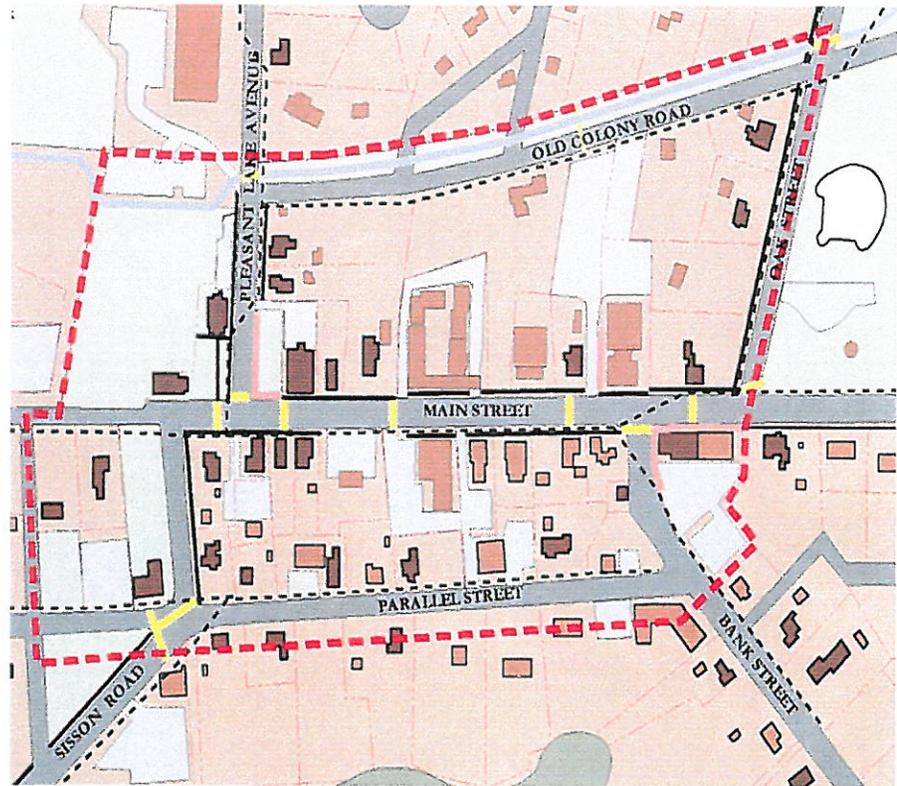


# FINAL REPORT FOR THE HARWICH CENTER INITIATIVE



Funded by:  
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
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Administered by:  
The Harwich Center Initiative

Prepared by:  
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# HARWICH CENTER INITIATIVE FINAL REPORT

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Overview

This is a summary of an important public planning and design initiative that can enhance the visual character and economic vitality of Harwich Center. The goal of this initiative is to create guidelines for future development that will strengthen the village character, contribute to the economic health and enhance the quality of the surrounding residential areas.

The Harwich Center Initiative, undertaken and coordinated by the Harwich Center Initiative Committee in Fall, 1999, has been funded by a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Department of Housing and Community Development's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative. This program provides towns with technical assistance in:

- identifying community needs
- envisioning what a revitalized downtown can be
- reviewing solutions other locales have applied to similar problems
- developing specific design actions
- understanding the implementation steps necessary to realize the vision

The emphasis in this revitalization effort must be on developing a shared vision for the future of the village center amongst the public and private interests who are the stakeholders in the community. For this reason the public participation workshop is the most important element of the plan.

The Cecil Group, Inc. provided professional assistance to the Town of Harwich in the preparation of this plan. The Cecil Group, Inc. is a design firm with expertise in urban design and landscape architecture.

### 2. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to cover key issues which are of concern to the stakeholders, exploring design options and recommending implementation steps that may help the community to proceed toward its goal of an improved village center.

### 3. Planning Process

A planning process was conducted that began with a review of the available background documents. These reports included the Downtown Technical Assistance Report for

Harwich Center (1999) prepared by the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative; Town inventories of parking and historic structure. Discussions with Michael Pessolano, former town planner provided an overview of local planning issues and insights into the concerns of public agencies, residents and the commercial sector. Base plans were prepared from assessors maps provided by the Harwich Planning Office. Design team members visited the area to familiarize themselves with local conditions and to take photographs of important design opportunities and planning constraints.

On November 6, 1999, a public planning workshop was held in Harwich Center to solicit issues, goals and design ideas from interested community members. Prior to the meeting, the Harwich Center Initiative Committee conducted a public outreach program to inform property and business owners, town residents and other stakeholders of the planning effort.

At that workshop, the community was shown a photographic slide “tour” of the existing project area. The planning team highlighted a number of areas that represented opportunities for visual enhancement and revitalization. Other conditions that constrain the creation of a coherent village center were also noted. Examples of other communities’ successful revitalization efforts and design tools were shown to illustrate the range of possible solutions available to solve similar problems. Harwich residents were then encouraged to break into small discussion groups facilitated by team members to mark site maps with their perceptions of problem areas and design opportunities. After re-assembling, spokespersons for each citizen team listed that group’s most important issues and goals.

Breaking down again into work groups, residents were asked to help generate design ideas for improvements aimed at specific problem areas or to enhance village features on site maps. From these proposed design visions, citizens developed a priority list which ranked these design elements from most important to least important.

The planning team then summarized the principal design ideas heard from the work teams and outlined resources available to fund some of these improvements. Implementation steps that the community might wish to undertake were discussed, to conclude the workshop.

As a final step, a Design Report and an outline estimate of the costs of some of the most important design elements have been developed to guide the community in understanding the responsibilities and processes involved in realizing these revitalization visions over time.

#### 4. Description of the Focus Area

The “focus area” identified prior to the workshop encompassed a compact area centered on Main Street extending from Forest Street eastward to Oak Street. The north boundary is formed by the north edge of the cemetery and the First Congregational Church Parking lot to the west of Pleasant Lake Avenue and the bikeway from Pleasant Lake

Avenue to Oak Street. The south boundary is formed by Parallel Street from Forest Street to Bank Street. The west boundary is formed by Forest Street from Parallel Street to Main Street and the western edge of the cemetery. The east boundary is comprised of the south and east edges of the Brooks Free Library property and Oak Street north to bikeway.

## COMMUNITY ISSUES

### 1. Overall Issues

Key issues for Harwich Center were identified in the initial technical assistance report released by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and by the Harwich Center Initiative and the Traffic Safety Committee. The overall issues identified concerned traffic, pedestrian safety and circulation, parking and enhancing the streetscape and “village” character of Harwich Center. Streetscape concerns revolve around providing attractive and durable street lighting, street furniture, overhead utility lines, crosswalks, sidewalks and landscaping. The committee would like solutions and products that are of a scale, period and materials that enhance the “village” feel of Harwich Center. These issues formed the basis for the workshop. The breakout groups provided more a detailed understanding of these issues including specific problem at specific locations for both the negative and positive attributes of Harwich Center.

### 2. Specific Issues

The following is a list of the key issues and areas of concern identified by the Harwich Center Committee and the Traffic Safety Committee.

