

## 2.0 Avon Center Background

Avon Center is the traditional village of Avon. It was, at one time, the main business area of town and contained most retail, services, transportation, institutional, and industrial uses in Avon. As Avon and the surrounding towns grew, so did the demand for more retail and service uses.

The center of Avon expanded along Route 44 and, to a lesser extent, along Route 10/202 to the north. The orientation changed from pedestrian friendly to automobile friendly. Sidewalks were no longer desired or necessary. Today, Avon Center is less identifiable as a traditional town center, yet still retains much of the charm of a New England village.



Buildings at the front property line create intimate spaces

This study recognizes that Avon Center has the basic infrastructure of a town center, but needs a bit of assistance in making it an even more vibrant and economically successful place to visit and do business.

It is also understood that the retail strip centers and large free-standing department stores in Avon and the surrounding towns have their place in the economy and will continue to fulfill a need as well. Yet, there is something comforting, pleasing, and welcoming in a traditional, pedestrian-oriented center that provides a sense of community. It is that somewhat elusive but very real sense that this study is attempting to re-establish.

Avon Center contains buildings which vary widely in architectural style; however, there are many fine examples of well preserved 19<sup>th</sup> century structures. Planning efforts should encourage the preservation of these buildings where possible, and new construction should emulate these architectural styles wherever possible. A study prepared for the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2003 presents an inventory and analysis of these properties and is incorporated as part of this plan.

The Center is not purely about buildings and architecture but, rather, about how to bring people to a town center that is easy to walk around, safe, pleasant, and even stimulating to the senses.