Swampscott
Downtown
Vision and
Action Plan

Funding provided by the
District Local Technical Assistance program

Prepared for
Town of Swampscott
Planning Department
22 Monument Avenue, Swampscott, MA 01907

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Theme 2: Use coastal resources to establish an identity for downtown.

Theme 3: Support businesses and attract people to the neighborhood.

Theme 4: Make it safe and easy to get around.

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Executive Summary

The Swampscott Downtown Vision and Action Plan is collaboration between the Town of Swampscott and MAPC. The project focused on the Burrill Street/Humphrey Street Corridor, including the Swampscott commuter rail station area and Blaney Street. Working with the Swampscott Town Planner, the Planning Board, the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce, residents, property owners and other stakeholders, MAPC has created a vision to guide downtown development and a set of recommendations that are designed to make downtown Swampscott a more vibrant, livable and attractive part of the community.

Key recommendations in the Action Plan under the following themes include:

**Build a vibrant downtown.** Conduct a zoning use and dimensional conformance analysis for parcels within the downtown study area. Use the results to help inform a Downtown Visual Preference Survey that would help identify neighborhood character and development issues, potential future land uses and design issues for the downtown. Once these have been done and information considered, revisit the 2009 proposals to adopt the Humphrey Street bylaw amendment package and establish a Design Review Board. Consider adopting a 40R District near the Swampscott commuter rail station to facilitate high quality, transit oriented, mixed use development.

**Use coastal resources to create a downtown identify.**

- Establish King’s Beach as a gateway to Swampscott;
- Improve Fisherman’s Beach and the Fish House;
- Create a town trail network;
- Improve signage and way finding;
- Create a local harbor plan.

**Support downtown businesses and attract people to the neighborhood.**

- Establish a Downtown Swampscott Subcommittee within the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce;
- Begin a storefront and façade improvement program;
- Organize workshops and technical assistance programs for downtown businesses;
- Perform a downtown market analysis and develop a brand and marketing strategy;
- Investigate the possibility of creating a Downtown Business Improvement District;
- Hold community gatherings downtown and develop signature events to draw people there;
- Complete a street tree inventory and tree planting and replacement program;
- Install pedestrian scale street lighting on Humphrey Street;
- Investigate options for streetscape bio-retention;
- Investigate funding options for streetscape improvements.
Make it safe and easy to get around

Roadway:

- Enhance roadway guide and regulatory signage;
- Improve handicap accessibility and parking;
- Install parklets along Humphrey Street.

Bicycle and Pedestrian:

- Install curb extensions at major crosswalks along Humphrey Street;
- Install bicycle lanes on Humphrey Street;
- Install shared lane markings and bicycle warning signage along Burrill Street;
- Install bicycle route signage;
- Upgrade pedestrian signal heads and pedestrian push buttons;
- Identify potential locations and install bicycle racks;
- Utilize the regional bike and pedestrian transportation plan;
- Implement a bicycle sharing program.

Transit:

- Install amenities at bus stops on Humphrey Street;
- Lengthen bus stops to accommodate standard MBTA buses;
- Improve pedestrian accommodations at the commuter rail station;
- Encourage mixed use development at the commuter rail station;
- Install electric car charging at the commuter rail station.

Site Access and Circulation:

- Encourage joint driveways and cross-access easements;
- Maintain continuity of sidewalks across driveways.

The project was initiated by the Town of Swampscott. MAPC performed the project with funding it received under the District Local Technical Assistance Program operated by the Department of Revenue. This document further details the study process, existing conditions and the proposed recommendations for the downtown Swampscott study area.
Chapter One: Introduction and Background

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to create a vision and develop recommendations for future growth and preservation in downtown Swampscott with a particular emphasis on the Humphrey Street/Blaney Street/Burrill Street (including the commuter rail station) corridor.

Planning Process

The planning process began with MAPC staff meeting with Town Planner Peter Kane on June 19, 2012. After meeting to discuss the scope of the project, MAPC staff walked the entire length of the study area to photograph existing conditions and to discuss issues of relevance to the study.

MAPC attended a meeting of the Swampscott Planning Board on September 10, 2012 to brief them on the project.

The first public participation event was held on October 12, 2012 with the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce. At that meeting MAPC heard from a cross-section of Swampscott business owners. That was followed up by a visioning workshop open to the public on October 23, 2012 in the cafeteria of the Swampscott High School. A final presentation on the draft plan was made on December 17, 2012 at the Swampscott Public Library.

Study Area

The study area begins at the Swampscott Commuter Rail Station at the intersection of Burrill Street and Railroad Avenue. The study area continues along Burrill Street to Monument Avenue and continues along Humphrey Street to Cedar Hill Terrace. The study area comprises 46 acres. There are approximately 275 separate parcels. The length of the study area from the commuter rail station to Cedar Hill Terrace is approximately 1.04 miles.
Previous Plans and Studies

At the onset of the project, MAPC staff reviewed a number of previous plans and studies dating back to 2004. These are summarized briefly below. In general, the issues and concepts identified in each subsequent planning study have been consistent.

Swampscott Community Development Plan 2004 – Swampscott was granted $30,000 in planning services to create a Community Development Plan, pursuant to Executive Order 318. Executive Order 418 allowed communities to address future growth and development by creating visions, goals, and strategies in four topic areas: natural resources and open space, housing, economic development, and transportation. Although the community development plan was town-wide in scope, many of the key concepts relate to the downtown study area. MAPC prepared the plan for the town.

The following key concepts emerged from a visioning workshop held in March 2003.

- Importance of linking beaches and parks with downtown and train.
• Downtown revitalization should involve compact development, reduced parking requirements, allowing mixed use development, the institution of design guidelines, pedestrian safety improvements, linking the Olmsted District to downtown, re-use of the Fish House and streetscape improvements.

• Transportation improvements suggested include improving bicycle and pedestrian access between the commuter rail station and downtown and the waterfront, creating a trolley/shuttle, increasing parking for non-residents, bicycle facilities and water transportation.

**Master Plan Recommendations for Downtown Humphrey Street, 2007** - This report was prepared by the Humphrey Street Revitalization Committee which was formed by the Planning Board to look into the recommendations from the 2004 Community Development Plan.

Revitalization efforts for Humphrey Street should include:
• Enhance coastal character.
• Improvements to the streetscape and public spaces.
• Encouragement of locally owned businesses.
• Changes in regulations to help appropriate businesses to flourish and simplify permitting.
• Design guidelines and design review process.

**Humphrey Street Zoning Bylaw Project, 2009** – The Town of Swampscott received a grant from the Mass. Downtown Initiative to explore the regulatory obstacles to revitalization of the Humphrey Street commercial area. The review was undertaken by a consulting firm and came up with the following recommendations:

• Adopt the Humphrey Street Overlay District Zoning Bylaw amendment package.
• Establish a Design Review Board and operating rules and regulations.
• Apply for regional transportation funding for design and construction of streetscape improvements.
• Create a Humphrey Street Association to continue advocating for improvements.

