### CITY OF NEWTON

### IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

### PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2010

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Crossley, Danberg, and Lappin

Absent: Ald. Lennon

Also present: Ald. Yates and Hess-Mahan

City staff present: Frank Nichols (Special Projects Engineer) and Robert Rooney (Chief

Operating Officer)

#194-10 PRESIDENT LENNON recommending the appointment of ROBERT A.

FRANCHI, 290 Adams Street, Newton, as an aldermanic appointee to the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE for a term to expire 12/31/11 (60 days

8/20/10). [6/11/10 @2:31PM]

**ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Danberg not voting)** 

**NOTE:** Mr. Franchi is a lifetime resident of the City of Newton and has many years of construction experience. He is very interested in giving some of his time to the City in a volunteer capacity. He is the owner of R.A. Franchi Construction Corporation, which specializes in commercial and high-end residential construction. Mr. Franchi, himself, specializes in carpentry, finished cement work, and has extensive knowledge of interior and exterior construction. Mr. Franchi also attended Wentworth Institute of Technology for architectural design.

Mr. Franchi has attended a Design Review Committee meeting to observe the workings of the Committee. Mr. Franchi felt that he would be able to bring a unique perspective to the committee meetings and make positive contributions to the discussion. Two of the Aldermen, who know Mr. Franchi well, felt that his appointment would be beneficial to the Design Review Committee. Ald. Salvucci moved approval of the appointment, which carried unanimously. The Chairman thanked Mr. Franchi for his willingness to serve on the Committee.

#193-10 PRESIDENT LENNON recommending the re-appointment of JOHN BLISS, 9

Lewis Street, Newtonville, as an aldermanic appointee to the CITIZENS

COMMISSION ON ENERGY for a term to expire 12/31/11 (60 days 8/20/10).

[6/11/10 @2:31PM]

**ACTION:** APPROVED 4-0 (Albright, Danberg and Gentile not voting)

<u>NOTE</u>: The Committee approved Mr. Bliss's reappointment to the Citizens Commission on Energy after a brief discussion. The Committee felt it unnecessary for Mr. Bliss to be present for the reappointment discussion, as he is well known to all of the Committee members and served on the Citizen's Commission on Energy since 1991. A detailed resume was attached to the agenda highlighting Mr. Bliss's experiences and accomplishments. A motion to approve the reappointment carried unanimously.

#208-10 PRESIDENT LENNON recommending the re-appointment of ARVIN GRABEL,

259 Otis Street, West Newton, as an aldermanic appointee to the CITIZENS COMMISSION ON ENERGY for a term to expire 12/31/12 (60 days 09/10/10).

[07/06/10 @ 3:27 PM]

**ACTION:** APPROVED 4-0 (Albright, Danberg and Gentile not voting)

**NOTE:** The Committee felt it unnecessary for Mr. Grabel to be present for the reappointment discussion, as he is well known to all of the Committee members and is a longstanding member of the Citizen's Commission on Energy. Mr. Grabel is an electrical engineer and provides valuable expertise to the Commission on Energy. A motion to approve the reappointment carried unanimously.

#195-10 PRESIDENT LENNON recommending the re-appointment of MARK CHUDY,

34 Prescott Street, Newtonville, as an aldermanic appointee to the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE for a term to expire 12/31/11 (60 days 8/20/10).

[6/11/10 @2:31PM]

**ACTION:** APPROVED 4-0 (Albright, Danberg and Gentile not voting)

**NOTE:** Mr. Chudy was not present for the discussion of his reappointment to the Design Review Committee, but is known to most of the Committee members. The submitted resume was attached to the agenda. Mr. Chudy is an electrical engineer with extensive experience in his field and has been a member of the Design Review Committee for close to seven years.

Ald. Lappin made a motion for approval of Mr. Chudy's appointment and it was approved unanimously. The Public Facilities Committee discussed inviting the members of the Design Review Committee to a meeting in the fall to confer regarding the possibility of amending the City's site-plan approval ordinance.

#196-10 PRESIDENT LENNON recommending the re-appointment of PETER BARRER,

24 Hazelton Road, Newton Centre, as an aldermanic appointee to the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE for a term to expire 12/31/11 (60 days 8/20/10).

[6/11/10 @2:31PM]

**ACTION:** APPROVED 4-0 (Albright, Danberg and Gentile not voting)

**NOTE:** Mr. Barrer is an engineer with a strong background in energy efficiency analysis and energy conservation. He has also designed HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems for new and renovated buildings. He began serving on the Design Review Committee in 2002 and is well known to the Committee members. Although Mr. Barrer was not present for the discussion, the Committee approved the appointment unanimously, as he has proven be a great addition to the Designer Selection Committee.

#191-10 NATIONAL GRID requesting a grant of location to install and maintain 40'

± of 4" gas main in VILLAGE CIRCLE from the existing 4" gas main in Village Circle at 41 Village Circle northeasterly to 45 Village Circle.

