

**ELEMENTS OF A VISION FOR
WESTWOOD'S FUTURE:
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT FROM
PUBLIC FORUM
(May 18, 2019)**



Design by Steven Kane

Meeting Purpose and Process

Purpose: To invite the Westwood community to come together and generate ideas that will create a shared vision for Westwood's future. This in turn will be used as the foundation for an action plan that will outline the steps necessary to attain this vision.

Process:

The public forum was held on Saturday, May 18, 2019 from 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM at the Thurston Middle School Cafeteria. Approximately 60 people attended and participated at the meeting, including 5 high school students who also gave their input. The high school students also provided childcare. Lunch was served and transportation was available if needed.

Following a brief presentation participants were divided into eight (8) discussion groups (plus the student group) of approximately eight (8) persons; each group was facilitated by a Steering Committee member. Participants were engaged and conversations were lively. Afterwards, each group presented their group's priorities. Noteworthy is the fact that there was a significant degree of consensus regarding residents' desires as well as their concerns.

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During the small group discussions, participants were asked the following questions:

1. ***What are your FAVORITE things about Westwood (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)?***
2. ***What are your LEAST favorite things about Westwood (that you feel are important to change in the future)?***
3. ***What is MISSING from Westwood?***
4. ***What would you predict to be some important ISSUES to take into account when planning for Westwood's future? (Opportunities and Challenges)***
5. ***If you could do ONE THING to improve Westwood, what would it be?***

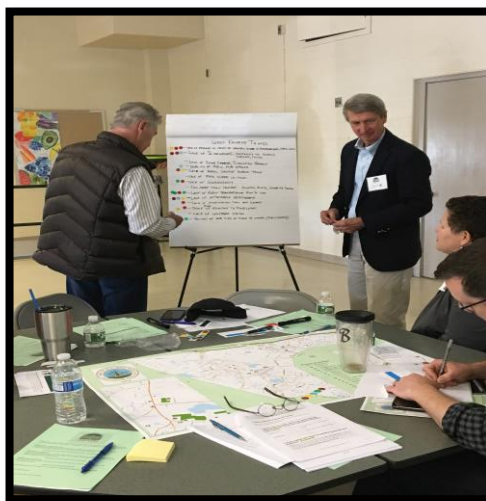
Additionally, participants were asked to respond in writing to the following three questions:

What is your favorite “Special Place”¹ in Westwood?

What else makes Westwood unique?

How would you define Westwood's town character? Identify some of the features that contribute to it.

A summary of the participants' input is provided in the pages that follow.



¹ “Identify those places in Town that define Westwood as a unique and special place. These could include outstanding views or landscapes, sites or buildings of historic value, or essential places in the community's life. These are places that give form to residents' internal images of community, are identified with cherished rituals, or contribute subconsciously to everyday life.” (Definition from Westwood Comprehensive Plan: 2000)

Highlights of Participant input (Most frequent responses)

Favorite Things

- Open space
- Small town character
- Schools

Also:

- Balanced growth
- Transportation options (out of Town)
- Location/convenience
- Residents /friendly neighbors
- Library
- Youth-oriented community

Least Favorite Things

- Traffic
- Taxes (too high)
- Poor walkability

Also:

- High Street Business Area
- Two towns feeling
- Lack of transportation options (within Town)
- Lack of connectivity

Missing from Westwood

- Walking/biking infrastructure
- Recreation Center
- Mix of businesses (especially dining options)

Also:

- More and better no-car transportation options
- Outdoor active and passive recreation opportunities

Future Opportunities for Westwood

- Demographic changes
- Solid tax base/bond rating
- Excellent schools “brand”

Future Challenges for Westwood

- Income inequality
- Balancing schools and growth
- Neighborhood schools vs. consolidated
- Town budget
- Traffic
- Aging population

If you could do one thing to Improve Westwood...

- Improve traffic conditions
- Lower taxes
- Recreation/Community Center
- Improve pedestrian/bike safety
- Act as one town

Also:

- Open-mindedness
- Town-wide shuttle
- Make Westwood more “green”

What is your favorite SPECIAL PLACE in Westwood?

*Open land
Hale Reservation
Lowell Woods
Woods and conservation areas
Hiking/walking trails*

“School Street playground – years of children and adults making new friends, bonding and making memories”

*Library
School Street playground
New cemetery*

“Hale Reservation – natural beauty, open to public, place to exercise, good memories.”

