

TOWN OF ACTON
472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts 01720
Telephone (978) 264-9636
Fax (978) 264-9630

Planning Department

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Don P. Johnson, Town Manager **Date:** October 31, 2003
From: Kristin K. Alexander, AICP, Assistant Planner *KKA*
Subject: *East Acton Village Green*

The East Acton Village Planning Committee (EAVPC) is currently drafting an application for CPA funding for the East Acton Village Green (EAV Green) project.

Background

In June 2001, the Board of Selectmen gave the EAVPC approval to undertake efforts to develop a concept plan for the EAV Green: the two small Town-owned parcels of land on the northwest corner of Great and Concord Roads (see attached map – Attachment A). It was agreed that the concept plan would involve passive recreation opportunities and low maintenance landscaping, paths, and plantings. Any concept plan would take into account the relationship of the parcels to East Acton Village, Ice House Pond and other natural resources, the rail trail, and the historic nature of the site.

In fall 2002, the EAVPC received approval to apply for a State grant to develop the concept plan. The EAVPC received the design services grant and the State contracted with The Cecil Group (a planning and design firm out of Boston) to provide the design services. No financial match was required from the Town - so the concept plan was free. The application to the State (Attachment B) and the Scope of Work agreed upon by the State and The Cecil Group (Attachment C) are attached.

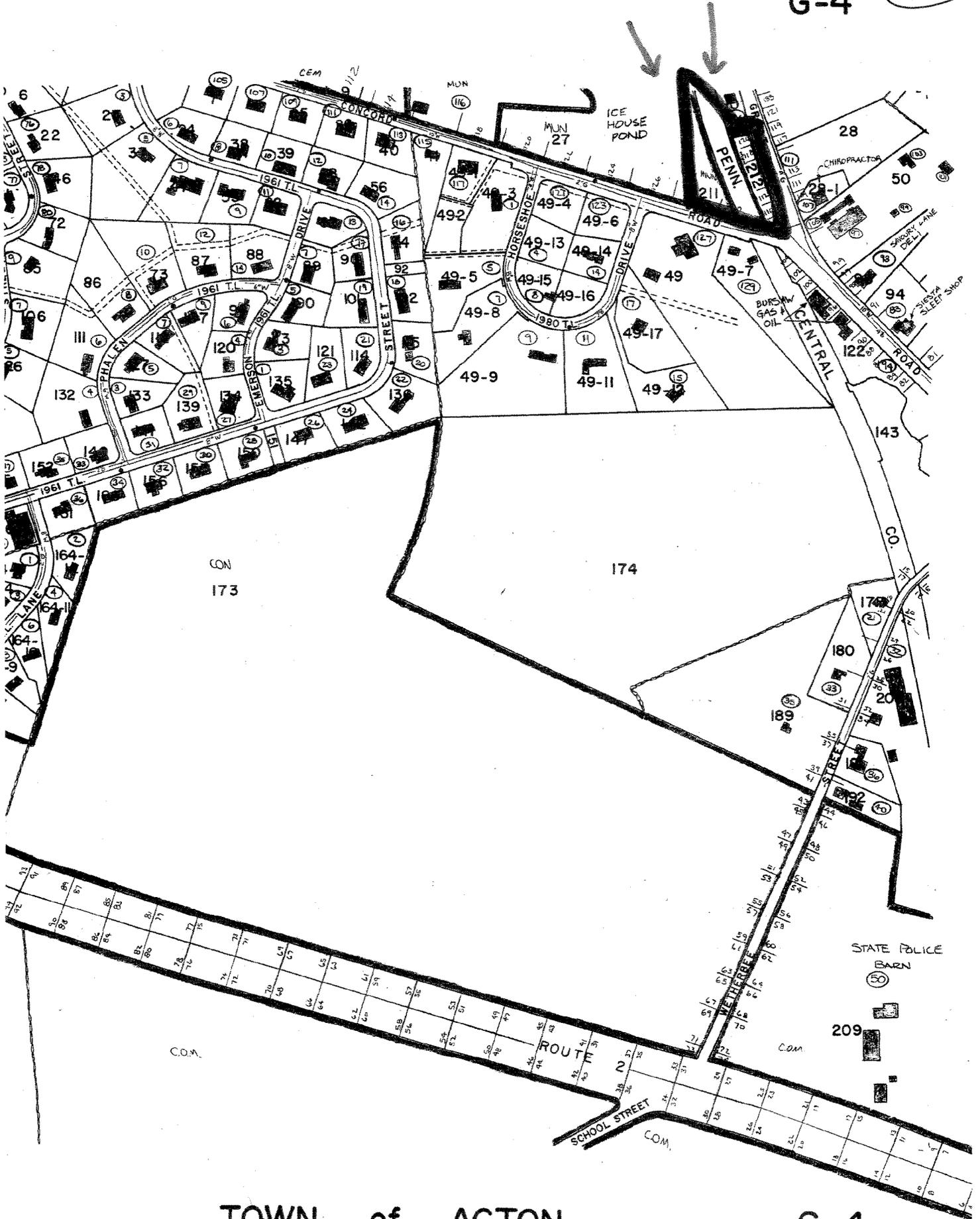
The concept plan developed by The Cecil Group for the EAV Green is included in Attachment D. It is comprised of 5 drawings (with the actual concept plan called "master plan"). It is also available online at: http://www.town.acton.ma.us/eav/great_road.htm.

