

Dedham Master Plan

April 2009

Draft

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Dedham Master Plan Update

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April 2009

**Prepared for:
Dedham Planning Board
Dedham Master Plan Steering Committee**

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CHAPTER 1

MASTER PLAN GOALS

Land Use & Zoning

- ◆ Update and modernize the Dedham Zoning Bylaw to achieve consistency with the goals and recommendations of this Master Plan.
- ◆ Integrate principles and best practices of sustainable development into Dedham’s development regulations.
- ◆ Evaluate ways to encourage “village” design in Dedham’s neighborhood commercial centers.
- ◆ Improve the quality of life for residents who live in close proximity to commercial areas.
- ◆ Encourage the re-use of attractive or historic buildings that are not part of a historic district.
- ◆ Clarify and simplify regulations and procedures for the reuse or redevelopment of older buildings.
- ◆ Improve and clarify existing permitting environment, including regulations and process.
- ◆ Improve communication between and among major boards with development review and permitting authority.
- ◆ Expand opportunities for town professionals to coordinate the development review process and ensure that Dedham’s regulations and policies are consistently implemented.



Dedham Common.

Transportation

- ◆ Increase the efficiency of Dedham's roadways through effective advocacy for priority transportation projects.
- ◆ Discourage traffic on residential streets through the appropriate use of traffic calming measures.
- ◆ Ensure continued maintenance and improvement of Dedham's pedestrian infrastructure.
- ◆ Increase access to and efficiency of public transportation in Dedham, including the JBL and MBTA bus lines.

Historic Resources

- ◆ Identify and document Dedham's historic resources.
- ◆ Protect Dedham's historic and archaeological heritage by identifying and instituting appropriate and broadly supported methods of historic preservation.
- ◆ Restore and preserve Dedham's municipally-owned historic resources.
- ◆ Identify, document, and protect Dedham's scenic roads.
- ◆ Make preservation objectives an integral part of Dedham's development review and permitting process.
- ◆ Generate local support for Dedham's historic resources through public outreach and education.
- ◆ Explore the possibility of providing professional support for historic preservation initiatives through the establishment of a regional preservation planner.

Natural Resources

- ◆ Promote conservation and protection of Dedham's wetlands and water resources.
- ◆ Increase awareness and management of local wildlife.
- ◆ Provide public education and build awareness of Dedham's natural resources.
- ◆ Provide consistency and a coordinated approach to implementing federal, state, and local stormwater management requirements.

Open Space & Recreation

- ◆ Improve the quality of Dedham’s parks, playing fields, and other open spaces.
- ◆ Increase opportunities for passive recreation such as walking and biking by developing a system of trails and walking and bike paths throughout town.
- ◆ Continue detailed and systematic planning for Dedham’s short- and long-term open space and recreation needs.
- ◆ Establish a consistent funding source for open space acquisition.
- ◆ Identify priority open space parcels for permanent protection and/or future acquisition.
- ◆ Promote the beautification of Dedham’s roadways, streetscapes, and other transportation infrastructure.

Housing

- ◆ Provide for a diversity of housing opportunities.
- ◆ Build municipal capacity to address local housing needs.
- ◆ Encourage and facilitate quality design and maintenance of residential properties.
- ◆ Improve housing quality conditions for homeowners and tenants in each neighborhood by enforcing state and local codes.

Economic Development

- ◆ Promote public- and private-sector support and coordination of Dedham’s economic development initiatives.
- ◆ Enhance development and redevelopment of large-scale and underutilized sites and areas.
- ◆ Encourage and support the revitalization of neighborhood commercial centers such as East Dedham, Dedham Square, Oakdale Square, and the Route 109/Bridge Street area.
- ◆ Identify market opportunities and locations for new types of economic growth.
- ◆ Support ongoing efforts to revitalize and improve Dedham Square.

Community Services & Facilities

- ◆ Plan for and finance the long-term maintenance, improvement, and necessary expansion of Dedham's public facilities and infrastructure.
- ◆ Continue to finance capital improvements through a responsible approach to debt management.
- ◆ Continue to increase the efficiency of town operations and services.

Governance

- ◆ Evaluate Dedham's form of government and its relevance to the town's present and future operations.
- ◆ Increase education, support, and accountability for Dedham's Town Meeting Representatives.
- ◆ Commit to long-term planning in Dedham's capital budget process.

CHAPTER 2

POPULATION PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

Dedham is a diverse community, both in its physical development pattern and in the make-up of its population. It is unique from many towns, for it has distinctive neighborhoods that offer a range of housing options to people with quite different socioeconomic characteristics. In general, while the size of Dedham's population has remained relatively stable over the past twenty years, demographic changes can be seen throughout the town. Household sizes are shrinking, but the number of households is increasing. In addition, Dedham's population is aging, much like that of the nation as a whole.

Population dynamics affect communities in multiple ways. For example, school departments must be able to accommodate growing or declining school enrollments. Towns have to consider and respond to growing demands for elder services and determine how best to handle changing housing and transportation needs. Furthermore, facilities such as neighborhood parks, playing fields, and community centers may become stressed or underused, not only because of absolute population growth or decline but also changes in the composition of a community's households and families and the ages of its residents. It is essential for communities to understand their current population demographics and observe shifts and trends in order to anticipate existing and future needs.

POPULATION

Population Growth

Dedham's population has decreased in the last several decades. In fact, Dedham experienced much of its twentieth-century population growth

in the immediate post-war years. With the expansion of regional highways, Dedham became a desirable community for families looking to move beyond the confines of the city. Since 1970, however, Dedham's population has declined steadily.

Table 2.1 shows that between 1950 and 1960, Dedham's population increased twenty-nine percent and peaked around 1970 at 26,928 persons.¹ Since then, the population has declined fifteen percent, to 23,464 persons in 2000.² Today, available estimates show that Dedham's population has not changed significantly since 2000, with various sources indicating either modest growth or decline. For example, the most recent estimates from Claritas, Inc., indicate that from 2000 to 2007, Dedham's population increased slightly and now stands at 24,046.³ Norfolk County also had strong population growth after World War II, but the countywide population has continued to grow,

TABLE 2.1
POPULATION GROWTH 1930-2000

	Dedham	Norfolk County	Massachusetts
1930	15,136	299,426	4,248,326
1940	15,508	325,180	4,316,721
1950	18,487	392,308	4,690,514
1960	23,869	510,256	5,148,578
1970	26,938	605,051	5,689,377
1980	25,298	606,587	5,737,037
1990	23,782	616,087	6,016,425
2000	23,464	650,308	6,349,097

Source: State Data Center, MISER.

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1950, 1960, and 1970 Census.

² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P12: Sex by Age," *American Factfinder* at <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>.

³ Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports" at <www.claritas.com>.

albeit slowly. Figure 2.1 illustrates the percent change in population for Dedham, Norfolk County, and Massachusetts between 1930 and 2000.

Figure 2.2 shows that communities in the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) – Dedham’s sub-region of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) – have grown at approximately the same pace since 1930.⁴ A few towns have grown dramatically and they continue to show strong population growth, namely Randolph and Stoughton, and to a lesser extent, Walpole and Canton. Like Dedham, some communities in the TRIC experienced significant population growth in the middle of the twentieth century, but more recently they have had declining populations, e.g., Norwood and Milton.

Age Profile

Some segments of the population defined by age groups, or age cohorts, have unique service needs. Growth or decline in these age groups can have a significant impact on local government expenditures and capacity to provide services. In Dedham’s case, the population in two of the most demanding age cohorts, children and older persons, have increased in size over the last several years.

As indicated in Table 2.2, between 1990 and 2000, the number of school-age children increased by over fourteen percent in Dedham.⁵ Estimates indicate that between 2000 and 2007, this age cohort increased by another three percent. Despite estimated growth in this age cohort, K-12 enrollments in the Dedham public schools declined between 2000 and 2007. During the 1999-2000 school year, 3,041 children were enrolled in the public schools, but in the 2007-2008 school

Figure 2.1: Percent Change in Population, 1930-2000

(Source: State Data Center.)

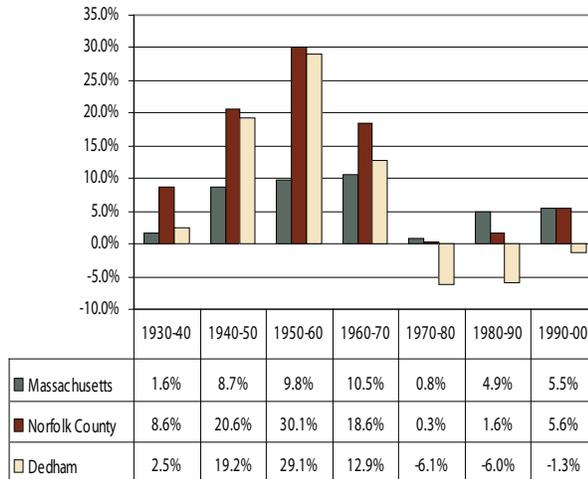
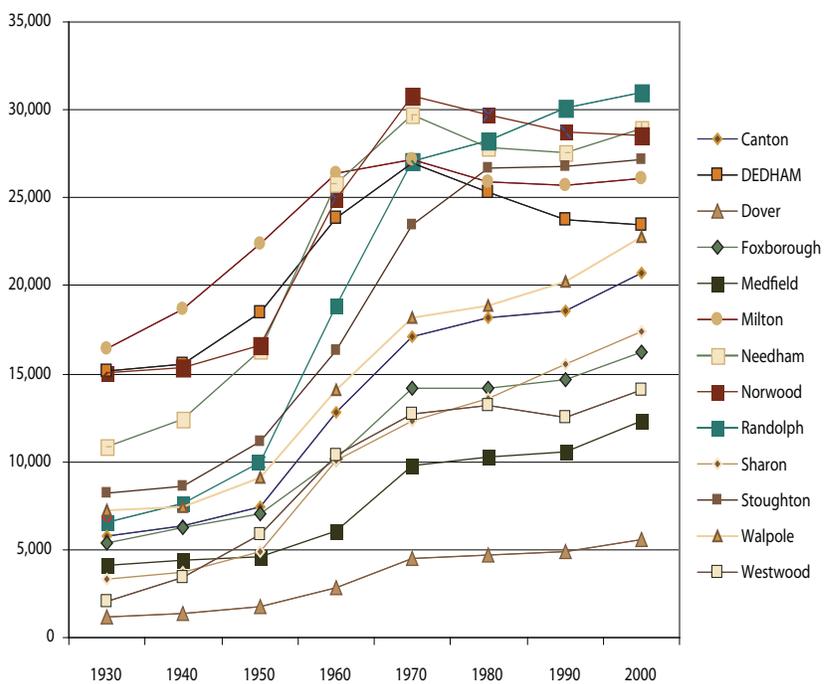


Figure 2.2: Growth Rates in the TRIC Region

(Source: State Data Center.)



year, K-12 enrollments dropped slightly to 2,879 students.⁶ This discrepancy may be attributed to increased enrollment in private schools. According to the Bureau of the Census, 596 Dedham children attended private school in 2000.

⁴ The TRIC service area includes the towns of Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, and Westwood.

⁵ 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, “P011: Age”; Census 2000, Summary File 1, “P12: Sex by Age.”

⁶ Massachusetts Department of Education, School District Profiles. “Enrollment by Grade” at <www.mass.gov/doe>.

TABLE 2.2
POPULATION GROWTH BY AGE COHORT AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION

	1990		2000		2007 Estimate	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	23,782		23,464		24,046	
Under 5	1,509	6.3%	1,435	6.1%	1,422	6%
5 to 18 years	3,303	13.9%	3,773	16.1%	3,870	16%
18 to 34 years	6,530	27.5%	4,608	19.6%	4,175	17%
35 to 54 years	6,076	25.5%	7,391	31.5%	7,706	32%
55 to 64 years	2,627	11.0%	2,352	10.0%	2,899	12%
65 to 74 years	2,190	9.2%	1,980	8.4%	1,868	8%
75 and over	1,547	6.5%	1,925	8.2%	3,974	17%

Source: 1990 Census, STF1, P011; Census 2000, SF1, P12; Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Report."

Dedham's older age cohorts are also growing in size. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of people over 75 years old grew by almost twenty-five percent. Current estimates for 2007 show that this age cohort has continued to grow and now makes up seventeen percent of Dedham's population.⁷ Furthermore, estimates indicate that today, people over 55 years old represent more than one-third of Dedham's population.

Dedham is not unlike its neighbors, however. Several communities in the TRIC region and beyond have experienced rapid growth in older cohorts, too. Table 2.3 shows the estimated median age of the population in each TRIC community as well as the proportion of the population composed of people over 65 years of age.

Race, Ethnicity and National Origin

In the last few decades, Dedham's population has become increasingly diverse. In 1990, almost ninety-eight percent of all Dedham residents were white, but by 2000, this figure had dropped to just over ninety-three percent.⁸ The change is attributable primarily to growth in African-American and Asian populations. As reported in Table 2.4, available estimates indicate that today, seven percent

⁷ Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P12: Sex by Age," [accessed 18 January 2008]; Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports."

⁸ 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, "P006: Race," [accessed 18 January 2008]; 2000 Census, Summary File 1, "P3: Race."

TABLE 2.3
MEDIAN AGE AND ELDERLY PERSONS
2007 ESTIMATE

Town	Median Age	Percent of Population over 65
Canton	41.8	16.6
DEDHAM	41.6	16.5
Dover	40.7	12.2
Foxborough	40.0	12.4
Medfield	38.0	9.8
Milton	40.5	15.5
Needham	41.6	17.0
Norwood	41.0	17.4
Randolph	40.4	14.2
Sharon	41.0	11.7
Stoughton	41.8	15.6
Walpole	40.4	14.7
Westwood	42.3	18.6
Norfolk County	40.0	14.4
Massachusetts	38.2	13.5

Source: Claritas, Inc. "Demographic Snapshot Report."

of the town's population is non-white.⁹ Statistics reported by the Massachusetts Department of Education suggest that there has been a significant increase in the number of African-American and Hispanic children enrolled in Dedham's public schools. African-American students currently make up 5.9 percent of the school district's population and Hispanic students, 7.2 percent. This compares to 2.4 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively, during the 1999-2000 school year.¹⁰

⁹ Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports."

¹⁰ Massachusetts Department of Education, School District Profiles. "Enrollment by Race/Gender."

**TABLE 2.4
POPULATION BY RACE**

	1990		2000		2007 Estimate	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
DEDHAM						
White	23,234	97.7%	22,175	93.2%	22,114	93.0%
Black or African American	196	0.8%	362	1.5%	591	2.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	27	0.1%	37	0.2%	42	0.2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	263	1.1%	449	1.9%	647	2.7%
Some other race alone	62	0.3%	188	0.8%	315	1.3%
Two or more races	n/a	-	253	1.1%	337	1.4%

Source: 1990 Census, STF1, P006; 2000 Census, SF1, P3; Claritas, Inc. "Demographic Snapshot Reports".

Dedham’s population includes people with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Most people in Dedham report their primary ancestry as Irish or Italian. In Census 2000, for example, over 6,700 people reported a first ancestry as Irish and over 3,500 Italian. Approximately 1,500 people claim an English heritage. A significant number of people with German, Lebanese, or Greek ancestry also live in Dedham.¹¹

Almost ten percent of Dedham residents are foreign-born. According to Census 2000, almost 2,200 residents were born outside the United States. The vast majority of immigrants to Dedham have come from Europe and Asia, and several hundred from Latin America.¹²

Educational Attainment

More than half of Dedham’s over-25 population has achieved education levels beyond high school. Eighteen percent have had some college education but did not pursue an advanced degree; twenty percent of persons over age 25 have bachelor’s degree and almost ten percent of have a master’s degree.¹³ Table 2.5 shows that in general, Dedham’s population is slightly less educated than the overall population of Norfolk County but equally as educated as the statewide population.

Group Quarters Population

Almost four percent of Dedham’s population is composed of people living in **group quarters**. By definition, the group quarters population consists of people who live in some type of institutional

**TABLE 2.5
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER, 2007 ESTIMATES**

Education Level	Dedham		Norfolk County		Massachusetts	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9th grade	598	3.5%	12,154	2.7%	254,787	5.9%
Some High School, no diploma	1,485	8.7%	27,723	6.1%	414,918	9.5%
High School Graduate or GED	4,968	29.2%	109,943	24.3%	1,192,565	27.4%
Some College, no degree	3,086	18.1%	75,206	16.6%	745,430	17.1%
Associate Degree	1,266	7.4%	33,806	7.5%	315,332	7.2%
Bachelor’s Degree	3,411	20.0%	113,256	25.0%	845,562	19.4%
Master’s Degree	1,660	9.8%	52,555	11.6%	402,692	9.3%
Professional School Degree	430	2.5%	17,932	4.0%	109,687	2.5%
Doctorate Degree	109	6.4%	9,996	2.2%	74,026	1.7%

Source: Claritas, Inc. "Demographic Snapshot Reports."

¹¹ Census 2000, Summary File 3, "PCT16: Ancestry."

¹² Census 2000, Summary File 3, "P22: Year of Entry for the Foreign Born Population," "PCT19: Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population."

¹³ Census 2000, Summary File 3, "P37: Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older."

TABLE 2.6
CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

	Households	One-Person Households		Families		Married Couples	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
DEDHAM							
1990	8,490	1,754	20.7%	6,404	75.4%	5,082	59.9%
2000	8,653	2,065	23.9%	6,146	71.0%	4,874	56.3%
2007*	9,004	2,228	24.7%	6,395	71.0%	5,076	56.4%

Source: 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, Tables P003, P016, P026, P027; Census 2000, Summary File 1, Tables P18, P21, P26, P34; Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports." * 2007 figures are estimates.

or shared non-institutional setting. In Dedham, approximately 600 of the 882 people in group quarters are inmates of the Norfolk County Correctional Center in the Route 128 median strip. Nearly 240 live in nursing homes.¹⁴

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

While it is important to understand population trends in order to assess needs and provide services, the number of **households** in a community affects many aspects of local government. A household includes all of the people who live in a housing unit: one person living alone, or a group of related or unrelated people living together. This definition makes it easy to see that in all communities, the number of households is the same as the number of occupied housing units.

Housing and development dynamics are intrinsically related to the number of households in a city or town. The number of housing units influences demand for infrastructure and facilities, the cost of delivering town services such as trash disposal, and local government administrative costs. Furthermore, the number, type, and value of housing units influences the amount of revenue a community receives to support the cost of local government services.

National trends indicate that households are smaller than in the past. Though populations in some areas may decline in absolute terms, people demand more housing units to accommodate growth in the number of households. Dedham,

too, has experienced this trend. As shown in Table 2.6, despite declines in population, the number of households in Dedham has increased moderately since 1990 and continues to grow. In 1990, Dedham had 8,490 households, and ten years later, there were 8,653, or an increase of two percent. Demographic estimates for 2007 indicate that 9,004 households currently live in Dedham.¹⁵ The vast majority of these households are **families**. A family is a household of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Household composition is changing in Dedham. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of one-person households increased while the number of family and married-couple households declined. In fact, Dedham has smaller households than many of its neighbors. Table 2.7 shows that compared with other communities in the TRIC region, Dedham has a relatively small average household size and a small percentage of households with children under 18. It is not surprising that communities with relatively high proportions of multi-family housing also have smaller households and fewer households with children. Given the several hundred units of rental housing recently constructed and currently under construction in Dedham, the next federal census will most likely show an increase in the proportion of Dedham households without children.

Household Income

Between 1990 and 2000, incomes in Dedham grew in real dollars, but since 2007, household incomes

¹⁴ Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P37: Group Quarters Population by Group Quarters Type."

¹⁵ 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, "P15: Household Type and Relationship," Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P18: Household Size," and Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports."

have actually declined when adjusted for inflation. In 1990, Dedham’s median household income was \$45,687, and by 2000, it had increased to \$61,699. Median family incomes and non-family incomes increased by similar margins during the 1990s. However, current demographic estimates indicate that in Dedham and many other communities, household income growth did not out-pace inflation between 2000 and 2007. Dedham’s median household income in 2000 is valued at over \$74,000 in today’s dollars, yet the estimated 2007 median household income is less than \$73,500.¹⁶

Income levels vary depending on household type. As is true in most communities, **non-family households** in Dedham have lower incomes and family households have higher incomes than the average household income. Non-family households consist of single people living alone – such as young adults, divorced non-custodial parents, and widows – and unrelated people living together.

Over 1,000 people, or four percent of Dedham’s population, live below the federal poverty level. Seniors account for twenty-five percent of the people in poverty, and twenty-six percent of the families in poverty are single-parent families headed by women. Over 200 Dedham children live in poverty.¹⁷

¹⁶ 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 3, “P80A: Median Household Income in 1989,” 2000 Census, Summary File 3, “P53: Median Household Income in 1999,” Claritas, Inc., “Demographic Snapshot Reports,” and Federal Reserve Bank of Minnesota CPI Calculator, <<http://www.minneapolisfed.org/Research/data/us/calc/>>.

¹⁷ Census 2000, Summary File 3, “P89: Poverty Status in 1989 by Age by Household Type,” “P90: Poverty Status in 1999 of Families by Family Type by Presence of Related Children Under 18 Years by Age of Related Children.”

**TABLE 2.7
REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS, 2007 ESTIMATES**

Town	Households	Average Household Size	Households with Children <18	
			Number	Percent
Canton	8,477	2.51	2,751	32.5%
DEDHAM	9,004	2.57	2,910	32.3%
Dover	1,869	3.03	877	46.9%
Foxborough	6,240	2.59	2,312	37.1%
Medfield	3,959	3.06	2,025	51.1%
Milton	9,122	2.76	3,580	39.2%
Needham	7,111	2.66	2,813	39.6%
Norwood	11,750	2.37	3,345	28.5%
Randolph	11,106	2.70	3,911	35.2%
Sharon	5,880	2.90	2,742	46.6%
Stoughton	10,179	2.56	3,414	33.5%
Walpole	6,725	2.67	2,468	36.7%
Westwood	5,047	2.70	1,907	37.8%

Source: Claritas, Inc., “Demographic Snapshot Reports.”

**TABLE 2.8
INCOMES IN DEDHAM, 1990-2007**

Income Type	Actual (Census)		Estimate
	1990	2000	2007
Median Household Income	\$45,687	\$61,699	\$73,464
Median Family Income	\$52,554	\$72,330	\$86,193
Median Non-Family Income	\$19,408	\$31,890	n/a
Per Capita Income	\$19,045	\$28,199	\$33,841
Persons Below Poverty	4.67%	4.60%	n/a

Source: 1990 Census, Summary File 3, Table P80A, P107A, P110A, P114A, P117; Census 2000, Summary File 3, Tables P53, P77, P80, P82; Claritas, Inc. “Demographic Snapshot Reports.”

NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS

The housing stock in Dedham’s neighborhoods varies greatly, but with the exception of household incomes, basic population and household characteristics do not vary from neighborhood to neighborhood as much as one might expect. Since Dedham’s neighborhood boundaries tend to coincide, at least in part, with small geographic areas used by the Bureau of the Census to report demographic data, it is possible to describe neighborhood-level social, economic, and housing characteristics by compiling and analyzing data for **census tracts** and **block groups** from the federal census. Unlike the town as a whole, however, there are no available demographic estimates for

neighborhood-level geographies in communities as small as Dedham. Accordingly, a neighborhood profile has to rely on somewhat older, actual data – in this case, Census 2000.

Map 2.1 illustrates the relationship between neighborhood boundaries depicted in the 1996 *Master Plan*, which are physical boundaries such as waterways, railroads, and streets, and “demographic” or statistical boundaries depicted in the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*, which have been adopted for this Master Plan Update. By this definition, the neighborhoods in Dedham consist of the following census tract and block group configurations:¹⁸

- ◆ **East Dedham:** Census Tract 4021.02, Block Groups 1-4, and Census Tract 4024, Block Group 1. Total Census 2000 population: 5,125.
- ◆ **Riverdale:** Census Tract 4021.01, Block Groups 1-4; total Census 2000 population, 3,865.
- ◆ **Greenlodge/Sprague:** Census Tract 4022, Block Groups 2-3, and Census Tract 4023, Block Groups 1-4. Total Census 2000 population, 5,672.
- ◆ **Oakdale:** Census Tract 4022, Block Group 1, and Census Tract 4024, Block Groups 2-6. Total Census 2000 population: 5,132.
- ◆ **The Village:** Census Tract 4025, Block Group 1. Total Census 2000 population: 1,193.
- ◆ **West Dedham:** Census Tract 4025, Block Group 2. Total Census 2000 population: 2,477.

Tables 2.9, 2.10, and 2.11 report some of the key demographic indicators that highlight differences between Dedham’s neighborhoods. East Dedham,

¹⁸ Note: these tract and block group boundaries are based on maps from Census 2000. Since the Bureau of the Census modified some block groups between the 1990 Census and Census 2000, data reported here (and in the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*) do not correspond precisely to neighborhood-level demographic data reported in the 1996 Master Plan.

About Census Boundaries

A **census tract** is a small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county. Census tract boundaries normally follow visible features, but may follow city or town boundaries, too. Drawn to be relatively homogeneous areas with respect to population, economic, and housing characteristics at the time of establishment, census tracts average about 4,000 inhabitants.

A **census block group** is part of a census tract. It is the smallest geographic unit for which the Bureau of the Census tabulates detailed demographic data.

Greenlodge, and Oakdale are the most populated neighborhoods, each with over 5,000 people. Expressed on the basis of population density per square mile (sq. mi.), however, East Dedham stands out as the most densely settled area in Dedham: 4,855.6 people per sq. mi., compared to the town as a whole at 2,196.4 people per sq. mi. Riverdale and West Dedham are less populated, and the Village has the smallest population. Table 2.9 shows that for the most part, Dedham’s neighborhoods are racially and ethnically diverse, with more diversity in some neighborhoods than others, notably East and West Dedham. Dedham’s non-white population represents over ten percent of the population in East Dedham and over eight percent in West Dedham.

Despite great differences in housing types between the neighborhoods, household sizes are fairly similar throughout the town. Table 2.10 shows that the average household size ranges from 2.4 to 2.7 people. Furthermore, approximately thirty percent of all households in each neighborhood have at least one child under eighteen.

As indicated in Table 2.11, income levels vary significantly between Dedham neighborhoods. The Village and West Dedham households have significantly higher incomes than households in other neighborhoods. East Dedham has some of the lowest incomes and the highest incidence of poverty.

**TABLE 2.9
POPULATION BY RACE BY NEIGHBORHOOD (2000)**

	East Dedham	Greenlodge-Manor	Oakdale	Riverdale	Village	West Dedham
Population	5,125	5,672	5,132	3,865	1,193	2,477
Race						
White	4,721	5,463	4,984	3,615	1,129	2,263
Black or African American	142	34	34	46	4	102
American Indian/Alaska Native	12	7	6	8	0	4
Asian or Pacific Islander	90	101	58	135	34	31
Some other race alone	71	15	17	22	20	43
Two or more races	89	52	33	39	6	34

Source: Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P1: Total Persons," "P3: Race."

**TABLE 2.10
HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS BY NEIGHBORHOOD (2000)**

	East Dedham	Greenlodge-Manor	Oakdale	Riverdale	Village	West Dedham
Households	2,064	2,052	1,881	1,508	465	684
Average Household Size	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.7
With Children <18	631	660	656	469	148	231

Source: Census 2000, SF1, P15, P17, P18.

