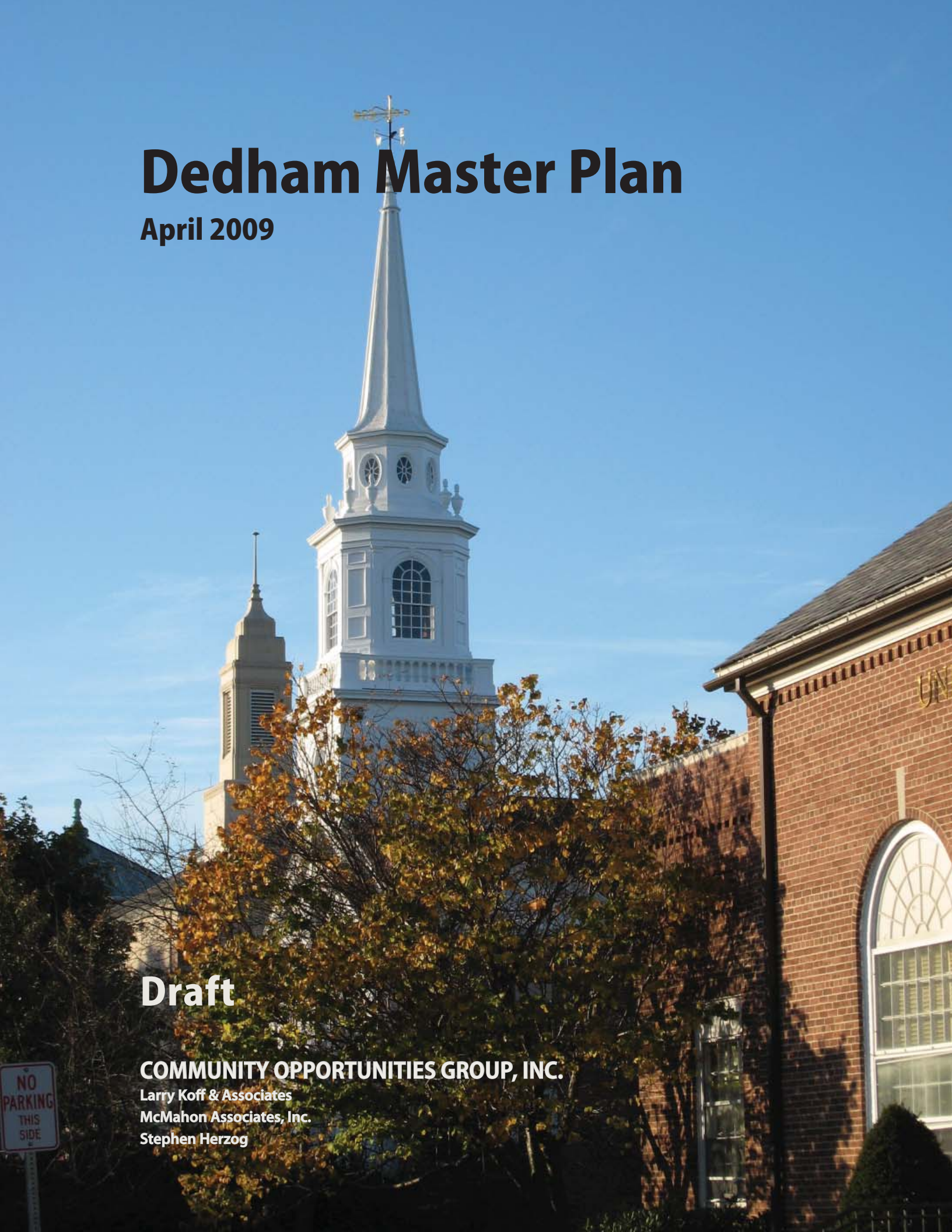
Dedham Master Plan

April 2009



Draft

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Dedham Master Plan Update

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April 2009

Prepared for:
Dedham Planning Board
Dedham Master Plan Steering Committee

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CHAPTER 1

MASTER PLAN GOALS

Land Use & Zoning

- Update and modernize the Dedham Zoning Bylaw to achieve consistency with the goals and recommendations of this Master Plan.
- Integrate principles and best practices of sustainable development into Dedham's development regulations.
- Evaluate ways to encourage "village" design in Dedham's neighborhood commercial centers.
- Improve the quality of life for residents who live in close proximity to commercial areas.
- Encourage the re-use of attractive or historic buildings that are not part of a historic district.
- Clarify and simplify regulations and procedures for the reuse or redevelopment of older buildings.
- Improve and clarify existing permitting environment, including regulations and process.

Dedham Common.

- Improve communication between and among major boards with development review and permitting authority.
- Expand opportunities for town professionals to coordinate the development review process and ensure that Dedham's regulations and policies are consistently implemented.

Transportation

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

Historic Resources

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

Natural Resources

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

Open Space & Recreation

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

Housing

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

Economic Development

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

Community Services & Facilities

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

Governance

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

CHAPTER 2

POPULATION PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

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

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

POPULATION

Population Growth

Dedham's population has decreased in the last several decades. In fact, Dedham experienced much of its twentieth-century population growth in the immediate post-war years. With the expansion of regional highways, Dedham became a desirable community for families looking to move beyond the confines of the city. Since 1970, however, Dedham's population has declined steadily.

Table 2.1 shows that between 1950 and 1960, Dedham's population increased twenty-nine percent and peaked around 1970 at 26,928 persons.[1] Since then, the population has declined fifteen percent, to 23,464 persons in 2000.[2] Today, available estimates show that Dedham's population has not changed significantly since 2000, with various sources indicating either modest growth or decline. For example, the most recent estimates from Claritas, Inc., indicate that from 2000 to 2007, Dedham's population increased slightly and now stands at 24,046.[3] Norfolk County also had strong population growth after World War II, but the countywide population has continued to grow,

TABLE 2.1
POPULATION GROWTH 1930-2000

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

Source: State Data Center, MISER.

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

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

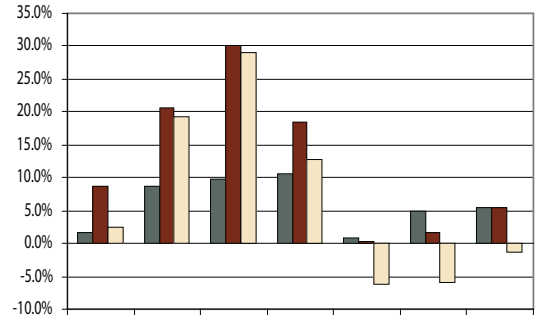
[3] Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports"at <www.claritas.com>.

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

Figure 2.2 shows that communities in the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) – Dedham's subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) – have grown at approximately the same pace since 1930.[4] A few towns have grown dramatically and they continue to show strong population growth, namely Randolph and Stoughton, and to a lesser extent, Walpole and Canton. Like Dedham, some communities in the TRIC experienced significant population growth in the middle of the twentieth century, but more recently they have had declining populations, e.g., Norwood and Milton.

Figure 2.1: Percent Change in Population, 1930-2000

(Source: State Data Center.)



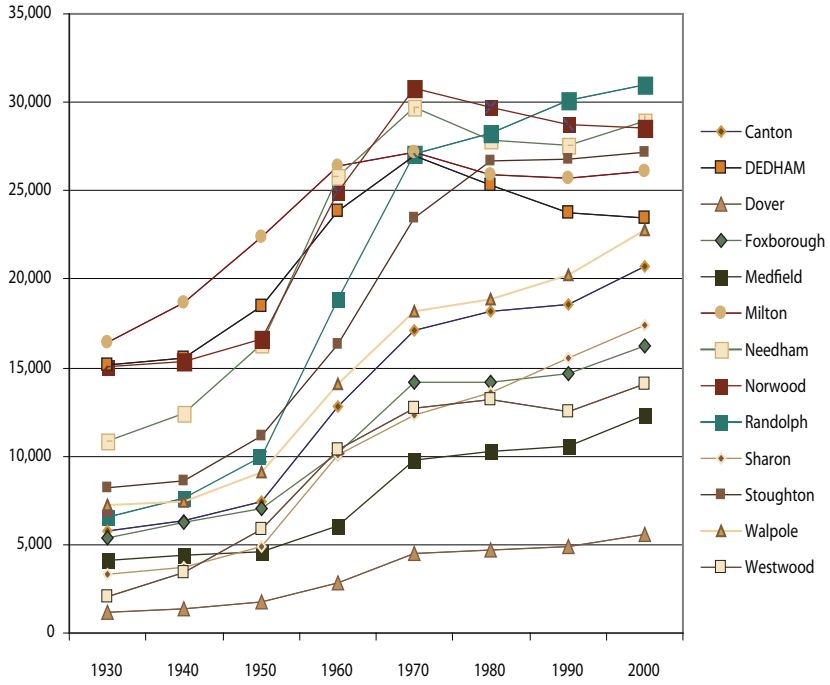
	1930-40	1940-50	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990-00
Massachusetts	1.6%	8.7%	9.8%	10.5%	0.8%	4.9%	5.5%
Norfolk County	8.6%	20.6%	30.1%	18.6%	0.3%	1.6%	5.6%
Dedham	2.5%	19.2%	29.1%	12.9%	-6.1%	-6.0%	-1.3%

Age Profile

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

Figure 2.2: Growth Rates in the TRIC Region

(Source: State Data Center)



As indicated in Table 2.2, between 1990 and 2000, the number of school-age children increased by over fourteen percent in Dedham.[5] Estimates indicate that between 2000 and 2007, this age cohort increased by another three percent. Despite estimated growth in this age cohort, K-12 enrollments in the Dedham public schools declined between 2000 and 2007. During the 1999-2000 school year, 3,041 children were enrolled in the public schools, but in the 2007-2008 school year, K-12 enrollments dropped slightly to 2,879 students.[6] This discrepancy may be attributed to increased enrollment in private schools. According to the Bureau of the Census, 596 Dedham children attended private school in 2000.

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

[5] 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, "P011: Age"; Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P12: Sex by Age."

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

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

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

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

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

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

TABLE 2.3
MEDIAN AGE AND ELDERLY PERSONS
2007 ESTIMATE

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

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

Race, Ethnicity and National Origin

In the last few decades, Dedham's population has become increasingly diverse. In 1990, almost ninety-eight percent of all Dedham residents were white, but by 2000, this figure had dropped to just over ninety-three percent.[8] The change is attributable primarily to growth in African-American and Asian populations. As reported in Table 2.4, available estimates indicate that today, seven percent of the town's population is non-white.[9] Statistics reported by the Massachusetts Department of Education suggest that there has been a significant increase in the number of African-American and Hispanic children enrolled in Dedham's public schools. African-American students currently make up 5.9 percent of the school district's population and Hispanic students, 7.2 percent. This compares to 2.4 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively, during the 1999-2000 school year.[10]

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

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

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

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

TABLE 2.4
POPULATION BY RACE

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

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

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

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

Educational Attainment

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

Group Quarters Population

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TABLE 2.6
CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

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

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

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

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

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

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

National trends indicate that households are smaller than in the past. Though populations in some areas may decline in absolute terms, people demand more housing units to accommodate growth in the number of households. Dedham, too, has experienced this trend. As shown in Table 2.6, despite declines in population, the number of households in Dedham has increased moderately since 1990 and continues to grow. In 1990, Dedham had 8,490 households, and ten years later, there were 8,653, or an increase of two percent. Demographic estimates for 2007 indicate that 9,004 households currently live in Dedham.[15] The vast majority of these households are **families**. A family is a household of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

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

Household Income

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

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

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

have actually declined when adjusted for inflation. In 1990, Dedham's median household income was $45,687, and by 2000, it had increased to $61,699. Median family incomes and non-family incomes increased by similar margins during the 1990s. However, current demographic estimates indicate that in Dedham and many other communities, household income growth did not out-pace inflation between 2000 and 2007. Dedham's median household income in 2000 is valued at over $74,000 in today's dollars, yet the estimated 2007 median household income is less than $73,500.[16]

TABLE 2.7
REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS, 2007 ESTIMATES

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

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

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

TABLE 2.8
INCOMES IN DEDHAM, 1990-2007

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

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

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

NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tables 2.9, 2.10, and 2.11 report some of the key demographic indicators that highlight differences between Dedham's neighborhoods. East Dedham, Greenlodge, and Oakdale are the most populated neighborhoods, each with over 5,000 people. Expressed on the basis of population density per square mile (sq. mi.), however, East Dedham stands out as the most densely settled area in Dedham: 4,855.6 people per sq. mi., compared to the town as a whole at 2,196.4 people per sq. mi. Riverdale and West Dedham are less populated, and the Village has the smallest population. Table 2.9 shows that for the most part, Dedham's neighborhoods are racially and ethnically diverse, with more diversity in some neighborhoods than others, notably East and West Dedham. Dedham's non-white population represents over ten percent of the population in East Dedham and over eight percent in West Dedham.

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

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

About Census Boundaries

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

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

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

TABLE 2.9
POPULATION BY RACE BY NEIGHBORHOOD (2000)

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

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

TABLE 2.10
HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS BY NEIGHBORHOOD (2000)

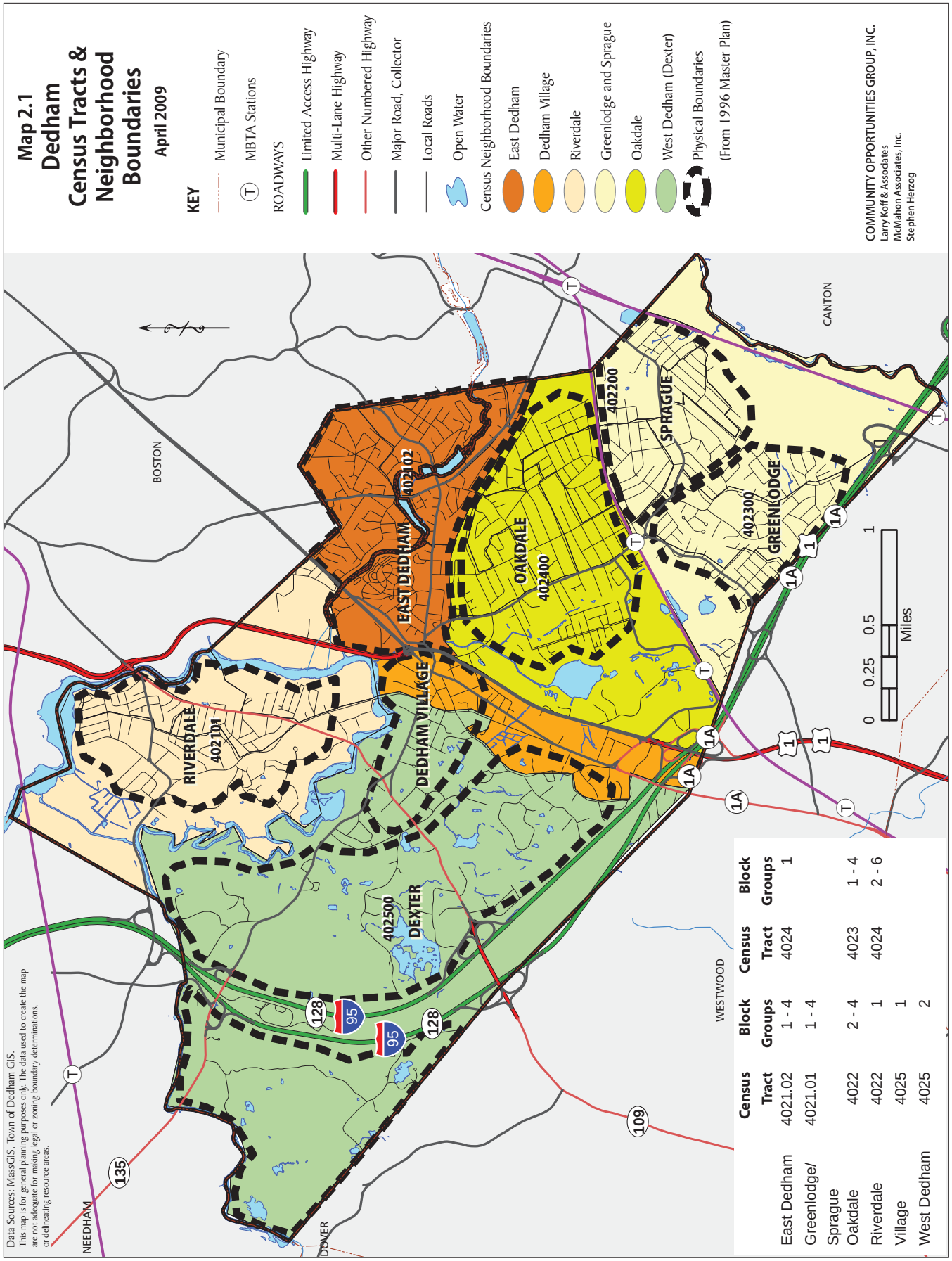
	East Dedham	Greenlodge-Manor	Oakdale	Riverdale	Village	West Dedham
Households	2,064	2,052	1,881	1,508	465	684
Average Household Size	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.7
With Children <18	631	660	656	469	148	231

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

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

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

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


Map 2.1
Dedham
Census Tracts &
Neighborhood
Boundaries
April 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
MBTA Stations
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Open Water
Census Neighborhood Boundaries
East Dedham
Dedham Village
Riverdale
Greenlodge and Sprague
Oakdale
West Dedham (Dexter)
Physical Boundaries
(From 1996 Master Plan)
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
DOVER
WESTWOOD
CANTON
RIVERDALE
402101
EAST DEDHAM
402102
DEDHAM VILLAGE
OAKDALE
402400
402200
SPRAGUE
402300
GREENLODGE
402500
DEXTER
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles
Census Tract
Block Groups
East Dedham
4021.02
1 - 4
Greenlodge/ Sprague
4021.01
1 - 4
Oakdale
4022
2 - 4
Riverdale
4022
1
Village
4025
1
West Dedham
4025
2
Census Tract
4024
4024
4023
4024
Block Groups
1
1 - 4
2 - 6

CHAPTER 3

LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

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

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

EXISTING CONDITIONS & TRENDS

Development Pattern

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

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

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

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

Dedham is evolving within a framework etched by mature transportation facilities, water, and wetlands. It has attracted redevelopment and intensification of existing development since 1999, both along the Providence Highway's retail corridor and on underutilized land near the Route 128/Route 1/1A interchange. It also has seen some incremental development of single-family homes, for despite Dedham's proximity to Boston, it still has pockets of vacant, usable land. At times, recent real estate investments in Dedham have not aligned well with the town's zoning requirements, such as the construction of two large mixed-income rental housing developments in the Research, Development and Office (RDO) District. In addition, Dedham has witnessed some new development on the west side of town, notably construction of NewBridge on the Charles, a large residential-institutional compound on West Street. As a result, even though the town's general development pattern has not changed dramatically, the constellation of land uses within established areas has shifted and the intensity of use in some areas has increased. This is typical of maturely developed suburbs.

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

TABLE 3.1
LAND USE CHANGE IN DEDHAM, 1971-1999

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

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

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

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

Source: Dedham GIS, 2008.

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

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

By contrast, Dedham's local commercial center – and its civic, social, and cultural center – is Dedham Square, a collection of human-scale historic and newer buildings consistent with a 19th century downtown. Small pockets of neighborhood businesses can be seen in East Dedham and the Sprague, Greenlodge, and Riverdale neighborhoods, too. The town currently has about 470 acres of commercial development, just under half devoted to various types of retail trade, along with offices, accommodations and food service, entertainment, and quite a bit of commercial flex space and warehouse space. Currently under construction just south of the main retail area, well within the RDO District by the Route 128/Route 1-1A interchange, is a 700,000± sq. ft. retail and entertainment "lifestyle" center, Legacy Place.

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

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

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

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

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

By contrast, Dedham has almost no vacant commercial land and only twenty-five acres of vacant industrial land with some prospect of future development. Dedham's real potential for commercial and industrial development has little to do with vacant land and everything to do with the ongoing redevelopment of parcels with existing businesses. As noted in the 1996 *Master Plan*, it can take many decades for a given parcel to undergo enough redevelopment cycles to reach its "regulatory" buildout capacity, or the maximum amount of development allowed under a community's density and dimensional regulations. For Dedham, the lack of vacant, developable land is not really a barrier to increasing the town's tax base. Instead, the barriers stem from regulatory constraints and in many cases, financial feasibility and market forces that impede the conversion of underused land to higher-value development.

ZONING REVIEW

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

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

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

TABLE 3.3
VACANT RESIDENTIAL LAND (2007)

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

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

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

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

TABLE 3.4
DEDHAM ZONING DISTRICTS

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

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

1996 Master Plan: Then and Now

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

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

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

Residential Zoning Districts

SINGLE RESIDENCE A AND B

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GENERAL RESIDENCE

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

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

ACCESSORY USES

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

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

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

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

> The use of a room or rooms in a dwelling or building accessory thereto as an office, studio, or workroom for a lawful home occupation by a person resident on the premises provided that: a) Such use is clearly incidental and secondary to the use of the premises as a dwelling, and b) Not more than one person other than residents of the premises regularly provided paid services in connection with such use, and c) No commodity or service is sold or provided to another person who is on the premises, and d) The public is not invited onto the premises in the usual course of business, and e) No offensive noise, traffic, vibration, smoke, dust, odor, heat, or glare is produced as a result of the home occupation, and f) There is no exterior display or exterior sign except as permitted under the Sign Code, and g) There is no exterior storage of materials or equipment (including the exterior parking of more than one commercial vehicle), and no other exterior indication of such use or variation from the residential character of the premises, and h) All parking for such home occupation, other than for residents of the premises, shall be provided off the street. Adequate off-street parking shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning By-Laws, and i) Such use has been approved in writing by the Building Commissioner.

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

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

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

Accessory Apartments

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

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

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

SENIOR CAMPUS DISTRICT

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

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

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

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

[6] In Table 1, Accessory Use Regulations, Subpart I, Accessory Regulations-Residential, the Zoning Bylaw cross-references "accessory dwelling unit" to Section 7.4. However, Section 7.4 governs "subsidiary units" in commercial districts. A "subsidiary unit" is a housing unit in a single-family residence located in a commercial district or in a commercial building. Unlike "accessory dwelling unit" a subsidiary unit is classified as a principal use in the Table of Use Regulations, though by definition in Section 10.0, a subsidiary unit is clearly accessory. In a future Zoning Bylaw update, the town should correct the "accessory dwelling unit" cross-reference to Section 7.7, Special Residential Regulations, which contains the regulations for accessory dwelling units in the SRA and SRB districts.

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

PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

The regulations that govern PRD submissions are unclear. Dedham does not specifically define "Planned Residential Development," so a prospective developer must seek guidance in various sections of the Zoning Bylaw. According to the Table of Principal Use Regulations (Zoning Bylaw Section 3.0, Table 1), a PRD is limited to detached single-family dwellings and two-family dwellings, both allowed as of right. However, the special regulations in Section 7.1 suggest that a PRD can include other types of housing units as well, for a PRD "is intended to accommodate dwelling units for small households in a variety of dwelling types, all in a planned setting." Unfortunately, the remaining regulations in Section 7.1 do not describe the variety of dwelling types that will actually be permitted in a PRD, or whether dwelling units other than single-family or two-family homes would require a special permit.

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

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

Commercial Districts

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

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

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

CENTRAL BUSINESS, GENERAL BUSINESS, AND LOCAL BUSINESS

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

Maximum lot coverage and **floor area ratios (FAR)** apply in all three small business districts, and the town also has a uniform building height limit of 40 feet in all nonresidential zones (commercial and industrial). Overall, Dedham's dimensional regulations suggest a preference for preservation of historic buildings and similar height and bulk in any new buildings constructed in Dedham Square, a moderate scale of development and intensity of use in the GB district, and small buildings for very small, neighborhood-oriented businesses in the LB district.

Floor Area Ratio

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

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

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

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

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

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

HIGHWAY BUSINESS

Prior to the 1996 *Master Plan*, land currently located in the HB district was zoned for industrial uses. At the time, the Limited Manufacturing (LMA) district covered most of the Providence Highway and the area now contained in the Research, Development and Office (RDO) district. The HB district differs significantly from Dedham's smaller commercial zones. By virtue of its shape and dimensional regulations, the HB district encourages suburban-scale commercial strip development, with a minimum lot area of one acre and minimum lot frontage of 200 feet, a minimum front setback of thirty feet, side and rear yard setbacks of twenty and twenty-five feet respectively, and a maximum floor area ratio of 0.35.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Industrial Districts

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

LIMITED MANUFACTURING (LMA AND LMB)

Dedham has two Limited Manufacturing districts. The larger district, LMA, encompasses about 5.6 percent of the town's total area. The extent of LMA is deceptive, however, because Dedham has zoned a large amount of protected open space – the Neponset River Reservation – for manufacturing uses that will never be built. Excluding the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) holding along the Neponset River and some other parcels owned by the town itself, the amount of land meaningfully zoned for LMA purposes is much less: about 140 acres. Much of this land extends along the railroad tracks in East Dedham, intertwined with the GR and GB districts, and also includes the Readville Yards off Sprague Street.

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

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

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

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

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

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND OFFICE (RDO)

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

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

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

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

Major Nonresidential Project

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

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

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

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

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

While some of the "required" standards are fairly straightforward, others describe broad expectations without a measurable basis for determining compliance. For example, the required traffic impact standards include "binding provisions…to compensate for errors in projecting the potential traffic volumes and traffic routes." Aside from uncertainties about what sort of "binding provisions" the town would accept, the Zoning Bylaw does not establish where the authority lies to determine after the fact that an error has occurred. Traffic patterns can change in response to circumstances unrelated to a particular project, e.g., increases in cut-through traffic to avoid congestion on Route 128.

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

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

Planned Commercial Development

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

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

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

Development Standards and Permitting Regulations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A division of special permit powers like Dedham's is not unusual. Until 1975 when the present Zoning Act took effect, a Zoning Board of Appeals was the only local board authorized to handle special permits. Since 1975, special permits have gradually evolved as a function of planning boards, though many communities have more than one SPGA, including Dedham. Still, dividing special permits among multiple boards or assigning special permits to one board and site plan review to another creates a challenging environment for applicants. In Dedham, small commercial projects requiring a special permit could necessitate separate zoning-related applications to the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board (for site plan review or parking plan review), and the Design Review Advisory Board, and another application to the Building Department and Design Review Advisory Board under the Dedham Sign Code.

Off-Street Parking

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

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

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

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

Planning Capacity

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

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

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

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

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Smart Growth

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

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

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

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

ZONING REFORM

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

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

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

Future Development Potential

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Site development regulations, focusing on environmental and energy performance standards - that is, "green" buildings and sustainable development practices;
- Clarity and consistency of definitions, use regulations, and development review and permitting criteria;
- Written descriptions of the purposes and intent of each use district and overlay district;
- Efficient special permit and site plan review procedures;
- Use and dimensional regulations in the HB and RDO districts;
- The boundaries (shape) and use and dimensional regulations of the CB district, including but not limited to consolidating and clarifying the regulations for mixed-use (residential and commercial) development;
- Clarity of review and decision standards for Major Nonresidential Projects (MNP), a reassessment of submission requirements, and providing for scoping sessions at an "all boards" and staff level to increase inter-board and interdepartmental coordination;
- The treatment of split lots;
- Regulatory flexibility for reuse and preservation of historic buildings;
- Off-street parking regulations;
- Transportation Demand Management;
- Adequacy of the existing Aquifer Protection Overlay District to achieve its objectives and comply with DEP policy;
- Open space design and its applications both for residential and nonresidential development;
- Design guidelines tailored to the unique form and character of each business area in Dedham;
- Reassessment of Planned Commercial Development, possibly to include provisions for mixed-use development in the RDO and HB districts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

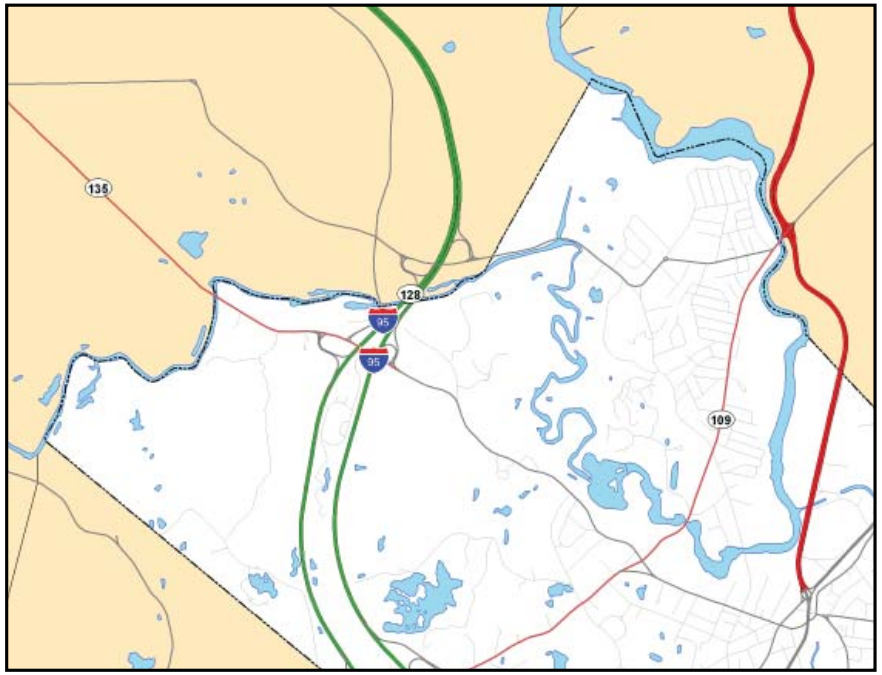
Dedham has been working on amendments to the Subdivision Control regulations – mainly procedural amendments. It will be very important to ensure that subdivision requirements do not unwittingly conflict with the goals of this Master Plan or other local and state requirements, e.g., stormwater management.

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

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

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

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



BRIDGE STREET CASE STUDY

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

Conduct a comprehensive review and update of zoning bylaw.

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

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

General Business District Limited Business District

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

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

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

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

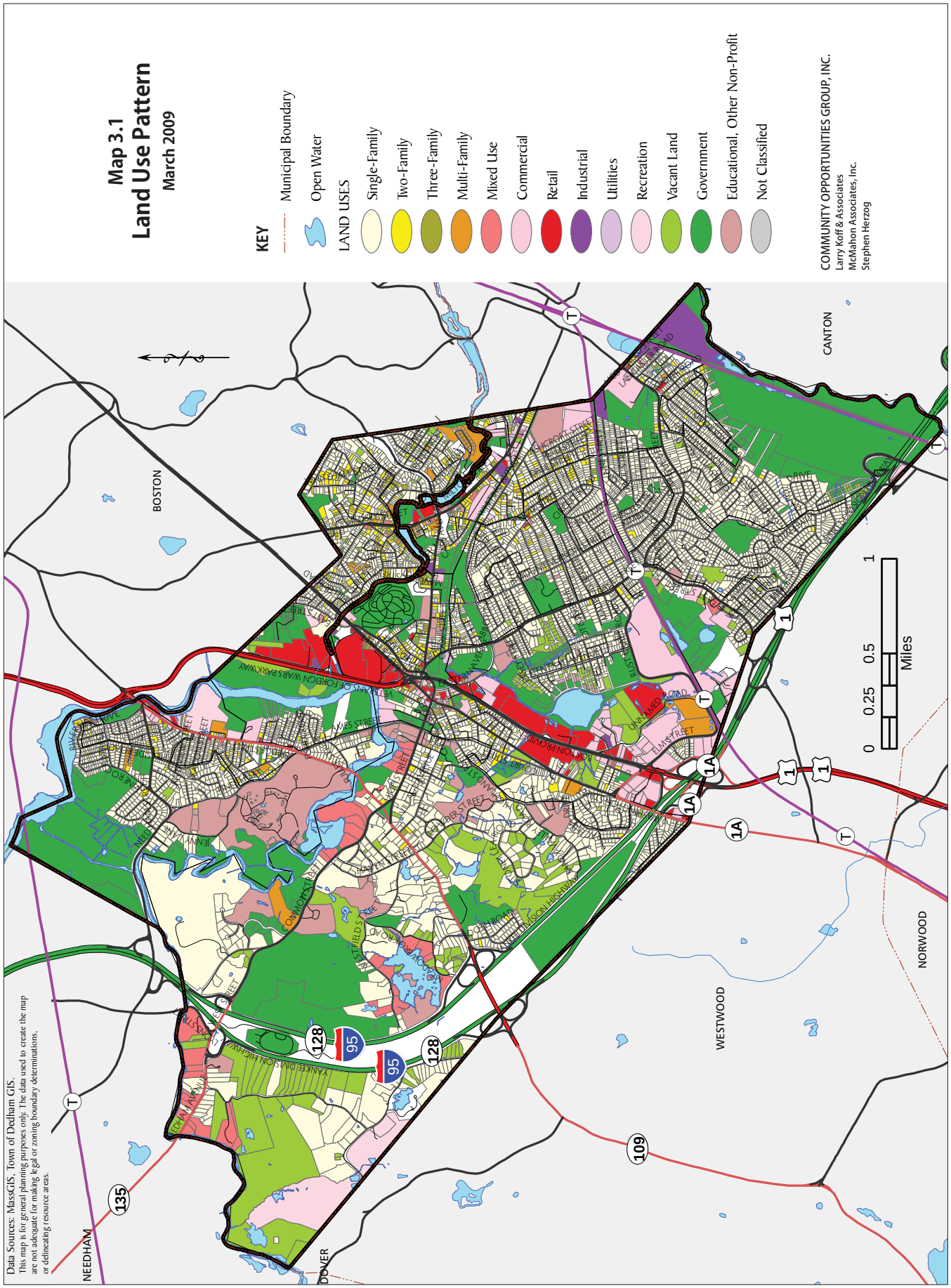
- Buildings located closer to the street to define and create a more inviting and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
- Parking located behind buildings.
- Minimizing curb cuts through shared parking lots, if possible.
- Landscaping standards: required number and placement of trees, and drought-tolerant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

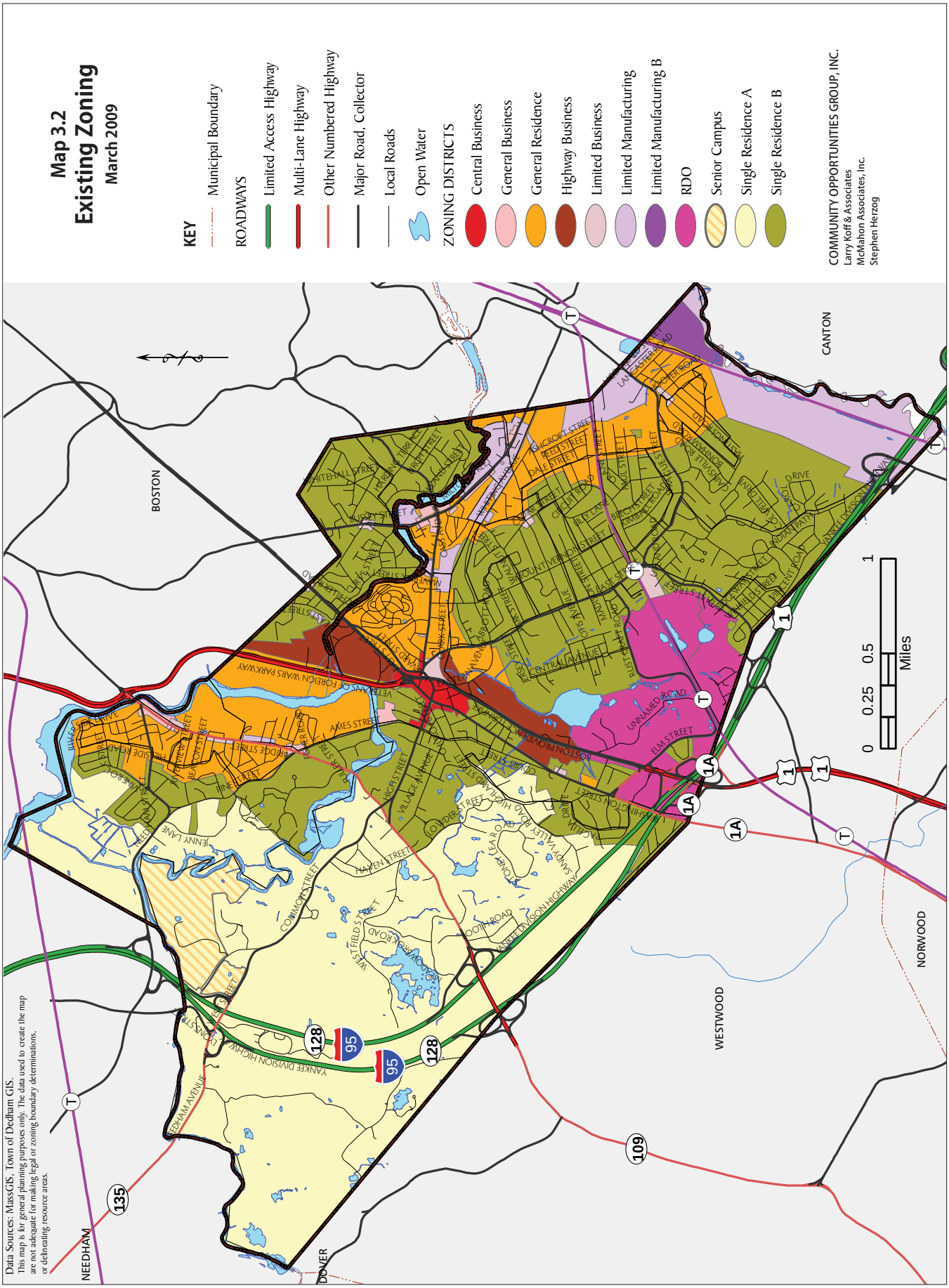
Some related Master Plan recommendations include:

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

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

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


Map 3.1
Land Use Pattern
March 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
Open Water
LAND USES
Single-Family
Two-Family
Three-Family
Multi-Family
Mixed Use
Commercial
Retail
Industrial
Utilities
Recreation
Vacant Land
Government
Educational, Other Non-Profit
Not Classified
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
CANTON
NORWOOD
WESTWOOD
DOVER
NEEDHAM
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles


Map 3.2
Existing Zoning
March 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Open Water
ZONING DISTRICTS
Central Business
General Business
General Residence
Highway Business
Limited Business
Limited Manufacturing
Limited Manufacturing B
RDO
Senior Campus
Single Residence A
Single Residence B
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles
BOSTON
CANTON
NORWOOD
WESTWOOD
NEEDHAM
DOVER
YANKEE DIVISION HIGHWAY
BOSTON PROVIDENCE TURNPIKE
ELM STREET
UNNAMED ROAD
CENTRAL AVENUE
COMMON STREET
HAYEN STREET
VILLAGE AVENUE
LOWDER STREET
JENNY LANE
AMES STREET
BRIDGE STREET
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS PARKWAY
WALKER STREET
PINE STREET
RIVER STREET
WHITEHILL STREET
MOTOR STREET
PARK STREET
PLAIN STREET
WALNUT STREET
WASHINGTON STREET
SAND VALLEY ROAD
HIGH STREET
COURT STREET
MAIN STREET
OTIS STREET
POST OFFICE SQUARE
MOUNT VERNON STREET
WILLOW STREET
PAUL STREET
BLEECH STREET
CAMBRIDGE ROAD
HIGHCROFT STREET
REED STREET
DALE STREET
CONCORD STREET
LANCASTER ROAD
CANTERBURY ROAD
CAMSVILLE ROAD
INDIAN PATH
DRIVE
VALENTI WAY
ANGELL DIVISION HIGHWAY
WISTFIELD STREET
WOODWORK ROAD
FOOT ROAD
TOWER STREET
GEAR ROAD
95
128
135
109
1
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CHAPTER 4

TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

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

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

Recent planning for Dedham Square has spurred plans to accommodate growth in the court system while expanding redevelopment opportunities downtown. As the town seeks to preserve and improve its transportation future, creating more walkable areas, improving pedestrian safety, and expanding public transit use and service will be equally as important as increasing the capacity of Dedham's roadways. In this section, we will review the progress and problems, address new issues and opportunities, and re-establish transportation goals for Dedham's future in light of present conditions.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Regional Access

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

MAJOR ROADWAYS

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

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

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

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

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

Route 109 extends through Dedham from VFW Parkway, where it is a two-lane roadway, to its interchange with Route 128/Interstate 95, where it is a four-lane roadway. Route 109 provides connections to West Roxbury and Westwood.

Traffic Generators

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

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

- **NewBridge on the Charles** includes one million square feet of intergenerational housing and service facilities on a 162-acre parcel north of Common Street.

- **The Legacy Place** "lifestyle" center will provide approximately 700,000 square feet of mixed-use development including retail, restaurants, a movie theater, and office space on the northeast corner of Providence Highway and Elm Street.

- The recently completed **Jefferson at Dedham Station** and the **Station 250** residential developments (nearing completion) will add a total of 600 units to the area adjacent to Legacy Place.

