

WESTWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**Prepared for the Westwood Planning Board
By the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee**

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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
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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 2018-2020

The members of the Planning Board participated by serving 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 for Economic Development and Land Use; David Atkins for Sustainability and Resiliency and Implementation. Robert Gotti joined the Planning Board in June 2020 and participated in 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 – The Planning Board created a Steering Committee Work Plan and developed a Committee Member Description of Duties and a Committee Application. The Board solicited volunteers at the annual Westwood Day event on September 29, 2018, as well as through the Community Connection Newsletter and a mailing to all residences. The Board also, created a webpage www.bit.do/WWComprehensiveplan.

November 5, 2018

Establishment – The Select Board established a resident steering committee. Members were assigned responsibility for specific subject area plan elements with one or two members per plan element.

November 19, 2018

Kick Off Meeting – The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee convened for a kick-off meeting. The agenda for this meeting, and all subsequent meetings of the Committee were posted on the Town website, with the Town Clerk, and sent to residents through the Town's e-notification system. All Committee meetings were recorded by Westwood Media Center and posted to the WMC YouTube channel. Minutes were made available on the Committee's webpage. The Committee decided to hire a public engagement consultant for the community visioning session.

Spring 2019

Survey – The community survey was distributed from March 20, 2019 through April 17, 2019 and received 811 total responses. Survey Monkey was selected as the survey platform and hard copies were made available at the senior center, Town Hall, both libraries, and Carby Municipal offices. The primary goal of the survey was to reach as many residents as possible to solicit input on priority areas of focus for the Plan Update. Survey responses were anonymous but participants were given an option to voluntarily provide an email address in order to receive further notifications about the Plan's Update. Over 400 respondents provided email addresses.

May 18, 2019

Vision Session - The Committee hosted a community visioning session at the Thurston Middle School cafeteria on Saturday, May 18, 2019, from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Participants were offered lunch, transportation, and supervised activities for children. The event was publicized through numerous sources, including flyers, community newsletters, local access cable TV announcements, phone calls, and social media postings. The community visioning session attracted 61 residents. The complete list of questions and details of this event 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 2019.

Fall/Winter 2019

First Draft Reviews - A first draft of each subject element was prepared by Committee members with participation by Planning Board liaisons. These first drafts were then posted to the Town website and distributed to Planning Board members for review at scheduled public meetings. Links to these drafts were included in email notifications in advance of each Planning Board 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 interested members of the public. All meetings to review these initial draft elements were held on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm, beginning on October 22, 2019 and continuing through January 7, 2020.

February 2020

Open House - The Committee hosted two open houses, with informal office hour format, to allow residents to speak directly with Committee members about what they wished to see addressed in the Plan Update. Open houses were held on Monday, February 10, 2020 from 12:00-3:00 pm at the Council on Aging, and on Thursday, February 13, 2020 from 4:00-7:00 pm at the Library.

November 2020

Letters of Support - The Select Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Partnership, Council on Aging, Board of Library Trustees, Commission on Disability, Westwood Environmental Action Committee, Conservation Commission, and Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Committee each provided letters of support for the Plan Update. Copies of each of these letters are provided in the Appendix. **- PENDING & IN PROGRESS**

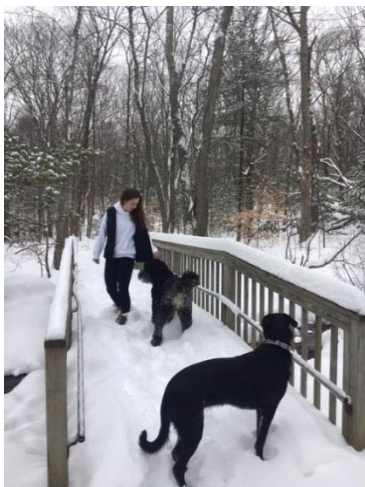
November 17, 2020

Public Hearing & Adoption - The Planning Board opened a public hearing on November 17, 2020, to discuss the draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan. The hearing was then further continued to

December 1, 2020 and [REDACTED]. The public hearing notice was published in the *Transcript & Bulletin* on October 29, 2020 and November 5, 2020. The full final draft Plan was first made available on the Town website on October 23, 2020. Ultimately, the Planning Board voted to adopt the Comprehensive Plan Update on [REDACTED]. **TO BE COMPLETED**

The Committee thanks all members of the community that participated in providing invaluable ideas and input for this plan, including everyone who took the time to take the survey, attend the Saturday community visioning session, attend the various Planning Board public meetings, and participate in the open houses. The 2020 Comprehensive Plan would not have been possible without community participation throughout the course of the Plan's development.

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Authority and Purpose

A Comprehensive Plan is an analysis of the current conditions in a community, with a focus on town services and land uses, and a shared vision for future growth. In developing an update to the Comprehensive Plan, the Committee and Planning Board examines where the Town is as of today, and works with stakeholders to develop a vision with goals and strategies to guide the Town through the next decade. A Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory mandate of things that must be done, but rather a blueprint of what could be done to achieve that shared vision. It is developed without consideration of resource requirements or fiscal limitations. It is a forward looking document that captures the vision of the community and describes how the Town might best continue to evolve. The document serves as a guide for the community on how to achieve the vision laid out in the Plan. Town officials, decision makers, businesses, and residents should consider the vision and goals laid out in the Plan when crafting polices, goals, and bylaws that will shape the town over the next decade.

Westwood adopted its most recent Comprehensive Plan in 2000. The Planning Board committed to updating this plan beginning 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 a number of boards, committees, departments, private entities, citizens, and local institutions. This Comprehensive Plan Update is a product of a wide range of public participation that has occurred over the past two and a half years.

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, a strategic approach, and potential action steps. A matrix assigning responsibility and general timelines for initiating action is provided at the end of the document. Committee members were assigned specific subject areas and asked to take the lead on drafting particular elements, however, all Committee members participated in the full Plan Update process. Similarly, Planning Board members served as liaisons for specific plan elements, but also participated in the review of each section of the complete Plan Update.

The COVID-19 Pandemic began when the Committee and Planning Board were well along in the process of updating the pPlan, and was still ongoing when the Plan was approved. The Pandemic staggered the economy and dramatically disrupted life, altering how we live, work,

play, and move around. Households, businesses, non-profits and governmental organizations have all been impacted and forced to adapt to changing circumstances.

It is impossible at this time to predict the full impact and long term effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the community and the world. Some short-term adaptations, such as expanding outside dining and relying more heavily on online services, may have continuing value. Other impacts may prove persistent and require new approaches that have yet to be envisioned. It is thus conceivable that the Town and Planning Board will want to revisit this Plan sooner than originally anticipated, to reconsider some of the Plan's assumptions, planning objectives, and priorities in light of the continuing effects of the Pandemic. We have already seen the wisdom of many of our long term goals, which are among the measures widely espoused to increase resiliency to future public health crises: ample and accessible open space, retail serving local needs in town centers, encouraging options for alternative transportations, and supporting high-quality government services.

Vision Summary

Westwood envisions a vibrant, welcoming environment that encourages diverse options for living and working and provides plentiful opportunities for safe social interactions between community members. Major themes include the continued provision of high quality public services; preservation of our natural resources, open spaces, and scenic/historical sites; increased opportunities for inclusive and affordable housing options; thriving business districts; and meaningful progress in the use of renewable energy to reduce CO2 emissions and combat climate change. There is a community-wide desire to maintain and strengthen the welcoming charm that makes Westwood an attractive place to live, work, and raise a family, through thoughtful contextually and sensitive building design, with attractive streetscapes and gateways, and pedestrian-oriented, bicycle friendly, tree-lined streets. Westwood strives to achieve this vision through a cohesive collaborative public process that will aid in fostering a sense of community.

Zoning Accomplishment Summary

Consistent with the vision and goals laid out in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, Westwood has accomplished many of the recommended actions. Some highlights include the establishment of a Land Trust that has preserved over 200 acres of open space; the creation of new affordable housing units in excess of the state's minimum requirements; the achievement of greater variety in housing types, to include apartments, condominiums, and senior living residences; the mixed-use redevelopment of University Station; substantial improvements in Islington Center; the construction of new municipal buildings, including the Westwood Library, Islington Fire Station, and Police Headquarters; various park improvements; and several zoning changes that encouraged many of these beneficial redevelopment.

As recommended by the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, Westwood made substantial zoning amendments that directly guided desirable redevelopment. The Upper Story Residential Overlay

District (USROD) zoning was established over a small area of the High Street Town Center, which led to the successful historic rehabilitation and redevelopment of the former Colburn School to include ground floor retail space and six upper levels. The residences were initially developed as apartments, but have recently been successfully converted to condominiums.

Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) zoning was adopted beginning in 2011, to encourage revitalizations of several commercial areas, including Westwood's two town centers. In the Islington FMUOD, 12 new apartments were created above two commercial storefronts in 2017, and a new mixed-use building with 18 condominiums above 14,000 square feet of commercial space is planned for construction in 2021 as part of the multi-phased redevelopment of Islington Center.

The University Avenue Mixed-use Overlay District (UAMUD) zoning was adopted in 2013 to encourage the mixed-use redevelopment of an underutilized and declining former light industrial area along University Avenue. This resulted in what is now University Station – a thriving complex of nearly two million square feet of retail, office, and residential development, including 350 apartments and 100 condominium units, all within a short walk of the Route 128 Commuter Rail Station, located at the intersection of Routes I-95 and I-93.

The town also adopted an Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw. The OSRD zoning provides a small density bonus for development proposals which include the construction of moderate and affordable housing units or for the preservation of historical structures. The OSRD bylaw also offers a larger density bonus for the development of age-restricted homes. The OSRD bylaw was recently applied in the redevelopment of the former Westwood Lodge property, which was approved in April 2019. That project will result in the conversion of the non-conforming 20-acre hospital property into 40 age-restricted townhouse duplexes, 5 single-family homes, and a 5-bedroom group home for developmentally disabled adults.

In 2016, the Town adopted zoning amendments to require that all residential special permit proposals for more than eight units of new housing are subject to inclusionary requirements. This requires a developer to provide the equivalent of 15% of the total number of proposed dwelling units affordable dwelling units eligible for listing on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).

A series of revisions to the Zoning Bylaw were adopted in 2017 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 a single-family home constructed prior to 1938 to be converted into a two-family home, provided that the single-family appearance is maintained. This option is limited to no more than 1% of the total number of one-family and two-family homes in Westwood. 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 sizeⁱ and appearance restrictions intended to maintain the property’s single-family integrity. In 2017, the total number of accessory apartments allowed was raised from 1% to 2% of one-family and two-family homes in Westwood, 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).

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University Station



Islington Center

LAND USE

BACKGROUND

Westwood's land use pattern is fully established, with over 80 percent of the Town's 7,155-acre land area now committed through development or preservation. This condition, characteristic of a mature suburb, will continue to influence the community's future development. Since most of the land is either developed or protected from development, any significant growth is possible only through intensification of existing developed areas, or new development of unprotected open land. As of this writing, 11 percent of Westwood's current open space is unprotected.

The Town's existing pattern of land use is the product of historical factors and past policy decisions. At the time the Town of Westwood was incorporated in 1897, the area that became Westwood was mostly outlying farms and a few mills alongside streams. After the turn of the century, Westwood experienced a migration of wealthy families from the city who purchased the large farms in the northern and eastern portions of the town for seasonal or year-round homes. Around the same time, street railways were built along High and Washington Streets which gave rise to small-scale commercial development along the routes and attracted newcomers to settle. Following World War I, the automobile displaced the railways and the Town experienced its first wave of residential subdivisions in the areas of Nahatan/Pond Streets, north of Buckmaster Pond, and Windsor/Hampton Roads. A second larger wave of suburbanization began after World War II and continued for decades. The 1949 rezoning of property near the Route 128 railroad station for light industrial and business uses eventually yielded the Westwood Industrial Park in the 1960s.

This history is imprinted on today's land use pattern. Commercial development, civic institutions, and higher density residential development cluster along the radial corridors of High and Washington Streets, while land along Route 1 and the Providence commuter rail line support regional-scale business. The early estate areas still exhibit the lowest residential densities and largest tracts of undeveloped land, and the densities of the remaining predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods reflect the zoning policies in place when they were developed.

Table 1: Westwood Land Use - 2019

Land Use Type	Acres	Percentage
Commercial	211	3.0
Community ¹	238	3.3
Industrial	85	1.2
Institutional ²	31	0.4
Mixed Use	137	1.9
Open Space	1,802	25.2
Residential Single Family	4,015	56.1
Residential Two Family	35	0.5
Residential 3+ Units	140	2.0
Roads	461	6.4
Total	7,155	100

Source: land use figures and percentages were calculated using Town GIS and the Westwood, MA Online Assessment Database for Fiscal Year 2019. The full parcel is assigned only one specific land use.

¹ Community: schools and municipal facilities

² Institutional: churches and American Legion Hall

Of the Town's 11 square miles, 59 percent is residential (55 percent is single-family residential, and the remainder is two, three-family, or multi-family residential). Over the past two decades, the Town has averaged about 11 additional single-family homes per year (see Table 2, Housing). Most of these, along with the new homes replacing teardowns, have not altered land use patterns though there is some modification of neighborhood character. The Town's Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw has been effective in shaping new residential developments to preserve open space, protect environmental quality, and respond to the housing needs of the community. The most significant growth and diversification of the Town's housing stock has occurred with the mixed-use redevelopment of commercial properties at University Station and in Islington Center.

Under current zoning, future single-family residential development will continue to involve small subdivisions, additional houses on scattered parcels, and redevelopment of existing residential properties. There is also potential for multi-family dwellings in mixed-use developments within the four FMUOD overlay districts that permit housing described earlier in the Westwood Accomplishments sections and shown on the official zoning map.

The percentage of land in commercial and industrial use has remained stable (under 5 percent of Westwood's total land area), but there has been appreciable redevelopment of that land to upgrade and expand commercial square footage and value, provide public amenities, and

generate significant new tax revenue. This was a result of the Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) zoning being applied to many of Westwood's commercial and industrial districts. Most notable are University Station's nearly two million square foot transit-oriented mixed-use development, and the revitalization of the commercial and civic uses in Islington Center. Essential considerations for any redevelopment in the town centers are the size, scope, appearance, and type of business activities, as well as compatibility with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

After residential, the second highest percentage of land use is open space at about 25 percent of the total land area. This includes public and private land, both protected and unprotected. Hale, a private nonprofit organization, holds the largest tracts of unprotected open space amounting to 7.3 percent of the Town's land area. Another 100 acres with little or no protection is held by Norfolk Golf Club and by Dedham Country and Polo Club, which are private golf courses. The Town owns 750.5 acres, consisting of 43 parcels totaling 558 acres under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission, four parcels with 73 acres under the control of the Select Board, and 13 properties totaling 120 acres dedicated to public recreation and educational uses managed by the School Committee or Recreation Commission. All unprotected land, whether public or privately held, can potentially be developed or changed to another use.

Massachusetts adopted the current zoning enabling act, M.G.L. Chapter 40A, outlining state wide zoning procedures in 1975. There have been various forms of legislation over the last decade to comprehensively update municipal land use practices to meet present demands, but none have yet come to fruition.

The predominant concerns regarding land use expressed by the public in the survey and visioning session include: maintaining a small town community character, especially in the town centers; preservation of natural resources and open space; expanding housing options; community cohesion; and fiscal stability.

Some elements of protecting community character are to manage the nature and appearance of the High Street, and Islington commercial districts; and protecting the Sandy Valley/Purgatory Brook and Noanet corridors. The character of the Town also depends upon social and economic qualities that land use may affect. For example, it is important to the character of the Town that current residents will still find appropriate housing here as they age, and that their children will have opportunities to live here, as well.

Every natural feature in the Town not already protected by ownership or control is a potential for development. Protection can be gained by open space acquisition, by conservation restrictions, or by shaping the development in the planning stage to provide protection, such as through Open Space Residential Development zoning. The 2000 Plan set as a modest objective preserving an average of 35 acres per year over the subsequent decade, bringing protected open land to at least 1,600 acres, and likely resulting in an approximately stable population. Between 2000 and 2018, Westwood Land Trust preserved an average of about 12 acres per year by securing conservation restrictions exclusively with private donations. Another 25 acres were preserved through conditions of approval on residential development projects.

Fiscal stability requires continuing to support economic development and doing so in ways that are not damaging to the basic residential qualities of the community. In 2019, commercial properties

represented 16 percent of the Town's assessed valuations and 27 percent of total property taxes paid. The Town should continue to strengthen the commercial tax base to at least maintain this level of fiscal contribution and vitality from the commercial sector. This plan recommends this by calling for not expanding the geographic extent of existing commercial areas, but improving and intensifying uses, while continuing protection of open space by relying on OSRD and FMUOD and other review standards to preserve as much open space and other desirable attributes as possible.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1:** Strengthen the design and quality of the pedestrian-oriented Villages, increase connectivity through pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and micro transit alternatives such as shuttles and ride-sharing, while maintaining the sound character of the Town, both business or residential.
- Objective 2:** Guide residential development to protect open space, serve diverse social needs, respect resource protection, and have visual compatibility with the character of Westwood.
- Objective 3:** Promote business development consistent with the overall objective of protecting residential quality of life.
- Objective 4:** Protect key open space resources through acquisition, conservation restrictions, and regulatory protection.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The major land use patterns of the Town are essentially committed by existing use and infrastructure patterns and reinforced by land use policies and regulations. Requiring additional attention, however, are the smaller-scale characteristics of development: not just what gets developed or how much gets developed, but also the specific qualities of that development, and how those smaller-scale characteristics reflect the preferences and interests of the Town. These actions are critical to success.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The order in which these actions are listed is not meant to signify priority but are arranged under subject categories.

General:

- L1. Foster a greater sense of community by connecting Westwood's commercial centers, schools and other institutions, open space resources, and recreation facilities through new or improved community gathering places, walking paths, bike paths, trails, and shuttle services.
- L2. Support legislation to reform the state's zoning, planning, and permitting laws (M.G.L. 40A) to provide the Town with additional tools to pursue local objectives and better planning.
- L3. Repurpose municipally owned property, when available, to advance the Plan's objectives for town centers, housing, renewable energy, and/or open space and recreation.

- L4. Develop policies and criteria for preservation of the character of the Town's residential neighborhoods and commercial centers.

To promote quality of residential development and diversity of housing opportunities:

- L5. Continue to prioritize use of flexible density-based residential controls with performance-based incentives, as contained in the Open Space Residential Development and Flexible Mixed Use Overlay District provisions of the Zoning Bylaw, giving the Town a stronger voice in siting, environmental protection, and housing choice.
- L6. Conduct a review of approved and completed OSRD projects to explore whether the process and outcomes could be improved through bylaw or regulation revisions.
- L7. Explore options for greater diversity in housing by considering potential locations for "cottage communities," small lot elderly housing, and/or small-scale multi-family housing, with creative design to complement, rather than detract from, existing neighborhoods.
- L8. Explore incentives and regulatory provisions to preserve and expand the stock of starter homes and moderately priced housing.

To support viable, sustainable, and compatible business development:

- L9. Strengthen the town's civic/commercial centers by promoting pedestrian-friendly, compact, mixed-use redevelopment, coherent community-oriented design, and featuring social gathering spaces.
- L10. Work with commercial property owners in the town centers to continually upgrade properties to maintain and attract local retail, restaurants, and services benefiting the community.
- L11. Formalize the Planning Board design review process by establishing standards for architecture, building orientation, materials, and site design to achieve attractive and compatible commercial buildings, particularly for the desired village and pedestrian business areas on High and Washington Streets.
- L12. Foster mixed-use redevelopment in the Glacier/Everett Business District area, encouraging a compatible integration of office, industrial, retail, and residential uses.

To protect key resources:

- L13. Continue to include support for open space acquisition and protection as part of the Town's long-range financial planning.
- L14. Continue to identify open space, scenic, cultural, and natural features that are of special significance to the community and set priorities for acquisition or protection.

RESOURCES

Westwood Open Space and Recreation Plan, Adopted by the Planning Board on February 26, 2019.

LAND USE DRAFT – 11-23-2020

Fenerty, Marjory R. 1972. West Dedham and Westwood: 300 Years.

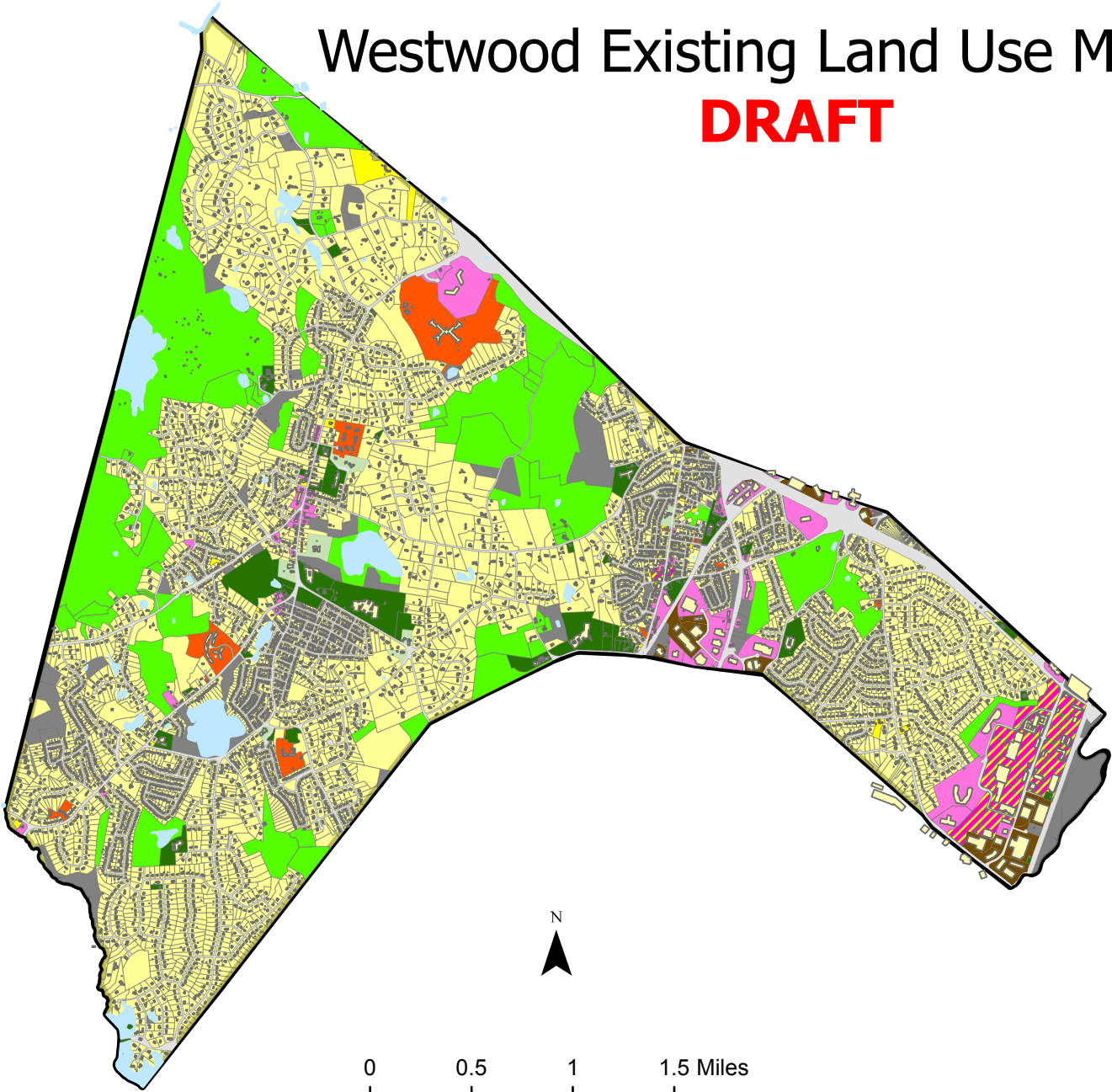
Westwood Annual Town Reports, 2000-2018.

