Streetscape Plan for Main Street South

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
FOR THE
TOWN OF SOUTH BURY, CONNECTICUT

SOUTH BURY PLANNING COMMISSION

2014
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Revision Adopted: December 9, 2014
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A program prepared under the provisions of Chapter 126, Sec. 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes and PART SEVEN: Adoption, Modification and Administration of the 1986 Comprehensive Plan of Development.

SOUTH BURY PLANNING COMMISSION

Prior Revision History
1990 Streetscape Plan: August 1, 1990
Revised & Adopted October 30, 1990
Effective November 15, 1990
This Plan is dedicated to the memory of our mentor
Robert S. Bryan, AICP

Without his foresight and direction, the Streetscape Plan may never have evolved. Bob brought a vision to all of his planning projects and urged non-traditional thinking to what he believed to be a long-term benefit to a community. He led the drafting and completion of what we know as the Streetscape Plan for Main Street South. With involvement from many different sectors of the community both then and now, the streetscape has evolved into a vibrant part of Southbury.

It has been said that Streetscape is the ribbon that ties the town together.
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2014

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2014

The goal and purpose of this 2014 Revision is to review and update the 1990 Streetscape Plan for Main Street South, assisted by Bennett Sullivan Associates.

Hugh John Sullivan, Chairman

Donald Antilla – Southbury Planning Commission

Tom Gaipa – Historic Tree Committee

Corporal Brian Hughes – Southbury Police Department

Susan Monteleone – Southbury Zoning Commission

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Town of Southbury Streetscape Committee
1990

The 1990 Streetscape Plan for Main Street South is based, in part, on studies and reports prepared by the Town of Southbury Streetscape Committee, assisted by William Pressley & Associates, Inc., Landscape Architects.

Donald A. Briggs, Chairman

Laurel Ann Cassazza               John Clark               John Duffy
Eloise Jasser                    Mary Stephani             Hugh John Sullivan
Edward Wilson
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INTRODUCTION

“STREETSCAPE PLAN FOR MAIN STREET SOUTH” is a program which details and elaborates on features of the Plan of Conservation and Development pertaining to the Southbury Center Area. The Streetscape Plan primarily addresses the appropriate treatment of the right-of-way of Main Street South, approximately from the intersection of Main Street South/ Ct Rt. 6/67 thru the intersection of Rt 172 (South Britain Road), to the Ichabod Road bridge over Interstate 84, and the frontage portions of lots abutting the right-of-way. The intent of the Streetscape Plan is to provide a guide for implementation of goals and policy of the Comprehensive Plan.

*Main Street South – looking west*
RELATIONSHIP TO PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Southbury has a strong tradition of preparing, adopting, amending, and implementing plans to guide land use trends and address future needs. The Planning Commission has closely followed the guidelines detailed in these past planning efforts:

- 1966 – Comprehensive Plan of Development
- 1975 – Southbury Center Plan
- 1981 – Amendment #5, Southford (amendment to the 1966 Plan of Development)
- 1986 – Comprehensive Plan of Development
- 1990 – Streetscape Plan for Main Street South
- 1994 – Southbury Center Plan (update of the 1975 Plan)
- 1998 – Exit 16 / Strongtown (plan for area in vicinity of I-84 and Route 188)
- 2002 – Plan of Conservation and Development
- 2006 – Plan of Conservation and Development for Southford
- 2012 - Plan of Conservation and Development

This Streetscape Plan incorporates many of the goals of the above Plans.
Goals and policy for future development and conservation activities in the Town of Southbury are expressed in the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Plan identifies the broad Southbury Center Area which lies in the Pomperaug Valley and is centrally located in the Town. The surrounding wooded hillsides define the Center and establish the rural, country-side setting.

A section within Southbury Center is the “Main Street South Area”, generally from Conn. Route 6/67 to the Ichabod Road bridge over Interstate 84. This land area, linear in shape, is about 2.8 miles long, parallels I-84 and is the primary governmental, community service, retail and economic development section of the Town.

The spine of the Main Street South Area is the street itself, having a generally straight alignment. When this street was U.S. Route 6, the State acquired a substantial width of right-of-way for future improvements, but the improvement concept was made obsolete by construction of I-84, and the State ceded the right-of-way in the Area for most of its length (from Conn. Route 492, Garage Road, westerly) to the Town of Southbury. The street is a Town facility and responsibility, and there exists for most of its length a wide right-of-way (typically 125’ to 200’) owned by the Town.

