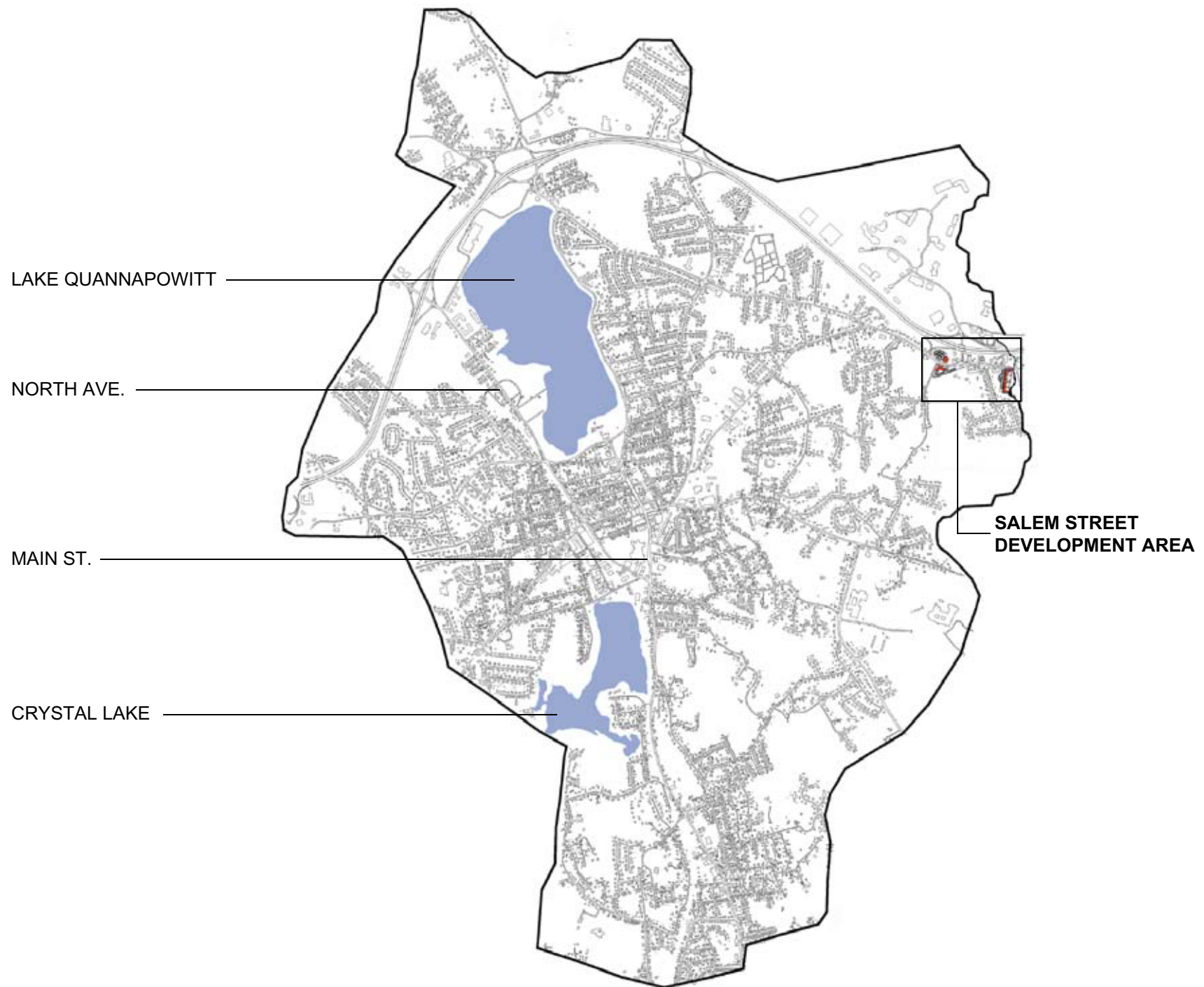


As has been noted in the previous sections, it is important that Wakefield's business districts grow so that they can provide the choices that today's shopper is looking for, and regain their central place in the life of the town. It is also important that the fringes of Wakefield maintain their rural character while responding to development pressures and opportunities. This is critical if Wakefield is to remain an attractive place to live and work.

