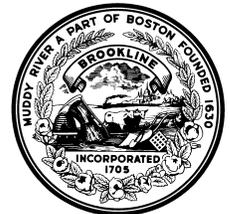


Creating Gateway East: A Public Realm Plan



DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
TOWN OF BROOKLINE



Creating Gateway East: A Public Realm Plan

Board of Selectmen

Robert L. Allen, Jr, Chairman
Joseph T. Geller
Gilbert R. Hoy
Michael W. Merrill
Michael S. Sher

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on April 26, 2005

Department of Planning and Community Development

Robert J. Duffy, AICP - Director
Jeff Levine, AICP - Assistant Director

Department of Economic Development

Catherine Cagle, RLA, LEED, AP - Economic Development Director

Photographic Credits

Catherine Cagle, RLA, LEED, AP - Economic Development Director
Donald Giard, AICP - Planner

Graphic Credits

- ◆ Goody, Clancy & Associates
- ◆ Information Technology Department
(Geographic Information Systems)

WHY A PUBLIC REALM PLAN?

The need for improvements to the Route Nine corridor has been recognized by many groups in Town and beyond. The Chestnut Hill Village Alliance, the Economic Development Advisory Board, Town Meeting, and the Town's legislative delegation have all pushed for improvements to Route Nine that would make it more livable. The common goal is to make Route Nine more of a boulevard and less of a highway, while still acknowledging that over 40,000 cars a day rely on the corridor.



ROUTE NINE TODAY DOES NOT HAVE A STRONG PUBLIC REALM

The recently approved *Brookline Comprehensive Plan 2005-2015* highlights the need to plan for the future of Route Nine and promote development and public improvements that are appropriate for the Town. New and renovated buildings that are more attractive, have a better presence along Route Nine, and are less automobile-oriented, can help improve the character of the corridor as well as meet other Town goals. The Comprehensive Plan calls for a "Route Nine Plan" that involves a number of facets, including transportation analysis, urban design studies, public involvement, and an assessment of current and proposed development along the corridor. The Comprehensive Plan also calls for district planning efforts in Chestnut Hill and Brookline Village that are related to the overall corridor plan.



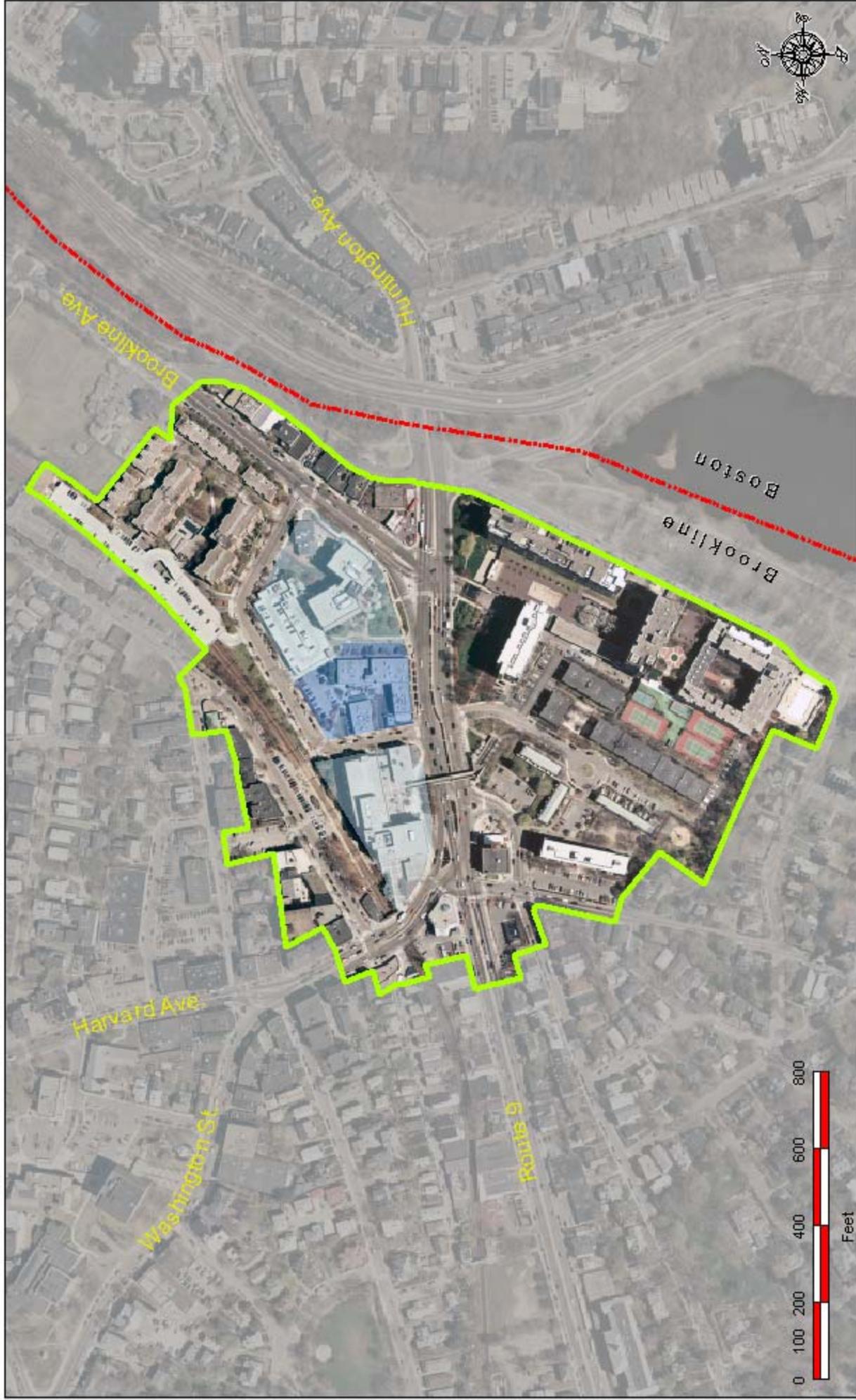
**THE PUBLIC REALM ON SOME BUSY STREETS IS WELCOMING –
COMMONWEALTH AVENUE IN THE BACK BAY**

