



# **08 IMPLEMENTATION**

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# IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Plan will require a number of actions from both municipalities as well as from the Commonwealth and private property owners, and developers. Implementation actions detailed throughout this report are summarized below.

## DEVELOPMENT VISION AND URBAN DESIGN

- Ensure that new development is consistent with and helps to implement the Framework Plan. Development proposals should be required to clearly detail how they accommodate and/or provide new, pedestrian-friendly streets that create new connections through The Triangle with buildings sited to reinforce the street edges.
- Review new development proposals for consistency with this Report, including inclusion of mixed-use, connections, open space, placemaking elements, driveway consolidation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, zoning and design principles.
- Encourage mixed-use development including retail, office, entertainment and residential uses.
- Work with property owners and developers to facilitate desired development.
- Finalize and adopt the zoning recommendations in Chapter 6.
- Pursue funding for the design and construction of the greenways through the wetlands.
- Design and implement a wayfinding and signage program throughout The Triangle.
- Work with property owners and developers to develop a continuous north-south and east-west greenway system utilizing existing open space (i.e., the central wetlands – Bannister’s Meadows, the Cochituate Rail Trail and Wonderbread Spur, the pathway around the Natick Mall and other identified wetlands) in combination with the patchwork of wooded areas bordering and linking the wetlands, including a wide multi-use path and pedestrian boardwalks through Bannister’s Meadows.
- Consider opening discussions with Eversource regarding building trails under Eversource power lines, both north and south of Route 9.

Implementation of this Plan could take up to 20 or more years, necessitating long-term attention to the framework of Development Vision & Urban Design, Transportation, and Zoning & Regulatory Changes.

Over that long-term, both communities must remain committed to working together, and with property owners, in order to succeed. Community engagement and process, as well as inter-municipal and public-private partnerships will be required for full implementation.

Report illustrations of transportation improvements and potential redevelopment are very conceptual and will require a much more detailed level of design to proceed. These concepts are intended to be a starting point for discussion, but are anticipated to be refined through the design process and in response to opportunities that arise with changing retail and commercial markets.

- Conduct a more detailed study to determine the feasibility of a perimeter pathway around Bannister's Meadows, including the availability of relatively flat land for constructing the path, permitting issues, and future ownership and maintenance responsibility.
- Consider providing an incentive or density bonus zoning provision to encourage developers to build connecting roads, to grant easements for the construction of connecting internal streets, and/or to pay into a fund that could be used by the municipalities to build connecting streets.
- Encourage developers to incorporate the frontage road concept for new development on parcels facing Route 9 and/or Route 30. This involves creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment by siting new commercial buildings further from these busy roads with a separation zone that includes a landscaped setback, a narrow frontage road with on-street parallel parking, and a wide sidewalk with a curbside tree lawn.
- On the south side of Route 9:
  - Work with property owners to study the feasibility of, and implement, segments of a connecting road at the rear of parcels, as well to consolidate driveways.
  - Explore options for defining the legal status of the pedestrian path from Essex Street to Mercer Road with the intention of creating a more definitive connection.
  - Encourage the introduction of a frontage road as properties are redeveloped.
- In the short-term, consider developing a short cycle track on Route 9 that connects via the Natick Mall path on the west side of Speen Street to the Wonderbread Spur and Cochituate Rail Trail on the east and to Ring Road or Shoppers World Drive on the west. In the long-term, as obstacles are removed by future redevelopment the potential redesign of MassPike Exit 13, consider developing a continuous cycle track on both Routes 9 and Route 30.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Property owners will need to become major players in transit improvements, including lobbying MassDOT and the MWRTA for improvements, providing employee incentives for commuting by transit and providing on-site transit amenities.
- Work with MassDOT and the legislative delegation to secure funding for the infrastructure that is needed to reach the desired growth. Specifically, MassDOT should be approached regarding:
  - Providing bus pull outs and shelters along Route 9 and Route 30 in order to encourage use of transit. Incorporating the transit accommodations into any infrastructure projects.
  - Providing funding for the proposed commuter route which will provide a first mile/last mile transit connection from the Commuter Rail to the Golden Triangle.
  - Accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists in infrastructure projects.
  - Committing to snow removal to allow for safe passage during all seasons. The municipalities should work with private property owners to ensure that public paths on private property are also cleared.
  - Designing and constructing the displaced left turn concept at the intersection of Route 30 and Speen Street.
  - Interchange improvements required to meet the goals of this study, including providing more direct access to Speen Street in order to reduce traffic at the ramp connection to Route 30 resulting in an intersection at Route 30 that is not grade separated.
- Evaluate transit routes and headways, stop locations and amenities, and pedestrian connections to potential destinations periodically to ensure that transit is a viable alternate mode for employees, residents and visitors to The Triangle.
- Work with MassPort to incorporate additional parking capacity onto the existing Logan Express site.