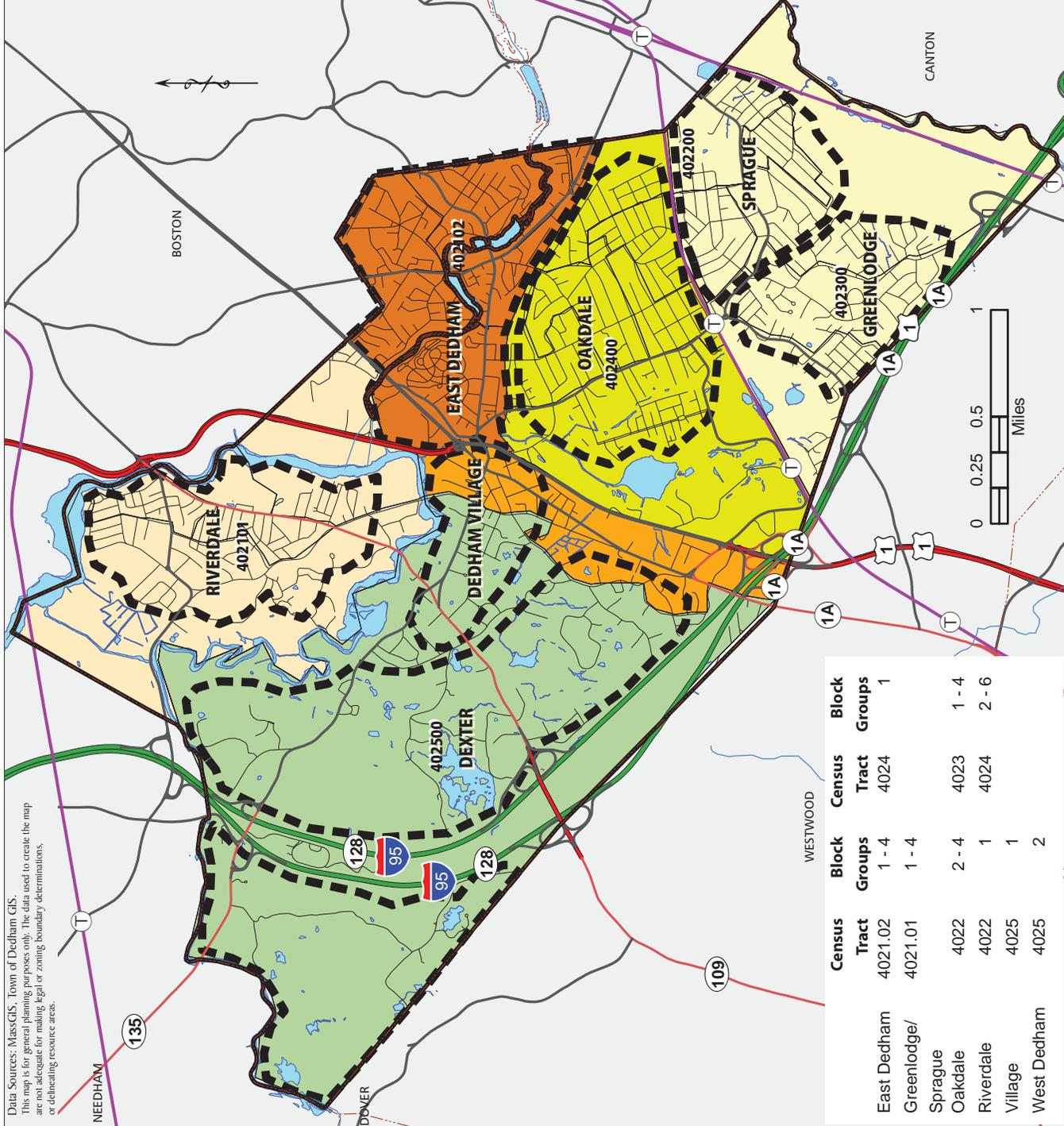
**TABLE 2.11
INCOMES AND INCIDENCE OF POVERTY BY NEIGHBORHOOD (2000)**

	East Dedham	Greenlodge-Manor	Oakdale	Riverdale	Village	West Dedham
Average Household Income	58,401	69,408	74,975	70,556	130,092	126,498
Average Family Income	64,995	78,178	80,152	77,866	155,638	150,259
Average Non-Family Income	18,848	9,044	11,424	16,992	18,513	11,712
Per Capita Income*	29,432	31,608	34,745	33,749	58,088	43,861
Persons below Poverty	7.8%	3.3%	4.6%	3.3%	0.7%	4.8%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3, P53, P77, P80, P82, P87. *Per capita income includes the population 15 years and older.

Map 2.1 Dedham Census Tracts & Neighborhood Boundaries April 2009

- KEY**
- Municipal Boundary
 - MBTA Stations
- ROADWAYS**
- Limited Access Highway
 - Multi-Lane Highway
 - Other Numbered Highway
 - Major Road, Collector
 - Local Roads
 - Open Water
- Census Neighborhood Boundaries**
- East Dedham
 - Dedham Village
 - Riverdale
 - Greenlodge and Sprague
 - Oakdale
 - West Dedham (Dexter)
- Physical Boundaries**
- (From 1996 Master Plan)



Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.

	Census Tract		Census Block		Census Tract		Census Block	
	4021.02	4021.01	4022	4023	4024	4025	4025	4025
East Dedham	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4
Greenlodge/Sprague	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4	1 - 4
Oakdale	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Riverdale	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Village	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
West Dedham	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

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CHAPTER 3

LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Land use refers to the amount and intensity of a community's residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development, along with roads, open land, and water. Patterns of development vary by the land and water resources that support them, the eras in which growth occurred, and the evolution of a community's transportation infrastructure. The ages of buildings in various parts of a town usually correlate with changes in land use patterns. Similarly, the placement of buildings in relation to the street and to each other tends to be inseparable from their age and whether they were constructed before or after the adoption of zoning. Furthermore, a community's development pattern and shape sometimes hint at its annexation history, or the incorporation of land to or from an adjacent city or town.

Dedham has all of these traits. Its 10.3 sq. mi. land area is the result of numerous boundary changes that occurred over time as large colonial settlements were populated and divided into districts and parishes, and eventually established as new towns. For Dedham, the process of spinning off new towns, annexing and re-annexing land to and from other jurisdictions, and the surveying and setting of new boundaries continued to unfold until the late 1890s. The town's present shape is defined in part by water and in part by old political compromises and choices, and in some ways its development pattern still suggests the once-seamless ties that Dedham had with neighboring communities. Of course, Boston, Dedham, and each of the surrounding towns has regulated land use through zoning for many decades now, and the imprint of zoning can be seen in the more regimented form of newer neighborhoods and commercial projects. What also can be seen in Dedham is a disconnect – some-

times subtle, at other times conspicuous – between its zoning policies, its history, the economic realities of redevelopment, and the market.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & TRENDS

Development Pattern

Dedham has many “faces,” each shaped by a different period in the town's physical and economic evolution. Its development pattern can be interpreted from an ordinary street map. Definable patterns of use and intensity of use tend to follow major transportation features and they, in turn, tend to relate to major natural features.

Dedham Village/Dedham Square is an unmistakable activity node framed by Church, High, Court, and School Streets and Franklin Square. Similarly, the historic industrial settlement pattern around Mother Brook, early twentieth century neighborhoods built along and adjacent to major roads in the north and east sides of town, postwar suburban neighborhoods along the south and southeast sections of town, and large tracts of land to the west are all suggested by Dedham's arrangement and hierarchy of roadways. Land use patterns that seem particularly obvious on a street map include the strip development along the Providence Highway, which splices the town in half from north to south, and older industrial areas near the railroad tracks. In general, transportation features serve as dividing lines between dominant land uses and intensity of development in Dedham.

Since the early 1970s, the state has tracked land use change throughout the Commonwealth by interpreting data from aerial photographs. Unlike land use information reported parcel by parcel by city or town assessors, the state's land use studies

measure land use by the amount of land “covered” by residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses, including the local streets that support those uses. Dedham gained housing and lost some industrial uses after the aerial flyovers in 1999 – the most recent year for which the photos have been interpreted and reported by the state – but overall, the town’s development pattern is not significantly different today than it was a decade ago. However, there has clearly been some reallocation of uses between the primary land use classes reported in Table 3.1.

Dedham is evolving within a framework etched by mature transportation facilities, water, and wetlands. It has attracted redevelopment and intensification of existing development since 1999, both along the Providence Highway’s retail corridor and on underutilized land near the Route 128/Route 1/1A interchange. It also has seen some incremental development of single-family homes, for despite Dedham’s proximity to Boston, it still has pockets of vacant, usable land. At times, recent real estate investments in Dedham have not aligned well with the town’s zoning requirements, such as the construction of two large

mixed-income rental housing developments in the Research, Development and Office (RDO) District. In addition, Dedham has witnessed some new development on the west side of town, notably construction of NewBridge on the Charles, a large residential-institutional compound on West Street. As a result, even though the town’s general development pattern has not changed dramatically, the constellation of land uses within established areas has shifted and the intensity of use in some areas has increased. This is typical of maturely developed suburbs.

Residential Development. Dedham is a residential suburb with an estimated 9,400 housing units. Today, about 2,800 acres of land support some type of housing development in Dedham, mainly neighborhoods of single-family homes. However, Dedham has hundreds of two-family homes peppered throughout East Dedham, Oakdale, and Riverdale, as shown in Map 3.1, along with numerous small multi-family dwellings and some larger apartment buildings. There are also some mixed-use buildings with businesses and one or more housing units, particularly in older, established areas along High Street and West Street, and

TABLE 3.1
LAND USE CHANGE IN DEDHAM, 1971-1999

Class of Use	Acres in Use			
	1971	1985	1999	1971-99 Chg.
Agricultural Uses	86.1	65.0	62.1	-24.0
Forested Land	1,930.7	1,865.5	1,764.7	-166.0
Mining	7.9	7.9	7.9	0.0
Open Land	177.2	64.7	85.8	-91.4
Recreation	182.8	168.6	190.4	7.6
Multi-Family	28.9	37.0	40.7	11.8
Small Lot Residential (<¼ acre)	660.4	666.0	666.0	5.6
Moderate Lot Residential (¼ – ½ acre)	1,340.5	1,356.2	1,379.5	39.0
Larger Lot Residential (> ½ acre)	522.7	541.3	572.1	49.4
Commercial	157.8	191.5	204.7	46.9
Industrial	212.6	356.1	399.0	186.5
Public or Institutional Land	258.8	272.3	230.9	-27.9
Transportation	328.2	325.3	316.8	-11.4
Waste Disposal	23.0	0.0	0.0	-23.0
Non-Forested Wetlands	693.0	693.0	690.5	-2.5
Open Water	222.5	222.5	221.8	-0.7
Total	6,832.9	6,832.9	6,832.9	

Source: MassGIS, “Land Use,” January 2002, from aerial photography in 1999; photointerpretation by University of Massachusetts-Amherst Resource Mapping Project. The data reported in Table 3.1 are the most current land use coverage data available from the state.

TABLE 3.2
ACRES OF RESIDENTIAL LAND USE BY CLASS (2007)

Class of Use	Acres
Single-Family	2,054.1
Multiple Residences	249.1
Two-Family & Multi-Family	306.3
Mixed-Use with Residential	286.8

Source: Dedham GIS, 2008.

senior residences with support services. A number of properties in Dedham have two or more free-standing dwellings, such as a large home and a carriage house. These residences tend to be large and quite valuable, typically constructed between the late 19th century and early twentieth century, and almost all are located on the west side of town.

Commercial Development. Dedham's most visible concentration of commercial space consists of the predominantly retail corridor that extends along the Providence Highway, roughly from Wigwam Pond north to the vicinity of Dedham Mall. The corridor is defined by relatively large "boxy" retail buildings, both free-standing and in strip shopping centers, with the large signs and generous parking lots that characterize highway-oriented businesses. For through traffic using the Providence Highway to reach non-local destinations, the impression formed by this part of town belies Dedham's character and beauty. Ironically, the Providence Highway figured prominently in Dedham's 1996 Master Plan as a source of frustration for Dedham residents and today, it remains one of the town's most crucial land use policy challenges.

By contrast, Dedham's local commercial center – and its civic, social, and cultural center – is Dedham Square, a collection of human-scale historic and newer buildings consistent with a 19th century downtown. Small pockets of neighborhood businesses can be seen in East Dedham and the Sprague, Greenlodge, and Riverdale neighborhoods, too. The town currently has about 470 acres of commercial development, just under half devoted to various types of retail trade, along with offices, accommodations and food service, entertainment, and quite a bit of commercial flex space and warehouse space. Currently under construction just south of the main retail area, well within

the RDO District by the Route 128/Route 1-1A interchange, is a 700,000± sq. ft. retail and entertainment "lifestyle" center, Legacy Place.

Industrial Development. Dedham has a considerable amount of land zoned for industrial development, but far less land actually occupied and used for industrial purposes. According to records from the assessor's office, less than 200 acres support some type of industrial use, much of it for storage, warehousing and distribution and associated offices, with few manufacturers.

Charitable, Educational, and Religious Uses. Dedham is home to several institutional uses, including four private schools: Noble and Greenough School, with a 187-acre campus bound by Route 109, Pine Street, and the Charles River; Ursuline Academy, an all-girls school on a former estate between Lowder Street and Highland Street; Dedham County Day School, located between Highland Street and Sandy Valley Road, and the Rashi School, located on the campus of NewBridg on the Charles. Northeastern University maintains a Dedham campus south of Nobles off Common Street, and MIT operates a conference center at the Endicott Estate on Haven Street. In addition to private educational uses, Dedham has a number of charitable organizations, notably the Dedham Community House at Ames Street and High Street (also a former estate) and the Animal Rescue League of Boston's animal protection and adoption facility on Pine Street, cultural and religious organizations such as the Society of African Missions on Common Street, and numerous churches. Together, these institutional uses occupy approximately 315 acres of land.

Public Uses. "Public use" is a wide-ranging term that includes property owned by federal, state, and local governments and used for a variety of public purposes. In Dedham, public uses include the town's seven public schools, town hall and other municipal facilities, and conservation land owned by the town; the court house, land controlled by the MBTA for railroad lines, and land owned by various agencies of the Commonwealth for open space, conservation, and flood control purposes. A long swath of state- and town-owned land sepa-

rates the northbound and southbound lanes of I-95/Route 128. In general, most of the town’s land east of the Providence Highway tends to be used for some type of public facility – schools, parks, playgrounds and the like – while to the west, both town-owned land and land owned by state or federal agencies is more likely to be used for conservation, forestry, or passive recreation. This, coupled with the presence of some larger institutional holdings and land owned by private conservation organizations west of the Providence Highway, makes for a land use pattern that is quite different from the intensively developed east side of town.

Vacant Land. There is more vacant land in Dedham than one might imagine, though much of it appears to have limited if any development potential. Some 600 acres are currently assessed by the town as vacant land or land in forestry or recreation use, including 434± acres of residential land, as shown in Table 3.3.

By contrast, Dedham has almost no vacant commercial land and only twenty-five acres of vacant industrial land with some prospect of future development. Dedham’s real potential for commercial and industrial development has little to do with vacant land and everything to do with the ongoing redevelopment of parcels with existing businesses. As noted in the 1996 *Master Plan*, it can take many decades for a given parcel to undergo enough redevelopment cycles to reach its “regulatory” buildout capacity, or the maximum amount of development allowed under a community’s density and dimensional regulations. For Dedham, the lack of vacant, developable land is not really a barrier to increas-

ing the town’s tax base. Instead, the barriers stem from regulatory constraints and in many cases, financial feasibility and market forces that impede the conversion of underused land to higher-value development.

ZONING REVIEW

The heart of any master plan, and particularly a master plan’s land use element, is zoning. Through zoning regulations and a zoning map, a community can exert considerable influence over its physical evolution and the character and quality of its built environment.

The Dedham Zoning Bylaw reflects a combination of old and new ideas about regulating land use and development. The town has three fairly conventional residential districts – Single Residence A and B, and General Residence – and the Senior Campus District, created a few years ago in anticipation of Hebrew Senior Life’s NewBridge on the Charles development. Dedham also has special regulations for Planned Residential Development (PRD), a type of overlay district that offers the possibility of higher-density development if Town Meeting approves a concept plan and the Planning Board later grants a special permit.

Dedham’s approach to commercial and industrial development is more complicated, involving eight districts, a “major development” threshold that triggers a special permit based on nonresidential gross floor area, and the possibility of developing otherwise prohibited commercial uses in industrially

TABLE 3.3
VACANT RESIDENTIAL LAND (2007)

Zoning District	Acres of Land by Development Potential			Total
	Developable	Potentially Developable	Not Developable	
Single Residence A	194.1	2.8	148.4	345.3
Single Residence B	19.7	19.3	24.9	63.9
General Residence	19.1	1.2	3.1	23.4
Local Business	0.6	0.9	0.0	1.5
Total	233.5	24.2	176.5	434.2

Source: Dedham GIS and CAMA database, 2007. Developable, potentially developable, and not developable categories refer to the way land is classified for tax assessment purposes. Land to be occupied by NewBridge on the Charles has been removed from this analysis even though it was vacant or partially vacant in 2007.

zoned areas. Some provisions of the Zoning Bylaw seem fairly innovative, yet often they rely on broad or ambiguous development review standards and decision criteria. It can be difficult to discern what Dedham really wants by reading the Zoning Bylaw.

Table 3.4 lists the town's zoning districts by type and acres allocated to each. Eighty-four percent of the town's total area is zoned for some type of residential use and nearly sixteen percent, for commercial or industrial uses. (See Map 3.2)

TABLE 3.4
DEDHAM ZONING DISTRICTS

Zoning District	Gross Acres	Pct. Town Area
Residential Districts		
Single Residence A	2,412.7	35.4%
Single Residence B	2,270.8	33.3%
General Residence	914.5	13.4%
Senior Campus	152.2	2.2%
Subtotal	5,750.2	84.3%
Nonresidential Districts		
Central Business	37.0	0.5%
General Business	29.2	0.4%
Local Business	31.8	0.5%
Highway Business	154.6	2.3%
Limited Manufacturing	381.6	5.6%
Limited Manufacturing B	36.3	0.5%
Research, Development & Office	400.6	5.9%
Subtotal	1071.0	15.7%
Total Acres	6,821.3	100.0%

Source: Dedham GIS. Note: the total area in Table 3.4 differs slightly from that of Table 3.1 due to the more accurate boundary data used by the town's GIS staff.

1996 Master Plan: Then and Now

Dedham's present Zoning Bylaw incorporates several land use recommendations from the 1996 *Master Plan*. At the time, Dedham did not have a Central Business District with regulations tailored to Dedham Square, or a Research, Development & Office (RDO) District. In addition, most of the Providence Highway was zoned for Limited Manufacturing, yet the corridor's use mix largely consisted of retail development. The 1996 *Master Plan* recommended rezoning portions of the Providence Highway to a Highway Business District, and Dedham responded in kind. Moreover, the existence and role of the Design Review Advisory Board stem directly from recommendations in the Master Plan. These moves and others show that Dedham made a significant commitment to implementing the Master Plan, yet some provisions of the Zoning Bylaw suggest that late-stage compromises may have occurred, too. Dedham also had difficulty adopting some recommendations of the 1996 *Master Plan*, such as enacting a scenic roads bylaw and following through on policy and programmatic initiatives that would be needed to make the new zoning as effective as possible.

Today, Dedham is at an important juncture in land use planning and zoning. The present Zoning Bylaw reflects several efforts to carry out major land use recommendations of the 1996 Master Plan, but it needs to be updated. It also needs technical corrections and a review for inconsistencies, and the Zoning Bylaw should be clear about what the town wants to achieve as it continues to evolve. If the Zoning Bylaw placed more emphasis on clear guidance to landowners and developers, the town would not have to rely on discretionary special permits as much as it does today. Further, Dedham's zoning needs to incorporate and promote smart development policies, such as compact development with a mix of residential and commercial uses and connectivity between them, sustainable buildings and landscaping, and more tools to protect open space.

The town needs to think about its approach to planning, zoning administration, and how to make the best possible use of its devoted board members and professional staff. Capacity is no less important for land use planning and zoning than any other municipal function, from management to public works and economic development.

Residential Zoning Districts

SINGLE RESIDENCE A AND B

The Single Residence A (SRA) and Single Residence B (SRB) districts are what their names suggest: zoning districts that encourage single-family home development. Though governed by different density rules, they share nearly identical use regulations. What Dedham allows in these districts is a function of the use regulations in Section 3.0 and the dimensional regulations in Section 4.0, and sometimes the overlay district regulations in Section 8.0 apply as well. For any uses other than single-family homes, applicants are additionally bound by various provisions of Section 7.0, Special Residential Regulations, some of the parking and landscaping requirements in Section 5.0, General Regulations, and the special permit requirements contained in Section 9.0, Administration and Procedures. Together, the regulations that govern both the SRA and SRB districts prescribe the conventional suburban development that Dedham has tended to attract.

The SRA district covers more than half of the west side of Dedham. Development in the SRA district requires a minimum lot area of 40,000 sq. ft. and, for lots created since 2000, minimum frontage of 150 feet. The SRB district extends easterly along the boundary of the SRA district, providing transitional space between Dedham's lower-density areas, activity centers along neighborhoods roads, and the spine of intensive growth along both sides of the Providence Highway. The SRB district also covers the east-central and southern sections of town, notably the Oakdale and Greenlodge neighborhoods and some of the Sprague neighborhood, too. It provides for moderately dense development, with a minimum lot area of 12,500 sq. ft. and 95 feet of frontage. For the most part, the SRB district follows the boundaries of established single-family house lots, with very few "split lot" configurations, or lots located in more than one zoning district. A noteworthy exception is the Noble and Greenough School campus, divided almost in half between the SRA and SRB districts.

In both districts, buildings must be set back from the street and from the rear lot line by at least 25

feet, and for the first 25 feet of lot depth measured from the street, the width of the lot must not be less than the minimum required frontage. To impose further regularity on the physical form of residential neighborhoods and presumably to control density, too, Dedham has a lot shape rule that excludes land in awkward lot layouts from the calculation of minimum lot area.¹ In addition, Dedham is one of a handful of Massachusetts towns that regulates the size of single-family dwellings with a *maximum floor area ratio (FAR)*: a metric that caps the total amount of built space on a lot by limiting the allowable floor area to a fraction of the lot area. Ironically, Dedham's FAR regulations make it possible to build a slightly larger home in the SRB district even though the SRA district requires a larger house lot.²

Most of Dedham's zoning districts have no statement of purposes or intent, so the purposes have to be inferred by users of the Zoning Bylaw. The inference drawn from SRA and SRB regulations is that Dedham strongly prefers detached single-family homes on regular lots, and that any other use would be an exception allowed only at the discretion of the Zoning Board of Appeals. While Dedham prohibits new two-family homes in the SRA and SRB districts, Section 7.2 authorizes the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant a special permit to convert an existing single-family home to a two-family home. It would probably be uneconomic for many people to convert, though. A conversion project requires a lot with at least 50 percent more area than the minimum lot required for a new home, i.e., 60,000 sq. ft. in the SRA district and 18,750 sq. ft. in SRB. The bylaw also discourages

¹ Under Section 4.8, Dedham discourages irregular lots by eliminating fragments or odd-shaped lot areas from the minimum lot area calculation, as follows: "When the distance between any two points on lot lines is less than 50 feet, measured in a straight line, the smaller portion of the lot which is bounded by such straight line and such lot lines shall be excluded from the computation of the minimum lot area unless the distance along such lot lines between such two points is less than 150 feet." This is a classic example of a dimensional regulation that would be easier for ordinary users to understand if the Zoning Bylaw included graphic illustration within the body of the Zoning Bylaw or in an appendix.

² In SRA, the maximum FAR requirement is 0.15; in SRB, it is 0.50.

“anticipatory expansions” of single-family homes, or floor area increases in anticipation of a future conversion permit, by limiting the size of a single-family home expansion within five years of the special permit application. Further, the building must continue to look like a single-family home despite alterations made to accommodate two housing units.³

The Zoning Board of Appeals has authority to grant special permits for assisted living residences in both districts. In addition, a “Multifamily Residential Complex” is allowable by special permit, but only in the SRB district and only through conversion of buildings that existed as of 1999. As defined in the Zoning Bylaw, a Multifamily Residential Complex consists of a building or group of buildings with three or more dwelling units. As regulated in Section 7.3, however, a Multifamily Residential Complex may not exceed a total of 24 units. To qualify for a special permit, an applicant would need at least 100,000 sq. ft. of land (2.3 acres) and 400 feet of frontage, or more than four times the minimum frontage required for a conventional single-family home.

A number of other restrictions apply, too. For example, an eligible existing building (in place as of 1999) is limited to a floor area expansion of 50 percent; 75 percent of all units in a proposed development must be located within a single building; the height of the existing building cannot be increased; and the proponent must provide at least 1.5 parking spaces per unit. One new single-family dwelling unit may be constructed on the same site. While the converted buildings need not meet any particular yard setback requirements, additions to them as well as any new buildings or structures on the property must comply with the ordinary SRB yard setbacks along the portion of the site that abuts an existing residence. It is not clear how many SRB properties could actually meet all

of the requirements for a Multifamily Residential Complex special permit.

GENERAL RESIDENCE

The General Residence (GR) district applies to areas that were developed many years ago. A conforming single-family house lot in the GR district has at least 7,500 sq. ft. and 50 feet of lot frontage, and for a two-family home, a minimum of 11,000 sq. ft. of lot area and 90 feet of lot frontage. A rowhouse dwelling would require at least 5,000 sq. ft. of lot area and 30 feet of lot frontage per unit. Dedham controls lot regularity in this district by two means: the awkward lot rule in Section 4.8, which applies in all zoning districts, and in the GR district in particular, there must be as much lot width at the front and rear building lines as the minimum lot frontage required for each type of residential use.

The GR district seems more flexible than SRA and SRB because it allows a slightly different mix of uses. In addition to two-family homes by right, the use regulations for the GR district include medical offices by special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. However, Dedham prohibits multi-family dwellings in the GR district, which makes all of the existing multi-family dwellings non-conforming uses (and presumably lawfully pre-existing nonconforming uses). It is not clear why Dedham would provide for multi-family special permits in the SRB district and not the GR district. It also is not clear why the dimensional regulations provide for a minimum lot area per unit for rowhouse dwellings when the Table of Use Regulations does not permit them. An additional challenge for some lots in the GR district is that even though the district boundaries tend to follow the perimeter of existing lots, pockets of small business zoning tend to coincide with the GR district on Bridge Street, in East Dedham, and the Oakdale area. Split lots abound in these locations, which probably creates more issues for business owners than residents.

ACCESSORY USES

In most cases, the SRA, SRB, and GR regulations provide for the same *accessory uses*, or uses incidental to and commonly associated with a permitted principal use. Dedham allows some traditional

³ In Table 1, Principal Use Regulations, the Zoning Bylaw cross-references conversion of an existing single-family home to Section 8.1. However, Section 8.1 contains regulations for the Flood Plain District. The actual cross-reference is Section 7.2, Conversion of Single Family to Two Family Dwelling. This should be corrected in a future Zoning Bylaw update.

accessory residential uses as of right: a garage for not more than three cars, an accessory structure such as a tennis court, swimming pool, greenhouse, or tool shed, keeping animals or livestock for non-commercial purposes, renting out rooms to up to three individuals in an owner-occupied house, certain types of home occupations, and “small” day care for children or adults, i.e., up to six children.⁴ A garage with space for more than three cars or “large” family day care requires a special permit, and in the SRA and SRB districts only, the Zoning Board of Appeals has authority to grant special permits for accessory apartments.

Home Occupations. Dedham’s Zoning Bylaw has very little to say about allowable home occupations. In Section 10.0, Definitions, the Zoning Bylaw describes “home occupation” in these terms:

The use of a room or rooms in a dwelling or building accessory thereto as an office, studio, or workroom for a lawful home occupation by a person resident on the premises provided that: a) Such use is clearly incidental and secondary to the use of the premises as a dwelling, and b) Not more than one person other than residents of the premises regularly provided paid services in connection with such use, and c) No commodity or service is sold or provided to another person who is on the premises, and d) The public is not invited onto the premises in the usual course of business, and e) No offensive noise, traffic, vibration, smoke, dust, odor, heat, or glare is produced as a result of the home occupation, and f) There is no exterior display or exterior sign

⁴ The terms “family day care home” and “large family day care home” are defined in M.G.L. c. 28A as private residences in which child care during normal daytime hours is provided to up to (a) six and (b) seven to ten children respectively. Dedham appears to be applying the same standards to “adult day care.” However, adult day care is a different type of use and typically not one that is accessory to a private residence. Adult day care is more likely to be accessory to an assisted living residence or continuing care community. In a few communities, adult day care programs are attached to municipal senior centers and public housing for the elderly. Furthermore, the general law standards for defining “small” and “large” day care apply only to homes licensed by the Office for Children as family day care homes for children.

except as permitted under the Sign Code, and g) There is no exterior storage of materials or equipment (including the exterior parking of more than one commercial vehicle), and no other exterior indication of such use or variation from the residential character of the premises, and h) All parking for such home occupation, other than for residents of the premises, shall be provided off the street. Adequate off-street parking shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning By-Laws, and i) Such use has been approved in writing by the Building Commissioner.