Present Activity of the EAVPC

The EAVPC is focusing most of its efforts on writing the East Acton Village Plan right now, but did not want to pass up an opportunity for potential funding. So they are drafting a CPA application for the EAV Green. They understand that any further work related to the project (including grant applications) would need approval from the Selectmen.

The EAV Green Project and the CPA

The EAV Green project is appropriate for CPA funding because it focuses on open space and historic preservation. It would create a green space in the general location of one that existed there in the early 1900s (Attachment E). It would link the site to its historic routes and the history of the surrounding area (Attachment F). The project already has a design with the costs analyzed (Attachment G). The EAVPC anticipates trying to obtain more private donations for some of the project (like it did in the past for the re-engraving of the stone marker onsite). The project is physically feasible because the two properties are owned by the Town; therefore, under Town control. Furthermore, the project would link to other town open space and recreation projects and areas: Ice House Pond, the Morrison property, and the proposed Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. It would also “continue to enhance the visual appearance of village centers” and provide “benches in village centers” (Master Plan Update, Land Use Action Strategies 5 and 8, pages 74 and 75).



(B)



Downtown Technical Assistance Site Visit Application Form

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Applications for the MDI Downtown Technical Assistance Site Visit Program are accepted on a non-competitive rolling basis from any Massachusetts community that has not received an MDI site visit in the past 12 months. Actual determination for a site visit is based on a community's ability to meet program qualifications and DHCD staff availability. For more information, contact your DHCD Regional Representative at 617-727-7001.

Community Name: Town of Acton, MA

Principal Contact:

Name Kristin Alexander
Title Assistant Town Planner

Address Planning Department
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720
Phone/Fax 978-264-9636 / 978-264-9630
E-Mail kalexander@town.acton.ma.us

Chief Executive Officer or Chief Elected Official

CEO Name/Title Don Johnson / Town Manager
(please print)

Date of Application August 9, 2007
Signature Don Johnson
(required for submission)

Downtown Topic: Please choose a topic from the attached list or provide one of your own. Include a brief description of the technical assistance you are requesting in the space provided.

Topic: Preserving & Enhancing Downtown Character

Description of requested t/a: See Attached Description.

Application

Check List: Please include the following information with your application:

- Downtown target area map.
- List of individuals comprising the downtown organization or committee.
- Brief summary of downtown revitalization activities conducted in the past year.

Description of the Request

The East Acton Village Planning Committee (EAVPC) is requesting technical assistance to design a passive recreation area or greenspace for Town owned land in East Acton, MA (the Site). The Site is approximately 1.29 acres and located at the northwest corner of the Concord and Great Roads (Rt. 2A) intersection, adjacent to Ice House Pond. The Site is also the former location of the East Acton Village train depot and greenspace (1872-1938 - see attached maps and photographs). The EAVPC is trying to promote and foster a village environment and sense of community within East Acton. It is anticipated the greenspace will help connect the village, pond, a future rail trail, and adjacent neighborhoods. It will bring together residents and visitors, and highlight the history and natural resources of the area. The greenspace will also encourage regional rail trail users to stop, rest, eat, and shop in East Acton Village, which would increase the economic vitality of the area. A design for the greenspace would be the first step toward achieving these goals.