**ACTION:** APPROVED 4-0 (Albright, Danberg and Gentile not voting)

**NOTE:** Dennis Regan, National Grid Permit Representative, presented the petition for a grant of location to install a gas main in Village Circle to provide gas service to a new home. The homeowners have contacted the City to request that the petition be expedited. They cannot move into their home until there is gas service. The item was originally scheduled for discussion on Monday, July 12, 2010. There was not a representative of National Grid present on July 12, 2010; therefore, the Committee held the item. The Department of Public Works has reviewed the petition and recommended approval of the petition with the standard conditions. The public hearing was opened and no one spoke for or against the petition. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of a motion for approval with a recommendation for an emergency preamble.

### REFERRED TO POST AUDIT AND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

#107-10 ALD. YATES, LAPPIN, FREEDMAN, FISCHMAN, AND HESS-MAHAN

requesting an update on the Newton South High School athletic field drainage

project. [03/15/10 @ 12:09 PM]

**ACTION:** NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0 (Gentile not voting)

**NOTE:** Frank Nichols, Special Projects Engineer, provided the Committee with an update on the fields and addressed an email (attached) that contained a number of concerns raised by an abutter. The City Engineer provided the Committee with an email (attached) response from the consultants regarding the abutter's concerns. In addition, a memo from the City Engineer on the status of the construction and drainage issues was attached to the agenda.

The abutter's e-mail raises three concerns regarding the Newton South High School fields project. The first concern is related to a number of dead and dying trees. The trees are under warranty and the City's Tree Warden will be consulted before the trees are replanted in the fall. The second issue is the rotting straw waddle along the school's property line. The straw waddle is designed to decay and does not require removal. However, Mr. Nichols is looking into removing the sections of the waddle along the abutting properties. It was suggested that Mr. Nichols consult with the Public Works Department to determine if they could remove the straw and compost it.

The third issue is related to drainage around the fields and run-off onto abutting properties. There are different water sources that are contributing to the flooding of the abutter's yard. Mr. Nichols stated that he will monitor the water run-off during the next significant rain fall to determine if the school fields are contributing to the flooding in the abutter's yard. Mr. Nichols does not believe that the run-off from the fields is reaching the yard, as there is an 18"-wide trench drain at the low point of a swale between the school fields and the abutting property. A catch basin may need to be installed in the yard to drain the pooled water. Also, the Parks and Recreation Department needs to aerate areas of the fields where ponding is occurring. The soil in those areas is very compact and there has not been grass growth due to the extreme weather.

There was a motion for no action necessary, which carried unanimously. The project is almost complete and the Engineering Department has agreed to monitor the fields and the abutters' yards for drainage issues. If further issues arise, a more specific docket item could be filed to address them.

#23-10 ALD. YATES & DANBERG proposing a Resolution urging His Honor the

Mayor to re-present the city's request for State bond money to be appropriated to implement the Needham Street reconstruction plan developed in partnership with the Needham Street property owners over the past decade. [01/04/10 @8:16 PM]

**ACTION:** NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0 (Gentile not voting)

**NOTE:** Robert Rooney, Chief Operating Officer, stated that representatives from the City of Newton and the Town of Needham have met with the State's Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Greg Bialecki on the reconstruction of the Needham Street Corridor. Secretary Bialecki was interested in the development potential of the corridor and requested further information from Newton and Needham. Newton and Needham provided the attached information to Secretary Bialecki and the Planning Department has set up a number of meetings with the largest property owners abutting Needham Street.

The reconstruction of Needham Street is one of the administration's top priorities. The City needs to update the 25% plans that were completed three years ago, as the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction standards have changed. Mr. Rooney explained that although it is an additional expense to the City, the updated plans would reflect an almost completely designed project. The Mayor's Office is looking at different funding options for the updated plans.

There was discussion amongst Committee members regarding the possibility of expanding the vision for Needham Street in terms of a comprehensive master plan to ensure that the area meets the city's needs well into the future. Mr. Rooney stated that the Planning Department would be working with two graduate student interns to work on the visioning of the Needham Street Corridor. Ald. Crossley pointed out that there are a number of resources available to the City to help develop a comprehensive master plan. She attended a conference on neighborhoods sponsored by the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) approximately a month ago, that focused on how to create vibrant areas within cities and towns. After the conference, Ald. Crossley informed the Mayor and the Planning Director that the MSGA is offering to help advance projects within cities and towns. The MSGA is offering a range of support that includes technical assistance. In order to take advantage of the MSGA's offer the City would have to have submitted a Letter of Interest by July 15, 2010. Ald. Crossley was unsure if a letter had been sent but pointed out that there are usually similar opportunities that the City could seek out for the Needham Street Corridor.

Ald. Yates suggested that the Committee hold the item for future updates. Committee members felt that the request for a Resolution to the Mayor asking that he re-present the city's request for State bond money for the Needham Street reconstruction plan was no longer relevant, as the Mayor has already begun the process. Therefore, the Committee voted in favor of a motion for no action necessary. The Committee suggested docketing a new item requesting updates on the Needham Street Corridor project as it moves forward.

