

WALPOLE MASTER PLAN

AND EO 418 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2004 - 2024

Master Plan Study Committee
Walpole Planning Board



Prepared by

Community Design Partnership

In association with

Dodson Associates

BETA Group

John Connery and Associates

June 2004

Funding for this plan was provided by the Town of Walpole Kendall Fund and by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the EO 418 Community Development Plan Program: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Economic Development, and Executive Office of Transportation and Construction. Project administration by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission.

Walpole Planning Board

Edward Collins
Edward Forsberg
Nancy McKenzie
James Lee
Elizabeth Nashawaty
John Conroy

Walpole Town Planner

Norman Khumalo

Walpole Master Plan Study Committee

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Edward M. Collins | Josh Cole |
| Edward Forsberg | David Conley |
| Nancy Mackenzie | Al Goetz |
| John Conroy | Landis Hershey |
| Elizabeth Nashawaty | Edward Hartmann, Jr. |
| Kate Delaney | Susan Maguire |
| Catherine Turco-Abate | Marianne Morales-McCann |
| William Abbott | Doreen Murray |
| James Arsenault | Ellen Nadeau |
| Maggie Walker | Jon Rockwood |
| Mary Jane Benker | Michael J. Ryan |
| Michael Caron | Richard J. Shields |
| Paul Cesary | Richard Stillman |
| Barbara Coghlan | Douglas Wynne |

Thanks to all the Walpole residents who filled out the survey and participated in public meetings and to town staff and officials, all of whom helped create this Master Plan.

Consultant Team

Community Design Partnership

Larissa Brown, Principal in Charge
Jon Seward, Principal
Mark Hunsberger, Senior Associate
Jeremy Stand, Associate
Kera Lagios, Associate

Dodson Associates

Peter Flinker, Principal
John Menapace, GIS Specialist

Beta Group

Tony Garro
Tom Welch

Connery Associates

John Connery

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Executive Summary | i |
| I. The Future of Walpole: Vision and Goals | 1 |
| A. The Master Plan Process | |
| B. The Walpole Vision Statement: the Future of Walpole | |
| C. Assets and Liabilities | |
| D. Goals | |
| E. The Structure of the Plan | |
| II. The Community Speaks: Public Participation | 7 |
| A. How Did We Get Here? | |
| B. Public Meetings | |
| C. The Master Plan Survey | |
| III. Community Characteristics and Trends | 22 |
| A. Population Trends | |
| B. Land Use Trends | |
| C. Maps | |
| Map 1: Existing Conditions: Land Use and Infrastructure | |
| Map 2: Zoning | |
| IV. Natural and Cultural Resources | 33 |
| A. Current Conditions | |
| B. Recommendations | |
| C. Maps | |
| Map 3: Natural Resources Inventory | |
| Map 4: Natural Resources Priorities | |
| Map 5: Cultural Resources Inventory | |
| Map 6: Cultural Resources Priorities | |
| D. Action Plan | |
| V. Open Space and Recreation Resources | 49 |
| A. Current Conditions | |
| B. Recommendations | |
| C. Maps | |
| Map 7: Recreational Resources Inventory | |
| Map 8: Recreational Resources Priorities | |
| Map 9: Green Network Composite | |
| Map 10: Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Plan | |
| Map 11: Land Use Suitability | |
| D. Action Plan | |
| VI. Housing and Residential Character | 60 |
| A. Current Conditions | |
| B. Recommendations | |
| C. Maps | |
| Map 12: Housing Opportunities | |
| D. Action Plan | |

| | | |
|--------------|--|------------|
| VII. | Economic Development | 101 |
| | A. Current Conditions | |
| | B. Recommendations | |
| | C. Map | |
| | Map 13: Economic Development Opportunities | |
| | D. Action Plan | |
| VIII. | Circulation and Transportation | 139 |
| | A. Current Conditions | |
| | B. Recommendations | |
| | C. Map | |
| | Map 14: Transportation Improvements | |
| | D. Action Plan | |
| IX. | Community Facilities | 153 |
| | A. Current Conditions | |
| | B. Recommendations | |
| | C. Map | |
| | Map 15: Community Services and Facilities | |
| | D. Action Plan | |
| X. | Managing Growth in Walpole | 167 |
| | A. Proposed Future Land Use | |
| | B. Standards, Streamlining and Community | |
| | C. Stewardship of the Master Plan | |
| | Map 16: Proposed Land Use | |
| | Zoning: Proposed Amendments | 172 |

Appendix Volume: Resources *(Separate Binder Volume Available in the Planning Board Office)*

Master Plan Survey form and results
Proposed New Zoning
Model Bylaws
Conservation Restrictions
Economic Development Tools
Permit Streamlining
Traffic Calming
Design Guidelines
Stormwater and Landscape Best Practices

Executive Summary

People in Walpole sometimes say the Town is “the best kept secret.” It’s a good place to live and residents like its unpretentious, small town and community-oriented values. Friendly and family-oriented, Walpole has diverse neighborhoods, an excellent school system, green parks, ponds and streams, good transportation access by road and train, and a town center with many assets. The many layers of the Town’s history can still be seen in the historic houses of East Walpole, Plimptonville and South Walpole, in Bird Park and a few remaining farm landscapes, and in the mix of businesses and older industrial buildings surrounded by residential neighborhoods. But Walpole’s identity is also in transition. Depending on the speaker, Walpole is either semi-rural or suburban; a traditional New England town or a changing community with many transients; still growing fast or already a mature community; middle class or experiencing a growing income gap. These contrasts are a symptom of different perspectives in a world of change.

Like all communities, Walpole is always changing and facing new challenges. The Town doubled in population between 1950 and 1970 and grew another 25 percent in the thirty years between 1970 and 2000. Although the growth rate has been slowing as the Town has become more developed, residents are also more sensitive to the way development impinges on a smaller amount of open space. They want high quality municipal services and public education, but residential property taxes have been rising with increased property values, creating interest in attracting more nonresidential taxpayers. The historic dispersal of commercial and industrial property along the river, on regional roads that have been superseded by new highways, and in environmentally sensitive areas creates challenges both for further economic development and for the close adjacency of many business and residential properties. In seeking to preserve community character, manage change, and create new opportunities, Walpole needs a blueprint for the future so that the Town is in a position to anticipate and guide change, rather than simply reacting after changes have occurred. This is the purpose of the Walpole Master Plan.

What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a guidance document that sets out a strategic framework for making decisions about the future long-term physical development of a community. It defines a future vision and overall goals and policies and contains strategies and action items that are recommended to achieve the goals. During the planning process, community members have the opportunity to discuss their values and goals and to agree on what kind of town they want in the future. In town forums and committee meetings, residents and other stakeholders identify the key areas where the Town must take action to make the vision a reality.

The Master Plan is not a zoning by-law or set of zoning amendments, a capital improvement program, a financial plan, a neighborhood or district plan, or a set of detailed projects or programs – although it can make recommendations about all of these. The Master Plan recommends a variety of implementation tools and techniques as strategies for change over the medium and long term. For example, it may be worthwhile to put new zoning into effect with the understanding that it will not make an immediate difference but will have an important transforming impact as properties are redeveloped or developed over a number of years. Some of the tools recommended in the Draft Walpole Master Plan include zoning; design guidelines and development performance standards; streamlined permitting programs through coordination of town departments, boards and commissions; incentives and disincentives; management plans; evaluation criteria; public-private partnerships; and new financing options. In most cases the details must be developed separately as part of the implementation of the

Master Plan. However, in this Master Plan project there is a concurrent process to prepare early-action zoning amendments as well as defining a long-term agenda for zoning changes.

The Walpole Master Plan

Walpole has a long tradition of planning dating back to 1912 when the first “Walpole General Plan” was created by a Town Planning Committee. Further plans and revisions were created in 1957, 1963 and 1985. This Master Plan process was initiated by the Walpole Planning Board. The Master Plan Study Committee was appointed in 2002. Under Executive Order 418, the Commonwealth offered funds for preparation of a Community Development Plan, a map-based plan focused on four of the elements traditionally included in a master plan: natural resources and open space, housing, economic development, and transportation. The Town added funds from the Kendall Fund to allow for the preparation of a full master plan. This Plan will be the combined Master Plan and EO418 community Development Plan for Walpole. In early 2003, a consultant team led by Community Design Partnership was chosen to assist the Committee in preparing the plan.

Community Participation in Making Strategic Choices

The Walpole community has participated in the Master Plan process through neighborhood and town-wide meetings, several town-wide forums, and a town-wide survey. In March 2003, a series of three neighborhood workshops, a meeting for the business community, and a town-wide workshop explored participants’ likes and dislikes about Walpole, the trends they are concerned about and the changes they would like to see happen. Also in the spring of 2003, the Master Plan Study Committee sent a survey to every household in Walpole. Nearly 1,800 respondents returned their surveys – an excellent response rate.

The workshop discussions, the survey, and Committee discussions formed the basis of a draft Walpole “Vision Statement.” This draft Vision Statement was discussed and confirmed at a second Town Forum. At the second Town Forum participants also worked on ideas for four focus areas: Walpole Center, the northern segment of Route 1, Route 1A/South Street, and the natural and cultural resource areas. Since early in the project, a zoning subcommittee has focused on zoning issues. Technical amendments were passed at fall 2003 Town Meeting.

Over the course of fall, winter, and spring 2003-2004, working groups and the Master Plan Committee met to focus on specific elements of the Master Plan, such as housing, natural and cultural resources, and economic development, and the zoning subcommittee continued to meet on zoning issues. The survey results and many working documents were posted on a Master Plan web page accessible through the Town’s web site. All Master Plan meetings were posted and open to the public.

The Draft Plan was made available for public review on May 21, 2004. Information for the local press was prepared. A short presentation summarizing the recommendations in the Draft Plan was made to the Board of Selectmen on May 25, 2004. Public discussion of the Draft Plan took place at a public meeting on June 9, 2004. The Plan was then revised to reflect the discussion during May and June and the final Master Plan submitted to the Town and to the state in late June 2004. In addition, a second set of zoning by-law amendments was prepared as part of this project and they will be proposed at fall 2004 Town Meeting, and a list of further zoning proposals to implement the Master Plan was included as part of the Master Plan.

Master Plan Survey Results

The Walpole Master Plan Survey was designed to provide a snapshot of residents' perceptions of conditions and trends in Walpole and the choices facing the Town. It was not intended to be a referendum or a vote on defined future courses of action. Approximately 22% of Walpole households responded, representing every neighborhood, and with a slight bias towards people who are long-time residents of the town. The survey asked respondents to identify the best and worst things about Walpole, the top four issues that Walpole must address in the next twenty years, and the most important issues in various topic areas such as economic development and housing. They were also asked to rate town services and to indicate where, if anywhere, they thought the Town should direct new housing or business development and where the Town should preserve open space. Survey findings include:

- Walpole residents like the location and convenience, friendly residents and business people, small town character and availability of open space in town. They think Walpole is a good place to raise a family and that it has strong civic pride.
- The top four issues facing Walpole's future are the tax burden, the need to attract new businesses, the need to protect drinking water quality and supply, and the need to preserve school quality.
- Protection of drinking water supplies and the water in streams and ponds was one of the top areas of agreement across the board.
- The Town needs to attract new business to enhance the tax base, focusing on existing business zones, such as Route 1, Route 1A and the Town Center, rather than expanding the area zoned for business development.
- Many people would like to see more varied and more upscale retail businesses and services in town, as well as aesthetic improvements to the business areas.
- Residents support protecting open space and historic resources.
- Residents would like to see residential growth slow down significantly.
- Residents are conscious of the increase in housing prices and support the creation of affordable housing, especially for town employees and senior citizens, though they are ambivalent about many of the tools used to create affordable housing.
- Walpole residents think most town services and facilities are good, but there is room for improvement.

The survey and detailed tabulations for each of the questions are available in the Appendix to the Master Plan, which is a binder of supporting information, model bylaws, and other materials available in the Planning Board office.

The Vision Statement

The purpose of the Master Plan Vision Statement is to crystallize a description of the Town's future in 20 years that can serve as a goal during implementation of the Master Plan. Walpole's Vision Statement focuses on strengthening the Town's natural and cultural resources network, encouraging more business development, managing residential growth while working towards attaining the state's 10% goal for affordable housing, and improving circulation and transportation choice. (See page 1 for the Walpole Vision Statement.)

Challenges Facing Walpole

During the 1990s, the number of housing units increased by 17%, the number of jobs in Town grew 28% and the number of employers grew 10%. With some 1,200 new housing units (including

condominiums and townhouses) and 2,612 residents added during the 1990s, concerns grew about pressures on the water supply and open space, traffic congestion and other impacts. Although the rate of housing development will naturally slow because there are fewer large, easily developable sites available, it is still important that the Town establish new ways to manage residential growth and direct it to appropriate areas.

Homeowners were also experiencing an increasing tax burden over the course of the last decade and into the early 2000s. This helped create a public perception that Walpole's commercial and industrial sector was declining, while the number of employers and jobs were actually increasing. The number of Walpole residents who also work in Town declined by 300 between 1990 and 2000 (to 19% of residents in the work force). The assessed value of business properties increased, but housing values increased much more and much more rapidly, resulting in a greater tax burden for homeowners. The perception of declining economic vigor may also derive from the fact that a number of commercial and industrial facilities, as well as the streets where they are located, need to improve their appearance. Contaminated "brownfield" sites also give the impression of underutilized business property. Finally, as reported in the survey and in public meetings, many town residents feel that Walpole's retail shops and services have insufficient variety and they shop more often outside the Town than in Walpole Center, the Walpole Mall, or other areas.

Walpole will have to face challenges and make trade-offs in order to successfully manage future residential growth and attract higher-value commercial and industrial investment. Challenges to managing residential development include the fact that Walpole has not met the state's goal of 10% permanently affordable housing units, making it open to Chapter 40B housing projects that may override the Town's zoning bylaws. To meet the 10% goal, Walpole will need to add at least 500 housing units that are eligible for the Chapter 40B list. Residents also want Walpole to be more business-friendly, provide a better range of goods and services, and build up the business tax base in areas that are zoned for business now. The big challenges in this area include the number of commercial and industrial establishments dispersed in locations without good highway access, lack of sewer in industrial zones over water supply recharge areas, and the need to clean up several important brownfield sites.

Like many communities, Walpole finds itself trying to reconcile competing "goods":

- The need to protect the Town's environmentally-sensitive sole source aquifer for drinking water
- The desire to maximize protection of remaining open space and green community character
- The need to manage housing development and gain more permanently affordable units eligible for the Chapter 40B list
- The need to encourage higher value nonresidential investment
- The desire to improve the appearance of business areas and the type and variety of goods and services available to residents in town

The best way to balance a number of different objectives is to try to solve more than one problem or to attain more than one goal simultaneously through a set of interrelated strategies. Sometimes, new incentives and frameworks can create multiple benefits in the same geographical location in Town. The "Key Actions" described in the next section provide a set of recommendations that are designed to have this kind of multiplying effect. The Draft Master Plan has many more recommendations to address a wide variety of issues of concern to the Town, but these actions focus attention on five areas of strategic importance. In moving forward with these strategies and using them as a guide to decision-making, the

Town will position itself to actively manage change rather than having to react to change that has already occurred.

Key Actions to Meet the Challenges and Achieve the Vision

Revitalize Walpole Center into a "smart growth" center with apartments or office space above shops, a new civic center for municipal facilities, improved streetscape and parking, and a new Town Green. Downtown Walpole has many assets: a commuter rail station, several viable "Main Street" style blocks, land for parking, civic land uses that anchor the downtown district, public assets that can be leveraged to make improvements, and underutilized properties that could be redeveloped. A new campus of public buildings with a Town Green and public investments such as streetscape improvements can combine with new zoning and financing incentives to attract more private investment. Apartments over ground floor retail uses encourage more variety in goods and services by providing more customers. Because apartments have fewer bedrooms and therefore fewer schoolchildren, they are likely to create a net tax benefit to the Town.

Recommendations:

- Establish a Downtown Opportunity Overlay District with design guidelines for all new development and redevelopment.
- Plan for a municipal facilities campus or civic center for public safety departments, town offices, the library, a new senior center, a new Town Green, and a parking deck.
- Designate the Center for District Improvement Financing to fund public realm improvements such as streetscape amenities and new parking options.

Target economic development efforts to create a higher-value nonresidential tax base and improve the appearance and traffic function of all business zones. From a transportation, environmental, and overall neighborhood impact point of view, the best location for office or industrial investment in Walpole is the area along the northern segment of Route 1 and between Route 1 and I-95. However, although most of it is zoned for business, there are also pockets of housing whose residents need to have their interests protected even if the Town decides to promote nonresidential development there. Throughout Walpole, as commercial and industrial establishments redevelop over time, new standards can promote higher value and more attractive development that minimizes impacts on nearby residents. Brownfield sites and the industrial park on Route 1A need long-term solutions that take into account remediation and infrastructure needs and traffic and environmental impacts.

Recommendations:

- Unlock the economic development potential of the Route 1/I-95 area by establishing a zoning overlay district to facilitate higher value office, R & D and retail business development while protecting the interests of current residential property owners.
- Establish design and development standards to improve design, reduce curb cuts, relocate parking to the side or rear, and provide sidewalks and plantings at the street edge.
- Complete assessment and remediation of brownfield sites for redevelopment and connect future uses of the Superfund site to downtown opportunities.

Manage housing development to preserve open space character and create affordable housing. Although there are relatively few large parcels of land that could be subdivided for housing, and some of them are not expected to be developed any time soon (such as golf course or county-owned parcels), it is important to put zoning frameworks into place so that any future development on these lands would require preserving blocks of open space. This can be done by requiring a sophisticated, cluster-type development model known as conservation subdivision. A requirement for 10% affordable housing in all housing developments, with incentives where appropriate,

can help Walpole keep up with its Chapter 40B obligations, and a Walpole Housing Partnership can take on the responsibility for pursuing affordable housing opportunities compatible with Walpole's town character.

- Establish mandatory, by right conservation subdivision zoning (cluster) for all subdivision projects of 4 acres or more – with site plan review by the Planning Board.
- Meet state goals for permanent affordable housing (10% under Chapter 40B) by creating a permanent Walpole Housing Partnership to coordinate affordable housing strategies.
- Establish required affordable housing (inclusionary zoning) in all residential developments of 10 or more units, with incentives where appropriate.

Protect natural and cultural resources in a Green Network and a Heritage Network.

Environmental resources are interrelated systems. Protecting and restoring the integrity of Walpole's natural resources focused on the Town's rich river, stream and wetland systems in a Green Network will also provide robust opportunities for nature based recreation. Walpole has many historic buildings, sites and landscapes that are known to some residents but need much more widespread acknowledgment and recognition. They too can form a Heritage Network that tells the story of the town. Marked pedestrian and bicycle routes linking natural, historic and scenic destinations can create greater awareness of these town-wide and regional systems.

Recommendations:

- Identify private lands near wells and Zone II areas for purchase or management outreach.
- Extend greenways along the Neponset River, Mine Brook and School Meadow Brook with trails and canoe access where feasible.
- Inventory historic buildings and landscapes and explore official recognition and protection options such as a historic landmarks bylaw.

Invest in people and new processes in town government. Walpole's goals for the future require more refined tools and techniques to manage development. Volunteer boards and commissions will need more staff assistance to evaluate projects; to work with residents, businesses, and state departments; and to pursue technical assistance and funding for Town projects. Although new development requirements may demand a higher standard, they should also communicate clearly what the Town wants. If businesses and developers understand what the Town is looking for, they will be more likely to provide it early in the permitting process. This is equally true for housing and business. New processes and procedures to coordinate and streamline the permitting process for projects that meet Town goals are essential to attracting more investment to Walpole. Finally, as part of the recently approved I-495/95 South Regional Technology Economic Target Area, the Town now has access to economic development tools like tax increment financing (TIF) to help attract new investment. The Town must designate and pursue state certification of the Economic Opportunity Areas, such as brownfields sites, that can benefit from this tool. Another kind of TIF is available through District Improvement Financing area designation. Walpole needs to take advantage of all the economic development techniques available to it.

Recommendations:

- Hire planning and economic development staff to assist boards and commissions in applying new standards, coordinating land use, housing and economic development strategies, and pursuing funding for Town projects.
- Streamline the permitting process for development projects that meet Town goals.
- Explore tax increment financing options for purposes such as redevelopment of brownfields, upgrading industrial park infrastructure, and providing a parking deck in the town center

Stewardship of the Master Plan

The everyday demands of town government and turnover in town staff and officials can sometimes make it difficult to seek guidance from a Master Plan in daily decision making. Effective implementation of a master plan requires stewardship – someone has to feel responsible for monitoring progress and bringing changes to the attention of the community. An Implementation Committee must be appointed to take on that role. The Committee will work with town staff and officials to develop a more refined set of priorities and a detailed schedule of implementation actions. In addition, the Committee should report annually to the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting on the progress of implementation, discussing unforeseen opportunities and barriers and changing conditions. Every five years, public meetings should be organized to review and modify the principles and priorities of the Master Plan, so that it remains a useful guide for town decision making.



Master Plan Study Committee
Walpole Planning Board
Community Design Partnership
Dodson Associates
BETA Group
Connery Associates

WALPOLE MASTER PLAN: THE FUTURE OF WALPOLE

Green - Livable - Business-Friendly

Summary Map

Key Actions to Achieve the Master Plan Vision:

Revitalize Walpole Center into a "smart growth" center with apartments or office space above shops, a new civic center for municipal facilities, improved streetscape and parking, and a new Town Green.

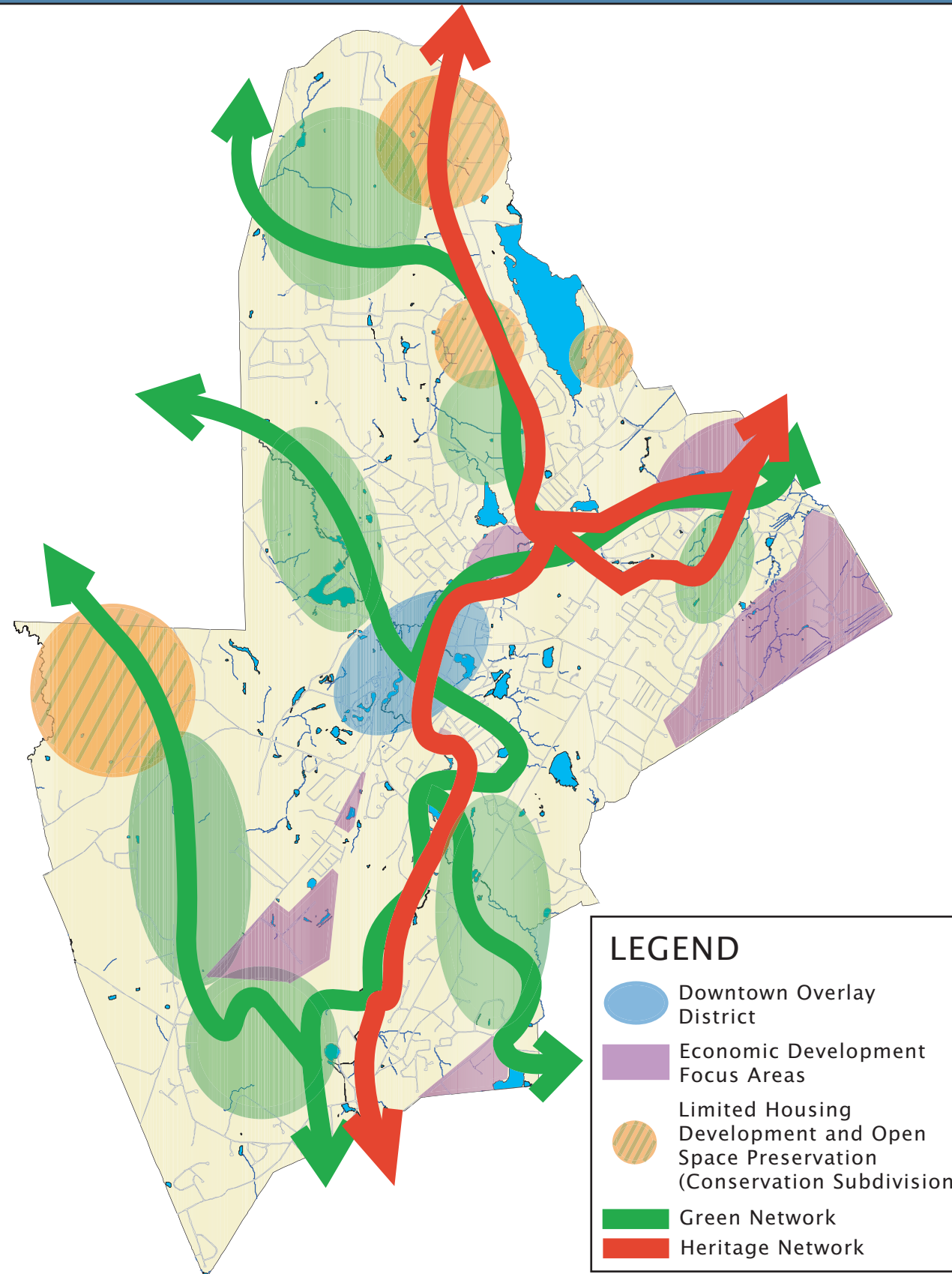
- Establish a Downtown Overlay District with design guidelines for all new development and redevelopment.
- Plan for a municipal facilities campus or civic center for public safety departments, town offices, the library, a new senior center, a new Town Green, and a parking deck.
- Designate the Center for District Improvement Financing to fund public realm improvements such as streetscape amenities and new parking options.

Target economic development efforts to create a higher-value nonresidential tax base and improve the appearance and traffic function of all business zones.

- Unlock the economic development potential of the Route 1/I-95 area by establishing a zoning overlay district to facilitate higher value office, R & D and retail business development while protecting the interests of current residential property owners.
- Establish development standards to improve design, reduce curb cuts, relocate parking to the side or rear, and provide sidewalks and plantings at the street edge.
- Complete assessment and remediation of brownfield sites for redevelopment, and connect future uses of the Superfund site to downtown opportunities.



Master Plan Town Forum



LEGEND

- Downtown Overlay District
- Economic Development Focus Areas
- Limited Housing Development and Open Space Preservation (Conservation Subdivision)
- Green Network
- Heritage Network

Manage housing development to preserve open space character and create affordable housing.

- Establish mandatory, by right conservation subdivision zoning (cluster) for all subdivision projects of 4 acres or more - with site plan review by the Planning Board - to preserve blocks of open space.
- Meet state goals for permanent affordable housing (10% under Chapter 40B) by creating a permanent Walpole Housing Partnership to pursue a variety of affordable housing strategies.
- Establish required affordable housing (inclusionary zoning) in all residential developments of 10 or more units, with incentives where needed.

Protect natural and cultural resources in a Green Network and a Heritage Network.

- Identify private lands near wells and Zone II areas for purchase or management outreach.
- Extend greenways along the Neponset River, Mine Brook and School Meadow Brook with trails and canoe access where feasible.
- Inventory historic buildings and landscapes and explore official recognition and protection options such as a historic landmarks bylaw.