Westwood Official Zoning Map, Amended May 2018.

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Westwood Existing Land Use Map

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- Commerical
- Community Facility (Schools/Municipal)
- Industrial
- Institutional (Religious and Other Non-Profit Institutions)
- Mixed Use (Commercial & Residential Categories)
- Open Space and Private Recreation (Protected & Unprotected)
- Residential - Single Family
- Residential - 2 Units
- Residential - 3 or more Units
- Vacant Land or Undeveloped
- ROW
- bldgs



Islington Center



Historic Colburn School on High St.

TOWN CENTERS

BACKGROUND

The existing village centers on High Street and Washington Street are critical elements in the Town's overall planning approach. The centers are vitally important in conveying the image of the community. The Town has limited means for guiding the character and development of private property, but has the ability to support the revitalization of the Town Centers with investments in public facilities and infrastructure, adoption of innovative regulatory tools and economic development incentives, coordination with property owners, and targeted outreach to current and prospective businesses.

Both corridors along Routes 109 and 1A have numerous, dispersed, and mostly small-scale commercial development and municipal facilities, with properties between and behind them containing predominantly single-family homes. These roads are commuter routes, with significant traffic congestion interfering with vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian movement along and across these corridors. Also, the distance between the corridors, the Town's limited east-west road connections, and the lack of a sidewalk along the primary connector, Gay Street, combine to create a distinct separation between Westwood's two town Centers. A similar separation exists between the Route 1 highway business area and the University Station mixed-use area.

Over the last decade, small and specialty retailers and other local businesses have been greatly affected by a significant increase in online shopping. A shift towards entertainment and social gathering spaces, including food establishments and similar destinations that involve social interaction, is desired by residents and needed to maintain the vitality of local commercial centers. Niche retailing, specialty stores, coffee shops, gathering space, restaurants and similar destinations that provide opportunities for interaction between residents were emphasized in responses to the survey and discussed in the community visioning session.

Almost half (47%) of the survey respondents reported that Westwood's small-town character is among their favorite things about living in Westwood. Through the survey, visioning session, and Comprehensive Plan Open Houses, the Committee received strong support for the attraction of additional dining options, greater variety of business types, increased opportunities for outdoor dining, and improvements to the aesthetics in these local business villages. Increasing the variety of businesses in each Town Center might strengthen the local business districts by attracting more foot traffic. Depending on a property's location and zoning designation, Westwood's Zoning Bylaw permits outdoor seating at restaurants with written approval from the Building Commissioner and/or Planning

TOWN CENTERS FINAL DRAFT – 11-17-2020

Board review and approval. In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Westwood's Select Board and the state have adopted temporary expedited reviews and licensing changes to accommodate a greater degree of outdoor dining, including seating within converted parking spaces.

At the community visioning session, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee asked residents to identify their favorite places. Responses noted areas in the Town Centers such as the School Street Playground, Libraries, the Council on Aging, and tree-lined High Street. The Town Centers contain a majority of Town facilities including the Town Hall, Police Headquarters, two fire stations, two libraries, recreation areas such as Morrison Park and the School Street Playground, the multipurpose fields and track at the high school, and the Town Cemetery (see the Community Facilities and Services Element for a discussion of the challenges they present).

Zoning is the primary tool for shaping beneficial redevelopment of the Town Centers. To encourage revitalization of the two Town Centers, the Planning Board initiated several changes to the Zoning Bylaw over the past decade. Zoning requirements for the Local Business Districts encourage the placement of buildings close to the street while pushing parking spaces to the rear or sides of buildings. They limit retail sales and service uses to be no larger than 10,000 sq. ft. (except grocery stores) to encourage more desirable small-scale retail establishments, and exclude incompatible business uses such as car washes and motor vehicle sales facilities.

Most significant among recent zoning changes was the introduction of Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) zoning. FMUOD districts were drawn to overlay many of the commercial properties in the two centers, with bylaw provisions drafted to provide incentives for redevelopment. These FMUOD overlay districts promote a mix of uses and establish dimensional controls to ensure cohesive and compact development at an appropriate "village center" scale. They allow residential uses above commercial storefronts, while imposing a 50% cap on residential floor area as a portion on any single development.

The FMUOD zoning has successfully attracted two mixed-use redevelopments in Islington Center, replacing previously underutilized and deteriorating commercial and institutional properties with attractive new buildings and a mix of commercial, municipal and residential space. The two Islington Center Redevelopment Projects will result in thirty new downtown residences, improving the Town's desired mix of housing options and providing a needed supply of consumers to support the local business establishments. Together, these two new mixed-use developments add 14 units to Westwood's count on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), thus assisting the town in its efforts to maintain the minimum number of affordable housing units required under M.G.L Chapter 40B and thereby preserving local control over new development.

In 2011, the Upper Story Residential Overlay District (USROD) zoning was adopted to overlay a few parcels on High Street. This allowed for the mixed-use redevelopment and restoration of the historic Colburn School with a first floor retail space and a total of six residences on the second and third floors. The USROD is an overlay district was drafted to apply only to Town-owned properties, allowing for a collaborative process between the Town and private entities for the relocation and redevelopment of the historic former school building, which in turn enabled the construction of a new library on land where the Colburn School building had previously been located.

As other communities have done successfully, the Town uses a planning approach that employs site design to connect Westwood by establishing pedestrian-oriented villages, fostering social gathering spaces, and guiding construction that reflects a small-town village atmosphere. This encourages independent businesses and centers that respect the surrounding established suburban character (see

“Land Use Element”). The results of the survey show that residents desire village centers that serve as primary gathering spaces for people to mingle at community, civic, shopping, social, and sporting events, whether occurring at Morrison Park in Islington, or at independent businesses such as cafes, restaurants, or niche retail, all within a walkable pedestrian-centered environment.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following objectives guide the actions needed to realize the type and quality of the Town Centers that residents desire to achieve:

- Objective 1:** Continue to balance the needs of residents and businesses while creating more vibrant and active Town Centers with a diverse range of offerings.
- Objective 2:** Create an improved image for Westwood through its Town Centers.
- Objective 3:** Enhance the small-town community character with attractive buildings, streetscapes, greenery, and amenities conducive to multi-generational gatherings.
- Objective 4:** Continue to prioritize the pedestrian experience by fostering walkable and intimate village centers to serve all residents and visitors.
- Objective 5:** Encourage additional developed areas like University Station to be considered village centers.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Strategic Approach of this Plan is to carefully design actions in line with the stated desires of the community and its priority concerns as expressed by residents in the survey responses and visioning session discussions. These actions and improvements will advance and enhance the high quality of the Town Centers in their economic and fiscal vitality, community character, community cohesion, and appealing physical character. They will enable the centers to each continue to serve as a welcoming community destination for residents of all ages.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are not formerly prioritized, but are organized under topic categories related to the above overarching goals and objectives..

- TC1. Consider expanding the FMUOD and USROD on High Street to include additional business properties currently in the LBA Local Business District but not included in the overlay districts, in order to provide options for upper-story housing and flexible reuse.
- TC2. Collaborate with the Select Board if the Deerfield school property becomes available following the construction of the new Hanlon-Deerfield Elementary School. The newly available open space could serve as a town green and community gathering place.
- TC3. Encourage property and business owners to make storefront and signage enhancements, façade restorations, more attractive window treatments and storefront displays, projecting signs, and other enhancements geared towards pedestrians and attracting customers. Explore funding opportunities to support these upgrades.

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- TC4. Promote community cohesion by encouraging public, cultural, and civic events and activities in the Town Centers. Work with the Neponset River Regional Chamber to promote local businesses, advocate for business needs, and organize merchants and activities.
- TC5. Encourage additional outdoor seating and street features such as benches; trash and recycling receptacles, bike racks, artwork, drinking water fountains, shade features, decorative lighting, and small gathering spaces wherever possible to allow for enhanced casual gatherings. Review and revise zoning and licensing procedures, as needed, to ensure ample opportunities for sidewalk cafes.
- TC6. Apply universal design standards for all sidewalks, walkways, and crossings, to maintain a minimum six-foot clear passage for all pedestrian access.
- TC7. Establish a street tree replacement program and tree fund for the care of street trees, and create a list of recommended street tree species best suited in village centers.
- TC8. Consider supplementing the existing Council on Aging bus with other ride-share and shuttle programs to bring people to and from the Town Centers.
- TC9. Optimize zoning in Town Centers to support community desires for first floor active uses that attract foot traffic such as coffee shops, cafes, sit-down restaurants, and entertainment uses, and to steer less active uses to upper stories or locations outside of the Town Centers.
- TC10. Consider a process for the annual review of infrastructure, street furniture, and amenities in each of the Town Centers.
- TC11. Improve pedestrian connections and biking options to the Town Centers with enhanced sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting to provide safe access from surrounding neighborhoods and other business districts. Provide an accessible and safe walking path or sidewalk on Gay Street to connect the two Town Centers.
- TC12. Consider formalizing the Planning Board design review process by establishing expanded standards for architecture, building orientation, materials, and site design to achieve the desired village and pedestrian centers.
- TC13. Encourage adjacent property owner collaboration to create more efficient site redevelopment, consistent with neighborhood aesthetics, by combining underutilized properties for redevelopment and shared parking.
- TC14. Encourage public art in business districts and Town gateway signage. Partner with local artists, and include public art and public amenity requirements in Town Center project reviews.
- TC15. Incorporate public gathering areas, pocket parks, and seasonal outdoor amenities.
- TC16. Incorporate greenery such as trees, landscape islands, window boxes, raised planters, and green walls into public ways and commercial properties.
- TC17. Revise zoning to promote curb cut consolidation, improve vehicular traffic flow, and encourage shared parking, charging stations, and solar panels over parking spaces.

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- TC18. Enhance the Town’s public-private partnership with property owners and tenants in the Town Centers. Continue to maintain an up-to-date contact list and meet with business owners to learn about their challenges and together identify opportunities for improvements.
- TC19. Improve regulations and local permitting to streamline the review and licensing process for desired businesses.

DRAFT



Gables Residential at University Station



Mixed Use Building, 323 Washington St.

HOUSING

BACKGROUND

Westwood is largely residential and is considered an “established suburb” by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). This term is applied to towns with predominantly single-family homes on moderately sized lots, inhabited by a relatively affluent population, and where there are limited amounts of vacant developable land, multi-family housing, and commercial development.

Existing housing in Westwood is mainly single-family dwellings with 4,608 out of 5,878 or 78.4% as single family and 1,229 dwellings in structures with two or more units. Eighty-five percent of households are owner-occupied.¹

Westwood’s residential land development patterns have continued with the construction of new single-family homes throughout Town on scattered vacant parcels, and with the subdivision of a few remaining larger parcels to create single-family house lots (Tables 2 and 3). The rate of new single-family home construction between 2000 and 2019 is approximately half that of the preceding two decades from 1980 to 1999.

Since 2000, 353 single family homes have been built in the town.² Notably, more than half of these are new homes built on lots where an existing house was demolished. As is seen in Table 2 for the years 2007 to 2018, 131 out of a total of 235 or 56% of building permits for single-family homes are the result of teardowns and reconstructions. Although these homes do not increase the number of housing units in town, they are generally larger than the homes they replaced, often on nonconforming lots, with the potential to influence neighborhood character and reduce the Town's existing stock of more moderately priced housing.

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Table 2: Building Permits for New Housing Units by Year³

Year	New single-family housing units	New single-family housing units replacing existing house	2 family	Units in buildings of 5+ units
2000	22	*		
2001	18	*		
2002	15	*		
2003	21	*		
2004	10	*		
2005	12	*		
2006	20	*		102
2007	1	9		
2008	6	7		
2009	3	9		
2010	9	3		
2011	7	13		
2012	4	6	2(4)	
2013	15	11		6
2014	12	15	2(4)	350
2015	12	19		
2016	6	14		
2017	10	10	1(2)	12
2018	19	15	1(2)	100
Totals	222	131*	12	570

* Data for new vs. replacement housing units was not broken out in the data source for years 2000-2006.

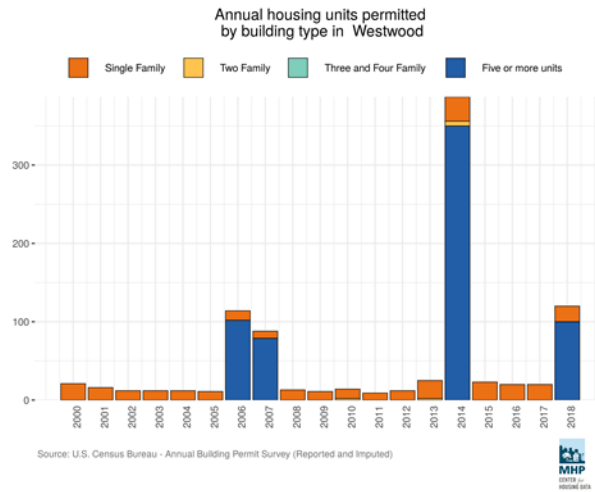


Figure 1: Annual housing units permitted by building type in Westwood
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Annual Building Permit Survey (Reported and imputed).

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Table 3: New Subdivision & Multi-Family Housing Development Summary 2000-2019

Project Type – New Housing Units by Type	Housing Type	Number of Units
Westwood Estates Subdivision, Hedgerow Lane. <i>Construction in progress</i>	Single Family	10
Far Reach Rd. OSRD Subdivision (<i>approved, construction anticipated 2021</i>)	Single Family	3
Morgan Farm Estates, off Dover Road. OSRD Subdivision	Single Family	10
Westview Estates, Thompson Ave.	Single Family	12
Fox Meadow Estates/FKA Captain's Crossing	Single Family	10
Phillip's Way	Single Family	5
Autumn Estates, Autumn Drive	Single Family	13
Powissett Estates	Single Family	10
Dover Road	Single Family	3
215 High Street	Single Family	1
600 Clapboardtree Street	Single Family	1
Currier Farms	Single Family	3
University Station, Gables Residential	Apartments	350
Westwood Place at University Station	Condos	100
Reynold's Farm Senior Residences, Town House Style	Single Family	12
321 Washington Street, Mixed Use Building	Apartments	12
288 Washington Street, Mixed Use Building <i>(approved, not yet constructed, anticipated construction 2021)</i>	Condos	18
Clapboardtree Street <i>(40 age-restricted units, 6 single family, approved & under construction)</i>	6 Single Family 40 Duplex	46
Colburn School	Condos	6
Total:		625

As a result of Zoning Bylaw changes adopted to advance the housing and economic development goals of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the number of multifamily units increased measurably. Prior to 2000, the Town had 731 units in buildings of 5+ units, almost all senior housing. Since then, 570 additional units have been constructed in buildings of five or more housing units, which represents 60 percent of the 947 new housing units constructed since 2000. These new multifamily units are concentrated in just a few buildings, mostly at University Station. These multifamily units were developed in response to needs identified by the community, diversifying the type, size, and cost of housing available in Westwood. These new units were all required by inclusionary housing provisions in the Zoning Bylaw, and these developments are key to maintaining the Town's desired percentage of affordable housing in excess of 10% of the total housing stock.

Westwood's total of 598 affordable units counted on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) represent 11.1% of all housing units, based on the Town's total of 5,389 year-round homes reported on the 2010 census.⁴ The Town currently exceeds the state standard under M.G.L. Chapter 40B. The total number of housing units will, of course, change upon release of the 2020 census and become the new "denominator" for determining the overall percentage of affordable

units. Westwood's affordable housing is a diverse portfolio offering 282 multi-family age-restricted units in Highland Glen, 69 rentals and 10 ownership units at University Station, 3 rental units in Islington Center, 38 single-family ownership homes in Chase Estates and Cedar Hill Estates, 11 Westwood Housing Authority rentals, and multiple group homes dispersed throughout Town serving residents with disabilities.

Housing options have also been expanded since 2000 under Zoning Bylaw provisions which allow for the conversion of pre-1939 single-family homes to two-family homes, and for the creation of accessory housing units in single-family dwellings, both of which may be accomplished through a special permit process.

Policies and strategies for housing in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan promoted the use of various flexible regulatory techniques and incentives to diversify housing types and respond to the needs of seniors and those seeking below-market priced housing. New Zoning Bylaw provisions were then adopted to enable multifamily units as part of mixed-use developments, and to require a minimum percentage of affordable units in all new special permit projects. Other changes incentivize the construction of age-restricted and affordable housing units, allow upper-story residential units in designated portion of Town Centers, and afford greater flexibility in subdivision design. Westwood's Zoning Bylaw now offers density incentives for desirable attributes, increases the opportunity for two-family housing and accessory units, and discourages the demolition of historic structures. The specifics of these zoning measures can be found in the Plan's Zoning Summary section.

Westwood is committed to fair housing principles and is diligent in maintaining its compliance with the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 40B. Westwood Town government has a Housing Agent, an active Fair Housing Committee known as the Housing Partnership, and an elected Housing Authority with broad statutory capacities. An independent, non-profit entity known as the Westwood Affordable Housing Associates, Inc. (WAHA) was created to foster affordable housing development. WAHA has helped create affordable housing rentals by acquiring and rehabilitating housing units throughout Westwood. WAHA currently manages a total of eleven units comprised of four duplexes and three single-family homes. Presently, the three single-family homes are not listed on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Furthermore in 2018, an Affordable Housing Account was established by Town Meeting and funded with \$1,000,000 to assist with affordable housing creation and preservation. Funds from this Affordable Housing Account were recently transferred to the Westwood Housing Authority for the use in securing two additional homes for renovation and reuse as affordable single-family rental units.

Westwood's median age increased by 4.7 years between 2000 and 2016, outpacing the general statewide population. The percentage of residents age 45 and over increased at a higher rate than the statewide demographic, with a noticeable decrease of people aged 20-39. A shortage of lower priced homes and an affordability gap created by the cost of newer construction may have contributed to this trend. In addition, seniors may be residing in their homes longer than expected for various reasons, including a shortage of modest "downsizing" homes at prices affordable to that demographic.

Westwood's population is less racially diverse than the statewide population, with 88% of the population identifying as white compared to 73% overall in Massachusetts.⁵ This, however, represents a 9% increase in diversity in Westwood since the 2000 census, when the population was 96% white. Westwood is also less racially diverse than the surrounding communities. Canton has (80%) of the population identifying as white, while Dedham has (79%), Norwood

(79%), Walpole (85%), Needham (84%), Dover (84%)⁶. When compared to the surrounding communities, the state, and across the nation, where 73% of the total population identifies as white, Westwood is significantly underrepresented with individuals that identify as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, or multiracial. This is important to consider when evaluating the housing supply. This analysis identifies a weakness and an area for improvement in providing inclusive housing opportunities in Westwood’s existing housing stock⁷.

Westwood has experienced a significant increase in residential values. The median sales price for a single-family home in Westwood in 2019 was \$752,000 according to The Warren Group, an 88% increase over the 2000 median home price of \$399,500. Westwood’s housing stock is predominately owner-occupied at 86% of all housing. Renter-occupied is 14% of housing, well below the state’s average of 37%. For Westwood rental households, the median monthly rent is \$1,575 per month as of 2017, and over 45% of rental households pay monthly rents that exceed 30% of their gross monthly income.⁸ When a household spends more than 30% of its income on housing, that household is considered cost burdened. The median monthly housing cost for homes with mortgages is \$3,165 per month,⁹ and 30% have mortgage payments which exceed 30% of the households’ gross monthly income. The median annual household income in Westwood is \$145,799.¹⁰

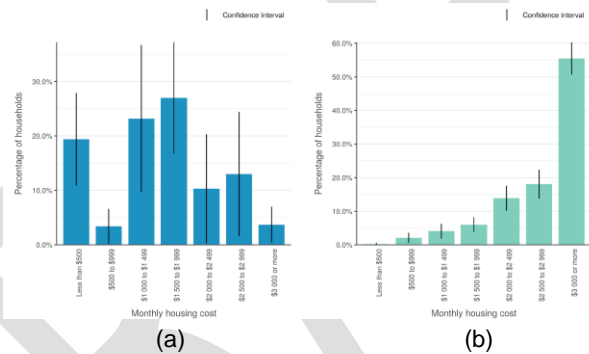


Figure 2: Monthly Housing Cost of Westwood:
(a) Renter Households. (b) Owner Households.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey. 2013-2017 5-year estimates.
 Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.

Westwood’s housing inventory available for purchase has typically hovered between zero and one percent at any given time over the last several years. This extremely low inventory can create difficulty in securing housing at all income levels, presenting barriers for first time homebuyers.¹¹ According to Massachusetts Housing Partnership, a healthy vacancy rate of 2% is needed for housing supply to meet housing demand. Even homeowners not interested in moving can find themselves impacted by higher property valuation and taxation, potentially forcing some homeowners, such as those on a fixed income, to sell.

Input from the community on housing needs was provided through the survey, community visioning workshop, and open houses conducted for this Plan. A separate housing-specific survey and visioning session were also conducted a year earlier as part of the process for preparing the Town’s Housing Production Plan (HPP) adopted in 2019. Information and ideas gathered from both surveys and visioning sessions, and from the HPP, were helpful resources for setting goals for this Plan.

