

REPORTS, ACTON

ITEM #18

#188318B05
~~188318B05~~



Urban Planning Policy Analysis and Administration

A PLAN FOR KELLEY'S CORNER

February 1977

**Department of City
and Regional Planning**

**Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts**

A PLAN FOR KELLEY'S CORNER

February 1977

Prepared for
Town of Acton Planning Board
Charles W. Burnham, Chairman

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Preface	ii
Chapter I	<u>INTRODUCTION</u> 1
Chapter II	<u>INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS</u> 6
	A. LAND USE 7
	B. PHYSICAL SITE CHARACTERISTICS 9
	C. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION 14
	D. SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND CHARACTERISTICS IN KELLEY'S CORNER 18
	E. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACTON 19
Chapter III	<u>A PLAN FOR KELLEY'S CORNER</u> 22
Chapter IV	<u>IMPLEMENTATION</u> 45
	A. CIRCULATION 46
	B. LAND USE, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND AESTHETICS 47
	C. THE PRIVATE SECTOR 60
Chapter V	<u>COSTS</u> 62
Chapter VI	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u> 65
Appendix	A MARKET STUDY: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACTON

PREFACE

The Harvard Workshop Program provides graduate students in the Department of City and Regional Planning with the opportunity to apply their skills to specific urban and regional problems in a professional relationship with actual clients. Workshop participants analyze the client's problem, develop and evaluate alternative approaches and recommend courses of action.

In the case of the Kelley's Corner Land Use Workshop, the students were helped immeasurably in their task by the Acton Planning Board, the Acton Businessmen's Association and interested Acton residents. Members of these groups met willingly with workshop participants at different times throughout the study to express their views in an open and informative dialogue. To all of these individuals we express our thanks for their most gracious cooperation.

The Study Team also wishes to acknowledge the very helpful contributions of Mrs. Carol Thomas, faculty member of the Department of City and Regional Planning and Mrs. Rick Sherman, Assistant to the Acton Planning Board, both of whom patiently provided assistance and guidance to workshop participants throughout the term of the study.

Participants in the Kelley's Corner Land Use Workshop were:

Jane Osborne Baker
Holly Gower Boots
Richard K. Domas
Ellyn S. Eder
Martin Goldstein
Charles H. Van Gorder

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Kelley's Corner, one of several small shopping districts in the Town of Acton, was until recently little more than a simple country intersection. For years it retained a distinctly rural flavor, its character assured by an uneven topography, dense vegetation and lack of development. Only after World War II did Kelley's Corner, like the rest of Acton, begin to change in response to the enormous pressures of an expanding population. Hoping to guide and control these changes, the Town in 1953 adopted a zoning ordinance which designated most of the land in the immediate vicinity of Kelley's Corner for "General Business" use. This gave added impetus to development in the area, and by 1963 the Northeast quadrant of the intersection had attracted a significant amount of new growth. In the following ten years, pressures intensified even more, and Kelley's Corner was dramatically transformed into a busy retail/office center.

The development of Kelley's Corner has benefited the Town of Acton in many ways. It has provided a wide variety of goods and services to Town residents and has yielded generous revenues in the form of taxes. It has also created problems. Visually, the area has experienced marked deterioration. The trees and dense vegetation which originally contributed to its rural character have in many instances been substantially eliminated by developers and replaced by asphalt, with only minor attempts at re-landscaping. Individual buildings are frequently attractive, but differences in design, crowding and the lack of clear visual interrelationships among them have created an architectural mosaic that on a large scale is more disconcerting than aesthetically pleasing. Finally, prominent overhead electrical wires clutter the sky and endless stretches of pavement create a feeling of monotony that cries out for relief.

This lack of visual attractiveness and unity is probably one reason why Kelley's Corner conveys a feeling of disorientation rather than a satisfying sense of place. Also contributing to the problem, however, is the disorderly pattern of land development. Single family homes are tucked between gas stations, retail stores and professional office buildings; an apartment complex fronts almost directly on the busiest part of the intersection; and shops and professional offices are scattered throughout the area, forcing users to walk long distances or drive from one corner to another in order to accomplish their errands. In short, structures do not relate well to each other on a functional level, thus increasing the feeling of disorientation originally conveyed by casual observation.

Bothersome as these problems are, by far the most serious and difficult is traffic congestion. Kelley's Corner unfortunately occupies a strategic position between several large suburban employment centers and many of their surrounding bedroom communities (see Map I). Hence, the two state roads which form the intersection are heavily used by commuters. A further complication is the public school complex which is located quite close to the corner and attracts a fleet of buses in both the morning and mid-afternoon. Adding to the problem is the fact that Kelley's Corner itself has evolved rapidly as a commercial/office district, thus generating a great deal of activity. The result of these combined influences is a degree of traffic congestion that is barely tolerable during the day and extremely severe during peak commuting hours. Lengthy back-ups at the traffic light are common and it is difficult to travel easily, by foot or by car, from one corner of the intersection to another. Heavy traffic also threatens the pedestrian. Sidewalks are scarce, no special provisions have been made for pedestrian street crossings, walkways are lacking within the interior of the shopping districts and cars driving on the private road between Routes 111 and 27 constantly interfere with pedestrian safety and other vehicles searching for parking spaces.

To date, the town of Acton has devoted very little attention to the problems at Kelley's Corner. There is accordingly much to be done. Although constrained by the extent of new development that has recently occurred, opportunities for innovation and improvement remain. Not all of the forest and vegetation has been destroyed. A number of interesting old buildings still grace the area, one of which will soon be restored and made available for public enjoyment as a museum. Thus, the potential for a better future exists. The purpose of the following study is to discuss what this future might be, in the hope that Kelley's Corner can again become a safe, attractive and desirable area for all of its users.

CHAPTER II

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

CHAPTER II

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. LAND USE

1. Type of Development

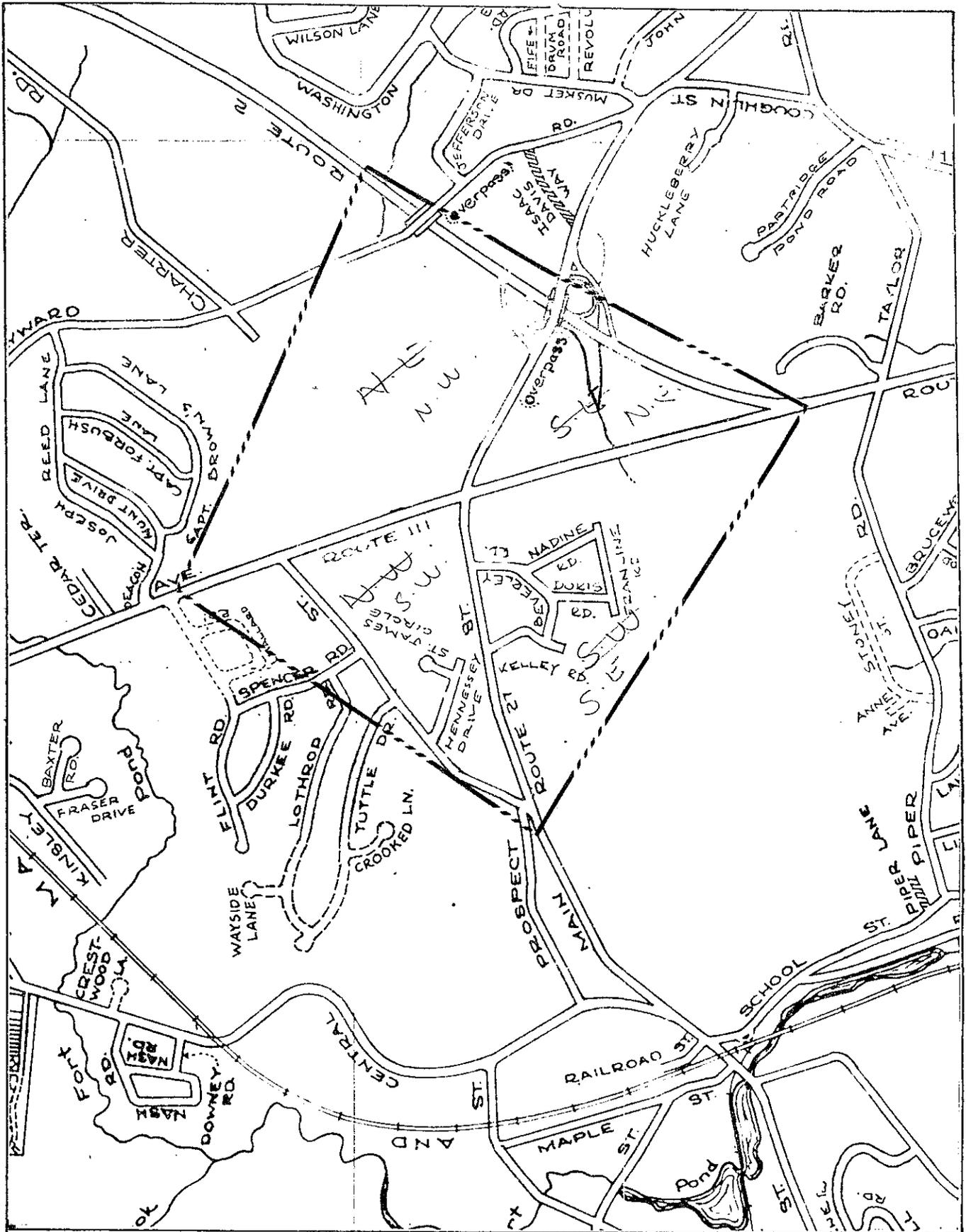
Kelley's Corner (see Map II) is an area of mixed land use and varying development intensity. The northeast quadrant contains several commercial and multi-family residential properties of moderate density as well as a number of low-density commercial and residential uses. The southeast quadrant contains several professional offices and a few low-density retail establishments. The northwest quadrant consists of residential development, old and new, single and multi-family, adjacent to a large school complex; while the southwest quadrant is dominated by moderately intensive retail and service uses. In all quadrants except the northeast, single family residential uses occur more frequently with increasing distance from the intersection.

2. Building Conditions

Most development is of recent origin and in excellent condition. Only two buildings, both some distance from the intersection, are dilapidated. One of these, the 1760 residence of Jonathan Hosmer, is of historic interest and will soon be restored for public use. The other is a small single-family home on Main Street.

3. Parcel Ownership

A remarkable number of properties, eighty-four of the one hundred and eighteen located closest to the intersection, have changed ownership since 1960, forty-five (38%) in the last six years alone. Most of these properties are owned by private individuals, but two or three real estate trusts each own several commercial and multi-family parcels in the



MAP II - STUDY AREA

KELLEY'S CORNER WORKSHOP

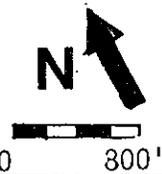
ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

JANUARY 1977



northeast quadrant. A number of properties are also owned by public entities. The northwest quadrant contains a large tract of land devoted to school use, while the southeast quadrant is the site of several parcels owned by the Conservation Commission. Two religious uses are also present. A Lutheran Church is located on Massachusetts Avenue, and the vacant land on Main Street adjacent to K-Mart was recently acquired for the construction of a synagogue.

4. Assessed Values

A majority of the properties in the area, fifty-nine percent of those investigated, are assessed at less than \$25,000, with the most valuable being situated closest to the intersection.¹ Analysis also indicates that the commercial properties at Kelley's Corner contribute much more in taxes to the town than they generate in costs. In general, this excess amounts to about 3.76% of total assessed value, or three times the cost to the town in required services.²

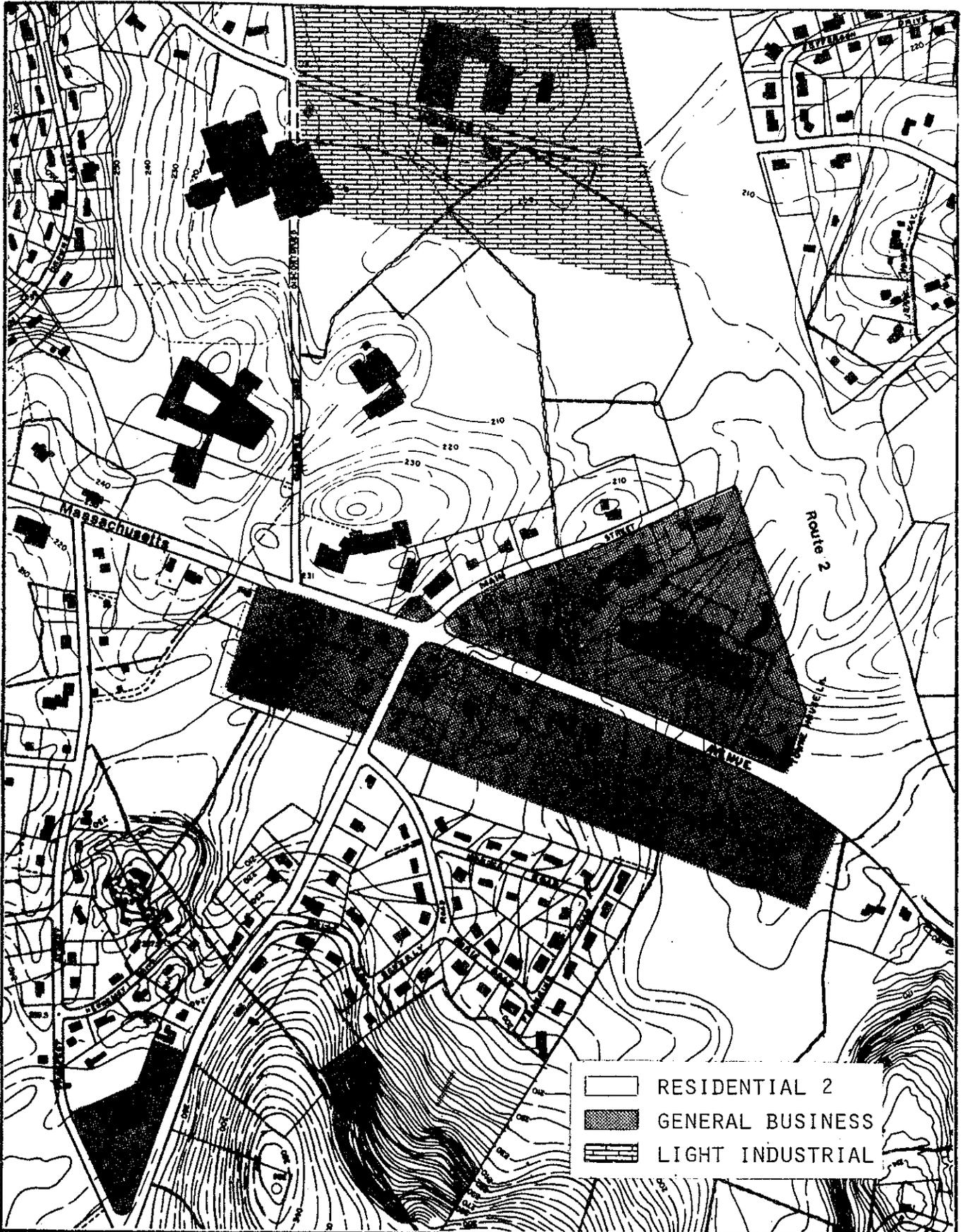
5. Regulatory Controls

Most of the land in the immediate vicinity of the intersection is zoned for "General Business" (see Maps III and IV). Uses permitted under this designation include retail businesses, banks, professional offices, hotels or motels, places of amusement, restaurants, hospitals and nursing homes. Other uses allowed by special permit include sawmills, kennels, wholesale businesses, warehouses, stone quarries, undertaking establishments and sand or gravel pits.