Invest in people and new processes in town government.

- Hire planning and economic development staff to assist boards and commissions in applying new standards, coordinating land use and economic development strategies, and pursuing funding for Town projects.
- Streamline the permitting process for development projects that meet Town goals.
- Explore tax increment financing options for purposes such as redevelopment of brownfields, upgrading industrial park infrastructure, and providing a parking structure in the town center.

I. The Future of Walpole: Vision and Goals

A. The Master Plan Process

Walpole has a long tradition of planning dating back to 1912 when the first “Walpole General Plan” was created by a Town Planning Committee. Further plans and revisions were created in 1957, 1963 and 1985. The current Master Plan process was initiated by the Walpole Planning Board and the Master Plan Study Committee was appointed in 2002. Under Executive Order 418, the Commonwealth offered funds for preparation of a Community Development Plan, a map-based plan focused on four of the elements traditionally included in a master plan: natural resources and open space, housing, economic development, and transportation. The Town added funds from the Kendall Fund to allow for the preparation of a full master plan. This Plan will be the combined Master Plan and EO418 Community Development Plan for Walpole.

In early 2003, a consultant team led by Community Design Partnership was chosen to assist the Committee in preparing the plan. In addition to Community Design Partnership, Dodson Associates prepared the maps and focused on issues having to do with natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation; BETA Group focused on transportation and facilities issues; and Connery & Associates prepared zoning amendments to improve technical aspects of the zoning bylaw and to reflect the early action zoning recommendations of the Master Plan recommendations.

A Master Plan is a guidance document that sets out a strategic framework for making decisions about the future long-term physical development of a community. This Master Plan has a time horizon of 20 years. The Plan defines a future vision and overall goals and policies and contains strategies and action items that are recommended to achieve the goals. During the planning process, community members have had the opportunity to discuss their values and goals and to agree on what kind of town they want in the future. In town forums and committee meetings and through a survey, residents and other stakeholders identified the key areas where the Town must take action to make the vision a reality.

The Master Plan is not a zoning by-law or set of zoning amendments, a capital improvement program, a financial plan, a neighborhood or district plan, or a set of detailed projects or programs – although it makes recommendations about all of these. The Master Plan recommends a variety of implementation tools and techniques as strategies for change over the medium and long term. For example, it may be worthwhile to put new zoning into effect with the understanding that although it will not make an immediate difference, the change will have an important transforming impact as properties are redeveloped or developed over a number of years. Some of the tools recommended in the Master Plan include zoning; design guidelines and development performance standards; streamlined permitting programs through coordination of town departments, boards and commissions; incentives and disincentives; management plans; evaluation criteria; public-private partnerships; and new financing options. In many cases the details must be developed separately as part of the subsequent implementation of the Master Plan.

B. The Structure of the Plan

This Plan is structured to provide an overview of existing conditions and trends, a vision for the future and associated goals, a discussion of community concerns and desires for Walpole, identification of the critical issues facing the Town, and more detailed discussion of conditions and recommendations for specific thematic areas. Starting in Chapter IV – Natural and Cultural Resources, the Plan follows the elements required in a Master Plan by MGL Ch. 41, Sec. 81D. At the end of each chapter discussing a master plan element, there is an action plan identifying goals, policies and strategies, with a high, medium, or low priority ranking and short, medium, or long term timeline. The final chapters focus on integrating the various elements and on ways to promote implementation of the Plan over the long term.

C. The Walpole Vision Statement- The Future of Walpole

Development of a vision statement is an essential early step in creating a Master Plan. The vision statement, accompanied by related goals, becomes a guiding image for the Town as it faces challenges and makes decisions in the future. Although sometimes seen as too idealized, vision statements focus attention on a community's values, sense of identity, and aspirations. The process of creating and confirming a vision statement is an occasion for residents to agree on a desired future and commit themselves to working towards that ideal.

The Walpole Vision Statement

In 2023,...

The Town of Walpole is a flourishing community with strong neighborhoods, a lively downtown, prosperous business districts, and protected green open spaces. Located on the Neponset River south of Boston, Walpole is proud of its rich and varied history of mills, farms, factories, shops, and neighborhoods as it builds on its heritage in the twenty-first century. It is a good place to live and to work with a diverse, friendly, and civic-minded population. Walpole's livability, services, and economy are attractive to both families and businesses. Walpole is financially sound, maintaining excellent services, schools and infrastructure through efficient, cost-effective and forward-thinking management.

- ***Green Walpole*** – Walpole protects its natural resources through a green network of permanently protected parks and open spaces that provide corridors for wildlife and recreation for residents, including a network of paths and trails connecting open space. This “green infrastructure” helps protect the town's drinking water resources in its sole source aquifer. The town has established a fund for permanent protection of open space through acquisition or conservation restrictions.

- ***Hometown Walpole*** – Walpole is a family-oriented town and its neighborhoods offer a variety of housing opportunities – single family homes, condominiums, rental apartments, and options for senior housing. By meeting state goals for affordable housing through housing development that fits Walpole’s character, the town has made it possible for seniors, young people, and town employees to stay in their hometown.

- ***Business-Friendly Walpole*** -- Walpole has a successful business community that provides a range of jobs and contributes substantially to the tax base, while protecting environmentally-sensitive areas. With a highly skilled workforce and good regional transportation connections, Walpole has attracted new businesses and good jobs to its commercial and industrial areas. Brownfield sites have been cleaned up and returned to appropriate uses. A revitalized downtown Walpole has a lively variety of shops and services catering to local residents and employees. Businesses, neighborhoods and town government collaborate to insure a productive balance between business and residential interests.

- ***Getting Around Walpole*** – Traffic improvements have made local roads safer and less congested but there are also more alternatives to depending on cars for transportation. The Town has become more walkable, with new sidewalks and walking trails connecting town destinations and open spaces. Public transportation services have improved, and additional parking at the commuter rail station has increased ridership.

- ***Municipal Walpole*** -- Thanks to efficient management and increased commercial tax revenue, the Town has new or upgraded town facilities for the public safety departments, the Library, the senior center, and a community center. The Town offers a wide range of high quality community services that are accessible to all residents. In particular, more options for youth provide diverse activities beyond the strong athletic programs. The Town’s effective government is based on excellent communication among departments, boards, and commissions.

Through wise stewardship and community commitment, Walpole has avoided indiscriminate development, shaping change by careful planning, protection of resources and the natural environment, effective regulation, and incentives to attract enterprise and to enhance quality of life and opportunity for everyone who lives and works in Walpole.

D. Assets and Liabilities

The EO 418 planning process requires an explicit listing of “assets and liabilities” in the four EO 418 planning areas. This listing helps identify some of the problems facing Walpole, as well as the Town’s many advantages.

Open Space & Natural Resources

Assets

- Bird Park
- Town Forest
- Adams Farm
- Agricultural School
- Town Common
- Home for Little Wanderers land
- Bay Circuit Trail
- Mrs. Green's Farm
- Hilltop Farm
- Country Club
- Open space character of state and county lands
- Neponset River and ponds

Liabilities

- Growth patterns have eroded open space
- Many open space parcels are not permanently protected
- No local control over state and county lands
- Contaminated (brownfield) lands need remediation
- Lack of predictable funding source for open space protection / acquisition
- Stream and pond water quality needs improvement

Housing

Assets

- Still relatively affordable in regional terms
- Varied housing stock and neighborhood character
- Distinctive historic areas such as South Walpole, Plimptonville and East Walpole
- Semi-rural character in North Walpole and West Walpole
-

Liabilities

- Need more affordable senior housing
- New housing is expensive
- All housing increasingly costly for town natives
- Lack of water and sewage capabilities to support new and proposed residential development
- Lack of rental properties
- Lack of sufficient permanently affordable housing to meet state 40B goal

Economic Development

Assets

- Diverse business sector
- Compact downtown with parking predominantly at back of buildings
- Brownfields projects for remediation and redevelopment underway
- Underutilized commercial/industrial parcels have development capacity
- Location along routes 1 and 1A
- Proximity to I-95
- Proximity to Gillette Stadium
- Strong market demographics for enhanced retail
-

Liabilities

- Limited amount of vacant commercially-zoned land
- Difficult access and environmentally sensitive lands affect some commercial and industrial zones

- Need to streamline regulatory process
- Commercial and industrial zoning needs refinement
- Walpole is not perceived as business friendly
- Downtown streetscape needs improvement

Transportation

Assets

- Accessible from Routes 1, 1A and I-95
- Easy to get around
- Commuter rail
- Bus service to Boston
- Nearby small, busy airport – Norwood Airport
-

Liabilities

- More commuter rail parking needed
- Traffic congestion on arterial roads and at intersections
- Street lights needed in some areas
- More sidewalks needed to link town destinations
- Need for improved pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Parking lot management needs improvement

Other Assets

- Good quality education
- Excellent Town services
- State and county facilities bring jobs

Other Liabilities

- Town facilities need upgrading
- Growing residential tax burden
- Insufficient ongoing maintenance of facilities

E. Goals

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that protect Walpole's water supply and water resources
- Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that support wildlife
- Identify and protect cultural resources including historic sites and heritage landscapes

Open Space and Recreational Resources

- Maintain eligibility for state open space funding
- Create a Green Network of open space
- Preserve significant open space areas on large parcels
- Create a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle master plan including trails and paths in open space
- Create new athletic fields
- Enhance public access to ponds and the Neponset River
- Upgrade downtown open space
- Seek regular funding to support open space activities

Housing and Residential Development

- Invest in planning staff capacity
- Manage residential growth to be compatible with town character
- Provide housing affordable to seniors, town employees and young people starting out in life and meet the Chapter 40B goal for 10% permanently affordable housing

Economic Development

- Invest in economic development staff capacity
- Increase property tax revenue from business properties
- Improve the mix of retail and services that serve residents
- Attract new high-paying jobs

Circulation and Transportation

- Improve traffic flow and reduce speeding on town roads
- Coordinate downtown traffic improvements with revitalization goals
- Improve traffic and pedestrian safety
- Mitigate traffic impacts of development
- Create a network of pedestrian and bicycle routes
- Improve parking and access to the train station

Community Facilities

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Water Master Plan Update.
- Integrate wastewater management, aquifer recharge needs, and town land use and growth management goals
- Continue upgrading stormwater management information and controls as part of implementation of Phase II Stormwater Rules
- Raise public awareness about the steps that individuals, households and businesses can take to conserve water and reduce stormwater amounts and pollution effects.
- Plan ahead for municipal facilities in a downtown civic center as an anchor for downtown revitalization
- Study the needs and options for creation of a Community Center

II. The Community Speaks: Public Participation

.....



A. How Did We Get Here?

This Master Plan represents a response to the concerns of Walpole residents and to other challenges facing Walpole in the next twenty years. Through neighborhood and town-wide meetings, town-wide forums, and a town-wide survey, Walpole residents expressed their views about Walpole's future.

In March 2003, a series of three neighborhood workshops, a meeting for the business community, and a town-wide workshop explored participants' likes and dislikes about Walpole, the trends they are concerned about and the changes they would like to see happen. Also in the spring of 2003, the Master Plan Study Committee sent a survey to every household in Walpole. The workshop discussions, the survey, and Committee discussions formed the basis of a draft Walpole "Vision Statement." The draft Vision Statement was discussed and confirmed at a second Town Forum. At the second Town Forum participants also worked on ideas for four focus areas: Walpole Center, the northern segment of Route 1, Route 1A/South Street, and the natural and cultural resource areas.

The Draft Plan was made available for public review on May 21, 2004 and information for the local press was prepared. A summary of key recommendations in the Draft Plan was distributed at Town Meeting on May 3, 2004, along with presentation boards and a report from the Planning Board on the progress of the Plan. On May 13, 2004, the consultant provided a summary of the draft plan to a meeting of the Walpole Chamber of Commerce. A presentation summarizing the recommendations in the Draft Plan was made to a televised meeting of the Board of Selectmen on May 25, 2004. Public discussion of the Draft Plan took place at a public meeting on June 9, 2004. At that meeting the focus of discussion was on a proposal for a commercial incentive overlay zoning district in the Route 1 north area and the concerns of residential property owners located within the proposed overlay district. It was recognized that there are complex issues involved and the Town would evaluate the proposal in more detail before new zoning language would be prepared for a future Town Meeting. The Plan was then revised to reflect the public comment during May and June and the final Master Plan submitted to the Town and to the state in late June 2004.

B. Public Meetings

The round of public meetings in March 2003 were designed to draw out the community's vision of its future from local residents and business owners, taking into account the perceived assets and liabilities, threats and opportunities, and priorities and concerns of the town.

Town-Wide Visioning Forum

At the first town-wide workshop, participants talked about Walpole as a place known to the outside primarily for the state prison but really “the best kept secret” -- a friendly, family-oriented, diverse and unpretentious town with good values. They mentioned its good neighborhoods and schools, convenient location, and significant open spaces. But there was also a sense that Walpole’s identity is in transition. Depending on the speaker, Walpole is either semi-rural or suburban; a traditional New England town or a changing community with many transients; still growing fast or already a mature community; middle class or experiencing a growing income gap. These contrasts are a symptom of different perspectives in a world of change. Among the issues that participants saw as presenting challenges for Walpole in the future are the following:

- Development issues: need for zoning changes, more and more dispersed affordable housing, recreation and athletic fields, sidewalks, better management and planning of new residential development, more balanced development, mitigation of traffic impacts of development, and the expansion of downtown
- Town facility issues: need for more parking, a community center, a larger senior center, an improved library, school improvements
- Business issues: need to encourage new business opportunities, clean/green companies and industries, need for economic development staff or active volunteers to recruit business
- Environmental issues: need to protect natural resources (especially aquifers), state and town lands, be environmentally responsible, clean junkyards, and preserve more open space
- Other issues: keep town character, become more interdependent as a community and less neighborhood focused, promote more communication within town government, adopt the Community Preservation Act or create an open space trust fund, have more financial resources and stability, and improve traffic flows

Business Community Meeting

The general consensus in the business meeting was that Walpole is in a desirable location with good market demographics but it needs to make changes in order to improve its competitive position in comparison to neighboring towns. Many people said that Walpole has given the impression that it is not business friendly and that town boards and commissions sometimes make conflicting decisions, but it was also pointed out that neighborhoods need to be brought into the development process early. The main points of the meeting were the following:

Walpole needs to be more business-friendly

- Streamline the regulatory process and provide assistance to businesses at town hall
- Decide where business is desirable and make the zoning as clear as possible
- Business perception is that neighborhoods don’t want business
- Need to bring neighbors (residents) into development process early – proposed mall expansion was shot down because neighbors were not included early in discussions
- Walpole needs to be a place where people work, not just a bedroom community
- Housing is also important because population stimulates the service economy – Main Street depends on housing because residents are Main Street's customers

Business development areas

- Develop Rte 1 - it’s the key area for development – especially the northern part of Route 1
- The southern end of Route 1 is more environmentally sensitive because it is over the aquifer
- Encourage clean business
- Possibly rezone Rte 1A to commercial
- Industrial park has poor access and utilities
- Revitalize East Walpole - East Walpole wants jobs and business

- Retail market demographics are the 3rd best in the state and could support a much more upscale mall
- Look to Norwood, Mansfield, and Westwood as models

Precincts 3, 4, & 5 - March 11, 2003

Participants from Precincts 3-5 see Walpole as changing in ways that concern them and focused their discussions on what they saw as too much (and too expensive) residential development in particular. They worry that Walpole is becoming too much of a bedroom community, which increases the tax burden on residents, and that there is a growing income gap in the town. They feel that Walpole has maintained good values despite change and would like it to remain affordable. Like the participants in the town-wide meeting, they are interested in attracting more high-value businesses to Walpole.

Precincts 1 & 2 March 12, 2003

Participants from Precincts 1 and 2 focused most of their time on discussing business development potential, particularly in East Walpole. They see the history of East Walpole as an example for the future: the Bird Company built good infrastructure and a park that have lasted for decades and the town needs to plan the same way for the future. They discussed the need to promote Walpole as business-friendly and expressed a desire for businesses such as biotech and other technology businesses. They also mentioned the need to have attractive public spaces, sidewalks and streetscapes and restaurants to support a business recruitment program. Like the participants in other meetings, they were concerned that large housing developments seemed to be taking up many of the remaining large open spaces in town.

Precincts 6, 7, & 8 March 13, 2003

This group was particularly concerned with increasing taxes and the limited financial resources of the town and the condition of town facilities, as well as conserving natural resources. They were also concerned with the fast rate of residential growth and what they saw as the Town's inability to retain industry and commerce.

C. The Master Plan Survey Results

The Walpole Master Plan Survey was prepared by Community Design Partnership in collaboration with the Master Plan Study Committee. The survey was designed to elicit opinions from Walpole residents and business owners on a wide variety of issues and concerns affecting Walpole's future. The survey is not a referendum; it is not a vote on defined future courses of action. Rather, it is a way to "take the temperature" of the community and provides a snapshot showing what is on people's minds, how they interpret conditions and trends in Walpole, and how they understand some of the choices that face the Town.

The four-page survey was mailed to every Walpole household in the late spring of 2003 and was also made available on the Master Plan web site. The survey included twenty questions on respondent characteristics, overall concerns, public facilities and services, traffic and transportation, natural and cultural resources, economic development, and land use and growth management. Both check-off and free-answer question types were included.

The survey and detailed tabulations for each of the questions is available online at the Walpole Master Plan web site that can be accessed through the town web site at www.walpole.ma.us and www.walpole.org.

Findings

- Walpole residents like the location and convenience, friendly residents and business people, small town character and availability of open space in town. They think Walpole is a good place to raise a family and that it has strong civic pride.
- Political conflict over town finances and the way it sometimes pits newer residents against long-time residents is a serious problem.
- The top four issues facing Walpole's future are the tax burden, the need to attract new businesses, the need to protect drinking water quality and supply, and the need to preserve school quality.
- Protection of drinking water supplies and the water in streams and ponds was one of the top areas of agreement across the board.
- A strong majority also agrees that the Town needs to attract new business to enhance the tax base, focusing on existing business zones, such as Route 1, Route 1A and the Town Center, rather than expanding the area zoned for business development.
- Residents would like to see residential growth slow down significantly. They tend to be wary of higher density, in the form of condominiums or rental apartments. Although they prefer family-oriented single family homes as a building type, they also know that this type of housing tends to result in more school costs, so many people are positive about housing restricted to persons over 55.
- Residents are also conscious of the increase in housing prices and support the creation of housing affordable to town employees and senior citizens, but they have mixed feelings about many of the methods often used to create more affordable housing, such as inclusionary zoning (requiring the provision of a certain number of affordable units in every development), providing town land for affordable housing, tax abatements, and density bonuses (giving a limited increase in density in return for production of affordable units) .
- Many people would like to see more varied and more upscale retail businesses and services in town, as well as aesthetic improvements to the business areas.
- Residents give very significant support to protecting open space and historic resources, particularly Adams Farm and the Town Forest.
- Walpole residents think most town services and facilities are good, but there is room for improvement.

Who responded to the survey?

Response Rate. A total of 1,794 usable surveys was received by the deadline date. If we use the 8,060 households in Walpole at the time of the 2000 Census as the approximate number of total potential responses, the response rate would be 22 percent. This is an excellent response rate, much higher than the 5 to 10 percent that

would generally be expected. The strength of the response shows that Walpole residents want to be involved in planning for their community's future.

As is the case with most surveys, not everyone responded to every question. In the summary of the survey results below, the percentages given are based on the actual number who responded to the question. If significant numbers did not respond to a question, that fact will be duly noted.

Respondents were asked to identify themselves as residents, business owners, or both residents and business owners (including home business owners). Ninety percent of the respondents were residents who are not business owners in town, nine percent of respondents identified themselves as both residents and business owners, and slightly less than one percent were business owners who are not Walpole residents

Balance among neighborhoods. Respondents were asked whether they lived in North, South, East, West, or Central Walpole.

| Respondents' Neighborhood (Residents) | | |
|--|------|-------|
| East Walpole | 360 | 20.4% |
| North Walpole | 467 | 26.4% |
| West Walpole | 136 | 7.7% |
| South Walpole | 154 | 8.7% |
| Central Walpole | 557 | 31.5% |
| Other | 55 | 3.1% |
| No Answer | 39 | 2.2% |
| Total | 1768 | 100% |

Because these neighborhood designations do not have clearly-acknowledged boundaries, they cannot be directly matched up with census tracts, for which we have population data, to see how the distribution of respondents reflects the geographic distribution of population within the town. However, we can make some general comparisons. The chart below compares the proportion of the total 2000 census population in Walpole's three census tracts with the neighborhoods that approximately correspond to these census tracts.

| | Census Tract % of Total Population | Survey Respondents % of Total Respondents |
|---|---|--|
| Census Tract 4111 (Central and South Walpole) | 18.0 | 40.2 |
| Census Tract 4112 (East Walpole) | 26.1 | 20.4 |
| Census Tract 4113 (West and North Walpole) | 41.8 | 34.1 |
| Other/No answer | - | 5.3 |

What this chart tells us is that the survey respondent group probably over-represents residents from Central and South Walpole and under-represents residents from other parts of town.

Business location. Most of the business owners (74%) who responded to the survey have businesses on Route 1A, East Walpole, Walpole Center, or in their homes. Almost 20 percent of the business respondents had home businesses.

Home ownership. Almost all (96%) of the residents who responded to the survey own their own homes. In contrast, the 2000 Census found that 85 percent of Walpole households are owners. This means that the views of Walpole residents who rent their homes are somewhat under-represented in this survey.

Time in Walpole and age composition. Slightly over 50 percent of the respondents to the survey have lived or worked in Walpole 20 years or more and 14 percent have lived in Walpole less than five years. At the time of the 2000 census, 32 percent of Walpole residents had lived in a different house five years earlier. Although some of them might have moved within Walpole, it is likely that the survey respondent group somewhat under-represents Walpole's newer residents. The fact that respondents also tend to be older than Walpole's population as a whole (see below) also indicates that the people who filled out the survey were disproportionately likely to be older, long-time residents of Walpole. This is not unusual in surveys of this type, which tend to attract the interest of people who have already made a significant time commitment to a community.

***Survey Respondent Group Compared
with 2000 Population at least 21 Years Old***

| <i>Age Group</i> | <i>Percent in Census 2000 Population</i> | <i>Percent in Respondent Population</i> |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <i>21 to 34</i> | 20.5 | 6.9 |
| <i>35-44</i> | 26.1 | 23.6 |
| <i>45-64</i> | 33.1 | 42.4 |
| <i>65 and older</i> | 20.1 | 27.1 |

Household size and presence of children. The respondents to the survey were more likely to live in larger households and to have children at home than the Walpole population as a whole. While 26 percent of Walpole's households in 2000 were single person households, only 14 percent of the survey respondents represented that group. By the same token, 47 percent of the respondents indicated that there were children or teenagers under 20 in their households, while the census reported that 33 percent of Walpole households included persons under 18 years old (a slightly smaller category). Sixteen percent of respondents had pre-schoolers at home.

The Best and the Worst

The survey asked for free answers to two general questions: What's the best thing about Walpole? What's the worst thing about Walpole? Respondents could write anything they wanted to in response, and the answers tell us how residents see the strengths and weakness of their town.

The Best

Over three-quarters of the respondents gave an answer to the question of what the best thing is about Walpole. The most frequent responses revolved around three concepts: location and convenience; the people; and community character.

Location and convenience

Walpole residents like the fact that the Town is located between Boston and Providence, that there is good access to commuter rail and regional highways, and they feel like it is a good home base from which to find employment and entertainment. Typical comments include:

- *Location between Boston and Providence (Cape and Mountains) Highways/Transportation* – from a Central Walpole resident in the 45-64 age group who has lived in town 20+ years and has children between 5 and 19 at home
- *Easy to commute to any area within a 25 mile radius* – from a Central Walpole resident aged 65 or over with two people in the household but no children and who has lived in town 20 years or more
- *Location to Boston-can commute on train* – from a West Walpole resident in the 45-64 age group who has lived in town less than 5 years

The people

Although there were a few dissenters, many respondents took seriously Walpole’s moniker of “friendly town” and mentioned the people and the town’s friendliness as the best thing about it.

- *The people and their concerns for the community and neighbors* -- from a South Walpole resident aged 45-64 with preschool and teenage children who has lived in town less than 5 years
- *The people are not pretentious - very down to earth* – from a North Walpole resident aged 45-64 with elementary school children who has lived in town less than 5 years
- *The people. We are still a small town and care about the future of Walpole* – from a Central Walpole resident of over 20 years, aged 45-64, without children at home
- *The best thing is the level of friendliness and courteousness of residents. Also, that residents really seem to care about their town.* – from an East Walpole resident aged 21-34 who has lived in Walpole between 5 and 9 years and has school-aged children at home

Community character

“Community character” can be a slippery concept, but when the survey respondents wrote about the kind of place that Walpole is and why they like it, several important characteristics repeatedly emerged:

- Walpole is a relatively small town – attractive and safe.
- It still has significant amounts of open space and good recreation opportunities.
- It has good schools and good neighborhoods.
- There is a good sense of community and town spirit.

- *Civic pride, the parades, the flags and plantings and the cleanliness of the center* – from a North Walpole resident of less than 5 years, aged 65 or over, who lives alone
- *Its size and variety of living areas. And its open spaces. I love the walking areas, Stone St. reservation, forest, Plympton, downtown and ponds* – from a Central Walpole resident aged 45-64 who has lived in town 10-19 years and has teenage children
- *Walpole has a small town, old fashioned feeling to it. People in town have a blue collar down to earth mentality, even when they make white collar money. Walpole is a great place to raise kids-the schools, rec. department and library are excellent.* – from a Central Walpole resident for 10-19 years, aged 21-34, with preschool and elementary school aged children

The Worst

Three quarters of the respondents also replied to the question asking about the worst thing about Walpole.

Answers to this question also tended to cluster in several categories:

- Town finances and taxes
- Town divisions and conflicts
- Need for more business tax revenue
- Town government
- School issues
- Rate of growth
- Traffic and transportation issues

Almost all of these categories are linked because the fundamental underlying issues are about the interrelationships among the tax burden, the level of services (particularly schools), how town government should pay for services, how to get more tax revenue, and the divisions in town over how best to find a balance between taxes and services.

Town finances and taxes

High taxes were mentioned by many respondents as the worst thing about Walpole.

- *Taxes are much too high, the town needs to manage its current income better.* – from a North Walpole resident of less than 5 years, aged between 35 and 44, with teenagers at home
- *The constant asking for more funds* – from an East Walpole resident aged 35-44 who has lived in town 10-19 years and has preschool and elementary school children
- *The taxes keep increasing and yet the state is broke and therefore town services, schools will make do with less. There is always the threat of cuts.* – from a North Walpole resident aged 35-44 who has lived in Walpole 20 or more years and has elementary-school aged children

Town divisions and conflicts

In contrast to the friendliness and community mentioned under the “what’s best?” question, this question elicited many complaints about political conflicts, particularly over town finances. In many cases,

respondents complained that other groups in town wanted too much or did not understand the income constraints of many residents, while others were tired of what they saw as constant political bickering.

