

## CHAPTER 10

# COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

## INTRODUCTION

The community services and facilities element of a master plan describes and anticipates the buildings, other facilities, and human resources a local government will need in order to meet the future demand of its services. A public facility is any town property that has been developed for a particular public purpose and provides a base of operations for community services. The term also includes local utilities, such as public water or municipal light service, and other, non-building facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and cemeteries.

In suburbs and small towns, community facilities commonly include town halls, fire and police stations, a public library, and public schools. In addition to these “basic” public buildings, many communities have unique facilities such as town hospitals, an airport, or a function hall and grounds, like Dedham’s Endicott Estate. Together, a town’s buildings, land, infrastructure, and equipment make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to deliver basic services to residents and businesses. Providing quality public services depends both on adequate facilities and adequate personnel to staff them, but “adequate” depends on several factors: the form and arrangement of local government, land use patterns and local development trends, and the expectations of residents.



*Dedham Public Library.*

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Form of Government

Under the Town of Dedham Charter (1998), Dedham’s executive branch is led by the Board of Selectmen, a five-member elected board with general responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of the town. The Board of Selectmen shares some executive-branch powers with other elected officials, such as the Board of Assessors, Board of Health, and the Planning Board. Many of Dedham’s governmental functions are overseen by a Town Administrator and other professional department heads such as the Town Administrator, Finance Director, Department of Public Works Director, and the Director of Assessing.

In total, there are about thirty-three elected and appointed town officials and twenty-eight elected and appointed boards, commissions, and commit-

tees supporting Dedham's government.<sup>1</sup> As of 2007, the Town employed 452 people, and the School Department 671 people.<sup>2</sup> Dedham's legislative body is a representative town meeting.

While Dedham controls and provides most of its services locally, the town is a part of several regional entities. For example, Dedham obtains drinking water from the Dedham-Westwood Water District, a public water supply controlled by Dedham and Westwood. Operating as a self-supporting entity, the Dedham-Westwood Water District is governed by a six-person board with three members appointed by the Board of Selectmen in each town.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Dedham is one of the 101 Greater Boston area communities represented by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The MAPC is an independent public body through which cities and town can address regional issues. It also functions as the area's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), giving it oversight authority for the region's federally funded transportation program.<sup>4</sup> Dedham is also included in the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), a sub-region of MAPC that includes thirteen communities southwest of Boston. The Council consists of two representatives from each community and works to address growth and development issues within the sub-region.<sup>5</sup>

(For additional information, see Chapter 11, Governance.)

<sup>1</sup> Town of Dedham, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*.  
<sup>2</sup> Nancy Baker, Dedham Assistant Town Administrator, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 18 December 2007.  
<sup>3</sup> Dedham-Westwood Water District at <[www.dwwd.org](http://www.dwwd.org)>.  
<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Area Planning Council at <[www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org)>.  
<sup>5</sup> Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Subregions – TRIC at <[www.mapc.org/metro\\_area/tric.html](http://www.mapc.org/metro_area/tric.html)>.



Dedham Fire Department Headquarters.

### Public Buildings

The Town of Dedham currently owns and manages nine public buildings (excluding public schools) as well as some accessory structures throughout the town. The major structures include the following:

- ◆ The **Dedham Town Hall** is located close to Dedham Square on Bryant Street. The 1960 building houses most municipal services. For some time, the Town Hall has not been able to meet current space demands for operations and storage. This has recently been mitigated by moving some departments, such as the Council on Aging and the Parks and Recreation Department Offices, to other locations. However, no long-term, permanent solution to space needs has been identified.
- ◆ The **Central Police Station**, at 600 High Street in Dedham Square, is a 1962 structure built in the Colonial style. The building and its limited site accommodate the Town's police force (about 60 officers, eight dispatchers, plus support staff) as well as the Department's vehicles and equipment. Due to its tight, downtown location, access and parking are major issues, as are storage and building maintenance. This building is a top priority for replacement.
- ◆ Dedham's **Central Fire Station** is also located in Dedham Square on Washington Street. The

1949 building is located on a small parcel next to the Town Hall, and accommodates between nine and thirteen personnel at a time. The building's three bays house the department's fire trucks and other vehicles. Like the Police Station and including the East Dedham Fire Station, these public safety buildings are pressing facilities issues for Dedham.

- ◆ The **East Dedham Fire Station**, on Bussey Street, is a 6,000 sq. ft. building that is over 100 years old and severely outdated. The station has two vehicle bays and accommodates only about three to four personnel at a time.
- ◆ The **Dunn Public Works Facility** on River Street, a one-story, modern structure built in the late 1960s, houses the Department of Public Works and the Engineering Department. The site also accommodates the Recreation Department Garage (below) and the town's salt shed, which was replaced in 2004. This building lacks adequate space for storage and functions. The departments are also divided within the building, further inhibiting efficient operations.
- ◆ The **Recreation Department Garage** is located behind the Dunn Public Works Facility Building on River Street. The building houses the Recreation Department's vehicles and also provides a small amount of office space. Recently, the Department moved some of its equipment and operations to its new site on Common Street, which has helped to alleviate what were before acute space needs.
- ◆ The **Recreation Department Office** is located on Common Street on an 11.5-acre site that abuts the Charles River. Purchased from the Society of African Missions in 2006, the building houses the Recreation Department's administrative offices, as well as some of its indoor recreation programs such as gymnastics and wrestling.<sup>6</sup>
- ◆ The **Brookdale Cemetery Maintenance Building** is located on the site of the 50-acre Brookdale Cemetery, which is also owned and operated by the Town. The one-story, 1,500 square-foot building was built in 1960 and provides office space and vehicle storage for both cemetery maintenance and ancillary DPW operations such as snow plowing.
- ◆ Dedham's **Main Library**, an impressive Romanesque building with a pink granite and sandstone exterior, was designed by Boston architects Van Brunt & Howe and built in 1886. Situated on Church Street, the library is well-placed within the Dedham Square area. In 1951 the building received a substantial addition and is now approximately 13,000 square feet. The Library, together with the Endicott Branch Library, houses the Town's 105,005 holdings.<sup>7</sup>
- ◆ The **Endicott Branch Library** is located on the site of the Endicott Estate and is accessed from Mount Vernon Street. Built in 1920, the stucco building once functioned as an outbuilding for the Endicott Estate. The Endicott Branch shares the Town's library holdings, and in 2007 it acquired a wireless internet network for visitors.
- ◆ The **Endicott Estate** is situated on a twelve-acre site along East Street in Dedham and is noted for its architectural and scenic beauty. The main building was built in 1905, with its three accessory structures—a garage, greenhouse, and what is now the Endicott Library—constructed shortly thereafter. The building houses a number of the Town's cultural and athletic programs, and also functions as an additional meeting place for municipal staff and their visitors. The Estate is also rented for private events, which provides additional revenue to the town.

<sup>6</sup> Town of Dedham, Official Town Website, Town Departments, Parks and Recreation at <<http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?pid=13094>>.

<sup>7</sup> *Dedham Town Report: 2006.*

**TABLE 10.1  
DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

School	Neighborhood	Grades	Recreation Facilities
Early Childhood Center	Greenlodge-Manor	Pre-K, K	Playground, baseball field, basketball courts.
Avery Elementary School	East Dedham	1-5	Playground.
Riverdale Elementary School	Riverdale	1-5	Playground, soccer & baseball field, basketball court.
Oakdale Elementary School	Oakdale	1-5	Playground, baseball fields.
Greenlodge Elementary School	Greenlodge-Manor	1-5	Playground, baseball field.
Dedham Middle School	East Dedham/Oakdale	6-8	Baseball field, multi-purpose fields.
Dedham High School	East Dedham/Oakdale	9-12	Football field, track, multi-purpose fields.

*Source: Dedham Public Schools Staff, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., January 2008.*

## Public School Facilities

Dedham operates seven public schools for its pre-K–12 public school system. An eighth school, the Dexter School, has been unoccupied for the past several years. However, the Town, under the guidance of the Building, Planning, Construction Committee, has been assessing the school grounds as a possible site for a new senior center. These plans are still in the design phase and will require a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion to fund further design development and construction. As currently planned, the new senior center would be built on an unoccupied part of the site, and the Dexter School building would return to educational use. Table 10.1 summarizes Dedham’s public school buildings and their associated recreational facilities.

## Other Public Facilities

### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

In addition to the recreational facilities provided by the Town’s public school grounds, Dedham also provides a number of other facilities that offer passive and active recreational opportunities. They include:

- ◆ **Memorial Park:** At almost eighteen acres, Memorial Park provides soccer, baseball and softball fields, as well as a playground. The park is also served by a public restroom and concession stand.
- ◆ **Churchill Park:** This park is just less than one acre in size and has a playground, basketball

court and baseball field. At the time of this writing, the park is undergoing renovation due to soil contamination with funding by a contribution from the Legacy Place project.

- ◆ **Condon Park:** Located in the East Dedham neighborhood, Condon Park is about seven and a half acres, and, like Churchill Park, has a playground, baseball field and basketball courts.
- ◆ **Dedham Town Common:** The Town Common is a two-acre open space at the intersection of Bridge and Common Streets. With mature trees and open lawn, the area maintains the aesthetic of a tradition New England town common.
- ◆ **Fairbanks Park:** Located near Wigwam and Little Wigwam Ponds, this fourteen-acre park provides three baseball or softball fields, one soccer fields, public restrooms, and a concession stand. Like Churchill Park, Fairbanks Park will soon undergo improvement with funds from the Legacy Place project.
- ◆ **Mucciaccio Pool, Araby Skateboard Park, and Pottery Lane Courts:** These facilities are located off High Street, and are very close to the Dedham High School. The Muccaccio Pool is one of Dedham’s most popular recreational attractions and sees over 100,000 users a year. The four and a half acre area also accommo-

dates a skateboard park, three tennis courts, and two basketball courts.

- ◆ **Oakdale Square:** Located between Oakdale Avenue, River Street, and Cobbler Lane in the Oakdale neighborhood, Oakdale Square is a half-acre neighborhood park with benches and walkways for passive recreational activity.
- ◆ **Paul Park:** This park is nearly three acres in size and provides baseball fields and basketball courts as well as a playground to residents of the nearby Oakdale and Greenlodge-Manor neighborhoods.

### TOWN CEMETERIES

Dedham has two town-owned cemeteries. The well-known **Brookdale Cemetery** includes over fifty acres of winding roads and paths and sensitive landscaping. The **Old Town Burial Ground** is a smaller area located just outside Dedham Square. Both of these facilities are maintained by the Dedham Department of Public Works.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

Dedham's sewer system is managed and maintained by the Department of Public Works. The Town's ninety miles of sewer serves approximately ninety percent of Dedham's businesses and households.<sup>8</sup> The **Dedham-Westwood Water District** provides water service to Dedham, and operates under the joint-governance of Dedham and Westwood. The Dedham-Westwood Water District is also a member of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), which allows the two towns to purchase up to 36.5 million additional gallons of water per year, if necessary.<sup>9</sup> The Dedham **Department of Public Works** maintains approximately eighty miles of roadways throughout Dedham.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Town of Dedham, *Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2004-2009*, (2004), 16.

<sup>9</sup> *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 128.

<sup>10</sup> Town of Dedham, Engineering Department, "Town of Dedham Strategic Planning Meeting 2008, Roads and Sewers," 16 January 2008.

## Community Services

While public facilities provide physical space for local government services, actual service delivery depends on people: municipal workers and volunteers. In Dedham, about thirty-three town officials, twenty-eight boards, committees, and commissions, over four hundred municipal employees, and numerous volunteers provide the well-rounded range of services enjoyed by residents and businesses. In 2005, Dedham undertook a substantial re-structuring of town government and professionalized most of its key municipal offices, relying on experienced staff (rather than volunteers) to provide critical services. However, the town still relies on committed citizens to fill seats on unpaid boards and commissions. Some of these groups and individuals receive administrative support to perform their work while others do not. The large number of boards and committees is a testament to Dedham's tradition of public service and involvement.

### ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

In fiscal year 2007, less than four percent of Dedham's general fund expenditures went to the functions of administration and finance.<sup>11</sup> The **Town Administrator** serves as the chief administrative officer for the Town. Appointed by and serving under the policy direction of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator performs both executive and financial management duties such as appointing a number of department heads, commissions, boards, and committees; preparing and presenting the annual operating budget and proposed capital outlay program; administering the Town personnel system; overseeing over the rental and use of Town facilities; and serving as the Town's chief procurement officer. The Town Administrator is supported by the Assistant Town Administrator, a Management Assistant, and an Administrative Assistant, all of which are full-time positions.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Town of Dedham, Department of Finance, Schedule A Worksheet, Part II "General Fund Expenditures and Other Financing Uses (Fund 01)", (2007).

<sup>12</sup> *Dedham Town Report: 2006*.

The Town’s financial operations are directed by the **Finance Department**, which is led by the Director of Finance and includes the services provided by the Accounting, Collecting, Treasury, and Information Services Departments. This department has become increasingly integrated, with the consolidation of Treasurer and Collector under a single appointed manager in FY2008.<sup>13</sup> The Finance Department works closely with the Finance Committee, a separate body with nine members (including a Chairman) appointed by the Town Moderator, who makes recommendations on all financial matters to Town meeting, and works with the Capital Expenditures Committee. The Finance and Capital Expenditure Committee members are jointly supported by one full-time assistant who provides support to both committees in addition to assisting the Town Administrator with his budgetary duties.

Dedham’s **Assessing Department**, responsible for the measuring and valuation of real and personal property, is led by the Director of Assessing, and includes four other staff and a three-member elected Board of Assessors. Another financial function is performed by the five-member, elected Commissioners of Trust Funds which manages all trusts held by the Town of Dedham and invests their income in accordance with the terms of the respective trusts.

Dedham’s **Town Clerk** is an elected position which operates by powers delegated through both state law and the town charter. With general responsibility as the official keeper of record, the Dedham Town Clerk organizes and oversees the election process, conducts the annual town census, records and certifies all official actions of the Town, records and preserves vital statistics, administers the oath of offices, issues various licenses, certifications, and permits, and submits bylaws adopted by Town

<sup>13</sup> Robin Reyes, Dedham Town Treasurer, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 June 2008.

**TABLE 10.2  
FY 2007 GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES**

Service Category	Expenditures	Percent Total
General Government	\$3,248,346	4.8%
Public Safety*	\$10,290,871	15.1%
Education	\$28,932,284	42.6%
Public Works	\$5,411,382	8.0%
Human Services	\$563,134	0.8%
Culture & Recreation	\$2,150,537	3.2%
Debt Service	\$4,521,925	6.7%
Fixed Costs	\$10,652,054	15.7%
Intergovernmental	\$2,221,627	3.3%
Other Expenditures	\$10	0.0%
Total Expenditures	\$67,992,170	100.0%

\*Includes fire, police, emergency medical services, building inspector.

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Data Bank Report, "Municipal Actual Revenues and Expenditures," Online at <<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dorconstituent&L=2&L0=Home&L1=Local+Officials&sid=Ador>>.

Note: The Massachusetts DOR includes public building maintenance, land use (planning), and Conservation Commission activities under General Government. Within General Government, Admin & Finance activities accounted for slightly less than 4% of total expenditures, and other activities less than 1% of total expenditures.

Meeting to the Attorney General for approval. The Town Clerk is supported by an Assistant Town Clerk, and an Administrative Assistant.

Other town services with in this category include a Workers Compensation Agent, who investigates accident claims, works with a state agency to resolve the claim, and disperses funds from the worker’s compensation program fund; and the Business/Procurement Officer who oversees and approves all purchasing and service procurement for town departments. This position is performed by one employee who also functions as the town’s veteran’s agent (see “Human Services”).

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

In 2007, approximately fifteen percent of Dedham’s general fund expenditures were allocated to public safety. Of this, about half funded the Police Department, about forty-two percent went to the **Fire Department**. Dedham’s police department consists of sixty officers, including nine full-time dispatchers and three-and-a-half civilian personnel.<sup>14</sup> Dedham’s Fire Department, in addition to protect-

<sup>14</sup> Executive Officer/Lieutenant Michael D’Entremont, Dedham Police Department, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 13 December 2007.

ing personal and public property from the threat of fire, also provides Emergency Medical Services and has an increasing role in hazardous materials handling, and responses to natural disasters and domestic and foreign terrorism threats.<sup>15</sup> In 2007, the Fire Department employed a total of sixty-five people, including the fire chief, four deputy chiefs, nine lieutenants, forty-nine firefighters, and one administrative assistant.<sup>16</sup>

Dedham's public safety services also include an **Emergency Management/Civil Preparedness Agency**, which is charged with coordinating the efforts of the police, fire, and emergency medical departments in response to major emergency situations. This agency is staffed by the Auxiliary Police Division, which consists of trained personnel who work as volunteers to implement the agency's mandate with uniforms and equipment provided with Town funds.<sup>17</sup> The Emergency Management/Civil Preparedness Agency has a volunteer director.

Although not typically thought of as having a role in public safety, building inspection and code enforcement services protect the health, safety, and welfare of a community, and are therefore usually grouped in this category along with fire, police, and emergency medical services. In Dedham, the **Building Department** provides building, electrical, plumbing, and gas inspectional services as well as enforcement of the town's zoning and sign bylaws, the state building code, and a portion of the town's stormwater management bylaw.<sup>18</sup> Headed by the

<sup>15</sup> Report of the Fire Department, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 146.

<sup>16</sup> Town of Dedham, *Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting*, Monday, May 19, 2008, (2008), C-3.

<sup>17</sup> Report of the Civil Preparedness Agency, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 141.

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Cimeno, Dedham Building Commissioner, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 13 June 2008. Note: Responsibility for enforcement of Dedham's Stormwater Management Bylaw falls upon three departments. The Environmental Coordinator reviews general stormwater permits, the Conservation Commission Agent reviews stormwater permits if they fall within wetland areas, and the Building Commissioner review stormwater permits for sheds, decks, patio

Building Commissioner, the Building Department employs a total of six full-time employees. These services, together with Dedham's Animal Control offices, account for the remaining eight percent of the Dedham's Public Safety expenditures.

## PUBLIC WORKS

Responsibility for Dedham's major infrastructure lies with the **Department of Public Works**. The Department is organized within six divisions – Administration, Highway, Sewer, Forestry, Cemetery, and Fleet Maintenance – and is staffed by twenty operations personnel, two administrative assistants, and the Director of Public Works. Together, these personnel are responsible for the maintenance and repair of Town roadways, sidewalks, and storm drains, some aspects of the sewer system, traffic signage, street signage, tree maintenance, trash and recycling collection, snow and ice operations, maintenance of Brookdale and Village Cemeteries, and labor support for various town departments and community events.<sup>19</sup> Dedham's sewer infrastructure is maintained by the Town DPW, but the MWRA provides sewage collection and disposal services. While in some communities the DPW is also responsible for the public water supply, in Dedham's case the **Dedham-Westwood Water District** performs this function.

Dedham's **Engineering Department** functioned as part of the Department of Public Works until 2005 when it was made its own department and renamed the Department of Infrastructure Engineering. This department is headed by the Director of Engineering and is staffed by a Project Engineer, Infrastructure Engineer, and supported by the administrative staff of the DPW. While the Department of Public Works maintains the town's infrastructure, the Engineering Department is charged with the general responsibility of the engineering, construction, development, and oversight of improvement, reconstruction, and repair of the town's infrastructure. Additionally, the department provides technical support to residents and

construction, etc., also known as Blanket Stormwater Permits. (Virginia LeClaire, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 June 2008.)

<sup>19</sup> Report of the Department of Public Works, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 141-142.

other entities on the installation and development of roads, sewers, drains, and buildings, and is available for technical review of subdivisions and site plans.<sup>20</sup>

Recently, Dedham appointed a part-time **Facilities Manager** to oversee the maintenance of all public buildings, excluding the schools. The facilities manager works with department heads to maintain and upgrade buildings, supervises construction projects, prioritizes maintenance needs, and works with architects and engineers on project design. The schools department employs their own building manager and staff.<sup>21</sup>

### LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Dedham's planning, development review, and permitting services are carried out by the Planning Board, Town Planner, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Conservation Commission. The **Planning Board** is a five-member elected board charged with both long-range planning duties – such as updating the Master Plan – and more immediate implementation responsibilities such as permitting, subdivision, site plan, and special permit review, and proposing and commenting on amendments to the zoning bylaw.<sup>22</sup> This work is supported by the **Town Planner**, which is currently a contractual, non-employee position. Over the past few years, much of the work of the Town Planner and Planning Board has focused on the review and permitting of major projects, including Hebrew Senior Life's New Bridge on the Charles and Legacy Place. The Planning Board is assisted by one nearly full-time administrative assistant.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Report of the Department of Infrastructure Engineering, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 142; David Field, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 6 June 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Eugene Negrone, Dedham Public Facilities Manager, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 10 June 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Report of the Planning Board, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 139.

<sup>23</sup> Town of Dedham, Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 19, 2008, (2008), C-2.

The **Zoning Board of Appeals** hears petitions for variances, some special permits where required by zoning, or persons appealing the decisions of the Building Commissioner or Planning Board.<sup>24</sup> In Dedham, the Zoning Board of Appeals has seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen and is supported by a part-time administrative assistant.<sup>25</sup>

As in many communities in Massachusetts, the **Conservation Commission** plays a key role in the Dedham's physical growth and development. The Conservation Commission is charged with reviewing development for compliance with the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, M.G.L. c. 131 s. 40, and the Town's wetlands bylaw, and issuing relevant permits. A five-person board, the Conservation Commission relies on volunteer hours of its members but receives part-time administrative support. The Conservation Commission also enforces and issues permits related to the stormwater bylaw for development in wetlands areas.<sup>26</sup> Besides its permitting role, the Conservation Commission also inventories and plans for open space resources in Dedham.

The position of **Environmental Coordinator** was created in 2007 to organize environment-related efforts of various Town departments and committees. The Environmental Coordinator works under the Town Administrator, assists the Conservation Commission on stormwater filings and deed research, and advises on increasing energy efficiency and environmental responsibility in town facilities and services.

Although the **Health Department** primarily plays a human service role in Dedham (see below), it also conducts inspections for compliance with Title V of the Massachusetts Environmental Code, which regulates the construction and maintenance

<sup>24</sup> Report of the Board of Appeals, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 131.

<sup>25</sup> Town of Dedham, Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 19, 2008, (2008), C-2.