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

TABLE 4.1
WORKPLACE OF DEDHAM RESIDENTS

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

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

TABLE 4.2
RESIDENCY OF DEDHAM WORKERS

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

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

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

Journey to Work

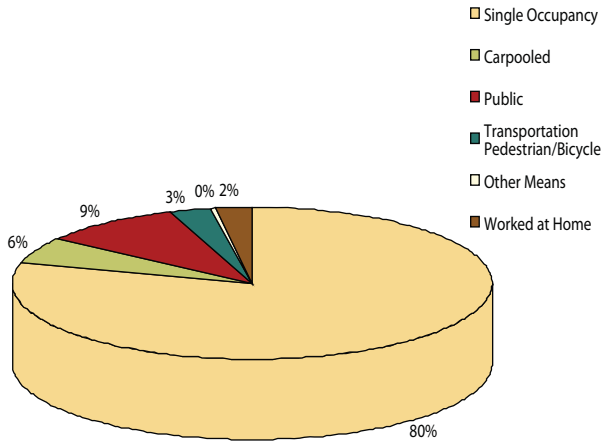
Dedham is primarily a residential community, yet it has a sizable employment base. Census 2000 Journey-to-Work data from the Bureau of the Census show that Dedham has more jobs (13,779) than residents in the workforce (11,412). A comparison of the workplace of Dedham residents and residency of Dedham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

As shown in Table 4.1, more than half of all Dedham labor force participants work in Dedham (20.1 percent) or Boston (31.2 percent). Only neighboring Norwood hosts more than five percent of Dedham's workers. The remaining destinations are scattered throughout the region, mainly key employment centers along Route 128. Additionally, the Journey-to-Work data in Table 4.2 show that of the 13,779 people who work in Dedham each day, only seventeen percent live in Dedham. Fifteen percent of Dedham's workers live in Boston, with no other municipality supplying more than five percent. The communities with the largest percentages of Dedham's workers are generally in neighboring towns or those located south and southwest of Boston.[1]

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

Figure 4.1: How Dedham Residents Commute to Work

(Source: Census 2000)

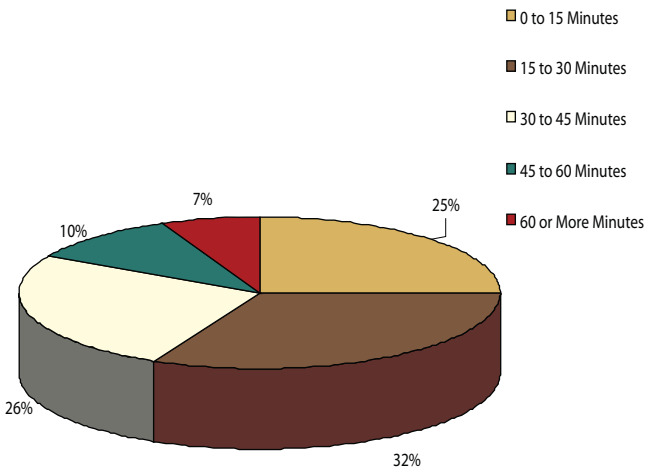


[1] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "QT-P23: Journey to Work: 2000."

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

Figure 4.2: Commuting Time for Dedham Residents

(Source: Census 2000)



Traffic Accidents

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

Public Transportation

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

COMMUTER RAIL

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

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

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

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

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

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

TABLE 4.3
ACCIDENT DATA

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

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

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

BUS SERVICE

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

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

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

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

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

Dedham Local Bus operated by JBL Bus Lines Inc. runs exclusively on weekdays between 6:45 AM and 5:10 PM and provides cross-town access to Endicott Circle, Westbrook, Oakdale Square, East Dedham Square, Parkway Court, Dedham Mall, Traditions, and Dedham Square. The Dedham Local Bus provides the only public transportation link across town. However, it operates infrequently, and therefore ridership and dependability are very limited. Based on the MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics, the Dedham Local Bus had a total annual ridership of 16,323 in 2004.[7]

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

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

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

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

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

Despite Dedham's proximity to Boston, its residents seem to be traveling farther for work. The mean travel time to work increased by 3.3 minutes between 1990 and 2000. In the same period, the number of residents working locally decreased from 3,030 to 2,296, the number of people traveling 30 to 44 minutes to work increased by 7.3 percent, and the number traveling more than 45 minutes to work increased by 31.7 percent. In addition, the percentages of people who are carpooling, bicycling, walking, and working at home declined between 1990 and 2000, but the percentage of people using public transportation, particularly the subway and commuter rail, increased, as shown in Table 4.4.[8]

TABLE 4.4
WEEKDAY DAILY BOARDINGS

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

Source: MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics.

TABLE 4.5
TRAFFIC VOLUME COMPARISON

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

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

The 1996 *Master Plan* provided Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes for Dedham roadways.[9] In addition, updated ADT volumes were included in the 2004 Dedham Development and Infrastructure Management Strategy study.[10] A comparison of the ADT data (Table 4.5) indicates that on average, the highway and arterial roadways within Dedham have experienced a slight decrease in overall traffic volumes. Meanwhile, the collector and local roadways show an increase in overall traffic volumes. It is possible that as congestion has increased on the highway and arterial roadways, drivers have sought alternative routes on collector and local roadways. In total, overall daily traffic flows in the past eleven years have experienced a three percent increase in Dedham.

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

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

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

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

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

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Town Studies

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

- Control and manage commuter traffic to and through Dedham.
- Improve operations at congested locations.
- Improve safety and amenities at key pedestrian facilities.
- Seek to establish additional east-west connections.
- Improve linkages between Dedham Square & Providence Highway.
- Reduce land area devoted to parking.
- Foster public transportation use in Dedham.
- Design development to minimize vehicle traffic impacts.[12]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

improvements, project coordination, and strategic planning.[14]

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

Developer Studies

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

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

Hebrew Senior Life. The Hebrew Senior Life Campus, NewBridge on the Charles, is a one-million sq. ft. intergenerational campus on a 162-acre parcel north of Common Street. Dedham approved the development in 2005 and the project is expected to be in operation by 2009. To offset traffic impacts on the surrounding roadways, several roadway and intersection improvements were required within the vicinity of the development site.[16] Table 4.6 also lists these improvements.

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

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

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

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Pedestrians and Bicycle Facilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TABLE 4.6
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

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

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

Currently, few areas in Dedham have or bicycle paths, either as dedicated or on-street routes. Bike paths are crucial infrastructural elements in cities and towns, and especially in mature suburbs like Dedham where the overall density and mix of uses make bicycling a viable transportation option. Bike paths are also an open space and recreation amenity, especially if they are dedicated, off-street paths or integrated into a greenway or linear park. The Dedham *Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2004-2009* identifies specific trail locations that have potential for bicycle (and pedestrian) accommodations.[20] These include land along Mother Brook, the Charles River, Wigwam Pond, and the Providence Highway corridor. Additionally, easements across private property could link land within the Town Forest, Neponset River Reservation, and Cutler Park to provide access to some of the town's ponds. If the town were successful in creating such linkages, bicycle trails could be constructed that would connect playgrounds, commercial areas, residential neighborhoods, train stations, and the town center.

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

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

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

Roadways

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

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

- Washington Street at Gay Street in Norwood
- Needham Street at Bridge Street/Riverside Drive
- Needham Street at Vine Rock Street
- Pine Street at Ames Street/Bridge Street
- Walnut Street at Milton Street
- Route 128 at Route 135 interchange
- Washington Street at Court Street (sight distance issue)
- Bridge Street (Route 109) south of Charles River Crossing
- Railroad Underpass on East Street near Endicott Rotary
- Memorial Field and soccer fields at East Street[21]

The 1996 *Master Plan* identified the possibility of constructing a flyover between the East Street rotary on 128 across the commuter rail tracks to Enterprise Drive.[22] Such a connection would theoretically reduce trips on Providence Highway and ease potential development impacts by opening up access to this area to help protect the Rustcraft Road neighborhood. Legacy Place is under construction adjacent to this area and uses Enterprise Drive as its primary access from Providence Highway.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

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

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

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

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

[22] Ibid.

[23] Master Plan Public Working Meeting, 17 November 2007.

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

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

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

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

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

SCENIC ROADS

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

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

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

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

- Dedham Boulevard (informally because it is owned by the DCR)
- Washington Street/Court Street
- Walnut Street
- Oakdale Avenue/Cedar Street
- East Street
- Sprague Street[24]

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

Dedham Square

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

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

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

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

Parking

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

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

Public Transportation

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

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

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

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

Transit-Oriented Development

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CONSIDER CREATING A TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE THE TOWN'S DIVERSE TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES AND ADVOCATE FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[27] Master Plan Public Working Meeting, 17 November 2007.

to assist with funding the study as a demonstration project.

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

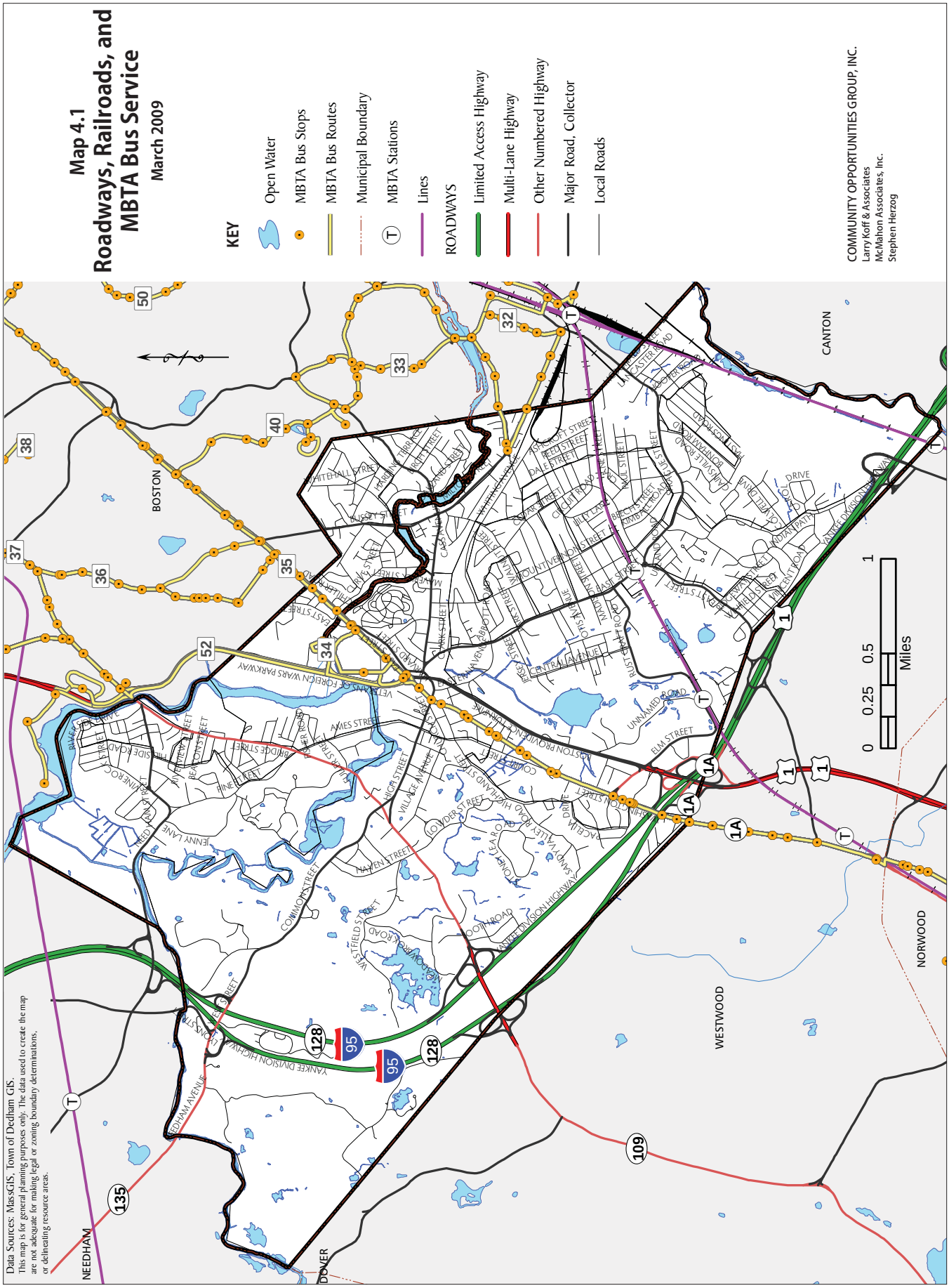
The Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study, through a series of recommendations, proposes a framework for the integration of proposed developments and ensures the continued growth in the Square. Because Dedham Square is a pedestrian-oriented environment but also one that must process and accommodate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

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

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

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

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


Map 4.1
Roadways, Railroads, and MBTA Bus Service
March 2009
KEY
Open Water
MBTA Bus Stops
MBTA Bus Routes
Municipal Boundary
MBTA Stations
Lines
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
DOVER
WESTWOOD
NORWOOD
CANTON
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS PARKWAY
VANKEE DIVISION HIGHWAY
NEEDHAM AVENUE
AMES STREET
BRIDGE STREET
PINE STREET
JENNY LANE
COMMONS STREET
NAYEN STREET
LOWDER STREET
VILLAGE AVENUE
WESTFIELD STREET
ELM STREET
UNNAMED ROAD
BOSTON PROVIDENCE TURNPIKE
LANCASTER ROAD
ROCKWELL DRIVE
ANGELL DIVISION HIGHWAY
95
128
135
109
1
1A
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
40
50
52

CHAPTER 5

CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

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

Norfolk County Jail Complex, 47 Village Avenue.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Neighborhoods

Historically, Dedham developed as a series of distinct neighborhoods as former farmlands were systematically subdivided for house lots. Many of the neighborhoods are defined not only by natural features and man-made boundaries, but also by their unique development patterns and the architectural styles of their buildings. Dedham's seven identifiable neighborhoods include **East Dedham**, **Greenlodge**, **Sprague** (Capen-Manor), **Oakdale**, **Riverdale**, the **Village**, and **Dexter** (often referred to as Upper Dedham or West Dedham).[1] Neighborhoods are not static; they continue to evolve and change. Today, Dedham's neighborhoods present particular challenges for historic resource protection, and they may require individualized preservation strategies in order to protect their special historic features. What works in one neighborhood may not be appropriate for another.

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

[1] Kenneth M. Kreutziger, *Dedham Master Plan* (March 1996), IV-4. Neighborhoods identified in the *Dedham Master Plan* and the 2004-2009 *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, largely corresponding with physical features and the boundaries of federal census block groups. See Chapter 2, Map 2.1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Historic Buildings

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

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

Dedham residents have long recognized the importance of preserving historic buildings. The town was one of the first in the area to establish local historic districts under M.G.L. c. 40C, for in 1975, Dedham designated two districts within Dedham Village. In addition, Dedham recently designated a large section of Dedham Village to the National Register of Historic Places. The Dedham Historical Society's publication, *Building Dedham: Celebrating 350 Years of History*, provides a comprehensive overview of Dedham's historic buildings, including an historic narrative on Dedham's development, a composite of architectural styles and building types represented in the town and photographs and descriptions of notable individual buildings.[3]

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

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

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

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

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

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

The Endicott Estate.

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

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

- The **Endicott Estate** (1904) was designed by Boston architect Henry Bailey Alden. Built for shoe manufacturer Henry Bradford Endicott, a founder of Endicott-Johnson Shoe Corporation in New York, this elegant two-and-one-half story Colonial Revival style residence is articulated with corner pilasters, an elaborate cornice, a Palladian window, prominent corbelled chimneys and a Doric columned porte-cochere representative of high-style Colonial Revival detailing. In 1955, the Endicott Estate was donated to the town and it is now used for community functions.

- The **Endicott House** (1931) on Westfield and Haven Streets was originally the estate of Brigadier General Stephen Minot Weld, who built an imposing mansion on twenty-five acres of rocky hilltop in the late nineteenth century. J. Wendell Endicott purchased the estate in 1931 and maintained the gardens and grounds but razed the Weld mansion, replacing it with a French manor style mansion designed by prominent New York architect Charles Platt. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) acquired the property in 1955 and maintains the estate for alumni functions.[4]

- The **Albert Nickerson House** or "The Castle" (1888) at 507 Bridge Street is a large Romanesque style structure designed by the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge for the president of the Arlington Woolen Mills and director of the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. It is the only residential example

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

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

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

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

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

Only the Haven House is protected from unsympathetic exterior alterations through its inclusion in the Franklin Square-Court Street Local Historic District. The other buildings have no such protection. While public sentiment alone may be enough to protect them, there are no restrictions in place to require these architecturally significant buildings to be preserved, both in terms of their exterior details as well as their significant interiors.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

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

CIVIC BUILDINGS

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

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

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

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

required to place a preservation restriction on the building.

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

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

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

Dedham also owns the historic **Endicott Estate**, which it acquired in 1955 when the original owner's daughter bequeathed the estate to the town. The town assumed ownership upon her death in 1967. The estate encompasses an entire block within the Endicott neighborhood, and serves both as a neighborhood landmark and a large expanse of open space within an otherwise developed suburban area. The Endicott Estate is used for public and private functions and meeting space for town boards and local organizations, and the grounds are available for passive recreation. The Endicott Estate Commission, which oversees the property, has prepared a master plan for it and is currently completing infrastructure improvements in order to facilitate continued public use, particularly for large gatherings. The work includes installation of a paved parking area at the rear of the estate house. The site retains large mature trees and expansive lawn areas. It is important that improvements to the property do not detract from its historic significance or detract from the remaining open space.

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

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

Norfolk County Courthouse.

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

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

[7] Dedham Historical Society, Newsletter (July 1998).

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

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

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

[8] *Building Dedham*, 68

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

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

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

CHURCHES

Dedham's religious structures represent the various architectural styles associated with ecclesiastical design over the past several centuries. Traditional wood meetinghouse style churches, grand stone Gothic Revival churches, and modest Revival style neighborhood churches are all represented in Dedham. As with other historic resources in Dedham, many of the churches have not been documented within the town's cultural resource inventory.

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

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

MUSEUMS

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

[9] *Dedham Master Plan*, IV-11.

The Dedham Historical Society operates the **Dedham Museum and Archives** (1888), a brick Romanesque Revival building designed by architect Edwin J. Lewis with distinctive arches, church-like buttresses, a large Palladian window and slate roof. The Museum contains a lecture/display hall on the first floor and an extensive archive on the basement level. The Archive includes genealogical records, town records, maps, photographs, glass plate negatives, family histories, maps and other local ephemera. The Museum houses a collection of furnishings and artifacts ranging from pre-Columbian stone tools and the 1652 Metcalf great chair (the oldest dated American-made chair) to an extensive collection of Dedham and Chelsea pottery. The museum also includes rotating exhibits, decorative arts associated with Dedham, including a silver collection by local Arts and Crafts silversmith Katherine Pratt, furniture, and works by local artists such as Alvin Fisher and Lillian and Phillip Hale.

Church of the Good Shepherd, Cedar Street.

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

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

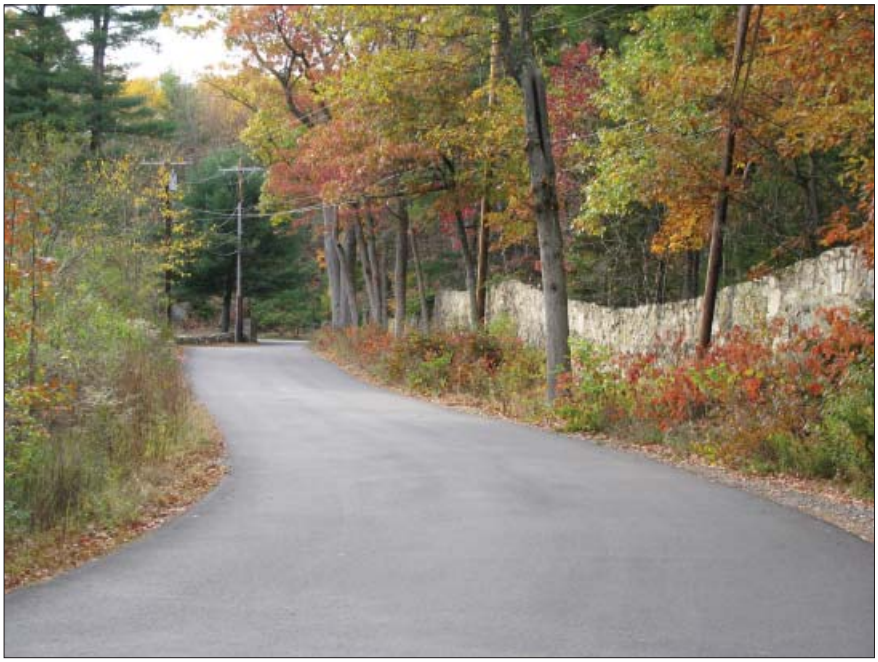
Scenic Landscapes

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Scenic Roadways

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

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

Stone Walls

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

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

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

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

Historic Structures

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

Historic Objects

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

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

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

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

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

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

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

Village Cemetery/Old Town Burial Ground.

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

Archaeological Resources

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

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

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS[16]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Preservation Planning in Dedham

LOCAL PRESERVATION CAPACITY

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

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

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

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

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

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

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

TABLE 5.1
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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

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

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

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

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

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT AND INDIVIDUAL LISTINGS

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been deemed significant in America history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Dedham has one large National Register District (Map 5.1), five additional properties that are identified individually in the State Register of Historic Places, and four properties that are individually listed in the National Register, as shown in Table 5.1.[19]

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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

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

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

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

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

PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS

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

- **Allin Congregational Church** (restriction enacted on November 5, 2001)
- **Dedham Historical Society** (restriction enacted February 8, 2002)
- **Dedham Public Library** (restriction enacted March 21, 2002)
- **Fairbanks House** (restriction enacted April 6, 1998 – expires on November 17, 2015)
- **First Church Meetinghouse** (restriction enacted May 4, 1998)
- **Saint Paul's Episcopal Church** (restriction enacted August 20, 1997)
- **18 Norfolk Street** (restriction enacted January 26, 1999)[20]

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Although Dedham residents seem to value the town's historic resources, they have been reluctant to approve legislation to protect these resources or offer economic incentives for rehabilitation. In 1975, Town Meeting approved one of the strongest forms of preservation legislation, a local historic district bylaw. Since then, however, Dedham has not acted on proposals to adopt a scenic roads bylaw or the Community Preservation Act, even though these were recommendations of past planning studies. Outside of Dedham's local historic districts, preservation of historic resources has been accomplished mainly on a voluntary basis. Some of the town's most historically significant and iconic buildings could be significantly altered or even demolished by private action, without any public involvement.

SCENIC ROADS

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

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

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

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

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

DEDHAM HDC

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

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

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

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

PRESERVATION TOOLS

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

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

- A **Demolition Delay Bylaw** provides communities with the opportunity to work with a property owner who plans to demolish an historic building. During the imposed delay period,

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

Dedham Village streetscape.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulatory Protection for Historic Resources

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

1. ADOPT A SCENIC ROADS BYLAW.

Despite previous recommendations and a proposal presented at town meeting in 2004, Dedham has yet to adopt a Scenic Roads Bylaw. The town identified a list of proposed scenic roads in its 1996 *Master Plan* and again in its *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*. Working with this list, Dedham should document each road's character-defining attributes in order to develop a bylaw that is specifically tailored to conditions in Dedham. Dedham will also need to define the types of road projects that will be reviewed under the scenic roads bylaw.

2. ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.

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

3. ADOPT A DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW.

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

4. ADOPT THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT.

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

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

Dedham has the opportunity to be a leader in preservation by serving as a model for preservation planning and building practices. The town does not currently integrate preservation objectives into its own public building projects. Town-owned resources such as the Powder House, the Endicott Estate, and the Village Cemetery are just a few examples of Dedham's historic properties. While the town has been a good steward of its historic properties, it has not instituted procedures to *require* historically appropriate preservation. Dedham should adopt a bylaw or establish an administrative rule requiring boards, commissions, and departments to seek HDC review as part of the project planning process and prior to issuance of any building permits or certificates of zoning compliance.

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

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

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

7. IMPLEMENT PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS.

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

Public Awareness and Education

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

8. COMPLETE A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY.

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

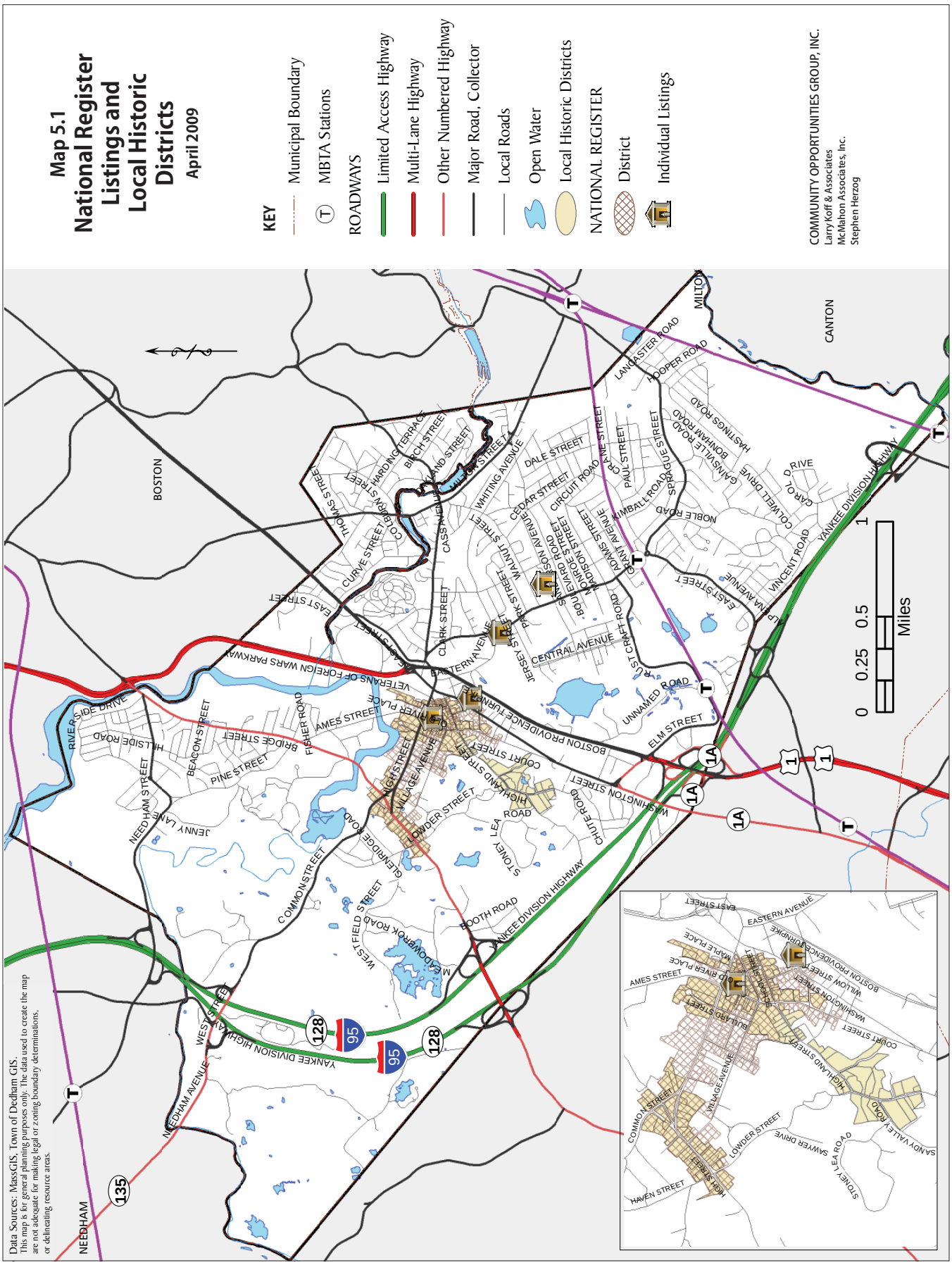
While historic resource inventories can be completed by volunteers, most communities find that this type of survey requires professional assistance. Therefore, Dedham should appropriate local funding to complete the inventory and seek a Survey and Planning grant through the Massachusetts Historical Commission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

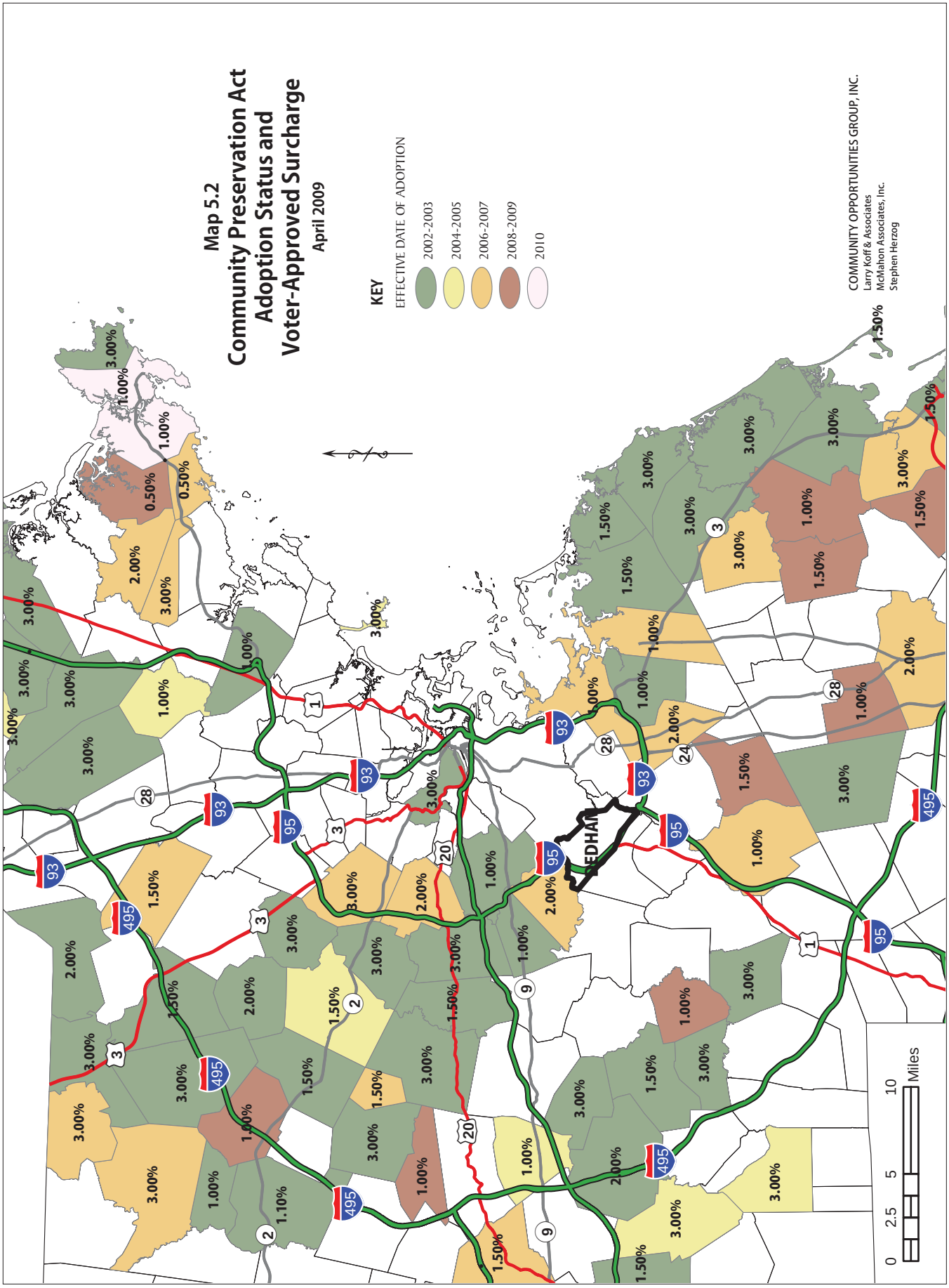
9. SEEK CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATUS FOR THE DEDHAM HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION.

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

10. SEEK SUPPORT FOR A REGIONAL PRESERVATION PLANNER.

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

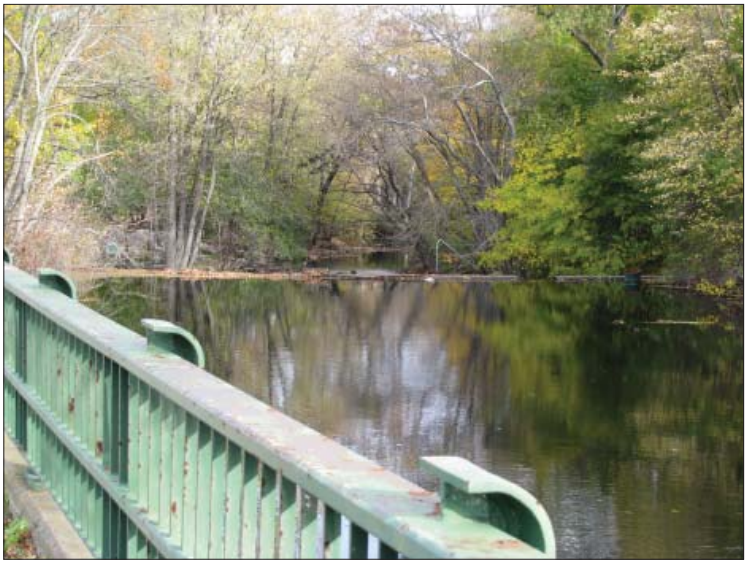

Map 5.1
National Register Listings and Local Historic Districts
April 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
MBTA Stations
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Open Water
Local Historic Districts
NATIONAL REGISTER
District
Individual Listings
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles
BOSTON
MILTON
CANTON
NEEDHAM
YANKEE DIVISION HIGHWAY
BOSTON PROVIDENCE TURNPIKE
EASTERN AVENUE
EAST STREET
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS PARKWAY
AMES STREET
MAPLE PLACE
BOULARD STREET
WASHINGTON STREET
WILLOW STREET
COURT STREET
HIGHLAND STREET
VILLAGE AVENUE
COMMON STREET
LOWDER STREET
SAWYER DRIVE
LEA ROAD
SANDY VALLEY ROAD
STONEY LEA ROAD
HIGH STREET
HAVEN STREET
NEEDHAM AVENUE
WEST STREET
BOOTH ROAD
GLENRIDGE ROAD
WESTFIELD STREET
MEADOWBROOK ROAD
JENNY LANE
NEEDHAM STREET
HILLSIDE ROAD
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
BEACON STREET
BRIDGE STREET
PINE STREET
FISHER ROAD
THOMAS STREET
HARDING TERRACE
BIRCH STREET
CURVE STREET
COLBURN STREET
CASS AVENUE
WILLOW STREET
WHITING AVENUE
DALE STREET
CEDAR STREET
CIRCUIT ROAD
WALNUT STREET
JEFFERSON AVENUE
BOULEVARD STREET
MADISON STREET
PARK STREET
JERSEY STREET
CENTRAL AVENUE
CLARK STREET
ADAMS STREET
GRAND AVENUE
PAUL STREET
SPRAGUE STREET
KIMBALL ROAD
NOBLE ROAD
GRANT AVENUE
ST CRAFT ROAD
UNNAMED ROAD
ELM STREET
CHUTE ROAD
LEA ROAD
STONEY
LANCASTER ROAD
HOOPER ROAD
HASTINGS ROAD
GAINSVILLE ROAD
BONHAM ROAD
COLWELL DRIVE
CARROL DRIVE
VINCENT ROAD
ELM AVENUE
EAST STREET
YANKEE DIVISION HIGHWAY
135
128
95
1
1A
T


Map 5.2
Community Preservation Act
Adoption Status and
Voter-Approved Surcharge
April 2009
KEY
EFFECTIVE DATE OF ADOPTION
2002-2003
2004-2005
2006-2007
2008-2009
2010
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
DEDHAM
0 2.5 5 10 Miles

CHAPTER 6

NATURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION



Mother Brook, East Dedham. Photo by Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

This chapter addresses some of Dedham's most important assets: the landscape, soils, woodlands, wildlife, rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, and groundwater. It provides an inventory of Dedham's natural resources, a discussion of their inherent significance, their stated importance to the community, threats and hazards to these resources, and possibilities for their protection and management. The term "natural resources" describes the features of the land that are perceived to be of value to society. These features include the land shape, geology, and soils, the surface water and groundwater, wildlife, including plants, animals, and rare species, and less obvious resources such as clean air, quiet, and the appearance or view of the land. Two other resources that are potentially beneficial components of the land are solar and wind energy.

Natural resources do not limit themselves to municipal boundaries. Dedham's resources are linked with those of the surrounding towns and the greater region, and vice versa. Rivers, streams, and groundwater flow across town boundaries, and the air, wildlife, and distant views do not notice town lines. All natural resources coexist on some scale, and all are affected by how people use the land, regardless of political boundaries.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Geology and Topography

BEDROCK GEOLOGY

The bedrock beneath Dedham was formed during tectonic plate collisions related to the forming of the Atlantic Ocean some 600 million years ago. The bedrock formations in Dedham are principally igneous (Dedham Granodiorite, Westwood Granite, and Mattapan Volcanic Complex), with small areas of the sedimentary Roxbury Conglomerate (Map 6.1).[1] This bedrock played a key role in Dedham's economy during the 1800s when several granite quarries were active in town. Stone from these quarries was used in the construction of prominent Boston area buildings, including St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Memorial Hall, St. Mary's Church, the Boston Public Library, and Trinity Church in Boston.

SURFICIAL GEOLOGY

The last ice age ended approximately 10,000 years ago in Massachusetts and left distinctive patterns across the landscape. As the ice advanced and retreated, it scoured the ground surface, carved into bedrock, collected eroded debris, and deposited it

[1] Zen, E-an, ed. 1983. *Bedrock Geologic Map of Massachusetts*. Compiled by R. Goldsmith, N. M. Ratcliffe, P. Robinson, and R. S. Stanley, Reston, VA: U.S. Geological Survey; Scale 1:250,000.

elsewhere. The glacier flowed slowly south across all of New England, scraping and carrying soil and rock, smoothing hilltops, and gouging valleys. As the glacier rode over the surface, a compacted material called **glacial till** was left beneath it. This is a mixture of broken rock of various sizes, from boulders to silt, and is one of the two principal surficial deposits found in Dedham (Map 6.2) and the surrounding area. While glacial till serves as a stable base for building, it transmits water slowly making it poorly suited for groundwater supply or sewage disposal. A specific group of soil types have developed on glacial till. They are generally dense and stony, like the till, making it difficult for farming and yielding up the rocks colonial farmers used to build the stone walls that can still be seen in Dedham and throughout New England.

As the glacier receded, turbid meltwater filled with debris poured off the glacier ultimately forming rivers, lakes, dams, and deltas. This meltwater deposited sediment in valleys and depressions, generally in well-sorted (consistent grain sizes) layers called **stratified drift** or **glacial outwash**. This is the second principal surficial geologic deposit. These surficial material types correspond fairly well with the topography – till covers most of Dedham, particularly the upland sections, while sands and gravels fill the valley sections. By contrast, the well-sorted sediments in the lowlands are relatively loose and porous, and thus hold and transmit groundwater easily. Soils that developed on outwash deposits also have specific characteristics: they are generally level, free of large stones, sometimes good for farming, sometimes too sandy and fast-draining. The outwash deposits form productive aquifers and provide effective storage for seasonal hydrologic cycling and floodwaters. Some outwash deposits may be many tens of feet deep where they were deposited in valleys or deltas.

In Dedham and the surrounding area, glacial erosion modified the existing bedrock hills and valleys. The pattern of ice movement, generally northwest to southeast, is manifested by glacial striations on bedrock and the orientation of **drumlins** (formed by glacial erosion over and around relatively resistant bedrock cores). A drumlin's typical long orientation parallels the direction of ice movement. Dedham's deglaciation followed the typical New England stagnation zone retreat: glacial lakes formed behind stagnant sections of ice. The resultant stratified glacial drift deposits are common throughout Dedham. As postglacial drainage progressed, **alluvium** was deposited along the rivers and streams. Windblown sediments from glacial drift were also deposited in some areas. Many smaller glacial lakes and ponds were gradually filled by sediment resulting in the town's wetlands and bogs, including the areas around Wigwam Pond and Little Wigwam Pond.

TOPOGRAPHY

The region's topography manifests the glacial scouring of the relatively recent past onto the remnants of tectonic activity of the distant past, all modified by the ceaseless action of water. Dedham's landscape is one of very gentle hills, streams, and native forest trees interspersed by roads and structures of the human landscape. The major rivers that pass through town, the Charles and the Neponset, meander across wide flood plains. The erosion, weathering, and accumulation of organic materials on the land since the glacier receded have also created a diversity of soil types that blanket the land. The topography, or land shape, formed by millions of years of geologic history that is still evolving, provides the beauty of Dedham's rolling hills and places some constraints on the use of the land.