This Route Nine Plan is one of the first implementation steps from the Comprehensive Plan. It is a large project that will have to be phased over several years. The Comprehensive Plan outlines two areas along Route Nine that have their own characteristics: “Gateway West”, roughly contiguous with Chestnut Hill; and “Gateway East”, roughly contiguous with Brookline Village (see Attachment 3). As a first phase of this overall Plan, the Department of Planning & Community Development proposes to develop public realm standards for the section of Route Nine between Washington Street and the Boston city line, making up most of Gateway East. These standards will set a tone for the entire corridor that can then be carried forward into other planning efforts, while also providing needed guidance to the Town and to private developers seeking to make physical improvements to the area.

The public realm can be broadly defined as the areas in Town that are designed for public use. These can consist of publicly owned streets, sidewalks, rights-of-ways, parks and other publicly accessible open spaces, and public and civic buildings and facilities. Some privately owned spaces can also be considered part of the public realm if they are available for public use without charge. The facades of buildings along public sidewalks also are part of the public realm, because they contribute to the experience people have when using the public spaces.

While private development, as regulated by the Town, is responsible for the creation of most of the buildings and interior spaces, it is the public sector that is the driving force in creating and maintaining the public realm. Public realm spaces are essential for linking together these

GATEWAY EAST



- 1, 5, and 10 Brookline Place
- 2 Brookline Place
- Area of Study

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private buildings- providing access but also providing places for people to relax and meet. In most private buildings you are not allowed to enter unless you have a reason to be there. In the public realm, you need no such reason. In fact, while many of the people using the public realm are using it to travel, many others are using it for no particular purpose other than to enjoy themselves.

This difference in purpose makes the public realm an essential part of what makes a community livable. It also highlights the importance of having an attractive public realm, where people feel safe and comfortable. In some ways, the feeling that the public realm needs to convey is like the one people want to feel when they are at home. Using attractive materials and careful design is therefore an essential part of creating a good public realm. Without such items, the public realm may function well as a transportation system but will not encourage people to linger, get to know each other, and enjoy the places they visit.