- Traffic calming: curb extensions and other techniques to slow traffic and enhance the pedestrian environment
- Crosswalks: proper placement, ADA compliance and visibility to motorists
- Sidewalks: type of materials with associated cost and maintenance considerations, extent of sidewalks, width and American Disability Act (ADA) compliance
- On-street parking: placement of spaces should optimize safety before quantity
- Off-street parking: identify suitable locations and appropriate design features
- Street lighting: fixture type, placement, operating costs and intensity
- Utility lines: bury or relocate, prioritize
- Street furniture: the placement appearance and maintenance of planters, benches, trash receptacles and bike racks
- Signage: public and private including directional, informational and interpretive signage
- Vegetation: species, placement and maintenance for *street trees* and other public plantings

## Breakout Group Comments

The following series of lists of “breakout group” comments include negative and positive attributes for both specific locations and those that occur throughout Harwich Center. Through the “breakout group” process some participants identified incompatible issues. For example, some participants perceived parking as insufficient by while others believed parking was sufficient.

### Specific Negative Attributes

- Traffic speeds through Harwich Center along Main Street with particular emphasis placed on Routes 124 and 39
- Intersection of Main Street and Pleasant Lake Avenue
  - Chaotic because of traffic congestion and poor visibility created by on-street parking
  - Unsafe parking along Main Street in area of Bates Hardware
  - Goods cluttering the sidewalk in front of Bates Hardware
  - Large delivery trucks obstruct traffic on lower Main Street creating hazards for drivers and pedestrians
- Intersection of Sisson Road and Parallel Street
  - Dangerous because of poor road alignment and long, diagonal crosswalks
  - No sidewalk in front of old Youth Commission facility
- Danger to small children who live along Parallel Street because of *speeding cut-through traffic* and no sidewalks.
- Area where Main Street intersects Bank and Oak Streets is congested and dangerous especially during high school rush hour
- Through truck traffic along Routes 39 and 124
- No crosswalk at the intersection of Parallel and Bank Streets.
- Poorly placed crosswalks along Main Street
- 13 curb cuts along Main Street
- Dangerous diagonal crosswalk north of Old Colony Road on Oak Street.
- Poor condition of brick sidewalk in area of Exchange Park causes accessibility problems for handicapped persons
- Ugly, narrow asphalt sidewalks throughout Harwich Center
- No sidewalk along Pleasant Lake Avenue from front of 1st Congregational Church church to Main Street
- Main street too narrow for parking
- Insufficient on-street and off-street parking
- Area between Main Street businesses and Parallel Street
  - Poorly utilized space encourages loitering
  - Ugly divider street connecting Main and Parallel Streets is used as a short cut

- The apartments on Main Street are poorly maintained.
- Ugly utility lines throughout Harwich Center (emphasis on Main Street)
- Poor system of connections to bikeway between Pleasant Lake Avenue and Island Pond Road, bikeway and Main Street and to Harwich Port
- Access to High School and Senior Center not well defined
- Highway lighting along Main Street is poor and inappropriate in scale
- Ugly overhead utilities create visual clutter
- Lack of focal point in Powderhouse Park that encourages people to use the park
- No stopping or gathering places along Main Street
- Poor signage at Getty Petroleum and the large scale of propane tanks and a lack of definition between sidewalk and service area
- Several structures in the village center are poorly maintained
- Merchants buildings poorly maintained and designed (especially Bell Atlantic)
- Narrow planting strips along Main Street

#### General Negative Attributes

- Insufficient number and variety and types shops that would appeal to visitors and help ensure the economic future.
- Harwich Center lacks visual continuity along Main Street, a sense of coherence and intimacy or a sense of center.
- No sense of entry or gateways into “historic” Harwich Center
- Problems with ADA accessibility at crosswalks and along sidewalks
- Sidewalk design and condition inconsistent with most sidewalks too narrow and in poor condition
- On-street parking is not defined or signed.
- Underutilized on and off-street parking
- Poor directional and informational signage to activities, parking and other facilities
- Nonstandard, ugly road signs
- Lack of public seating areas
- Lack of bike racks
- Buildings and hedges on north side of Main Street need maintenance
- Questionable civic pride

#### Specific Positive Attributes

- Walking routes throughout Harwich Center such as the “big loop”, the “little loop” and between Brooks Park and the high school
- Park (Powderhouse Park) between Brooks Academy and Main Street
- Millennium Park, Powderhouse Park, Exchange Park, Brooks Park and the bikeway form a strong basis for a series of linked open spaces

- Potential for strong pedestrian and visual connections from village center down to South Street and through Powderhouse Park to Brooks Academy
- Excellent village center, enhance it
- First Congregational Church contributes meeting space and visual charm
- Visually nice locations including the “village center” and the space formed Brooks Academy and Millennium Park
- The Bikeway
- Potential structures for reuse including old Harwich Recreation and Youth Commission building and the Albro House, the structure at 708 Main Street and the structures at 911 Pleasant Lake Avenue.
- Gardens between apartments on Main Street and Old Colony Road.
- Potential for purchase of property behind Bell Atlantic (Moyle property) for increasing parking supply and connection between bikeway and Main Street
- School pedestrian traffic along Main Street
- Nice appearance of Center Point Counseling property east of Library parking lot
- Brooks Park activities including concerts at the band stand, the craft show and the ball field
- The high school, senior center and the Harwich Recreation and Youth Commission provide a basis for cultural and social activities
- Brooks Library and Brooks Academy provide bookends to Harwich Center
- Brooks Library and First Congregational Church provide another set of bookends
- Winstead Elder Day Center at 113 Parallel Street
- Town Hall attracts people to Harwich Center
- Reasonable inventory and variety of businesses
- The inn property at corner of Parallel and Bank Streets
- Brooks Library a positive asset and draw
- Food at the Stewed Tomato
- Intact historic center with excellent examples of architecture provided by 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church, Brooks Academy and Brooks Free Library architecture
- The old exchange building evoked character of center
- Forest Street is opportunity to improve traffic pattern
- Pedestrian safety signs
- Cultural activities including the Cranberry Harvest Festival
- Potential for street planting and window boxes along Pleasant Lake Avenue would enhance entrance into town
- Opportunity to create links between good elements
- Harwich Center has all the basic elements for a complete community
- Brooks Park is a great open space at entrance to village center
- Road capacity of Main Street is sufficient for demand

- Old Colony Road and Parallel Street provide possible alternatives for establishing one way flow to divert traffic around center around the village center

#### General Negative Attributes

- Enough parking
- Some good signage that resulted from regulatory review
- Preserved green spaces
- Central civic location as resource
- Maintained basic character, no radical changes
- Small town character and charm remains

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Harwich Center retains much of the historic character and charm one associates with a Cape Cod village. The village is compact with the bulk of the historic core intact. Even with this distinct village character, the sense of unity for the village is not as strong as it could be. This lack of cohesiveness is influenced by an incomplete system of sidewalks, no sense of arrival, a weak streetscape accentuated by the poor condition and number of street trees. By virtue of its location at the intersection of Routes 124 and 39 Harwich Center is easily accessible. This accessibility influences some of the issues identified in the previous section both negative and positive. While the traffic passing through Harwich Center raises safety concerns, it is also a source of economic potential. The attached Figure 1 summarizes some of these existing conditions.

### 1. Traffic

Most traffic enters Harwich Center from one of five main points of entry. Along each of these routes traffic has already entered the village center before reducing speed. These points of entry are Main Street from the east (Route 39) and the west, Sisson Road (Routes 39 and 124) from the south, Bank Street from the south and Pleasant Lake Avenue (Route 124) from the north. At each of these entrances there are few clues designed to inform the driver a village is ahead. By the time drivers are aware they are within the village center they pose a safety threat to pedestrians and bicyclists using the crosswalks and bikeway. These clues are often provided by a “gateway” event that informs drivers that they are entering a special place and that they must slow down.