<sup>26</sup> Report of the Conservation Commission, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 113.

of septic systems and issues associated permits.<sup>27</sup> Ninety percent of Dedham's residences and businesses are on public sewer, but the remaining ten percent require Title V inspections and permits from the Board of Health.<sup>28</sup> Also, the Health Department provides housing inspection services to enforce the State Sanitary Code. Previously a stand-alone position, the Housing Inspector, was folded into the duties of the Assistant Health Director.<sup>29</sup>

While the Planning Board and Town Planner have traditionally led planning efforts in Dedham, the Town recently appointed an **Economic Development Director**, who reports to the Town Administrator. The Economic Development Director's role involves plans and programs that will influence both the economic and physical development of the Town. Created in 2007, this position is charged with preparing a town-wide Economic Development Plan, overseeing the Legacy Place development, participating in the Master Plan update, serving as a resource to the Town on creating additional affordable housing, and facilitating the revitalization of Dedham Square.<sup>30</sup> Recently, the Economic Development Director has worked to develop relationships with key tenants of the Legacy Place development, secured employment for local youth at its commercial establishments, and applied to state agencies for grant money for "smart growth" improvements to the area, that is, to integrate Legacy Place with its greater environment, particularly transit and housing.

In addition to these staffed positions and boards, there are several other volunteer groups that provide services in the area of planning and development for Dedham. The **Design Review Advisory Board** consists of five members, appointed by the Board of Selectmen. This group performs professional design review to maintain and improve the

visual quality of Dedham. The **Historic Districts Commission** is the official government agent responsible for historic preservation within the town's designated historic districts. Additionally, in 2004, the town created an **Open Spaces Committee** to coordinate the various open space preservation efforts underway by several town boards and committees. These groups operate with entirely volunteer efforts and provide important services to town departments and residents.

## CULTURE AND RECREATION

The **Dedham Public Library** is one of the Town's oldest and most valued institutions. The roots of the library date back to 1794 with establishment of the First Parish Church's Social Library. In 1854 the Dedham Library Association was founded, and the present Dedham Public Library was chartered in 1871. In 1886 the main branch library's current home was built, a distinctive structure designed by architects Van Brunt and Howe, on a site close to Dedham Square. Today, the Dedham Public Library occupies this location and a branch on the edge of the **Endicott Estate**. As of 2007, the library had 105,500 total holdings and circulated a total of 257,069 materials to library patrons.<sup>31</sup> In addition to its holdings, the library offers a variety of programs and classes, including children's programs and story hours, book groups, computer classes, and book sales.<sup>32</sup>

The library currently employs twenty full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel, including a Library Director, five full-time librarians, one part-time Sunday librarian, library assistants, library pages, and custodians. The library is funded both from the Town's operating budget and the Friends of the Dedham Public Library, a non-profit organization that conducts fund-raising to provide a flexible financing source for the library. The library also receives a small amount of funding through yearly state reimbursements. Trustees of the Dedham

<sup>27</sup> Report of the Board of Health, Ibid, 116.

<sup>28</sup> Town of Dedham, *Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2004-2009*, (2004), 16.

<sup>29</sup> Catherine Cardinale, Dedham Health Director, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 24 June 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Town of Dedham, Official Town Website, Town Departments, Economic Development at <<http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?pid=14667>>.

<sup>31</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, *Massachusetts Public Library Data, Circulation and Holdings Report FY2007 (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007)* at <<http://mbclc.state.ma.us/advisory/statistics/public/repirc/index.php>>.

<sup>32</sup> Dedham Public Library, < <http://www.dedhamlibrary.org/>>.

Public Library, a five member, elected board, provides policy guidance for the Dedham Library by adopting goals, policies, plans, and budgets, and is responsible for the overall administration of library staff.

In addition to the library, the Endicott Estate is another important landmark and cultural resource in Dedham. With its distinctive building and impressive grounds, the Estate performs multiple functions. At times, it used by local officials as an alternative site for important administrative meetings. Its grounds host youth athletic practices, and the building is frequently rented for private functions. The Endicott Estate is overseen by a nine-member commission which guides the care, upkeep, and overall management of the building and grounds. Property maintenance for the estate is provided by a staff that includes an Endicott Estate Manger, part-time caretakers, and part-time security guards.<sup>33</sup>

Dedham's **Civic Pride Committeee** is an important vehicle for the upkeep and celebration of the Town's appearance and community. As of 2006, the Civic Pride Committee had twenty-nine volunteer members, appointed by the Town Administrator. Their activities—which include beautification efforts in public parks and streets, landscaping and light infrastructure improvements along roadways, and improving the appearance of Dedham Square—are financed in part by the Friends of Dedham Civic Pride, which serves as a fundraising arm for the committee.<sup>34</sup> The group also receives a small amount of money from the Town's operating budget.

With its range of playing fields, playgrounds, baseball, basketball, and tennis facilities, and opportunities for hiking, biking, and boating, Dedham provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities for its residents. The **Parks and Recreation Department** provides recreational programming for Dedham residents and maintains Town parks and recreational facilities. The department is

overseen by the five-member, elected Parks and Recreation Commission, who appoint the Parks and Recreation Director. For both organizational and budgetary purposes, Parks and Recreation functions as two departments: the Parks Department, which is concerned with the maintenance and upkeep of parks and recreational facilities, and the Recreation Department, which oversees and provides recreational programs for Dedham. Appointed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Park and Recreation Director administers all recreation programs and oversees the Parks Department employees. The Director is supported by an Assistant Parks and Recreation Director, an administrative assistant, and a swimming pool instructor. The Town's parks and recreational facilities are maintained by one public works foreman, three special motor equipment operators, and also seasonal labor during the summer months.<sup>35</sup>

### HUMAN SERVICES

"Human services" refers to public health and social services for a clientele with unique, age-based or other special needs. More than 100 years ago, local governments provided a wide range of social, financial, and shelter services, but these responsibilities gradually shifted to state and federal agencies. Today, municipal human service delivery usually centers on programs for the elderly, public health services, veterans assistance, and tax relief for populations eligible under state law.

Dedham's **Health Department**, while largely involved in the inspection of residential and commercial structures, provides an important human service role in Dedham. Directed by a three-member, elected Board of Health, the Health Department is staffed by a Heath Director, Assistant Health Director, and Administrative Assistant (all full-time employees), and a part-time Public Health Nurse. Most of the direct human services in this department are provided by programs run by the Public Health Nurse, such as immunization & blood pressure clinics, school programs, and home visits. In Fiscal Year 2007, about thirty-seven

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Report of the Civic Pride Committee, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 111.

<sup>35</sup> Town of Dedham, *Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 19, 2008*, (2008), C-6.

percent of Dedham's human services budget went to health services.<sup>36</sup>

Dedham's human services also assist several special populations: senior citizens, youth, veterans, and people with disabilities. The **Council on Aging** is responsible for providing direct services to Dedham's senior population and also identifying other available community resources to assist this population. Staffed by the Director, Social Worker, Administrative Assistant, and part-time van driver, the Council on Aging provides transportation services, a meals-on-wheels service, and one-on-one assistance for a variety of needs such as applying for health insurance, disability, and other benefits. The COA's Senior Drop-In Center, which is part of the Dedham Senior Center – currently housed at the Traditions assisted living facility – provides a number of social and leisure activities for Dedham's older population.<sup>37</sup> It is hoped that the construction of a new senior center on the site of the Dexter School will allow the COA to greatly expand both its range of services and the number of seniors that are able to make use of them.<sup>38</sup>

Unlike many of the smaller communities in Massachusetts, Dedham's human service offerings include resources for youth. Dedham's seven-member **Youth Commission** establishes and directs youth services policy and programming, which is then carried out by a Youth Commission Director, and two Youth Coordinators, and is supported by an Administrative Assistant.<sup>39</sup> Youth Commission offerings include direct counseling services for youth and their families, as well as various programs that provide employment opportunities,

community services options for juvenile offenders, and a variety of activities provided together with the Dedham Public Schools.<sup>40</sup> Currently housed in the Town Hall, the Youth Commission offices will move to the Dedham High School in the fall of 2008. While this move will ease space constraints in the Town Hall, it will not substantially improve the Youth Commission office's space needs.<sup>41</sup>

Massachusetts state law requires cities and town to provide certain types of financial assistance to veterans, their surviving spouses, and the blind. The types and amounts of assistance vary by statute and program. In Dedham, one person performs the duties of the **Veteran's Agent** and the Business/Procurement Officer. The Veteran's Agent is responsible for helping veterans and their dependents with financial, medical, or burial benefits. The state reimburses 75 percent of eligible expenditures for these benefits. Also, when possible the Veteran's Agent assists Dedham veterans with housing and transportation. Over the past several years, Dedham has consistently provided benefits and approved tax exemptions to veterans, their spouses, and the blind, and received state reimbursements, as well as tax exemptions for seniors over the age of seventy.<sup>42</sup>

Dedham's human services also include a **Commission on Disability**. The Commission on Disability is a nine-member, unpaid, volunteer group which advocates for the full inclusion of person of disabilities within the community, works to ensure compliance with state and federal disability law, and provides technical assistance on all disability-related matters.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Town of Dedham, Schedule A Worksheet, Part II "General Fund Expenditures and Other Financing Uses (Fund 01)", 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Town of Dedham, *Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 19, 2008*, (2008), C-5; Town of Dedham, Official Town Website, Town Departments, Council on Aging at <[http://www.dedham.k12.ma.us/council\\_on\\_aging/index.html](http://www.dedham.k12.ma.us/council_on_aging/index.html)>.

<sup>38</sup> Rita Kalcos, Director, Dedham Council on Aging, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 17 June 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Town of Dedham, *Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 19, 2008*, (2008), C-5.

<sup>40</sup> Report of the Youth Commission, *Dedham Town Report, 2006*, (2006), 129-130.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Clinton, Director, Dedham Youth Commission, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 June 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Cherry Sheet Manual, (2005); "Cherry Sheets," Municipal Data Bank at <<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dorconstituent&L=2&L0=Home&L1=Local+Officials&sid=Ador>>.

<sup>43</sup> Report of the Commission on Disability, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 112.

## Public Education

Dedham operates a K-12 public school system which includes one early childhood education center, four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. According to the most recent data available from the Massachusetts Department of Education, 2,879 school-children were enrolled in the Dedham Public Schools (DPS) for the 2007-2008 school year. Of these, thirty percent were students in grades K-3, twenty-four percent in grades 4-6, twenty-three percent in grades 7-9, nineteen percent in grades 10-12, and 4.5 percent in Dedham’s pre-kindergarten program.<sup>44</sup> At the secondary school level, students in Dedham also have the option of attending the Blue Hills Regional Technical School, located in Canton. The regional school district for Blue Hills consists of nine member towns, including Dedham, and offers secondary education and vocational programs. Students in schools outside the Blue Hill Regional School District may apply, but students from member towns are given priority for admission<sup>45</sup>

Dedham prides itself on investing considerable resources in its public education system. In fiscal year 2007, Dedham spent an average of \$13,157 per student, the second-highest per pupil expenditure compared to the twelve other communities in its region.<sup>46</sup> Due to changes in the Massachusetts Department of Education’s record-keeping, it is

<sup>44</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, School District Profiles at <<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>>.

<sup>45</sup> Blue Hills Regional Technical School at <<http://www.bluehills.org/visitor/blue-hills-about-academics.html>>.

<sup>46</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, School Finance, Statistical Comparisons, “Per pupil expenditures” at <<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/statistics/>>.

**TABLE 10.3  
COMPARISON EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL, 2005-2008**

Community	Fiscal Year		
	2005	2006	2007
Canton	\$10,340	\$10,619	\$11,105
DEDHAM	\$11,637	\$12,594	\$13,157
Dover	\$12,786	\$13,298	\$14,615
Foxboro	\$9,147	\$9,570	\$9,956
Medfield	\$8,082	\$8,597	\$9,472
Milton	\$10,189	\$10,585	\$11,182
Needham	\$10,788	\$11,291	\$12,070
Norwood	\$10,648	\$11,028	\$12,052
Randolph	\$9,955	\$9,998	\$10,562
Sharon	\$10,676	\$11,681	\$12,204
Stoughton	\$9,264	\$9,830	\$10,282
Walpole	\$9,437	\$10,277	\$10,470
Westwood	\$11,592	\$11,885	\$12,436
State Average	\$10,600	\$11,210	\$11,868

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, School Finance, Statistical Comparisons, Per pupil expenditures, Online at <<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/statistics/>>.

Note: Expenditures include Chapter 70 aid, but do not include debt service, capital improvements, adult education programs, the school lunch program, or expenditures from state or federal grant revenue.

possible to compare per pupil expenditures only from FY2005 onward. Though a relatively short period of time, statistics since 2005 show that per pupil expenditures in Dedham have increased by thirteen percent. Compared to Massachusetts as a whole, per pupil expenditures in Dedham have been about ten percent higher than the state average.

Over the past ten years, enrollment in Dedham’s public schools has either increased, declined, or increased slightly. Since 2002 the number of students has declined between one and two percentage points (about twenty-five to fifty students, in absolute numbers), with the exception of a very small increase in 2004.

Dedham is a mature suburb whose population has been more or less stable or in decline for a number of years. Therefore, the greatest issues facing its public school buildings today are not as much a result of increasing enrollment as from aging facilities and their functional obsolescence. With the exception of the new Middle School, all Dedham Public School buildings are at least a half-century old and were not designed to accommodate current educational space demands. As noted

**TABLE 10.4**  
**K-12 ENROLLMENT TRENDS**

FY	Grades				Total	Percent Change	Absolute Change
	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12			
1999	1,002	736	650	512	2,900		
2000	1,013	759	637	521	2,930	1.03%	30
2001	1,022	759	660	528	2,969	1.33%	39
2002	986	712	684	535	2,917	-1.75%	-52
2003	946	696	699	528	2,869	-1.65%	-48
2004	889	768	667	550	2,874	0.17%	5
2005	877	720	699	523	2,819	-1.91%	-55
2006	848	711	663	556	2,778	-1.45%	-41
2007	848	682	651	572	2,753	-0.90%	-25
2008	863	683	657	547	2,750	-0.11%	-3

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), School/District Administration, Information Services, "Enrollment Trends," Online at <<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/statistics/>>.

in a 2001 study of Dedham's public schools, the introduction of public kindergartens, curricula in art, music, and library sciences, special education programs, and computers and associated technology, have all increased demands for space. As a result, schools must accommodate many more functions and equipment than they were originally designed to house. The same study reported that, with the exception of the new Middle and High Schools, all of Dedham's public schools are enrolled above their Planned Operating Capacity.<sup>47</sup> Interviews with elementary school staff revealed that each of the four elementary schools has shortages of meeting, storage, and arts education space, such as a music and/or art classrooms.<sup>48</sup>

Though maintaining Dedham's public schools as effective places of education is and will remain an ongoing challenge, Dedham has addressed and continues to work on some of its most pressing capital school building needs. In 2006 Dedham completed its new Middle School. A long-awaited

project, the Middle School is situated along Whiting Avenue, close to the High School and on a parcel adjacent to its former location. In 2007, the Avery School, located in the East Dedham neighborhood, was chosen by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for a feasibility study for construction of a new school. Built in 1921 with an addition in 1999, the Avery School has had a host of pressing problems for a number of years, including a distressed interior and exterior, lack of sufficient space for major operations, and mechanical systems in poor condition. The Avery School is one of forty-nine out of a total of 1,817 schools surveyed throughout Massachusetts chosen for further study. Should Dedham pursue further design and construction with the MSBA, the Town would most likely receive an approximate fifty percent reimbursement for design and construction costs. Although an exact location has not been determined, town officials hope the new school will be built on the High School campus on Whiting Avenue because the Avery School is an important anchor in the East Dedham neighborhood.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> New England School Development Council, *Long Range School Facilities Planning*, (Dec 2001), 3, 52. Note: The Long Range Facilities Planning report analyzed both the Current Operating Capacity and Planned Operating Capacity for each school. The Current Operating Capacity was based on current usage of the buildings. The Planned Operating Capacity was based on planned usage of the building, recommended class size policy, reduction of space deficiencies, and inclusion of appropriate classroom, lab, core facility, and special use areas [in, *Ibid*, 23].

<sup>48</sup> Dedham Public Schools Staff, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., January 2008 and June 2008.

<sup>49</sup> Town of Dedham, Dedham School Committee, "Avery School", proceedings from the Strategic Planning Meeting, 16 January 2008, Dedham Middle School, (Jan 2008).

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

### Public Facilities Planning

After a long period of taking very little action to maintain and expand its public facilities and infrastructure, Dedham has recently made substantial progress in this area. Previously, Dedham attended to capital improvements on an as-needed basis with little long-term focus. Indeed, prior to the construction of the Dedham Middle School in 2006, Dedham had not built or substantially renovated any public facility in fifty years. Several years ago, the Town Administrator's office began to assess the condition of its major public facilities in order to identify various needs and establish priorities among them (*see Past Plans, below*). The most pressing need identified in this study was for improvements to Dedham's public safety facilities. A new Senior Center was also seen as critical. With a better sense of public facilities needs and the issues and challenges associated with each, the Town is now moving forward to plan for and attend to these needs.<sup>50</sup>

### Strategic Planning and Finance

Dedham's recent public facilities planning activity is part of a larger strategic planning effort that looks at the needs of all Town departments and the Town's overall fiscal condition. At the first strategic planning meeting in June 2006, all Town departments assembled to discuss their respective needs and plans.<sup>51</sup> In January 2008, Dedham held a second strategic planning meeting in which Town officials and residents discussed the progress of some of the capital building and infrastructure projects that were implemented as a result of more coordinated planning, and discussed the town's remaining pressing needs. At this meeting, Town officials also presented the current debt service for Dedham and reviewed the sources of funds expected to be generated from commercial projects and proposals for their use.<sup>52</sup> Town departments in Dedham still plan individually, e.g., the DPW has assessed long-term

needs for roads and sewers and the School Department has conducted its own long-range planning. However, the strategic planning meetings mark an effort to bring these plans together into what may one day be a comprehensive capital improvements program and plan.

A particularly relevant aspect of the Town's strategic planning efforts is Dedham's current approach to financing public facilities improvements. In addition to a renewed commitment to maintenance and improvement of public facilities, Dedham has also adjusted its policy on funding these improvements. Indeed, the two are inextricably linked. One of the reasons Dedham previously avoided concerted maintenance and when necessary replacement of its public buildings and other facilities was the town's aversion to taking on debt. While some no doubt saw this as the most fiscally prudent path for Dedham, it also meant that there was little to no funding available to fix aging buildings. This fiscal policy led, in part, to deferred maintenance and functional obsolescence, which is now a major problem in several of the town's critical public facilities.

More recently, and in tandem with the Town's improved public facilities assessment and planning efforts, Dedham has also been building its amount of non-exempt debt, in part to increase its ability to pay for capital improvements. Non-exempt debt is money that must be paid for by a Town's operating budget. Unlike debt exclusions, non-exempt debt does not require approval from Town Meeting and does not increase property taxes. Non-exempt debt will not cover very large capital improvement projects (such as new construction of a town facility) but can cover a project in the three-to-four million dollar range. By building its debt-load, the Town has also improved its bond rating, further increasing its ability to borrow money.<sup>53</sup> The Town's assumption of debt has been coordinated through the use of its Long-Range Forecasting tool, which tracks the Town's retirement of debt over the next decade and beyond, and thus allows Dedham to see when it will have capacity to take on new debt. Using this tool, Dedham can predict when it will have capacity to borrow additional money and schedule more capital

<sup>50</sup> William Keegan, Dedham Town Administrator, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 20 November 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Town of Dedham, proceedings from the Strategic Planning Meeting, 16 January 2008, Dedham Middle School, (Jan 2008).

<sup>53</sup> William Keegan, interview by Community Opportunities Group, Inc, February 12, 2009.

improvement projects. In this way, the Town's long-range forecasting approach to managing its debt, coupled with enhanced capital improvements planning, comprises a complete capital improvement planning and financing approach.

### Departmental Reorganization

In tandem with capital improvements planning efforts, in recent years Dedham has made adjustments to its governance structure, particularly the departments with a role in facilities and infrastructure planning and maintenance. These adjustments were made to improve the way Dedham plans for and executes the maintenance and new construction of public facilities. The **Building, Planning and Construction Committee (BPCC)** is a relatively new committee charged with assessing the condition and capital needs of town facilities and making recommendations to the Town Administrator.<sup>54</sup> This group led the comprehensive assessment of and preliminary planning for the town's major public facilities in 2004 and is currently serving as the citizen oversight committee for the Senior Center planning process.<sup>55</sup>

The creation of the Department of Infrastructure Engineering in 2005 was another structural change. Reporting directly to the Town Administrator, the Department of Infrastructure Engineering is more focused on overall development and long-term maintenance of the town's infrastructure, though it also provides day-to-day technical support to residents and businesses for the installation, repair, and development of roads, sewers, drains, and buildings.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, the Town has taken steps towards establishing comprehensive management of its town facilities. Dedham does not currently have professional management for its public facilities, and, for the most part, department heads are left largely

responsible for the maintenance of the buildings they occupy. However, Dedham took a substantial step towards establishing central facilities management by hiring a part-time facilities manager in 2001. However, the BPCC has strongly recommended establishing a full-time, professional facilities manager and maintenance program for Dedham's public facilities.<sup>57</sup>

### PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Dedham does not have a comprehensive capital improvements plan, although the recent strategic planning efforts and the Municipal Facilities Assessment Study in 2004 have laid the foundation for such a plan in the future. In addition to these efforts, individual departments have assessed and planned for their own needs.

**Dedham Master Plan (1996).** The 1996 Master Plan's "Town Services and Physical Plant" chapter identified four major recommendations:

- ◆ Impose or increase fees for inspections and services (as opposed to raising taxes).
- ◆ Study opportunities for consolidating positions, functions or even departments to reduce costs and increase efficiency.
- ◆ Address maintenance issues in order to avoid higher one-time costs later on.
- ◆ Seek additional income, such as grants in aid and new revenue from Economic Development, and Proposition 2½ overrides to finance major capital expenditures.

Despite the persistence of some of the town's most pressing facilities needs, Dedham has made progress on a number of these broad objectives over the past ten years. For example, Dedham has addressed or is in the process of addressing its major maintenance issues, including roads

<sup>54</sup> Town of Dedham, Town Bylaws, Chapter Twenty-Six, "Building, Planning, and Construction Committee," at < <http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?cdid=12137>>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Report of the Department of Infrastructure Engineering, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 142.