The community participation process revealed support for a range of housing options including moderately priced starter homes, affordable and low-income housing, and more opportunities to downsize to smaller housing types, including condominiums and age-restricted units. These options would provide opportunities for residents wanting to remain in Westwood as they age. The demolition of smaller homes and their replacement by larger houses, referred to as “teardowns,” was cited numerous times in both surveys as a contributing factor for first time homebuyers having difficulty entering the Westwood housing market. Forty-two percent of survey respondents ranked moderately priced housing as the most needed housing type. An additional 28% of survey respondents selected starter homes as a housing priority.¹²

Respondents to the 2018 HPP survey indicated strong support of single-family homes with 74% of respondents indicating there are not enough “starter homes” in Westwood today. A vast majority (71%) felt there were too many luxury single-family homes, and 40 to 50% felt there were not enough duplexes and three-family homes, condos, apartments, affordable homes, and senior housing units.¹³ Survey respondents also demonstrated strong support for accessory apartments and for a continued focus on affordable housing production.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The housing goals of this Plan reflect the goals of the 2019 Housing Production Plan and the Town’s desire to have more types of housing available for people in more types of situations. This includes young families, single heads of households, seniors, singles, persons with disabilities, and the local workforce.

- Objective 1:** Diversify the housing stock by increasing the availability of moderately priced homes, senior housing, rental units, condominiums and townhomes, and attached style housing.
- Objective 2:** Provide opportunities to increase the diversity of the community population.
- Objective 3:** Implement policies and regulations to provide more low- and moderate-income housing options.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Applicable boards should promote housing opportunities that respond to the needs expressed by the above goals and objectives by using the following strategic approaches. Westwood's Housing Production Plan also establishes clear goals and a proactive strategy for producing low- and moderate-income housing at a rate and in a manner that ensures it will be within the Town's control and compatible with community objectives.

- Approach 1:** Encourage private development of moderate and affordable housing through zoning incentives and cooperative negotiation with individual developers.
- Approach 2:** Seek to provide moderately priced housing particularly when redeveloping Town-owned land.
- Approach 3:** Provide educational outreach and encourage regular diversity training within local private entities such as real estate agents and local employers.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are not in any prioritized order.

- H1. Revise the Zoning Bylaw to permit a greater range of housing types in all zoning districts and neighborhoods.
 - a. Identify, prioritize, and consider re-zoning Town-owned properties appropriate for moderately priced residences, should they become available.
 - b. Review the Town’s experience with the accessory apartment bylaw for possible refinements including eliminating or increasing the 2% cap, if appropriate.
 - c. Conduct a review of the procedural and substantive effects of the changes made in 2017 to mitigate the impacts of teardowns in Section 4.5, Nonconforming Uses and Structures. Propose further revisions if necessary to further discourage out-of-scale residential reconstruction.
 - d. Consider expanding the area of the USROD or FMUOD overlay districts on High Street to cover additional commercial properties where redevelopment for mixed-use and upper story housing is desirable.
 - e. Consider increasing the density bonus in the OSRD to encourage moderate-income housing units, affordable housing, and historic preservation that increases the diversity of available housing in terms of size, density, cost, and especially accessibility to public transportation.
 - f. Explore the potential and mechanisms for smaller lot and smaller single- and two-family housing where it would be in context with surrounding “village or cottage style” environments.
 - g. Investigate amendments to encourage the preservation of smaller and more moderately priced homes.
- H2. Pursue implementation of the goals and recommendations contained in the 2019 Housing Production Plan, to further the Town’s commitment to diversity and to continue to meet and exceed the statutory 10% standard of M.G.L. Chapter 40B, including an annual review of progress.
 - a. Explore innovative approaches to financing affordable housing, including use of the Town's Affordable Housing Fund to leverage lower interest rates and increase production of affordable or moderately priced housing and explore the possibility of setting up a separate Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
 - b. Investigate incentives and options to encourage affordable deed restrictions for accessory apartments or other less expensive residences.
 - c. Partner with developers, private property owners, and non-profit entities to produce moderately priced and affordable housing by working collaboratively with private entities, non-profits, and housing advocates.

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- d. Investigate additional methods to provide inclusionary affordable housing in development projects filed with the Planning Board under the Subdivision Control Law.
- H3. Establish policies and procedures to guide regulatory boards in their consideration of inclusionary affordable housing proposals for off-site units or other alternatives to meet the Town's needs and protect the privacy of residents.
- H4. Qualify the three affordable single-family homes owned by Westwood Affordable Housing Associates (WAHA) and all future WAHA properties for the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) through the efforts of the Westwood Housing Authority, WAHA, the Town's Housing Agent, and the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).
- H5. Provide Fair Housing and diversity training for various groups that directly and indirectly impact housing diversity including the Select Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board members. Encourage real estate agents, local businesses, and major employers to provide similar diversity training for their employees.
- H6. Strengthen the role of the Housing Partnership in community outreach and education, identification of unmet needs, and monitoring of affordable units for compliance with fair housing practices, and for placement on the Town's SHI.
- H7. Promote first-time homebuyer resources and provide technical assistance for first time homebuyers with a focus on Westwood's under-represented population groups. Examine establishing a non-profit entity to provide financial assistance such as down payment and mortgage assistance to members of under-represented populations to create a more diverse and welcoming community.
- H8. Establish a Diversity Committee or Human Rights Committee to evaluate existing barriers and make recommendations to increase population diversity in Westwood.
- H9. Study the benefits of adopting the Community Preservation Act, which provides funding for historic preservation, open space protection, and affordable housing development.
- H10. Explore options to upgrade existing and future affordable housing through grants and funding programs to provide universal accessibility.
- H11. Encourage Town government, community groups, local businesses, and real estate agencies to collaborate on developing a program to provide material and information about the Town to welcome all new residents.
- H12. Explore programs to encourage residents to make energy efficiency improvements to older dwellings and promote energy efficient alternatives for new construction to reduce carbon emissions and lower housing costs.
- H13. Identify creative ways to promote and supplement the Aid to the Elderly and Disability Tax Fund to assist with real estate tax costs.

Resources

U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2010-2017

Comprehensive Plan Survey by Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Survey Monkey, April 2019.

Open Space and Recreation Plan, Prepared by the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, Adopted by Planning Board February 26, 2019.

Town of Westwood Housing Production Plan, December 30, 2019, Adopted by Planning Board on November 19, 2019 with amendments; approved by DHCD on January 30, 2020, effective January 3, 2020.

Westwood Vision Session Report entitled “Westwood Comprehensive Plan, a Preliminary Vision, Goals and Objectives”, prepared for the Town of Westwood, Prepared by Community Circle with Barrett Planning Group, LLC, June 19, 2019.

Banker and Tradesman Warren Group, Year to Date from 2018 reported in 2019, Town of Westwood Assessing Records.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Massachusetts Community Types Classification System, July 2009.

Massachusetts Housing Partnership Center for Housing Data; Data Town Community Information.

ENDNOTES

¹ U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2018.

² New residential building permits, Building Official, Annual Town Reports, 2000-2018.

³ Annual Town Reports 2000-2018, Building Division Annual Reports.

⁴ The SHI was updated by DHCD on September 19, 2019. Periodic updates occur and this recent increase is due to the units at the Westwood Place condominiums at University Station.

⁵ U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS), Race & Ethnicity, 2012-2016.

⁶ U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS), Race & Ethnicity, 2012-2016.

⁷ U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS), Race & Ethnicity, 2012-2016.

⁸ Financial Characteristics 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census, American Fact Finder.

⁹ Financial Characteristics 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census, American Fact Finder.

¹⁰ Financial Characteristics 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census, American Fact Finder.

¹¹ U.S. Census American Community Survey, Housing Occupancy 2010-2017.

¹² Question 7 of the Town of Westwood Comprehensive Plan Community Survey, Survey Monkey, April 2019.

¹³ Housing Partnership Housing Survey, November 2018, Question 12.



Citizens, 200 Station Drive



Courtyard Marriott, University Station

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, Westwood has enjoyed a strong economy, a job rich environment, and a recent period of significant economic development activity with new businesses, services, restaurants, hotels, and housing. Commercial property, including industrial and mixed-use properties, comprises six percent of the 7,155 acres of land, but provides over 12,993 jobs and significant tax dollars for our Town budget.¹ Population has grown from approximately 14,618 in 2010 to an estimate of 16,127 in 2018 while the unemployment rate in Westwood was recorded at 2.6% vs. a state rate of 3.7% in 2017. The Town repeatedly sustains a significant balance in its Stabilization Fund, strong financials, excellent fiscal management, and healthy levels of cash. Standard and Poor's rating of Westwood is AAA with a stable outlook because of the Town's strong capacity to meet financial commitments, allowing the Town to borrow money easily and at low rates.

Westwood has several key attributes that have kept its economy strong. Westwood has easy access to employment centers like Boston and the high tech corridor and is located near the major highways of Interstate 95 and 93. It is convenient to Logan International Airport, commuter rail, and high speed rail service to New York City and Washington DC. Westwood has a desirable residential community, broad range of high-quality services, strong public education, and a positive quality of life that makes the Town an attractive place to live, work, and invest.

The Town's success over the past two decades in expanding and diversifying its commercial base contributed to the resiliency of the Town's economy during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further, as businesses adapted operations in response to this crisis, the Town provided expeditious and flexible programs with temporary licensing modifications. The Town and business community is committed to working together to mitigate these economic challenges and minimize the financial and social impact to the community.

In 2014, Westwood established a Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) to improve efficiency of the various land use departments and to better assist existing and prospective businesses considering expansion or relocation in Westwood. This office supports projects that foster responsible economic growth while preserving Westwood's unique community character. DCED unified the Building, Planning, Health, Zoning, Conservation, Historical Preservation, Licensing, and Housing functions within a single department that supports community and economic development.

The Department of Community & Economic Development acts as the advocate for the interests of residential and commercial property owners. With this structure the Town offers enhanced communication between departments, boards, and committees, and has been able to provide more efficient electronic permitting and improved government transparency through website enhancements, while implementing policies focused on economic development.

Zoning governs where particular land uses are permitted and prohibited, and thus is the Town's primary tool to guide growth. Zoning regulations and associated approval processes can be a major contributor to a Town's economic health and vitality. Over the last decade Westwood has evaluated all aspects of its Zoning Bylaw and made changes to achieve its economic development goals, most notably resulting in the University Station and Islington Center redevelopments. Zoning Bylaw amendments have included the creation of mixed-use and other overlay districts, along with new special permit options. Together these changes have incentivized redevelopment and provided a streamlined permitting approach. Flexible Multiple Use Overlay Districts (FMUODs) cover many of Westwood's commercial districts and allow additional zoning options for properties in those districts.

Other commercial properties, including several parcels along Route 1, have not yet benefited from redevelopment or substantial improvements, mainly because they remain zoned for residential use and their nonconforming zoning designations deter investment.

Importance of Economic Development for Westwood

1. Creates jobs for residents.
2. Provides convenient services for residents including restaurants, retailers, entertainment, and health care facilities.
3. Taxes on commercial properties and business services provide funds for education and broad Town services while also taking some of the tax burden off Westwood's residential homeowners. There are three significant ways commercial tax revenue is generated:
 - a. Commercial Property Tax – In FY 2019, commercial property values were 15.9% of the total tax base but commercial property owners paid 26.7% of property taxes. This is due to the commercial tax rate (\$28.24) being significantly higher than the residential tax rate (\$14.65). Over the 24-year span from 1991 to 2015, the share of commercial property value to total property value in Westwood dropped from 25% to a low of 12.5% in 2015. This decrease in commercial property value put more tax burden on residential property owners. The good news is that the percent of commercial value compared to total value has turned the corner. Since 2015, the commercial property value has increased from 12.5% to 15.9% in 2019. After a slight decrease to 14.9% in 2020, the commercial property value is expected to steadily increase as more commercial and mixed-use

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redevelopment adds value to the commercial base. For FY 2019, commercial values alone increased by approximately \$79 million or 12%. That year it is estimated that residential homeowners saved an average of \$1,370 due to the split tax rate.

- b. Meal Tax – Revenue from the .75% added to the State tax on restaurant meals grew from just over \$56,000 in FY 2015 to approximately \$449,000 in FY 2019. Lower totals of Meals Tax revenue are projected for FY20 and FY21 due to the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on restaurants and food establishments, but this source of income is expected to rebound in future years.
 - c. Hotel Tax – This 6% tax on hotel room charges grew from almost \$17,000 in FY 2016 to approximately \$330,000 in FY 2019. As with Meals Tax revenue, Hotel Tax revenue is also projected to be lower than usual in FY20 and FY21.
4. Investments encourage other neighboring locations to also upgrade their properties.
 5. Redeveloped properties under the Town's revised Flexible multiple use Overlay District (FMUOD) zoning can provide upper story multi-family housing to support a varied population including young individuals, small families, singles, large families, single heads-of-households, and senior citizens.
 6. Transit-oriented properties that are developed for housing, like those along University Avenue near the Route 128 Railroad Station, are more environmentally friendly as they reduce the need for automobile travel.
 7. New developments have allowed Westwood to achieve and sustain the threshold of 10% of housing stock being affordable housing. This is especially important in 2020 when the new decennial census will reset the affordable housing threshold levels and the former affordable units at Westwood Glen are no longer counted on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Maintaining the 10% minimum gives Westwood the ability to avoid unfriendly 40B developments and keep local control over development size, location, scope, and appearance.

Westwood's Five Commercial Areas

University Avenue

As of 2020, University Station is in the final stages of a nearly two million square foot, mixed-use development on 137 acres along University Avenue. This project is transit oriented, being adjacent to the MBTA/Amtrak station, with over 120 acres zoned for retail, restaurants, residential, office, and hotel use. The project includes: more than 700,000 square feet of stores, restaurants and other service establishments; 350 apartments and 100 condominium units; a Marriott Courtyard hotel; a 30,000 square foot Brigham & Women's medical center which opened in 2018 and is expected to more than double in size by 2022; a 100,000 square foot office building for Citizen's Bank completed in September 2020, and a 40,000 square foot office building for Meketa Investment Group which opened in November 2020. Citizen's Bank, with 600 employees, was attracted to Westwood using a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) which provides a lower tax rate on a portion of the increased property value over a specified period of time. Property tax revenue for University Station development is now approximately \$5.5 million per year over the pre-development tax revenue for the land, and this tax revenue is expected to continue to grow as the newly added office space is assessed in future years. In addition, a significant portion of the Town's Meals and Hotel tax is generated in this area. The increase in office use provides a

benefit to the local businesses because employees are likely to frequent nearby restaurants and businesses, thus supplementing spending in the local economy.

Islington

Islington Center is currently undergoing a \$35 million dollar redevelopment. In 2017 a new fire station was constructed on the southeast corner of the Route 1A and East Street/School Street intersection in 2017, and a private mixed-use redevelopment was simultaneously completed on the southwest corner of that intersection. Now, the other three corners are part of a three phase public-private partnership redevelopment. The three phases include 1) a new 10,000 square foot CVS that opened in fall 2019; 2) renovation of the former CVS building for new commercial use, plus a relocated and expanded Wentworth Hall, which will include the Islington Branch Library, Youth & Family Services Offices, and space for recreation and community services, which is slated for completion in mid-2021; and 3) a new mixed-use building with 18 condominiums and 14,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space replacing the old Islington Community Center, which is expected to be finished in 2022.. This redevelopment is expected to result in an increase in tax revenue of approximately \$400,000 per year.

High Street Town Center

Westwood's High Street Center is a busy and active area with service businesses supporting the local community. Some properties have remodeled and upgraded their appearance, but opportunities exist for additional improvements and investment in other properties. Some new businesses have replaced old businesses keeping properties generally full and healthy. Many of the businesses are personal service establishments and professional offices. Residents have expressed a desire for more eating establishments and destination retail.

High Street/Lowderbrook Road

The High Street/Lowderbrook Road area near Route 95 is a campus setting office park that supports a variety of businesses and provides numerous jobs for the region and steady tax revenue for the Town.

Route 1

Route 1 is a highway business district that supports a broad range of commercial uses including industrial, office, car dealerships, restaurants, services, and retail. New commercial properties have been built along Everett Street and several new car dealerships (Acura, Porsche, and Audi) now exist on the southbound side of Route 1.A new Shell Station and Season's Market was recently developed on Route 1 South and Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital just opened a pharmaceutical distribution facility on Wilson Way in Glacier Park. Redevelopment and updating of properties has been slower throughout the remainder of Route 1 and adjacent commercial areas.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Westwood's overall goals for economic development are:

Objective 1: Maximize the Town's commercial tax base by pursuing economic development that attracts the desired type of development to targeted locations and is complementary to Westwood's community character.

Objective 2 Foster the Town's village centers as a place to shop, dine, and mingle by encouraging a mix of desirable services and uses that generate increased foot traffic.

Objective 3: Provide jobs and other economic and social benefits for Westwood residents.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Town's desire to provide high quality public services for education and general government requires ample support from a robust local economy. The financial strength of local businesses and industry bolsters the Town's overall financial health and together they achieve the quality of life desired for the community. Accordingly, the Town's economic development strategy focuses on attracting high quality diversified businesses that are financially strong, vibrant community partners which provide positive benefits to Westwood. Efforts focus on proactive support of local businesses, developers, and investors to encourage their doing business in Westwood, balanced with sensitivity to the Town's predominately residential character.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are organized under topic categories related to the above overarching goals and objectives, following an informal order. A more formal implementation schedule may be found in the implementation matrix section of this Plan.

- E1. Devote specific attention to preserving the small town feel and maintaining a New England Village appearance in areas that have high residential ownership such as High Street Center and Islington Center.
- E2. Support the continued development of University Station in its final phase by working with the developer to attract additional quality businesses, fill the remaining office space, and bring in services to best meet the demands of the local community.
- E3. Encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties along University Avenue outside of the University Station development. Promote uses that maximize the commercial tax base with minimal environmental impact such as offices, service industries, and restaurants.
- E4. Encourage development focused on commercial, office, quality retail, and restaurants along Route 1 and in adjacent areas including Glacier Drive and the Southwest Park near Route 95.
- E5. Examine zoning changes along portions of Route 1 that are currently zoned residential but which contain long-standing non-conforming commercial uses, such as Lambert's Plaza. Revise the zoning to reflect the commercial uses of this property and encourage upgrades while being sensitive to the adjacent residential neighborhood.
- E6. Support the current and on-going redevelopment of Islington Center. Encourage new retailers, restaurants, and service companies so that Islington Center can thrive as a destination for residents to shop, dine and experience casual encounters in public spaces. Encourage attractive uses compatible with the village character
- E7. Work with commercial property owners to attract growing, financially strong businesses to the High Street/Lowderbrook Road Area near Route 95.

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- E8. Encourage the continued upgrading of commercial properties in the High Street Town Center with a focus on specialty retailers, restaurants, and small professional offices. Encourage revitalization that is attractive and compatible with the Town Center village character in design, size, and scope.
- E9. Engage our local chamber of commerce, the Neponset River Regional Chamber of Commerce, to actively support the business community with the focus on businesses in Westwood's Town Centers. Seek business community input on local economic needs and work with commercial property owners to identify ways to improve walkability, attractiveness, and the village feel of the High Street and Islington Centers.
- E10. Include green space, bike paths, and pedestrian connections to access eating, shopping, and parking in all developments. Avoid creating new traffic issues and whenever possible, improve traffic flow. In the University Avenue area, create additional pedestrian access points to the Amtrak/MBTA train station such as a connection from the east side of the MBTA garage to the Marriott Courtyard Hotel.
- E11. Maintain a program of sidewalk and street upgrades with a focus on safety, walkability, and bicycle use as discussed in the Transportation section. Prioritize pedestrian and bike connections to the Town's economic centers.
- E12. Increase housing diversity and transit-oriented housing opportunities for new economic development projects. Create mixed-use developments with housing on upper stories and businesses on the first floor to maintain the commercial tax base.
- E13. Support a positive relationship with businesses and continue to streamline permitting wherever possible as an incentive for business development.
- E14. Maintain the split tax rate for commercial and residential real estate. Regularly adjust it to mitigate major swings in real estate valuations with the long-term goal of using economic growth to increase the commercial tax base and reduce the tax burden on residential properties.
- E15. Utilize tax incentives, like TIF's (Tax Increment Financing), to attract significant business development only where there are clear long-term tax and other benefits to Westwood, and where it is necessary to compete with other towns offering similar incentives.
- E16. Consider formalizing the Planning Board design review process by expanding on existing review standards for architecture, building orientation, materials, and site design, particularly in the business areas on High and Washington Streets.
- E17. Explore whether Westwood would benefit from a business ambassador or business liaison program, even if on a part time or on call basis.
- E18. Review other towns' best practices and identify ways to balance vibrant economic development with requirements for appropriate design, use, scope, and size.
- E19. Complete implementation of electronic permitting for all Town departments, boards, and commissions to allow residents and businesses to achieve paper-free business with greater efficiency, coordination, recordkeeping, and transparency.

E20. Seek to improve business regulations to provide more efficient permitting by reducing remaining overlaps among different boards and committees, where permits by enabling legislation. In cases where multiple board or committee approvals are required for a single project, encourage concurrent meetings for greater efficiency.

RESOURCES

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended June 20, 2018, Town of Westwood, prepared by Finance Director.

Exhibit A.9 Town of Westwood Supplemental Financial Information, FY19 Budget Summary, prepared by Finance Director for Board of Selectmen and Finance and Warrant Commission.

Exhibit A.8 Town of Westwood Tax Rate History.

Town of Westwood, Financial Management Policies and Objectives, Prepared by Finance Director, Adopted by Board of Selectmen January 12, 2014 and Revised January 13, 2014.

ENDNOTES

¹ MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi>
MA Labor Market information, Municipal Employment Data, Westwood
<https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi/MunicipalEmploymentData/LmiTown?A=000370>

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Sen Ki, 1255 High St.



Buckmaster Pond

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

BACKGROUND

This section of the Comprehensive Plan is an assessment of the natural, historic, and cultural resources in Westwood. It includes environmental, wildlife, and geological features, and is an evaluation of the cultural resources contributing to the Town's historical and social identity. Westwood's natural and cultural resources play a critical role in supporting the overall health and social viability of the community. The overall landscape and social characteristics of a town are often what makes it special and unique to residents.

Natural Resources

The topography of Westwood is varied with numerous streams, wetlands and ponds, fertile upland, and many areas of bedrock and rock outcroppings. The Town is in two watersheds. Two-thirds of the southern portion of Westwood is in the Neponset River Watershed and the northeastern portion of the Town is in the Charles River Watershed.

Bodies of water and wetlands occupy approximately 155 and 464 acres of the Town's area, respectively. Buckmaster Pond at 28 acres is the Town's largest body of water. Since 1885, that pond has been available as a public water supply for the Town of Norwood. Thus, Norwood owns the water rights to Buckmaster Pond, limiting its recreational use. Westwood enjoys passive recreation in the park areas around the pond for hiking, picnicking, birdwatching, and enjoying the views along the Pond Street sidewalk.