**Swampscott Community Survey – April 2012** – The Planning Board and Planning Department developed a community survey which was made available to all households in Swampscott. This eight-question survey was designed to determine what topics were most important to residents. The response rate was 34%.

When asked to name your favorite thing about Swampscott, residents responded as follows: beaches, shopping, neighborhoods, ability to get around, parks, proximity to other towns.

When asked about their concerns, residents mentioned safety, driving/parking, real estate development, tax rate, business closings, and the need to go to other towns for services/stores.

When asked what was most important for the future, residents mentioned the beaches, a strong business community, parks/open space, walking/biking, affordable housing and parking.
When asked what the most important areas in town were, residents said Humphrey Street, Vinnin Square and the commuter rail station.

**Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce Focus Group October 12, 2012** – Nine local businesses attended the focus group. After being briefed about the project the attendees were led through a facilitated discussion and asked to consider three key questions:

- What do you like best about this neighborhood? assets and strengths
- What do you like least about this neighborhood? weaknesses and liabilities
- What’s your vision for Downtown Swampscott? What does it look like? What is there and who is there?

In response to the last question, the attendees developed a very full list of opportunities that they would like to see explored to improve the downtown.

**October 23 Swampscott Visioning Workshop** – This visioning workshop was held in the cafeteria of the high school and was open to the public. Approximately 30 town officials and residents attended. The attendees were asked to sit at tables for small breakout groups led by a facilitator. The groups were asked to review the list of strengths and challenges developed at the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce focus group and to add to the list. The majority of the time was spent reviewing the list of opportunities, adding to it and developing a sense of the group’s priorities.

**Swampscott Draft Downtown Vision and Action Plan, December 17, 2012** – At this public forum which was held in the Swampscott Public Library, MAPC presented a wide array of potential actions for the town to consider.
Chapter Two: Existing Conditions

Land Use Overview

The downtown study area contains a wide range of land uses. The study area was analyzed by using the Department of Revenue land use codes and the Town of Swampscott assessment database.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>% of Total Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-use</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single family</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>15.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>10.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two and three family</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>16.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartments</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inns/tourist homes</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail under 10,000 sf</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants/bars</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto related</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial parking lot</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General office</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical offices</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>23.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>9.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBTA</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46.57</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Swampscott Assessor
Within the study area there are 275 parcels. Based on land area, approximately 43.6% of the study area is residential. Another 23.8% is devoted to municipal uses. Approximately 7.5% is devoted to retail uses and another 2.29% to office uses.

**Sub-Areas**

In order to better understand the study area it has been broken down into three sub-areas.

1) **Burrill Street to Monument Street** – This sub-area begins at the commuter rail station and continues along Burrill Street to Monument Street, a distance of 0.54 miles. There is some commercial development in the area surrounding the commuter rail station. The town leases the train depot and has issued an RFP for a developer to re-use the building. Another option would be for the town to buy the building. The building would need extensive work to bring it up to code for re-use. Burrill Street is a combination of commercial and residential uses.

Included in this sub-area is one of Swampscott’s public beaches, King’s Beach. The beach extends for approximately 900 feet from Swampscott’s western boundary with Lynn to the Red Rock promontory. Swimming is allowed but there is no lifeguard on duty. There are no facilities for boating. There is a public park/sitting area with benches above the sea wall. It is readily accessible
by public transportation and is close to nearby restaurants. It is town-owned and maintained by the Department of Public Works but is under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Commission.
Church conversion on Burrill Street

King’s Beach
2) Monument Square and the Olmsted Subdivision Historic District

Monument Square can be thought of as the gateway to Swampscott. It is located at the intersection of Humphrey Street, Monument Avenue and Burrill Street. There is a tall civil war monument on a green traffic island. There is a strip of green running through the center of Monument Street which leads to the entrance to a neighborhood designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. This area includes the Elihu Thomson House which houses Town Hall and Linscott Park.

Although the Olmsted Subdivision is not within the study area, one of the goals of this plan is to tie together historic resources with the downtown. The 130 acre Olmsted Subdivision was planned by Frederick Law Olmsted and has many of the characteristics of an Olmsted development including curvilinear roads, traffic islands and the use of an entrance parkway.

Swampscott was included in the Essex County Landscape Inventory done by the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. A reconnaissance report was published in 2005 which includes a wealth of information about historic resources in Swampscott.
3) Humphrey Street to Cedar Hill Terrace

This section comprises the heart of the downtown. It is a mix of land uses including restaurants, bakeries and pizza shops and services such as dry cleaners, financial services and hair salons, dentists, home décor and furnishings. There are multi-use buildings with ground floor retail and residential or services on the second floor as well as a full range of residential types including single-family, two and three family structures and condominiums.

Also along the water side of Humphrey Street, there are several large restaurants that have dining facing the ocean.

The prominent coastal feature is Fishermen’s Beach and the Fish House and pier. Fisherman’s Beach is sometimes also known as Blaney Beach. The beach extends for 2,300 feet and includes 0.9 acres of upland reservation land above the sea wall. The Reservation, including the western half and the eastern tip of the beach is town-owned but most of the eastern half of the beach is owned by abutters. The Harbor Master is responsible for the commercial fishing and recreational boating uses including docking at the town pier. Recreational activities such as swimming and sailing lessons are managed by the Recreation Commission. The area is maintained by the Department of Public Works. Facilities include the following:

- The Fish House: The building is used for commercial fishermen to store their gear and includes public toilets.
- The town pier and moorings, both public and private, which are used by commercial fishing vessels and recreational craft.
• Three vehicle access ramps to the beach.
• Benches and parking.

This section also includes parcels on both sides of Blaney Street.
Multi-family residential on Blaney Street

Commercial development along Humphrey Street showing different building heights
Community Facilities

The study area encompasses a number of municipal buildings and other related community facilities.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 2: Study Area Community Facilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Rail Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olmsted District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fish House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church of the Holy Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Church of Swampscott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swampscott Club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: MAPC Data Lab*
Zoning

Existing zoning designations are somewhat accurate in depicting land use within the study area. There is historically mixed use zoning that reflects the traditional New England small town mix of uses built out with more contemporary uses over time. Starting at the commuter rail station, areas zoned Business B1 adjacent to the railroad station alternate with Residence A3 zoning heading south along Burrill Street, where professional offices are mixed with well kept older single and two-family homes. The intersection of Burrill Street and Paradise Road features a small B1 area and includes a dry cleaner and an insurance agency. Further south on Burrill Street, residential uses predominate with Residence A2 zoning on the eastern side of the street and A3 on the west until Rock Avenue, where municipal uses on both sides of the street—Swampscott Fire Department, Library Town Hall and Veteran’s Office—mix with professional offices. The western end of Humphrey Street features commercial uses on both sides of the street, tracking the allowed B1 zoning, until the edge of Anthony’s Pier 4 property, where uses on the ocean side of Humphrey Street shift into A3 zoning. Residence A-3, including more condominium development, continues on the south side of Humphrey Street to Blaney Beach and beyond to the Fish House/Swampscott Yacht Club. Commercial uses continue on the north side of Humphrey Street from Redington Street until roughly Fuller Terrace, where Residence A, mixed with some professional and medical offices, resumes as far as Greenwood Avenue. Beyond Greenwood Avenue to Cedar Hill Terrace is Business B-2, which features a restaurant, boutique, chiropractic and an automotive service located adjacent to a condominium development.
Figure 3- Study Area Zoning
Demographics