Downtown Revitalization Activities Conducted in the Past Year

The EAVPC was appointed by the Acton Board of Selectmen in late 2000 to create an East Acton Village Plan (Plan). Thus far, the EAVPC has conducted a resident survey, an East Acton property and business owner survey, and held two public workshops for input. The EAVPC also acquired funds through Town Meeting last year and hired a consultant to perform a transportation study for East Acton Village (which is near completion). This past June, the EAVPC co-hosted a public input meeting on the transportation alternatives generated by the consultant. All this information has helped the EAVPC draft goals and objectives for the Plan and has convinced them to initiate the greenspace project. The EAVPC is currently drafting strategies or action items to carry out the goals and objectives of the Plan. It is anticipated that the Plan will be completed in fall 2003 and implementation will begin in 2004.

Additionally, a private property owner who owns an older shopping plaza within East Acton Village has received permits to move a liquor store to a vacant cinema building and to remove some parking spaces and replace them with landscaping, sidewalks, and a small greenspace. It is anticipated that this project will be completed at the end of this year or early next year. It will be located just southeast from the proposed Site. The EAVPC has discussed the plaza renovation plans with the property owner. This project should also enhance the village.

East Acton Village Planning Committee (EAVPC) Members

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Mr. Dave Brown | <i>East Acton Resident</i> |
| Ms. Betsy Comstock | <i>East Acton Resident</i> |
| Ms. Stacey Durkin | <i>East Acton Resident & Business Owner</i> |
| Ms. Carol Holley | <i>East Acton Resident</i> |
| Ms. Susan Kennedy | <i>Acton Resident</i> |
| Mr. Tom McLaughlin | <i>East Acton Business Owner</i> |
| Ms. Susan Mitchell-Hardt | <i>East Acton Resident</i> |
| Mr. Ed Pearson | <i>Planning Board Representative</i> |
| Mr. Ken Sghia-Hughes | <i>Planning Board Representative</i> |
| Mr. Steve Steinberg | <i>East Acton Property & Business Owner</i> |
| Ms. Micki Williams | <i>East Acton Resident</i> |
| Mr. Art Wu | <i>East Acton Resident</i> |

(C)



Consultant Scope of Services & Estimated Cost

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Date	September 25, 2002
Community	Town of Acton
MDI Staff Contact	Emmy Hahn
Consultant	Steve Cecil, The Cecil Group

Scope of Work: Please include estimated timeline and as much detail of final work products as possible.

The technical assistance will be done by working with the East Acton Village Planning Committee in their efforts to design a passive recreation area or greenspace for a parcel of town owned land, adjacent to Ice House Pond. It is anticipated that the greenspace will help connect the village community and sense of community within East Acton. Historically, the parcel served as the town train station site. The redesign of the parcel will create a stronger village center and create a pedestrian element. Because of the existing design features in the center, high traffic and commercial buildings that are set back, the road is not conducive to pedestrian use, nor is there the sense that you are in a village center. The identified parcel will create a "Town common" in a sense. The town has identified other improvements such as sidewalks and design guidelines that encourage of commercial structures to line the street, as other elements that will also work towards this goal. The redesign of this parcel will also encourage regional trail users to stop and local residents to walk to local shops, which would increase the economic vitality of the area.

Scope of Work:

Task 1: Review of Existing Conditions and Community Goals – The Cecil Group will visit the site, photograph existing conditions, and prepare a base plan. They will meet with the East Acton Village Planning Committee and confirm the Town goals for the area, and the program elements that should be included in design concepts.