In the northeast section of Town is Rock Meadow Brook with small ponds, Lee and Storrow, flowing to the Charles River. Also, Powissett Brook drains Hale's Noanet Pond as well as Cedar Swamp and Storrow Pond to the Charles River. In the southern end of Town, Bubbling Brook begins at the local restaurant of the same name and defines Westwood's boundary with Walpole. It, along with Mill Brook, draining the area slightly to the east, both flow into Pettee's Pond and then through Willet Pond into Norwood's Ellis Pond. There they are joined by Germany Brook, which drains Westwood's Buckmaster Pond and Pine Swamp. Hawes Brook then carries this combined flow downstream from Ellis Pond to the Neponset River in South Norwood. Meanwhile, Purgatory Brook rises in Sandy Valley and Dead Swamp near Lowell Woods and flows to Purgatory Swamp near Route 1 and Everett Street. There, before draining into the Neponset, it is

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joined first by South Brook and later Plantingfield Brook, coming down from Lyman's Pond behind the High School. A tiny stretch of the Charles River forms Westwood's border with Needham at the Town's northernmost tip. The Neponset River defines the lengthier eastern border with Canton running behind University Avenue. Westwood's Conservation Commission protects these resources along with the Town's many areas of wetland habitat under the Massachusetts Wetland's Protection Act and Westwood's local Wetlands Protection Bylaw.

The Neponset River and its environs on the eastern border of Town bordering Canton are part of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) which contains priority habitats of rare species. The area is designated an ACEC by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs based on the significance of the natural resources: the river and its adjacent wetlands and floodplains, the associated aquifers and public water supplies, and the diverse wildlife habitats. The designation directs State environmental agencies to take actions to preserve, restore, and enhance the resources of the ACEC, and is intended to encourage and facilitate stewardship by public and private owners. The Westwood portion of these environmentally sensitive areas is relatively small as most of the ACEC and habitat areas are in adjoining towns.

The Dedham-Westwood Water District (DWWD) has six wells in Westwood and eleven in Dedham. Westwood works closely with the DWWD by actively serving on its board and sending all Planning Board applications to the DWWD for review and comment. Westwood has established Water Resource Protection Overlay Zoning Districts to protect and maintain the existing and potential groundwater supply and recharge areas throughout Town. Westwood's Zoning Bylaw sets specific use and review criteria and requires a special permit application and public hearing when certain uses and new buildings or structures are proposed within 400 feet of a DWWD well or within a Water Resource Protection District.

Stormwater runoff is an on-going threat to water quality everywhere. In 2015, Westwood Town Meeting adopted a Stormwater Management Bylaw to review and regulate stormwater to ensure proper treatment and quantity of stormwater runoff into the stormwater systems. The Bylaw requires review of any disturbance over 5,000 sq. ft. to control flooding and protect against contamination and illegal discharge. Westwood's Zoning Bylaw includes Flood Area Overlay Districts to reduce flooding, preserve the ground water table, and limit development in flood-prone areas. The Conservation Commission and Planning Board, when reviewing applications, require low impact design techniques including rain gardens, pervious paving, reduced pavement by narrower roads, rainwater recharge systems for rooftops and parking areas, and best management practices.

The Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) section of the Zoning Bylaw and the Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) section both promote environmentally sensitive development. The OSRD provides residential incentives to conserve more open space. The FMUOD provides incentives, imposes performance standards, and offers mixed-use solutions in appropriate development areas.

Westwood has thirteen designated scenic roads: Canton Street, Dover Road, Downey Street, East Street, Everett Street, Fox Hill Street, Grove Street, Milk Street, Mill Street, Sandy Valley Road, Summer Street, Thatcher Street, and Woodland Road. Under the Scenic Road Regulations, the Planning Board reviews proposed removal and trimming of mature trees and the removal or relocation of ancient stonewalls within a scenic road right-of-way to preserve the road's natural, scenic, and aesthetic character.

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In 2018, the Westwood Community Trails Program was established to promote the use, maintenance, and awareness of Westwood's trails. It is overseen by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee and administered by Hale to recruit and train volunteers, and organize trail programs such as hikes, trail maintenance, and clean-ups.

Westwood Land Trust was established in 1999 to promote the protection and stewardship of open space and natural resources in Westwood. Since its inception the Land Trust has successfully preserved over 220 acres by acquiring the development rights and placing conservation restrictions on Westwood properties.

Historic Resources

Westwood's land was originally part of the 1636 Dedham Grant. Over the years, a separate parish known as the Clapboard Trees was established which later became West Dedham. In 1897 that area was incorporated as the Town of Westwood. Early settlers were subsistence farmers who also harvested timber from the thick woodlands. Over the years, saw mills and grist mills developed along the Town's brooks and ponds. Taverns on Washington and High Streets were the centers of commercial activity.

The influence of the automobile on Westwood's development began in the 1930s after the demise of the two streetcar lines on Washington and High Streets and rapid residential development in the Islington and High Street areas. Following World War II there was a period of significant subdivision development and population increases. Much of this history is apparent in Westwood's current land use patterns.

The Westwood Historical Commission (WHC) works with other boards and commissions in planning and implementing programs for the identification, evaluation, and protection of Westwood's history. In 1995, the WHC documented the Town's history and over the next three years, conducted a multiple-phase comprehensive survey of Westwood's cultural resources. The resulting historical survey cataloged the cultural resources of the major periods of the Town's historic development from the first colonial European presence to the 1960s. It included a narrative history of the development of Westwood and a list of properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1998 Westwood established two honorary historic districts with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. One district is called the Colburn School-High Street District and includes 48 properties. The other is the Fisher School-High Street District with 20 properties. These districts stretch along High Street from Pleasant Valley Road to Church Square, the intersection of High, Pond, and Nahatan Streets. Although properties within the Colburn School-High Street District and the Fisher School-High Street District are publically recognized for their local historical and/or architectural significance, neither district is a regulatory Local Historic District, and no controls are currently in place to prevent the non-historic alterations of these properties.

In 2016, Westwood Town Meeting adopted a Historic Structures Demolition Bylaw to help preserve Westwood's historic structures constructed on or before December 31, 1910. This Bylaw gives authority to the Westwood Historical Commission to impose up to a six-month delay before a Demolition Permit may be issued by the Town's Building Division. The goal of this bylaw is to encourage owners to investigate opportunities to preserve historic buildings rather than move ahead quickly with complete demolition. WHC meets regularly to review demolition and pre-determination requests under this bylaw.

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The Westwood Historical Society was founded in 1965 and is a private, charitable, educational institution, supported by memberships and individual donations with a mission to preserve Westwood's history, educate the community, and advocate for historic preservation.

The following buildings and areas contribute to the Westwood's history and unique character:

The Town Pound: Initially part of the first land grant, it was built to hold animals that strayed from their owners and were waiting to be claimed. The pound was originally enclosed by a wooden fence and later a stone wall. A sketch made in 1899 by Lucius Damrell which included a large oak tree within the stone wall is on the Town seal.

Oven Mouth: This is a Native American Landmark, also known as Devil's Oven. This cave was used by Native Americans during the Colonial Period of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Old Westwood Cemetery – West Dedham Cemetery: This cemetery was constructed in 1752 on Nahatan Street at High Street.

The Fisher School: Built in 1845 on Clapboardtree Street and currently the headquarters of the Westwood Historical Society, this one-room schoolhouse has been relocated several times and now serves as a living history setting for school programs and cultural activities. For the past 20 years, third-grade students in Westwood have spent a day at the Fisher School studying the curriculum of 1868. The students wear period clothing and use materials of the time. This program is run by the Westwood Historical Society with the support of the Westwood Public Schools.

The Colburn School: This former school building, constructed in 1874, was named for Warren Colburn, a Westwood educator who wrote the math book titled *Intellectual Arithmetic* that is used in Westwood's third-grade program at the Fisher School. This book was used by elementary schools in 26 states in 1868 and in countries throughout the world. The Colburn School building was historically preserved in 2012 as a mixed-use building with retail space on the first floor and a total of six residences on the upper floors.

The Obed Baker House: This home was built by Obed Baker, a local teamster, for his wife Betsey Metcalf Baker in 1812. As a young girl in Providence, RI, she learned how to make a fashionable straw bonnet. Up until that time, straw bonnets were only available from England. She continued to make bonnets and taught other women this craft. Betsey is listed on Google.com as one of America's first entrepreneurs. The Obed Baker House was relocated to 909 High Street in 2002. Efforts to find a potential new use for this historic structure are ongoing. .

Wentworth Hall: First built in 1884 as a one room schoolhouse, this building also served as the first Westwood Town Hall, a community center, a place for church services, a fire station, and offices for the Parks and Recreation Department, before becoming the Islington Branch Library in 1959. In 2018, Westwood Town Meeting approved the Islington Center Redevelopment project that involves relocating exterior walls of the historic Wentworth Hall and incorporating those walls in the construction of a new building across the street. The new Wentworth Hall will again house the branch library, and will contain an addition for town offices as well as a fully accessible lower level multi-use community space.

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Westwood Town Hall: This Classical Revival brick building with slate roof was designed by Stebbins & Watkins Architects of Boston and constructed in 1910. It has served as the Westwood Town Hall ever since.

Cultural Resources

Westwood's cultural resources add to the community's character and sense of place. This includes a variety of organizations, libraries, Town services, and special events involving robust community participation. These cultural resources add to the overall feeling of community and create a welcoming environment for residents.

The Westwood Cultural Council (WCC) helps provide cultural opportunities for residents by giving grants to community members wishing to provide opportunities in the arts and humanities for Westwood residents. WCC receives grant funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Coalition.

Westwood's two libraries, the main library on High Street and the branch library on Washington Street, as well as the Town's human services departments and the Council on Aging, provide a wide variety of programming and services such as book clubs, youth programs, speakers, information sessions, educational programs, and social services for seniors, youth, teens, and other members of the community. Many of these events and offices, which have resided in the Islington Community Center (ICC) at the corner of East and Washington Street for the past decade, will take place in the new Wentworth Hall following its completion in 2021.

A quarterly newsletter containing a wide variety of local news and events and known as the Community Newsletter is mailed to all households. In 2018 the Town created the Westwood Wire, an electronic news bulletin distributed by email to subscribers. Westwood Wire is managed by the Town Administrator office to share town service updates, important information for residents, and local events. The Town's website serves as the hub of Town government information.

Westwood residents are active in a wide variety of ways, and resident engagement during the Comprehensive Plan update process demonstrated further growth in community involvement. Residents showed support for more opportunities for participation, an increased sense of community, and greater diversity. Westwood currently offers a variety of special community events that encourage cultural and community connection. Westwood Day is an annual community event held each fall that includes a variety of activities, entertainment, demonstrations, local vendors, a road race, and Westwood's homecoming football game. The Town also hosts a Westwood Little League Parade and opening day ceremony each spring.

Saint Mark of Ephesus Orthodox Cathedral hosts an annual Greek Festival each September celebrating Greek culture with traditional food, music, and dance. Diwali Festival of Lights is held annually by the Westwood Indian American Association to share Indian culture, pageantry, food, fashion, and rituals with the Westwood community. In 2019, the Westwood Library hosted an inaugural Eid al-Fitr celebration to learn about this holiday and religious tradition for Muslims, who break their month-long Ramadan fast celebrating with friends and family. Finally, a Christmas Tree Lighting is hosted each year by the Town along with winter activities in front of Town Hall.

Special Places

During the early visioning process of preparing this Plan, Town residents participated in the development of a "special places" inventory. Residents were asked to identify those places in Town that define Westwood as a unique and special place. These could include outstanding

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views or landscapes, sites or buildings of historic value, or essential places of community activity. These are places that give form to residents' internal images of the community, are identified with cherished rituals, or contribute subconsciously to everyday life. The sites listed below are among the many places identified with photographs or noted as favorite places during the survey or visioning session.

Open Space and Natural Features

- Hale – 1,200 acres of woods, streams, ponds, and meadows.
- Lowell Woods.
- Gay Street – aesthetic and scenic road.
- Buckmaster Pond.
- Wentworth Conservation Area.

Institutions

- First Parish Church.
- Colburn School Building.

Water Resources

- Buckmaster Pond – fishing derby in spring, band concerts in summer.

Community

- Westwood Media Center – Westwood's local television for community and government programming.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Protect notable resources by fostering historic preservation and encouraging rehabilitation projects.

Objective 2: Increase opportunities for community gathering through artistic, cultural, and other place-making activities to strengthen the sense of community.

Objective 3: Protect and improve access to open space and natural resources.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Protection of natural, historic, and cultural resources requires a broad and cooperative effort among residents, businesses, institutions, community organizations, and state and local agencies, boards, and commissions. Regional intergovernmental coordination is necessary since these natural resources are not confined by Town boundaries. Commitment to historic preservation should be prioritized and supported and should follow the examples from other communities that have successfully implemented historic preservation methods.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are not in any prioritized order.

NC1. Continue working cooperatively with neighboring municipalities, Dedham-Westwood Water District (DWWD), and regional groups such as the Neponset River Watershed

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- Association and Charles River Watershed Association to protect the quality and supply of groundwater and surface waters and related habitat.
- NC2. Utilize the provisions of the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD), Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD), and Environmental Impact and Design Review (EIDR) sections of the Zoning Bylaw and the Subdivision Rules and Regulations to achieve site design that is protective of environmental and cultural resources by:
- Keeping development away from sensitive areas such as steep slopes, wetlands, and scenic areas.
 - Requiring stormwater improvements for all redevelopment projects.
 - Minimizing cut and fill, and the area over which vegetation is disturbed.
 - Minimizing impervious surfaces.
- NC3. Encourage new residential construction to be in the form of an Open Space Residential Development (OSRD), supporting open space preservation and low impact design techniques.
- NC4. Provide connections to fragmented open space and prioritize efforts to preserve contiguous areas of undeveloped land..
- NC5. Encourage redevelopment of commercial areas to include effective protection and management of natural resources.
- NC6. Collaborate with the Dedham-Westwood Water District (DWWD) to continuously review and evaluate best practices to reduce and prevent pollution and contamination to the water supply and aquifers.
- NC7. Ensure that stormwater systems do not degrade water quality.
- NC8. Adopt practices that require improvement to existing stormwater management systems when sites are redeveloped.
- NC9. Explore creating incentives to encourage redevelopment of historic properties, including the potential establishment of a historic preservation fund and a network of historic rehabilitation professionals who can be available when needed.
- NC10. Consider formalizing the Planning Board design review process by expanding on existing standards for architecture, building orientation, materials, and site design, particularly in the Washington and High Street Town Centers.
- NC11. Explore zoning relief or other incentives for projects which preserve historic resources.
- NC12. Partner with University Station to host events at the plaza and park such as concerts, performances, and other cultural activities.
- NC13. Discourage use of invasive species by property owners and encourage their removal and proper disposal.
- NC14. Adopt a tree preservation bylaw to protect and preserve trees during construction.

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- NC15. Explore the establishment of a tree fund for the care, replacement, and addition of street trees.
- NC16. Consider installing Scenic Road signs on designated scenic roads.
- NC17. Establish a historic plaque program to recognize appropriate historic renovations.
- NC18. Work with interested property owners to perform a survey of historically and/or architecturally significant properties to submit for consideration of listing on the National Historic Register.
- NC19. Review the Planning Board's rules and regulations for scenic roads under the Scenic Roads Law and consider revisions to require the re-use of removed stones and to require one-for-one tree replacement.
- NC20. Consider submitting additional streets for Scenic Road Designation such as Gay Street, Clapboardtree Street, and other roads that may qualify.
- NC21. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Historic Structures Demolition Bylaw, consider lengthening the maximum period of demolition delay, and consider explicit incentives and alternatives to demolition.
- NC22. Explore funding opportunities for historic preservation and cultural enhancement.
- NC23. Investigate adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to preserve historic properties and acquire open space. Other eligible funding from CPA is for affordable housing and for outdoor recreation facilities which is discussed in the Housing section and in the Open Space and Recreation section.
- NC24. Consider developing a coordinated master calendar for all local cultural events and activities and identify who will manage and maintain the calendar.
- NC25. Explore opportunities for "pocket parks and parklets" and other small or temporary gathering space throughout town.
- NC26. Continue to utilize the Westwood Community Trails Program to organize trail maintenance, volunteer-lead hikes, and cleanup events.
- NC27. Collaborate with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to establish trail and sidewalk connections from the Warner Trail and University Avenue to the Blue Hills Reservation.
- NC28. Develop maps, brochures, electronic material, and signage to promote and raise awareness of trails, conservation areas, and historic sites.
- NC29. Work with the Neponset River Watershed Association and DCR to promote recreational use of the Neponset River and investigate the potential for development of a canoe launch on the west bank of the river in Westwood.
- NC30. Increase public education of and participation in recycling and solid waste reduction to prevent contamination. Provide recycling receptacles at all public places such as parks, fields, and town centers.

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- NC31. Partner with the Westwood Cultural Council to continue to promote cultural diversity and to educate the Westwood community.
- NC32. Complete the historic rehabilitation and reuse of the Obed Baker House to ensure its preservation.
- NC33. Promote the use of the Fisher School for meetings, activities, and events.
- NC34. Design sidewalks and pedestrian improvements to be compatible with the natural environment by respecting stonewalls, mature trees, and other natural features, and providing buffers between vehicles and pedestrians.

RESOURCES

Westwood Open Space & Recreation Plan, Adopted by the Planning Board February 26, 2019, conditionally approved by MA Department of Conservation and Recreation July 11, 2019.

Westwood Zoning Bylaw, May 6, 2019

Vision Session Preliminary Report, Special Places Campaign

DRAFT



Islington Fire Station



Police Headquarters

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

BACKGROUND

Public facilities make it possible for a municipality to provide services for the public good. Community facilities such as public buildings, infrastructure, utilities, and accompanying services support education, public works, public safety, and general town services, all of which contribute to the quality of life for Westwood inhabitants. Town residents recognize the role of public facilities in supporting a healthy and sustainable community and the need for their continued maintenance. Public Facilities, along with Town Center Revitalization and Traffic, were ranked as the top three planning areas in resident surveys, receiving 40%, 40%, and 38% of survey responses to the question for choosing the most important planning topics. Those areas were similarly echoed by participants of the vision session. Residents overwhelmingly expressed appreciation of the Schools, with 78% of survey responders listing the schools as their favorite thing about living in Westwood followed by the Council on Aging, Library, and the Town's financial stability.

Westwood's commitment to long range financial planning has proved effective in anticipating capital needs and managing costs. Over the last several years Westwood has found creative ways to fund capital projects. New development has successfully increased the commercial tax base and helped fund Town facilities and services. New and renovated public buildings have incorporated accessibility and energy efficiency upgrades but many older town buildings lack these attributes. Recreation facilities such as an indoor recreation building were also desired by residents in both the survey and vision session. These are covered in the Open Space and Recreation section. All other facilities are discussed in this section of the plan.

Commission on Disability and advocacy for Universal Design

The Town has a nine-member Commission on Disability that meets monthly, provides advisory guidance for a variety of issues, and advocates for residents with disabilities and their families. The Commission provides advice and support in the areas of housing, transportation, physical access, and emergency planning. The Town completed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation and transition plan in 1992 which addresses the accessibility needs for the community facilities in this section of the plan. An updated evaluation of accessibility at outdoor recreation facilities was included as part of the 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Commission not only promotes accessible design, a requirement focused on the needs of people with disabilities, but strongly advocates for universal design, a term used throughout this plan. Universal design covers a wider spectrum and more holistic approach of human abilities. It includes design features that exceed the minimum accessibility requirements and are more inclusive to encourage access and enjoyment for all.

School Facilities

Between 2000 and 2005, the Downey and Martha Jones elementary schools underwent renovations and additions, and a new high school was completed in 2005. The School District has determined that facility issues at three additional elementary schools, the Deerfield, Hanlon, and Sheehan, should be prioritized, with the middle school needs to be addressed thereafter.

As documented in a 2015 study, the facility issues in the Deerfield, Hanlon, and Sheehan elementary schools are largely due to age, all more than 65 years¹. Much of the existing, original plumbing and HVAC piping and components need replacement and the buildings are not fully ADA compliant. Educationally, the buildings lack sufficient space for art programs, small group instruction, and intervention services. Deteriorating conditions and structural limitations will continue to escalate. The buildings need to be modernized for safe and efficient operation, and for energy and accessibility requirements.

School enrollment projections are a contributing factor in the need for the Hanlon/Deerfield elementary school building project. After a period of declining enrollment, the latest estimates indicate a steady increase in the number of elementary age students entering the Westwood Schools over the next 10 years². The enrollment projections from September 2018 show the K-12 student population increasing from 3,043 students in 2018 to 3,303 in 2028. New facilities are necessary to accommodate today's population and account for the anticipated future growth.

As a result of the 2018 feasibility and assessment process, the School District is presently pursuing funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for construction of elementary school that will combine the Deerfield and Hanlon Schools. In 2017, the MSBA invited Westwood into its eligibility period after reviewing the Town's plans. In May 2018, Town Meeting approved funding a feasibility study. The School District, from fall 2019 into 2020, held several community forums to gather input and identify the important criteria for the project. Those conversations will inform the most cost-effective and educationally appropriate path forward, which was submitted to the MSBA in the summer of 2020. In June 2020, the School Building Committee voted to proceed with designing a combined Hanlon-Deerfield school, with a maximum enrollment of 560 students, to be situated on the site of the existing Hanlon School.

The elementary school project process is deliberately long, methodical, and thorough. The timeline is for completed design in 2021, commencement of construction in 2022, and completion expected in 2024. This is subject to approval by Town Voters at a Town Meeting and a successful ballot question at Town Election to authorize a debt exemption override.

The School Department is also currently evaluating how to address the facility needs of the Sheehan School. . Regarding the Thurston Middle School, the original section of the building was constructed in 1938 and renovated in stages, most recently with HVAC improvements, but a more comprehensive upgrade will be needed over the next decade.

Water Supply and Use

Westwood's water is supplied through the Dedham-Westwood Water District (DWWD). The DWWD water rates are comparable for the metro Boston area with monthly customer billing. DWWD annually makes capital improvements such as new and replaced water mains, fire hydrants, water service lines, and water meters. The average daily water demand in 2018 of both communities was 3.70 million gallons. Westwood's portion makes up 42% or 1.55 million gallons daily. Westwood residential water use comprised an estimated 69% of its total.