- *The animosity between "new" families and long-term residents. The constant battle about the schools (class size etc.)* – from an East Walpole resident of 5-9 years who is aged 35-44 and has preschool and elementary school aged children
- *Old timers resenting newcomers. Newcomers not staying long. Developers causing us to react and not working together.* – from a North Walpole resident aged 35-44 who has been in town 5-9 years and has preschool and elementary school aged children
- *All the fighting and arguing going on between the boards (with each other) and the residents. "Townies" need to come into the 21st century and some new young people in town need to get off their high horses!* - from a North Walpole resident of 20 or more years, aged 45-64 with teenage children.
- *The people with the budget crisis there seems to be little interest in community everyone wants what they want without having to pay for it and seem hostile to anyone who want or needs anything else. We need a plan for the town and leaders who can sell the plan and carry it out.* – from a South Walpole resident aged 45-64, in town 5 to 9 years and preschool and elementary aged children

Need for more business

Many survey respondents focused on the need for more business in Walpole for several reasons:

- To relieve the high residential tax burden
- To improve the mix of businesses serving town residents
- To improve the appearance of the town center and other business areas

- *The lack of support for new businesses. Osco Drug, the mall, Shaws, etc... It's amazing Big Y actually went through. Everyone wants new business but not in their neighborhood. This isn't Norfolk or Dover you need the commercial tax revenue.* - from an East Walpole resident of 5-9 years, aged 21-34 with no children.
- *Has a reputation of being anti-business which has had a significant impact on new business not coming to Walpole, which in turn results in less of a tax base-residential properties are carrying too much of the tax burden.* – from a resident of Central Walpole who also owns a business on Route 1A, has been in Walpole less than 5 years, is aged 45-64 and has no children
- *The town's seeming unacceptance to promote new industry. This is the only way to lessen the tax burden on residents and town services.* – from a North Walpole resident aged 35-44 who has been in town 5-9 years and has children 5-12 at home.

Town government

Many respondents believe town officials often work at cross-purposes to one another and that town government could be managed more smoothly and effectively.

- *The elected and appointed committees don't work in unison on some items such as economic development, land use planning etc.* - from a business person who has a business in the Town Center and also lives in Central Walpole, in town for 20 or more years, aged 65 or over, and with no children at home
- *The time it takes to get anything through Town Hall. There still is no liaison or "chain of command" for someone to know how things work at town hall.* – from East Walpole, aged 45-64 and in town 20+ years, and with no children
- *It's special interest groups stopping everything. The selectman have to learn to say no to them and let the town move forward.* – a resident and business owner from East Walpole, aged 45-64 and in town 20+ years, with no children
- *Small town politics and attitude and mismanagement.* – from an East Walpole resident aged 21-34, in town less than 5 years and with preschool children

Schools and service levels

Respondents repeatedly mentioned conflicts over school funding as the prime example of contentious local politics in Walpole.

- *The constant fighting over schools. We need good schools for the benefits of our children. The constant trade offs between services for schools vs services of fire, police, ambulance, elderly services is wrong. We need all the services. Figure out how to get it done.* – from a resident of North Walpole aged 45-64 in town for 5-9 years and with elementary and high school aged children
- *School Lobby , Too much money going to schools, No money left for fields, street, sidewalks. Permanent Bldg committee.* – from a Central Walpole resident in town for 10-19 years, aged 35-44, with elementary and high school aged children.
- *The potential degradation of schools with increased class sizes and loss of teachers after we have worked so hard to achieve a level of education that rivals other towns that invest more money per student.* – from a North Walpole resident of 20 or more years, aged 45-64 and with elementary and high school aged children

Rate of Growth

Long time residents were especially likely to say that Walpole has been growing too fast, losing its small town character and straining its resources.

- *It used to be "small town". Now it has been growing so much that the town of Walpole cannot keep up with the changes. Keep it "small" or keep up with the influx!* – from a West Walpole resident of 10-19 years, aged 45-64, with no children at home
- *Too many new houses. Built too close together. These houses need water which is a problem. Too expensive to live here.* – from an East Walpole resident of 20+ years in town, 65 years or older, and no children at home
- *The amount of building and increase in the population. This town is great because of its size, small. To increase building will increase the drain on resources, school, police, fire, as well as water and increase congestion. Stop the building and keep what is best about Walpole-redevelop existing areas-do not just cut into undeveloped areas.* – from a Central Walpole resident of 20+ years in town, aged 21-34 with no children
- *Becoming overbuilt, over populated then the town is concerned about having enough water.* – from an East Walpole resident of 20+ years, aged 45-64, with no children

Traffic and Transportation

Linked to concerns about rapid development is an increase in the traffic congestion that residents are experiencing.

- *After much residential overdevelopment many side roads are much too narrow to accommodate the substantially increased traffic flow during the last 25 years. A good example is North Street between Gould and Fisher Streets. – from a home business owner and resident of North Walpole, aged 45-64, in town 20+ years and with no children*
- *It's impossible to drive through town in AM + PM-ridiculously crowded. Saturday even worse. – from a Central Walpole resident of 20+ years, aged 45-64 with no children*

The Top Four Issues for the Next Twenty Years

Survey respondents were asked to rank the top four issues that must be addressed in Walpole over the next 20 years from a list of 18 (as well as an additional option of listing “other”). The four issues that received the greatest number of top priority (no. 1) rankings and the greatest number of rankings overall were:

- Tax burden
- Attracting new businesses
- Drinking water quality and supply
- School quality

These four issues exemplify the dilemmas that Walpole has been facing: balancing taxes with paying for school quality and attracting new business while ensuring protection of the Town’s sole source water supply.

Slightly below these four top concerns were two others that are also closely related:

- Protecting open space
- Quantity and/or location of new residential development

The residential growth that Walpole experienced over the last decade has made residents worried about how to protect open space.

Rating Community Facilities and Services

Survey respondents were asked to rank community facilities and services as Excellent, Good, Adequate, Poor or Don’t Know. Walpole residents are generally satisfied with the majority of town services, but they still see room for improvement. On a four-point scale, where 4 is Excellent and 1 is Poor, the facilities and services scored as follows:

| Service or Facility | Grade |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Fire Department | 3.1 |
| Ambulance | 3.1 |
| Police Department | 3.0 |
| School System | 2.8 |
| Trash collection & recycling | 2.8 |
| Library | 2.6 |
| Recreation areas & programs | 2.6 |
| Activities & facilities for youths | 2.6 |
| Board of Health | 2.5 |
| Water System | 2.3 |
| Activities & facilities for adults | 2.3 |
| Activities & facilities for seniors | 2.3 |
| Road Maintenance | 2.0 |
| Land use planning | 1.6 |

None of the choices was ranked as Excellent by over 25% of the survey respondents. However, the public safety departments, trash collection and recycling, the school system and the library all received scores of Good or Excellent from over 50% of the respondents.

The greatest dissatisfaction (over 25% rated the service as “Poor”) was expressed for road maintenance (29%), and land use planning land use planning (40%). However, over a quarter of respondents (28%) indicated that they did not have enough information or experience to judge land use planning. The other four services or facilities for which respondents indicated the least direct

knowledge (over 25% checked “don’t know”) were ambulance service, the Board of Health, and activities for youth, adults and seniors.

Transportation and Traffic

Most dangerous intersection. Respondents were asked to rank the most dangerous intersection from a list of ten provided by the Town Police Department. The “winner” by far is East Street and School Street, followed by East Street and High Plain Street and Route 1 and Coney Street.

Use of commuter rail. Slightly more than 10 percent of survey respondents are regular users of commuter rail and almost 40 percent never use it. The remainder uses the train only occasionally.

Improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Half of the respondents did not answer this question. Those who did showed most interest in repairing sidewalks and building new ones and then in creating trails and paths in open space. Fewer respondents gave importance to making shopping areas more pedestrian friendly.

Improvements to public transportation. Less than half the respondents (41%) responded to the question on what improvements are needed to public transportation. Of those who did respond, half identified more or better parking, particularly at the commuter rail station, as the most important improvement needed.

Natural Resources, Open Space, and Cultural Resources

Respondents were asked to rank the level of importance that they give to natural and cultural resource issues. On a five-point scale, where 5 is Very Important, 4 is Somewhat Important, 3 is Neutral, 2 is Not Very Important, and 1 is Unimportant, the rankings were as follows:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Protecting the quality and quantity of groundwater | 4.8 |
| Protecting the quality and quantity of water in streams and ponds | 4.5 |
| Protecting additional open space for drainage and pollution control | 4.3 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Protecting additional open space for wildlife habitat and corridors | 3.8 |
| Protecting additional open space for recreation | 3.7 |
| Protecting additional open space for scenic views | 3.6 |
| Protecting historic buildings | 3.6 |
| Protecting historic landscapes | 3.5 |

Protection of the town's water supply and the town's streams and ponds is of paramount importance to residents and they are willing to protect additional open space as a way to protect water. They feel less strongly, though still positively, about protecting open space for other purposes and about protecting historic resources.

Economic Development

Similar to the Natural and Cultural Resources question, respondents were asked to rank the importance of different economic development activities. On a five-point scale ranging from Very Important (5) to Unimportant (1), the ranks were as follows:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Attracting new office development | 4.1 |
| Attracting new retail development | 4.1 |
| Attracting new manufacturing development | 3.9 |
| Expanding buffer zones between residential and business zones | 3.7 |
| Allowing greater density in existing business zones | 3.6 |
| Rezoning more land for business | 3.3 |

Reflecting the overall emphasis in the survey on bringing new business to Walpole, there was strong support for attracting office and retail development and only slightly less support for manufacturing. Respondents were still positive, though somewhat less favorable towards allowing greater density in existing business zones or rezoning more land for business. At the same time, expanding the buffers between residential and business zones also received some support.

Use of retail areas. The survey asked how often respondents shopped or used services at Walpole Route 1, Downtown Walpole, Walpole Mall, the strip malls, and the regional malls. The results of this question suggest that many Walpole residents go out of town regularly for shopping. More than twice as many respondents indicated that they shop at regional malls once a week or more than in downtown Walpole. The Walpole Mall and the town's strip malls attract these regular shoppers more than downtown but less than the regional malls. Route 1 was the least frequented shopping area.

Improvements to the business mix. When asked if there was a type of retail business service that does not exist in Walpole but that they would like to see there, 68 percent of the respondents did not answer the question. The remaining third suggested a variety of options. Better and more varied restaurants were the most common choice, with department stores, clothing stores, and a café or bakery as other popular options. One theme in the answer to this question was the desire for what was often expressed as "high end" retail, services and

restaurants – boutique and gourmet style offerings. On the other hand, respondents also expressed interest in discount, big box retailers such as Costco, BJ's or Target, despite the existence of Wal-Mart on Route 1.

Housing

The survey asked respondents to answer Yes, Maybe, or No to a question about the need for different housing types in Walpole and a question about what measures the respondent might support to create more affordable housing to meet the state Chapter 40B goal of 10% permanently affordable units. Perhaps because many people experienced the residential growth of the last decade as very rapid, survey respondents were ambivalent about many of the housing options presented in these questions.

Housing types. On the type of housing needed in Walpole, respondents were unambiguously in favor of housing affordable to town employees (68% said Yes) and to the elderly (54% Yes). They were also quite positive about housing for persons over 55 years old (49% Yes). At the other extreme, half the respondents said that condos were not needed (50%), and nearly half (48%) said assisted living for the elderly was not needed. They were ambivalent, though leaning toward the negative, about rental apartments (39% saying No and 44% saying Maybe) and nearly equally divided about housing affordable to families (37% No, 32% Maybe, and 31% Yes). They expressed more positive ambivalence about single family housing (40% Maybe and 35% Yes).

Affordable housing creation. Respondents were not unambiguously in favor of any of the listed methods of creating more long-term affordable housing in Walpole. Inclusionary zoning (requiring that all housing projects include a percentage of affordable units) gained the most support with 44% saying Yes and 30% saying Maybe. Density bonuses for creating affordable units were rejected by 53% of the respondents. Fifty-eight percent of respondents are willing to consider (saying Yes or Maybe) the creation of affordable housing on town-owned land and two-thirds are willing to consider tax abatements for creating affordable units or affordable accessory apartments.

Land Use

Three free answer questions asked the survey respondents to identify one area where they think business development should go, where they think residential development should go, and which open space area should be protected by the town.

Business development

Of the nearly two-thirds of respondents who replied to this question, 75% identified Route 1 and/or Route 1A as the most appropriate areas for business development. Downtown and East Walpole were the next most frequently mentioned areas. This question also asked for an indication of whether business development should be retail, office or industry. Only a third of respondents answered this question, but of those who did, half preferred retail, followed by office.

Residential development

Seventy percent of the respondents answered this question, and of those, over half (54%) said they did not want more residential development. Among the remaining responses, North Walpole was the most often proposed

as the location for new residential development, sometimes with the explanation that this is where there is more land.

Open space preservation area

The survey asked for the top priority area for preservation from development by the town. Slightly more than half the respondents (52%) answered this question. Of those, 36% focused on Adams Farm. The other areas most often mentioned were the Town Forest and Bird Park. (Bird Park, of course, is permanently protected and is now being managed by the Trustees of Reservations.)

III. Community Characteristics and Trends

.....

A. Population and Demographic Trends

Key Findings

- Walpole added about half as many residents in the 1990s as at its peak growth in the 1950s
- Compared to the population of Massachusetts as a whole, Walpole....
 - has a larger proportion of family households and households with children under 18
 - has a smaller proportion of young adults between 20 and 34 years old
 - has a larger proportion of children under 20 years old and adults between 35 and 54
 - has a slightly higher proportion of seniors over 65
 - has less diversity in terms of race
 - has a smaller proportion of people with a disability
 - has a higher median household and family income
 - has a lower poverty rate for families and individuals
 - has a less diverse public student body in race/ethnicity
 - has a smaller percentage of public school students eligible for free/reduced price lunch
 - has a smaller percentage of students in special education
- Population projections for Walpole based on demographic trends forecast slow population growth from 2000 to 2020.
- Public school enrollment grew an average of 3.7% a year during the 1990s but growth slowed to 1.8% a year after 2000.

Key Challenges

- Senior citizens are likely to become an even larger proportion of the population as the baby boom generation ages.
- The proportion of children in the population is likely to decline as the “baby bust” generation moves into its child-bearing years during the next twenty years.
- The number of households is growing faster than the population because the average household size is declining.

| Walpole Population | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------|
| Year | Population | Change |
| 1930 | 7,273 | |
| 1940 | 7,443 | 2.3% |
| 1950 | 9,109 | 22.4% |
| 1960 | 14,068 | 54.4% |
| 1970 | 18,149 | 29.0% |
| 1980 | 18,859 | 3.9% |
| 1990 | 20,212 | 7.2% |
| 2000 | 22,824 | 12.9% |
| 2010* | 23,439 | 2.7% |
| 2020* | 23,415 | -0.1% |
| * Middle Projection | | |
| Source: US Census and MISER | | |

Population Growth and Projections

Walpole’s industrial villages gave it a larger population than many of its more rural neighbors before the 1950s, but like many towns outside Boston, especially those with a train station, it became a suburban community after World War II. Walpole’s population doubled between 1950 and 1970, with much more modest growth in the 1970s and even the 1980s. After these periods of comparatively low growth, the nearly 13% growth in population that Walpole experienced during the 1990s felt like an explosion to many residents. However, compared to neighboring towns in the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Walpole’s population growth during the 1990s was about average for the communities that had additional development

capacity. Included in the change is the growth during the 1990s of the MCI Cedar Junction population by an additional 200 inmates to a total of 909.

Future Population Projections

| Population Change 1990-2000 | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Town | Change |
| Canton | 12% |
| Dedham | -1% |
| Dover | 13% |
| Foxboro | 11% |
| Medfield | 17% |
| Milton | 1% |
| Needham | 6% |
| Norwood | 0% |
| Sharon | 12% |
| Stoughton | 1% |
| Walpole | 13% |
| Westwood | 12% |
| Source: US Census | |

Despite the strong growth during the 1990s, there is reason to believe that Walpole's population will not increase as quickly in the future. This is because communities tend to grow more slowly as they become more built-up and because of changes in the number of people in different age groups. Population projections by the Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER), which prepares population projections for all the cities and towns in the state, show much smaller population growth in the next two decades than in the last one.

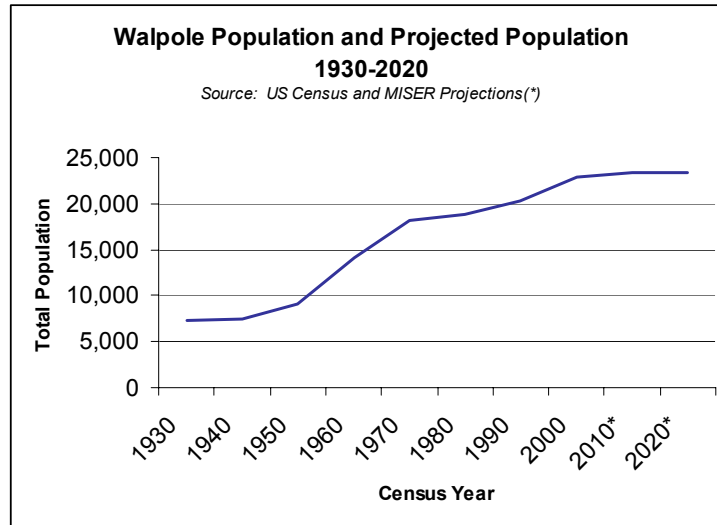
MISER makes high, middle and low projections based on slightly different assumptions about trends in natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration (the number of people moving into a town minus the number of people moving out).¹ The three projections for Walpole show that

the Town's population is expected to stabilize:

| Walpole Future Population Projections | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|------------------|--------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Population | US Census | | | MISER Projection | | percent change | | | |
| | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 1980 to 1990 | 1990 to 2000 | 2000 to 2010 | 2010 to 2020 |
| low | 18,859 | 20,212 | 22,824 | 22,778 | 21,954 | 7.2 | 12.9 | -0.2 | -3.6 |
| mid | 18,859 | 20,212 | 22,824 | 23,439 | 23,415 | 7.2 | 12.9 | 2.7 | -0.1 |
| high | 18,859 | 20,212 | 22,824 | 24,111 | 24,947 | 7.2 | 12.9 | 5.6 | 3.5 |

The graph below, which uses the medium projection, clearly shows how population rose steeply between 1950 and 1980 and grew more modestly by 2000. The more horizontal line from 2000 indicates less population growth. The expectation is that net migration will decrease and that birth rates will also decline.

¹ For Walpole, the middle projected population is based on the year 2000 Norfolk County birth rates, an average of Census and Social Security projected national trends in survival rates, and the average of 1980-1990 and 1990-2000 Walpole migration rates. The high estimate increased the assumptions and the low estimate decreased the assumptions using the demographers' judgment about a range of future population change based on an interpretation of past trends Stefan Rayer, "MISER Population Projections for Massachusetts, 2000-2020," Amherst: MISER, 2003.



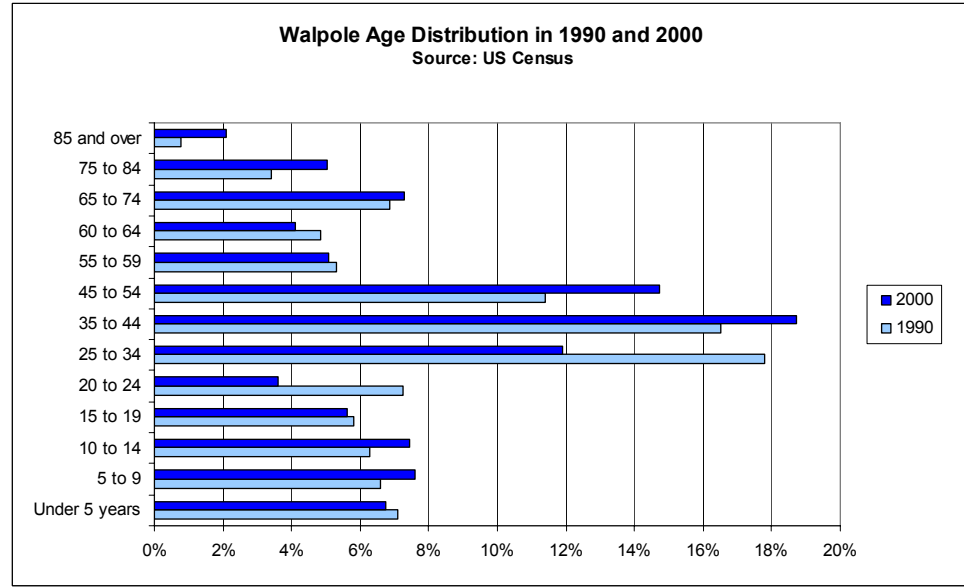
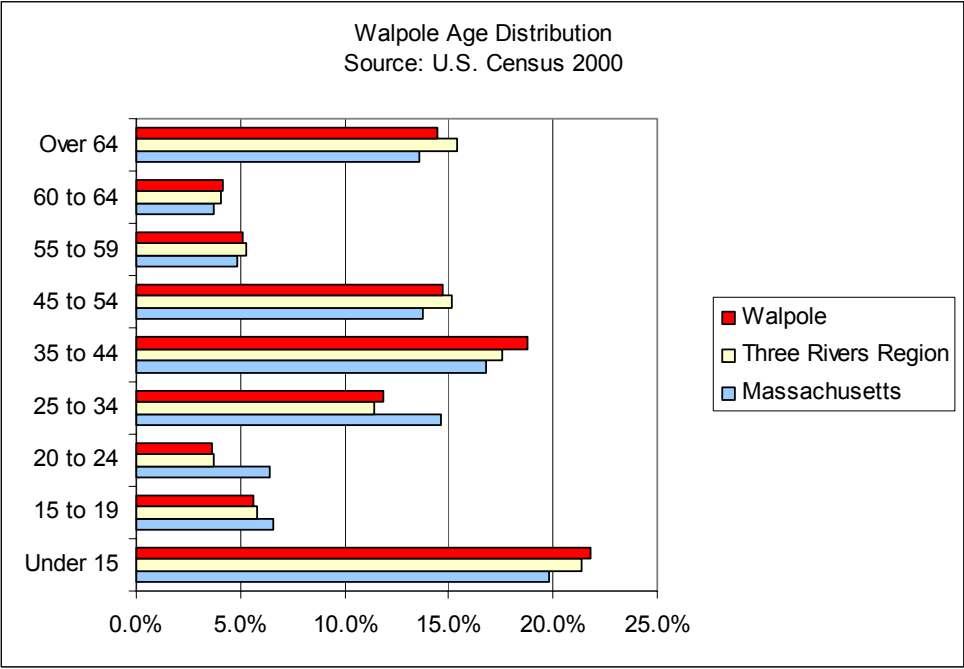
Although the overall population may not grow very fast, it is still likely that the number of households (and therefore the number of housing units) will increase faster than the population. During the 1990s, the number of households grew from 6,777 in 1990 to 8,060 in 2000 – an increase of 18.9% compared to the 12.9% population growth rate. The average number of people living in each household can be expected to get smaller in the future. There will be more “empty nester” households and more single person households.

Age and Racial Composition

Age Composition

Walpole’s age distribution has been changing as the baby boom generation ages, the “baby boom echo” goes through the school system, the “baby bust” generation reaches adulthood, and more elderly people are surviving into very old age. In 2000, more than a quarter of Walpole’s population (28%) was under 20 years old, a third of the population in the baby boom age group of 35 to 54 and 14% at age 65 or more. Like many suburban communities, the Town had a larger proportion of children and middle-aged people than the state as a whole and a smaller proportion of young adults. Walpole also had a somewhat greater proportion of elderly people than the state overall.

The predominance of the 35 to 54 boomer age group is clearly evident in the chart showing age distribution in 1990 and 2000. Since 1990 there has been a significant decline in the proportion of young adults. Although this reflects the fact that there are a smaller number of people in that age group overall, Walpole and other towns where housing has been getting more expensive have seen a disproportionate decline in this age group that may be related to housing costs.



| AGE GROUP | Walpole Age Composition | | | % of total TRIC Region population in 2000 | Walpole % Above / Below Region in 2000 | % of MAPC Region in 2000 | Walpole % Above / Below MAPC in 2000 |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | % of total population in 1990 | % of total population in 2000 | % change in proportion of total 1990-2000 | | | | |
| <5 | 7.2 | 6.8 | -5.9 | 6.7 | 1.5 | 6.1 | 10.8 |
| 5-9 | 6.6 | 7.6 | 14.5 | 7.3 | 3.9 | 6.4 | 18.6 |
| 10-14 | 6.2 | 7.5 | 20.7 | 7.4 | 0.8 | 6.2 | 20.3 |
| 15-19 | 5.9 | 5.6 | -5.1 | 5.8 | -3.8 | 6.1 | -8.1 |
| 20-24 | 7.4 | 3.6 | -51.4 | 3.8 | -4.3 | 6.9 | -47.8 |
| 25-34 | 17.7 | 11.9 | -32.9 | 11.5 | 3.8 | 16.2 | -26.6 |
| 35-44 | 16.4 | 18.7 | 14.0 | 17.6 | 6.5 | 16.7 | 12.2 |
| 45-54 | 11.3 | 14.7 | 30.3 | 15.2 | -2.8 | 13.6 | 8.4 |
| 55-59 | 5.3 | 5.1 | -4.4 | 5.3 | -4.5 | 4.8 | 5.6 |
| 60-64 | 4.9 | 4.1 | -15.6 | 4.1 | 0.5 | 3.7 | 11.4 |
| 65-74 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 6.1 | 7.5 | -3.0 | 6.7 | 8.9 |
| 75-84 | 3.4 | 5.0 | 49.3 | 5.6 | -9.9 | 4.8 | 5.0 |
| 85+ | 0.8 | 2.1 | 165.7 | 2.3 | -9.6 | 1.8 | 16.1 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | | 100.0 | | 100 | |

Source: U.S. Census; MAPC

Racial Composition

Walpole is predominantly white: 95.9% of the population according to the 2000 Census. African-Americans made up 1.7 % of the population and Asians 1.4%. Hispanics or Latinos, who can be of any race, made up 2 percent of the population in 2000.

School Population

Total enrollment of elementary and high school students in both public and private schools increased by 39% during the 1990s, from 2,900 in 1990 to 4,026 in 2000. Public school enrollment grew from 2,492 in 1990 to 3,548 in 2000, an average increase of 3.7% per year. Two years later, by the 2002-2003 school year, public school enrollment was 3,676, with the growth rate moderating to an average of 1.8% a year. These recent figures suggest that the Town will not continue to face the same enrollment pressures in the future as it did in the 1990s. During 2002-2003, 4.4% of school children were eligible for free or reduced price lunch and 17.8% were in special education programs. In 1990 and in the early 2000s, nearly 15% of school aged children in Walpole attended private schools.