Dedham's proximity to the coast means it is part of the Seaboard Lowland physiographic region. Two physiographic subregions characterize the immediate area around Boston: the Coastal Hills and the Boston Basin. Dedham lies in the **Coastal Hills** subregion, which consists of gently rolling, low relief hills with subtle breaks between major landforms. In areas of shallow soils and surficial deposits, where rock outcrops are numerous, the irregular bedrock forms determine the shapes of the low valleys. In deeper soil areas, however, glacial deposits determine the shape of landforms.

The topography in Dedham and the Seaboard Lowland varies on several scales. A view of the surficial relief of this area of Massachusetts reveals higher-relief patches separated by low-relief, gla-

cial outwash-filled valley plains. The high-relief areas are filled with bedrock outcrops and rocky hilltops or smoother glacial drumlins. Level land not covered with water is uncommon.

Dedham lies at approximately 150 feet above mean sea level (MSL) on average. The highest point in town, Wilson Mountain, is close to 300 feet above MSL, while the Neponset River as it leaves town, is less than 100 feet above MSL. The town center lies at an elevation of approximately 110 feet above MSL. This fairly narrow range of elevations is typical of the seaboard lowland, where rivers draining the uplands to the north and west have smoothed over the landscape.

The historic town center of Dedham lies within a broad north-south flat glacial valley between the Wilson Mountain reservation to the west and the Stony Brook reservation and the rolling neighborhoods of Oakdale and Ashcroft to the east. The meandering floodplain of the Charles River occupies the northern part of this valley. Wigwam Pond, Little Wigwam Pond, and their associated vegetated wetlands occupy the southern part. The gentle hills surrounding the town center consist of land shapes and soils well-suited to farming. The floodplain of the Neponset River, which lies south of the relatively higher terrain in the Greenlodge neighborhood, is drained by Greenlodge Brook.

The Wilson Mountain reservation area is the highest terrain in Dedham and has the greatest topographic relief. As a result, this area of Dedham was not permanently settled, although portions of the reservation were historically cleared for farming. The reservation offers panoramic views of Boston, the Blue Hills, and surrounding areas and is the largest preserved open space within Dedham. The Massachusetts DCR acquired the 213-acre reservation in 1995. Much of the other remaining undeveloped land in Dedham consists of topographically low areas, principally wetlands.

SOILS

Soil is a fundamental environmental resource; most other natural resources are in some way related to the soil. It is also a dynamic resource that is linked closely with hydrology, supports plant life, controls biogeochemical cycles, influences plant and animal habitat, and supports human habitation. The soils of Dedham, like the topography, are a slowly evolving feature of the landscape. The unconsolidated rock materials overlying the ancient bedrock from the last glacier receded from the building materials of the soil. Drainage patterns evolved on the landscape left by the glacier and the soils developed slowly as the vegetation built up organic matter in the soil's shallow reaches.

Soils are fragile resources vulnerable to extreme events such as flooding and to human impacts. Soils can be easily damaged by erosion, disturbance, or covering over, thereby reducing their value for the natural environment and for human use. It is extremely difficult and costly to attempt to restore the values or uses of disturbed soils. And most importantly, soil development takes time. New England's soils are considered young soils because they formed only within the last 8,000 to 10,000 years, since the glacier retreated.

Soils have identifiable properties that allow their description and classification. Soils with broadly similar properties and profiles comprise a soil series; all the soils of one series have comparable major horizons, composition and thickness because they developed from similar parent materials in a similar environment. Soil map units are typically comprised of one or more components and consist of the soil series name modified by such factors as texture, slope, and stoniness (e.g. Woodbridge fine sandy loam, three to eight percent slopes, extremely stony). Soil map units are useful in determining the principal characteristics of the soil in a particular area and the suitability of the soil for specific uses. Detailed maps, reports, and information on soils and potential for certain site-specific decisions and uses are available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) website at http://soils.usda.gov/.

The most common soil units in Dedham are the Hollis-Rock Outcrop-Charlton Complex (about 16 percent), the Merrimac-Urban Land Complex (11.8 percent), the Saco Silt Loam (9.5 percent), and the

Merrimac Fine Sandy Loam (6.5 percent).[2] Urban land comprises about 4.3 percent, and soil-urban land complexes also make up a significant fraction of the land. These and other soil units representing more than three percent of the soil area in Dedham are shown in Table 6.1. About three percent of Dedham's surface area is water.

Large areas of the town have been disturbed for development, some to the extent that the original soil type is no longer recognizable. These areas are now mapped as Urban Land. Other units contain the modifier Urban Land Complex. Site-specific soil evaluation is necessary for many uses, including stormwater management.

PRIME FARMLAND

Dedham's historic origins include agriculture, as was the case with all settled land in the Commonwealth in the 1600s. While no considerable agricultural activity has occurred in town since the early 1900s, some of the land area remains suited to agricultural pursuits and indeed may still be used for family vegetable gardens. Soils particularly well-suited to agriculture are defined by the NRCS as Prime Farmland

A total of 644 acres, or about nine percent of the soil units in Dedham, are classified as Prime Farmland soils.[3] However, urban or built-up areas are not considered Prime Farmland, so a much smaller fraction of the town's soil units are actually Prime Farmland. The Prime Farmland soil units in Dedham are: Merrimac fine sandy loam (0-3 percent slopes and 3-8 percent slopes), Sudbury fine sandy loam (2-8 percent slopes), Woodbridge fine sandy loam (3-8 percent slopes), Scituate fine sandy loam (3-8 percent slopes), and Canton fine sandy loam (3-8 percent slopes). Most of the soil units classified as Prime Farmland are located in the center and northern parts of town since most of the town's center has been developed.

[2] U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services, *Custom Soil Resource Report for Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, Massachusetts*, November 2007.

[3] Farmland Classification–Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, Massachusetts at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>, [accessed 10 November 2007].

What is Prime Farmland?

Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It must also be available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management.

In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.

USDA Soil Conservation Service

Water Resources

WATERSHEDS

The present land surface of Dedham has been formed in part by the action of water, including the present-day hydrologic cycle. **Watersheds**, also known as drainage basins, are divisions of the land surface into sections from which water drains to a common point or water body. Watersheds are somewhat analogous to a sink or bathtub, in which all the water flows toward the drain. The line dividing any two drainage basins is a topographic divide, or relatively higher area. In Dedham, all rain, snowmelt and streams eventually drain into either the Charles River or the Neponset River or percolate into the ground, in which case the water may also reach one of these rivers, but after a much longer period of time.

The term 'watershed' describes both the divide between two areas and the area itself, also known as a drainage basin or catchment area. Watersheds can be divided into subwatersheds and into progressively smaller subwatersheds or basins. Water-

TABLE 6.1
DOMINANT SOIL MAP UNITS IN DEDHAM

Map Unit Name	Acres, Percent	Soil Depth	Topographic Setting	Parent Material and Environment of Formation
Hollis-Rock outcrop-Charlton complex	1090.3 ac 16.08 %	10"-20" to bedrock	Hills and hillslopes	Shallow, friable loamy ablation till derived from igneous and metamorphic rock
Merrimac-Urban land complex	799.5 ac 11.79 %	18"-30" to contrasting soil	Plains, hill shoulders	Friable coarse-loamy eolian deposits over loose sandy glaciofluvial deposits
Saco silt loam	644.7 ac 9.51 %	40"-80" to contrasting soil	Toe of slopes	Soft coarse-silty alluvium
Merrimac fine sandy loam	439.6 ac 6.48 %	18"-30"to contrasting soil	Slopes, plains	Friable coarse-loamy eolian deposits over loose sandy glaciofluvial deposits
Charlton-Hollis-Rock outcrop complex	419.4 ac 6.19 %	> 80"	Hills	Friable coarse-loamy ablation till derived from granite
Hinckley loamy sand	306.7 ac 4.52 %	> 80"	Hillslopes, kames	Loose sandy and gravelly glaciofluvial deposits
Urban land	291.5 ac 4.30 %	variable	Unspecified	Excavated and/or filled land
Charlton-Hollis-Urban land complex	286.3 ac 4.22 %	> 80"	Hills	Friable coarse-loamy ablation till derived from granite; disturbed
Canton-Urban land complex	267.1 ac 3.94 %	18"-36" to contrasting soil	Slopes, hills	Friable coarse-loamy eolian deposits over loose sandy and gravelly ablation till; disturbed
Woodbridge-Urban land complex	245.1 ac 3.61 %	18"-40" to dense material	Drumlins, slopes	Friable coarse-loamy eolian deposits over dense coarse-loamy lodgment till from granite, gneiss
Udorthents, wet substratum	234.3 ac 3.46 %	> 80"	Footslopes	Sandy and gravelly human transported material over highly-decomposed organic material
Urban land, wet substratum	220.6 ac 3.26 %	variable	Unspecified	Excavated and filled land over organic material and/or alluvium and/or marine deposits
Freetown muck	220.5 ac 3.25 %	> 80"	Bogs, toe slopes	Highly-decomposed herbaceous organic material
Water	211.3 ac 3.12 %	variable	Topographic lows	Water

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services, Custom Soil Resource Report for Norfolk and Suffolk Counties MA, 2007.

sheds provide a useful perspective on the land because they manifest not only the topography and drainage patterns, but also to a large degree, variations in soils, natural vegetation cover, and even wildlife habitat patterns.

The U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Division (USGS) divides Massachusetts into 32 watersheds according to the state's major rivers.[4] Parts of Dedham are located within the watersheds of the **Charles River** and the **Neponset River**, both of which drain to Boston Harbor (Map 6.3). The Massachusetts Watershed Resources Commission (WRC) describes Dedham as within the Boston Harbor watershed.[5]

The land surface of all or part of forty-five municipalities drains into Boston Harbor. The Charles River Watershed drains an area of 308 square miles from its headwaters in Hopkinton east to Boston Harbor and includes thirty-five municipalities. The Neponset River Watershed to the south covers roughly 130 square miles as it leads to Boston Harbor, including parts of fourteen municipalities. Conservation organizations are associated with both the Charles River and Neponset River Watersheds. Watersheds are an excellent example of the interrelatedness of natural resources. Events and decisions elsewhere in the Charles and Neponset River watersheds upstream of Dedham affect the water resources of Dedham. Likewise, Dedham's actions affect the communities downstream.

The state's major drainage basins can be further described as connected sub-basins. Dedham includes parts of eight sub-basins. These have not been given geographic names by the USGS or the Massachusetts WRC, but correspond with significant hydrologic features such as Motley Pond and Mother Brook. Four sub-basins located wholly or partly within Dedham feed the Charles River watershed, while another four that are partly within Dedham lead to the Neponset River Watershed. Most of the town's land area lies within the Charles River watershed.

SURFACE WATER

Surface water in glaciated New England follows the general irregular pattern of the topography. Major streams are fed by smaller ones and isolated ponds and wetlands are numerous. This is the case in Dedham and environs, where two major rivers and several minor streams drain the area. The Charles River and the Neponset River meander slowly through broad valleys and empty directly into Boston Harbor and Dorchester Bay to the northeast (Map 6.3).

The presence in Dedham of these two major Massachusetts rivers is a unique feature of the town and they are well-appreciated community assets. Several residents expressed a desire to restore boat and canoe access to the Charles River during a public meeting for this Master Plann on 15 November 2007. These rivers have played a key role in Dedham's history, serving as both a transportation resource as well as a power source for local mills. During the seventeenth century, a canal was built to take advantage of their proximity and difference in water level in order to power the mills. Today, their principal value for the community is as a recreational resource, in addition to their intrinsic value for such things as stormwater and flood control and plant and wildlife habitat.

Charles River. The Charles River is perhaps the most noteworthy river in eastern Massachusetts due to its size, its place in the landscape and history of the region, as well as its prominent passage between the cities of Boston and Cambridge. The Charles River is fringed with protected green space as it winds from its headwaters in Hopkinton through suburbs, cities, roads, and highways on its way to Boston Harbor. Large stretches of the Charles are owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and managed by the DCR. The Charles is fortunate to be guarded by one of the first and most active watershed protection organizations in the nation, the Charles River Watershed Asso-

[4] U.S. Geological Survey, Massachusetts-Rhode Island Water Science Center at <http://ma.water.usgs.gov/basins>, [accessed November 2007].

[5] Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Water Resources Commission at <http://www.mass.gov/envir/water>; <http://www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/default.htm>.

ciation (CRWA). The river is approximately eighty miles in total length, with a vertical fall of approximately 350 feet.

In Dedham, the Charles River is a dominant feature in the northern third of town, bordered by floodplain wetlands and protected open space. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the native Americans used the river as an east-west transportation route. The settlers likewise used it for travel, and then in the industrial revolution, to power factory mills. The industrialization of the Charles, as with many other major rivers in the state, decreased the natural flow characteristics, introduced pollutants, and disrupted fish habitat.

Beginning with the nation's increasing environmental awareness in the 1960s, water quality in the Charles has greatly improved. The river is still threatened by existing and future development, particularly through groundwater withdrawals in the greater watershed area. The Charles River in Dedham meanders through a portion of Cutler Park, extends south toward the center of town, then winds north again toward Boston. Residents expressed agreement at the November 2007 public meeting (and at earlier times) the desire to construct canoe/kayak access points on the Charles River in Dedham. Such access points exist upriver, including landings in Needham, and in Boston and Cambridge, but Dedham's residents would enjoy closer access such as within Cutler Park or near Mother Brook. Creation of canoe access would require construction of a launching point, parking, and perhaps appropriate signage.

Neponset River. The Neponset River, the other major river (and watershed) in Dedham, flows from headwaters in Foxborough through the southern part of Dedham on its way to Dorchester Bay, and forms the eastern boundary between Dedham and Canton. The entire length of the River in Dedham is located within the **Fowl Meadow and Ponkapoag Area of Critical Environmental Concern.** A majority of this land is owned by DCR and is protected open space.

Mother Brook. The former East Brook was a small stream when Dedham was first settled in 1635, connecting East Dedham to the Neponset River. The watershed divide between the Charles and Neponset River watersheds is at a very low elevation in this area. It is also very close to the Charles River, approximately paralleling a section of the present VFW Parkway. The people of Dedham realized that East Brook and the Neponset River were noticeably lower in elevation than the Charles River in East Dedham. In 1639, the town constructed a ditch approximately 4,000 feet long across the watershed divide, connecting the Charles with East Brook, creating what is now known as Mother Brook.

The vertical drop from the Charles to the end of the ditch connecting to the natural (former) East Brook was about forty feet, draining some of the Charles River's water into Mother Brook, enough to power a mill to grind corn for the town. Mother Brook is believed to be the first canal constructed in the colonies, and was used to provide water power for many other mills over the next 250 years. Today, Mother Brook is controlled by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and functions as a flood control system for the Charles River. After many years of neglect, the brook is witnessing a resurgence. The recently formed Mother Brook Community Group has sponsored cleanup activities along the banks of the brook and the town is planning to seek historic waterway designation for the brook as well as assistance from various environmental organizations such as the DCR, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Neponset River Watershed Association to determine the level of industrial contamination and pollution and the scope of possible remediation efforts.

Wigwam Pond and **Little Wigwam Pond** in the southern part of town are surrounded by town-owned land under the care and management of the Conservation Commission. **Weld Pond** is east of Route 128 near Wilson Mountain and is surrounded by land owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Dedham Land Trust, and private residential properties. **Wight Pond** is surrounded by privately owned land.

WETLANDS

Dedham is rich in the wetland resources known to be critical to human settlement and wildlife. Many wetland types, including forested swamps, marshes, bogs, and floodplain swamps are found along Dedham's rivers and in the lower elevations. Wetlands are critical for good water quality and they perform crucial functions such as flood storage, flood damage control, pollution filtration, and recharge of groundwater.

About three percent of Dedham's area is open water and about thirteen percent of the town's area is composed of wetlands.[6] Dedham has extensive and beautiful wetlands that are as valuable to the town as its major rivers, lakes, and ponds. The most common wetland types in Dedham are wooded swamps, where groundwater is shallow or the ground surface is seasonally inundated and shallow marshes where standing shallow water is present much of the year. Wooded swamps and marshes border the Charles River and approximately 400 acres of these wetlands are protected under ownership by the DCR. Cutler Park is a state reservation of 700 acres (400 acres are located within Dedham) and is the largest freshwater marsh on the Middle Charles River.[7] The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has permanently protected Cutler Reservation as part of the Charles River Natural Storage Area for floodwater control.

The Neponset River is bordered by the **Neponset River Reservation**, an **Area of Critical Environmental Concern**, totaling approximately 200 acres. Additional major wetland complexes border both Wigwam Pond and Little Wigwam Pond, and surround Wight Pond, Lowder Brook, and the northern corner of town, between Needham Street and the MBTA Needham Line. Hundreds of smaller wetlands of several types are found throughout Dedham. Although Dedham has many acres of wetlands today, a comparable area was most likely lost to development over the town's 400 year history, including alongside the former East Brook which is now Mother Brook.

Wetlands are very sensitive and valuable resources and the regulations that protect them comprise some of the strongest constraints on land development in Massachusetts. Wetland impacts are regulated by the Federal Clean Water Act, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA), the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act, and the Town of Dedham's General Wetland Protection Bylaw. The Clean Water Act requires a permit for the dredging or filling of any "waters of the United States" including most wetlands. The Massachusetts WPA prohibits impacts to wetlands, buffer zone, and riverfront area, and the town's bylaw adds additional regulation to the WPA jurisdiction.

The Massachusetts WPA prohibits the removal, dredging, filling, or alteration of any bank, freshwater wetland, coastal wetland, beach, dune, flat, marsh, or swamp bordering on the ocean, any estuary, creek, river, stream, pond, or lake, or land under any of the water bodies listed above, land subject to tidal action, land subject to coastal storm flowage, land subject to flooding, or riverfront area without first applying to the local Conservation Commission and the state DEP for a permit (Order of Conditions). The WPA jurisdiction includes a 100-foot "buffer zone" around any of these resource areas. Guidance on wetland locations can be obtained from maps available from MassGIS, but wetlands must be delineated in the field by a competent expert and verified by the Conservation Commission as part of the permitting process.

The Rivers Protection Act of 1996 created a 200-foot riverfront corridor on each side of any perennial river or stream, measured from the mean annual high water line of the river. The purpose of this act was to protect the natural integrity of the Commonwealth's rivers, and to encourage the preservation of open space along rivers. The riverfront area protects water quality, mitigates flooding, and supports natural plant and animal habitat. The Rivers Protection Act is a complement to the WPA and is

[6] Massachusetts Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "Wetlands Datalayer," at <http://www.mass.gov/mgis.htm>.

[7] Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks>.

administered under the same procedures through the Conservation Commission.

Dedham's Wetlands Bylaw adds further protection within the geographic jurisdictional limits of the Wetlands Protection Act with regard to certain resource areas such as buffer zones and vernal pools, and certain activities such as stormwater management and compensatory resource area creation. The Dedham Wetlands Bylaw requires a separate application for a permit from the town for work impacting wetlands.

Recognizing the impacts of stormwater runoff, Dedham has enacted several layers of stormwater management regulations. Dedham has a Stormwater Management Bylaw that regulates activities having an impact on the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff to protect against increased and untreated stormwater runoff, flooding, and to protect the Town's ponds, rivers, streams and groundwater.

VERNAL POOLS

Vernal pools are unique wetlands with special wildlife. A vernal pool is a contained basin depression lacking a permanent above-ground surface water outlet. In Massachusetts, a wetland is defined by the presence of breeding amphibians that require this special environment. In the Northeast, vernal pools fill with water with the rising water table of fall and winter or with the meltwater and runoff of winter and spring snow and rain. Many vernal pools in the Northeast are covered with ice in the winter months. They typically contain water for only a few months in the spring and early summer. By late summer, a vernal pool is generally (but not always) dry.

Vernal pools do not support breeding populations of fish since they do not contain water year-round. However, many other organisms, some of them rare, have evolved to use this type of temporary wetland during part of their life cycle because they (and their eggs) are not preyed upon by fish. Such organisms are called "obligate" vernal pool species because they require a vernal pool for certain parts of their life cycles. In Dedham and most of southern New England, the most common obligate vernal pool species are the mole-type salamanders and the wood frog.

Certified vernal pools are recorded with the **Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program** (NHESP) and receive protection under the Wetlands Protection Act. Vernal pool certification requires evidence that a vernal pool exists and contains the biological indicators which define it as a vernal pool. The WPA only protects vernal pool habitat that falls within the geographic jurisdiction of the Act. Certified vernal pools are also afforded protection under the Massachusetts Water Quality Certification regulations (401 Program), the Massachusetts Title 5 regulations, and the Forest Cutting Practices Act regulations. Vernal pool habitats occur in a wide variety of settings, including forested swamps, bogs, and other wetlands, as well as upland and wetland buffer zone. According to the *Dedham Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2004), two vernal pools have been certified in Dedham. Many more potential vernal pools have been mapped by the DEP and are shown on the MassGIS Potential Vernal Pool datalayer (Map 6.4). Most of these are located in the areas of Wilson Mountain Reservation, the Charles River floodplain, and the Neponset River Reservation. Several Eagle Scouts are working to certify additional vernal pools in Dedham.

FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are areas of land that have a statistically significant likelihood of being flooded. These areas are often found adjacent to major streams and rivers, and indeed floodplain swamps and marshes are common wetland types.

Floodplains are categorized according to the average frequency of flooding and are stated in percent or converted to yearly probability. A floodplain with a one percent chance of flooding each year is therefore likely to be flooded once every 100 years and is referred to as the 100-year floodplain. Similarly, the 500-year floodplain has a 0.2 percent chance of being flooded in any year.

Development in floodplains is regulated in order to protect the safety of people and their property and to minimize the potential deleterious effects of decreasing the volume of space available to store and carry floodwater. Decreasing the flood storage volume in one area of a watershed greatly increases the potential severity of flooding downstream. Development in floodplains is restricted under the WPA and the Town of Dedham Floodplain District. In addition, the Dedham Wetlands By-Law regulates any reduction of the flood storage capacity of a freshwater wetland, river, stream or creek, and any alteration of a river, stream or creek that results in any increase in the volume or velocity of water which may cause flooding or storm damage.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater provides the drinking water source for the Town of Dedham. A large portion of rainfall (and snowmelt) infiltrates the soil and slowly migrates downward to the saturated zone. The saturated zone, or **aquifer**, is the area between deep soil and bedrock that is so tight water cannot effectively penetrate and the soil area above where water percolates but does not fill all of the spaces between soil particles. Aquifers, like surficial geologic units, soil, and watersheds, have physical and geographic properties that constrain their suitability for human use. They are also intimately related to the soil and the hydrology of the overlying watershed.

Water enters the aquifer through rainfall and under some conditions by downward discharge of some of the surface water in streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds. Water leaves the aquifer by flowing into other aquifer areas or surface water bodies or through direct removal by pumping for human use. When more water enters the aquifer than is taken out, the water table rises; when more is taken out, it falls. Most aquifers can support a specific volume of pumping removal and maintain equilibrium with the volume of water entering them. Aquifers are classified by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Massachusetts DEP as low, medium, and high yield, according to the volume of water they can sustainably produce.

Productive drinking water aquifers in New England are most commonly found in areas of glacial outwash sands and gravels because these materials are relatively loose, porous, and transmissive to water flow. Dedham contains a wide band of sand and gravel that extends north to south that provides high and medium yield aquifers.

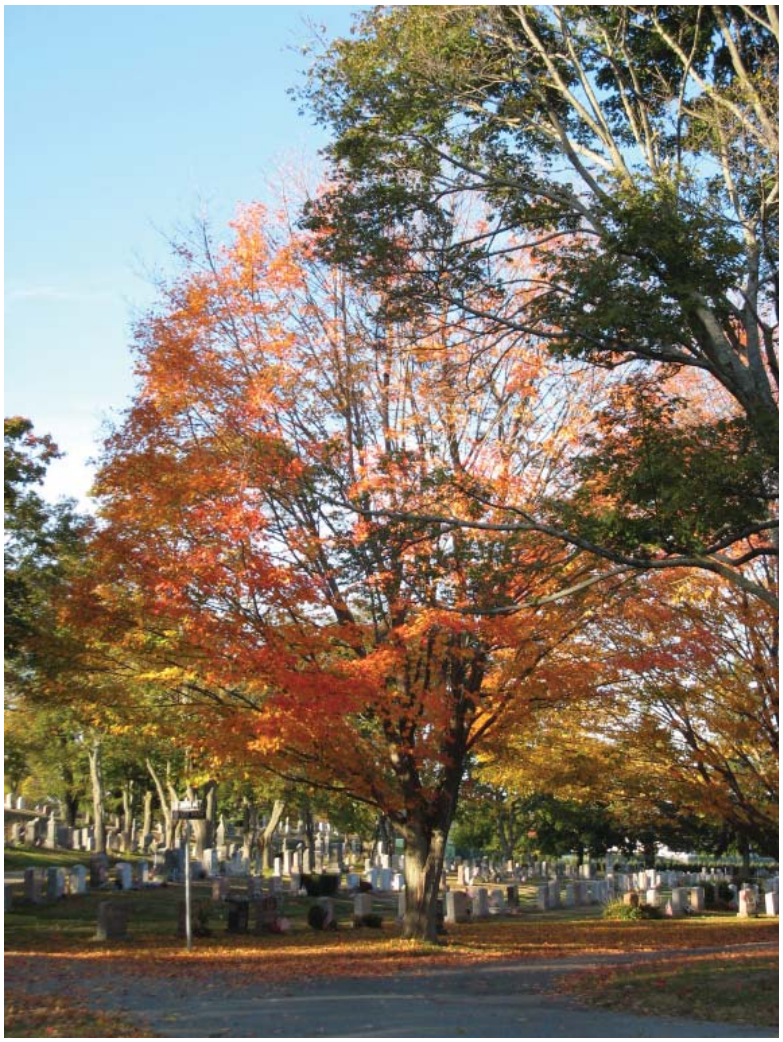
The **Dedham-Westwood Water District** operates drinking water supply wells in Dedham within wetland areas surrounding the Charles and Neponset Rivers (Map 6.3). The Dedham-Westwood Water District pumps an average of about 4.25 million gallons of water per day (gpd) from eleven wells, six of which are in Westwood, and five in Dedham. The newest well at Fowl Meadow in Dedham came on line in 1997.[8] The town's **Aquifer Protection District** bylaw prohibits certain activities in or near mapped districts (areas of Bridge Street and Fowl Meadow) to prevent the unregulated withdrawal of groundwater and the introduction of pollutants into the water supply. The Dedham-Westwood Water District regulates seasonal use of water and has developed a water conservation campaign to further encourage public conservation efforts. This information is available on its website.

Dedham has taken consideration of land use impacts on the quality and quantity of drinking water available to the town. However, the fact that an aquifer is physically located within the town's political boundaries does not guarantee that its water resources are and will continue to be available to the town. The water in an aquifer may be part of a watershed that extends into a neighboring town and may be pumped for drinking water there. Diversion of water from surface water bodies for industrial or other use may reduce the water entering the aquifer. Pollutants entering the groundwater in places distant from the wells may gradually make their way to the well fields. Therefore, an understanding of the watershed's hydrology is vital to protecting drinking water.

[8] Dedham-Westwood Water District at <http://www.dwwd.org/>.

Vegetation

Although Dedham is highly developed with homes, roads, and businesses, it still maintains a generally wooded appearance and is host to many of the same native plant species found in towns located further from Boston. Dedham's woodlands are part of the Oak-Hickory Forest belt that spreads across southern New England from Connecticut through Rhode Island, into southern and eastern Massachusetts, and up into southern New Hampshire. This forest, which has grown up on the land cleared for farming by the early settlers, is dominated by oaks and hickories along with other species including white pine, maples, and grey birch. The forest's understory contains juniper, sassafras, and many types of shrubs, ferns, grasses, and wildflowers.



Brookdale Cemetery.

Trees are interspersed among buildings throughout even some of the more densely developed areas in Dedham. Wooded lands are predominant in the northern and western parts of town. Heavily forested areas in Dedham include the floodplains of the Charles and Neponset Rivers, Wilson Mountain, and the Town Forest between the north and southbound lanes of Route 128. At seventy-one acres, the Town Forest is the largest conservation parcel under the care of the Conservation Commission.

The MassGIS Land Use datalayer contains thirty-seven land use classifications interpreted from 1:25,000 aerial photography, with the most recent complete coverage produced from 1999 data. The land use data shows that in 1999, Dedham contained 1,764 acres of forest land, approximately twenty-five percent of the town's land area. Forested land decreased about eight percent between 1971, the date of the first land use coverage calculated by MassGIS, and 1999.[9]

Dedham's landscape possesses the natural tendency to be forested: open fields and abandoned farmland will revert to woodland if left alone. Undeveloped buffers along roadways will yield up shrubs and trees if not regularly mowed. However, the prime tendency of humans is to clear the land for development. Deforestation has obvious effects on the environment by removing wildlife habitat and fragmenting the remaining forested areas, which tends to reduce biodiversity. Deforestation also reduces the value and extent of services that the land can provide for human society. These services have great economic value including climate regulation,

[9] Massachusetts Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), "Land Use Datalayer," at <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/lus.htm>.

maintenance of freshwater supply and quality, pollution assimilation and nutrient regulation, soil retention, mitigation of flooding, and recreation and aesthetic value.

In addition to its forests, Dedham's street trees are an important natural resource and play a significant role in defining the town's visual character. Although it is a densely-developed suburb of Boston, Dedham has many beautiful tree-lined streets and small wooded areas. Shade trees in populated areas are extremely valuable for both their visual beauty and the services they provide such as buffering of winds, shading and cooling for pedestrians and vehicles, absorption of carbon dioxide and physical trapping of dust and pollutants in the air. Trees also provide soft, natural screening between pedestrians, buildings, and traffic.

In an effort to increase its street tree inventory, Dedham is seeking grant funds to prepare a targeted street tree inventory that would be incorporated into the town's GIS system. In addition, the town has instituted an informal policy of planting two trees for every street tree removed. To further this goal, the Department of Public Works (DPW) is currently working toward eligibility as a Tree City USA community, a national program sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters.

In order to qualify for Tree City designation, Dedham must meet four criteria: 1) establish a Tree Board or Department; 2) create a Tree Care Ordinance to establish policies for planting, maintaining and removing public street trees; 3) establish a minimum annual forestry budget of $2 per capita; and 4) create a formal Arbor Day proclamation. Currently the DPW observes Arbor Day and plants trees with residents and schoolchildren, but an official proclamation has yet to be created. Benefits of a Tree City USA designation include preferred status when applying for grants, an established community forestry program, community education, improved public image and civic pride.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

NHESP maintains a list of all plant species listed as Endangered, Threatened, or considered Species of Special Concern. Table 6.2 lists the most recent observations of each species in Dedham.[10] However, because they are rare, many listed species are difficult to detect and NHESP does not conduct methodical species surveys in each town on a regular basis. Older "most recent observations" may be several years old and should not be interpreted as meaning that the species no longer occurs in a town. NHESP regards observations that are older than twenty-five years as "historic observations."

TABLE 6.2
ENDANGERED PLANT SPECIES OBSERVED IN DEDHAM

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Most Recent Observation
Ophioglossum pusillum	Adder's-tongue Fern	T	1884
Potamogeton vaseyi	A Pondweed	E	1887
Aristida purpurascens	Purple Needlegrass	T	1894
Scirpus longii	Long's Bulrush	T	2002
Eleocharis ovata	Ovate Spike-sedge	E	1878
Viola brittoniana	Britton's Violet	T	2001
Houstonia longifolia var. longifolia	Long-leaved Bluet	E	1897
Gentiana andrewsii	Andrews' Bottle Gentian	E	1911
Senna hebecarpa	Wild Senna	E	1885
Rhododendron maximum	Great Laurel	T	1900
Nabalus serpentarius	Lion's Foot	E	1901
Asclepias verticillata	Linear-leaved Milkweed	T	1884
Asclepias purpurascens	Purple Milkweed	E	1879
Ophioglossum pusillum	Adder's-tongue Fern	T	1884

Source: Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, updated September 11, 2007

[10] Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Updated 9/11/07 at <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species_info/town_lists/town_d.htm>.

None of these species identified in Dedham are listed on the Federal Endangered Species List.

Contiguous vegetated areas provide habitat not only for rare plant species, but for many species of native plants and wildlife that require such large areas or corridors of land for their habitat. Dedham, though densely populated, contains several significant wildlife corridors. The Charles River provides long stretches of undisturbed riparian and wetland environments, floodplains and adjacent uplands along virtually its entire length through Dedham (Map 6.4). The Neponset River is bordered by the Neponset Reservation, a wide area of wetlands and undisturbed upland. Also, the northwestern part of town from Route 128 through the Wilson Mountain Reservation provides many large areas of undeveloped land.

INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Non-native and invasive plant species are very common in many parts of Dedham especially in disturbed areas, along roadsides, and alongside Route 128 as it passes through town. An "invasive species" is defined by the National Invasive Species Council as a species that is 1) non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration, and 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.[11] Invasive plants often have few or no native competitors to maintain a balance in the landscape, thus allowing them to spread unchecked. Invasive plants, animals, and microorganisms cause harm through economic costs, damage to goods and equipment, food and water supply disruption, and environmental degradation.

In Dedham, invasive plant species continue to degrade environments and displace native species. For example, while purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) has beautiful purple flowers, it also diminishes waterfowl habitats, alters wetland structure and function, and chokes out native plants. Some of the other more prevalent invasive species in Dedham include Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). These invasive species are common to many other parts of New England and some communities have developed successful management strategies.

Fisheries & Wildlife

Dedham's woods, fields, lakes, and rivers host many common and some rare species of birds, fish, and other wildlife. Native woodland and water bodies provide suitable habitat for much of Dedham's wildlife. The native species are generally interdependent; impacts to the habitat of one species will likely affect that of others.

Dedham contains many species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, spiders, mollusks, invertebrates, birds, and fish. The most commonly seen mammals are squirrels, chipmunks, and raccoons. Approximately 450 species of birds are found seasonally in Massachusetts. Dedham's rivers, wetlands and riparian areas provide excellent habitat for waterfowl. Raptors such as hawks, falcons, and osprey nest in the openings of power line corridors. Song birds are found in forested areas, tree-lined residential neighborhoods and on the edges of woodland habitats. The Charles and Neponset Rivers have seen dramatic improvements in water quality in the past thirty years, and native fish habitat has improved.

As Dedham's land area was converted to development and native habitat, edge habitat and food supplies dwindled, conflicts between residents and wildlife populations increased. Over the past several years, the town has witnessed several wildlife conflicts: roaming populations of wild turkeys, damage from beaver dams, overpopulation of rodents and coyotes. The town does not have a municipal policy or budget for management activities

[11] National Invasive Species Council at <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/council/main.shtml>.

such as rodent control, legal beaver trappings or dam breaching.

TABLE 6.3
ENDANGERED WILDLIFE SPECIES OBSERVED IN DEDHAM

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Most Recent Observation
Cicindela duodecimguttata	Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	SC	1908
Circus cyaneus	Northern Harrier	T	1867
Neurocordulia obsolete	Umber Shadowdragon	SC	2004
Emydoidea blandingii	Blanding's Turtle	T	1993

Source: Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, updated 11 September 2007.

Four wildlife species in Dedham are listed by NHESP as Endangered, Threatened, and Species of Special Concern.[12] These are shown below in Table 6.3. None of these species are listed on the Federal Endangered Species List.

Conservation of rare species, and in fact any plant or animal habitat, is best accomplished through the protection of natural habitats. Most wildlife habitats are not discrete areas with clear boundaries, they are overlapping ecosystems with gradations in physical characteristics and species composition. Birds and large animals in particular often make use of multiple communities and require large areas or corridors to thrive.

NHESP publishes GIS maps depicting Priority and Estimated Habitats of Rare Species. The Priority Habitats datalayer contains polygons representing the geographic extent of the habitats of state-listed rare species in Massachusetts based on observations documented within the last twenty-five years in the NHESP's database. Priority Habitats are the filing trigger for proponents, municipalities, and other development project stakeholders for determining whether a proposed project must be reviewed by the NHESP for compliance with the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). Estimated Habitats are for use with the Wetlands Protection Act regulations (310 CMR 10.00). The Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife datalayer contains polygons that are a subset of the Priority Habitats of Rare Species. They are based on occurrences of rare wetland wildlife observed within the last twenty-five years and documented in the NHESP database. They do not include those areas delineated for rare plants or for rare wildlife with strictly upland habitat requirements.

Dedham has two areas of Priority Habitat and two areas of Estimated Habitat that are almost coincident (Map 6.4). The riverfront and floodplain area of the Charles River from its entrance into Dedham south and east to Providence Highway is both Priority and Estimated Habitat for rare wetlands wildlife. The Neponset River Reservation also contains both Priority and Estimated Habitat for rare wetlands wildlife. Any work proposed within uplands or wetlands within these habitat areas will require permission from NHESP.

Environmental Hazards

The Massachusetts DEP Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup regulates the identification, assessment, and remediation of contaminated sites, known as Disposal Sites under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP) regulations. According to the DEP's Reportable Release Lookup table dated December 2007, there have been a total of 170 disposal sites identified in Dedham since the DEP implemented the cleanup program following promulgation of M.G.L. c. 21E in 1983. Of these, only eighteen sites remain "open," i.e. they are not completely remediated or otherwise resolved, but are in assessment or remediation in accordance with the MCP regulations (Map 6.5).

The Tier status of each site is an indicator of the level of severity of the contamination. Tier 1 sites

[12] Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Updated 9/11/07 at <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species_info/town_lists/town_d.htm>.

TABLE 6.4
CONTAMINATED DISPOSAL SITES UNDERGOING REMEDIATION

DEP Number	Name	Address	Status
3-0002716	Mobil Station	19 Ames St	Tier 1C
3-0023153	Exxon Mobil Station	19 Ames St	Tier 1C
3-0023994	No Location Aid	19 Ames St	Tier 1C
3-0024795	No Location Aid	12 Bridge St	Tier 1C
3-0026971	Town Offices	26 Bryant St	Unclassified
3-0026355	Homeowner	14 Chauncy St	Unclassified
3-0027223	Texaco Service Station	901 East St	Unclassified
3-0020943	No Location Aid	1069 East St	Tier 2
3-0026876	Dedham Inst. For Savings	55 Elm St	Unclassified
3-0026841	No Location Aid	200 Elm St	URAM
3-0026872	Foundry Secondary Disp	200 Elm St	Unclassified
3-0026857	No Location Aid	250 Elm St	URAM
3-0027172	No Location Aid	Ernest and Milton	URAM
3-0002856	MBTA Readville Yard	Industrial Dr	Tier 1C
3-0021870	Sunoco Station	405 Providence Hwy	Tier 2
3-0016844	Parcels 49 and 52	367-419 Rustcraft Rd	Tier 2
3-0001022	Port Station Reynolds Ind	370 VFW Pkwy	Remedial Ops
3-0003712	MWRA Property	Wellesley Ext. Tunl.	Pending No Further Action

Source: Massachusetts DEP - Massachusetts Contingency Plan Searchable Sites Database, Accessed December 21, 2007.

are sufficiently hazardous to require direct oversight by the DEP Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup, while Tier 2 sites are remediated by Licensed Site Professionals with regular reporting to the DEP. There are no Federal 'Superfund' sites or DEP Tier 1A sites that are so contaminated that they require direct DEP supervision in Dedham.

The town operated a municipal solid waste landfill at East Street and Incinerator Road until 1976.[13] The landfill encompassed approximately eight acres and was not capped or lined at the time of its closure, according to DEP records. Even after a landfill stops accepting material, Massachusetts solid waste management facility regulations (310 CMR 19.000) require the owner or operator to properly maintain the site for up to thirty years to ensure that leachate or runoff does not contaminate water resources and gas generated as buried waste that continues to decay does not pose an explosion hazard. The Dedham landfill closed thirty-one years ago. There are no DEP records that indicate that Dedham's former landfill poses a threat to public health or safety.

Two less recognized environmental hazards are air pollution and non-point source water pollution. Air pollution is a problem in cities and densely developed areas. Major pollutants of concern and their principle sources include the following:

- Carbon monoxide is formed from combustion (often from incomplete combustion) of fossil fuels from motor vehicles and industry;
- Ground-level ozone is formed when hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides - from motor vehicles, industry, household products – interact on hot, sunny days;
- Nitrogen oxides form from combustion from utility plants, industrial boilers, incinerators, and motor vehicles;
- Other air toxics include organic compounds and metals from combustion, industrial processes, consumer products, motor vehicles; and

[13] Massachusetts Department of Environmental, Protection Bureau of Waste Prevention, "Solid Waste Facility Database," November 2007.

- Fine particulate matter results from diesel engine exhaust, industrial incinerators, smoke from wood-burning stoves, and wind-carried dust and soot.