*University Avenue and the large selection of shopping options
Tree-lined entrance to High Street
High Street and Washington Street*

“Lowell Woods- it’s great to have walking trails so close to home.”

*Gay Street’s farm-like and scenic character and the natural beauty/flora/fauna of Lyman’s Pond
View of iconic white church and steeple*

“High and Washington Streets give the town a small-town feeling”

What else makes Westwood UNIQUE?

*Great schools
Neighborhoods
Small- town feel
Family-friendly
Location
Open space
Diverse people
Quiet
Rural feel
Common sense
Plenty of shopping nearby
Open meadows
Established trees
High quality of sports*

“Focus on welfare/growth/safety of children.”

“The school system is superb.”

“Combination of open area, natural resources, nature bodies and conservation areas in proximity to residential properties.”

*White church and steeple in Islington Center
Accessibility to surrounding towns/resources*

“A residential town where the neighbors know each other.”

“A small, peaceful, safe town close to 128 and Boston.”

“Proximity to Boston but still retains a small town feel.”

How would you define Westwood's TOWN CHARACTER?

*Excellent schools
Open spaces
Country roads
Natural beauty
Good schools and sports
Historic buildings
Old-growth trees
Old stone walls
Classic New England town
Family-friendly
Safe and charming
Education is a priority
Bridging the old and the new
Smart and open
Lots of walkers, runners, and cyclists
Semi-rural feel
Forward-thinking and well-run
Beautiful architecture*

"A peaceful, safe, small town with lots of friendly people."

"A little bit of something for everyone."

"A great small town to raise a family."

"Family-friendly, neighbor helping neighbor, parents involved in school and coaching sports."

"Balance of access to nature and natural resources as well as amenities (e.g. grocery stores, train stations, auto dealerships as well as open space."

"Peaceful, attractive, modern, somewhat of a rural feel yet sophisticated."

There were also a few participants that expressed concerns regarding what they perceived to be negative aspects of the Town's character, in some cases due to recent changes.

*"Vanishing rural charm"
"Declining, uncertainty of Islington Community Center, demolition of Blue Hart Tavern, oversized buildings on inadequate lots."
"previously there was small-scale development"
"need more connectivity with more sidewalks and bike lanes"
"somewhat snooty"
"expensive"
"sometimes insular and afraid"
"without much of a center of community"
"declining, knee jerk reactions. No consideration of what residents want and need"
"divided!"
"Scattered and small-scale retail and lack of good restaurants and dining options or general places of commerce"*

"Islington/Westwood divide - need to come together for mutual decisions. This DIVIDE needs to heal and end. We are the TOWN OF WESTWOOD!!"

Detailed Notes from the Small Group Discussions

Unless otherwise noted, eight groups prioritized their input. Because two of the groups left the prioritization exercise for the end at which point some of the participants had left, the number of dots unfortunately does not include their input.

1. What are your FAVORITE things about Westwood?

Favorite feature	Comments	# of groups	# of dots
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Green space, parks, trails, recreation</i> • <i>Hale Reservation (11) (summer club, Membership Beach, Lowell Woods, Scouting programs, Sen-Ki, Buckmaster Pond)</i> • <i>School Street Playground</i> • <i>Greenery, trees</i> • <i>The guided trail hike (from Westwood Community Trails)</i> • <i>Preservation of natural resources has improved since 2000</i> • <i>Would like double the current amount of open space</i> 	8	42
Small town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Small population</i> • <i>Quiet neighborhoods</i> • <i>Close, tight neighborhoods</i> • <i>Peaceful and safe</i> • <i>Bucolic</i> • <i>Shared goals</i> • <i>Community feeling</i> • <i>Schools, town sports, scouts</i> 	6	30
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strong schools & education focus</i> • <i>Support for small neighborhood schools</i> 	7	27
Well balanced community with thoughtful growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strong school system, University Station for economic development, good public services; a beautiful town with commercial areas, meets modern needs</i> • <i>Keep sensitive with tight zoning</i> • <i>Balance development and preservation</i> 	3	13