The following demographic data from the 2010 Census is for the entire town rather than just the study area. It is presented to give a snapshot of the town and to highlight any trends that might impact future plans in general.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tr>
<td>0-15 years old</td>
<td>2,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years old</td>
<td>1,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years old</td>
<td>1,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years old</td>
<td>1,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 years old</td>
<td>2,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64 years old</td>
<td>2,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74 years old</td>
<td>1,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years old</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+ years old</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transportation and Circulation

To complement and assist the vision for Swampscott, a review was performed to identify transportation issues and opportunities within the corridor. This review included field observations of existing conditions, collection of local planning studies and documents, and input from the Town Planner and public participants. The following sections describe findings from this review.

Roadway Characteristics

The study area consists of Burrill Street between the Commuter Rail Station and Monument Avenue, Humphrey Street between Monument Avenue and Cedar Hill Street, and Blaney Street.
Burrill Street is an urban collector that provides a direct connection between the Commuter Rail Station and downtown Swampscott. Burrill Street is approximately 33.5' wide and provides on-street parking in designated areas, generally near the commuter rail and near Monument Avenue and the Public Library. Parking is free and has various restrictions depending on location: including permit parking only, 2 hour, 30 minute, and 15 minute parking spaces. A typical cross section is illustrated in Figure 4, page 21.
Burrill Street near Monument Avenue, facing west

Figure 4-Representative Cross-Section of Burrill Street
Humphrey Street is an urban principal arterial with a two-lane cross-section and a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Humphrey Street provides access to Marblehead to the north, and Lynn and Nahant to the south. Within the study area, Humphrey Street is 52’ wide, resulting in wide 18-foot travel lanes. On-street parking is permitted and marked along both sides of Humphrey Street within the study area. Parking is free and restricted to one or two hours, depending on location. See Figure 5, a cross-section of Humphrey Street, on page 23.

Humphrey Street near Blaney Street, looking west

Humphrey Street near Ingalls Terrace, looking east
Humphrey Street near Ingalls Terrace, looking west

Figure 5 - Representative Cross-Section of Humphrey Street
Blaney Street is a one-way local road that runs parallel to Humphrey Street east of Redington Street and then turns south and intersects with and ends at Humphrey Street. On-street parking is permitted on the south and west sides of Blaney Street. Parking is free and restricted to 1 Hour or Resident Permit parking, depending on location.

**Intersection Characteristics**

The study area includes 8 major intersections on Burrill Street and Humphrey Street:

- Burrill Street/Railroad Avenue/Middlesex Avenue: Un-signalized
- Burrill Street/New Ocean Street/Paradise Road: Signalized
- Burrill Street/Monument Avenue: Un-signalized
- Burrill Street/Humphrey Street: Un-signalized
- Humphrey Street/Redington Street: Signalized
- Humphrey Street/Blaney Street: Signalized
- Humphrey Street/Greenwood Avenue: Un-signalized
- Humphrey Street/Puritan Road: Signalized
Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks are present along the entire corridor and vary in width, generally measuring 7-8 feet on Humphrey Street and 4-6 feet on Burrill Street. Near the commuter rail station, grass buffers are provided between the sidewalk and the roadway on Burrill Street.

In some locations, sign poles and utility equipment creep are present on the roadside and reduce passable width on the sidewalks. Sidewalks are generally in good condition within the study area.

Crosswalks are present at each signalized intersection and many un-signalized intersections. Crosswalks on Humphrey Street are standard striped transverse lines with a painted blue fill, while crosswalks on Burrill Street are transverse lines with no color fill. Crosswalks on Humphrey Street were restriped in fall 2012 and are in good condition. There are multiple crosswalks along the corridor that do not provide curbing or ramps. Those with wheelchairs and strollers often must leave the crosswalk to gain access to the sidewalk, as shown below in Figure 6.

![Image of a crosswalk with no ramp](image)

Figure 6-Example of crosswalk with no ramp provided

Bicycle Facilities

Bicyclists were observed traveling on the corridor, but there are no existing on-street bicycle facilities available on Humphrey or Burrill Streets. Numerous recreational and commuting cyclists were observed traveling on the corridor. Humphrey Street provides access to the nearby trails in Lynn and Marblehead, and Humphrey Street is part of the East Coast Greenway, although there is no signage to indicate this along Humphrey Street. A rail trail is planned north of the study area, and would run across Swampscott in an east-west direction and link to an existing trail in Marblehead.
Minimal bicycle parking accommodations were observed within the corridor, at the commuter rail station and the public library.

Regional Trails surrounding the Study Area

**Transit Service and Amenities**

Swampscott has a commuter rail station located at the western end of the study area, at the intersection of Burrill Street and Railroad Avenue. The commuter rail provides service between North Station in Boston and Rockport and has 20 minute headways in the peak hours.

In addition to the commuter rail service, there are four MBTA bus routes that serve the corridor. Two bus routes run along Humphrey Street within the corridor: Route 442 and Route 449. Bus Route 442 travels between Marblehead and Wonderland, and Route 449 travels between Marblehead and Downtown Crossing. Bus stops are located less than 0.2 miles from each other on Humphrey Street, or approximately a 4 minute walking distance. Two bus routes intersect the corridor at Burrill Street along Paradise Road/New Ocean Street: Route 441 and Route 448. Bus Route 441 travels between Marblehead and Wonderland, and Route 448 travels between Marblehead and Downtown Crossing. Buses to Wonderland run every 10 minutes in the peak hours. Buses to Downtown Crossing run only during peak hours, with 30 minute headways.

There are minimal bus stop amenities within the corridor. Signs were observed to designate bus stop locations but there were no benches, shelters, schedules or other accommodation for passengers waiting for the scheduled service at most stops. A bus shelter is provided at one bus stop, at the intersection of Humphrey Street and Monument Avenue. Bus stops were observed to
be inadequate in length, with nearly all of the bus stops within the corridor measuring between 20-30 feet, while MBTA buses measure 40 feet. This width does not allow for the bus length or the space needed for buses to maneuver into and out of the bus stops. This can require passengers to load in the street, creating an unsafe condition and may not allow handicapped riders to access/egress the bus.

Parking

There are approximately 320 public parking spaces within the study area, in public lots and on Humphrey and Burrill Streets. Of these spaces, approximately 261 are on-street and 59 are off-street spaces.