Household Composition

Walpole is a family community. Seventy-four percent of Walpole's 8,060 households in 2000 were family households (people related by blood or marriage). In comparison, family households accounted for 65 percent of all

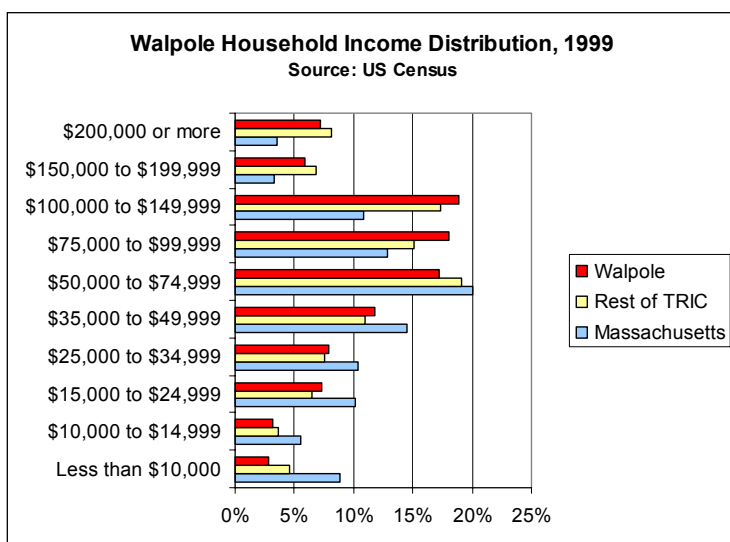
households in the state. Married couple families make up 65% of the family households, and households with individuals under 18 years old make up 37% of the total. Walpole has a smaller percentage of single person households (23%) than the state as a whole (28%). A significant percentage of the Town’s households – 29% -- include persons 65 years old and older.

The average household size in Walpole is 2.72 (compared with 2.51 for the state). Walpole’s average family size, 3.24 persons, is also greater than the state average of 3.11. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council projects that the total number of households will increase to 9,405 by 2020 (adding 1,345 to the number of households in 2000). Compared to the MISER population projections, this number seems high, or average household size will become drastically lower (1.58 persons per household at MISER’s high population projection). Because of population trends already in evidence, as noted earlier, it is likely that the average size of households will continue to decline.

Disabled Population

Nearly a third of Walpole senior citizens (65 and over) reported some kind of disability in the 2000 Census. In other age groups, as would be expected, a smaller percentage of people have disabilities: 7% of people 5-20 years and 12% of people 21-64 years.

Income Composition



Walpole’s median household income in 1999 was \$74,757 or almost 35 per cent above the median household income of \$55,000 for the Boston region. The median represents the midpoint of the distribution where half of the households have higher incomes and half of the households have lower incomes. The median income in Walpole kept pace with the rise in consumer prices over the decade. However, Walpole in 1999 ranked higher among all Massachusetts communities than

it did in 1989. In 1999 its median income was 55th out of 351 cities and towns, while in 1989 it was 70th. The distribution of household incomes shows that Walpole is what might be called “moderately wealthy”; the Town has more households earning between \$75,000 and \$150,000 than either the state as a whole or the neighboring communities in the Three Rivers Interlocal Council as a whole (TRIC includes Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Sharon, Stoughton, and Westwood). The Town has fewer residents than its suburban neighbors in the most affluent categories over \$150,000, but more than are found

statewide. At the other income extreme, 13% of Walpole households have incomes below \$25,000 and only 1.5 per cent of Walpole families fall below poverty level, compared with 6.7 per cent for the state.

B. Land Use Trends

Key Findings

- Residential land uses occupy nearly two-fifths of Walpole's land and most of the residences are single family homes.
- Fifteen percent of Walpole's total land area consists of protected open space.
- Walpole has a limited amount of vacant developable land.
- The zoning bylaw needs technical improvements to improve definitions, eliminate contradictions and make it more understandable.
- The Light Manufacturing zoning category does not facilitate the kind of business development that Walpole wants to pursue.
- Necessary protections for the water supply restrict some kinds of land uses.

Key Challenges

- The Town needs to focus more attention on redevelopment of underutilized sites and brownfields as a way to achieve land use goals.
- A more limited amount of open land means more competing potential uses for that land, including preservation as open space.

| Residential and Nonresidential Land Uses in Acres by Zoning District | | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------|--------|
| Zone | Residential Uses | Nonresidential Uses* | Developable and Potentially Developable Land | Undevelopable Land | Total |
| Residential | | | | | |
| R | 1,824 | 1,136 | 830 | 408 | 4,198 |
| RA | 823 | 249 | 301 | 190 | 1,563 |
| RB | 1,575 | 214 | 126 | 62 | 1,977 |
| GR | 487 | 96 | 0 | 48 | 631 |
| Non-Residential | | | | | |
| B | 14 | 72 | 13 | 7 | 106 |
| CBD | 4 | 36 | 2 | 0 | 42 |
| LM | 41 | 785 | 72 | 2 | 900 |
| IND | 20 | 597 | 142 | 38 | 797 |
| PSRC | 2 | 2,043 | 0 | 0 | 2,045 |
| | 4,790 | 5,228 | 1,486 | 755 | 12,259 |
| % of total | 39% | 43% | 12% | 6% | 100% |
| *Nonresidential uses include local and other government uses and protected open space. | | | | | |
| Source: Assessor's Data | | | | | |

Amount and distribution of land uses

About 39% of the total assessed land in Walpole is occupied by residential uses of one kind or another, on small or large lots, and 43% is occupied by nonresidential uses, including Town, county, and state lands, and permanently protected open space. About 12% of the acres in parcels in all zones are classified as developable or potentially developable and 6% are classified as undevelopable. For the purposes of this exercise, Housing Authority lands were put in the residential category and agricultural, forest and recreational lands in open space tax abatement programs (935 acres in Chapter 61, 61A and 61B) were placed in the developable category. If they are taken out of the developable category, then only about 4.5% of the acreage is developable or potentially developable. These are the actual uses

of the land – not the amount of land *zoned* for various land uses. Moreover, some of the land parcels that are

classified as already developed may have additional development capacity if they were to be subdivided in the future.

Protected open space

Approximately 2,000 acres of Walpole is permanently protected open space that cannot be developed. This constitutes 15% of the Town's total land area. Although some of the permanently protected land includes wetlands, there are other wetlands that are not under deed restriction but are protected from development under the Wetlands Protection Act. In addition, the 935 acres of temporarily protected Chapter 61, 61A, 61B lands and some town-owned open space is not permanently protected. Total open space resources, protected and unprotected, are over 20% of the land area.

Regulation of land uses

The use of land is regulated by the Zoning By-Law and Subdivision Regulations, the Walpole Wetland By-Law, the Walpole Aquifer Protection By-Law, the Rate of Multi-Family Development By-Law, the Growth Management By-Law and an Age Qualified Village By-Law. The zoning by law is applied by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Conservation Commission applies the state Wetlands Protection Act and the local wetlands bylaw.

Walpole has four residential zoning districts, four non-residential zoning districts, a special district for Park, School, Recreation and Conservation, and three overlay districts -- Water Protection, Flood Plain, and Wireless Communications.

| Walpole Zoning Districts | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Zoning District</i> | <i>Purposes</i> | <i>Minimum Lot (sf)</i> | <i>Minimum Frontage (ft)</i> |
| PSRC Park, School, Recreation and Conservation | institutional, government, agriculture, recreation, open space | 40,000 | 200 |
| R Rural Residential | agriculture, open space, low density SF housing | 40,000 | 200 |
| RA Residence A | medium low density SF | 30,000 | 150 |
| RB Residence B | medium density SF | 20,000 | 125 |
| GR General Residence | low density SF and multifamily, public, semi-public, institutional, recreational, professional office; transition to nonresidential | 15,000 | 100 |
| B Business | wide range of retail, office and service | minimum in closest abutting residential district | minimum in closest abutting residential district |
| CBD Central Business District | pedestrian-oriented business; center of municipal and cultural activities, landmark and symbol of Town | minimum in closest abutting residential district | minimum in closest abutting residential district |
| LM Limited Manufacturing | low density wholesale and unobtrusive manufacturing, wireless communications | 40,000 | 200 |
| IND Industrial | general manufacturing and wholesale, wireless communications | 40,000 | 200 |

| Walpole Zoning Districts | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Zoning District</i> | <i>Purposes</i> | <i>Minimum Lot (sf)</i> | <i>Minimum Frontage (ft)</i> |
| The overlay districts for Water Protection and Flood Plain also affect the amount of building permitted in those areas. The Wireless Communications Service District includes land under the control of the Board of Selectmen and the Sewer and Water Commission. | | | |
| Special Permits granted for uses in Business and Limited Manufacturing zones require a buffer to residential districts and buffers may be required in the case of other special permits. | | | |

| Distribution of Land in Zoning Districts | | | |
|---|--|---------------|----------------|
| | | Acres | Percent |
| | Total Assessor Database | 12,263 | 100% |
| | <i>Residential</i> | | |
| R | Rural Residential | 4,199 | 34.2 |
| RA | Residence A | 1,563 | 12.7 |
| RB | Residence B | 1,976 | 16.1 |
| GR | General Residential | 631 | 5.1 |
| | Total Residential | 8,369 | 68.2% |
| | <i>Non-Residential</i> | | |
| B | Business | 106 | 0.9 |
| CBD | Central Business District | 46 | 0.4 |
| LM | Limited Manufacturing | 900 | 7.3 |
| IND | Industrial | 797 | 6.5 |
| PSRC | Park, School, Recreation, and Conservation | 2,045 | 16.7 |
| | Total Non-Residential | 3,894 | 31.7% |
| <i>Source: Walpole Assessor's Data</i> | | | |

Special permits are available for an Age Qualified Village (over 55 housing) on tracts of at least 10 acres in the Business, Central Business and Limited Manufacturing Districts. Open Space Residential Development (clustered housing) is also available by Special Permit on tracts of at least 20 acres in Rural Residence and Residence A zones.

Walpole's zoning bylaw also contains two provisions intended to control the rate of building through the issuance of

building permits and a subdivision phasing by law. The "Rate of Multi-Family Development By-Law" (Sec. 9-H) and the "Growth Management By-Law" (Sec. 9-J) seek respectively to cap annual multifamily building permits at 50 units (with restrictions on how many permits can be issued per project) and all residential building permits at 85. Affordable housing units are exempted under the multifamily development by law and affordable and senior units under the growth management by law. Neither of these bylaws has ever been used because the threshold has not yet been met. The "Subdivision Phasing" by-law (Sec. 9-I) was approved in 1990 and has been extended to the end of 2005. This purpose of the bylaw is to evaluate proposed subdivisions according to a design criteria point system and allow faster buildout for subdivisions that get higher scores. However, the scoring system is complex, contradictory, and confusing and reportedly has not proven very useful.

Development Trends and Potential Buildout

In 1999, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, working through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and with the assistance of the town Engineering Department, prepared a buildout study for Walpole. A buildout analysis takes the existing zoning districts in a community, subtracts the amount of land that is already built or is not developable because of environmental or other reasons, and then projects the maximum number of housing units and the maximum number of square feet of commercial and industrial space that could be built under the

existing regulations for lot size, height, and other dimensions. The buildout makes assumptions about likely types of allowed development and takes into account only “as of right” development. This means the development that can occur according to zoning without recourse to any special permits, variances or comprehensive permits that might allow increases in the basic density of development. This buildout study found the potential for an additional 2,299 housing units (including multifamily units) on 2,642.4 undeveloped acres in residential districts with a potential for 2,278 additional lots and the potential for an additional 5.1 million square feet of commercial/industrial floor area.

Most of the land identified as available for development in the buildout is located in North and West Walpole, though there are lesser amounts of land available in other parts of town. Although this may seem like a lot of land, it includes all developable land that is not permanently protected, such as government lands and lands in open space tax abatement programs (Chapter 61), as well as land in parcels that currently have a house or other building but that could be subdivided under current zoning. In many of these cases, such as the Country Club lands or the Agricultural School, subdivision and development is not currently anticipated. The developable lands in the buildout also included areas that were slated for development after the completion of the study, such as the Gateway project and the Toll Brothers subdivision project. At the current rates of development it would take 28 years to fully build out the town from this 1999 study. The study used 1990 figures for average household size and school children per household, and found that final buildout would result in 6,253 additional residents and 1,125 additional school children.

However, a buildout analysis does not include a time frame and many communities never reach full buildout for a variety of reasons. In fact, the pace of growth often slows down as communities approach buildout because the more remote and constrained sites are more difficult and more expensive to develop. Moreover, as we have seen earlier, population projections based on demographic trends forecast a stabilizing population below the number predicted at buildout.

It is also important to note that this buildout analysis was prepared using map data and not by a parcel by parcel analysis. In addition, it did not account for the redevelopment potential of existing residences, residences being introduced into commercially zoned districts, special permit processes that might allow more density, or changes in zoning.

C. Maps

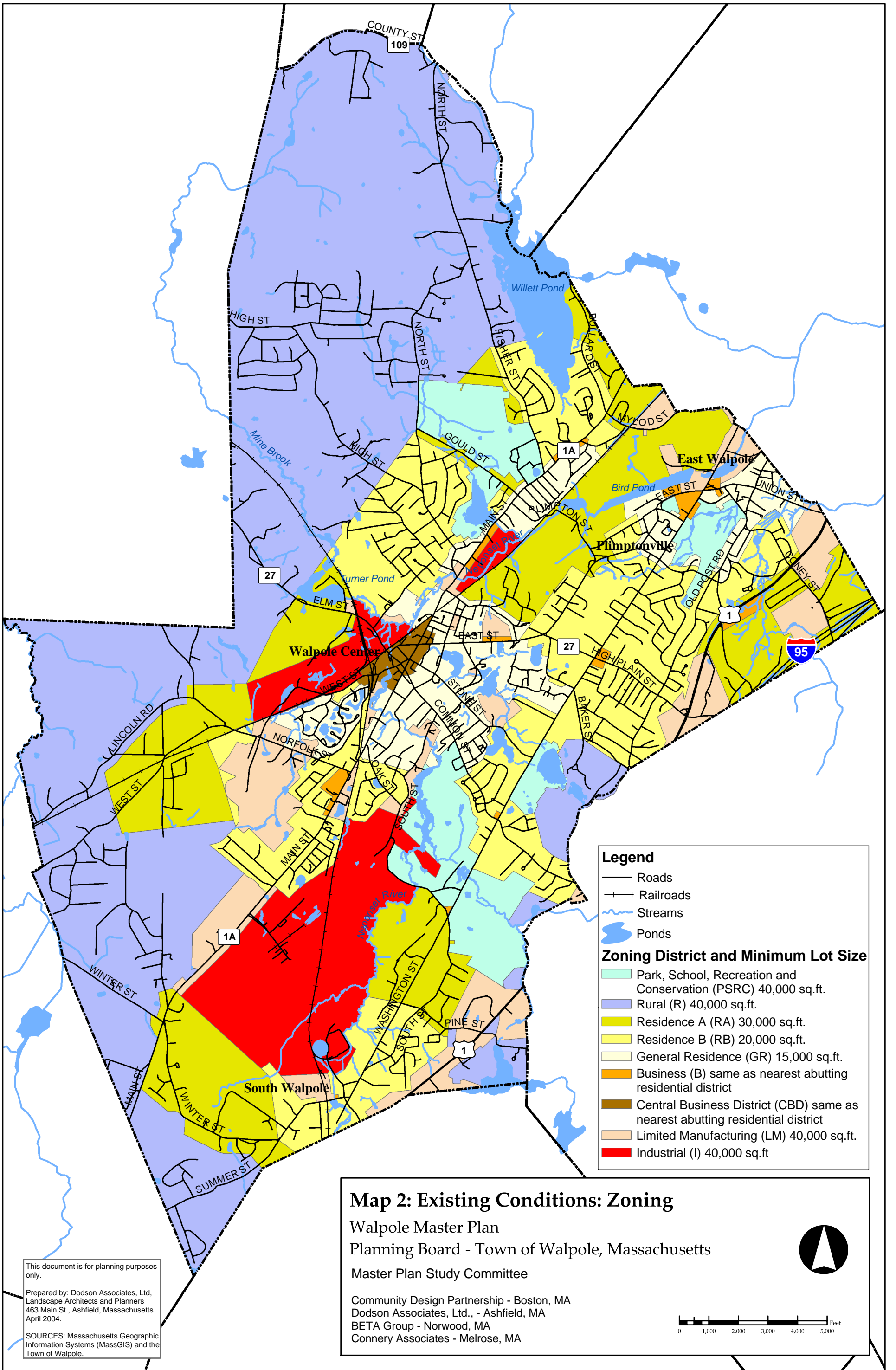
Map 1: Existing Conditions: Land Use and Infrastructure

This map shows land uses by parcel according to the classification used by the Town Assessor in 2003. This means that these are the kinds of uses of the land that actually existed in 2003, whether or not the land was zoned for these uses. It is not unusual for there to be “nonconforming uses,” especially in towns where zoning was established much later than many buildings were constructed. The map shows the tight organization of smaller lots around the historical settlement areas of Walpole Center, Plimptonville, East Walpole and South Walpole, while more recent development has spread with larger lot sizes into the north and west of town.

The map also shows that residential areas in the northern and western parts of the town are generally not sewerred. Sewer service is also absent from some of the commercial and industrial areas of town, notably Route 1A/Main Street and portions of Route 1.

Map 2: Existing Conditions: Zoning

This map shows the zoning existing at the beginning of this master plan project. The zoning map indicates the desired distribution of land uses and the desired intensity (density) of land uses in Town.



IV. Natural and Cultural Resources

.....



Goals:

- Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that protect Walpole's water supply and water resources
- Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that support wildlife
- Identify and protect cultural resources

A. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Key Findings

Natural Resources

- The Neponset no longer has the many industrial uses that once depended on the river, so it has returned to a more natural state.
- There are almost 2,000 acres of wetlands in Walpole, nearly 15 percent of the Town's area.
- Walpole depends completely on groundwater from a sole source aquifer for its drinking water supply.
- Several species observed relatively recently in Walpole are listed on the state's endangered species list, the Blue-Spotted Salamander, the spotted Turtle and a butterfly, Hessel's Hairstreak.
- There are two certified vernal pools in Walpole and a number of potential vernal pools.

Cultural Resources

- Walpole has a six-month Demolition Delay bylaw for buildings and other structures (such as dams) at least 100 years old.
- Walpole has only two sites listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, Old Town Hall and the Deacon Willard House (Walpole Historical Society headquarters).
- There are many historic sites and buildings that are unmarked and/or unprotected.
- Bird Park is the Town's most important example of a designed landscape.
- A few agricultural landscapes that are part of Walpole's heritage remain.

Key Challenges

Natural Resources

- Protect drinking water quantity and quality
- Continue improvements in surface water quality
- Keep dams in good repair

- Preserve habitat links
- Clean up brownfields so they do not threaten environmental health, particularly wetlands and water resources

Cultural Resources

- Inventory and protect culturally and historically significant sites
- Enhance public awareness of Walpole history

Natural Resources

There is a dramatic difference between the natural areas of Walpole today and those of a century ago. Then, the Neponset River was lined with active industry and polluted with wastes from homes and businesses. In the outer neighborhoods, farms and forests were still plentiful. Over time, changes in land use and economic patterns throughout the region have had a marked effect on Walpole's landscapes. Today, the river, if not pristine, has evolved through benign neglect into a state of near wilderness in some areas. In the southern part of town, significant stretches of its banks have been protected within the Town Forest and other conservation areas. Meanwhile, development of house lots and subdivisions outside the old town centers has forever altered their formally rural character, and the remaining open spaces are increasingly cut off from each other by development. These trends may continue, because the rivers and streams and wetlands are protected under state wetlands regulations, while the remaining upland farms and forests are likely to be under continuing pressure for development.

Walpole's natural resources exist within a network of ponds, streams, wetlands and forests. This network supports a wide variety of plants and animals and maintains the quality of the town's drinking water. Uniting all these features is the Neponset River and its tributary streams, which tie together virtually all the remaining open space in the town. These river and stream corridors provide for the movement of wildlife from one area to another, and channel surface runoff into larger wetlands and water bodies. This water then drains into the aquifers from which town wells draw water for residents. Much of this ecosystem is technically protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and Rivers Protection Act, but in practice this protection depends on monitoring by local officials who have many demands on their time. Runoff from streets and parking lots and development sites can affect protected areas before anyone notices it. Invasive plant and animal species are carried in by numerous means. Development continues to fragment the areas that now provide critical buffers to the core natural resource system. By better understanding the physical structure and ecological functioning of this system, however, the Town can protect its essential functions, preserving this valuable asset for future generations.

In the Master Plan survey and public meetings, there was overwhelming agreement that Walpole must continue to ensure protection of its water supply and much support for other environmental and cultural heritage protection measures.

The following information draws on the 1996 Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan, updated with information from state sources and participants in the Master Plan process.

Land Form and Topography

Walpole's rivers, ponds, streams and wetlands are created by the vertical structure of topography -- the town's landform. This physical structure was shaped by ancient geological processes that produced the underlying bedrock, overlaid with much more recent glacial action that occurred at the end of the last ice age. What resulted was a series of generally north-south running ridges, dividing one stream watershed from another. On the extreme western border of the town, the Stop River drains a narrow valley, running north through Medfield and emptying into the Charles River. Just to the east, a ridge of high ground running from the area of the Cedar Junction Prison north to Medfield separates the Stop River Valley from the Cedar Swamp, in the south end of town, and the Mine and Mill Brooks, to the north. Still another ridge separates the Mine Brook Valley from Bubbling Brook, which was dammed to create Willet Pond. This ridge forms the bulk of Walpole's northern end, and its well-drained soils historically supported a series of farms that still lend the area an agricultural aspect.

The Neponset River cuts a dramatic diagonal across this series of north-south valleys, further dividing the town into a series of small neighborhoods. This helps to explain the historical development of the Town as a series of discrete villages separated by large areas of wetland and wooded hills. This topographic pattern remains a striking part of Walpole's visual character.

Geology and Soils

Most of Walpole consists of sand and gravel and the northern part of the Town is primarily glacial till. The majority of the soils are the very deep and very well drained soils of the Hinckley-Merrimac-Urban category. These soils make Walpole susceptible to groundwater pollution, because they do not adequately filter effluent, even though they readily absorb it. Likewise, in North Walpole the soils are also poorly suited for septic systems. These Woodbridge-Paxton-Montauk soils are good agricultural and forestry soils and well-drained, but the fertile agricultural soils overlay a firm substratum which does not readily absorb effluent from septic systems.

Because of the geological characteristics of Walpole, the US Environmental Protection Agency has found that Walpole's groundwater supplies, though currently in good condition, are highly vulnerable to contamination. Potential contamination sources include not only septic systems but chemical spills, runoff from roads, leaking storage tanks (both above ground and below ground), road salt, and landfill leachate.

Water Resources

Surface water

Walpole has abundant surface water, ranging from the Neponset River, the Stop River and seven major brooks to at least 13 large and small ponds, totaling some 339 acres. A number of these ponds were man-made to supply water to mills downstream on the river. The Stop River is Walpole's western boundary with the Town of Norfolk. Because of its history of industry and nearby septic systems, the Neponset River has been highly polluted. However, tremendous progress has been made in cleaning up the river through sewer projects and changes in the business activities on the river.

In the late nineteenth century, a consortium of Walpole businesses and trusts gained control of a network of ponds and streams feeding into the Neponset River and the six dams on the river. The only remaining industrial user of this water is the Hollingsworth & Vose Company, which continues to maintain the dam and the mill pond on the border with Norwood. The company has turned over Willett Pond to a trust managed by the Neponset River Watershed Association. Owners of the land fronting the pond pay dues to the pond owner and the money goes to an account to maintain dams and control structures and cut trees when necessary.

The Town owns four major ponds (Clarks, Cobbs, Memorial and Turner Ponds) and three small ponds (Seventh, Eighth, and Colburn Ponds). The Pond Management Committee oversees management of the ponds with the objective of monitoring the water quality and environmental health of the ponds. Two ponds, Willett Pond and Turner Pond, are open to swimming by abutting residents and three ponds, Turner, Clark, and Cobb's, are used for skating and ice fishing

Wetlands

Walpole has almost 2,000 acres of wetlands, most of which are associated with the tributary streams to the Neponset River. Eighty percent of these wetlands are covered with trees or shrubs, while the remainder is open marsh or wet meadow habitat. A small percentage, about 33 acres, is bog, an increasingly rare form of wetland that supports a unique variety of plants and animals. All of these areas are protected by the state Wetlands Protection Act, which establishes a 100-foot setback from the edge of wetlands within which disturbance is carefully regulated. In addition, many areas were also designated as "state restricted wetlands" under an earlier program.

| Walpole Water and Wetlands | Acres | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Open Water | 338.82 | 14.52% |
| Bog | 32.86 | 1.41% |
| Deep Marsh | 200.16 | 8.58% |
| Shallow marsh, meadow or fen | 152.80 | 6.55% |
| Shrub Swamp | 434.29 | 18.61% |
| Coniferous wooded swamp | 341.13 | 14.62% |
| Deciduous wooded swamp | 633.40 | 27.15% |
| Mixed wooded swamp | 199.65 | 8.56% |
| Total | 2,333.10 | 100.00% |

Ground Water

Walpole depends completely on groundwater for its drinking water supply from the School Meadow Brook aquifer and the Mine Brook Aquifer, which are components of the Head of the Neponset River Aquifer. School Meadow Brook aquifer is considered to be completely developed for drinking water wells. The aquifer is susceptible to potential pollution hazards from Route 1. The Mine Brook aquifer is shared with Medfield and has the potential for additional wells.

Walpole's complex of aquifers has been recognized by the EPA as a sole source aquifer requiring special protection because of the geological conditions mentioned earlier which make the aquifers vulnerable to

contamination and because there are no viable alternative sources of drinking water to completely replace the current sources if they were to become contaminated. Water quality is currently rated good to excellent.

Habitat and Biodiversity Resources

Vegetation

There are four major plant communities in Walpole: upland oak-hickory; upland northern hardwood-softwood; coniferous; bottom or wetland hardwoods. These plant communities are typical of New England. Which community is present in a given location is determined by a combination of landform, soils, and drainage patterns. In the north end of town, for example, the woods around Adams Farm, including those owned by New England Forest, run to mixed oak, maple and pine on the high ground, with red maple communities in the wet bottom land. Further complexity is introduced by the historic land use pattern. Farm fields that were abandoned fairly recently have grown in with a young successional forest of hardwoods, while areas that were allowed to grow up to woods sooner now have a higher proportion of pine trees. Areas that have been undisturbed the longest, such as the Cedar Swamp, develop a certain uniformity in their major tree species, while retaining a more ecologically diverse plant community among the understory trees and herbaceous ground covers.