The need to make several decisions about the public realm in this area is looming. The Town needs to decide how to move ahead with providing pedestrian accommodation in Brookline



Village by renovating the closed pedestrian bridge or replacing with it a new at-grade facility. The developers of 2 Brookline Place have committed to making significant improvements to the public realm around their development, and will be seeking guidance from the Town in that regard. In addition, the MBTA is planning improvements to the Brookline Village station in the near future. By developing these standards at this time, the Town will be able to get the overall process under way, and also create a tool for use in public infrastructure decisions in the short term. Having this plan in place will also allow the Town to compete for state and federal transportation funds, and influence private investment in the area

**THE BUILDINGS ALONG A BUSY ROAD CAN WELCOME PEDESTRIANS –
BRATTLE STREET IN CAMBRIDGE**

STATE OF ROUTE NINE'S PUBLIC REALM TODAY



The public realm along Route Nine in Brookline Village has some good portions, but generally does not function as well as it could. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not adequate. The physical appearance of the corridor is unattractive, due in part to surrounding land uses, but in large part to the lack of interesting street furniture (such as benches and lighting) and materials used in sidewalks, crosswalks, and medians. In addition, while there have been some improvements in the quality of the facades of public buildings along Route Nine, there are still many buildings that do not contribute to the public realm, especially uses that are set back from the street behind parking lots. Landscaping along Route Nine is also not sufficient- however, the addition of new landscaping needs to be evaluated against the cost to maintain it.

GOALS OF THE PUBLIC REALM PLAN

The public realm plan will have to be realistic about the context in which it is developed. Route Nine is used by about 40,000 cars a day in this location, more than most other roads in the Boston area. Any changes it recommends will have to take into account the very high traffic volumes on the road and the need to maintain regional mobility.

At the same time, it is a major gateway into Brookline - as well as into Boston in the other direction. There are many ways this area can be made more attractive to pedestrians, bicyclists, residents, and local businesses without negatively impacting mobility. The public realm plan will find realistic improvements that can be made. It will also embrace the multi-modal nature of this area. Unlike many transportation corridors, this one is used by automobiles, rapid transit, pedestrians and bicycles. The public realm plan will work to maximize quality of life while maintaining and enhancing the multimodal nature of the area. It will also work to reinforce and connect with the Emerald Necklace as outline in its master plan.

In the context described above, the public realm plan will accomplish the following goals:

- Identify conceptual projects that are realistic and can be implemented over time
- Develop a short- and long-term capital investment strategy
- Provide the Planning Board with a set of detailed guidelines for application during design review under Section 5.09 of the Zoning By-law

- Provide conceptual designs for use in seeking state, Town and private funding commitments for further design and construction. For example, a total of \$700,000 was allocated to Route Nine as part of the state's 2004 Transportation Bond Bill. Gaining access to those funds will be considerably easier when the Town has initial concepts of what it would like to accomplish with the funds.
- Provide a basis for potential Zoning By-law amendments that seek to improve the character of the corridor
- Provide a critical first phase for Route Nine corridor and district planning efforts
- Provide a framework to influence future private investment in the area

The Public Realm Plan could also be presented to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen for possible adoption as a formal amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

This project will build on the Route Nine Key Element of the Brookline Comprehensive Plan to develop conceptual designs for public realm improvements along Route Nine. The design of these public realms is the first step to the development of an overall plan for Route Nine and will provide the state and private developers with specific physical improvements for funding by state transportation bond bill money or as public benefits from new construction.



IMPROVING THE SIDEWALKS & CROSSWALKS WOULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Specifically, the project will develop the following:

- A palette of plantings, materials, street furniture and other items for public and private spaces:

- Sidewalks
 - Street Trees
 - Pedestrian Connections and Crossings
 - Pedestrian Crossings
 - Emerald Necklace Connections
 - Urban Design Strategies
 - Building Façade Guidelines
 - Right-of-way Improvements
 - Transit Oriented Development
 - Transit Stations and Stops
 - Bike Travel, Storage and Crossing
 - Signals, Street and Directional Signs
 - Lighting
 - Capital Improvements and Financing
 - Implementation Phasing
- Sites and preliminary designs – with order of magnitude cost estimates - for specific improvements to pedestrian and bicycle circulation; public spaces; and the attractiveness of public areas overall.
 - Guideline for pending and future private development and investment.

In the longer term, this project could be the starting point for a larger public realm project along all of Route Nine.