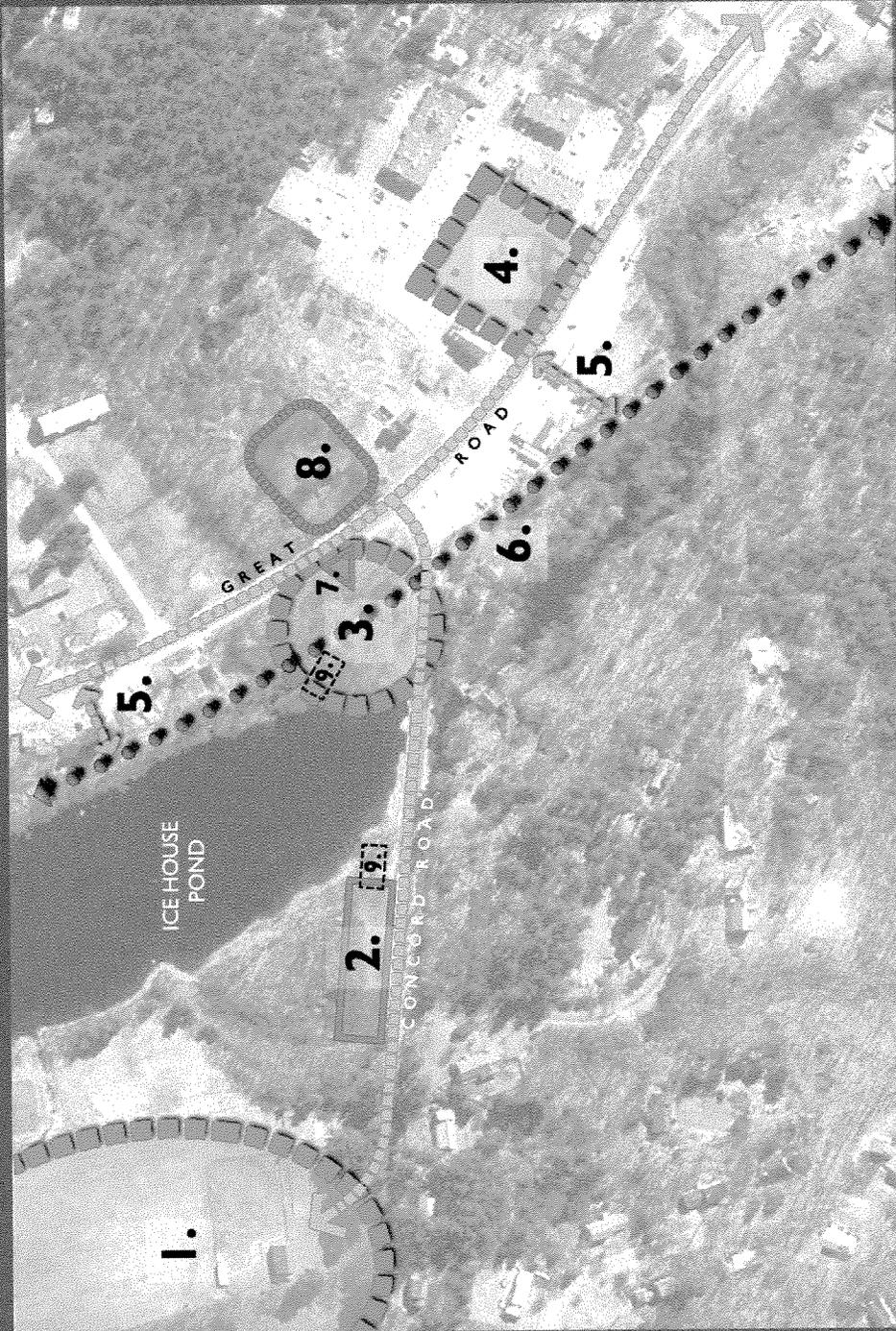
Task 2: Preparation of a Sketch Plans – The Cecil Group will then prepare sketch plans indicating landscape and townscape improvements that would accomplish the community's goals on the subject parcel. They will also graphically indicate how improvements in adjacent or nearby areas could be created to reinforce town image, pedestrian environment and commercial success of the surroundings. The Cecil Group will meet with the East Acton Village Planning Committee to review these ideas and receive input and direction.

Task 3: Presentation Boards and Recommendations – The Cecil Group will prepare presentation boards that convey the landscape, streetscape and urban design recommendations for the improvements on the subject parcel and surrounding areas. These boards will include text that describe the recommendations and suggest methods for implementation, including potential sources of funding.