The Town has conducted studies and prepared plans for Main Street South and the Main Street South Area ever since Southbury’s growth began to accelerate in the late 1960’s. The area contains the Town Government Center, Rochambeau Middle School, Pomperaug Elementary School, churches and sites for retail services, offices and other economic activity. The Area for most of its length is served by public water supply but central sanitary sewers are neither provided nor intended.

The street connects with the arterial and other primary collector routes in the Town and has regional gateways to I-84 at Exits 14 and 15.

The street and the Main Street South Area, then, are at the front door of the Town. These are highly visible areas and in a very significant way are strong components of the character of the Town. The implementation of streetscape to date has given Southbury a uniquely attractive center.
Economic development sites can be attractive and can have quality architecture, good land use planning, landscaping, tasteful signage and lighting. In fact, making sites attractive becomes a necessity if overall goals and policies for community character are to be achieved; and

Not all local commerce and essential services are easily made aesthetically pleasing. Gas stations, repair garages, contractors’ yards and building material storage operations are land uses which present significant aesthetic challenges. While these are to be accommodated in the local economy, site location and sight mitigation measures become important.

The Southbury 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) establishes Economic Development Program Goals and Policies:

Provide for the best use of commercial and economic development sites already designated and in a manner that supports the town character of Southbury, recognizes the influence of the highway system and avoids other adverse impacts upon the community.

Maintain commercial and industrial zone patterns "as is." Do not change boundaries for the foreseeable future.

Provide a wide range of goods and services desired by residents and which encourage residents to trade in Town.

Avoid the occurrence of a regional center for shopping, while recognizing that small-scale inter-town trade with neighboring towns will occur.

Encourage new retail, office and services that are especially useful and desired by residents.

Assure that no economic sector development occurs which will necessitate a public sanitary sewer system, draw excessive quantities from ground or public water supplies, or exceed the capacity of land and drainage systems at the site.

Along Main Street North and South in the Center Area of Southbury, an overall landscape and streetscape design, including street trees, lawn and other plantings, on and off the street right-of-way, as well as sidewalks, building position, bulk and finish and parking layout that is appropriate for each portion of the Center Area and unifies the whole in the character of a scenic and rural town has been achieved.
Main Street South, then, is a primary roadway facility in the Town, giving direct access to key community services and to retail, office and economic development activities, arranged in a linear pattern as a result of a variety of physical circumstances, and where a wide right-of-way exists to accommodate travel and landscape components. The Main Street South Area will necessarily change and grow in steps or pieces over the years, but the street and right-of-way offer opportunity for unifying features to reflect the intended character of the whole.

This Streetscape Plan for Main Street South is designed as support for already established goals and policy for the Southbury Center Area. This Plan provides elaboration and details for the Main Street South streetscape component.

_Southbury Green 775 Main Street South_
A recommendation of this Plan is that all of the town-owned land and right-of-way for Main Street South should be used for streetscape purposes, including the roadway, landscaping, pedestrian circulation, safe access to lots and other community features.

This plan consists of recommendations categorized as follows:

A. Visual Appearance
   1. Road Edge Definition and Curb Cuts
   2. Poles and Overhead Utility Wires
   3. Architecture
   4. Signage
   5. Lighting
   6. Landscaping
   7. Other Design Recommendations and Suggestions

B. Traffic Generation and Circulation

C. Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

D. Steps and Alternatives for Implementation
This plan incorporates the following maps having the general title “Streetscape Study Main Street South, Southbury, Connecticut”, prepared by William Pressley & Associates, Inc., Landscape Architects:

L-1:  9/29/88, 3/24/89; key map; Oak Tree Road (east end) toward Garage Road; Rev. 1-8-90.

L-2:  9/29/88, 3/24/89; Garage Road westerly to point west of Cumberland Farms (280 MSS); Rev. 1-8-90.

L-3:  9/29/88, 3/24/89; west of Cumberland Farms (280 MSS) to west of Flood Bridge Road; Rev. 1-8-90.

L-4:  9/29/88, 3/24/89; from west of Flood Bridge Road to South Village (900 MSS); Rev. 1-8-90.