B. PHYSICAL SITE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Topography

The present topography of the area was formed primarily by glaciers during the last ice age. Great Hill, at an elevation (Mean Sea Level) of three hundred and fifty-six feet, is typical of a glacial formation with a relatively steep south slope and a more moderate north slope. Drainage patterns are well-established, with the bulk of the Study Area drained to



MAP III - ZONING DISTRICTS

KELLEY'S CORNER WORKSHOP

ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

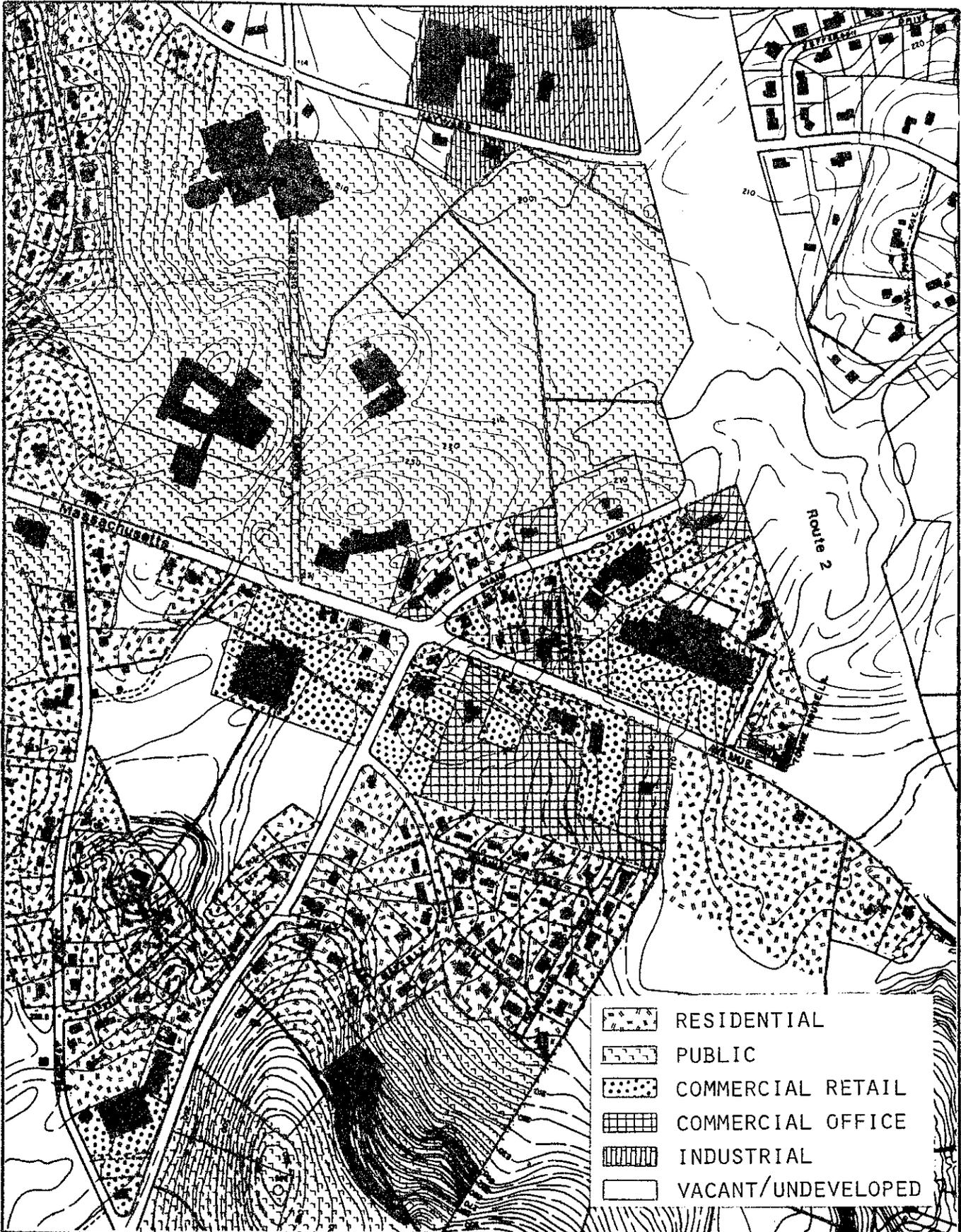
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

JANUARY 1977





MAP IV - EXISTING LAND USE

KELLEY'S CORNER WORKSHOP

ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

JANUARY 1977



the west-southwest through Inch Brook. Several areas are characterized by a high seasonal water table: the low area south of the existing K-Mart, an area bordering Route 2 above the historic home and the drainageway of Inch Brook south of Massachusetts Avenue.

2. Soils

Soils in Kelley's Corner comprise ten series and two additional soil classifications, Made Land and Muck.³ These soils are predominantly derived from the glacial till deposited during the last ice age and are characterized by the presence of stones and boulders. Much of the land, predominantly that occupied by the public schools and the area surrounding the professional office buildings and vacant Finast store, has been altered through the use of fill.

The soils in the Town of Acton are classified by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service for their suitability for various land uses. Of particular interest is their capacity for carrying commercial and industrial development, handling sewage effluent and withstanding additional road development.

The limitations on the use of the soils in Kelley's Corner for sewage effluent disposal are rated as very severe to severe, with one small area rated as slight; for commercial and industrial development, very severe to severe, with one small area rated as moderate; and for additional road development, very severe to moderate, with one area rated as slight. Restricting characteristics are identified as excessive slope, shallow depth to bedrock and the presence of an impermeable hardpan. However, the Soil Conservation Service states that these limitations are based on macro classifications of the soils and that further on-site investigation may reveal areas where the soil properties are such that they would be able to carry the particular use envisioned. This is particularly true regarding the ability of the soil within a specific lot to effectively handle sewage effluent. Thus, the soil limitations ratings of the Soil Conservation Service are only indicative of the amount of on-site investigation and site engineering necessary to prepare a site for a future land use.

3. Public Utilities

a. Water

Six-inch, eight-inch and ten-inch water lines were installed within the Study Area in the early 1970's. Water is supplied by the Acton Water District. There appears to be sufficient excess capacity in the system to handle additional development in the Area.

b. Gas

Two-inch gas lines have been installed throughout the Study Area. Gas is supplied by Boston Gas.

c. Electricity

Electricity is supplied by Boston Edison, with sufficient excess power to handle additional development.

d. Sanitary Sewage

There is no public sanitary sewerage system in the Town of Acton. Septic tanks are therefore used extensively in the Study Area. Conversations with the Assistant Town Engineer and a Board of Health official revealed few problems with the septic systems in Kelley's Corner. Reference was made, however, to several system malfunctions in the past (McDonald's, the apartments near the law offices). These problems seemed to be due to poor maintenance and do not indicate the inability of the soils to effectively handle sewage effluent.

e. Storm Drainage

According to the Assistant Town Engineer, storm drainage does not appear to be a major problem in the area. Fifteen-inch and eighteen-inch storm drainage pipes were installed with the construction of Routes 111 and 27. Recent developers in Kelley's Corner, however, have installed additional drainage pipes. The low area south of K-Mart acts somewhat as a retention basin with drainage via eighteen-inch and twentieth-four-inch concrete pipes to Inch Brook. Mammoth Mart has an extensive drainage system including twelve-inch and eighteen-inch aluminum pipes, thirty-six-inch reinforced

concrete pipe and a four by six foot reinforced concrete box culvert. There is some surface drainage in the Study Area, the bulk of which is located outside the immediate vicinity of the intersection.

C. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

The current situation at Kelley's Corner is an extreme example of traffic congestion during peak hours. The intersection is controlled by traffic signals and there is one lane in each direction on Routes 27 and 111. The proximity of Route 2 (limited access divided highway) to Route 27 and Route 111, to the north and east of the intersection, respectively, contributes to the large number of vehicles traveling through Kelley's Corner during the morning and evening peak hours. Traffic counts as of 1974 are given in Exhibit 1, and these counts are projected to 1977 in Exhibit 2. Estimated vehicle capacities of Routes 27 and 111 are presented in Table 1.

1. Work Trips

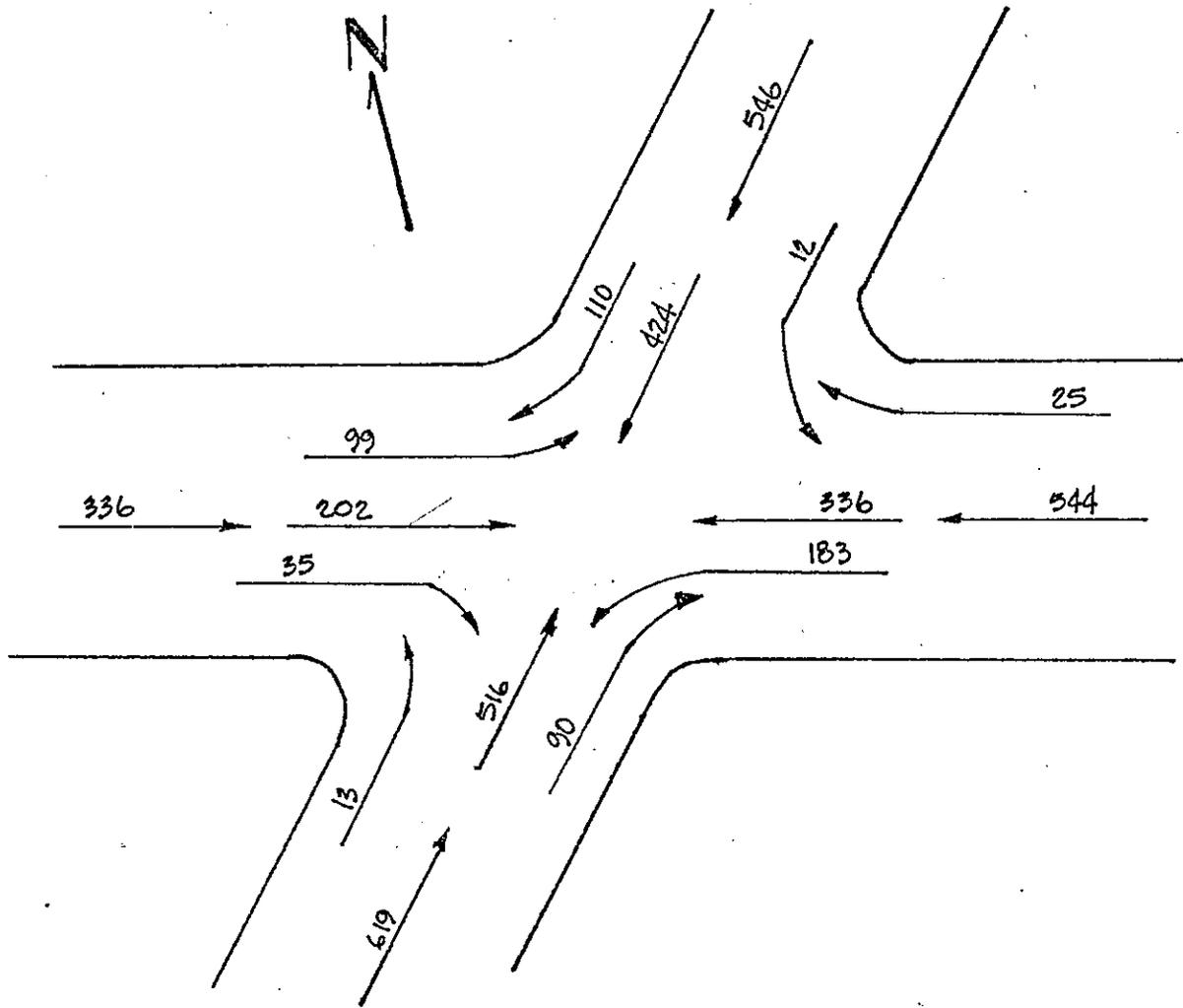
The 1970 Census of Population reports that 4952 residents of Acton work and that 2621 people are employed in Acton. The number of people who both lived and worked in Acton in 1970 was 1067. In all likelihood there has been an increase in these numbers over the past six years. Digital in Acton employs about two hundred and forty people, most of whom live in Acton. (Note: Due to lack of data, it is not possible to tell how many of these people drive through Kelley's Corner.) The Digital plant in Maynard is a large local employer and many people drive through the intersection on the way to work. The day-shift for line workers at the Maynard plant is from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. It is highly likely that the bulk of the morning traffic generated by the day-shift passes through the Kelley's Corner intersection before local traffic reaches any significant volume. However, the afternoon traffic volume generated by the Maynard plant is probably a major contributor to the congestion at Kelley's Corner. As shopping trips of brief duration are a characteristic of the afternoon work-to-home journey, the traffic flow within the shopping district is also significantly increased.

TABLE 1
 Estimated Vehicle Capacity of Rts. 27 and 111¹
 Acton, Massachusetts

	<u>vehicles per hour</u>
Route 111 Massachusetts Avenue	
Westbound	
One lane, 14 feet in width	550
Eastbound	
One lane, 12 feet in width	484
Route 27 Main Street	
Southbound	
One lane, 12 feet in width	750
Northbound	
One lane, 14 feet in width	852

¹ Based on a low level of service which assumes a slow average driving speed and cars traveling close together.

Exhibit 1
1974 Evening Peak Hour Volumes



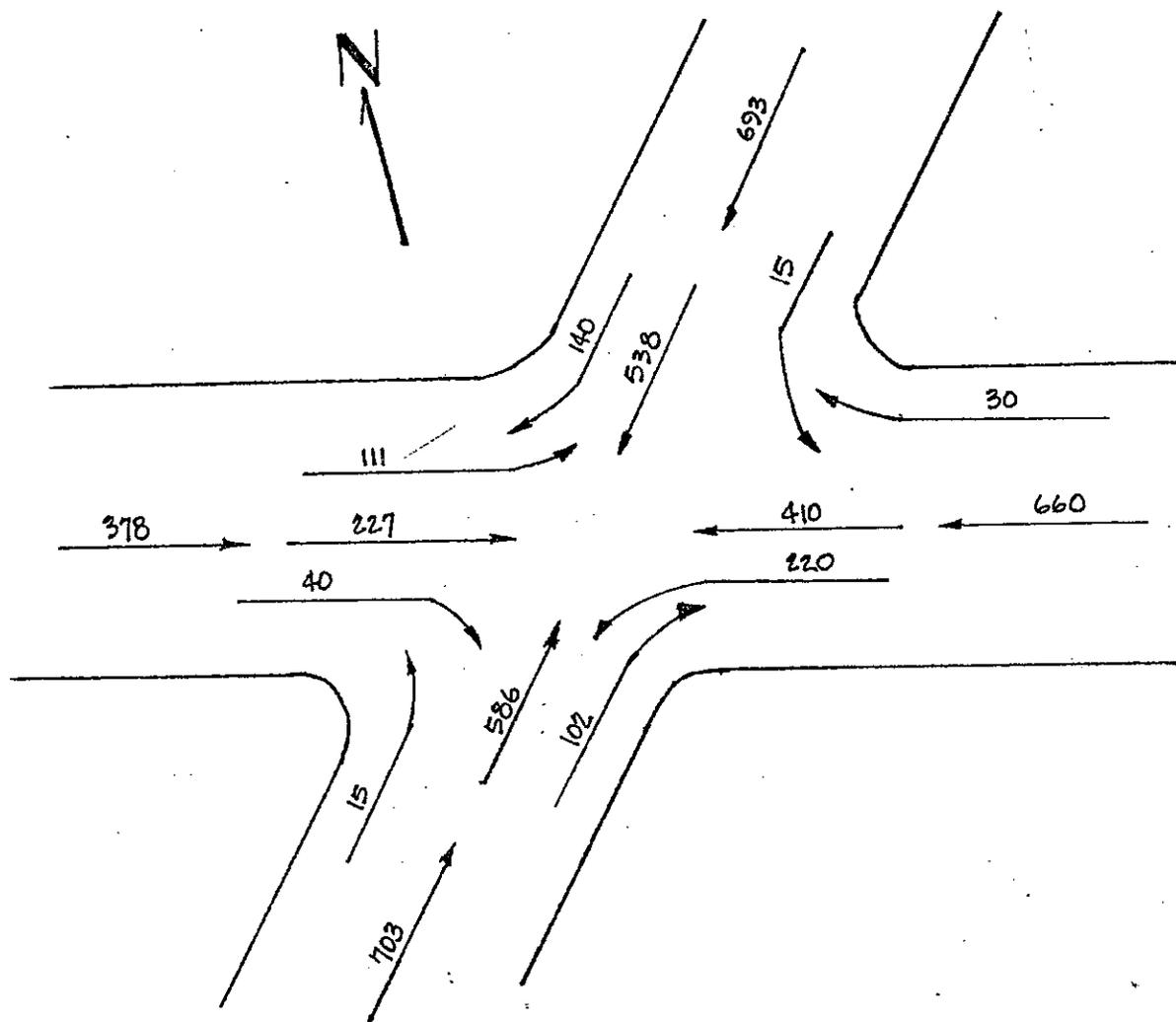
2. School Trips

There are approximately 330 people employed in the school complex. The majority live in Acton and it is estimated that at least half drive through Kelley's Corner.