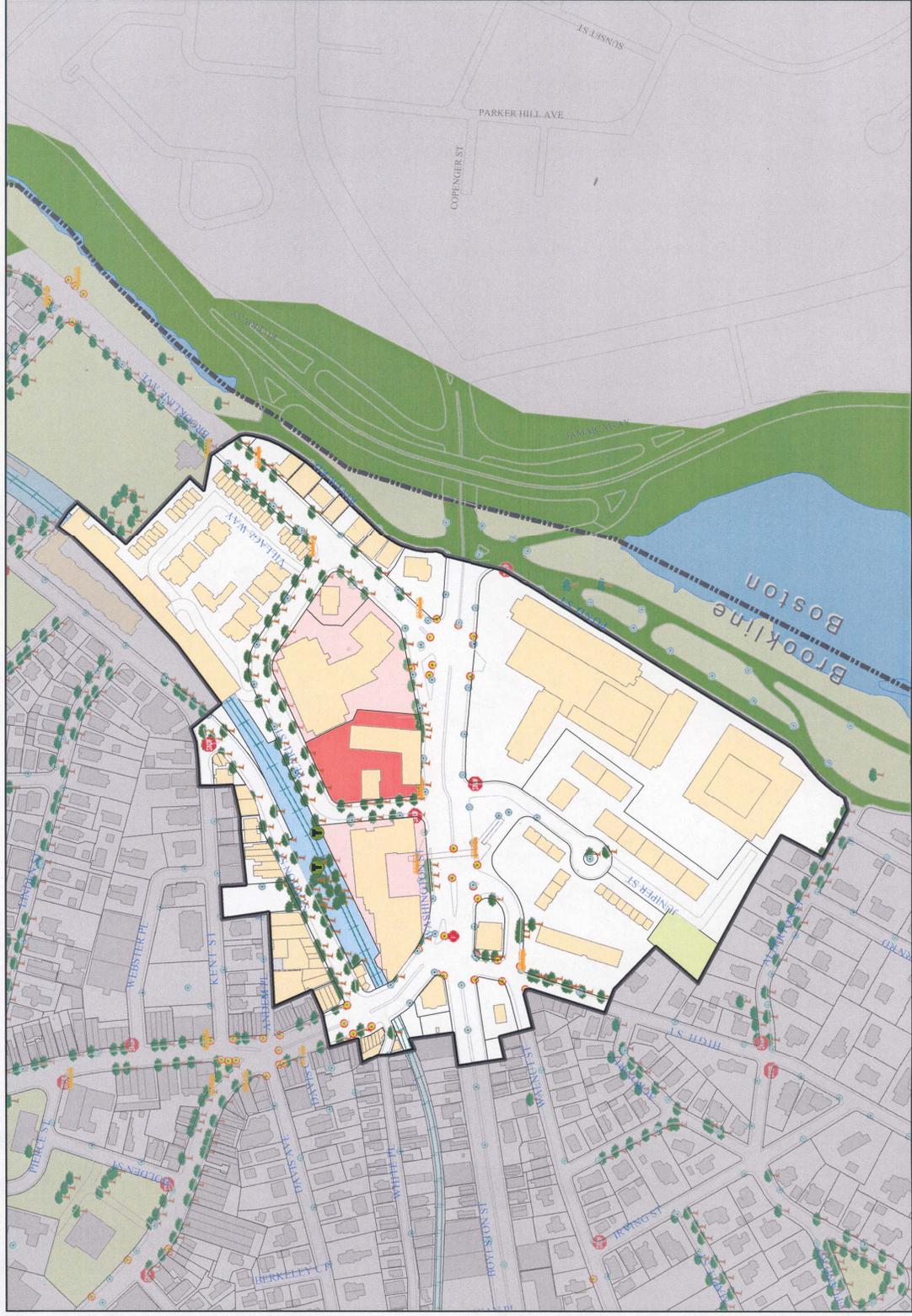
PLANNING AREA

The Planning Area for this project is defined by the following geographic limits:

- The Emerald Necklace to the south
- Pill Hill Local Historic District to the west
- Properties fronting Station Street/Station Street to the north
- Brookline Avenue Playground to the east

The study area includes properties fronting intersections of Boylston and Washington and White Place, Washington Street and Station Street. See the map below for more detail.