A literal reading of Dedham’s home occupation definition suggests that a professional conducting business entirely by telephone, email, or internet, or a tradesperson who simply maintains a commercial vehicle at home and performs all services off-site, would qualify for a permit, but not a music teacher offering instrumental or voice lessons at home, or a custom cabinetmaker, tailor, quilter, or painter wishing to sell merchandise from a home-based shop. There does not appear to be any authority for the Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board to grant a special permit for home occupations that meet most but not all of the requirements listed in the definition. In an era when home-based businesses have become increasingly common and work commutes so expensive, it seems that Dedham may inadvertently discourage some types of working at home that could be accommodated through a special permit process and special conditions. Presumably the town already does this by allowing “large” family day care by special permit.

Accessory Dwellings. Dedham allows accessory apartments in the SRA and SRB districts, but not the GR district, by special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Like most towns, Dedham limits accessory apartments to one per single-family residence and requires the residence to maintain the appearance of a single-family home despite renovations for the accessory unit. Dedham also imposes a floor area limit on accessory units: a minimum of 350 sq. ft. and a maximum of 1,000 sq. ft. or thirty-three percent of the total size of the building in which the unit is located, whichever is greater. The

Accessory Apartments

Under current zoning, accessory dwelling units are allowed only in buildings that existed when the accessory apartment provision was adopted by Town Meeting. However, the Zoning Bylaw does not identify the effective date. The recipient of an accessory apartment special permit must renew it every three years, and the special permit is not transferrable to a future homebuyer.

town requires a dedicated, appropriately screened parking space for the accessory unit, too. These are fairly common requirements in other communities. However, some of Dedham's requirements seem relatively onerous and others are unclear.

According to Section 7.7, accessory units can be approved only in buildings that existed when the accessory apartment provision was adopted by Town Meeting, but the Zoning Bylaw does not identify the effective date. In fact, many provisions of Dedham's Zoning Bylaw refer to unstated effective dates, which makes it difficult for users to determine what they can do with their property. The recipient of an accessory apartment special permit must renew it every three years, and the special permit is not transferrable to a future homebuyer. In addition, Section 7.7 implies that accessory units can be located within a single-family dwelling or in an accessory structure on the same lot, but this is not clear.⁵ In order to be eligible for an accessory apartment special permit, the homeowner's lot must be at least ten percent larger than the minimum lot area required in the zoning district, i.e., at least 44,000 sq. ft. in the SRA district and 13,750 sq. ft. in the SRB district. Further, the accessory unit is limited to two occupants.⁶

⁵ Section 7.7 contains a number of text errors that should be corrected in a future Zoning Bylaw update. For example, ¶ j states: "Alterations to the building dwelling unit [*sic*] shall be designed to be compatible with..." It seems that the text printed in the Zoning Bylaw was imported from a redline version of an earlier draft, but the final edits were never consolidated.

⁶ In Table 1, Accessory Use Regulations, Subpart I, Accessory Regulations-Residential, the Zoning Bylaw

SENIOR CAMPUS DISTRICT

The Senior Campus (SC) district is an overlay district that can include a parcel or contiguous parcels with at least one hundred acres in the SRA district, subject to approval by town meeting. Its stated purpose is to create an intergenerational community through the provision of housing and supportive services for seniors and a school for children. Dedham has placed one tract of land in the SC district: 152 acres on West Street, currently under construction for **NewBridge on the Charles**. Since the SC district is an overlay, it incorporates both its own rules in Section 7.6 of the Zoning Bylaw and the regulations that normally apply in the SRA district. However, the SC regulations supersede other requirements.

The SC district's use regulations provide for uses allowed in the underlying SRA district, "senior supportive housing," or age-restricted dwelling units with on-site services, and various accessory uses such as recreation facilities, food services, personal services, a coffee shop, and similar amenities for residents and employees of a development. For uses unique to the SC district, Dedham controls density with minimum lot area and minimum land area per unit requirements and a lot coverage restriction.

The SC district is the only zoning district in Dedham that allows buildings to exceed a height of forty feet. The bylaw was carefully written to exempt the overlay district from most other provisions of the Dedham Zoning Bylaw and to create a consolidated special permit, site plan, and parking plan approval process specifically for uses in the SC district. Though modeled after the submission requirements for a Major Nonresidential Project

cross-references "accessory dwelling unit" to Section 7.4. However, Section 7.4 governs "subsidiary units" in commercial districts. A "subsidiary unit" is a housing unit in a single-family residence located in a commercial district or in a commercial building. Unlike "accessory dwelling unit" a subsidiary unit is classified as a principal use in the Table of Use Regulations, though by definition in Section 10.0, a subsidiary unit is clearly accessory. In a future Zoning Bylaw update, the town should correct the "accessory dwelling unit" cross-reference to Section 7.7, Special Residential Regulations, which contains the regulations for accessory dwelling units in the SRA and SRB districts.

special permit, neither site plan review nor a special permit in the SC district is bound by the same kinds of “required” and “recommended” standards that govern MNP decisions. Instead, SC permits have to meet the district’s site plan standards in Section 7.6 and a set of basic special permit granting criteria in Section 9.3.

PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Dedham has established a mechanism for developers to propose higher-density residential uses. The mechanism is a **floating zone**: a type of zoning district with written regulations but no boundaries on a zoning map unless town meeting places land in the district at the request of a proponent, who is typically required to submit a sketch plan illustrating what will be built on the property.

Under Section 7.1 of the Zoning Bylaw, Town Meeting can authorize a Planned Residential Development (PRD) if the Planning Board recommends a concept plan for a proposed site. The concept plan must show the proposed uses and density and the approximate location of the required open space, which must be at least twenty percent of the site. According to the 1996 *Master Plan*, a PRD’s purpose is to “preserve significant tracts of open/wooded land...to retain the town’s overall open space image and its more rural character predominant in the western part of town.”⁷ In most communities with a PRD bylaw, the minimum open space requirement would be as high as fifty percent, even without sewer service.

The regulations that govern PRD submissions are unclear. Dedham does not specifically define “Planned Residential Development,” so a prospective developer must seek guidance in various sections of the Zoning Bylaw. According to the Table of Principal Use Regulations (Zoning Bylaw Section 3.0, Table 1), a PRD is limited to detached single-family dwellings and two-family dwellings, both allowed as of right. However, the special regulations in Section 7.1 suggest that a PRD can include other types of housing units as well, for a PRD “is intended to accommodate dwelling

units for small households in a variety of dwelling types, all in a planned setting.” Unfortunately, the remaining regulations in Section 7.1 do not describe the variety of dwelling types that will actually be permitted in a PRD, or whether dwelling units other than single-family or two-family homes would require a special permit.

Further, the Zoning Bylaw implies that a PRD is intended for empty-nesters and other childless households and that units will be size-restricted, but this, too, is unclear because “small household” is ambiguous. A two-person household could include a married couple whose adult children have moved on, two unrelated people sharing the same living quarters, or a single parent with a dependent child.

A PRD is subject to a density cap of 1.5 times the density allowed under conventional zoning. In addition, the regulations for a PRD seem to assume that at the detailed plan stage, permitting will fall under subdivision control, i.e., the proposed site would be divided into individual house lots. In such cases, the area dedicated as open space would constitute one or more parcels on the same subdivision plan, recorded as unbuildable lots. Often, however, true planned developments are designed for condominium ownership or single-family dwellings or townhomes with exclusive use areas, and all of the remaining land is held in common by the residents. Presumably Dedham would require developments of this type to undergo detailed plan approval under Section 9.5, Site Plan Review, but this, too, is unclear. Although the Zoning Bylaw does not explicitly limit eligible tracts of land to residential districts, it would be difficult to meet PRD requirements in any district that prohibits housing because the maximum allowable density depends on the rules that apply in the underlying zone. In Dedham, these eligible districts seem to include SRA, SRB, GR, and two business districts: Local Business, and General Business.

Commercial Districts

Dedham has four districts intended primarily or exclusively for commercial uses. The Central Business (CB) district includes Dedham Square and

⁷ Vision and Goals, *Dedham Master Plan* (1996), 1-4.

extends across the Providence Highway approximately 600 feet along the north side of High Street to Churchill Street. It also includes the rotary and land just to the north along the VFW Parkway and Washington Street, generally as recommended in the 1996 Master Plan. The General Business (GB) and Local Business (LB) districts occur in scattered locations throughout town, typically within or along the periphery of the GR and SRB districts. Finally, the Highway Business (HB) district includes approximately 155 acres of land along the east side of Providence Highway from Wigwam Pond north to the vicinity of Eastern Avenue, and again along northern Washington Street where the Dedham Mall is located. A smaller pocket of HB zoning extends northerly along the west side of the Providence Highway for about 1,800 feet, roughly opposite Wigwam Pond.

CENTRAL BUSINESS, GENERAL BUSINESS, AND LOCAL BUSINESS

Dedham's smallest commercial zones include the CB, GB, and LB districts. While they have some common regulations, Dedham seems to have thought about these districts and tailored many of the use regulations to the characteristics of each area. The CB and GB districts offer the greatest dimensional flexibility, with no minimum requirements for lot frontage, lot area, lot width, or yard setbacks. However, in some locations these districts are extremely shallow, extending roughly one hundred feet from the street sideline, the result being numerous split lots coinciding with the GR and SRB districts.⁸

Maximum lot coverage and **floor area ratios (FAR)** apply in all three small business districts, and the town also has a uniform building height limit of 40 feet in all nonresidential zones (commercial and industrial). Overall, Dedham's dimensional regulations suggest a preference for preservation of

⁸ For lots divided by a zoning district boundary, Dedham allows the entire lot area to be counted toward the minimum lot area for the principal use of the land. However, the principal use and accessory uses are confined to the portion of the lot that lies in the district where the use is permitted, plus 10 feet into the adjacent district, unless the Zoning Board of Appeals grants a special permit to extend the uses beyond 10 feet. This is an unusually restrictive split lot rule.

Floor Area Ratio

Floor area ratio (FAR) is the ratio of the total floor area built on a lot and the size of the lot. Its purpose is to control building bulk and overall intensity of use.

historic buildings and similar height and bulk in any new buildings constructed in Dedham Square, a moderate scale of development and intensity of use in the GB district, and small buildings for very small, neighborhood-oriented businesses in the LB district.

Dedham allows single-family homes by right in the LB and GB districts, but not in the CB district. Animal hospitals can be built in the LB and GB districts, but not in CB, and an unusually broad class of use – “general service establishment” – is permitted by right in the CB and GB districts and prohibited in LB.⁹ Dedham allows traditional business uses such as offices, banks, personal services, and retail space by right in all three districts, but the LB district rules clearly favor small retail shops and discourage larger stores. The town divides “retail” into two classes: small retail, up to 10,000 sq. ft. of floor area and retail business, over 10,000 sq. ft. Small retail and retail businesses are allowed in the CB and GB districts, but in the LB district, “small retail” is subject to a low floor area cap of 1,500 sq. ft. except by special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Similar distinctions apply to food service establishments. Dedham prohibits drive-through facilities in all three districts.

The Table of Use Regulations includes two types of residential uses in mixed use buildings: “build-

⁹ As defined in Section 10.0, a general service establishment includes: “nonexempt business or trade school, blueprinting or copying establishment, catering service, clothing rental establishment, dancing or music school, meeting hall for hire, funeral home, repair shops for bicycles, typewriters, televisions, electronic and household appliances, or like enterprise.” These are quite different uses combined into a single definition. For example, most zoning bylaws would separate a funeral home from uses such as repair shops or a catering service.

ings containing dwelling units in combination with stores or other permitted uses,” and “subsidiary units.” The Zoning Bylaw does not provide a clear distinction between them, yet the former is allowed in all three districts while the latter is restricted to the CB and GB districts. According to a footnote to the Table of Use Regulations, a two-unit maximum applies to “buildings containing dwelling units in combination with stores or other permitted uses” in the CB, LB, and GB districts.¹⁰ However, no unit cap and no specific density regulation applies to “subsidiary units” in Section 7.4 or Section 4.1. Instead, they must meet several conditions in order to qualify for an occupancy permit: upper-story location, a one-bedroom size limit, occupancy by not more than two adults, access to off-street parking, and compliance with the State Building Code. Presumably, “non-subsidiary” dwelling units are exempt from many of these conditions (except, of course, the State Building Code), but the Zoning Bylaw does not identify any special conditions or requirements for these units other than the two-unit cap per building. Some underlying policy differences between subsidiary and non-subsidiary dwelling units can be gleaned from the regulations, but Zoning Bylaw should be more instructive. Leaving less to the imagination of property owners and developers means fewer problems for the Building Inspector.

HIGHWAY BUSINESS

Prior to the 1996 *Master Plan*, land currently located in the HB district was zoned for industrial uses. At the time, the Limited Manufacturing (LMA) district covered most of the Providence Highway and the area now contained in the Research, Development and Office (RDO) district. The HB district differs significantly from Dedham’s smaller commercial zones. By virtue of its shape and dimensional regulations, the HB district encourages suburban-scale commercial strip development, with a minimum lot area of one acre and minimum lot frontage of 200 feet, a minimum front setback of thirty feet, side and rear yard setbacks of twenty and twenty-

five feet respectively, and a maximum floor area ratio of 0.35.

The HB minimum frontage of 200 feet is Dedham’s most demanding lot frontage requirement. It appears to have been chosen to encourage parcel assembly and consolidate curb cuts as properties redevelop over time. This makes sense in light of 1996 *Master Plan* recommendations that Dedham should encourage retail redevelopment along the Providence Highway in order to strengthen the taxable value of land in this area and simultaneously improve public safety and reduce traffic conflicts.

The HB district has no provisions for residential uses except an accessory watchman’s or caretaker’s residence on the premises of a commercial use. Dedham allows a wide variety of commercial uses by right in the HB district, from professional and medical offices and banks to retail, auto sales, personal services and general service establishments, commercial parking lots, printing establishments, wholesale showrooms, and hospitals, outpatient care facilities, nursing homes, and charitable institutions. While auto repair and auto body shops are permitted as of right, gasoline stations require a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The town allows several other uses by special permit as well, such as hotels, restaurants, motion picture theatres, kennels, drive-through facilities, and warehouses, and some industrial uses: limited manufacturing, and research laboratories. Furthermore, light manufacturing as an accessory use is permitted as of right as long as the manufacturing use occupies no more than twenty-five percent of the total floor area in a project and meets some additional conditions.¹¹ In short, the HB district can accommodate many activities with remarkably few restrictions.

The seemingly liberal use regulations that apply in the HB district do not present a complete picture

¹⁰ The same footnote number appears under Limited Manufacturing and Limited Manufacturing B. If the two-unit maximum does not apply in these districts, the footnote reference should be removed from the Table of Use Regulations.

¹¹ The provision for accessory manufacturing is erroneously listed in the residential portion of the Accessory Use Table. This should be corrected when the town updates the Zoning Bylaw, i.e., by relocating accessory industry or manufacturing to Part II of the Table, Accessory Uses - Nonresidential.

of the requirements that must be met in order to obtain a building permit for a project on a conforming lot. Almost any noticeable change that occurs in the HB district triggers Dedham's site plan review bylaw, Section 9.5, which requires an application to the Planning Board with detailed site construction, landscaping, and parking plans, and in many cases a separate submission to the Design Review Advisory Board. Through these and other permitting mechanisms, the Planning Board has worked to improve conditions along the Providence Highway on a project-by-project basis.

Any project involving 25,000 sq. ft. or more of new construction or expansion space or one hundred or more parking spaces requires a **Major Nonresidential Project (MNP)** special permit from the Planning Board. While the MNP special permit thresholds apply in the other commercial districts, development in the HB district is more likely to trigger the MNP process simply because the district is intended for larger-scale projects.

Industrial Districts

Four zoning districts in Dedham provide land primarily intended for office, industrial, and related uses: the Administrative and Professional Office (AP) district, the Limited Manufacturing (LMA) district, the Limited Manufacturing Type B (LMB) district, and Research, Development, and Office (RDO) district. In the very small AP district, Dedham allows only a few uses – offices and banks – and a private country club or tennis club. The town's larger office and industrial zones provide for many other uses and in doing so, they sometimes create the potential for significant use conflicts.

LIMITED MANUFACTURING (LMA AND LMB)

Dedham has two Limited Manufacturing districts. The larger district, LMA, encompasses about 5.6 percent of the town's total area. The extent of LMA is deceptive, however, because Dedham has zoned a large amount of protected open space – the Neponset River Reservation – for manufacturing uses that will never be built. Excluding the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) holding along the Neponset River and some

other parcels owned by the town itself, the amount of land meaningfully zoned for LMA purposes is much less: about 140 acres. Much of this land extends along the railroad tracks in East Dedham, intertwined with the GR and GB districts, and also includes the Readville Yards off Sprague Street.

Until the birth of the HB district, land currently zoned for retail development along the Providence Highway was located in the LMA district, too. Not surprisingly, there are some similarities in the use regulations that apply in the HB and LMA districts. By contrast, the LMB district includes just one property near the Dedham-Boston-Milton line: the Stop and Shop warehouse site that lies just east of the railroad tracks.

In both the LMA and LMB districts, developments must have at least one acre of land and at least 150 feet of frontage. The lot width and yard setbacks are similar to the HB district, except that in LMA and LMB, the side yard setback is fifteen feet instead of twenty feet. A lot in the manufacturing zones is also subject to a maximum lot coverage requirement of fifty percent and the conventional suburban FAR of 0.35. It is unclear how a project could achieve both the coverage and FAR limits, however, since a one-story manufacturing building covering fifty percent of the lot would exceed the maximum FAR of 0.35.

The use regulations for the LMA and LMB districts are very similar. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish them from the HB district. Important differences include by-right development of retail space in the HB district while retail uses in the two manufacturing zones require a special permit. Significantly, Dedham does not prohibit retail in these districts. In both the LMA and LMB districts, buildings containing dwellings associated with other permitted nonresidential uses are allowed by special permit, along with food service establishments and conference centers.

By right, Dedham allows development of professional and medical offices, hospitals and nursing homes, auto sales, personal services, general service establishments, animal hospitals and kennels,

shops for trade contractors, wholesale showrooms, commercial storage facilities, gasoline stations and auto repair shops, and research laboratories. The most obvious distinction between the two manufacturing districts is that ironically, Dedham allows manufacturing uses – both intensive and “limited” – by right in the LMB district but only by special permit in the LMA district. In addition, Dedham allows warehouses and bottling companies by right in the LMB district and prohibits them in the LMA district. In some ways, the LMA district, much like the HB district, has a confusing identity due to the wide range of uses that could be constructed on usable land within this zone. The same could be said about the LMB district, but since it includes only one property, the potential for use conflicts with abutting land is significantly reduced.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND OFFICE (RDO)

The RDO district is a product of the 1996 Master Plan. Its intent was to promote higher-value office, research and technology businesses on land with highway and commuter rail access. Interestingly, though, the RDO district is governed by the same dimensional regulations that apply in the LMA and LMB districts – including a maximum height restriction of forty feet, which would be a disincentive for some high-tech companies. The only substantive difference in dimensional rules for the RDO district is that by special permit, the Planning Board can approve a maximum FAR increase to 0.40 for projects with highway frontage or that involve consolidation of two or more parcels. This district contains a number of split lots, particularly along its eastern boundary with the SRB district, and east of the Providence Highway where the HB and RDO districts converge.

The RDO district differs from the LMA and LMB districts in that many uses allowed by right or by special permit in the latter are prohibited in the former. On one level, the RDO use regulations suggest that in this part of Dedham – some 400 acres of land along the lower end of Providence Highway near the Route 1/1-A and I-95 interchange – the town prefers research and development companies and corporate offices, as promoted in the 1996 *Master Plan* and specifically

provided for in the Table of Uses. Still, the regulations contain other features that seem to conflict with the district’s implied purposes.

For example, Dedham allows a detached single-family dwelling by special permit in the RDO district, which seems odd given that the town prohibits single-family homes in the other industrial districts as well as the HB district. Dedham also allows, by special permit, some uses that could work against the district’s desirability to high-end developments for specialized tenants: commercial storage, auto repair facilities, commercial boat rentals, and drive-throughs. Limited manufacturing is allowed by special permit, which does make sense for some types of industry clusters.

Dedham prohibits retail development in the RDO unless a proposed site has frontage on a “major highway” and consists of a lot created prior to 1996, or a new lot lying entirely within 500 feet of a major highway. If either condition is met, the Zoning Board of Appeals may grant a special permit for retail uses. According to Section 10.0 of the Zoning Bylaw, “major highway” includes the Providence Highway, Route 1A, or any state-numbered route with at least two travel lanes in each direction. Dedham provides a second mechanism for developing retail uses in the RDO, however: the Planned Commercial Development (PCD) special permit. The PCD provision paved the way for Legacy Place, a lifestyle center for which the Planning Board granted a special permit in 2007.

Major Nonresidential Project

In any commercial or industrial district, the Planning Board has authority to grant a special permit for Major Nonresidential Development (MNP), which the Zoning Bylaw defines as any nonresidential project with 25,000 sq. ft. or more of gross floor area or one hundred or more parking spaces. These thresholds are calculated retroactively to 1988, i.e., cumulative increases in floor area since then count toward the 25,000 sq. ft. limit that triggers the MNP special permit today.

In effect, the MNP requirement means that Dedham does not allow any commercial or industrial uses

by right, including those classified as permitted in the Table of Uses, if they exceed 25,000 sq. ft. or involve parking for 100 or more vehicles. A second effect of the MNP requirement is that the Planning Board becomes the special permit granting authority (SPGA) for uses that otherwise fall under the Zoning Board of Appeals's purview if developed below the MNP size or parking thresholds. The MNP bylaw has noble intentions and it could benefit both the town and developers. As written, however, it contains some unusually broad language that is susceptible to different interpretations. It has the potential to discourage moderate-scale improvements to commercial and industrial properties because the application requirements are fairly onerous and in some cases, the review standards are unclear.

The MNP permitting process is governed by Section 9.4 of the Zoning Bylaw, which describes the application requirements, review process, and decision standards for a special permit. Dedham adopted the MNP provision in order to consider a proposed development's off-site impacts, which typically exceed the authority of traditional site plan review, and to require mitigation as a condition of approval. In fact, MNP special permit applicants have to submit a considerable amount of information unless the Planning Board decides to grant a waiver.

The heart of the MNP application is a series of impact studies—traffic, environmental, and community and fiscal impacts—each with “required” and “recommended” standards to guide the development of a special permit application and the Planning Board's decision. “Recommended” is something of a misnomer, however, because the Zoning Bylaw authorizes the Planning Board to deny an application that does not meet two or more of the ten “recommended” standards. This would make it hard for applicants to anticipate what the Planning Board will expect above and beyond the fourteen “required” standards for approval.

While some of the “required” standards are fairly straightforward, others describe broad expectations without a measurable basis for determining compliance. For example, the required

traffic impact standards include “binding provisions...to compensate for errors in projecting the potential traffic volumes and traffic routes.” Aside from uncertainties about what sort of “binding provisions” the town would accept, the Zoning Bylaw does not establish where the authority lies to determine after the fact that an error has occurred. Traffic patterns can change in response to circumstances unrelated to a particular project, e.g., increases in cut-through traffic to avoid congestion on Route 128.

Similarly, the required environmental standards include a prohibition against increases in runoff from a site “unless such increase is deemed by the Planning Board to be beneficial.” Though it is unlikely that the Planning Board would ever classify an increase in stormwater runoff as beneficial (especially under the state's new Stormwater Guidelines), the Zoning Bylaw leaves the door open for a finding to this effect with no standards to guide the Board's decision. Remarkably, the environmental standards contain no specific guidance on sustainable design, such as green building technologies or low-impact development.

The more troublesome “required” standards in the MNP bylaw involve community and fiscal impacts. According to Section 9.4.11, applicants have to make “provisions to minimize adverse financial, social, and visual impacts and to prevent deterioration and blight” if a development “does not materialize as envisioned.” Possibly this broad language could be satisfied by a performance guarantee to complete the site work if an applicant abandons a project midway through construction, or it could mean that the applicant has to provide some type of payment to the town for “financial, social, and visual impacts” that the Zoning Bylaw does not clearly define. Another provision calls for the payment of impact fees to pay for off-site capital improvements that the town would have to make in order to serve the development, but the Zoning Bylaw does not establish how the impact fees will be set. It also does not provide for the possibility that the applicant would make the improvements instead of paying fees to the town.

Planned Commercial Development

As described in the 1996 *Master Plan*, “Planned Commercial Development” (PC) was intended to be a zoning district, and presumably an overlay district covering the “newly proposed zone districts of RDO, HB, and CB” to encourage “comprehensive planning and design of a larger area rather than a parcel-by-parcel development of buildings.”¹² Unlike PRD, which requires both Planning Board support for a concept plan and a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting, the PC provision gives authority to the Planning Board to grant a Major Nonresidential Project special permit for a commercial or mixed-use development in the CB, GB, HB, LMA, LMB, and RDO districts. It is not really a zoning district, for in Massachusetts, authority to establish zoning districts lies with the local legislative body and each district must be depicted on a zoning map.

In Dedham, PC is a mechanism for developing particular uses in a project that meets eligibility requirements in the Zoning Bylaw: location in one of the designated zoning districts and approval through the MNP special permit process. For projects meeting these basic thresholds, the Planning Board may approve uses that otherwise would be prohibited, such as retail space or subsidiary apartments in the RDO district, a hotel in the GB district, or a mixed-use development with drive-through facilities in the CB district.¹³

The PC bylaw provides some flexibility to consider the unique needs of large-scale redevelopment projects, which the 1996 *Master Plan* correctly anticipated. Redevelopment is both costly and

¹² *Dedham Master Plan* (1996), IV-17.

¹³ In Section 6.3.2(5), the Zoning Bylaw provides that “specific impacts...on the streets and service demands beyond the boundaries of the tract may be compensated for through impact fees as provided in the site plan review provisions of the Zoning Bylaw.” This is in error; Section 9.5, Site Plan Review, contains no reference to impact fees. The only reference to impact fees elsewhere in the Zoning Bylaw is under Major Nonresidential Project at Section 9.4.11(3), where the grant of a special permit is tied, in part, to the payment of impact fees for off-site improvements. There is currently no authority under the state Zoning Act for communities to *require* impact fees as part of the development permitting process.

complicated, and sometimes it hinges even more on market forces than the development of vacant land. Dedham’s PC provision makes sense given the prevalence of underutilized property in some of its zoning districts. At issue is whether the bylaw promotes the comprehensive planning of larger areas that the 1996 *Master Plan* intended. For example, there is no requirement for parcel assembly in a PC development.¹⁴ In addition, the PC bylaw does not offer the possibility of more flexible dimensional requirements, such as an increase in the maximum floor area ratio or maximum building height under specified circumstances. This type of latitude can be very important for some developments, especially redevelopment projects, and it should not hinge on a dimensional variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Development Standards and Permitting Regulations

Dedham has the basic development regulations that appear in virtually all zoning bylaws. The town has adopted regulations for off-street parking and landscaping, and special regulations to guide the development of certain uses, such as PC developments, hospitals, adult uses, and some residential use types.

Site Plan Review under Section 9.5 is a standard mechanism for reviewing detailed design and construction plans for uses other than single-family homes, farms, or uses classified as exempt in the state Zoning Act. Although most towns have some form of site plan review today, the Zoning Act does not provide for it. As a result, communities have to rely on a history of case law – sometimes inconsistent – to understand and apply site plan review within bounds established by the Massachusetts courts. In Dedham, site plan review applies to any construction involving 5,000 sq. ft. or more of gross floor area, and the process involves a 105-day permitting period between the applica-

¹⁴ A five-acre minimum land area requirement applies to PC developments. This appears as a footnote to the Table of Use Regulations, Section 3.1.6(19). In a future Zoning Bylaw update, the town should consider moving this requirement to Section 6.3, Planned Commercial Development Standards or to the Table of Dimensional Requirements as a footnote to LMA/LMB/RDO, CB and GB.

tion date and the Planning Board's decision. While the Zoning Bylaw does not require an advertised public hearing for site plan review, it does obligate the Planning Board to notify abutters and publish a meeting agenda. A striking feature of Dedham's site plan review bylaw is its omission of review standards or criteria to guide an applicant's site plan preparation and the Planning Board's decision. It is purely a procedural bylaw, i.e., submission requirements, review procedures, decision timeline, and appeals.

