

## **5.0 Identifying the Issues**

### **Avon Center's Strengths**

- The majority of Avon residents favor enhancing the Center to make it more pedestrian friendly.
- Avon Center is already an aesthetically-pleasing place. It has the infrastructure in place to further enhance and energize it.
- Avon Center is relatively compact. It is generally thought of as the area in the vicinity of Route 44 (East/West Main Streets), Old Farms Road, and Routes 10/202 (Simsbury Road).
- Avon Center has significant historic, economic, and recreational amenities that can be built on to strengthen its setting as a Town Center.
- Avon Center contains a mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, governmental/institutional and recreational.
- Topographically, the Center and surrounding area is quite level, making pedestrian and bicycle usage very practical.
- There is a significant amount of traffic through the Center.
- There is a fairly high concentration of daytime workers close to Avon Center. The Avon Chamber of Commerce estimates that about 1,800 persons work within one mile of Avon Center.
- There are a number of residential uses within walking distance to the Center.
- Substantial infrastructure of roads, water, sewer, gas, and drainage facilities are already in place and do not need major modification.
- Although Avon Center is burdened by traffic, the section of Simsbury Road from Route 44 to Fisher Drive carries about one-half the volume of traffic of East and West Main Streets. This area also contains the largest number of undeveloped parcels of land, including the Towpath School property. This is an asset that, if properly developed with a mix of housing and retail uses, can significantly add to the vitality of Avon Center.
- A recent survey recognized many buildings and structures of historical significance. (A historic resource inventory was completed by Jan Cunningham Associates and is an addendum to this study.)

### **Avon Center's Weaknesses**

- Avon Center is not fully integrated as a traditional, cohesive New England Town Center.
- Avon's Town Center has become "diluted" through the years as major commercial areas have grown along other sections of Route 44. For the Center to be successful there needs to be a critical mass of attractive retail, restaurant, and service uses. Concentrated development within the existing Center is required in order to create a traditional village.
- There must be retail and other services that fill a niche that the newer shopping centers fail to provide.

- There needs to be better presentation within shops, aesthetics, hours of operation, customer service and marketing efforts.
- Although there is a lively mix of land uses in the Center, it appears they are not operating at an optimal level.
- There is a lack of adequate sidewalks to encourage walking within the Center.
- There is a lack of pedestrian connections to ease walking between shops and services.
- There is a lack of theme elements such as lighting, sidewalks, benches, and trees that help identify and unify the Center.
- Traffic currently is traveling at speeds that are not considered to be appropriate for a Town Center.
- Although there are many workers near Avon Center, there is a lack of convenient pedestrian connections to the Center.
- Although there are a number of nearby residential areas, a lack of sidewalks inhibits walking to the Center.
- Although there is significant traffic in Avon Center, very little is destined for shopping or services available there.