- Pursue grant opportunities
- The Nashua Regional Planning Commission developed a regional Bicycle and Pedestrian plan that can be used as well as a resource.
- Outside mapping assistance may be needed.

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- Stakeholders may include participants from the local snowmobile club, and Conservation Commission.

Action: **Create a traffic and safety committee to address vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle safety issues in town**

- Discussions with Board of Selectmen
- Form a subcommittee under the Board of Selectmen
- Develop group within 1 - 3 years
- Some committee volunteers have already been identified through the study circle process
- Barriers include lack of funding
- Stakeholders may include interested residents and board members.

Action: **Develop a Town Center Master Plan**

- Discussion with Planning Board and Board of Selectmen
- Form a subcommittee under the Planning Board
- Ideally the plan would be developed in the next 3-5 years.
- Would require research on traffic data, surveys, public outreach, and possibly incorporation of the study circle process.
- Barriers include physical limitations, in terms of space, education and support for a town center.
- Stakeholders include: BOS, PB, Recreation Committee, property owners, business owners the road agent and possibly NHDOT.

Action: **Develop a town center overlay district to permit mixed use development allowing professional offices and small retail establishments in existing residential structures**

- Discussions with Planning Board
- Form a subcommittee under the Planning Board
- Research to be conducted on mixed use zoning in other communities.
- Would also require a Public Hearing with the Planning Board and vote at Town Meeting.
- Developed in 3-5 years.
- Would require communication and publicity for involvement as well as education.
- Barriers include septic and water limitations, parking, traffic along a state route and local support.
- Stakeholders include: potential business owners, town center residents, PB, BOS, and economic development group.

Action: **Establish a town center committee**

- Discussions with Board of Selectmen
- Form a subcommittee under the Board of Selectmen
- Developed in 3-5 years after the completion of the Town Center Master Plan
- Stakeholders may include participants of the study circle groups, interested residents and board members.

Action: **Review the sign ordinance for enhancements**

- Discussions with the Planning Board
- Form a subcommittee under the Planning Board
- Develop group within 3 - 5 years

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- Barriers include opposition to signage restrictions
- Stakeholders may include participants of the study circle groups, interested residents, business owners and board members

Action: **If successful in the town center amend zoning regulations to permit mixed use zoning along NH 130 outside of the town center**

- Discussions with Planning Board
- Form a subcommittee under the Planning Board
- Would also require a Public Hearing with the Planning Board and vote at Town Meeting.
- Research to be conducted on other communities.
- Developed in 5-10 years.
- Would require communication and publicity for involvement as well as education.
- Barriers include septic and water limitations, parking, traffic along a state route and local support. Could include larger sized facilities than in the town center.
- Stakeholders may include potential business owners, corridor residents, PB, BOS, and economic development group.



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**Question 5**

Mixed use development would be appropriate for: (check all that apply)

- |                         |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 34 - on northern Rt. 13 | 34 - on eastern Rt. 130 | 43 - Town Center      |
| 41 - on central Rt. 13  | 33 - on western Rt. 130 | 21 - no where in town |
| 36 - on southern Rt. 13 |                         | 61 - throughout town  |

**Question 6**

Currently, there are no restrictions of building square footage in Brookline. I think there should be restrictions on the square footage of buildings: (check all that apply)

- |                        |                         |                       |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 9 - on northern Rt. 13 | 28 - on eastern Rt. 130 | 51 - Town Center      |
| 9 - on central Rt. 13  | 30 - on western Rt. 130 | 40 - no where in town |
| 2 - on southern Rt. 13 |                         | 46 - throughout town  |

**Question 7**

How important is it that new development in Brookline be built in an energy efficient way, utilizing alternative energy sources?

- |                     |                      |                     |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 76 - very important | 57 - important       | 17 - doesn't matter |
| 4 - unimportant     | 4 - very unimportant |                     |

**ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

A large number of comments were compiled from this survey. A detailed list of all survey comments can be found in Appendix F. The comments are loosely divided into six categories and have been summarized below. The following summary highlights common themes and unique ideas, but does not include each individual comment that was received.