Special Permits. Unlike site plan review, state law does provide specific local authority to grant special permits. Communities use special permits to regulate what has been called the "middle tier" of uses, i.e., uses not prohibited and uses not liberally allowed by right because in the wrong location or under the wrong conditions, they could create problems for neighboring properties. In Dedham, the Zoning Board of Appeals serves as the "default" special permit granting authority (SPGA). This means that unless the Zoning Bylaw specifically empowers the Planning Board to grant a special permit, such as for Major Nonresidential Projects or developments in the Senior Campus district, the Zoning Board of Appeals has jurisdiction over special permits.

The Zoning Board of Appeals has authority to grant or deny special permits in the residential districts and LB district, and for residential uses allowed in nonresidential districts, developments under 25,000 sq. ft. in all of the nonresidential districts, adult uses, and exceptions in the Flood Plain Overlay District, the Aquifer Protection Overlay District, and the Wireless Communications Services Overlay District. In addition, the Zoning Board of Appeals controls special permits for non-conforming uses, structures, and lots.

A division of special permit powers like Dedham's is not unusual. Until 1975 when the present Zoning Act took effect, a Zoning Board of Appeals was the only local board authorized to handle special permits. Since 1975, special permits have gradually evolved as a function of planning boards, though many communities have more than one SPGA, including Dedham. Still, dividing special

Off-Street Parking

Dedham requires a considerable amount of off-street parking for nearly all types of nonresidential development. For retail stores, the Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum of one space per 200 sq. ft. of floor area – a standard that typically serves as the upper limit in modern parking bylaws with both minimum and maximum off-street parking space requirements...the same concerns were identified in Dedham's 1996 Master Plan.

permits among multiple boards or assigning special permits to one board and site plan review to another creates a challenging environment for applicants. In Dedham, small commercial projects requiring a special permit could necessitate separate zoning-related applications to the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board (for site plan review or parking plan review), and the Design Review Advisory Board, and another application to the Building Department and Design Review Advisory Board under the Dedham Sign Code.

Off-Street Parking is regulated under Section 5.1 of the Zoning Bylaw, which establishes minimum parking space requirements for various uses, sets construction standards for parking lots and access roads, and regulates the location of parking lots. It also provides authority for the Planning Board to approve a deferral of parking space construction in some cases. In addition, Section 5.1 offers some flexibility for Dedham Square properties, most of which would find it impossible to provide enough off-street parking to meet the requirements of the bylaw. In a related section, the Zoning Bylaw imposes modest landscaping standards on parking areas. The standards are quantitative more than qualitative, focusing on matters such as the percentage of a parking lot that must be landscaped and the minimum dimensions of perimeter buffers.

Dedham requires a considerable amount of off-street parking for nearly all types of nonresidential development. For retail stores, the Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum of one space per 200 sq. ft. of floor area – a standard that typically serves as the *upper* limit in modern parking bylaws with both minimum and maximum off-street parking space requirements. The Zoning Bylaw does not have a sliding scale to allow parking space reductions for very large retail facilities, and for retail involving the sale of goods produced on the premises, such as a bakery, the Zoning Bylaw requires storage and production space to be counted as retail floor area. For manufacturing facilities, Dedham requires one space per 500 sq. ft. of floor area and for warehouses, one space per 1,000 sq. ft., yet the industry standards for these types of uses include one space per 800 sq. ft. and one space per 1,500 to 2,000 sq. ft., respectively. In general, most of the parking requirements in Dedham exceed guidelines recommended by planners today. Many of the same concerns were identified in Dedham's 1996 *Master Plan*.

Excessive parking can create both aesthetic and environmental problems, and over-sized parking lots also waste land that could be put to higher-value use. Dedham's Zoning Bylaw does not provide clear or predictable ways to adjust parking requirements for mixed-use developments, and there are no requirements or incentives for bicycle parking. The Zoning Bylaw also provides no authority for pavement reductions to encourage environmentally sensitive design, such as bioretention cells or rain gardens. Significantly, Dedham's approach to density and dimensional regulations does not include a minimum open space requirement in any of the nonresidential districts, where intensive uses can cover nearly an entire site except for the modest buffers around parking lots. This, coupled with the town's off-street parking requirements, creates the potential for excessive land coverage.

Planning Capacity

Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeal sometimes overlap in Massachusetts because both can serve as a special permit granting authority, but their roles and responsibilities are not the same.

A Planning Board has exclusive jurisdiction over preparing a city or town master plan, administering the Subdivision Control Law and the Scenic Roads Act, and conducting hearings and making recommendations to town meeting about proposed zoning changes. In Dedham as in most communities, the Planning Board also has authority over site plan review. Since Dedham's government is organized under a home rule charter, the Dedham Planning Board's powers and duties flow not only from state law and the Zoning Bylaw but also from the charter, which places the Planning Board in charge of the planning department.

Among the 1996 *Master Plan's* recommendations was a proposal to fund a full-time planner position. Though classified as "completed" in the Master Plan implementation element, Dedham has not really funded a full-time planner. The town has been fortunate to have retained a well-qualified planner who effectively worked full time for the Planning Board but as a consultant, not a municipal employee. As a result, the position has been budgeted as an expense item in the Planning Board's operating budget for many years. While the terms and conditions of employment for wage and salary workers stem from a community's personnel plan or a collective bargaining agreement, consultants operate under a contract. The difference is not minor. Employee status brings an obligation for communities to provide health and retirement benefits, but since consultants do not qualify as municipal employees, the community saves employer costs.

Dedham has benefited from an unusual situation. Planners who agree to work on a full-time basis under a non-employee contract are the exception, not the rule. While Dedham has continued to function on this basis, town government created new employment positions in an effort to bolster its capacity in other areas identified in the 1996 *Master Plan*, notably engineering, economic development, and environmental policy. The retirement of the consulting planner presents an opportunity for Dedham to reassess the organization and staffing of the planning department. The town needs to protect and enhance its planning capacity. It also needs to ensure that the Planning Board, which

has permitting responsibility for major developments, receives adequate, reliable staff support from a professional planner. In addition, Dedham needs to continue integrating its staff into working teams for tasks such as development review. In any community, a development review team should be lead by a planner who brings together all of the participating disciplines and synthesizes from their input a coherent approach to permitting.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Smart Growth

Since 2003, state government has shown some interest in “smart growth,” a set of planning principles that emphasize environmental protection by promoting compact, mixed-use development near public transportation, more transportation options to reduce vehicle dependency, housing and employment choices for people of all income levels, and fairness in development review and permitting procedures. The state’s strategy involves measures such as Chapter 40R, which offers financial incentives to communities that allow higher-density housing by right, and designating growth districts. Massachusetts also promotes green buildings and renewable energy through public education and low-interest loans and grants for commercial, industrial, and government buildings that address the state’s energy and water conservation policies. In addition, Chapter 43D encourages communities to identify areas for commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development (“Priority Development Sites”) and make the permitting process for those projects efficient and clear. In a telling fragmentation of state policy, however, approval of Priority Development Sites does not depend on consistency with any local, regional, or state smart growth plan.

Dedham has the potential to implement a smart growth planning framework. It has two commuter rail stations, four points of access to the interstate highway system, and a development pattern with many of the ingredients of smart design. It also lacks crucial components of smart growth policy, however. Some noteworthy examples include:

- ◆ Dedham needs to reassess its land use policies around the Dedham Corporate Center MBTA station for opportunities to encourage higher-density mixed use development, including residential uses;
- ◆ Dedham does not have a clear, specific policy for encouraging or requiring Transportation Demand Management (TDM) for large non-residential developments;
- ◆ The Zoning Bylaw’s approach to regulating site development is archaic, e.g., excessive pavement and parking requirements, and no incentives or requirements for environmental and energy performance standards in the design, construction, or operation of sites and buildings;
- ◆ The Zoning Bylaw depends too heavily on ambiguous or non-existent review standards, which increases the applicant’s risk that permitting decisions will not be timely or predictable;
- ◆ The Zoning Bylaw does not encourage a variety of housing choices, particularly near transit;
- ◆ There are no incentives or requirements for bicycle parking, even in small business areas connected to residential neighborhoods;
- ◆ Dedham does not have all of the tools for a coordinated approach to promoting redevelopment of underutilized areas. It has professional staff, which is very important, but complicated redevelopment projects sometimes need other types of government capacity, such as an economic development and industrial corporation (EDIC);
- ◆ The town needs to invest in Dedham Square by implementing recommendations in the 1996 *Master Plan*, the 2004 *Community Development Plan*, and this Master Plan Update; and

- ◆ Dedham needs to marshal more effective tools to protect open space and incorporate open space design in new developments: open space residential development, a more realistic PRD bylaw, and dedicated funding for open space acquisitions, which may include adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

ZONING REFORM

A comprehensive revision of the Zoning Act, Chapter 40A, has been submitted to the legislature several times. Originally known as the Land Use Reform Act (LURA), the proposal was renamed the Community Planning Act, or “CPA-II,” in 2006. CPA-II intended to address a wide range of municipal planning concerns and update Chapter 40A to make it more like the zoning laws found in many other states. It also required consistency between local comprehensive plans and zoning. Resistance to CPA II from developers and housing advocates made it difficult for supporters to move forward. Opposition increased in 2006 after the Pioneer Institute and the Rappaport Institute jointly published a critique of zoning and other regulations that were said to impede housing development in the Boston metropolitan area.

In 2007, the governor assigned a point person to work with opponents and supporters of land use reform in an effort to find compromise. A Zoning Task Force met to develop what is currently called the “Land Use Partnership Act,” or LUPA – a proposal with incentives for communities to adopt and implement comprehensive plans that address state and regional growth policy objectives. Unlike CPA-II, which would apply to all communities, LUPA promotes a voluntary system for communities to adopt plans consistent with state requirements, such as zoning land for commercial growth and high-density housing by right, with expedited permitting for development in these locations. In exchange, communities with LUPA-compliant plans would be allowed to exert more control over development by gaining access to regulatory tools that CPA-II intended to provide to all cities and towns: eliminating the “Approval Not Required” process, placing limits on vested rights, adopting rate-of-growth regulations, and making

zoning changes with a simple majority vote at town meeting.

Despite LUPA’s support from the administration, it has received mixed reviews from groups interested in zoning reform, in part because LUPA will not resolve fundamental weaknesses in Chapter 40A except for a limited number of communities. Dedham may be in a good position to benefit from the provisions of LUPA should it be enacted by the legislature because the town has so many redevelopment opportunities in the right locations. However, doing so would require the town to overhaul its development permitting procedures and designate specific areas for residential and commercial growth. In fact, Dedham already has designated commercial growth areas. What it lacks are designated areas for higher-density residential development.

Future Development Potential

Nearly a decade ago, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs funded a statewide program to estimate the future growth capacity of every city and town in the Commonwealth. According to the analysis of undeveloped land in Dedham, the town’s reserve growth capacity included 923 new housing units and about 361,250 sq. ft. of additional commercial space.¹⁵ However, the state’s projection ignored Dedham’s significant potential for redevelopment, especially along the Providence Highway, and also ignored the impacts of Chapter 40B, the comprehensive permit law.

Since the buildout analysis was completed in 2001, Dedham has permitted nearly 600 units of mixed-income housing in the RDO district and 256 cottage-style homes in the large NewBridge on the Charles development, in addition to incremental new-home construction. The town also permitted a major regional retail center, Legacy Place, with nearly twice the nonresidential floor area estimated in the state buildout study, as well as institutional space at NewBridge on the Charles. Together, these events underscore the significant growth potential that can come about as a direct result of redevelop-

¹⁵ Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, 2001. (EOEEA was known as EOAA in 2001.)

opment and infill development and, in the case of Hebrew SeniorLife’s project, the strategic use of overlay zoning.

Dedham needs to harness the full power of land use regulation so that future development occurs where there are adequate facilities to support it and provides not only economic and fiscal benefits, but also environmental benefits. The future evolution of land uses adjacent to the Providence Highway will present enormous challenges for Dedham – challenges that far surpass contending with comprehensive permits or working through the permitting process for a large development such as Legacy Place. Its present zoning policies will not be enough to address these challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. RECODIFY AND UPDATE THE ZONING BYLAW AND AMEND THE ZONING MAP, PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

- ◆ Site development regulations, focusing on environmental and energy performance standards - that is, “green” buildings and sustainable development practices;
- ◆ Clarity and consistency of definitions, use regulations, and development review and permitting criteria;
- ◆ Written descriptions of the purposes and intent of each use district and overlay district;
- ◆ Efficient special permit and site plan review procedures;
- ◆ Use and dimensional regulations in the HB and RDO districts;
- ◆ The boundaries (shape) and use and dimensional regulations of the CB district, including but not limited to consolidating and clarifying the regulations for mixed-use (residential and commercial) development;

- ◆ Clarity of review and decision standards for Major Nonresidential Projects (MNP), a reassessment of submission requirements, and providing for scoping sessions at an “all boards” and staff level to increase inter-board and interdepartmental coordination;
- ◆ The treatment of split lots;
- ◆ Regulatory flexibility for reuse and preservation of historic buildings;
- ◆ Off-street parking regulations;
- ◆ Transportation Demand Management;
- ◆ Adequacy of the existing Aquifer Protection Overlay District to achieve its objectives and comply with DEP policy;
- ◆ Open space design and its applications both for residential and nonresidential development;
- ◆ Design guidelines tailored to the unique form and character of each business area in Dedham;
- ◆ Reassessment of Planned Commercial Development, possibly to include provisions for mixed-use development in the RDO and HB districts.

The **Bridge Street Case Study** at the end of this chapter illustrates how some of these regulatory recommendations could help to encourage property improvements in Dedham.

2. CHANGE THE TOWN PLANNER POSITION FROM A CONSULTANT TO A MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE.

This recommendation will be addressed at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting.

3. INVENTORY LARGE UNDERUTILIZED PARCELS AND EXAMINE HOW TO MAXIMIZE THEIR POTENTIAL.

Encouraging reuse and redevelopment of underutilized nonresidential properties will be central to any economic development strategy in Dedham. As detailed in this chapter and referenced in Chapter 9, Economic Development, in some cases these properties are difficult to redevelop because of existing zoning requirements. As Dedham explores the potential of its underutilized property inventory, it will be important to consider not only the employment and tax revenue benefits to be gained from reuse, but also – from a land use perspective – how reuse opportunities will fit within the context of each site, enhance the quality of life for adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods, and promote the principles of smart growth.

4. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AND AMONG MAJOR BOARDS WITH JURISDICTION OVER PROJECTS AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COORDINATION BY TOWN PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE BOARDS.

For major development projects, Dedham should consider holding at least one “all-boards” meeting for town boards and commissions with permitting authority as early as possible in the permitting process. In addition, boards could hold joint hearings even if their review and decision timelines are different. These kinds of practices are fairly common in regulations for Chapter 43D “Priority Development Sites,” but communities do not have to designate a Priority Development Site in order to institute better communication among town boards and between boards and applicants.

5. REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF SUBDIVISION CONTROL TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY AND COMPATIBILITY OF TECHNICAL ENGINEERING STANDARDS WITH THE UPDATED ZONING BYLAW.

Dedham has been working on amendments to the Subdivision Control regulations – mainly procedural amendments. It will be very important to ensure that subdivision requirements do not unwittingly conflict with the goals of this Master

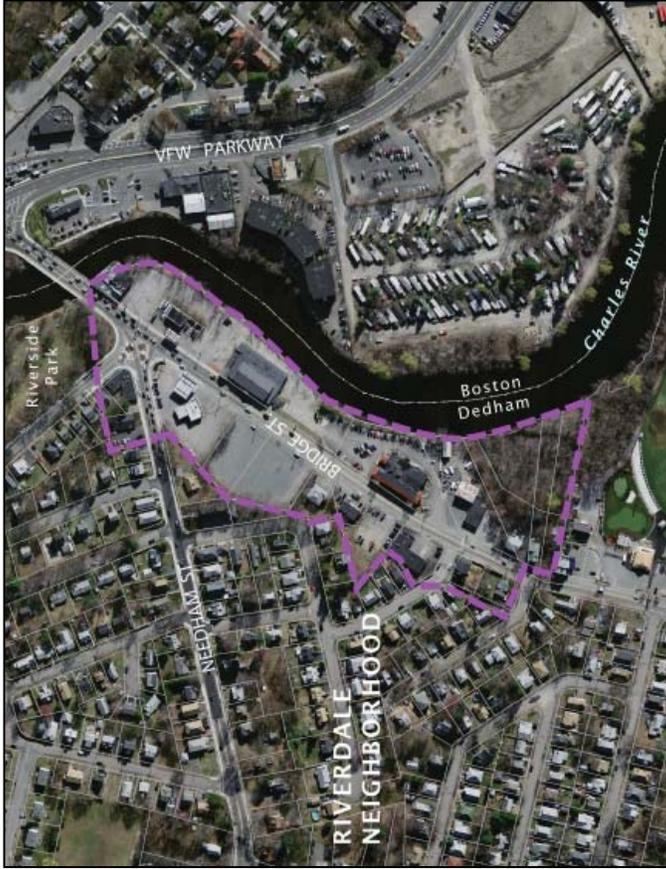
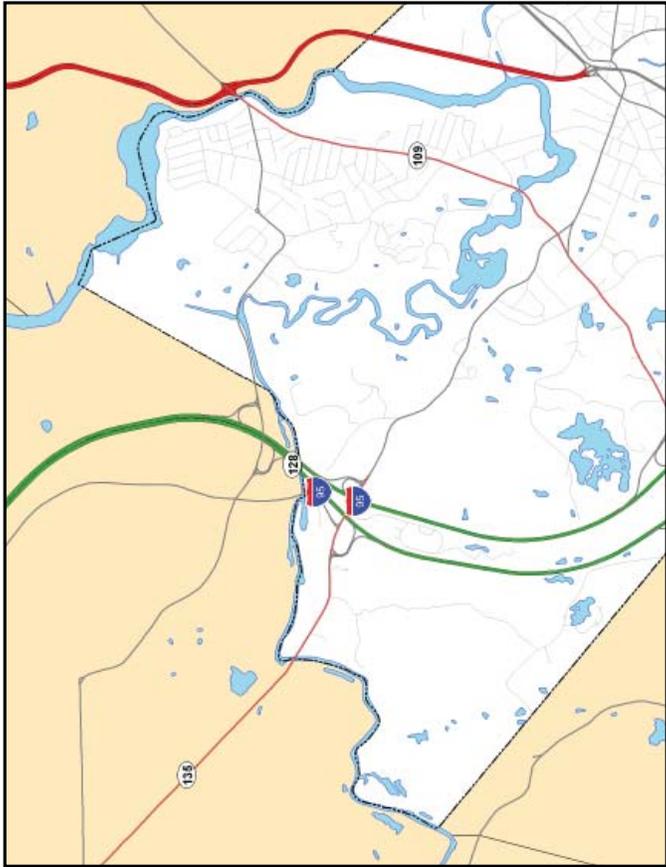
Plan or other local and state requirements, e.g., stormwater management.

6. EVALUATE THE TOWN’S CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS FOR ITS ABILITY TO JUSTIFY IMPACT FEES, AND MODIFY THE PROCESS AND CONTENT OF THE PLAN AS NEEDED. DEDHAM NEEDS TO BE PREPARED FOR THE EVENTUALITY THAT IMPACT FEE LEGISLATION WILL BE ENACTED IN MASSACHUSETTS.

Although it is very difficult to institute impact fees under current state law, both of the prevailing proposals to change the Zoning Act - the Community Planning Act and the Land Use Partnership Act – contain provisions that would authorize local governments to charge impact fees. The key to a defensible system of impact fees is a capital improvements plan with an analysis of the facilities and infrastructure costs triggered by new residential and nonresidential development. As Dedham works toward implementing a long-range capital improvements plan process, the town will need to assemble, review, and document development cost data and incorporate this information in the plan.

7. ESTABLISH AN ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS TO EVALUATE THE TOWN’S PROGRESS TOWARD IMPLEMENTING THIS MASTER PLAN, TO BE LED JOINTLY BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND PLANNING BOARD.

The Planning Board and Board of Selectmen should jointly appoint a Master Plan Implementation Committee to coordinate the implementation of this plan. This is the first action item listed in Chapter 12, Implementation.



Conduct a comprehensive review and update of zoning bylaw.

Because zoning is Dedham’s principal tool for land use control, this is the most important recommendation for shaping the study area. Most of the area is now zoned as General Business (GB), with a Limited Business zone directly to the south. However, in some areas the both the GB and LB districts are extremely shallow, which detracts from the marketability of the parcels, an important factor for a redevelopment site. As part of its zoning update, therefore, Dedham should adjust its zoning districts to align with parcel boundaries wherever possible. Additionally, reviewing and changing the following aspects of the zoning bylaw will benefit this area.

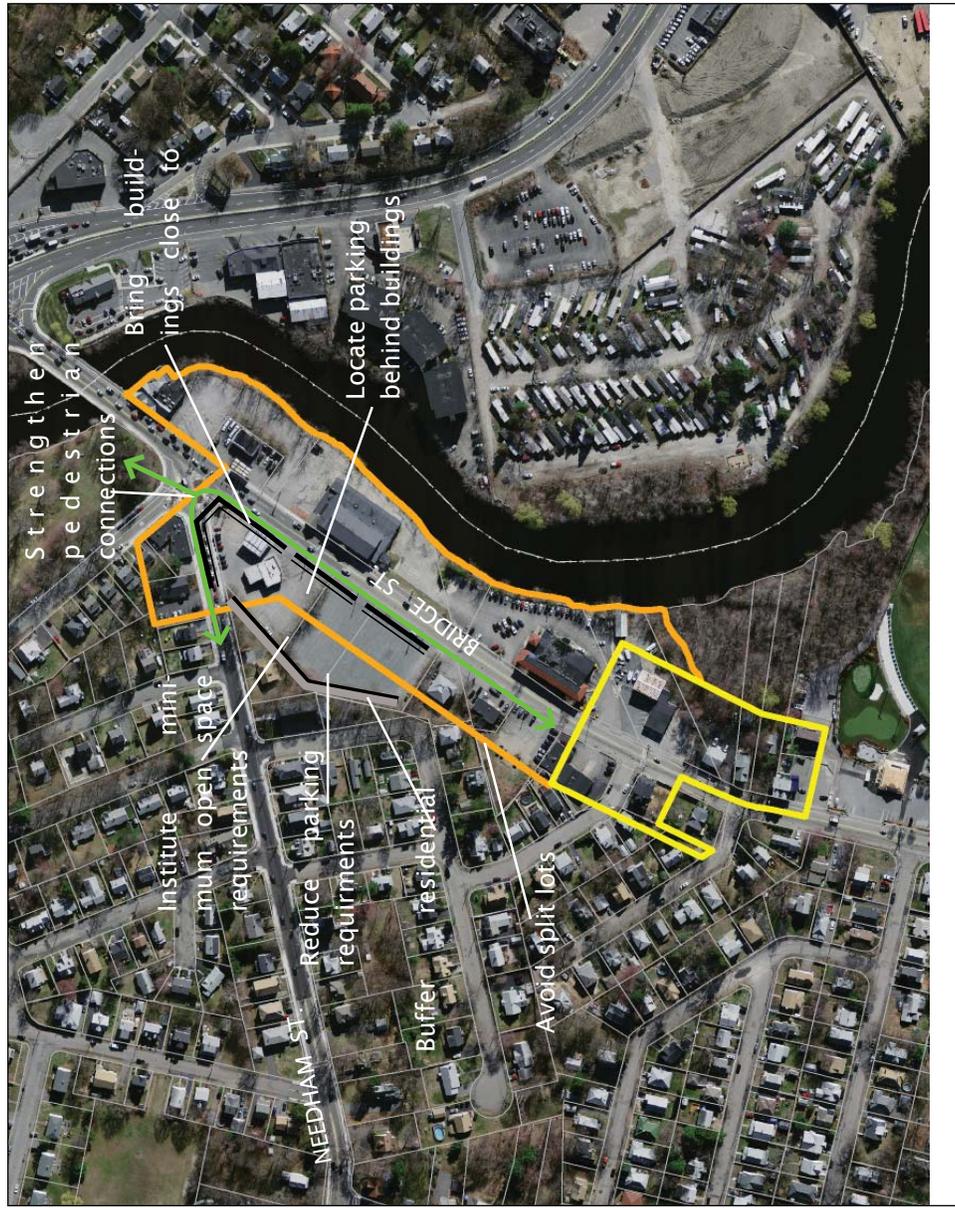
BRIDGE STREET CASE STUDY

A focused look at the intersection of Bridge and Needham streets in northwest Dedham illustrates some of the ways Master Plan recommendations can shape future development and redevelopment. Located just south of the Boston city line, this area is an important gateway to Dedham, providing visitors with their first glimpse of the town. Several Master Plan recommendations and implementation items, if carried through, would provide regulation and guidance to improve the physical appearance and marketability of key parcels in this area. Because a Master Plan is a long-range, policy-level document, in most cases an intermediary planning step must be undertaken and completed before it can be applied to a development site. This analysis and illustration intends to show what could be possible if Dedham not only adopts the Master Plan, but implements its recommendations fully. For many recommendations, including those discussed below, this requires additional planning.

Off-street parking requirements. Dedham’s off-street parking requirement for nonresidential uses are universally high. This is particularly true for the commercial uses allowed in General Business, which incorporates most of the study area. Current requirements call for one parking space per 200 sq. ft. of development: the upper limit of what is required in most modern parking bylaws. A revised bylaw should also provide reduced standards for mixed-use development. Reducing the amount of required parking spaces will result in less paved land which, if coupled with design guidelines requiring parking to be located behind buildings, will allow for a site less dominated by parking, which has many environmental as well as aesthetic benefits.

Minimum open space requirements for non-residential development. Creating open space requirements for nonresidential developments will improve the appearance and environmental performance of the sites in the study area. Currently, Dedham has no open space requirement for nonresidential development. Design guidelines could articulate preferences for the placement of open space to ensure that it visible and attractively landscaped. This could take the form of a landscaped buffer strip between the sidewalk and building, or, if coupled with environmental performance standards, could take the form of a swail or other bioretention device in the site’s parking area.

Landscaping and appropriate pedestrian connections between commercial and residential uses. The western edge of the study area abuts the Riverdale



neighborhood. Provisions to ensure that this area is both protected from and connected to the commercial or mixed-use area will be important. The Zoning Bylaw (in coordination with design guidelines) should provide criteria for appropriate visual screening through vegetative buffers, earthen berms, or other means. The Zoning Bylaw also needs requirements for pedestrian connections to the adjacent neighborhoods. In this case, sidewalks and cross-

walks would be most appropriate. The current condition of the sidewalk is not inviting to pedestrians, and the crosswalks do not make a person on foot feel secure crossing this busy section of Bridge Street.

Create design guidelines for neighborhood commercial districts. Design guidelines can take zoning requirements to the next level and have a strong role in shaping both the form and quality of development. This is especially true in the General Business district, where the zoning requirements do not specify minimum lot frontage, lot area, lot width, or yard setbacks. Design guidelines should promote the following:

- ◆ Buildings located closer to the street to define and create a more inviting and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
- ◆ Parking located behind buildings.
- ◆ Minimizing curb cuts through shared parking lots, if possible.
- ◆ Landscaping standards: required number and placement of trees, and drought-tolerant and non-invasive species only.
- ◆ Possible guidance on allowed materials, colors, and signage to produce a more coordinated appearance throughout the specified area.

Some related Master Plan recommendations include:

Provide incentives for a variety of housing types. If Dedham wants to consider mixed-use, village-style development in this area, additional provisions for residential development will be key. Under current zoning, some smaller, multi-family units are allowed, but the requirements are not clear and there are no development incentives. To encourage mixed-use residential-over-retail development, Dedham should allow residential uses and determine how to encourage them. This could result in a two- or three-story building with commercial uses on the ground floor and apartments above.

Improve service and alter routes of JBL Bus Line and advocate for changes to MBTA bus service. Providing transit to neighborhood commercial centers will be important to sustaining the vitalities of these areas. Dedham could consider coordinating redevelopment of the Bridge Street area with rerouting of the JBL Bus Line's current route.

Economic development recommendations including creation of an Economic Development Vision and Plan and marketing efforts for development and redevelopment sites. Although the Bridge Street area was not identified as one of Dedham's key development sites, the Economic Development department should be involved in redevelopment plans and marketing for this area.