Many of these pollutants are caused by motor vehicles. The use of public transportation, bicycles, or walking and the fostering of efficiently located retail, service and community establishments all help to reduce air pollution.

Non-point source water pollution is pollution originating from diffuse or widespread sources that acts principally through stormwater runoff entering surface water bodies and groundwater. Such pollutants include:

- Excess fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from lawns and farmland;
- Oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from urban runoff and energy production;
- Sediment from improperly managed construction sites, eroding streambanks;
- Bacteria and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes, and faulty septic systems.

These pollutants have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, and fisheries and wildlife. Identifying and controlling the source of these pollutants, such as a leaking underground oil tank, is much more difficult than point source pollution. The most important ways to control non-point source pollution are through proper land management, effective maintenance of septic waste and petroleum, and zoning or erosion control ordinances, particularly in sensitive areas.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

The most visible trend of the last fifty years in Massachusetts has been the exodus of city residents to the suburbs, including Dedham, and the resultant conversion of forest and farmland to residential development. This settlement pattern reversed the century-long increase in forested land cover that followed the abandonment of farmland during the industrial revolution. When European settlers cleared forested land for farming, the land remained vegetated and impacts from farming on land, water, plants, and wildlife were limited. With the development of buildings, roads, and hardscape, the modern impact on these resources is far greater.

A recent counter to the hardscape development trend is growing appreciation for open space and otherwise undeveloped land. With increasing development pressures, many communities in New England are realizing that natural resources such as open space, clean water, clean air, and natural biological diversity and ecological balance are inherently valuable and worth protecting. Communities have the ability to protect their resources as they see fit with many different tools, ranging from overlay zoning districts to low-impact development techniques, land acquisition, and conservation restrictions.

The latter has been a growing trend in many towns, including Dedham, which owns approximately 265 acres of protected land. At the initial community meeting for this Master Plan Update on 15 November 2007, residents expressed a strong desire to preserve natural resources and open space. When asked what they liked about Dedham today, residents identified the town's forestland, open space, and trails as their second most-liked feature (behind only the revitalization of Dedham Square). When asked what challenges Dedham faces today, residents also identified the preservation of open space as a high priority.

A third trend in Massachusetts communities, and one already adopted in Dedham, is the establishment of local bylaws to provide the town added control over development impacts to resources such as wetlands and aquifers. Dedham has adopted several local bylaws to protect its water resources, including a wetlands protection bylaw, a stormwater management bylaw and an aquifer protection overlay zoning district. Dedham has also adopted Drainage and Stormwater Management Design

Standards and has incorporated stormwater regulations into its subdivision regulations. The Conservation Commission is currently reviewing all of the town's stormwater management regulations to ensure consistency between the various bylaws and standards. The Commission is also reviewing these documents to incorporate the Massachusetts DEP's Stormwater Handbook's standards and Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Another growing trend is strong public awareness of global climate change. Anthropogenic forcing of climate change can potentially be ameliorated by decisions made today, such as reducing consumption of fossil fuels, and maintaining forests and naturally vegetated areas. Dedham's Master Plan can present choices that may help respond to climate change, such as the preservation of open space, encouraging public transportation, bicycles, and pedestrian-friendly land development rather than the continued growth of roads and reliance on automobiles and the development of environmentally-sensitive ("green") municipal buildings and landscapes.

In recognition of this issue, Dedham formed the Dedham Sustainability Advisory Committee (previously called the Renewable Energy Committee), to identify and recommend actions for Dedham to reduce its energy usage and carbon footprint. The Committee has promoted actions through workshops, brochures, and information on the town's website. Dedham is also a member of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)/Local Governments for Sustainability, an association of national, regional, and local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development. ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information resources to support local government in the creation and implementation of a sustainable development plan. In addition, Dedham instituted a new Environmental Coordinator staff position in 2008. The Coordinator is responsible for promoting community environmental initiatives such as recycling, energy and water conservation, and wildlife management.

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Dedham Master Plan (1996). Dedham's 1996 Master Plan presented several clear goals related to the protection of the town's natural resources. The Introduction's Vision Statement placed great emphasis on the value of natural resources: describing Dedham as "…a town of extraordinary beauty in its physical environment…" which recognizes "the quality of its landscape including tree-lined streets, public parks, passive recreation areas, and preservation of natural resources (wetlands and flood plains, wooded areas, rivers, brooks, and ponds)."[14]

The goals set forth in the Plan included a section entitled Environment, Open Space, and Recreation. The goals included:

"Establish a program of open space protection for one or a combination of the following purposes:

- preservation of scenic, natural, and aesthetic values;
- protection of aquifers and watersheds;
- provision of outdoor recreational opportunities;
- protection of areas of historic and cultural significance; and,
- protection of wildlife."

The Environment Chapter in the 1996 *Master Plan* presented a detailed discussion of the town's most desirable attributes that should be promoted and preserved in the future. These included improvements to the Providence Highway corridor related to street tree plantings; protection of water quality through stormwater management; appropriate landscaping in Dedham Square and other gateways to the town; adoption of a Scenic Road Bylaw

[14] Dedham Planning Board, *Town of Dedham Master Plan*, 1996.

under M.G.L. c. 40, s. 15C; development of a town shade tree protection program; establishment of a permanent Open Space Committee to advocate for implementation of an Open Space Plan; protection of wetlands, surface water bodies, water supply, wildlife, forest and meadow lands, parks, networks of open space, trails and greenbelts; and the promotion of Conservation Restrictions. The 1996 *Master Plan* made the following recommendations with regard to the town's natural resources:

- Tree Planting Program – Establish a program for tree planting along streets and in parks and other public spaces that includes maintenance practices and a replacement policy. Consideration should be given to meeting the standards for obtaining Tree City USA designation;
- Scenic Roads Designation – Improve civic appearance by designating a network of scenic roads in town as allowed by State legislation;
- Fowl Meadow Aquifer District – Enact an overlay aquifer district zoning provision and other land use policies to protect the water supply now being developed in Fowl Meadow;
- Establish a Greenspace Acquisition Fund, including a proposal to establish greenbelts in the following areas: Providence Highway; High School Rail-toTrail; Wigwam Ponds; Mother Brook; Wilson Mountain; greenbelts on private property; and
- Update the town's 1992 Open Space Plan.

Dedham has had limited success in implementing these recommendations. The town enacted an overlay zoning district to protect the Fowl Meadow aquifer and completed an update of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* in January 2004. Dedham is also working toward meeting the standards for Tree City USA designation. However, the town has been unsuccessful in its efforts to adopt a Scenic Roads Bylaw or establish a Greenspace Acquisition Fund.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2004). The 2004 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* gave more explicit consideration to protecting the town's natural resources than the 1996 *Master Plan*.[15] The major goals for natural resource protection identified in the 2004 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* are as follows (Goals and Objectives – Natural Resource Protection, Stewardship, Restoration, and Enhancement):

- Protect biological diversity, watersheds, and ecosystems of natural resource areas;
- Promote sound environmental management of open spaces and encourage responsible use among recreation users;
- Encourage development that protects open space systems and enhances natural resources;
- Preserve and restore waterways, ponds, and wetlands;
- Integrate historic and scenic resource protection in Open Space and Recreation Planning; and
- Pursue methods to protect additional natural resource areas.

These goals were addressed in a series of fourteen proposed actions outlined in the Plan's Five-Year Action Plan. Related goals of the 2004 Plan were addressed in actions proposed under other categories, too, such as Access to Public Open Spaces, and Land Acquisition, Funding, and Management.

Dedham Community Development Plan (2004). The Dedham Community Development Plan (CDP) provided an overview of Dedham's hous-

[15] Dedham Open Space Committee and Dedham Planning Board, *Town of Dedham Open Space and Recreation Plan*, January 2004.

ing and economic development issues and established a set of strategies for the town to consider as it addresses these priority concerns. While the plan focused on housing and economic development, these topics are intertwined with Dedham's underlying natural environment and the plan provided recommendations to ensure that new development would have limited impacts on natural resources.

Regarding the potential impacts of industrial uses on drinking water, the CDP recommended that Dedham protect its water supply by enforcing its stormwater regulations and supporting and encouraging land uses that would have the least demand for public water. The CDP also recognized the impacts that new development could have on natural resources. It recommended that Dedham amend and or adopt new zoning provisions such as cluster housing to allow the town to reach two seemingly differing objectives: accommodating new growth and simultaneously protecting the environment. The CDP further recommended that Dedham consider adopting an open space bylaw in West Dedham ("the estate area"). Finally, it set forth a draft Environmental Checklist that could be used by town boards and departments during the development review process. The checklist includes items pertaining to groundwater, soils/slopes, wetlands/surface water and significant and unique features. The plan also included a draft Site Design Checklist that could be used to review a development proposal based on the proposal's landscape criteria, subdivision design and facilities, utilities, and safety.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The principal natural resource issues identified in this Master Plan Update remain largely the same as in the 1996 Master Plan (and the 2004 Open Space and Recreation Plan). These issues can be distilled to one primary goal: to preserve Dedham's most significant open spaces, surface water bodies, wetlands, floodplains, groundwater, soils, forestland and wildlife habitats in the face of development pressures.

Recommendations and goals expressed in the 1996 *Master Plan* were presented at a community meeting in November 2007 for discussion and consideration of their degree of success. Residents agreed that the following goals of the 1996 *Master Plan* had not been met with success:

- Preservation of scenic, natural and aesthetic values;
- Provision of outdoor recreational opportunities;
- Protection of wildlife;
- Set priorities for acquisition of open space parcels;
- Purchase development rights for certain open space;
- Establish or improve small neighborhood parks at the central area of each neighborhood; and
- Include work of the Open Space Committee for Open Space Issues.

As noted earlier, when residents were asked at the November 2007 meeting what they liked most about Dedham, they named the town's forests, open space, and trails as their second most-appreciated feature. Considering that municipalities often purchase undeveloped land, the slowdown in commercial and residential construction, and relative stabilization in the real estate market, Dedham has two basic opportunities: 1) promote the importance of permanently protecting the town's most valued natural resources; and 2) integrate land and resource protection clearly into the master planning process and into town government.

Dedham's current approach to evaluating the environmental impacts of a development is fragmented and fairly informal. For example, special permit requirements for major nonresidential developments include some environmental standards and guide-

lines, but they are vague. Site plan review regulations do not include any environmental standards or requirements. Both the Design Review Advisory Board and the Development Review Committee consider and comment on environmental impacts in their project reviews, but their work is not guided by shared, specific criteria.

Another critical issue apparent in Dedham, as in other communities, is the need to conserve water and protect water quality. Presently, the Dedham-Westwood Water District regulates the seasonal use of water and promotes water conservation awareness through public forums and the distribution of informational literature. The town could expand upon these efforts by promoting appropriate forms of water conservation methods such as the use of drought-resistant and low-water-use plantings and appropriate landscape maintenance care. Dedham also could serve as a model for environmentally-sensitive design by developing water-efficient landscape design on some of its public landscapes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Residents say that since the 1996 *Master Plan* was completed, only two of the plan's nine natural resource goals have been successfully addressed. The unmet goals remain relevant today, and they should be reinforced in this Master Plan Update. In addition, the Master Plan Update should provide guidance for the town to integrate the care of its natural resources into the goals and policies of all the other plan elements to the greatest extent possible. Also, the Master Plan Update should promote communication, outreach, and advocacy for the protection of Dedham's natural resources. The fourth and most fundamental recommendation is the prioritization and implementation of land acquisition or conservation by the town.

During the Master Plan Update planning process, the Steering Committee asked its subcommittees to establish goals for this plan. The goals were reviewed and discussed by the Steering Committee, and they provide a basis for the following recommendations.

1. DEVELOP AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST TO ASSIST WITH DEVELOPMENT REVIEW.

The 2004 *Dedham Community Development Plan* recognized the need for the town to establish criteria for evaluating the environmental impacts of a project. It presented a draft checklist for use by town boards and staff that would make the permitting process more transparent and predictable. Dedham should review the checklist to ensure that it adequately identifies impacts on natural, scenic, and historic and cultural resources. When reviewed and approved, the checklist should be formalized as part of the update of the Dedham's Zoning Bylaw or immediately following completion of the Zoning Bylaw revision process. (*See also, Chapter 2: Land Use, Recommendations.*) The criteria should be available both in print and on the Town's official website.

2. CONTINUE TO REVIEW AND REVISE DEDHAM'S LOCAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS AND BYLAWS TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS.

Dedham is currently reviewing its various layers of regulations related to stormwater management to ensure their consistency with each other and their consistency with current standards and guidance. Through this review, the town will incorporate the Massachusetts DEP Stormwater Handbook's standards and BMPs for use in Dedham.

3. ESTABLISH MUNICIPAL POLICY AND AN ANNUAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT.

Conflicts between humans and wildlife will continue to increase in Dedham and the costs associated with addressing these conflicts will potentially escalate. The town should review the issues and adopt a municipal management policy with an associated annual appropriation. A concerted public education and awareness campaign is also important as is collaboration with adjoining communities on management issues.

4. ESTABLISH A PLAN AND PRIORITIES FOR MAINTAINING AND INCREASING THE TOWN'S URBAN FOREST AND PUBLIC TREE INVENTORY.

The town should complete a long-term Urban Forestry Management Plan to protect and maintain its tree resources. This should start with the proposed GIS-mapped tree inventory, which should be expanded to include all town street trees. Dedham should formalize its existing street tree planting policy and continue to work toward Tree City USA designation. In addition, the town should review its existing management policies, whether formal or informal, regarding the Town Forest and its conservation lands to ensure the protection of these vital resources.

5. DEVELOP AND PROMOTE PUBLIC CONSERVATION EFFORTS RELATING TO WATER AND ENERGY RESOURCES.

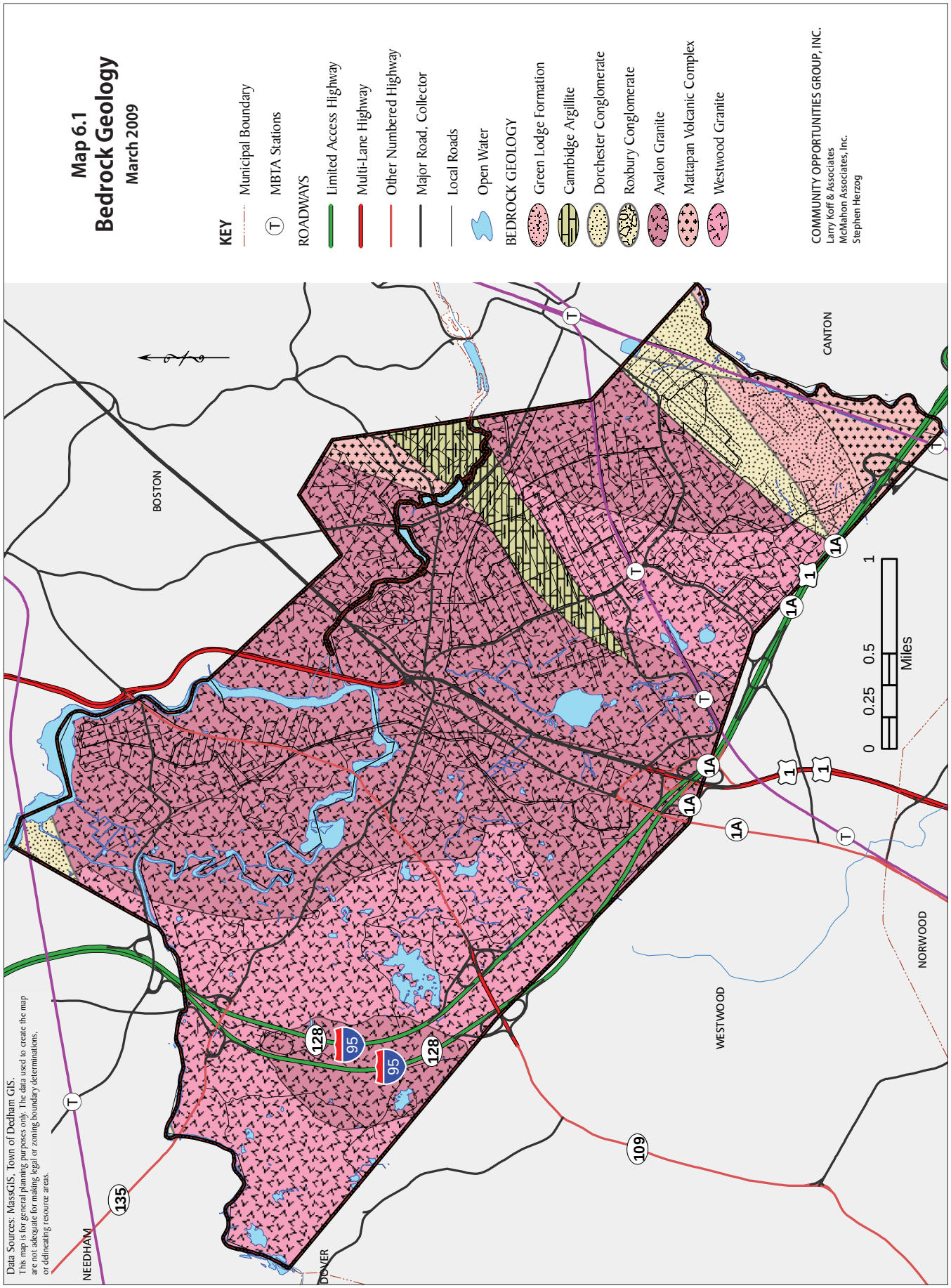
The creation of the Sustainable Advisory Committee is an important step in promoting public conservation efforts. Water conservation measures, ecological landscape practices, and energy and resource conservation are all important goals not only for community residents and businesses but for public officials as well. Building upon the existing Dedham-Westwood Water District's water conservation efforts, Dedham has the opportunity to be a leader in conservation by initiating environmentally sensitive landscape designs for public spaces and instituting water and energy conservation techniques in town buildings.

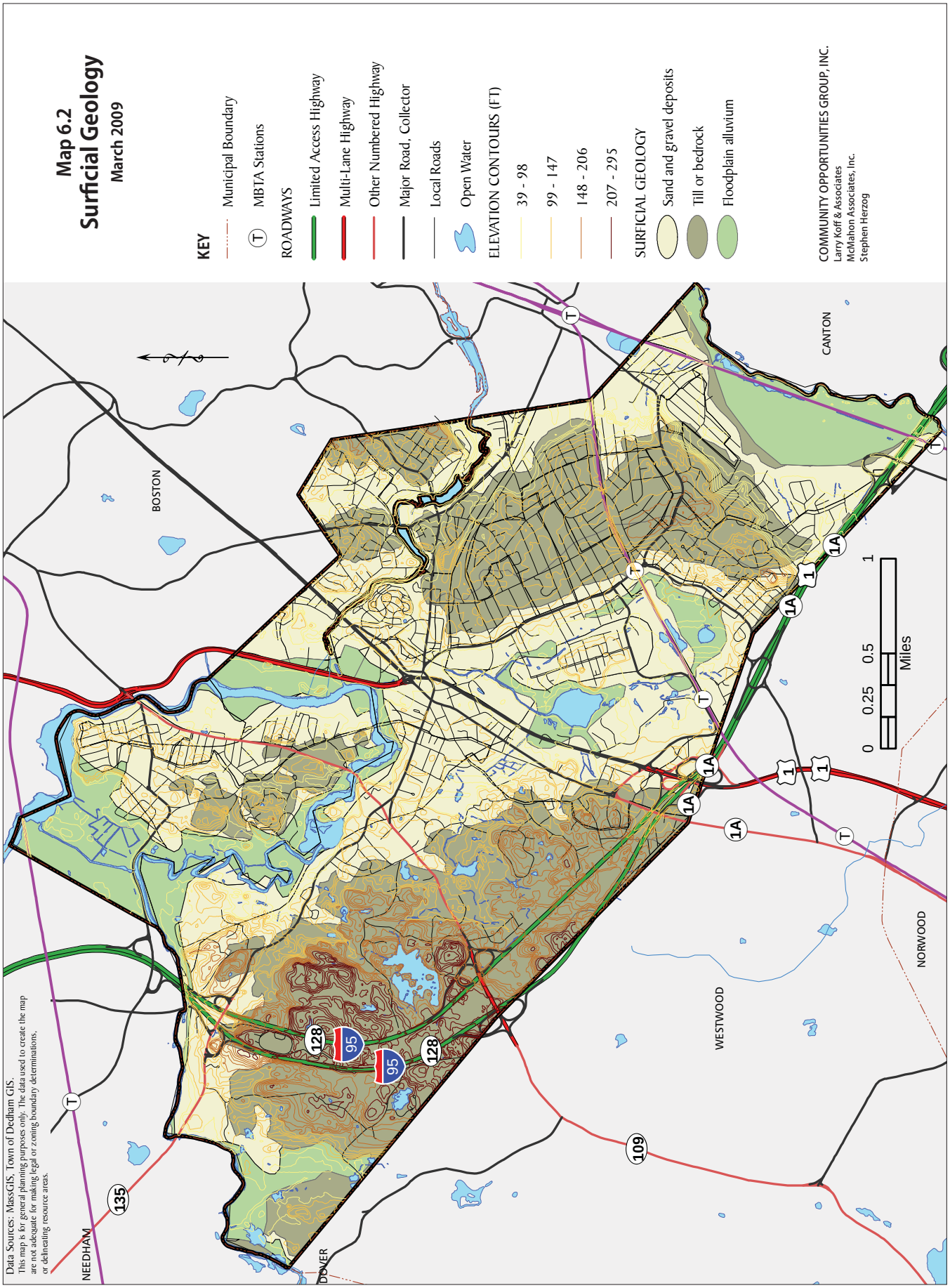
6. INCREASE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS TO PROMOTE APPRECIATION AND PROTECTION OF THE TOWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES.

Through the Environmental Coordinator, Dedham has the opportunity to expand its efforts to engage the public in natural resource protection. Encouraging citizen participation and involvement through volunteer programs such as water quality monitoring, species counting and reporting, and trail maintenance would raise awareness of Dedham's vital resources and work toward their ultimate protection. Utilizing the town's website as part of an educational campaign would also educate and inform residents about environmental issues affecting Dedham's natural resources, such as its waterways and aquifer system.

7. INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH NEARBY COMMUNITIES AND CONSERVATION GROUPS FOR REGIONAL WATER RESOURCE AND HABITAT PROTECTION.

Natural resources are not defined by a municipality's boundaries; actions taken in one town can have significant impacts on the water resource and natural habitats of the communities that surround it. Regional collaboration between communities and conservation organizations should be continued and expanded where appropriate. Dedham should take a leadership role in hosting activities related to resource protection efforts.


Map 6.1
Bedrock Geology
March 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
MBTA Stations
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Open Water
BEDROCK GEOLOGY
Green Lodge Formation
Cambridge Argillite
Dorchester Conglomerate
Roxbury Conglomerate
Avalon Granite
Mattapan Volcanic Complex
Westwood Granite
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
CANTON
NEEDHAM
DOVER
WESTWOOD
NORWOOD
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles


Map 6.2
Surficial Geology
March 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
MBTA Stations
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Open Water
ELEVATION CONTOURS (FT)
39 - 98
99 - 147
148 - 206
207 - 295
SURFICIAL GEOLOGY
Sand and gravel deposits
Till or bedrock
Floodplain alluvium
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
CANTON
NEEDHAM
DOVER
WESTWOOD
NORWOOD
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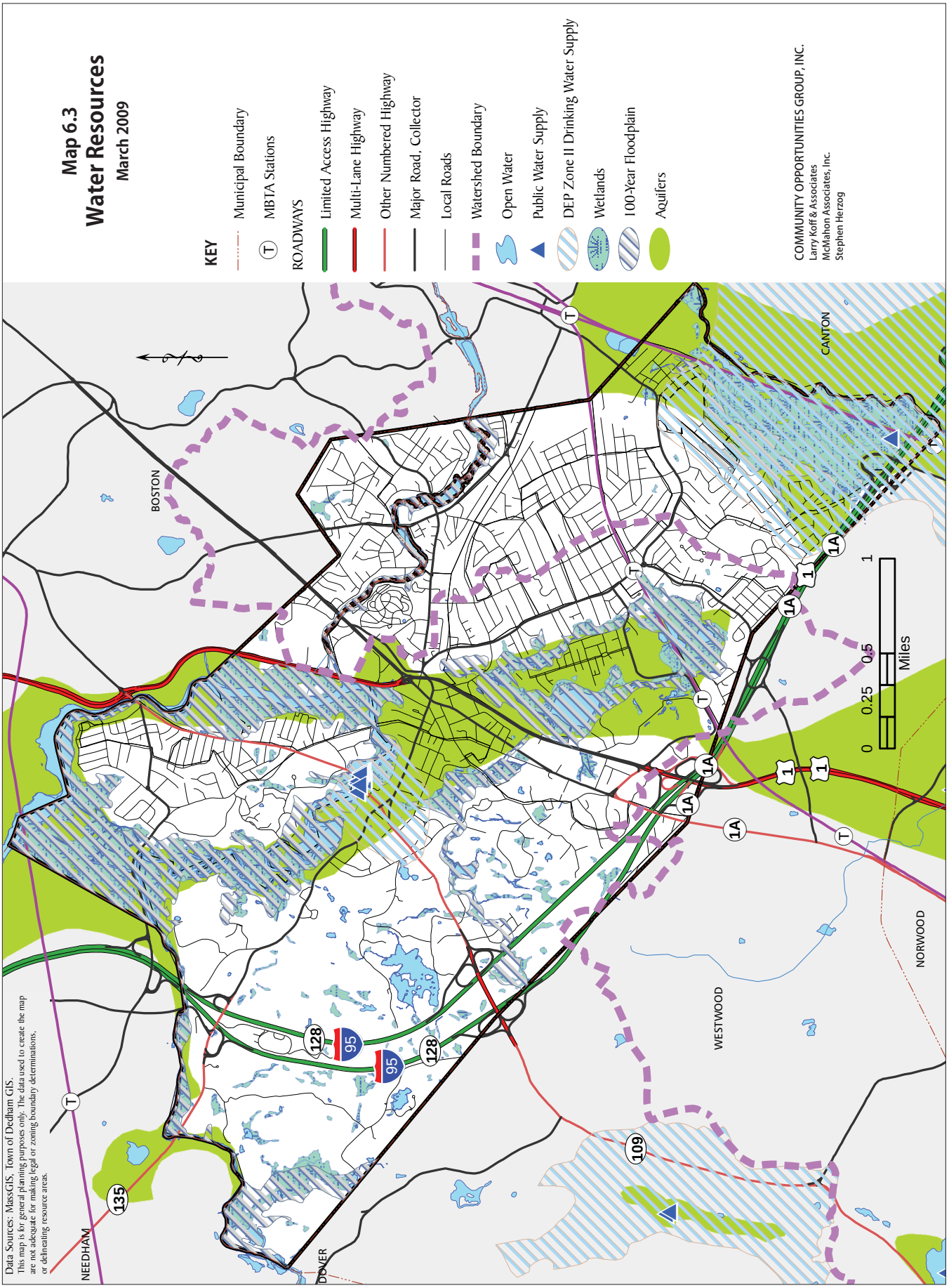
Map 6.3
Water Resources
March 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
MBTA Stations
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Watershed Boundary
Open Water
Public Water Supply
DEP Zone II Drinking Water Supply
Wetlands
100-Year Floodplain
Aquifers
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
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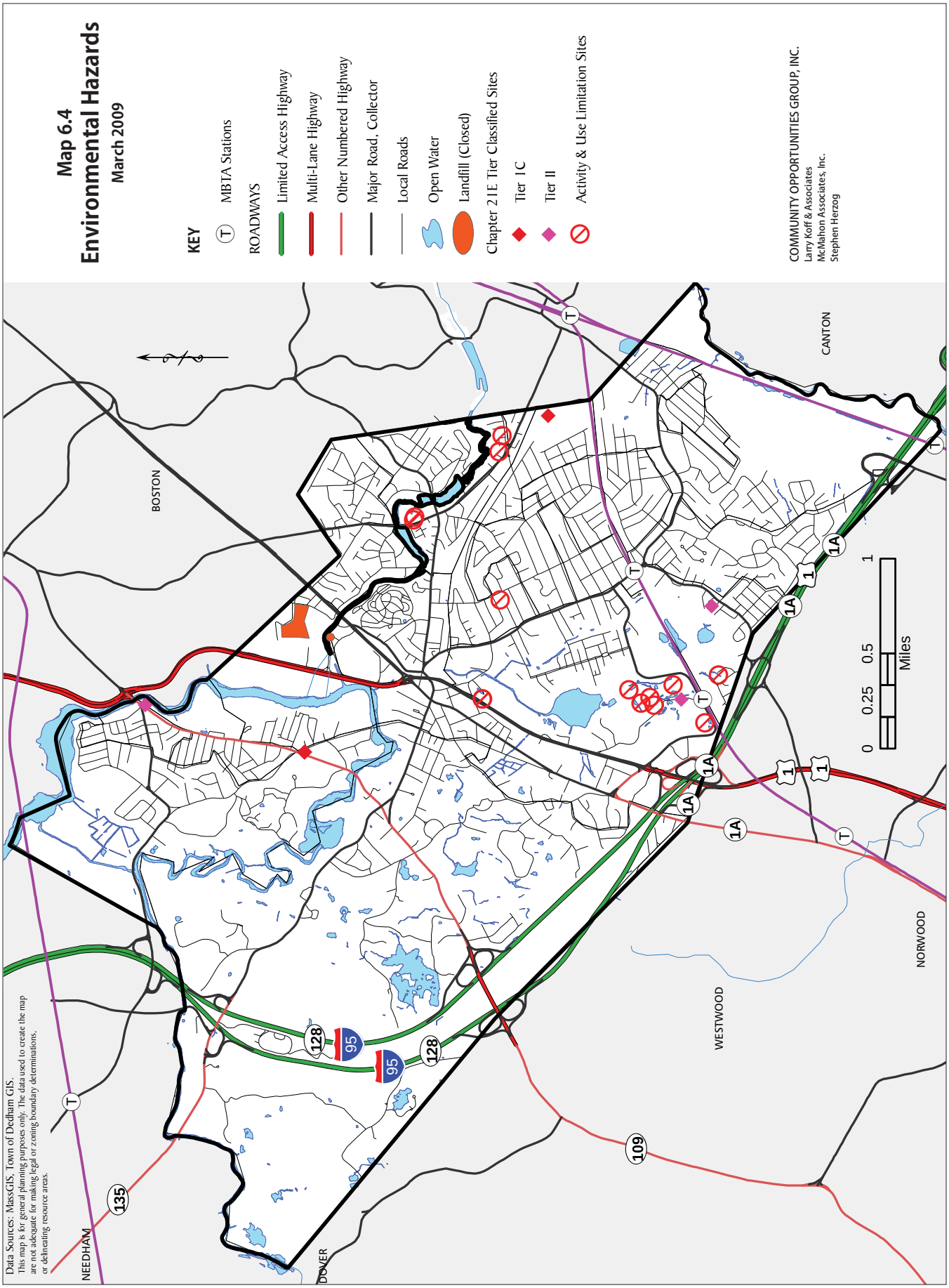
Map 6.4
Environmental Hazards
March 2009
KEY
MBTA Stations
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Open Water
Landfill (Closed)
Chapter 21E Tier Classified Sites
Tier 1C
Tier II
Activity & Use Limitation Sites
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
DOVER
WESTWOOD
NORWOOD
CANTON
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Miles
135
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CHAPTER 7

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

Open space is essential to the quality of life in every community. From urban centers to rural hamlets, open space supports the natural environment and gives shape and visual interest to the built environment. In suburbs like Dedham, the open space network tends to be characterized by urban parks on one hand and wetlands on the other, for most of the developable upland has already been converted to homes, businesses, civic uses, and transportation facilities.

Soccer fields at Barnes Memorial Park.

When new growth does occur, it is immediately visible to a large number of people. This makes the remaining land in substantially built-out suburbs very important to residents, for the loss of open space has a direct impact on the character of their neighborhoods and may also have an impact on their property values. Still, it can be extremely difficult for older suburbs to acquire and protect open space because the scarcity of vacant land makes for very high land values. Since the public cost to buy open space is daunting in suburbs along Route 128, communities need to take creative approaches to protecting the land they lave left, and they have to set priorities.

A master plan's open space and recreation element should help a community plan for adequate land to meet its social, ecological and health needs, today and in the future. Open space protects wetlands, wildlife habitat and vistas, and provides for outdoor recreation and gathering places. In Dedham, institutional open space plays a prominent role in defining the town's visual character – from the imposing campus of Noble and Greenough School to the manicured grounds of the Endicott Estate. Dedham's public parks also benefit neighborhood residents of all ages, but particularly the town's children, whether they participate in organized sports or congregate for informal play. For them, neighborhood open space is akin to a common back yard.

Dedham has to consider not only how much open space and recreation land it should have, but also how the town will care for the land it already owns and will own in the future. In many of the Commonwealth's maturely developed suburbs, management and stewardship have become more critical open space planning issues than strategies to protect vacant land from development. The competing demands on local governments often leave very little funding for asset management and the effects can be seen in deferred maintenance of public buildings, parks, playing fields and playgrounds, and unattended conservation land. As Dedham plans for its open space needs, the town

should think about public costs and benefits in a comprehensive way, and explore opportunities to engage developers as partners in providing open space by design.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Open Space and Recreation Inventory

Dedham's open space is notable. Approximately 2,185 acres, or slightly less than one third of the town's total land area, are used for open space, conservation and recreation purposes (Map 7.1). Federal, state and local government agencies own a combined total of about 1,450 acres, or sixty-six percent of the open space that exists in Dedham today. For example, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers owns 278 acres of riparian corridor along the Charles River for flood control purposes. In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns 626 acres in five parks in Dedham: Riverside Park, Cutler Park, Stimson Wildlife Sanctuary, Neponset River Reservation, and Wilson Mountain. The Dedham Conservation Commission controls 265 acres of town-owned land, mainly wetlands or riparian tracts, while the Parks and Recreation Department and Dedham Public Schools manage another 150 acres of land with active recreation facilities.[1]

Wetlands account for about 900 acres of Dedham's open space and recreation land. Red and silver maple, speckled alder, white oaks, pin oaks, hemlock, sweet pepperbush, and highbush blueberry are common in Dedham's swampy, wet areas. The upland vegetation is characterized by southern New England hardwood forest, including northern red oak, shagbark hickory, beech, red maple, and birch. One of Dedham's most significant open space resources is Fowl Meadow, a contiguous wetland associated with the Neponset River Reservation and the 8,350-acre Fowl Meadow and Ponkapoag Bog Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Fowl Meadow area, along with a portion of the Wilson Mountain Reservation in the northwest part of town, provide significant habitat for rare species in and around Dedham.[2]

With the exception of the Town Forest and Wilson Mountain, most of the large parcels of upland open space in Dedham are privately owned.[3] The Dedham Land Trust and the Massachusetts Audubon Society own thirty-seven acres, and 224 acres of privately owned land are under Chapter 61 agreements. Private non-profit institutions own about 245 acres. Finally, there are approximately 73 acres of vacant, privately-owned land in Dedham, mainly in West Dedham.[4]

LEVEL OF PROTECTION

A common way of classifying open space is by the degree of certainty that land will not be converted to another use in the future. The levels of open space protection include permanent (in perpetuity), temporary, limited, and none. Open space protected in perpetuity includes land owned for conservation and wildlife habitat by federal and state agencies, a local conservation commission or non-profit land trusts, and privately owned land bound by conservation restrictions. In turn, temporary protection applies to open space covered by revocable restrictions against a change in use, such as a Chapter 61 agreement. Further, open space with limited protection includes properties such as a ball field or neighborhood park, i.e., land that technically could be redeveloped, though a change in use is very unlikely. Finally, open space without any legal restrictions is land that could be developed in the future. Table 7.1 reports the levels of protection that apply to land in Dedham's open space inventory.

The Dedham Assessor's Office classifies 428 of the 532 acres of town-owned open space as "public-permanent," or publicly-owned land that is protected in perpetuity. Only the schools, the landfill, and two small water bodies are not permanently protected conservation and recreation land. In ad-

[1] Dedham Assessor's Office, "Parcel Records Database," (2006); Town of Dedham, *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*, 26.

[2] Ibid, 26, 29.

[3] Town of Dedham, *Dedham Master Plan* (1996), 9.

[4] Dedham Assessor's Office, Parcel Records Database, (FY 2006).

TABLE 7.1
OPEN SPACE BY LEVEL OF PROTECTION

Level of Protection		Totals	Owners
Private		263.85	
	Private institution	31.56	MIT; others
	Private recreation	39.18	Dedham Community House; Dedham Athletic Complex; others
	Private school	193.11	Noble & Greenough School; Dedham Country Day School ; Ursuline Academy; Northeastern University
Private-partial		224.32	
	Chapter 61	224.32	Dedham Country & Polo Club; various private owners
Private-permanent		243.80	
	Conservation restriction	138.91	River Bend Inc.
	Private cemetery	25.70	Various church cemeteries
	Private conservation	57.80	Dedham Land Trust; Mass. Audubon Society
	Private institution	21.38	Animal Rescue League of Boston
Public		101.25	
	Public school	93.58	Town of Dedham
	Town	7.68	Town of Dedham (Landfill)
Public-permanent		1,327.18	
	Federal flood control	278.04	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
	State park	626.40	Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Trust for Public Land
	Town cemetery	51.53	Town of Dedham
	Town conservation	271.40	
	Town historic properties	19.14	
	Town park	80.68	
None			
	Vacant land	73.09	Various owners
	Water	9.17	N/A
	Abandoned Rail	1.23	MBTA
Total		2,243.89	

Source: Town of Dedham, Engineering Department, GIS data file, 2004.

dition to the town's protected open space, 1,030 acres are protected in perpetuity and held by another entity. Remarkably, 1,458 acres of all 2,185 acres of open space in Dedham (66%) qualify as permanently protected land.[5]

Dedham property owners have the opportunity to work with the town and local, regional and state conservation organizations to protect their land through conservation restrictions and land donations. The Dedham Land Trust holds conservation restrictions in Dedham on some private land, and the Trustees of Reservations holds a conservation restriction on eighty-eight acres of land along the Charles River near the Needham border. Property owners also have the option to donate their land to these conservation agencies. Recently a property owner in West Dedham donated a parcel of land on Stoney Lee Road to the Conservation Commission.

NEIGHBORHOOD OPEN SPACE

Each of Dedham's neighborhoods has open space, park, and recreation facilities. The largest open space holdings with passive recreation amenities exist in the Riverdale and West Dedham/Dedham Village neighborhoods, where the town, state, and several educational institutions own a considerable amount of land. East Dedham and Oakdale contain most of the town's schools, parks and active recreation facilities, while Greenlodge/Manor has a mix of active recreation and large open space areas. Table 7.2 summarizes the open space in the neighborhoods.

[5] Ibid.

TABLE 7.2
NEIGHBORHOOD OPEN SPACE

Neighborhood	Open Space, Park and Recreation Facilities
Riverdale	Charles River Riparian, Cutler Park, Riverside Park, Stimson Wildlife Sanctuary, Riverdale School, Noble and Greenough School
West Dedham/Village	Town Forest, Wilson Mountain, Dedham Common, Dexter School, Dedham Country Day School, MIT Endicott House, Northeastern University, Ursuline Academy, Dedham Country and Polo Club, Meadow Brook Conservation Restriction, Weld Pond
East Dedham	Churchill Park, Condon Park, East Dedham Passive Park, Gonzalez Field, Hartnett Square, Mucciacio Pool/Araby Skateboard Park, Pottery Lane Courts, The Triangle, Brookdale Cemetery, Avery School
Oakdale	Wigwam Pond conservation land, Barnes Memorial Park, Fairbanks Park, Oakdale Common, Dedham Middle School, Dedham High School, Oakdale School, Endicott Estate
Manor/Greenlodge	Fowl Meadow and Neponset River Reservation, Little Wigwam Pond, Manor Fields, Paul Park, Greenlodge School, Capen Early Childhood Education Center

Source: Town of Dedham, Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2004-2009.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Dedham's Park and Recreation Department manages twelve sites totaling about fifty-five acres with playgrounds and active recreation amenities. The Parks and Recreation Department also manages the playgrounds and athletic fields at several of Dedham's public schools. Dedham's Conservation Commission is responsible for maintaining the public hiking trails located on municipal conservation land, such as those in the Town Forest. Table 7.3 summarizes the active recreation facilities in Dedham. The state has made recreation improvements at each of the five properties managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Several private sporting clubs and private schools also have recreation facilities. Hebrew Senior Life's NewBridge on the Charles development in northeast Dedham will offer the use of the Rashi School's two fields when not in active use, which was a condition for development approval.