Past projections of over 7 million GPD peak system wide demand have not quite been realized over the past 15 years with the highest level at 6.9 MGD. The additional supply from Fowl Meadow Well 5 added in 1997, and from the District becoming a partial MWRA member in 2006, has DWWD well positioned to meet peak demands. The District continues to be concerned with increases in sodium and chloride levels in Fowl Meadow Well 5 and the other wells along University Avenue. DWWD continues to encourage MassDOT to reduce the amount of sodium and chloride applied to its highways which end up in the nearby wells.

DWWD continues to encourage water conservation measures through grants and partnerships to manage demand and maintain regulatory compliance. The District offers rebates and provides incentives to residents to purchase water efficient washing machines and water conserving toilets. Complimentary rain sensors, low flow showerheads, and aerators are distributed. Concerns of the District include the adequacy of future water supply, the management of seasonal demands, difficulty in securing new supply sources, and the impact of increased regulatory restrictions. The District satisfies water quality concerns by operating and maintaining its facility through an effective risk management and safety program to assure safe and unrestricted water service to every customer.

Public Works Roadways

The Department of Public Works (DPW) has a pavement management and sign inventory plan that every year generates significant roadway and neighborhood enhancements. The work is funded through the annual state Chapter 90 Program. In 2019, the Town approved a Road Improvement Bond for paving, curbing, and sidewalk improvements on Route 109 from North to Nahatan Street. Another Road Improvement Bond for sidewalk enhancements, safety improvements at crosswalks, and pavement preservation techniques applied throughout town is proposed for FY2021. Pedestrian Infrastructure improvements such as crosswalks, sidewalks, and bike paths were listed as the most important facility priority receiving 62% of the survey responses. Pedestrian improvements and walkability were also highlighted at the vision session and the open houses. Improving traffic flow was identified as a top priority in all public input. These objectives are all discussed in the transportation section.

Public Works Fleet and Equipment

The vehicle fleet replacement program has been funded through the Town's capital program over the past several years and has kept the Town's fleet on track for a 10 to 12-year replacement schedule. Two to three new vehicles and equipment are ordered annually. Replacements and cost estimates are currently forecast ten years in advance.

Cemetery

The Cemetery Division of DPW completed a master plan in 2015 and constructed the expansion area identified in that plan the following year. That new section could reach capacity in ten years, but development and construction of the next phase should be completed well before then.

Westwood Cemetery averages 60 burials per year and approximately 50 graves are purchased each year.

Sewer

The Town's Sewer Master Plan has been completed after many years and future efforts are to maintain the system. The Sewer Division operates an on-going Inflow and Infiltration program along with a Sewer Pump Station maintenance program. These capital programs continually ensure the stability of the system and its eleven pump stations.

Carby Street DPW Facility

The Carby Street Municipal Building was constructed in 2004 and meets universal design standards. It contains DPW administrative staff, the Department of Community and Economic Development, and other staff. The approximately 1,000 square foot DPW employee facility located behind the Municipal Building is a 50-year-old, dilapidated Cape house with one bathroom, no shower, no locker room, and no air conditioning. This building does not adequately support the needs of the staff of 25 and does not provide separate restroom facilities for men and women. There are 35 vehicles and pieces of equipment stored on the Carby site. Most of the equipment is housed in three garages totaling 11,000 square feet and one other structure. Two of the garages are over 50 years old, and the other was built in 2008. Due to lack of space, some vehicles such as the dump trucks are stored outside, subject to the weather, which reduces their life expectancy.

Trash and Recycling

The Town continues to provide weekly curbside pick-up for trash and bi-weekly for recycling, but recycling contamination is a continuing problem and a significant cost factor. The Town began providing single stream recycling in 2012. Due to contaminated material such as plastic bags and food waste on recycled items, the contractor, Waste Management, bills the Town every month a contamination fee which varies by the amount of contamination. The Town needs to continue to educate residents and has contracted with a company to provide residents updated information and help them identify what is recyclable and what is not. A part time recycling coordinator would also help with both education and enforcement.

Police Facilities

Safety and low crime rate was selected as the residents' top reason for living in Westwood in 80% of survey responses and is clearly an important factor in choosing to live in Westwood. A new police facility was constructed and opened in 2018. The new police headquarters features universal design; training space doubling as community meeting space, adequate storage for equipment, modern facilities for the handling of detainees, and a combined (police, fire and EMS) communications and dispatch center that processes over 35,000 calls annually. Evidence is now stored and handled using industry best practices. At 19,000 square feet the new facility is adequately sized for anticipated growth, therefore there is no capital building need for the police department for the foreseeable future.

Fire Facilities

The fire department has over 40 personnel that provide fire suppression, ambulance service, specialized search and rescue, fire prevention and code enforcement inspection, training, fire investigation, public education, and emergency management. A new 12,000 square foot Fire Station 2 at 300 Washington Street was constructed and opened in late 2017. The new facility

replaced a small outdated 2-bay garage with a state-of-the-art 3-bay firehouse that supports current operational and emergency response needs. Fire Station 1 on High Street serves a dual function as the main fire station and the department administrative offices including Fire Prevention, Emergency Medical Services, and the Training Division. The building was originally designed to function with a half dozen personnel, but the department’s daily staffing has nearly doubled reducing operational efficiency. It was constructed in 1948 and underwent a renovation in 1975³. The station is 10,000 square feet; has apparatus storage, gym, and support division offices in the basement; administrative offices, apparatus bays, living facilities on the ground level; and dormitories on the second floor. The site has limited room for expansion to meet current operational needs for work areas, offices, and storage. A 2016 Slab Evaluation Study and 2019 Update found structural and mechanical concerns such as concrete cracking of the apparatus bay floor, water damage throughout, corroded floor drains, and outdated and non-code compliant utilities⁴.

Library & Human Services

Westwood’s public libraries consist of the Main Library on High Street and the Branch Library on Washington Street. The Main Library was opened in 2013 complete with public meeting space, study group areas, computer workstations, and various physical and on-line collections. In 2021, the Branch Library will be moved from its original location on the east side of Washington Street to the new Wentworth Hall, which is currently under construction on the west side of the street. This relocation is part of the second phase of the 3-phase Islington Center Redevelopment Project. In addition to library services, the new facility will include first floor offices for the Youth and Family Services Department and a lower level multi-functional community room available for recreational programs, public meetings, and community functions. When this project is completed in July 2021, the new Wentworth Hall will accommodate the uses and activities formerly held at the Islington Community Center (ICC) at the corner of East and Washington Street. The ICC building will be demolished in the third phase of the Islington Center Redevelopment Project. .

Town Hall

Westwood’s Town Hall on High Street is a 10,455 square foot building constructed in 1910. Its three floors accommodate various municipal offices such as the Finance Department, Town Administrator’s office, Veteran Services office, and the Town Clerk’s office. It is the primary contact for the public with Westwood’s government. The building requires significant renovations to fully meet ADA requirements as it does not have an elevator. Town offices have outgrown the space and the HVAC system needs repair. A 2016 needs assessment and replacement analysis examined the current site and outlined future needs.

Senior Center

The Council on Aging building is located on Nahatan Street and was constructed in 1998. The facility is approximately 5,000 square feet located near the Middle and High Schools. It has universal design and is convenient to use. However, there is a need for more handicap

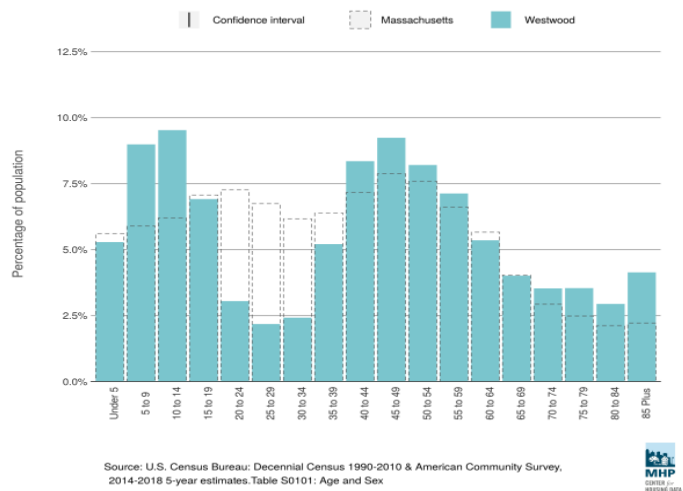


Figure 3: Age distribution of population Westwood v. State, 2010.

parking spaces, and updates to the building's interior. There is also a need for more space to accommodate the high demand for programs. The Council on Aging offers over twenty health classes such as exercise, yoga and tai chi, creative activities such as quilting and knitting, educational programs, and book clubs. Annually, ten holiday lunches are held but each limited to 80 seniors because of seating capacity. The Council on Aging believes twice the number of seniors would attend if more space were provided.

Over the last few years, the number of residents participating in programs at the Center has grown by more than 40% with over 3,000 seniors attending monthly programs or participating in outreach and transportation services. This is consistent with population data from the U.S. Census Bureau that shows Westwood's senior population is increasing at a higher rate than the statewide average (Figure 3). As Westwood's population ages more room for programming and activities will be especially important.

Network Infrastructure and Information Technology

The School and Town Information Technology departments maintain separate networks that are interconnected. Each of the schools and all Town buildings are connected by a fiber backbone (INET) centered in the Fire Station basement. It was installed by Comcast in 2003 and maintained by them as a condition of their cable license with the Town. Currently the Town network has a 1G bandwidth, while the school network was upgraded to 10G several years ago.

The condition of the network Infrastructure within each Town building varies with the age of the building. Buildings with limited Ethernet connections were upgraded in 2012. Public Wi-Fi, which is not connected to the Town network, is available in most Town buildings. The need for network infrastructure to support building systems such as lighting, HVAC, cameras, and security has stretched the network to its limits in many buildings.

Changes in technology and especially use in utility systems require increased bandwidth. New construction requires expansion of the network. Buildings need to be evaluated and upgraded to accommodate the increased demand. Increasing the Town's network speed to 10G would allow for improved Wi-Fi connectivity.

Westwood Media Center has been instrumental in disseminating information to keep residents informed and engaged. Typically, Westwood Media Center films various town-wide events and programming, and records and streams all Select Board, Planning Board, Finance and Warrant Commission, and Town Meetings. With the COVID-19 Pandemic beginning in early 2020, Westwood Media Center has provided a vital service to the Town and its residents by streaming and recording multiple remote meetings and public hearings, and by working with the Council on Aging and Recreation Department to film and broadcast extensive online programming.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal for community facilities planning is to keep pace with emerging needs to assure that Westwood's governmental services continue to provide high quality public services.

Objective 1: Public facilities are safe and secure.

Objective 2: Facility long-range planning is consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 3: Resources and facilities meet universal design standards.

Objective 4: Public facilities are energy efficient.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Community Facilities section focuses on Town services and facilities by identifying and analyzing existing and forecasted needs for these facilities and services. The objectives listed above should be constantly considered when improving, replacing, or maintaining any Town facility. The goal is to make all users of the Town’s facilities and resources feel safe, welcomed, and well served. The facilities should be adequate to enable Town services to be provided and maintained at the high level desired by all residents and visitors.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are prioritized under topic categories related to the above overarching goals and objectives followed by an informal priority order. A formal implementation schedule can be found in the implementation matrix section.

To implement public facility capital building needs:

- CF1. Prioritize the renovation and expansion of Town Hall to satisfy office space needs, upgrade the network infrastructure, improve heating and cooling, install an elevator and other upgrades to meet ADA and universal design standards, and improve energy efficiency.
- CF2. Complete the processes for designing and seeking local and state funding for an elementary school building project that addresses the facility and student needs at the Hanlon, and Deerfield Schools.
- CF3. Continue to address the facilities needs at the Sheehan School and Thurston Middle, focusing on the aging Thurston facility, through the annual and long-range capital planning process.
- CF4. Prioritize incorporating renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaics at all town properties.
- CF5. Conduct a space needs assessment at the Westwood Senior Center and develop a timeline for expansion to address the growing needs of the Town’s increasing elderly population.
- CF6. Following the relocation of the Branch Library to the new Wentworth Hall, explore the use of the new multi-purpose lower level community space for expanded library offerings including individual and small group collaborative study, along with Youth and Family Services and Recreation programming opportunities.
- CF7. Investigate parking expansion options or additional shared parking arrangements for the main library.
- CF8. Consider addressing deficiencies at Fire Station 1 in the short term by relocating personnel and equipment, providing temporary storage space, securing additional temporary office space, and upgrading to universal design standards.
- CF9. Develop a plan to renovate, expand, or replace Fire Station 1.

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CF10. Expand the number of electric Town vehicles and charging stations at municipal properties to encourage public use.

To implement policies and planning for community facility improvement:

CF11. Prioritize pedestrian infrastructure improvements through a Sidewalk Prioritization Plan and pursue funding for sidewalks and universal design improvements at road crossings as further described in the transportation section.

CF12. Evaluate the feasibility of developing a new multi-purpose indoor recreation community center to serve the community's growing need for dedicated recreation space and programming such as basketball courts, an indoor track, and full size gymnasium for residents of all ages as described in the Open Space & Recreation Section.

CF13. Implement the self-evaluation and transition plan to achieve universal design standards for all municipal facilities and school buildings, prioritizing public meeting and function spaces.

CF14. Involve the Commission on Disability in the Planning Board's review process to make recommendations related to accessibility, universal design, and support for people with disabilities.

CF15. Incorporate meeting space and multi-purpose function space including kitchens, where appropriate, in redevelopment and new construction projects to provide for community meetings, social functions, and events.

CF16. Assess and evaluate all public buildings, particularly the schools and public meeting halls, for ample security and safety measures to aid in the prioritization of needed improvements..

CF17. Evaluate interest and opportunity areas for community gardens.

CF18. Perform education, outreach, and enforcement for proper recycling through existing resources or consider hiring a recycling coordinator.

CF19. Investigate having a metal recycling facility and a reuse area for furniture and other items.

To improve communication:

CF20. Improve the Town's network by upgrading to 10G connectivity to increase network speed, replace the network core switch, all network node switches, and all servers, and add more Ethernet connections to accommodate increased technology needs.

CF21. Implement electronic permitting for all Town departments, boards, and commissions to allow residents, businesses, contractors, and visitors to conduct online and paper free business to achieve greater efficiency, coordination, recordkeeping, and transparency.

CF22. Develop practices and policies, and use digital meeting management software so that all materials and resources from all board, commission, and committee public meetings and all public projects are easily available for viewing on the Town's website with universal design features such as contrast, enhanced fonts, and magnification.

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- CF23. Expand the contract with Westwood Media Center (WMC) to record, televise, and stream online additional Town board, commission, and committee meetings. Consider expanding legislative definitions beyond “cable” to include “streaming services” to ensure long term financial support for WMC.
- CF24. Consider adding a Director of Communications position to ensure the dissemination of vital town messaging across multiple media: video, audio, website, email, social media etc.

To maintain and improve public works facilities:

- CF25. Consider a comprehensive plan to upgrade the DPW facilities to adequately house and maintain the DPW fleet and provide adequate staff facilities with gender and disability accommodations.
- CF26. Explore designs to further expand Westwood Cemetery.
- CF27. Maintain the water rate structure that supports capital improvements and effective operation and maintenance of the District's water system.
- CF28. Complete the 2019 DWWD Comprehensive Planning Study and implement relevant recommendations.

To implement policy for facility maintenance, improvement, and replacement:

- CF29. Require all municipal redevelopment and construction projects to incorporate the review of sustainable best practices and universal design in an effort to maximize energy efficiency and renewable energy as described in more detail in the Sustainability Section.
- CF30. Regularly update long-term operation and preventative maintenance plans for all Town facilities and structures to improve regular maintenance and prolong the life of facilities.
- CF31. Design new municipal buildings and renovations to be representative of local history and compatible with surrounding buildings.
- CF32. Consider the establishment of a municipal facilities staff committee to assist the Town Administrator in the regular reviewing of capital building projects.
- CF33. Continue to evaluate zoning and application procedures to encourage wireless carriers to pursue upgrades and fill communications gaps through colocation opportunities, wherever possible.

To increase racial diversity and representation:

- CF34. Mentor and recruit new members to municipal boards, commissions, and committees with particular emphasis on encouraging greater participation by members of currently underrepresented populations.
- CF35. Advertise and widely promote municipal and school employment opportunities in a broad range of locations reachable to diverse candidates.

Resources

Capital Needs Study for Westwood Public Schools Phase V – Master Plan, prepared by SMMA of Cambridge, dated June 17, 2015.

Evaluation prepared by Weston & Sampson, prepared for Fire Chief William Scoble, RE: Structural Evaluation of Apparatus Slab Draft, dated January 6, 2019 (18 pages). A 2019 updated assessment by Weston & Sampson is currently underway and report not yet issued.

Town of Westwood, Massachusetts Fire and Ambulance Services Study, prepared by Kent Greene, David Phares, Todd Leduc, dated June 2013 (80 pages).

Municipal Capital Needs Assessment and Replacement Reserve Analysis, prepared for Town of Westwood, prepared by RECAP Real Estate Advisors and On-Site Insight, dated December 21, 2016.

Dedham-Westwood Water District Annual Water Quality Report for 2018 and 2019 (8 pages) #dwwd3297090 and #3073000.

A Preliminary Vision, Goals and Objectives, Report prepared by Community Circle and Barrett Planning Group, dated June 19, 2019.

Town of Westwood Comprehensive Plan Community Survey, Survey Monkey, Spring 2019.

SMMA Phase V - Master Plan Capital Needs Study. Westwood Public Schools, June 17, 2015.

Annual Water Quality Report for 2018. Dedham-Westwood Water District.

Action Plan FY20 - Westwood Public Library.

Engineering Study for Westwood Fire Station 1, Weston and McKim.

ENDNOTES

¹ Capital Needs Study for Westwood Public Schools Phase V – Master Plan, prepared by SMMA of Cambridge, dated June 17, 2015.

² MSBA Enrollment Projection – Westwood, September 2018, Provided by School Department, 10 Pages.

³ Town of Westwood, Massachusetts Fire and Ambulance Services Study, prepared by Kent Greene, David Phares, Todd Leduc, dated June 2013 (80 pages).

⁴ Evaluation prepared by Weston & Sampson, prepared for Fire Chief William Scoble, RE: Structural Evaluation of Apparatus Slab Draft, dated January 6, 2019 (18 pages). A 2019 updated assessment by Weston & Sampson is currently underway and report not yet prepared.



Morrison Park & Field, East Street



Prout Farm/Clapboardtree Meadow

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

BACKGROUND

Open space and recreation areas are highly valued in Westwood. The Town's open space and recreational facilities provide numerous benefits for the community, including health, social opportunities, climate resiliency, civic engagement, and enjoyment of the beauty of nature, all contributing to the Town's character. During the early stages of the public input process, Westwood residents spoke about open space, natural resources, and recreation facilities as treasured assets that make Westwood truly special.

The visioning session heard a strong desire for a community recreation center and expanding opportunities for active and passive recreation both indoors and outdoors. When asked to identify favorite things about living in Westwood, 47% of the 811 survey responders selected open space and trails. Walking trails, bike paths, and sidewalks were identified in the survey as items residents would like to see increased, chosen by 43%, 42%, and 62% of respondents, respectively. Eighty percent indicated protecting more open space is a high priority and 46% listed providing more recreational facilities for formal activities and organized sports as a "very important" or "important" goal.¹

Massachusetts recognizes the importance of open space and recreation and encourages municipalities to have an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) updated every seven years. In 2019, the Select Board and Planning Board voted to approve an updated plan for Westwood. The 2019 OSRP was completed by a committee, assisted by a consultant, working collaboratively with the community. A survey was conducted and 809 responders identified the following facilities as the top five priorities for the coming years: ice hockey rink at 39%, trails at 37%, a dog park at 31%, a community center at 30%, and an outdoor swimming facility at 25%.²

The approved 2019 OSRP provides the foundation for this element of the Comprehensive Plan. Natural resources such as water and wildlife are discussed in more detail in the Natural and Cultural Resources section.

A 2018 visioning session and corresponding survey for the Open Space and Recreation Plan found support for improved conservation land management, for universal design to encourage access and enjoyment by people with disabilities, and for additional recreation facilities, particularly an indoor recreation center. Universal design is a concept that supports features that

exceed the minimum accessibility design requirements such as textured surfaces along walks, audio, ropes along trails, and braille on signage, all to accommodate people with a wider range of abilities.

Open Space

Approximately 1,802 acres totaling 25% of 7,155 acres of land in Westwood can be characterized as “open space.” The term “open space” refers to conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways, or an undeveloped area that is owned by an organization devoted to conservation. The term includes land that is legally protected for conservation or recreational interest, and similar land that is not protected against changes in use or development. Some open space is used for passive activities such as walking and hiking, while others include active recreational uses such as soccer, tennis, or baseball. In this section, the term refers to the broader notion of land that is committed to some degree of passive or active use.

Westwood has 981 acres of protected open space listed in Table 4 and owned by the Town and private owners, including parcels preserved within open space residential subdivisions. The Westwood Conservation Commission holds the majority of protected lands with 557 acres followed by the Westwood Select Board with 73 acres, mostly Lowell Woods and the Sandy Valley area. Protected land is property that is protected from development through a conservation or deed restriction, or by Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. For the purposes of the Town's OSRP, protected land must have legal protection that includes public ownership and/or conservation restrictions recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B land is not classified as protected since the level of protection is more limited. Chapter 61 is the section of state law for forestry or woodlands, Chapter 61A is land used for agriculture, and Chapter 61B land is used for recreation. A significant portion, 821 acres, of Westwood's open space is unprotected with no guarantee that it will remain undeveloped.

Hale accounts for 521 acres of unprotected open space as shown in the below table. Hale is a private non-profit educational institution and a beloved resource for walking, biking, running, and swimming. Many Westwood residents as well as people throughout Greater Boston participate in Hale's year-round educational programs and its popular youth summer camps. However, most residents do not realize that Hale is unprotected land and how vulnerable it is.