Figure 7 below shows the location of the various types of parking restrictions along the corridor and Table 3 shows the breakdown of the type and number of parking spaces.
Figure 7 - Swampscott Downtown Parking Spaces

Table 3. Public Parking within the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Parking</th>
<th>Number of Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Minute Parking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Minute Parking (6:30am-9:30am)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hour Parking</td>
<td>53 (+2 HP-V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hour Parking (7am-6pm)</td>
<td>123 (+2 HP-V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hour Parking</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permit Parking Only (6:00am-10:00am)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Hall Lot (no restrictions)</td>
<td>18 (+2 HP-V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish House Lot (no restrictions)</td>
<td>37 (+2 HP-V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312 (+8 HP-V)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional parking is available at the commuter rail station off of Burrill Street, with approximately 131 parking spaces available for commuters for a daily fee of $4.00. The parking lot and station is owned by the MBTA.
Chapter Three: The Downtown Vision

Downtown Swampscott should be an active, mixed-use community, with a variety of housing options that incorporate lively commercial and residential areas. The neighborhood should have a safe, attractive and enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle environment that connects its different amenities, including the commuter rail station, the Olmsted District, Humphrey Street, town beaches, the harbor, the new high school and town parks. Commercial businesses and development opportunities that draw on and enhance Swampscott’s historic residential fabric and coastal heritage should be encouraged and supported.

During the planning process, a vision for the downtown area emerged that aims to see the downtown as a sum of all its parts, attracting more business, visitors and local use while protecting the historic character and scale of the neighborhood. Group discussions and interviews clearly indicated that residents support maintaining the small scale, stable residential character of downtown while enabling pedestrian-scaled, appropriate mixed uses that could draw people downtown and to the town’s beaches and waterfront.

Many people expressed their wishes for a safer, more walkable and beautiful downtown, particularly along Humphrey Street, with improved sidewalks, signage, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and safer crosswalks. There is a strong desire for visitors to be able to take the train to Swampscott, park at the commuter rail station and then walk or bike safely to Humphrey Street, King’s Beach, the harbor and Fish House. Installing heritage-themed signage throughout the downtown area could also help to establish a clear identity for the neighborhood and direct visitors to attractions such as the Olmsted District, Town Hall, Linscott Park, gateway welcoming areas, beaches and the Fish House.

Residents and business-owners stated their desire for shared parking strategies for new development occurring downtown and a desire for a mediated parking solution for the Anthony’s Pier lot that, if advanced, could help provide additional spaces downtown. Many supported the idea of having more events such as the Farmer’s Market, happen downtown on a regular basis and the creation of an overall strategy could help reduce peak congestion periods and help visitors and residents feel that parking was available downtown.

The downtown can develop a more robust and inviting atmosphere by using its coastal resources to create an identity for downtown. Establishing gateways to Swampscott at both the commuter rail station and at King’s Beach could help provide local business and historical information to visitors, offer restrooms, bicycle rentals and other amenities. Fisherman’s Beach and the Fish House could become more robust recreational destinations with improved amenities and appearances and providing more reasons to visit and relax downtown.

For the future, the community also expressed its wishes to create an ocean front public walking path and to begin using a seasonal trolley service to access the downtown without having to add parking. The trolley could serve to connect the commuter rail station with the downtown and Vinnin Square commercial areas as well as town beaches, the harbor, and the Fish House.
The downtown’s physical appearance could be improved using building façade and storefront improvements. There was significant support from the community that downtown buildings and properties should be well maintained and kept clean. There was also hope expressed that underutilized or vacant properties such as the former senior center and police station on Burrill Street could be redeveloped in ways that support the downtown vision.

The Swampscott neighborhood downtown vision also supports the reuse and revitalization of the commuter rail station and the area adjacent to it. Commuter rail access to and from Swampscott can be enhanced by adding secure bicycle and scooter parking at the station in the short term, while negotiations with the MBTA on the future use of the station itself continue. The community expressed its wish to see continued safety improvements near the station, such as being able to access both in-bound and out-bound trains from either side of the station. Several residents expressed the desire to see the commuter rail station area become another area of mixed use growth and housing opportunities for the town and the town should investigate the feasibility of establishing a 40-R overlay district in the properties adjacent to the commuter rail station. Transit-oriented development near commuter rail and transit stops is becoming increasingly popular with professionals who prefer to commute by rail to Boston as well as today’s smaller families and empty-nesters who are seeking to downsize and while having access to Swampscott’s amenities and those of nearby Boston and Salem, without having to own a car.

All future residential development in the area should be accompanied by the creation of small parklets, open space areas that could complement the development of new bicycle and pedestrian connections, including bike parking and secure storage areas, throughout the downtown area. These could be developed in conjunction with the redevelopment of larger sites using the special permit process. Short term goals could include the development of a local bike sharing network and completion of the Humphrey Street to Middle School section of the Swampscott Rail Trail, with a possible long-term goal of completing the entire trail with connections to Salem and Marblehead, downtown, the beaches, the high school and commuter rail station.
Chapter Four: The Downtown Swampscott Action Plan

The Downtown Swampscott Action Plan is organized around four key themes that emerged from a review of past studies and the results of the visioning workshops.

Theme 1: Build a vibrant downtown with appropriate mixed uses.

**Action #1: Conduct a zoning conformance analysis of the downtown study area.**

Conduct a zoning conformance analysis of the study area parcels to determine what percentage of existing uses are conforming and what percentage of existing structures are dimensionally conforming. Visual surveys of this part of the downtown indicated multiple land uses that have evolved over time. Some of these uses and buildings are probably not in conformance with present zoning and others would be made non-conforming under zoning if the area were rezoned. A thorough zoning conformance analysis could provide a baseline for the town to proceed from as it studies the downtown area and considers making changes.

**Action #2: Hold a visual preference survey workshop for the Humphrey Street corridor.**

A visual preference survey can help a community design the kind of development design it prefers by introducing a series of design images that participants then score according to their preference. The images can be actual photographs or computer simulated images illustrating various building styles and design scenarios. Held after performing a base line zoning analysis (Action 1), the survey can also help provide a sound foundation for establishing zoning or design modifications within an established area.

**Action #3: Consider a mixed use bylaw and design guidelines for the downtown area.**

There has been consistent support expressed by residents for zoning in the downtown area that would help distinguish and revitalize the Humphrey Street corridor, enable small businesses to grow and modify some of the regulatory challenges, all while respecting the special historical character of the downtown. Enabling a mix of small business and residential uses, backed by sound design guidelines to ensure best development practices along and near Humphrey Street has been a consistent theme in both the 2004 Community Development Plan and the 2007 Master Plan Recommendations. This theme also continued to receive strong support from Swampscott business owners at the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce visioning session as well as the October 23 town-wide downtown visioning meeting.