TABLE 7.3
PARK, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND PLAYGROUNDS

Ownership	Number of Sites	Est. Acres	Facilities
Town of Dedham			
Parks & Recreation	12	54.8	Playgrounds, multi-purpose fields, baseball, softball and soccer fields, basketball, tennis courts, skateboard park, outdoor pool
Public Schools	8	93.6	Playgrounds, multi-purpose fields, baseball, softball, football and soccer fields, basketball, tennis courts, track, indoor pool
Conservation Commission	8	278.1	Hiking trails
Commonwealth of Mass.	5	626.5	Playgrounds, basketball, tennis, hiking trails, boat launch
Privately Owned	3	122.6	Golf, tennis, polo

Source: Town of Dedham, Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2004-2009; Dedham Assessor's Office, Parcel Record Database, 2006.

Management and Stewardship

Three town government entities – the Open Space Committee, the Conservation Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Department – as well as DCR have responsibility for the management and stewardship of public open space and recreation land in Dedham.

TOWN OF DEDHAM

Dedham has been engaged in comprehensive open space and recreation planning for sixteen years. The role of the Open Space Committee is to guide the development of each open space and recreation plan, set

policy and implementation priorities, and advocate for implementation of the plan once it is completed. Dedham produced its first open space and recreation plan in 1991 and updated the plan in 1998. In 2003, Town Meeting appropriated funds for the Open Space Committee to hire a consultant to prepare the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* so that Dedham would be eligible for state open space grants. The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Division of Conservation Services subsequently approved the 2004 Plan.[6]

Dedham's Conservation Commission, operating under M.G.L c. 40 s. 8C, is responsible for protecting the town's water resources and open space. The seven-member Commission administers and enforces the state Wetlands Protection Act and the Dedham Wetland Protection Bylaw. The Commission also manages Dedham's 265 acres of conservation land. Its staff includes a Conservation Agent, an Environmental Coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is a five-member elected body that oversees the Parks and Recreation Department at 269 Common Street, a gym that hosts recreation programs for Dedham residents. In addition to the Parks and Recreation Director, the department has three full-time employees assigned to the Parks Department while sixty to seventy part-time employees manage the recreation facilities and run programs for the Recreation Department. The Parks Department manages Barnes Memorial Park, Hartnett Square, Whiting Triangle, East Dedham Passive Park, the Dedham Common, Oakdale Square, and Condon, Paul, Churchill, and Fairbanks Parks, and the athletic fields at the Capen, Greenlodge, Oakdale, and Riverdale Schools.[7]

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (DCR)

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has authority over 626 acres of open space in Dedham. DCR prepares resource management plans and engages in capital planning and policy development for all lands under its jurisdiction throughout the state. DCR's Urban Parks Division, South Region, manages Cutler Park and Wilson Mountain. In addition, DCR has general oversight of the Fowl Meadow and the Ponkapoag Bog Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Recreational Program Participants

Dedham's recreational facilities are used for programs run by the Recreation Department, the School Department, and youth sports leagues. While available program statistics do not reflect casual users of Dedham's recreation facilities, they do provide an estimate of the demand for each facility. According to local data, the Mucciacio Pool is the most heavily used recreation facility in Dedham, accommodating about 122,300 users annual-

[6] *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, 1-3.

[7] Town of Dedham, Official Website, Parks and Recreation at <http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?pid=11777>.

TABLE 7.4
ATHLETICS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS BY FACILITY TYPE

Facility Type	Program	Number of Facilities	Number of Users
Pool	Swimming (one year attendance)	1	120,000
	Parks and Rec Swim Team		400
	Parks and Rec Swim Lessons		1,900
	School Athletics Swimming & Diving		11
Tennis	Parks and Rec Tennis Lessons	3	190
	School Athletics Tennis		26
Basketball (indoor-outdoor)	Dedham Youth Basketball	16	600
	School Athletics Basketball		85
Baseball/Softball	Dedham Little League	16	955
	Dedham Girls' Softball		250
	Dedham Parks and Rec Mens' Softball		220
	School Athletics Baseball		66
	School Athletics Softball		51
Track	School Athletics Track & Field	1	147
Field Sports*	Dedham Youth Soccer	9	823
	School Athletics Soccer		108
	School Athletics Field hockey		68
	School Athletics Lacrosse		45
	School Athletics Football		69
Playgrounds	Parks and Rec All Day Playground	8	120
	Parks and Rec Playgrounds		302
Indoor Facilities	Karate	2**	170
	Wrestling		175
	Gymnastics		270

** Includes soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, and football.*

*** Recreation Center and Dedham High School.*

Source: Dedham Parks and Recreation Department, Dedham School Department, and Dedham Youth Leagues.

ly. Baseball and softball fields are the second-most heavily used type of facility, with over 1,500 users annually. Playing fields for soccer, field hockey, and lacrosse attract over a thousand users per year, most of them soccer players. Table 7.4 reports the estimated number of participants in outdoor and indoor recreation programs sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, Dedham Public Schools, and various youth sports organizations.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

Aerial photographs show that between 1971 and 1999, the total amount of open land in Dedham decreased by about 280 acres (Table 7.5). The greatest absolute loss occurred with forest land—about 166 of the 280 acres – yet this represented a relatively small loss as a percentage of total forest land (-8.6 percent). About ninety acres of general "open" land were lost, too, including abandoned agricultural land and areas with no vegetation (such as power lines). Agricultural land, which by

TABLE 7.5
LAND USE CHANGE, 1971-1999, DEDHAM REGION

ACRES	Canton	Dedham	Dover	Foxboro	Medfield	Milton	Needham	Norwood	Randolph	Sharon	Stoughton	Walpole	Westwood
1971													
Open Land*	5,928.7	2,193.9	7,276.2	8,621.4	6,170.5	4,051.9	2,601.9	1,980.9	2,618.2	10,748.0	6,070.3	8,565.3	3,304.6
Recreation	757.3	182.8	57.4	422.8	65.9	246.3	169.4	227.3	61.1	334.2	112.6	186.8	178.6
Residential	2,756.0	2,552.4	2,136.9	2,505.0	1,954.0	3,351.8	3,781.1	2,574.8	2,689.6	2,819.2	3,022.3	3,009.6	2,816.8
Commercial	821.5	378.2	24.4	389.0	138.2	107.5	475.6	754.7	306.2	206.2	515.2	566.2	351.4
Water	1,539.2	915.5	283.9	829.8	843.0	262.9	725.9	581.5	584.7	942.5	400.4	862.3	264.6
All Other	684.2	610.0	99.0	573.8	201.8	373.8	406.5	576.9	430.5	575.2	409.3	317.6	222.4
Open Land % of Total	47.5%	32.1%	73.7%	64.6%	65.8%	48.3%	31.9%	29.6%	39.1%	68.8%	57.6%	63.4%	46.3%
1999													
Open Land*	4,533.5	1,912.5	6,636.6	7,076.3	5,121.3	3,408.5	2,297.1	1,376.1	1,942.7	8,927.3	4,699.8	6,718.8	2,717.2
Recreation	777.9	190.4	67.8	508.1	88.0	383.8	223.4	264.7	68.1	373.4	129.4	284.0	182.8
Residential	3,846.6	2,658.2	2,798.8	3,809.8	2,973.7	3,759.5	4,041.8	2,773.0	3,185.7	4,601.6	4,067.1	4,518.8	3,336.7
Commercial	1,084.6	611.6	16.4	484.5	143.9	165.7	474.3	1,211.3	504.6	169.1	870.7	709.1	439.4
Water	1,547.2	912.3	255.9	854.3	788.3	272.1	725.9	515.5	583.5	942.5	404.1	848.9	264.6
All Other	697.1	547.7	102.3	608.8	258.3	404.8	398.0	555.5	405.7	611.5	359.0	428.2	197.7
Open Land % of Total	36.3%	28.0%	67.2%	53.0%	54.6%	40.6%	28.1%	20.6%	29.0%	57.1%	44.6%	49.7%	38.1%
% Change in Open Land, 1971-1999	-23.5%	-12.8%	-8.8%	-17.9%	-17.0%	-15.9%	-11.7%	-30.5%	-25.8%	-16.9%	-22.6%	-21.6%	-17.8%

Soucey: MassGIS Land Use Summary Statistics Set 2, Massachusetts Geographic Information Systems. Online at <www.massgis.gov>, [last accessed 15 January 2008]. "Open land" includes agricultural, land, forests and other open or vacant land. "Commercial" includes commercial and industrial.

1971 already made up a very small proportion of all acres in Dedham, accounted for the remaining decline in acres of open land. Compared with most towns in the region, Dedham's loss of open space was fairly small. Only Dover and Needham experienced smaller losses of open space, while Randolph, Stoughton, and Walpole had losses of over twenty percent and Norwood, over thirty percent.[8] However, Dedham had a relatively small overall percentage of open space in 1999. While Dedham is largely built out and has many acres of protected open space, its relatively dense neighborhoods and small proportion of open space overall mean that even small losses can have significant effects on local ecology and would be felt keenly by residents.

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Local Plans

Dedham Master Plan (1996). The 1996 *Master Plan* was Dedham's most recent comprehensive planning effort. In the "Environment" chapter, the plan set forth two broad goals for open space and recreation in Dedham. The first addressed the protection and enhancement of open space as a natural and cultural resource and the second as a critical element of the town's design:

- Establish a program of open space protection for one or a combination of the following purposes:
  - Preservation of scenic, natural and aesthetic values
  - Protection of aquifers and watersheds
  - Provision of outdoor recreational opportunities
  - Protection of areas of historic and cultural significance
  - Protection of wildlife
- Establish or improve small neighborhood parks at the central area of each neighborhood, typically where convenience retail services are located.

To attain these goals, the following policies and actions were proposed:

- Set priorities for acquisition of open space parcels.
- Purchase development rights for certain open space.
- Include the work of the Open Space Committee for open space issues.

These goals and actions were revisited at the Dedham Master Plan Public Meeting held on November 15, 2007. (See *Recent Community Planning* below.)

Dedham Open Space and Recreation Plan (2004). Dedham published its most recent *Open Space and Recreation Plan* in 2004. As part of its evaluation of open space and recreational needs, the Open Space Committee surveyed Dedham residents about conservation strategies and the town's recreational facilities. Most of the survey respondents said that protecting open space in Dedham is a priority, particularly for conservation of land and water, and also for recreational needs. Respondents favored a broad mix of strategies the town could use to protect open space, including dedicating more local funds for maintenance of existing open space and recreation areas, creating a fund to acquire and maintain open space, and regulating the intensity of development in certain areas. Also, the majority of respondents indicated they would personally vote for town-supported land acquisitions to preserve open space. However, they also said the town should act first to maintain current recreation areas before moving to acquire new recreation land.

Regarding existing facilities, the greatest dissatisfaction expressed by respondents involved the quantity and quality of tennis courts and sports

[8] Massachusetts Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS), "Land Use Summary Statistics Set 2," at <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/landuse_stats.htm> .

fields. Several respondents reported overuse of existing fields and facilities. They also mentioned lack of access to waterways and lack of paths for various activities as a source of dissatisfaction. Survey respondents felt that both the quantity and quality of recreational areas for young or school-aged children were better than those for adults. The most commonly cited recreational amenities needed in Dedham were bike trails, public boat access, and soccer fields.

Based on the survey results and other information, the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* set forth an analysis of Dedham's open space needs. These needs fell into three broad categories, with related issues and opportunities:

- *Protection and restoration* of open space as both a natural resource and recreational opportunity.
    - Implement stormwater management techniques and restore ponds impacted by non-point source pollution.
    - Continue to make necessary improvements to recreational facilities.
- *Increased access* to open space.
    - Expand presence of hiking/walking trails, especially into networks of trails that function as both a recreational opportunity and as an alternative form of transportation.
    - Increase opportunities for canoeing and kayaking.
- *Acquisition* of additional open space.
    - Some of Dedham's neighborhoods are more densely populated than others, and there is a particular need to ensure that open space and recreational opportunities are accessible to all residents.
    - Unprotected private parcels must be monitored and protected carefully.
    - The town should develop criteria and strategies for acquisition of unprotected open space.

In addition, the plan identified a need for improved coordination of departments and other groups to ensure consistency with the town's overall open space objectives and to promote awareness of open space goals. From this analysis of needs, the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* identified the following goals, which fall under four main areas of action:

- *Recreation area planning and maintenance:* Maintain and improve quality of recreational service; Provide a range of recreation opportunities.

- *Natural resource protection, stewardship, restoration, and enhancement:* Protect biological diversity and scenic character; Preserve water resources.

- *Access to public open spaces:* Provide universal access to facilities and programs; Expand access to open spaces.

- *Land acquisition, funding, and management:* Plan and coordinate protection of lands of conservation and recreation interest; Provide linkages between existing open spaces; Implement and promote land management strategies; Provide adequate funding for open space acquisition and management.

These broad policy statements were translated into steps that comprise the *Five-Year Action Plan.* Now nearing the end of its intended lifespan, the Action Plan serves both as a guide to current and future open space planning and as a sounding board against which to evaluate what has been accomplished in recent years. Since the Plan's approval, Dedham has made progress on the following actions:[9]

- *Maintain and improve quality of recreational service:* The Parks Department has made improvements to several parks, including work to improve accessibility. Playground equipment has been replaced at Paul Park, accessible parking will be added at Fairbanks Park, and Churchill Park will be renovated.

- *Provide a range of recreation opportunities:* The town acquired the former Society of African Missions (SMA) property to accommodate the Parks and Recreation Department office and facilities, and will be the site of a boat launch onto the Charles River. The Dolan Fields property will host two new softball fields, addressing the need for new playing fields. However, there has been little to no progress on actions regarding planning for a town-wide greenway, bicycle/pedestrian trails, and other recreational trails.

- *Protect biological diversity and scenic character:* The Conservation Commission has continued to enforce the town's wetlands bylaw, which is more restrictive than the state Wetlands Protection Act, and follows the ACEC guidelines for the Fowl Meadow/Ponkapoag Bog area. The 100-year floodplain has not been updated, and without town resources to dedicate toward this action, the Conservation Commission will have to go to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for funding. Actions to protect scenic character were perceived to be under the jurisdiction of the Dedham Historic Districts Commission (HDC).

- *Preserve water resources:* The Conservation Commission has addressed actions to monitor water quality by continuing to use the Charles River Watershed Association's (CWRA) water quality monitoring services, and is generally supportive of their efforts. The town participates in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) MS4 Program, which regulates Dedham's stormwater system, and the Conservation Commission is making additional efforts to monitor stormwater discharges from individual properties. In addition to working with the CWRA, the town has made efforts to improve the quality of Charles River by cleaning up the waterfront that abuts the former SMA property. There has been no action on pursuing funding from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to restore Wigwam Pond.

- *Provide universal access to facilities and programs:* Aside from beginning to designate and construct accessible parking spaces at Parks Department facilities, there have been no actions under this goal. Many of Dedham's parks pose barriers to people with disabilities and therefore require renovations to gates, paths of travel, and playground equipment, but these have not been addressed. The action to de-

[9] Don Yonika, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 January 2008; Jim Mahar, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 23 January 2008.

velop recreational facility design standards to guide future construction of facilities also has not been addressed. Finally, because the action to create other recreational trails has not been addressed, neither has the action to provide a range of trail systems for all abilities.

- *Expand access to open spaces:* Dedham has made some progress increasing access to both water and land open space resources. The town has increased access to the Charles River – a long-standing goal articulated in both the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* and in recent community planning efforts – by acquiring the SMA property and installing a boat launch. Further, the Conservation Commission has applied for funding to create a "Water Trail" along the Charles River. This project will involve the creation of a water-proof map to guide boaters along a three-mile river route, installation of benches, repair and upgrade of boat launches, and the removal of hazardous debris in the waterway.

  While the town has focused on expanding access to waterways, no action has been taken to create or upgrade trails in the Town Forest. This may partially reflect the Parks and Recreation Department's perception that there is little demand for these trails due to the presence of trails elsewhere, such as Wilson Mountain.

- *Plan and coordinate protection of lands of conservation and recreation interest:* The Conservation Commission has begun to identify and update ownership information on parcels of conservation interest and create a prioritized list of Chapter 61 parcels and other vacant land. Action to generate a list of "orphan" properties that could be sold to generate funds for other open space acquisitions is in progress. Actions to identify and create a strategy to acquire institutional or recreational properties have not been addressed. Of the properties identified for acquisition, one has been acquired, two are under negotiation for preservation of open space, and one has not been acquired. An Open Space Committee has been established, but reportedly meets infrequently.

Universal Access

Many of Dedham's parks pose barriers to people with disabilities, and therefore require renovations to gates, paths of travel, and playground equipment, but these needs have not been addressed. According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2006 (SCORP), the most pressing recreation facility needs in the Metropolitan Boston region involve providing access for people with disabilities of all types. These needs are more pronounced in the Boston area than in any other part of the Commonwealth.

- *Provide linkages between existing open spaces:* No specific actions under this goal have been addressed per se because their implementation is largely contingent upon completing the identification and prioritization of parcels.

- *Implement and promote land management strategies:* Although the youth sports league teams do some cleanup of recreational facilities, there has been little outreach to encourage local stewardship of parks, fields, playgrounds, and open space, and little to no education for property owners regarding preservation opportunities or environmental stewardship. There has been little progress on improving communication between town boards with jurisdiction of open space and recreational facilities.

- *Provide adequate funding for open space acquisition and management:* The action to hire one full-time staff person for environmental protection and development review was completed when the town hired an Environmental Coordinator in 2007. Efforts to establish an Open Space Land Acquisition Fund have not been initiated. The town attempted to pass the Community Preservation Act (CPA), but was not successful. This may have been due to insufficient information, lack of preparation, concerns about the cost to taxpayers, or a preference to pay for

open space and other CPA-eligible activities with general fund revenue.

Regional Plans

Charles River Watershed Association. The Charles River Watershed Association (CWRA) consists of thirty-five cities and towns adjacent or near to the eighty-mile-long span of the Charles River. While the CWRA has not issued specific actions to be carried out by communities within the watershed, its Stormwater Management program puts particular emphasis on outreach and education to communities. In a recent report submitted to the EPA, the CWRA's Stormwater Education and Outreach Project set forth the following goals:[10]

- Educate municipalities on better methods for stormwater prevention and control, including low-impact development (LID) and on-site stormwater best management practices (BMPs);
- Assist in the preparation and adoption of local stormwater regulations; and
- Educate and advocate for the development, adoption and implementation of dedicated stormwater financing mechanisms, such as user fees or stormwater utilities.

Neponset River Watershed Association 2004-2009 Action Plan. The Neponset River Watershed comprises about 130 square miles of land in fourteen towns, including Dedham. The Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) is a non-profit organization that works to protect and restore the Neponset River through science, outreach, project work, and advocacy. NepRWA's 2004-2009 Action Plan identifies the following actions relevant to open space resources in Dedham:

- Require implementation of town-wide bylaws with emphasis on recharge that applies to both new development and redevelopment;
- Establish collaborative multi-town, state, and citizen group efforts to implement education/public participation on aspects of pollution reduction more effectively, including methods to limit stormwater runoff from landscaped areas;
- Adopt and enforce Irrigation System Performance Standards;[11]
- Encourage all municipalities and water suppliers to dedicate meaningful funding to water conservation activities and effective outreach; and
- Encourage all towns to collaborate to maximize effectiveness in water conservation efforts.

In addition, NepRWA's Action Plan identifies Priority Sites for a series of recommended actions. The Neponset River's Middle Mainstream section, which includes Boston, Canton, Dedham, Milton, Norwood, and Westwood, was designated as a priority site for addressing runoff from impervious surfaces and the river's reduced streamflow, caused primarily by excessive water withdrawals. Dedham's Mother Brook was designated as a priority site for two reasons: first, it has one of the highest nutrient levels in the watershed, and trash and debris from runoff, and second, it contributes to the river's reduced streamflow because of channelization and habitat destruction from illegal dumping.[12]

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[10] Charles River Watershed Association, *Charles River Watershed Plan*, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Targeted Watersheds Grant Program, 2003-2006, Final Report, (2007), 123-124,

[11] Neponset River Watershed Association and Alexandra Dawson, "Options for Managing the Impact of Private Irrigation Wells and Surface Diversions on Wetlands, Waterways and Public Water Supplies," (2004).

[12] Neponset River Watershed Association, *Neponset River Watershed 2004-2009 Action Plan*, (30 June 2004), 22-26.

Massachusetts Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (2006). *Massachusetts Outdoors 2006* is the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which allows the Commonwealth to be eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants. Findings are reported for the state as a whole and also by regions. Dedham belongs to the Metropolitan Boston region, which, though smallest in land area, accounts for approximately thirty-two percent of the state's population. It is notable that, though the region has the smallest total acreage of open space, it has the third largest percentage of total land area dedicated to open space and recreation.

According to the results of a survey conducted for the SCORP, baseball, basketball, and other field-based activities were more popular in the Metro Boston region than other regions in the state. There was significantly less resource use in the Boston area, for half the resource types including lakes, ponds, and wetlands, wildlife conservation areas, forests, mountains, and agricultural lands. The SCORP survey found the most pressing needs to be providing access for people with disabilities of all types, a need which garnered a higher percentage than in other regions in the state. This need was followed by maintenance and restoration of existing facilities (a concern shared by other regions), and then by providing public transportation to recreation activities (also a need more pronounced in the Metro Boston region). In terms of facilities maintenance needs, tennis and basketball facilities were named as most in need of repair. For new facilities, respondents named walking, road biking, swimming, and playground facilities as most important.[13]

Recent Community Planning. In November 2007, Dedham residents came together to discuss and evaluate many aspects of town life, including open space and recreation. The meeting consisted of two parts. The first involved the entire assembly, when residents were invited to express what they liked and did not like about life in Dedham. After generating a list of ideas, residents voted on which items they felt were important, and also which they felt were worth spending money on. Several open space issues garnered significant support, including:

- The Town Forest, open space, and trails;
- Preserving open space in general;
- Development and maintenance of playing fields, and
- Maintaining a balance of open space and development.

Of these, with the exception of "preserving open space," fewer people indicated they were willing to spend money on these issues than thought them important.

In a smaller group discussion, participants agreed that there had been some progress on protecting aquifers, watersheds, and historically and culturally significant areas, and slight progress on establishing and improving neighborhood open space. For the remaining goals and actions, the group agreed there had been little if any progress, and—with the exception of aquifer protection—there was general agreement on the lack of success in meeting most open space goals and actions.

In addition to feedback on goals, general discussion in the break-out group generated the following issues and opportunities:

Dissatisfaction with the management/governance of open space issues and action. There was a sense that open space-related committees hold meetings, but are ineffective in their cooperation with each other and with citizens.

[13] Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs: Division of Conservation Services, *Massachusetts Outdoors 2006 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*, (2006), 50, 86-91.

Suggestions for possible new open space and recreation sites, including the landfill site and a possible canoe launch on the Charles River.

Emphasis on the need for continued aquifer and watershed protection and addressing the issue on a regional level.

Concern for the loss of open space on the Charles River.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

MAINTAINING AND MANAGING EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

With over two hundred acres of active recreation facilities and over 1,000 total acres of outdoor recreation space, Dedham has a wealth of recreational opportunities. As demonstrated in the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* survey, Dedham residents recognize the importance of maintaining and improving existing facilities before building new ones. With an inventory of existing open space assets and a list of actions to improve town-owned recreational facilities, the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* provided a good road map for maintaining Dedham's parks, fields, playgrounds, and trails. Since the plan's publication, the Parks and Recreation Department has been active in pursuing some of its goals. Continued adherence and regular updates to this type of short-range plan will be crucial to keeping the resources Dedham already owns in good repair for future generations of users.

Some aspects of Dedham's substantial parks maintenance could be lessened by leveraging neighborhood assets. Many communities have had great success in transferring the care of their smaller, neighborhood open spaces to the people who use them: the residents of the neighborhoods. These types of open spaces—known as *community open spaces*—typically see a higher level of care, increased safety, and a strengthening of neighborhood social fabric as people work together to care for a common space close to where they live. Dedham is fortunate in that it has identifiable and intact neighborhoods with at least two parks in each. By organizing groups to take charge of certain aspects of parks maintenance, such as cleanups, plantings, and light renovations, the town could experience both decreased demands for park maintenance and a stronger civic fabric through increased neighborhood activity. The Five-Year Action Plan refers to this sort of arrangement with its recommendation to create adopt-a-park and adopt-a-spot programs for public open spaces. Dedham Civic Pride currently runs a "sponsor-a-spot" program with local merchants and neighborhood groups to beautify traffic islands and street corners. With the help of the town's Parks and Recreation Commission, this type of activity could be expanded to each neighborhood.

INCREASING ACCESS AND EXPANDING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

With regard to new recreational facilities and opportunities, Dedham's greatest opportunity and challenge lies in activating substantial and largely inaccessible parcels of town-owned open space, and linking the existing collection of open space pieces into a town-wide open space system.

ACTIVATING EXISTING OPEN SPACE

Dedham owns several large parcels of open space that remain largely inaccessible to and, therefore underutilized by, local residents. For example, the Wigwam Pond and Little Wigwam Pond conservation areas include over one hundred acres of open space, but most of the land is inaccessible to residents due to overgrown trails and lack of signage. The Town Forest contributes another seventy-six acres of open space, yet it too remains largely underutilized due to a poorly marked access point and overgrown trail.

Developing these lands into areas for walking, hiking, and biking will not only activate open spaces with low-impact, sustainable recreational activities, but will also provide the types of recreation facilities that residents identify as being in short supply: walking and hiking trails and bike paths, activities that can be enjoyed as much by adults as by young and school-aged children. The need and opportunity for this type of recreational amenity

appears in the Five-Year Action Plan,[14] the 1996 *Master Plan* and the SCORP, and also was evident during the public participation process for this Master Plan Update. The Parks and Recreation Department may think there is less demand for trails due to their presence in other locations, such as Wilson Mountain and Cutler Park. However, these areas are concentrated in west and northwest Dedham, leaving large areas of town underserved by hiking, walking, and biking trails.

LINKING EXISTING OPEN SPACE

The other element to unlocking Dedham's open space potential is the creation of a network of trails to connect existing open spaces. This goal and relevant actions also appear in the Five-Year Action Plan, and several suggestions for potential trails to connect significant open space parcels have been identified.[15] Specifically, the Plan identified paths along Mother Brook, the Charles River, Wigwam Pond, and the Providence Highway corridor, and connections among the land within the Town Forest, Neponset River Reservation, and Cutler Park through easements across private land to provide access to Dedham's ponds.[16]

In addition, the Plan recommends that the abandoned railroad between the Readville Station in Boston to just before Providence Highway be developed into a **greenway**—a linear green space that provides walking and bicycling paths, and typically links nodes such as public facilities, commercial centers, or other open spaces, together. A greenway in this location would create connections between several open space and recreational land such as the High School fields, Pottery Lane recreation area, and the fields at Memorial Park, and would also provide a nearly-direct route between the Readville commuter rail station and Dedham Square.

The Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission are in the process of identifying land ownership along some of the proposed trail routes. Once the prospective routes are inventoried, these groups will need to create a strategy for acquiring the necessary parcels or obtaining conservation easements from private property owners. While such an undertaking will be a long and challenging endeavor, it is nevertheless a crucial one if Dedham is to expand the opportunities provided by its open spaces. By moving away from open space as a patchwork of parcels and toward open space as a *network* and *system*, Dedham can greatly increase access to open space through relatively small additions of land. Doing so would provide routes for alternative forms of transportation, further provide for under-represented recreational activities such as walking, biking, and hiking, and offer a new experience of the town's built and natural environment previously unknown even to long-time residents.

Finally, providing information on recreational facilities is an immediate and relatively low-cost way to increase access to town-owned open space. The Five-Year Action Plan recommends creating handouts and brochures for the major parks and public lands, showing trails, special features, and access points for pedestrians, the disabled, and vehicles. Making these materials available at Town Hall, on the town's website, and at town-wide events would

Greenbelts and Greenways

A greenbelt is a contiguous band of forests, open space, and parkland around a community or connecting places within a community. Its primary purposes are to protect natural and scenic resources, enhance the quality of life, and preserve community or neighborhood aesthetics.

A greenway is a linear open space network adjacent to defined corridors such as rivers, railroad rights of way, or streets. Its primary purpose is to provide a system of safe, aesthetically pleasing trails and paths for non-vehicular transport such as walking, jogging, and biking.

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14 *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*, "Five Year Action Plan," (2004), Actions A-1, A; A-2, A, B, C, D, and K, 72-77.

15 Ibid, see Action L-2, C.

16 Ibid, 61.

boost use of Dedham's lesser known recreational areas and help to create a greater constituency for their care and stewardship.

RECENT AND PENDING OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS

In addition to expanding access to some of its long-standing open space parcels like the Town Forest, Dedham also has a new opportunity to shape and activate open space through its development of the Manor Fields recreational site, also known as the Striar property. In 2001, the town purchased this property – a 25-acre parcel named after its former owner, Steven Striar – for the purpose of preventing further industrial and commercial development. The town placed a conservation restriction on the land and dedicated it for recreational purposes.

In the early 2000s, a concept plan and feasibility study were completed by the Norfolk County Engineering Department and Vollmer Associates, respectively. The latter study highlighted two key problems with the basic concept plan for Manor Fields: wetlands impacts and site access.[17] Dedham resolved the site access issue in 2008, which until then had posed a critical roadblock to the property's development, by obtaining an access easement through an abutting property. In 2009 the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended establishing a committee to spearhead planning for the parcel. The group includes two members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Public Works (DPW) Director, the Director of the Department of Engineering, Conservation Commission members, and two at-large members. Currently, this committee is in the process of generating possible development objectives and options, which include:

- Working with the DPW and Engineering Directors for field development and parking lot design.
- Possible inclusion of snow storage area.
- Providing for wetland protection and management.
- Providing for the temporary storage yard for equipment and materials.
- Possible inclusion of space and/or facilities for composting residential yard waste for clean fill and loam for use on municipal fields and properties, which would reduce the need to pay for the removal of yard materials and for loam for playing fields and flower beds.

Dedham will need to continue with its efforts to develop and provide access to this space, taking into consideration the types of recreational opportunities Dedham residents desire most and also how the Striar property can be linked to other existing open space parcels.

LAND PROTECTION PRIORITIES

Dedham's priorities for acquiring unprotected parcels should hinge on whether they abut or could potentially contribute to existing or planned open space resources. Many vacant, privately-owned parcels could make a significant contribution to Dedham's open space holdings due to their location near larger parcels of open space with at least some level of protection. In addition to the larger parcels, small parcels or conservation easements to connect existing open spaces should be identified and made acquisition priorities.

Currently, the Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee are working to identify properties of conservation and recreational interest and incorporate them into the town's existing Open Space Inventory. Without a funding source, however, it has been difficult to acquire land to add to existing open space resources. Instead, open space has been acquired on a piecemeal basis by negotiating with developers.[18] While this approach may add to the net amount of protected open space in Dedham, it does not advance the development of an overall open space plan or design, nor does it lend itself to assembling larger parcels or corridors of open

[17] Vollmer Associates, *Feasibility Study: Manor Fields Recreation Facility*, (February 2004), iii-iv.

[18] Don Yonika, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 January 2008.

space that offer habitat protection. Dedham could take a more comprehensive and planned route to open space conservation and preservation by completing its open space inventory, identifying parcels that are particularly valuable due to size and/or location, and making those parcels priorities for preservation. This approach, coupled with a designated funding source for open space acquisition and an outreach strategy for cultivating donors of conservation restrictions and outright donations of land, would allow Dedham to take a much more strategic approach to protecting open space and building an open space system.

FUNDING

Dedham's most recent *Open Space and Recreation Plan* and accompanying Five-Year Action Plan is comprehensive in its identification of issues, opportunities and goals, and its articulation of actions required to advance those goals. However, without a reliable source of funds for open space acquisition, the plan's most important goals and a large amount of Dedham's open space potential will not be realized. Asking town officials and residents to dedicate large sums of money to purchase open space will be a difficult proposition. While many residents value open space and the recreational opportunities it provides, there are competing needs for town funds that overshadow open space acquisition. Many town facilities are badly in need of repair, an issue that will require not only substantial amounts of money for renovation but possible additional purchases of land as well. Dedham's sewer and road systems also have acute needs that will require a large and long-term financial commitment.

Dedham cannot afford to ignore or set aside planned additions to its open space system. The potential to link existing open spaces means that a relatively small amount of land may create enormous gains in access. Additionally, the town has over 600 acres of land owned by non-profit organizations or private institutions, used as private recreation, or under the Chapter 61 program. The sale of one of these holdings could either present a tremendous opportunity or loss, depending on whether Dedham has some means to finance open space acquisition.

Adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) would provide a means to acquire open space (as well as fund affordable housing and historic preservation). The CPA is local option legislation through which municipalities voluntarily agree to impose a surcharge on their property tax bills of up to three percent. These funds may be used for open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation only. Some taxpayers may be granted an exemption from paying the surcharge. CPA cities and towns receive matching funds from the state, which collects revenue for the statewide CPA trust fund through fees on real estate transfers. Initially, each CPA community received a match equal to 100 percent of its locally raised revenue. While the match rate has fallen significantly over the past two years (to an average match of seventy-four percent in 2008), new legislation was filed in January 2009 to stabilize the statewide trust fund by guaranteeing that CPA communities received a minimum 75% annual match.[19]

The CPA was brought to Town Meeting several years ago, but there was little public outreach and education, and the legislation did not pass. The town should again consider adopting CPA to fund urgently needed public resources, including open space acquisition. Asking residents to accept an increase in their property taxes is difficult, but it would provide the means to move forward with long-term open space planning, design, and implementation which, despite comprehensive open space planning efforts, has to this point been difficult to realize.

Another funding mechanism used in communities such as Bedford involves authorizing a sizeable open space bond issuance, which would essentially reserve some of the town's borrowing power to buy open space as properties become available. This approach would require a debt exclusion under Proposition 2 1/2.

CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS

Traditionally, Dedham has not promoted the use of conservation restrictions as a component of its open

[19] Massachusetts Community Preservation Act at <www.communitypreservation.org>.

space protection strategy. The majority of protected land in Dedham has been secured through land purchase or, in a few instances, land donation. This ensures municipal jurisdiction over the protected land and allows for public access. However, municipal ownership can also raise land management issues and potential liability concerns as well.

While Dedham has successfully preserved a significant amount of open space, there are still large tracts of undeveloped land and smaller, strategically located parcels that remain unprotected. These parcels could significantly enhance the town's open space inventory. However, current economic conditions can make it difficult for towns to complete outright purchases of land, and alternative methods for land conservation should be pursued. Furthermore, there may be instances where a municipal purchase of land is not necessary or is simply not feasible in order to provide permanent protection for an open space parcel. A conservation restriction placed on a private landholding would result in the same benefit of permanent protection. Strategically combining the use of trail easements and conservation restrictions could enhance the town's ability to develop a town-wide trail system without the need to acquire land parcels.

MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ISSUES

Dedham has three entities in town government with a role in managing open space and developing recreational facilities: the Conservation Commission, the Open Space Committee, and the Parks and Recreation Department. Additionally, the Dedham Historic Districts Commission (HDC) has a role to play in issues relating to scenic quality and character.

The Conservation Commission acts under the authority of M.G.L. c. 40, s. 8C as the local municipal agency responsible for protecting the town's land, water, and biological resources. To achieve its mandated mission "for the promotion and development of natural resources and for the protection of watershed resources," the Commission has the authority to acquire, protect, and limit the use of open space parcels in the interests of resource conservation. To date, the Dedham Conservation Commission has 265 acres of land under its care and custody. The Commission has the authority to adopt rules and regulations governing the use of public conservation land and is responsible for managing the parcels.

As is often the case in communities, the Conservation Commission's jurisdictional responsibilities for watershed and wetlands protection can hinder its ability to seek and promote open space conservation. To address this, Dedham made the Open Space Committee a permanent committee to advocate for open space after completion of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*. However, there is a sense among residents that the Open Space Committee has not been as effective as it could be in advancing *Open Space and Recreation Plan*'s goals and actions. More clearly defined roles and responsibilities, greater visibility within town government, a method of accountability to residents, and predictable funding might improve the Committee's efficacy and standing. Further, it appears that the Dedham HDC has not been included in joint planning efforts with the Open Spaces Committee. Improved coordination between the HDC and Open Space Committee is worth considering.

As recommended in the Five-Year Action Plan, Dedham recently hired a full-time Environmental Coordinator to act as a liaison for different boards and departments dealing with open space and environmental issues.[20] This position may need to be assessed and reshaped to accommodate Dedham's changing and growing open space and environmental needs.

ZONING & OPEN SPACE

In some cases, preservation or conservation of open space should happen through conservation restrictions or outright purchase of land. This is true when there is a distinct parcel of land with clear value as open space, whether it is left as conservation land or developed into some type of recreational amenity or other public space. However, open space also has value as a design element within development itself, providing aesthetic, ecological, and sometimes recreational benefit. This type of ar-

[20] Virginia LeClair, interview, 9 January 2008.

rangement is well-illustrated by "cluster" development, a residential form that increases housing density on one section of a subdivision and leaves a large section of land as contiguous open space. Cluster development creates less impervious surface, which reduces stormwater runoff, and leaves larger parcels of undeveloped land that support critical ecological functions such as stormwater retention and bioremediation, as well as wildlife habitat. Cluster developments are the product of local zoning regulations which allow, encourage, or require developers to create smaller lots and preserve open space.

Dedham's current zoning bylaw provides something like a cluster development bylaw with its Planned Residential Development (PRD) Standards. These are special regulations for residential districts that allow a unit density 1.5 times higher than what is allowed under conventional zoning, and require twenty percent of the entire tract to be maintained as natural open space, i.e., no addition of impervious surfaces or structures. (*For more information on PRD, see Chapter 3, Land Use.*) While the regulations do provide a means for conservation of open space, there is little incentive for developers to use them. The regulations require developers to present a comprehensive concept plan to the Planning Board and to obtain Town Meeting approval before the Planning Board can act on a development application. Although this type of permitting process intends to provide greater control over development, it usually acts as a disincentive to developers to use the regulations.

To better integrate and protect open space as a design element, Dedham should adopt an open space-residential development (OSRD) bylaw. This type of regulation differs from Planned Residential Development Standards in that it maintains the net unit density on a large parcel of land but allows reduced lot sizes, and consolidates the land that would otherwise be in private yards and driveways into common open space. The results include more compact development and a large area of common open space. Also, a typical OSRD process identifies the most sensitive or unique land within a parcel and frames the development around this feature, resulting in both better open space and natural resource protection and often better design. (*For more information on OSRD zoning, see Chapter 3, Land Use.*)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CONTINUE EFFORTS TO PLAN FOR AND DEVELOP THE MANOR FIELDS (FORMERLY THE STRIAR PROPERTY) SITE FOR RECREATIONAL USES.

Dedham has made substantial progress toward activating this open space parcel, which it acquired in 2001, by conducting conceptual planning and a feasibility study and also by securing an access easement through an adjacent property in 2008. The town recently assigned a special committee to undertake preliminary planning for the parcel. This group should continue its work identifying development objectives and working with appropriate staff, boards and committees to develop the property. The committee should incorporate other overarching goals discussed in this element into its planning for Manor Fields, especially linking the parcel with existing opens by connecting them through proposed greenways or other trails). The site's proximity to the Readville Yards, the Readville commuter rail station, and the proposed greenway between Readville station and Providence Highway present a significant opportunity to create new and powerful open space connections.

2. CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND COMPLETE A COMPREHENSIVE OPEN SPACE INVENTORY THAT IDENTIFIES AND RANKS ALL OPEN SPACE PARCELS WITHIN THE TOWN.

Dedham has made commendable progress in developing its existing open space inventory. However, it will be important going forward for the town to ensure that each parcel has consistent information on ownership, level of protection, and existence of conservation restrictions and/or agricultural preservation restrictions. In addition, Dedham needs to develop a system for evaluating parcels in terms of their relative priority for preservation. Considerations for identifying priority parcels could include proximity to existing open space; level of existing protection; and the likelihood that the current owner may sell. The priority ranking of an open space parcel should also be based on whether

that parcel helps to expand or complete an existing trail or path. A comprehensive inventory will serve as an invaluable tool as Dedham seeks to expand and link together its open space holdings. This work should be done in concert with work that is currently underway to update the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009*.

3. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO PROVIDE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO THE TOWN'S RECREATION FACILITIES, PARKS, AND TRAILS.

The *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* included a number of recommendations for accessibility improvements to Dedham's existing recreational facilities. Aside from providing accessible parking spaces at several municipal parks, Dedham has done little to address these accessibility recommendations. Access to recreation facilities for people with disabilities is both a civil rights issue under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA) and an eligibility issue for federally funded grants under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Dedham will need to devote more attention to disability access in its future planning for open space and recreation facilities development.

4. MAKE THE OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MORE EFFECTIVE BY CLEARLY COMMUNICATING ITS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PUBLIC, HOLDING IT ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS INITIATIVES, AND GIVING IT A MORE VISIBLE ROLE WITHIN TOWN GOVERNMENT.

Dedham is fortunate to have a dedicated municipal committee to serve as an advocate for open space initiatives, and the town should take advantage of its potential. The Open Space Committee's role also needs to be made distinct from the Conservation Commission's role as it relates to open space.

5. ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND GROUPS TO TAKE GREATER OWNERSHIP AND STEWARD SHIP OF NEIGHBORHOOD OPEN SPACES.

The maintenance responsibilities of neighborhood associations could be limited to small tasks such as caring for vegetation, walking paths, and other plantings. Interested groups could work with the Parks Department to establish responsibilities for the upkeep of certain areas. Further, the Parks Department could provide materials for use by neighborhood groups, which would give them greater control and ownership over some of the aesthetic and functional choices in neighborhood open spaces, such as the placement of flower beds and types of plantings that are chosen. This type of arrangement takes dedicated individuals and flexible, attentive town staff. However, it could provide a way to foster greater civic engagement and stewardship while providing better maintenance and care for town parks.

6. ESTABLISH A TRAIL STEWARDS GROUP.

Town-owned trails suffer from poor maintenance, which leads to reduced access and decreased utility for town residents. Trail conditions could be improved by establishing a volunteer Trail Stewards Group to not only maintain but also create and promote the town's trails. Currently, access to Dedham's municipal trails is limited by poor trails maintenance and also a simple lack of awareness of these resources. A Trail Stewards Group could maintain trails and also publish basic materials such as maps and brochures to guide residents and visitors to and along existing trails.

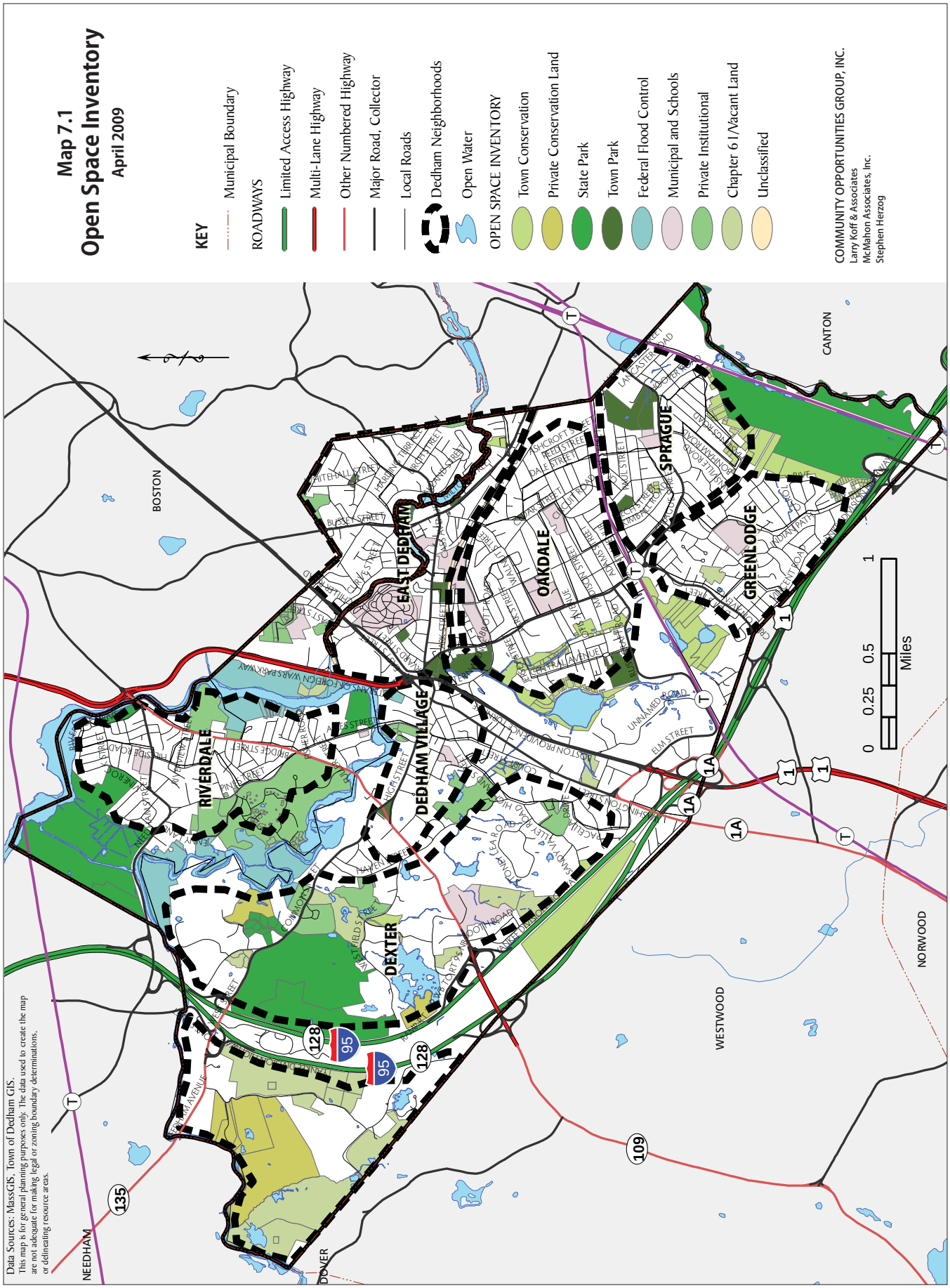
7. CONTINUE EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A TOWN-WIDE TRAILS SYSTEM.

Dedham's Conservation Commission should continue to work to identify land ownership along proposed trail or "greenway" routes in Dedham and strategize to preserve and gain access to the necessary parcels. The *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* contains a number of 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 in to a town-wide open space system and providing more op-

portunities for passive recreation activities, such as walking or biking.

8. MAINTAIN TIMELY UPDATES OF THE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN (OSRP) TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR OPEN SPACE PLANNING FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

An Open Space and Recreation Plan and its accompanying public process help a community identify open space resources and establish action items to improve, expand, and protect them. The structure and contents of an OSRP are determined by requirements of the Division of Conservation Services. Fulfilling these requirements allows cities and towns to apply for competitive state grants for open space and recreational facility development. In Dedham's next OSRP, it will be particularly important to include a framework and specific details for improving and maintaining the town's recreational facilities. Going forward, Dedham should use the recreational facilities recommendations and action items in its OSRP as a roadmap for upgrading all parks and recreational facilities.


Map 7.1
Open Space Inventory
April 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Dedham Neighborhoods
Open Water
OPEN SPACE INVENTORY
Town Conservation
Private Conservation Land
State Park
Town Park
Federal Flood Control
Municipal and Schools
Private Institutional
Chapter 61/Vacant Land
Unclassified
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS.
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal or zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
DOVER
WESTWOOD
NORWOOD
CANTON
RIVERDALE
DEDHAM VILLAGE
EAST DEDHAM
DEXTER
OAKDALE
SPRAGUE
GREENLODGE
0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

CHAPTER 8

HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Dedham has a diverse housing stock that reflects the town's history and growth. Established in 1635 as a buffer town to protect coastal communities from attacks from the interior, Dedham initially included more than two hundred square miles of land, much of it used for agriculture. Industry made an early mark in Dedham with the digging of Mother Brook to supply power to the town's corn mill. Manufacturing expanded and eventually employed over 650 people in the mid-nineteenth century, producing textiles, metal goods, paper, furniture, leather goods and other products.

Construction of the Norfolk & Bristol and the Harford & Dedham Turnpikes through Dedham, and the later establishment of rail lines, created new economic opportunities centered on transportation. By the twentieth century, it became clear that the town's agricultural identity was lost, and the future use of farmland would be the subdivision.[1]

Housing in Dedham ranges from the historic mill workers' housing in East Dedham to large homes surrounded by wide expanses of pasture in West Dedham. The physical form and vitality of the Village makes it easy to imagine the hustle-and-bustle of life in Dedham of years gone by, and the postwar housing boom is apparent in Dedham's suburban neighborhoods of Greenlodge, Riverdale and Oakdale. Today, Dedham faces housing issues common to many communities in the Boston region: affordability, preservation of housing stock, the changing needs of the population, and growth pressures stemming from residential and commercial development. In addition, Dedham has a uniquely diverse housing stock that contributes directly to the ambience of each neighborhood. As Dedham moves into the future, the town will need to consider the shape and character of its housing stock when developing policies and regulations that affect housing production and preservation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Population Characteristics

Dedham experienced much of its population growth after World War II. With the expansion of regional highways and local road networks, Dedham became a logical choice for families looking to move beyond the confines of the city. Between 1950 and 1960, Dedham's population increased twenty-nine percent and peaked around

[1] The Dedham Historical Society and Museum, "A Capsule History of Dedham," <www.dedhamhistorical.org>.

1970 at 26,928 persons.[2] Thereafter, its population declined fifteen percent to 23,464 persons in 2000.[3] Current estimates suggest that Dedham's population has increased slightly and now stands at 24,046.[4]

While population growth plays an important part in determining needs for community services, housing dynamics are intrinsically related to household growth and changes in household composition. National trends indicate that households are smaller than in the past, and though populations in some areas may decline in absolute terms, people demand more housing units to accommodate growth in the number of households. Dedham, too, has experienced this trend. Despite declines in population, the number of households in Dedham has increased and continues to grow. In 1990, Dedham had 8,490 households, but ten years later, there were 8,653 households in town and as of 2007, the estimated number of households in Dedham is 9,004.[5]

The characteristics of Dedham's population and households affect local housing demand and housing needs. Though certainly not the only considerations, two influential factors are the ages of household members and household income. Like the Boston region and the nation as a whole, Dedham is witnessing dramatic growth in some of its older age cohorts with the aging of the Baby Boom generation. Estimates indicate that between 2000 and 2007, the 55 to 64 year old cohort increased by twenty-three percent to almost 2,900 persons. Today, people over 55 years old represent more than one-third of Dedham's population. Furthermore, the 75 and over age cohort grew dramatically between 1990 and 2000, increasing twenty-five percent. Estimates for 2007 show that the over-75 population continues to grow and now makes up seventeen percent of Dedham's total population.[6]

Household incomes in Dedham grew in real dollars between 1990 and 2000, but when adjusted for inflation, incomes declined between 2000 and 2007. Dedham's median household income increased from $45,687 in 1990 to $61,699 in 2000. Median family incomes and non-family incomes increased by similar margins during the 1990s. As is the case in many communities, however, household incomes in Dedham did not outpace inflation between 2000 and 2007. Dedham's median household income in 2000 is valued at over $74,000 in today's dollars, yet the current median household income is estimated at less than $73,500.[7]

Neighborhood Housing Characteristics

Dedham has many types of housing. Its homes range from single-family dwellings to large multi-family complexes, from historic homes dating back hundreds of years to new development still under construction, and from modest, market-rate and affordable homes to multi-million dollar estates. Its housing varies by neighborhood, too, which sheds light on the town's history, physical evolution, and regional influences. As noted elsewhere in this Master Plan Update, Dedham has seven recognizable neighborhoods: East Dedham, Greenlodge, Sprague/Manor, Oakdale, Riverdale, Dedham Village, and West Dedham (often referred to as Dexter or Upper Dedham).[8] While these neighborhoods have grown and changed over time, each retains distinctive characteristics and a unique identity.

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[2] U.S. Census Bureau, 1950, 1960, and 1970 Census.

[3] Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P12: Sex by Age."

[4] Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports", <www.claritas.com>.

[5] 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, "P15: Household Type and Relationship," Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P18: Household Size," and Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports."

[6] Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P12: Sex by Age," and Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports,"

[7] 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 3, P80A; 2000 Census, Summary File 3, P53; Claritas, Inc.; and Federal Reserve Bank of Minnesota CPI Calculator, <http://www.minneapolisfed.org/Research/data/us/calc/>.

[8] Kenneth M. Kreutziger, *Dedham Master Plan* (March 1996), IV-4. Neighborhoods identified in the *Dedham Master Plan* and the *Open Space & Recreation Plan 2004-2009*, largely corresponding with boundaries of 2000 Census Tracts and Block Groups. See Map 2.1.

TABLE 8.1
NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE BY NEIGHBORHOOD

	Number of Units in Structure							
	1, detached	1, attached	2	3 or 4	5 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 49	50+
DEDHAM	6,735	343	949	474	226	91	60	55
East Dedham	959	142	495	376	65	70	48	22
Greenlodge/Manor	1,973	37	18	13	34	0	0	0
Oakdale	1,612	49	240	30	12	0	0	0
Riverdale	1,199	63	131	41	94	9	0	9
Village	353	27	55	14	13	12	12	0
West Dedham	639	25	10	0	8	0	0	24

Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H30: Units in Structure."

EAST DEDHAM

East Dedham is indelibly influenced by its history of industrial development along Mother Brook. Home to mills and factories, East Dedham has a housing inventory that reflects its industrial past. Multi-family housing, modest cottages, and mill housing predominate in this neighborhood. Many homes are set on small lots, and narrow streets wind through neighborhoods. East Dedham has a dense residential development pattern as well as commercial areas, churches, schools, and other institutional buildings that provide services to residents.

In federal census terms, East Dedham is composed of Census 2000 Tract 4021.02, Block Groups 1-4, and Tract 4024, Block Group 1 (see Map 2.1). Just over half of East Dedham's 2,069 housing units are single-family attached and detached homes; 871 units are in two- to four-unit structures, and the remaining units are in larger multi-family structures or complexes. East Dedham has some of the oldest housing in town. Fifty-percent of housing units in East Dedham were built prior to 1939.[9]

East Dedham has the lowest levels of owner-occupancy in Dedham, for fewer than sixty percent of the housing units are occupied by the owners. Owner-occupied housing values are lower than in other Dedham neighborhoods, too, with the median values in each census block group ranging from $181,400 to $196,800.[10]

GREENLODGE, SPRAGUE, OAKDALE, & RIVERDALE

The four neighborhoods of Greenlodge, Sprague-Manor, Oakdale, and Riverdale were formerly agricultural land that began their transition to housing in the mid-nineteenth century, with considerable subdivision development occurring in the twentieth century. Newer infill development is scattered throughout each of these neighborhoods as well. House lots vary in size between neighborhoods, but in general the lots are larger than in East Dedham and as a result, these neighborhoods are less densely developed.

Single-family homes are the most prevalent housing type in the Greenlodge, Sprague-Manor, Oakdale, and Riverdale neighborhoods. Of the four neighborhoods, Oakdale has the oldest housing stock, for fifty-two percent of its homes were built before 1939. By comparison, homes built before 1939 account for fifteen percent of all housing units in the Greenlodge/Sprague-Manor and neighborhoods and thirty-nine percent in Riverdale.[11] Not surprisingly, owner-occupancy is high in these neighborhoods, with approximately eighty to ninety-four percent of units occupied by

[9] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H30: Units in Structure," "H34: Year Structure Built."

[10] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H36: Tenure by Year Structure Built," "H76: Median Value for Specified Housing Units."

[11] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H30: Units in Structure," "H34: Year Structure Built."

TABLE 8,2
AGE OF HOUSING STOCK BY NEIGHBORHOOD

Year Built	DEDHAM	East Dedham	Greenlodge-Manor	Oakdale	Riverdale	Village	West Dedham
1999 to March 2000	20	0	8	0	5	0	7
1995 to 1998	148	24	38	18	10	6	52
1990 to 1994	65	10	39	0	0	0	16
1980 to 1989	409	143	142	35	47	21	21
1970 to 1979	664	248	195	73	81	34	33
1960 to 1969	1,331	229	456	211	268	41	126
1950 to 1959	1,764	222	654	345	362	47	134
1940 to 1949	874	203	229	243	165	11	23
1939 or earlier	3,658	1098	314	1018	608	326	294

Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H34: Year Structure Built."

the property owner. Owner-occupied property values vary considerably depending on the location. According to Census 2000, median values in the block groups comprising the neighborhoods range from $158,500 to $264,700.[12]

TABLE 8.3
HOUSING UNITS AND TENURE

	Housing Units	Owner occupied (%)	Renter occupied (%)
DEDHAM			
East Dedham	2,069	58.9%	41.1%
Greenlodge/Manor	2,053	94.0%	6.0%
Oakdale	1,896	88.8%	11.2%
Riverdale	1,508	77.9%	22.1%
Village	467	75.4%	24.6%
West Dedham	682	85.9%	14.1%

Source: 2000 Census, Summary File 3, "H36: Tenure by Year Structure Built."

THE VILLAGE

Dedham Village is located near the geographic center of town. The Village neighborhood grew around major transportation routes and is home to Dedham Square, a central business district with retail, restaurants, offices, and government buildings, including the Norfolk County Court House. The Village's housing stock offers several examples of well-maintained and preserved historic homes. Small lots and minimal setbacks create a pedestrian-friendly and picturesque neighborhood.

The boundaries of the Dedham Village neighborhood match those of Census Tract 4025. Housing units in the Village are predominantly single-family detached homes and owner-occupied. The Village has many of the oldest homes in Dedham; sixty-seven percent of units in the Village were built before 1939. With a median housing value of $324,600, owner-occupied housing in the Village is considerably more valuable than that in other Dedham neighborhoods.[13]

WEST DEDHAM

West Dedham, also referred to as Dexter, is the most sparsely developed of all of Dedham's neighborhoods. Formerly the location where wealthy businessmen constructed their country estates, West Dedham's housing is impressive in scale and style. Large lots and rolling lawns create a landscape that calls to mind Dedham's bucolic past.

West Dedham's boundaries closely align with those of Census Tract 4025. Almost exclusively comprised of single-family detached homes, over forty percent of West Dedham's housing was built prior to 1939, much of it during the late nineteenth

[12] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H36: Tenure by Year Structure Built," "H76: Median Value for Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units."

[13] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H30: Units in Structure," "H34: Year Structure Built," H36, H76.

TABLE 8.4
HOUSING VALUES BY NEIGHBORHOOD

	Range of Median Values by Block Group (Census 2000)		Avg. Single-Family Sale Price (7/1/2008 to 12/31/2008)
DEDHAM	Low	High	
East Dedham	$181,400	$196,800	$197,889
Greenlodge/Sprague	$178,300	$240,100	$189,967
Oakdale	$189,800	$264,700	$246,746
Riverdale	$158,500	$249,800	n/a
Village	$324,600		$357,054
West Dedham	$536,300		

Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H76: Median Value for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units;" RE Records Search at <www.thewarrengroup.com>, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

and early twentieth century. Owners occupy eighty-five percent of West Dedham's housing and owner-occupied housing values are the highest in town with a median value of $536,300.

General Housing Characteristics

TYPES OF HOUSING

Today, it is estimated that there are 9,368 housing units in Dedham, almost 700 more units than counted by Census 2000. The vast majority of these units (78%) are single-family detached homes, and over ten percent of Dedham's units are in two-family homes.[14] Dedham housing stock also includes several multi-family homes ranging from three unit structures to over fifty units per structure. Many smaller multi-family properties are scattered throughout Dedham's neighborhoods, while large developments are primarily located near major highways.

Since 2000, developers have started construction on several large-scale housing developments and some developments are complete. These developments include a combination of market-rate and affordable rental housing, and senior housing developments. These developments are described in more detail later in this paper.

TENURE

Most Dedham residents own the home they live in. However, Dedham offers a varied housing stock that provides both ownership and rental opportunities. Homeownership housing comes in various forms—condominiums, single-family homes and owner-occupied multi-family properties. The level of homeownership has remained level since 1990; today, approximately eighty percent of units are owner-occupied.[15]

Dedham is similar to its neighbors in the diversity of its housing stock and in the proportion of owners to renters. Although some neighboring towns have more suburban characteristics, i.e. predominantly single-family homes and high levels of owner-

TABLE 8.5
CHANGE IN HOUSING BY NUMBER OF UNITS IN STRUCTURE

	Number of Units in Structure									
	1, detached	1, attached	2	3 or 4	5 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 49	50 or more	Mobile home	Other
DEDHAM										
1990	6,465	294	1,032	449	220	106	93	-	1	90
2000	6,735	343	949	474	226	91	60	55	-	-

Source: 1990 Census, Summary File 1, "H041: Units in Structure," Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H30: Units in Structure," Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Reports."

[14] Claritas, Inc., and Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H36: Tenure by Year Structure Built."

[15] 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, "H003: Tenure," Census 2000, Summary File 1, "H36: Tenure by Year Structure Built."

TABLE 8.6
CHANGE IN HOUSING UNITS AND TENURE

	1990			2000		
	Housing Units	Owner occupied (%)	Renter occupied (%)	Housing Units	Owner occupied (%)	Renter occupied (%)
Canton	6,605	74.9%	25.1%	7,952	74.2%	25.8%
DEDHAM	8,490	79.4%	20.6%	8,675	80.0%	20.0%
Dover	1,643	91.8%	8.2%	1,849	94.9%	5.1%
Foxborough	5,262	66.0%	34.0%	6,141	72.0%	28.0%
Medfield	3,428	82.6%	17.4%	4,002	86.1%	13.9%
Milton	8,749	82.5%	17.5%	8,982	84.2%	15.8%
Needham	10,160	79.7%	20.3%	10,612	80.9%	19.1%
Norwood	11,018	57.0%	43.0%	11,945	55.7%	41.6%
Randolph	10,886	70.9%	29.1%	11,524	70.9%	27.2%
Sharon	5,244	87.7%	12.3%	6,026	88.5%	9.9%
Stoughton	9,394	73.2%	26.8%	10,488	72.9%	24.9%
Walpole	6,777	81.8%	18.2%	8,229	83.9%	14.1%
Westwood	4,444	86.6%	13.4%	5,251	87.0%	10.5%

Source: 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 3, "H008: Tenure," 2000 Census, Summary File 3, "H36: Tenure by Year Structure Built."

occupancy, most communities in the region offer a range of housing options.[16]

Housing Affordability

In general, a home is considered affordable if a household spends less than thirty percent of its gross income on housing costs. For renters, this includes rent and utilities; for homeowners, thirty percent should cover mortgage principal and interest, property taxes, and hazard insurance. Federal census data indicate that in Dedham, thirty-six percent of renters and thirty-one percent of homeowners with mortgages have unaffordable housing costs.[17]

RENTERS

Renter households earning incomes less than $35,000 annually have particular difficulty affording apartments in Dedham. Sixty-percent of these households spend more than thirty percent of their household income on housing; in fact, many spend more than thirty-five percent. As incomes decline, the situation worsens. Almost seventy percent of households with incomes less than $10,000 spend thirty percent or more of household income on rent and utilities.[18]

Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, prepared by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), offer more insight into housing affordability issues. In Dedham, very low-income renter households – that is, households with incomes at or below thirty percent of the area median income for the Boston metropolitan area – with two to four family members have the highest incidence of housing affordability problems. Over fifty-eight percent of these residents spend more than fifty percent of household income on housing. In absolute terms, this translates to thirty-four households. While this may seem relatively small, when added to the other very low-income households with excessive housing cost burdens (forty elderly households and seventy-five unclassified households), the total

[16] The region is the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) service area and includes Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, and Westwood.

[17] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H69: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income," "H94: Mortgage Status by Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income."

[18] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H73: Household Income in 1999 by Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income."

TABLE 8.7
CHAPTER 40B SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY (JANUARY 2008)

Development	Address	Type	Units	Affordability Expires
East Dedham Square	High St. & O'Brien Way	Rental	24	Perpetuity
n/a	Veterans Road/Oakland	Rental	80	Perpetuity
n/a	Parker Staples Road	Rental	26	Perpetuity
n/a	Parkway Court	Rental	25	Perpetuity
n/a	Doggett Circle	Rental	80	Perpetuity
n/a	O'Neil Drive	Rental	100	Perpetuity
n/a	Hitchens Drive	Rental	8	Perpetuity
Lantern Lane	Lantern Lane	Rental	3	2016
Traditions of Dedham	Washington Street	Rental	95	2043
Westbrook Crossing	East Street	Ownership	15	2012
Jefferson at Dedham	Presidents Way	Rental	300	Perpetuity
DMR Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	28	n/a
DMH Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	23	n/a
Fairfield Green (Station 250)	Elm St & Rustcraft Rd	Rental	285	Perpetuity

Source: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, "Dedham SHI 1-31-08.pdf"

number of very-low income households competing for affordable rental housing (149) is a concern. Renter households with incomes between thirty and fifty percent of the area median (low-income) also have housing affordability issues, however not to the same degree as Dedham's very-low income households. Many low-income renters spend more than half their income on housing. [19]

The recent or pending addition of approximately 175 affordable rental units into Dedham's housing stock does not guarantee that the housing needs of very-low-income households will be addressed. The affordable units both at Jefferson at Dedham and Station 250 are priced to be affordable for households with incomes at eighty percent of the area median. For example, rents for one-bedroom units start at approximately $1,000 per month.[20] Households with incomes below the eighty percent threshold could occupy these units if they have a portable rental subsidy, such as HUD's Section 8 voucher program.

The **Dedham Housing Authority** (DHA) owns and operates affordable rental housing in six developments with a combined total of approximately 300 units, including 130 family units and 205 elderly units. In addition, the DHA administers 460 HUD Section 8 housing vouchers that subsidize the difference between what a low-income renter can afford and the market-rate rent charged by a private landlord. Dedham residents and veterans receive priority for the DHA's Section 8 vouchers.

The wait for an elderly or family unit is approximately six months in Dedham if the applicant meets both local preferences, but one to two years if the applicant is solely a resident of Dedham (without veteran status). The wait for a non-resident applicant is over five years. While households earning fifty percent of the area median according to household size are eligible for public housing units, households earning less than thirty percent of the area median must occupy seventy-five percent of all DHA units.[21]

The DHA is one of sixty-four housing authorities in the state that participate in a centralized waiting list to mange distribution of Section 8 vouchers. Currently there are over 60,000 applicants on the

[19] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, CHAS Data worksheet, "Housing Problems Output for All Households," at <www.huduser.org>.

[20] Leasing Agent, Jefferson at Dedham and Jennifer Mahalek, Marketing Agent for Station 250, interviews, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 April 2008.

[21] Dedham Housing Authority, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 29 April 2008.

statewide list. Typically, the DHA turns over two to three vouchers a month.

Most of Dedham's public housing inventory was built in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Newer and larger units are in high demand as are those located near commercial areas and public transportation. The properties have major capital needs. With modernization funding recently released by the State, the DHA is currently reconstructing the roofs on all properties.[22]

HOMEOWNERS

Housing affordability presents concerns for many of Dedham's lower-income homeowners, too. Sixty percent of homeowners with household incomes below $35,000 have housing costs that exceed thirty percent of their income. Like renters, as the incomes of homeowners decline, the frequency of affordability problems increases. Over eighty-six percent of homeowner households with incomes below $20,000 spend an unaffordable proportion of income on housing. In absolute terms, 462 households have this predicament; in fact, 420 homeowners spend more than thirty-five percent of income on housing.[23]

Dedham's elderly and small-related households with limited incomes have excessive cost burdens, according to HUD's CHAS data. Almost half of Dedham's very-low income elderly households spend over fifty percent of their income on housing. The same is true for sixty-eight percent of two- to four-person, very-low income family households, and over sixty-percent of two- to four-person, low-income, family households. Large families (five or more people) with lower incomes also have housing cost burdens. In total, over 370 of Dedham's very-low and low-income homeowners spend more than half of their income on housing costs.

For the Dedham Community Development Plan (2004), Larry Koff & Associates completed an *affordability gap analysis*. The gap analysis compares the selling prices of homes against the income level of residents. The results of the analysis indicate that while twenty-eight percent of Dedham's households have low-incomes, only one percent of Dedham's owner-occupied housing units are technically affordable to low-income households. There are more homes affordable to middle-income households (150 percent of area median income) in Dedham than middle-income households. This suggests that higher income households may be living in more affordable homes or lower-income households are stretching their budgets to live in technically unaffordable homes.[24]

Dedham's diverse housing stock includes modest single-family homes and condominiums: housing that is often affordable to first-time homebuyers and households with limited incomes. As of May 2008, however, there were only five properties listed for sale under $200,000, and four of the five units were condominiums. Twenty-eight units listed between $200,000 and $300,000, including eight condominiums. Although, this type of housing exists in Dedham, few units are actually priced at a level affordable to first-time homebuyers.

Housing Market

Dedham's home prices increased steadily after 2000 and peaked in 2005. Reflecting the downturn in the national and regional real estate market, both single-family home and condominium sale prices declined in 2006 and 2007. The number of housing sales between 2000 and 2007 in Dedham followed the same trend: rising steadily, then starting to decline in 2005.[25]

The recent decline in prices does not necessarily mean that purchasing a home has become more affordable to many households. For five consecutive years, housing prices in Dedham continued to grow, with single-family home prices increasing forty-three percent, from a median selling price of

[22] Ibid.

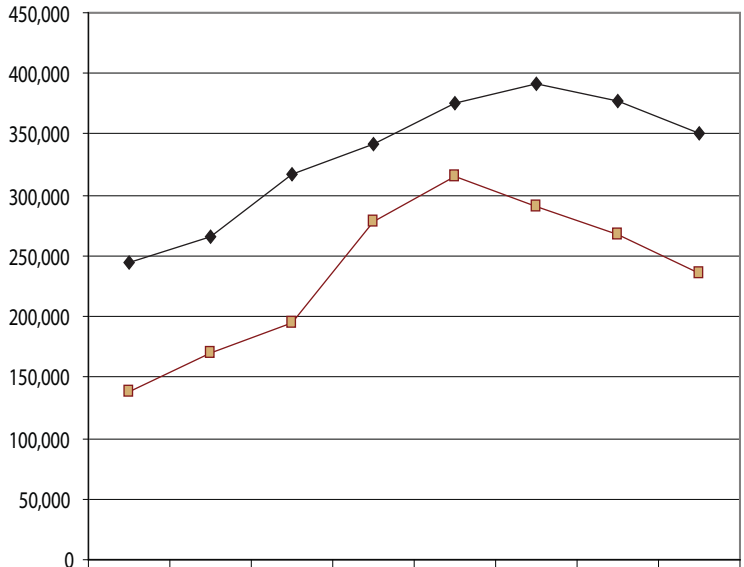
[23] Census 2000, Summary File 3, "H97: Household Income in 1999 by Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999."

[24] Larry Koff & Associates and Bluestone Planning Group, *Dedham Community Development Plan*, 2004, 8-9.

[25] The Warren Group, "Town Stats" at <www.thewarrengroup.com>.

Figure 8.1: Change in Median Housing Sale Prices in Dedham, 2000-2007

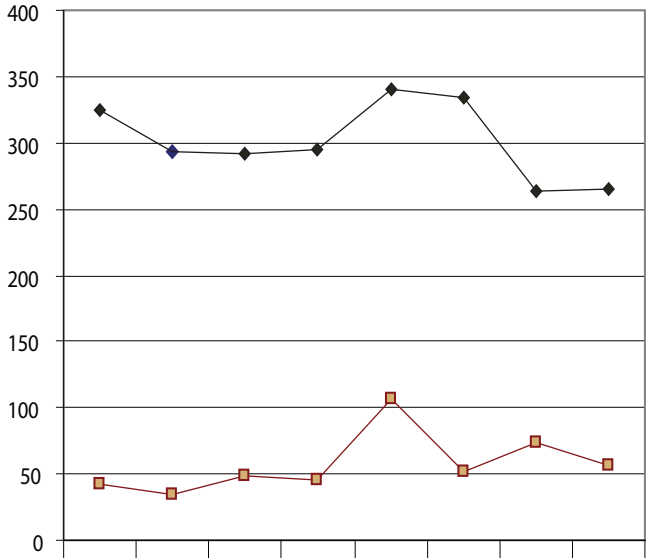
Source: The Warren Group.



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Single Family	244,000	265,000	317,250	342,000	375,000	392,250	376,500	350,000
Condominiums	138,000	170,000	195,000	278,000	315,000	290,000	268,000	236,500

Figure 8.2: Change in Number of Housing Sales in Dedham, 2000-2007

Source: The Warrent Group.



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Single Family	324	293	292	295	340	334	263	265
Condominiums	43	35	48	45	106	51	73	57

$244,000 in 2000 to $350,000 in 2007.[26] The *average* sale price for single family homes between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008 was significantly lower at $249,509.[27] However, in the same period that housing prices have fallen, wage and salary income has barely increased throughout the region and unemployment has continued to rise. These factors, coupled with challenging conditions in the banking industry that make it very difficult for many people to obtain a mortgage, mean that for Dedham and most communities, housing has not really become more affordable even though home prices have decreased.

New Construction and Alterations

Since 2000, the Dedham Building Department issued 124 building permits for new single-family home construction. Eighteen of the seventy permits issued between 2003 and 2007 were to permit the demolition of existing homes and the construction of new replacement homes on the same house lots.

In total, the town approved new construction of over 775 units since 2000. Approximately 600 of these are units are included in the Jefferson at Dedham and Station 250 comprehensive permit rental developments. In 2007, the town also issued 325 permits for construction of residential units for the NewBridge on the Charles development. These developments are described in more detail below.[28]

[26] Ibid.

[27] RE Records Search at <www.thewarrengroup.com>.

[28] Jim Sullivan, Dedham Building Department, interview Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 25 April 2008.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

Recent and Projected Population Growth

Dedham's population decreased slightly between 1990 and 2000. Moreover, Dedham was the only community in the TRIC region to experience a population decline, as other towns witnessed moderate to substantial population growth. Looking forward, available projections indicate that Dedham's population will continue to decline through 2020 and populations in surrounding towns will decline as well.[29]

TABLE 8.8
POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS FOR THE TRIC REGION, 1990-2020

Town	1990	2000	2007 (estimated)	2010 Projected	2020 Projected
Canton	18,530	20,775	21,731	21,732	21,918
DEDHAM	23,782	23,464	24,046	21,921	20,090
Dover	4,915	5,558	5,661	5,599	5,130
Foxborough	14,637	16,246	16,254	16,683	16,738
Medfield	10,531	12,273	12,263	11,739	10,682
Milton	25,725	26,062	26,161	25,455	24,471
Needham	27,557	28,911	NA	27,226	24,654
Norwood	28,700	28,587	28,410	27,340	26,037
Randolph	30,093	30,963	30,295	32,201	33,356
Sharon	15,517	17,408	17,119	16,908	16,534
Stoughton	26,777	27,149	26,538	26,243	24,946
Walpole	20,212	22,824	NA	23,436	23,417
Westwood	12,557	14,117	13,738	13,828	12,448
Norfolk County	616,087	650,308	653,686	654,198	652,440
Massachusetts	6,016,425	6,349,097	6,395,171	6,557,001	6,767,712

Sources: 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 1, "P001: Persons"; 2000 Census, Summary File 1, "P1: Total Population"; Claritas, Inc.; MISER, Mid-series Projections.

Despite a barely perceptible increase in population between 2005 and 2006, for the last several years the population of the Boston Metropolitan Area has declined. Housing analysts say this is largely due to the shortage of affordable housing in the Greater Boston area. High housing costs have provided few opportunities to young families seeking housing at the lower-end of the price spectrum, forcing them to seek housing elsewhere. However, population growth statistics conceal the outmigration of young families from greater Boston and Massachusetts due to significant foreign immigration into the region.[30]

Housing Demand and Affordability

Housing demand and affordability in Dedham and in the region are ongoing concerns. Recent downturns in the housing market have resulted in price adjustments in the for sale housing market, but the simultaneous rise of interest rates and scrutiny of credit markets has impaired the ability of many prospective homeowners to take advantage of lower pricing.[31] Table 8.9 shows that in the TRIC region, median sales prices for single-family and condominium homes declined between 2005 and 2007, yet the number of sales did not increase. Indeed, the data in Table 8.10 show that sales transactions also declined.[32]

While Dedham has had more housing starts than many of the surrounding communities, this is due primarily to two large-scale rental developments. Permitted under Chapter 40B comprehensive permits, both developments offer affordable and high-end market rate rental units – primarily one- and two-bedroom units designed to limit the number of apartments that might appeal to families.

[29] 1990 Census, Summary File 1, "P001: Persons"; Census 2000, Summary File 1, "P1: Total Population"; Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) at <http://www.umass.edu/miser>. Note: The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has prepared population projections as part of its MetroFutures effort. These projections indicate that given current trends Dedham's population will be 26,760 in 2020. However, MAPC's methodology is based on a regional approach to population growth versus a town-level approach. For more information see <http://www.metrofuture.org>.

[30] Bonnie Heudorfer, Barry Bluestone, et al., *The Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2006-2007*, October 2007.

[31] Ibid.

[32] The Warren Group, "Town Stats."

TABLE 8.9
CHANGE IN MEDIAN SALE PRICES, 2005-2007, TRIC REGION

	Change in Sale Price 2005-2007		
Town	**Single-Family**	**Condominiums**	**All Sales**
Canton	-19.4%	-16.8%	-12.8%
DEDHAM	-10.8%	-18.4%	-14.5%
Dover	-10.6%	-8.2%	-16.4%
Foxborough	-4.3%	40.3%	5.5%
Medfield	-10.2%	-9.0%	-11.8%
Milton	-8.8%	-32.9%	-11.5%
Needham	-7.8%	-30.7%	-7.8%
Norwood	-8.8%	1.5%	-5.1%
Randolph	-18.1%	-31.8%	-16.1%
Sharon	-9.0%	64.2%	-6.9%
Stoughton	-10.6%	-8.5%	-9.4%
Walpole	-7.7%	-18.0%	-5.9%
Westwood	-6.9%	n/a	-10.0%

Source: The Warren Group, "Town Stats."

TABLE 8.10
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF SALES, 2005-2007, TRIC REGION

	Change in Number of Sales 2005-2007		
Town	**Single-Family**	**Condominiums**	**All Sales**
Canton	-22.3%	-28.9%	-18.8%
DEDHAM	-20.7%	11.8%	-20.2%
Dover	-10.0%	75.0%	-8.8%
Foxborough	-19.4%	-55.4%	-20.9%
Medfield	4.3%	-18.5%	-5.3%
Milton	-28.8%	-43.2%	-31.1%
Needham	19.1%	-6.3%	13.2%
Norwood	-24.9%	-40.1%	-33.9%
Randolph	-37.8%	-52.1%	-39.9%
Sharon	-29.6%	-16.0%	-27.0%
Stoughton	-41.1%	-30.2%	-40.0%
Walpole	-5.6%	-39.4%	-13.3%
Westwood	-0.5%	-100.0%	-13.0%

Source: The Warren Group, "Town Stats."

In response to municipal concerns about inmigration of school-age children, development trends shifted several years ago to promote age-restricted housing. This type of housing can add units to a town's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory, thereby increasing its supply of affordable housing (and getting it closer to the 10 percent statutory minimum) without the burden of growth in school costs. As shown in Table 8.11, Dedham currently has 360 units of age-restricted housing, and completion of New Bridge on the Charles will add another 600 units (250 independent living, 350 assisted living to acute care). Age-restricted housing is an attractive way for towns to increase their unit count on the Subsidized Housing Inventory and it may be in great demand as the "Baby Boom" generation ages. However, there is currently an over-supply of "active adult" housing for people over 55 years in Massachusetts.[33]

Recent and Future Housing Development

Jefferson at Dedham. Located on President's Way, Jefferson at Dedham is a 300-unit rental development offering both market-rate and affordable one- and two- bedroom units. Developed with a comprehensive permit, seventy-five units are set-aside as affordable to households earning up to eighty percent of the area median income. Rents for the affordable units range from $1,150 to $1,375. Market-rate unit rents range from $1,475 to $1,880 for a one-bedroom unit and $1,925 to $2,165 for a two-bedroom unit. The development is ninety-three percent occupied. There is a one-year wait list for affordable units.[34]

Station 250. Station 250 on Elm Street is currently under construction. When complete, the development will offer 285 one-, two- and three-bedroom rental units. Also permitted under Chapter 40B, Station 250 will have seventy-two rental units affordable to households with incomes up to eighty percent of the area median. Rents for affordable units start at $946 for a one-bedroom unit, $1,092 for a two-bedroom unit and $1,233 for a three-bedroom unit. The developer plans to list market-rate units starting at $2,022 for a one-bedroom unit, $2,622 for a two-bedroom

[33] Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, *Age Restricted and Active Adult Housing in Massachusetts: A Review of the Factors Fueling Its Explosive Growth and the Public Policy Issues It Raises* (June 2005), 5.

[34] Leasing Agent, Jefferson at Dedham, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 April 2008.