Estimated Costs for Work Outlined Under Scope of Work: Please include estimated number of hours and additional costs that might be recognized at this time.

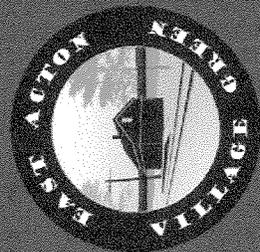
Task 1: Review of Existing Conditions and Goals	16 hours
Task 2: Sketch Plans	20 hours
Task 3: Presentation Boards and Recommendations	24 hours
Total hours:	60 hours

Time Frame: 8 weeks



Legend

- 1. Morrison Property
- 2. Existing Parking Area
- 3. East Acton Village Green
- 4. New Green Space
- 5. Potential Pedestrian Connection
- 6. Future Rails to Trails Pathway System
- 7. Signage Opportunity
- 8. Consider Station Master's House as Part of Gateway
- 9. Historical Foundations of Icehouse



EAST ACTON VILLAGE GREEN

EAST ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

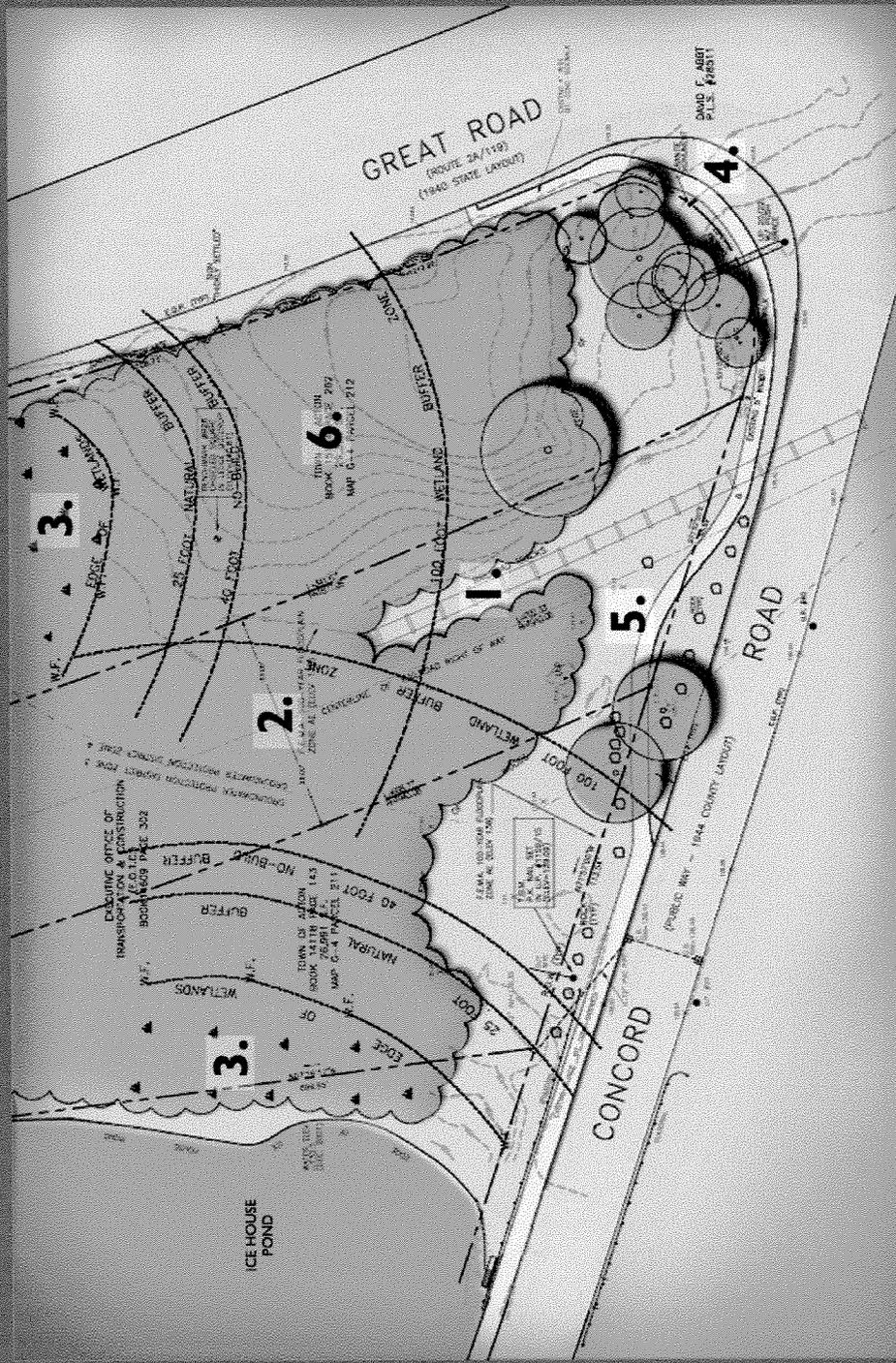
SITE CONTEXT

PREPARED BY THE CECIL GROUP, INC.
 MASS. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
 EAST ACTON VILLAGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

(D)

Legend

- 1. Abandoned Railroad Tracks
- 2. Railroad Easement
- 3. Wetlands
- 4. Granite Marker
- 5. Existing Walkway
- 6. Existing Vegetation/Ledge Outcroppings



EAST ACTON VILLAGE GREEN

EAST ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PREPARED BY THE CECIL GROUP, INC.
 MASS. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
 EAST ACTON VILLAGE PLANNING COMMITTEE



