

WESTWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONTRIBUTORS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Jack Wiggin, Chair
Steven Olanoff, Vice Chair

Charles Donahue, *Open Space and Recreation*
Nancy Donahue, *Natural and Cultural Resources*
Paula Jacobson, *Open Space and Recreation*
Pam Kane, *Resiliency and Sustainability*
Peter Kane, *Resiliency and Sustainability*
Trevor Laubenstein, *Transportation*
Sheila Hanley-Longval, *Housing*
Janica Midiri, *Natural and Cultural Resources*
Peter Neville, *Economic Development*
Steven Olanoff, *Transportation*
John Rogers, *Town Centers*
Barbara Shea, *Housing*
Tom Viti, *Community Facilities*
Linda Walsh, *Land Use*
Jack Wiggin, *Land Use*
Kate Wynne, *Town Centers*

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS 2018 – 2020

David Atkins
Deborah Conant
William Delay
Brian Gorman
Robert Gotti
Michael McCusker
Christopher Pfaff

TOWN OFFICIALS

Abby McCabe, Town Planner
Nora Loughnane, Director of Community & Economic Development
Hans Mayer, GIS Specialist
Christopher Coleman, Town Administrator
Mike Jaillet, Town Administrator (former)
Sarah Bouchard, Housing Agent
Karyn Flynn, Land Use & Licensing Specialist

Visioning Session and Forum Report and Preliminary Goals prepared by:

Daphne Politis of Community Circle with Judi Barrett of Barrett Planning Group, LLC

Comprehensive Plan Update logo designed and created by Steven Kane.

Town Departments and Other Entities

The Committee is grateful for the helpfulness of the following community members, Town department heads and members of their staffs, who were interviewed on more than one occasion and who provided valuable resources, information, and data in the preparation of this Plan:

- Interim Recreation Director Richard Adams
- Council on Aging Director Lina Arena-DeRosa
- Hale Executive Director Eric Arnold
- Recreation Director Nicole Banks
- Housing Agent Sarah Bouchard
- Commission on Disability & Veterans' Officer Mary Anne Carty
- Town Manager Christopher Coleman
- Executive Director DWWD Eileen Commane
- Fire Chief John Deckers
- Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Pam Dukeman
- Land Use & Licensing Assistant Karyn Flynn
- Commission on Disability Chair Anne Berry Goodfellow
- Town Manager Mike Jaillet (former)
- Public Works Director Todd Korchin
- Community & Economic Development Nora Loughnane
- Community & Economic Development Administrative Assistant Tiana Malone
- Facilities Director Jim McGrath
- Westwood Land Trust President Karen Manor Metzold
- Town Services Representative Desmond O'Leary
- School Superintendent Emily Parks
- Library Director Tricia Perry
- Deputy Director of Public Works Brendan Ryan
- Police Chief Jeff Silva
- Youth & Family Services Director Danielle Sutton
- Council on Aging Operations Manager Trish Tucke

Planning Board Liaisons

The members of the Planning Board participated served as liaisons to specific sections of the plan. Past member Michael McCusker and then current member William Delay served as the liaison on the housing and natural and cultural resources sections; Brian Gorman as liaison to transportation and open space; Deborah Conant for community facilities and town centers; Christopher Pfaff as economic development and land use; David Atkins for sustainability and

resiliency and implementation; and Robert Gotti joined the Planning Board June 2020 for the final public hearing presentations and review.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PROCESS & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

In summer 2018, the Planning Board began discussing initial recommendations on how to update the current Comprehensive Plan last adopted in 2000. A full description of the all the public meetings, events, and detailed public participation summary is available in the appendix.

- Summer 2018** **Conception** - Planning Board created Steering Committee Work Plan, Committee Member Description and Duties, Committee Application, solicited volunteers at Westwood Day event on September 29, 2018, Community Connection Newsletter mailing to all residences, created webpage www.bit.do/WWComprehensiveplan.
- November 5, 2018** **Establishment** - Select Board established a resident steering committee. Members were assigned responsibility for a subject area two per plan element.
- November 19, 2018** **Kick Off Meeting** - Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee convened for a kick-off meeting. All meetings of the Committee were posted on the Town website, with the Town Clerk, Town e-notification system, and filmed by Westwood Media Center. Minutes are available on the Committee's webpage. Committee decided to hire a public engagement consultant for the community visioning session.
- Spring 2019** **Survey** - Community survey distributed on March 20 and closed on April 17, 2019 with 811 total responses. Survey Monkey was the survey platform and hard copies were made available at the senior center, Town Hall, both libraries, and Carby Municipal offices. Primary goal was to reach as many residents as possible to collect input on priority areas to focus. The survey was anonymous with option to provide an email to receive further notifications about the Plan's Update and over 400 emails were collected.
- May 18, 2019** **Vision Session** - The Committee hosted a vision session at Thurston Middle School in the cafeteria on a Saturday from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Lunch, transportation, and activities for children were offered. The event was publicized through numerous sources with flyers, calls, and electronic resources and social media. The visioning session attracted 61 residents. The complete list of questions and details from the day are provided in the Appendix in the Vision Session Summary. The event was filmed by Westwood Media Center and a full report with preliminary visioning ideas was provided and distributed in June and available in the Appendix.

Fall/Winter 2019

First Draft Reviews - A first draft of each subject element was prepared and reviewed by the Planning Board liaison. The first draft was distributed to Planning Board members and posted to the website and meeting email notification in advance of each meeting. All meetings were televised live by Westwood Media Center and streamed on YouTube. The purpose was to prepare a first draft for initial feedback and direction by the Planning Board and public. All meetings began at 7:00 pm Tuesday evenings beginning on October 22, 2019 and continuing through January 7, 2020.