Map 3.1 Land Use Pattern March 2009

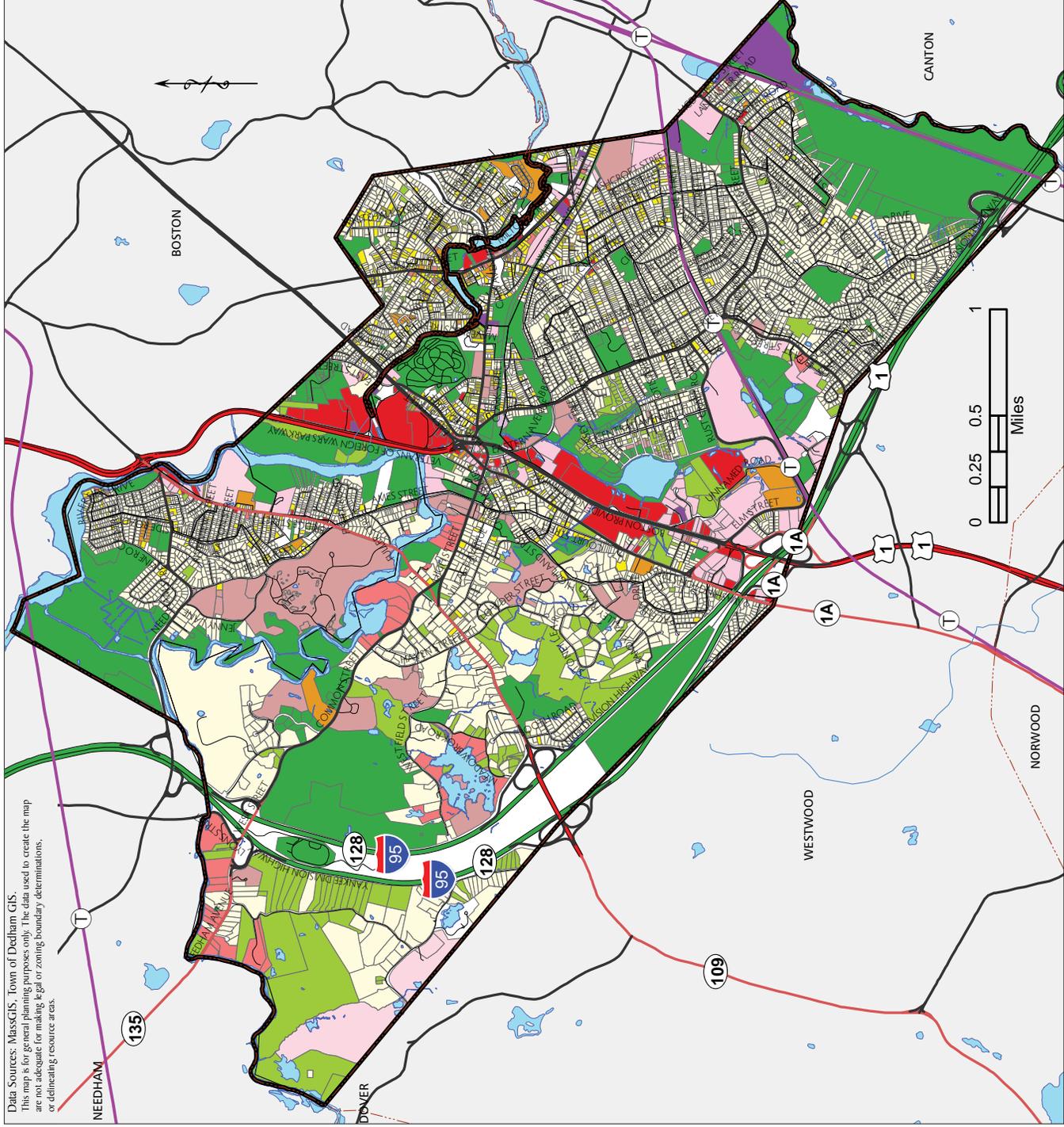
KEY

- Municipal Boundary
- Open Water

LAND USES

- Single-Family
- Two-Family
- Three-Family
- Multi-Family
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Retail
- Industrial
- Utilities
- Recreation
- Vacant Land
- Government
- Educational, Other Non-Profit
- Not Classified

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
 Larry Koff & Associates
 McMahon Associates, Inc.
 Stephen Herzog



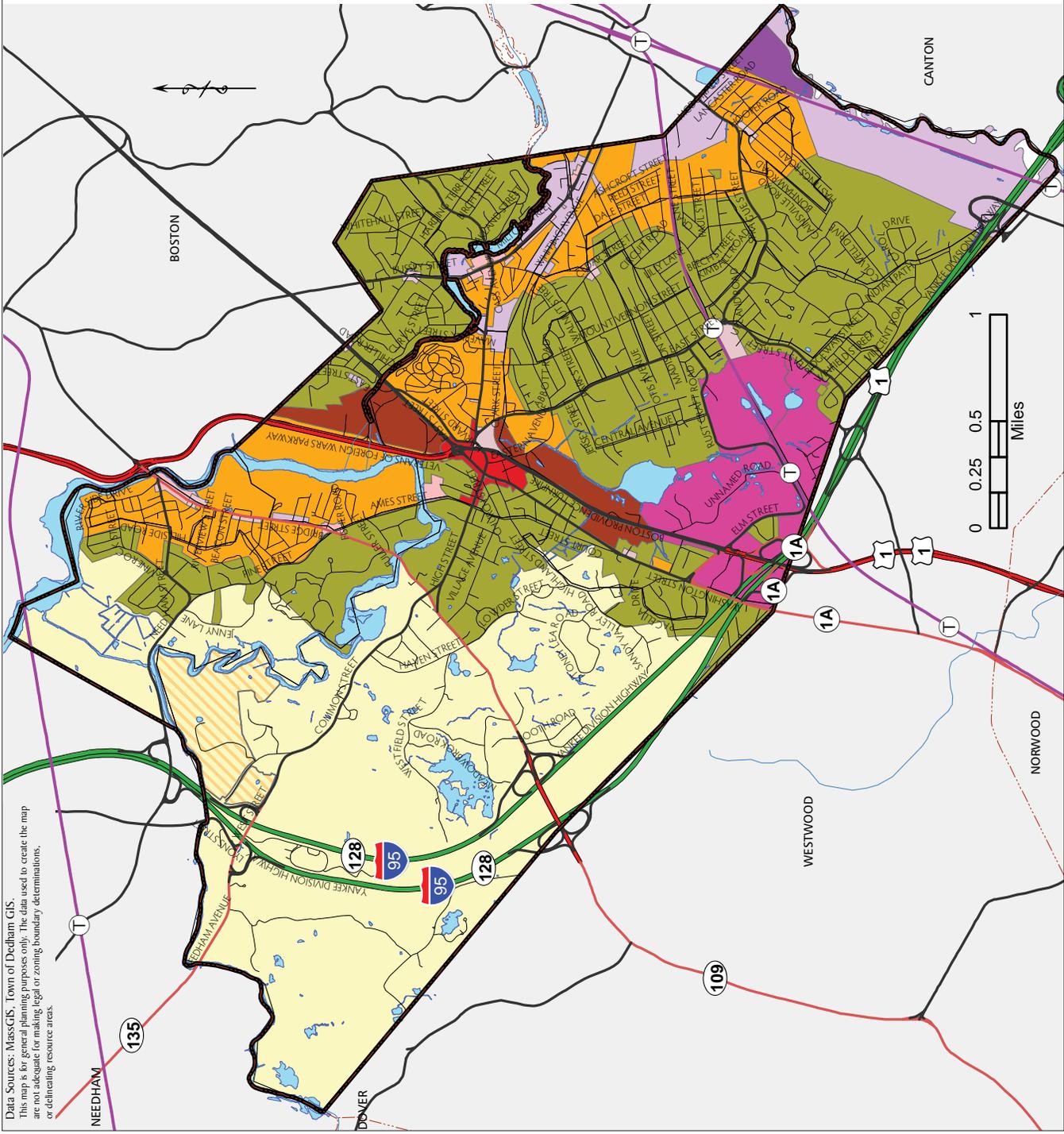
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
 This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.

Map 3.2 Existing Zoning March 2009

KEY

- Municipal Boundary
- ROADWAYS**
 - Limited Access Highway
 - Multi-Lane Highway
 - Other Numbered Highway
 - Major Road, Collector
 - Local Roads
 - Open Water
- ZONING DISTRICTS**
 - Central Business
 - General Business
 - General Residence
 - Highway Business
 - Limited Business
 - Limited Manufacturing
 - Limited Manufacturing B
 - RDO
 - Senior Campus
 - Single Residence A
 - Single Residence B

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
 Larry Koff & Associates
 McMahon Associates, Inc.
 Stephen Herzog



Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
 This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

Like many communities, Dedham is not in complete control of its transportation destiny. Located on the Route 128 corridor and divided by regional roadways, general levels of traffic vary based on regional growth and trends as much as they do from changes within the town itself. With much of the past and planned growth occurring on the town's periphery, Dedham continues to try to find a balance in its overall transportation network. By focusing growth in areas with good access to the regional highway network, Dedham strives to maintain and protect the livability of its neighborhoods. Achieving a balance between accommodating growth and protecting residential areas is a complicated challenge made more difficult as demands on the transportation system continue to increase. By integrating transportation planning into growth discussions, Dedham will continue to be successful in achieving this balance.

Many of the issues, opportunities and goals established in the 1996 Master Plan remain important today. While the town has made progress over the past decade, challenges increase as Dedham residents travel farther for work and the web of workers traveling to Dedham widens. To accommodate these increases, Dedham has been working to focus this growth along its regional roads. At the same time, Dedham is also looking inward, having experienced renewed interest in attracting shoppers, residents, and activity into its neighborhood commercial centers, such as East Dedham and its traditional downtown, Dedham Square.

Recent planning for Dedham Square has spurred plans to accommodate growth in the court system while expanding redevelopment opportunities downtown. As the town seeks to preserve and

improve its transportation future, creating more walkable areas, improving pedestrian safety, and expanding public transit use and service will be equally as important as increasing the capacity of Dedham's roadways. In this section, we will review the progress and problems, address new issues and opportunities, and re-establish transportation goals for Dedham's future in light of present conditions.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Regional Access

Dedham is located approximately eight and a half miles southwest of downtown Boston. Although Dedham lacks a direct highway connection to downtown Boston, several major highways and roadways that run through Dedham provide regional and local access. Map 4.1 depicts the major roadways in and around Dedham.

MAJOR ROADWAYS

Route 128/Interstate 95 is a circumferential roadway ringing Boston's inner suburbs that runs along Dedham's southern and western town border. The section of roadway that runs along Dedham's border is currently a six-lane, controlled-access highway that provides excellent regional access. During typical weekday morning and weekday afternoon commuter peak periods, Route 128/Interstate 95 is heavily traveled and congested. Over the past decade, daily traffic volumes have increased slightly on the highway. In order to better accommodate traffic levels, the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) is currently in the design and construction phases of an "Add-a-Lane" project, which will widen the highway to four lanes in each direction between Route 9 and Route 24. The

“Add-a-Lane” project is expected to be complete by 2015.

Providence Highway/Route 1A is a limited access, median separated roadway bisecting Dedham and connecting Providence Highway to the south and the VFW Parkway in Boston to the north. Providence Highway, which is under state jurisdiction, generally provides a four-lane cross section and is the second highest traveled roadway in Dedham behind Route 128/Interstate 95. Even though traffic volumes on Providence Highway have decreased over the past several years, this corridor remains congested and near capacity during peak hours. Providence Highway provides access to numerous retail developments, which attract both local and regional shoppers. However, Providence Highway also serves as a significant through route for regional traffic.

Washington Street roughly parallels Providence Highway and provides access between Westwood and West Roxbury. Washington Street is more local in nature than Providence Highway, and the two roadways intersect at the Washington Street rotary. Washington Street generally is a two-lane, undivided arterial, which provides “back door” access to several retail developments along Providence Highway. Over the past several years, traffic volumes have decreased on Washington Street, perhaps due to the vacant retail spaces within the Dedham Mall and Dedham Plaza.

East Street is a two-lane roadway generally traversing in a north/south direction between Route 128/Interstate 95 to the south and Washington Street to the north. East Street is residential in nature, but also provides access to the Dedham Mall and connects to Sprague Street to the east. Sprague Street is a connector road to the Readville neighborhood of Boston and accesses several industrialized areas. Traffic volumes on East Street over the past decade have increased over ten percent, which may be a result of the increased congestion on Route 128/Interstate 95.

Route 109 extends through Dedham from VFW Parkway, where it is a two-lane roadway, to its

interchange with Route 128/Interstate 95, where it is a four-lane roadway. Route 109 provides connections to West Roxbury and Westwood.

Traffic Generators

Most commercial development in Dedham is concentrated on and around Providence Highway, and consists of a mixture of retail, office, and limited industrial uses. The Dedham Mall is perhaps the largest and best-known retail use in Dedham. Other significant commercial developments are located along the Route 128/Interstate 95 corridor and the access roads that feed it, including Allied Drive, Rustcraft Road, and Elm Street. Dedham is also the seat of Norfolk County, and Dedham Square hosts the Courts, Registries and County offices as part of its overall commercial activity. Along with Dedham Square, other streets with locally focused commercial activity include Washington Street, Bussey Street, Milton Street, and High Street.

Several new, major projects have been recently completed or are under construction in Dedham. They include:

- ◆ **NewBridge on the Charles** includes one million square feet of intergenerational housing and service facilities on a 162-acre parcel north of Common Street.
- ◆ **The Legacy Place** “lifestyle” center will provide approximately 700,000 square feet of mixed-use development including retail, restaurants, a movie theater, and office space on the northeast corner of Providence Highway and Elm Street.
- ◆ The recently completed **Jefferson at Dedham Station** and the **Station 250** residential developments (nearing completion) will add a total of 600 units to the area adjacent to Legacy Place.

These projects are along the outer edge of Dedham, where large parcels are more readily available. Although these developments will most likely

**TABLE 4.1
WORKPLACE OF DEDHAM RESIDENTS**

Location	Count	Percent
City of Boston	3,557	31.2
Town of Dedham	2,296	20.1
Town of Norwood	598	5.2
City of Newton	463	4.1
Town of Needham	393	3.4
City of Quincy	318	2.8
City of Waltham	290	2.5
City of Cambridge	273	2.4
Town of Westwood	272	2.4
Town of Wellesley	211	1.8
Town of Brookline	204	1.8
Town of Canton	201	1.8
Other Locations	2336	20.5
Total	11,412	100.0

Source: Census 2000, "2000 Minor Civil Division/County-to-Minor Civil Division/County Worker Flow Files."

generate a significant amount of traffic, they are oriented toward the regional highway system. Furthermore, extensive roadway and intersection improvements will mitigate the impacts on Dedham's local roadway network.

Journey to Work

Dedham is primarily a residential community, yet it has a sizable employment base. Census 2000 Journey-to-Work data from the Bureau of the Census show that Dedham has more jobs (13,779) than residents in the workforce (11,412). A comparison of the workplace of Dedham residents and residency of Dedham workers indicates that high concentrations of Dedham residents commute to specific locations, but the places of residence for Dedham workers are generally more scattered.

As shown in Table 4.1, more than half of all Dedham labor force participants work in Dedham (20.1 percent) or Boston (31.2 percent). Only neighboring Norwood hosts more than five percent of Dedham's workers. The remaining destinations are scattered throughout the region, mainly key employment centers along Route 128. Additionally, the Journey-to-Work data in Table 4.2 show that of the 13,779 people who work in Dedham each day, only seventeen percent live in Dedham.

**TABLE 4.2
RESIDENCY OF DEDHAM WORKERS**

Location	Count	Percent
Town of Dedham	2,296	16.7
City of Boston	2,017	14.6
Town of Norwood	555	4.0
City of Quincy	509	3.7
Town of Walpole	347	2.5
City of Brockton	314	2.3
Town of Randolph	301	2.2
Town of Stoughton	275	2.0
Town of Westwood	256	1.9
Town of Weymouth	251	1.8
Other Locations	6,658	48.3
Total	13,779	100.0

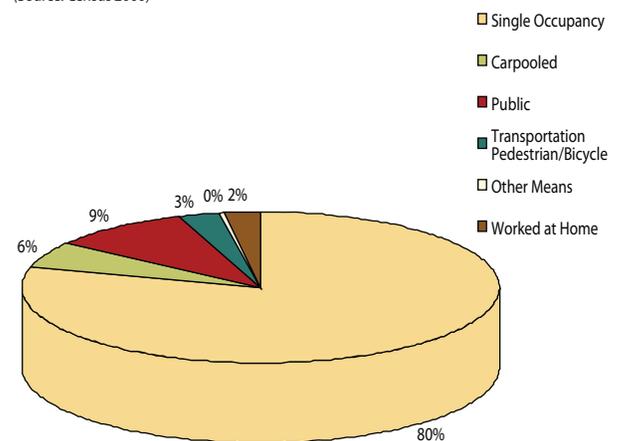
Source: Census 2000, "2000 Minor Civil Division/County-to-Minor Civil Division/County Worker Flow Files."

Fifteen percent of Dedham's workers live in Boston, with no other municipality supplying more than five percent. The communities with the largest percentages of Dedham's workers are generally in neighboring towns or those located south and southwest of Boston.¹

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 examine the commutes of Dedham residents. Figure 4.1 indicates that nearly

Figure 4.1: How Dedham Residents Commute to Work

(Source: Census 2000)



¹ Census 2000, Summary File 3, "QT-P23: Journey to Work: 2000."

eighty percent of Dedham residents commute to work by driving alone. Only 9.4 percent use public transportation to commute to work, and 5.6 percent carpool to work.² Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of travel times for Dedham residents to get to work. The average commute time for Dedham residents is 26.3 minutes, and in general, there is an even distribution of commute times. The vast majority of Dedham workers (over 80 percent) have commutes of less than 45 minutes; however, 6.7 percent of Dedham residents spend more than an hour getting to work.³

Traffic Accidents

Dedham is fortunate in that none of its intersections appears on the MHD Top 200 Highway Crash Intersection Locations.⁴ However, an analysis of available development reports and associated traffic impact analysis reveals three intersections in Dedham that have above average crash rates compared to State averages. Table 4.3 summarizes the high accident locations and proposed improvements that may reduce accident frequency.

Public Transportation

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provides access to Dedham via the Franklin commuter rail line and several bus routes.

COMMUTER RAIL

The MBTA provides daily commuter rail service to downtown Boston via the Franklin Line, which stops at Dedham Corporate Center and Endicott Station. The train stops at Forest Hills and Back Bay, providing access to the Orange Line, and continues to South Station where a connection to the Red Line is possible. Regular, scheduled commuter rail service operates on weekdays from approximately 5:30 AM to 12:30 AM. The frequency of service is high and ranges from 12 to 34 minutes during weekday-morning commute hours and from 17 to 40 minutes during peak weekday-afternoon commute hours. Regularly scheduled service

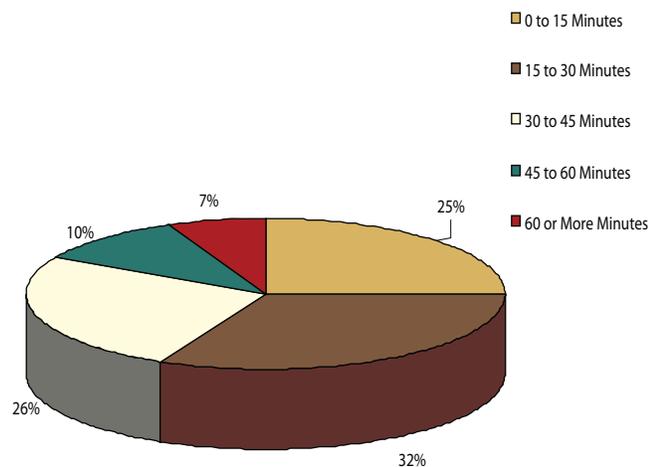
² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Massachusetts Highway Department, *Top 200 High Crash Intersection Locations 2003-2005*, 14 February 2007.

Figure 4.2: Commuting Time for Dedham Residents

(Source: Census 2000)



also operates on weekends, but on a less frequent basis.

Endicott Station commuter rail station is accessible by vehicle via Elmwood Avenue and Grant Avenue and by foot via Depot Lane and Greenwood Avenue. There are forty-five parking spaces maintained by the Town of Dedham at Endicott Station. The lot is located adjacent to Grant Avenue. In 2005, Endicott Station had 325 weekday daily inbound boardings, a slight increase over the previous year's data.⁵

Dedham Corporate Center commuter rail station provides parking for 497 vehicles. Previously, riders accessed the station primarily from Allied Drive, and many choose to access it from Rustcraft Road even though there is no formal access. In fact, a chain link fence separates the station from Rustcraft Road. However, due to traffic circulation patterns, many people are dropped off on Rustcraft Road and use a jog in the fence to cross into the station. These access issues will be improved when the Station 250 installs a crosswalk on Elm Street to allow access to the Dedham Corporate station platform. However, the town will want to continue to evaluate access to the station to make sure there is a range of walking as well as bicycle routes to and from the station. Dedham Corporate

⁵ Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, *Ridership and Service Statistics, Tenth Edition*, 2006.

TABLE 4.3
ACCIDENT DATA

Intersection	Crash Rate	Proposed Improvements	Affect
Providence Highway at Washington Street	1.33	Signal timing adjustments included in part with the coordinated Providence Highway Signal system	Reduce vehicle delay
Washington Street at Elm Street	1.39	Reduce overall size of intersection, Tie Highland Street and Harmony Hill into traffic signal, Remove Westbound channelized right-turn lane, restrip the southbound approach to provide an exclusive left-turn lane.	Reduce vehicle conflict
East Street at Rustcraft Road	0.72	Install traffic signal	Allow eastbound traffic to enter traffic flow

Source: Massachusetts Highway Department, Top 200 High Crash Intersection Locations 2003-2005

Center had 561 weekday daily inbound boardings in 2005, which represents a decrease compared to previous year's data.⁶

BUS SERVICE

The limited bus service available in Dedham is mostly oriented toward the Dedham Mall. Most regularly scheduled MBTA bus service operates on the Washington Street or Providence Highway corridors, passing through Dedham, but not connecting with its residential areas. Only the lightly used, irregularly scheduled Dedham Local Bus serves the residential neighborhoods. Meanwhile, service is not available to either the commercial parks that provide substantial employment in Dedham or to the MBTA commuter rail stations that residents use to get to the downtown Boston job market.

Bus Route 33 operates between Mattapan Station in Boston and East Dedham, on 30-minute peak hour headways. In 2005, overall boardings were 895 per weekday.

Bus Routes 34 and 34E both operate on Washington Street north to the Forest Hills Orange Line station in Boston. Route 34E is an express that extends south to Walpole with limited Dedham stops. Route 34 extends only as far south as East Street. Combined, the two routes had approximately 5,938 weekday boardings in 2005.

Bus Route 35 runs between the Forest Hills Orange Line station and the Dedham Mall via Centre Street in West Roxbury. In 2005, overall boardings were 1,902 per weekday.

Bus Route 52 connects Watertown and the Dedham Mall along the VFW Parkway. Weekday ridership was approximately 640 boardings in 2005.

Dedham Local Bus operated by JBL Bus Lines Inc. runs exclusively on weekdays between 6:45 AM and 5:10 PM and provides cross-town access to Endicott Circle, Westbrook, Oakdale Square, East Dedham Square, Parkway Court, Dedham Mall, Traditions, and Dedham Square. The Dedham Local Bus provides the only public transportation link across town. However, it operates infrequently, and therefore ridership and dependability are very limited. Based on the MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics, the Dedham Local Bus had a total annual ridership of 16,323 in 2004.⁷

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The more densely developed areas of Dedham generally have continuous sidewalks in relatively good condition. Most areas with new development also have sidewalks, as required by the town's subdivision regulations. Typically, pedestrian activity within Dedham is localized.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Dedham does not have designated bicycle paths. On-street conditions on Dedham’s major roads are not considered favorable by bicyclists, and therefore do not promote bicycle use.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

Despite Dedham’s proximity to Boston, its residents seem to be traveling farther for work. The mean travel time to work increased by 3.3 minutes between 1990 and 2000. In the same period, the number of residents working locally decreased from 3,030 to 2,296, the number of people traveling 30 to 44 minutes to work increased by 7.3 percent, and the number traveling more than 45 minutes to work increased by 31.7 percent. In addition, the percentages of people who are carpooling, bicycling, walking, and working at home declined between 1990 and 2000, but the percentage of people using public transportation, particularly the subway and commuter rail, increased, as shown in Table 4.4.⁸

The 1996 *Master Plan* provided Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes for Dedham roadways.⁹ In addition, updated ADT volumes were included in the 2004 Dedham Development and Infrastructure Management Strategy study.¹⁰ A comparison of the ADT data (Table 4.5) indicates that on average, the highway and arterial roadways within Dedham have experienced a slight decrease in overall traffic volumes. Meanwhile, the collec-

TABLE 4.4
WEEKDAY DAILY BOARDINGS

Service	1993	2001	2005
Commuter Rail			
Endicott Station	214	281	325
Dedham Corporate Station	665	1,036	561
Bus			
Route 33	737	871	895
Route 34/34A	6,516	6,280	5,938
Route 35	2,307	2,082	1,902
Route 52	1,010	828	640

Source: MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics.

TABLE 4.5
TRAFFIC VOLUME COMPARISON

Roadway	1992	2003	Change
Highway/Arterial Roadways			
Route 128	141,000	143,700	1.90%
Providence Highway (north of High)	46,000	44,800	-2.60%
Providence Highway (south of High)	47,200	45,200	-4.20%
Washington Street	21,000	20,200	-3.80%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>255,200</i>	<i>253,900</i>	<i>-0.51%</i>
Collector/Local Roadways			
Ames Street	13,600	13,200	-2.90%
Sprague Street (at East Street)	12,000	11,700	-2.50%
High Street (west of Washington)	9,400	15,400	63.80%
Whiting Avenue	6,100	8,900	45.90%
East Street (north of Sprague)	10,500	11,900	13.30%
Bridge Street (Ames to High)	11,600	11,100	-4.30%
Needham Street	9,100	11,800	29.70%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>84,300</i>	<i>95,700</i>	<i>13.50%</i>
Total	339,500	349,600	3.00%

Source: 1996 Dedham Master Plan, 2004 Development & Infrastructure Management Strategy

tor and local roadways show an increase in overall traffic volumes. It is possible that as congestion has increased on the highway and arterial roadways, drivers have sought alternative routes on collector and local roadways. In total, overall daily traffic flows in the past eleven years have experienced a three percent increase in Dedham.

Projections made in the Municipal Growth Planning Study for the towns of Canton, Dedham, Norwood, and Westwood showed that transportation and congestion will continue to be a challenge in the future, given that the region imports tens of thousands of workers each workday. Furthermore,

⁸ Census 2000 Summary File 3, “P31: Travel Time to Work for Workers 16+ Years,” “P30: Means of Transportation to Work for Workers 16 Years and Over,” and 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3, “P050: Travel Time to Work,” “P049: Means of Transportation to Work.”

⁹ Town of Dedham, *Dedham Master Plan*, 1996.

¹⁰ Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. and Earth Tech, *Development and Infrastructure Management Strategy*, 2004, Appendix.

much of the region's traffic originates from and is bound for locations outside these four towns. In addition, the growing suburban development patterns generally do not provide sufficiently high densities to support public transportation. This relatively small four-town region currently generates more than 600,000 average daily trip ends. Based on current growth projections, this number will rise to approximately 730,000 by the year 2040 if no transportation demand management activities are undertaken.¹¹

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Town Studies

Dedham Master Plan (1996). The 1996 *Dedham Master Plan* presented several transportation goals as part of the Master Plan, with an overall vision of, ".....seeking to balance additional transportation capacity with measures to reduce traffic impacts and improve pedestrian safety and amenities." From that vision, the 1996 Master Plan set forth eight transportation related goals:

- ◆ Control and manage commuter traffic to and through Dedham.
- ◆ Improve operations at congested locations.
- ◆ Improve safety and amenities at key pedestrian facilities.
- ◆ Seek to establish additional east-west connections.
- ◆ Improve linkages between Dedham Square & Providence Highway.
- ◆ Reduce land area devoted to parking.
- ◆ Foster public transportation use in Dedham.