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Favorite feature	Comments	# of groups	# of dots
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Many options</i> • <i>Train station, AMTRAK</i> 	4	10
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proximity to Boston</i> • <i>Access to major arteries and cities</i> 	4	9
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diverse, friendly, different cultures</i> • <i>neighbors</i> 	2	5
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Both</i> 	3	5
Youth-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All kinds of opportunities based on kids interests</i> 	1	5
Solid financial plan/bond rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Town has strong and solid financial plan/bond rating</i> • <i>Affordability relative to town services</i> 	2	4
Senior Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>COA</i> 	2	4
Islington Steeple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Former Church</i> 	1	3
Good public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Public safety</i> 	3	2
Affordable senior housing		1	2
Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nice historic architecture and features</i> 	1	2
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Access to board meetings, etc.</i> 	1	1
Environmentally conscious		1	

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Favorite feature	Comments	# of groups	# of dots
Bubbling Brook		1	
Islington Center improvements		1	

2. What are your LEAST favorite things about Westwood?

Least favorite feature	Comments	# of groups	# of dots
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Everywhere, but particularly on High Street and Route 1A</i> • <i>Need controls in residential areas</i> • <i>109 & Washington</i> • <i>Truck traffic</i> • <i>High school</i> • <i>Eliminate cut throughs</i> • <i>Gay St./Hartford St. Light Cycle</i> • <i>Safety for drivers on new lanes on High Street at Town Pond</i> 	8	40
Taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Too high</i> 	3	17
Poor walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of response to pedestrians at crossing traffic lights, speed limits exceeded, need better enforcement</i> • <i>Kids not walking to schools and activities as often as used to</i> • <i>Pedestrian safety especially on High Street at Town Pond</i> 	5	14
High Street Business Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Could be improved to provide a mix of uses, more independent businesses, compatible businesses</i> • <i>Make more aesthetically pleasing</i> 	2	12

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Least favorite feature	Comments	# of groups	# of dots
Two towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Divisiveness</i> • <i>Politics of one side of town versus the other</i> • <i>“the other side of town: us vs. them: we need to create a community space together</i> • <i>Idea and feeling that there are two sides of Town. Feeling of a division in Town. Want more cohesion.</i> • <i>Some residents stick to themselves</i> 	4	11
Lack of transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Need public shuttle across town</i> • <i>Lack of bike share</i> • <i>Lack of public transportation on High Street side</i> • <i>Need to reduce reliance on automobiles</i> 	3	9
Lack of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>because of lack of continuous sidewalks to schools, services, fields</i> • <i>lack of shuttle, pedestrian and bikeways</i> 	1	9
Lack of public information and input into development process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Town is reactive to developers, rather than proactive</i> • <i>Lack of transparency for developer selection and design. Should have 3 developers selected with public input to select the chosen developer. More public design input</i> 	2	8
Lack of variety of businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would like to see more unique & more variety (not all banks & service uses)</i> • <i>More retail businesses in town centers</i> 	3	7
Lack of long-term vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Unbalanced growth</i> • <i>Population density control based on available resources (roads, water, air quality)</i> • <i>Town takes reactive, unbalanced approach to development</i> 	4	6

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Least favorite feature	Comments	# of groups	# of dots
Façade of Plaza @ High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to be changed but no suggestions (some feel New England Charm is desired) 	1	6
Lack of affordable restaurants		1	5
Lack of attractive Town Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking for more charming town centers, more of a destination for community 	1	5
Lack of coordination between Town and School Dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of planning and decision-making Find right balance of resources to expend for economic development and public schools; schools are currently strong, maintain strong education and Town's focus on education 	2	4
Town Hall building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs improvements; it is small, old, and not enough room for town offices, could be renovated 	1	3
Quality of public play spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In need of maintenance & improvements 	1	2
Maintenance of Buckmaster Pond		1	1
Lack of diversity		1	1
Communication with residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication overload Failure to reach people not on internet 	1	
Lack of Islington branch of Senior Center		1	
Too many town centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islington, High Street & University Station No "true" town center 	2	

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Least favorite feature	Comments	# of groups	# of dots
Abandoned buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Washington St. towards south/Norwood side of street 	1	
New Fire Station on High Street		1	