On-street parking in the area where Main Street, Pleasant Lake Avenue and Sisson Road come together, particularly those spaces in front of Bates Hardware, impairs the vision of drivers turning onto Main Street from Pleasant Lake Avenue. The layout of these intersections results in a traffic backups caused by cars attempting to turn left onto Route

124 north. In part, this is related to the short distance that Main Street is part of Route 124.

Even though the bike crossing at Old Colony Road is marked, traffic entering Harwich Center from the north poses a threat to bicyclists and pedestrians using the bikeway crossing. Additionally, in this area cars enter Pleasant Lake Avenue from the 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church and the Harwich House.

The intersection of Sisson Road and Parallel Street is confusing and dangerous with traffic approaching the intersection along Sisson Road at a high rate of speed. Where Sisson Road intersects Parallel Street at about 40 degrees there is little indication that one is approaching the intersection and where to turn for Harwich Center.

Traffic on Bank Street enters Harwich Center at a high rate of speed up a hill that crests just south of Parallel Street. Bank Street intersects Main Street on an incline where views are partially obstructed along Main Street.

## 2. Crosswalks

The durability, safety and ADA accessibility of crosswalks are part of the overall safety issue in Harwich Center. The material used for crosswalks is a combination of green and white paint. The safety of pedestrians using the three crosswalks on Main Street from Christy's east, are threatened by vehicles still in the process of slowing down. The crosswalks at the intersection of Sisson Road and Parallel Street are long and diagonal and in a location where vehicles are beginning to reduce speed. Few crosswalks such as that in front of Brooks Free Library have handicap ramps, most do not. In order to provide a semblance of accessibility the crosswalk by Christy's was aligned with the entrance drive.

## 3. Sidewalks

The sidewalks in Harwich Center are primarily narrow asphalt walks that are cracked and heaved in several locations. The brick sidewalks located by Town Hall and Brooks Free Library appear to be in excellent condition. The brick sidewalk by Exchange Park has deteriorated to where the uneven surface reduces accessibility of handicapped persons.

## 4. Parking

Within Harwich Center there are six public parking facilities providing 194 parking spaces. Of these, the only lots offering spaces for the general public are those located at Town Hall (67 spaces) and Albro House (10 spaces).

## Parking Inventory

Facility	Location	# spaces	Primary users	Usage/demand
Town Hall	732 Main Street	67	Town employees Patrons General public	Optimal
Albro House	Main Street	10	Town employees Patrons General public	Optimal
Brooks Free Library	Main Street	18	Town employees Patrons	Overused
Brooks Academy	Parallel Street	22	Town employees Patrons	Optimal
Recreation Building	Parallel Street	30	Town employees Patrons	Optimal
Brooks Park	Oak Street	47	Patrons	Optimal

Source: Town of Harwich Planning Department

Off-street parking is provided by business along lower Main and Parallel Streets. Businesses on Parallel Street providing off-street parking are Anne C. Ross Glass Studio, Carriage Stop Antiques. Businesses on Main Street providing off-street parking are Cape Pediatric Dental Associates, the shopping plaza with Christy's and behind Bates Hardware.

### 5. Street Lighting

Current street lights are standard highway "cobra head" fixtures attached to utility poles. One example of streetlights that provide a model for future lighting is located at the front of the Town Hall.

### 6. Utility Lines

Overhead utility lines are a major source of visual clutter throughout Harwich Center. These are particularly noticeable along Main Street and Pleasant Lake Avenue. Major sources of visual disturbance in Harwich Center are overhead utility lines. In addition to disease and age tree trimming practices meant to reduce risk to utility lines assisted in reducing the quantity and quality of shade along Main Street.

### 7. Street Furniture

There is a minimal provision of street furniture in Harwich Center. Street furniture include trash receptacles, benches, bike racks and information kiosks of boards. Two public locations with benches are one in front Town Hall and one at Exchange Park. Two benches are provided in front of the Stewed Tomato.

## 8. Signage

In general the character of signage for local businesses and institutions is appropriate for the village atmosphere of Harwich Center. Existing directional signage does a poor job in guiding visitors to parking areas and public facilities and the extents of on-street parking. Nor is there informational and interpretive signage to inform residents and visitors of local events and history.

## 9. Vegetation

The street edge as defined by street trees in Harwich Center is weak. Over time disease, tree trimming practices and no “urban forestry” program designed to maintain the public landscape and replace trees failed to maintain a healthy system of street trees. The lower end of Main Street is almost devoid of street trees while many of those further east have been disfigured by tree trimming practices.

## CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In general the concepts and recommendations fit into three broad categories covering “traffic and safety”, “parking” and “design. The ideas voiced by workshop participants include general recommendations responding to problems which relate to large parts of Harwich Center and site specific solutions. This section of the report identifies and synthesizes these recommendations as a basis of future initiatives.

Specific concerns covered under “traffic and safety include “traffic calming” measures, pedestrian safety through proper crosswalk placement, new sidewalks where necessary and eliminating cut-through traffic. Parking concerns revolve around the ensuring there is an adequate and safe supply of on- and off-street. Concerns covered under “design” include sidewalk size and materials, street trees, street lighting, street furniture, establishing “gateways” and enhancing the sense of place and unity throughout the village center by strengthening the links between landmarks. See Figure 2 for village-wide recommendations.

### 1. Traffic and Safety

Workshop members identified the locations of the most serious safety concerns and provided recommendations that include village-wide treatments, site specific treatments and changes in street layouts.

## Traffic Calming

There is a need to reduce the speed of traffic entering Harwich Center. Accomplishing this through the use of “traffic calming” techniques was identified as a top priority by workshop participants. Traffic calming involves using physical design features that encourage traffic to reduce speed. Commonly used traffic calming methods include using welcome signs, differentiating pavement surfaces or features that perceptually reduce the width of the road such as street trees, curbs and curb extensions.

Possible pavement treatments identified by workshop participants include rumble strips, raised pavement at intersections called “traffic tables”, raised crosswalks, and textured surfaces such as cobbles or “streetprint” for crosswalks. Street edge treatments include “sidewalk extensions” at corners and crosswalks, reestablishing strong corridors defined by street trees, reducing the width of Main Street and providing sidewalks along Main Street at Brooks Park. Each work group proposed providing strong “gateway” events at each entrance into the village which also serve to calm traffic. Other traffic calming techniques included entrance signs, flashing beacons and strict enforcement of the speed limit. The following table summarizes the traffic calming techniques identified during the workshop.

### Traffic Calming Techniques

<u>Technique</u>	<u>Location</u>
Surface treatments	At each “gateway” and on Bank Street south of Parallel Street
Signage	
Flashing beacons	1) Main Street east of Oak Street in vicinity of Brooks Park
Rumble strips	2) Main Street west of Sisson Road 3) Sisson Road south of Parallel Street 4) Pleasant Lake Avenue north of the bike crossing at Old Colony Road
Crosswalk treatments	
1) Cobble surface	At all crosswalks
2) Streetprint	At all crosswalks
3) Raised crosswalks	Along Main Street, Pleasant Avenue and Sisson Road
Sidewalk extensions	At all crosswalks along Main Street, Pleasant Lake Avenue and Sisson Road

### Gateways

Four locations were identified as suitable for “gateways”. The first is located on Main Street east of Oak Street in vicinity of Brooks Park. The second is on Main Street west of Sisson Road in the vicinity of Forest Street. The third is on Sisson Road south of Parallel Street. The fourth is on Pleasant Lake Avenue north of the bike crossing at Old Colony

Road. Proposals for these gateways include a combination of signage, pavement treatments, plantings and enhancing views of features such Brooks Park.