Because of the proximity of the school complex to Kelley's Corner, there is also considerable concern about pedestrian safety and the interaction

Exhibit 2

1977 Projected Evening Peak Hour Volumes



of school buses and general traffic. Forty-one buses pass through Kelley's Corner in the morning, about half during the peak period from 8:15 am to 8:45 am. All students in grades K-3 ride buses, but most older students within a 1½ mile radius walk. In reality, very few students walk through Kelley's Corner in the morning, but it is believed that many walk through the area in the afternoon.

3. Land Development

The land uses within Kelley's Corner generate a significant amount of traffic. Employees of the professional offices and retail businesses in Kelley's Corner not only contribute to the peak hourly flows in the morning and afternoon, but also generate significant traffic volumes throughout the day. As pedestrian circulation routes within Kelley's Corner are ill-defined or non-existent, a substantial number of the auto trips generated within Kelley's Corner consist of short trips from store to store. In addition, directional arrows in the parking lots for both vehicular and pedestrian circulation are poorly designed and coordinated, creating serious traffic hazards in many instances.

The private road between Routes 27 and 111 in the northeast quadrant is a serious traffic hazard. As little curbing is present along this road, almost unlimited access is provided, creating points of conflict and uncertainty in the traffic flow. Parking spaces abut directly onto the road in several places and cars parking in these locations must back into the road to get out of their spaces. Lack of lane striping is a further safety hazard.

D. SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND CHARACTERISTICS IN KELLEY'S CORNER

A sampling of shoppers in Kelley's Corner revealed some interesting insights into the relationship of Kelley's Corner to the rest of Acton. One observation shared by nearly all of the shoppers surveyed was the importance of preserving the low density, rural character of the Town. Although each person felt that Kelley's Corner was a major problem due to traffic congestion, nearly all did the bulk of their shopping in Kelley's Corner. Some viewed it as the central focus of the Town because of its numerous shopping opportunities, but most felt this way because the Post Office is there. Only one out of ten people thought that the real center of Acton was the historic center. Thus, Kelley's Corner appears to be a highly visible area that is quite important to Town residents.

Recommendations expressed by the shoppers for improving Kelley's Corner included such diverse ideas as an elevated bypass, one way streets, wider streets, a turning lane, additional lights and, surprisingly, no changes. In general, most felt that Kelley's Corner was developed enough and feared changes which would attract more people or businesses.

Store owners attested to the commercial viability of Kelley's Corner, stating that business is usually good throughout the year. The Postmaster said that the Post Office is so busy that a new and larger facility would be needed in the very near future. On the other hand, the proprietor of the French restaurant mentioned that the reason he is leaving Kelley's Corner is that many of his customers do not feel comfortable dining out in a shopping center.

The crime and vandalism rate in and around Kelley's Corner is relatively low. This is in part due to the well-lit parking lots. Apparently, the lot behind Mammoth Mart is sometimes used as a "hangout" for the local teenagers, who also congregate at the McDonald's restaurant and the telephone company's parking lot. These activities, however, rarely present a threat to the community and do not require excessive surveillance by the police.

E. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACTON

A market study was undertaken in order to determine the factors affecting commercial development in Kelley's Corner. A market study area consisting of the thirteen towns which form a natural ring around Acton was delineated, and the population, the number and nature of existing shopping centers and the access to Acton of this area was examined in detail. The market study is presented in its entirety in Appendix I.

In summary, the market study concludes that Acton appears to be a natural commercial center for the defined market study area. It is

located centrally within a region not yet served by a dominant shopping complex; it has a particularly high population growth rate; and the median income of the Town is notably higher than most cities and towns in Massachusetts. It is easily accessible from nearly all points within the market study area, being served by four major arteries, namely Routes 27, 111, 2 and 2A.

Within Acton, there are two major locations of commercial development servicing the needs of the community and the surrounding area -- Great Road and Kelley's Corner. Kelley's Corner is somewhat of a "hybrid", containing the banking, professional services, recreational facilities and variety stores associated with a community center, yet lacking the many other uses also identified with a community shopping center. The future of Kelley's Corner hinges on whether the Town will continue to support the linear "strip development" along Great Road.

NOTES

1. Assessed values are as of June 30, 1976.
2. Calculations deriving these figures are on file with Acton Planning Board.
3. Detailed soil maps of Acton are on file with the Acton Town Engineer.

CHAPTER III
A PLAN FOR KELLEY'S CORNER

CHAPTER III

A PLAN FOR KELLEY'S CORNER

An inventory of existing conditions at Kelley's Corner suggests four major areas of concern: automobile traffic and pedestrian circulation, land use, aesthetics and social interaction. Recommendations for future improvements have accordingly been designed to achieve four basic goals:

1. Safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian circulation both within and through Kelley's Corner;
2. Integration of land uses within a functional, cohesive, environmentally sound and economically viable whole;
3. An attractive visual environment; and
4. Positive social contact and interaction between resident and non-resident users of Kelley's Corner.

The following recommendations have also been influenced by the expressed wishes of Acton residents to limit future commercial development at Kelley's Corner, despite evidence contained in the Market Study indicating that a population increase and rising income levels in the future could support much more commercial development than presently exists. With these factors in mind, the recommendations for Kelley's Corner have been divided into two Phases.

Phase I is essentially a reaction to the most serious problems at Kelley's Corner and requires minimal Town expenditures to improve the landscaping and alleviate existing traffic congestion. Phase II is more ambitious. It is, in effect, a plan which will enable the Town to guide and control the future of Kelley's Corner by channeling a limited amount of additional commercial development to selected areas and devoting other areas now used commercially to less intensive public uses. Traffic congestion, pedestrian circulation, land use and aesthetic problems are all addressed. While Phase II requires greater expenditures by the Town

than does Phase I, it is much more than the type of stop-gap effort represented by the latter. As an active, constructive blueprint for the future which will require a solid commitment by the Town for successful implementation, this plan carries great potential for the kind of lasting improvements that the residents, businessmen and users of Kelley's Corner hope to achieve.

RECOMMENDATIONS: PHASE ONE

CIRCULATION

One of the major concerns at Kelley's Corner is the large number of cars which pass through the area. In 1973, the average number of vehicles passing daily through the intersection of Routes 27 and 111 was 38,000¹. Prospect Street diverted another 2-3,000 vehicles per day away from the intersection.² However, in spite of these heavy traffic loads, the accident rates are relatively low. The intersection of Routes 27 and 111 and the intersection of Route 27 and Prospect Street each had nine accidents in 1971, and there were three accidents at the intersection of Route 111 and Prospect Street during that same year.³ The problem appears to be primarily one of "efficient" traffic flow rather than one of "safe" traffic flow.

Phase IA. Interim Steps

Vehicular

- *Increase carpooling efforts of local employers.*
- *Install directional signs from Maynard to Route 2 via School Street and Piper Road.*
- *Install directional signs from South Acton to West Acton, and from West Acton to South Acton, along Prospect Street.*
- *Prohibit left turn from Route 27 North onto Route 111 West during rush hours.*

- *Prohibit left turn from Route 111 West onto private road in northeast quadrant.*
- *Provide traffic controller at intersection during rush hours.*
- *Repaint pavement markings at intersection.*
- *Control traffic circulation in parking lots with large directional arrows and traffic control signs.*
- *Delineate ingress-egress to/from parking lots with entrance-exit signs.*

Pedestrian

- *Delineate pedestrian paths and crosswalks in parking lots with directional arrows and appropriate signs.*

The first three recommendations are directed toward reducing the rush hour traffic load at the Kelley's Corner intersection. The alternative routing plan (see Map V) might be temporary until the capacity at the intersection is increased. The left hand turn prohibition is aimed at avoiding unnecessary traffic backups and delays. The traffic controller and pavement markings are directed toward achieving a more efficient and responsive form of traffic control. A better definition and control of the traffic circulation both into and within the large parking lots are the purpose of the final three recommendations.

Phase IB. Short-Range Improvements

Vehicular

- *Implement Department of Public Works Safety Plan.⁴*
 - A. *Widen Routes 27 and 111 at intersection.*
 - 1. *Provide two full lanes on Route 111 westbound approaching the intersection.*
 - 2. *Provide a minimum 16-foot width on remaining entrances to intersection.*
 - B. *Increase number of traffic signals to six.*
 - C. *Provide rush hour lead time for left turns from Route 111 West onto Route 27 South.*
- *Increase traffic controls and improve delineation of travel paths at the intersection of Prospect Street and Route 27 and at the intersection*

of Prospect Street and Route 111.

- *Install curbing and directional signs on private road.*
- *Remove stop signs on Route 27 at the intersection.?*
- *Remove prohibition of left turn from Route 27 North onto Route 111 West.*

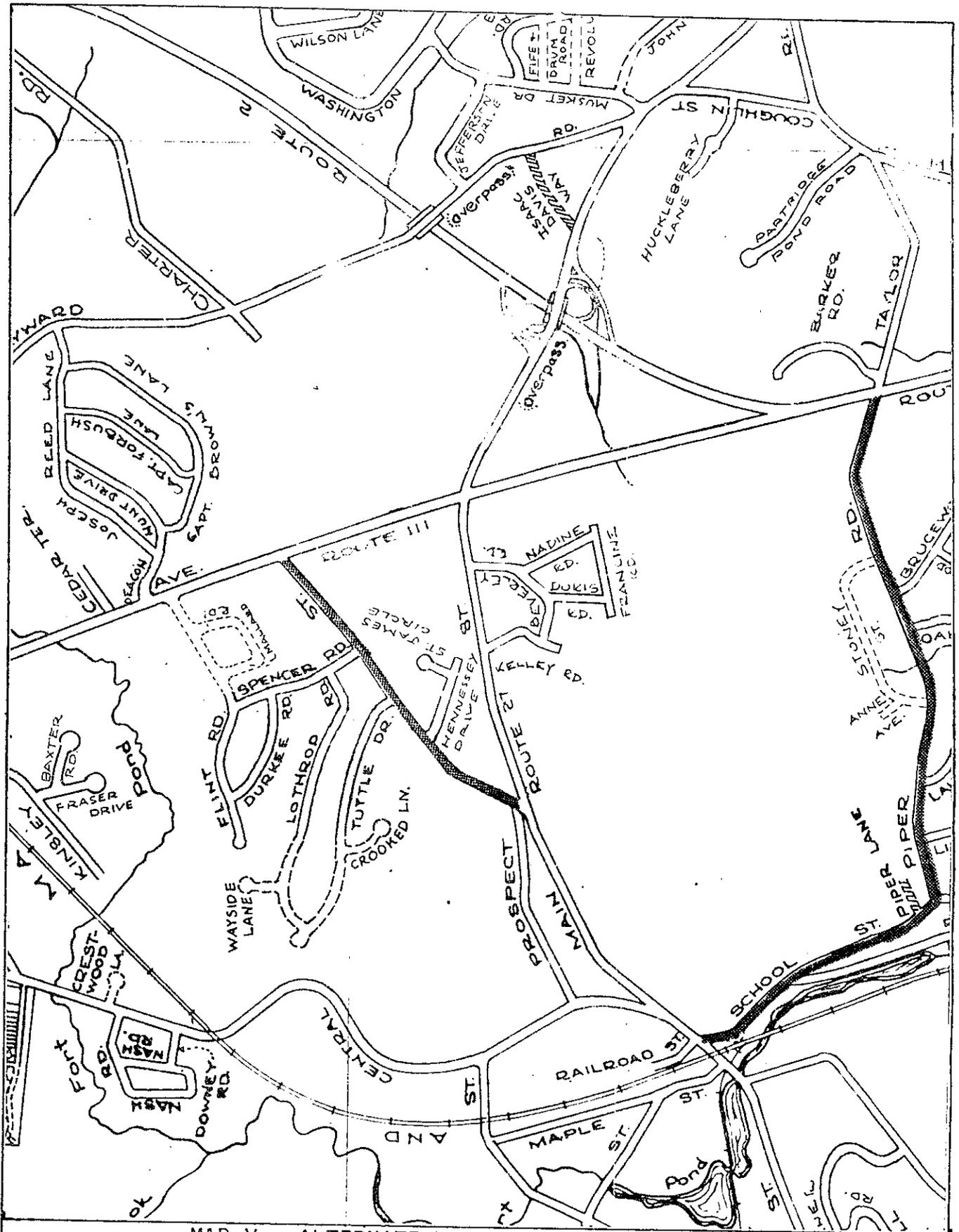
Pedestrian

- *Implement Department of Public Works Safety Plan.*
 - A. *Install demand-responsive pedestrian signals at intersection.*
 - B. *Replace existing sidewalks.*
 - C. *Install wheelchair ramps.*
- *Provide sidewalks along entire project.*

The Department of Public Works Safety Plan would greatly help in alleviating traffic congestion at the intersection. Sixteen-foot wide entrances to the intersection will allow for the by-passing of left-turning vehicles. While this Safety Plan may not incorporate all improvements that might be desired, it should be understood that the Department of Public Works is working under two basic constraints: (i) little or no taking of private property; and (ii) strict monetary limits. (See Table 2 and Exhibit 3.)

The Acton Areawide TOPICS Plan⁵ indicated the need for improvements at the intersection of Prospect Street and Route 27 and at the intersection of Prospect Street and Route 111. Additional traffic controls could be added and, at Route 27, additional curbing would better define the traffic paths at this intersection. These improvements will be of even greater importance if traffic flow increases due to traffic redirection between South Acton and West Acton.

The private road in the southeast quadrant is particularly hazardous due to undefined traffic paths and the lack of directional signs. New curbs, clear signage and pavement markings would greatly improve this situation.