#385-07 ALD. SCHNIPPER AND GENTILE updating the Public Facilities Committee on

the progress of the Newton North High School Project. [11/21/07 @ 10:23 AM]

**ACTION: HELD 6-0 (Gentile not voting)** 

## PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2010 PAGE 5

NOTE: Ald. Schnipper gave a brief update on the Newton North High School (NNHS) project. She was unable to attend the last NNHS meeting but she has heard that the project is moving along. The jersey barriers are in place for the demolition of the old school. A 10' foot fence will be placed on top of the jersey barriers and a fence will be added along Elm Road to enhance security. There is a plan for an open house in September for a structured community walk through. The City is in discussion with the Walnut Street abutters regarding landscape screening. Ald. Schnipper expects that the Executive Office will be requesting a shift of funds with in the project budget for project management. The Board of Aldermen approved a grant of location for a pole relocation on Elm Road that is related to the project. The item was reconsidered after an Alderman learned that the cost of relocation is \$15,000, which the City would have to pay. It is Ald. Schnipper's intent to discuss the significant cost of the proposed pole relocation on Elm Road at the next NNHS meeting.

All other items were held without discussion and the Committee adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman

Hi Shawna,

It would be great if there can be someone who can address the below concerns at the meeting on Wednesday.

Thanks,

Cheryl

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Stephen C. Farrell" < scf13@verizon.net>

**Date:** July 12, 2010 8:16:50 PM EDT

To: "'Cheryl Lappin'" < <a href="mailto:"Iappinc@verizon.net">! "Jonathan Bamel"</a>

<<u>JBamel@rcn.com</u>>, "'Jay Portnoy'" <<u>jsportnoy@yahoo.com</u>>, "'Susan Allen'"

<<u>SAllenRE@aol.com</u>>

Cc: "John Freedman" < john@freedmanhealthcare.com >, "'Mitch Fischman'"

<mitch.fischman@tetratech.com>, "Ted Hess-Mahan"

<thessmahan@newtonma.gov>, "'Ted Tye'" < Tye@NatDev.com>,

<emani025@yahoo.com>

**Subject: RE: NSHS Fields** 

Hello, Cheryl...

...and thank you for the notice of the meeting. I have a tentative conflict, but if it changes I will attend.

It is not without a great deal of concern, consideration and conflict that I suggest that the Engineering Department is not correct is suggesting that the drainage issues in the disputed area are resolved. They are better, to a slight degree, but certainly not resolved. Two examples.

Granted that this past weekend's deluge was, again, unusual, but I am told that our backyard filled in the lake-like effect that occurs each time there is a heavy rain. (We were out of town, and did not witness the actual water. However,...) One could easily see the accumulation of pine needles and leaves that settle when the water finally recedes. And, one could see the flood paths from the fields onto the land from the property lines at our and our neighbor's homes next to the fields.

Second, the attached <u>photos</u> (the numbers 100606 represent dates – year (10), month (06), day (06)) were <u>taken on June 6 following a normal summer rain a full 24 hours before (June 5)</u>. As you can see, the water puddles along the sides of the new French drain in several locations. And it sits there until it evaporates. Also, and more disturbingly, one can see heavy water accumulations inside the outfield fence on land that should not flood at all.

In addition to the continued water issues, I have included several photos of dead and dying trees. Since they have been in that state for several months, I wonder whether they will ever be replaced. And finally, the straw line along the borders of all the homes is still in place, and rotting. Will it ever be picked up?

Good grief, I hate being a nagging complainer....

With appreciation and best regards, Stephen C. Farrell

From: Cheryl Lappin [mailto:lappinc@verizon.net]

Sent: Friday, July 09, 2010 10:57 AM

To: Stephen C. Farrell; Jonathan Bamel; Jay Portnoy; Susan Allen

Cc: John Freedman; Mitch Fischman

Subject: Fwd: NSHS Fields

Hello all,

Hope you are enjoying your summer.

I want you to make you aware of the meeting before Pubic Facilities on Wednesday the 14th. According to our Engineering department the drainage issues have been resolved. Please let me know if your drainage issues have or have not been addressed so I can have the appropriate people at the meeting.

Thanks. Cheryl

Begin forwarded message:

Resent-From: <a href="mailto:clappin@newtonma.gov">clappin@newtonma.gov</a>

From: "Sullivan Shawna" < ssullivan@newtonma.gov>

**Date:** July 8, 2010 2:08:31 PM EDT

To: <u>byates@newtonma.gov</u>, <u>thessmahan@newtonma.gov</u>, <u>mfischman@newt</u>

onma.gov, clappin@newtonma.gov, jfreedman@newtonma.gov

**Subject: NSHS Fields** 

Good Afternoon,

Just wanted to let you know that the Public Facilities Committee will be discussing the below item on Wednesday, July 14, 2010. The City Engineer will be providing a memo, which will be attached to the agenda stating that the issues related to drainage have been resolved. Have a great day.

### REFERRED TO POST AUDIT AND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

#107-10 ALD, YATES, LAPPIN, FREEDMAN, FISCHMAN, AND HESS-

MAHAN requesting an update on the Newton South High School athletic field drainage project. [03/15/10 @ 12:09 PM]

Regards, Shawna





















From: "" < ltaverna@newtonma.gov> To: ssullivan@newtonma.gov,

lappinc@verizon.net.

john@freedmanhealthcare.com, mfischman@newtonma.gov

Date sent: Tue, 13 Jul 2010 12:32:30 -0400

Subject: **Fwd: NSHS Fields** Copies to: fnichols@newtonma.gov

Priority:

A brief response form our consultants follows:

The rain deluge of last weekend, similar to that in the spring, was unusual and caused flash flooding in many low lying areas. It is not surprising that Mr. Farrell's yard took on some water. It is difficult to comment on the source(s) of the water without direct observation. Gale has observed in the past that there are multiple sources of water in Mr. Farrell's yard which is a low spot at the edge of the drainage divide. We can't comment if the field contributed to the water that temporarily pooled in his yard but it is clear that abutting residential properties have been a source of water in major storm events. The City will attempt to observe future storm events. (Mr. Farrell may need a catch basin similar to his neighbor's.)