Program Elements

ZONE A

Welcome to East Acton Village Sign

Historic Marker Rehabilitation

Slope/Rock Plantings

Accessible Pathways

ZONE B

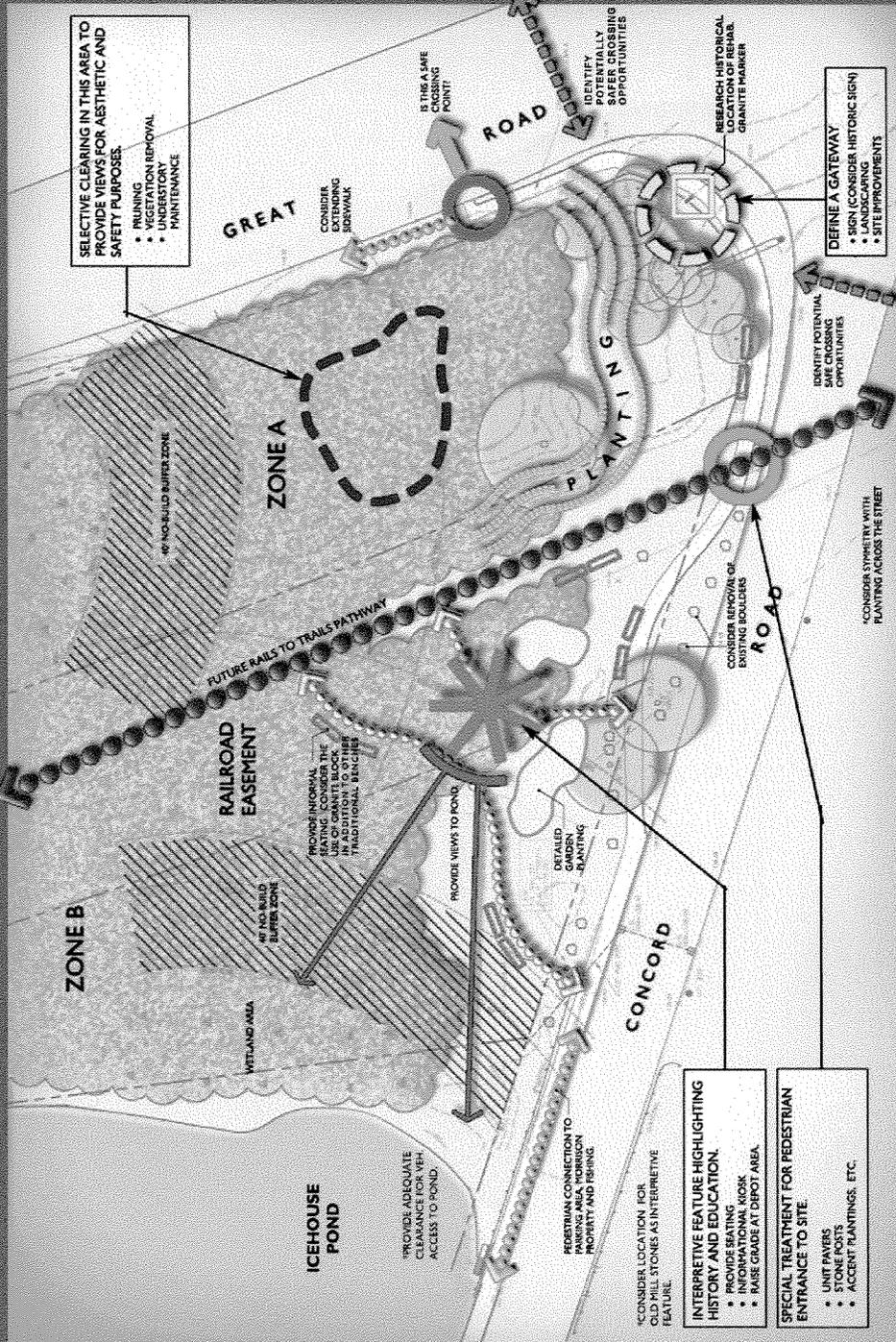
Seating Areas with views of Pond

Educational Kiosk

Historical Features

Plantings with Labels

Accessible Pathways



SELECTIVE CLEARING IN THIS AREA TO PROVIDE VIEWS FOR AESTHETIC AND SAFETY PURPOSES:

- PRUNING
- VEGETATION REMOVAL
- UNDERSTORY
- MAINTENANCE

DEFINE A GATEWAY

- SIGN (CONSIDER HISTORIC SIGN)
- LANDSCAPING
- SITE IMPROVEMENTS

INTERPRETIVE FEATURE HIGHLIGHTING HISTORY AND EDUCATION.

- PROVIDE SEATING
- INFORMATIONAL KIOSK
- RAISE GRADE AT DROPT AREA.

SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE TO SITE

- UNIT PAVES
- STONE POSTS
- ACCENT PLANTINGS, ETC.



EAST ACTON VILLAGE GREEN

EAST ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

PREPARED BY THE CECIL GROUP INC
MASS. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
EAST ACTON VILLAGE PLANNING COMMITTEE



East Acton Village Common (pre-1940)



East Acton Rail Station (c. 1909)

(F)

6

The Cecil Group

Architecture Landscape Architecture Urban Design Planning

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 25, 2003
To: Kristin Alexander, Town of Acton Planning Department
From: Jeff Denzak/Ti Johnson, The Cecil Group
RE: Magnitude of Cost Information – East Acton Village Green