<sup>57</sup> Town of Dedham, proceedings from the Dedham Strategic Planning Meeting, 16 January 2008, Dedham Middle School, (Jan 2008).

and sewers and key public facilities. Although no definite plans have been made for improvements or replacement of the fire and police stations, it is clearly a priority in the minds of town officials and residents alike. The town will receive substantial infusions of new revenue as well as mitigation measures from the Legacy Place project. However, realizing that private development will not fund all the town's capital needs, Dedham residents will soon vote on a Proposition 2½ override to fund a new senior center. Certain areas of town government have been consolidated or are moving in that direction. The finance department recently placed the collecting and treasury departments under a single manager, and officials hope that soon those departments will be consolidated and staffed by individuals who are cross-trained in both areas.<sup>58</sup>

The Town has also addressed a number of the individual recommendations, including studying options for moving or improving Town Hall, establishing a Town Engineer position, an Economic Development Director position, and funding a Town Planner position. Outstanding recommendations include reviewing service fees for adequacy and relevancy; establishing a private ways committee; examining the affect of private school landholdings on Dedham's tax base; establishing better record-keeping for engineering and public services; and forming relationships with regional human service providers.

**Dedham Police Station Study Summary (1997).**

This study examined two options for Dedham's police station. One option was to build a new 20,000 square foot facility on a 7.5 acre site at the corner of Washington Street and Wilson Avenue. The second option proposed a renovation and expansion of the existing police station in Dedham Square to a total of 18,716 square feet. Because of the current police station's site constraints, the latter option was contingent upon closing Church Street and expanding the rear parking lot. Though apparently no action was taken on either proposal, the study is useful in that it illustrates the pros and cons of building a new police station versus reno-

vating the current police station. It also shows that many of the issues facing the police station today have been present for over a decade.

**Long-Range School Facilities Planning (2001).**

In 2001, the New England School Development Council (NESDC) developed a report to analyze present and projected future school facilities needs in Dedham. Looking at demographic and enrollment trends and current and planned operating capacities for each school, the report was intended to lead to a long-range school facilities master plan for the Dedham Public Schools. The report found that while enrollment in the DPS was not projected to rise drastically, the school system still had pressing capital issues to the functional obsolescence of the majority of its school buildings. The report also proposed four alternatives for resolving school buildings' needs, each of which involved major construction and/or rehabilitation of existing facilities. Since the report was issued, Dedham has constructed the new Middle School and is preparing to rebuild the Avery School.

**Municipal Public Facilities Assessment (2004).**

This report marked a concerted effort to comprehensively evaluate Dedham's public facilities in order to identify priorities that could be incorporated into a long-range capital improvements plan. The analysis evaluated the following public facilities: Dedham Town Hall, the Central Police Station, Dedham Public Library's Main Branch, the Central Fire Station, the East Dedham Fire Station, the Dunn Public Works Facility, the Parks and Recreation Garage, and the Brookdale Cemetery Maintenance Building. For each facility, the report included a review of available building plans, an assessment of current conditions at each facility, and interviews with departmental personnel. Each facility was also evaluated for compliance with current building codes and standards for public facilities. The report concluded that, in general, the eight public facilities evaluated would not be able to meet the current or future needs for delivery of services. Additionally, the current sites of these major facilities are generally undersized, limiting options for major renovation of and/or additions to existing buildings.

<sup>58</sup> Mariellen Murphy, Director, Dedham Finance Department, to Community Opportunities Group, 9 June 2008.

**Municipal Service Facility Models Development Project (MSFMDP, 2004).** This report built on the efforts of the Municipal Public Facilities Assessment by developing prototype buildings based on the needs of each public facility. Preliminary sites were identified and site layouts were established and used to evaluate the viability of candidate sites. The report created the following three concept plans for the configuration of Dedham's public facilities:

- ◆ Service center approach: consolidates certain functions of service provision into a single facility. Functions that could be grouped include DPW functions, fleet maintenance, and fire, police, DPW, and parks and recreation storage needs.
- ◆ Campus concept: groups certain municipal facilities at a single location. For example, the police and fire station could be combined into a joint facility.
- ◆ Decentralized arrangement: locates municipal facilities on individual sites without consideration for combining facilities are combining common facility functions.

It is not clear whether the MSFMDP is currently being used for planning purposes.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES<sup>59</sup>

### Departmental Coordination

Because of the mix of elected and appointed positions in Dedham's town government, departmental coordination and service delivery, at times, experience inefficiencies. For example, a lack of coordination between departments that deal with planning, development, and permitting has led to long permitting timeframes for development. Dedham has begun to address this issue by

<sup>59</sup> Note: Community Opportunities Group, Inc. distributed a departmental questionnaire to all department heads in Dedham to obtain information on existing conditions, trends, and issues in Town departments. Responses were received from most but not all departments.

purchasing an online permitting software system which will improve both the transparency and efficiency of the permitting process. While this initiative will provide better departmental coordination for permitting, the Town should also consider whether there are other areas where lack of departmental alignment diminishes the quality of service provision.

### Staffing

Since service delivery depends primarily on people, sufficient staffing largely determines whether a community's needs are being adequately met. According to town reports and responses to a departmental questionnaire, most municipal departments' staffing levels have remained relatively constant for the past several years. Exceptions to this trend were either driven by an increase in workload or the influence of past plans' recommendations. For instance, the Technology Division was given an additional Network Support Technician in 2005 to address growing demand for technological services, and the Building Department added a Building Code/Enforcement Officer in 2007 to keep up with the increased demand for services from three major commercial developments in Dedham.<sup>60</sup> The creation of an Economic Development Director was a response to a need identified in the 1996 Master Plan, and possibly other plans. Otherwise, most departments have not experienced increases in personnel.

Despite a relatively flat staffing trend, many areas of Dedham's community services identified a need for more personnel, either now or in the near future.<sup>61</sup> Significant among these are the fire and police departments, which both expect to see increased workloads and subsequent staffing needs due to the several major developments that will reach completion within the next few years.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth Cimeno, Dedham Building Commissioner, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc. 13 June 2008. Note: The addition of the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer to the Building Department was offset by the removal of a similar position from general government.

<sup>61</sup> Note: Of the departmental surveys that were returned, one half indicated current or expected needs for more staff.

These developments, which include residential and commercial components, will greatly increase the demand for public safety services. Therefore, in addition to planning for new public safety facilities, Dedham should also expect to add both fire and police personnel to meet the expected increase in workload.

Pressure on staff will increase in the public safety departments because of increasing demands for service, but other departments are experiencing staff shortages because the work itself is becoming more complicated, not because the number of people requesting services has necessarily increased. For example, the Finance Department, Town Clerk, Information Services, and the Business/Procurement Office, have commented that their workloads have increased due to the growing complexity of the analysis and reporting that is expected of them. In particular, new technology and new legal requirements place an additional burden on these departments.

For the Youth Commission and Council on Aging, demands for services are also triggered by the changing needs of the populations they serve; the issues and problems of both youth and senior citizens have grown more complex in recent years. Although demands for community services that result from the changing nature of work rather than an absolute increase in residents, businesses, or development may be more difficult to identify or legitimate to the public, Dedham needs to remain aware of these increasing requirements and the demands they place on current town employees.

## Facilities Constraints

As documented by what is now many years of studies, plans, and public discussions, Dedham has several, pressing public facilities needs (see Table 10.5). With a new Middle School built and planning process for a senior center in progress, public safety facilities are a top priority to many in Dedham. Both the fire and police facilities have severe space shortages, as well as multiple other issues and deficiencies. On par or closely following in priority are improvements to or reconstruction of the Town Hall, which is inadequate on several

Dedham's recent strategic planning efforts have begun to address major facilities needs. With a clearer sense of priorities combined with the town's recent efforts in long-range financial planning and expected revenue from major projects, Dedham is in a much better position to plan for and meet its capital needs. Still, one of the major questions that remains for Dedham is how much additional debt the town wishes to take on to meet its capital building goals and how much additional tax burden residents are willing to accept.

fronts, including storage space, meeting space, technological infrastructure, and mechanical systems. Though transferring some departments to different locations—including the expected move of the Youth Commission to the High School—has and will temporarily alleviate the needs of some departments, it is not a long-term solution for the building's operations, meeting, and storage space needs.

The Dunn Public Works Facility building has also exhibited a host of problems over the years. Although the town undertook substantial renovation of the building in 2006, which included replacing the roof and installing new heating, air-conditioning, and electrical systems, lack of space continues to be the public works building's greatest issue. Like other public buildings, minimal storage space at the DPW facility detracts from space for operations. Additionally, the arrangement of space within the building is also problematic; currently the Department of Engineering is split between different parts of the buildings, making workflow management difficult. Additionally, the building's size prevents future expansion of staff or operations for the Department of Engineering.

Dedham's recent strategic planning efforts have begun to address major facilities needs. With a clearer sense of priorities combined with the town's recent efforts in long-range financial planning and expected revenue from major projects, Dedham is in a much better position to plan for and meet its capital needs. Still, one of the major questions

**TABLE 10.5  
DEDHAM PUBLIC FACILITIES: SUMMARY OF ISSUES & DEFICIENCIES**

Facility	Issues/Deficiencies	Recent repairs (past 3 years)
Central Police Station	Lack of office storage; lack of vehicle circulation & parking space; mechanical systems; handrail mounting heights; some asbestos present.	New gutters; repairs to HVAC; removal of some asbestos tiling.
Central Fire Station	Structural problems; roof needs repair; inadequate office, vehicle space, and employee facilities space; plumbing needs repair; cramped area for turnout gear; needs repointing of façade masonry.	Main floor replaced; some asbestos removal.
East Dedham Fire Station	Building is not ADA compliant beyond first floor; inadequate parking; sleeping quarters lack daylight; lack of storage for personal gear; overall severe space shortages.	Roof replaced; main truss replaced; new fire alarm system, boiler, furnace, electrical system, and generators.
Town Hall	Lack of employee/office storage; inadequate meeting space; public counters are not ADA compliant; vaults limit flexibility; windows are not energy efficient; HVAC in generally poor condition; inadequate space for Selectman's chamber; inadequate parking.	New electric service and switchgear, emergency electric generator and lighting, and oil tank.
Finance Department	Work area is congested; requires offsite location for paper storage; treasurer/collectors' counters are not ADA compliant; lack of space for confidential consultations.	None.
Finance Committee	Lack of meeting/collaboration space.	None.
Technology Division	Lack of space for equipment and personnel; will become an increasingly pressing issue within the next two years.	None.
Youth Commission	Insufficient space to serve youth population; limited and inflexible hours of operation makes it difficult to adequately serve youth.	Relocated to offices in High School planned for Fall, 2008; however, this space also poses issues in terms of space, accessibility, parking, and hours of operation.
Planning Board	There will be a need for more storage space for files and plans in the future.	None.

**TABLE 10.5  
DEDHAM PUBLIC FACILITIES: SUMMARY OF ISSUES & DEFICIENCIES**

Facility	Issues/Deficiencies	Recent repairs (past 3 years)
Conservation Commission	Lack of space for storage of files and plans.	Moving Youth Commission to the High School will largely solve this issue.
Dunn Public Works Facility	Brick requires repointing; inadequate parking; inadequate office and equipment storage and inadequate operations space - departments are split throughout building; lacks fire and theft alarm systems; potential asbestos; requires additional garage.	New salt shed; new insulated windows; replaced electrical system (including emergency generator), heating and AC systems; new roof.
Brookdale Cemetery Maintenance Building	Bathrooms are not ADA compliant; inadequate garage space for maintenance vehicles; lacks fire and theft alarm systems; deteriorating clapboards; some water infiltration.	Replaced HVAC, roof, windows, siding, and electrical system.
Recreation Department Garage	Overhead doors are not insulated; lacks domestic water, lockers, and restroom facilities; lacks second means of egress.	Some of the Recreation Department's activities moved to new facility on Common St, which has helped space and facilities issues.
Main Library	Inadequate fire protection; overcrowded stacks; narrow stairways; some shelves inaccessible.	Replaced boiler and hot water heater.
Endicott Branch Library	Issues similar to Main Library; also, exterior stucco, masonry, and brick chimney need repair.	Replaced, heating and AC systems, windows, and roof.
Council on Aging	Current space at Traditions living facility is severely space-constrained.	Possible construction of new senior center.

\* Note: Does not include public schools. Please see "Existing Conditions – Public Facilities - Public Schools."

Sources: Town Department heads, Town staff, and Eugene Negrone to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., Jan-June 2008; Earth Tech, Dedham Public Facilities Assessment, Feb 2004.

that remains for Dedham is how much additional debt the town wishes to take on to meet its capital building goals and how much additional tax burden residents are willing to accept.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. CONTINUE TO ESTABLISH A FORMAL CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS AND MAINTENANCE PLAN.

The Town is well poised to take its substantial facilities planning efforts that began in the early 2000s and fold them into a formal, comprehensive capital improvements plan (CIP). This plan would integrate currently separate planning processes (such as the planning processes of the DPW and Department of Engineering) together into one, consolidated plan. In addition to a formal capital improvements plan, Dedham needs to develop a plan for ongoing maintenance of town facilities and infrastructure. The facilities maintenance plan would capture the smaller yet important maintenance items such as regular building maintenance and seasonal grounds work, and could even provide a schedule for the regular assessment of buildings to provide for early identification of maintenance needs that might otherwise go unnoticed.

In tandem with its development of a capital improvements plan, Dedham should also continue to fund capital improvements through responsible assumption of non-exempt debt. Town officials have developed substantial capacity to fund small-to-mid-sized capital improvement projects by increasing their capacity to take on non-exempt debt. Dedham's use of its Long-Range Forecasting tool for financial planning makes it possible to understand the Town's debt burden over time and also its capacity to taken on more debt and fund additional projects. Using this approach, Dedham has increased capacity and flexibility to respond to its capital needs. This approach should be continued, and Dedham should be proactive in communicating the rationale for and success of this approach to Town boards and departments, and also the general public.

### 2. CREATE A FULL-TIME FACILITIES MANAGER POSITION TO PROVIDE SUSTAINED MAINTENANCE FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES.

Although the town has a part-time facilities manager who has provided some level of oversight and support for building maintenance, a full-time professional position would greatly increase Dedham's capacity to care for its public buildings and other facilities. Dedham's Building, Planning, and Construction Committee believes that the complexity of Dedham's facilities maintenance needs requires full-time, professional management and has therefore voiced their strong support of this office. Establishing this position would be especially effective with the completion of comprehensive capital improvements plan, as described above.

### 3. DEVELOP ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICIES TO DISPOSE OF EXCESS PROPERTY.

Service needs and demand for municipal buildings change over time, often leaving municipalities with obsolete or unused properties in their assets inventory. While sometimes perceived as a burden, these properties can present opportunities to raise funds for capital improvements or guide development to meeting a determined public benefit. Dedham should establish policies to guide the identification and disposition of surplus municipal property – land or buildings, including tax-title properties.

### 4. CONTINUE TO SCOPE THE TOWN'S FUNDING NEEDS, MATCH THEM WITH PROSPECTIVE GRANTS, AND DEDICATE STAFF TIME TO PURSUE THEM.

Dedham's public facilities needs do not have to be supported entirely by the town budget. External funding sources, namely grants, are available to fund a variety of facilities needs, although they may be competitive. Dedham knows this because the town has carried out grant-writing efforts in past years, but other sources should be pursued as well. The following funding sources are examples of some that need to be investigated further in Dedham:

- ◆ **Community Preservation Act.** The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows cities and towns to impose a surcharge on property taxes to create a dedicating funding source for open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation.

## DEDHAM MASTER PLAN

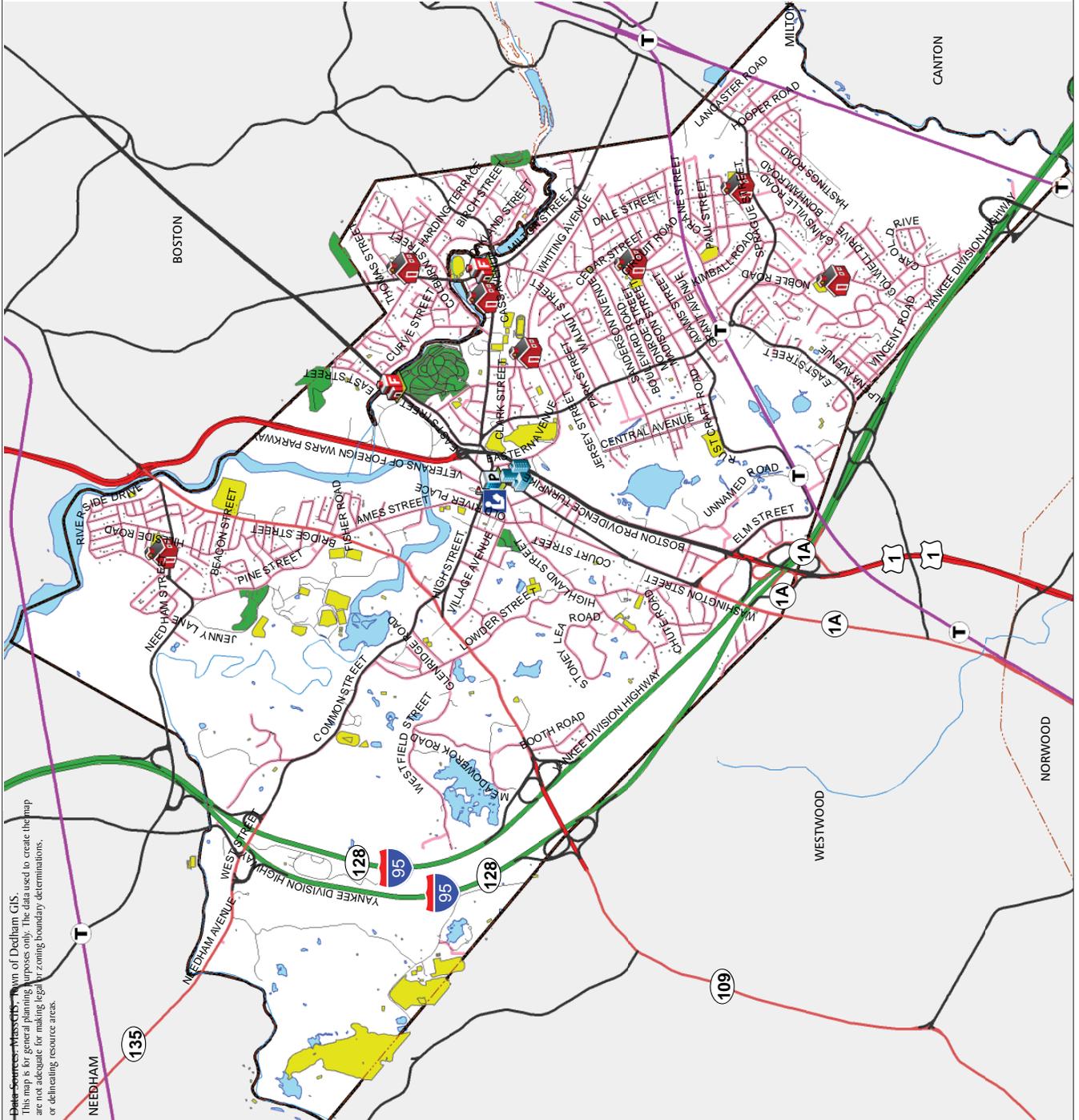
*(For a more detailed description of the program, see Chapter 5, Historic Resources, and Chapter 7, Open Space and Recreation.)*

- ◆ **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF).** Offered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), the MPPF provides competitive matching grants for public building restoration projects. However, this tends to be an unpredictable funding source as it is contingent upon the state's fiscal condition.
  
- ◆ **Infrastructure and capital projects grants.** Dedham's Economic Development Director, Planning Director, and Director of Department of Public Works should continue to offer input and assistance on seeking other grants to fund capital projects. The town's recent application for a Public Works for Economic Development (PWED) grant for improvements in Dedham Square is a good example of ways that Dedham could pursue state discretionary grants to finance worthy local projects.

**Map 10.1**  
**Community Facilities**  
March 2009

- KEY**
- Municipal Boundary
  - MBTA Stations
- ROADWAYS**
- Limited Access Highway
  - Multi-Lane Highway
  - Other Numbered Highway
  - Major Road, Collector
  - Local Roads
  - Open Water
- PUBLIC FACILITIES**
- Town Hall
  - Public Schools
  - Fire Stations
  - Police Station
  - Town Library
  - Parks and Playgrounds
  - Cemetery
  - Water Service

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



**Data Source:** 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 dedicating resource areas.



## CHAPTER 11

# GOVERNANCE

### INTRODUCTION

Governance refers to a municipality's form and structure of government. Although governance is often intertwined with the provision of community services and the operation of municipal facilities, a governance analysis is more concerned with a community's political culture, citizen access to opportunities for public service and the policy-setting process, how the community resolves conflicts and makes law, and the locus of authority for major decisions.



*Dedham Town Hall.*

Dedham is currently trying to determine the best way to move forward with a review and assessment of its current government structure. A petition recently circulated to establish a Charter Commission under the Home Rule Procedures Act. Since this effort failed to gain enough signatures, Dedham is now considering other ways to evaluate its town government. This chapter describes Dedham's current form of government – the basic structure, its efficiencies and deficiencies, and its cooperation and integration with regional entities – and provides recommendations for the town as it looks to the future.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Town Government in Dedham

Dedham adopted its first **charter** in 1974. A municipal charter is a written description of a community's form of government and distribution of powers. Massachusetts cities and towns have a few options for establishing their own charter, and Dedham

chose to pursue a **home rule** charter under Article 89 of the state constitution. The Home Rule Procedures Act (M.G.L. c. 43B), which the legislature enacted to implement Article 89, requires municipalities to establish a Charter Commission to create or amend a home rule charter. In the mid-1990s, Dedham initiated the process for making substantial changes to its 1974 charter. Dedham's Charter Commission completed a study, but only some of the Commission's charter proposals were accepted by the town.

Establishing the position of town administrator was among the changes that voters agreed to support in 1974. Replacing the former position of executive secretary with the more powerful role of town administrator marked a significant shift in Dedham. It enabled the town to move toward a more professional, centralized form of government. However, elements of a decentralized government structure remained, as evidenced by the retention of several elected boards and oversight of some professional staff by boards or committees.

Today, Dedham appears to be poised to examine the distribution of powers allotted in the current charter, reflect on this structure's performance over time, and consider its future governance needs.