Some pooling around the French drain and the outfield areas is expected. The areas have been heavily irrigated this spring to encourage growth. We will ask Gale to review the grading along the drain, but it is designed to be relatively flat.

The City has asked that trees not be replaced until the fall planting season. All trees are under warranty.

The erosion control barriers are typically allowed to stay in place. They need to remain in place until the project is completed and the Con Com signs off on the project (that is, the order of conditiond are met). The project is not yet complete, as some punch list items remain.

Louis M. Taverna, P.E. City Engineer Newton Department of Public Works 1000 Commonwealth Ave Newton, MA 02459 Phone: 617-796-1020

Fax: 617-796-1051

E-Mail Address: Ltaverna@newtonma.gov

From: "Sullivan Shawna" <ssullivan@newtonma.gov>

To: Itaverna@newtonma.gov, fnichols@newtonma.gov

Date sent: Tue, 13 Jul 2010 11:40:14 -0400

Subject: (Fwd) Fwd: NSHS Fields

Priority: normal

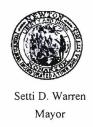
----- Forwarded message follows ------

Hi Shawna, It would be great if there can be someone who can address the below concerns at the meeting on Wednesday. Thanks, Cheryl

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From: "Stephen C. Farrell" <scf13@verizon.net>
Date: July 12, 2010 8:16:50 PM EDT
To: "'Cheryl Lappin'" <lappinc@verizon.net>, "'Jonathan
Bamel'" <JBamel@rcn.com>, "'Jay Portnoy'"
<jsportnoy@yahoo.com>, "'Susan Allen'"
<SAllenRE@aol.com>
Co: "'John Freedman'" <john@freedmanhealthcare.com>,
"'Mitch Fischman'" <

----- End of forwarded message ------



# City of Newton, Massachusetts Office of the Mayor

Telephone
(617) 796.1000
Telefax
(617) 965-6885
E-mail
swarren@newtonma.gov

July 12, 2010

The Honorable Greg Bialecki Secretary of Housing and Economic Development The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development One Ashburton place, Suite 2101 Boston, MA 02108

Dear Secretary Bialecki,

We would like to thank you for meeting with the leadership from the Town of Needham and the City of Newton on one of our top priorities namely, the reconstruction of the Needham/Newton Street corridor. The reconstruction of this street and the bridge that connects Needham and Newton is a significant contributor to the economic vitality of both communities. The roadway serves as a gateway to both of our communities and provides a transportation link between business districts located in each community, that are rich in their redevelopment potential. In response to your questions, we have provided a summary of the highlights of this regional transportation project, including specifics on project costs and anticipated investment benefits that reconstruction of this corridor would provide to the individual communities and the Commonwealth.

As submitted in the 2008 State Transportation Bond Bill, the road's reconstruction cost is estimated at \$17M and includes both Needham Street in Newton, Highland Avenue in Needham, and the upgrading of the functionally obsolete bridge over the Charles River. A breakdown of this estimated cost is provided (*Attachment "A"*). In addition, we have provided for each community, a descriptive narrative of the planning vision anticipated for the corridor, a build-out analysis of projected development under said vision and current zoning rules and market conditions, an estimated value of projected build-out in terms of increased tax revenue and job creation, and associated land use maps showing regional context, zoning district boundaries and potential project locations (*Attachment "B"*). The importance of this area to the business community is underscored in a letter from the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce (*Attachment "C"*), which amplifies its support and belief that this area is postured for redevelopment with a commitment from the State and both municipalities to provide the necessary infrastructure to support their private sector investment. We believe there is the potential to double the assessed commercial value of this area and the number of jobs currently supported with the noted transportation upgrades.

1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Our hope is that you will also see the corridor as a valuable opportunity and that you will be willing to help engage other State agencies in further discussions around funding options to advance this initiative. Please feel free to contact either of us with any questions you many have. We will follow-up with you soon.

Very truly yours,

Kate Fitzpatrick Town Manager

late his patrick

Mayor

### Needham Street - Highland Avenue Corridor Construction Cost Breakdown

Category Breakdown	Needham Street	<b>Highland Avenue</b>	
Mobilization	\$150k	\$790k	
Construction	\$2.18M	\$1.53M	
Drainage	\$250k	\$270k	
Curb & Sidewalks	\$600k	\$520k	
Signalization	\$870k	\$440k	
Signs & Markings	\$100k	\$50k	
Management	\$900k	\$700k	
Police Details	\$700k	\$390k	
Contingency	\$1M	\$940k	
Land Takings	\$250k	\$20k	
Signalization Signs & Markings Management Police Details Contingency	\$870k \$100k \$900k \$700k \$1M	\$440k \$50k \$700k \$390k \$940k	

Total: \$7.0M \$5.65M

### Recapitulation

Needham Street \$7.0M Highland Avenue \$5.7M Bridge over Charles River \$4.3M

Total Cost: \$17M

### POTENTIAL BUILD-OUT AND REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

MassDOT's stated goals of leveraging transportation projects "to spark economic development, encourage private sector investment and support more livable communities" will be met through investment in reconstruction of this corridor and is consistent with the economic goals of the Cities of Newton and Needham. The reconstruction of the street and bridge that connects Needham and Newton is a significant contributor to the economic vitality of both communities.