3. What is MISSING in Westwood?

Missing feature	Comments	# of groups
Walking/biking infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walkways, Bike paths, Bike share Sidewalks on Gay Street Connect the trails and trail areas 	7
Recreation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor track, movie nights Swimming, park Outdoor pool YMCA/YWCA 	5
Mix of businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missing a Hardware Store, coffee shops, restaurant choices More casual dining restaurants Taverns, restaurants, public house A traditional Town center 	5
More and better no-car transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shuttle bus around town Coordinate/collaborate with surrounding towns Better connection with the T (possibly a shuttle) Bike Share 	4

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Missing feature	Comments	# of groups
Outdoor active recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tennis courts and other facilities</i> • <i>Co-curriculars with schools and Hale</i> • <i>Fitness course</i> • <i>Need an outdoor field and multi-use recreational space (possible opportunity exists at Deerfield Elementary School)</i> 	4
Town concerts and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free events for all</i> 	2
Outdoor passive recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More passive facilities (e.g. hiking, walking areas, connections, paths, biking, sidewalks)</i> • <i>Outdoor learning</i> 	2
Town Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Town green (like Norwood and other towns)</i> 	2
Affordable senior housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More accessory apartments for seniors</i> 	2
Sustainability measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Town-wide climate change goals</i> • <i>Curbside composting</i> 	2
Activities for teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recreation</i> • <i>Life skills (e.g. balancing checkbooks, etc.)</i> 	2
Hot line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To provide anonymous tips on conditions that town departments should respond to</i> 	1
Enforcement of parking rules		1
Unity of people		1
Senior Center/COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>That is big enough to serve the Town</i> 	1
Reuse plan for the Deerfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The location near the library, Town Hall, High Street, Police and Fire Station makes it an</i> 	1

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Missing feature	Comments	# of groups
School	<i>important piece of land. Prepare a thoughtful and careful plan</i>	
Tree preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tree ordinance</i> 	1
Dog Park		1
Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Separate from the Recreation Department (e.g. for learning languages, etc.)</i> 	1
Finding a tenant for the Obed Baker house		1
Architectural Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To advise projects</i> 	1
Community gardens		1
Community Center		1
Shared space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Music venue</i> 	1
Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would like to see more people/residents getting involved in Town. More involvement from everyone. Not the same people at Planning Board/voting, etc.</i> 	1
Cultural activities / resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Theaters, cafés</i> 	1
Investment in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Need to invest more in schools</i> 	1
Comprehensive traffic mitigation		1
No true Town Center		1

Missing feature	Comments	# of groups
Range in housing affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderately priced homes • Starter homes 	1
Economic diversity		1

4. What would you predict will be some of the important ISSUES to take into account when planning for Westwood’s future?

OPPORTUNITIES	How should we take advantage of these?	# of groups ²
Demographics, population, age changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community in All Respects • Housing stock for first time homebuyers • Increase representation on town boards • What are other towns rations on Select Board based on population size? 	3
Strong Town financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize funds for traffic plan • Reach out to neighboring towns for collaborative effort • Solid tax base • Keep bond rating up 	3
Leveraging our school “Brand”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School consolidation (could be both an opportunity and a challenge) 	2
Shorten timeline on projects		1
More people working remotely (i.e. fewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in traffic. Need for local spaces and businesses (cafes) that people can work from 	1

² Out of 7 groups

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OPPORTUNITIES	How should we take advantage of these?	# of groups ²
commuting to workplaces		
Day services for parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plan for/accommodate this use</i> 	1
Continuing technological improvements: cell phones , WiFi		1
Can make a great safety plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leverage our resources to make a strong holistic safety plan, looks like Westwood should have the money</i> 	1
DPW culture is strong		1
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Connect them</i> • <i>Continue to maintain and clean up trails (using school groups and trail program)</i> 	1
Main Fire Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Repair and improve</i> 	1
Preserve historic buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strengthen historical building protection</i> 	1
Artificial turf fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide more fields without taking open space</i> 	1
Improve town centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Redevelop High Street and make more aesthetically pleasing</i> • <i>More restaurants</i> • <i>Outdoor seating/cafes</i> • <i>More pedestrian friendly</i> 	1
School system		1
Hale Reservation		1

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OPPORTUNITIES	How should we take advantage of these?	# of groups²
Leverage other town facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regionalize services (partner with other towns)</i> 	1