Other unprotected lands include public recreation areas such as Town fields, playgrounds, and school properties as well as private recreation facilities such as Xaverian High School and Chapter 61 Land, which includes the Dedham Country and Polo Club, the Charles Bean farm on Clapboardtree Street, and large properties on Hartford Street. Table 5 and Map O1 show the protected and unprotected open space and recreation land in Westwood. During the inventory review stage of the Open Space and Recreation Plan and the public engagement process, many of the open space and conservation areas were deemed to be in poor condition.³

The Westwood Land Trust was established as a 501(c)(3) public charity organization in 1999 to preserve open space and natural resources and help retain Westwood's rural character and native wildlife. The Land Trust has permanently protected over 220 acres since its inception. Most of the property is privately owned and protected through conservation restrictions. 50 acres have been conveyed to the Town.⁴

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Table 4: Protected and unprotected open space

Westwood Open Space – PROTECTED		
Ownership	Acreage	Percentage of Westwood's Total Land
Conservation Commission	557.27	7.27%
Select Board	72.99	1%
Dedham-Westwood Water District (DWWD)	17.20	.2%
High Ridge Homeowners Association	35.14	.45%
Powisset Estates Homeowners Association	9.61	.12%
Chase Estates Homeowners Association	1.53	.02%
Neponset River Land Holding	17.46	.23%
Westwood Land Trust Owned	4.68	.06%
Private land with Conservation Restrictions	186.7	2.6%
Duncan M. McFarland	27.45	.36%
Groundhog Land Corporation	7.16	.09%
G.D. Fox Meadow, LLC	7.63	.09%
NW Land LLC	26.40	.34%
Gobbi FLP Trust	4.05	.05%
C/S Westview LLC	6.60	.09%
Subtotal	981.87	13.72%
Westwood Open Space & Recreation – UNPROTECTED		
Ownership	Acreage	Percentage of Westwood's Total Land
Hale	521	7.28%
Public Recreation Properties	120.33	1.6%
Private Recreation Properties	82.82	1.1%
Chapter 61 Land	11.23	.15%
Chapter 61A Land	23.53	.30%
Chapter 61B Land	62.06	.8%
Subtotal	820.97	11.47%
TOTAL	1,802.84	25.2%

Recreation

A variety of recreational opportunities exists in Westwood. In this section recreation land refers to areas that are primarily devoted to recreational uses such as man-made facilities including parks and playgrounds, school yards, country clubs and golf courses, picnic areas, and passive recreation areas which may be publicly or privately owned. In this plan, Hale is considered in the open space section above.

In Westwood, public recreational facility management responsibilities are shared between the Recreation Department and the School Department. Maintenance is done by the Department of Public Works. Table 5 lists the public and private recreation facilities in Town. School properties provide most of the recreational opportunities as fields are often located on school property. Other properties managed by the Recreation Department include Morrison Park, the fields at Sheehan, the School Street Playground, June Street Playground, the Lion's Club Tot Lot, and the indoor swimming pool facility at the high school. In the Open Space and Recreation Plan's inventory of recreation properties, the school and Recreation Commission properties are generally categorized as being in good and excellent condition.⁵ The former Westwood Lodge property at 45 Clapboardtree Street, now known as the Homes at 45, was redeveloped into age-restricted housing as an open space residential development. The open space on the private property is to

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be maintained by the homeowner’s association and the multi-purpose playing field was conveyed to the Town for continued recreation use.

Table 5: Public and private recreation facilities.

PUBLIC			
Property	Area Acreage	Management Agency	Use
School St. Playground	1.80	Recreation Commission	Baseball, Softball, Playground
Morrison Park	3.76	Recreation Commission	Baseball, Softball, Basketball
June St. Playground	3.08	Recreation Commission	Fields, Playground
Lion’s Club Tot Lot	2.29	Recreation Commission	Playground
Sheehan Fields	6.25	Recreation Commission	Baseball
Swimming Pool at High School	NA	Recreation Commission	Swimming Pool
Deerfield School	8.54	School Committee	Baseball, Softball, Basketball, Playground
Hanlon School	8.59	School Committee	Baseball, Softball, Basketball, Playground
Thurston Middle School	17.44	School Committee	Baseball, Softball, Multipurpose Field
Downey School	9.81	School Committee	Baseball, Multipurpose, Basketball, Tennis, Playground
Sheehan School	4.27	School Committee	Baseball, Multipurpose Field, Basketball, Tennis, Playground
Martha Jones School	8.89	School Committee	Baseball, Basketball, Playground
Westwood High School	42.9	School Committee	Baseball, Football, Multipurpose Field, Basketball, Tennis, Outdoor Track, Lacrosse
PRIVATE			
Property	Area Acreage	Management Agency	Use
Former Westwood Lodge, The Green Company	Field Use – 2.8 acres Open Space Area – portion of the 7 acres ⁶	Field – conveyed to Town for Public Recreation, Private HOA for Open Space	Multipurpose Field (soccer, lacrosse)
Norfolk Golf Club	43.96 (full site)	Private Club	Golf, 9-hole course
Xaverian High School	25.97 (full site)	Xaverian Brothers	Baseball, Football, Tennis, Outdoor Track
Life Time Athletic	7.89 (full site)	Life Time Fitness	Pool, Basketball, Fitness

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee spent a year developing the 150-page Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) adopted by the Planning Board in 2019 and which serves as the foundation for the following recommended actions.

In the Committee's deliberations of how the plan's recommendations might be funded, the potential adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) was identified as a possible funding source that deserves consideration. The Community Preservation Act is a state law (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) designed as a smart growth tool to encourage municipalities to implement projects for conservation of open space, athletic fields, historical preservation, and affordable housing. As of November 2019, 176 cities and towns have adopted the CPA in the 20 years since the

program's creation. Similar communities that have adopted the CPA are Concord, Needham, Lexington, Acton, Wellesley, Wayland, Carlisle, Holliston, Hopkinton, Millis, and Norwood.

If adopted by the Town, two sources of funds are available for eligible projects. The first is the Community Preservation Fund made up of revenue from a surcharge on residential and/or commercial property taxes. The town may vote a surcharge of up to 3% of the real estate tax, and the first \$100,000 of the assessed property value may be exempted. Most towns have chosen to enact a 1% surcharge. If a given property is taxed \$6,000 a year, the CPA contribution would be an additional \$60 a year. This would generate approximately \$700,000 a year of funding available for CPA projects in Westwood.⁷

A second source of money is the State's Community Preservation Trust Fund which provides matching funds for CPA projects. Fees paid to the Registry of Deeds for recording deeds and plans become available to CPA communities as matching funds for these projects.

A sample of improvements and investments that other towns have made is included in the resource exhibits. Implementation of the CPA requires Town Meeting adoption and a town election with this question on the ballot. Upon adoption, a Community Preservation Committee is established with appointed representatives from the Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Planning Board, Housing Authority, and Recreation Commission. The Committee would be responsible for setting priorities for funding and recommendations to Town Meeting for individual projects.

Overall, Westwood residents desire improved maintenance and awareness of conservation and open space, and additional recreation facilities, particularly indoor recreation such as a community facility to serve residents. Other desired needs include indoor basketball courts, pickleball, ice skating, indoor track, activities for seniors, and activities not associated with a particular sports organization.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Westwood's overall goals focus on preserving Westwood's character that values protection of open space, sensitive design, passive recreation, and providing high quality active recreation facilities for all residents and visitors.

Objective 1: Protect and enhance Westwood's scenic character.

Objective 2: Increase recreation facilities and programming for residents of all ages to fulfill any unmet or growing demand.

Objective 3: Expand and improve protected open space and conservation land by enhancing maintenance, access, awareness, and use.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The focus is on balancing the protection of open space and providing recreational opportunities while remaining sensitive to Westwood's treasured community character. To achieve many of these goals, the Town will need to enhance resources and apply creative approaches to protect, acquire, and improve maintenance and awareness of open space areas. To expand and provide additional recreational opportunities to fill unmet and future recreational demands, the Town will need to invest in improvements and maximize current opportunities.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are prioritized under each general topic categories related to the above overarching goals and objectives for community character, open space, and recreation followed by an informal order.

Community Character:

- CC1. Encourage all new development to use the Open Space and Residential Development zoning bylaw and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to protect and preserve open space and natural areas, and reduce impervious surfaces with narrower road widths, and smaller building footprints and lots.
- CC2. Review the Planning Board's rules and regulations for scenic roads under the Scenic Roads Law to incorporate enforcement provisions to adequately protect the Town's designated scenic roads.
- CC3. Protect open space, natural features, and historical buildings that are significant to Westwood by identifying priorities and partnering with entities such as the Westwood Land Trust, Westwood Historical Society, Westwood Historical Commission, Westwood Conservation Commission, and other applicable agencies to combine resources.
- CC4. Encourage shared parking at nearby lots to accommodate visitors to currently undisturbed locations, rather than installing new parking.
- CC5. Increase the usability and attractiveness of trails, conservation land, and open space for seniors and people with disabilities by providing trail maps, promotional material, accessible parking, seating, accessible routes, and by applying universal design principles.
- CC6. Educate the community on the value and benefits of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and consider the adoption of the CPA as a funding source for open space protection, historic preservation, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Recreation:

- RE1. Prioritize developing a new multi-purpose indoor recreation community center to serve the community's growing need for dedicated recreation space and programming such as basketball courts, an indoor track, and full-size gymnasium for residents of all ages and abilities.
- RE2. Identify properties which might be available to serve unmet recreational needs, including surplus or unused Town owned property.
- RE3. Partner with private entities to share an indoor ice-skating facility with surrounding towns. Examine options for a portable refrigeration system for outdoor recreational ice-skating.
- RE4. Expand the use of existing recreation fields and facilities by implementing use and maintenance plans.
- RE5. Expand outdoor recreation facilities by creating more multipurpose fields and consider installing field lighting for optimal usage at existing fields.

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- RE6. Increase recreational opportunities and programs for adults and seniors, including pickleball courts.
- RE7. Incorporate universal design into all recreation facilities, playgrounds, and fields, providing parking, seating, accessible routes, and accessible gender-neutral rest rooms.

Open Space:

- OS1. Incorporate universal design with rope guides at trails, benches at resting areas, large print and braille signage, and wheelchair accessible surfaces at feasible locations to allow all visitors to experience outdoor areas.
- OS2. Prepare Management Plans for the maintenance and management of each conservation area.
- OS3. Consider developing a mobile application (App) featuring Westwood's open space and recreation areas to help increase awareness of, interest in, and use of said areas.
- OS4. Land acquisition should focus on areas contiguous to existing protected property to provide connectivity to open space. The space around Lyman's Pond in Rice Reservation could be developed for walking around the pond, stocked for fishing, skating in the winter, and include benches for relaxing.
- OS5. Collaborate with Hale to permanently protect its open space and recreational land by acquiring a conservation restriction on this land.
- OS6. Continue to encourage the donation of open space or conservation restrictions by private landowners.
- OS7. Actively pursue grants, donations, and funding to assist with open space acquisition, conservation access, and improvements. Establish a fund for open space acquisition.

RESOURCES

- Open Space and Recreation Plan, Prepared by Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, Adopted by Planning Board February 26, 2019.
- Open Space and Recreation Survey, Survey Monkey, 809 Responders, Open November 2017 to March 2018.
- Comprehensive Plan Survey, Survey Monkey, 811 Responders, Open March 20 to April 17, 2019.
- Comprehensive Plan Vision Session Report, June 19, 2019.
- Map OR1: Open Space and Recreation Land, Westwood 2019.
- Westwood Land Trust Protected Properties Descriptions, February 20, 2019.
- Community Preservation Act Supporting Documentation.
- Registry of Deeds, Norfolk County CPA Surcharges 2017 and 2018.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Question 13 of the Westwood Comprehensive Plan Community Survey, Survey Monkey, Spring 2019 (811 Survey Responses).
- ² Question 6 of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey, Survey Monkey, December 2017 – March 2018.
- ³ Open Space and Recreation Plan 2019, Westwood, Massachusetts, Adopted by Planning Board February 26, 2019, Table 12 - Protected Open Space Parcel Inventory, Pages 43-51.
- ⁴ Westwood Land Trust Protected Properties Descriptions, February 20, 2019.
- ⁵ Open Space and Recreation Plan 2019, Westwood, Massachusetts, Adopted by Planning Board February 26, 2019, Table 14 - Public Recreation Properties, Pages 53-55.
- ⁶ The Open Space & Field Area at 45 Clapboardtree Street, formerly the Westwood Lodge, is currently under construction by the Green Company and categorized as private recreation but will become 2.8 acres of public recreation use and the remaining open space will become protected open space managed by the future Homeowners Association, anticipated fall 2020.
- ⁷ CPA Tax Background, Total Tax Collections Estimates FY19 Chart, Residential \$563k & Commercial \$181K, Page 3.

DRAFT



Shared Use Path along University Ave.



Electric Car Station at Carby Municipal Offices

TRANSPORTATION

BACKGROUND

Westwood enjoys excellent regional access by automobile, rail, and a bus line, but lacks an effective network of transportation within the town. Any travel across town involves driving on multiple roads using residential areas as cut throughs. The Town would benefit from alternative transportation methods such as shuttle buses along with pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

The distribution of places where people live, go to school, shop, and visit makes transportation dependents of a large share of the population either too young, too old, or otherwise unable to drive or safely walk or bike. Access to the high school, middle school, and senior center from Islington requires automobile travel along narrow, winding Clapboardtree Street or a circuitous route via East, Pine, Gay, and High Streets. Narrow roads without sidewalks or shoulders throughout the Town make biking or walking impractical and unsafe for vulnerable residents.

The only options for non-drivers, other than walking or bicycling, are ridesharing companies such as Uber and Lyft, taxicabs, limited van services from the Council on Aging by appointment only for seniors and disabled residents, MBTA bus 34E on Washington Street, THE RIDE program by the MBTA for those who qualify, and a few private shuttle buses for specific senior residences and businesses. There are no other bus lines, no taxi stands except at the Route 128 Railroad Station, and no public shuttle bus service.

The morning commute creates congestion for Westwood residents as commuters from outlying towns fill High Street, Hartford Street, Washington Street, and Canton Street en route to Route 128. This makes it difficult for residents on side streets to enter the traffic, and for children to walk to school, pedestrians to cross, and bicycles to be safely used. Along these corridors, commuters utilize neighborhood side streets to bypass the congestion on the main streets, expanding and exacerbating the impacts of the through traffic. The evening commute is the same problem in reverse.

These conditions have worsened since the last revision of the comprehensive plan. Significant improvements to High and Washington Streets, including the addition of turn lanes and traffic

signals, and traffic calming measures on some neighborhood streets, have been installed over past years to mitigate these problems. These improvements have avoided even greater problems, but they have not addressed the fundamental lack of a comprehensive system incorporating multiple modes of transportation.

In 2012-2014, the Town adopted mixed-use zoning allowing multi-unit dwellings to promote transit-oriented development at University Station and the two town centers. This combination of commercial, office, and living facilities located near public transportation reduces the need for automobile travel and encourages walking and bicycling.

At the 2015 Annual Town Meeting, Westwood adopted a Complete Streets Policy, which seeks to accommodate all road users by creating a transportation network that equitably meets the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bikers, transit riders, persons with disabilities, and people of all ages. This policy adoption led to certification of Westwood as a Complete Streets Community by the state, and to the Town receiving two funding grants from MassDOT for intersection improvements and accompanying sidewalks at North Street/High Street and Pond Street/High Street.

In considering approaches to improving mobility, it is important to recognize our long-established land use pattern and how fundamentally transportation has been structured around the automobile in Westwood. This is unlikely to change, and automobiles will remain the primary mode of transportation in and through the Town as long as there are few alternative modes of transportation. For example, the Islington MBTA commuter rail station is underutilized because of limited amount of service and lack of adequate parking and amenities. The Islington stop is not ideal for most commuters coming into Westwood since it is not near any major employment center and provides no access to the High Street side of town, being used mostly by nearby residents to commute to Boston and Xaverian Brothers High School students. The Route 128 station is used by many residents who overwhelmingly drive there in single occupancy vehicles.

Regional cooperation and collaborative effort with nearby communities could help improve Westwood's transportation problems. Several Westwood Planning Board members serve as representatives to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), and the MBTA Advisory Board.

Biking and walking are currently a small share of the transportation mode for Westwood, but over time there has been growing interest in biking and walking, not only as a recreational pursuit, but as a general quality of life issue. In 2009, the Town created the Pedestrian and Bike Safety Committee as an advisory committee to the Planning Board to help make Westwood a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly community. Its purpose is to identify needs and advocate for improvements related to walkability and pedestrian and bicycle safety. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan drafted by MAPC in consultation with the Committee was adopted by Town Meeting on May 5, 2014 and the Complete Streets Policy worked on and supported by the Committee was adopted the following year.

Interest in improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure remains high among Town residents. When asked to select improvements to the town, 60% of survey responders for this plan choose improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Additionally, 62% said they would like to see more sidewalks, 43% more walking trails, and 43% would like to see more bicycle paths. Over one third (36%) responding to the survey said that improving public transportation was a "very important" or "important" goal. Improving transportation safety, reducing reliance on the automobile, and addressing traffic congestion were also major priorities discussed at the Community Visioning Session.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Town's transportation goal is to develop a network of transportation options that allows all residents the opportunity to participate effectively in the community by having convenient access to community resources. This network should promote safety, minimize the negative effects of automobile traffic, and wherever possible promote an active and healthy lifestyle. The transportation network should connect all segments of our town.

The following objectives guide the policies and practices over the next decade:

- Objective 1:** Create a safe, equitable, and affordable transportation system for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities, unifying the Town using all modes of travel to provide economic, recreational, educational, and living opportunities consistent with the character of the Town.
- Objective 2:** Utilize the Town's Complete Streets Policy to guide the proposal, design, and implementation of transportation projects. Progress should be measurable, specific, ongoing, and include evaluation and reporting.
- Objective 3:** Fund improvements through sources in addition to general tax revenue. The Town should incorporate a methodical approach to identifying alternative funding mechanisms, pursuing grants, and exploring all possibilities for the funding needed to meet the goals.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Transportation means more than simply allowing convenient travel from place to place. It can also be a component of a strong community. Over the past years, the conditions on High Street, Washington Street, and Canton Street have dominated planning and discussion, and significant improvements have been made. While these major roads must be maintained and any safety issues addressed, the Town has an opportunity to improve the scope of its transportation network using the Complete Streets Policy to utilize all modes available, including biking, walking, and shuttle services. Incremental improvements should continue to be made to the transportation infrastructure. Biking and walking are not merely recreational activities to be accommodated, but components of a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of life in Westwood and the connectivity of the Town.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are not formerly prioritized but are organized under topic categories related to the above overarching goals and objectives, followed by an informal order of significance.

To support regional initiatives towards transportation improvement:

- T1. Continue leadership efforts under the Regional Working Group organized by the Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association and the Neponset River Regional Chamber to promote regional roadway, traffic, and public transportation improvements, and to strongly advocate for the completion of the MassDOT I-93/I-95 Interchange project.
- T2. Seek consistent participation in the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) by both Select Board and Planning Board members.

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- T3. Work through the MBTA Advisory Board and directly with MBTA management to advocate for improved bus service on both Route 1A and Route 109, better commuter rail service, late night rail service, improvements to the Islington Station, and regular maintenance of the Route 128 Station parking garage.

To develop a Complete Streets transportation network within the town:

- T4. Strive to implement the Town's Complete Streets Policy where feasible. Use the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee, the Police, and DPW to gather data as well as feedback from residents to create annual reports as specified in the Policy.
- T5. Use the Complete Streets map and project prioritization plan to implement an ongoing and continuous sidewalk development and replacement program, maintaining an inventory containing the condition and priority of all existing and missing sidewalks.
- T6. Continue efforts to design and construct an accessible and safe walking path or sidewalk on Gay Street to connect High Street and Washington Street.
- T7. Work towards implementing various items from the Town-meeting approved "Dedham and Westwood Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan" to create a contiguous network of bicycle lanes and paths.
- T8. Consider a bicycle-sharing system.
- T9. Pursue the planning and development of a contiguous trail network.
- T10. Explore opportunities for shuttle bus service along High Street/Pond Street to University Station and possibly Dedham Corp. Center/Legacy Place, according to a state study which found such a route to be viable.¹ Consider additional routes, including a cross-town connection between the High Street and Islington villages. Examine various modes for the shuttles such as fixed route, variable route, and on-demand.
- T11. Investigate the coordination of bus and shuttle services within the Town and with adjacent communities by working through MAPC, TRIC, and the Regional Working Group with emphasis on connecting the bus line along Route 1A with the jobs along Route 1. Explore grants and funding sources encouraging sustainable transportation services.
- T12. Consider increasing the number of bus stop shelters on existing and newly created routes and incorporating solar arrays.
- T13. Consider a cooperative program with ridesharing companies (Uber and Lyft) to provide reduced rate service for students, seniors, and the disabled.
- T14. Implement the recommendations of the recent Crosswalk Study conducted by the Town to identify safety concerns and ADA accessibility compliance at all pedestrian crossings.
- T15. Pursue funding for an adaptive signalization program on Route 109 to improve traffic flow.
- T16. Periodically review the traffic calming measures for Canton Street, Everett Street, and Forbes Road, as well as for High Rock Street, Dover Road, and Conant Road to determine their effectiveness and need for adjustments so that the desired levels of safety are achieved.

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- T17. Conduct a traffic cut-through study for Route 109 and other problem areas to explore most effective ways to deal with this problem.
- T18. Develop and publicize an App, dial 311, or other means for easily reporting potholes, signage, or other road related problems.
- T19. Encourage participation by all schools in programs like Safe Routes to School and actively work to decrease parental drop-off/pickup automobile trips, encourage walking and school bus use, and discourage high school students from driving to school.
- T20. Pursue additional streets and sections of streets for placing all utilities underground, as was done previously for sections of High Street, Washington Street, and University Avenue, and where possible, make use of the resulting space for sidewalks or walking paths.
- T21. Study the ability of the power grid to handle the future of more electric cars being recharged, and any improvements in capacity and equipment needed.
- T22. Continue to use the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee as an initial forum for the airing of traffic and safety concerns, Complete Streets implementation, and plans for street redesign and new street development, with the Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Committee serving as a subcommittee to the Planning Board, and through the Planning Board, as an advisor to the Select Board/Road Commissioners. Provide appropriate support to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee with DPW, Police Department, and Traffic Engineering staff participation as needed.

To coordinate local transportation policy and action:

- T23. Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in redevelopment projects and subdivisions with the provision of new sidewalks, on-site or off-site paths or trails, or an equivalent contribution to the Town Sidewalk/Path Fund.
- T24. Establish consistent street design, reconstruction, repair, and street acceptance policies for the Select Board when acting as Road Commissioners, for DPW in its reconstruction and improvement programs, and for the Planning Board in its consideration of subdivision and special permit approvals.
- T25. Require appropriate mitigation measures for all developments that increase transportation demand.

To bring local zoning regulations into harmony with transportation objectives:

- T26. Review and update the Zoning Bylaw, Subdivision Rules and Regulations, and all other Planning Board regulations to be consistent with the Town's Complete Streets Policy and the latest environmental, stormwater, accessibility, and sustainability standards.
- T27. Continue to refine and implement context sensitive design standards that differentiate between village and industrial/commercial locations for such things as traveled way width, centerline radii, maximum grades, storm water system approaches, and pedestrian and bicycle accommodation.