#### Newton

The Needham Street corridor is the largest of the Newton's four regional business areas, with roughly 2.5 million square feet of commercial floor area (just under ¼ of the commercial square footage in the City). The City's *Comprehensive Plan* identifies it as having the greatest potential for increased growth, totaling three million square feet of new development under the current zoning, which is predominantly mixed use. The commercial properties that line and feed into Needham Street are valued at over \$291 million and property tax revenue for fiscal year 2009 was over \$5 million. Even without intensifying uses along the corridor, filling existing vacancies along the stretch could introduce 740 new jobs, an estimated \$2.2 million in new State income tax revenue, and roughly \$1.3 million in State sales tax revenue.

Development of a 22-acre site near the Needham/Newton boundary, previously proposed by Northland Corporation, estimated \$5 to \$6 million in new State sales tax annually and new real estate taxes for the City of \$2 to \$2.5 million. In addition, the company estimated development could create between 600-800 indirect and direct construction jobs, which could raise between \$2.3 and \$3 in income taxes, as well as 300-500 net new permanent full-time positions that could generate between \$900,000 and \$1.5 million in income tax per year. Crosspoint Associates, which owns several properties midway along Needham Street (including 24 companies in 250,000 sq. ft. of rentable space, including Newton Technology Park) and employing 1,050 (with another 50-75 jobs in current construction), has short-term plans that it estimates could create up to 20 new jobs and about 100 construction jobs. In addition, it has calculated that if Needham Street were to be reconstructed, the redevelopment of several of its parcels (excluding Newton Technology Park) could bring an additional 100 permanent jobs and almost 200 construction jobs. However, attracting tenants and new development to Needham Street depends on roadway improvements that will help accommodate new and rationalize existing traffic.

In its existing condition, Needham Street is ill equipped to handle the additional volume of traffic that would be generated by such developments. Improvements to the street, intersections, sidewalks, crosswalks, bridge that connects the Cities, enhancements that facilitate all modes of transportation, such as bike lanes and increased transit service, as well as reduction of curb cuts would improve conditions and encourage economic development that is capped by these constraints and an environment that is uninviting to prospective new businesses.

The City of Newton is actively pursing efforts to realize the potential of this corridor. First, to ensure that the economic potential of mixed-used development is sought while balancing environmental impacts and protecting the quality of life in surrounding areas, Mayor Warren recently appointed 18 residents to serve on a Mixed-Use Task Force, which is developing policies and parameters for such developments; its work is expected to conclude in September 2010. This summer, a Transportation Advisory Committee (as recommended in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan) will begin crafting policies and plans for a Citywide "Complete Streets"-type approach to encouraging all modes of transportation for users of all ages and ability, which is consistent with MassDOT's aim to ensure that "transportation services and investments will balance the needs of all users ~ transit riders, bicyclists, drivers and pedestrians." Finally, in September 2010 graduate students from the Design and Urban Studies Program at MIT will partner with the City to perform a comprehensive study of Needham Street, which will include community visioning, consider zoning options appropriate to the infrastructure and produce an implementation plan, including financing mechanisms for improvements beyond the road reconstruction. It will also evaluate the best way to achieve well-planned, compact, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development on Needham Street that is consistent with the Newton Comprehensive Plan and The Commonwealth's Sustainable Development principles.

### Needham

The Town of Needham has already completed master planning studies (2000-2007) and created three zoning districts in a 215-acre area known as the New England Business Center (NEBC). Like Newton's current efforts to plan wisely for development of this commercial corridor, the overarching goal of Needham's planning effort has been to unlock the site's economic development potential, while creating significant benefits for residents, business, and property owners, and while also controlling the impacts of development, especially traffic on adjacent areas. Each of the three new districts has a unique character and market potential, so the use profile and dimensional requirement for each varies. In general, the new master plan offers increased building heights and densities, calls for incentives for creating public benefits, and links new development to traffic improvements.

The market analysis for the proposed build-out recommended 2.5 million square feet of development, which could be accommodated by the proposed improved roadway. By 2007, the NEBC provided approximately 57% of tax revenue from all commercial and industrially classified properties in Needham. The NEBC and Highland Street corridor, which also includes those commercial and industrial areas along the west side of Highland Avenue and those that are accessed directly by it, comprised 70% of all commercial-industrial valuations in the Town in tax revenue, which means the Highland Corridor contributed \$9.7 million of the \$13,860,000 property tax revenues attributable to commercially and industrially classified properties in Needham.