Wildlife and Wildlife Corridors

Waterways and wetlands provide the most diverse habitats for wildlife and are essential to many species for breeding and food supply. A variety of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians have been known to use the habitats available in Walpole. (The lists can be examined in the open space plan.) Walpole's network of streams, ponds and wetlands offers the potential for a sustainable network of habitat corridors, especially if combined with adjacent forested upland areas, which offer shelter to animals that go back and forth to waterbodies to breed and feed. Recent studies in landscape ecology indicate that sustaining healthy populations of plants and animals requires a combination of large patches of protected land connected by corridors through which animals can pass back and forth. The size of both the patches and corridors depends upon the particular species involved. At a minimum, the science would suggest protected buffers of at least 600' surrounding water bodies, where wildlife can live in reserves, and linear protected areas at least 300' wide along each side of streams to allow wildlife to migrate between reserves. A good example in Walpole is the way Cedar Swamp and the Town Forest are connected. Each of these areas is between 2000' and 3000' wide and they are linked by protected lands along the Neponset River and Cedar Swamp Brook that are at least 1000' wide. These widths should be sufficient to sustain existing populations of plants and animals, but argue for further work to extend protected buffers, particularly in areas where industrial or residential development is encroaching on the corridors.

Much narrower corridors will do, but limit the number of animals that can use them effectively over the long term. Some types of narrow corridors that are relatively undisturbed by humans frequently serve as wildlife corridors, such as transmission line rights of way, railroad beds, and chains of undeveloped private lands. An example is the way that the School Meadow Brook area is linked by a transmission line corridor to Wolomololpoag

Pond in Sharon and to the Neponset River. This area is then linked by a railroad line to Cedar Swamp and eventually to Crocker Pond and Lake Pearl in Wrentham.

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are wet depressions in the land that, by definition, are flooded only part of the year. Many rare and valuable species depend on vernal pools. Lacking fish populations and common wetlands vegetation, they support unique wildlife communities that have adapted to wet and dry cycles. Like wetlands in general, vernal pools often need protection that extends beyond the area defined in law, for many amphibians that breed in the pools may move hundreds of yards away during the course of their life cycle. Protecting the pool itself and a 100' buffer is not enough to ensure the survival of creatures like the spotted salamander, for example. Each pool must be examined in its context to determine the appropriate buffer size and management techniques that will ensure the continued survival of its inhabitants.

Certified vernal pools are protected by the Wetlands Protection Act. The state Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) certifies the pools on the basis of information submitted according to criteria developed by NHESP biologists. There are two certified vernal pools in Walpole. One is located east of North Street and south of Smith Avenue and the other is west of Winter Street along the town line with Norfolk north of the prison. State biologists have analyzed aerial photographs taken in the spring and fall to identify potential vernal pool sites big enough (about 100 feet wide) to be identifiable from aerial photos. Field investigation of these areas is necessary to establish the presence of recognized indicator species. Many smaller pools that could not be identified in the aerial photographs might be revealed by field studies. Over 60 potential vernal pools were identified in Walpole, many of them in or adjacent to wetlands areas. Vernal pools do not receive any additional protection under state law until they are officially certified. Vernal pool certification has become a popular activity for school science classes. Information and forms for certification are available on the NHESP web site.

Rare Species Habitat, Rare Natural Communities and Biodiversity

Estimated and Priority Habitat

Walpole has four areas that are designated as both Estimated and Priority Habitat of Rare Species. Priority Habitat Areas show where the NHESP estimates the existence of habitat for state-listed rare species. These estimates are made on the basis of species population records, habitat requirements and landscape information. Priority habitats are not protected by law, but the rare species that may use these habitats are protected. Estimated Habitat areas are designated by the NHESP where state-listed rare species have been *documented* within the last 25 years in wetlands resources defined under the Wetlands Protection Act. Proponents of projects that come before the Conservation Commission that would affect this habitat must notify the NHESP, which will then determine if alteration of the area would have an adverse effect on rare species.

The four areas of Priority and Estimated Habitat in Walpole are the Cedar Swamp, the wetlands around School Meadow Brook from Washington Street to the town border with Sharon, a small area surrounding a certified vernal pool east of North Street and south of Smith Avenue, and wetlands in North Walpole in the Adams Farm area.

BioMap Core Habitat and Supporting Habitat

The NHESP developed the state BioMap to identify areas in Massachusetts where the biodiversity of the state is most in need of protection. The map focuses especially on state-listed rare species and on natural communities of plants and animals that exemplify the biodiversity of the state. The BioMap is divided into two categories: Core Habitat and Supporting Natural Landscape. Core Habitat shows the areas where rare species habitat and natural communities are most viable and likely to persist. These are large areas with a minimum of human intrusion and impact. Supporting Habitat provides buffers for Core Habitat, corridors and connections between Core Habitat areas, and undeveloped areas that provide habitat for common Massachusetts species. In Walpole, four swamp areas, including the Cedar Swamp, have been designated as Core Habitat on the BioMap.

Rare Species

The NHESP keeps records of observations of rare species. The agency does not send staff to survey towns and depends to a great degree on observations submitted by the public or others. The fact that the most recent observation date is quite old in some cases does not mean that the species no longer exists. However, state wetlands and endangered species regulations only consider species with observation dates less than 25 years old when ruling on project reviews. Forms to report observations are available on the agency's web site.

| Walpole Rare and Endangered Species | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Taxonomic Group | Scientific Name | Common Name | State Rank | Federal Rank | Most Recent Observation |
| Amphibian | <i>Ambystoma laterale</i> | Blue-Spotted Salamander | SC | | 1992 |
| Reptile | <i>Clemmys guttata</i> | Spotted Turtle | SC | | 1997 |
| Butterfly/Moth | <i>Callophrys hesseli</i> | Hessel's Hairstreak | SC | | 1987 |
| Butterfly/Moth | <i>Erynnis persius persius</i> | Persius Duskywing | E | | 1930 |
| Vascular Plant | <i>Ophioglossum pusillum</i> | Adder's-Tongue Fern | T | | 1908 |
| Vascular Plant | <i>Rhododendron maximum</i> | Great Laurel | T | | 1908 |
| SC = Species of Special Concern; E = Endangered; T = Threatened | | | | | |
| Source: NHESP | | | | | |

Environmental Issues

Interbasin transfer of water. While Walpole depends on the groundwater resources of the Neponset Aquifer, the Town's partial sewer system ties into the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority. This means that some of the water drawn out of the aquifer does not return as recharge but ends up in Boston Harbor. The dilemma is that sewerage prevents groundwater contamination by failing septic systems, but functioning septic systems can be beneficial because the aquifer is recharged with cleaned water from the system.

Brownfield sites. Walpole has one Superfund site and a number of other brownfield sites. The Superfund site is the Blackburn and Union Privileges Site, on the list since 1994. The site, also known sometimes as the “South Street Site” or “Shaffer Realty Site,” covers about 22 acres on both sides of South Street near Common Street. It started as a saw mill site in the 17th century and has since then been used to produce machinery, cotton products, lamp wicks, snuff, iron nails, rubber goods, and asbestos clutch and brake linings. Over time, chromium, arsenic, and mercury were used at this site, as well as asbestos. Asbestos was removed and the excavated soils consolidated, capped, fenced and restricted by deed to protect the cap from disturbance. Other hazardous materials, including lead, sodium hydroxide and arsenic still remain on the site and must be remediated. One of the two responsible companies, W.R. Grace, filed for bankruptcy in 2000, leaving the Kendall Company with the responsibility for cleanup. EPA awarded the Town a \$100,000 EPA grant in 2000 to plan for the reuse of this site and a series of public meetings have been held (most recently in October 2003) to discuss reuse alternatives.

Walpole also received a \$200,000 EPA grant under the Brownfields Assessment Pilot Program. The Town’s Brownfields Committee identified 25 potential brownfield sites, refined this list to seven priority sites and then selected three sites for participation in the pilot program. The first site in the program was a downtown parking lot. The EPA funding was used to assess environmental conditions and to develop site remediation requirements. Construction of the parking lot was funded by an \$895,000 state grant and completed in 2002. The second site was a group of parcels on Main Street/Route 1A currently occupied by automobile salvage yards, scrap metal recycling facilities, and truck parking. The site was previously used for municipal solid waste and building demolition debris disposal. The parcels’ location near wetlands and over the aquifer protection district is particularly sensitive and suggested that recreational reuse of the parcels might be appropriate. With a state grant of \$42,500, the Town commissioned a feasibility study for a golf course, completed in 2002, on these sites. Unfortunately, Walpole’s application for new funding from the EPA for Phase II assessment of these and other brownfields sites was not successful. Further options for the Main Street parcels need to be identified. Brownfields issues are discussed further in the chapter on economic development.

Some brownfield remediation has occurred privately, in response to the Town’s brownfields tax incentives and market opportunities. For example, a site at 757 Main Street, formerly a Texaco gas station, has been redeveloped into a car wash, and a home heating oil retail business at 1333 Main Street was redeveloped into new office space.

Cultural Resources

Like other towns, Walpole is becoming more aware of the unique value of its historic structures and tree-lined residential streets. Happily, economic forces will likely foster an economic climate where the old buildings and Main Street itself are recognized as worth saving, not only in their own right but as a tangible economic asset. Less clear is the future of other cultural resources, such as the remaining farmsteads and agricultural landscapes along North Street, the dams and mill sites along the Neponset River, and the rural roads in the outlying neighborhoods. For each of these resources, the economic value of preservation is less obvious, and therefore they are much more likely to be overwhelmed by the forces of neglect and suburbanization.

Historic Resources

Walpole historic and cultural resources stretch into the pre-colonial past before settlement by Europeans. The Neponset River attracted Ponkapoag and Neponset Indians to fish in weirs at the falls, plant fields and grind corn, make tools, and trade.

Walpole has no state or national historic districts and only two buildings are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places: the Deacon Willard Lewis House (1826), which serves as the home of the Walpole Historical Society; and the old Town Hall (1881). Listing of these buildings does not provide protection except if they are affected by state or federal projects. The Town has not created any local historic districts or a local landmarks law that could be used to preserve the exterior character of historic buildings. It does, however, have a Demolition Delay By-Law for buildings and other structures at least 100 years old. If the Historical Commission finds that such a structure is preferably preserved, demolition will be delayed six months in order to seek opportunities for adaptive reuse.

The Walpole Historical Society and its members have a very valuable archive and have done excellent work in gathering information on Walpole's history. In 1982, with the assistance of the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, the Historical Commission published an inventory of approximately 200 historic sites, a partial inventory of the Town's historic resources. Areas of historic significance in Walpole include:

- The Town Center and Common Street, in addition to the two listed properties includes the United Meeting House (1830) and other nineteenth century homes and commercial buildings that may be worthy of protection.
- South Walpole has a tavern and toll house from the early nineteenth century and several federal period houses, as well as a charming small common.
- Plimptonville includes a number of large and distinctive houses built in the early nineteenth century by one of the first important industrial families in Walpole, the Plimptons
- East Walpole's character as an early mill village has not been well preserved, but there are important remnants of the neighborhood's past, including the Clock Tower.
- Bird Park, now under management of the Trustees of Reservations, is an important example of landscape design by John Nolen, a significant landscape architect and planner of the early twentieth century.

Scenic Roads and Heritage Landscapes

There are seven designated Scenic Roads in Walpole: North Street, High Street Lincoln Road, Pine Street, Peach Street, Baker Street, and Lewis Avenue. Because there are no signs, many residents are unaware of the designation. Nine other roads have been suggested as Scenic Roads including Fisher Street, Brook Street, Bullard Street, Plimpton Street, Moose Hill Road, South Street, Summer Street, Kittredge Street, and Granite Street. This designation prevents destruction of trees or stone walls along the road without a public hearing.

Although people often think only of buildings as historic sites, there are many kinds of landscapes that we readily acknowledge as having historic and cultural importance, such as town commons cemeteries, and battlefields. The state Department of Conservation and Recreation has begun the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program to

increase awareness of cultural landscapes. Heritage landscapes include landscapes with a clear connection to the past, like the cemeteries or battlefields mentioned earlier, but they also include other landscapes that reflect community character. For example, formal gardens and parks, farms, camp meeting grounds, institutional campuses and similar places may be heritage landscapes that help define a community's "sense of place." In Walpole, heritage landscapes include Bird Park, the Town Forest, the Agricultural School, Adams Farm, and Hilltop Farm.

Cultural Organizations

The arts are supported in Walpole by a number of groups including the following:

- *Walpole Cultural Council* distributes funds from the Massachusetts Council for the Arts and Humanities to local arts organizations.
- *Concerts on the Common*. The Greater Downtown Business Association underwrites free evening concerts in the summer at the bandstand on the Town Common.
- *The Walpole Footlighters*, a regional theater group, has been in operation since 1924. The group has its own theater and presents four productions a year.
- *Walpole Children's Theater* has been in operation since 1969 to teach children about theater.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural Resources

Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that protect the water supply

- **Identify private parcels near wells and Zone II wellhead protection areas for purchase or management outreach.** Vigilance to protect Walpole's water supply will continue to be important. Private parcels of land near town wells or in the Zone II areas should be targeted for purchase and permanent protection or alternatively, the Town should work with the property owners to provide information and assistance in managing their properties to avoid contamination threats to groundwater.
- **Complete the assessment and remediation of recognized brownfield sites and inventory smaller ones that may not be as well known.** Walpole's brownfield sites, particularly those in the water resource protection district and near wetlands, will continue to pose a threat to the Town's environment until they are remediated. The Brownfields Committee and Board of Health have taken a leadership role in this effort and should continue to seek funding for this work. They should coordinate work with economic development staff and the Economic Development Commission to seek solutions that would encourage private remediation and redevelopment of contaminated sites.
- **Work with private property owners, homeowners associations and with town departments to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) around ponds and streams, wetlands, and on roadways to analyze stormwater flows and impacts.** Now that most "point" sources of water pollution, such as factories, have been identified and regulated, the greatest source

of pollution to surface water and wetlands today comes from “nonpoint pollution” resulting from the flow of stormwater over paved areas and landscaped areas that contain chemicals, oils, grease, metals, and other pollutants. Watershed groups and other environmental organizations have produced educational materials that can be used to raise public awareness and encourage private property owners to use BMPs. This kind of effort is also important under the EPA Phase II Stormwater Management Rules that have recently gone into effect. The Department of Public Works or the Sewer and Water Department may be able to secure funding for outreach and/or mailing educational materials to property owners.

- **Inventory dam ownership and current maintenance and continue planning for repair and future management.** The Town has an interest in keeping informed about the condition of the dam system on the Neponset and any changes in management. The Department of Public Works can check in with the dam owners periodically on current maintenance issues and to ask if any future changes are contemplated
- **Preserve forests and isolated wetlands in tributary subwatersheds.** A significant amount of land has been preserved adjacent to Mine Brook, though there are still a few buffering parcels that are not protected.

Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that support wildlife

- **Inventory town-owned lands that are important wildlife habitat areas and corridors and permanently protect them.** There are a number of town-owned open space areas that are not technically permanently protected. This includes the Town Forest and Adams Farm. The Town can permanently protect some or all of these parcels by placing them under the care of the Conservation Commission or by enacting a permanent conservation restriction.
- **Pursue protection and/or Best Management Practices (BMPs) for management of wetlands and large forest blocks.** The remaining large areas of forest and wetlands are the most important wildlife habitat areas and wildlife corridors in Walpole. Protection of large blocks of forest and upland buffers to wetlands does not require that the Town purchase these lands. The Town can approach landowners about putting conservation restrictions on the most important areas and can ensure that the most environmentally sensitive areas are left undeveloped as permanent conservation land if development on large parcels is limited to conservation subdivision models (also known as open space residential subdivisions). Recommendations for conservation subdivision zoning can be found in the Housing Chapter.
- **Work with the state and county governments to place conservation restrictions on portions of MCI property and the Agricultural School lands that serve as important wildlife habitat and corridors.** Through the Conservation Commission the Town should begin discussions with the state and county on inventorying and protecting the parts of their lands that are important to supporting wildlife in Walpole.

- **Pursue education and outreach to private property owners to promote sustainable management of natural areas.** State agencies and nonprofits have created educational materials to encourage property owners to make their landscape management practices more sustainable, for example the publication, *More Than Just a Yard: Ecological Landscaping Tools for Massachusetts Homeowners*, issued by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and available on the agency's web site. The Town can provide links to these resources on its web site, make pamphlets and other materials available to Walpole property owners, and invite nonprofits to offer workshops.
- **Incorporate wildlife buffers into stormwater management plans.** Natural upland buffers to streams, ponds and wetlands are effective in filtering stormwater runoff. Wildlife values should also be considered and supported when buffers are set aside for stormwater management purposes.
- **Incorporate natural resource values into an updated town forest plan.** The Town Forest is a very important resource for the town because it protects the School Meadow Brook aquifer, it serves as a very important wildlife corridor, and it is one of the Town's most important locations for nature-based recreation. Updated Town Forest management plans should continue to make sure that the proposed management elements support the natural resource value of the Forest.

Cultural Resources

Identify and protect cultural resources

- **Pursue historic rehabilitation of Old Town Hall through public or private resources.** Old Town Hall is one of the two State and National Register listed historic buildings in Walpole and the only one owned by the Town. It is a symbol of the Town and its heritage and anchors an important location in downtown Walpole. As noted earlier, being on the register does not in itself protect the building from changes to the exterior, interior, or even demolition. The building's current use as Police Department headquarters is unsatisfactory – both for the department and for the historic character of the building. Several years ago, the Town received a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission for approximately \$300,000 of restoration work, but the cost of full restoration is estimated at \$2 million. The interior of the building has been modified many times and interior restoration may not be a viable option, though it should be evaluated.

Funding options for historic rehabilitation include seeking additional state funding; seeking philanthropic contributions; creating a campaign to raise money from residents and others connected to Walpole through events, selling named bricks, and similar methods; and turning the building over to a private developer for residential or office use. The Town could offer a 99-year lease or sell the building subject to a requirement for historic restoration and maintenance of the exterior.

- **Pursue a detailed inventory and mapping of historic sites, coordinating the work of the Historic Commission and the Historical Society and working with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).** A number of sites in Walpole are probably eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The first step in gaining this recognition is to complete the historic

inventory using forms and methods approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. This work can be done by volunteers, but MHC also offers competitive grants to communities so they can hire historic preservation consultants to complete the work expeditiously.

- **Incorporate cultural resource data into the town's GIS system and involve local historians in keeping the data updated.** Mapping cultural resources on the town GIS system and keeping this information up to date will help in enforcement of the Demolition Delay Bylaw and help both project proponents and the Town's land use regulatory boards be more aware of the historic and cultural values and context of potential redevelopment projects.
- **Explore a historic landmarks bylaw or encourage preservation easements with nonprofit organizations to create official protection of historic buildings and structures.** Walpole does not have a Local Historic District or any other means of protecting the exterior integrity of historic buildings that have exceptional historic value to the community. A Historic Landmarks Bylaw offers the opportunity to identify individual buildings and sites for this protection. The Town of Barnstable has a model that might be appropriate for Walpole. The Bylaw requires permission of the property owner before designation as a historic landmark and the Historic Commission must approve specified types of exterior changes that would permanently alter its historic character. (Typically this kind of regulation does not include temporary changes such as paint colors.) Although some property owners are reluctant to be subject to this kind of regulation, historic landmark status usually makes the property more valuable and, for business properties, it can be a distinguishing characteristic for a business.

Historic preservation easements are voluntary agreements between property owners and a historic preservation organization recognized by the IRS. The easement restricts specified kinds of changes to the property and the donor conveys certain rights over the property to the easement holding organization which then has the legal authority to enforce the terms of the easement. The easement can cover changes to the exterior or interior of a building, the façade, additional building, etc., and is tailored to each situation. In return for the donating the easement, the donor gets a tax deduction.

- **Explore official recognition for historic landscapes like Bird Park, possibly under Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Program.** The state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative has published a guide, *Reading the Land*, to identification, documentation, evaluation and protection of historic landscapes. Bird Park is already protected and well-managed by the Trustees of Reservations, but other landscapes in Walpole such as the South Walpole Common may benefit from more attention to their historic character. In other communities, volunteers have been very active in this work, similar to the work of the Friends of Bird Park.

Enhance public awareness of local history and historic sites

- **Encourage the Historic Commission and the Historical Society to work with the schools to incorporate local historic research into class curricula.** Making students aware of local history is an excellent way not only to help them make everyday connections to larger historical changes but it also increases

overall public awareness of historic resources in Town because parents become involved in the school-based local history projects.

- **Encourage the Historical Society to publish updated maps and guidebooks and to consider a fee-based program to provide historic plaques and house histories to homeowners and other property owners.** Many communities with a strong sense of their historic legacy and character have programs that encourage private property owners to learn about the history of their homes or their business buildings and to put a historic plaque on their houses with the date and the name of the original owner or builder. For a fee, the historical society will research the history of the buildings and then give the owner a copy of the history and the plaque. As the number of these plaques proliferates, townspeople become much more aware of the many historic homes in town. It is also worth remembering that “historic” designation is not limited to buildings from the nineteenth century and earlier. Some buildings from the 1950s are now beginning to be considered historically valuable.

C. MAPS

Map 3: Natural Resources Inventory

This map shows the environmental foundation of Walpole: the network of streams and wetlands, habitat areas and groundwater resources.

Map 4: Natural Priorities

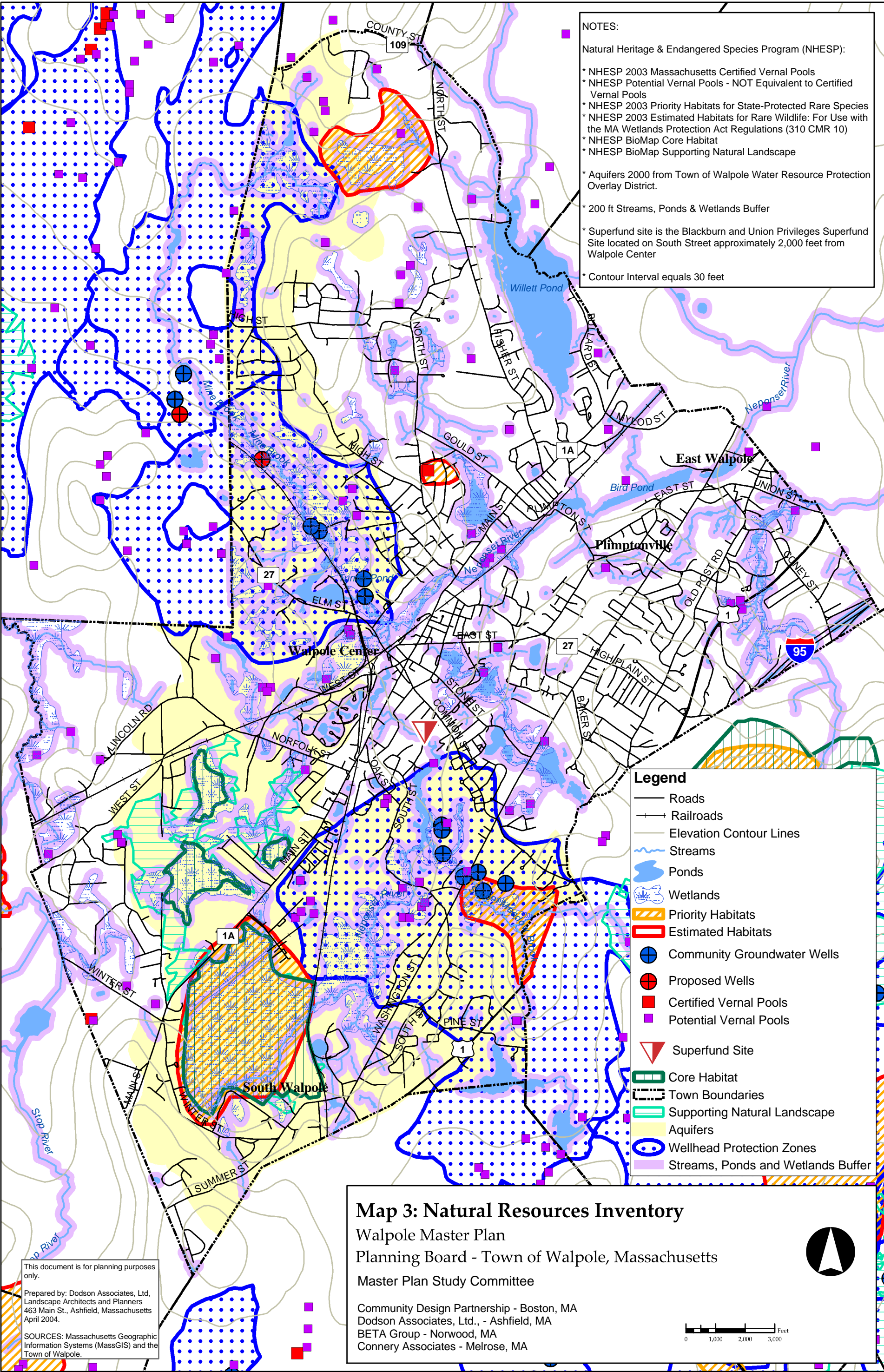
Based on the previous map, this map identifies the natural resources areas that have primary and secondary importance for protection and environmental sensitivity. The primary resource areas are those that need greatest protection because of their combined value for water resources protection and for their habitat value. The secondary resource areas are also focused on wetland and water resource areas. The importance of the Neponset River and its major tributaries is evident from this map.