MAP V - ALTERNATE VEHICULAR ROUTING

KELLEY'S CORNER WORKSHOP

ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

JANUARY 1977



TABLE 2
 Estimated Vehicle Capacity of Routes 27 & 111
 With Safety Plan Improvements¹
 Acton, Massachusetts

	<u>Vehicles per hour</u>
Route 111 Massachusetts Avenue	
Westbound	
Two lanes, each 12 feet in width	965
Eastbound	
One lane, 16 feet in width	414 ²
Route 27 Main Street	
Southbound	
One lane, 16 feet in width	632 ²
Northbound	
One lane, 16 feet in width	632 ²

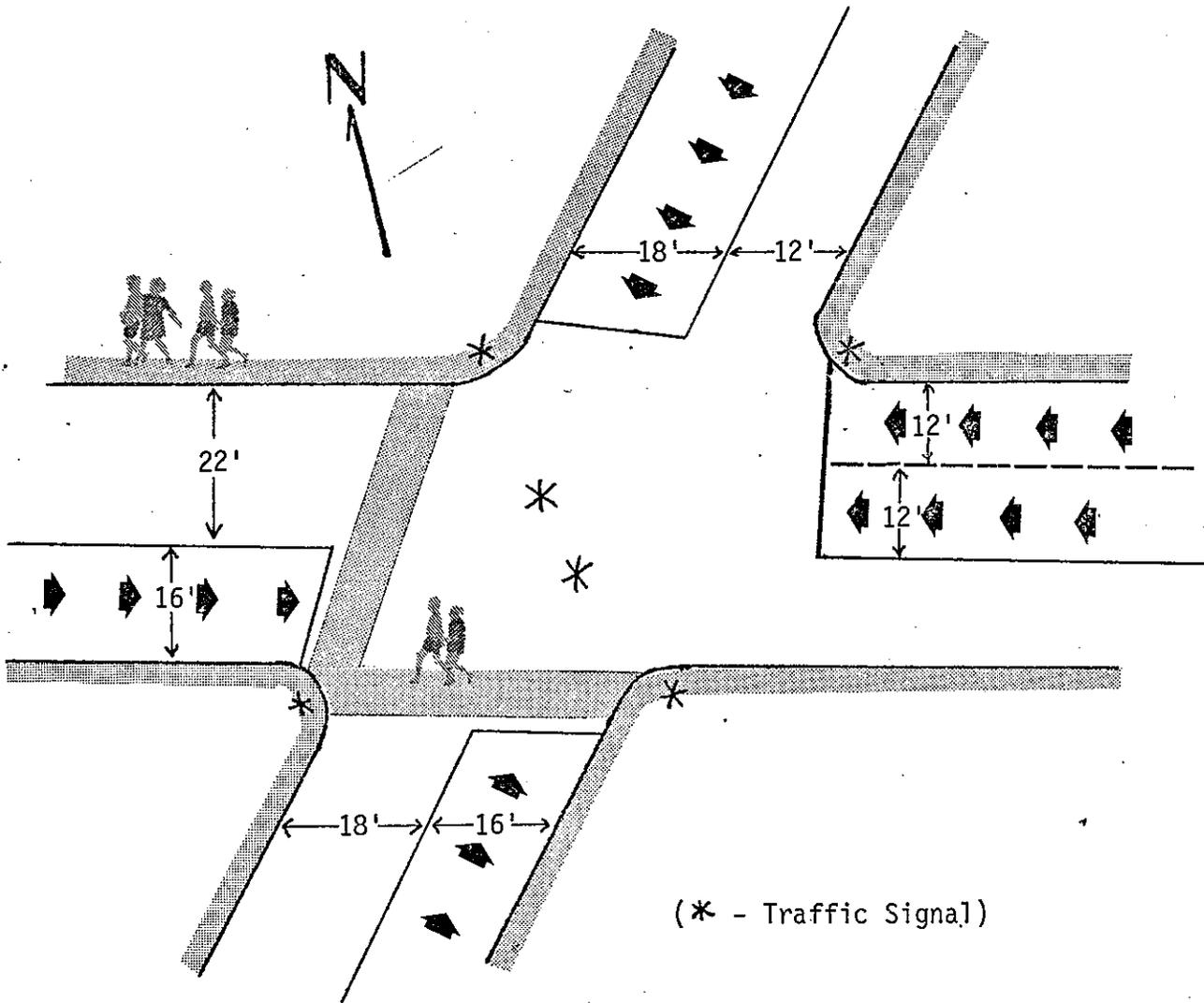
¹ Figured on a higher level of service than the current estimated capacities (Table 1). This means less delay per car traveling through the intersection.

² Capacities for Route 111 East and Routes 27 North and South are lower than before the Safety Plan because of the timing of the traffic light cycle to give lead time to cars turning left from Route 111 West onto Route 27 South. By changing the lead time (currently planned to be fifteen second of an eighty second cycle), the capacities of each approach changes.

These capacities do not include interruptions in the signal cycle for pedestrian crossing.

Exhibit 3

Kelley's Corner Intersection
With Safety Plan Improvements

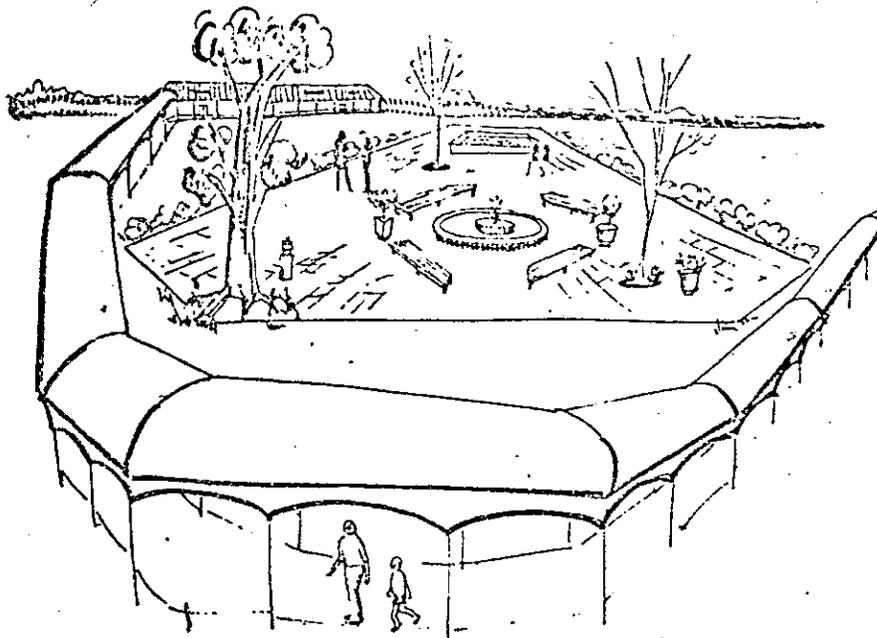


SOCIAL INTERACTION

- *Provide a vest-pocket park near Post Office.*

To promote the interaction of residents and shoppers in Kelley's Corner, the Study Team is recommending that the small landscaped area adjacent to the Post Office be upgraded into a vest-pocket park. Although minimal in size, the park could contain a number of conveniences and amenities which would ensure its use by both shoppers and residents alike. The Study Team recommends that attractive but functional outdoor seating be provided, along with a bank of public telephones in a nicely landscaped setting. At least one outdoor table with markings for chess and checkers is recommended, as well as a small kiosk that could be used for publicizing public activities and upcoming civic events. The park is illustrated in Exhibit 4.

The vest-pocket park could be located adjacent to a walkway between Mammoth Mart and the Post Office, and would provide a pleasant diversion for shoppers and a comfortable place for the older residents of Kelley's Corner to interact with shoppers and their children. It would also provide an attractively-planted open space for brown-bag or take-out lunches in warm weather.



AESTHETICS

- *Screen parking lots from through traffic.*

Major emphasis should be placed on the screening of parking lots from through traffic. As the large parking lots at the K-Mart and Mammoth Mart shopping centers dominate the visual environment of Kelley's Corner, some screening of these large asphalt expanses from Routes 27 and 111 would greatly enhance the attractiveness of the area. Route 111 in the vicinity of the public school complex is especially pleasant and is indicative of what can be accomplished with selective plantings.

This recommendation is not intended to suggest that retail establishments be invisible from the road. On the contrary, building signs should be clearly visible to the drivers on adjacent roads and available parking should be readily apparent. Parking lots, however, should be neatly bordered with shrubs and/or small trees, or a combination of attractive fencing and vegetation.

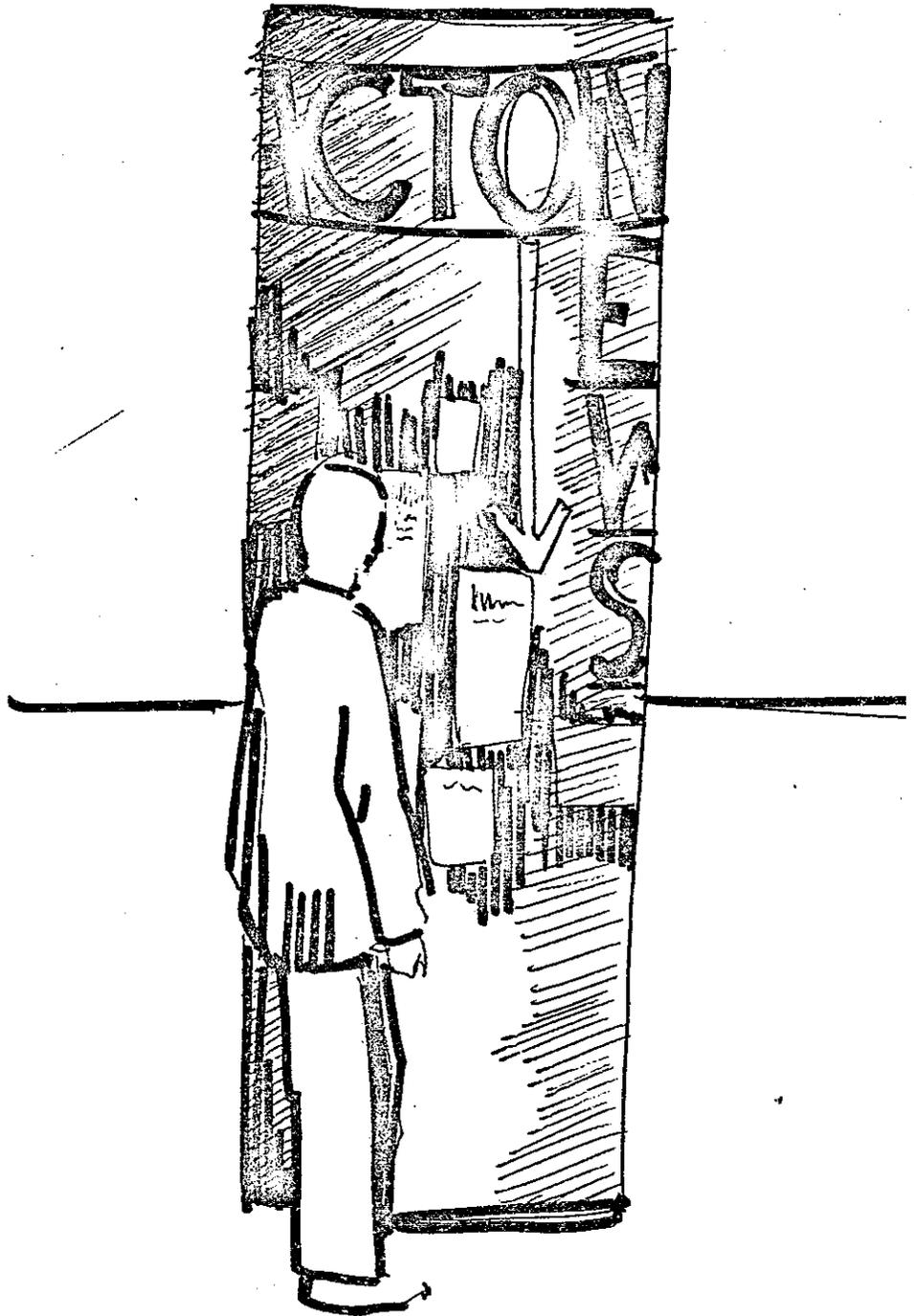
- *Control uniformity and simplicity of traffic circulation markings and signs in parking lots.*

A uniform size and style of traffic flow signs and markings would contribute significantly to the alleviation of the visual clutter apparent in the Study Area. The series of modern signs designed recently, utilizing a graphic presentation in lieu of words, would be particularly attractive.

- *Encourage use of color in Kelley's Corner.*

More care should be taken to incorporate color into the visual imagery of Kelley's Corner. The use of flags should be encouraged--perhaps the Town, State and United States flags in a cluster near the vest-pocket park. Awnings are especially capable of providing a mass of color at a reasonable cost. Awnings could be used in front of the Post Office and

along the front of the now vacant Finast building. Flower boxes could be encouraged with a small annual prize given to the nicest looking store front. The possibilities for incorporating color into the visual imagery of Kelley's Corner are almost infinite.



RECOMMENDATIONS: PHASE TWO

While Phase I is a low-cost reaction to existing conditions, Phase II is a complete blueprint for the future of Kelley's Corner. The success of this phase is dependent upon a close working relationship between the public and private sectors.

CIRCULATION

Vehicular

- *Widen Routes 27 (from Route 2 to Prospect Street) and 111 (from Route 2 to vicinity of Prospect Street) to three, or possibly four, lanes based on future need.*
- *Provide service road to businesses in southeast quadrant across the back of these properties.*
- *Remove/relocate gas stations from northeast and southeast quadrants.*
- *Construct right hand turn lane through southeast quadrant at intersection.*
- *Improve right-turning radius in northeast quadrant.*

Pedestrian

- *Install sidewalks in construction areas.*

The circulation measures recommended in Phase IB are not likely to be long-term solutions, because alternative routings are not acceptable or because increases in traffic flows render them inadequate. At such time, further steps must be taken to increase the capacity and service level of the Kelley's Corner intersection. Two alternative methods of accomplishing this would be to widen the existing roadways or to build a bypass. The bypass alternative was discarded for several reasons, including excessive cost and lack of space. Widening existing roadways to three lanes would allow cars to queue in the center ^{LANE} lane for all left-turn movements. The four-lane alternative is mentioned because if a four-lane roadway seems necessary in the long run, it would be cheaper to build it in one stage.

The service road would provide access to all of the businesses currently fronting Route 111 in the southeast quadrant and would allow all curb cuts on Route 111 to be closed at the time of road widening. The service road would be accessible from Route 27. While it may be desirable to have this road intersect with Route 111, this is not feasible given the existing wetlands and stream in the vicinity of the Foster & Foster Realty Company location on Massachusetts Avenue. The service road would end in a cul-de-sac and the ingress/egress point at Route 27 would be the sole means of access.

The existing gas stations adversely affect the operation of the intersection by presenting curb cuts immediately adjacent to the intersection. Additionally, they impede further expansion of the intersection. In order to implement the recommendations of this phase, the two gas stations would have to be removed or moved back from the existing lot lines.

- *Connect Mammoth Mart, Post Office and vacant Finast complexes with a covered walkway.*

A covered walkway or promenade between these three major buildings would greatly foster pedestrian flow and would add a dynamic new element to Kelley's Corner. The walkway, illustrated with the vest-pocket park in Exhibit 4, could be constructed of an open, trellis-like frame, similar to that in Boston's Waterfront Park. This form would allow light and air to circulate during the warm months. In inclement weather, canvas or plastic could be stretched over the frame to protect shoppers. Plantings could be placed along the outside and trained to climb the sides of the trellis frame. An alternate form could be a simple metal framing covered by a colorful canvas awning. The addition of color would significantly enhance the visual imagery of Kelley's Corner.

- *Provide new curb cut on Route 111 into Mammoth Mart parking lot at eastern end and designate for entrance only.*
- *Close private road to through traffic in conjunction with extension of vest pocket park.*

- *Provide internal circulation in tip of northeast quadrant proposed as a unified office district.*
- *Designate private road access to Route 111 as for exit only.*

These recommendations are aimed at facilitating the traffic flow through and within the northeast quadrant and anticipate the shift in focus to this quadrant of Kelley's Corner. The closing of the private road to through traffic will result in the division of the quadrant into two traffic districts (the Mammoth Mart complex and the vacant Finast complex) and will foster safe pedestrian circulation between the two complexes.

LAND USE

The purpose of the following land use recommendations is two-fold: first, to control and possibly reduce the intensity of land use at Kelley's Corner for traffic control purposes; and secondly, to confine higher intensity uses within the district to specific areas. This would reduce the number of points at which people and vehicles intersect and would integrate the area visually. An expanding regional population is likely to bring development pressures to Kelley's Corner as well as to other sections of Acton. It is hoped, however, that the suggestions made below will reasonably contain this development in accordance with the expressed wishes of Acton residents.

- *Develop the northeast quadrant of Kelley's Corner as a unified retail/office complex.*

High density retail establishments probably generate more traffic on a continuing basis throughout the day than any other use. Since retail uses are already heavily concentrated in this portion of Kelley's Corner, it seems natural that the area should remain the focal point for additional retail development in the future. By "containing" retail uses within a single quadrant, traffic patterns will be simplified. Most shoppers will be able to accomplish their errands without having to drive or walk to another

quadrant, and since more retail-oriented traffic will be directed to a single location, traffic problems can be more easily predicted and controlled.

An important consequence of this recommendation is that it places clear limits on the amount of future retail development that can occur at Kelley's Corner. Because the northeast quadrant is already highly developed, most future retail demand will be required to fill vacancies in existing building, such as the one formerly occupied by Finast. This, of course, would be a boost to the area, as this vacancy problem seems to have had the effect of sapping the vitality necessary to draw customers and attract good quality stores. The channeling of retail shoppers to the northeast quadrant rather than allowing them to disperse throughout the intersection might also generate a livelier sense of community than currently exists, a factor which might make shopping for many people a more pleasant experience.

The Town might wish to explore the possibility of attracting McDonald's to the site which will soon be vacated by the French restaurant. The benefits of such a move would be enormous. It would shift a high traffic-generator from an area where less activity is desired to a location where more intense activity would be much more appropriate. The ability of McDonald's to attract a high volume of customers might also enhance the viability of that portion of the northeast quadrant which has had the most vacancies.