Copies:

Area 1 - Interpretive Depot Plaza

- Bluestone plaza
- Salvaged seat walls
- Wood platform deck
- Kiosk
- Associated Planting
- Miscellaneous signage
- Miscellaneous site preparation and demolition
- Miscellaneous earthwork

Total Cost for Area 1 = \$39,000

Area 2 – Great Road Green

- Gateway sign with stone wall base
- Special slope planting
- Vegetative management and understory clearing

Total Cost for Area 2 = \$15,500

Area 3 – Rail Trail Streetscape

- Salvaged granite piers.
- Benches and seating
- Concrete unit pavers.
- Miscellaneous planting.
- Low stone sign
- Stone bollard
- Miscellaneous site preparation and demolition

Total Cost for Area 3 = \$36,000

Area 4 – Pond Front Green Section

- Chip and Seal accessible connector path.
- Benches and seating
- Miscellaneous interpretive features (i.e. millstone)
- Miscellaneous planting.

Total Cost for Area 3 = \$20,500

Assumptions:

1. All demolition costs to be performed by local DPW.
2. Rails-to-Trail Improvements not included.
3. Proposed site improvements based on competitive market bidding process.
4. Hard costs only. Does not include design fees, permits and permitting, and/or contingency.
5. In order to receive competitive and comparable construction bids, consider appropriate level design documents that include drawings and specifications.