L-5:  3/24/89; from South Village(900 MSS) past Travel Center (971 MSS); Rev. 1-8-90.

L-6:  3/24/89; from Travel Center (971 MSS) to approximately Ichabod Road; Rev. 1-8-90

This Revision incorporates the following maps having the general title “Main Street South, Current Conditions, Town of Southbury”, prepared by Bennett Sullivan Associates, Inc., Architects and Planners:

L.100: Key Plan and Part 1, August 27, 2013.
      Main Street North intersection (Ct 6/67) toward Oak Tree Road

      Oak Tree Road westerly to point east of Marie’s Country Furnishings (330 MSS)

      East of Marie’s Country Furnishings (330 MSS) to west of Southbury Town Hall (501 MSS)

L.103: Part 5 and Part 6, August 27, 2013.
      West of Southbury Town Hall (501 MSS) to Brown Road

      Brown Road to Route 172 / South Britain Road
These maps show the following features, some of which are existing and others recommended:

a. base mapping with existing topography, buildings, paved areas.

b. existing trees, ranked by condition and proposed trees by species to be installed or replaced.

c. street right-of-way (Town land), and parking setback and building setback required by zoning.

d. existing traffic signals.

e. existing utility poles, overhead wires, and street lights.

f. existing vegetation masses, benches, signs, mailboxes and waste receptacles.

g. storm drain lines.

h. pedestrian path lights and concrete sidewalks including areas of damage.

i. existing driveway locations and the curb-cut recommendations of the Plan.

j. existing accessible pedestrian curb ramps, crosswalks and proposed modifications thereto.

The intent of plans for modification of existing driveways is to allow for limited, but reasonable access to property from the street. Other, alternate driveway plans, however, may be appropriate upon final design of substantial building and site improvements and clearly will be needed on an interim basis to enable existing nonconforming sites to continue to be functional (i.e. basic parking service, car and truck access, etc.) until owners initiate substantial building and site alterations. On file with the Southbury Planning Commission are additional driveway access study plans and alternates which are to be used as guides for particular properties where existing driveways do not conform to zoning. *

*Additional driveway plans and alternates have been prepared by property owners and by the Streetscape Committee. Many of the alternates for interim driveway service have been found acceptable by the Committee as meeting the purpose and intent of streetscape guidelines.
SUPPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Visual Appearance:

1. **Road Edge Definition and Curb Cuts:** Road edge definition along Main Street South in selected locations is inconsistent. Some driveways are too close to one another and too wide along the street, resulting in excess access points, which can lead to distraction and vehicle and pedestrian conflicts. Driveway(s) accesses should be reviewed with a goal to reduce the number of access points to the minimum necessary.

   Recommendations:
   
   - Continue to enforce a uniform roadway width along Main Street South by installing curbing on both sides of street to create an edge.
   - Minimize the number of driveways and curb cuts in order to enhance traffic safety.
   - Reduce width of existing curb cuts where needed to conform to the Town standards for ingress and egress.
   - Establish curb cuts that are appropriate to land use being served; the widths should be appropriate for the type of commercial use (access by trucks to have wider curb cuts than for cars).
   - To minimize curb cuts and control traffic, the Town should continue to require adjoining property owners to share common curb cuts, and to have inter-lot driveway connections thereby allowing vehicular traffic to traverse on the commercial landowner’s property without burdening Main Street South and adding to traffic conflicts.
   - Continue to review the overall physical design of Main Street South.

2. **Poles and Overhead Utility Wires:** These are major visual problems because the poles are very high, contain many wires, cables and transformers and are not always parallel to the roadway. Locations vary from a foot or so to over 40 feet in from the Main Street South roadway. The major overhead wire route crosses the street as much as four times.
Recommendations:

- Install all utilities underground; eliminate and remove all existing utility poles; discourage additional or future installation of utility poles because it creates visual clutter inappropriate for the streetscape design. In view of the costs to bury power and other lines, this could be done in segments in accordance with a prioritized plan.

- Modify site plan standards in zoning to mandate that all utilities be located underground.

- This concept and design should become standard methodology for Main Street South. However, the cost of installing or relocating utilities underground is high and will take a period of time to implement. Town officials and Land Use representatives should meet with Connecticut Light & Power to explore options.