Dedham's charter provides for a five-member Board of Selectmen, an appointed Town Administrator, who serves as chief administrative officer of the town, and a representative town meeting. The charter instituted what could be called a "three-quarters" approach to centralized government. While the majority of Dedham's boards and officials are appointed by either the Board of Selectmen or the Town Administrator, several are elected offices, including the Planning Board, Town Assessor, and Town Clerk.

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Board of Selectmen leads the executive branch of Dedham's town government. As the town's chief elected officials, the Board of Selectmen is responsible for formulating and promulgating policy directives and guidelines to be followed by all town agencies that fall under the Board's jurisdiction. The Board serves as the town's licensing authority, issuing licenses for the sale of alcohol, food, and other consumer products. In addition, the Board of Selectmen appoints a number of prominent town positions and boards, including the Town Administrator, Zoning Board of Appeals, Registrars of Voters, Director of Finance, and Building Commissioner.

### TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

In 1995, the Board of Selectmen appointed Dedham's first Town Administrator, a position that replaced the former executive secretary. The Town Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of local government, handling matters assigned to the position by charter or delegated by the Board of Selectmen. Specifically, the powers and duties of the Town Administrator include:

- ◆ The efficient administration of town functions and activities;
- ◆ Appointments of a number of department heads, commissions, boards and committees;

- ◆ Administration of the town's personnel system and negotiation of collective bargaining agreements with town employee unions;
- ◆ Jurisdiction over the rental and use of town facilities and oversight of their maintenance and repair (except for facilities under the control of the School Committee or Conservation Commission);
- ◆ Preparation and presentation of the annual operating budget and proposed capital outlay program; and
- ◆ Service as the town's chief procurement officer; and related duties.

While the Town Administrator has authority to appoint, remove, and supervise a number of offices, this position does not have jurisdiction over departments overseen by elected boards.

### ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICES

Dedham's government consists of thirty-two elected and appointed officials (not including the Town Administrator) and twenty-seven elected and appointed boards, commissions, or committees. Some offices have regulatory powers, such as the Board of Health and Planning Board, while others serve in a policy-making role, such as the Trustees of the Public Library and Parks and Recreation Commission. Further, some offices are advisory, such as the Commission on Disability, Transportation Committee, the Building, Planning, and Construction Commission, and the Design Review Advisory Board. Other elected or appointed offices function in an administrative or operational capacity. The Town Administrator appoints the police and fire chiefs, Building Commissioner, Director of Finance, and the Director of Public Works, which play major roles in the delivery of town services. The Town Clerk, a key administrative office, is elected by voters.

**Elected Boards.** In addition to the Board of Selectmen, Dedham has eight elected boards and committees as well as an elected Town Clerk and Town Moderator, and Treasurer-Collector. Some

**TABLE 11.1**  
**ELECTED OFFICIALS IN DEDHAM**

Office	Members	Office	Members
Board of Selectmen	5	Planning Board	5
Board of Assessors	3	School Committee	7
Board of Health	3	Town Clerk	1
Commissioners of Trust Funds	5	Town Moderator	1
Housing Authority	5	Trustees of the Public Library	5
Parks and Recreation Committee	5		

*Town of Dedham, Dedham Town Report: 2006. Town of Dedham, official website, at <<http://www.dedham-ma.gov/>>. Note: the Housing Authority includes one member appointed by the governor, as required by law.*

lected officials essentially serve as full-time paid employees, such as the Town Clerk, while members of the elected boards typically serve as volunteers, such as members of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Health, and Planning Board. Some of these offices employ additional staff, like the Board of Assessors, which oversees a Director of Assessing and three assessing specialists.

### APPOINTED BOARDS

In Dedham, the Board of Selectmen or Town Administrator has appointing authority for most appointed offices. The Town Charter assigns authority to the Board of Selectmen to appoint the Town Administrator, constables, registrars of voters, the board of appeals, conservation commission, and the historic district commission. The Board may also appoint additional boards or commissions that function primarily in a policy-making or advisory capacity. Table 11.2 lists the town's appointed boards and committees.

### MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS

Dedham's seventeen municipal departments provide services to residents and businesses and maintain the municipal facilities and infrastructure. The Town Administrator appoints several department heads and senior staff while other staff are appointed by the official or boards that oversee them. Although some of the town's elected and appointed officials work as town employees, most of Dedham's 400+ municipal workers are the staff of departments. *(For more information on Dedham's municipal departments and the services they provide, see Chapter 10, Community Services and Facilities.)*

### FORM OF TOWN MEETING

Dedham's legislative branch of government is a Representative Town Meeting. The Town is divided into seven precincts. According to Dedham's Charter, the representative town meeting is to consist of "not less than 270 members and not more than the closest higher number of members necessary to achieve an equal number of members from each district."<sup>1</sup> Today, Dedham has 273 elected representatives (thirty-nine from each precinct) for its nearly 24,000 residents.<sup>2</sup>

Dedham is one of thirty-six towns in the Commonwealth with a Representative Town Meeting form of government. Dedham combines its town meeting format with a "strong" Town Moderator and also holds "mini-town meetings" the week prior to regular scheduled town meetings. The mini-meetings provide residents with an opportunity to discuss items on town meeting warrants and provide municipal staff with feedback prior to the official town meeting vote. In addition, this "preview" process allows the Moderator to conduct a tightly-run town meeting during which articles on the warrant are referred to by number only. Avoiding the warrant text facilitates an unusually efficient meeting that most often concludes in a single night.

District representatives take their responsibilities seriously. They function as "precinct captains,"

<sup>1</sup> Dedham Home Rule Charter as amended at 1992 Annual Town Meeting Article 22, Chapter 134, Acts of 1992. Prior to 1992, Dedham's Charter only required that representative town meeting consist of not less than 270 members.

<sup>2</sup> Town of Dedham, Official Town Website at <<http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?pid=13707>>.

**TABLE 11.2  
APPOINTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND STATUTORY OFFICES**

Appointed Office	Number Appointed	Appointing Authority
Town Administrator	1	Board of Selectmen
Board of Appeals	7	Board of Selectmen
Building Commissioner	1	Town Administrator
Building, Planning, & Construction Commission	7	Town Administrator
Canine Controller	1	Town Administrator
Capital Expenditures Committee	5	Moderator
Civic Pride Committee	29	Town Administrator
Civil Defense Director	1	Town Administrator
Commission on Disability	5	Board of Selectmen
Conservation Commission	5	Board of Selectmen
Council on Aging	10	Town Administrator
Cultural Council	5	Board of Selectmen
Design Review Advisory Board	5	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Historic Design Commission
Director of Finance*	1	Town Administrator
Director of Public Works	1	Town Administrator
Endicott Estate Commission	9	Town Administrator
Finance Committee	9	Moderator
Fire Chief	1	Town Administrator
Historic Districts Commission	7	Board of Selectmen
Police Chief	1	Town Administrator
Registrar of Voters	4	Board of Selectmen
Scholarship Committee	6	Board of Selectmen
Sealer of Weights and Measures	1	Town Administrator
Town Counsel	1	Board of Selectmen
Transportation Committee	2	Town Administrator
Treasurer*	1	Director of Finance
Collector*	1	Director of Finance
Veteran's Agent and Procurement Officer	1	Town Administrator
Water Commissioners	3	Board of Selectmen
Wire Inspector	1	Town Administrator
Youth Commission	7	Town Administrator

\* Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2002 created the position of the Director of Finance, and made the previously elected positions of Town Treasurer and Town Collector appointed positions. At the Dedham Town Meeting of 2008, a Home Rule Petition was approved to consolidate the positions of Treasurer and Collector. This change is still pending in the legislature. (Mariellen Murphy (Director of Finance, Town of Dedham, MA), communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 2 October 2008.)

Source: Town of Dedham, Dedham Town Report: 2006.

personally approaching constituents to gather information and opinions. Town board members and officials and residents appreciate both the Town Meeting process and its efficiency. There does not appear to be strong sentiment in Dedham to change town meeting to a town council – in Massachusetts towns, a less common type of legislative body that also holds some executive powers.<sup>3</sup>

## Regional Government

Although many types of regional services exist in Massachusetts, there is little in the way of regional government. Until recently, Massachusetts had fourteen county governments, each with administrative responsibility for county courts, jails, and a registry of deeds, and maintenance of county roads. In the late 1990s, the Commonwealth abolished the governments of four Massachusetts counties. Two other counties have since secured special charters to become regional councils of government, with an additional county special charter still pending in the legislature. These county governments provide a variety of services to participating cities and towns (who pay an annual assessment), including planning, public safety, engineering, water and waste disposal. The remaining six county governments remained substantially unchanged. Norfolk County, for which Dedham is the county seat, is one of the six remaining county governments.<sup>4</sup>

All Massachusetts counties, regardless of whether they have maintained a county government, still elect a registrar of deeds and probate, sheriffs, and district attorneys. Counties whose governments are still intact provide additional services. In Norfolk County, these services include the registry of deeds, county engineering department, Norfolk County Agricultural High School, the sheriff's department, the Wollaston Recreational Facility, appellate tax jurisdiction, the county treasurer's

<sup>3</sup> Meeting with Town Administrator and other Department Heads (Town of Dedham, MA), verbal communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 21 May 2008; Various boards, commissions, and officials (Town of Dedham, MA), verbal communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc, 10 September 2008.

<sup>4</sup> The League of Women Voters, Your Government, "Massachusetts Government: County Government," <http://lwvma.org/govcounty.shtml>.

office, county land and open space management, some statutory jurisdiction over roads, and retired and senior volunteer programs.<sup>5</sup> Although Dedham experiences more of a county presence than other communities, county government is a minimal part of the day-to-day operation and governance of Dedham.

Despite the lack of any single framework of **regional government**, there are many organizations that contribute to the web of **regional governance** that involves and affects Dedham. Since Dedham is part of the Boston metropolitan area – which most define as Boston and the 100 cities and towns around it – the nature and extent of regional organization is greater for Dedham than for many suburbs. While all communities are part of systems and have problems that are regional in nature, Dedham's part in a major metro area make awareness of and participation in regional cooperation and problem-solving all the more important. Dedham is a part of the following regional organizations:

- ◆ **Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).** A planning and advocacy organization for the 101 cities and towns that make up the metropolitan Boston area. The region is divided into eight subregions, including the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), of which Dedham is a member. Each member town of the MAPC has a Local Council Representative, who may or may not attend the TRIC subregion monthly meetings. In Dedham, the Local Council Representative is the Town Clerk, who attends TRIC meetings. Other staff from the town also participate in TRIC - including the Town Administrator and Economic Development - giving Dedham the reputation of being activist and interested in regional issues.<sup>6</sup>
- ◆ **Charles River Watershed Association.** The Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA)

<sup>5</sup> The County of Norfolk Massachusetts, "About Norfolk County," <<http://www.norfolkcounty.org/index.cfm?pid=10436m>>.

<sup>6</sup> Steve Winter (TRIC Subregional Coordinator, Metropolitan Area Planning Council), communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 9 October 2008.

is a non-profit organization that leads advocacy, legal, and science-based initiatives along the Charles River and the thirty-five communities within the watershed. The CRWA monitors water quality along the river, provides policy guidance for communities (for instance, model stormwater bylaws or best practices for low-impact development), give educational talks to companies, local government, and community groups, and numerous other activities.

- ◆ **Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization** (Boston MPO). Comprised of the 101 communities that define the Boston metro area, the Boston MPO conducts the federally-mandated transportation planning process for metro areas with populations of over 50,000. The MPO conducts long-range and implementation planning for multi-modal transport projects and decides how to allocate federal and some state funds among its member communities.
- ◆ **Minuteman Library Network.** This consortium of forty-one libraries with sixty-four locations in the Greater Boston area provides library resources to participating communities. The MLN is governed by a nine-member executive board and a Membership Committee that includes the library directors from each member community or organization.
- ◆ **Dedham-Westwood Water District.** A locally controlled public water supply for Dedham and Westwood, the Dedham-Westwood Water District (DWWD) operates as a self-supporting unit of local government. It is governed by a six-person board with three members from each town. Dedham's representatives to the DWWD board are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.<sup>7</sup>

Communities often have informal, cooperative arrangements with neighboring towns, too, such as mutual aid (public safety) and occasional equipment sharing. Most of these programs and services reflect decisions made by municipalities to seek

<sup>7</sup> Dedham-Westwood Water District at <[www.dwwd.org](http://www.dwwd.org)>.

resources beyond their own corporate boundaries – within limits. Dedham's government framework is mostly a local one that relies relatively little on regional collaboration. This is true for most Massachusetts communities.

## Civic Engagement

Many of Dedham's elected and appointed board members have served in their positions for several years. The most active boards include the elected Board of Selectmen and School Committee (which are often the most contested races), as well as the Planning Board and Finance Committee. In addition to participating in local government through elected or appointed office, Dedham has numerous local civic and service organizations and clubs that offer volunteers service opportunities.

Until recently, local advocacy groups have not had as profound an impact on Dedham's governmental policy as in other communities. Beginning four years ago, Citizens for Dedham Neighborhoods Alliance (CDNA), a town-wide organization, advocated for the preparation of this Master Plan and sponsored forums, attended by other Dedham organizations, on the subject of citizen engagement. Another local organizations, Dedham Square Circle, is a non-profit corporation that organizes and advocates for economic and physical improvements to Dedham's historic downtown.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the recently formed advocacy organization is the Mother Brook Community Group in East Dedham. Currently seeking nonprofit status, the group works to improve the condition of the Mother Brook and local amenities such as Condon Park and the Avery Elementary School.<sup>9</sup> All of these groups have initiated improvement projects and lobbied local government for assistance with specific activities. The Dedham Civic Pride Committee is a longer-running, appointed committee with non-profit status that works to improve Dedham's overall physical appearance.

<sup>8</sup> Dedham Square Circle, "Our Vision," <<http://www.dedhamsquarecircle.org>>.

<sup>9</sup> "Move to Nurture Mother Brook," *Daily News*, 17 April 2008, at <<http://wickedlocal.com/dedham/archive>>.

Aside from the activities of these organizations, citizen participation in town government primarily occurs through the election process, public meetings, and town meeting. Additionally, Dedham's municipal website allows people to be more involved and up to date in town affairs. Sensing that the website could be better utilized, Dedham is considering placing more municipal information online and expanding "e-gov" access. In addition to providing internet information, Dedham televises many of its public meetings through the local cable access channel, Dedham Public TV.

### Recent Changes to Town Government Structure

The amendments to Dedham's Home Rule Charter in 1998 and the subsequent restructuring of several departments moved the town toward a more centralized form of government, with professional staff taking responsibility for functions once handled by volunteers or for functions that needed to be expanded or enhanced. Besides increasing the efficiency and expertise of local government, another reason for some of these changes was to limit the town's reliance on outside consultants, although it is not clear whether this has been successful. The town continues to rely on appointed boards to oversee many government functions.

In 2002, a charter amendment authorized creating the position of Director of Finance and made the Town Collector and Treasurer positions appointed offices within the Finance Department.<sup>10</sup> More recently, Town Meeting approved a Home Rule Petition to consolidate the Treasurer and Collector into one position. This change is still pending in the legislature.<sup>11</sup>

In 2005, Dedham separated most engineering functions from the Department of Public Works and created the Department of Infrastructure Engineering, which reports directly to the Town Administrator. This change was the result of many years of discussion within the department, includ-

ing management and labor issues. Previously, one Public Works Commissioner was responsible for overseeing all public works operations as well as the limited engineering services that occurred. At the time, most engineering services were contracted to private consultants, which some considered inefficient. Providing a professional engineer on staff allows the town to review private development proposals for impacts on local services. Today, the Director of Public Works now oversees Highway, Sewer, Forestry, Cemetery and Fleet Maintenance operations while the Director of Engineering oversees engineering services, but the two departments work closely together. The Director of Engineering functions as a Town Engineer.

Since 2005, Dedham has added a total of five new full-time positions (this does not include the addition of part-time staff or school department personnel). These positions include:

- ◆ A Network Support Technician in the Finance Department's Technology Division in 2005;
- ◆ A building Code/Enforcement Officer in the Building Department in 2007;
- ◆ An Economic Development Director in 2007;
- ◆ An Environmental Coordinator in 2007; and
- ◆ A GIS Manager in 2008.

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

### Form of Government in Surrounding Towns

Approximately two-thirds of the communities in Massachusetts with a town form of government have some sort of professional manager or administrator and eight-eight percent have an open town meeting. Thirty-six out of the Commonwealth's 301 cities and towns have a representative town meeting. However, this number was higher until several changed to a city form of government beginning in the late 1970s. Table 11.3 summarizes

<sup>10</sup> Mariellen Murphy (Director of Finance, Town of Dedham, MA), communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 2 October 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

**TABLE 11.3  
FORMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DEDHAM’S REGION**

Community	Population*	Type of Town Meeting	Type of Charter†	Executive Structure
Canton	21,916	Open	N/A	BOS/Executive Secretary
Dover	5,627	Open	N/A	BOS/Town Administrator
Foxborough	16,298	Open	Special Act	BOS/Town Manager
Medfield	12,266	Open	N/A	BOS/Town Administrator
Milton	25,691	Representative	N/A	BOS/Town Administrator
Needham	28,263	Representative	Special Act‡	BOS/Town Manager
Norwood	28,172	Representative	Home Rule	BOS/General Manager
Randolph	30,168	Representative	N/A	BOS/Executive Secretary
Sharon	17,033	Open	N/A	BOS/Town Administrator
Stoughton	26,951	Representative	Home Rule	BOS/Town Administrator
Walpole	23,086	Representative	Home Rule‡	BOS/Town Administrator
Westwood	14,010	Open	Home Rule‡	BOS/Town Administrator

\*Massachusetts Department of Revenue, *Population Estimates, 2007, Municipal Data Bank*.

† Those without charters (“N/A”) operate under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 39 through c. 44.

‡ Town charter available online.

Sources: Official Town websites of the above-listed communities.

the basic characteristics of local government in the communities surrounding Dedham.

### Regional Cooperation

Although Massachusetts lacks any sort of robust or consistent framework for regional governance, many municipalities partake in some type of regional affiliation, including Dedham. Beyond the town’s existing regional affiliations such as the MAPC, the Dedham-Westwood Water District, and its mutual-aid agreements with neighborhood towns, Dedham has collaborated with nearby communities to address regional issues.

In 2002, Dedham partnered with the neighboring towns of Canton, Norwood, and Westwood to form a regional working group charged with studying, development-related issues such as traffic, environmental issues and contaminated sites.<sup>12</sup> The study spurred the formation of the Regional Working Group (RWG) through the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce. This group – which now includes Dedham, Canton, Norwood, Westwood, and Walpole<sup>13</sup> – meets quarterly to coordinate and

manage large development projects with regional impacts and also to pursue regional economic development initiatives. Each member community pays annual dues to the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber provides a number of services, including training and professional development, project monitoring, facilitation between member towns, and advocacy at the state level for funding and support for member communities. Currently, the RWG is focused on branding the region in order to attract desirable industries, such as the life sciences. The group is a way to move forward with large objectives and to get member communities around the table to discuss current issues of regional concern.<sup>14</sup>

Another initiative that recognizes Dedham’s role within the greater region is the establishment of its Economic Development Director. Created in 2007, this position seeks to allow Dedham to improve communications with and compete within the larger economic region. Specifically, the Economic Development Director is responsible for preparing a town-wide Economic Development Plan, overseeing the Legacy Place development, participating in the Master Plan update, serving as a

<sup>12</sup> Daylor Consulting Group, *Municipal Growth Planning Study Phase II*, May 2002, 1.

<sup>13</sup> The towns of Sharon and Norfolk occasionally join the RWG, but they are not official members.

<sup>14</sup> Susan McQuade (President, Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce), to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 9 October 2008.

resource to the town on creating additional affordable housing, and facilitating the revitalization of Dedham Square.<sup>15</sup> The Director is a member of the Economic Development Committee of the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce and works closely with the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) and the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA).<sup>16</sup>

The most pressing issues facing communities today are regional in nature: traffic, pollution, affordable housing, and sprawl. Therefore, these sorts of regional relationships and initiatives will continue to be important for ensuring a high quality of life at the local level. Dedham should continue its record of participating in regional dialogue and action.

## PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

There has been little concerted study of governance in Dedham since the Charter Commission's work from 1992 and 1994. In drafting proposed amendments to the charter, the Commission studied the structure of government in Dedham. The Commission produced a Majority Report on its findings. Many of the Majority Report recommendations were not carried forward as proposed charter amendments, but some recommendations were compiled into a Minority Report that became the basis for the warrant articles for Town Meeting. In 1995, voters acted on the charter amendments at a general town election and agreed to establish the position of the Town Administrator. This marked the most substantive change to Dedham's government structure since the first Home Rule Charter in 1974.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### ELECTED AND APPOINTED BOARDS

Dedham's charter provides for a fairly common form of town government: a board of selectmen-

town administrator arrangement with a legislative body of representative town meeting. The charter consolidates most but not all executive-branch operations under the town administrator and locates responsibility for most but not all executive-branch policy with the Board of Selectmen. Though mostly centralized, this structure nevertheless divides authority and procedures in ways that raise issues for those within local government. Currently, Dedham's Town Charter assigns the Town Administrator with hiring and firing authority over most town employees, but not for those serving as staff for elected boards. (The Town Administrator is, however, involved in contract negotiations and budget decisions with all town employees). In some instances, the disconnect between elected and appointed officials can result in friction and stalemates, and in extreme circumstances it can influence policy and regulatory approvals.

Dedham has taken steps to improve interdepartmental dialogue. Soon after being appointed, the Town Administrator began holding regular meetings with senior staff in the town's major operations departments. However, departments that serve as staff to elected boards or committees are not typically represented, including the town planner, yet these departments work together on a daily basis. In the planner's case, the issue is complicated by the fact that Dedham funds the position as a consultant to the Planning Board, not as a salaried town employee.

### DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

The divide between elected and appointed boards can cause a breakdown in communication that raises particular problems for development review and permitting. Development permitting is usually improved by inter-board consultation, particularly for large or complex projects. The different statutory procedures and timetables of development review and permitting can make it very difficult for local officials to communicate. For these reasons, it is extremely important for boards and departments to maintain regular and clear communication throughout the permitting process. Dedham's current structure of government scatters

<sup>15</sup> Town of Dedham, Official Town Website, Town Departments, Economic Development at <<http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?pid=14667>>.