### Sidewalk Extensions

In addition to calming traffic, sidewalk extensions enhance the safety of pedestrians by reducing the length of crosswalks. The use of sidewalk extensions would tie in with redesigning crosswalks, improving on-street parking and the redesign of sidewalks throughout Harwich Center. Sidewalk extensions integrated with the crosswalks along Main Street would help identify the extents of on-street parking. Other locations where sidewalk extensions would be suitable include the crosswalks at the intersection of Sisson Road and Parallel Street and the bike crossing on Pleasant Lake Avenue.

### Crosswalks

It was recommended that the crosswalks along Main Street between Bank Street and Pleasant Lake Avenue be realigned, with particular attention paid to moving crosswalk in front of Christy's out of the driveway and the crosswalk by Bates Hardware to the intersection with Pleasant Lake Avenue.

A second important location for redesign is the intersection of Parallel Street and Sisson Road. Recommendations include eliminating the diagonal crosswalk and providing four crosswalks for the intersection. This includes the crosswalk strengthening the crossing between Millennium Park and the old Harwich Recreation and Youth Commission building, Millennium Park to the Brooks Academy, Sisson Road north of Parallel Street with a new crosswalk on Parallel Street east of Sisson Road. The workshop participants also recommended that a new crosswalk be provided at the intersection of Parallel Street and Bank Street. It was recommended that the redesign of crosswalks should include using of more durable materials such as unit pavers and integrating crosswalks with curb extensions along Main Street, Sisson Road and Pleasant Lake Avenue.

### Bike Path Connections

In addition to the recreation values presented by the bike path there are potential economic values that have not been tapped. In recognition of this it was recommended that not only should direct links between the path and the village center be created, but that links from Harwich Center to Harwichport be created.

### Pedestrian Safety

Other recommendations meant to increase pedestrian safety included extending sidewalks or providing new sidewalks.

## Sidewalks

Locations identified for extending sidewalks were the east side of Pleasant Lake Avenue from the front of First Congregational Church to Main Street and Oak Street north of Old Colony Road. New sidewalks were proposed for the north side of Parallel Street, the east side of Sisson Road between Parallel Street and Main Street, and the north side of Main Street along the southern edge of Brooks Park.

## Integrated Traffic and Safety Recommendations

The breakout groups developed a series of integrated recommendations that consider the relationships between traffic flow and pedestrian safety, parking and business deliveries.

### Pleasant Lake Avenue, Sisson Road and Main Street

This recommendation responds to several issues including on-street parking, commercial deliveries, crosswalk location and poor sight lines. This recommendation includes encouraging greater use of commercial off-street parking such as the lot behind Bates Hardware for deliveries and customers, restricting delivery times along Main Street and designating an area in front of Main Street businesses as a loading zone. It also suggests moving the crosswalk by Bates Hardware closer to intersection of Main Street and Pleasant Lake Avenue, eliminating parking spots that obstruct traffic flow and visibility and closing the drive adjacent to the Stewed Tomato. In order to compensate for the loss of any on-street parking spaces loss of any on-street parkingPurchase lot behind Getty Petroleum for public parking. See figure 3.

### Sisson Road and Parallel Street

All actions for this recommendation revolve around new sidewalks along the north side of Parallel Street and along the west side of Sisson Road adjacent to Powderhouse Park to improve pedestrian safety. Special emphasis is placed on the safety of students walking between the “village center” and the middle school. This recommendation involves closing Parallel Street between the entrance to Brooks Academy and Sisson Road and eliminating the dangerous diagonal crosswalk. Redesigned crosswalks connect Millennium Park to the old Recreation Youth Commission building across Sisson Road, from the Brooks Academy to the north side of Parallel Street across Sisson Road and a new sidewalk that crosses Parallel Street on the east side of Sisson Road. See figure 4.

### Reroute Routes 39/124

This recommendation calls for widening Forest Street, cutting off Sisson Road between Main Street and Forest Road, and rerouting Routes 39/124 from Sisson Road to Forest Street up to Main Street. This recommendation suggests using closed often sections of

Sisson Road for parking. This recommendation would also eliminate the dangerous crosswalks by the Brooks Academy, Parallel Street cut-through. See figure 5.

## 2. Parking

There was little consensus on whether parking is actually a problem, therefore contradictory parking reflect this lack of consensus. The one parking related issue that workshop participants did agree is a problem is parking during the Cranberry Festival, but because the festival is a once a year event alleviating associated parking problems is not seen as a priority.

### Off-street Parking

Some workshop participants felt there was a distinct lack of off-street parking making it necessary to provide more parking public off-street parking. This course of action would most likely require the acquisition of property. Participants identified two sites. The first of these is the lot behind the Getty Petroleum service station. The second is the Moyle property behind Bell Atlantic and adjacent to the Town Hall parking lot. A unique way to increase parking in Harwich Center is the recommendation to reroute Routes 39/124 to Forest Street.

Other participants felt there was sufficient off-street parking, but it was not efficiently used. Recommendations include improving directional signage to public parking and greater use of other public lots such as those by the Brooks Academy and the old Harwich Recreation and Youth Commission. Participants recognized that maximizing the use of these lots requires enhancing pedestrian access through improvements such as new and improved sidewalks, and directional signage.