Professional offices are the most appropriate use for the "tip" of the northeast quadrant. Acton residents do not appear to want further retail development at Kelley's Corner. In addition, office development would be a logical extension of that already present on adjacent parcels. If demand for office space is not sufficient to support an additional office complex, retail uses might then be considered as an alternative.

This future development can occur in one of two ways: either piecemeal, on each of the properties involved, or on one large "super-parcel" created by unifying the five smaller ones which contain two gas stations, two single-family homes and the Whitmac Furniture Store, which is soon to go out of business. The latter seems more desirable for several reasons. A larger parcel of land would give a developer more flexibility in arranging building locations, parking lots and road access, and would enable him to achieve greater economic efficiency as well as a more aesthetic result. The creation of a super-parcel would also give a developer more opportunities to preserve the valuable natural elements which remain on this portion of the northeast quadrant. Every effort should be made to save the large trees which still exist. This goal could best be realized by providing a developer with maximum latitude in the siting of his buildings.

Timing will be a crucial part of the land assembly process. This recommendation assumes that development pressures at Kelley's Corner will reach a point where existing uses at the tip of the northeast quadrant will be replaced by higher intensity uses. As the retail and service industries seek to locate in Acton, land values in Kelley's Corner will rise, current property owners will sell or rebuild to higher intensities. If all five land owners place their properties on the market at about the same time, it will not be difficult for a single buyer to purchase them and proceed with an integrated development plan. If this does not occur and if an interested developer is absent, development is likely to proceed on a piecemeal basis. Methods to encourage unification of this area into a single developable parcel will be discussed in the implementation section which follows.

- *Plan for future use of the southwest quadrant for non-commercial purposes.*

The K-Mart and McDonald's are high traffic generators which violate the recommendation of concentrating retail uses in a single location. The Town might encourage McDonald's to relocate to one of the vacant stores in the northeast quadrant. K-Mart might also be persuaded to relocate to the

now-empty space once occupied by Finast. If this fails, plans should be made for the reuse or replacement of the building leased by K-Mart. The subsequent use should be a non-commercial one which does not generate a large amount of traffic. In addition to reducing the amount of traffic in this portion of Kelley's Corner, a non-commercial use would be more compatible with adjacent residential and public school uses on Massachusetts Avenue. Reuse in the form of a youth or teen center, community or crafts center, town museum or historical center, elderly or low-density multi-family housing would meet the objectives of the land use recommendations. The area would still remain an interesting and integral part of the community. Similarly, the McDonald's building could be converted into a Town information center or one of the uses described above. The Town might also consider acquiring and demolishing this building in order to create a small public park.

Because K-Mart and McDonald's will probably remain in their present locations for some time to come, it is more likely that development or reuse opportunities in this quadrant will occur on the property fronting on Route 111. This land is now owned and used by an oil company and consists of a building and adjacent parking lot. If the present owner eventually decides to sell, one possible reuse which is consistent with the other recommendations for the quadrant would be a community center for the elderly. This center might offer special programs or informal activities of interest to all elderly residents in the Town of Acton, but especially to those who live nearby. An alternative reuse might be school-related, such as an arts or crafts center.

- *Continue to maintain low-density uses along the northwest portion of Main Street.*

Development pressures at Kelley's Corner will probably cause some or all of the owners of the single-family homes located on the northwest portion of Main Street to sell their properties. New land uses

will inevitably generate more traffic and will be of higher density than the present uses. In order to ensure consistency with prior recommendations, the area should remain available for housing. Elderly housing would be especially appropriate, as it generates less traffic than multi-family housing and would provide older citizens with excellent access to shopping facilities and professional offices. If a community center is developed on the K-Mart property, elderly residents will be in an especially good position to avail themselves of the programs offered by such a center. An alternative to elderly housing would be low-density, multi-family housing, for the same reasons. Additionally, proximity to the public schools would make low-density, multi-family housing in this area especially attractive for small families with one or two young children.

One problem with these suggested uses as well as other more intensive use in this location is the capacity of the soils to support such development. Accordingly, studies should be undertaken as soon as possible to determine exactly how "developable" these properties are, and whether or not a Town-owned package sewage plant might be an appropriate solution. The outcome of the study could have a major impact on future planning.

If housing demand is not sufficient to support the foregoing recommendations, a third reuse alternative would be office development. This would generate more traffic than low-density housing but not as much as many retail uses. If office development is allowed to occur it should be of low density. If offices are also built on the tip of the Northeast quadrant, Kelley's Corner will be an important office center within the town. This prospect offers certain advantages. While office development generally yields somewhat less in tax revenues than retail development, it costs the town much less in services than does residential use. Thus, the development of offices as an important element within Kelley's Corner represents a compromise between high traffic-generating, high tax-yielding retail business and lower-traffic-generating, lower tax-yielding residential development.

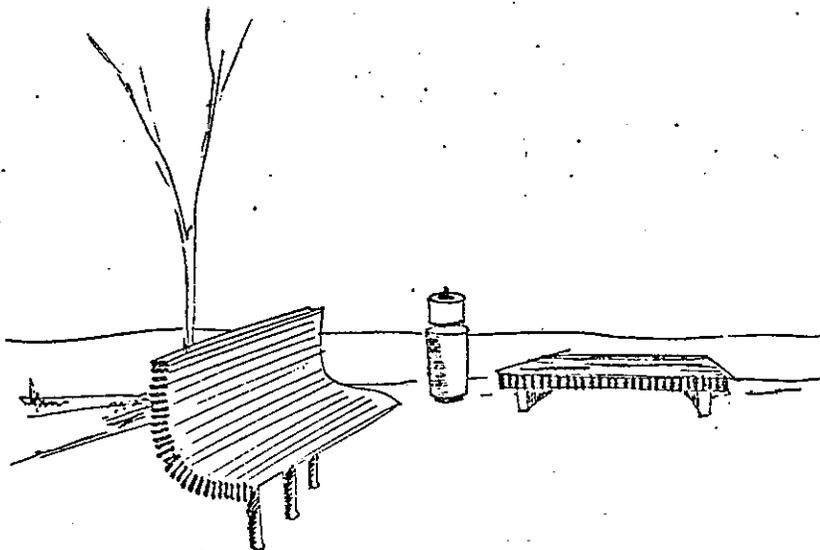
- *Encourage low-density automobile-oriented retail and service uses along the southeast portion of Massachusetts Avenue.*

Fortunately, this area has attracted low-density commercial uses which are relatively well-integrated with their natural settings. There appears to be little room for new development except in the easternmost portion of the area near Route 2. Should additional development take place, it should consist only of low-density uses. Similarly, if present establishments move out, care should be taken to ensure that they will not be replaced by the type of high traffic-generating retail business that is recommended for the northeast quadrant.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

- *Develop land surrounding historic home as a public park.*

The Town should, in conjunction with the restoration of the historic home on Route 27, develop the surrounding land as a public park. The park could possibly be designed along a historical theme, perhaps with a period herb garden adjacent to the house. It should contain proper outdoor seating and tables, lighting and access to the schools on Route 111.



- *Extend vest pocket park by cutting off private road to through traffic.*

This minor extension of the vest pocket park would connect the proposed office district in the tip of the quadrant to the park and the shopping district, providing additional opportunities for safe pedestrian circulation within the quadrant. Expansion of the vest pocket park would also permit the provision of a "tot lot", an area where parents could leave their children to play while they visit the stores and offices of Kelley's Corner. The tot lot need contain only one piece of play equipment suitable for climbing or swinging, and possibly a small sand box. Seating should be available for parents and other spectators, and a drinking fountain would also be appropriate in this location.

AESTHETICS

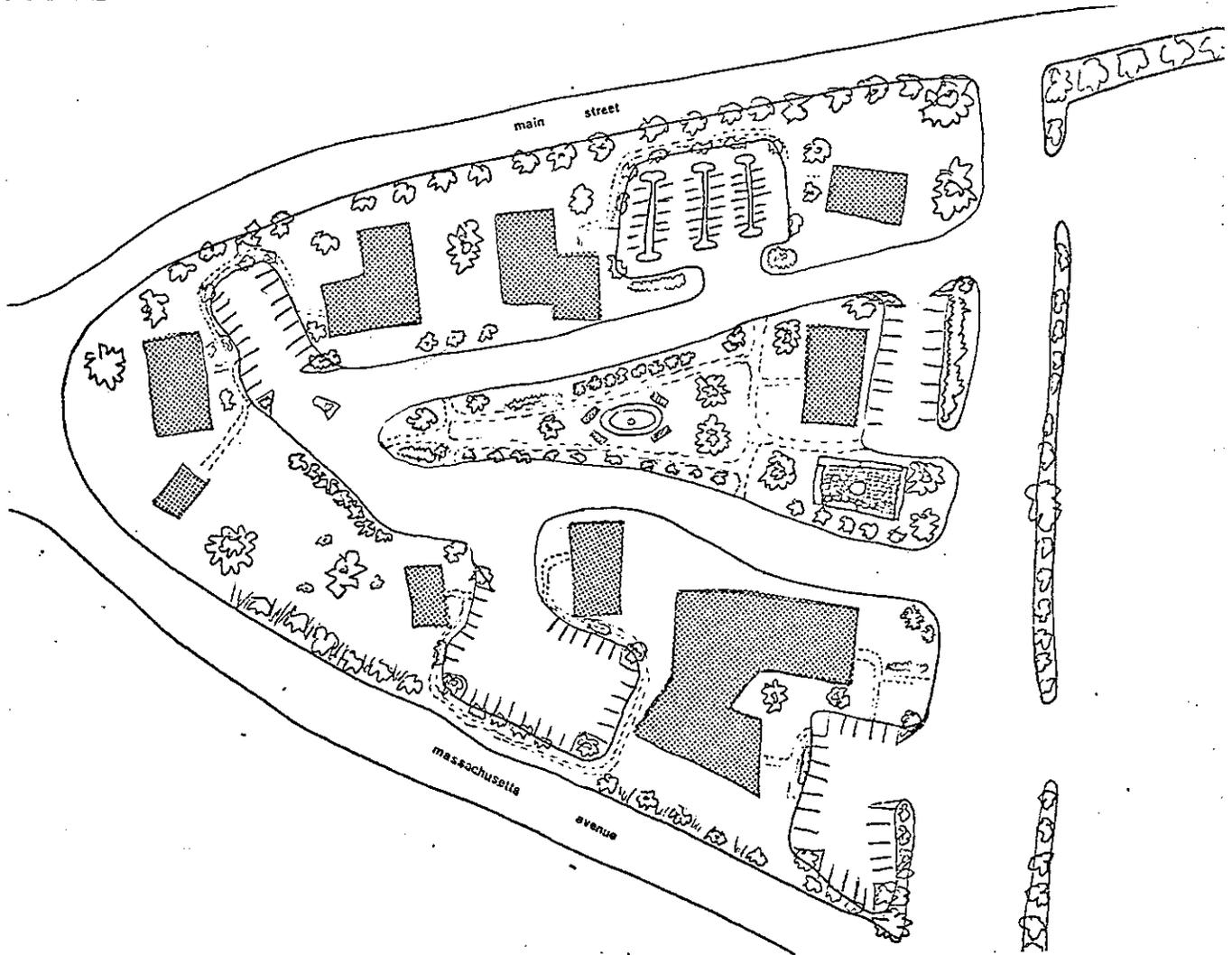
- *Landscape site of gas station on southeast corner of intersection (contingent upon the removal of the station during road construction).*

Removal of this gas station for intersection improvements would leave a small, irregularly-shaped parcel of land. This parcel could be attractively landscaped to bring a sense of scale, proportion and identity to the widened intersection.

- *Integrate landscaping into tip of northeast quadrant to be developed as a unified office complex.*

Providing an internal circulation network in the tip of the northeast quadrant would provide numerous landscaping opportunities. Parking spaces could be functionally integrated into the landscape by selective groupings of trees and shrubs, as illustrated in Exhibit 5. Outdoor seating and other amenities would also facilitate the social contact and interaction of the office workers.

Exhibit 5
Landscaped Office Park
in
Northeast Quadrant

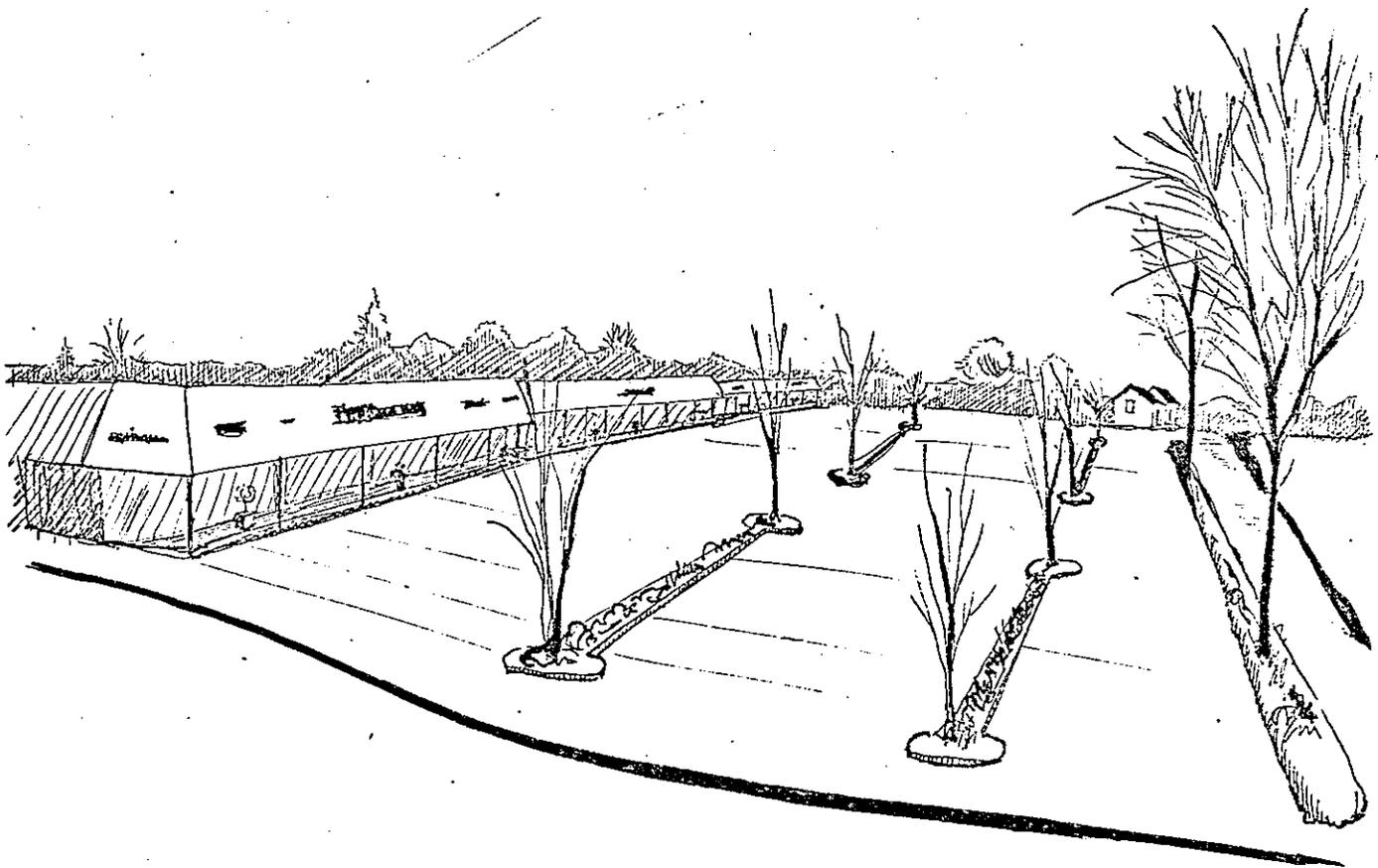


- Landscape interior of all parking lots.
- Install pedestrian lighting of suitable scale along major pedestrian paths within Kelley's Corner.

The interior of all parking facilities within Kelley's Corner should become the focus of a major landscaping effort. In addition to the parking lot screening described in Phase I, plantings should be placed within parking islands, as illustrated in Exhibit 6. Walkways within parking lots should be clearly identified and marked. Planting configurations and species should differ from lot to lot to avoid repetitive designs.