<sup>16</sup> Karen O'Connell (Dedham Economic Development Director, Town of Dedham, MA), to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 19 June 2008.

offices with development-related charges in different areas of government. For example:

- ◆ The Conservation Commission and Board of Appeals are appointed by the Board of Selectmen;
- ◆ The Building Commissioner, DPW director, Economic Development Director, Environmental Coordinator, Fire and Police Chiefs, and Building, Planning, and Construction Commission are appointed by the Town Administrator; and
- ◆ The Planning Board and Parks, Recreation Commission, and Board of Health are elected by voters.

At some level, most if not all of these offices have a role in or they are directly affected by the development process. They need to be informed as projects unfold so they can fulfill their obligations for reviews, comments, inspections, and approvals. Dedham's boards, commissions, and officials have a difficult time managing their workloads and maintaining effective communication when development activity increases. It is particularly hard for them to respond quickly to an abrupt change in permitting demands.<sup>17</sup>

Another development-issue stemming from fragmented communication between departments is that sometimes, comments from the DPW Director and Department of Engineering are not incorporated in special permit and site plan review decisions. Currently, the town does not require that the DPW or Department of Engineering review development proposals during the permitting process. In the absence of these two departments, the Planning Board and Conservation Department may place conditions of approval on infrastructure for development projects that are impractical for the DPW and Department of Engineering from a construction and maintenance perspective. Also,

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<sup>17</sup> Various boards, commissions, and officials (Town of Dedham, MA), verbal communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc, 10 September 2008.

the absence of the DPW and Department of Engineering during the permitting process can lead to an uncoordinated reliance on outside consultants for services that could be completed in-house. For example, the Parks and Recreation Department built new recreation fields at the recently-acquired SMA property. This project relied in part on the donated landscape architectural services from a local resident. However, the plans were sent to an outside consultant for review at a significant cost to the town (paid from bond proceeds) when the Department of Engineering could have conducted the review.

Dedham is not alone in its struggle to improve coordination for development review and permitting. Like many towns, it has established a Development Review Team (DRT) that includes department heads with a role in development. The DRT meets informally with developers to discuss proposals in the preliminary stages of project development, before the more formal application and review process starts. This is an opportunity for the developer to discuss a proposal with all town departments at the same time, a preemptive gesture that helps to avert future pitfalls and sets the stage for a more informed and smoother process going forward. The participating department heads include the Town Planner, Economic Development Director, Building Commissioner, DPW Director, Town Engineer, Environmental Coordinator, the Chiefs of Police and Fire Departments, and the Health Department Director. However, committees and boards without staff, such as the Historic Districts Commission, are not represented at these meetings. Moreover, the DRT does not act in place of the boards and commissions with permitting authority.

Other recent changes within local government may help to improve the efficiency and clarity of the development review process. For example, the Economic Development Director's position is expected to foster and improve interdepartmental and board communication relating to nonresidential development in Dedham. Additionally, Dedham's recently adopted permitting software system, ENR Govsolutions, should increase effi-

ciency between departments and encourage greater interdepartmental and board cooperation for economic development projects deemed beneficial to the town.<sup>18</sup> However, economic development and community planning are different disciplines, and the Planning Board's statutory responsibilities exceed the purview of the Economic Development Director. An equally pressing concern for the town is to reassess the wisdom of having a Town Planner work on a consulting basis to the Planning Board.

### CHANGES TO FORM OF GOVERNMENT

In addition to improving communication within town government, some Dedham residents and officials have advocated for changing the form of government itself. In 2007, the Citizens for Dedham Neighborhood Alliance, Inc. (CDNA) proposed adoption of a new Commission on Dedham Government to review the structure and organization of Dedham's government and to "compare it to other towns, enhance the economy, efficiency and quality of decision-making and service in town government, enhance the openness and transparency of town government, and identify best practices in government operations."<sup>19</sup> A group within town government tried to initiate the charter review process in 2009 by collecting the petition signatures required to put the question of establishing a Charter Review Commission on the town election ballot. These initial efforts were not successful, but the group will make another attempt in 2010.<sup>20</sup>

Other communities in Dedham's region are also examining their local governments in order to increase efficiency. In 2004, a study committee in Sharon recommended establishing a Charter Commission, and at a Dedham all-boards meeting in September 2008, attendants expressed concern that all departments do not report to the Town Admin-

istrator. Some board members have suggested that the town establish a Charter Review Committee to look at the current government structure and determine whether adjustments should be made.<sup>21</sup>

### EFFICIENCY VS. EFFECTIVENESS

Conversations with municipal employees and officials suggest that many are dissatisfied with inefficiencies that seem to result, in part, from the organization of town government in Dedham today. However, a deliberative process and citizen influence and participation seem to be highly valued aspects of Dedham's political culture. While Dedham officials want more **efficiency** in their government, they also want an **effective** government – one that is responsive to people, works slowly and deliberatively by design, and gives citizens the opportunity to influence or participate directly in decisions.

For example, the two-year timeline used to review and permit recent large-scale development projects in Dedham was apparently a conscious decision to ensure that an adequate review of these projects occurred; it was a deliberative rather than an efficient structure for development review. At an all-board's meeting in September 2008, participants described Dedham as a process-oriented town where people enjoy the opportunity to debate issues prior to Town Meeting.<sup>22</sup> Dedham has taken noteworthy actions to improve communication and increase efficiency in important ways, such as appointing an Economic Development Coordinator and investing in technology to expedite and clarify the permitting process. As Dedham examines the overall structure of government and the manner in which the town makes and implements decisions, the relationship between efficiency and effectiveness and the role each should play must be considered as well.

<sup>18</sup> Karen O'Connell, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 19 June 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Town of Dedham, MA, "Dedham Finance Committee Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, 2007," 50.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah MacDonald, (Town Selectman and Dedham Master Plan Steering Committee Member), to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., February 17, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Various boards, commissions, and officials (Town of Dedham, MA), verbal communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc, 10 September 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Besides enhancing communication between entities within town government, another key concern for Dedham is maintaining good communication with citizens and providing access and transparency to local government. One method Dedham uses to enhance citizen communication and participation is its “mini town meeting” system. A week before the Annual Town Meeting, precinct chairs preside over a formal warrant review meeting (referred to as “mini-town meeting”) which is open to the public and televised. This meeting allows Town Meeting Representatives as well as Dedham citizens to ask questions about warrant articles and obtain answers from town officials and department heads. Some precinct chairs regularly communicate with their Town Meeting Representatives, bringing to their attention posted openings on town boards and committees and alerting them to noteworthy activities. Going forward, precinct chairs should be encouraged to take an even more active role in disseminating information and encouraging exchanges of ideas. A technical assistance guide should be developed to help precinct chairs lead Town Meeting representatives, with an emphasis on improved communications.

Despite commendable efforts to improve communication between Dedham’s precinct chairs, other Town Meeting members, and the general public, there is a need for even more support for Dedham’s town representatives. Town Meeting members have expressed concern that their roles and responsibilities are not clearly understood, and this is especially true for new representatives. Also, some Town Meeting representatives are concerned that many representatives do not take their offices seriously, and that the entire representative town meeting structure suffers as a result. Increased training for Town Meeting representatives could empower and hold them accountable and also generally improve Dedham’s “mini -town meeting” and the Annual Town Meeting.

Dedham’s independent neighborhood associations provide another avenue for greater citizen participation. Some of these groups make serious efforts to work with their Town Meeting Representatives and keep the local newspapers informed

of their activities and concerns. Each independent group should be encouraged to determine how to communicate issues and concerns to Town government.

## TECHNOLOGY AND TOWN GOVERNANCE

Various types of technology – especially those that enable communication through the world wide web – are becoming increasingly important to local governments. In most towns today, residents expect that their town halls will have some sort of internet presence. Dedham is continuing its efforts to ensure that all committees and boards post their meeting notices and agendas as soon as meeting dates are known. In addition, committees and boards are encouraged to post minutes of their meetings as soon as possible. Dedham’s website should continue these efforts to make all public records available through the website and to post items as soon as they are available. Dedham could also use its website to capture the energy and respond to the knowledge of its citizens.

Town government has already started to incorporate enhanced website capabilities, and officials should be encouraged to make use of existing electronic resources to disseminate and gather information. Community groups such as the Citizens for Dedham Neighborhoods Alliance, Dedham Educational Partnership, Dedham Square Circle, Dedham Historical Society, and the Mother Brook Neighborhood Association and various blogs also have expanded the use of electronic communication. The Dedham Visionary Access Corporation provides an opportunity for citizens to gather information about town affairs. Another technological resource is Dedham’s online permitting system, which is helping to make steps toward greater public awareness about new development. One of the features of the software is the establishment of an on-line database of development projects through which the public can track projects through the permitting pipeline. This resource will improve the transparency of the development process and allow for more organized and timely public input.

In addition to its municipal website, Dedham is fortunate to have a local weekly newspaper and

a daily regional newspaper. To supplement these readily-available print resources, the town could install several public workstations at Town Hall would allow better access to information.

Besides posting meeting minutes and agendas on its website, Dedham needs to consider other avenues to improve access to local boards and commissions and to gather citizen input before officials make a decision. For example, access to a monthly calendar of public meetings, the record of minutes from previous meetings, and contact information for elected and appointed officials are important. All meetings are open to any interested person, and increased effort should be made to encourage greater citizen attendance and participation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. CONTINUE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE TOWN CHARTER.

Dedham's current Town Charter consolidates most but not all executive branch operations under the Town Administrator and locates responsibility for most but not all executive branch policy with the Board of Selectmen. Though mostly centralized, this structure nevertheless splits authority and procedures in ways that can create issues for those within local government. Establishing a Charter Review Commission is the first step in making changes to Dedham's form of government and improving process and communication issues within the town's local government.

### 2. IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS AND ISSUES SURROUNDING PERMITTING IN GENERAL.

Dedham has made progress toward improving its development review and permitting efficiency and effectiveness by establishing a Development Review Team and obtaining an electronic permitting system. In addition, some of the issues currently affecting development review would be addressed by a Charter Review Commission and possible changes to Dedham's form of government. However, the Town should nevertheless

pursue opportunities to make changes to the way the process is currently run. To improve permitting-related issues, Dedham should:

- ◆ Sustain the DRT's coordinating efforts throughout the development process, including special permit and site plan review.
- ◆ Ensure that boards with permitting authority use town staff instead of outside expertise.
- ◆ Incorporate more boards into the DRT process, such as the Historic Districts Commission.

### 3. IMPROVE REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING BY ESTABLISHING A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR TOWN MEETING REPRESENTATIVES.

Although Dedham's "mini town meeting" improves communication between Town Hall, town meeting representatives, and the general public, town meeting members may not be able to perform their jobs effectively if they do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Instituting a brief training program for town meeting representatives would introduce new members to the system. For existing members, such a program would fill in training gaps they never had and also remind them of their responsibilities. Finally, such a program might reinforce a sense of accountability for town meeting members.

### 4. UNDERTAKE A STRATEGIC STUDY AND PLANNING EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE TOWN'S WEBSITE, STARTING WITH ITS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AND INCLUDING SPECIFIC MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE WEBSITE.

Dedham's town website is a potentially powerful tool to increase communication between town departments and the general public, and to improve communication and coordination between town departments, boards, commissions, and other groups. However, the current website falls short of this potential. Some improvements, such as increasing the amount of documentation and information available on the website, could be done through existing applications. Others, such as improving the ability for the public to communi-

cate with and offer commentary to staff and town officials, may require the integration of additional technology.

**5. HAVE A “POINT PERSON” WITHIN TOWN HALL TO COMMUNICATE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS, MAINTAIN CONTACT INFORMATION, AND POST INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUPS ON THE TOWN WEBSITE.**

Dedham has several neighborhood associations, such as the Mother Brook Association and Dedham Square Circle. These groups represent an opportunity for the town to better support neighborhood initiatives and communicate with residents in general. The responsibility of establishing a neighborhood organization and taking on various initiatives ultimately lies with the organizations themselves. However, their efforts should be encouraged and supported by Town Hall. Support at the neighborhood level is already a part of Dedham’s culture, but the town has an opportunity to make it more so. A point person could become an advocate for the formation of other neighborhood groups, meeting with interested residents and providing general guidance on how they might go about establishing an organization. The amount of involvement Dedham wishes to have with these groups will ultimately be up to the Town. However, there should be some level of official support, even if largely symbolic, that recognizes neighborhood organizations and important pieces of local governance.

## CHAPTER 12

# IMPLEMENTATION

<b>SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>					
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
1	Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee.	X			X
2	Integrate master plan implementation within the Town's annual goal-setting process.	X			X
3	Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the Dedham Zoning Bylaw.	X			
4	Complete the review and update of the Rules and Regulations of Subdivision Control.	X			
5	Change the consulting Town Planner position to a full-time Planning Director.	X			
6	Complete a comprehensive Historic Resources Inventory.	X			
7	Include the Department of Public Works and Department of Engineering in the development review and permitting procedures conducted by town boards.	X			
8	Develop an environmental checklist to assist with development review.	X			
9	Continue to develop and institute a capital improvements plan process.	X			X
10	Update Dedham's Open Space and Recreation Plan.	X			X
11	Develop a plan to provide universal access to recreation facilities, parks, and trails.	X			X
12	Analyze the potential of Dedham's MBTA commuter rail stations for transit-oriented development (TOD).	X			
13	Improve service and alter routes of JBL Bus Line and advocate for changes to MBTA bus service.	X			
14	Adopt the Community Preservation Act.	X			
15	Create an economic development vision and plan.	X			
16	Institute a training program for Town Meeting Members.	X			X
17	Establish a Transportation Advisory Committee.		X		X
18	Strengthen enforcement of existing no-parking regulations on sidewalks.		X		X
19	Adopt a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policy.		X		X

<b>SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>					
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
20	Create a town-wide traffic calming policy.		X		X
21	Seek Certified Local Government designation.		X		X
22	Study adoption of demolition delay bylaw.		X		
23	Create a full-time Facilities Manager position for all town and school properties.		X		
24	Conduct site evaluations for priority sites identified in the economic development vision and plan.		X		
25	Investigate additional Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites.		X		X
26	Create a permitting guide.		X		
27	Support an association of Dedham neighborhood organizations.		X		X
28	Encourage neighborhood groups to become stewards of local parks.		X		X
29	Adopt a Scenic Roads Bylaw.		X		
30	Become a "Tree City."		X		X
31	Establish a Housing Partnership Committee.		X		
32	Establish a housing rehabilitation program.		X		
33	Work with neighboring towns to hire a regional preservation planner.		X		
34	Review the Dedham Town Charter.		X		
35	Establish municipal policy and an annual budget appropriation for wildlife management.			X	
36	Encourage the formation of a Trails Stewards Group.			X	X
37	Encourage the establishment of Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts.			X	X
38	Encourage business owners in neighborhood commercial areas to organize.			X	X
39	Create design guidelines for neighborhood commercial districts.			X	
40	Investigate creating a rental housing code enforcement program.			X	
41	Encourage rehabilitation of deteriorated, highly visible residential and mixed-use buildings.			X	X
42	Create a Housing Resource Guide.			X	
43	Participate in marketing strategies for key development sites.			X	X
44	Consider using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements to support business development.			X	
45	Develop asset management policies to dispose of surplus municipal property.			X	
46	Continue to fund capital improvements through responsible assumption of non-exempt debt.				X

<b>SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>					
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
47	Continue to coordinate infrastructure improvements with civic beautification efforts.				X
48	Increase collaboration with nearby communities and conservation groups for regional water resource and environmental habitat protection.				X
49	Develop and promote public water conservation efforts.				X
50	Work with Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership (SAHP) to promote its First-time Homebuyer Program.				X
51	Continue to seek grants to support capital improvements on a project-by-project basis.				X
52	Continue to include sidewalk maintenance in the Department of Public Works' pavement management system.				X
53	Continue to identify parcels to form a system of paths and trails.				X
54	Formalize and continue the practice of Historic District Commission review and comment on public development projects.				X
55	Protect significant open space parcels.				X
56	Maintain a comprehensive open space inventory.				X
57	Annually review the number of boards and committees in town government, determine their continued relevance, and disband committees that are no longer needed.				X



## PHASE I

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### Action: Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee.

*Primary MP element: All*

*Related MP elements: All*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Planning Board, Town Administrator, Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Citizen volunteers and existing staff*

#### Discussion:

Although many people think that implementing a master plan is mainly the responsibility of a Planning Board, master plans involve far more than land use and zoning. Communities with many boards and committees – like Dedham – are more likely to succeed with master plan implementation if they establish a coordinating committee to keep the implementation process moving forward. This will be particularly true once the initial implementation period has passed. In consultation with the Planning Board, the Board of Selectmen should appoint a Master Plan Implementation Committee (7 to 9 members). Possible members include, but are not limited to, representatives from: the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the School Committee and citizens at-large. The Committee’s charge should include the following responsibilities:

- ◆ Serve as a resource to town departments and boards to assist with interpreting the master plan and implementing recommended actions;
- ◆ Guide the implementation process by coordinating actions that require participation from multiple departments and boards, making periodic reports to Town Meeting, and generally providing oversight, technical assistance, and advocacy;
- ◆ Assist with public outreach and education needed to implement the plan;
- ◆ Support funding requests for master plan implementation; and
- ◆ Ensure that the master plan remains a “living document” by reviewing the status of master plan implementation and the continued relevance of master plan recommendations, and make proposals to the Planning Board as needed to amend or modify the implementation plan.

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### Action: Integrate master plan implementation within the Town’s annual goal-setting process.

*Primary MP element: Governance*

*Related MP elements: All*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Town Administrator, Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham has an annual goal-setting process that helps to align the work of staff with goals established by the Board of Selectmen. This process provides an ideal opportunity to engage all town departments in the master plan implementation process and creates a mechanism for tracking the status of master plan recommendations. In preparing their fiscal year goals for the Town Administrator, each department should be asked to include at least one achievable goal that addresses actions contained in the implementation plan. Toward this end, the goals template that department heads use to submit their goals should be modified to include, following the “Importance” and “Timing” items, a third item entitled, “Relationship to Master Plan,” with space to identify the applicable master plan goal or implementation plan action. This will encourage all departments to consider the master plan in their annual operations planning. In addition, it will help to coordinate implementation at the staff level, where most of the master plan’s implementation will actually occur (as is the case in most suburban communities).

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**Action: Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the Dedham Zoning Bylaw.**

*Primary MP element: Land Use*

*Related MP elements: Natural Resources, Economic Development, Open Space and Recreation, Housing*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Board*

*Support: Planning Director, Environmental Coordinator, Town Counsel*

*Resources needed: \$70,000-\$85,000 (Consulting Services)*

**Discussion:**

Dedham recently recodified its Zoning Bylaw (ZBL), which is a wise “first step” toward improving a community’s land use regulations. While recodification helps to reorganize a zoning bylaw and make it easier for many people to use, recodification is not designed to address fundamental land use policy objectives. Dedham needs to conduct a comprehensive review and update of its ZBL to advance the land use, housing, environmental, energy, and economic development goals of the master plan and to improve the town’s permitting procedures. The following tasks should be emphasized during the zoning revision process.

- ◆ **Review, clarify, and strengthen site development regulations.** Particular attention should be paid to:
  - ◆ *Off-street parking.* Dedham’s off-street parking requirements are considerable and often excessive for nearly all types of nonresidential development, resulting in large amounts of impervious surface.
  - ◆ *Minimum open space requirements for nonresidential development.* The lack of required open space, coupled with hefty parking requirements, results in large areas of asphalt that characterize much suburban sprawl and causes a range of negative environmental impacts. While the Planning Board works with developers on a project-by-project basis to mitigate this affect, the ZBL should be re-written to establish clear regulations that support the town’s development objectives.
  - ◆ *Environmental and energy performance standards for the design, construction, and operation of sites and buildings.* For each type of development (e.g. commercial, institutional, residential) Dedham should decide whether it wants to require or encourage the adoption of environmental and energy performance standards, what those standards will be, and how they will be administered or enforced. Dedham may choose to use the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating

- system for some types of development. However, other rating systems and development objectives should be explored.
- ◆ *Landscaping and pedestrian connections between commercial and residential uses.* Adjacent residential and commercial uses require particularly thoughtful planning and site design. There may be needs for visual screening through vegetative buffers, earthen berms, or other means as well as needs to connect different land uses in order to promote walking and biking, and to move toward a more mixed-use pattern of development. The Zoning Bylaw should be updated to include development regulations that address the need for screening for aesthetic or visual purposes and also for connectivity.
  - ◆ **Consider providing incentives for the development of a variety of housing types.** Providing for multi-family and/or mixed use development, especially when close to transit, reduces land consumption and increases housing equity, both of which are key principles of smart growth.
  - ◆ **Replace Dedham’s existing Planned Residential Development (PRD) bylaw with an Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw.** Dedham’s PRD bylaw is intended to allow a less land-consumptive pattern of residential development. However, it requires a small percentage of open space and it is unclear or confusing on many levels. In addition, access to PRD requires Town Meeting approval on a project-by-project basis before a developer can even apply for a permit. Dedham should create a new Open Space-Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw that requires a higher minimum amount of open space, allows for a variety of housing types, and offers effective density bonuses and other incentives to make the bylaw realistic for developers.
  - ◆ **Review and clarify the development review and permitting process.** Dedham’s current requirements for permitting and approvals are difficult to understand and follow. There should be a concerted effort to clarify and streamline the permitting process, paying particular attention to:
    - ◆ The Major Nonresidential Project permitting process and special permit granting criteria;
    - ◆ Site development standards and site plan decision criteria; and
    - ◆ Parking standards.
    - ◆ Roles and responsibilities of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Development Review Team, and other reviewing authorities.

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**Action: Complete the review and update of the Rules and Regulations of Subdivision Control.**

*Primary MP element: Land Use*

*Related MP elements: Transportation, Natural Resources*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Board*

*Support: Planning Director, DPW Director, Director of Engineering*

*Resources needed: Existing staff or consulting engineer*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs to complete the review and update of the Rules and Regulations of Subdivision Control that began last year. Subdivision regulations set forth all the technical standards for the subdivision of land and the provision of public infrastructure, such as roads and sewers. Although not as well-known to the general public as zoning, subdivision regulations have great influence over the form and function of a city or town's built environment. To ensure consistency and compatibility of technical engineering standards with an updated zoning bylaw, municipal subdivision regulations need also to be updated periodically. Dedham could combine its remaining work on the subdivision regulations with updating the Zoning Bylaw. However, completion of this project could also be undertaken independently of the Zoning Bylaw update.