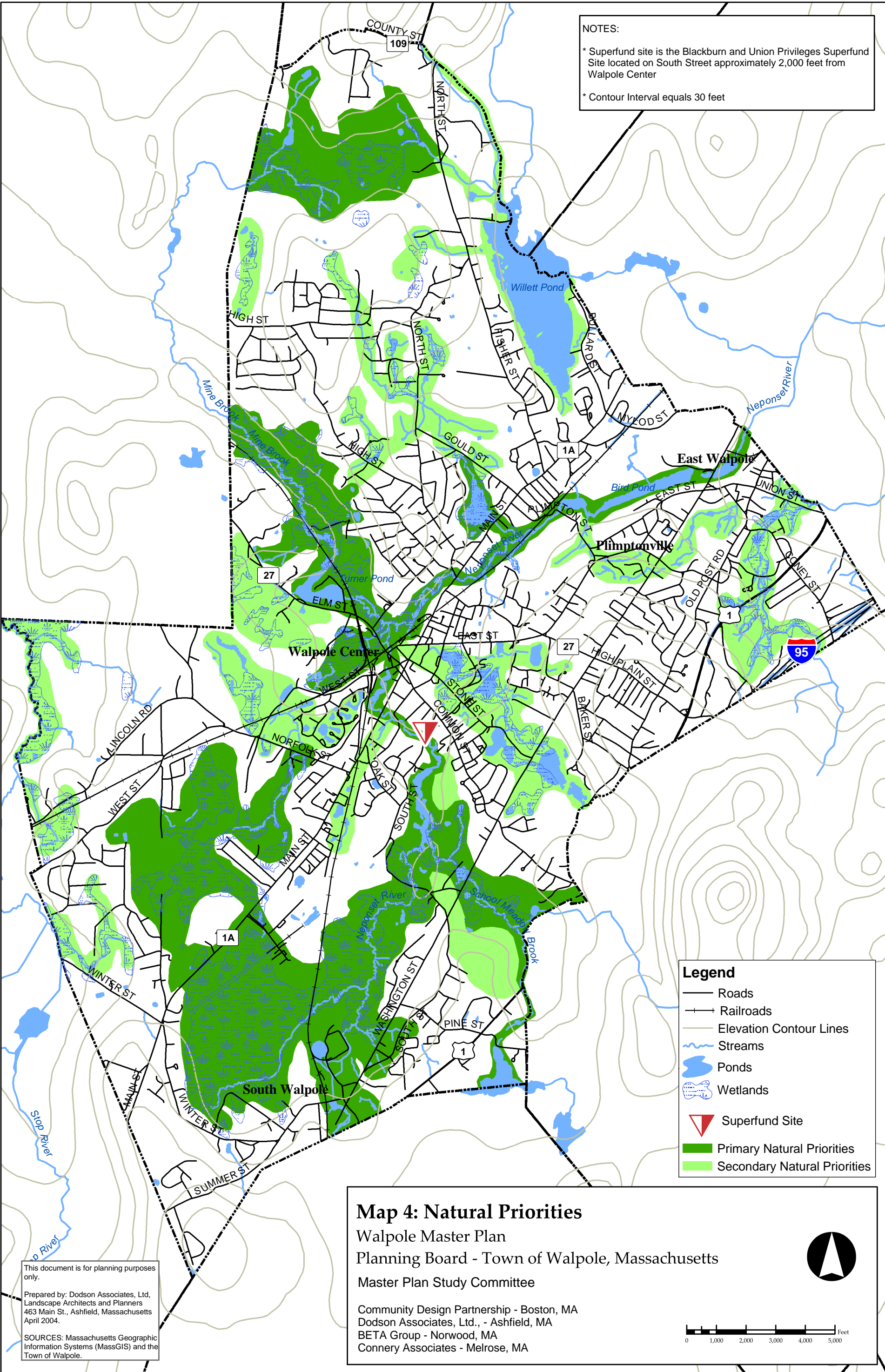
Map 5: Cultural Resources Inventory

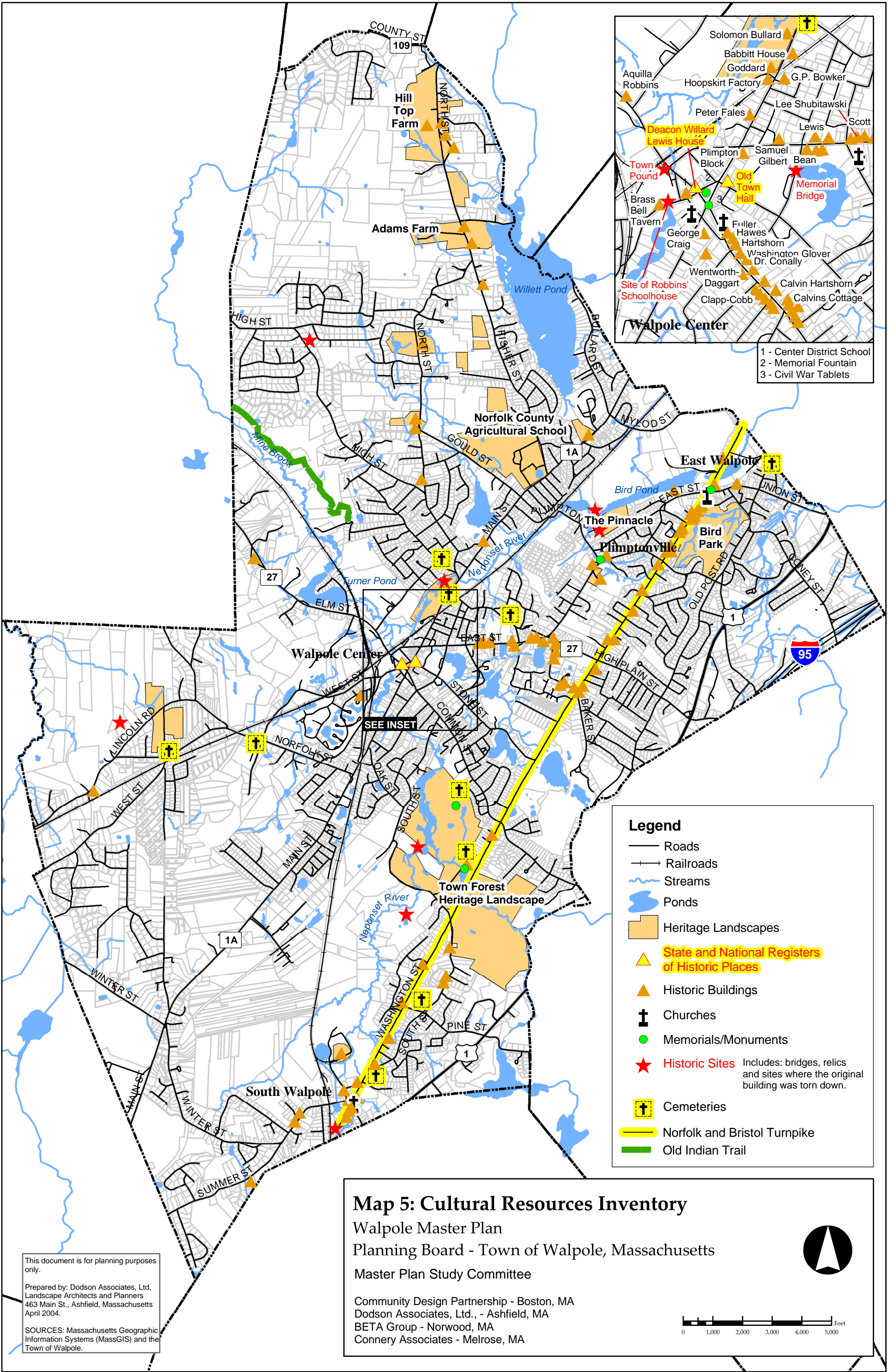
This map is based on published histories of Walpole, the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, State and National Register of Historic Places information, and local informants. In addition to the historic buildings and sites shown on the map, landscapes have been identified as “Heritage Landscapes” that can be considered culturally and historically important because they illustrate a landscape character that is no longer prevalent in Walpole, or, as in the case of Bird Park, are important examples of landscape design by significant landscape architects.

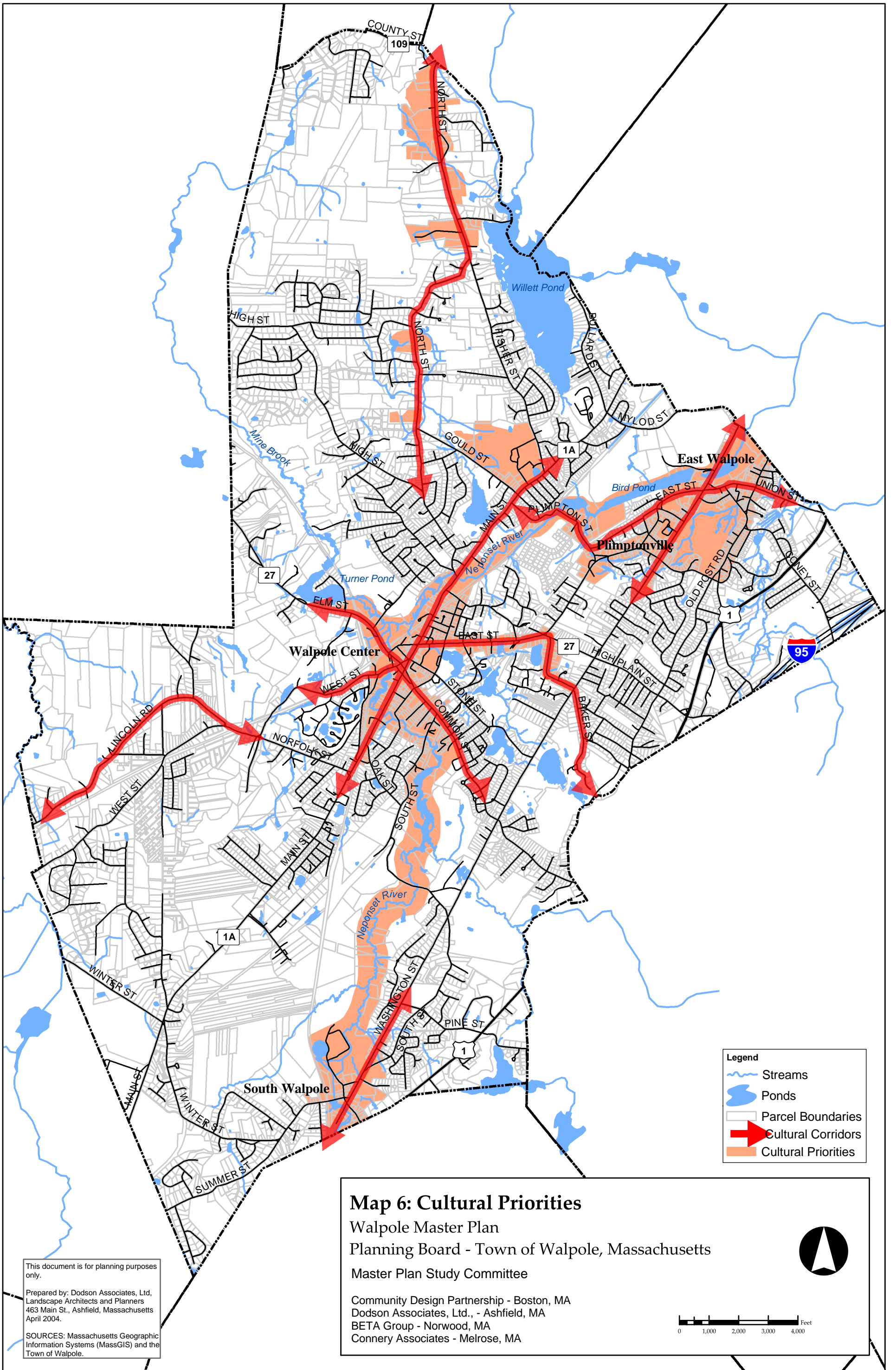
Map 6: Cultural Priorities

This map shows road and river corridors, as well as former village centers, where cultural and historic resources are concentrated. The importance of these areas for the historic and cultural identity of Walpole should be taken into account when redevelopment and new development activities are proposed.









| D. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that protect Walpole's water supply and water resources | Protect drinking water quality and quantity | Identify private parcels near wells and zone II for purchase or management outreach. | H | S | Water Department |
| | | Complete the assessment and remediation of recognized brownfield sites and inventory smaller additional ones that may not yet be well known. | H | S | Board of Health; Brownfields Committee |
| | | Identify those portions of brownfield sites most important for buffers and best management practices. | M | M | Conservation Commission |
| | Protect surface water quality | Work with town and state highway departments on implementing BMPs for roadways. | H | S | Public Works-Highway Department |
| | | Work with private landowners to implement BMPs around ponds and streams. | M | S | Pond Management Committee |
| | | Work with large landowners and businesses to initiate BMPs and study stormwater flows and impacts. | M | M | Conservation Commission; Watershed Association |
| | | Pursue protection and/or BMP management of wetlands and large forest blocks. | M | L | Conservation Commission; non-profits |
| | | Pursue natural resource priorities that coincide with cultural resources and recreational opportunities. | M | L | Conservation Commission; non-profits |
| | | Inventory dam ownership and current maintenance and promote continued planning for repair and future management. | M | M | Public Works |
| | | Pursue preservation of forests and isolated wetlands in tributary subwatersheds. | M | L | Conservation Commission |
| Preserve and enhance the natural resources and ecological systems that support wildlife | Protect the environments that support Walpole's wildlife and native plant communities. | Inventory town-owned lands that are important wildlife habitat areas and corridors and pursue permanent protection | H | S | Conservation Commission; Open Space Committee |
| | | Work with state and county governments to place conservation restrictions on portions of MCI property and the Agricultural School lands that serve as important | M | M | Conservation Commission; Open Space Committee |

| D. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|--|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | | wildlife habitat and corridors. | | | |
| | | Pursue education and outreach to private landowners to promote sustainable management of natural areas. | M | S | Conservation Commission; Open Space Committee |
| | | Incorporate natural resource values into updated town forest plan. | M | S | Town Forest Committee |
| | | Incorporate wildlife buffers into stormwater management plans. | M | M | Public Works |
| Identify and protect cultural resources | Preserve the historic significance of Old Town Hall | Pursue historic rehabilitation of Old Town Hall with public or private resources | H | M | Board of Selectmen (BoS); Historical Commission; Historical Society |
| | Inventory and protect significant cultural and historic sites and landscapes | Pursue a complete inventory and mapping of historic sites, coordinating with the Massachusetts Historic Commission. | H | M | Historical Commission; Historical Society |
| | | Incorporate cultural resource data into town GIS system. Involve local historians in ongoing GIS inventory process. | H | M | Engineering Dept.; Historical Commission; Historical Society |
| | | Explore a historic landmarks bylaw or encourage preservation easements with nonprofit organizations to create official protection of historic buildings and structures. | M | L | Historical Commission |
| | | Explore official recognition for historic landscapes like Bird Park, possibly under the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Program. | M | L | Historical Commission |
| | Enhance public awareness of local history and historic sites. | Work with schools to incorporate local historic research into class curricula. | M | L | Historical Commission; Historical Society |
| | | Publish updated maps and guidebooks to historic sites | M | L | Historical Society |
| | | Consider a fee-based program of historic plaques and house histories for homeowners and other property owners | M | M | Historical Society |
| | | Create annual art gallery display areas in the library and other public venues. | L | M | Arts Council; Library |

V. Open Space and Recreation Resources

.....



Goals:

- Maintain town eligibility for state open space and recreation funding
- Create a “Green Network” of connected open space for environmental protection and recreational use
- Pursue preservation of open space without town funding through conservation restrictions
- Create a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle plan including trails and paths in open space
- Work with state and county governments to assure continued open space on their lands
- Create new athletic fields
- Enhance public access to ponds and the Neponset River

A. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- Fifteen percent of Walpole (nearly 2,000 acres) is permanently protected open space.
- The first designated public open spaces in Walpole were Bird Park and the Town Forest. Together with Adams Farm, they are the three “jewels” of Walpole’s open space and park system.
- Many Town Forest and Adams Farm parcels are not permanently protected from development.
- The Mine Brook corridor and the Cedar Swamp have a patchwork of protected and unprotected lands.
- Growth in organized youth sports has pushed demand for athletic fields.
- Increased all-season use of existing ball fields has raised the demand for year-round maintenance, improvements for drainage surfacing, and need for chemical treatment and irrigation to maintain healthy turf coverage.
- Public access to Town water bodies is limited.

Key Challenges

- Gradual, unplanned development of unprotected private parcels adjacent to protected lands or to wetlands, streams, and ponds has the potential to fragment the remaining expanses of open space in Walpole.
- Town residents desire more opportunities for nature based recreation and trails.
- New athletic fields are needed to meet demand and prevent overuse of existing fields.
- The Town should be alert to opportunities to acquire public access points on the Neponset for boating and the ponds for swimming.

Protection of open space began with the work of the Bird Family nearly a century ago, which resulted in Bird Park and the protection of the Town Forest. The Conservation Commission has been active over the last decades in ensuring public ownership of large areas of Cedar Swamp, and areas adjacent to Mine Brook. Many of

these protected resource areas are still connected with a larger matrix of unprotected lands, linked by a network of streams and wetland areas, blocks of forest, and utility corridors.

Open Space Resources

The total amount of permanently protected open space in Walpole is 1,995 acres. The Walpole Conservation Commission manages approximately 1,160 of these acres, including some Town Forest and Adams Farm parcels. Much of the rest of the Conservation Commission land is in the Cedar Swamp and Mine Brook areas. The New England Forestry Foundation owns or controls approximately 166 acres in the northern part of town. This includes areas known as Winslow Warren Forest, which includes access to Willet Pond; Patten Forest; and the Jean Swaim Conservation Easement. Some of these lands are generally considered to be part of the Adams Farm open space area. The Trustees of Reservations own the 89 acre Bird Park. The remainder of the permanently protected land includes the Pinnacle and conservation restrictions not held by the Conservation Commission.

Temporary Open Space Lands

Temporary open space includes all public lands that are in open space use, but which could be privately developed or sold for development or developed by the current owner for public facilities or services. These include town-owned land that has not been placed in permanent conservation, the Norfolk County Agricultural School lands, Cedar Junction prison lands, private lands in tax abatement programs for forestry, agriculture and recreation, and other large private open space properties. The tax abatement programs, known as Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B, allow property owners to pay lower property taxes as long as they keep the land in the designated open space use. If the land is taken out of the program and put up for sale, the Town has the first right of refusal. If the lands are sold for development, the Town is reimbursed for the abated taxes. Although the reimbursement provision was intended to be a disincentive to selling the land for development, in practice it simply becomes part of the price.

The “Jewels” of Walpole Open Space

Walpole has three very significant open space areas, each in a different part of town.

- **The Town Forest** is located behind the High School and off South Street, stretching from Central to South Walpole. It was established in 1916 with a grant of 150 acres of land from George Plimpton. Guided by the environmental vision of Charles Bird, it became the third tree farm in the state recognized by the Massachusetts Forestry Association and the first town forest to be managed for timber revenue. Now including 315 acres, it is managed by a Town Forest Committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, with the focus on passive recreation, watershed protection and maintenance of a healthy forest environment. There are miles of walking trails, including a section of the Bay Circuit Trail.
- **Adams Farm** was purchased by the Town in 1997. The 293-acre former farm composed of fields and woods has a number of walking trails. The Friends of Adams Farm, a volunteer group, has taken on the task of maintaining the agricultural character of the area.

- The Trustees of Reservations recently acquired **Francis William Bird Park** in East Walpole, and is in the process of developing a management plan. The 89-acre park was designed in the early twentieth century by the noted landscape architect, John Nolen, and opened in 1926 as a place of respite for East Walpole workers in the Bird Company factories. With five miles of paths, two ponds and numerous foot bridges, and a Music Court, the park exemplifies the Olmsted-style urban park bringing an idealized country into the city. In 1989 a master plan to guide improvements and management of the park was prepared by a team of graduate students from the Conway School of Landscape Design. Some of the recommendations have been implemented and the Trustees in 2004 began the process of creating a new management plan in collaboration with neighborhood and town representatives.

Active Recreation Open Space

Walpole is a very sports-oriented Town and the Town has a wide variety of athletic fields and other active recreation areas, many of them located on school grounds.

- Memorial Park, at Stone & School Streets, with 32.5 acres, including Memorial Pond, the Blackburn Building and parking lot, and recreation facilities including a children's Mini-Park (swings, etc.), a 60' baseball diamond with lights, one skating pond and shelter with lights, one jogging and walking trail, and a picnic area with grill.
- Stone Field, located behind Town Hall, off School and Stone Street, includes a 60' baseball field and a multi-purpose field.
- Mylod Street soccer fields
- West Street Fields include two 60' Baseball fields with a concession stand off West Street in West Walpole.
- Old Fisher Field, located off Main Street, includes a small soccer field and a 60' baseball field.
- Boyden School Grounds: one 60' ball field, one basketball court, one Mini-Park
- Fisher School Grounds: one basketball court, one paved area marked for games, a Mini-Park, and a modular playground.
- Plimpton School Grounds: one Mini-Park
- Bird Middle School Grounds: one 60' and two 90' ball diamonds, one soccer field, one football field, and a basketball court.
- Johnson Middle School Grounds: one 60' and one 90' ball diamond, 4 tennis courts, one football field, one soccer field, a basketball hoop in the driveway and one Mini-Park.
- High School Grounds: one 90' and two 60' ball diamonds, one field hockey field, one football field, one tennis backboard, one 440 yard track surfaced with tracklite and facilities for field events (1/4 pin strikes). Also lighted for night play are: 6 tennis courts, one tennis backboard, a multi-purpose play area with one basketball court, 2 basketball backboards, 2 volleyball courts, and 3 badminton courts. The area can also be used for street hockey.

Privately-owned Recreation Facilities

Walpole has a number of privately-owned recreational lands, including athletic fields, golf clubs and gun clubs:

- Ellis Athletic Field -- a 6-acre soccer field owned by the Trustees of Reservations, adjacent to Bird Park. The management planning underway for the park may change the use of this land.
- Rodman & Restaino Fields on West Street in West Walpole - Two 60' ball diamonds
- Walpole Country Club – 18 hole golf course, approximately 29 acres
- Royal Crest Country Club – 9 hole golf course (and condominium community).
- Walpole Sportsman's Association, approximately 116 acres off Lincoln Road
- Westwood Gun Club, approximately 37 acres off County Road.

Potential Recreation Facilities

A report submitted to the Board of Selectmen in August 2000 outlined the need for additional active recreation fields and reviewed various parcels of land to be considered. The report was prepared in part because of a controversy over whether some of the newly-acquired lands at Adams Farm could be used for new sports facilities. The front fields at Adams farm, according to the report, were viewed by the Field Subcommittee of the Recreation Committee as the most cost-effective location for new ball fields, while the Adams Farm Land Use Study Committee clearly felt that the use would be inappropriate.

The field subcommittee inventoried the existing fields, and determined a need for three additional all-purpose fields for soccer, field hockey and lacrosse, plus two 60' and one 90' diamonds for baseball and softball. They calculated the necessary total area at approximately seven acres, which could easily fit within the approximately 25 acres of open land at the front of Adams Farm. The report evaluated 19 additional sites, five of which are within some of the wooded backland at Adams Farm. A major consideration for siting fields is whether presence of one of the town's aquifers would prevent application of the chemical treatments required to maintain the fields. The top four areas recommended by the Recreation Committee members and staff were, in order:

1. *Adams Farm location.* Located just beyond the four front fields at Adams Farm, a 8-acre site would require widening and extending the existing access road or require a long walk to the fields and would provide space for three full fields, plus parking.
2. *Walpole High School location.* In conjunction with gravel excavation and field construction at the High School, excavation of a hill south of the current fields could create a site for two additional ball fields, while providing at least 100,000 cubic yards of fill that might be suitable for required drainage improvements at the Lincoln Road landfill. There would be no aquifer impacts, but potential impacts on the Blake Cemetery and the Town Forest
3. *Lincoln Road Landfill.* This fifteen acre site containing a former landfill which could yield 12 acres of buildable land in conjunction with a capping project. At the time of the report, funds for capping and field construction did not appear to be available.

4. *Johnson Middle School, off Robbins Road.* A site considered for a new elementary school, heavily wooded, but containing a gravel bank with more than 400,000 cubic yards of material and no aquifer issues that would affect chemical treatment of the fields, it could potentially allow the existing middle school ball fields, which are above the aquifer, to be eliminated.

At present, the Lincoln Road Landfill site seems most suitable for new athletic fields and the capping project is underway. Recreational uses of capped landfills have become well established in a number of Massachusetts cities. In many cases, capped landfills cannot support much new building but can easily support recreational activities. This is a beneficial way to reuse land that has already been disturbed and avoid constructing athletic fields and the associated parking on wooded or formerly agricultural land. The capping of the landfill is now nearing completion. An estimated additional \$500,000 would be required for ball field construction.

Volunteer Open Space Stewardship Groups

Walpole's three most important open space areas, Adams Farm, Bird Park, and the Town Forest have "Friends" groups made up of volunteers. The groups play an important role in the management of open space areas. Activities of the groups include the following:

- *Friends of Bird Park.* The Friends have raised funds and implemented a number of projects including plantings, renovation of recreational and playground areas, preservation of the park's wrought iron fencing and organizing concerts at the Music Court.
- *Friends of Adams Farm.* The Friends of Adams Farm recently made a commitment to the Board of Selectmen to assume the maintenance costs of Adams Farm. Their objective is to maintain the agricultural character of the land. In addition to promoting nature programs like star-gazing parties and bird-watching, the Friends are working on a project to demolish the existing Hog Barn on the land and replace it with a new barn and pavilion to be used for picnicking and other events.
- *Friends of Town Forest.* The Friends of Town Forest assist in the management of the Forest. Recent activities include creating a canoe launch on the Neponset and installing a gate and a bench.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Maintain eligibility for state open space and recreation funding

- **Update the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan every five years.** Walpole's current Open Space and Recreation Plan was prepared in 1996. The state Division of Conservation Services requires that the plans be updated every five years and resubmitted for approval before the Town can be eligible for open space or recreation funding. Some of the basic elements of the plan will not have changed (for example, descriptions of geology) and do not need to be revised, but the sections on community needs and a new five year plan do need to be updated. The maps and relevant elements in this Master Plan can be incorporated into an updated open space plan, though the updated sections need to be more detailed than the elements in this plan. In many towns, dedicated volunteer committees have completed open space plans and updates, while in other communities the

Conservation Agent has taken on a large role, or the town has engaged a consultant to write the update. The Town should reconvene an Open Space and Recreation Committee to begin the process of preparing the update, so Walpole will be eligible to compete for state funds – for example, to help create new athletic fields on the Lincoln Road Landfill site.

Create a “Green Network” of open space for environmental protection and recreational use.

- **Develop criteria for evaluation of land for protection purposes, and coordinate decision making among town boards and commissions that have different missions.** Map 9: Green Network shows how the natural, cultural and recreational resource priorities within Walpole are related to one another and overlap. The overlapping area should be the first priority for protection and for creating an interconnected network of open spaces that protect critical environmental resources, provide habitat corridors for the support of wildlife, and offer opportunities for nature-based recreation. In Walpole these areas are also among the most important from a historical point of view because the Green Network is focused on the Neponset River, which has been a center of human activity since before European settlement.

The Green Network concept can help set priorities, but more specific criteria will help the Town and its nonprofit partners in focusing scarce resources for further open space protection. A number of communities, such as Ipswich and Hopkinton, have developed a set of explicit criteria by which they evaluate open space – in a general way before lands come on the market, and on a more detailed level if the Town is actually considering purchase. A revived Open Space Committee could work on such as system during or after the update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

One of the most important reasons for creating a clear set of criteria is to help coordinate decision making among different boards and commissions. For example, if the Planning Board is reviewing an open space subdivision, it would help the Board evaluate the protected open space component of the subdivision if it can require the project proponent to demonstrate to what extent the open space meets the Town’s priority open space preservation criteria and is related to the Town’s Green Network.

Areas of special interest that should be included are:

- Open lands and gravel pits along Elm Street – plan for the eventual disposition of the gravel pits and protection of open lands adjacent to existing conservation land
- West Walpole lands – evaluate the ecological value of town-owned lands and plan to protect a significant block of adjacent forested land
- Cedar Swamp – continue to assure the protection and environmental health of the swamp
- Town Forest – incorporate Green Network recommendations and identify more areas for permanent conservation
- Neponset River corridor – promote organization of a Friends group to pursue and oversee creation of a greenway plan

Pursue preservation of open space without town funding through conservation restrictions

- **Organize outreach to large property owners on the benefits of donating conservation restrictions.** The Town or nonprofit organizations are not likely to purchase all the significant remaining open space in Walpole. The town should seek conservation restrictions, which can preserve all or part of a parcel from development, from property owners.