Exhibit 6

Landscaped Mammoth Mart Parking Lot



NOTES

- 1 Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton, Engineers and Architects, Areawide TOPICS Plan: Acton, Massachusetts (Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton, 1975).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Developed through a program established by the Commonwealth to alleviate congestion at some of the worst intersections in Massachusetts.
- 5 Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton, op.cit.

CHAPTER IV
IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER IV
IMPLEMENTATION

A. CIRCULATION

1. Phase 1A. Interim Steps

The low-cost, non-construction means of alleviating some of the traffic and congestion at Kelley's Corner in this phase are interim measures which can be accomplished within the next few months. The Town could hire a traffic controller, who could well be a semi-retired senior citizen living in the area. The Police Chief of Acton could also ask the District Officer of the State Department of Public Works to implement the recommendations regarding traffic signs and pavement markings. The District Office would forward the request along with its recommendation to the Boston Office of the Department, which authorizes all changes in highway signs and pavement markings. Upon approval, the local District Office would be responsible for implementing the requested actions.

2. Phase 1B. Short-Range Improvements

The Department of Public Works Safety Plan for Kelley's Corner is approximately one-quarter completed. The Commonwealth has the responsibility for administering, supervising and (jointly with the Federal government) funding this project. In February 1977 the Town will be contacted by the Department of Public Works for a public hearing on this plan. The Department is anxious to hear local comments and this would be an excellent opportunity for Town residents to voice their concerns and suggestions for improving the traffic problem at Kelley's Corner, using the traffic recommendations presented in this Study as guidelines. If all changes are incorporated soon, construction could begin as early as the Spring of 1978.

The TOPICS program indicated the need for intersection improvements on Prospect Street. The Town will need to prepare design drawings for these improvements to convince the State to fund them.

Improvements to the private road are the responsibility of its current owner. Acton may employ a range of incentives to encourage these improvements. If this fails, Acton could take the road by eminent domain and implement the necessary improvements. In fact, the owner may be quite willing to deed the property to the Town for a nominal consideration.

3. Phase II. Long-Range Improvements

Improvement of numbered highways is the responsibility of the Commonwealth. If the construction of improvements specified in the Safety Plan proves insufficient, the Town should petition the state to widen Routes 27 and 111. During this construction, utility wires could be put underground and sidewalks provided along the entire length of new highway. Construction by the Town of the service road to serve the businesses along Route 111 would be coordinated with the widening of Route 111.

In conjunction with the enlargement of the park near the Post Office (and the closing of the private road to through traffic), a new entrance to the Mammoth Mart parking lot should be constructed by the owner.

B. LAND USE, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND AESTHETICS

The Town must take the lead in implementing many of the recommendations regarding land use, social interaction and aesthetics. The primary mechanism for implementing many of these recommendations will be legislation establishing a special zoning district for Kelley's Corner. The changes in the zoning by-law outlined below incorporate several of the new powers granted to local communities under Chapter 808, An Act Further Regulating the Zoning Enabling Act. For instance, a grant of power enabling

local communities to provide bonuses to developers in exchange for provisions of public amenities is extensively developed below. As the zoning by-law of Acton must be brought into conformity with Chapter 808 by June 30, 1978, the comprehensive review of the by-law necessitated by this requirement affords an opportunity to consider seriously the merits of the zoning amendment outlined below.

But a zoning mechanism is not the only requirement for implementing these recommendations. Other areas need exploring by the Town. These are outlined below as well.

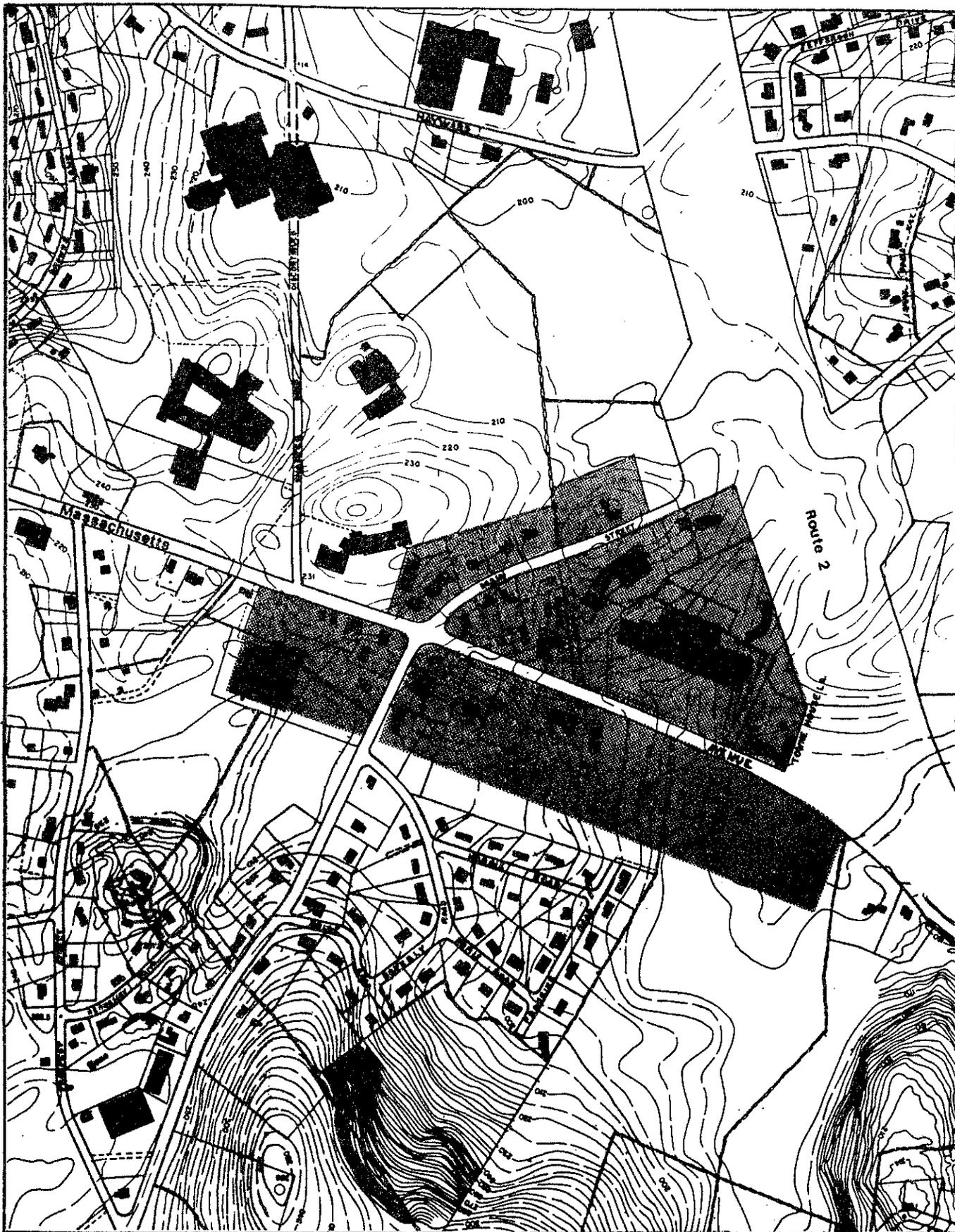
1. Create a special zoning district in Kelley's Corner.

Kelley's Corner is currently zoned General Business, but this designation has resulted in several problems. First, the boundaries of the present district do not include all of the properties which are conceptually and functionally part of Kelley's Corner. Secondly, several uses are now permitted in the district which are not included among the uses proposed in the recommended development plan. Finally, each of the uses allowed within the current district (with the exception of those which require a special permit) can locate anywhere within it. This is inconsistent with the recommendation of allowing specific uses only in certain portions of Kelley's Corner.

In order to resolve these problems, a zoning by-law amendment establishing a special zoning district is therefore recommended to replace the existing district. This new district might be designated the "Kelley's Corner Business District", consisting of the following elements:

- a. District Boundaries

District boundaries, shown in Map VI, would include all property currently designated "General Business" as well as the five parcels located on the northwest side of Main Street now designated "Residential 2". These five parcels consist of two single-family homes, an apartment complex, a real estate office and the historic building, which is soon to be restored.



MAP VI - KELLEY'S CORNER BUSINESS DISTRICT

KELLEY'S CORNER WORKSHOP

ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

JANUARY 1977



0 400'

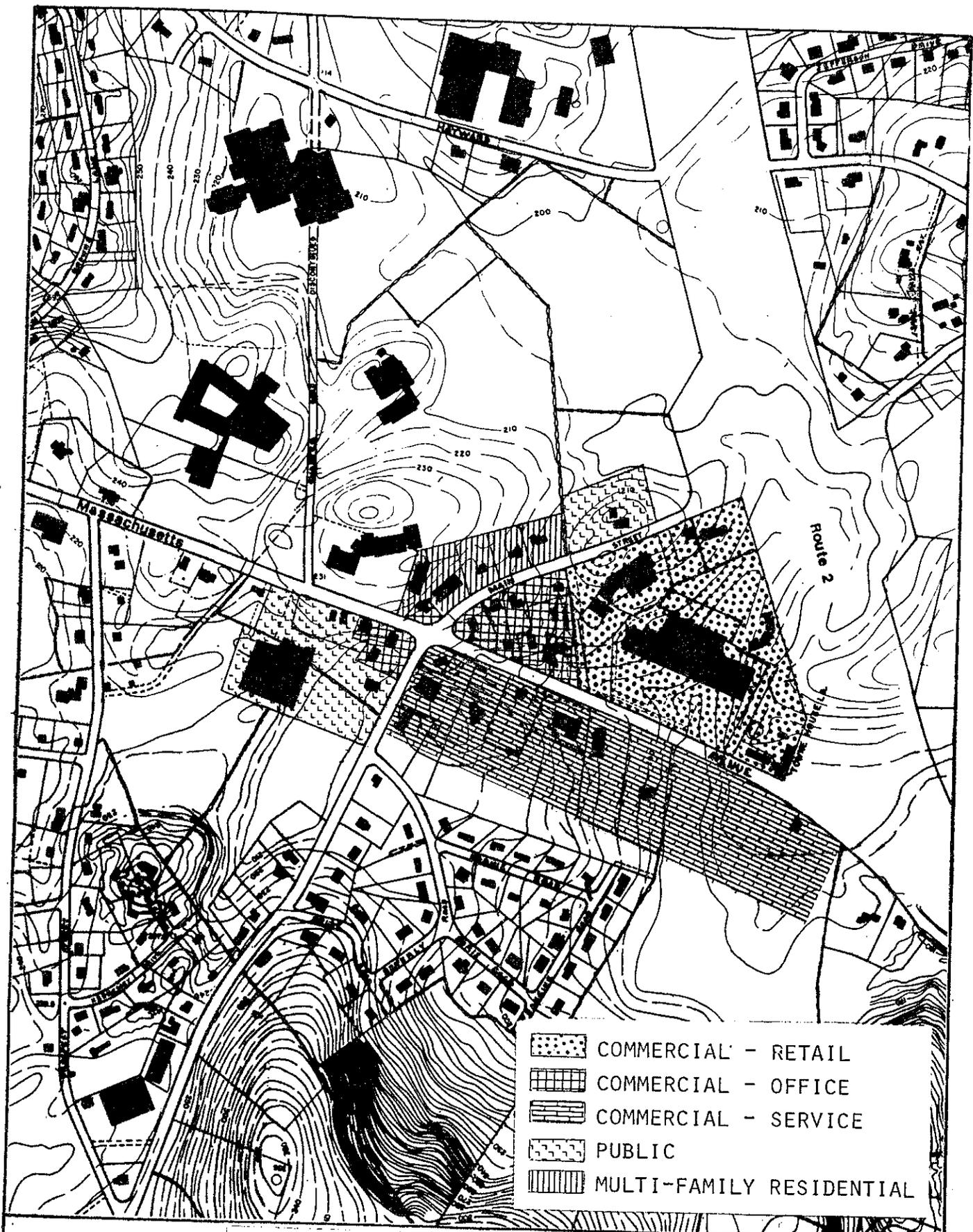
These five parcels are of lower density than, and seem to be set apart from, most other properties at Kelley's Corner because of their residential character. However, their location directly across from the highly developed northeast quadrant and the strong likelihood that intensified use will generate increased traffic makes them appropriate objects for special control.

b. Permitted Uses

Permitted uses would be limited to those listed below. A concept map detailing the proposed land uses and their interrelationships is presented in Map VII. As noted in an earlier chapter of this Report, strict limitations regarding the type of future development at Kelley's Corner would control the traffic problem and insure a harmonious visual and functional relationship among properties within the Study Area. However, instead of listing uses permitted within the district as a whole, it is proposed that the district be subdivided, as shown in Map VIII, into five sub-areas corresponding largely to the four quadrants formed by the intersection of Routes 27 and 111. Certain uses would be permitted as of right within each sub-area and certain other uses would only be permitted upon application to and approval by the special permit granting authority. The sub-areas and their suggested uses might be as follows:

Sub-area 1:

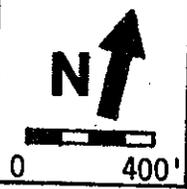
- Retail business;
- Service shop, such as a barber shop, beauty shop or dry cleaning pick-up establishment;
- Shop for the manufacture on the premises of products to be sold on the premises to the consumer, such as leather goods, clothing, food or jewelry;
- Restaurant where food and beverages are consumed indoors, or if consumed outdoors, are consumed on an adjacent patio;
- Bank, financial, business or professional office;
- Combinations of any of the above in any one building.

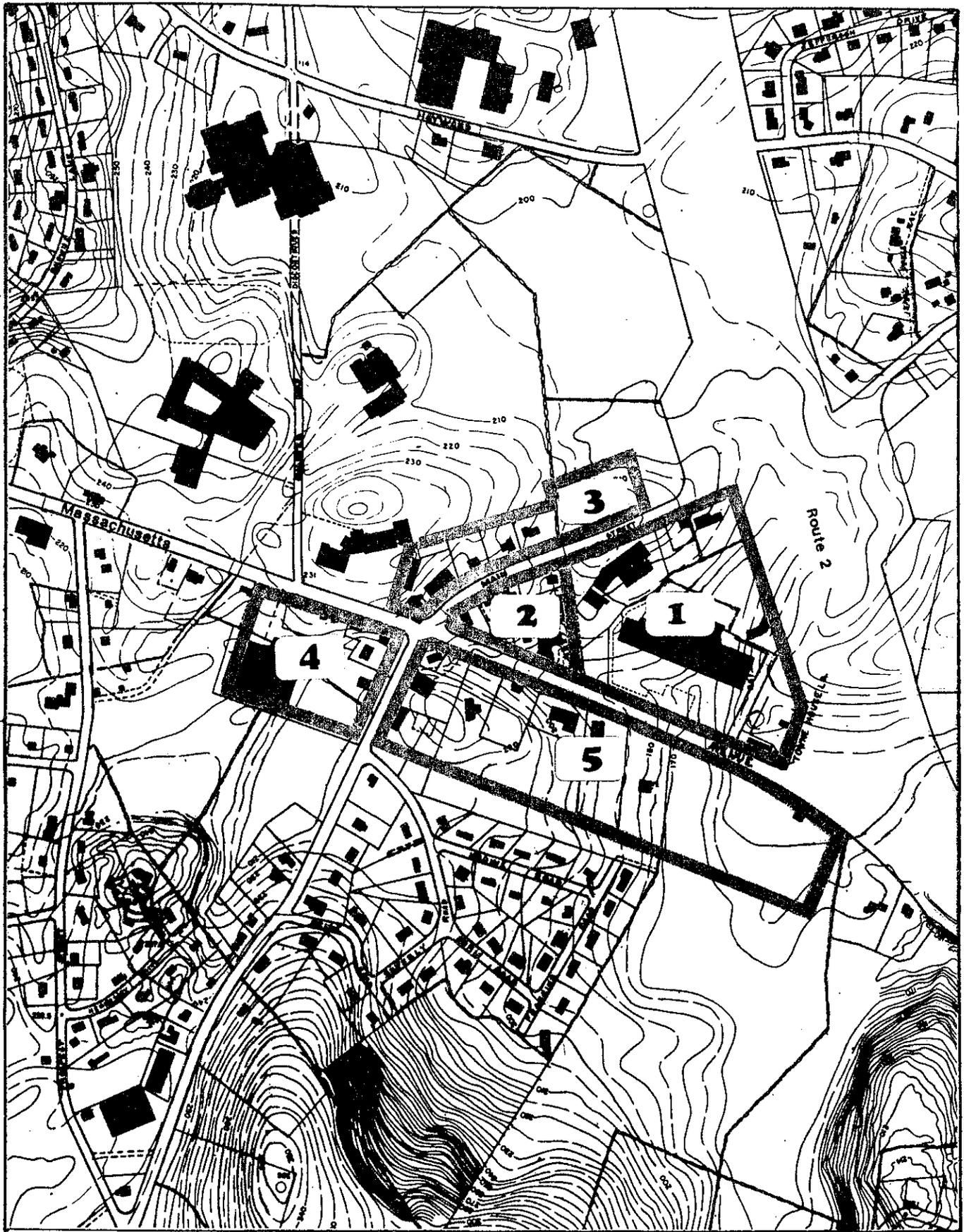


-  COMMERCIAL - RETAIL
-  COMMERCIAL - OFFICE
-  COMMERCIAL - SERVICE
-  PUBLIC
-  MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

MAP VII - PROPOSED LAND USE

KELLEY'S CORNER WORKSHOP	ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS
HARVARD UNIVERSITY	GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING	JANUARY 1977





MAP VIII - SUB-AREAS OF KELLEY'S CORNER BUSINESS DISTRICT

KELLEY'S CORNER WORKSHOP

ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

JANUARY 1977



Sub-area 2:

- Bank, financial, business or professional office;
- The following uses, by special permit from the Board of Appeals, if adjudged non-detrimental to the neighborhood:
 - Retail business;
 - Service shop, such as a barber shop, beauty shop or dry cleaning pick-up establishment;
 - Shop for the manufacture on the premises of products to be sold on the premises to the consumer, such as leather goods, clothing, food or jewelry;
 - Restaurant where food and beverages are consumed indoors, or if consumed outdoors, are consumed on an adjacent patio;
 - Combinations of any of the above in any one building.