Ideally, updated technical standards should be prepared by the Department of Engineering. If the Department's workload prevents existing staff from developing the technical standards, the Planning Board will need an appropriation to hire a consulting civil engineer. In this case, it will be crucial for the consultant's scope of work to include coordination with the Department of Engineering to ensure that standards prepared for the Subdivision Regulations reflect local requirements. In addition, the Rules and Regulations of Subdivision Control should be reviewed for consistency with the town's Drainage and Stormwater Management Design Standards and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Stormwater Handbook.

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**Action: Change the consulting Town Planner position to a full-time Planning Director.**

*Primary MP element: Land Use*

*Related MP elements: Transportation, Economic Development, Housing, Governance*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator*

*Support: Finance Committee*

*Resources needed: (Salary and Benefits, amount to be determined at a future date)*

**Discussion:**

For more than a decade, Dedham has been in the unusually fortunate position of having a town planner who served the Planning Board on a full-time basis even though he was employed as a consultant. The town planner's retirement presents an opportunity for Dedham to invest in permanent professional planning capacity. In fact, the most important investment Dedham can make in the success of this master plan will be a commitment of public funds to a full-time planning director.

The town took an important first step toward improving its planning capacity by establishing the town planner position after the 1996 Master Plan was completed. Recently, Dedham made a commitment to environmental planning and economic development by funding new professional staff positions appointed by the Town Administrator. Dedham also has professionally staffed public works and engineering departments, and many other personnel whose competent performance helps to explain why Dedham is such a well-run community. While clearly important, these positions do not substitute or obviate the need for professional planning capacity. A planning director not only serves a community's planning board, but also coordinates with and acts as a technical resource for other municipal departments, conducts or directs a variety of planning studies and special planning projects, provides leadership on planning and development issues, and brings a "best practices" approach to local government planning. Moreover, the planning director should play a key role in helping to develop a capital improvements plan (CIP) because the success

of any master plan hinges on a coherent, integrated approach to physical development: land use regulation, infrastructure, and facilities.

Toward these ends, Town Meeting should be asked to appropriate funds to the planning board's salary account to ensure that a planning director can be appointed in Fiscal Year 2010. It will be important for the Planning Board, Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, and Finance Committee to present a unified recommendation at the Annual Town Meeting.

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**Action: Complete a comprehensive Historic Resources Inventory.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Land Use*

*Leadership responsibility: Historic Districts Commission*

*Support: Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Consulting Preservation Planner (Est. Cost: \$35,000)*

**Discussion:**

To ensure that Dedham has adequate information to protect and preserve its historic resources, the Town should conduct a comprehensive historic resources inventory. Historic resource inventories provide a foundation for good preservation planning at the local level. A comprehensive inventory documents the historical and architectural significance of resources found throughout a community, including historic buildings, objects, structures, and archaeological sites, landscape features, and industrial resources. Dedham's existing historic resources inventory is outdated, and it has limited information about the architectural and historical significance of properties and secondary features such as outbuildings, stone walls, and landscape elements. Moreover, Dedham's inventory does not include all types of historic resources or historic resources found throughout neighborhoods.

Most communities find that completing a comprehensive historic resource survey requires professional assistance. Documenting historic resources in compliance with MHC standards, particularly in a community of Dedham's size and wealth of resources, usually exceeds the capacity of volunteers. Dedham should take the following steps to complete the inventory:

- ◆ Seek preservation funding from available grant sources such as MHC's Survey and Planning Grant Program. Survey and Planning grants are awarded annually on a competitive basis to fund preservation planning activities such as a historic resource survey, preservation plans, educational activities, and in some instances, staff support. However, it is important to note that Survey and Planning Grants are matching reimbursement grants, so the town must appropriate the entire amount necessary to complete the inventory and will ultimately be responsible for funding a portion of the survey costs. (*See also, Phase II.*)
- ◆ Catalogue the Historic Resources Inventory in an online database and integrate with town's GIS system. The Historic Resources Inventory should be available to municipal departments and officials and the public as a database maintained on Town's website. Organizations such as the Marlborough Historical Society ([www.historicmarlborough.org](http://www.historicmarlborough.org)) have well-designed websites with online photographs, maps, and data on all inventoried properties, which can serve as models for Dedham. The Historic Resources Inventory should also be available as a GIS data layer for use with Dedham's other planning work.

**Action: Include the Department of Public Works and Department of Engineering in the development review and permitting procedures conducted by town boards.**

*Primary MP element: Transportation*

*Related MP elements: Governance, Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Board, Conservation Commission*

*Support: Department of Public Works, Department of Engineering, Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should take steps to ensure that its Department of Public Works and Department of Engineering have an active role in reviewing and commenting on the infrastructure, drainage, and utilities aspects of proposed projects during the development review and permitting process. For example, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission often place conditions of approval on projects through special permit, site plan review, and wetlands permitting, and some of the conditions involve sidewalks, roadways, and other public infrastructure. These requirements have the intention of providing public benefits, but they are not always practical for the Department of Public Works or Engineering Department from a construction and maintenance perspective. Since all public infrastructure ultimately falls under the purview of these two departments, their technical standards and recommendations need to be accounted for during the development review process and in each board's conditions of approval.

A related issue is the practice of contracting with private consultants for engineering review services and not soliciting the expertise of Dedham's own in-house engineers. All development-related boards and departments should coordinate closely to ensure that engineering needs are addressed first by the Department of Engineering, and referred to outside consultants only when issues require particularly specialized analysis or design, or a second opinion. The town may need to adjust its administrative or application fees to help offset the cost of in-house technical review because escrow accounts for consulting services cannot be used as a revenue source for municipal operating budgets.

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**Action: Develop an environmental checklist to assist with development review.**

*Primary MP element: Natural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Land Use*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Director, Environmental Coordinator, Conservation Agent, Building Commissioner*

*Support: All town boards with a role in development review and permitting*

*Resources required: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs to establish criteria for evaluating the environmental impacts of a project and apply the criteria consistently during the permitting process. A uniform environmental checklist for use by boards and staff involved in development review would make the permitting process more transparent and predictable for residents and developers. It also would help to synchronize the work of town boards, for each has unique jurisdiction over particular types of permits and this can make it difficult for them to apply review standards in a consistent way.

Dedham’s current approach to evaluating the environmental impacts of development is fragmented and fairly informal. For example, special permit requirements for major non-residential developments include some environmental standards and guidelines, but they are vague. Site plan review regulations do not include any environmental standards or requirements. The review committees consider and comment on environmental impacts in their project reviews, but their work is not guided by shared, specific criteria. Moreover, the Historic Districts Commission has no role in commenting on development proposals, even those with the potential to have adverse impacts on historic resources.

An environmental checklist should account for impacts on natural, scenic, and historic and cultural resources. It should be created as part of the update of Dedham’s ZBL or immediately following completion of the ZBL revision process. The criteria should be available both in print and on the Town’s official website.

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**Action: Continue to develop and institute a capital improvements plan process.**

*Primary MP element: Community Services and Facilities*

*Related MP elements: Governance, Transportation, Open Space and Recreation*

*Leadership responsibility: Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Capital Expenditures Committee, Finance Committee, Department Heads, Building Planning and Construction Committee*

*Resources required: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should continue its efforts to establish a formal capital planning process and consider consolidating the Capital Expense and Capital Planning Committees. After a long period of taking little action to maintain and enhance its public facilities and infrastructure, Dedham has recently made substantial progress in this area. Its recent public facilities planning is part of a larger strategic planning effort that looks at the needs of all town departments and the town’s overall fiscal condition. Dedham has held two strategic planning meetings with all departments in an effort to coordinate and consolidate individual departmental plans into a comprehensive capital improvements program. Ultimately, the town should have a five- or six-year plan that:

- ◆ Evaluates all condition of all municipal assets – buildings, roads, sewers, playgrounds, fields, and parks and recreation facilities – and analyzes both their capital needs and the relationship between these needs and departmental operations;
- ◆ Considers the basic necessity of each public facility, possibilities for combining functions with other facilities, and possibilities for disposition of surplus assets;
- ◆ Sets capital improvement priorities and addresses the maintenance of town facilities;
- ◆ Contains a financing plan that includes tax dollars, enterprise funds, and outside resources such as grants or other non-local revenues, and incorporates the town’s long-range approach to financing capital improvements. (See “Action: Continue to fund capital improvements through responsible assumption of non-exempt debt.” in the Ongoing actions identified in this plan.)

## DEDHAM MASTER PLAN

- ◆ Articulates the town's fiscal policies; embraces clear, locally accepted criteria for funding projects from capital reserves or bond authorizations; reports the estimated fiscal (tax rate) impact of the financing plan; and applies generally accepted debt evaluation criteria to the financing plan so that local officials and Town Meeting members can make informed decisions.

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### **Action: Update Dedham's Open Space and Recreation Plan.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Open Space Committee*

*Support: Planning Director, Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission,*

*Resources needed: Existing staff or consultant (est. cost: \$15,000)*

#### **Discussion:**

Dedham needs to update its Open Space and Recreation Plan to provide a comprehensive framework for open space planning for the next five years. An Open Space and Recreation Plan helps a community understand its open space and natural resources, identify actions to improve, expand, and protect open space, and become eligible for grants to acquire and protect open space and develop recreation facilities. Dedham's current Open Space and Recreation Plan expires in 2009. While some tasks in the Five-Year Action Plan have been completed, others require ongoing work by the town and they should be retained in the updated plan. It will be particularly important for next plan to include a framework and details for improving and maintaining Dedham's recreation facilities. Going forward, Dedham should use the recreation facilities recommendations and action items as a roadmap for setting capital improvement plan priorities and upgrading the town's parks and recreational facilities.

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### **Action: Develop a plan to provide universal access to recreation facilities, parks, and trails.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Parks and Recreation Commission*

*Support: Commission on Disability*

*Resources needed: Existing staff for planning and design tasks, and appropriations to fund access projects as scheduled in the capital improvements plan.*

#### **Discussion:**

Dedham needs to implement the accessibility recommendations in the Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009 for the town's parks, playgrounds, fields and trails. Although the town has designated and constructed accessible parking spaces at several Parks Department facilities, Dedham still needs to address the recreation facility needs of people with disabilities. Many town parks continue to pose access barriers, with inaccessible gates, paths and playground equipment. An access plan should be developed in concert with efforts to plan a town-wide trails system in order to ensure that public trails provide universal access, too. In turn, the proposals contained in these plans should be incorporated within the town's capital improvements plan.

**Action: Analyze the potential of Dedham’s MBTA commuter rail stations for transit-oriented development (TOD).**

*Primary MP element: Land Use*

*Related MP elements: Transportation, Housing, Economic Development*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Director*

*Support: Economic Development Director, Environmental Coordinator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and ideally, citizen volunteers for an ad hoc steering committee*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs to understand and capitalize upon the potential of its MBTA rail stations, especially Dedham Corporate Station, for transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD encapsulates many of the objectives of smart growth by allowing higher-density, mixed-use development close to transit, thereby promoting efficient land use, walkability, access to jobs, transportation alternatives, and a diversity of housing options. A conceptual TOD analysis and plan for the Allied Drive/Dedham Corporate Station area was prepared for Dedham’s Community Development Plan in 2004. The concept plan (which includes four parcels near the Dedham Corporate MBTA station, three of which are in both Dedham and Westwood) showed the potential for a five-story MBTA parking garage, two 100,000 sq. ft. R&D/Office buildings, a large residential complex, and a hotel/residential development. While further study is needed to analyze market conditions, encourage public input, and consider other economic development priorities, the conceptual plan clearly demonstrates the TOD potential of one of Dedham’s two rail stations.

As Dedham moves ahead with TOD planning, the town should focus on the following objectives:

- ◆ Assess opportunities for higher-development, especially at the Dedham Corporate station;
- ◆ Maximize 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; and
- ◆ Identify commercial and/or light industrial development opportunities.

Depending on how this action is scheduled by the town, zoning to facilitate TOD may be included in the comprehensive zoning revision process or introduced at a subsequent town meeting as a zoning bylaw amendment. However, the comprehensive zoning revision should not be postponed until a TOD study has been completed.

**Action: Improve service and alter routes of JBL Bus Line and pursue changes to MBTA bus service.**

*Primary MP element: Transportation*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Town Administrator*

*Support: Planning Director, Economic Development Director*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs to advocate for improvements to its existing JBL Bus Line and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) services to provide an accessible, reliable alternative to private auto transportation. The town is currently served by JBL Bus Lines (a privately contracted bus service) and several MBTA bus routes. The JBL bus provides transportation mostly within Dedham, and the MBTA bus routes provide inter-city transportation, with destinations in Boston, Walpole, and Watertown. While Dedham is fortunate to have these bus options, a number of problems exist. People have complained that JBL is not a reliable transportation option due to the lack of dependable services. In addition, the current route should provide access to Dedham’s newer major developments such as Legacy Place. The MBTA bus routes also should be examined to make sure they provide access to places people want to go. Two of the bus lines currently terminate at the Dedham Mall and do not service other important destinations, notably Dedham Square or the MBTA commuter rail stations.

To maximize the benefits of local bus service, Dedham first needs to determine how it would like the bus network to operate. The town will need to consider objectives such as providing access to both local (e.g. Dedham Square) and regional (e.g. Legacy Place) shopping destinations, and increasing mobility for transportation-disadvantaged populations such as seniors, youth, and the disabled. These objectives suggest that new destinations should be added to current routes. Additionally, efforts should be made to coordinate schedules and provide connections between bus lines and the commuter rail to provide a seamless, multi-modal trip for transit customers. Once Dedham is clear on the changes it wants to make for its bus network, the Town Administrator will need to work with both JBL Bus Lines and the MBTA to negotiate changes to existing service. These changes should be coordinated with any planning for transit-oriented development or similar smart growth initiatives.

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**Action: Adopt the Community Preservation Act.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources, Housing, Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Historic Districts Commission*

*Support: Neighborhood groups, Civic Pride Committee, Finance Committee*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and, if CPA is adopted, citizen volunteers to serve on the Community Preservation Committee*

**Discussion:**

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) should be a key resource for meeting Dedham’s open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing needs. The CPA is local option legislation that provides a mecha-

nism for cities and towns to fund three types of activities: open space and recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing. When communities vote to adopt the CPA, they voluntarily agree to impose a surcharge on their property tax bills and restrict use of the revenue to the statutory purposes of CPA. Communities must establish a surcharge rate of up to three percent, and they may allow any or all of the following exemptions: 1) low-income owners and low- and moderate-income elderly owners; 2) some commercial and industrial properties; 3) \$100,000 in residential valuation.

CPA communities receive matching funds from the state, which collects revenue for the statewide CPA trust fund through fees on real estate transfers. The actual amount of each year's match depends on funds available in the CPA trust fund and the number of communities participating in CPA. At least thirty percent of a community's annual CPA revenue must be divided equally among the three statutory purposes: ten percent for open space, ten percent for housing and ten percent for historic preservation. The remaining seventy percent can be expended for any CPA purpose as long as the local Community Preservation Committee recommends it and Town Meeting appropriates the funds.

Dedham could use the CPA to address a variety of needs and implement several recommendations of this master plan. For example, Dedham has identified a need to restore historic properties such as the Powder House and the Village Cemetery, which could be funded with CPA revenue. In addition, the town could use CPA funds to purchase affordability restrictions on existing homes and thereby provide affordable homeownership opportunities. CPA funds also would make it possible to establish and maintain an open space acquisition fund.

Education of the public will be critical to the adoption of CPA. It will take a concerted, cooperative effort from many facets of the community to garner public support for adopting the CPA. The Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition provides public education materials and technical assistance to interested communities, but Dedham may also benefit from consulting with other CPA communities, including nearby towns such as Needham and Sharon. To date, 140 communities have adopted CPA, representing forty percent of all cities and towns in Massachusetts. For more information on CPA see the Community Preservation Act website at <[www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org)>.

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### **Action: Create an economic development vision and plan.**

*Primary MP element: Economic Development*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Housing*

*Leadership responsibility: Economic Development Director*

*Support: Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and, ideally, an ad hoc citizen advisory or steering committee*

### **Discussion:**

Dedham's prior planning work, this master plan process, and efforts of local officials and staff have produced or reinforced important economic development ideas: redevelopment of specific sites, study, planning, improvement and/or redevelopment of larger areas, and revitalization of commercial districts. However, there is no clear consensus about preferred development options for any of these areas. An economic development vision and plan would help to clarify the kind of local economy that Dedham wants and options for achieving it through redevelopment and revitalization.

Dedham is fortunate to have a full-time Economic Development Director to coordinate the work that needs to be done in order to prepare a vision and plan. A working group of key stakeholders such as the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Planning Board, and private landowners should be convened to explore options for potential redevelopment sites and priority economic planning areas. These options should be vetted with developers, regional planners and state economic development officials as well, and evaluated against market reality. Ultimately, Dedham needs to institute a public process for reaching agreement about the vision for its economic future so the town is positioned to respond as development opportunities arise. A clear vision and plan will help to guide the work of town staff and provide a policy framework for boards and committees.

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### **Action: Institute a training program for Town Meeting Members.**

*Primary MP element: Governance*

*Related MP elements: Not applicable*

*Leadership responsibility: Town Moderator*

*Support: Town Administrator, Town Clerk*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

#### **Discussion:**

The Town Moderator should work with the Town Administrator to establish a training program for Town Meeting Representatives and District Chairpersons about their duties and responsibilities. Dedham currently has 273 elected representatives (thirty-nine from each of the seven precincts) for its nearly 24,000 residents. District representatives take their responsibilities seriously and function as “precinct captains,” personally approaching constituents to gather information and opinions. New representatives who may be unfamiliar with the Town Meeting process could benefit from specific training to augment their understanding of Town Meeting procedures and how to be effective in the role of representative. Dedham should develop a manual for Town Meeting members to be posted on its website.

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## **PHASE II**

### **Action: Establish a Transportation Advisory Committee.**

*Primary MP element: Transportation*

*Related MP elements: Governance, Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Department of Public Works, Department of Engineering, Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Citizen volunteers and existing staff*

#### **Discussion:**

Dedham should establish, within guidelines and limitations articulated by the Board of Selectmen, a Transportation Advisory Committee to oversee ongoing transportation planning and projects. The Transportation Advisory Committee should set priorities, develop strategies, and advocate, both within Dedham and with regional and state planning agencies, for implementing transportation improvements in Dedham. While the Transportation Advisory Committee should be primarily a volunteer group operating in an ad-

visory capacity to the Board of Selectmen, it also should include department heads such as the Director of Engineering, the DPW Highway Superintendent, and the Planning Director as *ex officio* members. The Committee's deliberations may include consideration of transportation in the capital improvements plan process (see Phase I).

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**Action: Strengthen enforcement of no-parking regulations on sidewalks.**

*Primary MP element: Transportation*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Police Department*

*Support: Transportation Advisory Committee*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should strengthen its commitment to pedestrian safety by enforcing no parking regulations on public sidewalks. Dedham has several older neighborhoods with homes that either lack garages or have limited on-site parking capacity. As the number of cars per household increases, residents and visitors will use any available on-street space to park their vehicles, including sidewalks. Increasing enforcement of Dedham's no-parking regulations for sidewalks will help to preserve this infrastructure for its intended purpose: pedestrian safety. The police department is responsible for parking enforcement in Dedham. The (proposed) Transportation Advisory Committee should work with and provide support to the police department and, if necessary, advocate for strict enforcement of no parking regulations on sidewalks. Additionally, Dedham may need to consider increasing its fines for parking violations to the extent permitted by law.

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**Action: Adopt a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policy.**

*Primary MP element: Transportation*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Economic Development*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Director*

*Support: Economic Development Director, Environmental Coordinator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff, and possibly collaboration with the 128 Business Council or a similar organization that promotes commuting options in Dedham's region.*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs to work with its larger companies and businesses to encourage employees to use transportation modes other than single-occupancy vehicles to commute to work. TDM is an umbrella strategy adopted by companies 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, such as parking cash-outs, where an employee receives payment for opting not to use 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.

**Action: Create a town-wide traffic calming policy.**

*Primary MP element: Transportation*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Planning Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Department of Public Works*

*Resources needed: Existing staff, assisted by a transportation planner with significant traffic calming experience. For budgetary purposes, assume \$50,000.*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs traffic-calming in residential areas to steer non-local traffic away from local streets and out of Dedham’s 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, such as turns, bumps, and narrow travel lanes, causing cars to travel more slowly or avoid a route all together. Dedham’s proximity to major highways, its roadway network (which contains several major arterials), and the large number of residential streets that are prone to cut-through traffic and speeding make traffic calming necessary in a number of locations.

The town should begin by hiring a transportation planning consultant to conduct field reconnaissance in a sample of known critical traffic areas. The consultant’s charge should be to help the town understand how various types of traffic calming solutions work under different conditions, using the critical traffic areas as case studies, and develop a town-wide policy. In addition, the consultant should advise the town about the costs and benefits associated with each type of intervention, assist with developing criteria that can be used to evaluate areas for traffic calming suitability, and assist with developing project selection criteria. Determining which locations should receive which types of traffic calming interventions requires a case-by-case assessment of traffic issues and potential traffic calming solutions. The unique needs of each area or neighborhood must be accounted for in order to institute an effective, safe traffic calming program.

A traffic calming policy should do the following:

- ◆ Identify and define a list of acceptable traffic calming techniques that could be used in various parts of Dedham.
- ◆ Set up a process by which traffic calming techniques can be applied for on an area-specific basis. For example, a request for traffic calming could be made by resident petition or the professional opinion of town staff, such as the Department of Public Works Director or Planning Director.
- ◆ Establish an assessment and evaluation process to determine whether an area needs or will benefit from traffic calming.
- ◆ Decide on a case-by-case basis whether to design a traffic calming project in-house or contract with an outside consultant.

**Action: Seek Certified Local Government designation.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Historic Districts Commission*

*Support: Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and volunteers (see also, proposed hiring of a regional preservation planner under an inter-local agreement with a neighboring town.)*

**Discussion:**

Dedham's Historic Districts Commission should seek Certified Local Government (CLG) designation, which is granted by the National Park Service through the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). Dedham is eligible to apply for CLG designation because the town has a local historic district bylaw. The Commission should consult with MHC to determine other requirements, if any, that would need to be met. CLG designation would benefit Dedham because ten percent of MHC's annual Survey and Planning Grant funding must be distributed to CLGs. MHC funds cities and towns through annual matching grants, distributed on a competitive basis. In order to maintain CLG certification, the Dedham Historic Districts Commission must submit annual reports to the MHC.