Conservation restrictions limit the use of land in order to protect conservation values such as the natural, scenic or open condition of the land. A property owner can donate a conservation restriction to be placed on an entire parcel or on a portion of a parcel. The conservation restriction transfers management of the land to an approved conservation organization, such as a nonprofit or a state agency, that monitors compliance with the restriction. In some cases certain uses such as farming or timber harvesting continue to be allowed under the restriction, or the owner retains the right to live on the land during the rest of his or her life.

In addition to contributing to the preservation of the natural environment in the community, landowners can reduce their property tax bills after donating conservation restrictions. Because the conservation restriction reduces the development capacity of the land, the land value and taxes will be reduced. Property owners may also reserve the right to some uses of the land including farming or timber harvesting or to use existing structures on the land. Following the example of other towns, the Open Space Committee could invite property owners to a workshop on conservation restrictions and ask the Trustees of Reservations to provide speakers.

- **Establish conservation subdivision zoning by right for sites of four acres or more.** One way to promote open space conservation is to mandate that if development takes place, it must conform to certain types of limited development models that include preservation of open space. The traditional “cluster” model has not always been successful because the bylaws were not written to ensure the desired results. Newer forms of cluster, known as conservation subdivisions, are much more effective. Conservation subdivision development is a form of cluster development with a four-part design process that ensures the preservation as open space of the most environmentally sensitive and scenic lands in a development project. It is a way to avoid unnecessary fragmentation of open space and to preserve a more green and scenic appearance from the road. More information is available in the chapter on housing.

Approach Norfolk County and the state to make agreements or conservation restrictions to ensure the Town’s ability to assure public use and enjoyment of these lands in the future should county and state uses change.

The Norfolk County Agricultural School lands and the open space around Cedar Junction prison are among the remaining areas that still convey the flavor of rural Walpole. The Town Open Space Committee should review the potential town interest in these lands during the update of the open space plan and then approach the county and state about creating agreements.

Pursue a town-wide pedestrian and bicycling master plan

- **Revive the Trails Committee to develop a trails plan.** The Trails Committee should use the Green Network concept as a guide and work with existing groups such as the Friends groups, the Neponset River Watershed Association, and the Bay Circuit Alliance to promote and publicize existing trails, to plan new trail segments, and to organize volunteer groups, such as neighborhood or Eagle Scout groups, to implement segments of a town-wide trail system. The program should include:
 - Publicity, mapping, and signage for the Bay Circuit Trail and other town trails
 - Work with Eagle Scouts, neighborhood groups, or other volunteers to plan, build and maintain neighborhood trail links
 - Pursuit of trail connections and joint projects with neighboring towns
 - Work with utilities to formalize public access to utility corridors
 - Work with seniors and school children to plan walkable recreation and safe routes to school program

Create new athletic fields at the capped Lincoln Road landfill.

When the landfill is capped, this site will have 12 acres that can be used for athletic fields and associated activities. Recreational uses are an excellent way to put this land to municipal use once again. The estimated cost is \$500,000. Walpole can apply for state funds once it has started to update its Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Town will receive additional points on its application if it also receives EO 418 Housing Certification. (See the Housing chapter for more details).

Create a new Town Green downtown and a master plan for all downtown open spaces as part of an overall revitalization plan.

Consider making Stone Field into a new Town Green as part of a downtown revitalization plan and relocating the athletic field to Lincoln Road or another of the sites identified in the field committee report, or upgrading the landscape environment of the Field so that it fits in better with a downtown environment. A new Town Green can become a community gathering place with space for concerts, festivals, and passive recreation as part of a broader plan to revitalize downtown with mixed use development. (See the Economic Development chapter for more details.)

Plan to enhance public access to ponds and the Neponset River

- **Improve recreational access to the Neponset River.** No longer a highly-polluted industrial river, the Neponset in Walpole could be a beautiful canoe trail through the town. The canoe launch established by the Friends of the Town Forest is a good step in that direction. Further work is needed to develop boating opportunities on the Neponset River, including parking and boat launches, portages around dams, clearing of

brush and deadfalls, signage and mapping. The Neponset River Watershed Association might be willing to assist in organizing a volunteer group or finding an existing group willing to take on this role.

- **Pursue greater public access to ponds.** Despite the number of ponds in Walpole, there is limited public access to ponds. In the past the Town has refused to acquire a public access point on Willett Pond. Although there is no immediate likelihood of access points becoming available, public access to water is very desirable. The Open Space Committee, in updating the Open Space Plan and developing criteria for protection and acquisition, should include potential pond access points as it develops a ranking system.

Consider enacting the Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act would provide a dedicated stream of funding for open space protection, as well as affordable housing and historic preservation. The CPA process also promotes the possibility of projects that can successfully combine the three goals. Current fiscal conditions may make it difficult for the Town to consider adding new tax responsibilities, even if they are modest. However, the Town should study the benefits that the CPA has brought to communities that have adopted it and consider a plan to vote on it in a few years.

C. MAPS

Map 7: Recreational Resources Inventory

This map identifies major recreation destination points for passive and active recreation, trail systems, and the regional Bay Circuit trail

Map 8: Recreational Priorities

This map shows proposed pedestrian and bicycle routes and recreational priorities.

Map 9: Green Network Composite

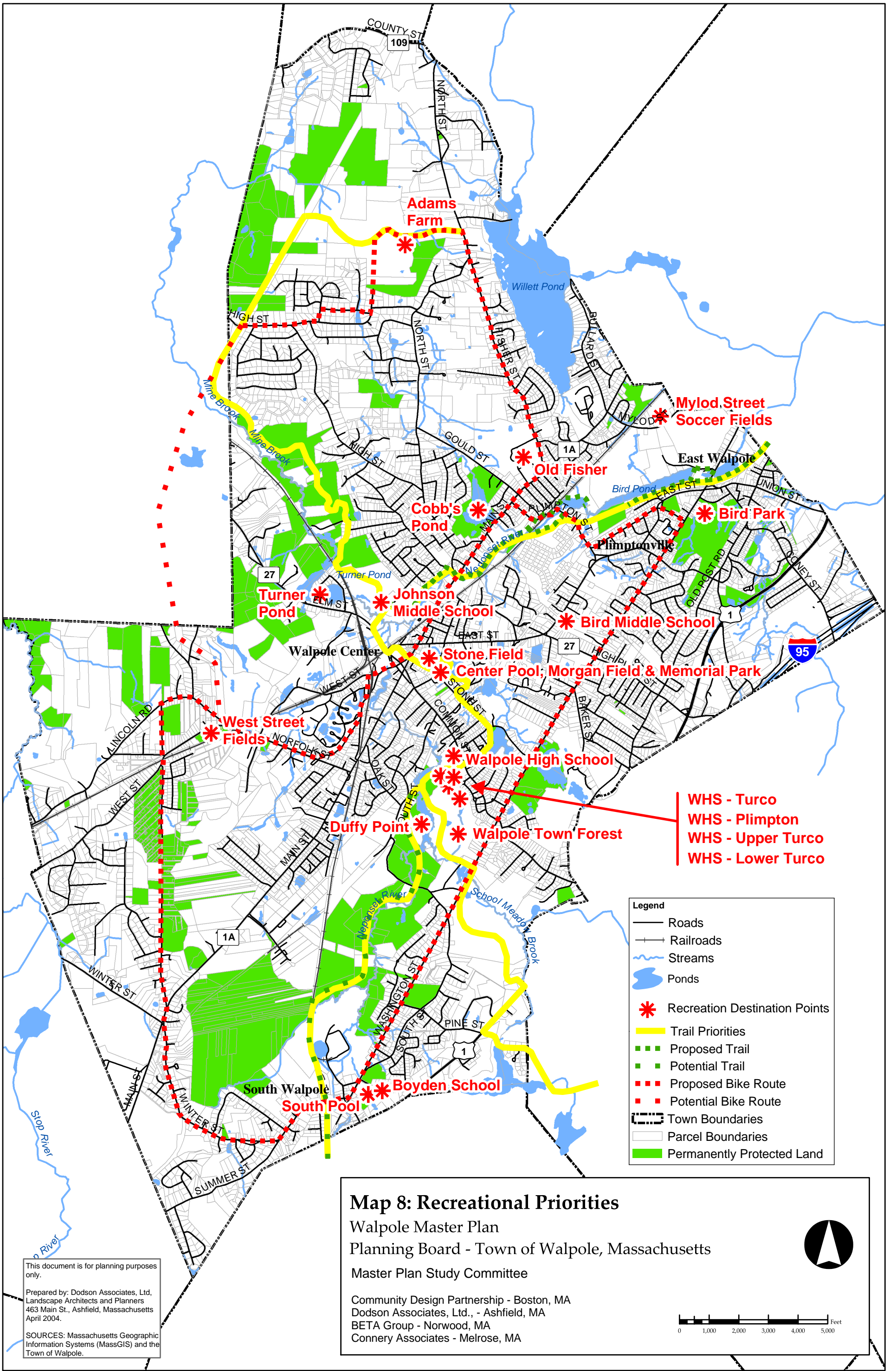
The Green Network map is a composite plan that overlays the priority elements of the Natural Priorities, Cultural Priorities, and Recreational Priorities Maps to see where the areas of greatest emphasis are. The Green Network concept that is created by overlaying the priority areas in these three systems should serve as guide for decision making.

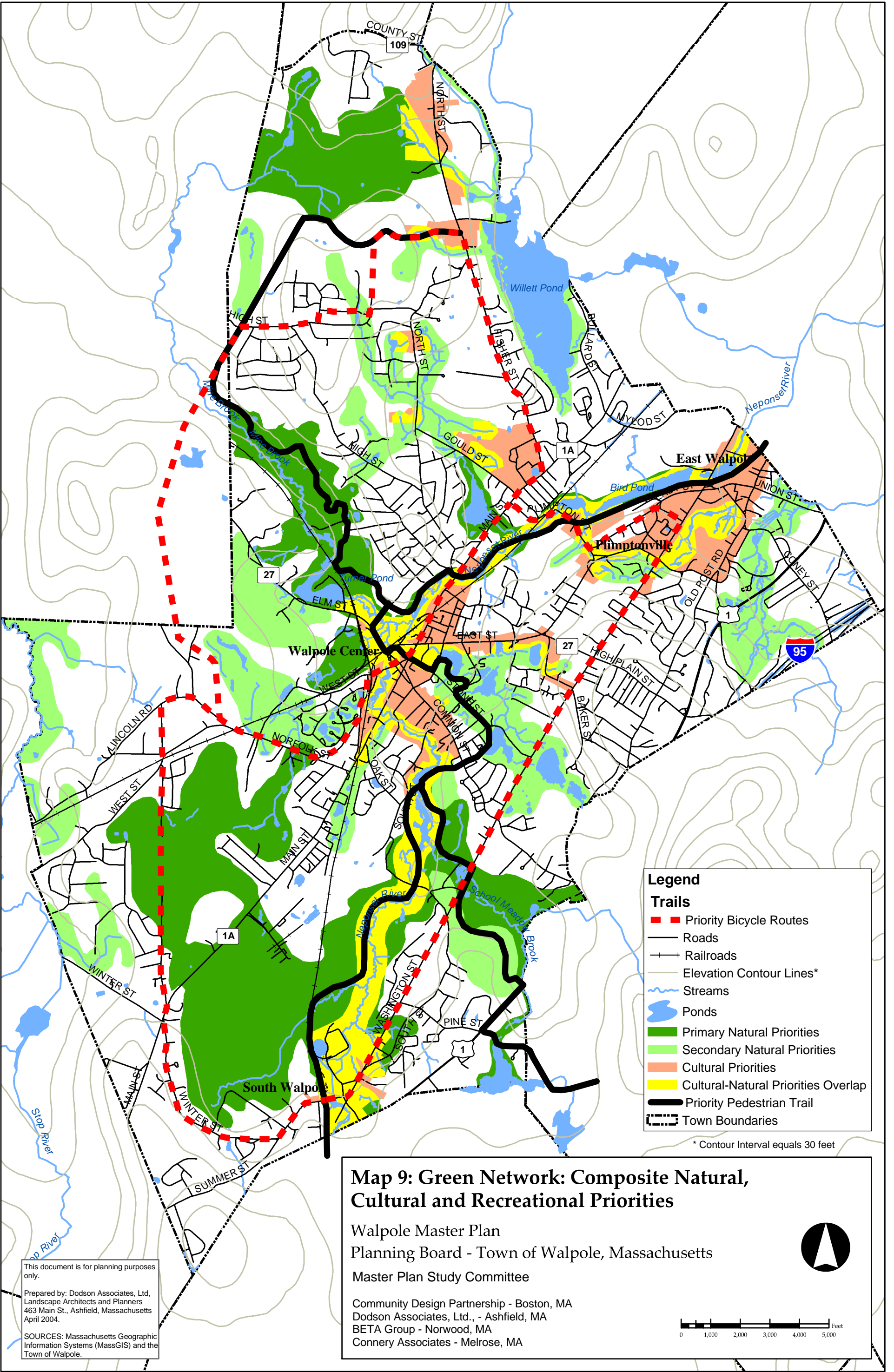
Map 10: Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Facilities Plan

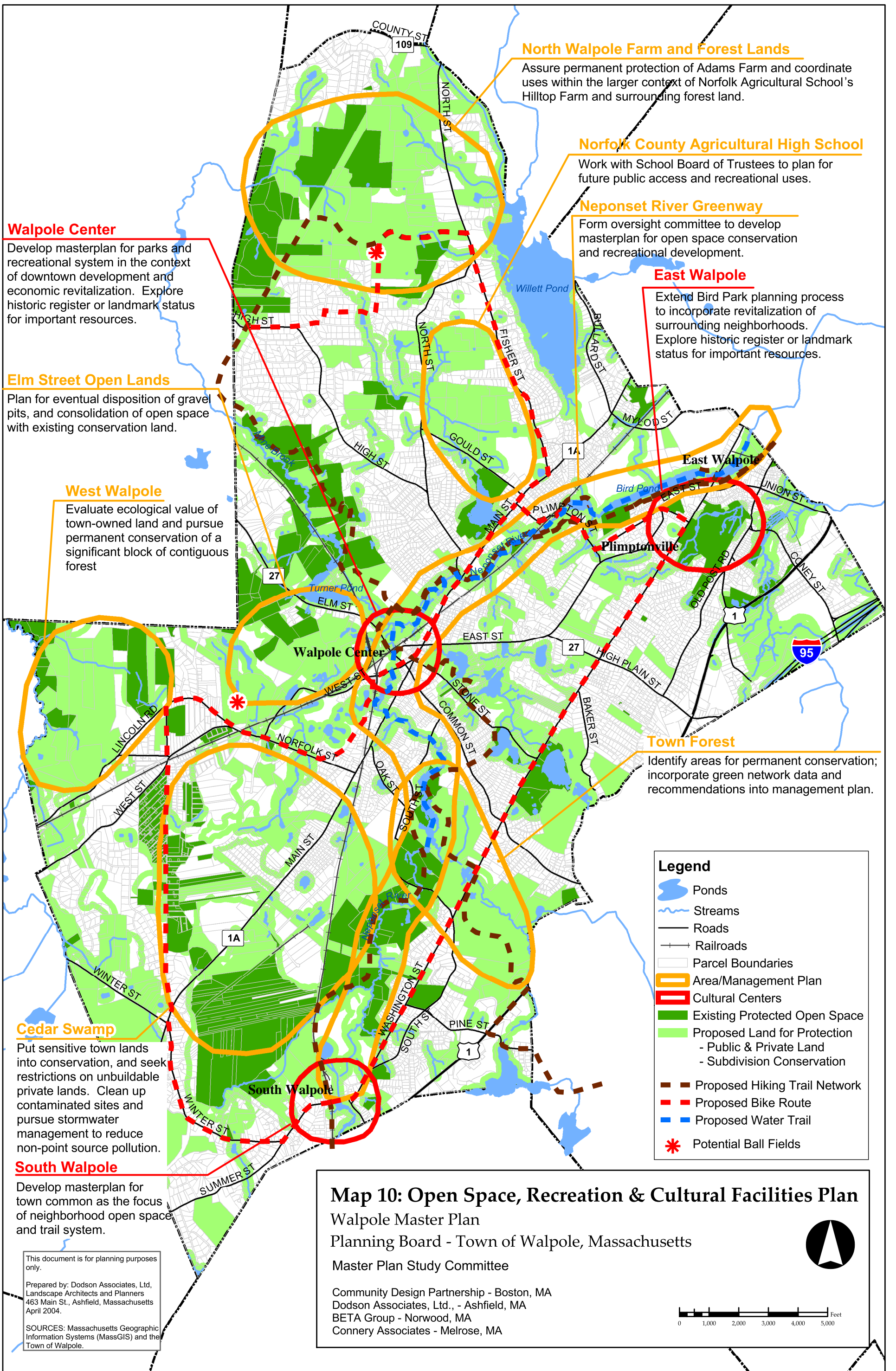
This plan puts major recommendations in a geographic context, showing a series of recommendations for different parts of Town.

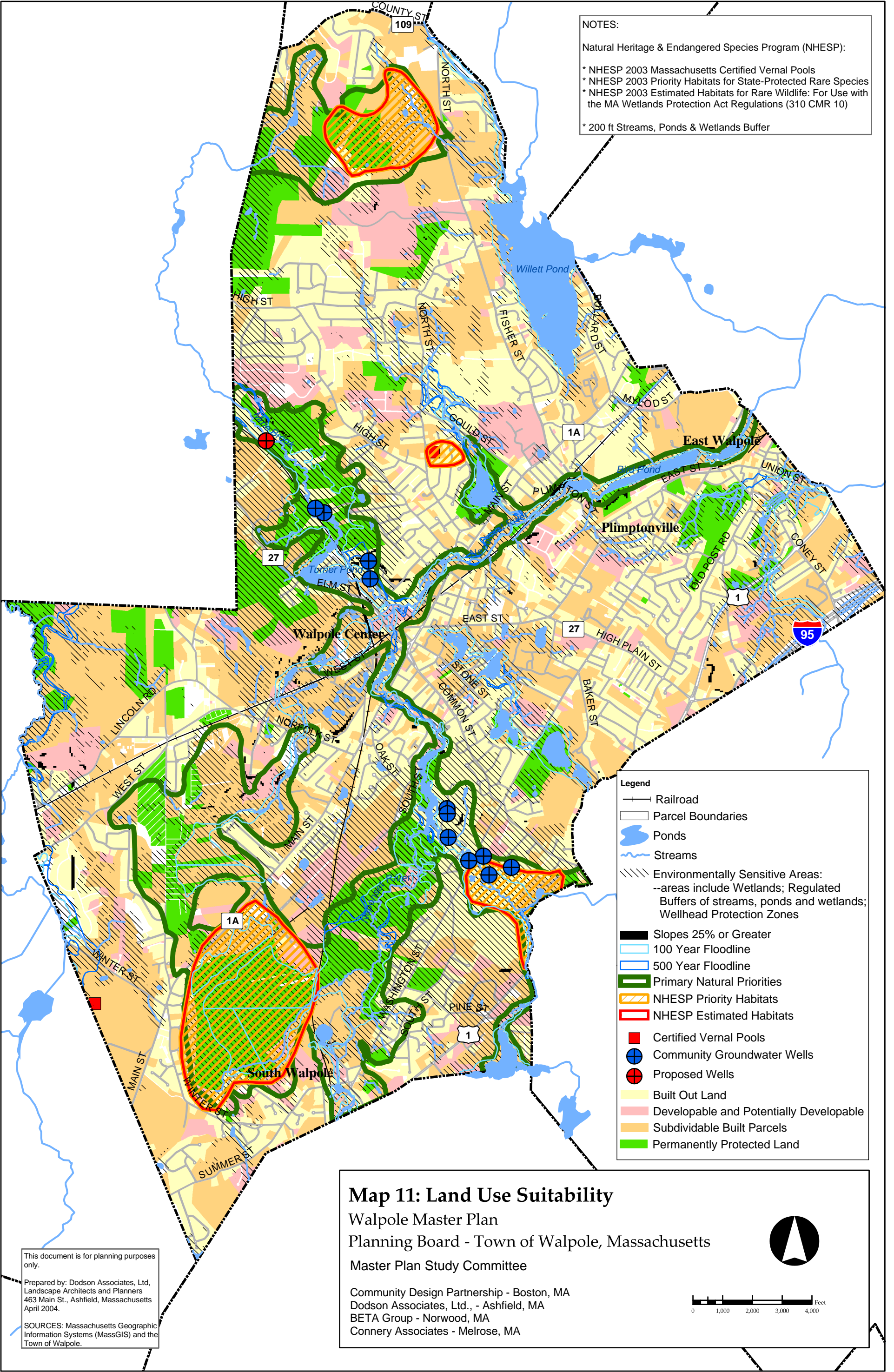
Map 11: Land Use Suitability

The Land Use Suitability Map, one of the maps required for the EO 418 Community Development Plan, layers the environmentally sensitive areas of Walpole over a simple land use map that distinguishes between parcels that have been developed to capacity under current zoning or are permanently protected, and parcels that still have development capacity.









| D. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| Maintain eligibility for state open space funding | Update the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan every five years. | Create a new Open Space Committee to update the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, which is no longer valid | H | S | Conservation Commission |
| Create a Green Network of Open Space | Evaluate land for potential protection | Develop criteria and an evaluation system based on the Green Network concept | M | M | Open Space Committee |
| | Coordinate decision making among town boards and commissions | Ensure that boards consult the Open Space Plan, Green Network, and open space protection criteria in evaluating development projects by asking project proponents to show if and how the projects impact the potential Green Network | H | M | Town Planning; Planning Board (PB); Conservation Commission; Open Space Committee |
| Preserve significant open space areas on large parcels | Pursue open space protection through conservation restrictions and other | Organize outreach to large property owners on the benefits of donating conservation restrictions. | M | M | Open Space Committee |
| | | Establish mandatory conservation subdivision zoning by right for parcels of 4 acres or more | H | M | PB; Town Meeting (TM) |
| | | Approach the county and state for agreements or conservation restrictions on a portion of their open lands | M | L | Open Space Committee |
| Create a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle master plan including trails and paths in open space. | Revive the Trails Committee to develop a trails plan. | Enhance publicity, mapping, and signage for Bay Circuit Trail. | M | L | Trails Committee |
| | | Work with Eagle Scouts, neighborhood groups or other volunteers to plan, build and maintain neighborhood trail links. | M | S | Trails Committee |
| | | Pursue trail connections and joint projects with neighboring towns. | M | L | Trails Committee |
| | | Work with utilities to formalize public access to utility corridors. | L | L | Open Space Committee; Trails Committee |
| | | Work with seniors and school children to plan walkable recreation and safe routes to school program. | M | M | Trails Committee; School Department |
| Create new athletic fields | Give preference to creating fields on already disturbed land and land that is | Create new athletic fields at the capped Lincoln Road Landfill site. | H | M | Recreation Dept.; TM |

| D. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | not over the aquifer | | | | |
| Enhance public access to ponds and the Neponset River | Improve recreational access to the river. | Identify an existing group or organize a new group to focus on developing boating opportunities on the river – perhaps to be called Walpole Friends of the Neponset. | M | M | Recreation Dept.; Volunteers |
| | Pursue greater access to ponds | Include pond access and priority rankings in the Open Space Plan update and evaluation criteria for open space acquisition | M | L | Open Space Committee; Pond Management Committee |
| | | Develop boat launches and portages on the Neponset. | M | M | Recreation Dept.; Volunteers |
| Upgrade downtown open space | | Create a downtown open space master plan as part of downtown revitalization | M | L | Town Planner; PB; BoS |
| | | Create a new Town Green as a community gathering place and relocate Stone Field if possible | M | L | Town Planner; PB; BoS |
| Seek regular funding to support open space activities | | Consider enacting the Community Preservation Act | M | L | TM |

VII. Housing and Residential Character



Goals:

- Manage residential growth to be compatible with town character
- Provide housing affordable to seniors, town employees and young people starting out in life and meet the Chapter 40B goal for 10% permanently affordable housing

A. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- During the 1990s, the number of housing units grew 17%, an average of 1.7% annually.
- School enrollments grew at almost 3% a year during the 1990s.
- The median price of Walpole houses and condos almost doubled between 1990 and 2002
- Compared to the region, Walpole housing is still relatively affordable because Walpole households making the median income can afford to buy a Walpole single family home at the median price
- Over a third of Walpole renters pay more than 30% of income for housing and one-third of Walpole households have incomes below \$50,000. Housing remains expensive for young people, some town employees, and many senior citizens.

Key Challenges

- Preserving town character and remaining open space while accommodating some residential development
- Meeting state Chapter 40B goals for permanently affordable housing.
- Even if population growth slows, the number of housing units will tend to grow at a higher rate than population because of declining average household size
- Housing growth in the form of conventional single-family houses will have disproportionate impacts on traffic and infrastructure because remaining land for conventional development is in the large-lot, outlying parts of town

Over the course of the twentieth century, Walpole's identity changed from a farm and mill town to a suburban residential community. In the Town's historic neighborhoods, such as East Walpole, Plimptonville and

South Walpole, as well as the town center, older homes reflect an earlier era. During repeated waves of suburbanization since World War II, development radiated from these older centers of settlement along the former country roads and through subdivision of farms. Although most housing is in detached, single family homes, the Town has a significant stock of condominiums and apartments, which provides some housing diversity.

Walpole is now a mature suburban community and the amount of developable land is diminishing. But Walpole's many assets – access to commuter rail and I-95, an excellent school system, a diversity of housing types and costs, substantial amounts of protected and institutional open space – continue to attract new residents and housing developers. As the Town has become more built out, each new house or subdivision has a greater relative impact on a diminishing amount of open space. The Master Plan survey demonstrated that many Walpole residents would like to see residential growth slow down, but at the same time they understand the need to provide affordable housing options for town employees, senior citizens, and young people starting out in life. There is a tendency to identify with and prefer an image of Walpole as a community of single family homes, yet many residents also realize that apartments and condominiums consume less land and their residents generally make fewer demands on town services.

Walpole also faces the challenge of accommodating potential Chapter 40B housing projects that can override town zoning. Because Walpole will not be able to block all new residential growth and the Town has an interest in meeting the state goal for 10% permanently affordable housing, it must seek ways to accommodate new housing in ways that have the minimum impact on open space and quality of life and meet the goal for affordable housing preservation.

Existing Housing Stock

Almost 70% of the Town's land is zoned for housing, and over 4,700 acres have already been developed for residences of various types, accounting for 36% of the Town's total land area. Prior to World War II, most houses were built on modest-sized lots in densely settled neighborhoods in central, east and south Walpole. Reflecting that history, half the houses in town have lots smaller than one half acre. However, particularly since the 1980s, new houses have been built in formerly rural north and west Walpole on larger lots of an acre or more. Since most of the Town's remaining developable residential land lies in zoning districts with the largest minimum lot sizes, continuation of the current trend will increase the Town's average lot size, which is now three-quarters of an acre, and the amount of undeveloped land will rapidly diminish.