- T28. Consider revising Subdivision Regulations to promote street and path connectivity. Decide whether cul-de-sacs should be more restricted or prohibited outright, or whether path connections should be required at their ends.
- T29. Continue to codify the use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures for all projects under review and strongly encourage all existing commercial uses in Town to adopt TDM measures.
- T30. Continue to review the parking regulations to consider:
- Maximum as well as minimum parking requirements, applying usual demand standards and overall limits.
 - Reduced requirements for transit-oriented developments.
 - Reduced requirements for developments containing affordable units.
 - Parking space pricing unbundled from residential unit pricing.
 - Transportation Demand Management rules, such as preferential parking locations for carpools.
 - Electric recharging stations.
 - Amount of bicycle parking.
 - Pick-up/Drop-off areas for shuttle buses, ride sharing, car sharing, and autonomous vehicles.
- T31. Review and strengthen the traffic mitigation requirements of the Zoning Bylaw. Consider making those requirements applicable to more projects, not just those requiring a special permit.
- T32. Simplify and expand the Planning Board's Earth Material Movement Environmental Impact Design Review by creating heavy truck routes for each section of Town, developing regulations for applying those routes, and referencing or including the relevant routes in all permits issued by the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Building Department.

To use publicly funded projects for advancing the Town's mobility objectives:

- T33. Incorporate sidewalks, bike lanes, paths, grass and tree buffer strips between vehicles and pedestrians, and other traffic calming features in public roadway projects.
- T34. Consider traffic calming measures and devices where necessary to address speeding and safety issues.
- T35. Apply the principle of the "5 E's" to achieve safety improvements, particularly for schools:
- Engineering – Design physical and operational infrastructure improvements that reduce speeds, prevent conflicts, and establish safer and accessible crossings, walkways, trails, and bikeways.
 - Education – Teach about the broad range of transportation choices, offer training in bicycling and walking safety skills, and launch safety campaigns.
 - Encouragement – Use events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
 - Enforcement – Partner with the police department to ensure that traffic laws are obeyed and utilize community enforcement such as crossing guards and student safety patrols.

- Evaluation – Monitor and review the results, from before to after.

To manage land use consistent with transportation objectives:

- T36. Continue the implementation of the Village Zoning approach to encourage creative design and promote walking, bicycling, shared parking, and public transportation use for both the High Street and Islington villages in Land Use Element.
- T37. Pursue mixed-use concepts for the Route 1 area in the Land Use Element and other parts of town to promote more compact development.

RESOURCES

Town of Westwood Policy on Complete Streets, Adopted by Select Board on September 29, 2015, Adopted by Town Meeting as Article 18 on November 9, 2015.

Regionwide Suburban Transit Opportunities Study - Phase II, Produced by Central Transportation Planning Staff for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, December 2005.

Dedham and Westwood Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan, Prepared by MAPC under the Sustainable Communities program, April 2014.

Town Crosswalk Study and Evaluation, Prepared by BETA Group for the Department of Public Works.

Zoning Bylaw of the Town of Westwood, Revised through May 6, 2019.

Westwood Planning Board Subdivision Rules and Regulations, Revised through April 2015.

ENDNOTES

¹ Region wide Suburban Transit Opportunities Study - Phase II, by the Central Transportation Planning Staff for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, December 2005.



Solar at Westwood High School



Target at University Station

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Sustainability and Resiliency is a new section of Westwood’s Comprehensive Plan and was added because these elements have become more critical since the writing of the 2000 Plan. Charting a sustainable path as our Town grows will ensure that actions today contribute to a better future for our children and grandchildren. Resiliency will determine whether we meet the unknown challenges of the next decade and beyond with optimism, hope, and perseverance, or allow disruptions to diminish and harm our community.

One of the greatest challenges facing not only Westwood, but our entire planet in 2020, is whether or not we can collectively address climate change in a way that slows the impact of global warming in time to avoid a future of environmental catastrophes and conflict over resources. While climate change is being caused by worldwide patterns of industrial growth, we can do our part to have an impact locally. We can challenge our community to do what needs to be done and provide an example and leadership to others.

Sustainability principles guide the proactive steps Westwood can take. We should ask ourselves, does the action we take today protect or harm the future? Planning for sustainability and resilience is an acknowledgement of the reality of our changing world. We need to plan so that catastrophic events, such as severe storms, and man-made disasters, do not paralyze our Town and put our residents at unnecessary risk.

Westwood residents expressed their support for sustainability issues by voting almost two to one (5864 Yes, 2990 No) on a nonbinding ballot question in the November 3, 2020 state election which called for “...legislation that would require Massachusetts to achieve 100% renewable energy use within the next two decades, starting immediately and making significant progress within the first five years...”

SUSTAINABILITY

BACKGROUND

Sustainable practices are those that allow present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainability principles are applicable to all topics covered in this plan and have been embedded throughout policies and

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recommendations of this plan along with a conscious attempt to balance social, economic, and environmental considerations, incorporate equity and resilience, and link local actions to regional and global concerns, such as climate change.¹

This section complements the plan's policies and recommendations for land use, transportation, housing, natural resources, and infrastructure by prioritizing renewable energy and presenting specific strategies and steps to mitigate the climate crisis which is creating severe impacts to:

- **The natural environment:** The health, distribution, diversity, and abundance of plant and animal species.
- **Human health:** Vector-borne diseases, water supply and food production, prevalence of oppressive heat and humidity, and the formation and dispersion of air pollutants.
- **Public safety:** Damage from storms, floods, droughts, and fires.²

Many common practices are not necessarily sustainable long-term, including, most significantly, the burning of fossil fuels as the primary source for heating buildings and water, powering vehicles, equipment, and industrial processes, and generating electricity. The buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels, is causing the Earth to rapidly warm and has disrupted the relatively stable climate that humans depend upon. Billions of tons of CO₂ are released into the atmosphere from the use of coal, oil, and gas. As a result, climate and weather-related disasters have become more frequent and more intense as the Earth warms.

Climate change is a global, regional, and local threat that has become an urgent matter and is now a global crisis requiring aggressive actions. All efforts, big and small, to reduce greenhouse gasses over time will have measurable benefits. A significant reduction in fossil fuel use can be achieved through greater reliance on renewable energy sources such as photovoltaics, solar thermal systems, and wind power, as well as the use of heat pumps, electric vehicles, and conservation. Existing buildings can be converted, and new ones constructed as net zero buildings where the total amount of energy used by a building over time is at least equal to the amount of renewable energy created onsite or offsite. Achieving 100% renewable electricity is the most effective means to prevent irreparable damage. As of 2020, climate scientists are warning that conversion to clean renewable energy to drastically reduce fossil fuel use must occur within the next seven to ten years to avoid an irreversible change in the climate system.³

In 2008, Massachusetts became one of the first states to establish a program to address climate change, set economy-wide greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, and outline a regulatory framework.

Westwood has taken many important steps to become more sustainable. The Town has added some electric vehicles and charging stations at the Carby Municipal Building, installed PV solar systems at the High School, Thurston, Martha Jones, and Downey schools, converted to energy efficient street and traffic lights, and made numerous HVAC and lighting upgrades. The Town has participated in the state's Safe Routes to School program that assists with improvements for safe biking and walking to middle and elementary schools. A Stormwater Management Bylaw was adopted by Town Meeting in 2015 requiring residential and commercial projects with any land disturbance over 5,000 sq. ft. to capture and treat stormwater runoff. The Westwood Land Trust, Select Board, School Department, and Conservation Commission have been key players in implementing sustainable practices.

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The Select Board established an Environmental Action Committee (WEAC) in 2008 as an advisory committee on environmental concerns. WEAC proposes solutions to promote energy, water, and resource conservation, renewable energy, green building design, more efficient vehicles, reuse and recycling, and environmental education in Westwood. Each spring and fall, it sponsors a recycling event with the DPW for items not accepted at curbside. In 2019, the Committee initiated a Community Electricity Aggregation (CEA) purchasing program for the Town to start offering lower group electricity rates and renewable energy options to all residents and businesses.

WEAC was instrumental in Westwood becoming a Green Community, a state program offering municipalities energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities. This required meeting various criteria such as allowing as-of-right rooftop solar, purchasing fuel efficient municipal vehicles, and adoption of the Stretch Code (780 CMR 115 AA) of the Massachusetts Building Code. The Stretch Code requires newly constructed buildings to use less energy to minimize the life-cycle costs. The Town participates in an annual state certification process to demonstrate compliance with Green Community criteria to become eligible for grants for energy conservation projects.

Since receiving the Green Community designation, Westwood hired an Energy Manager to seek and manage grants to reduce energy use and emissions in municipal facilities. As of 2020, the Energy Manager has implemented over 50 projects valued at over \$2.83 million using \$1.43 million in Green Communities funding and approximately \$500,000 in Eversource incentives. In 2018, the Energy Manager received the Lead by Example Award from the Massachusetts DOER. Some of the recent projects awarded Green Community funding include converting all streetlights to LED, and new lighting at the Martha Jones Elementary School, the High School hallways, and the swimming pool. Solar panels were installed at the High, Thurston, Martha Jones, and Downey schools. Most recently new energy efficient ventilators were installed at Thurston Middle School.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Town's sustainability goals should strive to align with the Commonwealth's goals of zero CO₂ emissions by 2050. That includes emissions from vehicles, buildings, operations, and electricity generation. The Town should endeavor to be more sustainable, encourage all residents and businesses to do the same, and incorporate sustainability into the mission of every Town department, commission, board, and committee.

Objective 1: Develop a Climate Action and Resiliency Plan.

Objective 2: Educate residents on the sense of urgency around climate change action.

Objective 3: Take steps to convert to clean renewable energy to drastically reduce fossil fuel use within the next seven to ten years.⁴

Objective 4: Promote healthy living for a healthy community.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Sustainable practices are found throughout this Plan, but this section focuses on what the Town can do to achieve sustainability by integrating this endeavor into all of the Town's operations, practices, policies, and municipal facilities with a strong emphasis on renewable energy.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are not formally prioritized but are organized under topic categories related to the above goals and objectives, followed by an informal order of significance.

- S1. Develop a Climate Action and Resiliency Plan including the following:
- Comprehensive energy use audit of all Town buildings, equipment, and vehicles to identify and help prioritize opportunities for improvement.
 - CO₂ reduction goals and actions to achieve those goals including:
 - Energy conservation;
 - Energy efficiency;
 - Energy purchasing with a goal of 100% renewable;
 - Net zero energy standards for new Town buildings;
 - Promotion of residential solar; and
 - Phase out of fossil fuel use.
 - Policies for the purchase of Town supplies that are greener products, with fewer single use, less plastic, more recycled and recyclable content, and more energy efficient.
 - Sustainable transportation with electric vehicles and charging stations.
 - Conversion to electric and battery powered equipment where feasible.
 - Proposed Shuttle bus service.
 - Infrastructure that promotes walking and biking.
 - Procedures for improved water conservation and pollution prevention.
 - Community education focused on sustainability.
 - Preservation, replacement, and planting of trees.
 - Path to Zero Waste by reduction, recycling, and composting.
 - Replacement of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides with less toxic and natural substitutes.
- S2. Consider climate change and greenhouse gas emission when any Town board, committee, or department creates any plans or programs, or makes decisions regarding the use, re-use, or improvement of Town land or facilities.
- S3. Continue the installation of roof solar panels and consider adding solar carports in parking lots on municipal and school property.
- S4. Conduct an annual Town-wide CO₂ production and energy use audit and report.
- S5. Consider the creation of a sustainability manager or sustainability planner position.
- S6. Continue energy conservation and strive to expand the use of renewable energy in Town facilities, operations, and the Town fleet. Establish net zero energy standards for new Town buildings.

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- S7. Explore Zoning Bylaw amendments related to the review of applications by the Zoning Board of Appeals for special permits to allow the installation of ground mounted solar panels, including revised design and performance standards which balance the need for renewable energy with neighborhood concerns.
- S8. Consider revising the Zoning Bylaw to create zoning incentives for buildings and developments that are Net Zero, LEED certified, or otherwise sustainable.
- S9. Strengthen Environmental Impact Design Reviews by the Planning Board to encourage greater energy efficiency, on-site stormwater treatment, Low Impact Design (LID), open space preservation, and tree plantings.
- S10. Explore revisions to the Wetlands Protection Bylaw and the Stormwater Bylaw to better address climate change issues and enable the Town to meet federal and state requirements for stormwater quality. Consider a stormwater utility to fund stormwater system improvements.
- S11. Utilize the features of the Town LED streetlight network to reduce lighting during late-night hours and save energy.
- S12. Explore programs to promote and incentivize energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy use by Town residents.
- S13. Build awareness of all residents, students, and Town officials and personnel of the urgency to combat climate change.
- S14. Engage WEAC and other Town groups to increase public awareness and participation in the early design stage review of sustainability elements for municipal construction projects.
- S15. Promote residential solar use and net zero energy attainment by participating in state programs for residential solar power.
- S16. Consider installing automobile electric charging stations for public use throughout Town. Identify policies and incentives to expand the public and private electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- S17. Explore programs to incentivize the transition to electricity to phase out commercial and residential natural gas, oil, and propane use.
- S18. Perform education, outreach, and enforcement for proper recycling through existing resources or consider hiring a recycling coordinator. Provide recycling receptacles at all fields, playgrounds, and other public buildings and facilities, and at appropriate locations in commercial areas.
- S19. Partner with schools and extracurricular programs to educate children and residents about healthy lifestyle choices such as food, exercise, hygiene, and mental health to improve the overall health of the community.
- S20. Actively pursue opportunities through the Green Communities program for grants to support energy efficiency initiatives.
- S21. Facilitate walking, biking, and carpooling to work or school.

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S22. Continue to partner with the Dedham-Westwood Water District and Neponset River Watershed Association to maintain the community's drinking water supply and protect aquatic habitat through conservation and reduction/elimination of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.

RESOURCES

<http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=06182019>

<https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/global-warming-solutions-act-background>

4th National Climate Assessment <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

Summary of Findings report entitled “Westwood, Massachusetts MVP Community Resilience Program, Resilience Building Workshop,” prepared by BETA Group for Town of Westwood, February 2020.

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Sustainability Primer, 2015

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/sustainability_primer_v9.pdf

Massachusetts Vulnerability Preparedness Program: <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program>

RESILIENCY

BACKGROUND

Resiliency refers to the ability of a community to adapt to new circumstances and the ability to respond to and recover from extreme events caused by climate change and/or other man-made or natural disasters. Resiliency requires a clear understanding and acknowledgment of potential risks and vulnerabilities, planning, and preparedness to mitigate those risks.

Climate change-related natural and human-caused disasters are a major force that will impact Westwood and is a focus of resiliency planning in this element. Westwood may not be directly affected by sea level rise like coastal communities, but the Town is expected to experience more extreme weather events, more inland flooding due to intense precipitation, higher average temperatures, more summer days over 90 degrees, and more droughts, hurricanes, snow, and ice storms.⁵ The summer of 2020 was the warmest on record for Massachusetts and the fourth warmest in the United States.⁶ Westwood experienced periods of dry spells and periods of heavy rainfall such as a storm in late June 2020 that dumped 4 inches of rain in 90 minutes. The heavy rain in such a short time led to flooding, severe damage, and the closure of Norwood Hospital which serves many Westwood residents. With the increased heat there are expected health impacts and higher risk of vector borne diseases such as Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Disruption of critical infrastructure such as water, sewer, energy, transportation, and telecommunication will occur.⁷ The severity and the rate of climate

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change depends on the global human response to this crisis and is a significant challenge for all communities.

Westwood has begun the process of resiliency planning by applying for and receiving a state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant in 2019. The purpose of the grant was to complete a community-led planning process to designate Westwood as an MVP community. Next will be further state resiliency funding to complete vulnerability assessments and action-oriented plans. A workshop held in late 2019 with community stakeholders identified flooding, high wind and winter storms, droughts and extreme temperatures, and invasive species as the top hazards facing Westwood.

Health concerns were also identified as a major concern impacting Westwood and the region. In summer 2019, the dangerous mosquito born disease EEE was prevalent and expected to begin a three-year seasonal cycle. The outbreak of novel Coronavirus known as COVID-19 followed shortly after and became a public health pandemic in 2020 with far reaching economic and social impacts calling attention to the shortcomings of our resilience preparedness. COVID-19 led to devastating economic impacts in the first six months when many industries were significantly impacted. Public health impact with the contagious disease has been fatalities and unknown long-term effects. Social services and regional healthcare systems were overwhelmed.

Overflowing dams both natural and beaver-made have contributed to local flooding. Some areas that often experience flooding are University Avenue near the train station, which is also a community groundwater source. A second area that frequently floods is the neighborhood between Pond Street and Edgewood Road. High wind and winter storms pose a threat as they lead to fallen trees and downed power lines. Most of the Town is at risk due to the vulnerable combination of tree-lined streets and above-ground power lines.

The state MVP program provides a framework for developing a Resiliency Plan. Westwood recently (February 2020) completed the first phase of this planning process with a state grant. Since resilience spans across many areas, a Resiliency Plan requires input from many governmental departments, officials, committees, and boards in Town. A Resiliency Plan must also achieve full public participation and support to be effective.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Resiliency planning is necessary to better prepare for, manage, and respond to any disaster, to minimize stress, and to cultivate a better quality of life.

Objective 1: Create a Town resiliency plan or plans to determine the existing and future vulnerabilities to the Town from climate change and artificial or natural causes.

Objective 2: Build awareness among residents, students, and Town employees of the need to take action to reduce risk and increase resilience.

Objective 3: Take action to implement the resiliency plans.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Identifying weaknesses and threats and having plans and procedures in place is necessary to respond to emergency situations. The strategic approach emphasizes community empowerment and regional engagement to be able to respond and requires diligent direction and leadership from

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local and state officials. This approach also focuses on how Westwood can advance infrastructure and services with nature-based solutions that will have long term impacts on climate change and other natural and human-made disasters. Nature-based solutions use natural systems to work in combination with traditional approaches to address and respond to natural hazards.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The following actions are not formally prioritized but are organized under topic categories related to the above overarching goals and objectives, followed by an informal order of significance.

- R1. Develop a combined Climate Action Resiliency and a Hazard Mitigation Plan that evaluates existing gaps, identifies solutions, and develops implementation strategies.
- R2. Complete the process to become a state-certified Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) community to allow Westwood to qualify and apply for future grants and programs.
- R3. Conduct a hydrologic study to identify weaknesses leading to flooding and make recommendations for improving culverts, low-lying roads and areas, and the stormwater system.
- R4. Develop updated flood maps to show areas that are at risk and vulnerable for increased extreme weather flooding.
- R5. Expand the Emergency Planning Committee to include human service leaders, local businesses, and community organizations.
- R6. Continue to review and improve the Town's emergency operations and communications system.
- R7. Place power lines underground to prevent storm-related power outages and allow more street trees.
- R8. Communicate the importance of resiliency planning to all Westwood residents, government officials, and board and committee members.
- R9. Identify local businesses and community partners such as local grocers, food suppliers, transportation providers, and housing services such as local hotels, to create a resource list and develop a relationship to be utilized in emergency situations.
- R10. Improve community engagement skills of health, police, and fire departments to strengthen abilities for health and wellness and disaster preparedness.
- R11. Build broad stakeholder networks that include social services, behavioral health, community organizations, businesses, academia, at-risk individuals, and faith-based organizations in addition to traditional public health, healthcare, and emergency management partners.
- R12. Support programs that serve at-risk individuals and assist individuals with vulnerabilities in taking an active part in protecting their health.
- R13. Develop a list of local volunteers to assist in the event of an emergency.

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- R14. Aid households in having a disaster kit to provide the ability to shelter in place for up to 72 hours.
- R15. Facilitate strong social networks by establishing “neighbors helping neighbors” groups.
- R16. Cooperate with nearby towns to conduct regional resiliency planning.
- R17. Proactively reach out to senior, disabled, and assisted living facilities with vulnerable populations to prepare evacuation and emergency response plans.
- R18. Conduct semi-annual catch basin cleaning.
- R19. Strengthen and promote access to public health and social services by developing partnerships between local healthcare organizations and Westwood’s human services departments such as the Division of Youth and Family Services and the Health Division.

RESOURCES

<https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program>

<http://www.resilientma.org/mvp>

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/18/>

<https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

ENDNOTES

¹ Sustaining Places: The Role of the Comprehensive Plan. Planning Advisory Services Report Number 567. By David Godschalk, and FAICP, William Anderson, FAICP, 2012.

² Presentation by John P. Holdren on [Climate Science and Public Policy](#) (pdf) November 9, 2015.

³ IPCC SR15 (Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees C), Chapter 2, page 108, Table 2.2, https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_Chapter2_Low_Res.pdf
The blue highlighted bar in the table shows the remaining carbon budget for 1.5 degrees for three different levels of uncertainty. It shows that for a 67% chance of staying below 1.5 degrees, we can only emit 420 more gigatons of CO₂. We are emitting about 40 Gt per year and as of 2020 this report is two years old, so our budget is now down to 420-80 = 340 Gt. If we continue to emit 40 Gt/year, then we have about 340/40 = 8.5 years left before exceeding 1.5 degrees of global temperature increase.

⁴ *Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet*, NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, CA <https://climate.nasa.gov/news/2865/a-degree-of-concern-why-global-temperatures-matter/>

⁵ Resilient MA, The Climate Change Clearinghouse for the Commonwealth, <https://resilientma.org/changes>

⁶ *Assessing the U.S. Climate in August 2020*, National Centers for Environmental Information NOAA, September 9, 2020 <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/national-climate-202008>

⁷ Fourth National Climate Assessment - Chapter 18: Northeast, <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/18/>

IMPLEMENTATION

The following Implementation Table summarizes the over 230 implementing actions of the various Plan elements. Listed is a summary of each action from each Plan element, the suggested lead agency to implement the action, and the time period when the action is expected to be initiated. The primary purpose of the table is to provide an easy reference list and a sense of the timing to be used by Town staff, boards, and the responsible entities. This may be used as an annual guide to document progress in implementing the Plan.

The columns of the Implementation Table are as follows:

Action	The identifying number of each implementing action from each element.
Action Summary	A brief description of the implementing action.
Lead Agency	The suggested Town department, board, or committee that should take responsibility for implementing the action, listed in order of responsibility.
Ongoing	The action is already in progress and/or should be done on a regular basis.
Short Term	Expected to be initiated within two years.
Mid Term	Expected to be initiated within three to five years.
Long Term	Expected to be initiated after five years.
High Priority	A major area of concern that needs implementation as soon as possible.