TABLE 8.11
AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING IN DEDHAM

Development	Number/Type of Units	Age Restriction	Affordable Units
New Bridge on the Charles (Hebrew Senior Life)	250 Independent Living, 350 other units ranging from assisted living to acute care	62+	
Traditions at Dedham	95 units; independent living and assisted living units	62+	19
Westbrook Crossing	60 condominium units	55+	16
Dedham Housing Authority			
Doggett Circle	80 rental units	60+	All
O'Neil Drive	100 rental units	60+	All
Parkway Court	25 rental units	60+	All

Compiled by Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

unit and $3,432 for a three-bedroom unit. Phase I includes thirty apartments that were slated to be available for occupancy in July 2008. Construction of subsequent phases will be completed thereafter, depending on market demand. Applications have been accepted for the affordable units, but leasing the market-rate units has not started.[35]

Readville Site. The Readville site is a former railroad yard owned by the MBTA. In 2007, the Dedham Planning Board approved the development of 264 condominiums on the property. However, the MBTA halted the project in October 2007 due to the developer's lack of progress in cleaning up the contaminated site. Town Meeting rezoned the parcel to Single Residence B in May 2008, effectively reducing the allowable density on the parcel to single-family homes on 12,500 s.f. lots. The town is not aware of any active plans to develop the parcel.[36]

NewBridge on the Charles. NewBridge on the Charles, developed by Hebrew SeniorLife, is an intergenerational campus offering a retirement community, assisted living, rehabilitation and long-term care facilities, a K-8 school, a community center, and recreation facilities. Construction began in June 2007. The development is located on a 162-acre parcel of land that abuts the Charles River in West Dedham. When complete, NewBridge on the Charles will offer more than 250 independent living units for seniors, and 350 assisted living, sub-acute and long-term beds.[37]

Traditions at Dedham. Located on Washington Street, Traditions at Dedham is a ninety-five unit assisted living facility. Traditions offers supportive housing arrangements for elderly persons. The apartments are studios and one- and two-bedroom units. Services include meals, nursing services, housekeeping, programs, and transportation. Of the ninety-five units at Traditions, nineteen are affordable rental units subsidized by MassHousing with rents for affordable units starting at $2,320 for a one-bedroom unit. There is currently a one- to three-year waiting list. It typically takes two years for an affordable unit to turnover.

Westbrook Crossing. Westbrook Crossing is an age-restricted condominium development on East Street. Developed earlier in the decade with a comprehensive permit, Westbrook Crossing consists of sixty condominium units for people over 55. Fifteen of the units are set-aside as affordable. The affordable units sell in the range of $175,000 to $190,000 and only two units have turned over since initial occupancy. Market-rate units sell in the low $300Ks.

[35] Jennifer Mahalek, Marketing Agent for Station 250, interview, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 April 2008.

[36] Patrick Anderson, "Readville Summit", *The Daily News*, <http://www.dailynewstranscript.com>.

[37] Schneider Associates, "Hebrew SeniorLife Secures $457 Million in Bonds for Major Facilities and Service Expansion," 19 February 2008, <www.PRlog.com>.

Economic Development

Two large mixed-use developments are planned for sites in and near Dedham: Legacy Place and Westwood Station. When complete, they will draw people from the region to work in the retail centers and planned office developments. It is likely that these new employment centers will influence housing demand in Dedham and the surrounding towns.

Legacy Place. Located in Dedham, Legacy Place broke ground in April 2008. The completed development will offer 675,000 sq. ft. of retail space and 85,000 sq. ft. of office space along Providence Highway and Elm Street. Scheduled for completion in Summer 2009, the development is being advertised as a "lifestyle center," offering upscale shopping, fine dining and entertainment.[38]

Westwood Station. Westwood Station is a proposed retail/office development in Westwood that will offer 1,000 housing units and two hotels. In total, Westwood Station will include 1.5 million sq. ft. of office, laboratory, and research and development space, and 1.35 million sq. ft. of retail space. The project is estimated to generate 7,500 jobs.[39]

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Dedham Master Plan (1996). The 1996 *Master Plan* emphasized that Dedham's housing stock is unaffordable to many Dedham households, especially young adults, single-parent households, and empty-nesters. These are the same groups that are expected to experience the greatest growth in the future. The *Master Plan* recognized that Dedham's zoning did not provide for small-lot development. It also did not provide for small-scale alternative housing development such as accessory apartments or residential units over existing commercial space. To address these concerns and prepare for future, the *Master Plan* promoted the following goals and related policies and actions:

- Provide for a diversity of housing opportunities.
  - Allow planned residential developments in order to save open space and provide diversity of housing opportunities.
  - Establish Open Space Preservation Zoning (cluster zoning).
  - Plan for a supply of affordable housing that will allow our young adults and senior citizens to remain within the town.
  - Study affordable housing potential at MBTA Readville site.
- Consider ways to allow smaller dwellings.
  - Permit small apartments above commercial in Dedham Square.
  - Provide ways to maintain large older homes.
  - Allow accessory or subsidiary apartments in large single-family dwellings.

Since completion of the 1996 *Master Plan*, Dedham has implemented several changes to the Zoning Bylaw, including provisions for Planned Residential Development (PRD), and accessory and "subsidiary" apartments. Developers explored the possibility of constructing affordable housing on the Readville site, and an agreement with the Town, the City of Boston, and the developer (Baran Cos.) was executed to achieve this end. However, slow progress of site clean-up led the MBTA to rescind the agreement and there is currently no plan for the property.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2004). In January 2004, Dedham's Open Space Committee and the Dedham Planning Board completed the *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2009* (OSRP). While the OSRP primarily focused on meeting Dedham's open space and recreational needs, conservation

[38] Legacy Place website located at <http://www.legacyplacededham.com/>.

[39] Westwood Station Community Bulletin located at < http://www.wscommunityonline.com>.

and housing objectives invariably intersect when new development is at hand. The OSRP identifies the subdivision of land and the possibility of missed opportunities to conserve open space as issues of concern.

To address these concerns, the OSRP recommended that Dedham consider "limited development" as a strategy to finance the acquisition of open space. This technique enables a community to acquire land and pay for it by allowing partial development while preserving the most important sections as open space. The community uses the proceeds from selling the parcel designated for development to finance the entire land acquisition. Furthermore, as owner of the parcel, the town has the ability to guide sensitive development of the land.

In addition to limited development, the OSRP recommended incorporating conservation subdivision design in the Dedham Zoning Bylaw. The OSRP also encouraged the Planning Board to promote the use of PRD when appropriate.

Community Development Plan (2004). The *Dedham Community Development Plan* was prepared by Larry Koff & Associates and Bluestone Group in 2004. It analyzed Dedham's housing and economic development needs, identified issues, and presented several recommendations.

The housing needs analysis concluded that Dedham has a limited and declining supply of affordable housing that is unlikely to meet the demands of residents. An affordablility gap analysis indicated that households with low- and moderate-incomes could not afford to purchase housing in Dedham, yet there appeared to be ample units appropriately priced for middle-income households. The gap analysis also concluded that Dedham had an adequate supply of rental units affordable to households at all income levels despite data indicating that over thirty percent of Dedham's renters spend more than thirty percent of their income on housing. (This suggests that many renters may not be living in financially appropriate units.)

In addition to examining housing affordability, the *Community Development Plan* explored issues with housing development patterns in Dedham. It identified the potential loss of landscape, views, and conservation lands due to conventional subdivisions as undesirable, and encouraged Dedham to adopt cluster zoning in order to allow for housing development that works to preserve open space. In addition, the Plan proposed housing in Dedham Square to "reinforce its sense of place," and recommended that the town consider the fiscal impact of some types of housing during the development review process. Lastly, the Plan emphasized that Dedham would continue to attract housing development due to its prime location and the presence of commuter rail.

Goals and strategies described in the *Community Development Plan* included the following:

- Provide for diverse housing by using zoning techniques to encourage mixed uses and focusing on how to meet the current and future housing needs of Dedham residents.

- Allow smaller dwellings and encourage mixed-use development in Dedham Square, allow accessory apartments in single-family dwellings, and provide for more types of housing.

- Identify public and private strategies to produce another 111 units of affordable housing so the town could meet the ten percent minimum under Chapter 40B, e.g., coordinating with Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership, using the Local Initiative Program (LIP) for Chapter 40B development, reusing municipal property for affordable housing, and establishing a first-time homebuyer program.

- Upgrade problem buildings and areas by working with local groups on renovation activities, offering housing rehabilitation assistance, and studying the potential for affordable housing development at the Readville site.

In support of these goals, the *Community Development Plan* proposed the following actions:

- Establish public consensus about priority areas for housing and economic development.
- Reorganize public oversight of housing and economic development activities.
- Broaden staff support for carrying out housing and economic development programs.
- Prepare new zoning for housing and economic development priority areas.
- Work with regional organizations to pursue housing and economic development strategies.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Like many first-ring suburbs, Dedham's housing issues center around an aging housing stock, affordability, and growth management. Dedham's ability to respond to the housing needs of its dynamic population is also critical. In the near future, population growth in older age cohorts due to the aging of the Baby Boom generation and new commercial and industrial development will affect demand for housing in Dedham. While local government is limited in its ability to influence housing supply, governments can take an active role in identifying housing gaps, creating policies, and designing incentives to encourage developments that are responsive to locally identified needs.

Dedham does not have a town board dedicated to addressing housing issues and needs within the community. During the *Community Development Plan* process in 2004, Dedham established a housing committee to offer insight into the town and guide the consultants preparing the plan. After the plan was completed, the committee dissolved. Since then, Dedham has not had a housing-centered group to advocate for the needs of lower-income residents, including the elderly and lower-wage municipal workers. That Dedham has surpassed the ten percent affordable housing minimum under Chapter 40B does not mean the town has successfully met the housing needs of its residents. Housing needs vary and change; to meet them effectively, a community must track and analyze market dynamics, local demographics and other factors.

Despite recent market changes, Dedham's housing stock remains unaffordable to many would-be homebuyers. Of the single-family properties for sale in Dedham today, the median list price is $419,000. Under the thirty percent affordability standard, a homebuyer's household income would need to be at least $122,000 in order to purchase such a home.[40] While Dedham has properties priced below the median, it has very few homes under $350,000 suitable for families. Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership, a regional housing advocacy organization based in Dedham, recently established a first-time homebuyer program that offers grants of $3,000 to qualifying homebuyers to help bridge the affordability gap.[41]

Dedham's housing stock currently includes close to 300 units of age-restricted or elderly housing, and approximately 150 are designated as affordable units. When complete, NewBridge on the Charles will add roughly another 300 market-rate units to this count. However, as people age, their housing needs tend to progress incrementally. People often prefer to stay in their homes as long as they can and move to a supported housing arrangement when living independently becomes difficult or unsafe. Many towns offer housing rehabilitation assistance to elders to address repair needs and make homes physically suitable for the occupants. Other models exist to help elders address their changing housing needs, such as allowing homeowners to construct accessory apartments within their homes and providing transportation and other services to elders living alone.

The housing stock in each of Dedham's neighborhoods directly contributes to the neighborhood's

[40] This calculation makes the following assumptions: 5% downpayment, 6.25% mortgage interest rate, $200/month for hazard insurance and a property tax mil rate of $12.05 (Dedham's 2008 rate).

[41] Catherine Luna, President, Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership, interview Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 30 April 2008.

character. Not only does Dedham's housing reflect a variety of architectural styles, but also reflects a range of sizes and unit configurations. Preservation of Dedham's housing stock is important for neighborhood vitality and the reinforcement of neighborhood identity. Local government can promote housing preservation by sponsoring housing rehabilitation programs in specific areas and identifying properties the town wants to preserve for aesthetic, affordability, or other purposes.

Current economic conditions and increases in the number of foreclosures present immediate issues for Dedham. The town has responded by coordinating with local clergy to establish the "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" program, which helps households facing foreclosure to make connections with resources to assist them. The group held its first event in November 2008, bringing together local banks, real estate professionals, human service agencies, and fuel and housing assistance programs. Neighbors Helping Neighbors has also created a Foreclosure Guide available at no cost to help people locate resources. Dedham is exploring developing a registry of foreclosed/vacant properties in order to track the town's growing inventory.[42]

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ESTABLISH A HOUSING PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE.

By establishing a housing partnership committee, Dedham can improve its capacity to recognize and respond to housing issues and trends. Although more than ten percent of Dedham's year-round housing is counted on the Chapter 40B subsidized housing inventory, this does not mean the housing needs of Dedham residents are being met in a comprehensive way. 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.

A Housing Partnership Committee could help to establish a municipal structure that works toward addressing various housing issues. For example, a housing partnership committee today could 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.

2. COMPLETE A HOUSING PLAN.

Dedham's Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan includes a housing component, but the town should review the plan for its current applicability and adequacy. A housing plan critically analyzes the housing needs of residents against opportunities, and develops strategies for meeting defined gaps. Dedham should closely consider the multiple and varied housing needs of its residents, such as elderly households, families with modest incomes, or those with special needs. A housing plan with a thorough needs assessment and strategies to address identified needs would help Dedham take an informed approach to addressing housing needs that are not met by Chapter 40B developments.

3. IDENTIFY TOWN-OWNED, TAX-TITLE PROPERTIES THAT MAY BE REDEVELOPED TO ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS.

Dedham should identify town-owned land and properties (including tax-title property) that may be suitable for development or redevelopment to meet needs such as affordable elderly housing, affordable family housing, "starter" homes, or other types of housing identified in a needs assessment. Through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, Dedham may be able to attract interest in development of such properties.

4. REHABILITATE HIGHLY VISIBLE AND DETERIORATED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES.

Public investment focused on particular properties can trigger private investment in the surrounding area. Dedham should consider establishing a program that offers financial assistance to owners of renter- or owner-occupied dwellings if they

[42] Karen O'Connell, Dedham Economic Development Director, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 17 March 2009.

agree to invest in improving their property. For example, the town could seek CDBG funds and other grants to support this type of housing rehabilitation. By focusing on highly visible properties, the effect of the town's investment will most likely be maximized.

5. ESTABLISH A HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM.

Dedham should establish a housing rehabilitation program to assist lower-income property owners and tenants with basic home repairs, weatherization, energy efficiency, and code compliance. The program could focus on particular neighborhoods or provide assistance throughout the town. Housing rehabilitation programs promote 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.

Dedham could design a program that offers low-interest or no-interest loans to property owners whose incomes fall within designated limits (up to 80 or 100 percent of the area median income depending on the funding source). The financial assistance would be secured with a property lien or mortgage recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

6. ESTABLISH A RENTAL CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM.

Rental properties may be more prone to neglect and code violations because often they are owned by absent or inattentive landlords. Dedham should consider establishing a program that conducts outreach and education to tenants and landlords and offers financial assistance to landlords to bring their properties up to code. The objective of the program would be to increase code compliance and improve the condition of rental properties. The program should include the following elements:

- Inventory and periodic inspection of all rental properties;
- Communication with property owners and tenants;
- Monitoring and enforcement to ensure correction of code violations.

The town could charge landlords a per-unit fee to cover its administrative costs. When developing the program, Dedham should consider how often it will inspect units given available staff resources and its ability to monitor and enforce code violations.

7. CREATE A HOUSING RESOURCE GUIDE.

The Housing Partnership Committee should create a housing resource guide for homeowners and renters that describes local, regional, and state level housing assistance programs, including fuel assistance, housing improvement assistance, resources for public and subsidized housing, tenant assistance, and foreclosure assistance. A housing resource guide can help residents readily identify programs that offer different types of housing assistance and connect them with needed services.

8. WORK WITH SOUTHWEST AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP (SAHP) TO PROMOTE FIRST TIME HOME BUYER PROGRAM.

The SAHP offers downpayment assistance and financial/homebuyer counseling to first-time homebuyers in Dedham's area. There may be opportunities for the town and SAHP to coordinate efforts to assist first-time homebuyers and find and finance homes in Dedham. Access to affordable starter homes in Dedham is difficult for first-time homebuyers; it is also difficult for many homeowners to retain their properties. In addition, Dedham should consider coordinating with SAHP and other organizations to broaden the scope of services offered on an as-needed basis. For example, resources may be combined to offer foreclosure prevention counseling and assistance.

CHAPTER 9

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

A community's economy is influenced by its household wealth and sources of household income, the types of industries it attracts, and the uses of its land. In turn, each community is an integral part of an economic region, or larger areas connected by population, employment, labor and trade characteristics. The boundaries of economic regions usually correspond to land use patterns, utilities, and transportation systems that support the movement of goods and people.

Since local governments depend on property taxes for their operating revenue, they often pay closer attention to the structure of their tax base than the size, make-up, and health of their employment base. As a result, communities often think of "economic development" as zoning for commercial and industrial uses, yet building a local economy involves more than zoning, and economic development is not simply a matter of tax base enhancement. A host of non-taxable land uses also prime the economy of cities and towns, regions and the state as a whole: public and private schools, colleges and universities, outdoor recreation areas, government offices, and major charitable institutions. Dedham is an example of a community with tax-exempt land uses that provide significant local employment, notably the Norfolk County court system and Noble and Greenough School.

Dedham wants to revitalize its commercial areas and neighborhood centers in order to foster civic pride, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide revenue for local government services. Its economy is increasingly affected by changes in American consumer habits from local to regional shopping – changes that have led to more parking demands and a challenging environment for Dedham Square retailers. Since Dedham has very little vacant developable land, securing and retaining a strong employment base will depend on the redevelopment of established commercial and industrial areas.

Mixed-use building developed across from Town Hall.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Labor Force

A community's **labor force** includes all residents 16 years of age and older, employed or looking for work. Dedham's labor force currently includes about 12,200 people. Most hold white-collar jobs in the Greater Boston area, with over forty percent working in management and professional occupations and thirty percent in sales and office

occupations.[1] Of the 9,116 residents commuting to non-local jobs, one-third travel to Boston, reflecting Dedham's position as an economic sub-area of the City. About one-fifth of the labor force works locally.[2] (*See Chapter 4, Transportation, Table 4.2.*)

TABLE 9.1
DAYTIME POPULATION CHANGE: DEDHAM AND REGION

Municipality	Total Resident Population	Estimated Daytime Population	Daytime Population Change	
			Number	Percent
Canton	20,775	30,305	9,530	45.9%
DEDHAM	23,464	25,831	2,367	10.1%
Dover	5,558	4,128	-1,430	-25.7%
Foxborough	16,246	16,358	112	0.7%
Medfield	12,273	10,967	-1,306	-10.6%
Milton	26,062	19,874	-6,188	-23.7%
Needham	29,911	33,454	4,543	15.7%
Norwood	28,587	36,497	7,910	27.7%
Randolph	30,963	24,468	-6,495	-21.0%
Sharon	17,408	13,490	-3,918	-22.5%
Stoughton	27,149	25,673	-1,476	-5.4%
Walpole	22,824	20,071	-2,753	-12.1%
Westwood	14,117	18,676	4,559	32.3%

Note: Milton and Randolph are part of the South Coastal WIA. Stoughton is part of the Brockton WIA.
Source: Massachusetts EOLWD, Regional LMI Profile: Annual Profile for Metro South/West Workforce Area

Despite Dedham's proximity to Boston, residents seem to be traveling farther for work because the mean travel time for Dedham commuters increased by 3.3 minutes between 1990 and 2000. In the same period, the number of residents working locally decreased from 3,030 to 2,296, the number of people traveling 30 to 44 minutes to work increased by 7.3 percent, and the number traveling more than 45 minutes, by 31.7 percent. The percentages of people carpooling, bicycling, walking, and working at home declined significantly, but the percentage of people using public transportation increased.[3] Similar trends occurred throughout Eastern Massachusetts, but Dedham's declining shares of home-based workers and commuters driving alone to work stand out as regionally unique.

While the unemployment rate in Dedham tends to be lower than that of the state, it has exceeded the unemployment rates of Norfolk County and the Metropolitan South/West Workforce Investment Area since 2000. Dedham's unemployment rate peaked in 2003 at 5.3 percent and rose 0.3 percent between 2005 and 2006, from 4.3 to 4.6 percent.[4]

Employment Base

A community's **employment base** includes all payroll jobs reported by for-profit, non-profit and public employers. Dedham serves as a regional employment hub with a relatively large employment base that offers about 1.17 jobs for every resident in the labor force. Due to the number of available jobs and the regional shopping attractions along Providence Highway, Dedham's daytime population is estimated at 25,831, or 10.1 percent more than the total population, as shown in Table 9.1.[5] Boston residents traditionally make up about fifteen percent of all people working in Dedham each day. Other communities that generate a substantial number of workers in Dedham include Norwood, Quincy, Walpole, Brockton, and Randolph.[6] (*See Chapter 4, Transportation, Table 4.1.*)

[1] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 1, "DP-1: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics," *American Fact Finder,* <http://factfinder.census.gov/>.

[2] Census 2000, "2000 Minor Civil Division/County-to-Minor Civil Division/County Worker Flow Files," <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/journey.html>.

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

[4] Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), Municipal Employment Data, at<http://lmi2.detma.org/>.

[5] EOLWD, *Regional LMI Profile: Annual Profile for Metro South/West Workforce Area* (March 2007), 36.

[6] Census 2000, "2000 Minor Civil Division/County-to-Minor Civil Division/County Worker Flow Files."

TABLE 9.2
EMPLOYMENT, ESTABLISHMENTS, AND WAGES BY SECTOR (2007)

Sector	Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Annual Wage
Total, All Industries	875	14,731	$46,176
Goods-Producing Domain	132	1,115	$60,528
Construction	111	736	$51,116
Manufacturing	21	379	$78,832
Durable Goods Manufacturing	12	308	$76,336
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	9	71	$89,804
Service-Providing Domain	743	13,615	$44,980
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	178	2,938	$35,048
Utilities	3	63	$69,420
Wholesale Trade	53	374	$83,408
Retail Trade	113	2,412	$26,104
Transportation and Warehousing	9	89	$49,608
Information	23	755	$76,024
Financial Activities	90	868	$58,812
Finance and Insurance	51	642	$65,676
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	39	226	$39,312
Professional and Business Services	171	2,889	$59,956
Professional and Technical Services	110	596	$64,220
Management of Companies and Enterprises	7	876	$65,312
Administrative and Waste Services	54	1,418	$54,756
Education and Health Services	71	3,036	$43,056
Educational Services	11	806	$50,180
Health Care and Social Assistance	60	2,230	$40,508
Leisure and Hospitality	68	1,699	$19,500
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	16	258	$24,856
Accommodation and Food Services	52	1,441	$18,564
Other Services	122	496	$30,784
Public Administration	20	934	$52,156

Source: Massachusetts EOLWD, Municipal Employment Data (ES-202).

Dedham is home to 875 businesses with over 14,700 employees. Most jobs in Dedham are in Professional and Business Services (19.6 percent), Education and Health Services (20.6 percent), and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (19.9 percent) industries. Overall, the composition of Dedham's employment base is fairly similar to that of the state and Norfolk County, but the town has a comparatively large proportion of jobs in Professional and Business Services, Information, and Public Administration even though the latter industries make up a fairly small percentage of local employment. Dedham's largest employers include the American Red Cross, the Highgate Manor Center for Health, and the Norfolk County Court system. In most industries, Dedham's jobs pay less than the state average. For example, Dedham employees in the Finance and Insurance industry earn an average annual wage of $65,676 compared with the statewide average of $104,208 while those in Professional and Technical Services earn $64,220 versus $87,724.[7]

Services and retail trade are among the most productive industries in Dedham. According to the 2002 Economic Census, the health care industry generated nearly $195 million in revenue that year, while retail trade generated $421 million, wholesale trade $295 million, and administrative

[7] EOLWD, Municipal Employment Data, ES-202; and Employer Locator, at <http://lmi2.detma.org/Lmi/employers.asp>.

and support and waste management and remediation services, $560 million.[8]

Household Income

The difference between Dedham's median household income ($61,699) and the average annual wage ($38,970) indicates that many Dedham households have more than one wage earner and Dedham residents also work in communities with higher wages. Of Dedham's 4,987 married couples, both partners work in 44.8 percent of the households and 17.4 percent have more than two employed family members. These statistics make Dedham similar to the state as whole, though the percentage of married-couple families with both partners employed is somewhat smaller than the Massachusetts average (49.6 percent).[9]

TABLE 9.3
VALUATION, TAX RATES, AND SHIFTS FOR CIP PROPERTY (FY07): DEDHAM AND REGION

Town	CIP as % of Total Valuation	CIP Shift	CIP Tax Rate
Canton	22.0	1.650	17.94
Dedham	16.4	1.830	23.89
Dover	1.9	1.000	9.20
Foxborough	21.1	1.000	9.92
Medfield	4.5	1.000	12.27
Milton	2.9	1.830	20.34
Needham	11.7	1.750	18.17
Norwood	25.4	1.730	17.35
Randolph	11.4	1.750	17.85
Sharon	6.0	1.000	14.16
Stoughton	16.5	1.750	19.93
Walpole	12.3	1.250	13.89
Westwood	14.1	1.650	19.81

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, FY 2007 CIP Tax Shift.

Tax Base

Dedham depends primarily on property taxes and state aid to pay for municipal and school services. Property taxes represent 68.2 percent of Dedham's total revenue, the fourth highest percentage among towns in the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC).[10] Relatively high taxes for commercial property and a proportionally high level of state assistance have contributed to Dedham's strong AA bond rating and enabled the town to maintain a low residential tax rate of $10.93 (FY 2008).

In Dedham, tax revenue from nonresidential development represents about thirty percent of the entire tax levy.[11] Compared with other communities in the TRIC subregion, Dedham transfers a larger share of the levy to nonresidential taxpayers, and its commercial tax rate of $23.89 is the highest. In FY2007, Dedham ranked fifth in the region for the percentage of its total assessed valuation composed of commercial, industrial and personal property (CIP).[12]

Commercial and Industrial Areas

Dedham's commercial areas include retail and services that cater to residents of the town and the surrounding region. Dedham Square contains a variety of retail, office, and municipal uses surrounded by a historic residential neighborhood. Auto-oriented commercial uses line Providence Highway, serving a large trade area that extends into eleven communities. Additional commercial activity occurs in small clusters located around town.

Dedham Square. Dedham Square is a historic downtown anchored by the Norfolk County Courthouse and other municipal buildings. A mixed-use area located west of Providence Highway, Dedham Square provides shopping, cultural, entertainment, and service uses for local residents, visitors and employees. The district has sixty-six business-

[8] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Economic Census 2002, "Table 2. Selected Statistics by Economic Sector and Sub-Sector, at <http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/>.

[9] Census 2000, Summary File 1, "DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics," and Summary File 3, "Table P48: Family Type by Number of Workers in Family in 1999."

[10] Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, At A Glance Reports, at <http://www.mass.gov>.

[11] Massachusetts Department of Revenue, DLS, Property Tax Information, "Assessed Values by Class, FY 2007", at <http://www.mass.gov>.

[12] Massachusetts Department of Revenue, DLS, Property Tax Information, "FY 2007 CIP Tax Shift", at <http://www.mass.gov>.

TABLE 9.4
CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AREAS

Location	Land Use	Vacancy Rate	Building Condition
Dedham Square	Shopping Goods/ Restaurant/Office/ Convenience/ Institutional/Public/ Mixed Use	Low	Good
Providence Highway Gateway (Washington St. to Boston line)	Shopping Goods/ Restaurant/Office	Average	Good
Providence Highway South (Washington St. to Enterprise Dr.)	Shopping Goods	Low	Fair
RDO District West	Shopping Goods/General Services	Low	Fair
RDO District East	Office/Hotel/General Services	High	Good
Readville/Sprague St./Stop & Shop	General Services/Office/ Warehouse/Flex Space	High	Fair
East Dedham	General Services/Office Warehouse/Flex Space/ Convenience/Retail	Low	Fair

Note: Vacancy rate rating=5% low, 6-10% average, 11 % + high, approximated. Source: Larry Koff & Associates, Windshield Survey, August 2007.

es including restaurants, personal and business services, general shopping, and a local movie theater.

Providence Highway Gateway (North of Washington Street to Boston line): This area includes the Dedham Mall, which has undergone substantial redevelopment and currently has a Super Stop & Shop and the Dedham Health and Fitness Club. While Circuit City and other stores have left the Dedham Mall, new owners continue to invest in making the mall a viable retail center. In contrast, the gateway area north of the Dedham Mall contains a confusing mix of retail, wholesale and service businesses with multiple curb cuts and out-of-scale signage.

Providence Highway South (Washington Street to Enterprise Drive): This area contains stable big box retail uses, such as BJ's, Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond, Bugaboo Creek, and TGI Fridays, which draw customers from throughout the region. It also includes Dedham Plaza, a strip mall fronting on Providence Highway and Washington Street. The Washington Street side has a large number of personal service establishments while the Providence Highway side has a Star Market.

RDO District/West (West of Commuter Rail Line): Located off the Route 128 interchange, this area currently includes hospitality, office, industrial, warehouse, retail, service, and big box chains to the east and west of Providence Highway. In 2007, the Planning Board approved a 500,000 sq. ft. lifestyle center, Legacy Place, with retail, restaurant and entertainment space and an 85,000 sq. ft. office building on forty-two acres adjacent to a small neighborhood and a Marriott Hotel. A Holiday Inn, banks and commercial office buildings occupy land across Providence Highway to the west. Two parcels on Providence Highway will soon contain a CVS and a Walgreen's. A mix of offices, services, building materials, Costco, and light wholesale and warehouse uses currently lie to the rear of Stergis Way and Rustcraft Road.

RDO District/East (East of Commuter Rail Line): With a commuter rail stop and proximity to Legacy Place, this underutilized area has potential for mixed-use or biotech development. Currently, it is anchored by a Hilton Hotel and an MBTA commuter rail parking lot. There are a number of vacant office buildings, storage, and truck repair uses. Vehicular access to the district is confusing because it is accessible only from the Route 128 ramps.

Readville/Sprague St./Stop and Shop. There are four major sub-areas along the Boston boundary line zoned or used for industrial purposes. Only one of these areas, the First Highland warehouse/office industrial park off Sprague Street, has access from Dedham; the others require access from Boston. The Stop & Shop, a vacant thirty-seven acre property, has the greatest re-use potential. The Readville Yard property, zoned Limited Manufacturing, is owned by the MBTA and proposed for housing, but a developer has not been designated. An adjacent industrially zoned parcel was proposed for an eight-lot industrial subdivision.

East Dedham (Milton and High Streets). The land uses and zoning in East Dedham include a mix of General Business, Limited Manufacturing and General Residential. Given the presence of the Mother Brook, a number of auto-related businesses, contractor supply and services, and other similar businesses, the buffers between these uses are often not well developed. In addition, a number of the former mill buildings contain artist lofts, signaling the attractiveness of this area for residential uses. Two properties of note along the residential section of High Street include the now-closed St. Mary's School and the nineteenth century warehouse partially occupied by Ali-Med, Inc.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

Mix of Businesses

Dedham residents have access to two full-service food markets – a new Star Market and a Super Stop & Shop -- in addition to BJ's and Costco wholesale stores. Legacy Place is anticipated to offer a Whole Foods store as well. Major theaters, restaurants, and hotels are located with good regional access along Providence Highway South. Despite the proliferation of automobile-oriented businesses, Dedham has few drive-ins and few fast-food restaurants. It also does not have a large number of medical, service- or office-related uses. Further, warehouse distribution and light manufacturing uses are limited to the MBTA and Stop and Shop properties along the Boston line.

Vacancies[13]

Vacancy rates differ by land use and location. According to local sources, retail vacancy rates are generally the lowest, about five percent, and industrial vacancy rates are roughly the same, excluding the large Stop & Shop property, which has been vacant for three years and marketed by different owners for a variety of uses. In contrast, the office vacancy rate in Dedham has been estimated at twenty-one percent.[14] This is substantially higher than the estimated office vacancy rates for Dedham's area: 9.2 percent for the Route 128/Mass Pike sub-area and 18.1 percent for the South sub-area.[15]

Dedham Mall has the highest retail vacancy rate in Dedham. This partially reflects the mall's change of ownership and ongoing buildout by prior and current owners. The Allied Drive RDO District historically has had the town's highest office vacancy rate, but several properties in this area are now occupied, excluding the former Harvard Health Plan building, which lies partially in Westwood. The Stop and Shop property is a unique industrial site that remains vacant for several reasons. An adjacent industrial warehouse property owned by the Hurley Company could be redeveloped for more intense light manufacturing or warehouse use.

Property Conditions

Dedham's commercial and industrial base does not measure up to the quality of its retail activity. The industrial areas along the Boston/Dedham line, the Stop & Shop warehouse and adjacent Readville area, East Dedham, the properties in the RDO district along Stergis Way and Commercial Circle, and a limited number of vacant properties around Allied Drive need reinvestment. The buildings, shopping plazas, and infrastructure in

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13 Analysis based on windshield survey, November 2007, and interviews with local realtors.

14 Hunneman & Company, interview, Larry Koff & Associates, November 2007.

15 Jones Lang LaSalle, "Greater Boston Market Statistics – 3rd Quarter 2007," at <http://www.joneslanglasalle-boston.com/ma/corporate/research/research_portal.html>.

East Dedham along Milton and High Streets tend to be in fair condition. In general, these conditions undermine the adjacent residential areas. Furthermore, some of the retail and service businesses along Providence Highway in Dedham Plaza need to be upgraded or replaced.

Trends in Businesses and Employment

Since 2001, the number of businesses in Dedham has decreased by 6.2 percent and average monthly employment has declined by seventy-eight jobs, but the average wage has increased by 14.4 percent. Dedham's shrinking industrial base is gradually being replaced by service and trade jobs. While Dedham consistently ranks near the top of the TRIC subregion in retail trade and commercial development, manufacturing jobs have decreased by about thirty percent since the early 1990s.[16]

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) recently projected a continuation of these trends. MAPC estimates that by 2030, Dedham's employment base will consist of 15,434 jobs, representing employment growth of approximately six percent. The largest increase is expected to occur in the Professional and Business Services industries (fifteen percent).[17] However, MAPC also predicts that Dedham's manufacturing employment will decline by twenty-six percent during the same period. In general, MAPC's forecast for Dedham is similar to that of the larger TRIC subregion, where Professional and Business Services employment is expected to grow by twenty-six percent and manufacturing employment will decrease sixteen percent.[18]

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

Dedham has completed several planning studies, both town-wide and area-focused. The two most recent town-wide plans, the *Dedham Master Plan* (1996) and *Community Development Plan* (2004), identified similar economic development goals.

Dedham Master Plan (1996). Dedham's 1996 Master Plan stressed the importance of expanding office, research, and light assembly uses and to a lesser extent, retail uses.[19] Dedham has adopted new zoning to implement many of its master plan goals. For example, several sections of Providence Highway have improved under the new Highway Corridor zoning and site plan review guidelines. Despite establishing the RDO district to promote research and development and technology development, however, Dedham has not lured the anticipated changes in land use.[20]

Community Development Plan (2004). The 2004 Community Development Plan highlighted the need for staffing and public intervention in support of economic development. The plan recommended revitalizing key industrial and commercial sites and adopting new policies and incentives for economic development, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and District Improvement Financing (DIF). The plan also urged protection of Dedham's limited supply of water through strict enforcement of stormwater regulations and support of land uses that minimize the demand for public water.[21]

Dedham Square Specific Area Plan (1999). The Dedham Square Specific Area Plan was developed under the leadership of a Planning Board-sponsored committee that included representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, DPW Commissioner, and Town Planner. It identified the need for as many as 500 additional parking spaces for the courts, municipal uses, and retail stores, improved traffic flow and pedestrian circulation, streetscape improvements in Dedham Square, new municipal facilities for the Police Department and Council on Aging, and a public/

[16] EOLWD, Municipal Employment Data, 2001-2006. These statistics represent annual averages and do not account for seasonal fluctuations in employment.

[17] Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), *Employment Projections 2010-2030* (January 2006), <http://www.mapc.org/data_gis/data_center/data_center_data.html#projections>.

[18] MAPC, *Employment Projections 2010-2030*.

[19] Kenneth M. Kreutziger, *Dedham Master Plan* (March 1996), VIII-2.

[20] *Dedham Master Plan*, VIII-8.

[21] Larry Koff & Associates, *Community Development Plan* (June 2004), 86.

private partnership between county, town and state elected officials.[22]

Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study (2007). The Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study assessed redevelopment options for the Keystone site and for providing additional parking in Dedham Square. The report concluded that if the Keystone site was redeveloped for uses other than public parking, downtown's parking deficit could increase to 280 spaces, not including municipal parking needs.[23] The study recommended that representatives of the town, Norfolk County, and the state (DCAM and elected officials) work together on a facility and parking plan for Dedham Square.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

Dedham Square and the Providence Highway corridor have attracted new investment, but the commercial and industrial districts have problems with vacancy rates, blighting land uses, stagnating development and redevelopment, general deterioration, and regulatory issues. Overcoming the barriers to achieving a coherent vision for each district will take concerted leadership by property owners, business owners and the town, and in some cases cooperation from the MBTA, the City of Boston, and state government.

Dedham Square. Dedham Square's future depends upon its ability to adapt to competition from Legacy Place and other retail developments, meet the expansion needs of the courts for office space and parking, meet the town's need for expanded municipal facilities, and fulfill market demand for mixed-use development. The major barrier to Dedham Square's future is the inability of the town, the courts, the county, and the state to follow through on a planning process to address issues of mutual concern. A consensus plan needs to be refined and funding strategies identified and carried out in order to initiate a multifaceted initiative of court and registry facilities, parking for the courts and local businesses, traffic and streetscape improvements, and municipal facilities.

Providence Highway Gateway. This area has seen some improvement recently through updating of retail stores and reducing vacancies at the Dedham Mall. However, the area needs enhanced pedestrian amenities, and a greater overall sense of place. This could be accomplished by adding pathways to adjacent properties and improved access to the banks of the Charles River.

Providence Highway South. This underutilized area needs planning for future uses, redevelopment, and improved traffic flow between commercial properties and access to Providence Highway. Planning efforts should consider whether the northern area adjacent to Eastern Avenue should be, in effect, part of Dedham Square, with better pedestrian connections and compatible zoning. Another consideration might be whether a new mix of tenants, such as a grocery store, and physical improvements would make Dedham Plaza a more viable highway-oriented commercial center.

RDO District/West. Two possible sub-areas exist in this location: retail frontage on Providence Highway and warehouse and industrial uses off Enterprise Drive and Stergis Way. Dedham's existing zoning does not necessarily reflect current uses or a realistic future vision. Meetings with local property owners would encourage the development of ideas for public/private cooperation, a consensus vision and new zoning and roadway improvements that match the vision.

RDO District/East. A transit-oriented development above the MBTA parking lot, incorporating underutilized properties along Allied Drive, could transform the visual, economic and circulation characteristics of this area. A number of underutilized and vacant properties exist adjacent to the Hilton Hotel. With the addition of air rights over the MBTA parking lot and a pedestrian connection across the tracks, there may be opportunities

[22] Larry Koff & Associates, et al, *Dedham Square Specific Area Plan* (January 1999), 3-4.

[23] The Cecil Group, *Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study* (June 2007), 6.

to develop a mixed-use complex in this location. A publicly financed parking garage could leverage such an outcome, especially if there were pedestrian and vehicular access to the Rustcraft Road area. With proper planning and incentives, this is a prime location for office, hi-tech, and possibly residential uses.

Readville/Sprague Street. Town officials, neighborhood residents, the developers, the City of Boston and MBTA need to work cooperatively on reuse plans to improve the Hurley and Readville properties while minimizing traffic impacts in Dedham. Issues of access, zoning, utilities, and coordination with the MBTA and the City of Boston continue to impede redevelopment of these important sites. Dedham has taken a clear position on both properties, supporting limited-scale residential development at the Readville Yards and light industrial uses for the adjacent Hurley parcel. Without comprehensive planning on both sites, it will be difficult to carry out a consensus plan that addresses Dedham's key concerns.

Stop and Shop Warehouse. Dedham needs to encourage the redevelopment of this 35-acre site as a state-of-the-art industrial park that improves access and minimizes traffic impacts. Access through Boston is limited and a rail line cuts through wetlands. Many of the facilities here need to be upgraded. Of the existing 700,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space, a little over one-half is leasable. Moreover, less than half of the existing space is located in Dedham. The balance lies in Boston.

East Dedham. The visual appearance and mix of commercial uses in East Dedham need to be improved. This corridor has a mix of businesses, some in deteriorated condition. A number of uses contain surface parking areas and auto-oriented uses along the frontage, with no setbacks and landscaping. Without public intervention, East Dedham's blighted commercial properties will probably continue to deteriorate. Small parcels and multiple owners make private-sector revitalization difficult.

ZONING CONSTRAINTS

Zoning changes could help to address some of the problems in Dedham's commercial and industrial areas. The exception is the Stop and Shop warehouse site, which appears to need financial and other incentives more than zoning relief. The zoning that applies in Dedham's key business areas includes the Administrative and Professional, Research Development and Office (RDO), General Business, Highway Business, Central Business, and Local Business districts. The industrial districts, Limited Manufacturing and Limited Manufacturing Type B, are located on the western edge of town with access directed toward Boston or Route 95.

Dedham Square. Dedham Square is one of the few areas where Dedham has adopted zoning to allow a mix of residential and commercial uses. Across from Town Hall, a local developer recently constructed his second mixed-use building. The Dedham Zoning Bylaw limits multifamily buildings to two units, but places no cap on subsidiary units in the General Business and Central Business Districts or in Planned Commercial Developments. Parking requirements vary by housing type. If Dedham wants to encourage mixed-use developments, the Zoning Bylaw should provide more clarity and flexibility.