Swampscott received a grant from the Mass Downtown Initiative in 2009 to explore the regulatory challenges in the Humphrey Street corridor. Working with the Humphrey Street Zoning Bylaw Committee, the town’s planning consultant for the grant, Eaton Planning, produced a draft Humphrey Street Overlay District that included design standards for the overlay district. The Town should review the proposed bylaw and revisit the proposals to:
• Adopt the HSOD bylaw amendment package.
• Establish a Design Review Board.

**Action #4: Adopt a 40R district for the train station area.**

The town should consider adopting a smart growth zoning district for the area around the train station as per the State’s [40R program](#). The Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District Act, Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2004, codified as M.G.L. chapter 40R (the Act), encourages communities to create denser residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including a percentage of affordable housing units, to be located near transit stations, in areas of concentrated development such as existing city and town centers, and in other highly suitable locations. Some communities who have passed 40R districts include Reading, North Reading, Lynnfield and Marblehead. The Town of Reading adopted a [Smart Growth Overlay District](#) on November 30, 2009. This district includes the Reading Commuter Rail station. The first development under this zoning has been completed (30 Haven Street) and is just two blocks from the commuter rail.

**Theme 2: Use coastal resources to establish an identity for downtown.**

Swampscott residents have always felt that the beaches, waterfront and harbor are some of the town’s greatest assets but residents feel that these assets need to be enhanced in order to play a greater role in downtown revitalization. The two main coastal resources in the study area are the Fish House/Fisherman’s Beach and Kings Beach. Each has the opportunity to fill a different need in the overall scheme of downtown revitalization.

**Action #1: Establish King’s Beach as a gateway to Swampscott.**

This beach is closest to the commuter rail station and is the first Swampscott beach that you come to as you enter Swampscott on Route 129. It ends in the vicinity of Monument Avenue at the Civil War monument and is in close proximity to several restaurants. As such, it can be promoted as a destination for day visitors and as a gateway to Swampscott and the Monument Avenue/Olmsted District area.

This gateway function could be promoted in the following ways:

• Information kiosk to orient visitors.
• Be the start of a historic walking trail.
• Bicycle rentals or bike share kiosk.
• Restrooms at Linscott Park.
• Provide shade at the sitting area above the sea wall.
• Landscaping (trees and flowers) to create a more welcoming space.
• Public art related to the ocean.
Local businesses should be encouraged to help fund improvements to this area.

**Action #2: Improve Fisherman’s Beach and the Fish House to strengthen its use as a recreational resource and as an active working waterfront.**

Fisherman’s Beach and the Fish House are farther into the heart of downtown and also currently provide more recreational amenities than King’s Beach. These recreational amenities include swimming, boating and sailing lessons. Reinforcing the recreational amenities could give visitors and residents more reason to venture further down Humphrey Street and to stay there longer.

Improvements could include the following:
- Upgrade the public bathrooms at the Fish House.
- Provide locker rooms for changing.
- Bike racks.
- Landscaping to improve the look of the area.

**Action #3: Create a network of marked trails to connect the train station and downtown with natural, cultural and historic features.**

Downtown Swampscott is a compact area with a number of cultural, historic and natural features which are easily accessible on foot. Highlighting these areas with a well thought out network of marked trails can provide residents and visitors with another way of enjoying the many assets of the community. Any network of trails within Swampscott should be coordinated with the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway which runs through Swampscott.

There are many elements that go into a person’s decision to walk versus drive from Point A to Point B including the amount of time available, the weather and the nature of the trip. One low-cost way to increase the likelihood of walking trips is to provide simple signage that lets pedestrians know how to get to various destinations and how long it will likely take. Several examples of wayfinding initiatives in Massachusetts cities and towns include Beverly, Dennis, Sandwich, Turners Falls and Worcester. A signage and wayfinding program for Swampscott could include the following areas:
- The commuter rail station to Monument Street.
- Monument Street to Town Hall and the Olmsted district.
- Monument Street to Fisherman’s Beach.

There are several steps that would be necessary to develop such a trail network.

1. **Involve the public in discussions about signage and wayfinding** – Residents and businesses are rightfully concerned about sign pollution and how such a program would be implemented. The town should develop a process and commit to full public participation so that all stakeholders can have an opportunity to provide input. This process should be designed to achieve the following goals:
   - Provide residents with an understanding of the benefits of such a program.
   - Provide an opportunity to hear all stakeholder concerns.
• Develop a preliminary plan of destinations to tie together.

2. **Hire a consulting firm to design the program** – Because of the importance of this program to improving the downtown and because of the level of investment, the development of the program should be done by professionals. This would include designing a logo, sign placement and determining what information needs to be on the signs.

3. **Meet with private property owners** - Residents at the October 23rd visioning session expressed an interest in having a coastal walking path. While there is already public access on the beaches and along the sidewalks, there are other areas where the coastline is in private ownership such as the large restaurants or smaller businesses between Redington Street and Fuller Terrace. The town may want to convene a meeting of all the property owners involved to determine if there is any potential for developing such a path as part of the overall trail system.

MAPC worked with the Town of Winthrop to develop [Walk Winthrop: A Greenway Action Plan](#). This could serve as a template for a similar plan for Swampscott.

MAPC has also been involved with a project to develop signed walking routes to the Mystic River. As part of this project MAPC developed a tool kit to help communities develop walking routes. Although the focus of that project was routes to a river, the same process can be applied to any type of route. The tool kit can be found on the MAPC [walking routes to the river](#) web page.

Examples of signs for a variety of walking trails
Action #4: Continue the harbor planning process.

Swampscott recently expanded the role of the Harbor Committee to look at the use of the whole waterfront. The town would like to conduct dredging to maintain and expand on traditional mooring areas in the harbor once eelgrass mitigation issues can be settled. Swampscott should consider working with MA Coastal Zone Management staff to help them outline and conduct a Local Harbor Plan that would clarify the goals and regulatory processes around the harbor and waterfront, assist in eelgrass mitigation measures and dredging, and help in obtaining grants to move the harbor and waterfront planning and implementation process forward. http://www.mass.gov/czm/phpp2.htm

Theme 3: Support downtown businesses and attract people to the neighborhood.

Action #1: Establish a Downtown Swampscott Subcommittee within the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce

This was one of the recommendations of the Humphrey Street Zoning Bylaw Project. There are many models that could be used. This could be an informal merchants association or could be as formalized as a Business Improvement District (see below). One potential model could be as a subcommittee of the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce. Another would be a 501 (c) (3) non-profit. A merchants association devoted just to Humphrey Street could start out small and grow as the revitalization effort grows. The focus of such an organization would be on marketing and events. While the appropriate zoning is a critical step in the process, zoning only permits uses, it does not ensure that they are put in place. It is not always true that “if you zone it, they will come”.

Action #2: Begin a storefront and façade improvement program.

A storefront/façade improvement program provides matching funds for property owners or tenant merchants who wish to make improvements such as new or improved windows, doors, signage, awnings, lighting, entryways, and other items. Both Salem and Peabody have façade improvement programs that could serve as models for Swampscott.

