

4.0 Existing Conditions

Avon Center still retains much of its original charm and character. There are a wealth of historic structures within the Center. These include numerous buildings associated with the Ensign-Bickford Realty Corporation, including the Town Hall Complex, the Avon Congregational Church, and many 19th century homes, most of which have been converted to commercial uses. It remains as the center for Town government. It includes two significant residential neighborhoods known as the Mountain View Avenue Neighborhood and the Columbus Circle neighborhood. All of the homes are within easy walking distance to the Town Hall Complex, post office, retail shopping, restaurants, and other services. At the present time, there is approximately 225,000 square feet of retail, office, and professional services space in the Center.

Land Use

Map 2 depicts the Center's current land uses. The core area of Avon Center consists of about 100 acres. Of this, 38 acres are used for retail and service uses; 1 acre is industrial use; 10 acres are governmental or institutional use; 4 acres are residential use; 2 acres are cemetery; 20 acres are in open space; 15 acres are roads or right-of-way; and 10 acres are vacant.

Open Space

The 21 acres of open space in Avon Center are a significant asset. The major open space pieces consist of the Enford Street property, Sperry Park, and the Town Green. These spaces should remain as open public areas. A master plan for the Town Green should be prepared. Additional amenities should be added over time to further enhance this special place. **Map 6** describes possible improvements to the Enford Street property. This open space is currently underutilized.



Avon Town Green

Towpath School

The redevelopment of the Towpath School property, located on Simsbury Road (Rt10/202), is a critical element to the future of Avon Center. This site consists of approximately 8.5 acres with two existing structures. The first is the old Towpath School, built in 1909, and currently houses the Avon Board of Education offices. The other structure is the “new” Towpath School, built in 1949, and is currently partially rented to the Farmington Valley Health District and the Farmington Valley Arts Center. The building is in some disrepair and will require major

renovation if it is to be used for other purposes. The site abuts Sperry Park to the north and the Farmington Valley Greenway to the east.

This property is one of the largest single properties in Avon Center and contains over 2,000 feet of frontage on Simsbury Road. It is of critical value and has great potential to enhance the Center. Any increase in activity will only help bring more people and vitality to the Center. At the same time, any use must be respectful of the existing residential uses to the east through proper landscape buffering.

Section 8.0 of this report contains specific recommendations regarding redevelopment scenarios for this site.

Parking at Sperry Park is presently inadequate during baseball season. Any redevelopment of this parcel should provide for parking which can be shared with Sperry Park. Consideration should be given to a revision of the lot lines giving each of these parcels a more regular, rectangular shape.



Towpath School

Current Zoning

Map 3 depicts the present zoning categories for the Avon Center area. This consists of nine different zones permitting a number of varied uses.

The purpose of each zoning district is as follows:

- **CP-A Commercial Park A Zone...** to establish space for office, commercial, light industrial, and other related uses; permit flexible site development; retain the natural features and open character of the area; and create a park-type environment.
- **CP-B Commercial Park B Zone...** to establish a district for compatible commercial and residential uses, and to permit flexible site development in order to retain natural site features and promote harmonious development.
- **CS Commercial Specialized Zone...** to establish a district for specialty stores and other compatible land uses which do not generate large volumes of traffic; encourage the most appropriate use of land; and retain the present architectural and aesthetic character of the area for purpose of conserving property values.
- **I Industrial Zone...** to establish a district for light manufacturing and other suitable uses to encourage the most appropriate development of industrial land, in harmony with the neighborhood.

- **IP Industrial Park Zone...** to establish a district for industry and other suitable uses; to permit flexible site development in order to retain the natural features and open character of the areas; and to produce a park type environment for industry and other compatible uses.
- **OP Office Park Zone...** to establish a district for business and professional offices as a gradual transition between commercial and residential areas; to retain open space and natural features of the area; and to promote the construction of buildings that are architecturally compatible in type, scale, and exterior materials with the character of the area.
- **R-15 Residential Single-Family, 15,000 sf lots**
- **R-40 Residential Single-Family, 40,000 sf lots**
- **ROS Recreation/OpenSpace** - This zone permits golf courses, playgrounds, recreation areas, parks and open space.