**Building Guidelines / Regulation**

- Maintain the 'New England' look for future commercial, industrial, and retail development and enhance curb appeal.
- Recent development in Bedford along Route 101 is attractive and a prime example of a design that fits well in New England.
- Limit bright neon lights and signs, as well as large signs throughout town.
- Need attractive landscaping.
- Building architecture should reflect traditional New England style or residential look.
- Development should blend in with the rural surroundings, buffered by existing trees.
- Parking should be buffered by trees and located to the rear of buildings to minimize visible large parking lots, and connected to adjacent lots where possible
- Development guidelines would be helpful, but shouldn't be overly restrictive.

**Recreation / Conservation**

- As many trees as possible should be maintained in town, especially along Route 13.
- Maintain the natural features of the town as much as possible including: trees, conservation areas, lakes, farm lands, and wildlife.
- New development must blend in well with the rural nature of the town.
- Limit additional development. The town should not grow too much.
- Maintain the rural look of the town.

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- Conservation of natural resources must be considered including trees, Lake Potanipo, and existing and future conservation land.

### **Commercial / Industrial Development**

- Increase tax revenue in town, reduce the tax burden for property owners.
- Looking for lower property taxes and would like to see additional development along Route 13.
- Interested in additional “conveniences” within town, to limit the need to leave town for all services.
- Commercial, retail and smaller scale industrial is most appropriate for Route 13.
- Eastern Route 130 would be appropriate for small scale industrial and commercial development.
- Some mixed use development, and small retail/commercial would be appropriate for Route 130.
- Mixed use development with home based businesses would be appropriate for the town center and Route 130.
- Do not want to see any additional development. Maintain the existing rural character, trees etc.
- Need well thought out development that is attractive, ‘New England’ in character and has curb appeal, not like Route 101A.
- Town center could have mixed use, small retail, and commercial.
- Need to make Brookline attractive for future businesses.
- Future development throughout the corridors should be attractive, New England architecture, which blends in well with the rural surroundings and small town character of the community.
- Home based professional business would be an asset to the community.
- Would like to see some industrial parks, or technology and manufacturing sites.

### **Uses / Businesses Located in Town**

- Provide additional retail amenities, to limit trips out of town and support the local economy, including grocery store, cleaners, restaurants, carwash, laundry mat, hardware store, garden store, toy shop, etc.
- Big box stores and chains should not be encouraged.
- Building design, signage and lighting should be attractive.
- Mixed use including professional offices and residences should be encouraged in town, especially in the town center and along Route 130.
- Interested in a community recreation center/senior center in town, as well as senior housing, affordable housing and apartments.
- Conservation of natural resources must be considered including trees, Lake Potanipo, and existing and future conservation land.
- Centralized commercial areas, either along Route 13 or the town center, would provide opportunities to park once and walk to a number of destinations.
- Commercial, retail and light industrial uses are appropriate for Route 13. Mixed use professional businesses are appropriate for the town center and Route 13. Small retail and restaurants are also appropriate for the town center. Smaller scale commercial would be appropriate along eastern Route 130.
- The town center in Groton, MA is very attractive and a desirable example of future development.

### **Community Character and Town Center**

- The town center should remain quaint.
- Need sidewalks and centralized parking to facilitate parking once and then walking to a number of destinations within the town center.
- Additional uses such as restaurants and shops – like Groton, MA.
- Buildings should have an attractive New England look to them.

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- No further development in the town center, should just maintain the existing residential feel, possibly look at historic district designation.
- Add community amenities including a skateboard park, playground, community center, and tennis/basketball courts.
- Maintain the rural nature by preserving trees and green spaces.