Action #3: Organize workshops and technical assistance programs for downtown businesses.

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development offers a range of programs related to downtown revitalization. DHCD’s Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) provides assistance to communities seeking help on how to revitalize their downtowns. It takes a comprehensive approach that includes economic development and community development. Successful downtown revitalization is comprehensive and includes a well-balanced community strategy composed of seven downtown building blocks:
* Encouraging Community Involvement & Ownership;
* Preserving & Enhancing Downtown Character;
* Ensuring Economic Vitality;
* Promoting Downtown Assets;
* Getting Into & Around Downtown;
* Living Downtown; and,
* Keeping Downtown Safe.

The town has already received assistance from DHCD in the form of support for the Humphrey Street Zoning Bylaw project. A complete list of programs offered can be found at the DHCD website.

MDI is charged with development of downtown education and training opportunities that meet the needs of communities at various stages of downtown revitalization. A series of workshops is held each year on topics such as business recruitment and retention, design issues, creating a business improvement district, or upper-story housing.

**Action #4: Perform a downtown market analysis and develop a brand and marketing strategy.**

**Conduct a comprehensive downtown market analysis.**

- A market analysis is needed to develop a complete picture of existing commercial conditions in the study area and to identify market opportunities. This should be combined with Vinnin Square businesses to get a complete analysis of the entire community and to begin to establish stronger links between the downtown and Vinnin Square business communities.
- Such an analysis involves a complete inventory of all businesses and commercial spaces to estimate economic activity across various commercial segments. An analysis of the surrounding neighborhood demographics provides an estimate of the purchasing power across those same segments. The result is a picture of the district’s strengths as well as market “leakage”—segments with the highest potential to capture local purchasing power.
- The Downtown Subcommittee could be the appropriate party to manage such a market analysis, which would be conducted by an economic development consultant. Funding should be sought from local banks or other major businesses and employers.

**Beginning downtown marketing actions.**

- Marketing can help to attract more shoppers and encourage them to visit multiple merchants during a single visit.
- The marketing campaign could involve print or radio advertisements, advertising at the commuter rail station, or internet campaigns.
- The Downtown Subcommittee could be the appropriate party to coordinate a joint marketing campaign, which would be funded by participating businesses.
Action #5: Investigate the possibility of creating a Downtown Business Improvement District.

Business Improvement Districts (BID): A BID is a special assessment district organized by and for property owners with the intention of improving a commercial district. Property owners vote to establish a district to finance supplemental services or enhancements to supplement services already provided by the town. A special assessment, or common area fee, is applied to property within the district. A wide range of services and improvements are allowed including marketing and public relations, improving the downtown marketplace or city/town center, capital improvements, public safety enhancements, and special events. The goal of a BID is to improve a specific commercial area by attracting customers, clients, shoppers and other businesses.

Action #6: Hold community gatherings downtown and develop signature events to draw people there.

Special events such as concerts, music or food festivals, heritage days, walking tours, etc. can draw people to communities they might not have otherwise visited. Events that are of general interest, rather than strictly local, can be easier to publicize in the newspapers. While such events require a real commitment of time and money on the party of the organizers, they can bring people into the downtown and can increase business for restaurants and local shops. Four events per year might be difficult at first and the focus should be on events that take advantage of Swampscott’s coastal location. In addition, the role of the Farmers Market should be revisited. It is currently held at the High School but several residents suggested that it might be better to move it to Linscott Park to bring more people downtown.

Some examples of the types of events that are popular can be found at the Downtown Happenings section of the Beverly Main Streets web page.

Action #7: Complete a street tree inventory and tree planting and replacement program.

Swampscott currently lacks the level of street tree coverage that would significantly improve the aesthetics of downtown. Humphrey Street was once lined with trees, which have disappeared over time as the road was transformed into MA Route 129. According to a fact sheet published by DCR the benefits of street trees include the following:

- Economic development: Shoppers prefer tree lined village streets and downtown.
- Residential: People prefer to buy homes in a community with many trees.
- Storm water management: Trees reduce storm water runoff and flooding.
- Air quality: Trees help clean the air.
- Quality of life: Trees provide beauty, serenity and raise the quality of life.

Swampscott does not currently maintain an inventory of town trees although the Public Works Department would like to achieve this goal. Due to budget constraints the town is limited to pruning and evaluating trees that come through the department’s work order system. For at least the last ten years, the department has operated with an annual budget of $4,000 for tree replacement. Typically, this translates into about 20 new trees per year. The DCR recommends that communities invest $2-$5 per capita on tree programs. For Swampscott, with a population of approximately 13,800 this would mean a tree budget of $27,600 - $69,000.
It is recommended that an inventory be performed to identify existing healthy trees by type and size as well as the locations of unhealthy trees and missing trees. A program should then be developed to track these natural assets and set up a schedule for replacing unhealthy and missing trees. As part of the replacement process, activities should follow recommended best practices for urban street tree plantings, especially for tree variety, soil substructure, and tree pit specifications.

Action #8: Install pedestrian scale street lighting on Humphrey Street

Replace the existing “cobra head” style highway lighting along Humphrey Street with pedestrian scaled, decorative lighting between the intersection of Monument Avenue and Humphrey Street to Cedar Hill Terrace. The town should investigate the possibility of also using LED lights to save energy.

Some decorative lighting alternatives

Action #9: Investigate options for streetscape bio-retention.

In areas around the United States, cities are experimenting with the applications of ‘Green Streets’. Green Streets are streets that have been reconstructed to include low impact development (LID) features. The LID approach includes decentralized treatment of rainfall and infiltration techniques that minimize runoff and maintain natural hydrology. A particular application used on the Green Streets is bioretention within existing curb extensions. This application is used to retain stormwater and then allow for infiltration and treatment of the stormwater through the vegetation and soils in the curb extension. It is recommended that the use of bioretention in planned or proposed curb extensions be investigated. Not only would this feature assist in
addressing stormwater related impacts along the corridor, it would also contribute to the aesthetics, natural resources and snow storage space on the corridor.

Action #10: Investigate funding options for streetscape improvements

Some of the potential streetscape improvements that could be of benefit to downtown Swampscott have been discussed above (street trees, pedestrian scale lighting and bio-retention areas). But there are others that would also add value to the downtown including landscaping, upgraded crosswalks and street furniture such as benches to name a few.

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides a one-stop shop for municipalities and other eligible public entities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development and job creation and retention, housing development at density of at least 4 units to the acre (both market and affordable units) and transportation improvements to enhancing safety in small, rural communities. The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation and Executive Office for Administration & Finance. The program funds the construction, reconstruction or expansion of publicly owned infrastructure including sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking facilities and bicycle/pedestrian improvements. The 2012 guidelines can be found on the MassWorks website.

Theme 4: Make it safe and easy to get around.