Gateway East Planning Area





CONCEPTUAL VISION FOR GATEWAY EAST FROM THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PRELIMINARY SCOPE

This project is part of an overall Route Nine planning effort and is one of the first implementation steps for the Comprehensive Plan. The initial phase will be the creation of a set of preliminary recommendations for the segment of Route Nine between Washington Street and Huntington Avenue – the portion that is also called “Washington Street.” These preliminary recommendations will be developed with the guidance of a Citizen Advisory Committee and with the input of the public at public meetings. These preliminary recommendations are extremely important to have in the short term as a way of guiding investment in the area. Once preliminary recommendations are complete, future work will build on these preliminary recommendations and produce a final set of recommendations. Later phases of the project could focus on the area around Cypress Street, Chestnut Hill, and the area around Reservoir Road.

Initial Phase

The initial phase involves the following steps:

1. **Board of Selectmen Actions (April 2005):** The Board of Selectmen would approve this overall approach and work program, and would convene a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC). A recommendation for CAC members is attached at Attachment 3. The Board of Selectmen will also approve a specific charge and schedule for completion of this phase.
2. **CAC Initial Meeting (May 2005):** The CAC will meet for a brief welcome from the Board of Selectmen, review their charge and schedule, and then go on a guided walk (from 5 to 7 pm.) around the study area, noting the quality of the public realm and the experience of the pedestrian moving along and across Route Nine. A brief discussion will follow.
3. **CAC Follow-Up Meeting (May 2005):** The CAC will meet approximately one week later to discuss the experience and outline some key issues and opportunities facing the study area.
4. **Interdepartmental Meeting (May 2005):** The Department of Planning & Community Development and Economic Development Department will convene a meeting of relevant Town staff to discuss the issues raised to date and provide information on the project.
5. **Meetings with Regional Stakeholders (May-June 2005):** During this timeframe, meetings will occur with officials from Boston and relevant state agencies to discuss this project and initial findings and receive feedback.
6. **Charette and Follow-up Public Meeting (June 2005):** In order to obtain as much public input as possible in a short time, the CAC, the Department of Planning & Community Development and the Economic Development Department will hold a highly interactive event at a central location that will allow the public to provide their views on issues and opportunities facing the study area. Through the use of maps, diagrams, and markers, this will allow the public to clearly convey their views on these issues. A follow-up meeting will be held a week later to provide a basic summary of what was learned at the charette and from the CAC and some initial thoughts about how to address these issues.
7. **CAC Meeting (July 2005):** The CAC will meet again to debrief from the charette and public meeting and review a draft of the preliminary report.
8. **Preliminary Guidelines Presented (August 2005):** The preliminary recommendations will be presented to the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Design Advisory Team for 2 Brookline Place, and other groups that could benefit from early information on the public realm in this area. Any feedback received at these meetings could be incorporated into a revised version of this document or the final report.
9. **CAC/Public Meetings (July-August 2005):** The CAC will meet one or two additional times for further refine the recommendations of the preliminary report and develop a more detailed final report.
10. **Final Guidelines Presented (December 2005):** A final report for the public realm from Washington Street to Huntington Avenue will be presented to the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and others.

11. **Evaluation and Next Steps (Fall 2005):** The Department of Planning & Community Development will meet with the Board of Selectmen to discuss next steps for this process based on the work done to date. Options at this time appear to be: conclude the study at this time; extend the public realm work west to Chestnut Hill (pending funding); extend scope of this work beyond public realm issues; and other variations of geographic and topical scope.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

This project will be managed by Jeff Levine, the Assistant Director of Planning & Community Development, and by Catherine Cagle, the Director of Economic Development. The internal project team will include those departments, the Department of Public Works' Division of Engineering and Transportation, the Department of Public Works' Division of Parks and Open Space; and, as needed, other Town departments.