February 2020

Open House - The Committee hosted two open houses to serve as informal office hour format to allow residents to speak with Committee members about what they'd like to see. Open houses held on Monday February 10 12-3:00 pm at the Council on Aging and February 13 4-7:00 pm.

October 2020

Letters of Support - Provided by Select Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Partnership, Council on Aging, Board of Library Trustees, Commission on Disability, Westwood Environmental Action Committee, Historical Commission, Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Committee, and School Committee/Superintendent in the Appendix.

November 2020

Public Hearing & Adoption - Planning Board held a public hearing on _____ the updated Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was published in the Transcript & Bulletin on _____ and _____. The full plan was made available on website on _____. Ultimately, the Planning Board voted to adopt the Comprehensive Plan Update on _____.

The Committee thanks the residents and all members of the community that participated in providing invaluable ideas and input for this plan. Particularly those that took the time to take the survey, attend the Saturday visioning session, attending the various planning board public meetings, and participated in the open houses. The 2020 Comprehensive Plan would not have been possible without community participation at all stages of the Plan's development.



Authority and Purpose

A Comprehensive Plan is an analysis of the current conditions in a community focused on town services and land uses. The Committee and Planning Board examines where the Town is as of today and works with stakeholders to develop a vision of the community over the next 10 years, goals, and strategies to meet that vision. A Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document but creates action steps to guide the community on how to reach its vision and thus provides clear guidance for residents, businesses, town officials, and decision makers over the next decade.

Westwood adopted its last Comprehensive Plan in 2000 and the Planning Board committed to updating the existing Plan in summer 2018. State law, M.G.L. c. 41, §81D, gives the Planning Board lead responsibility for developing a Comprehensive Plan. The effort for an update involves contributions from numbers boards, committees, departments, private entities, citizens, and local institutions. Thus, the Plan is a product of a wide range of public participation throughout the two year update process.

The Plan is organized in nine topic elements: Land Use; Natural and Cultural Resources; Open Space and Recreation; Community Facilities; Transportation; Economic Development; Town Centers; Housing; and Resiliency and Sustainability. Each element begins with a snapshot of that subject area followed by goals and objectives, the strategic approach, and implementing actions. An implementation matrix assigning responsibility and general timeline for each implementing action is provided at the end of the subject elements. Steering Committee members were assigned a subject area to take the lead on but all participated in the full process as did the Planning Board members serving as liaisons on specific sections and participating in review of each section. The Steering Committee members have demonstrated their commitment to Westwood by volunteering many hours over the last two years and the Town greatly appreciates their dedication.

Vision Summary

Westwood envisions an equitable, vibrant, welcoming community that encourages opportunities for social interactions, living and working opportunities for everyone, and fosters a sense of community. Major themes were for high quality public services, abundant natural resources and open space, scenic and historic preservation, thriving business districts, progressive actions for renewable energy to combat climate change, proactive in attracting businesses the community desires for fiscal stability, buildings designed to be context sensitive, attractive streetscapes and gateways on pedestrian oriented, bicycle-friendly, tree-lined streets.

Zoning Summary

The University Avenue Mixed Use Overlay District (UAMUD) zoning was adopted in 2013 to encourage redevelopment of an underutilized and dying former light industrial area along University Avenue, and resulted in what is now University Station, featuring 350 apartments and 100 condominiums, and two million square feet of retail and office development within a short walk of the Route 128 Commuter Rail Station and at the intersection of Routes I-95/93.

The Flexible Multiple Use Overlay Districts (FMUOD) zoning was instituted to encourage revitalizations of the two town centers and allows upper-story housing over retail. It has been implemented in Islington Center, where 12 new apartments were created in 2017 and 18 condominiums is expected to be constructed in 2021, but no property owners on High Street have thus far chosen to take advantage of it.

The Upper Story Residential Overlay District (USROD) zoning was established over a small area of the town center on High Street which led to the successful historic rehabilitation and redevelopment of the former Colburn School into a retail bank and six residences above the bank.

In 2016, the Town amended all residential special permit proposals for more than eight units of new housing are subject to inclusionary provisions which require the developer to provide the equivalent of 15% of the total number of proposed dwelling units as affordable.

The Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) zoning provides a small density bonus for the construction of moderate and affordable housing development. To date there have been no OSRD proposals taking advantage of this incentive. The OSRD zoning also offers a larger density bonus for age-restricted homes. These provisions were utilized in the redevelopment of the Westwood Lodge property approved in April 2019. That project will have age-restricted townhouse duplexes.

A series of revisions to the Zoning Bylaw in 2017 intended to decrease the number of tear-downs and over-sized reconstructions in neighborhoods with small lot sizes. Under the current bylaw, it is now more difficult for non-conforming structures to increase their non-conformities, thereby encouraging the preservation of existing more-moderately priced homes.

A special permit process allows for the conversion of a single-family home constructed prior to 1938 to a two-family home, provided that the single-family appearance is preserved. This option is limited to no more than 1% of the total one-family and two-family homes. Another special permit option allows for single-family homes within the General Residence (GR) district to be converted to two-family homes if the property exceeds the minimum lot size requirement by at least 4,000 square feet.

Accessory apartments are allowed through a special permit process with size¹ and appearance restrictions intended to maintain the property's single-family integrity. The total number of accessory apartments allowed was raised from 1% to 2% in 2017 after the original cap was reached. There are currently 55 accessory apartments scattered throughout town.

ⁱ The floor area of the Accessory Apartment shall not exceed the lesser of nine hundred (900) square feet, or thirty-three percent (33%) of the floor area of the combined dwelling or dwellings if the footprint of the principal dwelling remains unchanged, or twenty-four percent (24%) of the floor area of the combined dwelling if the footprint of the principal dwelling is enlarged (Zoning Bylaw, Section 8.5.6.3).