Salem Street near route 128 and the Saugus River offers opportunities for office, residential, and small scale retail or restaurant development if site constraints can be overcome. Design guidelines and regulations can help insure that the natural beauty and rural charm of the area is respected at the same time that appropriate development takes place.



## SALEM STREET AT ROUTE 128

### EXISTING CONDITIONS - PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC

Edgewater Park, located on the north side of Route 128 at the Salem Street exit, is an excellent example of a successful and attractive commercial development that continues to benefit the town's fiscal well-being. Underutilized parcels with even better access to the regional highway system sit on the south side of Route 128 near Salem Street between Montrose Avenue and the Lynnfield town line.

For years, town officials and potential developers have struggled to find ways to overcome the barriers that have limited the highest and best use of these sites. Impediments include the presence of wetlands, high tension power lines, environmental contamination, and noise and traffic from Route 128. The parcel sizes tend to be small, and surrounding residential property owners may be resistant to multi-family or commercial development. This further discourages new construction.

Much of the development that has taken place locates buildings and parking lots close to Salem Street, with broad asphalt aprons and very little landscaping to define the edges of the road. This kind of site development detracts from the rural character of the area without providing the denser development that could take real advantage of the proximity to Route 128 and provide significant new taxes to the town. This type of conventional strip development contrasts with what has been built recently in neighboring Lynnfield. Several commercial developments there offer attractive design options that can be a model for proposed development in Wakefield.



*Parking and access drives create a sea of asphalt along Salem Street near Montrose Avenue, detracting from what could be a pleasant rural environment.*

*New construction is possible while protecting the natural environment and character of the landscape. Power lines are one of a number of development challenges.*





## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- a** Wetlands and high tension lines limit development opportunities.
- b** Contamination at the former Hudson Bus depot raises development costs.
- c** Residential neighborhoods and zoning make commercial development more difficult on a site that is appropriate for non-residential development.
- d** Sites at the intersection of Montrose Avenue and Salem Street near Route 128 are very accessible and visible, although lot size limits development options.
- e** Despite the presence of Route 128 and a significant number of buildings, Salem Street still has a rural character that is worth preserving.
- f** Although proximity to wetlands and the Saugus River raises questions about development on the riverfront site, larger parcel size and location suggest development opportunities.



The area around Salem St. at Route 128 provides an opportunity for the town to increase its fiscal base by encouraging and supporting significant new development. It is critical that the town continue developing planning strategies, catalysts and tools that both encourage owners to redevelop their properties to maximize their value, while establishing a clear set of guidelines to ensure that new development has a desirable design character that is appropriate for its rural setting. The area's proximity to significant automobile traffic is likely to attract more strip development if an alternative planning vision is not put forward by the town.

## ROUTE 128 AT SALEM ST. - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposals that follow envision two possible locations for development. The site at the corner of Salem Street and Montrose Avenue is at a prominent intersection whose redevelopment could significantly improve the character of the area. The other site, off of Salem Street in a more secluded enclave next to the Saugus River, is unusually large for this part of Wakefield, facilitating the scale of construction that makes commercial development more cost-effective. Both multi-family residential and commercial uses are shown in the plans that follow, and could be appropriate if properly designed.

The options illustrate design approaches that are appropriate for the rural context, and are analyzed in terms of their financial impacts. Any proposed development scenario, of course, is subject to changes in the real estate market that can impact viability.