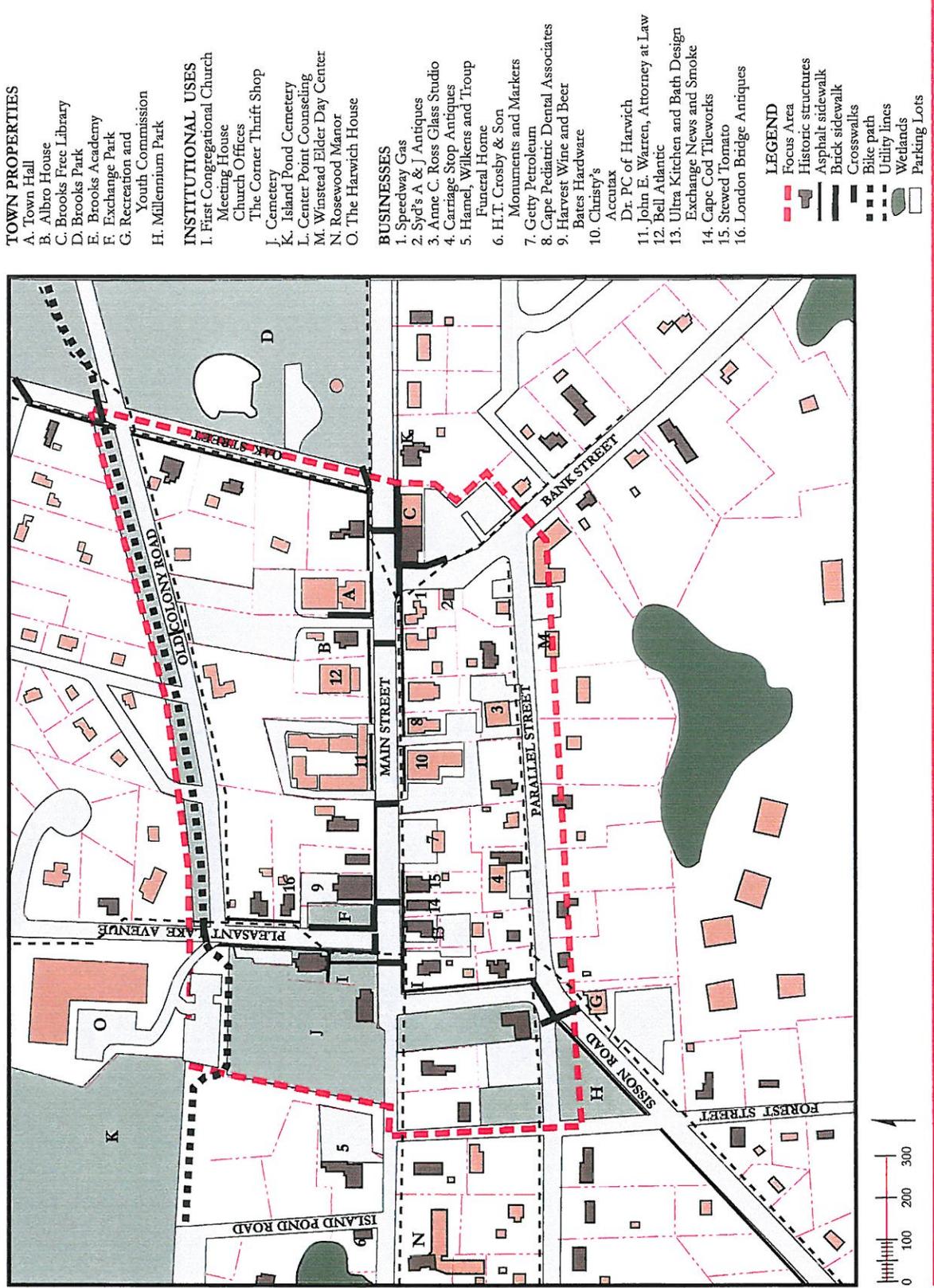
### Oak and Bank Streets

One recommendation to increase the number of public off-street parking spaces calls for extending Oak Street to Bank Street, cutting off Bank Street between Main and Parallel Streets and extending the library parking lot west.

### On-street Parking

On-street parking recommendations for Main Street also reflect a lack of consensus parking adequacy in Harwich Center. Reflecting these perceptions are recommendations called for maintaining parking on both sides of Main Street, one side of Main Street or eliminating all parking along Main Street.

Recommendations to maintain parking on both sides of Main Street propose to clearly delineate on-street parking zones through the use of sidewalk extensions. Other



Harwich Center Initiative

Figure 1. Existing Conditions

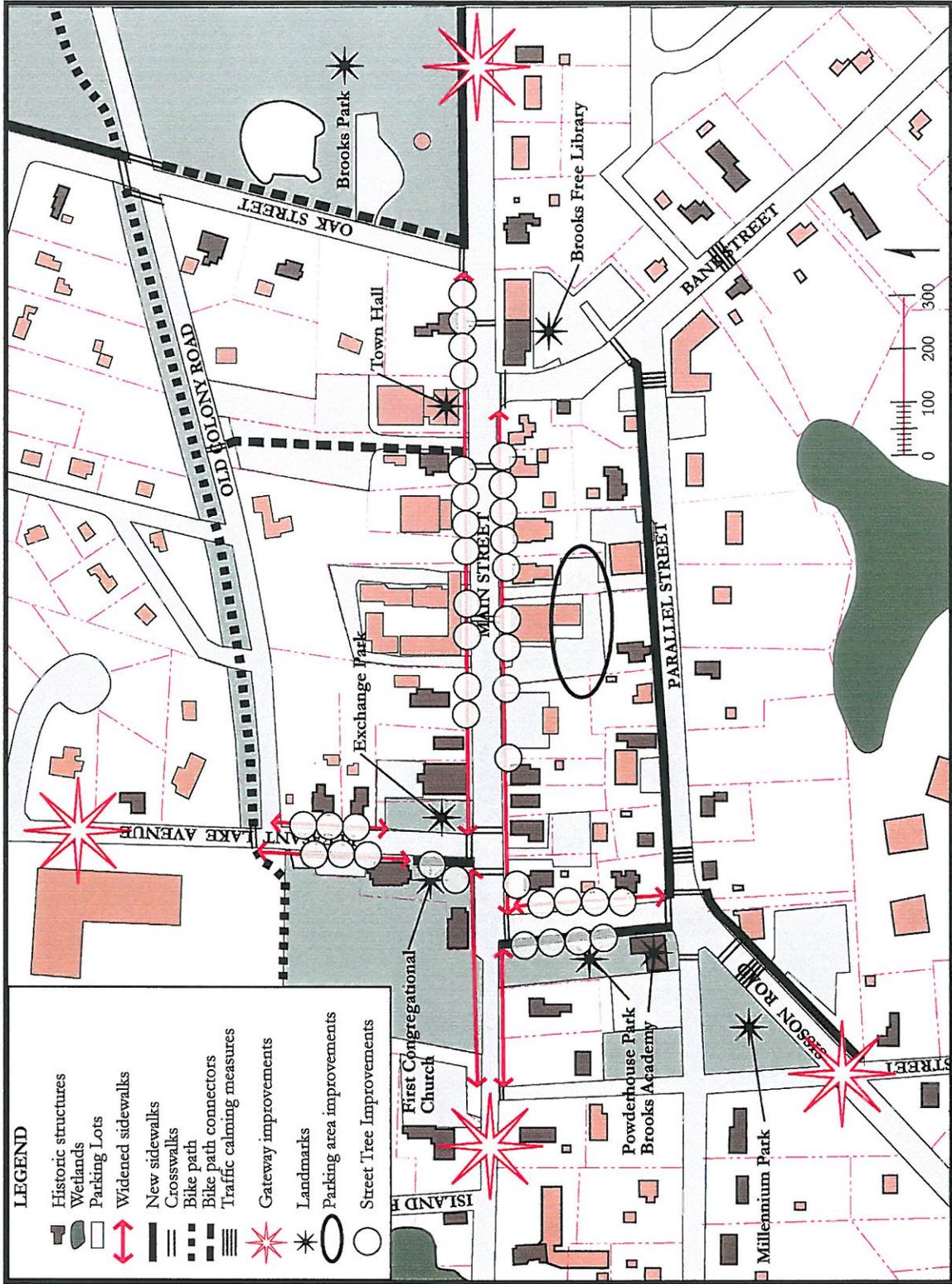
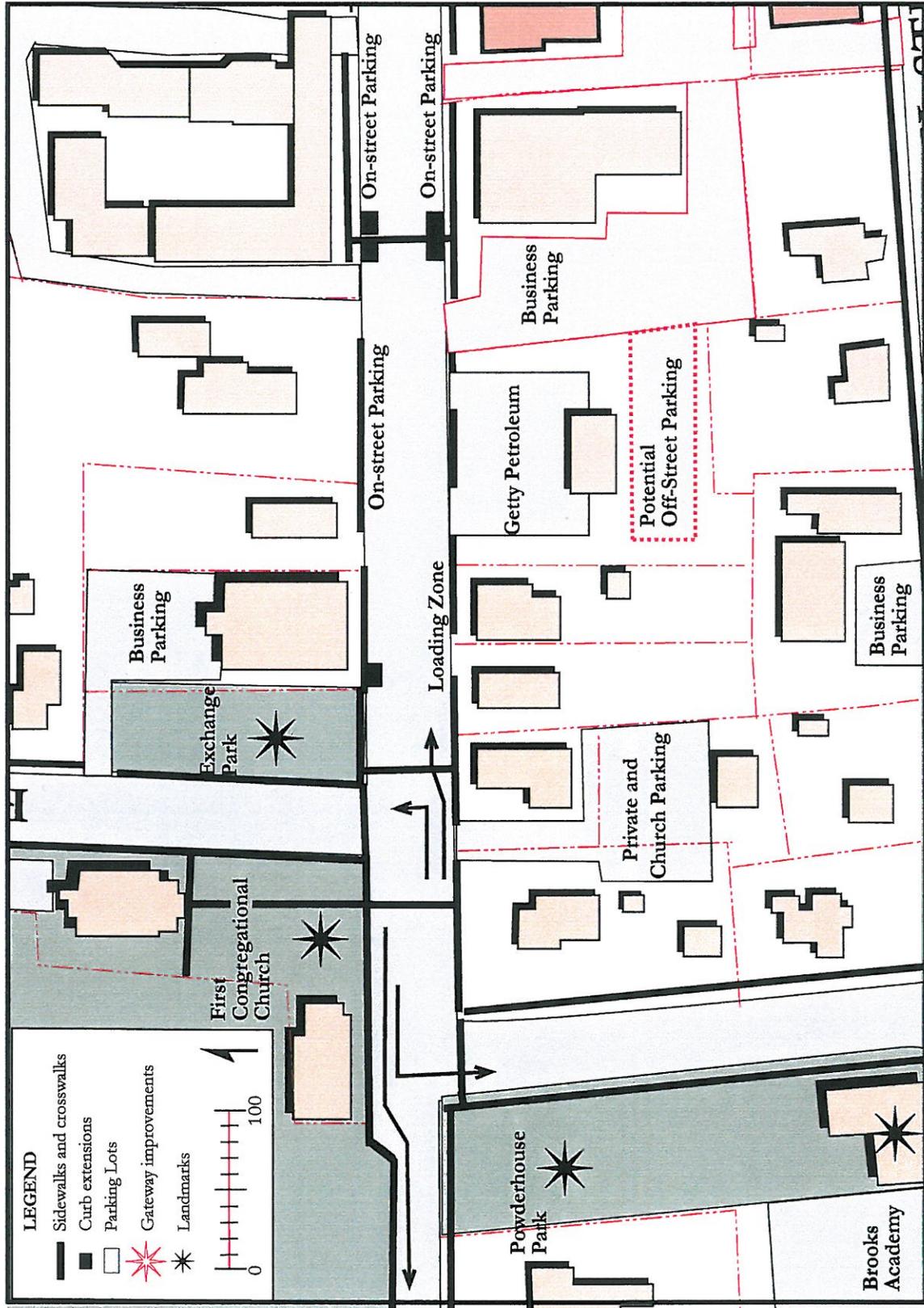