- Continue to monitor changes in transportation technology to ensure that the transportation system accommodates new technologies and traffic operations in The Triangle remain as efficient as possible.
- The municipalities should include zoning that allows for the mixed-use types of projects that will result in lower exterior trip generation.
- When permitted, projects should be required to include pedestrian, cyclist and transit accommodation as well as provide appropriate connections to adjacent properties, either through constructing those connections as described in detail in Chapter 5, or providing easements and paying into a fund to allow them to be constructed at a later date when adjacent properties are redeveloped.
- Development projects should be required to join the Transportation Management Association (TMA) which joins together employers and then uses that larger employment base to support transit, carpooling and other tools to reduce single occupant vehicular traffic.

## **UTILITIES**

- All redevelopments will need to comply with local and state regulations to ensure that adequate water supply is available and that capacity exists for the resulting wastewater.
- When projects are redeveloped in the area of Route 30 and Speen Street, and in other locations where flooding has been observed, special attention should be given to the stormwater in light of existing flooding occurrences.
- When possible, underground power, cable and telephone should be considered.

## **ZONING**

- Coordinate on limiting the granting of Variances and Special Permits to ensure that the intent of the Master Plan is not undermined.
- Create and adopt new zoning for Primary Development Zones:

- Allow up to six stories in height for new development. Consider allowing taller buildings by Special Permit, particularly for a larger office project or a project that is considering structured or underground parking as a way to increase allowable development on a given site. If Special Permits are granted for taller buildings, consideration should be given to tying density bonuses back to an increase in public amenities, transportation connectivity and landscaping requirements.
- Encourage parcel consolidation and larger, more coordinated development projects, by setting a higher minimum lot size (than in the existing zoning).
- Set both a minimum and maximum front yard setback and vary those requirements by the type of street on which the parcel fronts.
- Create a building frontage requirement to ensure there is an ample amount of building wall along the frontage of the property.
- Require a high percentage of transparency in ground floor facades along streets to create a more interesting pedestrian environment.
- Step back provisions for upper stories above the second or third floor for buildings that have frontage on secondary streets should be considered on an individual basis.
- Create and adopt new zoning for Transition Zones:
  - Allow buildings up to three to four stories in height and create a transition provision in the zoning that heights step down within a certain radius of single-family residential neighborhoods.
  - Set minimum lot sizes in a way that does not discourage individual property owners from investing in or redeveloping their land, but also encourages parcel consolidation where appropriate.
  - Set both a minimum and maximum front yard setback and vary those requirements by the type of street on which the parcel fronts.
  - Set a deeper rear yard setback where commercial properties abut surrounding residential neighborhoods to provide a larger well-landscaped buffer.

