



MassPike Exit 13: Framingham and Natick Envisioning a New Golden Triangle

Background:

The Golden Triangle District (the “District”) is a critical economic engine for Framingham and Natick. Located strategically off Exit 13 of the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), the District is a regional hub for businesses, shoppers, and travelers. The District is home to a dynamic mix of mature companies and emerging startups, including the TJX Companies, Meditech, IDG, Heartware, and The MathWorks. The area is also known as New England’s premier retail shopping center, home to leading retailers housed at Shoppers World, the Natick Mall, and other shopping plazas. Finally, while the District is largely automobile-oriented, the area is starting to accommodate multiple transit options. The recently-expanded MassPort Logan Express facility, the inclusion of landscaped pedestrian paths throughout the area, and a near-finalized Cochituate Rail Trail point to the future utility of transportation alternatives.

Yet successful area development to date has created significant challenges, including:

- Serious traffic delays, especially at Route 30/Speen Street and along Route 9;
- Linear and disconnected development patterns that add to traffic delays;
- Lack of realistic transportation/mobility alternatives to car-based transit;
- Underutilized land and parcels;
- Properties that straddle Town lines and are split zoned; and
- Current zoning which may preclude sustainable development patterns fostering transportation and mobility options, economic growth, and resiliency.

In 2014, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) began to address traffic congestion in the area. That same year, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) developed several alternative designs to improve traffic flow in the Route 30/Speen Street area. In order to better assess the feasibility of any option, MassDOT needs to understand potential future traffic demand.

To address MassDOT’s need to plan for the future traffic and land use demands, the Towns jointly seek the creation of a separate development plan. This planning effort will incorporate a robust research and public engagement effort. The effort will culminate in the creation of an updated District land use, zoning, and transportation/mobility plan.

Key Questions & Project Components

The Towns intend this project to provide a clear and achievable future development vision for the District, with focus on the Route 30 and Speen Street corridors and access to and from Exit

13 of the Massachusetts Turnpike. In creating the development vision, the Towns seek to address several question sets, including:

- What shall be the vision of the District?
- What infrastructure improvements are necessary to support the vision?
- How do we get there?
- What is the expected incremental traffic demand, assuming full build out of the development vision?
- What are the expected tax and economic impacts resulting from the development vision?

To establish the vision, the Towns will complete a 3 phase project to analyze existing conditions, develop a long-term development vision, and create an action plan. The effort will also include market analysis and outreach to District stakeholders, community leaders, and the general population of both communities.

In developing a District vision, the Towns will build and assess alternative development scenarios from the perspectives of land use, economic development, traffic generation, and environmental impacts. The development scenarios will integrate alternative transportation options. Build-out potential for these scenarios may also be compared to the full build out potential of the District under today's land use rules. Visualization tools, supporting each development scenario, may also be used to further inform the vision creation process.

The resulting vision will lead to a recommended implementation/action plan. The plan will include clearly defined action steps for each community, anticipated traffic generation data, and recommended infrastructure investments needed to improve the mobility throughout the District.

Project Timeline

The project is now underway, with a final report to be completed in December 2017. For more detail on process and deliverables, see the attached project timeline.

Project Oversight & Contract Management

The Town of Framingham and Natick are providing joint funding for this project. An intermunicipal agreement governs contract implementation. That agreement includes creating a Steering Committee, comprised of elected officials, Town staff, property owners, and business leaders, to provide high-level direction. The Steering Committee will conduct four meetings over the project term.

Golden Triangle Planning Study Schedule
 Crosby | Schlessinger | Smallridge
 April 19, 2017

TASKS	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17
Phase 1: Existing Conditions Analysis									
Phase 2: Build-Out Analysis - Long Term Vision									
Modeling Baseline									
Developing Alternative Scenarios									
Modeling Alternative Scenarios									
Analysis of Alternative Scenarios									
Summary Memo									
Selection of Preferred Vision									
Phase 3: Action Plans									
Meetings									
Client Phone Check-Ins									
Client Meetings									
Stakeholder Meetings (with public/quasi public organizations)									
Individual Stakeholder Meetings									
Steering Committee Meetings									