**Action: Study adoption of a demolition delay bylaw.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Housing*

*Leadership responsibility: Historic Districts Commission*

*Support: Building Department*

*Resources needed: Historic Districts Commission, existing staff*

**Discussion:**

A demolition delay bylaw is a preservation tool to assist communities in their efforts preserve significant historic buildings and structures. It provides communities with the opportunity to work with property owners to try to find an alternative to demolition. During the delay period, a community can encourage an owner to preserve their building or seek a buyer who would retain the structure. The bylaw also creates a public review process for proposed demolitions of historic structures. This ensures that important historic landmarks are not destroyed without community awareness and the ability to seek an alternative. However, a demolition delay bylaw is just that: a *delay* bylaw. After the delay period expires, if the owners still want to demolish their building the town cannot prevent them from doing so.

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 assess alternatives. A community may tailor its bylaw to meet local needs. For example, Dedham can determine which properties will be subject to the bylaw and the specific term of the delay period. Some bylaws define applicability by age while other bylaws use a year-of-construction threshold. Some communities with a comprehensive historic inventory have designed their bylaws to apply only to buildings included in the inventory. While most communities with demolition delay bylaws originally imposed a six-month delay period, many have found that this is not sufficient time to find alternatives for properties that are deter-

mined “preferably preserved.” As a result, the current trend is toward longer delay periods. The Dedham Historic Districts Commission should seek technical assistance from MHC to determine the type of demolition delay bylaw that would be most appropriate for Dedham.

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**Action: Create a full-time Facilities Manager position for all town and school properties.**

*Primary MP element: Community Services and Facilities*

*Related MP elements: Governance*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator*

*Support: School Department*

*Resources needed: \$75,000-\$90,000 (salary only; approximately \$112,000 with employee benefits)*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should create a full-time facilities manager position to manage municipal properties and implement the town’s ongoing maintenance plan. Currently, Dedham does not have full-time professional management for its public facilities. For the most part, department heads are left largely responsible for maintenance of the buildings they occupy. While Dedham took a substantial step toward centralizing facilities management by hiring a part-time facilities manager in 2001, the Building, Planning, and Construction Committee has strongly recommended establishing a full-time facilities manager and maintenance program for all of Dedham’s public facilities. The town will need to consider whether a facilities manager should oversee both municipal and school facilities maintenance.

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**Action: Conduct site evaluations for priority sites identified in the economic development vision and plan.**

*Primary MP element: Economic Development*

*Related MP elements: Land Use*

*Leadership responsibility: Economic Development Director*

*Support: Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Existing staff with support services from a consultant. For budgetary purposes, assume \$30,000 to \$35,000 per site for a conceptual site study.*

**Discussion:**

Conducting site evaluations for key redevelopment areas identified in the economic development vision and plan (*Phase I*) is the first step toward successfully marketing these sites. Prospective companies in an expansion or a relocation mode consider many factors when evaluating both a specific site and a community. It will help staff and local officials involved with business recruitment to understand the opportunities, constraints, and market position of each redevelopment site. A thorough site evaluation process involves four major tasks:

- ◆ Gather background information on the site and location, general site information, resources within thirty to forty-five minutes of the site, details of any existing buildings, and a real estate market analysis.

- ◆ Consider potential options for the site. Possible uses for the site will be based on the findings of the first task, and include the size and configuration of the site, existing buildings, access to transportation and labor, utilities, and other local amenities.
- ◆ Assign best uses to each site, taking into consideration target industries in Dedham and the region, and specific needs of certain industries and whether they are a good match for the site in question. When considering best uses, a group of key stakeholders, including the current land owner(s) – similar to the stakeholder group assembled to create the economic development vision and plan – should be assembled to provide input and identify potential obstacles to proposed uses.
- ◆ Develop a marketing strategy for each site. The marketing strategy may include making physical improvements and/or regulatory changes to the site to improve its level of readiness for development.

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### **Action: Investigate additional Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites.**

*Primary MP element: Economic Development*

*Related MP elements: Land Use*

*Leadership responsibility: Economic Development Director*

*Support: Planning Director, Town Administrator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff. Note that under current Chapter 43D program rules, the town may also qualify for additional Chapter 43D planning grants for new Priority Development Sites.*

### **Discussion:**

In May 2008, Dedham Town Meeting voted to designate the town's first Priority Development Site (PDS) under M.G.L. c. 43D, which encourages commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development of particular parcels chosen by communities. A PDS is a commercially or industrially zoned parcel that can accommodate buildings of at least 50,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area that the town would like to see developed or redeveloped. In adopting Chapter 43D and designating a PDS, the community agrees to provide a "fast-track" permitting process where all permitting decisions that are required to qualify for a building permit occur within 180 days. In return, communities receive program benefits such as priority consideration for state funding assistance, and visibility and promotion through the state's online marketing system for the sites. Communities also become eligible for technical assistance grants. Dedham has designated the Keystone Lot in Dedham Square as a PDS, and the town recently received a grant to purchase and employ permitting software to increase the speed and efficiency of the permit process.

Having designated one PDS and upgraded its permitting capacity through the permitting software, Dedham is in a good position to designate other sites under Chapter 43D. Whether this is appropriate will depend on the findings of site evaluations and the amount of state support and aid available through the Chapter 43D program at that time. PDS designation could be part of a comprehensive marketing strategy for key development sites.

**Action: Create a permitting guide.**

*Primary MP element: Land Use*

*Related MP elements: Economic Development, Housing*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Director*

*Support: Economic Development Director, Environmental Coordinator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should create a permitting guide that outlines necessary approval steps and timelines for various types of permits that may be required for development projects. Obtaining all necessary permits and approvals for a project can be a complicated undertaking with many steps, requirements, and involvement with a number of staff, boards, and committees. Even communities with well-organized and clear zoning bylaws and other regulatory layers may still need to provide additional guidance for developers and property owners. A permitting guide would list all permits, relevant departments and boards, submission requirements, timelines, and any other pertinent information in clear, non-regulatory language to help applicants navigate the permitting and approvals process. Since different land uses require different types of permits, Dedham may wish to create separate sections or chapters of the guide to address these different needs. The Town may want to start with one development type that tends to be most complicated—for example, commercial development or a small residential subdivision—and add other sections over time.

Permitting guides can range in complexity from simple, black and white PDF documents to electronic documents with illustrations and hyperlinks. Whatever the format, the guide should be available both in print at Town Hall and on the town’s website. All staff who participate in permitting and approvals process should be familiar with the guide and should distribute it to potential applicants as early as possible in the pre-development phase of a project.

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**Action: Encourage an association of Dedham’s neighborhood organizations.**

*Primary MP element: Governance*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities, Open Space and Recreation*

*Leadership responsibility: Civic Pride Committee*

*Support: Town Administrator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff (limited role)*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should continue its efforts to link various local groups together in a town-wide association of neighborhood organizations and provide support within Town Hall. Strong and organized neighborhood organizations work more effectively to beautify parks, public spaces, and other neighborhood amenities, and to otherwise improve the quality of life for residents. Linking these organizations together allows them to share knowledge and resources, network with each other, and generally increase their capacity. Responsibility for this action should remain with the neighborhood groups, but could be organized under the Civic Pride Committee. This would allow a centralized group to network with various neighborhood groups. The effort also be supported through a page on the town’s website with the names and contact information for each group.

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### **Action: Encourage neighborhood groups to become stewards of local parks.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Parks and Recreation Commission*

*Support: Civic Pride Committee*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

#### **Discussion:**

Dedham is fortunate to have a number of active, engaged neighborhood groups, and the town should encourage them to become further engaged in open space stewardship. Many communities have had success in transferring some maintenance responsibility of smaller, neighborhood parks to neighborhood organizations. In Dedham, groups like the Mother Brook Coalition and Dedham Square Circle could become ongoing stewards for neighborhood open spaces. Appropriate tasks might include maintaining vegetation, walking paths, and ornamental shrubs or flower beds. Implementing this task will require a partnership with staff in the Parks and Recreation Department to coordinate efforts, identify specific tasks for each park, and monitor progress.

For areas without a formal neighborhood association, neighborhood open space stewardship could occur through day-long (“done in a day”) clean-ups hosted by the Dedham’s Civic Pride Committee at neighborhood parks. This type of event could draw upon volunteers from neighborhood schools, youth groups, churches, and business owners near the parks. Although this task depends primarily on residents’ efforts, town government could designate a “point person” at the Parks and Recreation Department to support and provide some coordination assistance to the neighborhood groups.

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### **Action: Adopt a Scenic Roads Bylaw.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Transportation*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Board*

*Support: Historic Districts Commission, Department of Public Works*

*Resources needed: Existing staff, but the town will most likely need assistance from a landscape architect or preservation planner to complete this action. For budgetary purposes, assume \$35,000 for the documentation and planning tasks listed below.*

#### **Discussion:**

Dedham can protect the unique physical qualities of its scenic roadways by adopting a Scenic Roads Bylaw. A proposed scenic roads bylaw was tabled at Town Meeting several years ago because it lacked support for adoption. In anticipation of the meeting, a number of scenic roads were identified and the list is included in the current Open Space and Recreation Plan (2004-2009). Under M.G.L. c. 40, s. 15C, the Scenic Roads Act, the Planning Board would serve as the review authority for a scenic roads bylaw to ensure that “any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving work... shall not involve or include the cutting or removal of trees, or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, or portions thereof...” within a public way.

Dedham should first identify and document the character-defining attributes of each scenic road in order to create a bylaw that is specifically tailored to conditions in Dedham. Many communities have hired a consulting planner or landscape architect to assist with documenting the identified scenic roads and drafting a bylaw due to the significant effort involved with this endeavor. The Planning Director could seek technical assistance from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and MHC and work with the Planning Board, the Department of Public Works, the town's Tree Warden and the Historic Districts Commission to draft the Town's bylaw

Public education of the benefits of a scenic roads bylaw is critical to its passage. Before the bylaw can be written, Dedham needs to carry out the following steps to build community support and ensure successful implementation of the bylaw once it is adopted:

- ◆ Complete an inventory and photo documentation of scenic roads.
- ◆ Each roadway candidate for scenic designation should be inventoried and documented through photographs, identifying character-defining features. This inventory should be compiled in an accessible format for use by the Planning Board, the Department of Public Works and the Tree Warden. The Planning Director should serve as the municipal staff in charge of the project, reviewing and cataloging the documentation.
- ◆ Establish criteria for projects subject to the scenic roads bylaw.
- ◆ In addition to identifying specific roads worthy of scenic designation, Dedham will also need to define the types of road projects that will be reviewed under the scenic roads bylaw. Written criteria will help the Department of Public Works plan road improvement projects and also help the Planning Board with its review process.

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### **Action: Become a "Tree City."**

*Primary MP element: Natural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Open Space and Recreation*

*Leadership responsibility: Department of Public Works*

*Support: Board of Selectmen, Environmental Coordinator*

*Resources needed: Approximately \$50,000 per year, and existing staff*

### **Discussion:**

Dedham should take the necessary steps to obtain "Tree City" designation from the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA® Program. Improving the quality and size of a town's urban canopy provides a number of public benefits such as increased wildlife habitat, improved air quality, ambient cooling of both indoor and outdoor environments, improved aesthetics, and increased property values. Becoming a Tree City would provide Dedham with access to funding sources and technical assistance for expansion and maintenance of the town's trees. To meet the criteria for designation, Dedham would need to undertake the following:

- ◆ Establish a Tree Board or Department, or designate an existing department to serve as the Tree Department;

- ◆ Create a Tree Care Bylaw to determine policies for planting, maintaining and removing public trees; and
- ◆ Establish an annual minimum community forestry budget of \$2 per capita.

The Town has already taken steps on a few of these criteria. For example, the Department of Public Works currently consults with the Town of Wellesley's municipal arborist and works with a private tree service on tree care and maintenance. In addition, Dedham has adopted an informal policy to plant two street trees for every one street tree that is removed. Now Dedham needs to create a formal Tree Care Bylaw that requires the two-for-one tree replacement and codifies design standards for new trees, such as required species, caliper, or planting placement. Dedham estimates that it already spends \$2 per capita through tree plantings and other efforts, but it has not established an annual forestry budget.

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### **Action: Establish a Housing Partnership Committee.**

*Primary MP element: Housing*

*Related MP elements: Governance*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Planning Director, Town Administrator*

*Resources needed: Citizen volunteers and existing staff*

#### **Discussion:**

The Board of Selectmen should establish a Housing Partnership Committee (HPC) of five to seven members to advocate for housing needs at the local level. Although more than ten percent of Dedham's housing units are counted on the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory, this does not mean that Dedham's housing needs are actually being met. It is important for local governments to recognize that residents have many types of housing needs, and that a housing advocacy board makes a difference in a community's ability to meet these needs effectively. By establishing a housing partnership committee, Dedham can build its capacity to recognize and respond to housing issues and trends. For example, a housing partnership committee today would play a major role in working with other town boards, staff, and local and regional organizations to assist homeowners facing foreclosure and develop strategies to manage the growing inventory of foreclosed properties.

The HPC needs representatives from the following types of professions: finance, law, real estate development/sales, advocacy and human services, and representation from the Dedham Housing Authority. The partnership's charge should include the following tasks:

- ◆ Prepare a housing plan for the town;
- ◆ Advise the Planning Director and Economic Development Director on matters related to housing trends, issues, plans, programs and development;
- ◆ Work with other local boards and organizations to identify common interests and concerns. Explore ways to work together and pursue mutually beneficial opportunities to support, preserve, and develop affordable housing, and respond to housing trends and issues;

## DEDHAM MASTER PLAN

- ◆ Advocate for local policies, including CPA, that support the production and preservation of affordable and mixed-income housing; and
- ◆ Educate town boards, departments, and the public about affordable housing and housing needs.

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### **Action: Establish a housing rehabilitation program.**

*Primary MP element: Housing*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Housing Partnership*

*Support: Planning Director, Economic Development Director*

*Resources needed: For budgetary purposes, assume \$30,000 per housing unit, assuming \$25,000 in financial assistance and \$5,000 for program management. However, the actual cost per unit will depend on the program design.*

### **Discussion:**

Dedham needs a housing rehabilitation program to help lower-income property owners and tenants with basic home repair, weatherization, energy efficiency, and code compliance. The program could offer low-interest or no-interest loans to property owners whose incomes fall within designated limits. Loans would be secured by a lien or mortgage recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

A housing rehabilitation program promotes property maintenance, housing affordability for lower-income residents, improvements in property conditions, neighborhood revitalization, and an increased supply of decent, safe (including lead-safe) housing. It could target particular neighborhoods or be offered town-wide. Dedham could seek Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to pay for this program, either on its own or on a regional basis with a neighboring town. The CDBG program requires people receiving housing rehabilitation assistance to meet strict income guidelines, i.e., incomes up to 80 percent of area median income, adjusted for household size. In addition, the state CDBG program requires that federal funds be secured with a lien or mortgage for a minimum of 15 years. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) administers the state's annual CDBG allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (CDBG). Funds are available to municipalities through a highly competitive application process. DHCD gives preference to communities that demonstrate a compelling need and capacity to administer grants.

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### **Action: Work with neighboring towns to hire a regional preservation planner.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Historic Districts Commission*

*Support: Board of Selectmen, neighboring towns*

*Estimated cost: \$55,000 salary if funded entirely within Dedham's municipal budget; less if salary is shared with an adjoining town. (For budgetary purposes, assume \$72,500 with employee benefits.)*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should consult with one or two neighboring towns, such as Norwood or Westwood, about the feasibility of establishing a shared preservation planner position. For years, Dedham has relied on a dedicated core of volunteers to undertake preservation planning initiatives. However, this has limited the town's ability to protect and promote historic resources beyond those located in its designated local historic districts. A professional preservation planner could lead local preservation efforts. Since funding a new position in Dedham under current economic conditions would be very difficult, a regional approach should be pursued. 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.

**Action: Review and update the Dedham Town Charter.**

*Primary MP element: Governance*

*Related MP elements: None*

*Leadership responsibility: Charter Commission*

*Support: Board of Selectmen, other town boards*

*Resources required: Citizen volunteers, existing staff; possibly consulting services.*

**Discussion:**

In Massachusetts, communities can make substantive changes to their local government structure by adopting or amending a town charter. This can be accomplished under M.G.L. c. 43B, the Home Rule Procedures Act (the process that Dedham followed in the 1990s) or by petitioning the legislature for a "special act" charter. Dedham's existing charter is a home rule charter written by a charter commission. The procedures for establishing a charter commission involve a petition from fifteen percent of a municipality's registered voters, a ballot vote to create a charter commission, and electing nine commissioners.

Dedham's town charter consolidates most but not all municipal operations under the Town Administrator and locates responsibility for most but not all executive branch policy with the Board of Selectmen. Though mostly centralized, the government structure in Dedham nevertheless splits authority and procedures in ways that can compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal operations. The charter assigns hiring and firing authority for most town employees to the Town Administrator, but not for employees serving as staff to elected boards. (However, the Town Administrator is involved in contract negotiations and budget decisions with all town employees). A disconnect between elected and appointed officials and staff can result in friction or stalemates. In extreme circumstances, it can politicize operations and regulatory approvals.

Dedham is a maturely developed town with needs that are challenging to meet. At the very least, the town should conduct a review of its existing charter and determine whether structural changes could help to improve efficiency, accountability, and policy making.

## PHASE III

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### **Action: Establish municipal policy and an annual budget appropriation for wildlife management.**

*Primary MP element: Natural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Conservation Commission, Environmental Coordinator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff, and possibly an inter-local agreement. However, implementing this action also involves an annual appropriation for wildlife management education and public safety, to be determined as part of the process for establishing local policy.*

### **Discussion:**

As development encroached on a community's forest and open lands, native wildlife has lost its core habitat, edge habitat and food supplies. These pressures lead to reductions in wildlife populations and increased contact between humans and the remaining wildlife. While much of Dedham's land is developed, wetlands and forested open spaces still exist and they provide habitat for wildlife species. Developing a municipal program to encourage successful cohabitation with urban wildlife populations should rely on fostering public education, appreciation, and respect for the wild animals that call Dedham home.

In the past several years, Dedham has addressed several wildlife conflicts: roaming populations of wild turkeys, damage from beaver dams, overpopulation of rodents, and coyotes. The town has addressed these conflicts as they arise, but recognizes that they may become more frequent. Dedham does not have formal municipal policy for addressing wildlife management needs or an annual budget for management activities such as rodent control and legal beaver trappings or dam breaching. The Environmental Coordinator estimates that if beaver trapping is needed at a particular location to address extreme flooding issues, the cost could exceed \$10,000.

Staff should work with the Board of Selectmen to adopt a municipal wildlife management policy and determine an annual appropriation for management activities. The policy should include a public awareness campaign through literature, seminars, and collaboration, and publishing information on the town's website. The Town of Wellesley provides information on its website regarding suburban wildlife concerns. MassWildlife and the Massachusetts Audubon Society also have extensive information on their websites and can serve as resources. Collaborating with other municipalities such as Lexington, Concord and Bedford, which are also grappling with wildlife management issues, and with adjoining towns could help Dedham develop a successful management program.

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### **Action: Encourage the formation of a Trails Stewards Group.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Conservation Commission, Parks Department*

*Support: Environmental Coordinator, Dedham Land Trust, Planning Board*

*Resources needed: Existing staff (limited role)*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should build upon its existing open space and recreation resources by improving the maintenance of and access to town trails on municipal conservation lands. To do this, the town should promote the establishment of a volunteer Trails Stewards Group to create, maintain, and promote trails. Dedham owns several public conservation parcels, including the Town Forest and Wigwam and Little Wigwam Pond conservation areas. While trails may exist on these sites, public access to them is limited by overgrowth, limited signage, a shortage of parking, and lack of public awareness. Improving access to the town's existing trails is particularly important because in areas outside West Dedham, the town's conservation lands represent the only available land for passive recreation. Developing these lands into areas for walking, hiking, and biking will not only activate open spaces with low-impact recreation activities, but will also provide walking and hiking trails and bike paths, which residents have identified as being in short supply in Dedham.

The Trails Stewards Group could work with town staff such as the Environmental Coordinator to enlist local scout groups and schoolchildren for trail improvements and promoting the town's trails and conservation lands through trail signage, maps, brochures, and other information materials. This information should also be published on the town's website. Dedham should have a contact person at Town Hall to respond to trails issues identified by stewards or residents and to coordinate municipal and volunteer efforts. Ideally, the Environmental Coordinator should serve in this capacity.

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**Action: Encourage the establishment of Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources*

*Related MP elements: None*

*Leadership responsibility: Historic Districts Commission*

*Support: Neighborhood organizations*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and (proposed) regional preservation planner*

**Discussion:**

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (NAC) provide a tool to protect historic neighborhoods by establishing regulations that are less restrictive than a local historic district bylaw yet preserve characteristics that give areas a historic quality. A NAC typically regulates scale and massing of alterations and new construction but not specific architectural detailing. Several communities in Massachusetts have already established this type of historic district, including the Cambridge Historical Commission, which has a Neighborhood Conservation District booklet on its website, <[www.cambridgema.gov/historic/ncd\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/ncd_brochure.pdf)>, as well as Newton, Wellesley, and Lincoln.

According to MHC guidelines, Dedham needs to complete a historic resources inventory before it can designate a NAC (*see Phase 1*). The inventory should serve as the basis for determining specific areas that may qualify as NAC districts. Once a potential district is identified, the town would need to establish a set of design guidelines, prepare a NAC bylaw, and designate a NAC Commission to administer the district. (The NAC bylaw and each district created under it must be adopted by Town Meeting.) Alternatively, a community can adopt a NAC bylaw first and encourage neighborhoods to propose district designations by following the process laid out in the local bylaw. This is the process that Wellesley and Lincoln followed, and in 2008, Wellesley Town Meeting approved the town's first NAC. The Dedham Historic Districts Commission should initiate a campaign to educate the public and generate community support for this initia-

tive. MHC has literature available explaining the benefits of NACs, including *Preservation Through Bylaws and Ordinances*.