Commercial development requires almost three times as many park-



*New development should incorporate features of a rural landscape, including planted buffers, trees, berms, and appropriately scaled buildings. One option, shown above, locates office buildings set back from the street at the corner of Salem St. and Montrose Ave. to the left, and residential buildings near the Saugus River to the right. Another option, shown below, locates an office building and restaurant at the corner to define the intersection of Salem and Montrose, with an office building along the river.*











*Recent development on Salem Street just over the town line in Lynnfield incorporates elements of a rural vernacular – stone walls, landscaping, low buildings with finely scaled massing – to maintain the character of the area. Parking is screened from view by planting and berms. These kinds of design features should be required for new development in rural parts of Wakefield.*



ing spaces for the same square footage of floor area as residential development, although it returns more in taxes to the town. The design proposals and analyses take this into account in the build-outs shown. Costs and benefits for both Wakefield and private developers must be taken into consideration when the town considers what the most advantageous development options are.

It will take work by both the public and private sectors to create successful developments that achieve the goals established in the Master Plan. Public sector contributions might include improvements to Salem Street, traffic signals and signage to ease access to and from Route 128, and infrastructure improvements to open up areas that are now inaccessible. The town could also help in recruiting developers and assembling parcels large enough for high quality office construction. Additional town and state aid may be required to deal with environmental contamination at the former Hudson Bus property at the corner of Salem Street and Montrose Avenue, and to address wetlands issues.

Private sector contributions would include meeting design standards established by the town. These should include a planted buffer strip between parking areas and Salem Street, building in locations and with massing appropriate for the context, and design features such as stone walls that create a sense of character and continuity from one parcel to the next.

Rewards from such development are significant. In addition to increasing the town's tax base, development could open the Saugus River and the adjoining wetlands up to public access and appreciation while protecting these natural resources and reducing contamination from older industrial uses.



## SALEM STREET AT MONTROSE AVENUE SITE

Low walls, planted buffer strips and landscaped berms screen development from the street and help maintain a rural character. Parking areas interspersed with trees continue the natural landscape through developed areas. Buildings should be of modest height and articulated massing to fit into their surroundings.

The north side of Salem Street is appropriate for office development, although the floor plate area, approximately 10,000 square feet, would make a restaurant perhaps more economically viable. The south side is well suited to office development, although the proportions of the site provide development difficulties. Housing may be considered as well, although the proximity to the street and Route 128 may make residential development less attractive. The site also offers a possible relocation opportunity for the Department of Public Works.

Buildings can be placed close to the street with parking behind - a town center model. Alternatively, buildings can be pulled away from the street with landscaped parking in front - a rural model. Streetscape elements and sidewalks that support pedestrian use should be encouraged. Both options are shown on the plans on the previous pages.