Sub-area 3:

- Residences, apartments and multi-family dwelling units;
- Conservation or municipal Park;
- The following use, by special permit from the Board of Appeals, if adjudged non-detrimental to the neighborhood.
 - Bank, financial, business or professional office.

Sub-area 4:

- Residences, apartments and multi-family dwelling units;
- Conservation or municipal Park;
- Library;
- Municipal building;

Sub-area 5:

- Bank, financial, business or professional office;
- Conservation or municipal park;
- The following uses, by special permit from the Board of Appeals, if adjudged non-detrimental to the neighborhood:
 - Retail business;
 - Service shop;
 - Shop for the manufacture on the premises of products to be sold on the premises to the consumer.

Section VI,B.3.b. of the Town zoning by-law states that "in acting upon special permits the Board (of Appeals) shall consider the general intent of the Comprehensive Town Plan and may accordingly impose such conditions and safeguards as are deemed necessary." A clause of similar wording and intent referencing this Report and concept map, Map VII, should accompany the designation of a Kelley's Corner Business District. Prospective developers and existing land-owners in Kelley's Corner will then have a public document to guide their individual land use decisions, and the special permit granting authority will have guidelines to follow when assessing applications for special permits.

c. District Regulations

Many of the regulations under the present zoning of General Business can be retained in the Kelley's Corner Business District. However, this Study has revealed the need for additional regulations, particularly in the areas of aesthetics and parking. Although presented here as regulations of the special zoning district, the Town could also apply these regulations to future zoning districts which parallel the uses found at Kelley's Corner.

- i. Parking plans for new development may take into consideration excess parking currently in the District.

The excess parking which exists throughout the District, could be transferred and used to satisfy the parking requirements of the off-street parking formula. Implementation of the recommendations regarding pedestrian circulation and land use within the District will reduce the number of auto trips within the area and decrease the need for further parking. The Planning Board should record the amount of excess space and gauge permissible reductions in the parking requirements for new development. The location of the excess parking spaces within the District in relation to the new development must also be considered. For example, excess parking in the K-Mart lot will not service a new development occurring on a parcel near the Route 2-Route 111 intersection. This regulation may eliminate the need to destroy additional natural ground cover in the District to provide parking.

- ii. Prohibit the provision of parking in excess of the amount required by the off-street parking formula.

This regulation is intended to stop the proliferation of excessive amounts of parking in the District. A case in point is the new office building to be built behind the Mammoth Mart complex. A total of sixty-eight parking spaces are required; eighty-three are being provided. Excess parking is the major cause of the visual unattractiveness of the area. The acres of asphalt and paucity of natural elements affront the senses of the thousands of drivers who pass through Kelley's Corner daily. Kelley's Corner is the only part of Acton many people see. It therefore creates a negative image of the Town as a whole. This image is at odds with the one embraced by Acton residents, who see their Town as "semi-rural" and "undeveloped".

- iii. Increase landscaping requirements in the parking facilities of new development.

While the District will not witness additional development the size of a Mammoth Mart or K-Mart with their corresponding acres of parking facilities, new development and redevelopment will occur in Kelley's Corner. By requiring the screening of parking facilities from the road and by requiring parking to be provided in landscaped bays or clusters of not more than, say, ten spaces, the visual impact of new development can be softened. With landscaping requirements, new development will very probably enhance the environment of Kelley's Corner, preserving the rural atmosphere of Acton frequently referred to by the residents of Acton.

- iv. Parking lots to be marked adequately for both vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

The larger parking lots of Kelley's Corner presently lack suitable delineation of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow. This is both a

serious irritant and a safety problem for the shoppers in Kelley's Corner. New parking lots should provide well-marked and accessible crosswalks and paths for pedestrians.

- v. Require provision of bicycle racks for certain uses.

Kelley's Corner provides few bicycle racks for the students of all ages that frequent the area. Depending upon the nature of the development, bicycle racks should be required of new development. For instance, an office building containing professional offices need not necessarily be required to provide bicycle racks, whereas a bakery or drug store should be.

d. Bonuses and Incentives

In order to implement the recommendations for Kelley's Corner contained in this Study, the Town should adopt a number of incentives or bonuses appropriate to the needs and desires of both the merchants of the Business District and the Town. The incentives presented below can be utilized to encourage both the changes in usage advocated by the proposed land use concept plan and the provision of certain amenities and facilities urged in the circulation, aesthetics and social interaction sections. A wide variety of bonuses and incentives is presented to illustrate the options open to the Town. Certain incentives may be more appropriate to the Town and these are better known and judged at the local level.

The various incentive mechanisms require differing degrees of participation by the Town. For example, decreased parking requirements or increased lot coverage could automatically be granted once the developer has fulfilled detailed requirements specified in the by-law. On the other hand, property tax incentives and increased building heights are best handled under the special permit process. Under this procedure, the Town would examine and assess the merits of the particular bonus with respect to the change requested. Conditions could be placed on the special permit to ensure that the changes conform to the goals contained in this Report.

i. Property Tax Incentives

The Town can, through prudent use of its property taxing powers, encourage local retailers and professionals to conform to the proposed land use plan. For example, tax abatement proposals might be arranged in order to lure gasoline stations away from the intersection of Routes 111 and 27 to the parcels along Route 111 recommended for automobile-oriented retail services.

This same device could be employed to encourage merchants to provide the landscaping and other amenities proposed in this Report.

Tax incentives could take the following forms:

(1) Reducing the property tax assessment by means of a credit or deduction for each amenity provided. This could be determined by a schedule established by the Planning Board.

(2) Allowing the property tax assessor to exclude from his assessment, for a specified period of time, any increase in property value due to any improvements which further the goals set forth in this Report. The Planning Board could devise a system of registration for such qualifying improvements.

(3) Entering into an agreement with a future merchant to waive property taxes for a given length of time in order to implement the land use recommendations in this Report. The Planning Board would determine the length of waiver for a particular use.

(4) Allowing tax incentives to be given to groups. If, for example, the merchants and land-owners within the Business District coordinate store and facade design, holiday decorations, landscaping, sign graphics, etc., a lowered rate of assessment could be offered for the entire District.

ii. Decreased Parking Requirements

A new development which furthers the goals of this Report could be permitted to provide fewer than the required number of parking spaces. For instance, a developer who exceeds the landscaping requirements promulgated by the Planning Board for the District or a merchant who provides outdoor seating could be granted a reduction in the parking requirement.

iii. Exchange of Services

The Town could exchange a number of municipal services for the provision of landscaping or other amenities. This could also be the basis for ensuring changes required by the proposed land use plan. Such services might include a given number of days of snow removal, maintenance of landscaped areas, planting services or garbage removal. These transfers would be subject to approval by the Planning Board.

iv. Increased Building Height

As the Kelley's Corner Business District does not contain within it much developable land, the Town may consider extending the thirty-six foot height restriction which is currently enforced in the General Business District. The locations for these taller buildings in the District and the extent of the height increase could be determined by the Planning Board. Any potentially adverse impact could be offset by requirements for additional landscaping, building orientation and so forth.

v. Zero Lot Lines for Side and Rear Yards

While not applicable to the entire District, this incentive could be used selectively to connect buildings and to fully develop all vacant land. Such an incentive would permit a connection between the Post Office and vacant Finast complex. This incentive should be handled under the special permit process in order to ensure access of fire and police vehicles to the rear of such buildings.

vi. Increased Lot Coverage

In exchange for the provision of amenities, the Town could allow a structure to be built on a greater portion of a lot than is presently allowed.

e. Special Permit Granting Authority

Under the powers granted in Chapter 808, it is recommended that the Planning Board be designated as the special permit granting authority for matters concerning the Kelley's Corner Business District. As the Planning Board sponsored this Study and maintained close contact with the Study Team throughout its term, it is familiar with the planning process followed by this Study Team. Developers frequently contact and consult the Planning Board before undertaking many major developments, and dealing with one public agency would facilitate the site approval process. The Planning Board maintains close working relationships with several Town departments and these relationships would contribute considerably to implementing and executing the functions inherent in this Report.

2. Immediate negotiation with the owners of the K-Mart property, the oil company property and the five properties located on the tip of the northeast quadrant in order to obtain the right of first refusal with respect to the future sale of these properties.

Rights of first refusal would provide the Town with an opportunity to acquire the properties at the price offered by a future buyer. In the case of the K-Mart and oil company properties, this would be desirable in order to implement some of the suggested public reuses discussed in an earlier chapter. Acquisition of the other properties, a form of "landbanking", might aid future public development by bringing about the formation of a "super-parcel" that could later be resold by the Town to an interested developer. During the period between the first and last acquisition, the buildings currently located on the properties might be leased temporarily in order to defray carrying costs. It is anticipated that the eventual sale

of the properties would recapture in full both the acquisition costs and the carrying costs in addition to whatever gain in market value has occurred during the period.

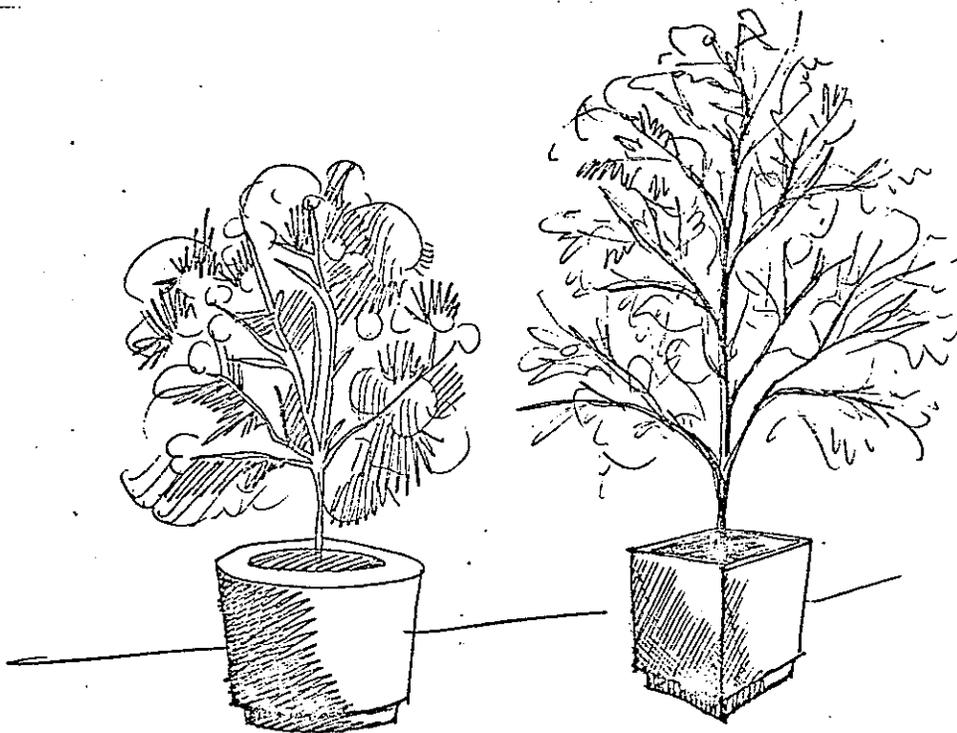
3. Discussion with the Housing Authority to determine the need for elderly housing in Acton as well as the desirability and feasibility of the proposed sites in the northwest and southwest quadrants for such housing in the future.
4. A detailed soils study to determine soil capacity in the northwest quadrant and the need for a town-owned sewage treatment package plant.
5. Exploration of the desirability and feasibility of the public uses recommended for the southwest quadrant.

C. THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The businessmen and landowners in Kelley's Corner have tremendous influence over the impact of this Study. In the development and incorporation of the various bonus provisions, it is imperative that this group be consulted and actively engaged in the planning process. As both businessmen and landowners, this group is most desirous of arriving at a successful and winning formula for Kelley's Corner.

This Study Team has not ignored the role of the businessmen in Kelley's Corner. It is highly recommended that a Kelley's Corner Business Association be formed, consisting of the businessmen in Kelley's Corner. This Association would be able to better coordinate activities among its members as well as activities with the Planning Board and other Town agencies. A Business Association would be a means whereby individual property owners in the Kelley's Corner Business District could effectively coordinate store and facade design, graphic styles and presentation, holiday decorations, landscaping and pedestrian networks. Dues could be assessed with the proceeds utilized to provide landscaping, outdoor seating, etc. The Association, in conjunction with an Acton garden club, could sponsor a landscaping contest, with annual awards given to the Kelley's Corner business which has contributed most to upgrading the visual image of Kelley's Corner.

The Town itself can do much to foster public awareness and interest in efforts to upgrade Kelley's Corner. The Town, in conjunction with organizations such as the Acton Business and Professional Association, the various garden clubs, fraternal organizations, youth groups and so forth, could adopt a "Plant-a-Tree" or other improvement program which would solicit donations of material and labor to provide the amenities proposed for Kelley's Corner.



The Town could annually cite and award businessmen or landowners who make outstanding contributions to the Kelley's Corner Business District. The interest of Acton residents in Kelley's Corner shown in the turnout for the public meeting in early January can be tapped in many ways, providing a source of innovation and initiative.

The many banks in the Kelley's Corner Business District could become catalysts in the implementation of these recommendations. By providing seed money in the form of donations or low-cost loans, these banks can make a significant contribution to the area.

CHAPTER V

COSTS

CHAPTER V

COSTS

Estimates of the costs of Phases I and II are presented in Table 3 below. The costs have been allocated between the Town of Acton, other government units and the private sector.

The bulk of the Town expenditures as presented are utilized to acquire several properties in the area at some time in the future. As some of these properties will continue to be leased in the market during the period of ownership by the Town, the figure presented below is not a true figure. It is anticipated that the Town will recoup any investment in property ownership at the time of sale. Expenditures to acquire the K-Mart Kelley's Corner plan should not be directly allocated to the entire community as the benefits of such a center will be shared by the entire community.

The Town may fund its share of the cost from general revenues or from federal revenue sharing funds. It is not recommended, however, that a tax surcharge be placed on the properties within Kelley's Corner immediately as this may act as a negative incentive to dampen efforts of businessmen and landowners to upgrade their properties. The public investment in the area will very probably increase land values and the investment may well be recouped at some time in the near future from higher property taxes.