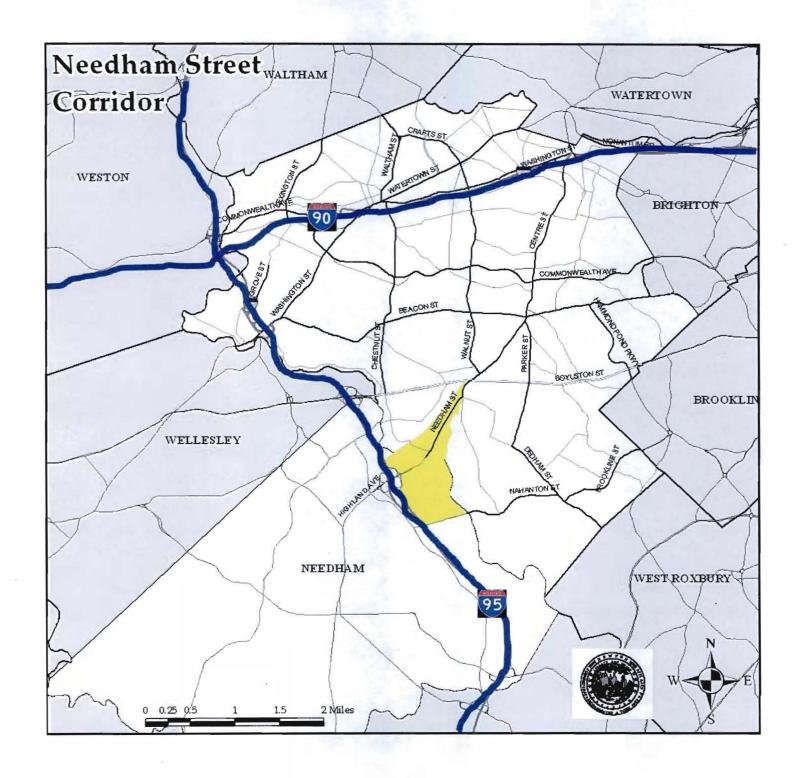
Needham's build-out analysis shows the 2.5 million square foot build-out in the NEBC has the potential to yield \$250,000,000 in new assessed valuations over ten years. The analysis also estimated a yield of \$4,720,000 gross property tax revenues and \$3,790,000 in net new property tax revenues. Should this level of build-out come to pass in the NEBC, assuming the roadway improvements needed to support them and adequate market conditions, the Corridor Study Area would then provide 77.6 % of all commercial and industrial assessments in Needham. If only 500,000 square feet of commercial development were added, the Town would realize, conservatively, close to an additional \$980,000 in property taxes per year at build-out. In Needham, property taxes constitute 63% of Needham's local revenue sources.

Recent redevelopment of two parcels along this corridor demonstrate the economic development benefits that have come to Needham as a result of these efforts thus far:

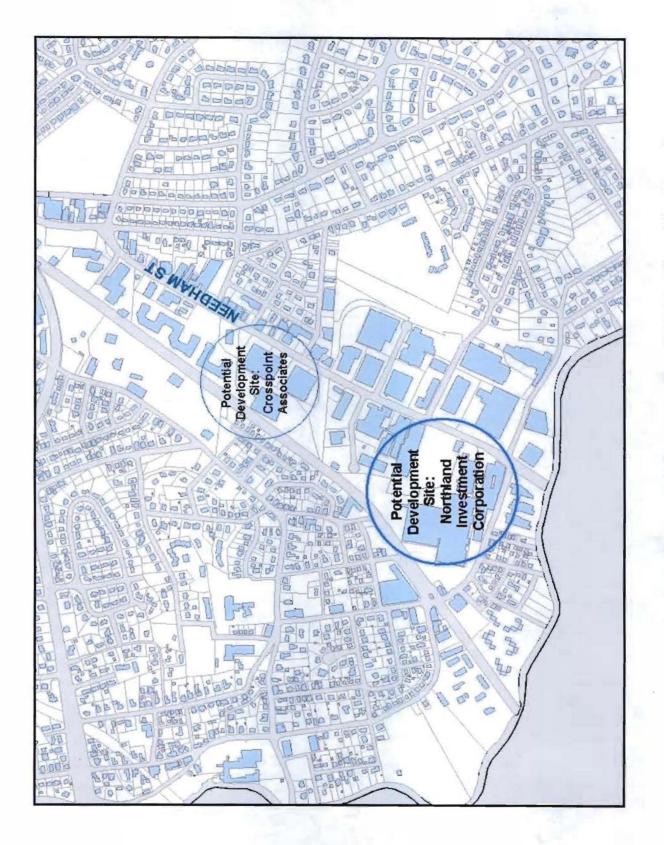
ADDRESS	2000 ASSESSMENT	2000 TAX LEVY	2008 ASSESSMENT	2008 TAX LEVY
140 Kenrick Street	\$15,271,700	\$288,330	\$45,588,600	\$862,536
100 Highland Avenue	\$ 936,300	\$ 17,677	\$ 4,143,200	\$ 78,389
TOTAL TAX		\$396,000		\$940,925

The total tax increase in the Study Area between 2000 and 2008 was 37.5%; in contrast, the total tax increase on these two redeveloped properties was 207%. This demonstrates the power of redevelopment from the standpoint of municipal revenue growth.