Recommended transportation improvements for Burrill Street and Humphrey Street were prepared based on data collected, field observations and input from local officials and the public. The recommendations include proposed changes to the roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit accommodations. The focus of the recommendations is to enhance access and mobility for multiple modes of travel while building on a shared vision for a unified and attractive community corridor.
Recommendations are organized below according to improvement area (e.g., roadway, bicycle and pedestrian, etc.).

**Roadway Recommendations**

**R 1: Enhance roadway guide and regulatory signage.**

Many existing street signs within the corridor were observed to be faded or in need of repair. This is compounded by the absence of some recommended regulatory and warning signs, such as pedestrian warning signs and speed limit signs. The signs in poor condition and missing signs can be addressed through an inventory of the corridor and development of a sign improvement program. In particular, the following are recommended:

- **Parking signs:** On-street parking locations on the corridor are very important because they provide spots for customers who are visiting local merchants. In many places, the parking guidelines are inconsistent and confusing; this may lead people to avoid parking and shopping in the area. A review should determine if parking signs should be replaced or repositioned to better identify whether parking is permitted and applicable time constraints. Another consideration is to encourage a consistent parking regulation along Humphrey Street within the study area. Currently, Humphrey Street has one or two hour restrictions; providing a consistent two hour restriction could encourage patrons to park once and dine and shop rather than moving their vehicles to park multiple times within the corridor.

In addition, there are off-street public parking locations such as the lot behind Town Hall and the lot near the Fish House; however, there are few signs that direct motorists to these locations. It is recommended that on Humphrey Street, parking area guidance signs be installed. Including the names of the specific parking facilities would assist motorists in choosing the lot that best fits their needs.

*Examples of the various parking signage within the corridor*
More examples of the various parking signage within the corridor

- **Destination guide signs:** Guide signs can direct visitors and other motorists to and around the corridor. As the corridor vision is being decided, it presents the opportunity for developing a community wayfinding system. The use of consistent and coordinated guide sign system across the entire corridor would aid navigation through the area and provide motorists with directions to important civic, transportation, cultural and commercial locations on Burrill and Humphrey Streets.

**R 2: Improve handicap accessibility and parking.**

As described in the Existing Conditions, many crossings on Humphrey Street do not provide the ramps that are required for handicap users to access crosswalks. An audit should be conducted to determine how many crossings are out of compliance and ramps should be installed at all crosswalks within the study area.

In addition, handicapped parking spaces should be audited to determine whether the number and location of handicap parking spaces is appropriate for the corridor. During field observations, a vehicle with a handicap parking tag was parked outside of the regulated parking area, likely in order to accommodate a wheelchair or an accessibility issue. Providing appropriate numbers of handicap parking spaces, in the areas where they are needed, will prevent vehicles from parking illegally within the roadway.
R 3: Install parklets along Humphrey Street.

To improve the pedestrian experience, provide new opportunities for local businesses, and to encourage more green space, installing parklets along Humphrey Street is recommended. Parklets are small parks along the roadway that provide a variety of accommodations, ranging from benches for small groups, bicycle parking, and/or café seating. Common uses are outside of coffee shops, ice cream shops, and other similar uses where groups of local residents are often located. Parklets involve removing one or two parking spaces, depending on the amount of space desired for the parklet. Although a minor amount of parking would be removed, the structures are known to result in additional business for the surrounding environment. Parklets can be temporary and placed during busy summer months and removed for snow removal in winter months. In order to install a parklet at low cost and to have neighborhood input on the desired uses, consider allowing local students or a youth group to construct the parklet.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Recommendations

BP 1: Install Curb Extensions at major crosswalks on Humphrey Street.

Curb extensions narrow pedestrian crossing distances by extending the sidewalk into the vehicular parking lane. Since pedestrians are crossing from an elevated location on an extended sidewalk, rather than on the street level, curb extensions also provide enhanced visibility. To reduce the existing 52 feet crossing width on Humphrey Street, the installation of curb extensions is recommended. Currently, at 52 feet, pedestrian crossings take an average of 15 seconds on Humphrey Street, resulting in an extended time for pedestrians to be vulnerable within the roadway. Curb extensions would be installed at both ends of crosswalks, along the existing parking lane. Since parking is not allowed within crosswalks, a loss of parking as a result of the installation would be minimal.
Curb Extension example and diagram.

**BP 2: Install Bicycle Lanes on Humphrey Street.**

To increase the bicycle network in Swampscott, and to provide improved connections to nearby regional paths, it is recommended that bicycle lanes be installed on Humphrey Street. Many bicyclists currently utilize sidewalks along Humphrey Street rather than the roadway, resulting in a poor experience for pedestrians in the area. Bicycle lanes would help provide space for cyclists within the roadway, and provide a visual queue to remind drivers to share the roadway. Bicycle lanes will also reduce the speed of vehicles on the roadway.

Bicycle lanes could be installed with no changes to the curb locations, with no construction necessary. The cost of bike lane installation would be relatively minor, as it would only require the purchase of roadway paint.

*Bicyclist using sidewalks on Humphrey Street*
BP 3: Install Shared Lane Markings and Bicycle Warning Signage along Burrill Street.

Unlike Humphrey Street, Burrill Street does not have additional width for bicycle lanes; therefore it is recommended that shared lane pavement markings be installed. Shared lane markings assist bicyclists with positioning in the travel lane, especially in relation to parked cars, and have been shown to reduce sidewalk and wrong-way riding. Also, shared lane markings alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists along a corridor. Bicycle warning signs should be installed on the corridor immediately after major intersections. Shared lane markings will help provide access to the commuter rail station, a frequent destination for cyclists.
Examples of shared lane markings

**BP 4: Install Bicycle Route Signage**

A number of community and recreational destinations are located on or in the vicinity of the corridor. As with the suggested guide signage for motorists, bicycle route signage should be used along Burrill Street and Humphrey Street. The bicycle route signs should contain directional and destination information (e.g., ‘Commuter Rail Station 0.5 Mi. ➔’) and be located by major intersections. Possible destinations include the Commuter Rail Station, Fish House, Public Beaches, Schools, Public Library.
Example of bicycle route signage - Source: MUTCD, 2009 Edition. Figure 9B-4.

**BP 5: Upgrade Pedestrian Signal Heads and Pedestrian Push Buttons.**

The existing pedestrian signal heads and push buttons within the corridor are aging. It is recommended that pedestrian signals be upgraded at the signalized intersections to countdown signal heads. These signal heads provide pedestrians with more information about available time for crossing and have been associated with reductions in pedestrian crashes.

The second part of this recommendation is to upgrade pedestrian push buttons so that they include an internal pilot light at a minimum. The pilot light will let pedestrians know that they have requested a crossing phase. Currently a pedestrian, especially one new to the Corridor, can be uncertain if the phase was activated or when it may occur. To go further with this measure, tactile or audio characteristics could be used. These features assist in making signals more accessible to those with visual or auditory disabilities.