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**Action: Encourage business owners in neighborhood commercial areas to organize.**

*Primary MP element: Economic Development*

*Related MP elements: None*

*Leadership responsibility: Economic Development Director*

*Support: None*

*Resources needed: Existing staff (limited role)*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should encourage local business owners to establish organizations to promote and improve their businesses. Generating and organizing stakeholder support is the first step to a successful revitalization effort. A well-organized group of business owners could develop consensus and build capacity to carry out or promote improvements in their commercial areas. Successful business organization has already occurred in Dedham Square due to the commendable efforts of Dedham Square Circle. A similar type of organization could help business owners in other parts of town. Although it is not town government's responsibility to promote private business or provide staff support to private organizations, it is in Dedham's economic interest to offer encouragement and technical assistance, provide referrals and information resources, and help local businesses get started with basic organizational tasks.

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**Action: Create design guidelines for neighborhood commercial districts.**

*Primary MP element: Land Use*

*Related MP elements: Economic Development*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Board*

*Support: Planning Director*

*Resources needed: \$25,000 to \$40,000 for consultant services, depending on the number of commercial districts*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should create design guidelines to improve the visual quality of neighborhood commercial districts, employing a "village" concept to give each area a distinct appearance. Design guidelines vary in their scope and level of prescriptiveness. They also vary in terms of what elements of the built environment they are concerned with. For a neighborhood commercial district, such as the Route 109/Bridge Street corridor or East Dedham, design guidelines might influence building type, building materials and color, awnings, and signage. Design guidelines also vary in how they communicate design concepts. Although they should contain graphics, they also take the form of photographs, computer-generated graphics or diagrams, hand-drawn sketches, and illustrations. Depending on the level of expertise available within the Planning Board and other town boards and staff, the design guidelines could be created in-house or may require involve consultant services, or involve a combination of the two. This will determine how much funding is required from the town.

In Dedham, the creation of commercial design guidelines should reinforce the priorities established in the economic development vision and plan (*see Phase 1*). To avoid homogenizing the commercial districts, guidelines should be tailored to each area, highlighting the characteristics that make these districts unique. To do this, the Planning Board, with the assistance of a consultant, will need to survey each district and develop an inventory of key visual traits, and then decide how to perpetuate those traits through guidelines. For example, this could be done by encouraging a certain type of signage, exterior paint colors, and awning types. The Planning Board should meet with business owners in each area to make sure that what they are proposing for guidelines do not impose undue burdens on small businesses. Once adopted, the guidelines should be published on the town's website and made available through the Building Department. They will form the basis for design review during the permitting process under Dedham's Zoning Bylaw.

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**Action: Investigate creating a rental housing code enforcement program.**

*Primary MP element: Housing*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities, Economic Development*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Director, Code Enforcement Officer*

*Support: Building Commissioner, Town Administrator*

*Resources needed: Contingent on program design. Dedham should expect to cover most program costs through regular inspection fees.*

**Discussion:**

The Planning Director should work with the Building Commissioner and Code Enforcement Officer to develop a code enforcement program to monitor conditions of rental properties. Rental properties may be more prone to neglect and code violations because often they are owned by absent or inattentive landlords. A code enforcement program would be centered on a comprehensive and systematic inspection of all rental properties. Each rental unit would be subject to regular inspection (for example, once every two years or once every five years), which would ensure that all units meet health and safety requirements. If a violation is found, the unit would be subject to re-inspection to ensure the problem is corrected.

Successful code enforcement programs for rental properties in other cities and towns are commonly financed by through an annual per-unit fee for property owners. If inspections occur less than once a year, the fee could be paid in annual installments to ensure adequate cash flow to the program. Ideally, the fee should be based on what is required to cover program costs. In other communities, fees range from \$28 to \$50 dollars, with more in the \$30 range. There would be an additional fee for re-inspection if a violation is found, and other adjustments to the fee schedule could be made depending on the needs of the program. In addition to housing inspections, the code enforcement program should include outreach and education for landlords as a part of the overall effort to increase code compliance and improve the condition of rental properties.

**Action: Encourage rehabilitation of deteriorated, highly visible residential and mixed-use buildings.**

*Primary MP element: Housing*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Economic Development*

*Leadership responsibility: Planning Director*

*Support: Housing Partnership Committee, Building Inspector, Economic Development Director, GIS Manager*

*Resources needed: Varies depending on extent of rehabilitation and program design*

**Discussion:**

The Planning Director and Economic Development Director should identify highly visible residential or mixed-use properties that need rehabilitation and would have high “impact” potential once rehabilitated. Focusing intensive public support on particular properties can trigger private investment in the surrounding area. Toward this end, Dedham could establish a program that offers financial incentives to owners of deteriorated multi-family dwellings or mixed-use buildings, or deteriorated nonresidential buildings suitable for multi-family reuse.

The town could seek CDBG and other grants to support this type of program. CDBG funds can finance activities that remove “slums and blight” (as defined by HUD) as long as the community has completed a DHCD-approved slums and blight inventory. Dedham plans to prepare an inventory in East Dedham during the spring (2009). This may qualify the town to use CDBG funds to encourage rehabilitation of the exteriors of commercial buildings. By contrast, CDBG funds may be used for interior residential rehabilitation only if the occupants meet specified income limits. In both cases, the town would secure financial assistance with a property lien or mortgage. It also may be possible to use CPA funds to redevelop a deteriorated building if the project will produce affordable housing and be subject to a perpetual affordable housing restriction held by the town.

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**Action: Create a Housing Resource Guide.**

*Primary MP element: Housing*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Housing Partnership Committee*

*Support: Board of Selectmen, Planning Board*

*Resources needed: Existing staff or consultant; for budgetary purposes, assume \$3,500 to \$5,000.*

**Discussion:**

The Housing Partnership Committee should create a resource guide for owners and renters that describes local, regional and state level housing assistance programs, including the Home Modification Program, Get the Lead Out, MassHousing’s Home Improvement Program, HUD Section 8, and resources for subsidized housing and tenant assistance. A housing resource guide can help residents readily identify programs that offer different types of housing assistance. This information should be available both in print and electronic form, and posted on the town’s website.

**Action: Participate in marketing strategies for key development sites.**

*Primary MP element: Economic Development*

*Related MP elements: Land Use*

*Leadership responsibility: Economic Development Director*

*Support: Planning Director, Town Administrator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Once a marketing strategy has been determined for a priority site, Dedham will need to carry out its share of the marketing responsibilities – a task that is likely to vary on a site-by-site basis, depending on ownership of the property and the incentives required to lure reinvestment. It is not uncommon for municipal economic development offices to prepare basic marketing materials (print or brochure form and published on the Town’s website) and work in partnership with local, regional, and state organizations to promote the site. Dedham has already established relationships with the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) and the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce, both of which provide opportunities to attract developers and new industries to locate in Dedham. The town should continue to nurture these relationships while also developing its internal marketing capacity.

**Action: Consider using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements to support business development.**

*Primary MP element: Economic Development*

*Related MP elements: Land Use*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Economic Development Director, Town Administrator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff, and Town Counsel. Depending on the project, the town may benefit from retaining a consultant to assist with TIF negotiations. However, the cost of consulting services should be (and usually is) borne by the proponent of a project.*

**Discussion:**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can help to attract companies to Dedham. TIF is a form of tax incentive that can enhance job opportunities for local residents. A TIF designation makes a company eligible for local property tax exemptions and substantial state tax credits. In return, communities may require that local residents are given priority for new jobs. Dedham took an important step toward using this incentive when it joined the Quincy Economic Target Area (ETA), which enables the town to enter into TIFs agreements. To do this, the Board of Selectmen must designate Economic Opportunity Areas within which a TIF project can be located. Each Economic Opportunity Area and TIF agreement requires approval by the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC). In addition to local tax relief, the TIF provides a five percent Investment Tax Credit and a ten percent Abandoned Building Tax Deduction, as well as eligibility for predevelopment and/or Brownfield’s financing.

**Action: Develop asset management policies to dispose of surplus municipal property.**

*Primary MP element: Community Services and Facilities*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Housing*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator*

*Support: School Department, Capital Planning Committee, Housing Partnership, Assessor*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and citizen volunteers*

**Discussion:**

The Town should have policies for disposing of surplus land and buildings, investing the proceeds in future capital improvements, and deciding when asset disposition should be carried out for a public benefit purpose. Even though service needs change over time, communities often retain obsolete or unused property in their assets inventory. These properties, while sometimes perceived as a burden, can also present opportunities to towns looking to achieve certain development objectives. By disposing of surplus properties for reuse, municipalities can guide redevelopment to meet a particular public benefit either through reuse of the property itself or through use of proceeds from a sale. M.G.L. c. 30B prescribes the means for real property disposition. Ideally, the Board of Selectmen, with the assistance of the Town Administrator, would be responsible for developing property disposition policies for the town. Consultations with the Assessor, other department heads, boards and commissions should inform these policies.

As part of this effort, the Planning Director and Housing Partnership Committee should identify town-owned properties (including tax title properties) that may be suitable for (re)development to meet local housing needs, such as elderly housing, affordable family housing, or “starter” homes. Through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, Dedham may be able to attract interest in (re)development consistent with the town’s housing plan (*see Phase 2*).

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**ONGOING**

**Action: Continue to fund capital improvements through responsible assumption of non-exempt debt.**

*Primary MP element: Community Services and Facilities*

*Related MP elements: Governance*

*Leadership responsibility: Town Administrator*

*Support: Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee*

*Resources needed: Bond authorizations and annual debt service appropriations consistent with the capital improvements plan.*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should continue to build its non-exempt debt capacity to fund capital improvement projects. Unlike Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusions, non-exempt debt can be authorized by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting without a ballot vote at a town election because the debt service has to be absorbed within Dedham’s levy limit. For several years, Dedham has gradually increased its ability to carry non-exempt debt in order to finance needed capital improvements. In doing so, Dedham also has improved its bond rating, which enhances its borrowing power because the town can borrow at a lower interest rate.

Dedham has pursued a responsible strategy for managing debt. Through use of its long-range forecasting tool, Dedham has established a schedule for retiring all debt. In this way, the town can forecast when it will have additional bonding capacity to fund other projects. This approach marks a change from Dedham's traditional stance toward assuming debt. For several decades and until recently, the town shied away from borrowing, preferring not to take on debt. However, its facilities, including many key public buildings, suffered as a consequence. By increasing its capacity to issue and pay down debt, Dedham has secured a stable funding source for small- to mid-sized (up to several million dollars) capital improvements projects. This long-range forecasting approach, coupled with a comprehensive capital improvements plan will allow Dedham to adequately plan for and fund its capital improvements needs.

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**Action: Continue to coordinate infrastructure improvements with civic beautification efforts.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Transportation, Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Department of Public Works, Engineering Department, Civic Pride Committee*

*Support: Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator*

*Resources required: Existing staff and citizen volunteers*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should continue its efforts to coordinate regular collaboration between the Department of Public Works, the Engineering Department, and the Civic Pride Committee. In many cities and towns, roadway and other infrastructure improvement projects can sometimes interfere with beautification efforts and aesthetic concerns. In recent years, Dedham has taken action to coordinate the infrastructure objectives and concerns of the DPW and Engineering Department and the beautification objectives of the Civic Pride Committee to ensure that infrastructure improvements, particularly at Dedham's gateways, do not detract from and ultimately can contribute to the town's aesthetic beauty. This coordination should continue to ensure a balance between transportation efficiency, public safety, and visual quality in Dedham.

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**Action: Increase collaboration with nearby communities and conservation groups for regional water resource and habitat protection.**

*Primary MP element: Natural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Land Use*

*Leadership responsibility: Environmental Coordinator*

*Support: Conservation Commission, Planning Board*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and citizen volunteers. However, projects arising from regional conservation efforts – such as acquiring open space to protect habitat – will require additional expenditures by the town, including exempt or non-exempt debt, to be determined in accordance with the capital improvements plan.*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs to continue its participation in efforts to review and address regional environmental concerns. Natural resource concerns and impacts are not restricted to a municipality's boundaries. Dedham's resources are intricately linked with those of the surrounding towns and the greater region, and vice versa. Actions taken in one town can have significant impacts on the natural resources of the towns that surround it. Dedham currently participates with organizations such as the Charles River Watershed Association and

the Neponset River Watershed Association, and these efforts should continue. The town could also host annual forums, monthly discussion groups or other formalized meetings with neighboring towns on common natural resource, habitat, and open space protection efforts and to facilitate cooperation and joint action.

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**Action: Develop and promote public water conservation efforts.**

*Primary MP element: Natural Resources*

*Related MP elements: None*

*Leadership responsibility: Conservation Commission, Environmental Coordinator*

*Support: Dedham-Westwood Water District, Parks and Recreation Department*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should expand upon the educational efforts currently undertaken by the Dedham-Westwood Water Commission. The town should create (or reproduce existing) informational brochures for local residents on water conservation methods, particularly related to outdoor irrigation use, and provide this information on its website. Currently, the Dedham-Westwood Water Commission regulates seasonal water use and promotes water conservation awareness through public forums, education programs and other informational activities. One of the ways Dedham could add to these efforts is by disseminating public information on topics such as of drought-resistant and low-water-use plantings, fertilizers, maintenance care, and pest control. Some communities also regulate landscaping practices, through zoning or general bylaws. The town could also demonstrate the use of low water or water-efficient landscape design in some of its own public landscapes, and thus serve as a leader in environmentally sensitive design. The Town of Shrewsbury is an example of a community that constructed a sustainable garden on the grounds of its town hall.

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**Action: Work with Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership (SAHP) to promote its First-time Homebuyer Program.**

*Primary MP element: Housing*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Housing Partnership Committee*

*Support: Planning Director*

*Resources needed: Citizen volunteers and existing staff (limited role)*

**Discussion:**

The Housing Partnership should work with the Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership (SAHP) to promote and support its first-time homebuyer program. The SAHP offers downpayment assistance and financial/homebuyer counseling to first-time homebuyers in Dedham's region. Access to affordable starter homes in Dedham is difficult for first-time homebuyers with moderate incomes. Under current economic conditions, it also is difficult for many owners to retain their properties. To ease this burden, Dedham could coordinate with local organizations to ensure that residents have opportunities for counseling and financial assistance. In addition, Dedham should consider coordinating with SAHP and other regional organizations that offer foreclosure prevention counseling and assistance.

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**Action: Continue to seek grants to support capital improvements on a project-by-project basis.**

*Primary MP element: Community Services and Facilities*

*Related MP elements: Governance*

*Leadership responsibility: Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen*

*Support: School Department, Planning Director, Economic Development Director*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

The Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen should continue their existing efforts to supplement the town's budget for capital improvements and property maintenance by seeking specialized grants on a project-by-project basis. While grant funds are generally limited, Dedham may benefit from exploring opportunities to supplement its capital spending with alternative funding sources. For example, adopting the CPA would provide an additional revenue stream for eligible projects. CPA funds can be used for capital improvements related to preserving historically significant buildings and recreation improvements on land acquired with CPA revenue. In addition, the Massachusetts Historic Commission offers the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) which provides competitive matching grants for public building restoration projects. MPPF is contingent upon available state funds and can be an unpredictable funding source. Should Dedham decide to adopt CPA, the Community Preservation Committee would be responsible for making funding recommendations to Town Meeting. In addition, the Planning Director, Economic Development Director, and Department of Public Works should assist with seeking other grants for capital projects at the direction of the Town Administrator.

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**Action: Continue to include sidewalk maintenance in the Department of Public Works' pavement management system.**

*Primary MP element: Transportation*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Department of Public Works*

*Support: Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee*

*Resources needed: Annual appropriations for sidewalk maintenance.*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should continue to include sidewalk maintenance in the Department of Public Work's (DPW) pavement management system to provide for systematic assessment and upgrade of the town's pedestrian infrastructure. Currently, the DPW assesses, programs, and budgets for sidewalk improvement needs in conjunction with its planning for roadway paving and improvements. This allows for more efficient use of the DPW's time and resources, and results in more attention to pedestrian infrastructure overall. The town should continue with this approach and should continue to provide adequate support for sidewalk maintenance within the pavement management budget.

**Action: Continue to identify parcels to form a system of paths and trails.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Conservation Commission*

*Support: Planning Director, GIS Manager*

*Resources needed: Existing staff and citizen volunteers*

**Discussion:**

The Conservation Commission should continue to work on identifying land ownership along proposed trail or “greenway” routes in Dedham and strategize to preserve and gain access to the necessary parcels. The Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009 contains several recommendations related to the development of a system of trails, paths, or “greenways” in various parts of town. It also identifies several potential trail or greenway routes, such as a linear open space system along the Mother Brook and Charles River and a trail along the Charles River in West Dedham. These additions would contribute significantly to the Dedham’s open space resources by linking currently isolated open space parcels to a town-wide open space system and providing more opportunities for passive recreation, such as walking or biking.

The Conservation Commission and Open Spaces Committee have already begun the task of identifying parcels that would need to be acquired and assembled in order to create some of the proposed greenways. Once the land ownership pattern along a proposed trail route has been identified and assessed, the Conservation Commission should begin work to acquire the necessary parcels or obtain trail easements from private property owners to allow limited public access through the property. A trail easement is a legal agreement that allows others to use someone’s land in the manner specified in the easement.

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**Action: Formalize and continue the practice of Historic District Commission review and comment on public development projects.**

*Primary MP element: Historic and Cultural Resources*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Historic Districts Commission, Planning Board*

*Support: Endicott Estate Commission, School Building Rehab Committee, Building Planning and Construction Committee*

*Resources needed: Citizen volunteers*

**Discussion:**

Dedham should require additional scrutiny of the impacts of public development projects on its historic resources. Currently, Dedham does not integrate preservation objectives into the development review and permitting process for 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 the town’s historic properties. While Dedham has been a good steward of its historic properties, it has not instituted procedures to *require* historically appropriate preservation. To improve upon this, the town should adopt a bylaw or establish an administrative rule that requires boards, commissions and departments to seek Historic Districts Commission review as part of the project planning process and prior to issuance of any building permits or cer-

tificates of zoning compliance. The Town of Concord has a similar policy granting authority to the Historic Districts Commission for review of town projects.

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**Action: Maintain a comprehensive open space inventory.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Land Use, Natural Resources*

*Leadership responsibility: Conservation Commission, Planning Board*

*Support: Environmental Coordinator, Planning Director, GIS Coordinator*

*Resources needed: Existing staff*

**Discussion:**

Dedham needs to maintain a comprehensive open space inventory that contains all open space parcels by location, ownership and acreage, level and type of protection, and level of risk for development. The inventory also should establish priorities for the preservation of parcels. A complete open space inventory is important for guiding Dedham's decisions about open space parcels, e.g., whether to buy the land, work with a developer to preserve some of it, work with a land owner to establish a conservation restriction, or allow the land to be developed. The inventory reported in the most recent Open Space and Recreation Plan (2004-2009) has been updated from time to time, but it does not identify high-priority parcels or code parcels according to type of protection, type of ownership, use, or development risk. To identify parcels that Dedham deems important to protect, the Town should:

- ◆ Develop a system to identify and document the *level of risk* for each parcel of open space. For example, a parcel that is protected in perpetuity would rank "0" while a privately-owned, unprotected parcel next to developed land would rank "5."
- ◆ Establish criteria for identifying priority acquisition parcels and assign a priority to them (high, medium, low). Dedham could consider adopting published standards such as the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) Criteria for Ranking Undeveloped Land for conservation. These criteria include: contiguity with existing protected open space to develop wildlife corridors; specific natural resource value such as wetlands or aquifer recharge areas; and specific natural attributes such as water supply, presence of an endangered species habitat or unusual native plant community.

Updating and enhancing Dedham's existing open space inventory should be done in concert with updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2009, and maintained annually thereafter.

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**Action: Protect significant open space parcels.**

*Primary MP element: Open Space and Recreation*

*Related MP elements: Natural Resources*

*Leadership responsibility: Conservation Commission*

*Support: Dedham Land Trust*

*Resources needed: Open space bond authorization, subject to inclusion in the town's capital improvements plan; and Community Preservation Act*

**Discussion:**

The Dedham Conservation Commission should identify privately-owned, at-risk or otherwise valuable open space parcels and encourage land owners to donate conservation restrictions on the land or donate the land outright. Dedham still has some large parcels under private ownership that are unprotected and potentially vulnerable to development. Through development of its open space inventory, Dedham should identify parcels that would contribute to the town's open space plan, such as by creating a greenbelt or preserving land for neighborhood open space. Then, the town should develop an outreach strategy for cultivating donors of conservation restrictions, outright donations of land, or land acquisitions financed by the town. The Conservation Commission could seek assistance from the Dedham Land Trust, other land trusts in the region, and other communities to develop an approach that will be effective in Dedham. Informational materials about conservation restrictions should be available on the town's website. Community workshops, strategic mailings, and newspaper articles are other effective educational initiatives.

It is important to point out that in the absence of willing donors or cooperative developers, Dedham may have to acquire land in order to protect it, just as countless other towns have done and continue to do today. This is one of the key reasons that Dedham needs to maintain a current Open Space and Recreation Plan because without it, the town will not be eligible for Self-Help grants to assist with financing the cost of open space acquisitions. Access to CPA revenue and an open space bond authorization (as exempt debt) from Town Meeting will be critically important tools for the town in its efforts to protect open space.

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**Action: Annually review the number of boards and committees in town government, determine their continued relevance, and disband committees that are no longer needed.**

*Primary MP element: Governance*

*Related MP elements: Community Services and Facilities*

*Leadership responsibility: Board of Selectmen*

*Support: Town Administrator, Town Clerk*

*Resources needed: Citizen volunteers*

**Discussion:**

Like most suburbs, Dedham has many town committees because in Massachusetts, local governments have historically promoted and relied upon citizen participation. Today, cities and towns find it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified people to serve on appointed committees or to run for elected office. In reviewing draft proposals for this implementation plan, a town official noted that adding more committees to Dedham's roster of public servants could simply compound the problems associated with multiple committees and a shortage of volunteers. This may be true, but implementing a master plan invariably calls for change, both immediate and incremental. For example, Dedham has talented professional staff whose service to the town will be essential to carrying out this plan. However, Dedham does not necessarily have enough staff, or an optimal arrangement of staff, to conduct the work of master plan implementation (or meet its present-day needs). The town's choice is to forego components of the master plan or reorganize its priorities in order to complete the plan's recommendations. Similarly, Dedham may have more committees today than it actually needs for the functions of local government. In that event, Dedham should consider eliminating some committees and providing active volunteers other opportunities to serve the town. It also may be appropriate to determine whether some functions currently handled by volunteer committees could be performed more efficiently by staff.