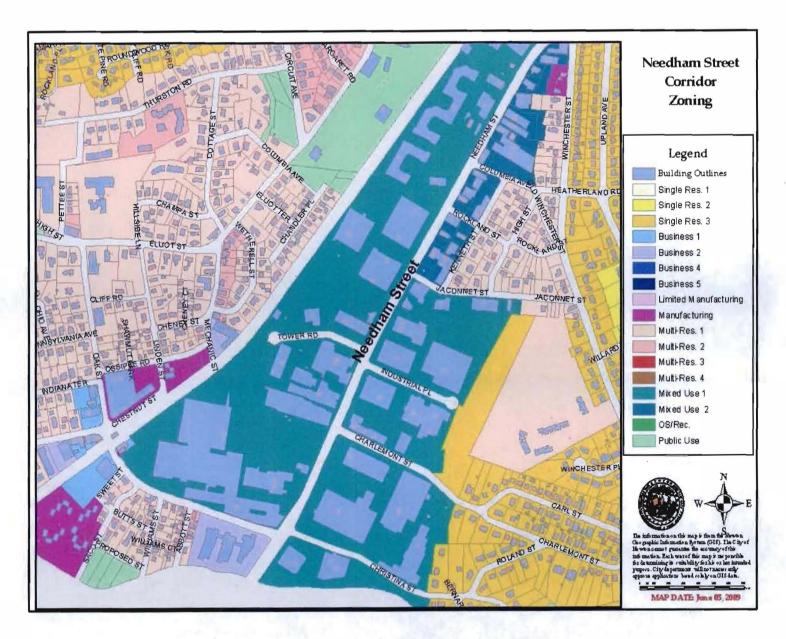
There are roughly 10,100 jobs in the corridor study area, amounting to 51 % of all jobs in Needham, many provided by the six largest employers in the City. Jobs in the study area estimated annual payroll of \$787,800,000 in the study area with 5% or \$39,390,000 realized by the Commonwealth in the form of State income taxes. With the recent recession, vacancy rates have risen, but at full occupancy of existing construction, the net new development would bring in between 1,400 and 2,000 new jobs, between \$109,200,000 to \$156,000,000 to the total annual payroll in the Highland Corridor Study Area, and account for additional revenue to the Commonwealth in the form of State income tax of between \$5,460,000 and \$7,800,000 annually (2007 figures).



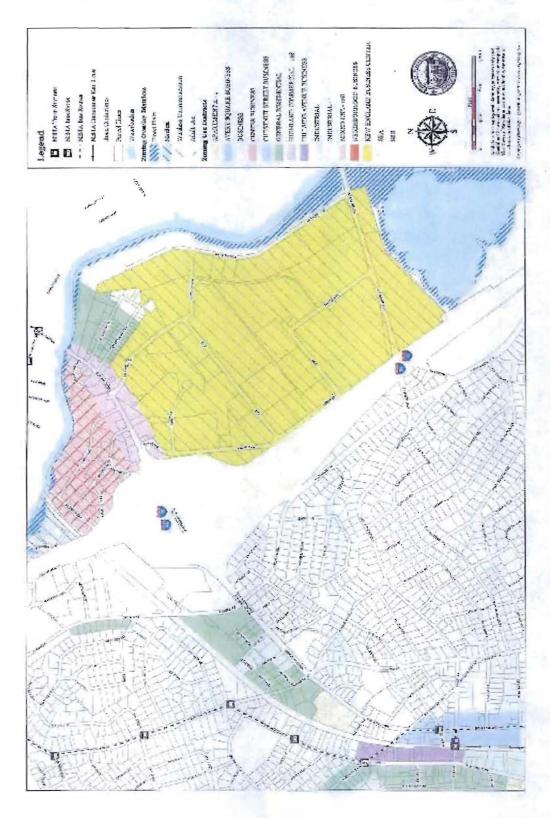
Regional Context
Roadway connection between Newton and Needham



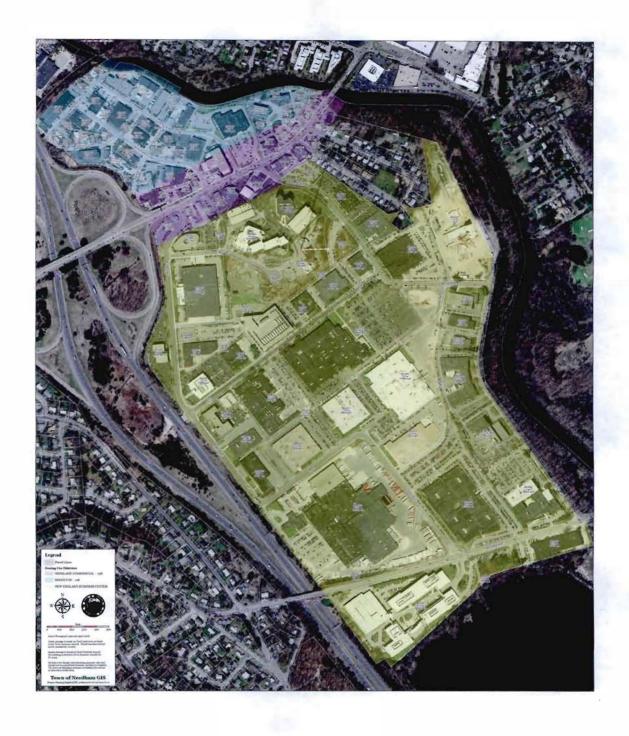
Potential Development Sites on Needham Street - Newton