In addition, the boundary of the CBD excludes commercial properties on the east side of Providence Highway, south of East Street. Some of these properties, such as Staples, are located within both the Local Business District and Highway Business District. Especially with the Sprague Street Bridge reconstruction, it is appropriate to review the boundaries of the Central, Local, and Highway Business Districts east of Providence Highway from East Street south to Eastern Avenue.

Providence Highway South, Washington Street to Enterprise Drive. The continued vacancies in Dedham Plaza, especially along Washington Street, signal problems with this shopping center. The existing zoning (Highway Business) and permitting process for signs, parking, and physical improvements constrain reuse of portions of Dedham Plaza.

RDO District/West. The frontage of the RDO district along Providence Highway consists of commercial uses. This activity will be reinforced by Legacy Place. It may be appropriate to rezone land along Providence Highway to Highway Business and leave the rear portions as RDO. Alternatively, the town could consider a mixed-use RDO that would allow some types of retail uses.

RDO District/East. Dedham allows a Planned Commercial Development (PCD) within the RDO, but not multifamily and retail. If the town wants to encourage mixed uses within a PCD, the relationship between PCD and the rules that normally apply in the RDO District should be reassessed.

Readville/Sprague St. Parcels located both in Boston and Dedham constitute a portion of the former MBTA Readville Yards. One portion is zoned for residential uses on small lots while the second is zoned for industrial uses. Zoning changes may be required to facilitate reuse of these properties.

East Dedham, Milton and High Streets. The Table of Uses should be clarified to permit artist lofts as well as provide more stringent site planning requirements for auto uses and parking lots.

Priority Development Areas

A review of Dedham's commercial and industrial districts indicates that other than some key sub-areas along the Providence Highway retail corridor, most of the commercial areas are in fair condition. Concerted public action in conjunction with private property owners will be needed to reposition underutilized sites and buildings to achieve their full market potential. A planning process should be undertaken for priority sites in order to build consensus and provide the right mix of incentives to foster development.

DEDHAM SQUARE

Several public and private planning and business improvement initiatives are currently underway in Dedham Square. These efforts seek to accommodate growth for the court system, improve marketing and the mix of businesses in Dedham Square, and address traffic, parking, and landscaping issues. Not all of these initiatives can be carried out at the same time, and public and private cooperation will be essential.

In June 2007, the state's Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) released a memo summarizing the status of court facility planning in Norfolk County.[24] DCAM concluded that a new courthouse should be built utilizing the front of the Registry of Deeds building and expanding to the rear with a surface parking lot for 260 cars. The Courthouse would house the Superior, District, and Juvenile Courts and the law library, and the Registry of Deeds would relocate to a new site, presumably within or near Dedham Square.

Concurrent with DCAM's work, the *Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study* was undertaken to examine office space and parking needs of the court system and the town.[25] The study identified a development program and three possible sites for parking and office use to meet overlapping needs of the courts, the town, and the local merchants. According to the report, Dedham Square needs 350 more parking spaces. The Keystone site cannot fulfill the diverse needs of the Registry of Deeds, parking for the Registry and Dedham Square businesses, and retail uses.

If the Registry of Deeds moved, the Keystone site could be developed for ground floor retail along High Street and Eastern Avenue to reinforce commercial uses at the heart of Dedham Square. However, local officials and Dedham Square leaders want the Registry of Deeds to remain in its current location. Dedham Square's competing needs for parking and developable land are challenging, but it should be possible to address them if redevelopment and revitalization are undertaken as a comprehensive, cooperative exercise between town, county, and state. Toward this end, both the town and state and county officials have taken steps toward the revitalization of Dedham Square. These efforts include:

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24 Elizabeth Minnis, Memo, *Norfolk County Courts Master Plan*, (June 13, 2007).

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

TABLE 9.5
DEDHAM SQUARE POSSIBLE PARKING SITES

Site	Current Use	Ownership	Sq. Ft.	Current Parking	Proposed Use
Keystone Site	Public parking	Town	63,000	157	Parking, ground floor retail, commercial
Eastern Ave./ Bryant St.	Commercial, Parking	Multiple owners	14,400		Mixed use, court/public
Harris St.	Warehouse	Mix	20,400		Mixed use, court/public
Post Office	Post Office	Private	36,000		
Police Station	Police Station	Town	8,200		
Ames St./ Registry of Deeds	Parking	County	179,400		Parking deck 380 spaces

- A state-funded feasibility study to review returning the Probate Court to Dedham Square. Financing for the study as been approved, although the study has not yet commenced.

- The Economic Development Department in partnership with Dedham Square Circle is submitting a Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant to fund its "Engineering the Future" infrastructure and streetscape improvement project.

- In 2008, the Keystone Lot was approved as a Priority Development Site under the state's Chapter 43D program.

- Dedham Square Circle has explored options for a parking study, which may be pursued once a clearer redevelopment plan is established.

In addition to continuing the aforementioned studies and projects, Dedham needs ways to promote planning for the following issues:

- Once a redevelopment plan is established, a traffic and parking study should be undertaken that identifies needs of the merchants and courts and outlines a management entity and funding mechanism for developing additional parking. This would be carried out jointly by Norfolk County and the town because the state is not interested in taking the lead on developing parking as part of the court facilities improvements.

- A Phase II Brownfield Site Assessment of the Keystone lot should be undertaken to rule out any significant contamination. A Phase I brownfields site assessment revealed slight contamination consistent with the site's prior use as a train station. In order to make sure the Keystone lot is free from development barriers, a Phase II site assessment was recommended.

- A Police Station site reuse and relocation study has long been recommended. The Dedham Police Station Study Summary, issued in 1997, examined two options for a new police station. However, the study is now a decade old, and since any reuse or relocation of the police station must be coordinated with the Dedham's other public facilities needs and overall planning for Dedham Square, the town needs to take a fresh look at this issue.

- Evaluating the feasibility of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Dedham Square to manage a variety of marketing, landscaping, parking and other related improvements.

Table 9.5 identify sites, their current uses, ownership, and acreage. A study committee will need to assess the costs, feasibility, and roles of various participants in carrying out the redevelopment program for court expansion, parking, and retail.

STERGIS WAY/COMMERCIAL CIRCLE

Market conditions indicate a demand for retail uses not allowed by right in the RDO. The Legacy Place retail and entertainment center will foster the redevelopment of forty-two acres in an area currently zoned RDO. Additionally, retail uses along Providence Highway reinforce the commercial draw of this area. By contrast, warehouse, service, and the material reprocessing operations off Commercial Circle and Stergis Way provide approximately forty acres of potential redevelopment for retail or business uses. With improved access, it might be possible to market this locus for back office space, flex space, or some type of mixed retail/wholesale.

Much of the property in this study area is under the control of the Stergis family. Their support for a planning study is essential. In addition, a number of reuse scenarios should be considered, depending on market conditions as Legacy Place is built out and its impacts on this area can be more fully assessed.

Nine properties along Stergis Way and two on Commercial Circle are identified in Table 9.6. The two Commercial Circle parcels together contain twenty-five acres (1,091,178 sq. ft.) while the Stergis Way parcels contain 14.8 acres (636,896 sq. ft.). While there are some viable uses, for the most part this area is plagued by inappropriate land uses such as the two material reprocessing uses off Commercial Circle, excess surface parking, poor visibility and access from Providence Highway, a history of failed office development proposals, and blighted commercial uses at the gateway to Enterprise Drive. The two most viable uses in the sub-area are big box retail (Costco) and flex retail (wholesale/light manufacturing retail). In the long term, office use might be a possibility.

TABLE 9.6
PARCELS FOR POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT: STERGIS WAY AND COMMERCIAL CIRCLE

Parcel	Address	Land Area (acres)	Owner	Current Use
Stergis Way				
136-19A	75 McNeil Way	2.3	850 Providence Highway Assoc.	Office Building
149-1	850 Providence Hwy.	2.2	850 Providence Highway Assoc.	Restaurant Retail
149-2	852 Providence Hwy.	1.0	850 Providence Highway Assoc.	Factory
149-3	30 Stergis Way	1.0	1445 Realty Inc.	Warehouse Storage
149-3A	60 Stergis Way	1.0	Newood Realty Trust	BISCO Irrigation Warehouse Storage
149-3B	110 Stergis Way	1.3	Stergis	Boston Home Infusion Warehouse Storage
149-3C	45 Stergis Way	2.1	Stergis	Office Building
150-7B	75 Stergis Way	1.3	Stergis	Hobart Corp. Warehouse Storage
150-7A	125 Stergis Way	2.6	Stergis	Stergis Industrial Park Auto Repair
Sub Total		14.8		
Commercial Circle				
149-6	200 Commercial Cir.	8.5	200 Commercial Circle Realty Trust	Dedham Recycled Gravel
150-4	400 Commercial Cir.	16.6	Dedham Corporate Center Realty Trust	Costco
Sub Total		25.1		
Total		39.9		

TABLE 9.7
PARCELS FOR POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT: ALLIED DRIVE

Parcel	Address	Land Area (acres)	Owner	Current Use
176-5-90	67 Allied Drive	5.5	MBTA	Parking Lot-500 cars
176-2	122 Allied Drive	2.5	Extra Space of Allied Dedham LLC	Storage, Child care, Retail
176-4	100 Allied Drive	2.3	Northeast Realty Trust	Truck Repair
177-3	40 Allied Drive	2.9	B&A Condominium Realty Trust	Vacant

ALLIED DRIVE/DEDHAM CORPORATE CENTER TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

The Allied Drive parcels include a surface parking lot that can accommodate approximately 500 cars, a three- story converted warehouse occupied by a number of tenants, including a wholesale/retail clothing store, truck rental, and storage, Cummins Truck repair, and a former warehouse converted to office space once occupied by Harvard Pilgrim Health and currently vacant.

Dedham's *Community Development Plan* (2004) provided a transit-oriented development concept plan for the Allied Drive area. The plan illustrated a five-story MBTA/private parking garage for 2,125 cars adjacent to two free-standing office/R&D buildings fronting on Allied Drive, each with about 100,000 sq. ft. The garage could provide parking for an additional two office buildings. Another parcel included a 225-unit housing development with underground parking. The adjacent Harvard Community Health building could be replaced by a residential/hotel project with 140 housing units and 240 rooms. This transit-oriented development also included a pedestrian bridge over the commuter rail tracks. If carried out with District Improvement Financing (DIF), the project could probably support local traffic and open space improvements as part of the overall financing package.

READVILLE/HURLEY PROPERTY

The twenty-one acre Hurley property is located both in Dedham (fourteen acres) and Boston (seven acres). It is currently in the Limited Manufacturing District. The property contains a number of older warehouse structures occupied by the owner, the A.J. Hurley Company. A master plan is currently being developed for industrial use of the property. Adjacent to the Hurley site is a forty-acre surplus MBTA parcel, Readville Yards. This property is in the General Residential District. Dedham and Boston need to be involved in a planning process with the MBTA to address issues of reuse, access, and infrastructure. This would build on the planning process carried out in 2003 by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), the MBTA, and the Readville community groups.[26] Incentives to attract funding for planning and development will be critical to the success of this effort.

STOP AND SHOP WAREHOUSE

This facility is an important regional resource. It consists of approximately 760,000 sq. ft. of various warehouse and related service uses on a thirty-five-acre site with at least five acres of wetlands. The Stop & Shop tenancy generated some 900 truck trips per day on Boston streets. A recent owner considered demolishing two outdated buildings on the Dedham side of the property and replacing them with a new state-of-the-art distribution building. Access would continue from Hyde Park, as wetlands probably prevent use of the rail line. Since this option lacked tenant interest, another developer tried to market the property for residential use. This concept involved annexing the property by the City of Boston and it, too, has failed. Dedham may need to consider incentives to induce the redevelopment of these properties for commercial/industrial use. A new commercial use with less impact than a residential subdivision would benefit Dedham in terms of tax revenue and employment.

[26] Boston Redevelopment Authority, Memo: Kairos Shen, Director of Planning, Readville Yard 5 Disposition and Redevelopment, Technical Memo summarizing 5 major categories of concern to be addressed in planning and redevelopment of Yard 5, August 11, 2003.

EAST DEDHAM (MILTON AND HIGH STREETS)

This area is zoned variously as Limited Manufacturing, General Business, and General Residence. Windshield surveys indicate relatively low vacancy rates and fair conditions in the business areas. Local residents and property owners would like to improve the district's appearance. If conditions merit designation as a blighted area under federal regulations, it may be possible to obtain Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for sign and façade and streetscape improvements. A public/private planning effort will need to be undertaken to explore the problems and opportunities in this area and identify appropriate funding strategies.

Regional Barriers to Economic Development

Two regional issues affect economic development in Dedham: water supply and traffic congestion. While these issues are not absolute barriers to development, they must be addressed in any economic development planning that takes place.

Water Demand and Protection of the Dedham-Westwood Water District. Recognizing that Dedham did not have sufficient water supply during peak summer months, the town recently joined the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Dedham now has the ability to meet some six percent of its supply needs through the MWRA. Current projections indicate that there will be ample supply to accommodate growth. However, developers are expected to undertake water conservation and stormwater protection measures. Furthermore, new commercial development requiring large amounts of water should be carefully regulated to ensure that water conservation efforts are implemented.

Transportation Corridor Planning. Due to Dedham's proximity to Route 128 and the presence of major retail districts along the length of Providence Highway, Dedham hosts far more cars per day than it has residents. Understandably, transportation planning in Dedham has focused primarily on traffic flow through the town and to destination retail and employment centers, and alleviating congestion for its residents and workers. If the town wants to pursue commercial development opportunities, however, the barriers of traffic and parking must be addressed in Dedham Square, Allied Drive, the Readville/Hurley Property, and the Stop & Shop Warehouse site.

Economic Development Incentives

Since Dedham is centrally located in the region and subject to substantial competition from adjacent communities, the town should assess its opportunities and barriers for economic growth and pursue strategies that can support its goals. A review of various tools for competitiveness indicates that Dedham has the necessary infrastructure but lacks the incentives required to attract growth, especially in blighted and underutilized areas where private investment is most needed. In addition to organizational changes to focus on economic revitalization, there are tax incentives, funding sources, and zoning tools that can be used to foster economic development. Dedham will need to use these programs along with corridor traffic and stormwater management if it wants to revitalize critical economic development areas.

Many towns around Dedham lack at least one of these tools or incentives, so providing them may help to motivate businesses to locate in Dedham. Establishing priority development activities, forming an economic development committee to work with property owners and regional entities, and providing adequate funding for planning would help to carry out a revitalization program.

EXISTING INCENTIVES

Dedham has taken two important steps to promote economic development. First, the town has hired an economic development director. Second, Dedham joined the Quincy Economic Target Area (ETA), which includes Quincy and ten neighboring towns. The designation of an Economic Opportunity Area (EOA) and a Certified Project, as discussed below, can be an effective tool for attracting and retaining desired businesses. Norwood, for example, has approved six Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements to attract and retain businesses.

TABLE 9.8
SUBREGION COMPETITIVENESS FOR COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

	Type of Incentive						
Towns	Direct Rail Connection	Tax Increment Financing	ED Planner	ED/Ind. Commission	Streamlined Permitting	Training/ Labor Retention	Public Industrial Park
Canton	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Dedham	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dover	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Foxboro	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Medfield	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Milton	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Needham	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Norwood	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Sharon	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Stoughton	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Westwood	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Walpole	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Source: Larry Koff & Associates

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows municipalities to provide flexible tax incentives to attract development and employment growth. An eligible company located in an Economic Opportunity Area designated by the Board of Selectmen would be eligible for substantial state tax credits and can, in addition, negotiate a savings in local property taxes under a TIF plan. The state tax relief, a five percent Investment Tax Credit and a ten percent Abandoned Building Tax Deduction, as well as eligibility for predevelopment and/or Brownfields financing, are major incentives for attracting businesses apart from any local tax relief that might be negotiated. Furthermore, in return for the benefits a company would receive under a TIF, the town may require that Dedham residents be given priority in filling new jobs.

District Improvement Financing. M.G.L. c. 40Q allows a city or town to pledge future increases in property taxes generated in a specified area (the "Development District") to repay a bond used to finance capital improvements that benefit properties within the district. The bonds could be secured only by the pledge of new future property taxes in the Development District. Since a DIF project could involve multiple parcels and owners, preparing and securing public approval of a Development Plan and a Financing Plan requires substantial scrutiny both at the local and state level.

A **Business Improvement District (BID)** is a designated contiguous area in which at least seventy-five percent of the land is zoned or used for commercial, retail, industrial or mixed uses. In Massachusetts, BIDs are authorized and regulated under M.G.L. c. 40O. Through a special assessment, property owners within the district vote to initiate, manage, and finance supplemental services above and beyond the base of services provided by the city or town. BIDs often support the following types of services:

- District management services
- Maintenance and security
- Business services
- Promotion and marketing
- Physical improvements and property management

A BID obtains revenue for these services from annual fees or a surcharge paid by the district's property owners in addition to their real estate taxes. Each BID establishes its own fee system and may impose a cap or an upper-limit on the amount paid by property owners. For example, the Spring-

field BID caps the amount per property at $4,000. BIDs are managed by a board of directors. Although M.G.L. c.40O does not specify the composition or size of the board, BIDs generally include representation from property owners, retailers, residents, and corporations.

The state recommends that communities considering a BID undertake a process that includes consensus building, developing an improvement plan to address district-level needs, and establishing or identifying a management entity to implement the plan. M.G.L. c. 40O requires that property owners within the proposed district petition the local governing body to establish the BID. The petition must contain the signatures of the owners of at least sixty percent of the properties and at least fifty-one percent of the assessed valuation of all real property within the proposed BID.[27]

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) manages a federally funded grant program, the **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**. Through various set-asides of CDBG funds, DHCD disburses grants to municipalities for downtown revitalization initiatives, planning, sign and façade, streetscape, and business assistance. The grants are extremely competitive, and a successful application usually requires advance planning and documentation of need.

REGULATORY INCENTIVES

M.G.L. c. 43D, the Expedited Permitting Law, encourages communities to facilitate permitting for development or redevelopment of at least 50,000 sq. ft. of commercial or mixed-use development. The state provides grants for consulting services, staffing, and in some cases special planning studies. A community that adopts Chapter 43D also receives priority consideration for various state programs such as Public Works for Economic Development (PWED) and Community Development Action Grants (CDAG). In return, the city or town must agree to amend it local rules and regulations to comply with the 180-day permitting timeline required under Chapter 43D.

Transit-Oriented/Joint Development. With the support of the MBTA, the administration is promoting transit-oriented development (TOD), which calls for concentrating housing and commercial activity near public transportation facilities. Numerous MBTA properties located at or near T stations are involved in the TOD Program. The MBTA, the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) work with local communities to use surplus MBTA land near transit stations to catalyze high-quality, transit-oriented projects. The program provides technical assistance for outreach, planning, marketing and RFP development.[28]

Marketing, Promotion, Planning

Dedham will need to reach out to the owners of commercial properties and businesses and provide for a broad-based effort to facilitate appropriate commercial and industrial growth. Marketing, promotion, joint planning, and one-stop permitting are some of the strategies that local staff and town boards should consider. Given regional competition for economic development, it will be critical for Dedham to maintain a "business friendly" climate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ESTABLISH CONSENSUS ON THE LOCATIONS AND VISIONS FOR THE KIND OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES WANT TO PROMOTE.

Dedham needs an economic development vision and plan that includes preliminary planning for the town's eight priority economic revitalization areas (Table 9.8) and its smaller, neighborhood commercial centers that may require similar atten-

[27] Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development, "Business Improvement Districts (BID)", <http://www.mass.gov/dhcd/components/cs/1PrgApps/BID/default.HTM>.

[28] Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, "T Projects and Transit Oriented Development," at <http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/t_projects/projects_tod>.

TABLE 9.8
VISION FOR PRIORITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Location	Vision
Dedham Center	Prepare a plan and carry out a locally sponsored "Main Street" program with property owners, town, DCAM, State and County support for parking, traffic, streetscape improvements as well as appropriate office and mixed use development.
Providence Highway Gateway (Washington St. to Boston line)	Working with Wilder Companies (Dedham Mall), Dedham Racket and the Town's Open Space Committee, foster the preparation of a public/private plan to promote destination shopping, mixed use, open space and pathway connections to Dedham Square and the Charles River.
Providence Highway South (Washington St. to Enterprise Dr.)	With support of property owners, enhance Dedham Plaza and adjacent areas for Big Box and destination shopping, business and personal services, office, and mixed use where appropriate.
RDO District West (West of Commuter Rail Line)	Refine zoning to reflect current pattern of land uses, i.e. retail on frontage of Providence Highway, destination shopping and entertainment (Legacy Place), and promote hi-tech RDO near Stergis Way.
RDO District East (East of Commuter Rail Line)	Promote re-use plan for Transit Oriented Development.
Readville/Hurley Site	Identify traffic improvements that will facilitate appropriate residential development of the Readville MBTA site while concurrently providing for light industrial development of the Hurley site.
Stop & Shop Warehouse	Facilitate redevelopment of site for warehouse/distribution/biotech or Light Manufacturing.
East Dedham (Milton and High Streets)	Identify a plan and needed resources to upgrade mixed use, retail, general services.

tion. Toward this end, Dedham should take the following steps:

- Initiate a **planning process** for priority commercial and industrial sites, build consensus around best uses, and provide incentives to foster development. The process should include site evaluations in each economic revitalization area. The site evaluations should provide for a data gathering phase to develop a comprehensive profile of each site, consideration of potential uses, and designated best uses for each site. The last phase should be to develop a marketing strategy for each site, which may include recommendations for physical improvements and regulatory changes – such as zoning amendments – to the priority areas to make them more development-ready.

- **Identify incentives** for key areas/sites by taking advantage of tax incentives, funding sources, and zoning techniques to foster economic growth. In addition, Dedham should establish an Economic Development Advisory Committee to work with property owners and regional entities, and obtain planning funding. Some funding possibilities include:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Dedham should identify the types of projects that would be appropriate for TIF agreements. A statement by the Economic Development Advisory Committee could formalize town policy for the type of projects, incentives, and support to be provided.

Chapter 43D Technical Assistance. Although Dedham has already adopted Chapter 43D and received a grant from the Interagency Permitting Board for planning, the town should be open to designating other Priority Development Sites and receiving additional Chapter 43D grants where appropriate.

Business Improvement District. A BID designation would give Dedham Square Circle a base of funding to pursue marketing and promotion, and leverage additional improvements.

DCAM/Norfolk County. It is critical that DCAM, Norfolk County, and the town work together on a plan to provide parking and office space. A parking authority or parking corporation jointly managed by the town, county, and a local non-profit in Dedham Square could serve as an organizational vehicle to finance and manage needed parking facilities.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). This source of funding can be used for sign, façade, and streetscape improvements for Dedham Square and the neighborhood centers, including the Milton/High Street areas. CDBG funds can also be used for housing rehabilitation.

2. CONSIDER DESIGNATING ADDITIONAL CHAPTER 43D PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT SITES.

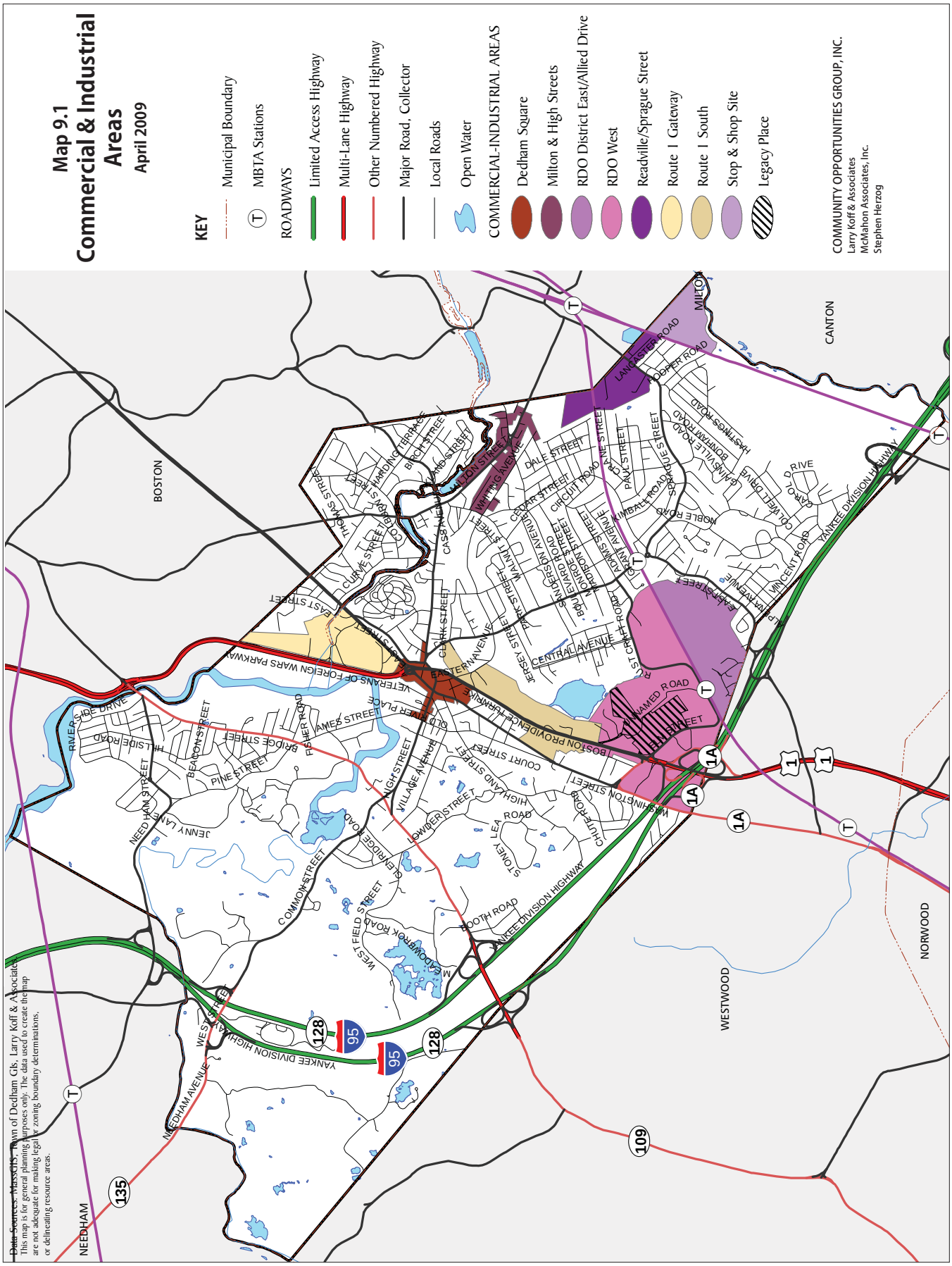
A Chapter 43D Priority Development Site designation may be obtained for commercially or industrially zoned parcels that can accommodate buildings of at least 50,000 sq. ft. of gross floor areas. By designating a PDS, a city or town agrees to enable "fast-track" permitting with decisions made within 180 days. In return, municipalities receive benefits such as priority consideration for the technical assistance funding mentioned above, and marketing assistance.

3. DEVELOPING DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR EACH COMMERCIAL AREA.

Design guidelines work to promote improved visual quality and some degree of visual cohesiveness throughout an area. Dedham already has a provision for design review and a Design Review Advisory Board to implement it, and commercial district design guidelines could be integrated into this existing process. Since it may be important to create a distinct visual identity for each district, separate guidelines should be created for each commercial area. While this would not be appropriate for all commercial areas identified in the economic development vision and plan (see above), it should be considered for smaller, cohesive areas where a distinct visual identity would make the area more attractive and more successful.

4. UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE APPRAISAL OF PERMITTING PROCEDURES, MARKETING AND PROMOTION.

One of the first steps in this effort would involve a self-assessment survey of Dedham's competitive position in promoting commercial development. The Northeastern University Center for Urban and Regional Policy could help the town conduct such a survey for a modest fee. Several neighboring towns have found a self-assessment survey to be useful in setting planning priorities.


Map 9.1
Commercial & Industrial Areas
April 2009
KEY
Municipal Boundary
MBTA Stations
ROADWAYS
Limited Access Highway
Multi-Lane Highway
Other Numbered Highway
Major Road, Collector
Local Roads
Open Water
COMMERCIAL-INDUSTRIAL AREAS
Dedham Square
Milton & High Streets
RDO District East/Allied Drive
RDO West
Readville/Sprague Street
Route 1 Gateway
Route 1 South
Stop & Shop Site
Legacy Place
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES GROUP, INC.
Larry Koff & Associates
McMahon Associates, Inc.
Stephen Herzog
Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Dedham GIS, Larry Koff & Associates
This map is for general planning purposes only. The data used to create the map are not adequate for making legal zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
WESTWOOD
NORWOOD
CANTON
MILTON
135
128
95
109
1
1A
YANKEE DIVISION HIGHWAY
BOSTON PROVIDENCE TURNPIKE
EASTERN AVENUE
CENTRAL AVENUE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS PARKWAY
NEEDHAM AVENUE
WESTSTREET
LANCASTER ROAD
HOPPER ROAD
WHITING AVENUE
DALE STREET
CEDAR STREET
CIRCUIT ROAD
PAUL STREET
SPRAGUE STREET
KIMBALL ROAD
NOBLE ROAD
BOWTHAM ROAD
HASTINGS ROAD
CLEVELAND DRIVE
CARROLL DRIVE
YANKEE DIVISION HIGHWAY
MINCENT ROAD
FIFTH AVENUE
EAST STREET
CURVE STREET
THOMAS STREET
HARDING TERRACE
BIRCH STREET
HILTON STREET
CLARK STREET
FIRST STREET
PARK STREET
WALNUT STREET
CROSSROAD
BOULEVARD STREET
MORRISON STREET
ADAMS STREET
FIRST CREEK ROAD
RIVER PLACE
AMES STREET
FISHER ROAD
BRIDGE STREET
BEACON STREET
PINE STREET
HILLSIDE ROAD
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
JENNY LAND STREET
NEEDHAM STREET
HIGH STREET
VILLAGE AVENUE
COURT STREET
HIGHLAND STREET
WASHINGTON STREET
CHURCH ROAD
STONEY LEA ROAD
BOOTH ROAD
COMMON STREET
BRIDGE ROAD
WESTFIELD STREET
WESTGOWRIOK ROAD

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.

Dedham Public Library.

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.

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.[1] As of 2007, the Town employed 452 people, and the School Department 671 people.[2] 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.[3]

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.[4] 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.[5]

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

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

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1 Town of Dedham, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*.

2 Nancy Baker, Dedham Assistant Town Administrator, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 18 December 2007.

3 Dedham-Westwood Water District at <www.dwwd.org>.

4 Metropolitan Area Planning Council at <www.mapc.org>.

5 Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Subregions – TRIC at <www.mapc.org/metro_area/tric.html>.

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.[6]

- 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.[7]

- 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.

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

[7] *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.

- **Mucciacio Pool, Araby Skateboard Park, and Pottery Lane Courts:** These facilities are located off High Street, and are very closes 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.[8] 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.[9] The Dedham **Department of Public Works** maintains approximately eighty miles of roadways throughout Dedham.[10]

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.[11] 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.[12]

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

9 *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 128.

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

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

12 *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.[13] 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.

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.

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 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.[14] Dedham's Fire Department, in addition to protect-

[13] Robin Reyes, Dedham Town Treasurer, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 16 June 2008.

[14] 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.[15] 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.[16]

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.[17] 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.[18] Headed by the 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.[19] 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

[15] Report of the Fire Department, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 146.

[16] Town of Dedham, *Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting*, Monday, May 19, 2008, (2008), C-3.

[17] Report of the Civil Preparedness Agency, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 141.

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

[19] 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.[20]

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.[21]

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.[22] 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.[23]

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.[24] 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.[25]

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.[26] 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

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

[21] Eugene Negrone, Dedham Public Facilities Manager, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 10 June 2008.

[22] Report of the Planning Board, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 139.

[23] Town of Dedham, Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 19, 2008, (2008), C-2.

[24] Report of the Board of Appeals, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 131.

[25] Town of Dedham, Report and Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting, Monday, May 19, 2008, (2008), C-2.

[26] Report of the Conservation Commission, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 113.

of septic systems and issues associated permits.[27] 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.[28] 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.[29]

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.[30] 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.[31] 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.[32]

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

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27 Report of the Board of Health, Ibid, 116.

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

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

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

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

32 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.[33]

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.[34] 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.[35]

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

[33] Ibid.

[34] Report of the Civic Pride Committee, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 111.

[35] 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.[36]

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.[37] 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.[38]

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.[39] 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.[40] 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.[41]

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.[42]

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.[43]

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

37 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>.

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

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

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

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

42 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>.

43 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 schoolchildren 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.[44] 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[45]

TABLE 10.3
COMPARISON EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL, 2005-2008

	Fiscal Year		
Community	**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.

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.[46] Due to changes in the Massachusetts Department of Education's record-keeping, it is 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

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

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

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

TABLE 10.4
K-12 ENROLLMENT TRENDS

	Grades						
FY	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	Total	Percent Change	Absolute Change
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.[47] 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.[48]

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.[49]

[47] 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].

[48] Dedham Public Schools Staff, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., January 2008 and June 2008.

[49] 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.[50]

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.[51] 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.[52] 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.[53] 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

[50] William Keegan, Dedham Town Administrator, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 20 November 2007.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Town of Dedham, proceedings from the Strategic Planning Meeting, 16 January 2008, Dedham Middle School, (Jan 2008).

[53] 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.[54] 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.[55]

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.[56]

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.[57]

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

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

[55] Ibid.

[56] Report of the Department of Infrastructure Engineering, *Dedham Town Report: 2006*, 142.

[57] 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.[58]

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 renovating 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 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.

[58] 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[59]

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 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.[60] 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.[61] 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.

[59] 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.

[60] 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.

[61] 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 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.

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.

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.

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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 posses 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.

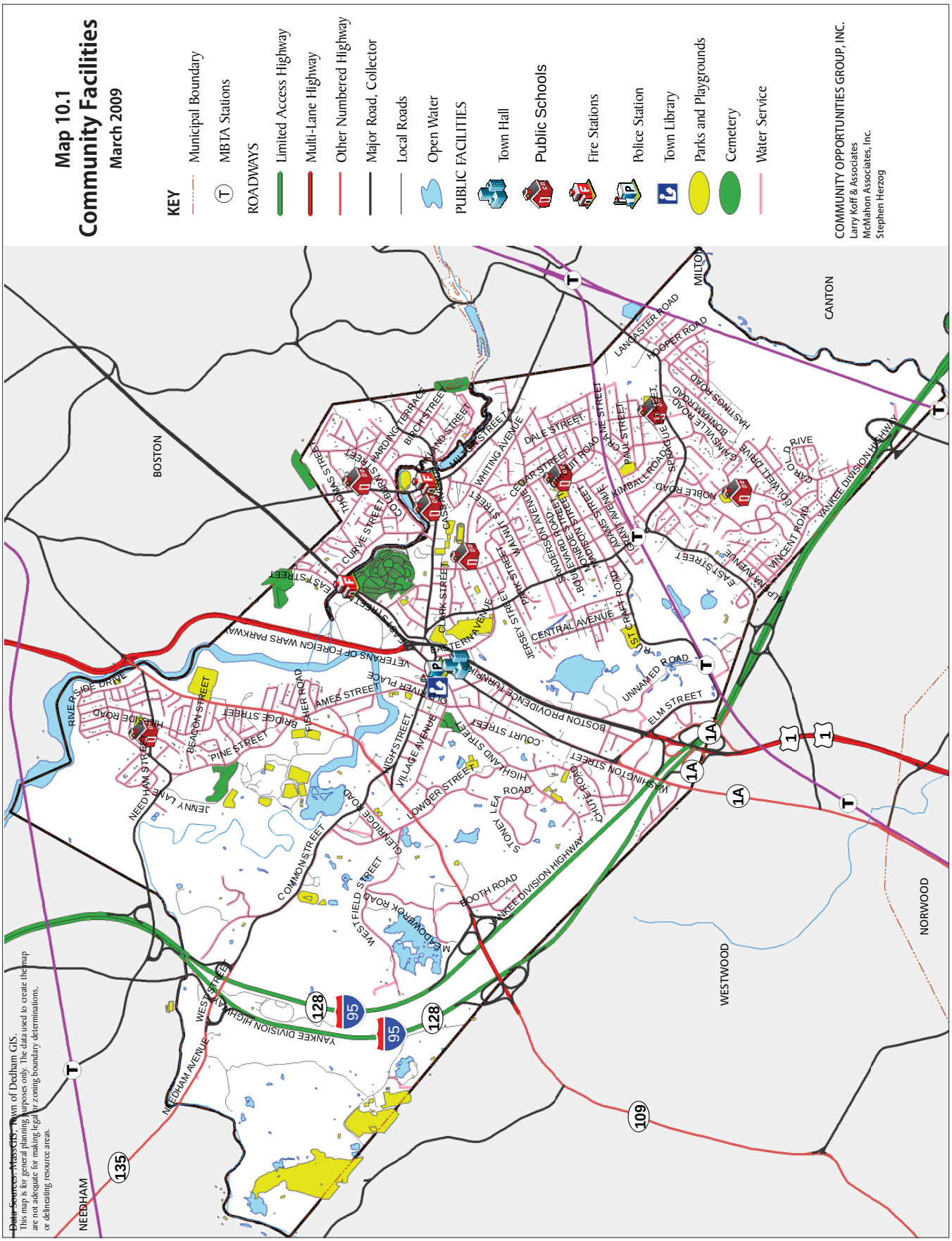
Dedham's public facilities needs do not have to be supported entirely by the town budget. External funding sources, namely grants, are available to fund a variety of facilities needs, although they may be competitive. Dedham knows this because the town has carried out grant-writing efforts in past years, 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.

(*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 Historic al 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 zoning boundary determinations, or delineating resource areas.
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
WESTWOOD
NORWOOD
CANTON
MILTON
YANKEE DIVISION HIGHWAY
BOSTON PROVIDENCE TURNPIKE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS PARKWAY
EASTERN AVENUE
CENTRAL AVENUE
ELM STREET
WASHINGTON STREET
NEEDHAM AVENUE
WEST STREET
BOOTH ROAD
COMMON STREET
WESTFIELD STREET
MEADOWBROOK ROAD
GERRIBIDGE ROAD
STONEY LEA ROAD
HIGHLAND STREET
COURT STREET
LOWDER STREET
VILLAGE AVENUE
HIGH STREET
OLD COLONY PLACE
AMES STREET
BRIDGE STREET
PINE STREET
BEACON STREET
JENNY LANE
NEED HAM STREET
RIVER SIDE DRIVE
HILLSIDE ROAD
EAST STREET
CURVE STREET
THOMAS STREET
HARDING TERRACE
BIRCH STREET
CLARK STREET
CASS AVENUE
WHITING AVENUE
DALE STREET
CEDAR STREET
WALNUT STREET
JERSEY STREET
PAUL STREET
SPRAGUE STREET
NUMBALL ROAD
NOBLE ROAD
GAINSVILLE ROAD
BONHAM ROAD
HASTINGS ROAD
HOOPER ROAD
LANCASTER ROAD
GOLVIEW DRIVE
CAROL DRIVE
VINCENT ROAD
LEONA AVENUE
EAST STREET
1ST CRAFT ROAD
UNNAMED ROAD
95
128
135
109
1
1A

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.

elected 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 then 270 members and not more than the closest higher number of members necessary to achieve an equal number of members from each district."[1] Today, Dedham has 273 elected representatives (thirty-nine from each precinct) for its nearly 24,000 residents.[2]

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,"

[1] 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.

[2] 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.[3]

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.[4]

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 office, county land and open space management, some statutory jurisdiction over roads, and retired and senior volunteer programs.[5] 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.[6]

- **Charles River Watershed Association.** The Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA)

[3] 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.

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

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

[6] 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.[7]

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 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.[8] 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.[9] 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.

[7] Dedham-Westwood Water District at <www.dwwd.org>.

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

[9] "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.[10] 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.[11]

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, including 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

[10] Mariellen Murphy (Director of Finance, Town of Dedham, MA), communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 2 October 2008.

[11] 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.[12] 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[13] – 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.[14]

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

[12] Daylor Consulting Group, *Municipal Growth Planning Study Phase II*, May 2002, 1.

[13] The towns of Sharon and Norfolk occasionally join the RWG, but they are not official members.

[14] 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.[15] 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).[16]

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

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

[16] 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.[17]

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, 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-

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

ciency between departments and encourage greater interdepartmental and board cooperation for economic development projects deemed beneficial to the town.[18] 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."[19] 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.[20]

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 Administrator. 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.[21]

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.[22] 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.

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18 Karen O'Connell, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 19 June 2008.

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

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

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

22 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 though 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

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

	Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Ongoing
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

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

	Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Ongoing
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

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

	Action	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Ongoing
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

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.

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).

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 rewritten 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.

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.

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.

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 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 the Marlborough Historical Society (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.

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.

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.)

- 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.

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.

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, multimodal 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.

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>.

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.

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.

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*).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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;

- 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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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>, 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.*

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.

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.

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.

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*).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.