**Miscellaneous**

- Large trucks traveling through the town center and Meetinghouse Hill Road are a problem, interested in a bypass.
- Do not want to create another Route 101A, but Groton, MA is a good example.
- Encourage bicycling and walking trails throughout town and along the length of Route 13.
- Encourage energy efficiency.
- Address the cleared lot next to Andre's Art Institute.
- Further research into the following:
  - Use of Infant Jesus Church as a children's library/community center.
  - Melendy Pond - take back for recreation when leases expire.
  - Quimby Road - redevelopment as a historic/mixed use district.
  - Elderly housing/assisted living and apartments would be appropriate.

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## CHAPTER III. VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

### SUMMARY

A total of 85 respondents completed this survey. Results show that mixed use development is widely supported throughout the study area, with a focus on smaller scale residential structures along Route 130 and a variety of architectural styles along Route 13 and the town center. Industrial development is deemed most appropriate for Route 13 and is not supported in the town center or Route 130. All levels of commercial development are supported along Route 13, small scale commercial is considered appropriate for Route 130, and a village market or restaurant is supported in the town center. Side and rear parking is viewed as appropriate throughout town. Front parking is deemed most appropriate along Route 13, and to a lesser extent Route 130, but not in the town center.

See Appendix G for Visual Preference Survey photos and responses.

### MIXED USE

Photos 1-3 show businesses (in residential structures) *adjacent* to residences, photos 4-6 depict retail and residences in the *same* building, and photos 7-9 illustrate office and residential uses in the *same* building.

Respondents selected most of the mixed use photos as appropriate for Route 13, Route 130 and the town center.

- This indicates that in general residents are open to the idea of allowing or encouraging mixed use development throughout town.
- The responses suggest that traditional single family homes with businesses are most appropriate for Route 130.
- A greater variety of styles would be appropriate in the town center, including ground floor retail establishments with residences above, large scale multi-family residences, apartment buildings with retail below, and traditional farmhouses.
- The largest retail/office/residential structures and those not in keeping with traditional New England architecture were preferred for Rt. 13 or were not considered appropriate for Brookline. For example, photos 6, 7 and 9 received the highest votes for not appropriate anywhere in town, with photo 9 receiving 28 votes.

### Town Center

The Town Center received high votes for every mixed use photo except 7 and 9. The photos included compact single family homes, large multi-family structures, traditional farm houses, and retail ground floor with residences above. This indicates that residents were open to a variety of architectural styles and different variations of mixed use, including offices adjacent to residences, and retail with residential in the same building. Photo 8 ranked very high for the town center and Rt. 130, while photos 7 and 9 ranked much lower. This illustrates that the shared office/residential use is desired, however, structural appearance influences where it should be located.

### Route 13

Most of the photos were selected as appropriate for Route 13, with the exception of 1, 5 and 9, which ranked somewhat lower. All three of these photos depict traditional single family homes or in the case of photo 5 a traditional New England commercial structure with residences above. Respondents indicated that these structures are more appropriate for Route 130 and the town center.

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### **Route 130**

Compact single family homes, large multi-family structures, and traditional farm houses are deemed most appropriate for Rt. 130. Photos 5, 7 and 9 were ranked lowest for Route 130. These larger structures do not fit the scale and character of what residents want to see along the corridor.

### **INDUSTRIAL**

Photos 10-12 show large scale industrial development, photos 13-15 illustrate small scale industrial development, and photos 16-18 depict industrial parks. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they did not want to see any industrial development in the town center. There is overwhelming support for small scale industrial along Rt. 13, except for the fueling station, which was opposed town wide by about one third of respondents. There was also significant support for industrial parks along Route 13.

Less than half of the respondents thought large scale industrial was appropriate for Route 13 and at least half the respondents did not feel it was appropriate anywhere in town.

### **Town Center**

Almost every respondent indicated that all types of industrial development were inappropriate for the town center.