- Create a building frontage requirement to ensure there is an ample amount of building wall along the frontage of the property.
- Vary the allowable uses in the transition zone to shift the focus more toward neighborhood-scale retail, office, residential, and entertainment/civic uses. These might include small restaurants, neighborhood services, professional offices, art galleries, coffee shops, fitness and wellness, and residential uses such as townhomes, duplexes, and smaller-scale multi-family dwellings.
- Both Primary Development Zones and Transition Zones are intended to be created as new base zoning districts to remove any possibility of future redevelopment utilizing the existing underlying zoning. Prior to removing or changing existing base zones and/or overlay districts, both municipalities should check with legal staff with regard to any payments received under the existing overlay districts and how those may be impacted by any proposed zoning changes.
- Create an incentive or density bonus provision to encourage developers to grant easements for the construction of connecting internal streets or to pay into a fund that could be used by the municipalities to build connecting streets.
- As The Triangle redevelops and transportation improvements occur, both municipalities should monitor progress and make determinations over time with regard to rezoning additional portions of The Triangle.
- Modify allowable uses within Triangle to encourage to support today's residential, mixed-use and cottage industries.
- Adopt parking recommendations:
  - Unify parking requirements for the new zoning districts. Consider using Natick's parking requirements as a starting point as they are lower than Framingham's.
  - Consider parking maximums in The Triangle. Retail and office developers may want to build more parking than is required under zoning.

- Allow shared parking for mixed-use developments. Consider a 10 percent reduction in overall parking for uses that do not have overlapping times of parking demand.
- Regulate the placement of parking to limit it to the rear and sides of buildings.
- Encourage shared access to adjacent parking lots and the closure of curb cuts where possible, particularly along primary travel corridors.
- Establish bike parking standards for residential and mixed-use development, at a minimum.
- Allow for parking reductions if the applicant provides transportation demand management solutions such as car sharing, land banked spaces, joining the MetroWest TMA, subsidizing transit passes, etc.
- Adopt recommendations for landscaping and public amenities:
  - Develop a unified set of landscaping requirements that includes the types (e.g., columnar, high canopy), size and caliper of street trees, bushes and other plantings with a preference toward native or hybrid species.
  - Develop a unified set of design guidelines and imagery that represent the placement, clustering and types of landscaping that is desired in The Triangle.
  - Vary the minimum landscape requirements for the primary development zone and the transition zone. While the overall density of plantings and the percentage of open space may vary between the primary and transition zones, there should be visual consistency between the two.
  - Ensure the front setback in both districts is wide enough to accommodate an ample amount of landscape buffer between the road and the building with room for sidewalks, shared use paths, or a frontage road if desired.
  - Consider varying landscape and public amenity requirements by the size of the development, where larger-scale development provides more and smaller-scale development provides less.

At no point should the minimum requirements detract from the overall landscape and public amenity plan for The Triangle. Consistency across parcels is the goal, but standards and amounts can vary based on the size of the development project.

- Consider varying sidewalk/pathway widths and public amenity space (pedestrian gather spaces, plazas, etc.) by the roadway on which the parcel fronts.

## **MUNICIPAL COORDINATION**

- To improve cross-municipal coordination between Framingham and Natick, consideration should be given to creating a district-wide entity such as a Business Improvement District (BID) to ensure coordination between municipal staff, governing bodies, property owners, and businesses in The Triangle. The BID would have dedicated staff who could focus on both public and private needs and serve as an intermediary to negotiate and advocate for improvements in The Triangle.
- The two municipalities should consider the idea of establishing a District Improvement Financing (DIF) district as a way to help fund public infrastructure and improvement projects in The Triangle. The DIF district would use incremental property tax gains as an vehicle for funding future infrastructure enhancements. Further study would be needed to determine if a DIF could serve two municipalities together, where the district boundaries would be drawn, how tax revenue and cost share would be determined, and how projects would be selected for DIF funding.
- The two municipalities should continue to inform each other of development proposals, zoning changes, infrastructure improvements, and similar issues. This practice should be codified in any new zoning for The Triangle where the zoning district boundaries span the municipal boundary between Framingham and Natick. This would be similar to how the Regional Center Overlay district works today.