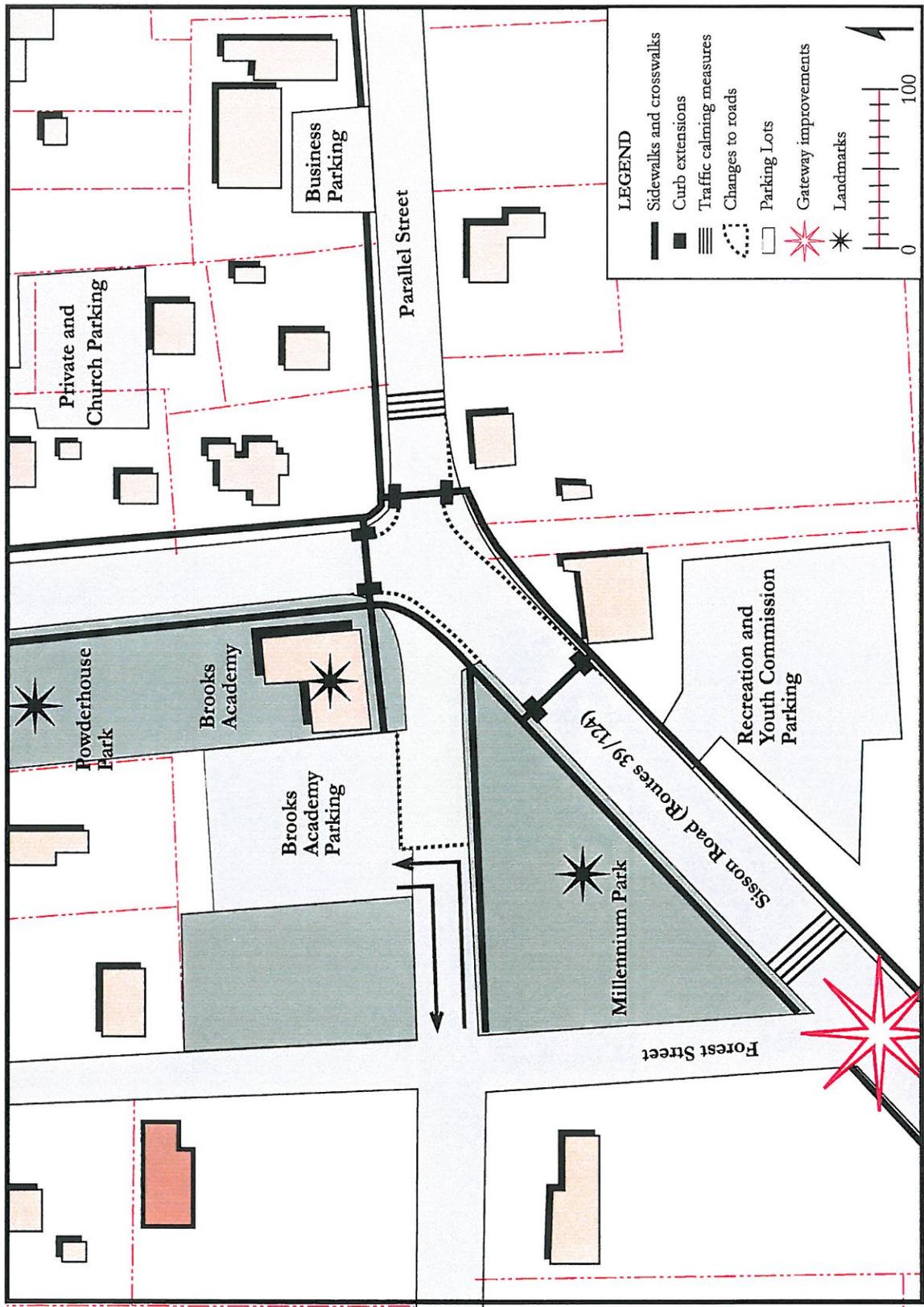
Figure 2. Village-Wide Recommendations

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Figure 3. Village Center Recommendations



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Figure 4. Sisson Road/Parallel Street Recommendations