### **Route 13**

One third to one half of all respondents indicated that photo 11 and 12 would be appropriate examples of large scale industrial development along Route 13. However, the other half indicated these would not be appropriate anywhere in town. Significant support was shown for small scale development (photos 14 and 15) with the exception of propane storage facilities (photo 13), which roughly one third of respondents felt was not appropriate anywhere in town. Industrial parks, particularly smaller scale, such as photo 17, were also supported for Rt. 13.

### **Route 130**

Route 130 did not rank high for any type of industrial development. Photos 14 and 17 ranked the highest with about one quarter of respondents indicating they would be appropriate uses for the corridor.

### **COMMERCIAL**

Photos 19 -21 show large scale commercial development, photos 22 - 24 illustrate medium scale development and photos 25-27 depict small scale commercial development. Results from the commercial component clearly indicate that overall design guidelines are very important to town residents. Photo 27, depicting a village store and restaurant, was the only widely supported example of Commercial development appropriate for the town center. All levels of commercial development were favored for Route 13 with the exception of big box retail. Medium and small scale commercial development was supported along Route 13 as long as the development maintained a typical New England character. In all cases buildings with traditional New England architecture and uses were favored. Photos 22 and 24 illustrate this point. Photo 22 shows a rental facility with an unkempt site while photo 24 depicts a medium commercial building with a typical New England look and attractive landscaping. About one half of all respondents indicated that photo 22 was not appropriate anywhere in town compared with only 8 who said the same about photo 24.

### **Town Center**

The only example of appropriate uses for the town center is photo 27 showing a market/restaurant in a typical New England structure.

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### **Route 13**

All levels of commercial development are supported along the corridor. Photos 19 and 22 received the least support, demonstrating that residents do not want typical “big box” retail or unkempt and unattractive uses. Photos 20, 24, 25, and 26 were deemed the most appropriate for the corridor. These include attractive agricultural businesses, a gas station, and a commercial building with a typical New England character.

### **Route 130**

Medium and small scale commercial development are deemed appropriate for Route 130, however, they must keep with traditional New England design and use. Larger chains, bland architecture, or unkempt sites are not desired along the corridor.

### **PARKING**

Respondents supported side and rear parking along Routes 13 and 130, and to a lesser extent rear parking in the town center. Front parking was deemed appropriate for Route 13 and to a lesser extent at small scale businesses along Route 130 and the town center.

### **ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

- Many respondents commented on the visual elements of development.
- Based on survey responses, residents would likely support requirements on landscaping, maintaining the historic architecture in the town center, signage, design, and location of commercial and industrial uses along the corridors.
- Respondents are looking to maintain the sense of community and the current feel and scale of Brookline.
- Industrial development must be carefully chosen for specific areas of town.

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## CHAPTER IV. TOWN CENTER SURVEY RESULTS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A total of 75 respondents completed this survey. The town center is most frequently described as including the Town Hall, Library and Village Store, and to a lesser extent the fire station, RMMS, Lake Potanipo and churches. An overwhelming majority (63) of respondents indicated that they would prefer to walk between destinations in the town center followed by 36 respondents interested in bicycling. However, this would require some additional parking opportunities in the center, as well as a safe pedestrian and bicycle system with sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, benches and period lighting. Additional professional services and gathering places such as, a coffee shop, small restaurant, gazebo for concerts, a park, and retail shops, would create a more vibrant town center and a destination unto itself. Respondents want to maintain the existing center's open space and natural beauty as well as historic buildings and New England charm into the future.

### SURVEY RESULTS

#### Question 1

What destination points or other markers do you think define Brookline's town center (ex. library, post office, school, Lake Potanipo)?

- More than 35 respondents included the Town Hall, Library, and Village Store.
- 10 or more respondents included the Fire Station, RMMS, Lake Potanipo, and Churches.
- Between 5 and 10 respondents included the Ball Field and Playground, Cemetery, and the Post Office / Safety Complex.
- Improved access between sites via safe sidewalks and bicycle and pedestrian paths between the town center and residential areas is desired.

#### Question 2

How would you most like to travel from one destination point to the next when in the town center (ex. Drive, walk, bike, etc.)?