- In the meantime, locate and install all streetscape trees in accordance with the Streetscape Plans, which, in part, have the intent to soften the visual obtrusiveness of existing utility poles and overhead wires.

- Review species to assure that mature tree height will not interfere with existing power/data wires since changing to underground power can be a long-term process.

- All proposed Public Works plantings and replacement species shall be forwarded and reviewed by the Planning Commission or staff for consistency with the stated goals of streetscape plantings prior to being planted.

3. **Architecture:** There is a great variety of architecture on Main Street South, some of which at times may appear inappropriate for a scenic and rural New England town. In several areas, there are buildings which do not meet Town minimum setback requirements of the current Zoning Regulations, as well as the overall goals and objectives of the streetscape plan.

Recommendations:

- Encourage building designs appropriate for a scenic and rural New England town, recognizing architectural scale, rhythm and proportion; avoid large monolithic building forms whose architectural appearance is devoid of traditional scale, rhythm and proportion; encourage building design that implements the use of traditional forms and shapes; encourage the use of fractured facades and roof forms in order to control the scale of the built environment.
When existing properties are proposed to be substantially improved, set buildings back from the street in order to be in compliance with existing Town regulations, and thereby meeting the design intent of the streetscape program and goals.

4. **Signage:** Some signs at Main Street South businesses do not conform to present Zoning Regulations and some are even located within the Town-owned right-of-way. Three nonconforming billboards are located on the north side of the street. The type and sum of all signs along the street, depending on size, location, number and illumination, can debase the scenic and rural character of the “front door” of the Town.

**Recommendations:**

- No privately-owned signs, structures or buildings should be permitted on Town right-of-way land; present sign regulations should be strictly enforced; new or replacement signs should be submitted to the Planning Commission or the Zoning Enforcement Officer as appropriate for approval before any type of permit is issued by the Zoning Enforcement Officer and/or Building Inspector.

- Apply sign and lighting standards and enforce such standards especially with respect to location and illumination.

- Billboards should be removed as soon as possible (all opportunities should be pursued such as consideration of a “buy out” of the billboard lease or leases by the town).

5. **Lighting:** As of 2014, Main Street South is illuminated for pedestrian sidewalks. Cobra heads, floodlights, and other lighting fixtures are used to light parking areas, landscaping elements, and some building facades. The effect is to create “hot spots” among other areas of more subdued lighting. They fail to comply with the lighting criteria of the Zoning Regulations and are inappropriate to the streetscape design plan.

**Recommendations:**

- Prohibit general urban-type street lighting. No other lighting of any kind should be permitted on Town-owned right-of-way land except pedestrian street lights on Main Street South, which shall be uniform for the length of the street.

- Enforce the Lighting Standards with regard to all lighting that illuminates any of the Streetscape planning area.
6. **Landscaping:** Landscaping in some areas is sparse and/or not well maintained. There are many mature, healthy trees, however, which are an asset to Main Street South. Additional and replacement trees are needed for continuity for the length of Main Street South and to confirm a scenic and rural character.

   **Recommendations:**
   
   - Maximize green areas through the use of lawns, trees and shrubs; retain healthy existing trees; give special care and attention to all trees that are mature and form an important element of the appearance of Main Street South.
   
   - Develop a formal maintenance program and schedule for support of the landscape features of the streetscape plan; lawn areas, trees and plantings are to be maintained in accord with good landscaping practices. Continuity of maintenance will best be a Town responsibility.
   
   - Continue a specific line item in the Town budget for trees and general Streetscape maintenance and enhancements. Include crosswalks in this formal line item budget.
   
   - Monitor existing sites for consistency and compliance with the Plan.

7. **Other Design Recommendations and Suggestions:**

   **Recommendations:**
   
   - Select additional locations for pedestrian benches to be installed on Main Street South as well as other areas of the community where pedestrian sidewalk circulation is being implemented. Continue to allow benches to be purchased with memorial plaques for a person or family.
   
   - Update all traffic line striping on Main Street South as required to insure there is appropriate clarity and contrast for safe vehicular circulation and pedestrian access and crossing.

B. **Traffic Generation and Circulation:**

Main Street South is perceived to have current problems at various intersections, and potential for problems will increase with future development. The Streetscape Plan locates most trees, sidewalks, and pedestrian lighting to allow for streetscape implementation without affecting alternatives that may emerge from on-going traffic
studies by the town, regarding capacity analysis, convenience, safety and level of service for traffic circulation.