CHALLENGES	How should we address these?	# of groups³
Income inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No starter homes</i> • <i>Regressive tax</i> • <i>Cost of living increasing, need controls to keep down</i> 	3
Balancing the school and educational focus and commercial development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue to take a balanced and well thought out approach</i> • <i>Diminishing student enrollment</i> 	2
Neighborhood schools vs. consolidated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mixed feelings about having more neighborhood schools and consolidating elementary schools</i> • <i>Both an opportunity and a challenge</i> 	2
Town Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frivolous spending when we are well funded – would like to see a rainy day fund</i> • <i>Small housing stock/high tax rate/services</i> 	2
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>everywhere, but especially on Route 109/High Street</i> • <i>Mitigation needed</i> 	2
Aging population and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Affordable senior housing</i> 	2
Impacts of climate change on vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Require plantings that can tolerate predicted conditions due to climate change impacts</i> 	1

³ out of 7 groups

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CHALLENGES	How should we address these?	# of groups³
Deerfield Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prepare a plan for the school</i> 	1
Empty buildings on Washington Street		1
Kids not walking as much as used to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More sidewalks, keep neighborhood schools (5 elementary schools)</i> 	1
Funnell Community for access to 128/95		1
Mental health of students		1
Technology		1
Improving the Islington Train Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Islington residents were opposed to moving the station</i> 	1
Accessory apartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Should it be limited only to seniors? Why?</i> 	1
Air B&B type rentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is regulation needed?</i> 	1
Taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tax relief</i> • <i>Commercial vs. residential</i> 	1
Artificial turf fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cost of periodically replacing</i> 	1
Redeveloping to scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maintain small spaces while still updating (small town character)</i> 	1
Improving walkability		1

CHALLENGES	How should we address these?	# of groups³
Number of buildable lots is decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wetlands/diminishing resources areas</i> • <i>Town is built out and developed</i> 	1
Cost of town improvements		1

5. If you could do ONE THING TO IMPROVE Westwood, what would it be?

One thing to improve...	Comments	# of groups⁴	# of dots
Improve traffic conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce/enforce speeding regs</i> • <i>Regional effort to address traffic on 109</i> • <i>Restrict heavy trucks on 109 (like Dedham)</i> 	4	22
Lower taxes		2	20
Recreation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For teens: entertainment, recreation</i> • <i>Something for all ages</i> • <i>Make high school gym facilities available to adults for membership</i> • <i>Community centers on both sides of Town</i> 	3	19
Improve bike and pedestrian safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Smart lights on 109 and safety plan town-wide for sidewalks</i> • <i>Fully implement crosswalk safety study</i> • <i>Better sidewalks</i> • <i>Gay Street sidewalk</i> 	3	17

⁴ out of 7 groups

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One thing to improve...	Comments	# of groups ⁴	# of dots
Act as one town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Walkability between the two centers</i> • <i>Heal the divide between Islington and the rest of Town. Westwood is one community but has a history of being two separate and distinct parts of town.</i> • <i>Provide same town services on both sides of Town (e.g. now there is decorative holiday lighting on High Street but not on Washington St. in Islington, landscaping services should be same on both sides of town, etc.)</i> 	3	13
People remaining open-minded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diversity acceptance</i> • <i>Listen to all viewpoints</i> 	2	12
Town-wide shuttle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One way of reducing the feeling of "two towns"</i> • <i>Town trolley/bus/town transportation</i> 	2	9
Make Westwood more "green"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sustainable energy</i> • <i>Increase recycling frequency to weekly</i> • <i>Alternative energy subsidies and incentives</i> • <i>More leadership from Select Board</i> 	2	9
Opportunities for lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adult Education Opportunities</i> • <i>More classes for teens</i> 	1	8
Increase range and variety of businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More high end stores at University Station</i> • <i>More businesses</i> 	2	8
Improve Business District on High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More aesthetically sensitive, more restaurants, dining, activities, decorative lighting, walkable)</i> 	2	7