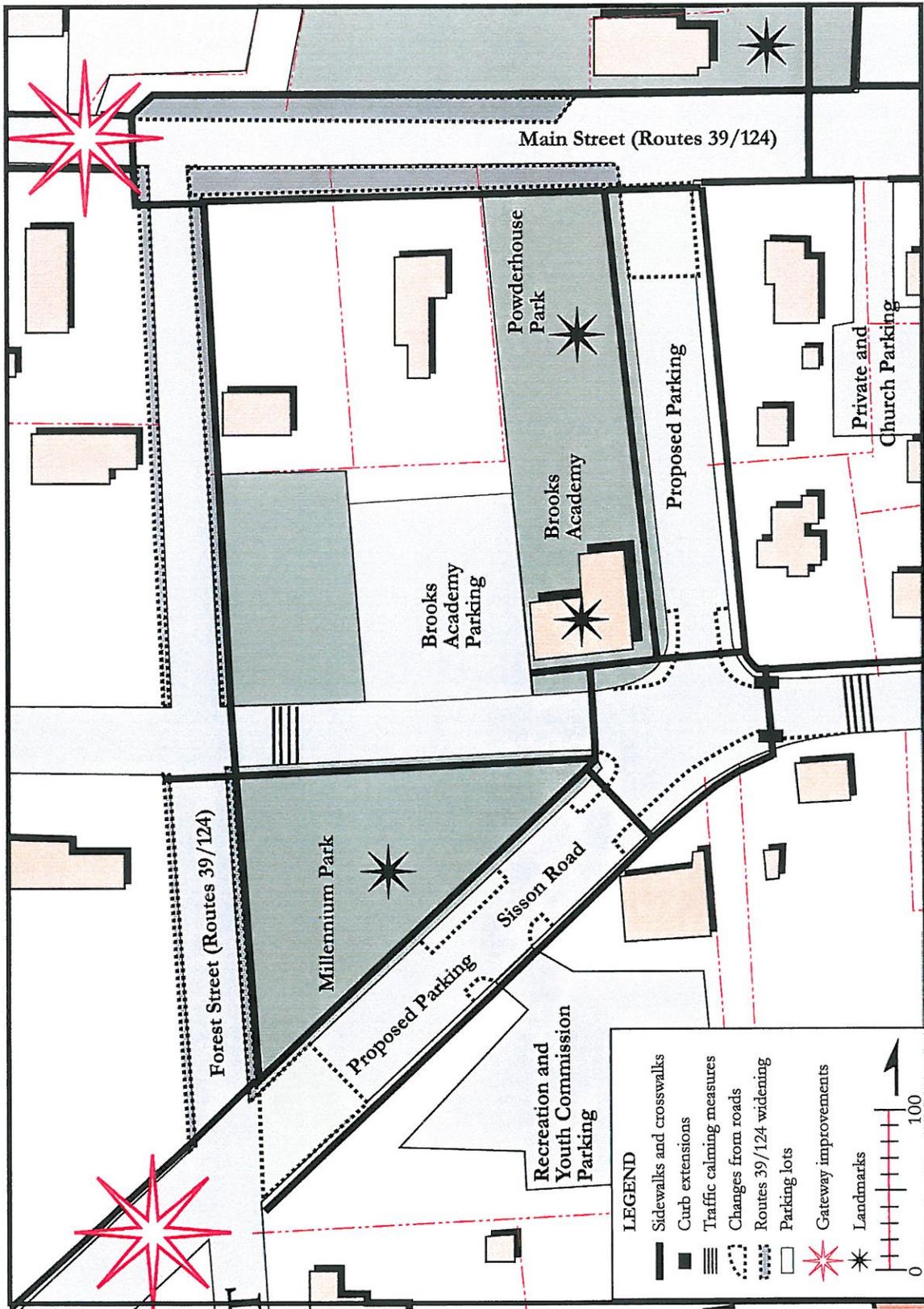


Figure 5. Route 39/124 Recommendations

recommendations call for eliminating parking spaces, for safety reasons including improving pedestrian safety, improving site lines and improving traffic flow where Main Street, Pleasant Lake Avenue and Sisson Road come together. Specific recommendations include eliminating parking spots on the south side of Main Street for the creation of a zone business delivery zone, eliminating parking spots between the crosswalks Sisson Road and Pleasant Lake Avenue to improve traffic flow and improve site lines. A final recommendation calls for converting those parking spaces in front of First Congregational Church into a traffic lane westbound Main Street traffic not turning south on Routes 39/124.

Recommendations eliminating on-street parking along Main Street on one or both sides allow greater potential for widening sidewalks and generous planting strips for street trees. The recommendation for eliminating traffic along one side of Main Street suggests maintaining it along the north side to assist in calming traffic through the use of curb extensions at crosswalks to calm traffic and delineate on-street parking zones.

#### Private Parking

The one recommendation related to private parking calls for an integrated parking lot between Main and Parallel Streets. This program calls for integrating the private parking areas with a landscaped buffer to resurrect the “dead zone” between Main and Parallel Streets. This proposal also ties in with any future use of the parcel behind Getty for parking.

#### Parking Study

Because of the lack of consensus regarding parking in Harwich Center, it is recommended that a parking study be performed to accurately determine the quantity and quality of parking in Harwich Center. This would serve as the basis for any future recommendations related to increasing or reducing parking and strategies designed to maximize the use of parking.

### 3. Design

#### Street Furniture and Public Amenities

Workshop participants recognized the role street furniture would play in strengthening the village character of Harwich Center. Street furniture was recognized as an important part of larger scale improvements and programs. Participants recommended greater use of benches, trash receptacles, bike racks and information kiosks in conjunction with improved public amenities such as parks, parking lots, public restrooms and a visitor center.

Recommendations included making Exchange Park and Powderhouse Park more inviting to residents and visitors. Participants felt that within Exchange Park there should be more benches and trash receptacles, and that it was an appropriate location for an information kiosk. It was also felt that the landscaping and walkway in Powderhouse Park should be upgraded with improved seating areas, trash receptacles and as a good location for an information kiosk. The Town Hall parking lot was identified as a possible location for an information kiosk. The Brooks Academy parking lot was seen as a potential location for an information kiosk if included within an overall program that more effectively links the Brooks Academy to Main Street.

The Albro House property was identified as a potential location for a visitors center with a public restroom. If the bikeway was linked to Main Street through the Town Hall parking lot A public restroom at this location would meet the recommendation for a public restroom along the bikeway and serve as a good location for bike racks. An alternative to a new public restroom was to keep open and properly maintain the public restroom in Brooks Park.

### Street Lighting

In recognition that the current “cobra-head” highway lighting does not enhance the village character of Harwich Center, workshop participants recommended installing period street lighting along Main Street and Pleasant Lake Avenue. Other locations recognized as suitable for this type of lighting include the bikeway and Powderhouse Park.

### Signage

In general, workshop participants did not have many comments regarding signage within Harwich Center. Signage recommendations were primarily concerned with providing clear directional signs to guide drivers and pedestrians to parking and public facilities, informational signs listing ongoing activities and interpretative signs relating the history of Harwich Center. Other recommendations suggested the use of “welcome” signs “gateway” elements, more clearly emphasizing speed limits and delineating on-street parking areas. The general consensus regarding private and public street signs was that there were few inappropriate signs, but that there should be some standards to ensure future signs were village friendly.

### Plantings

The major recommendation related to public landscaping calls for establishing a street tree program that includes planting and maintaining trees to a strong shady street corridor that once that in Harwich Center. This program would be village wide with an initial focus on Main Street, Sisson Road and Pleasant Lake Avenue. A street tree

program help define gateways and calm traffic. A second recommendation calls for improving and maintaining public plantings to create more welcoming environments at Exchange Park and Powderhouse Park.

### Utility Lines

Utility and poles were lines were recognized as causing visual clutter throughout Harwich Center. Recommended suggest burying utility lines in the village. In recognizing the costs associated with burying utility lines, streets were prioritized: 1) Main Street and Pleasant Lake Avenue, 2) Parallel Street and Sisson Road and 3) Old Colony Road. An alternative for Parallel Street involves moving the utility lines from parallel Street to the rear of properties.

## Suggested Street Tree List

The following is a short list of trees that are appropriate for use in a street tree planting program. They perform well under city conditions and some of the trees are naturally shaped to fit into tight sidewalk spaces.