- 63 respondents indicated a preference to walk, followed by 36 respondents preferring to bicycle and 12 respondents preferring to drive between locations in the town center.
- Improved pedestrian crossings, trails, sidewalks and reduced traffic speeds would facilitate traveling by foot and bicycle.
- Numerous respondents indicated that they need to drive to the town center and park, and then they would be interested in walking between destinations, as long as the center had a well connected sidewalk system.
- The town center does not currently have enough amenities to be a destination unto itself.
- Destinations are too spread out to easily travel by foot.

#### Question 3

What improvements would need to be made, if any, to allow you to travel in this way (ex. expanded sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, lighting, etc.)?

- Expanded sidewalks are the priority with 45 responses.
- Lighting was selected by 19 respondents, crosswalks by 22 and bike lanes by 24.
- A bike and pedestrian trail from the town center to Bear Hill and Birch Hill would provide access to a dense residential area in town.

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- Additional sidewalks or bike and pedestrian paths are needed to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access to the center.
- Need additional destinations and services in the town center.
- Additional features such as flowers, banners, and period lighting (gas lamp look) would make the center more inviting.
- Parking is needed in the center to allow drivers to park and walk to all town center destinations.

**Question 4**

In 20 years, what would you like to see in the town center that is not currently there?

- Coffee shop, small restaurants, recreation center, library, gazebo for concerts, a park, village green, and small retail stores were selected most by respondents.
- Additional destinations and services including gathering spots in the town center.
- Groton, Massachusetts is an example of a desirable town center.
- Restaurants, coffee shops, antique shops, book shop and professional offices would be desirable uses in the town center.
- Maintain and enhance the historic feel of the center with gas lighting, natural building materials, and businesses in existing homes.
- A park with a playground, wading pool, recreation fields and gazebo.
- Define the town center area.
- ADA accessibility.
- Community/recreation center for both seniors and teenagers.

**Question 5**

What features of Brookline's current town center do you want to ensure are maintained in 20 years?

- Conservation land, open space and natural beauty.
- Existing historic buildings, architectural characteristics, and small town NE look and feel.
- Town hall, church, village store, library, historic homes.

**Question 6**

What amenities would you like to see enhancing the town center (ex. park benches, lighting, banners, expanded sidewalks)?

- Expanded sidewalks were selected by 36 respondents, benches by 35, lighting by 28 and banners by 15.
- Historic looking signs, and a guide to historic buildings.
- Attractive park with playground.
- Period lighting, benches, wheelchair accessibility, gazebo and sidewalks.

**Question 7**

What is your overall vision for Brookline's town center?

- Gathering places, both indoor and outside including cafés, an ice cream stand, and gazebo for concerts. A place to spend time with friends and family on a Saturday night.
- Quaint town center.
- A destination including a park, and businesses such as a card shop, café, hardware store, professional offices all in keeping with typical NE architecture.
- Mixed use development with retail below and residential above.
- Simple, walkable town center with a historic NE feel.

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- A town center like Groton, MA.
- A destination and community hub for town events.
- Outdoor performance space.
- Maintain the rural feel.

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## CHAPTER V. TRANSPORTATION SURVEY RESULTS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A total of 83 respondents completed this survey. The top rated overall priority was improvements to the school zone, pedestrian amenities, and access to Lake Potanipo. Within this category three items were very closely ranked as the top priority: **1) Removing the passing zone at RMMS; 2) Upgrading crosswalks with crossing signals, raised pavement, bright pavement markings, & crosswalk signs; and 3) Adding a crosswalk from Meetinghouse Hill Rd. to Mason Rd. for pedestrian access to Lake Potanipo.** A few suggestions were made to locate a pedestrian bridge over Rt. 13 to provide a safe means of crossing from Meetinghouse Hill Road to Lake Potanipo.