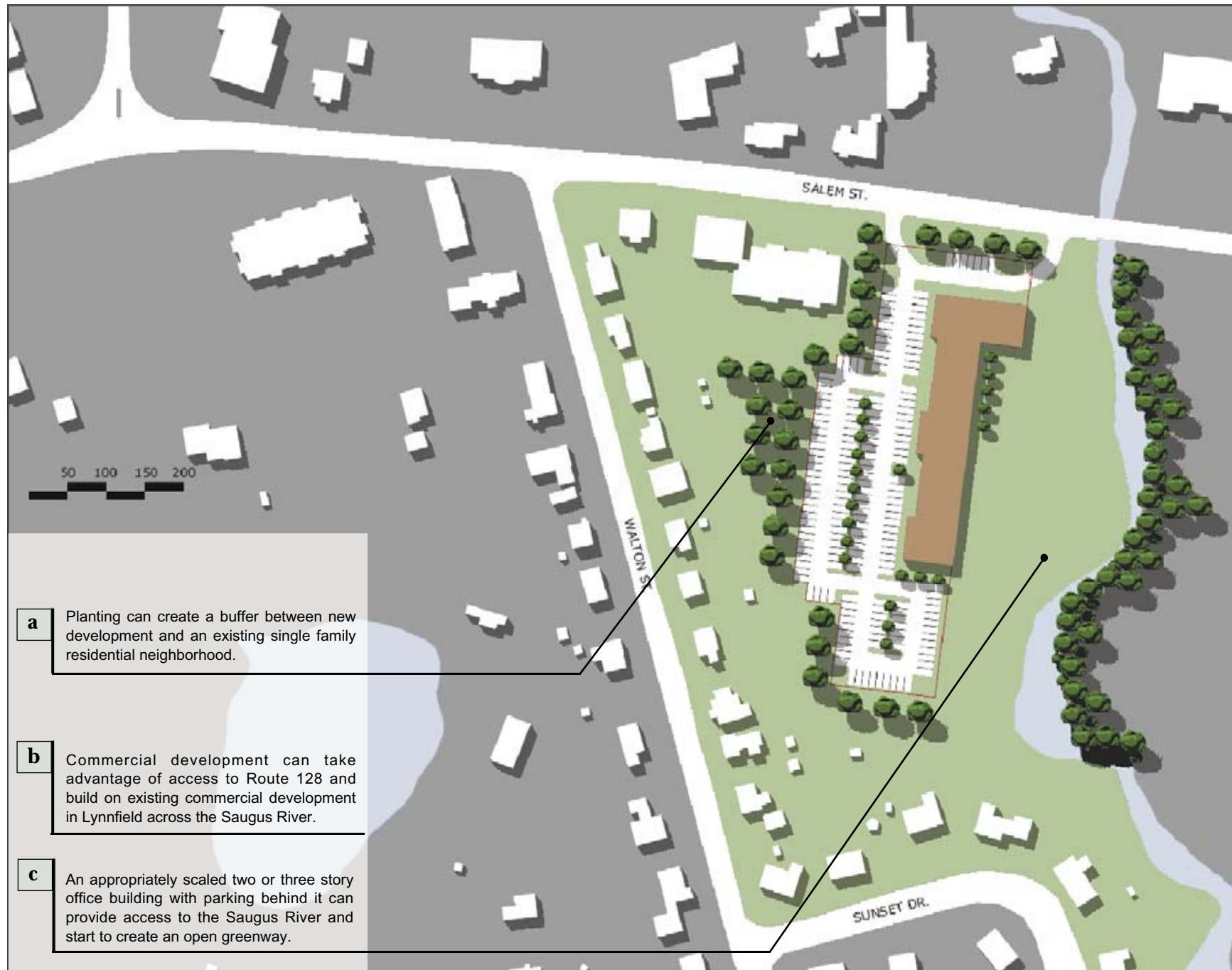
Wetlands, high tension lines, traffic, environmental contamination, and the small size and awkward proportions of the sites make development difficult, but not impossible. With the proper zoning requirements and design guidelines, new construction can reinforce the character of the area.

## SALEM STREET AT THE SAUGUS RIVER SITE

One of the few area parcels large enough for significant commercial development is located off of Salem Street along the Saugus River. It is surrounded by single family residential development on two sides, strip commercial along Salem Street, and the Saugus River on the fourth side.

Significant planting and buffering would be required between new buildings and neighboring parcels, along with parking and appropriate design to get the zoning relief necessary for development. Landscaping along Salem Street and provisions for public access to the Saugus River are public benefits that should be required in return for rezoning the land from single family residential uses. Although commercial development may be the most beneficial to the town in terms of taxes, multifamily residential is also appropriate. Both options are illustrated on the plans that follow.

Proximity to the Saugus River and the presence of wetlands limit the development possible at this location. Proposals may also meet with opposition from abutters, whether residential or commercial. Nevertheless, the size, access to Route 128, and proximity to other commercial and residential projects make this an appropriate development parcel.







## REDEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY AND FISCAL BENEFIT: SALEM STREET AT ROUTE 128

Salem Street at Route 128 - Montrose Avenue Site Economic Development Plan Land Values and Fiscal Benefits													
	Impact of Redevelopment on Property Value							Fiscal Impact of Redevelopment					
	Res'l Units	GSF	Cap Rate	SF or Pad Rent	Projected Land Value	Current Assessed Value	Added Value	Acres	Hard + Soft cost / SF	Total Value	Taxes	Current Taxes	Additional Net Fiscal Benefit
Salem Street Commercial													
Office bldg		37,900		\$25	\$ 947,500	\$ 673,700	\$ 273,800	3.0	\$ 145	\$ 7,193,000	\$ 173,639	\$ 16,263	\$ 157,376
Restaurant		8,600	8.50%	\$170,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 981,700	\$ 1,018,300	2.1	\$ 120	\$ 3,557,000	\$ 85,866	\$ 23,698	\$ 62,168
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>46,500</b>			2,947,500	\$ 1,655,400	<b>\$ 1,292,100</b>	5.1		\$ 10,750,000	\$ 259,505	\$ 39,961	<b>\$ 219,544</b>
1 - 2004 Fiscal year residential tax rate = \$11.40 per thousand; commercial tax rate = \$24.14 per thousand 2 - Cap (Capitalization) Rate is a financial tool that translates an annual rent into an overall value. 8.5% is a prevailing rate for credit retail tenants as of Jan., 2004. 3 - Assumes \$250,000/acre for site improvements 4 - For additional assumptions see Section VI. Development Scenarios Overview													

### Montrose Avenue Site

A fiscal analysis of the Montrose avenue site suggests that commercial and restaurant development could provide significant benefits to both the town and to property owners. While site development costs are included in the valuation, the full cost of environmental remediation for site contamination is not necessarily included in project costs shown. Further study of these issues must be pursued before a more accurate cost-benefit analysis can be prepared.

### Saugus River Site

The Saugus River site has been analyzed comparing two development types - commercial offices, and multi-family residential. Build-outs were based on the following methodology.

The residential density was set at 14 units per acre as per MR-1 Zoning. The site is 5.75 acres resulting in an 81 unit development with either 1,150 gross square feet and 1.5 parking spaces per unit (apartments) or 1400 gross square feet and two parking spaces

Salem Street at Route 128 - Saugus River Site Economic Development Plan Land Values and Fiscal Benefits															
	Impact of Redevelopment on Property Value						Fiscal Impact of Redevelopment								
	Impact of Redevelopment on Property Value						Tax Calculation				School Costs	Fiscal Benefit			
	Res'l Units	GSF	Land Value / Unit or SF	Projected Land Value	Current Assessed Value	Increase in Property Value	Hard + Soft cost / SF -- condo					Current			
							Acres	value	Total Value	Taxes		Fiscal Benefit	Current Taxes	School Impact	Additional Net Fiscal Benefit
Saugus Commercial Office Building	55,000	\$25	\$1,375,000	\$804,000	\$571,000	5.75	\$145	\$10,787,500	\$260,410	\$0	\$260,410	\$19,409	\$0	\$241,002	
Saugus Residential Residential -Apt	81	93,150	\$35,000	\$2,835,000	\$804,000	\$2,031,000	5.75	\$130	\$16,382,000	\$186,755	\$80,401	\$106,354	\$19,409	\$0	\$86,946
Residential - Condo	81	113,400	\$75,000	\$6,075,000	\$804,000	\$5,271,000	5.75	\$350,000	\$28,350,000	\$323,190	\$80,401	\$242,789	\$19,409	\$0	\$223,381
1 - 2004 Fiscal year residential tax rate = \$11.40 per thousand; commercial tax rate = \$24.14 per thousand 2 - School costs calculated assuming 0.20 children per unit and a cost per child of \$4,963 3- Assumes 1150 gsf for apartments, 1400 gsf for condominiums 4 - Assumes \$250,000/acre for site improvements 5 - For additional assumptions see Section VI. Development Scenarios Overview															

per unit (condominiums). Building height is set at three stories. Using the larger condominium proposal, a site plan was drawn (as shown) that utilizes about 38% of the site for building and parking and 62% for open space.

The office development proposal was then designed to fit on a similar footprint taking up the same 38% of the site. Given the requirement for one parking space per 250 square feet of office space,

this plan resulted in a three story building with 55,000 square feet of office space and 220 parking spaces.

The commercial development appears to be slightly more beneficial to the town, while the residential condominium development appears to be the most beneficial to the property owner. Although every site has different cost and benefits, opportunities and constraints, this conclusion is likely to apply to many development sites in Wakefield given the tax rates and parking requirements.