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One thing to improve...	Comments	# of groups ⁴	# of dots
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make it more of a destination</i> • <i>Needs refacing or replacement</i> 		
Public spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conducive to casual meeting</i> 	1	6
Increase community engagement		1	6
More open space protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Land Trust preservation</i> • <i>Protect meadows, fields & open space areas</i> • <i>Free co-curricular programs with Hale and schools/outdoor learning</i> 	2	5
Improved coordination between Town and School Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seem to be on separated and uncoordinated tracks</i> 	1	4
Improve area along Washington Street in Dunkin Donuts area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>away from downtown</i> 	2	4
Special places that add value to the community and neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Qualitative places through thoughtful and careful planning</i> 	1	2
More transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Select Board</i> 	1	2
Town Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Define the boundaries</i> 	2	2
Elementary METCO program		1	1
Restore bus service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>On Rt. 109/High Street</i> 	1	1

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One thing to improve...	Comments	# of groups ⁴	# of dots
Plan for the future of the elementary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Five neighborhood schools versus consolidated schools</i> 	1	
More library parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At main library</i> 	1	



Westwood Youth Voice

Four Westwood High School students volunteered to provide childcare at the public forum. Additionally, they were given instruction to conduct visioning exercises with the six children under their care during the visioning session. The teens and children presented their thoughts at the session and also submitted the following in writing.



What is your favorite thing in Westwood?

- The parks
- Westwood Day
- Schools
- Education

What we want to see happen in Westwood

“For the past couple of days, we have recently seen more amounts of trash not being separated into recycling around Westwood. Together we envision a place where people are more aware of where they put their trash and to put effort in saving the environment.”

Children’s Opinion:

- *“People should start picking up trash”*
- *“We should put trash where it belongs”*
- *“Do a fundraiser to promote picking up trash”*
- *“Recycle more”*

“Another thing we would love to see happen in Westwood is a community garden; this could be a fun way to bring the Westwood community together. The garden could include a variety of flowers, vegetables and fruits.”

Children’s Opinion:

- *“I would love to plant things with my family!”*
- *“We should plant trees because they help us breathe”*
- *“I want to see a plant grow that I planted”*

“Take a book, leave a book” is a concept where we would have small libraries around Westwood. Each library will have a variety of adult and children’s books. This could be a fun way to encourage reading and strengthen the community.”

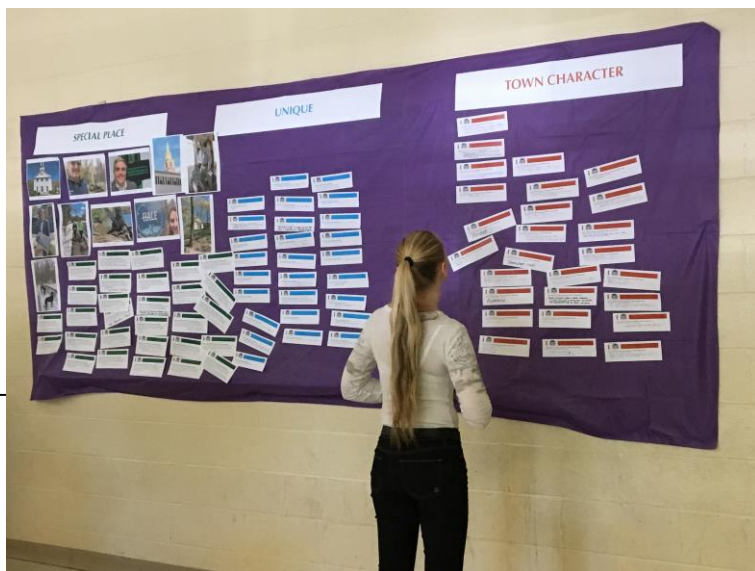
Children’s Opinion:

- *“When people are bored, they can bring their unused books and take the books they like”*
- *“Reading is fun!”*
- *“I want to walk around and read books all day”*

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Participants were asked to respond to three questions in writing. Cards were provided for their response to each question. Participants were then asked to place their responses on a surface treated with adhesive, referred to as the “sticky wall.” Participants’ responses are provided below.