This project will also involve significant intergovernmental coordination. As needed, meetings will be held with the City of Boston, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the state's Office of Commonwealth Development, the Massachusetts Highway Department, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

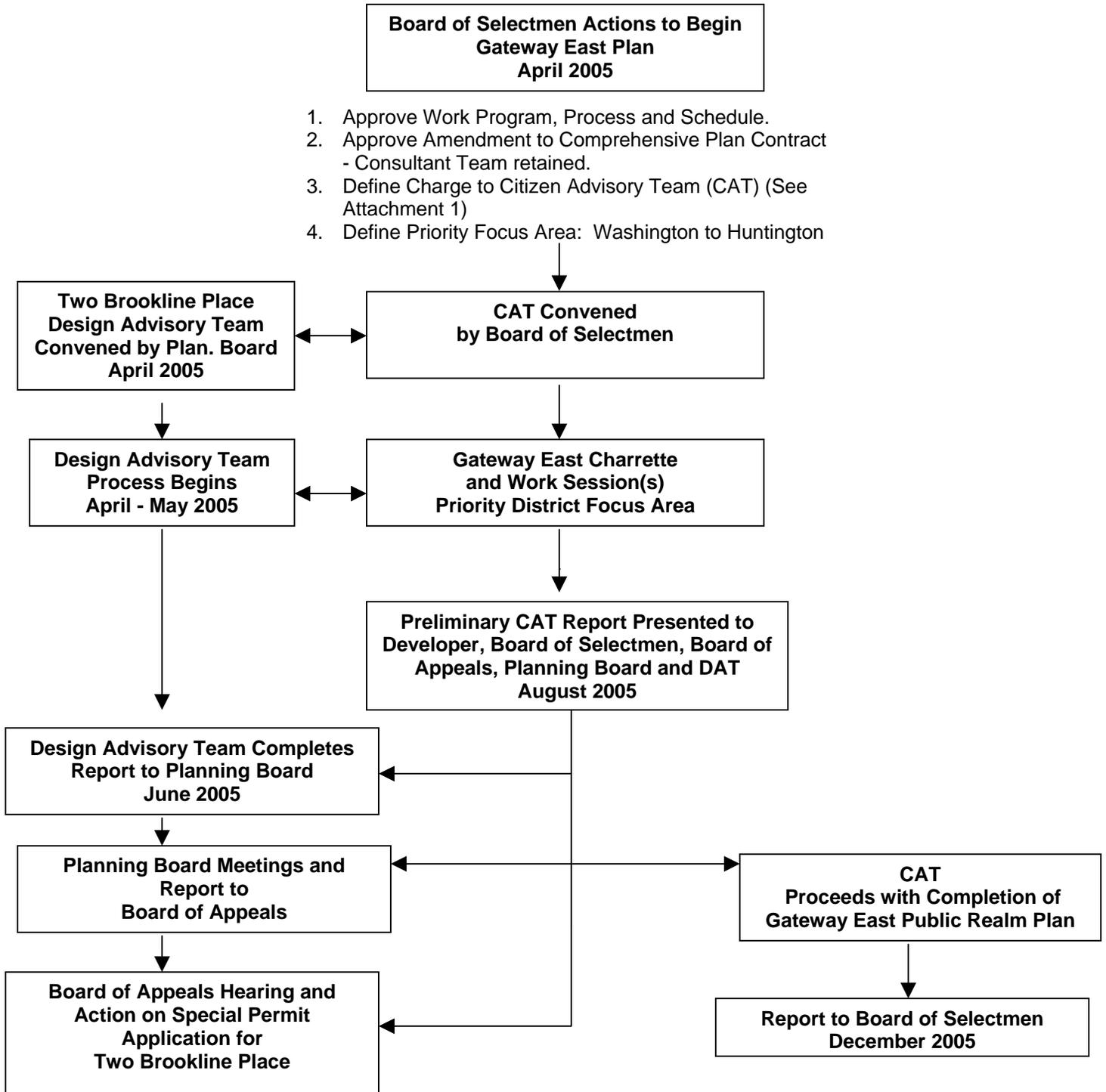
Due to the timeframe of the project and its scope; consultant services will be necessary. The Department of Planning & Community Development will retain consultants to work with and complement the roles of Town staff. Consultants will provide design services, transportation consulting, public participation & facilitation, and graphics services. All consultant services will be through an extension of the contract for the Comprehensive Plan as permitted under Massachusetts General Law ch. 30B. This extension will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

ATTACHMENT 1

Outline of Preliminary Citizen Advisory Committee Program and Process

**Creating Gateway East
Focus Area – Washington to Huntington**

Department of Planning and Community Development/Economic Development Department
April 2005



ATTACHMENT 2

Board of Selectmen
Potential Appointments
Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