Recommendations:

- In order to create improved circulation of traffic, control signals should be further synchronized along Main Street South.

- Encourage continued use of alternate approach routes such as Poverty Road and Old Field Road, so as to reduce traffic impact on Main Street South.

- Collaborate with Connecticut Department of Transportation to have all traffic control devices synchronized to achieve better coordinated flow onto and off of Main Street South.

C. **Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation:**

The Plan of Conservation and Development incorporates a plan for the sidewalk network to be extended beyond the already installed sidewalks that run along both sides of the majority of Main Street South. The proposed Streetscape plans depict them on both sides of the street to a point west of the “Travel Center.” Sidewalks promote pedestrian safety, encourage walking from place to place, thus reducing motor vehicle traffic, and encourage the use of Main Street South’s wide park like areas by pedestrians. Upon approval the addition of a designated bicycle path along the outer edge of the Main Street South roadway could help to encourage safe use of bicycles for travel. An attractive and functional sidewalk and biking system also supports healthful lifestyles.

Recommendations:

- Continue to install five-foot wide Portland cement sidewalks, ramped at curb cuts to meet the ANSI for Providing Accessibility and Usability for Physically Handicapped People, on both sides of Main Street South in accordance with the Streetscape Plans.

- Further investigate the use of bicycles on Main Street South.

- Improve crosswalks with pedestrian signal heads at all intersections and crosswalks.

D. **Steps and Alternatives for Implementation:** The work to be continued consists of installing continuous curbing, shoulder grading and stabilization, concrete sidewalks, and pedestrian lights, and the installation of trees and shrubs and loaming and seeding of the off-roadway portions of the Main Street South right-of-way. There are also existing driveways, drive-over areas and curb cuts to be altered
to conform to zoning and other Town standards and the Streetscape Plan. When and if alterations to exiting driveways are to be done, provisions must be made for reasonable access to existing developed sites, and the details of alterations will need to enable the continued functional operation of existing uses and businesses. The actual process of construction and installation of streetscape elements in the Main Street South Area as a whole can be done with little interruption of traffic and normal business activity of abutting owners.

The Streetscape Plan will continue to be refined and the visual and functional improvements will continue to have a beneficial effect for the entire Main Street South Area and the Town, its citizens and the business community. The benefits are widespread and involve actions by the Southbury Zoning Commission, Planning Commission and the Board of Selectmen.

Recommendations:

1. **Frontage of Undeveloped and Underdeveloped Property**: work and/or cost to be borne by the owner/developer of the property abutting the street as sites are to be built on and used, or substantial improvements are made to existing development.

2. **Developed Property**: work and/or cost to be carried by the Town.

3. **Additional Steps**:
   - Modify site development plan criteria of the Zoning Regulations to recognize the Streetscape Plan, and the responsibility of the owner/developer.
   - Continuing review of site development plans by the Planning Commission for implementation responsibilities and opportunities.
   - Continue an annual Town budget line for Town responsibilities under the Streetscape Plan plus a five year future prediction of the funds required.
   - Board of Selectmen will continue to review and resolve any of Main Street South right-of-way ownership issues as they may arise.
   - Program the phase-out of existing driveway access layouts that fail to conform to zoning and Streetscape Plan while assuring continued reasonable access and functional operation of existing uses and businesses, and consider Town licensing for continuation of use of the right-of-way for existing non-conforming private uses and access where needed to assure continued functional operation of existing businesses until the owner initiates substantial building and site alterations.
   - Enforce the existing sidewalk ordinance instituting abutting owner responsibility for maintenance and construction.
➢ Consider establishment of a special district under Chapter 105, Connecticut General Statutes, or a Municipal Special Services District under Chapter 105a, CGS, for continuing maintenance and upkeep of Streetscape facilities.
Key Plan: Main Street South from Exit 14 to Exit 15

Part 1: Existing Conditions

Legend
Part 2: Existing Conditions

Part 3: Existing Conditions
Part 4: Existing Conditions

Part 5: Existing Conditions
Part 6: Existing Conditions

Part 7: Existing Conditions
Part 8: Existing Conditions

Part 9: Existing Conditions