“Sticky Wall” Responses Consolidated:



A forum participant reading the “sticky wall” responses

1. **What is your favorite SPECIAL PLACE in Westwood and why?**

- *Westwood public library- a place to learn*
- *Westwood public library – main: friendly and helpful employees, many interesting and information programs*
- *School Street playground*
- *Islington Center, high school area*
- *Shuttleworth woods and conservation areas*
- *Islington Center before this awful new development*
- *Gay Street*
- *Library – have used this service since I was a child. Feeds my intellect and social. Churches feed my soul*
- *Hanlon School, Lowell Woods, Hale, Fisher School*
- *Sen-Ki Woods – combination of history, public space, hiking/walking trails in a central location with parking -> would love it to be more accessible by foot and public transportation*
- *By far Hale Reservation – all that space, wonderful programs and open to the public*
- *As I've lived here a long time, I have several: Lowell Woods as I spent most of childhood playing in them, the ICC as many friends have gathered there over the years, and the new cemetery as it's a beautiful, peaceful place and my father is there*
- *Open land trust spaces. Benefits all of us in many ways*
- *Public library, walking University Ave., large selection of shopping options*
- *Hale Reservation*
- *The tree-lined entrance to High Street from 128*
- *School Street Playground, Morison Field, Hale Reservation*
- *Gay Street's farm-like and scenic character and the natural beauty/flora/fauna of Lyman's Pond for adjoining conservation area and properties (residential)*
- *Hale, library and School Street playground*
- *Hale Reservation*
- *Hale Reservation – great recreational environment just off the I-95 highway*
- *Hale Reservation, Lowell Woods and walk in woods*
- *Hale reservation, Carby St. side and Beaett side*

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- *Hale Reservation, trees*
- *Drive south on East Street and view iconic white church and steeple*
- *Hale Reservation and my house – love the gorgeous view of the sky out back with the world at my fingertips out front*
- *Shuttle worth woods behind Hanlon School*
- *Hale - open space, trails, lakes, programs*
- *School Street Playground – years of children and adults making new friends, bonding and making memories*
- *Lowell Woods – it is great to have walking trails so close to home*
- *Hale Reservation – High and Washington Streets give the town a small-town feeling. High Street and Islington Centers – small town feeling, University Station – providing many of the conveniences we used to have to go out of town to find*
- *New library is fantastic! Children’s programming and Readers Advisory are great!*
- *Islington Brach Library (Claire Connors!!). Looking forward to the renovations*
- *Hale Reservation – natural beauty, open to public, place to exercise, good memories*
- *Library, Buckmaster Pond, Hale Reservation*
- *Hale Reservation and School Street playground*
- *Hale Reservation and Buckmaster Pond*
- *I love the library an can't wait to have improved Islington library that I can walk to. Wish I could safely walk to main library.*
- *Hale Reservation, Islington Center, Lowell Woods, Buckmaster Pond area, Gay Street, Thatcher, Milk Street area*
- *Hale, Buckmaster Pond, Flahive Filed, Thurston Fields*
- *Lowell Woods – I enjoy how we have this open, natural space*
- *Buckmaster, some trails*

2. **What else makes Westwood UNIQUE?**

- *Schools, neighborhood, location*
- *Open space*
- *Diverse people in a small town*
- *Accessibility to surrounding resources/towns. Focus on welfare/growth/safety of children. Green spaces, especially public spaces and trails. Pockets of historical and long-lived institutions*
- *Quaint, family-friendly, close to Boston, great schools*
- *Low-key town - great proximity to major highways, Boston, Logan, Cape and Islands*
- *It has a small-town feel*
- *White church and steeple in Islington Center. Very disappointed to see parts of view obstructed by new building (School Street)*
- *Combination of open area/natural resources/nature bodies and conservation areas in proximity to the residential properties*
- *Proximity to Boston but still retains a small-town feel*
- *Hale Reservation, Bubbling Brook, Ice Creamery*
- *Open space. Location and safety. Family orientation. Small-town feel. Quiet*
- *A residential town where the neighbors know each other*
- *Churches, Colburn School, excellent leadership*
- *One-of-a-kind Town Administrator. High quality town and sewer. Rural feel. Off a major highway. Very convenient community*