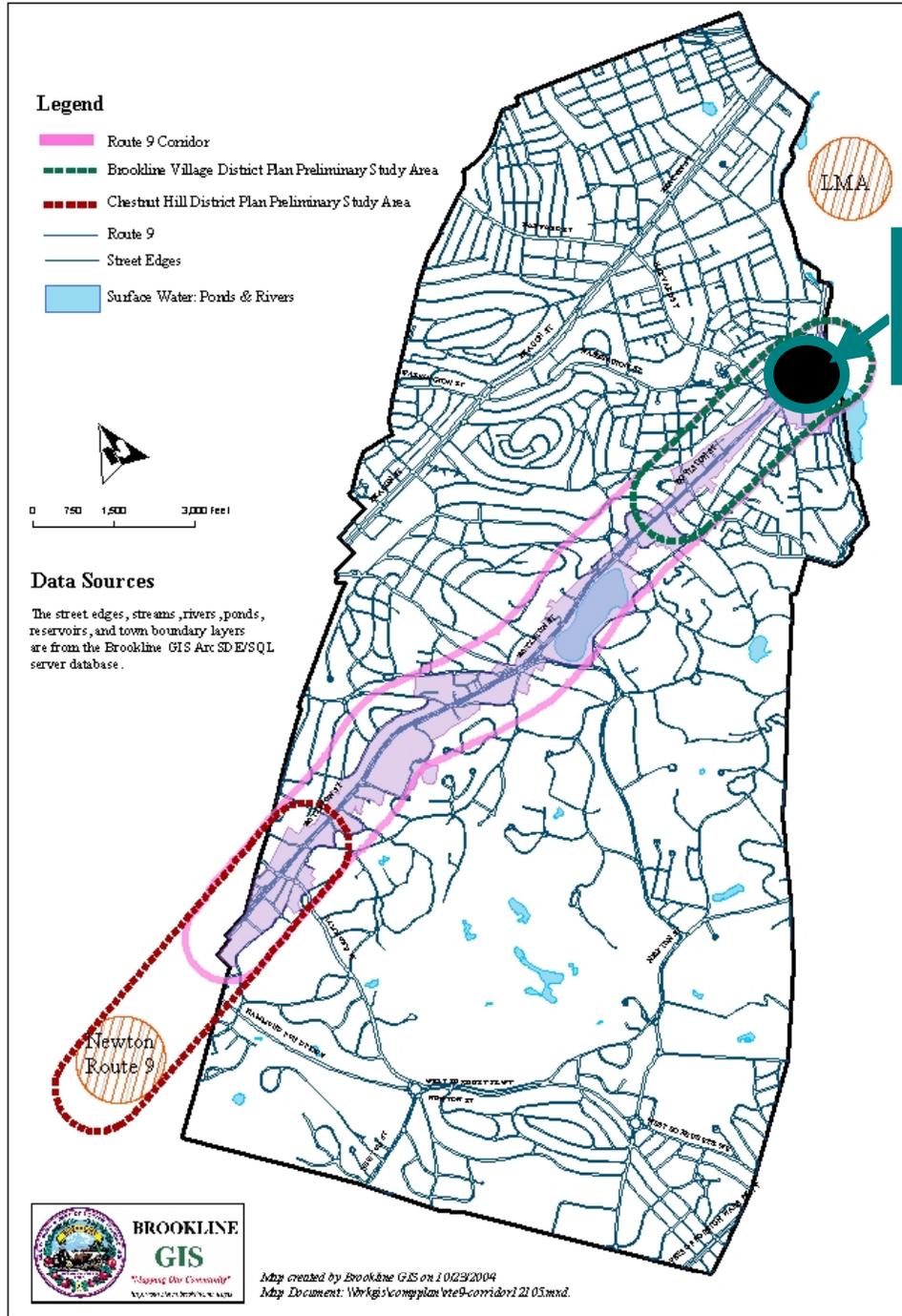
Route 9 – Gateway East – Public Realm Plan