The challenge of addressing this demanding agenda inevitably falls most heavily on the Select Board and Planning Board and the Planning Division, but others also are called upon to do a great deal. Keeping up with the schedule will call for careful priority setting and coordination among the responsible groups.

To assure sound implementation of this broad agenda, ongoing coordination and direction will be needed. Westwood has a strong tradition of Town organizations working closely together, and now has the staff and organizational structure to make that effort work.

This list of actions reflects not only the judgement of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and the Planning Board, but also the concurrence of the many organizations who reviewed and made suggestions on this Plan. Gaining that concurrence took some time but was worth pursuing. The Plan represents the collective intentions of the boards, agencies, and officials involved, as well as the broad array of citizens who participated.

The responsibility for Plan adoption lies with the Planning Board. The intention is that the Board will annually review the Implementation Table to help guide efforts over the forthcoming year. The Board will also provide each agency with a convenient format to update its progress, and to explain any departures from the implementation schedule. After the current coronavirus pandemic is stabilized the Town and Board will review and evaluate any necessary changes and re-examine priorities as needed.

Regularly plan to set aside time and resources for updates are of critical importance and are recommended for every seven to ten years. An update generally takes two years to complete, therefore, this Plan recommends beginning the update process no later than seven years from adoption or 2027. As noted in the introduction, this plan was finalized during a period of extraordinary

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disruption and uncertainty about future conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If certain changes brought about by the pandemic become long-term trends, it is possible that the Planning Board will want to revisit some of these measures in a couple years within a shorter timeframe.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
Land Use							
L1	Foster community gathering places, walking paths, bike paths, trails, shuttle services.	Select Board, Planning Staff, Conservation, Recreation		X			
L2	Support state’s zoning, planning law reforms.	Planning Staff		X			
L3	Re-purpose municipally owned properties for Town centers, housing, or open space & recreation.	Select Board		X			
L4	Polices for preservation of residential and commercial center character.	Planning Board		X			
L5	Prioritize flexible density controls with performance incentives.	Planning Staff	X				
L6	Review approved and completed OSRD projects and process.	Planning Staff		X			
L7	Explore options for greater diversity in housing..	Planning Staff, Housing	X		X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
L8	Strengthen Town centers.	Planning Staff, Economic Development		X			
L9	Work with commercial property owners to upgrade.	Economic Development, Planning Staff	X				
L10	Formalize & strengthen Planning Board's design review process for High & Washington Streets.	Planning Board		X			
L11	Mixed use at Glacier/Everett business area.	Planning Staff, Economic Development			X		
L12	Funding for open space.	Select Board			X		
L13	Prioritize open space protections & acquisitions.	Select Board, Land Trust, Conservation			X		
Town Centers							
TC1	Consider expand FMUOD/USROD on High St. to other business properties.	Planning Board		X			
TC2	Collaborate with Select Board for Deerfield property.	Select Board, Planning Staff			X		X
TC3	Storefront and façade enhancements.	Economic Development				X	

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
TC4	Community cohesion with events and activities.	Economic Development, Recreation		X			
TC5	Outdoor seating, street furniture, gathering places.	Select Board, Public Works		X			
TC6	Apply universal design standards to sidewalks, walkways, crossings.	Public Works	X				
TC7	Street tree program/tree fund/recommended tree list.	Planning Staff, Public Works			X		
TC8	Expand shuttle and ride-share programs.	Planning Board			X		
TC9	Zoning for uses that generate foot traffic.	Planning Board		X			
TC10	Annual review of infrastructure and improvements.	Select Board, Public Works		X			
TC11	Sidewalk, crosswalk, lighting enhancements to Town centers.	Select Board, Public Works, Ped./Bike Com.	X				X
TC12	Consider formalizing Planning Board design review process.	Planning Board		X			
TC13	Property owner collaboration on shared parking.	Economic Development		X			

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
TC14	Public art and public amenities.	Select Board, Planning Board			X		
TC15	Public gathering spaces.	Select Board Planning Board		X			
TC16	Incorporate greenery in public ways and commercial projects.	Select Board, Planning Board		X			
TC17	Zoning for shared parking, solar, electric car charging.	Planning Board		X			
TC18	Public-private partnerships.	Economic Development	X				
TC19	Streamline permitting process.	Economic Development, Licensing		X			
Housing							
H1	Zoning changes for greater housing choices	Select Board, School Com., Planning Board, Housing Partnership			X		
H2	Housing Production Plan compliance to increase subsidized housing inventory.	Housing Partnership, Planning Board, Housing Authority, Select Board	X				X
H3	Affordable Housing Policy Guide.	Planning Staff, Housing		X			

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
H4	Housing Authority properties on state's subsidized housing inventory.	Westwood Housing Authority, Housing		X			
H5	Fair Housing training.	Housing		X			
H6	Active Housing Partnership committee.	Housing, Housing Partnership	X				
H7	Promote first time home buying programs and provide assistance. Examine establishing a non-profit to assist under-represented populations.	Housing staff, Planning staff			X		
H8	Establish a Diversity or Humans Rights committee.	Select Board		X			X
H9	Study benefits of CPA.	Select Board, Finance			X		
H10	Upgrades to existing affordable housing stock.	Housing			X		
H11	Welcome package for new residents.	Town Administrator			X		
H12	Explore programs for energy efficient and renewable energy improvements for residence.	Select Board, WEAC			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
H13	Supplement Aid to the Elderly & Disability Tax Fund.	Select Board, Finance			X		
Economic Development							
E1	Preserve small town feel.	Planning Board	X				
E2	Final phases of University Station	Town Administrator, Economic Development	X				
E3	Redevelop properties on University Ave.	Economic Development, Planning Staff	X				
E4	Encourage commercial development along Route 1.	Economic Development, Select Board, Planning Staff			X		
E5	Examine zoning changes along Route 1	Planning Board				X	
E6	Support development of Islington Center.	Select Board, Planning Staff, Economic Development	X				
E7	Work with High St./Lowder Brook Drive property owners.	Economic Development		X			
E8	Encourage upgrades of High Street commercial properties.	Planning Staff, Economic Development	X				
E9	Engage local chamber for business support.	Economic Development			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
E10	Include green spaces, pedestrian connections, bike paths.	Planning Board	X				
E11	Maintain street and sidewalk program.	Public Works, Ped./Bike Com.	X				
E12	Transit oriented housing opportunities.	Planning Board				X	
E13	Streamline business permitting.	Select Board, Planning Board, Economic Development	X				
E14	Maintain & adjust as needed split tax rate.	Select Board, Board of Assessors, Finance	X				
E15	Utilize tax increment financing (TIF).	Select Board, Finance			X		
E16	Consider formalizing Planning Board design review.	Planning Board		X			
E17	Explore business ambassador liaison.	Select Board, Economic Development			X		
E18	Review & benchmark other towns.	Economic Development			X		
E19	Implement Town-wide electronic permitting	Town Administrator, Economic Development	X				

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
E20	Seek to improve business regulations.	Economic Development		X			
Natural & Cultural Resources							
NC1	Work with neighboring communities and regional entities to protect quality and supply of water and habitats.	Planning Staff, Conservation, Public Works				X	
NC2	Utilize performance based zoning and regulatory measures to protect environment & cultural resources.	Planning Board	X				
NC3	Encourage all new residential construction to be open space residential development.	Planning Staff		X			
NC4	Provide connections to fragmented open space.	Select Board, Conservation, Land Trust				X	
NC5	Compatible economic development & resource protection.	Planning Staff, Conservation	X				

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
NC6	Collaborate with DWWD to prevent & reduce contamination.	Public Works	X				
NC7	Ensure water quality.	Public Works, Conservation			X		
NC8	Adopt practices that require improvement to stormwater management systems.	Planning Board, Conservation	X				
NC9	Explore creating incentives for historic property preservation (potential Historic Preservation Fund).	Historical Commission, Economic Development, Planning Staff				X	
NC10	Establish Washington & High Street design criteria.	Planning Board		X			
NC11	Zoning relief or other incentives to preserve historic resources.	Historical Commission, Planning Board			X		
NC12	Partner with University Station for events and activities.	Economic Development, Recreation		X			
NC13	Discourage use of invasive species.	Conservation	X				
NC14	Adopt a tree preservation bylaw.	Planning Board, Public Works, Conservation			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
NC15	Explore establishment of a tree fund.	Planning Staff		X			
NC16	Consider installing scenic road signage.	Public works			X		
NC17	Historic plaque program.	Historical Commission			X		
NC18	Perform survey for National Historic Register listing.	Historical Commission				X	
NC19	Revise scenic road regulations.	Planning Board		X			
NC20	Consider adding new streets as designated scenic roads.	Planning Board		X			
NC21	Evaluate effectiveness of the Historic Structures Demolition bylaw.	Historical Commission, Select Board		X			
NC22	Explore funding opportunities for historic preservation and cultural enhancements.	Economic Development, Planning Staff, Recreation				X	
NC23	Investigate benefits of the CPA.	Select Board, Finance			X		
NC24	Consider developing master calendar listing of events & activities.	Town Administrator, Economic Development, Recreation		X			

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
NC25	Explore opportunities for pocket parks and parklets.	Economic Development, Select Board, Public Works, Recreation		X			
NC26	Continue to utilize Westwood Community trails program.	Recreation, Public Works, Ped./Bike Com.		X			
NC27	Establish trail & sidewalk program to Blue Hills Reservation.	Ped./Bike Com., Select Board, Planning Board				X	
NC28	Develop promotional material to promote trails & historic sites.	Conservation, Recreation, Historical Commission, IT Department			X		
NC29	Improve opportunities for use at Neponset River.	Conservation, Recreation, Public Works				X	
NC30	Recycling public education campaign.	Public Works, WEAC		X			
NC31	Partner with Westwood Cultural Council.	Economic Development			X		
NC32	Pursue historic rehabilitation of Obed Baker House.	Select Board, Economic Development	X				
NC33	Promote use of Fisher School	Historical Commission		X			

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
NC34	Sidewalks to be designed with natural environment.	Select Board, Public Works		X			
Community Facilities							
CF1	Renovation & expansion of Town Hall, accessibility improvements.	Town Administrator, Facilities Management	X			X	X
CF2	Complete the elementary school building project.	School Committee	X				X
CF3	Address facility needs at High School, Middle school, Martha Jones and Downey.	School Committee			X		X
CF4	Prioritize incorporating renewable energy at town properties.	Select Board, School Committee		X			X
CF5	Conduct needs assessment for senior center.	Council on Aging, Facilities Management				X	
CF6	Optimize space for Islington branch library and multi-purpose gathering space.	Library Board of Trustees, Recreation Commission, Planning Staff	X				X
CF7	Investigate parking expansion options at main library.	Select Board, Library Board of Trustees			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
CF8	Address deficiencies at Fire Station I for temporary storage.	Fire		X			
CF9	Develop long range plan for Fire Station I renovation or expansion.	Select Board, Fire				X	X
CF10	Expand electric charging stations at municipal properties.	Public Works, Select Board		X			X
CF11	Prioritize pedestrian improvements through Sidewalk Prioritization Plan.	Pedestrian & Bike Safety Committee, Public Works	X				
CF12	Evaluate feasibility of multi-purpose indoor recreation community facility.	Recreation Commission, Select Board		X			
CF13	Implement self-evaluation and transition plan for municipal properties.	Facilities Management, Commission on Disability			X		
CF14	Involve Commission on Disability in Planning Board application review process.	Planning Staff	X				
CF15	Incorporate meeting and multi-purpose space for new municipal construction.	Select Board,	X				

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
CF16	Evaluate security and safety measures at schools and public buildings.	Public Works, Facilities, School Dept.	X				X
CF17	Evaluate opportunity for community gardens.	Select Board, Public Works			X		
CF18	Education and outreach for recycling.	Public Works		X			
CF19	Investigate metal recycling facility and reuse area.	Public Works			X		
CF20	Upgrade to 10G to improve Town's network.	IT	X				
CF21	Implement electronic permitting for all departments.	Town Administrator, All Depts.	X				
CF22	Develop practices for digital and accessible material for all public boards and committees.	IT			X		
CF23	Expand Westwood Media contract to cover more public meetings.	Select Board			X		
CF24	Devote staff to website updates and communications.	Town Administrator, All Depts.			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
CF25	Upgrade Public Works facilities with adequate staff facilities for disability accommodations.	Public Works		X			
CF26	Pursue designs to expand Westwood Cemetery.	Cemetery Commission, Public Works			X		
CF27	Maintain water rate structure.	DWWD	X				
CF28	Complete DWWD Comprehensive Planning Study.	DWWD	X				
CF29	Require municipal redevelopment to incorporate sustainable practices and maximize energy efficiency.	Select Board		X			X
CF30	Regularly update long term operation maintenance plans for Town facilities.	Public Works		X			
CF31	Design municipal facilities to represent local history and compatible with surroundings.	Select Board		X			
CF32	Establish municipal facilities staff committee.	Select Board			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
CF33	Encourage upgrades for wireless facilities to fill communication gaps.	Planning Staff			X		
CF34	Mentor and recruit new members to boards and commissions with emphasis on currently underrepresented populations.	Select Board	X	X			
CF35	Advertise and promote municipal employment opportunities.	Human Resources, municipal & school	X	X			X
Open Space & Recreation							
CC1	Encourage OSRD and LID techniques for new developments to preserve and protect open space.	Planning Staff	X				
CC2	Review scenic road regulations.	Planning Board		X			
CC3	Partner with Westwood Land Trust, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission to protect natural features and historic buildings.	Conservation, Historical Commission, Land Trust, Planning Staff			X		X

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
CC4	Encourage shared parking.	Planning Staff, Economic Development			X		
CC5	Increase usability and attractiveness of trails.	Public Works, Conservation, Recreation			X		
CC6	Educate the community on the benefits of the CPA.	Select Board, Finance, Housing Partnership, Conservation, Recreation, Historical Commission			X		
RE1	Prioritize developing a new multi-purpose indoor recreation community center.	Select Board, Recreation		X			
RE2	Identify properties that might be available to serve unmet recreational needs.	Recreation		X			
RE3	Partner with private entities to share indoor ice-skating facility and examine portable outdoor system.	Recreation, Public Works		X			
RE4	Implement use and maintenance plans.	Recreation, Public Works		X			
RE5	Expand outdoor recreation facilities by more multipurpose fields and lighting.	Recreation, Public Works		X			

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
RE6	Increase recreational opportunities and programs for adults and seniors.	Recreation			X		
RE7	Incorporate universal design into all recreation facilities.	Recreation, Disability Commission, Public Works			X		
OS1	Incorporate universal design at feasible locations.	Conservation, Disability Commission, Public Works		X			
OS2	Prepare management plans for conservation areas.	Conservation, Public Works			X		X
OS3	Consider developing a mobile app to increase awareness of open space and conservation land.	Conservation, Land Trust			X		
OS4	Land acquisition for contiguous connectivity such as near Lyman's Pond.	Conservation, Select Board, Land Trust			X		
OS5	Collaborate with Hale to permanently protect land.	Town Administrator, Finance	X				X
OS6	Encourage open space donations or conservation restrictions.	Select Board, Land Trust	X				

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
OS7	Pursue grants, donations, funding for open space acquisition and improvements.	Conservation		X			
Transportation							
T1	Promote regional transportation improvements.	Public Works, Select Board, Planning Staff		X			
T2	Seek participation in MAPC & TRIC.	Planning Staff, Select Board	X				
T3	Advocate for improved commuter rail service and maintenance of Rte. 128 garage.	Select Board, Planning Staff	X				
T4	Strive to implement complete streets policy.	Public Works, Select Board	X				
T5	Use the complete streets prioritization plan for replacement and maintenance.	Select Board, Public Works	X				
T6	Continue efforts to design and construct path or sidewalk on Gay Street.	Select Board, Public Works	X				X
T7	Work towards implementing recommendations of the Dedham-Westwood Pedestrian Connection Plan.	Select Board, Public Works, Ped./Bike Com.			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
T8	Consider a bike-sharing program.	Select Board, Planning Staff			X		
T9	Pursue contiguous trail network.	Conservation, Ped./Bike Com.				X	
T10	Explore opportunities for shuttle bus service along High St. University Station, & Legacy Place shopping areas.	Economic Development			X		
T11	Investigate and coordinate bus and shuttle service with adjacent towns.	Economic Development, Planning Staff			X		
T12	Consider increasing number of bus shelters.	Select Board, Planning Staff			X		
T13	Consider cooperative rideshare programs.	Select Board, Economic Development, Planning Staff, Council on Aging		X			
T14	Implement crosswalk improvements.	Public Works	X				X
T15	Pursue adaptive signalization program on route 109.	Public Works		X			
T16	Review existing traffic calming measures for effectiveness.	Public Works			X		
T17	Conduct a Town-wide cut-through study.	Town Administrator, Public Works,			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
T18	Develop App to easily report road problems.	IT, Public Works		X			
T19	Participate in Safe Routes to School, encourage walking to school.	School Dept., Public Works, Ped./Bike Com.	X				
T20	Pursue underground utilities.	Town Administrator				X	
T21	Study ability of power grid to handle electric vehicles.	Town Administrator, Energy Manager			X		
T22	Continue to use the Pedestrian/Bike Safety committee as initial forum for resident concerns, public safety and traffic problems .	Pedestrian & Bike Safety Com.	X				
T23	Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in projects or sidewalk/path contribution funds.	Planning Board	X				
T24	Establish street acceptance policies.	Select Board, Public Works			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
T25	Require appropriate mitigation measures for projects that increase transportation demand.	Planning Board, Select Board	X				
T26	Review and update zoning bylaws, regulations for complete streets, sustainability, and accessibility.	Planning Board		X			
T27	Refine and implement context sensitive design standards and pedestrian accommodations.	Planning Board		X			
T28	Revise subdivision regulations to promote street and path connectivity.	Planning Board			X		
T29	Use Transportation Demand Measures for all projects.	Planning Board		X			
T30	Review parking regulations.	Planning Board			X		
T31	Review and strengthen traffic mitigation measures in zoning bylaw.	Planning Board			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
T32	Simplify and expand earth movement bylaw and establish truck routes.	Planning Board, Public Works			X		
T33	Incorporate sidewalks, bike lanes, paths, trees in public roadway projects	Select Board, Public Works, Planning Board				X	
T34	Consider traffic calming measures to address speeding and safety.	Select Board, Ped/Bike Com., Public Works, Police	X				
T35	Apply engineering, education, enforcement, evaluation, encouragement for safety improvements.	Select Board				X	
T36	Continue implementation of village zoning.	Planning Board, Economic Dev.		X			
T37	Pursue mixed-use concept for Route 1.	Planning Board, Economic Development			X		
Sustainability & Resiliency							
S1	Develop Climate Action & Resiliency Plan.	Town Administrator, Public Works, Fire, Police, Conservation, Planning Staff		X			X

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
S2	Consider climate change in all Town decisions.	Town Administrator, Select Board, All Departments	X				X
S3	Continue installation of roof solar and add solar carports on municipal properties.	Select Board, School Com., Energy Manager, Facilities Management	X				X
S4	Conduct Town-wide CO ₂ energy use audit & report.	Select Board, Energy Manager	X				X
S5	Consider creating a sustainability manager/planner position.	Town Administrator			X		X
S6	Energy conservation and use or renewable energy in Town facilities and fleet.	Select Board, WEAC, Public Works	X	X			X
S7	Explore zoning amendments for the review of solar special permits.	Planning Board		X			X
S8	Consider revising zoning for incentives for sustainable buildings.	Planning Board			X		X
S9	Strengthen EIDR to promote sustainability.	Planning Board			X		X
S10	Explore revisions Wetlands Protection Bylaw.	Conservation			X		X

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
S11	Reduce street-lighting during late night.	Public Works	X	X			
S12	Explore programs to promote and incentivize sustainability and renewable energy to residents.	Energy Manager, Select Board, WEAC		X			X
S13	Build awareness of urgency to combat climate change.	WEAC, School Dept., Energy Manager		X			X
S14	Engage WEAC or other groups to increase public awareness of sustainability for municipal construction.	Energy Manager, Select Board		X			X
S15	Promote residential solar use.	Energy Manager, WEAC	X	X			X
S16	Consider electric vehicle stations for public use throughout Town.	Town Administrator, Facilities Management		X			X
S17	Incentivize transition to electricity to phase out fossil fuel use.	Select Board, Planning Board		X			
S18	Perform outreach and enforcement of proper recycling.	Public Works	X	X			

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
S19	Partner with schools and extracurricular programs for children and resident healthy lifestyles.	Health, School Dept., Youth & Family Services, Recreation	X	X			
S20	Pursue Green Communities grant programs.	Energy Manager, Public Works, Planning Staff	X	X			X
S21	Facilitate walking and carpooling to work and school.	Town Administrator, School Dept.	X	X			X
S22	Partner with DWWD to promote water conservation measures.	DWWD, WEAC	X		X		
R1	Develop Climate Action Resiliency Plan	Select Board, Fire, Health, Public Works, Conservation, WEAC		X			X
R2	Complete process to become a certified MVP community.	Public Works		X			
R3	Conduct hydrologic study to identify flooding areas.	Public Works			X		
R4	Develop updated flood maps.	FEMA, IT, Conservation		X			
R5	Expand the Emergency Planning Committee.	Town Administrator, Fire, Health		X			

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
R6	Review Town's emergency operations and communications systems.	Police, Fire, Health, Public Works	X	X			
R7	Place power lines underground to prevent storm-related outages.	Select Board, Public Works			X		
R8	Communicate importance of resiliency planning.	Town Administrator		X			X
R9	Identify local businesses and community partner entities for emergency situations.	Town Administrator		X			
R10	Improve community engagement skills of Health, Police, and Fire.	Town Administrator, Fire, Police, Health		X			
R11	Build broad stakeholder networks including social, behavioral health, community orgs, health.	Town Administrator, Fire, Police, Health		X			
R12	Support programs to serve at-risk individuals.	Health, Disability Commission, Council on Aging		X			
R13	Develop a list of local volunteers to assist in emergencies.	Health		X			
R14	Aid for disaster and shelter in place kit.	Health			X		

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE							
Action	Action Summary	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term	High Priority
R15	Facilitate “neighbors helping neighbors” groups.	Town Administrator, Health			X		
R16	Promote cooperation with nearby towns.	Town Administrator			X		
R17	Proactively reach out to residences, vulnerable populations.	Health, Disability Commission, Council on Aging	X	X			
R18	Conduct semi-annual catch basin cleaning.	Public Works		X			
R19	Promote and strengthen public health and social services.	Health, Human Service Town Depts., Council on Aging		X			