- ◆ Design development to minimize vehicle traffic impacts.¹²

Many of these goals remain valid as Dedham, like many other communities in the Commonwealth, struggles to balance transportation and land use needs while promoting alternative modes of travel.

Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study (2007). The *Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study* evaluates options for redevelopment in the downtown within the context of the Norfolk County Court expansion. A major finding of the study concludes parking was a significant limiting factor to redevelopment within Dedham Square. The most developable parcel, the Keystone Site, is presently used for surface parking. Developing it would result in a significant parking deficit. The planning process and study recognizes that the combined needs of the Norfolk County Court expansion, town goals, and local merchants must be reviewed concurrently.

Development of existing sites and the Court expansion are positive steps towards the goal of improving pedestrian vitality and urban design character of Dedham Square. The study further examines the Keystone Site's development potential and identified locations for additional parking to offset the projected deficit. Ultimately, the study recommends that the town conduct further analysis in order to define parking needs and opportunities.¹³

Development and Infrastructure Management Strategy (2004). The *Development and Infrastructure Management Strategy* was prepared for Dedham to provide traffic volumes on various roadways throughout the town and to identify current and proposed major roadway construction projects. The purpose of this study was to provide the necessary data for the town to determine traffic

¹¹ Daylor Consulting Group, *Municipal Growth Planning Study – Canton, Dedham, Norwood, Westwood*, (May 2002), 13.

¹² Town of Dedham, *Dedham Master Plan*, 1996.

¹³ The Cecil Group, *Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study*, 25 June 2007.

improvements, project coordination, and strategic planning.¹⁴

Master Plan Update Workshop. In November 2007, the Dedham Planning Board held a public meeting for residents to discuss concerns, issues, and future action items for potential inclusion in this Master Plan Update. As part of the meeting, residents discussed transportation related issues and opportunities.

Developer Studies

Several recent traffic impact studies conducted by developers of projects in Dedham provide traffic count data, accident data, roadway improvement plans, and capacity analysis for several intersections and roadways throughout Dedham.

Legacy Place. In 2007, the town approved the Legacy Place development, which is located on the northeast corner of Providence Highway and Elm Street and contains approximately 700,000 square feet of mixed-use development including retail, restaurants, a movie theater, and office space. Legacy Place is expected to open in 2009. To offset the traffic impacts of this development, the developer has designed an extensive roadway and intersection improvement plan for the Providence Highway corridor and several other intersections near the project.¹⁵ These improvements are listed in Table 4.6.

Hebrew Senior Life. The Hebrew Senior Life Campus, NewBridge on the Charles, is a one-million sq. ft. intergenerational campus on a 162-acre parcel north of Common Street. Dedham approved the development in 2005 and the project is expected to be in operation by 2009. To offset traffic impacts on the surrounding roadways, several roadway and intersection improvements were required within

¹⁴ Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. and Earth Tech, *Development and Infrastructure Management Strategy*, 2004.

¹⁵ Allen & Major Associates, Inc., *Planned Commercial Development "Legacy Place" Fiscal Impact Report*, 30 June 2006.

the vicinity of the development site.¹⁶ Table 4.6 also lists these improvements.

Walgreens Pharmacy. The Walgreens project is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Providence Highway and Elm Street, and includes the construction of an 11,333 square foot pharmacy with drive-through window.¹⁷ The town approved the project in 2007 and is proceeding as planned

Jefferson at Dedham. Jefferson at Dedham is a multi-family residential development with approximately 300 units, located on Enterprise Drive.¹⁸ The development opened in 2006.

Fairfield Residential. Fairfield Residential's new residential development, known as Station 250, is a multi-family rental development with approximately 300 units, located on Elm Street east of Providence Highway.¹⁹

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Pedestrians and Bicycle Facilities

Dedham has significant barriers to the development of pedestrian and bicycle routes through town. The greatest of these barriers is Providence Highway which effectively divides the town in two, creating a major safety problem due to the lack of designated bike and pedestrian crossings. The current reconstruction of Providence Highway at Eastern Avenue and the proposed reconstruction of Providence Highway at Elm Street will improve pedestrian and bicycle crossings.

Despite these barriers, Dedham holds great opportunity as a walkable community. Its

¹⁶ Geller DeVellis, *Site Plan Review and Special Permits Application*, 1 June 2005.

¹⁷ Rizzo Associates a Tetra Tech Company, *Traffic Impact Study Proposed Pharmacy Dedham, Massachusetts*, 31 October 2006.

¹⁸ Coler & Colantonio Inc., *Traffic Impact Report*, November 2001.

¹⁹ Vanasse & Associates, Inc., *Traffic Impact Assessment Fairfield Green at Dedham* (November 2004).

TABLE 4.6
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Roadway/Intersection	Improvement	Entity
Providence Highway Corridor	Coordinated Traffic Signal System	Legacy Place
East Street at Rustcraft Road	Install Traffic Signal	Legacy Place
Route 128	Add two travel lanes, Additional Capacity	Massachusetts Highway Department
Route 128 Northbound Ramp to Providence Highway	Additional Capacity	Legacy Place
Route 128 Ramps to West Street	Additional Capacity	Hebrew Senior Life
Sprague Street at Cedar Street	Additional Capacity	Legacy Place
Elm Street at Providence Highway	Additional Capacity	Legacy Place
East Street at Eastern Avenue	Additional Capacity	Legacy Place
Providence Highway at Enterprise Drive	Additional Capacity	Legacy Place
Providence Highway at Eastern Avenue	Additional Capacity	Town of Dedham
West Street at Lyon Street	Safety Improvement	Hebrew Senior Life
Elm Street at Washington Street	Safety Improvement	Legacy Place
Common Street at Bridge Street	Signal Equipment Upgrade	Hebrew Senior Life
High Street at Court Street/Ames Street	Signal Timing Adjustments	Hebrew Senior Life
High Street at Washington Street	Signal Timing Adjustments	Hebrew Senior Life
Needham Street	Repaving and Sidewalk Construction	Town of Dedham
East Street	Reconstruction	Town of Dedham

moderately-intense, well-connected neighborhoods—especially those on the east side of the town—contain residential streets with sidewalks, infrastructure that is not always a given in many suburban communities. The town’s Department of Public Works includes sidewalks in its pavement management program, which systematically assesses, programs, and repairs all roadways in Dedham on an on-going basis. As more and more people recognize the importance and myriad benefits of non-motorized transportation, Dedham’s pedestrian infrastructure will remain of paramount importance, and the town should take every opportunity to maintain and, when appropriate, expand this critical infrastructure.

Currently, few areas in Dedham have or bicycle paths, either as dedicated or on-street routes. Bike paths are crucial infrastructural elements in cities and towns, and especially in mature suburbs like Dedham where the overall density and mix of uses make bicycling a viable transportation option. Bike paths are also an open space and recreation

amenity, especially if they are dedicated, off-street paths or integrated into a greenway or linear park. The Dedham *Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2004-2009* identifies specific trail locations that have potential for bicycle (and pedestrian) accommodations.²⁰ These include land along Mother Brook, the Charles River, Wigwam Pond, and the Providence Highway corridor. Additionally, easements across private property could link land within the Town Forest, Neponset River Reservation, and Cutler Park to provide access to some of the town’s ponds. If the town were successful in creating such linkages, bicycle trails could be constructed that would connect playgrounds, commercial areas, residential neighborhoods, train stations, and the town center.

Additionally, Dedham’s *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* recommends that the abandoned rail between the Readville Station in Boston to just before Providence Highway be developed

²⁰ Town of Dedham, *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2004), 61.

into a bike path. Such a path will create connections between many of Dedham's green spaces and provide access to the commuter rail at Readville Station. For further discussion of these opportunities, see "Open Space and Recreation."

Roadways

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Since the 1996 *Master Plan*, the town has made substantial progress improving Dedham's roadways. However, a number of locations referenced in the 1996 Master Plan have yet to be improved, including:

- ◆ Washington Street at Gay Street in Norwood
- ◆ Needham Street at Bridge Street/Riverside Drive
- ◆ Needham Street at Vine Rock Street
- ◆ Pine Street at Ames Street/Bridge Street
- ◆ Walnut Street at Milton Street
- ◆ Route 128 at Route 135 interchange
- ◆ Washington Street at Court Street (sight distance issue)
- ◆ Bridge Street (Route 109) south of Charles River Crossing
- ◆ Railroad Underpass on East Street near Endicott Rotary
- ◆ Memorial Field and soccer fields at East Street²¹

The 1996 *Master Plan* identified the possibility of constructing a flyover between the East Street rotary on 128 across the commuter rail tracks to Enterprise Drive.²² Such a connection would theo-

retically reduce trips on Providence Highway and ease potential development impacts by opening up access to this area to help protect the Rustcraft Road neighborhood. Legacy Place is under construction adjacent to this area and uses Enterprise Drive as its primary access from Providence Highway.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Overall, traffic in Dedham is increasing, especially on its local and collector roadways. With the construction of several recently approved large projects, traffic growth will continue. Residents are most concerned about traffic increasing on neighborhood streets rather than on the regional roads (Route 128/Interstate 95 and Providence Highway). Meanwhile due to Providence Highway, cross-town access is becoming increasingly difficult and time-consuming as neighborhood traffic grows.

In response, the town has paid particular attention to the impacts of developments on these residential streets. Managing access to developments to keep regional traffic on regional streets is an ongoing goal, while specific neighborhood improvements are continually being evaluated. Many residents have expressed a desire to minimize and protect their streets from additional traffic.²³ Additional traffic is likely a result of general population growth, specific developments, and cars seeking alternatives to increasingly congested major town roads.

One way to protect residential neighborhoods is to review new developments to ensure that access is designed to minimize or eliminate travel on residential streets. For example, traffic exiting the Legacy Place development via Elm Street is deterred from entering the Robinwood Road neighborhood by allowing "right-out only" access onto Elm Street and resident only signage. The town also secured a commitment to future studies to determine the affects of Legacy Place on the neighborhood and to prevent future problems in the area. The town can use other traffic calming measures to discourage but not prevent traffic on residential streets. Traffic calming measures may include raised

²¹ Town of Dedham, *Dedham Master Plan*, 1996.

²² Ibid.

²³ Master Plan Public Working Meeting, 17 November 2007.

intersections, speed humps, speed bumps, and roundabouts. These measures often can succeed in slowing traffic speeds, even if general traffic levels remain constant.

Another way Dedham could potentially reduce traffic volumes on its major roadways, especially during peak travel periods, is through Transportation Demand Management, or TDM. TDM is an umbrella strategy undertaken by businesses and institutions to reduce the number of workers who commute with single-occupancy vehicles. Employers typically offer financial incentives to encourage commuting through alternative modes of transportation or carpooling to reduce the number of fewer single-occupancy-vehicle trips. Examples of incentives include parking cash-out (where an employee receives payment for not using a subsidized parking space), travel allowances (where an employee receives a payment instead of a parking subsidy); or transit or rideshare benefits (where employers give free or discounted transit fares).

While TDM is an employer-sponsored program, communities can take steps to encourage or require TDM for some types of developments. For example, Dedham could require a TDM plan as part of the project approval process. (This usually would apply to larger developments.) With eighty percent of commuters using single-occupancy vehicles, TDM measures that increase the rate of carpooling, transit, walking and biking could make a significant impact on traffic volumes on Dedham's major roadways.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

The 1996 *Master Plan* recommends exploring additional east-west connections across Providence Highway. Based on the public meeting held in November 2008, opinions about this issue appear to be changing in Dedham. There seems to be increasing sentiment against additional Providence Highway crossings. Barriers, both natural and manmade, complicate placement of additional access. Wigwam Pond, the Neponset River, and existing commercial development are substantial obstacles to an east-west crossing. Regardless, the town is taking an important step to complete

substantive improvements to the existing crossings so that they are efficient, safe and modern.

SCENIC ROADS

Dedham has not adopted a policy for scenic roads, though this was one of the recommendations of the 1996 *Master Plan*. The goal of the Scenic Roads Act is to preserve specific characteristics of the town's roadways by requiring Planning Board review of the cutting or removal of trees or the alteration of stone walls within the right of way on designated scenic roads. Only local, public roads may be designated.

When a community adopts the Scenic Roads Act, it creates a scenic roads bylaw to implement the policy and then designates roads with valued characteristics as scenic roads. Establishing a scenic roads bylaw does require additional knowledge and care from the town's Planning Board and cooperation from the Department of Public Works. However, the bylaw would not affect existing property owners because the Scenic Roads Act is limited to activity within the public right-of-way. Thus, rather than being an overly restrictive bylaw, the Scenic Roads Act is often regarded by preservationists and others as not being strong enough. For Dedham, however, adopting of the Scenic Roads Act and a local bylaw would be an important step toward preserving the quality of the town's local roadways.

The roads suggested to be included in the scenic road plan in the 1996 *Master Plan* are as follows:

- ◆ Needham Street/Pine Street/Ames Street
- ◆ Common Street/West Street
- ◆ Haven Street/Lowder Street
- ◆ Highland Street
- ◆ High Street/Mill Lane (from the Common through Dedham Square to Mother Brook)

DEDHAM MASTER PLAN

- ◆ Dedham Boulevard (informally because it is owned by the DCR)
- ◆ Washington Street/Court Street
- ◆ Walnut Street
- ◆ Oakdale Avenue/Cedar Street
- ◆ East Street
- ◆ Sprague Street²⁴

For more information on adopting a Scenic Roads Bylaw, see Chapter 5, Cultural and Historic Resources.

Dedham Square

Residents have expressed significant support and a willingness to spend town resources on the continued revitalization of Dedham Square. With new shops and restaurants and a far more pedestrian-friendly environment than Providence Highway, Dedham Square has become an attractive destination for residents and visitors alike.

With the proposed expansion of Norfolk County Court facilities and the town's desire to redevelop the Keystone site, Dedham Square appears poised to remain vital well into the future. Promoting a growing mix of uses, which would spur pedestrian activity and support economic growth and ground-level retail, are part of the vision for Dedham Square. However, recent studies have shown that the need for parking to support all of the proposed uses is a constraint for development and a challenge to Dedham Square's long-term ability to serve all of these uses. At present, there is a general sense that the parking system downtown works well. Still, as the area's popularity grows, maintaining an adequate and not overbearing parking supply will be critical to Dedham Square's success.

For more information on development options for Dedham Square, see Chapter 9, Economic Development.

²⁴ Town of Dedham, *Dedham Master Plan*, 1996.

Parking

Recently proposed developments, especially those including retail components, have had difficulty achieving the parking ratios required by current zoning due to site constraints, cost, and projected utilization. As developers continue to propose mixed use and infill projects in Dedham, the prescribed parking ratios can become a deterrent to development. In some cases, the required ratios create difficulties for the development to meet other town goals.

Another parking issue in Dedham is the reported tendency for residents to park their vehicles on sidewalks in the more densely populated neighborhoods. This situation likely occurs in older neighborhoods where homes either lack garages or have limited on-site parking capacity. As the number of cars per household increases, residents and visitors tend to park on sidewalks and evidently, the no-parking regulations are not strictly enforced. This practice not only blocks the few pedestrian routes that exist around town, but also puts undue stress on the sidewalks themselves, causing cracking, buckling and the need for more frequent repairs.

Public Transportation

The *Municipal Growth Planning Study: Phase II* identifies a desire for business growth in four municipalities – Dedham, Canton, Westwood, Norwood – while seeking to minimize the transportation impacts of business development and reduce the growth in traffic congestion and cut-through traffic in these communities.²⁵

Public transportation in Dedham is substantial, but not adequate to meet the growing needs of the town. MBTA commuter rail and bus service do not provide access to the areas west of Providence Highway or to the business areas along Providence Highway between High Street and the Westwood town line. These areas of Dedham are experiencing significant growth. Without improved public transportation access, it will be difficult to minimize the vehicular impacts of new developments.

²⁵ Daylor Consulting Group, *Municipal Growth Planning Study-Phase II*, May 2002.

With nearly eighty percent of Dedham residents commuting to work by driving alone, there may be opportunities to increase use of public transportation. Since approximately thirty percent of Dedham residents work in Boston and about fifteen percent of Dedham workers live in Boston, improving bus and rail connections between Dedham and Boston could result in increases in public transportation usage.²⁶

Transit-Oriented Development

Dedham's potential to encourage transit-oriented development is a major transportation opportunity. Transit-oriented development, or TOD, is a form of development centered around transit nodes, featuring higher densities and a mix of uses, including residential uses. In this way, TOD encapsulates many of the objectives of smart growth by promoting more efficient land use, walkability, access to jobs, transportation alternatives, and a diversity of housing options.

Dedham is fortunate to have two commuter rail stations: the Dedham Corporate MBTA Station and the Endicott Station, and both are prospective TOD locations. TOD is both a land use and transportation issue. (*For discussion of land use and economic development aspects of TOD, see Chapter 4, Land Use.*) From a transportation perspective, realizing the objectives of TOD requires increasing and maximizing local and regional bus, walking, bicycle, and car/vanpool connections to both stations, making them fully functioning multi-modal transportation hubs that are integrated with their neighborhoods or other surroundings. Dedham needs to assess and plan for (together with land use considerations) greater transportation connectivity at both of its commuter rail stations to create multi-modal transit hubs that can support increased development, sustain employment, and become successful centers in their own right.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CONSIDER CREATING A TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE THE TOWN'S

²⁶ Census 2000, Summary File 3, "QT-P23: Journey to Work: 2000."

DIVERSE TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES AND ADVOCATE FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

Dedham has a number of roadway projects from the 1996 Master Plan that have not yet been implemented. There needs to be ongoing evaluation as to whether these projects are still relevant and if so, advocacy for their implementation. In addition, the group should oversee other critical aspects of the town's transportation systems, such as improving its bus service, pedestrian and bike routes.

2. WORK WITH JBL BUS LINES AND THE MBTA TO EXTEND BUS SERVICE TO EMPLOYMENT CENTERS, RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, AND GROWTH AREAS SUCH AS LEGACY PLACE AND NEWBRIDGE ON THE CHARLES.

While Dedham's public transportation services are substantial, they are inadequate to meet the town's growing needs. One of the ways public transportation could offer greater mobility for Dedham residents is through improved bus service. The town should advocate for better overall performance from JBL Bus Lines as there have been complaints irregular service and failure to follow designated routes. The need for increased transit service in Dedham is clear: many previously completed studies express the need to increase transit use to ensure Dedham's transportation future. With most growth in Dedham occurring on the periphery, transit access and service must increase to these areas. Additionally, Dedham increasingly is looking to new developments to raise transit mode shares, and minimize single-occupancy vehicle travel. Dedham should seek to couple expanded transit service with targeted mode share goals for new developments. Community outreach and input should accompany proposed changes and expansions to transit service.

3. CREATE A TOWN-WIDE TRAFFIC CALMING POLICY TO INSTITUTE TRAFFIC CALMING IN VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

Traffic calming is a general term for a wide range of physical interventions that cause minor inconveniences along a vehicle's path of travel, causing cars to travel more slowly or avoid a route all together. Dedham is appropriate for this type of

strategy because it is edged by major highways and its roadway network contains several major arterials that experience congestion during peak travel hours, increasing the incidence of cut-through traffic. The traffic calming policy would not be a plan for where traffic calming should be placed, but rather a process by which traffic calming interventions could be evaluated for a certain area, and if appropriate, a traffic calming plan be created. Each area or neighborhood in Dedham will require a different traffic calming solution.

4. DEVELOP A TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) POLICY AND DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH ITS LARGER COMPANIES TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO ADOPT TDM PROVISIONS.

With its presence of large companies, Dedham is in a good position to work with private businesses to establish TDM strategies. TDM is a term used for strategies that private businesses use to encourage their employees to carpool or use transit rather than commute in single-occupancy vehicles. Additionally, the town could incorporate TDM requirements into some of its permitting process by requiring a TDM plan for project approval.

5. CONDUCT A REVIEW OF STREETS THAT PRESENT PARKING PROBLEMS AND USE THEM AS A BASIS TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR ALLOWING AND MANAGING PARKING ON RESIDENTIAL STREETS.

By suburban standards, many of Dedham's residential streets are old and residents have stated that parking on them is becoming increasingly difficult.²⁷ Streets without appropriate width or those that have experienced significant traffic increases may need to be re-evaluated for parking. Guidelines should reflect current auto-ownership trends, which are substantively different from those dating from when these streets were built. Ideally, a review would look at whether the town should make two-way streets one-way to allow for additional parking or to minimize on street conflicts. The Fire Department, Public Works Department, and other emergency response agencies should be involved in any review or establishment of guidelines.

²⁷ Master Plan Public Working Meeting, 17 November 2007.

A related step the town could take immediately to address parking issues on older residential streets would be to enforce no-parking regulations for sidewalks in these areas, where the presence of autos is clearly inappropriate. In Dedham, the police department is responsible for parking enforcement, and there should be a concerted effort to ticket motorists who continue to park their vehicles on sidewalks. Dedham could also raise parking violation fines, which are controlled by the Board of Selectmen.

6. MAINTAIN SIDEWALKS AND KEEP THEM FREE AND CLEAR FOR PEDESTRIANS.

In recent years, Dedham has cared for its sidewalks by treating them much like roads and incorporating them into the Department of Public Work's pavement management system. The pavement management system assesses, programs, and budgets for sidewalk improvement needs in conjunction with roadway paving needs, which allows for more efficient use of the DPW's time and resources, and results in more attention to pedestrian infrastructure overall. The establishment of this system has been beneficial to both roadway and sidewalk maintenance and should be continued.

7. WORK WITH MASSHIGHWAY TO PREPARE AN ACCESS MANAGEMENT STUDY FOR PROVIDENCE HIGHWAY THAT EXAMINES ACCESS ALONG THE ROAD AS A WHOLE, NOT ON A REQUEST-BY-REQUEST BASIS.

The Access Management Study should develop recommendations to manage the continued proliferation of access points. The newly released MassHighway Design Guide has implemented new access regulations, which may be applicable to the current situation on Providence Highway. Dedham recognizes that MassHighway has final jurisdiction on curb cuts on this roadway.

The most important product of such a study would be a recommended strategy for future access requests as well as identification of access consolidation opportunities. Given the new regulations, the town should approach MassHighway

to assist with funding the study as a demonstration project.

8. CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE LOCAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE OF DEDHAM SQUARE AND MAKE STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS TO ENSURE ITS ONGOING VITALITY AND BALANCE.

The Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study, through a series of recommendations, proposes a framework for the integration of proposed developments and ensures the continued growth in the Square. Because Dedham Square is a pedestrian-oriented environment but also one that must process and accommodate significant traffic and parking, many of these recommendations are transportation-related, including:

- ◆ Seek redevelopment of the Keystone lot and others sites that provide a mix of and pedestrian oriented retail on key streets.
- ◆ Conduct a detailed traffic and parking study to determine future parking needs.
- ◆ Investigate the potential to create additional public parking, including a technical and feasibility study for a parking garage.
- ◆ Coordinate with the planning and design for the Norfolk County Court expansion.
- ◆ Consider the creation of a local parking authority to manage downtown facilities.²⁸

Dedham should seek state and federal assistance with funding to complete further Dedham Square transportation and parking studies, which will be necessary as planning for the Norfolk County Court expansion continues. Also, as Legacy Place will surely further challenge retailing in Dedham Square, the town should begin planning for its influence now, by quantifying transportation demand and directing the nature of growth in

Dedham Square to ensure its continued transportation viability.

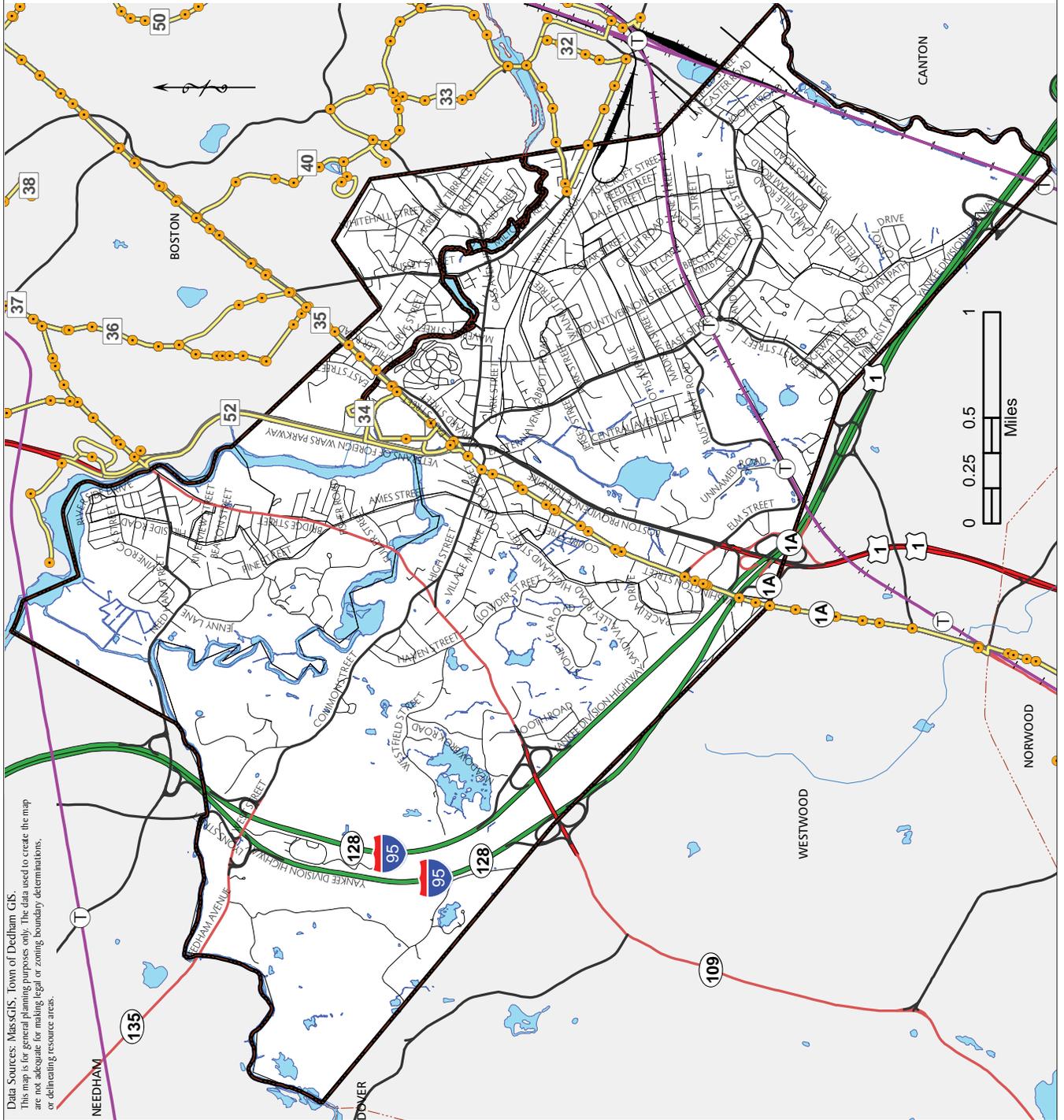
One of the particular areas that Dedham should focus on is its parking requirements for mixed-use and retail developments such as Dedham Square. There are a number of industry and planning standards that could be applicable to development in the Square and should be reviewed on a site-by-site basis. These include the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), and the Urban Land Institute (ULI), all of which have developed standards and guidelines to determine parking ratios for different types of developments, especially in urbanized areas. Shared parking requirements and standards are also continually evolving and should be factored into the final determination of parking needs at a given site.

²⁸ The Cecil Group, *Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study*, 25 June 2007.