April 2005

Bob Allen	Chair, Board of Selectmen	Co-chair
Gil Hoy	Board of Selectmen	Co-chair
Amy Graubard	Station Street Resident	
Denise Karlin	Brook House Trustee	
Dorothy Bell	TMM, P6	Project Review Team
Faith Michaels	Transportation Board	
Frank W. Farlow	TMM, P4	
Hugh Mattison	TMM, P5	Tree Plant. Committee
Linda Sassaman	Brook House	
Merelice	Brookline Village Neigh. Alliance	Project Review Team
Nadine Gerdts	TMM, P4	Advisory Committee
Neil A. Wishinsky	TMM, P5	Advisory Committee
Stacey Sweeney	New England Institute of Art	
Terri Schmitz	Brookline Village Merchant	
Tina Oddleifson	Greenspace Alliance	
To be Determined	Walnut Apartments	
To be Determined	Brookline Coop	
To be Determined	Village Way	
Tom Nally	Economic Development Adv. Bd.	
Werner Lohe	Conservation Commission	
John Bain	Parks & Recreation Commission	

In addition, all members of the Design Advisory Team convened by the Planning Board for 2 Brookline Place will be invited to be members of this CAC.

ATTACHMENT 3





TOWN of BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

ROBERT L. ALLEN, Chairman
JOSEPH T. GELLER
GILBERT R. HOY, JR.
MICHAEL MERRILL
MICHAEL SHER

RICHARD J. KELLIHER
Town Administrator

BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02445

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RESOLUTION REGARDING THE GATEWAY EAST PUBLIC REALM PLAN

April 26, 2005

WHEREAS, the Brookline Comprehensive Plan calls for further planning work to be conducted on the Route Nine corridor and in Brookline Village through the development of “Gateway East”; and

WHEREAS, the primary element required in the creation of “Gateway East” is the creation of a plan for elements of the public realm in the area between Washington Street and the Boston city line that will have the following objectives:

- Identifying conceptual projects that are realistic and can be implemented over time
- Developing a short- and long-term capital investment strategy
- Providing the Planning Board with a set of detailed guidelines for application during design review under Section 5.09 of the Zoning By-law
- Providing conceptual designs for use in seeking state, Town and private funding commitments for further design and construction.
- Providing a basis for potential Zoning By-law amendments that seek to improve the character of the corridor
- Providing a critical first phase for Route Nine corridor and district planning efforts; and
- Providing a framework to influence future private investment in the area; and

WHEREAS, a number of public and private projects are imminent in the Gateway East area that require guidance from the Town in order to achieve the vision set forth in the Brookline Comprehensive Plan for this area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen instructs the Department of Planning & Community Development and Economic Development Department, working with the Department of Public Works Engineering & Transportation

and Parks & Open Space Divisions, to immediately begin work on the Gateway East Public Realm Plan as presented to this Board on this date; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen initially appoints a Gateway East Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to guide this efforts, to be co-chaired by Selectmen Bob Allen and Gill Hoy, and consisting of the following members: Amy Graubard, Denise Karlin, Dorothy Bell, Faith Michaels, Frank W. Farlow, Hugh Mattison, Linda Sassaman, Merelice, Nadine Gerdts, Neil A. Wishinsky, Stacey Sweeney, Terri Schmitz, Tina Oddleifson, Tom Nally, Werner Lohe, John Bain, and appointees to be determined from the Brookline Coop, Village Way and Walnut Apartments, in addition to the members of the Design Advisory Team appointed by the Planning Board on April 13th to review the proposed development at Two Brookline Place; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this CAC may be reviewed and revised by the Board of Selectmen pending the availability of these appointees; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen charges this Gateway East CAC with providing advice to Town staff and consultants as to the key issues and opportunities in this area; with commenting on draft documents prepared as part of this project; with working with Town staff and consultants at public charettes and meetings held as part of this project; with completing preliminary and final guidelines as defined below; with focus on elements of the public realm, while not duplicating the efforts of the Design Advisory Team for Two Brookline Place as defined in the Zoning Bylaw; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Department of Planning & Community Development is instructed to report back to the Board of Selectmen as to the preliminary results of this project by August 30, 2005- including initial sketches, materials, and pedestrian/bicycle crossing solutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Department of Planning & Community Development is instructed to report back to the Board of Selectmen with final guidelines- including overall revisions to the circulation patterns, refined sketches, initial cost estimates, and other items as needed- by December 15, 2005.

ATTEST:

Richard J. Kelliher
Town Administrator