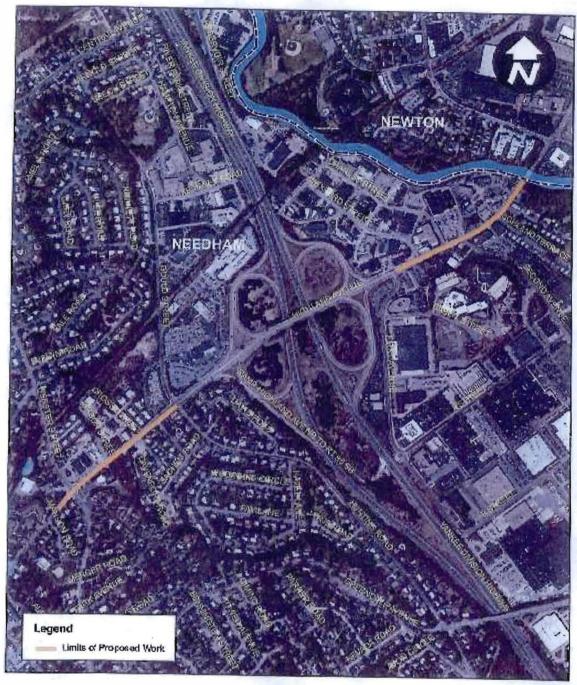
**Needham Street Zoning - Newton** 



New England Business Center/Highland Avenue Corridor Zoning Needham



New England Business Center/Highland Avenue Corridor Needham



LOCUS MAP Highland Avenue Reconstruction Project Needham, Massachusetts Project File No. 601827

0 350 700 Feet

Highland Avenue Improvements - Needham



June 22, 2010

Greg Bialecki, Secretary
Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
One Ashburton Place, Room 2101
Boston, MA 02108

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Linda Sloane Kay, 1st Vice Chair Dear Secretary Bialecki:

On behalf of the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce I am writing to urge your support in seeking immediate funding for the reconstruction of the Needham Street/Highland Avenue corridor. The Chamber represents over 650 businesses and thousands of employees in the Newton-Needham region.

We are pleased to know that the reconstruction of Highland Avenue and Needham Street was included in the Governor's Supplemental Transportation Bond Bill with \$17 million earmarked for Newton and Needham to carry out the long overdue reconstruction of this critical east-west roadway between Routes 9 and 128 (I-95). As you know this serves vital retail and residential components connecting the two communities.

The issue of traffic congestion along this commercial corridor is consistently noted by our members and other businesses as the number one issue of concern in the region. The road is a gateway to commercial development in both Needham and Newton and handles over 20,000 vehicle trips per day. Consequently, another major concern to our members, local merchants and the general public, is the issue of safety along the roadway. The Chamber of Commerce office is on Needham Street so I can speak first hand to the number of accidents which occur regularly due to traffic in poorly marked and ambiguous lanes coupled with multiple curb cuts. My staff and I do our best to avoid travelling on the street at midday due to the frustration that comes with entering and exiting the road only to then sit in traffic. We will often walk the street for short errands, but even then we must be ever vigilant when attempting to cross as drivers seem to come from all directions. For young children and the elderly I cannot imagine them navigating the street on foot.

A larger issue for the long-term is the economic development impact of the roadway. As you can see from the supporting documents and studies provided by both Newton and Needham the potential benefits of this corridor's reconstruction are significant to both the local communities and the state.

281 Needham Street Newton, MA 02464 Commercial development on both sides of the Charles River has been limited in recent years and not just because of the economic downturn. Prior to that development was limited by constraints posed by limited access and traffic concerns. Increasing the roadway efficiency and hence the capacity will open up tremendous re-development opportunity in each community. This could result in the creation of thousands of jobs which would generate millions in state income tax revenue. It would also result in a significant increase in sales tax revenue. Additionally, the ability to add a couple million square feet of commercial space will add millions of property tax dollars to Newton and Needham. It goes without saying how important and needed this revenue is for any community.

The timing of this request is also important in that it could tie in nicely with the add-a-lane project on Route 128 as it makes its way into Needham. Furthermore, the ability of both communities to plan for increased commercial development now will allow them to position themselves favorably for growth as the economy begins to improve. Already the business community is beginning to consider the investment potential of the area as evidenced by proposed mixed use developments at Chestnut Hill Square on Route 9 and the Riverside train station.

A commitment by the state to jump start this project, now a couple decades in the planning, would provide synergy with the business community to invest and create jobs and increase the tax base. Please consider this letter strong support from the local business community for the Commonwealth to release sufficient funds now for Needham Street and Highland Avenue to assure that this corridor can live up to its potential as a safe and vital economic engine for the region.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. O'Rourke, CCE

President

Cc: Mayor Setti Warren

Kate Fitzpatrick

State Senator Richard Ross

State Senator Cynthia Creem

State Representative Ruth Balser

State Representative Lida Harkins

State Representative Kay Khan

State Representative Peter Koutoujian