Map 4.1 Roadways, Railroads, and MBTA Bus Service March 2009

KEY

-  Open Water
-  MBTA Bus Stops
-  MBTA Bus Routes
-  Municipal Boundary
-  MBTA Stations
-  Lines
- ROADWAYS**
-  Limited Access Highway
-  Multi-Lane Highway
-  Other Numbered Highway
-  Major Road, Collector
-  Local Roads



Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS
 This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning, boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
 Larry Koff & Associates
 McMahon Associates, Inc.
 Stephen Herzog

CHAPTER 5

CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

For many people, the term “historic resource” conjures an image of the quintessential colonial house. However, historic resources are so much more than 200-year-old homes. They include any physical remnant from a community’s past, including objects, buildings, structures, and roadways. Dedham has not only historic homes, but also civic buildings, mill structures, stone walls, cemeteries, stone bridges, and scenic roads, and all contribute to the town’s historic character and sense of place. Each of these resources – some portraying Dedham’s rural past, others its industrial heritage – are inextricably knit together to provide a unique built environment. These resources exist throughout the community and can be found within all of Dedham’s historic neighborhoods. Each resource has its own unique story to tell.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Neighborhoods

Historically, Dedham developed as a series of distinct neighborhoods as former farmlands were systematically subdivided for house lots. Many of the neighborhoods are defined not only by natural features and man-made boundaries, but also by their unique development patterns and the architectural styles of their buildings. Dedham’s seven identifiable neighborhoods include **East Dedham**, **Greenlodge**, **Sprague** (Capen-Manor), **Oakdale**, **Riverdale**, the **Village**, and **Dexter** (often referred to as Upper Dedham or West Dedham).¹ Neigh-

¹ Kenneth M. Kreutziger, *Dedham Master Plan* (March 1996), IV-4. Neighborhoods identified in the *Dedham Master Plan* and the 2004-2009 *Open Space &*



Norfolk County Jail Complex, 47 Village Avenue.

borhoods are not static; they continue to evolve and change. Today, Dedham’s neighborhoods present particular challenges for historic resource protection, and they may require individualized preservation strategies in order to protect their special historic features. What works in one neighborhood may not be appropriate for another.

East Dedham generally includes the area east of Washington Street and north of the Mother Brook to the Dedham/Boston line. It initially developed as a mill village, dating back to the first dredging of the Mother Brook canal in the seventeenth century. Early enterprises included grist, saw and fulling mills, while later factories specialized in textiles, paper, lumber, carriages and pottery.² This industrial village continued to prosper over the next century with mills, workers’ housing and associ-

Recreation Plan, largely corresponding with physical features and the boundaries of federal census block groups. See Chapter 2, Map 2.1.

² Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Reconnaissance Survey: Town of Dedham, Massachusetts* (1981), 7.

ated commercial, social and religious buildings constructed for the influx of immigrant workers drawn to work in the mills. However, most of industrial activity in East Dedham eventually declined and the neighborhood lost its industrial identity. Today, sections of East Dedham still contain remnants of its industrial heritage in surviving mill buildings, modest nineteenth century workers' cottages and multi-family dwellings, and immigrant-associated establishments such as churches and social clubs. Other clues to the area's industrial past can be seen in local street names, such as Pottery Lane and views of Mother Brook.



Mother Brook, viewed from the Alimed Company, Maverick Street.

Upland from the Charles River is another village that developed during the seventeenth century: **Dedham Village**. Development here differed significantly from the architecture of the mill village, both functionally and stylistically. Located near the town's geographic center, Dedham Village developed around a confluence of transportation routes, namely the Boston and Providence Post Road (now High Street and Court Street). Activity along these early roadways spurred the development of commercial, civic, religious, and residential buildings along a typical village street pattern.

The designation of Dedham as the Norfolk County Seat in 1793 accelerated the transformation of this once-rural farming community to a prosperous civic and commercial center, and ultimately to the suburb that exists today. Dedham Village retains its historic character with a well-preserved and diverse collection of architectural styles, including grand single-family residences rendered in a variety of historic styles, a monumental granite Greek Revival court house, a Gothic Revival former prison, a limestone Neoclassical Registry of Deeds, a Romanesque Revival public library and Queen Anne style commercial blocks.

The outlying areas of Dedham, including the neighborhoods of **Greenlodge, Oakdale, Riverdale** and Endicott, remained primarily agricultural until

the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The mid-century arrival of train service triggered demand for housing, and family farms were subdivided to make way for new homes. By 1870, the first large-scale residential development was underway in Endicott Station and would continue for the rest of the century. The Oakdale and Elmwood neighborhoods were under construction by 1876. Oakdale included a small commercial node known as Oakdale Square, while Elmwood included the "presidential" streets, Madison, Jefferson, Monroe, and Adams. The neighborhood of **Greenlodge** was developed by the mid-twentieth century, with its distinct topography, large irregular lots and 1950s housing stock of capes, split-levels and ranch-style homes.

The neighborhood referred to both as **Dexter** and **West Dedham** has the lowest density of development in town due in part to its topography. West Dedham generally includes all of the land west of Dedham Village and north to the Charles River. The area has many steep slopes, granite outcroppings, wetlands and woodlands. Today, it contains some of Dedham's most significant remaining open space and natural habitats along streams, ponds, and wetlands. The scenic beauty of this area attracted wealthy businessmen to the "country," and they constructed impressive estates during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Historic Buildings

Dedham is blessed with an impressive and well-preserved collection of historic buildings representing more than three hundred years of development, from the arrival of English settlers in the seventeenth century through Dedham's evolution as a suburb in the mid-twentieth century. The historic buildings represent many of the architectural styles popular during the past 350 years, including a First Period structure from the seventeenth century, Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival styles popular during the early eighteenth century, the Second Empire, Gothic Revival and Italianate styles fashionable in the mid-nineteenth century; the Romanesque, Queen Anne and Shingle Styles popular during the late nineteenth century; and the Revival styles of the early- to mid-twentieth century. These styles are represented in "high-style" architect-designed buildings and more modest "vernacular" versions constructed by local builders, and they are rendered on a variety of building forms, including residential, commercial, religious, institutional, industrial and governmental buildings.

Most of Dedham's historic buildings are well-preserved, exhibiting the hallmark details of their respective styles, from the classical and symmetrical designs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the exuberant architectural trim of the late nineteenth century Victorian era. This built environment defines Dedham's visual character today and provides a tangible link to the town's past. Previous historic resource inventory efforts concentrated primarily on documenting the historic residential and institutional buildings in Dedham Village, where most of the town's preservation planning efforts have also focused. While efforts to document other resources in town have been limited, this does not mean that Dedham has no historic resources outside of Dedham Village.

Dedham residents have long recognized the importance of preserving historic buildings. The town was one of the first in the area to establish local historic districts under M.G.L. c. 40C, for in 1975, Dedham designated two districts within Dedham Village. In addition, Dedham recently designated

a large section of Dedham Village to the National Register of Historic Places. The Dedham Historical Society's publication, *Building Dedham: Celebrating 350 Years of History*, provides a comprehensive overview of Dedham's historic buildings, including an historic narrative on Dedham's development, a composite of architectural styles and building types represented in the town and photographs and descriptions of notable individual buildings.³

While most of Dedham's historic buildings are privately owned, several are held in public and non-profit ownership, including local educational institutions. Today, the town maintains ownership of several older structures, including the Public Library and the Endicott Estate, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and several neighborhood schools and fire stations. These older structures can present challenges for a municipality as it struggles to balance competing demands for local revenue with rising maintenance costs for aging buildings. Determining ways to provide regular, historically sensitive maintenance is critical to ensure each building's long-term viability and historic significance. Deferred maintenance only leads to higher costs in the future and the potential for an irreplaceable loss of a community's heritage.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of Dedham's residential architecture is the visual diversity of its historic housing stock, both in terms of styles represented and building form and scale. This diversity clearly displays the town's social, economic and developmental history through the range of vernacular, modest housing to more ornate manor homes.

The historic single-family homes of Dedham Village and the late nineteenth and early twentieth century neighborhoods of Oakdale, Endicott and Greenlodge are generally well-preserved and contribute significantly to the character of their respective neighborhoods. Workers' housing

³ Electra Kane Tritsh, ed. *Building Dedham: Celebrating 350 Years of History* (Dedham Historical Society, 1986).

in East Dedham, including single-family, duplex, and multi-family dwellings along High, Milton, Colburn, Maverick, and Bussey Streets, still exist today and represent the area's industrial heritage. While more modest in scale and less architecturally distinct than buildings elsewhere in Dedham, these homes are historically important and they continue to provide affordable housing, much as they did during the industrial era.



The Endicott Estate.

Today, many of the homes in East Dedham have been altered by the installation of synthetic siding, but their scale and massing remain intact and many buildings still retain exterior detailing along rooflines and entrances. Maintenance will continue to be a challenge for property owners as lead paint and deteriorating materials add to maintenance costs. Dedham has not yet experienced the tear-down phenomenon found in other communities, but deferred maintenance can cause the irreplaceable loss of historic building fabric.

Dedham has some of the area's most impressive historic estates. Similar estates elsewhere in the Commonwealth have been subdivided and their mansions either demolished or redeveloped as condominiums, but most of Dedham's historic mansions have been preserved intact with several retaining their extensive grounds. This has occurred in part through the conversion of residential properties into educational or public facilities. For example:

- ◆ The **Endicott Estate** (1904) was designed by Boston architect Henry Bailey Alden. Built for shoe manufacturer Henry Bradford Endicott, a founder of Endicott-Johnson Shoe Corporation in New York, this elegant two-and-one-half story Colonial Revival style residence is articulated with corner pilasters, an elaborate

cornice, a Palladian window, prominent corbelled chimneys and a Doric columned porticochere representative of high-style Colonial Revival detailing. In 1955, the Endicott Estate was donated to the town and it is now used for community functions.

- ◆ The **Endicott House** (1931) on Westfield and Haven Streets was originally the estate of Brigadier General Stephen Minot Weld, who built an imposing mansion on twenty-five acres of rocky hilltop in the late nineteenth century. J. Wendell Endicott purchased the estate in 1931 and maintained the gardens and grounds but razed the Weld mansion, replacing it with a French manor style mansion designed by prominent New York architect Charles Platt. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) acquired the property in 1955 and maintains the estate for alumni functions.⁴
- ◆ The **Albert Nickerson House** or "The Castle" (1888) at 507 Bridge Street is a large Romanesque style structure designed by the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge for the president of the Arlington Woolen Mills and director of the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. It is the only residential example

⁴ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *Endicott House*, <www.mitendicotthouse.org/about_history>.

of this style in Dedham. The building has a richly colored stone façade, distinctive towers, recessed porches, arched entry, and steeply pitched roof, and it is maintained within the 158-acre campus of the Noble and Greenough School.⁵

- ◆ The **Haven House** on the corner of Ames and High Streets is a Federal Style mansion attributed to Charles Bulfinch. The building is now owned by the Dedham Community House (DCH), founded in 1922 as a charitable, non-profit association. The DCH originally acquired the property for use as a community center and has preserved the Haven House as a function facility. Today, the DCH property includes two other older buildings, the “Stone House” and the “cottage” on Bullard Street within its eight-acre campus along the Charles River.

The Haven House is rented for functions and DCH operates recreation programs and classes in their other buildings and on the grounds. DCH recently completed a master plan for the property, including plans for a new playground, boathouse and dock on the Charles River. The plan recommended preservation of the Community House, renovation of the Stone House for a preschool, and retention of the cottage for future growth or rental income.⁶ This property is located within the **Franklin Square Local Historic District**.

Other educational and cultural institutions operating within historic properties include the **Dedham Country Day School** at 90 Sandy Valley Road; the **Ursuline Convent and School** at 85 Lowder Street; **Northeastern University** on Common Street; and the **Society of African Missions** on Common Street.

Only the Haven House is protected from unsympathetic exterior alterations through its inclusion in the Franklin Square-Court Street Local Historic

District. The other buildings have no such protection. While public sentiment alone may be enough to protect them, there are no restrictions in place to require these architecturally significant buildings to be preserved, both in terms of their exterior details as well as their significant interiors.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

Although Dedham has a rich industrial history, the town has not specifically documented the physical resources that remain from this legacy. A review of Dedham’s cultural resource inventory and a visual inspection of the town indicate that at least two mill buildings remain in East Dedham: the Stone Mill (1834) of the Norfolk Manufacturing Company (1830-1915) at 90 Milton Street, and a large brick mill, now occupied by the Alimed Company along Mother Brook on Maverick Street. The Stone Mill, located on the banks of Mother Brook, was renovated into residential condominiums in the 1990s, preserving its distinctive dome-roofed cupola and granite stone façade.

CIVIC BUILDINGS

Surprisingly, the town itself owns very few historic properties. Buildings under the care and custody of the town represent types usually owned by a municipality: a public library, a fire station, school buildings, and a public works facility. Located throughout Dedham, these structures are in various states of preservation.

The **Dedham Public Library** (1888) at 43 Church Street is an impressive Romanesque Revival style building designed by architects Van Brunt and Howe. Constructed of Dedham pink granite with decorative red sandstone trim and red slate roof, the building’s distinctive features include the original entrance accented with a checkerboard pattern of granite and green slate, and clustered colonnettes on a cylindrical tower with a copper clad dome. Alterations made to the building in the 1950s do not detract from its architectural significance. More recently, the library trustees completed a restoration of the building’s slate roof with guidance from the Dedham Historic District Commission and a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF). As a condition of the grant, Dedham was

⁵ Noble and Greenough School, <www.nobles.edu/home>.

⁶ Dedham Community Association, *Dedham Community House*, <www.dedhamcommunityhouse.org>.

required to place a preservation restriction on the building.

Other historic buildings owned by the town include the **Upper Village Fire House** (1908) at 25 Westfield Street in Connecticut Corner, and the **Bridge Street Pumping Station** (1881) at 536 Bridge Street. The brick pumping station was designed by Ernest N. Boyden in the Romanesque Revival style, similar to other public water supply buildings constructed throughout country.

Dedham's neighborhoods are still served by neighborhood elementary schools, many located within historic buildings dating to the establishment of the neighborhood. These buildings, rendered in Georgian and Renaissance Revival styles, serve as local landmarks. Dedham has not surveyed the school buildings as part of its historic resource inventory, and none of the schools are located within historic districts. The **Oakdale School**, although modified with later additions, is generally well-preserved. Dedham recently restored the third-floor auditorium space, which had been vacant for fifty years. The school established the "Hidden Treasures Project" to raise funds to renovate the space for a new library.

Balancing the desire to preserve historic buildings with state requirements for educational facilities can present unique, often insurmountable challenges for public school districts. Dedham is currently proposing to renovate the Avery School for a new use when it constructs a new school building on the same property. In the past, Dedham has decommissioned school buildings and allowed them to be adapted for new uses. For example, the Ames Schoolhouse (1898) at 450 Washington Street was sold and renovated for commercial office space while the Dexter School on Dexter Street was sold and converted into residential use when it was decommissioned as a school in the late 1950s.

Dedham also owns the historic **Endicott Estate**, which it acquired in 1955 when the original owner's daughter bequeathed the estate to the town. The town assumed ownership upon her death in 1967. The estate encompasses an entire block within

the Endicott neighborhood, and serves both as a neighborhood landmark and a large expanse of open space within an otherwise developed suburban area. The Endicott Estate is used for public and private functions and meeting space for town boards and local organizations, and the grounds are available for passive recreation. The Endicott Estate Commission, which oversees the property, has prepared a master plan for it and is currently completing infrastructure improvements in order to facilitate continued public use, particularly for large gatherings. The work includes installation of a paved parking area at the rear of the estate house. The site retains large mature trees and expansive lawn areas. It is important that improvements to the property do not detract from its historic significance or detract from the remaining open space.

Dedham's long history as the Norfolk County Seat has resulted in an impressive collection of government buildings in Dedham Village. These exceptionally well-preserved masonry buildings make a significant contribution to the town's cultural identity and more specifically to the streetscape of Dedham Village. The **Norfolk County Courthouse** was one of the first county structures built in Dedham Village. Originally constructed in 1827 and designed by Boston architect Solomon Willard, this imposing Greek Revival style granite building has a Doric-columned portico along the High Street façade. Later nineteenth century additions designed by Gridley J. F. Bryant (who also designed the Dedham Jail on Village Street) and Wait and Cutter only add to the building's architectural prominence and iconic appearance. Other county buildings include the **Norfolk County Registry of Deeds** (1902) at 649 High Street, an impressive limestone structure designed in the Neoclassical style by Peabody and Stearns, and the **Norfolk District Court** (1938) also constructed in limestone in the Art Deco style by the architectural firm of Cram and Ferguson.

Other government buildings include Dedham's **Post Office** (1934) at 611 High Street, constructed as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project when the federal government instituted public works programs during the Great Depression. In keeping with WPA building tradition, this



Norfolk County Courthouse.

building is constructed in brick in the Colonial Revival style. These government buildings continue to be used in their original civic capacity and contribute significantly to the overall visual and historic character of Dedham Village.

Located a block away from the main commercial district of the Village, the **Norfolk County Jail** (1851) at 47 Village Avenue is nestled within a residential neighborhood. This complex includes the massive granite jail structure designed by Gridley J. F. Bryant in a cruciform plan, with arched gothic windows and central cupola as well as a Sheriff's residence (1880) and an Italianate style carriage barn.⁷ The Jail was abandoned in 1993 and the structures remained vacant for several years. In the late 1990s, the Jail, the attached Sheriff's residence and the carriage house were renovated for residential condominiums.

⁷ Dedham Historical Society, Newsletter (July 1998).

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Dedham Square has served as Dedham's civic, cultural and commercial center since the town's inception as the Norfolk County Seat in the eighteenth century. Early highway and rail service into Dedham Square helped to solidify this area as a local and regional destination. Dedham Square contains an impressive collection of historic commercial structures, including several designed by noted Boston architects. The **Dedham Institution for Savings** at 601-603 High Street is one such example. The building was constructed in 1892 and designed by the Boston firm of Hartwell & Richardson in the Romanesque Revival style, with a high-pitched roof, steep dormers, arched doorways and terra cotta details, all common elements of the style.⁸

Later commercial structures in Dedham Square include one- and two-story blocks constructed in the early and mid-twentieth century, which contribute significantly to the area's overall character. Most are well-preserved, and they retain street-

⁸ *Building Dedham*, 68

level commercial use in the storefronts. Several recent improvement projects have occurred in the square. A local citizens group recently raised funds to restore the original marquee of the **Community Theater** and today it serves as an important downtown feature. Another recent improvement project to install storefront awnings provides a uniform appearance to Dedham Square, but ultimately screens the storefront's architectural details from public view.

The 1996 *Master Plan* recognized the important role historic preservation plays in Dedham Square's vitality. "The distinguished history of Dedham and the retention of many of its old and historic buildings are a good foundation for reinforcing and enhancing the vitality of Dedham Square. These structures are important to the image of Dedham Square and to the town's historic heritage."⁹ Churches, the former Ames School, the Dedham Institute for Savings Bank building, the Historical Society, the Public Library, the Norfolk County Superior Court, District Court and Registry of Deeds, the Dedham Community House, and a varied collection of multi-storied Victorian-era and early twentieth century commercial blocks are all located within Dedham Center.

However, the town's historic commercial structures are not limited to Dedham Square. Small neighborhood retail districts developed in association with Dedham's neighborhoods. Many of these districts contain single-story concrete commercial blocks representative of turn-of-the-century development. Oakdale Square's commercial blocks, religious structures, and small landscaped common help to define this neighborhood and also provide community services.

CHURCHES

Dedham's religious structures represent the various architectural styles associated with ecclesiastical design over the past several centuries. Traditional wood meetinghouse style churches, grand stone Gothic Revival churches, and modest Revival style neighborhood churches are all represented in Dedham. As with other historic resources

in Dedham, many of the churches have not been documented within the town's cultural resource inventory.

The two meetinghouse style wood-frame churches in Dedham Village contribute significantly to the Village's quintessential New England village appeal. The Greek Revival **Allin Congregational Church** (1819) at 683 High Street, with its flush-board façade, tall palladian window, pilastered corners, and steeple with octagonal cupola, and **The First Church** (1762, 1820) at 670 High Street with its pedimented gables, pilasters and steeple, serve as neighborhood landmarks. The Gothic Revival **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** (1859) at 59 Court Street and **St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel/Brick Chapel** (1875) 76 Church Street stand in stark contrast to the earlier churches in the village, with their roughcut stone facades, steeply pitched roofs, pointed arch lancet windows, and buttresses.

Neighborhood churches such as the **Church of Good Shepherd** (1876) at 60 Cedar Street in Oakdale Village represent the conversion of Dedham's rural farmland into residential areas. This stucco and half-timbered Gothic Revival Church was constructed to serve residents of the Oakdale neighborhood. St. Mary's Church and the adjoining St. Mary' School buildings are remnants of a once-thriving Irish immigrant population that worked in the mills of East Dedham. While most of Dedham's churches continue to be used for religious purposes, St. Mary's School is vacant and the town is seeking to purchase the property. Religious congregations throughout the Commonwealth face the challenge of maintaining and heating their older buildings in the face of dwindling populations and limited finances. Many expand their efforts to serve as community gathering centers while others share their buildings with other religious and non-profit groups.

MUSEUMS

Dedham has two museums: the Dedham Museum and Archives at 612 High Street and the Fairbanks House at 511 East Street.

⁹ *Dedham Master Plan*, IV-11.

The Dedham Historical Society operates the **Dedham Museum and Archives** (1888), a brick Romanesque Revival building designed by architect Edwin J. Lewis with distinctive arches, church-like buttresses, a large Palladian window and slate roof. The Museum contains a lecture/display hall on the first floor and an extensive archive on the basement level. The Archive includes genealogical records, town records, maps, photographs, glass plate negatives, family histories, maps and other local ephemera. The

Museum houses a collection of furnishings and artifacts ranging from pre-Columbian stone tools and the 1652 Metcalf great chair (the oldest dated American-made chair) to an extensive collection of Dedham and Chelsea pottery. The museum also includes rotating exhibits, decorative arts associated with Dedham, including a silver collection by local Arts and Crafts silversmith Katherine Pratt, furniture, and works by local artists such as Alvin Fisher and Lillian and Phillip Hale.

The **Fairbanks House Museum** is maintained and operated as a house museum, exhibiting the furnishings collected by eight generations of the Fairbanks family as well as the home's significance as the oldest standing timber frame house in North America.¹⁰ The **Fairbanks House** (1637) is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a "First Period" building. Although the home was added onto over time, many of the hallmark characteristics of First Period architecture (1625-1725) are still evident, including medieval building features such as a steeply-pitched roofline and lean-to additions, a prominent central chimney, and an asymmetrical fenestration pattern. The property is still owned by the Fairbanks family trust, which opens the house for public tours on a seasonal basis.

¹⁰ *The Fairbanks House Historical Site*, <www.fairbankshouse.org>



Church of the Good Shepherd, Cedar Street.

Scenic Landscapes

Open space and scenic landscapes contribute as much to Dedham's cultural identity and sense of place as its historic structures. Dedham has a wealth of landscapes that retain their natural and scenic qualities. The town's rivers, brooks, ponds and lakes provide some of the community's most picturesque vistas, along with its wooded parcels and open space. In contrast, **heritage landscapes** are those created by human interaction with the land.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) operates the Historic Landscape Inventory Program, which helps cities and towns identify heritage landscapes and determine appropriate preservation planning initiatives to protect them. DCR's publication *Reading the Land, Massachusetts Heritage Landscapes: A Guide to Identification and Protection* provides a definitive explanation of heritage landscapes and their community value.¹¹ In Dedham, sections of Mother Brook in East Dedham (considered to be the first canal in America dug by English settlers) and town-owned resources such as Oakdale Common, Dedham Common,

¹¹ See Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Reading the Land, Massachusetts Heritage Landscapes: A Guide to Identification and Protection* (April 2003).

and Little Common are examples of resources that would be included in a heritage landscape survey.

Dedham Common, or the Great Common/Training Ground, was first created in 1644, although it was later bisected by Bridge Street in 1828. This large triangular-shaped green, located within the Connecticut Corner Local Historic District, contributes significantly to Dedham Village's traditional New England character. **Little Common**, at the First Parish Church on High and Court Streets, is the last remaining open parcel of land from the original 1638 landholdings of the Church and one of the last green spaces adjacent to Dedham Center.

Dedham is unique in that approximately 290 acres are owned by private educational institutions.¹² These schools are located in the western section of Dedham on land previously developed as estates. For example, the **Ursuline Academy** occupies the former estate of Isabella Stewart Gardner's nephew, designed by Guy Lowell, architect of the Museum of Fine Arts. Northeastern University's College of Professional Studies Dedham campus is located on land originally part of the Stephen Weld estate. While new construction has occurred on these estates, the impact has been fairly limited and significant open space remains. As such, the schools contribute significantly to the rural character of Dedham. However, none of the schools is located within the town's historic district and the landscapes remain vulnerable to future development. These institutions could choose to sell portions of their land for financial or other reasons, significantly altering the character of town.

Scenic Roadways

One of the major features that contribute to Dedham's rural character is its scenic roadways.



Stone wall on Westfield Street, along the rear of the MIT/Endicott House property.

Many of them date to Dedham's early history and represent historic transportation routes established more than 300 years ago. Particularly in the western sections of Dedham, these roads maintain such rural characteristics as narrow pavements, winding patterns and adjoining stone walls, mature trees and vegetation.

In 1992, Dedham considered adopting a Scenic Roads bylaw under the Scenic Roads Act (M.G.L. c. 41, s. 15C) but local opposition at Town Meeting caused the proposal to be tabled. Both the 1996 *Master Plan* and the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* recommended that Dedham adopt a Scenic Roads bylaw and identified specific roads worthy of designation: Needham Street/Pine Street/Ames Street; Common Street/West Street; Dedham Boulevard; Highland Street; Haven Street/Lowder Street; High Street/Mill Lane (from the Common through Dedham Square to Mother Brook); Washington Street/Court Street; Walnut Street; Oakdale Avenue/Cedar Street; East Street; and Sprague Street.

Stone Walls

Dry laid stone walls once served as property boundaries for agricultural fields. Today, these walls testify to the historic development pattern of land ownership and agricultural use, and provide

¹² *Dedham Open Space and Recreation Plan (2004).*

physical evidence of Dedham's agrarian heritage. Stone walls in Dedham can be found within now-forested land, along its scenic roadways, and bordering the perimeter of its remaining open space. The physical nature of these structures belies their inherent fragility; deferred maintenance and natural erosion cause many dry-laid stone walls to deteriorate. Dedham does not have an inventory of its stone walls, but some notable examples can be seen along Lowder Street, one of the town's most picturesque rural roadways.

Perhaps even more notable is Dedham's collection of mortared stone walls, which define the historic estates in West Dedham and serve as property boundaries for the historic homes in Dedham Village and other historic neighborhoods. These tall, masonry walls, some with arched openings and elaborate entrance details, provide the boundary definition for educational institutions such as MIT's Endicott House and the Noble and Greenough School. As with the town's dry laid stone walls, the mortared walls are located in close proximity to the pavement of adjoining roads and contribute significantly to the scenic character of these roadways.

Historic Structures

Dedham's most significant historic structure is the **Dedham Powder House**. Located on Ames Street near the Charles River, the Dedham Powder House was constructed in 1766 by Captain Fuller as a powder magazine for the Revolutionary War. It is a small, one-story brick structure with a distinctive concave hipped roof nestled on a wooded parcel above the Charles River. Ownership is complicated, with the town retaining care and custody of the structure while the land remains under the ownership of the Dedham Historical Society. Due to the secluded location of the Powder House and liability concerns, little work has been undertaken on the building and it has deteriorated over the years. The Historical Society funded repairs to the wood roof and painted portions of the structure several years ago, and interest remains high in ultimately restoring it. The image of the Dedham Powder House is represented on many town documents. The *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* specifically

recommended that a historic landscape plan be completed for the Powder House site.

Historic Objects

According to Dedham's historic resources inventory, the town has a number of historic monuments, plaques and markers documenting the community's historic events. Most of the objects listed in the inventory are located within Dedham Village. They include:

- ◆ The **Marine Memorial War Monument** (1957) on Washington Street;
- ◆ The **Dedham War Memorial** (1963) in front of Town Building on Bryant and Washington Streets;
- ◆ The **Pillar of Liberty** (1766) on Court and High Streets;
- ◆ The **Fisher Ames Marker** and **Suffolk Resolves Marker** (both ca. 1905) on High Street; and
- ◆ The **French Encampment Plaque** (1926) on Court and Marsh Streets.

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

The town maintains two public cemeteries: the Village Cemetery (est. 1678) at 30 Village Avenue and the larger Brookdale Cemetery (est. 1878). The town recently hired Vollmer Associates to complete planning studies for both cemeteries.

The **Village Cemetery/Old Town Burial Ground**, Dedham's oldest burial ground, is located within Dedham Village off Village Avenue and Bullard Street.¹³ This four-acre burial ground includes more than 1,000 gravestones dating from 1678, including early slate markers and later Victorian monuments. The cemetery is defined by mature trees and ornamental iron fencing, some of which needs restoration. The town recently designated

¹³ N.B. This burial ground is identified by several names. The recent Open Space and Recreation Plan lists it as the Old Village Burial Ground.

the Village Cemetery within the Franklin Square Local Historic District and completed a Preservation Management Plan in order to assess the cemetery's current condition and develop a restoration plan.¹⁴ The rural character of the cemetery stands in sharp contrast with the imposing granite façade of the former Norfolk County Jail across the street.