The top three intersections that respondents identified as poorly configured or in need of improvements were: **1) Rt. 13 at South Main Street and the State Line Liquor Store; 2) Rt. 130 and Cross Street and 3) Rt. 13 and Old Milford Road.** This was followed by the Rt. 13 and Meetinghouse Hill Road intersection. The data indicates that the Meetinghouse Hill Road intersection may be a greater concern for safe pedestrian access rather than vehicular access.

The survey asked for input to prioritize speeding concerns at three locations. These locations were selected based on speed counts conducted as part of the Rt. 130 Corridor Plan in 2005. Respondents were most concerned about speeding along Rt. 130 at RMMS, followed by a concern about speeding on Rt. 13 at Meetinghouse Hill Road. Some respondents raised concerns about speed at additional points along the corridors; a first step in investigating these concerns would be to conduct additional speed counts.

### SURVEY RESULTS

#### Overall Priorities

**Question:** Please rank the following overarching issues from 1-3, with 1 being most important and 3 being least important (the average response is in parenthesis).

**Rank:**

- 1 School Zones & Pedestrian Amenities (1.65)**
- 2 Intersections (2.05)**
- 3 Speeding (2.13)**

#### School Zones and Pedestrian Amenities

**Question:** A number of improvements have been suggested in the school zone along Milford St. near RMMS and along Rt. 13 near Lake Potanipo. Please rank the following improvements from 1-6, with 1 being most important and 6 being least important (the average response is in parenthesis).

**Rank:**

- 1 Remove the passing zone on Milford St. north of RMMS (2.56)**
- 2 Upgrade crosswalks with crossing signals, raised pavement, bright pavement markings, & crosswalk signs (2.59)**
- 3 Add a crosswalk from Meetinghouse Hill Rd. to Mason Rd. for pedestrian access to Lake Potanipo (2.61)**
- 4 Add grooves in pavement and/or pavement markings to indicate a school zone (3.43)**
- 5 Include additional amenities such as lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and school zone sign (3.99)**
- 6 Add speed bumps near school crosswalks (4.41)**

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### Intersections

**Question:** The intersections below have been identified as being poorly configured or in need of improvement. Please rank the following intersections from 1-6, with 1 being of most concern and 6 being of least concern (the average response is in parenthesis).

**Rank:**

- 1 Rt. 13, South Main Street, and the State Liquor Store **(2.84)**
- 2 Rt. 130 and Cross Street **(3.00)**
- 3 Rt. 13 and Old Milford Road **(3.19)**
- 4 Rt. 13, Mason Road, and Meetinghouse Hill Road **(3.31)**
- 5 Rt. 130 and South Main Street **(3.60)**
- 6 Rt. 130, Bond Street, and Meetinghouse Hill Road **(3.70)**

### Speeding

**Question:** How concerned are you about speeding at the following locations? Please rank the following locations from 1-3, with 1 being of most concern and 3 being of least concern (the average response is in parenthesis).

**Rank:**

- 1 Rt. 130 at the Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS) **(1.24)**
- 2 Rt. 13 between Bond St. and Meetinghouse Hill Rd. **(2.12)**
- 3 Rt. 130 at the Hollis town line **(2.44)**

## **ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

### Speed

- A few respondents suggested the need to lower or raise speeds along Rt. 130 and Rt. 13. The calculation of posted speed limits is based on industry standards of the Institute of Traffic Engineers. As these are both state roads any changes to the speed limits would need to be addressed directly with the NH Department of Transportation.
- Several respondents mentioned concerns about speeding on South Main Street.
- Comments were received about speed limit enforcement, especially in the 35 mph zone on Rt. 13 between Bond Street and Meetinghouse Hill Road, South Main Street and Rt. 130 at RMMS.
- Concerns were raised about the potential need to reduce speed limits in the future as more development occurs along Rt. 13.