**BP 6: Identify Potential Locations and Install Bicycle Racks.**

Bicyclists were observed along the entire length of the Corridor. However, there were no bicycle racks noted either in front of businesses or on properties with off-street parking, only at the commuter rail station and the public library. It is recommended that bicycle racks be installed at regular intervals along Burrill Street and Humphrey Street where there are commercial activities. These racks could be U-style or be designed by local artists to create specific artistry for the town, such as ocean themed bicycle racks.
Examples of U-Style bicycle racks

Examples of ocean-theme bicycle racks

In addition, it is recommended that a bicycle parking ordinance, if not already enacted, be considered by Swampscott. The ordinance would set a requirement for the inclusion of a bicycle racks relative to the amount of off-street vehicle parking spaces created.

**BP 7: Utilize the Regional Bicycle Plan and the Regional Pedestrian Transportation Plan.**

MAPC completed a Regional Bicycle Plan in 2007 and a Regional Pedestrian Transportation Plan in 2010. These plans are both resources for identifying a variety of concepts and applications to
improve bicycle and pedestrian travel. There is even the potential to adopt the regional plan in order to strengthen local goals for integrating bicycle and pedestrian elements into municipal circulation plans. For more information on these regional plans, use the following website: http://www.mapc.org/resources/ped-plan.

BP 8: Implement a bicycle share program.

An alternative to private vehicles, bicycles can provide a healthy and environmentally friendly way to reduce vehicular traffic and can provide access to locations that are too far to walk. Bicycle sharing provides the opportunity to access bicycles for short term trips for a small cost or no fee, removing the barrier or purchasing a bicycle which is prohibitive for some. Bicycle sharing stations could be provided at the commuter rail station, the public library/Town Hall, and popular beaches. This option could encourage beach users to utilize the commuter rail instead of driving and parking in Swampscott.

Transit Recommendations

T 1: Install amenities at bus stops on Humphrey Street.

Bus stops on Humphrey Street (with the exception of one at Monument Avenue) do not have existing amenities such as benches, shelters or route information. In studies, it has been found that transit ridership can be enhanced by improving the waiting experience through amenity and information improvements. Therefore, it is recommended that options be explored for improving the stop locations on the corridor, where space allows.

T 2: Lengthen bus stops to accommodate standard MBTA buses.

Bus stops on Humphrey Street are not adequate in length to accommodate MBTA standard buses. The bus stops along the corridor measure between 20-30 feet, and a standard MBTA bus that travels the corridor measures 40 feet. Therefore, buses are forced to load within the roadway and handicap and elderly riders are unable to load from the sidewalk. Lengthen the bus stops to provide the appropriate space for the bus, as well as the necessary space to pull in and out of the bus stops.

Left: Example of inadequate bus stop length (29’ bus stop length at Humphrey Street at Monument Avenue)
T 3: Improve pedestrian accommodations at the commuter rail station.

A direct connection across the tracks is desired by local residents to improve access from the station and its surrounding parking areas. Consider installing a pedestrian crossing across the tracks to enhance the pedestrian experience.

T 4: Encourage mixed use development at the commuter rail station.

The train station currently lacks retail options for commuters. Providing a mixed-use environment would encourage commuters to utilize local businesses, and would also minimize vehicle miles traveled by commuters. Common businesses surrounding commuter rail stations include: dry cleaning, bakery, coffee shop, small grocery store, etc.

T 5: Install Electric Car Charging at the Commuter Rail Station.

Charging an electric vehicle can take several hours and most vehicles have a limited range before it is necessary to recharge. As ownership of electric vehicles expands, owners should have the opportunity to charge their cars while at work. By investing in an infrastructure that supports electric vehicle charging stations, the use of an environmentally friendly transportation option is promoted and sustainability is increased. A commuter rail station is an ideal place for electric car charging, as vehicles are parked during the day while charging would take place.

Site Access and Circulation Recommendations


There are multiple driveway access points on Burrill and Humphrey Streets. While individual driveways may be needed for residential properties, commercial properties can share driveways and accommodate vehicle access across sites. These arrangements allow people to park once and visit multiple uses, and can allow more development on a site. It also reduces the number of times a motorist must enter and exit a roadway, activities which slow traffic flow and can lead to more vehicular conflicts. It is recommended that as part of the site plan review process joint driveway be encouraged and development sites be required to explore options for cross-access drives with adjacent sites.
SC 2: Maintain Continuity of Sidewalks across Driveways

When driveways cross over existing sidewalks, the sidewalks are typically continuous in material and width. In some cases, however, driveways are paved across sidewalks, effectively displacing the sidewalk. It is recommended that as part of site plan review, new developments maintain or replace the sidewalks with the same material and width. Also, it is recommended that sidewalk elevation control the driveway design so the driveway entrance meets the sidewalk and does not cut through it.

Example of a continuous sidewalk across a driveway
## Resources

There are several resources that could be used to put the recommendations into action. Local resources, both in terms of funding and staff time, will push the recommendations forward, but additional outside resources will likely be necessary for completing improvements. A listing of potential outside resources, which include planning toolkits and funding, is detailed below:

**Downtown Revitalization** - DHCD’s Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) offers a range of services and assistance to communities seeking help on how to revitalize their downtowns. The primary mission of the MDI is to make downtown revitalization an integral part of community development in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.


**MassWorks Infrastructure Program** – The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides grant funding for publicly owned infrastructure including, but not limited to sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking facilities, site preparation, demolition, pedestrian walkways, streetscape, and water treatment systems. The focus of the grant program is job creation and economic development. The Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant, as well as five other grant sources, has been consolidated into this grant program.

[http://www.mass.gov/ehed/infrastructure](http://www.mass.gov/ehed/infrastructure)

**MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – The TIP program funds for the implementation of the Boston MPO’s long-range transportation plan. As a four year plan, it programs federal-aid funds for transit projects, and state and federal-aid funds for roadway projects.

[http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/3_programs/2_tip/tip.html](http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/3_programs/2_tip/tip.html)

**Low Impact Development Toolkit** – Low Impact Development is a set of strategies that treat stormwater management as a site design problem, not an exercise in sizing storm drains and detention ponds. This publication is one component of the Massachusetts Low Impact Development Toolkit, produced by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, in coordination with the I-495 MetroWestCorridor Partnership, and with financial support from United States Environmental Protection Agency.


**Mixed Use Zoning Toolkit** – Mixed Use Zoning: A Planners Guide presents the fundamentals you need to plan a mixed use bylaw. A version of the guide for citizens is also available for download. This guide is based primarily on the experiences of five suburban communities that have prepared bylaws with assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), supported by grants from the state’s Priority Development Fund.


**Sustainable Transportation: Parking Toolkit** – This toolkit is designed to help local officials, developers, citizen board members, and advocates understand the sources of parking issues in their communities and identify potential solutions. The strategies outlined in the toolkit address a variety of situations and concerns in ways that save money, protect the environment, support local businesses, and encourage alternatives to driving.

[http://www.mapc.org/resources/parking-toolkit](http://www.mapc.org/resources/parking-toolkit)