The **Brookdale Cemetery** is a forty-seven acre cemetery designed in the rural landscape movement style with meandering paths, hilly terrain, and picturesque landscape features. The cemetery is highlighted by a large entrance gate and it includes Victorian-era monuments as well as more contemporary stones. Dedham has completed a master plan for this cemetery, too. The plan includes an assessment of the condition of the grounds and facilities, anticipates needs of the cemetery over the next several years, identifies needed improvements, and outlines potential phased construction of improvements over next twenty years.¹⁵

Archaeological Resources

Dedham has not conducted a town-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey to identify Native American or historic archaeological resources within its boundaries. The land upon which Dedham is located has a history that extends far beyond that of its English settlers. In fact, Dedham's original road network is based on Native American trails. So, while the town has not completed an archaeological survey or included archaeological sites within its historic resources inventory, significant archaeological resources probably exist within Dedham. Moreover, while only a few mill buildings remain from Dedham's industrial period, industri-



Village Cemetery/Old Town Burial Ground.

al-related artifacts could remain from other mill sites, and historic agrarian and residential-related archaeological sites may also exist.

Significant archaeological sites identified in Dedham will be included in the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) *Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth*. This confidential inventory contains sensitive information and is not a public record. (M.G.L. c. 9, s. 26A (1)). All archaeological site information should be kept in a secure location with restricted access.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS¹⁶

For planning purposes, MHC includes Dedham within the twenty-eight communities of the Boston Region. Preservation planning activity within the region varies, with communities north and west of Boston actively pursuing preservation planning and rehabilitation activities while communities south of Boston have been more limited in their preservation efforts. It makes sense to review preservation planning trends on a sub-regional basis, so this review focuses on Dedham and the surrounding communities of Canton, Dover, Foxborough,

¹⁴ Vollmer Associates, LLP, *Village Cemetery: Preservation Management Plan* (March 2005).

¹⁵ Vollmer Associates, LLP, *Master Plan for Brookdale Cemetery, Dedham, MA* (January 2002).

¹⁶ Information on local and regional trends was gathered from *Massachusetts Preservation Plan* and interviews with Christopher Skelly, Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Medfield, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole and Westwood.¹⁷

Of the towns closest to Dedham, none has a municipal preservation planner on staff and very few provide a working budget for their historical commissions. Dedham has been one of the region's most active communities, for the town has enacted local historic district legislation and submitted National Register nominations. Still, it is the only community highlighted in the *Massachusetts Preservation Plan* for its "outdated, little or no inventory" status. Dedham and Milton are the only two communities that have undertaken rehabilitation projects with matching grants from the Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund (MPPF). Seven communities have enacted demolition delay bylaws, including Canton, Dover, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Needham, Sharon and Walpole. However, Dedham, Norwood, Stoughton and Westwood have not. In addition, Sharon, Needham, and Stoughton are the only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Dedham is one of four communities (including Foxborough, Medfield and Sharon) with local historic district bylaws. While all of the towns in the surrounding region have approved National Register designations, not all have approved National Register *districts*, for several towns have only designated individual buildings.

Preservation Planning in Dedham

LOCAL PRESERVATION CAPACITY

Dedham has two local groups dedicated to the preservation and advocacy of Dedham's historic and cultural resources: the **Dedham Historical Commission**, a municipal board, and the **Dedham Historical Society, Inc.**, a private non-profit organization. Other groups, such as the **Fairbanks House Trustees**, focus on site-specific preservation. Town boards such as the Planning Board and Conservation Commission have also worked cooperatively in the past to preserve Dedham's historic character.

The **Dedham Historic Districts Commission** (HDC) is an appointed town board, chartered with the preservation of the historical and archaeological assets of the town. Founded in 1975, this group is involved in preservation advocacy and planning initiatives including oversight of the town's local historic districts. The HDC operates without a municipal budget and does not have paid town staff or an office at Town Hall. All preservation planning activities are undertaken by the HDC's committed group of volunteers. The HDC meets monthly and reviews approximately eight to ten major renovation projects a year. Most projects reviewed by the HDC involve minor repair work. Recent planning activities include applications to the National Register of Historic Places and expansion of one of the town's local historic districts. In the past, the HDC has provided consultation for projects affecting historic properties when requested, but there are no specific procedures in place to make this a consistent practice.

The **Dedham Historical Society, Inc.** is a private non-profit organization founded in 1859 for the purposes of collecting and preserving records and traditions relating to the history of New England and the Town of Dedham. The Society owns and operates the **Dedham Museum and Archives**, and recently provided financial support for preservation planning initiatives undertaken by the HDC. The Society also provides educational programming to the community through a lecture series, exhibits, tours and school programs, as well as a historic house plaque program and house tours. In addition, the Society maintains an extensive research archive.

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Identifying a community's historic resources through a cultural resource inventory forms the basis of historic preservation planning at the local level. The majority of Dedham's historic resource inventory dates from the mid-1970s (although several forms were completed more recently). To date, the town has submitted 434 properties to MHC's *Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth*. Original copies of the inventory forms are kept at the Dedham Historical Society and MHC.

¹⁷ These twelve communities, including Dedham, are part of the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC).

Resources identified in the inventory date from 1636 to 1980 and include 363 buildings, thirteen objects, thirty-five structures, twenty-two areas, and one burial ground. The inventory forms do not include secondary features such as outbuildings, stone walls, and landscape elements. In general, Dedham’s inventory is not *comprehensive*, for it does not include all types of resources or resources found throughout the town. Perhaps most significant in terms of the town’s preservation planning capacity, Dedham’s completed survey forms have minimal information about each resource’s architectural, historical and contextual significance. This information was not required on forms completed thirty years ago.

According to the *Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Plan*, Dedham has a very outdated inventory.¹⁸ For communities with old inventories or little or no inventory work in place, the state plan recommends initiating a community-wide comprehensive survey. For Dedham, the state plan specifically notes that surveys of pre-1830 buildings should be expanded.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Dedham has two properties designated as National Historic Landmarks by the Secretary of the Interior: **The Fairbanks House** (designated October 9, 1960) and the **Norfolk County Courthouse** (designated November 28, 1972). National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Fewer than 2,500 historic places in the United States have been honored with this national distinction.

¹⁸ Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Plan 2006-2010* (September 2006), 8-3.

**TABLE 5.1
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Historic Name	Date Listed	Number of Properties
<i>Historic Districts</i>		
Allin Congregational Church*	2006	1 contributing
Dedham Historical Society*	2006	1 contributing
Dedham Public Library*	2006	1 contributing
Dedham Village	2006	342 contributing
First Church Meetinghouse*	2006	1 contributing
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church*	2006	2 contributing
<i>Individual Listings</i>		
Ames School	1983	1
Endicott Estate	2002	6
Fairbanks House	1966	1
Norfolk County Courthouse*	1972	1

**These properties are included within the 2006 Dedham Village National Register District, but they are also listed individually in the State Register of Historic Places since each property has a preservation restriction.*

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT AND INDIVIDUAL LISTINGS

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been deemed significant in America history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Dedham has one large National Register District (Map 5.1), five additional properties that are identified individually in the State Register of Historic Places, and four properties that are individually listed in the National Register, as shown in Table 5.1.¹⁹

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Dedham has created three local historic districts under M.G.L. c. 40C. The **Connecticut Corner Historic District** is located on High Street, from Lowder Street to the far point of the Common, and it includes thirty-four properties. The **Franklin Square-Court Street Historic District** includes eighty-seven properties on Court, High, Old River Place, and Village Avenue, as well as all of Church, School and Norfolk Streets and Franklin Square. Both districts were designated in 1975. In 2006, the town approved an expansion of the Franklin Square District to include the Village Cemetery. More recently, the Dedham HDC presented a proposal at the May 2008 Town Meeting to design-

¹⁹ Massachusetts Historical Commission, *State Register of Historic Places 2007*.

nate a new local historic district that includes nineteen properties. Town Meeting passed the proposal unanimously, creating the **Federal Hill Historic District**. The article was approved by the Attorney General in September and by the Massachusetts Historical Commission in December. This district includes houses ranging from the late seventeenth century (ca.1690) to a reproduction Cape from 1986.

Dedham's local historic districts have some overlap with the larger **Dedham Village National Register District**. However, the National Register district is significantly more inclusive.

PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS

Dedham has six properties protected by historic preservation restrictions under M.G.L. c. 184, ss. 31-33. A preservation restriction is attached to the deed of a property and is one of the strongest preservation tools available. All but one of Dedham's preservation restrictions runs in perpetuity, with no expiration date. Most of the restrictions were put in place when the properties were restored with a **Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund** (MPPF) grant.

- ◆ **Allin Congregational Church** (restriction enacted on November 5, 2001)
- ◆ **Dedham Historical Society** (restriction enacted February 8, 2002)
- ◆ **Dedham Public Library** (restriction enacted March 21, 2002)
- ◆ **Fairbanks House** (restriction enacted April 6, 1998 – expires on November 17, 2015)
- ◆ **First Church Meetinghouse** (restriction enacted May 4, 1998)
- ◆ **Saint Paul's Episcopal Church** (restriction enacted August 20, 1997)

- ◆ **18 Norfolk Street** (restriction enacted January 26, 1999)²⁰

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Dedham has undertaken several planning studies in the past decade. Its last Master Plan was completed in 1996, and since then the town has pursued more resource- or area-specific planning such as open space conservation, downtown revitalization, and cemetery preservation. For the most part, these plans recognize the significant role that historic resources play in defining Dedham's community character and future economic success. A review of these plans, in chronological order, reveals several recurring themes relating to historic preservation. Discussions at the November 2007 public meeting for this Master Plan indicate that residents believe Dedham has been relatively successful in implementing the historic preservation goals identified in the 1996 Master Plan.

Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009. The *Dedham Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* updated the town's previous 1998 Plan. This plan recognized the important role that a community's cultural landscapes play in open space protection. As such, the plan included historical information about Dedham's development patterns, noting how they help "to set community and natural context for an inventory of present open space and recreation facilities." It also included an abbreviated list of cultural and historic areas.

The *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* identified several goals and action items for historic resource preservation. One of the goals was for Dedham to integrate historic and scenic resource protection into open space and recreation planning. The plan's Five-Year Action Plan took this goal a step further, with recommendations that Dedham adopt both a Scenic Roads Bylaw and the Community Preservation Act. In addition, the plan recommended that Dedham maintain and update its inventory of historic and cultural resources and more specifically, that the Historical Commission

²⁰ This preservation restriction was inadvertently omitted from the 2008 State Register of Historic Places.

pursue funding for a historic landscape preservation and management plan for the Powder House site.

Dedham Square Specific Area Plan (1999). The *Dedham Square Specific Area Plan* (1999) focused almost entirely on traffic circulation and parking issues. It was not intended or designed to address preservation of Dedham Square’s historic assets.

Dedham Master Plan (1996). The 1996 *Dedham Master Plan* devoted considerable attention to Dedham’s historic resources and included within its vision statement the phrase “... (Dedham is) a town that preserves and celebrates its historic heritage, protects and nourishes its unique neighborhoods...” One of the goals and objectives of the last master plan specifically stated that Dedham should “...preserve the historical heritage of the town, including historic buildings, historic open spaces and tree-lined streets.” Toward this end, the plan recommended that Dedham establish a design review advisory board to review proposed development projects, in part to ensure that the town’s historic character is preserved. While Dedham ultimately created a design review board, the board’s role is purely advisory, i.e., it has no authority to regulate design. Another goal stated in the last master plan involved enhancing Dedham’s image by rehabilitating historic buildings, preserving undeveloped space, stone walls and fences, and maintaining scenic country roads and scenic tree-lined streets by adopting a scenic road bylaw. It appears that many of these ideas have not been implemented.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Although Dedham residents seem to value the town’s historic resources, they have been reluctant to approve legislation to protect these resources or offer economic incentives for rehabilitation. In 1975, Town Meeting approved one of the strongest forms of preservation legislation, a local historic district bylaw. Since then, however, Dedham has not acted on proposals to adopt a scenic roads bylaw or the Community Preservation Act, even though these were recommendations of past plan-

ning studies. Outside of Dedham’s local historic districts, preservation of historic resources has been accomplished mainly on a voluntary basis. Some of the town’s most historically significant and iconic buildings could be significantly altered or even demolished by private action, without any public involvement.

SCENIC ROADS

The *Open Space and Recreation Plan* and the 1996 *Master Plan* recommended that Dedham adopt a scenic roads bylaw to protect the rural, natural, historic and scenic qualities of roadways that contribute to Dedham’s character. Both plans recommended specific roads for designation. The proposed bylaw would have regulated any “repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving work” that involved cutting or removing trees or altering stone walls by requiring approval by the Planning Board, following a public hearing. If the road work did not involve cutting trees or tearing down stone walls, no public hearing would be required. Despite the limited jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Scenic Roads Act – the “parent” legislation for local scenic roads bylaws – public sentiment was mixed and the proposal was tabled at town meeting.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

More than 120 cities and towns in Massachusetts have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which provides for a surcharge of up to three percent on local real estate tax bills, with some exemptions allowed by local option. The state provides matching funds from the Community Preservation Trust Fund. The actual amount of each year’s match varies year to year, depending on the funds available in the trust fund and the number of participating CPA communities. In Dedham, public response to the CPA has been mixed, much like the town’s reaction to the Scenic Roads Act. In 2008, Town Meeting turned down a proposal to adopt CPA.

As shown on Map 5.2, some nearby communities that have adopted the CPA include Newton, at one percent; Wellesley, at one percent; Needham, at two percent; Sharon, at one percent; Randolph, at two percent; and Stoughton, at 1.5 percent. Dedham could use CPA funds for historic resto-

ration projects such as the Powder House and the Public Library, and for preservation planning such as a comprehensive historic resource survey and National Register nominations.

DEDHAM HDC

The Dedham HDC receives no funding from the town. This hinders its ability to carry out preservation planning initiatives beyond those that can be accomplished by volunteers. Dedham's historic resource inventory – one of the most important local preservation planning tools – is archaic by professional standards, with thirty-year-old forms and entire sections of the town underrepresented. Updating the inventory should be a key priority as Dedham moves forward with efforts to protect its rich heritage. Since the survey work will require an evaluation of each resource's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the information would help Dedham develop a National Register listing plan for future designations. MHC currently provides matching funds for surveys, National Register nominations, and preservation plans through its Survey and Planning Grants program. Funding for this and other preservation programs varies from year to year, so it is important for the town to maintain contact with state agencies. Only upon completion of a comprehensive resource inventory should Dedham begin examining its historic neighborhoods for appropriate preservation strategies. National Register nominations, neighborhood conservation districts, and local historic districts are some of the tools available for historic resource protection. They may be appropriate in some neighborhoods but not in others.

It is important to build community support for preservation initiatives such as scenic road bylaws, CPA, and historic district designations before seeking approval at Town Meeting. Public understanding of the importance of Dedham's resources is the first step in building support for their ultimate protection. Toward these ends, expanding current public outreach and education programming by the Dedham Historical Society and the HDC will be critical.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

Preservation planning does not happen in a vacuum. Actions and decisions made at the local level can have lasting and irreversible effects on a community's historic character. Dedham currently does not integrate preservation objectives within the development review and permitting process for public and private projects. While the HDC has consulted on some development projects in the past, this is not a consistent practice within town government. Dedham should require prior review by the HDC for all town building or maintenance projects that affect historic resources. In addition, a historic resources checklist could be created for use by town boards in zoning and the conservation review process. Dedham has an opportunity to be a leader in protecting the town's historic character by serving as an example with its own building practices.

PRESERVATION TOOLS

There are a variety of preservation-related tools that Dedham could consider in its resource protection efforts. These include:

- ◆ **A Neighborhood Architectural Conservation District** (also called Neighborhood Conservation District) is a preservation tool designed to protect a neighborhood's overall character by regulating demolition, major alterations and new construction to ensure that proposed changes respect the scale, massing, setback and materials of historic buildings. Typically more flexible than local historic districts, NACs are not designed to regulate specific architectural detailing. A community may adopt a neighborhood architectural conservation bylaw and designate specific districts at a later date. Lincoln and Wellesley both took this approach and Wellesley recently designated its first district. With a bylaw in place, neighborhood groups can then be encouraged to petition to have their areas designated as a district.
- ◆ **A Demolition Delay Bylaw** provides communities with the opportunity to work with a property owner who plans to demolish an historic building. During the imposed delay period,

a community can encourage the owners to preserve their building or seek a buyer who would retain the structure. The bylaw also creates a public review process for proposed demolitions to ensure that historic landmarks are not destroyed without community awareness.

Demolition delay bylaws can be designed to meet local needs. A community determines which properties are subject to the bylaw and the specific term of the delay period. Applicable properties can include those over a certain age (e.g., all buildings more than fifty years old) or those built prior to a certain date (e.g., buildings built prior to 1930). Delay periods also vary by community. While most communities in Massachusetts have adopted bylaws that impose a six-month delay, many have extended the delay period to twelve months and even eighteen months after determining that six months is not adequate for finding alternatives to demolition.



Dedham Village streetscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulatory Protection for Historic Resources

Dedham residents clearly value the town's historic resources. However, the town has been unwilling or unable to adopt the regulatory tools that local officials need in order to enforce these values. Without appropriate legal mechanisms, Dedham cannot prevent future alteration or destruction of the historic resources that define the town's character. The following regulatory tools would enhance the effectiveness of Dedham's historic preservation efforts.

1. ADOPT A SCENIC ROADS BYLAW.

Despite previous recommendations and a proposal presented at town meeting in 2004, Dedham has yet to adopt a Scenic Roads Bylaw. The town identified

a list of proposed scenic roads in its 1996 *Master Plan* and again in its *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*. Working with this list, Dedham should document each road's character-defining attributes in order to develop a bylaw that is specifically tailored to conditions in Dedham. Dedham will also need to define the types of road projects that will be reviewed under the scenic roads bylaw.

2. ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.

Dedham is a community with distinctive neighborhoods, each with its own unique historic resources and preservation challenges. Although preservation efforts have traditionally focused on Dedham Center, other neighborhoods in the town warrant recognition and protection. Encouraging neighborhoods to consider adopting Neighborhood Architectural Conservation districts (NAC) is a viable option in Dedham. Completion of a town wide historic resources inventory can provide a basis for determining specific neighborhoods or areas that should be considered for NAC districts. The inventory effort can also assist the Historic Districts Commission in initiating a campaign to educate the public and generate community support for this initiative. Adopting a NAC bylaw should be the first step towards promoting this preservation tool to Dedham neighborhoods.

3. ADOPT A DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW.

Currently, any historic building in Dedham that is not located in a local historic district could be demolished without any input from the town and the public. Adopting a demolition delay bylaw would allow Dedham to postpone whole or partial demolition of historically significant buildings so that town officials and property owners can work together to seek alternatives. Dedham should consider adopting a bylaw that would apply to buildings over fifty years of age, regardless of its location. While most communities in Massachusetts have imposed a six-month delay period, many have found that this is not sufficient time to find alternatives for properties that are determined “preferably preserved.”

4. ADOPT THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT.

As recommended in the Open Space & Recreation and Housing Chapters of this master plan, Dedham needs to consider adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Previous planning studies in Dedham have recognized the importance of this funding source. Public education about the benefits of CPA is critical and will require a cooperative education effort between town boards and commissions. Identifying how CPA funds could preserve Dedham’s community character could be highlighted through examples of potential projects in the town. In Dedham, CPA could be used for municipal historic preservation projects such as restoring the Powder House and the Village Cemetery and could also be used to fund preservation planning such as the comprehensive resource survey and National Register nominations.

5. INSTITUTE A REGULAR, FORMAL ROLE FOR THE DEDHAM HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION IN REVIEWING AND COMMENTING ON PROJECTS THAT AFFECT TOWN-OWNED HISTORIC RESOURCES.

Dedham has the opportunity to be a leader in preservation by serving as a model for preservation planning and building practices. The town does not currently integrate preservation objectives into its own public building projects. Town-owned resources such as the Powder House, the Endicott Estate,

and the Village Cemetery are just a few examples of Dedham’s historic properties. While the town has been a good steward of its historic properties, it has not instituted procedures to *require* historically appropriate preservation. Dedham should adopt a bylaw or establish an administrative rule requiring boards, commissions, and departments to seek HDC review as part of the project planning process and prior to issuance of any building permits or certificates of zoning compliance.

6. INTEGRATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES INTO THE TOWN’S EXISTING DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING PROCEDURES.

Dedham’s HDC should have an active, formal role in reviewing and commenting on projects that affect historic resources, such as applications for special permits or site plan review involving properties outside of designated historic districts.

Dedham should incorporate historic preservation objectives into an environmental checklist for use by town boards and commissions during the development review process. (*See also, Chapter 6: Natural Resources, Recommendations.*) The checklist could include the following items: protection of stone walls, bridges, foundations, landscapes, structures, archaeological sites, and significant architectural features; preservation of scenic road characteristics; and compliance with state and federal preservation guidelines for rehabilitation of historic buildings.

7. IMPLEMENT PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS.

In addition to recommendations for a comprehensive historic resource inventory and adoption of a scenic roads bylaw, the 2004 Open Space Plan also recommended that a preservation plan be completed for the Powder House. More recently, the town commissioned a Village Cemetery Preservation Management Plan that identified specific restoration needs for the town’s oldest cemetery. These recommendations for the Powder House and the Village Cemetery, both of which would be eligible for funding through a local Community Preservation Act fund, should be pursued.

Public Awareness and Education

Dedham has two active preservation organizations currently engaged in preservation planning, education and outreach. The Dedham HDC and Dedham Historical Society, Inc., undertake public outreach and education efforts, both independently and collaboratively. However, the HDC, Dedham's municipal board, is a volunteer committee that operates without staff or a budget, which limits its ability to protect and promote historic resources beyond those located in designated local historic districts. The initiatives described below would help the HDC expand its public education efforts.

8. COMPLETE A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY.

It is difficult for any community to protect historic resources if it does not have complete knowledge of the resources that it contains. Historic resource inventories form the basis for preservation planning at the local level. However, since Dedham's existing historic resources inventory is outdated, has limited historic and architectural information and does not include all types of historic resources or historic resources found throughout its neighborhoods, the town is unable to adequately plan for resource protection. Therefore, Dedham should seek to complete a comprehensive historic resource survey as a first step in its preservation strategy.

While historic resource inventories can be completed by volunteers, most communities find that this type of survey requires professional assistance. Therefore, Dedham should appropriate local funding to complete the inventory and seek a Survey and Planning grant through the Massachusetts Historical Commission to fund a portion of the costs. Once completed, the historic resources inventory should be made available as an online database maintained on the town's website and be integrated into the town's GIS data system.

9. SEEK CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATUS FOR THE DEDHAM HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION.

Once Dedham has completed a comprehensive historic resources survey, the town should seek

designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Since Dedham already has a local historic district bylaw, it would be eligible to apply for CLG designation, granted by the National Park Service through MHC. CLG designation put Dedham in a better competitive position to receive preservation grants since at least ten percent of the MHC's annual federal funding must be distributed to CLGs through the Survey and Planning Program.

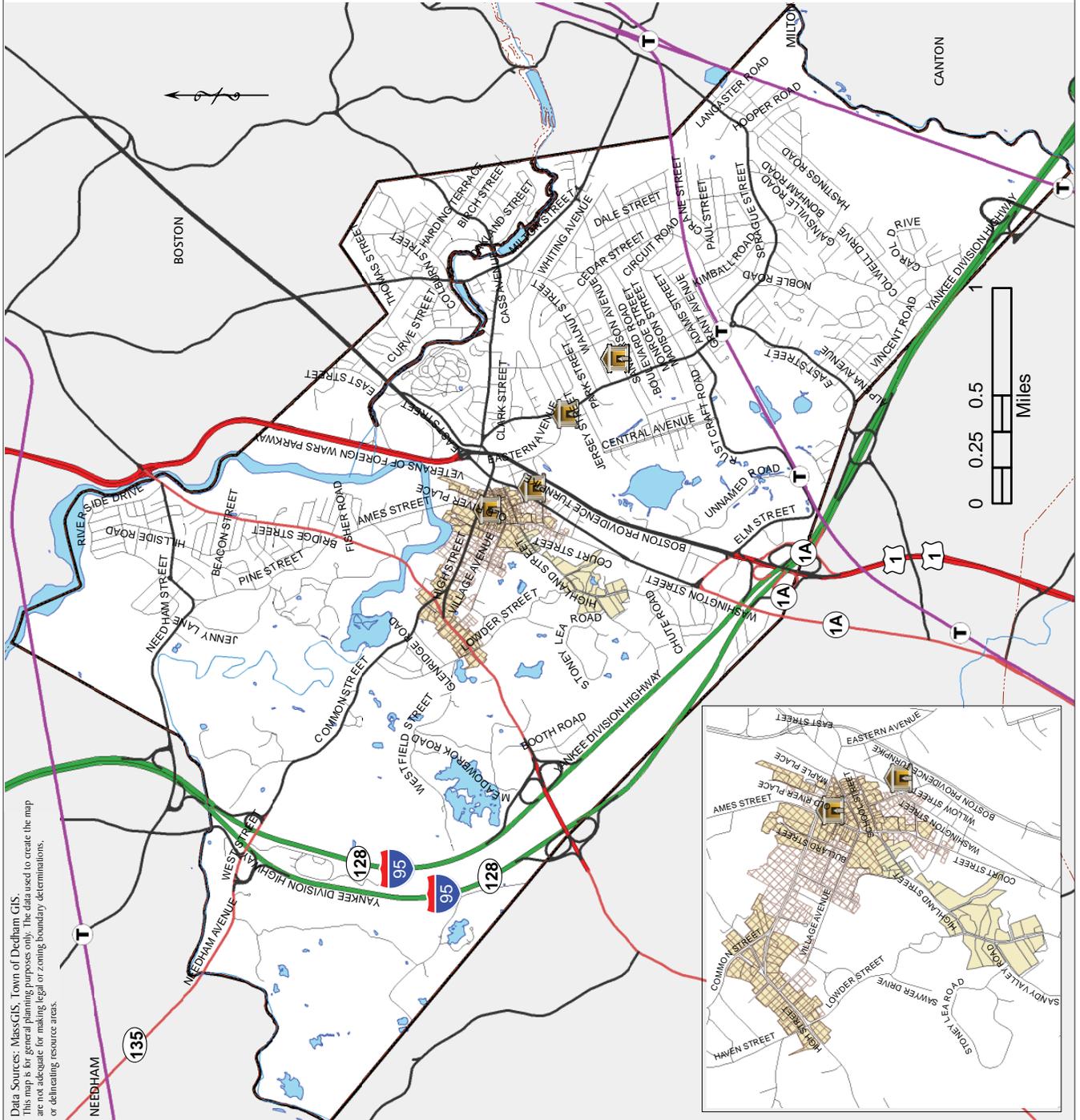
10. SEEK SUPPORT FOR A REGIONAL PRESERVATION PLANNER.

A professional preservation planner could significantly expand the town's preservation efforts. However, funding a new position in Dedham, particularly considering current economic conditions, would be difficult. Dedham should consider a regional approach by consulting with one or two neighboring towns, such as Norwood or Westwood, about the feasibility of establishing a shared preservation planner position. One community would serve as the designated employer and assume responsibility for providing benefits, the cost of which would be shared by the participating towns. Furthermore, a preservation planner staff position would be an eligible activity through MHC's Survey and Planning Grant program and a regional staff position could be highly competitive for funding.

Map 5.1
National Register
Listings and
Local Historic
Districts
 April 2009

- KEY**
- Municipal Boundary
 - Ⓣ MBTA Stations
 - ROADWAYS**
 - Limited Access Highway
 - Multi-Lane Highway
 - Other Numbered Highway
 - Major Road, Collector
 - Local Roads
 - Open Water
 - Local Historic Districts
 - NATIONAL REGISTER**
 - ▨ District
 - 🏠 Individual Listings

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
 Larry Koff & Associates
 McMahon Associates, Inc.
 Stephen Herzog



Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
 This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.