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- *Common sense. Our town has made decisions which have helped to improve our town in many ways. The vision of our town has greatly improved the spirit and spaces for education*
- *Great schools*
- *Small-town environment with easy access to Boston and Providence*
- *Awesome School St. Playground. Community building by smaller local elementary school*
- *Rural charm - resident since 1972*
- *Small-town feel. Access to commuter rail line (2)*
- *Hale*
- *Good feel as a town. Fantastic location (easy access to town, plenty of shopping nearby). Hale Reservation. Established trees. Investment in town areas (love the sidewalks)*
- *Small town, near Boston, still has open space*
- *School system is superb. Hale Reservation*
- *Its accessibility to Boston and points southwest*
- *Quiet*
- *Small-town feel, people get to know you*
- *Land trust - open meadows*
- *Great schools and open space*
- *Size of the town, still retains high quality of sports, school and natural beauty*
- *Westwood Station- retail station. Wegmans*
- *Small-town feel with easy access to highway and Boston*
- *Sort of close to Boston but still feels rural*
- *Less developed/smaller*
- *The geographic location, being close to Boston and also having all types of transportation while maintaining a true suburban town feeling*
- *The people and the schools*
- *A small, peaceful, safe town close to 128 and Boston*
- *We used to be one of the few remaining towns in this area that still had a small-town feel. I'd like to see what's left of that preserved.*

3. **How would you define Westwood's TOWN CHARACTER? Identify some of the features that contribute to it.**

- *Excellent schools, open spaces, country roads*
- *Vanishing rural charm*
- *Natural beauty, good schools and sports, not too large – good size*
- *Declining, uncertainty of Islington Community Center, demolition of Blue Hart Tavern, oversized buildings on inadequate lots*
- *Highway convenience, top notch school system, access to rail travel*
- *Peaceful, safe, small town with lots of friendly people*
- *A little bit of something for everyone*
- *Family friendly, neighbor helping neighbor, parents involved in school and coaching sports*
- *Historic buildings and old-growth trees, classic New England town, small-scale development (previously), quality schools, family-friendly*
- *A great small town to raise a family*
- *Stable financially, safe and charming*

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- *Safe, small-town feel*
- *In-town shuttle bus transportation, more connectivity with more sidewalks and bike lanes*
- *Somewhat snooty*
- *Quaint, education is a priority, community-focused*
- *Balance of access to nature and natural resources as well as amenities e.g. grocery shops, train stations, auto-dealerships/repair shops, as well as open space*
- *Expensive*
- *Bridging the old and the new, smart and open, but sometimes insular and afraid. A quiet home community, but without much of a center of community*
- *Hard working citizens! Everyone tries to make what they have look great. Pride*
- *Somewhat rural*
- *Preserve the neighborhood schools which they have had so much success with*
- *Small in size, town meeting, great schools, fantastic library, friendly residents, land preservation*
- *Declining, knee-jerk reactions. No consideration of what residents want and need*
- *Open space is important. Wolverine-pride. Schools are great.*
- *Open space, old stone walls, schools*
- *Divided!*
- *Good moral values, New England charm*
- *Small town USA*
- *High-quality community, strong educational environment, semi-rural feel yet right off a major highway*
- *Residential*
- *Islington/Westwood divide- need to come together for mutual decisions. This **DIVIDE** needs to heal an end. We are the **TOWN OF WESTWOOD!!!***
- *Westwood is a town where neighbors help each other out. Westwood does not feel a need to “compete” with other towns because we are secure in our community- I feel accepted and I can count on neighbors to help*
- *Friendly, clean, kept in repair. Lots of walkers, runners, and cyclists. Great meeting space*
- *School system, town services, and open spaces*
- *A small commuter town with real schools accentuated by proximity to rail lines and highways. Scattered and small-scale retail and lack of good restaurants and dining options or general places of commerce*
- *Peaceful, attractive, modern, somewhat of a rural feel yet sophisticated. Mature trees, beautiful architecture. Forward-thinking and well-run – new buildings (library, school, Islington, etc.)*
- *Great place to raise a family – schools, people, location and open space*

4. **Additional Comments or Questions?**

- If you feel you didn't have an opportunity to bring something up and/or you weren't sure that your idea of concern are within the scope of a comprehensive plan, please write your thoughts here and give this paper to a member of the Consultant team or Steering Committee.
 - i. *One place for community info*

SUGGESTIONS BOX

The following comments were placed in a Suggestions Box at the Forum

- *Reduce speed limits and restrict commercial truck movement along residential roads. Limit them to use Route 109 and I-95.*
- *Minimize low cost housing and over crowding with apartment complexes.*
- *Preserve all the conservation land as well as the water bodies as well as the scenic roads/routes.*

Perks of Participation



Refreshments



Raffle prizes