Bradford Pear – *Pyrus calleryana* “Bradford”

Littleleaf Linden – *Tilia cordata*

Green Ash – *Fraxus pennsylvanica* “Marshalls Seedless”

Red Maple – *Acer rubrum*

Elm – *Ulmus spp.* (disease resistant variety)

## Utility Lines

Utility and poles were lines were recognized as causing visual clutter throughout Harwich Center. The Visual environment would greatly benefit from the burial of utility lines in the village. In recognition of the costs associated with burying utility lines, streets were prioritized: 1) Main Street and Pleasant Lake Avenue, 2) Parallel Street and Sisson Road and 3) Old Colony Road. An alternative for Parallel Street involves moving the utility lines from parallel Street to the rear of properties.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The total cost for implementing the all of the ideas proposed for the Harwich Center Initiative is very difficult to estimate with any degree of certainty before at least a preliminary master plan is developed. Unit Costs for the principal design elements recommended by workshop participants have been included in the Appendix for purposes of understanding very rough costs.

For example, if ornamental streetlights are estimated to cost approximately \$3,500. each including conduit and controls and the lights are spaced 75’ apart; it can be seen that to install ornamental lights on a 1000’ length of road will cost approximately \$45,000.

In order to turn this vision into a reality, the town may wish to subdivide the project into more “digestible “ design areas for funding purposes. To aid in that process, the design team recommends considering sidewalk and safety improvements along Main Street from Oak Street to Forest Street as a first phase. Replacing the existing sidewalk, installing unit pavers at crosswalks and rumble strip might cost \$57,000. A second phase focusing on the installation of sidewalk and safety improvements and curbing where none exists along Sisson Road and Pleasant Lake Avenue from Forest Street to the bike path at Old Colony Road might cost \$66,000. Similar improvements

along Parallel Street as a third phase might cost \$40,000. After completing sidewalk and safety improvements; a fourth phase focusing on ornamental lighting and planting street trees along Main Street, Pleasant Lake Avenue and Sisson Road from Parallel Street might cost \$175,000 for ornamental street lights and \$68,000 for street trees.

Improvements beyond phase four should include town gateway improvements, park improvements and a bike path connection to Main Street.

## Funding

As can be seen from a glance at the Unit Costs, capital improvements to Harwich Center will involve substantial sums of money. The full range of local, state and federal sources should be explored as part of the implementation effort for the Harwich Center Initiative. A number of basic funding sources were identified as suitable and available to fund this project. A brief description of a number of public funding programs that may have relevance to the implementation of the Harwich Center Initiative follows.

<b>Source:</b>	<b>MA Community Development Action Grant</b>
<b>Amounts:</b>	\$1 million cap; requires match by the community.
<b>Uses:</b>	Community and Development funds for economic development; no restriction on spending but must be spent on publicly-owned facilities.
<b>Timing:</b>	State-appropriated and bonded every four years.
<b>Note:</b>	Matching funds can come from Town's CDBG funds.
<b>Source:</b>	<b>TEA-21: Surface Transportation Program (STP)</b>
<b>Amounts:</b>	\$33.3 billion authorized.
<b>Uses:</b>	Safety improvements, sidewalk modifications to meet ADA, compliance and transportation enhancements.
<b>Timing:</b>	FY 1998 - 2003
<b>Notes</b>	STP is the broadest and most flexible component of TEA-21.
<b>Source:</b>	<b>Public Works Economic Development Funds</b>
<b>Amounts:</b>	Up to \$1 million spent every two years.
<b>Uses:</b>	Public works infrastructure improvements that result in economic enhancement, possibly including streetscape improvements in line with the economic enhancement potential of the improvements.
<b>Timing:</b>	Every two years.

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<b>Community Development Block Grants</b>	
<b>Source:</b>	
<b>Amounts:</b>	Up to \$ 1 million per year.
<b>Uses</b>	Streetscape improvements if the surrounding area is shown to meet certain needs criteria. CDBG funds may be matched to dollars obtained from other sources.
<b>Timing</b>	Yearly
<hr/>	
<b>MA Ready Resource Fund</b>	
<b>Source:</b>	
<b>Amounts:</b>	Up to \$400,000 per year.
<b>Uses:</b>	Public facilities, parking lots and infrastructure improvements for the enhancement of commercial districts (a more targeted subsection of Community Development Block Grant program).
<b>Timing</b>	NA
<hr/>	
<b>MA Department of Environmental Management - Historic Landscapes Program</b>	
<b>Source:</b>	
<b>Amounts:</b>	\$50,000 maximum.
<b>Uses:</b>	Grants are given to municipalities for historic parks, commons, public buildings.
<b>Timing:</b>	Annual.

The likelihood of acquiring funding under any of these programs or other sources depends on a variety of factors, including timing, eligibility, competing applications and aggressive support of elected officials.

## SUMMARY

Harwich Center is a delightful community with many outstanding assets. Among its most important resources are the energy, involvement and vision of its citizens. The public workshop attended by these citizens provided a forum in which community goals, objectives, visions and design ideas were put forth. The study team merely recorded the comments, synthesized the ideas and developed this report.

If implemented, these recommendations may reduce traffic impacts, improve pedestrian safety, provide a sense of visual continuity and may reinforce a community center with a true sense of place. These improvements can also provide a clean, safe and attractive environment that will attract residents and visitors to the village and may make a meaningful contribution to Harwich Center's economy.

# APPENDIX A

## HARWICH CENTER INITIATIVE DESIGN REPORT

Design Elements Unit Costs

February 9, 2000

Description	Unit	Unit Cost	Remarks
<b>Site Demolition</b>			
Demolish and remove existing asphalt pavement	SY	\$3.50	Demolish existing bit conc. Road and sidewalk pavement
Remove and stockpile existing granite curb	LF	\$3.25	Stockpile for reuse within park.
<b>Pavement</b>			
Unclassified excavation at road crosswalks	CY	\$5.50	Assume 12" excavation of existing subgrade to remove unsuitable material
Unclassified excavation at new sidewalks, and realigned curbs	CY	\$5.50	Assume 10" excavation of existing subgrade to remove unsuitable material at walks and curbs
Reinstall stockpiled vertical granite curb at streets	LF	\$20.00	Reinstalled curbing in new locations and at std reveal hgt.
Gravel borrow base course at pedestrian sidewalks	SY	\$2.50	Bank run gravel spread and compacted - 6" depth
Fine grading and compacting subgrade areas	SY	\$1.50	Grading subgrade areas under all pavements
Ornamental unit pavers pavement at crosswalks	SF	\$16.00	4 x 8 pavers, handtight joints swept with sand/cement mix. including concrete base
Cement concrete pavement at new sidewalks	SF	\$2.00	4" cement concrete (6" @ driveways) sidewalk with expansion jts and score jts

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Description	Unit	Unit Cost	Remarks
<b>Planting</b>			
Street Trees	EA	\$800.	Shade trees - 4-5" caliper installed in sidewalks.
Tree Grates	SF	\$500	Cast iron 5' x 5' tree grates in sidewalks
Loam & seed	SY	\$4.50	Assume 6" topsoil in new lawn areas - offsite loam Turf grass seed mix - 4 lbs./1000 SF - hydroseeded. In proposed park areas
<b>Site Furniture / Improvements</b>			
Benches	EA	\$1,000	6' length - iron frame wood slats
Trash receptacles	EA	\$750	
Bike racks	EA	\$500	
Kiosk	EA	\$1,500	Wood kiosk for community announcements
Signage	LS	\$20,000	Informational, directional, regulatory and parking lot signs. Lump sum allowance
<b>Lighting</b>			
Ornamental street lights	EA	\$3,500	Assumes 14' fiberglass poles and ornamental metal halide luminaires. Includes footings handholes, conduit and excavation.