

Charlton's Route 20 Corridor

Business booming along Southern Worcester County's busiest artery

By Brooke Blew

Charlton's Route 20 Corridor is a bustling highway of diverse industry.

The reinvention of the area began in 2000, when the Charlton Economic Development Commission joined forces with the Charlton Planning Board and interested parties in studying the Route 20 corridor to appropriately re-zone various locations along the corridor. The result has been a modern, up-to-date zoning designation and a streamlined local permitting process. These improvements, coupled with the completion of the Route 20 construction effort by MassHighway in 2006, has helped the corridor emerge as a key economic development growth area.

Today's Route 20 Corridor boasts several

stories of success.

"There is a diverse group of flourishing businesses – such as innovative technologies, small retail shops and automotive services – adding to the traditional industrial base of the corridor. This varied mix provides a range of products and services for not only

Charlton residents, but for the people of Southern Worcester County," said Charlton Town Planner Alan I. Gordon, AICP.

In addition to new enterprises cropping up along Route 20, such as The Barkwood Inn pet resort, many existing businesses have seen significant expansion, including Incom Inc., John's Auto Service and All Granite & Marble Inc. In the case of the latter, the company has recently quadrupled its square footage. In

March, Ted's – a town institution – will break ground to expand its convenience/package store and renovate an additional 95K square feet around the existing building. A new, 13K square foot commercial/retail marketplace will be home to the expanded Ted's, which will include an in-store Paoletti's Fruit & Produce, and other consumer businesses.

According to Mr. Gordon, it was the summer of 2010 when the corridor crept out of the economic downturn currently afflicting the nation. He says the area is currently in a very normal range – from interest in properties all the way to the design/building phase.

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Making the most impact on the economic health of the corridor are two things: Population growth and increased traffic. In fact, with over 14K residents, the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission has ranked Charlton in the top eight fastest growing towns in Central Massachusetts. This ranking holds true for CMRPC's 30-year projections.

"Our population has doubled in the last 15 years," Mr. Gordon said. "We are now seeing, given the size, that people want in-town services. The Route 20 Corridor is meeting those needs."



A rendering of the new Ted's Marketplace at 27 Worcester Rd, Charlton. The project breaks ground in March.

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— Charlton Town Planner Alan I. Gordon

Route 20 Corridor: Existing economic development opportunities

An available, undeveloped property at the northwest corner of Route 20 and Center Depot Road.



Millyard Industrial Properties is offering four large parcels; including 100 acres zoned Business Enterprise Park (BEP), across from the Trolley Crossing business district. "The site is perfect for a large-scale shopping center, commercial, office space or a smaller model mixed-phase development," Mr. Gordon said.

The land is located at the northwest corner at the junction of Route 20 and Center Depot Road, what Mr. Gordon calls the hottest intersection in town.

Another Millyard property, located southerly off of Route 20 just easterly of the Charlton-Sturbridge town line, is 98-acres, zoned industrial-general. Minutes from both the Massachusetts Turnpike exit/entrance in Sturbridge and Route 84 South to Connecticut. It offers an excellent location for a potential business park within the Southern and Central New England highway network.

For more info, contact Dan Prouty at 508-987-8760.

Two parcels, offered by Joyce B. O'Connor Real Estate, Inc. are available at 130 Sturbridge Road (44 acres) and 135 Sturbridge Road (68 acres), both zoned for Business Enterprise Park (BEP) and ideal for retail or commercial. Contact (508)865-1188 or joyceboconnor@charter.net for more info.

The Kaszowski Property, 98 acres southerly off Route 20 sits on the location of a former farm. With its flat, dry land, adjacent to the Capen Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, Mr. Gordon deems this site ideal for business or commercial use. For more info, contact 508-889-3552.

The Yankee Crossing parcel is located across Route 20 from Ted's Marketplace. The property offers two buildings, 18K and 2,500 square feet, for commercial or office use. Contact Steven Green at Forever Hopeful LLC, (774) 696-3288, for info.

For more information, contact Alan Gordon at (508)248-2237 or alan.gordon@townofcharlton.net.

The Charlton Economic Development Commission would like to thank the following companies for their sponsorship of this advertisement.

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