### School Zones / Pedestrian Access / Bicycle Access

- Numerous comments were received about the need to improve safety by expanding and enhancing sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes throughout the entire town, but especially in the town center, near both schools and across Rt. 13 to access Lake Potanipo.
- Respondents also mentioned improved lighting, raised or painted crosswalks, raised curbs between the sidewalk and roadway, and town center beautification as a means to improve safety and access for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- A few respondents suggested locating a pedestrian bridge over Rt. 13 to provide access from Meetinghouse Hill Road and Lake Potanipo.
- Safety concerns about bicycling in travel lanes were raised. Marked bicycle lanes were suggested as well as bicycle and pedestrian paths/trails throughout town, particularly along Old Milford Road to provide access from Bear Hill/Birch Hill to the town center.

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**Intersections**

- Concerns about safety at the intersection of Rt. 13 and Old Milford Road, Rt. 13 and Mason Rd/Meetinghouse Hill Road
- Possibility of adding left turn lanes on Rt. 13 at Mason Road, Rt. 13 and Rt. 130 and Rt. 13 and Old Milford Road.
- Traffic light or improvements at Rt. 13 and Meetinghouse Hill Road.
- Improvements or restricting left turns at Rt. 130 and Cross Street.
- Safety concerns at Bohanon Bridge Road and Rt. 130.

**General Findings**

- Safety concerns were raised about snow banks, in particular the snow piles located at Bohanon Bridge Road and Rt. 130 in the winter time.
- Concerns about through truck traffic in along Rt. 130 and in the Town Center.

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## CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY OF STUDY CIRCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Zoning and Taxes

- 1.) Form an Economic Development Group
- 2.) Develop design guidelines for commercial buildings
- 3.) Allow for "mixed use" zoning along the town center portion of Route 130
- 4.) Promote less restrictive "cluster" zoning in limited areas

### Travel and Safety

- 1.) Eliminate/reduce the line of traffic in front of RMMS
- 2.) Improve Route 130/Cross St. intersection
- 3.) Add crosswalks on Route 13 at the town beach and CSDA
- 4.) Add a southbound left turning lane on Route 13 at Old Milford Road
- 5.) Provide substantial paved shoulders on all roads, where practical
- 6.) Develop a comprehensive plan for bike paths that connect neighborhoods
- 7.) Work with utility co. to install more efficient street lights and add shields
- 8.) Pursue moving Route 130 onto Cross St. and directly to Route 13

### Small Town Feel/Communication

- 1.) Provide organized outreach to all new residents when they move to Brookline
- 2.) Create a "Volunteer Coordinator" role for Brookline
- 3.) Improve the "town" newspaper as a vehicle for town-wide communication and information
- 4.) Start a weekly Farmers Market in town
- 5.) Increase attendance at annual town and school meetings; provide childcare
- 6.) Add a large sign at the transfer station similar to the new Women's Club sign
- 7.) Hold meetings, with childcare, that allow for both socialization and discussion of timely town-wide topics

### Nature and Environment

- 1.) Proactively develop a town plan, including regulations, for alternatives sources of energy
- 2.) Focus as a town on energy efficiencies/"green" opportunities for town and school buildings
- 3.) Consider tax breaks for residents with solar, geothermal or other alternative energies
- 4.) Increase volunteerism/required community service to maintain Brookline's environment
- 5.) Enhance facilities and safety for swimmers at the town beach

### Education

- 1.) Set up a group to develop specific measurements to evaluate the quality of education in Brookline
- 2.) Provide regular communication to taxpayers about the quality of education, including specific areas targeted for improvement and how success will be measured
- 3.) Focus on hiring and retaining the best teachers; determine how to improve
- 4.) Improve attendance and amount of public dialogue at school board meetings
- 5.) Look into voucher system
- 6.) Ensure sufficient building and teaching resources

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**Other**

- 1.) Evaluate a move to “pay as you throw” at the transfer station
- 2.) Review current elderly tax exemption and consider modifications
- 3.) Develop a list of potential real estate purchases by the town; coordinate with Conservation Commission

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## **APPENDICES**

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