TABLE 3
 Estimated Costs of Recommendations
 Acton, Massachusetts

	<u>Public</u>		<u>Private</u>
	<u>Acton</u>	<u>Other</u>	
<u>Phase I</u>			
Circulation	\$ 9,000	\$198,000	\$ 1,400
Social Interaction	60,000	0	0
Aesthetics	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>90,000</u>
	\$ 69,000	\$198,000	\$ 91,400 ²
<u>Phase II</u>			
Circulation	\$ 269,000	\$310,000	\$ 40,000
Land Use	1,360,000 ¹	0	0
Social Interaction	538,000	0	0
Aesthetics	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>64,000</u>
	\$2,167,000	\$310,000	\$104,000 ²

¹ Estimated fair market value of the K-Mart and oil company properties in the southwest quadrant and the five properties in the tip of the northeast quadrant.

² Town may assume a portion of these costs depending upon the nature of the bonuses extended.

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase I

CIRCULATION

1A. Interim Steps

Vehicular

- Increase carpooling efforts of local employers.
- Install directional signs from Maynard to Route 2 via School Street and Piper Road.
- Install directional signs from South Acton to West Acton, and from West Acton to South Acton via Prospect Street.
- Prohibit left turn from Route 27 North onto Route 111 West during rush hours.
- Prohibit left turn from Route 111 West onto private road in north-east quadrant.
- Provide traffic controller at intersection during rush hours.
- Repaint pavement markings at intersection.
- Control traffic circulation in parking lots with large directional arrows and traffic control signs.
- Delineate ingress-egress to/from parking lots with entrance-exit signs.

Pedestrian

- Delineate pedestrian paths and crosswalks in parking lots with directional arrows and appropriate signs.

1B. Short-Range Improvements

Vehicular

- Implement Department of Public Works Safety Plan.
 - A. Widen Routes 27 and 111 at intersection.
 - 1. Provide two full lanes on Route 111 westbound approaching intersection.

2. Provide a minimum 16-foot width on remaining entrances to intersection.
- B. Increase number of traffic signals to six.
 - C. Provide rush hour lead time for left turns from Route 111 West to Route 27 South.
- Increase traffic controls and improve delineation of travel paths at the intersection of Prospect Street and Route 27 and at the intersection of Prospect Street and Route 111.
 - Remove prohibition of left turn from Route 27 North onto Route 111 West.

Pedestrian

- Implement Department of Public Works Safety Plan.
 - A. Install demand-responsive pedestrian signals at intersection.
 - B. Replace existing sidewalks.
 - C. Install wheelchair ramps.
- Provide sidewalks along entire project.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

- Provide vest-pocket park near Post Office.

AESTHETICS

- Screen parking lots from through traffic.
- Control uniformity and simplicity of traffic circulation markings and signs in parking lots.
- Encourage use of color in Kelley's Corner.

PHASE II

CIRCULATION

Vehicular

- Widen Routes 27 (from Route 2 to Prospect Street) and 111 (from Route 2 to vicinity of Prospect Street) to three, possibly four lanes based on future need.
- Provide service road to businesses in southeast quadrant across the back of these properties.

- Remove/relocate gas stations from northeast and southeast quadrants.
- Construct right hand turn lane through southeast quadrant at intersection.
- Improve right-turning radius in northeast quadrant.
- Provide new curb cut on Route 111 into Mammoth Mart parking lot at eastern end and designate for entrance only.
- Close private road to through traffic in conjunction with extension of vest-pocket park.
- Provide internal circulation in tip of northeast quadrant proposed as a unified office district.
- Designate private road access to Route 111 as for exit only.

Pedestrian

- Install sidewalks in construction areas.
- Connect Mammoth Mart, Post Office and vacant Finast complexes with a covered walkway.

LAND USE

- Develop the northeast quadrant of Kelley's Corner as a unified retail/office complex.
 - A. Limit future retail expansion at Kelley's Corner to the northeast quadrant.
 - B. Attract the McDonald's Restaurant to the vacant Finast shopping complex.
 - C. Anticipate and plan for the possible unification of the five contiguous parcels closest to the intersection in order to provide space for future expansion of office uses.
- Plan for future use of the southwest quadrant for non-commercial purposes.
- Continue to maintain low-density uses along the northwest portion of Main Street.
- Encourage low-density automobile-oriented retail and service uses along the southeast portion of Massachusetts Avenue.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

- Develop land surrounding historic home as a public park.
- Extend vest pocket park by cutting off private road to through traffic.

AESTHETICS

- Landscape site of gas station on southeast quadrant (contingent upon removal of the station during road construction).
- Integrate landscaping in tip of northeast quadrant to be developed as a unified office complex.
- Landscape interior of all parking lots.
- Install pedestrian lighting of suitable scale along major pedestrian paths within Kelley's Corner.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

A Market Study Commercial Development in Acton

One of the major concerns which Acton officials expressed to the Study Team was the pattern of commercial development at Kelley's Corner. Gas stations, discount stores and a fast-food restaurant have sprung up around the intersection in a rather haphazard fashion. The activity these developments generate has resulted in circulation problems for both drivers and pedestrians, and the appearance of these retail establishments is often unattractive and not in keeping with the semi-rural character of the rest of the Town.

Other portions of this Study attempt to deal with the problems of Kelley's Corner in 1977. The Study Team hopes that in addition to reacting to those problems in a timely and cost-effective manner, the Town may anticipate the problems and developments it will confront ten or twenty years hence.

Acton's policy-makers can inhibit, encourage or control commercial activity within the Town. This market study attempts to describe the kinds of development pressures likely to confront the Town in the foreseeable future.

A. Shopping Center Categories

There are three major categories of shopping centers. These centers are typed both by the kinds of stores they contain and by the size of the center. One author makes these distinctions:

The Neighborhood Center provides for the sale of daily living needs; i.e., "convenient goods", such as foods, drugs, hardware, and personal services. A supermarket is the principal tenant in this type of center, which is usually located on a site of from four to ten acres.

The Community Center provides, in addition to "convenient goods", a wider range of facilities for the sale of "shopping goods", such as apparel and furniture, and may include banking, professional services, and recreational facilities. A junior department store or variety store is the principal tenant in this type of center, which is usually located on a site of from ten to thirty acres.

The Regional Center provides a variety and depth of "shopping goods" comparable to a central business district, including general merchandise, apparel, and home furnishings, as well as a variety of services, and may include recreational facilities. At least one major department store of generally not less than 100,000 square feet is the principal tenant in this type of center, which is usually located on a site of 30 acres or more.¹

If we treat all the retail businesses found in the vicinity of Kelley's Corner as a disjointed center of sorts, it is clear that this center could be classified as a community center. Its distinguishing characteristics include discount or variety stores, banking and professional services and recreational facilities. Whether or not Kelley's Corner could support a regional shopping center is a question addressed in the following study.

B. The Market Study Area

The Study Team began its analysis by drawing the boundaries of a hypothetical trade area for a commercial development within the Town of Acton. Figure 1 illustrates the location of the thirteen towns which form a natural ring around Acton. No town is more than 15 or 20 minutes driving time from Acton, a hypothesized limit on the accessibility of a major shopping center. The analysis of this trade area will turn on three factors--population, competition and accessibility.

TABLE I
POPULATION PROJECTIONS
1960-1985

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>% Change, 1960-1985</u>
U.S.	179,323,000	203,940,000	240,747,000	34.2
Massachusetts	5,149,000	5,495,000	6,219,000	20.7
Acton	less than 10,000	14,045	23,000	130.0

Source: U.S. and Massachusetts figures from People, Profits, Places: A Blueprint for Retailing, Homer Hoyt, National Retail Merchants Association (Washington, D.C.), April 1969, p. 11.

Acton figures are approximate and are taken from:

1960 figures -- 1965 U.S. Census figure of 10,188.

1970 figures -- U.S. Census, 1970.

1985 figures -- unofficial population projections,
Metropolitan Area Planning Council,
(Boston, Massachusetts), August 1976.

TABLE 2
POPULATION WITHIN MARKET STUDY AREA

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>% Change, 1965-1975</u>
Acton	10,188	14,045	18,209	78.7
Bolton	1,669	2,015	2,427	45.4
Boxborough	1,163	1,528	2,642	127.2
Carlisle	2,011	2,929	3,178	38.0
Chelmsford	23,040	30,341	31,749	37.8
Concord	14,516	16,693	17,270	19.0
Harvard	2,360	3,145	3,514	48.9
Hudson	13,642	16,295	16,827	23.3
Littleton	5,572	6,342	6,629	19.0
Marlborough	23,591	28,185	30,249	28.2
Maynard	9,070	9,590	9,901	9.2
Stow	3,191	3,986	4,688	46.9
Sudbury	10,894	13,842	14,951	37.2
Westford	8,283	10,678	12,951	56.4
Massachusetts	5,295,281	5,539,741	5,789,478	9.3
Middlesex County	1,280,235	1,344,474	1,397,524	9.2
Boston SMSA	2,724,374	2,878,448	2,892,588	6.2

Source: U.S. Census Data. As of Dates:

1975 - March 1, 1975

1971 - January 1, 1971

1965 - January 1, 1965

TABLE 3
POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR MARKET STUDY AREA

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>
Acton	20,750	23,000	25,000	26,250	26,750
Bolton	2,800	3,350	3,750	4,000	4,150
Boxborough	2,950	3,250	3,400	3,500	3,550
Carlisle	3,400	3,600	3,800	3,900	4,000
Chelmsford	34,800	37,100	39,500	41,500	43,000
Concord	19,100	21,300	23,000	24,300	25,673
Harvard	3,700	4,200	4,700	5,200	5,400
Hudson	17,500	18,800	20,300	22,000	22,800
Littleton	7,200	7,900	8,800	9,900	10,600
Marlborough	32,800	35,200	37,700	40,000	41,000
Maynard	9,100	9,400	9,800	11,100	11,400
Stow	5,000	5,400	5,900	6,400	6,800
Sudbury	18,500	20,300	21,300	21,800	22,000
Westford	<u>13,800</u>	<u>17,300</u>	<u>21,100</u>	<u>24,700</u>	<u>26,000</u>
TOTAL	191,400	210,100	228,050	244,550	253,123

Source: Unofficial Population Projections of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Boston, Massachusetts), August, 1976.

There are several well-established rules of thumb for judging the stability of a given market area to a given size of center. A community center requires a minimum trade area of 70,000 persons by one estimate.² The same source estimates that a regional center needs a trade area of 20,000 families or 350,000 persons.³ It is clear that in terms of total population available, the market study area cannot support a regional center. However, the population of the study area far exceeds that required by a community center, and could, in fact, support a sub-regional center.

The income of the market study area population appears to be above the average income in the State of Massachusetts and in Middlesex County. This is indicated by the median income of the towns within the market study area listed in Table 4. Acton has the fourth highest median income for the towns listed. Again, Acton appears to be a natural center for the study area. It is located centrally within a region not yet served by a sub-regional center; it has a particularly high population growth rate; and the median income of the Town is notably higher than most cities or towns in Massachusetts.

2. Competition

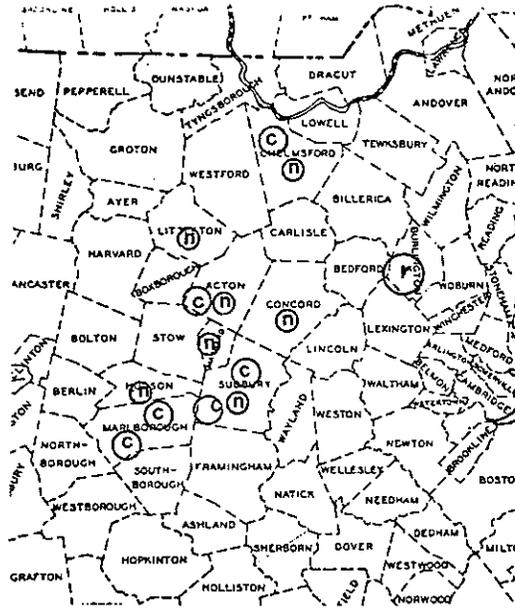
There are sixteen shopping centers either existing or planned within the market study area.⁴ Of these sixteen shopping centers, two-thirds are neighborhood centers of usually less than 50,000 square feet of building area, and the remaining one-third are community centers of between 100,000 and 250,000 square feet of building area. There is one regional shopping center which was tentatively scheduled to open sometime in 1976-1977 in Hudson. However, further research reveals that this project is in the very first stages of development and it is unlikely that the center will open, if ever, before 1980. The nearest existing regional center is located in Burlington. The location of this regional center as well as the locations of the sixteen shopping centers in the market study area are shown in Figure 2. In addition to these shopping centers,

TABLE 4
 MEDIAN INCOME OF TOWNS WITHIN MARKET STUDY AREA

Acton	\$ 15,210
Bolton	
Boxborough	11,679
Carlisle	19,613
Chelmsford	13,867
Concord	16,463
Harvard	
Hudson	11,645
Littleton	12,243
Marlborough	11,415
Maynard	10,665
Stow	13,083
Sudbury	17,798
Westford	11,897
Massachusetts	10,835
Middlesex County	11,860
Boston SMSA	11,449

Source: U.S. Census, 1970. Incomes as of 1969.

community services are provided in two major shopping districts adjacent to Acton--Concord and Maynard Centers.



Key:
 Neighborhood Center (N)
 Community Center (C)
 Regional Center (R)

Figure 2. Shopping Center Locations

Acton itself contains only two locations which might service community needs. Great Road, or Route 2A, which runs north and south through Acton, is lined with commercial development which services the needs of the affluent population of the Nagog Woods planned unit development. Kelley's Corner is the other location.

Kelley's Corner presently provides a number of services necessary in a community shopping center, as described above. However, a number of community uses are not found within its bounds: junior clothing or specialty shops, baked goods or candy, music shops, shoe stores and so forth. These kinds of uses seem to have been locating on Route 2A over the last few years. They have not, however, been developing in the kinds of

inoffensive "village" clusters which the Acton Growth Policy Committee endorsed in 1976. To the contrary, despite the concern of these and other interested Acton citizens, Route 2A seems to be in first stages of what land use planners refer to as "strip development". Various uses are strung out over a great deal of land, attempting to capitalize on the automobile traffic. Each business has its own signs and parking facilities and the negative impacts of such development are not concentrated in a single section of Acton. Instead, both sides of the road are highly developed and commercialized. Social interaction, improved aesthetics and energy conservation -- the goals of the Growth Policy Statement -- seem to have been abandoned.

These problems are evident to even the casual passerby. In the event, therefore, that the Acton Planning Board will not continue to allow this form of unsightly commercial development along 2A, greater attention will be paid to Kelley's Corner as a prime location for servicing the still-unmet community needs of Acton (South Acton in particular). In addition, the east-west and north-south traffic through Kelley's Corner provides a ready market for any enlarged or well-developed shopping facility, once existing traffic problems are solved.

NOTES

- 1 Yehoshua Cohen, Diffusion of an Innovation in an Urban System: The Spread of Planned Regional Shopping Centers in the U.S. (Chicago: University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1972), p. 29.

- 2 Homer Hoyt, People, Profits, Places: A Blueprint for Retailing Washington, D.C.: National Retail Merchants Association, 1969), p. 29.

- 3 Hoyt, op. cit.

- 4 The sixteen shopping centers within the market study area are:
 - Acton
 - Acton Plaza
 - Acton Shopping Center
 - First National Shopping Center
 - Chelmsford
 - Chelmsford Mall
 - (planned shopping center - Route 495)
 - Concord
 - Concord Shopping Center
 - Hudson
 - Heritage Mall
 - Hudson Shopping Center
 - Littleton
 - Nashoba Valley Shopping Center
 - Marlborough
 - Boroughs Shopping Plaza
 - Post Road Shopping Center
 - Maynard
 - Victory Plaza

Sudbury

Mill Village Shopping Center

(planned shopping center - North Road and Route 117)

Sudbury Plaza

Sudbury Shopping Center

Information on the size and tenants of these shopping centers is on file with the Acton Planning Board.