Even with an increase in the housing supply, a growing *regional* housing shortage led to falling vacancy rates and rising prices locally as well. Already low in 1990, vacancy rates fell even farther, to under 1 per cent for owned units and slightly above 2 per cent for rentals in 2000. Single family house prices in Walpole almost doubled from 1990 to 2002 to a *median* of \$334,250, while the median price for condominiums rose to \$265,000. (The median is the point where half the prices are higher and half are lower.) In 2003, the *average* single family home was assessed for tax purposes at \$293,000. While the Town's 2003 tax rate of \$13.93 was higher than most of its neighbors, the annual tax bill of \$4,091 was in the middle of the range.

| Walpole Housing Stock | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Total Units | 8,229 | 100.0 |
| 1 unit detached | 5,867 | 71.3 |
| 1 unit attached | 585 | 7.1 |
| 2 units | 326 | 4.0 |
| 3 or 4 units | 343 | 4.2 |
| 5 to 9 units | 383 | 4.7 |
| 10 to 19 units | 298 | 3.6 |
| 20 or more units | 420 | 5.1 |
| Unit Types | | |
| Single Family | 6,452 | 78.4 |
| In Multi-Family Structures | 1,770 | 21.6 |
| Occupancy Status | | |
| Occupied Units | 8,060 | 97.9 |
| Vacant Units | 142 | 1.8 |
| Seasonal Units | 27 | 0.3 |
| Tenure | | |
| Owner Occupied | 6,860 | 85.1 |
| Renter Occupied | 1,200 | 14.9 |
| Vacancy Rates | | |
| Owner | | 0.8 |
| Renter | | 2.2 |

Source: US Census 2000

Housing Stock

Number and type of housing units

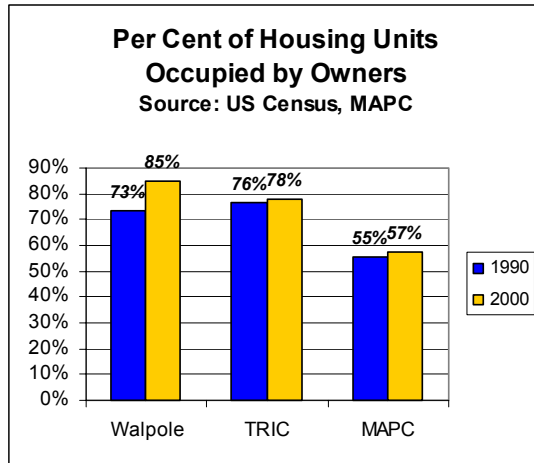
The 2000 US Census counted 8,229 housing units in Walpole of all kinds (including 27 seasonal units), an increase of 1,207 or 17 per cent from 1990. Over the decade, almost 650 single family houses were added. While Walpole's housing stock is dominated by the single family detached house, comprising 71 per cent of the 8,229 housing units, the Town also has over 900 condominiums. During the 1990s Walpole added 726 housing units in townhouses and in multi-family developments consisting of more than 10 units. The majority of these units were condominiums. The Town also lost 166 housing units in multifamily buildings and mobile homes. The Town's supply of rental units declined slightly by 34 to 1,200 while owner-occupied units increased by 1,300 to 6,860. Fully 85% of Walpole's households owned their home by 2000, and the number of rental units in the Town actually declined slightly to 1,200.

Current Town tax records identify 6,046 single family houses, and an additional 63 parcels with more than one house on the property. There are 227 two-family and 40 three-family houses and 928 condo units. The Town has 24 apartment buildings of 4 to 8 units, 19 with more than 8 units, and 7 structures identified as group living quarters.

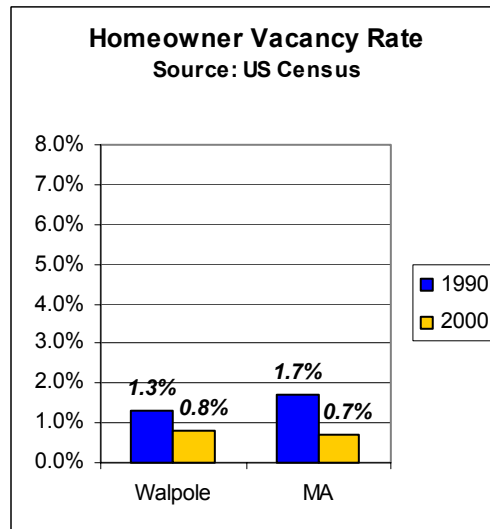
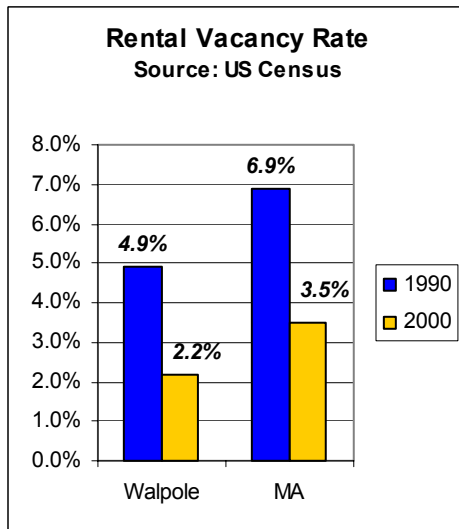
| Occupied Housing Units in Walpole, 1990-2000 | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------|
| | 1990 | 2000 | Change | |
| 1 Unit, Detached | 5,220 | 5,867 | 647 | 12.4% |
| 1 Unit, Attached | 293 | 585 | 292 | 100% |
| 2 to 4 Units | 740 | 669 | -71 | -9.6% |
| 5 to 9 Units | 412 | 383 | -29 | -7.0% |
| 10 or more Units | 284 | 718 | 434 | 152.8% |
| Mobile & Other | 73 | 7 | -66 | -90.4 |
| Total | 7,022 | 8,229 | 1,207 | 17.2% |

Source: US Census

Housing Tenure

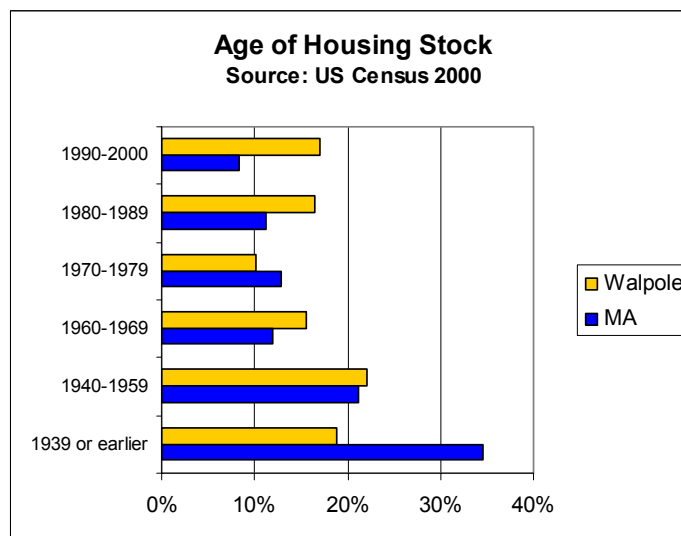


As a result of the significant growth in owner occupied units, Walpole's home ownership rate rose over the decade from 73 per cent to 85 per cent. While Walpole significantly added to its housing supply in the 1990s, construction of new housing across Greater Boston has generally not kept pace with demand. Vacancy rates for rental units in Walpole fell by over half to 2.2% by 2000. While the loss of rental units in Walpole certainly contributed to the decline, rental vacancy rates fell by almost the same proportion statewide although remaining above the Town's. For owner-occupied housing, Walpole's vacancy rate fell to 0.8% in 2000, while the state rate declined even farther.



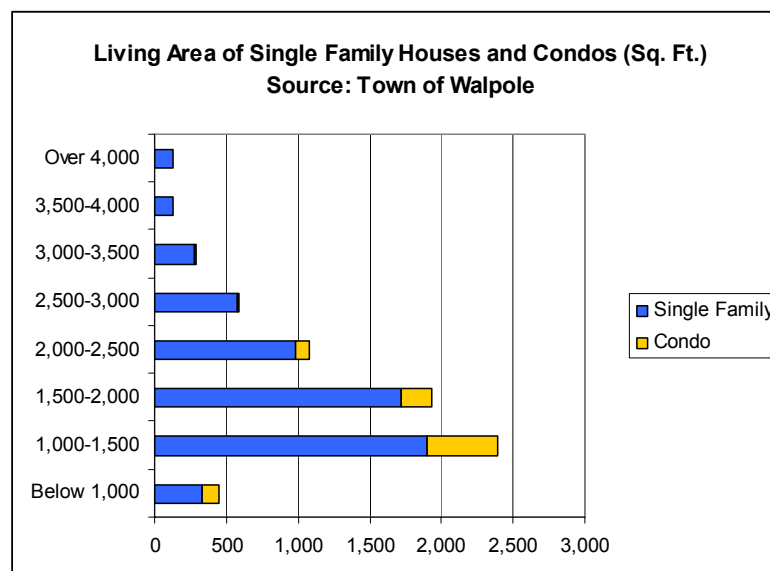
Age of Housing

While neighborhoods such as South Walpole, East Walpole, and Plimptonville hark back to Walpole's colonial history, the bulk of Walpole's housing stock was built after the Second World War. Fewer than one in five homes pre-date the 1940s, and the single biggest addition of homes came in the first wave of suburban growth in the 1950s. After slowing in the 1970s, housing construction accelerated in the 1980s and 90s, leaving Walpole with a housing mix considerably younger than that of Massachusetts as a whole.

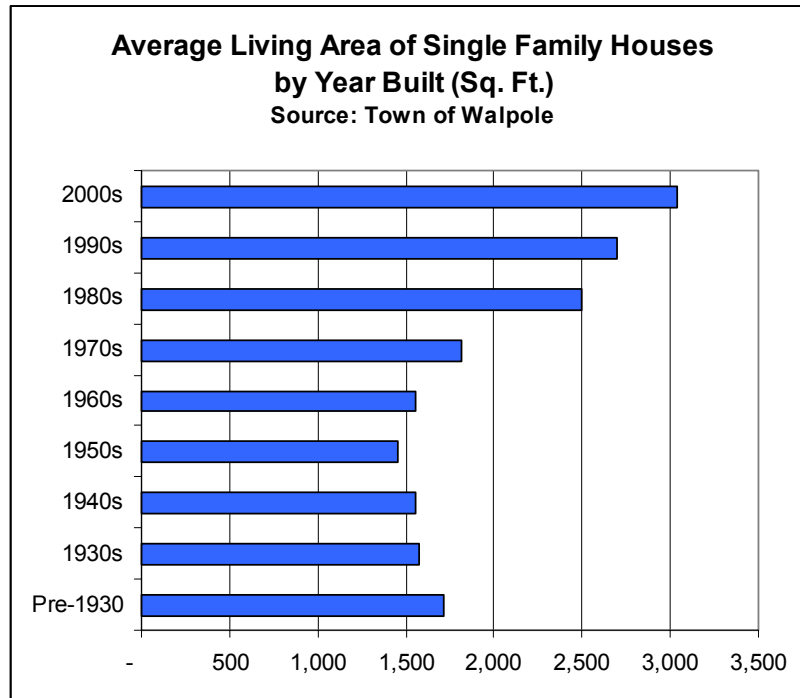


Condition and size of housing units

The condition of housing units in Walpole is generally good. Town assessor records classify less than 1% of properties as Below Average in condition. The average living area for single family homes is 1,883 square feet and 1,470 for condos. While there are over 500 houses over 3,000 square feet, 60 per cent of single family homes range from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet.



Consistent with national trends, the size of new houses built in Walpole has been increasing since the 1950s. Average house sizes began to grow substantially in the 1980s, to an average of slightly over 3,000 square feet so far in the 2000s.



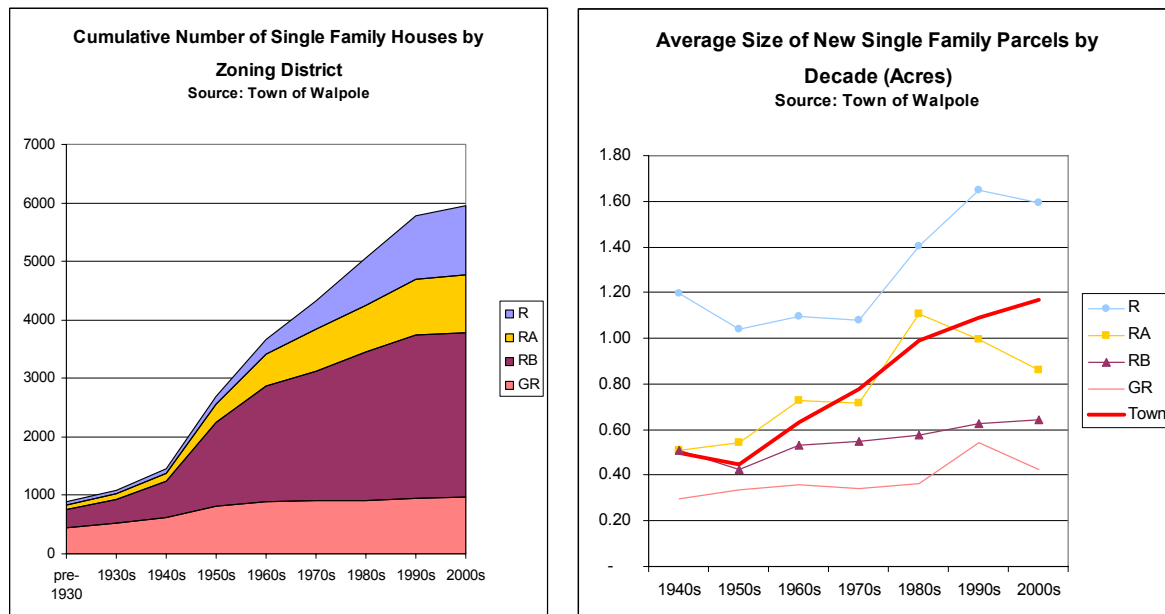
Trends in Residential Development

Residential Zoning Districts and Housing Density

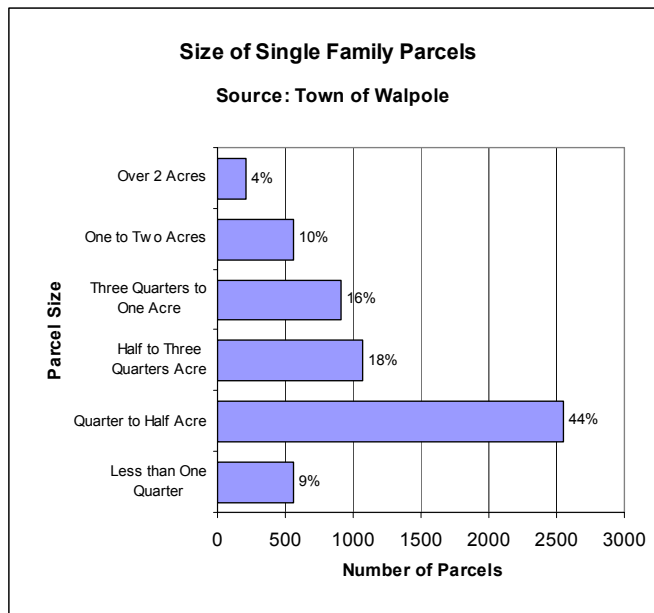
Almost 8,400 acres of land in Walpole are zoned for residential use, and over 4,700 acres have already been developed for housing. The Town has four residential zoning districts, ranging in order from highest to lowest allowed housing density:

- General Residential (GR) surrounding the Central Business District and in East Walpole and Plimptonville;
- Residential B north and south of downtown, and along Washington Street from East Walpole to South Walpole
- Residential A in West and South Walpole, the Walpole Mall area, and in the gaps between the higher density districts; and
- Rural Residential (R) covering much of North and West Walpole.

As Walpole grew after the Second World War, housing developments spread from the original densely settled neighborhoods in what are now the GR and RB districts to new subdivisions with larger lots in today's RA and R districts. The pattern of decreasing housing density is not unique to Walpole, and reflects the increasing affluence and mobility of post-war suburbs nationally.



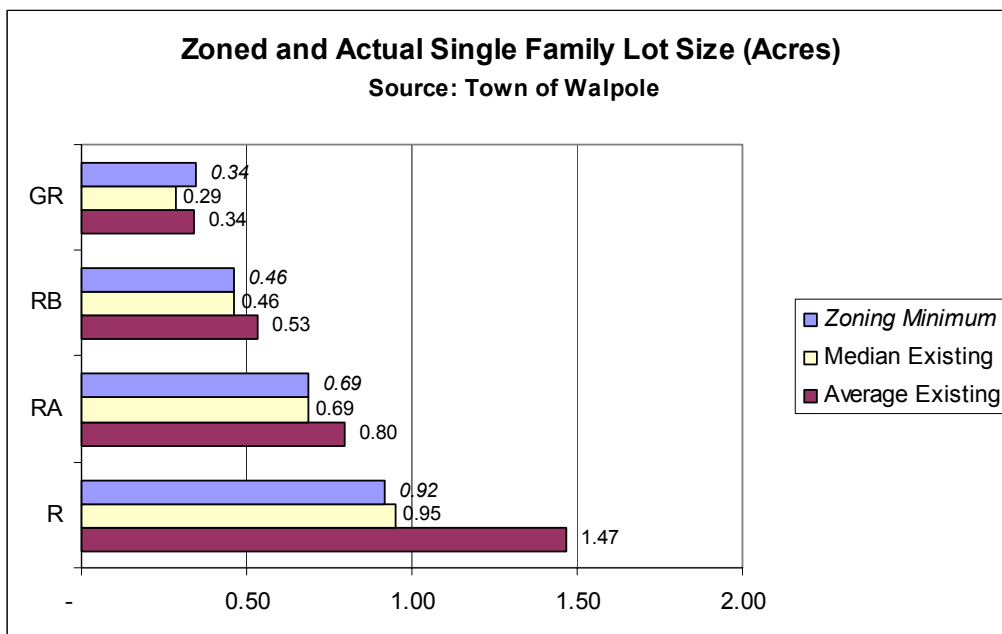
Walpole's Rural zoning district is the focus of much recent subdivision activity because it has the largest supply of undeveloped land. This district has the largest minimum lot size at 40,000 square feet (approximately one acre). Therefore, while this zoning district contains only about 20% of the Town's single family houses, it accounts for 40% of the land already developed for houses. At the other end of the density scale, most of the Town's condominiums are located in the GR district, and to a lesser extent in RB. This is also true for 2- and 3-family houses. The largest number of apartment buildings (17 of 43) is in GR, with an equal number in non-residential districts and only 9 in R, RA, and RB combined. The average house in the Rural zoning district (R) sits on about an acre and a half of land, with half of the houses having lots smaller than one acre and half larger. In the Residential B district, which has the largest number of houses, each single family house uses about one third as much land -- half an acre on average. The higher density zones are therefore more "efficient" in supporting more homes per acre of land because each lot has less open land around the house.



Lot Size and Nonconformity

Roughly half or more of the developed single family parcels in districts RA, RB, and GR are smaller than the minimum zoning requirement, compared to only one third in the Rural district. This probably reflects district R's larger lot size as well as the fact that the rural land toward the edge of the town has been subdivided fairly recently, while other areas were built up before the current zoning regulations were in place. For the Town as a whole, the average single family lot is almost three quarters of an acre, and roughly half the lots are smaller than half an acre. The most frequent lot size is a relatively modest one quarter to one half acre,

which reflects the large number of houses in established neighborhoods in the RB and General Residential districts. Average lot size has increased steadily since mid-century as development has spread from the original settlements into former fields and forests, and will continue to increase if current trends persist.



Rate of Residential Development

| Building Permits 1995-2002 | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Year</i> | <i>Single Family Houses</i> |
| 1995 | 82 |
| 1996 | 115 |
| 1997 | 65 |
| 1998 | 104 |
| 1999 | 71 |
| 2000 | 72 |
| 2001 | 74 |
| 2002 | 75 |
| <i>Source: Census Bureau</i> | |
| Average Annual Increase in Housing Units 1940-1999 | |
| 1940-1959 | 91 |
| 1960-1969 | 128 |
| 1970-1979 | 83 |
| 1980-1989 | 135 |
| 1990-1999 | 124 |
| <i>Source: US Census</i> | |

Walpole has been growing steadily for 60 years, with the recessionary 1970s accounting for the slowest annual increases – a still substantial 83 units a year. The pattern continued during the 1990s. Over the course of the decade, the number of housing units of all types in Walpole increased by 1,207 units or 17 percent. Sixty-two subdivisions of 893 units taking up 1100 acres were developed or permitted during the decade. The average subdivision was on 18 acres with 14 lots, but the median was 9 lots on 10 acres. The subdivisions ranged from five 2-lot subdivisions to several large developments, such as High Oaks 4 with 65 lots, Symphony Park with 61, Hitching Post Estates with 70 lots, and Wisteria 2 with 91. Between 1995 and 2002, an annual average of 82 single family building permits were issued every year. School enrollments during much of the 1990s grew at nearly 3 percent a year, reflecting the fact that most new housing was large enough for families with children.

Residential Buildout Analysis and Development Capacity

The 1999 buildout analysis prepared by the state estimated that the majority of potential new housing units would be in the Residence R zoning district in north and west Walpole. This build out analysis assumes that residential development within Aquifer Protection Zones 1 to 4 is limited to two acre lots with septic systems. Two-thirds of the R district lots are outside the aquifer protection zones. At current rates of development, and assuming that all lots will be occupied by a single family house, Walpole would reach build out under current zoning in about 28 years. The buildout could be expected to add more than 6,000 new residents, 2,400 new households and, assuming current averages of school children per household, over 1,200 new schoolchildren. This analysis does not include a time frame and many communities never reach full build out. It is worth remembering that all land in a residential zone that was not permanently protected or environmentally precluded from development was included in this analysis, for example, government land and Chapter 61 parcels. The likelihood and timing of build out depends on market conditions and other factors.

| Residential Buildout Capacity 1999 | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Zoning District</i> | <i>Undeveloped Acres</i> | <i>Potential Additional Lots</i> |
| General Residential GR | 65.4 | 132 |
| Rural Residential R | 1,585 | 1,182 |
| Residential A | 671 | 580 |
| Residential B | 321 | 384 |
| Total | 2,642.4 | 2,278 |
| <i>Source: EOE/MAPC Buildout Series</i> | | |

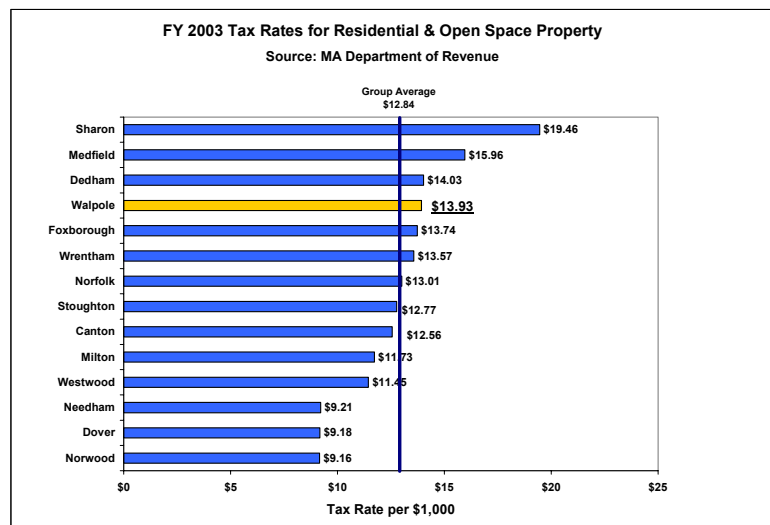
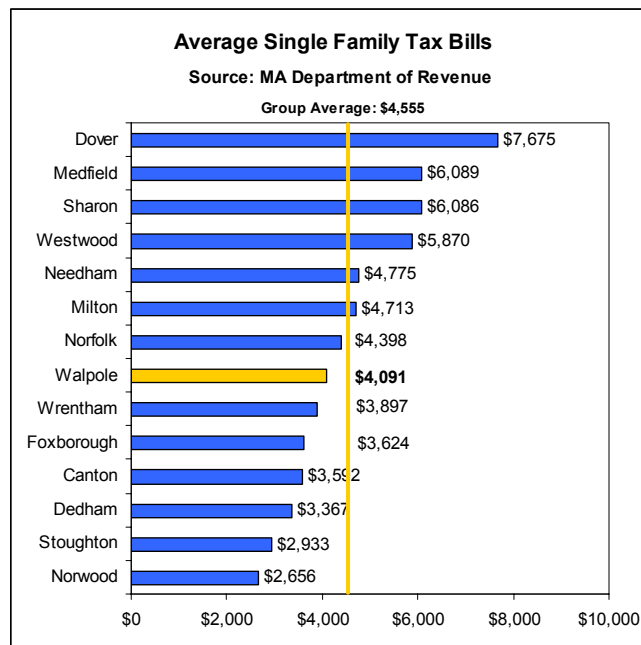
| EOEA Buildout Data for Walpole | <i>Date of Current Data</i> | <i>Current</i> | <i>Buildout</i> | <i>Impacts of Buildout</i> |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Population | 2000 | 22,824 | 29,077 | 6,253 |
| Households | 2000 | 8,060 | 10,528 | 2,468 |
| School Children | 2002-03 | 3,676 | 4,901 | 1,225 |
| <i>Source: EOE/MAPC Buildout Series</i> | | | | |

An analysis of residentially-zoned parcels in the assessor's data results in a lower buildout estimate, but does not include acreage in Chapter 61 properties. According to assessor's data, almost 780 acres of undeveloped land in residential districts are capable of being developed for new houses. Over 600 of these acres are in the lowest density R and RA districts. At most, approximately 1,100-1,200 houses could be built on this amount of land according to current minimum lot sizes. The number of houses that could actually be built would be less because some lots are smaller than the minimum lot size, or could not be developed to the maximum because of other requirements such as minimum street frontage. Nevertheless, these rough estimates illustrate differences between the different zoning densities. For example, fully building out the higher density RB and GR districts rather than the Rural district would accommodate 65 more houses (415 vs. 403) while consuming half as much land (167 vs. 333 acres).

| Walpole Residential Zones | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Rural Residential (R) | Residential A (RA) | Residential B (RB) | General Residential (GR) | Combined Residential Zones |
| Total Parcels | 1,637 | 1,288 | 3,199 | 2,173 | 8,297 |
| Total Acres | 4,219 | 1,563 | 1,977 | 632 | 8,390 |
| % of Town | 34% | 13% | 16% | 5% | 68% |
| % of Res. Zones | 50% | 19% | 24% | 8% | 100% |
| Existing Houses | | | | | |
| Parcels | 1,186 | 987 | 2,818 | 973 | 5,964 |
| % of Res. Zones | 20% | 17% | 47% | 16% | 100% |
| Acres | 1,740 | 787 | 1,496 | 329 | 4,352 |
| % of Res. Zones | 40% | 18% | 34% | 8% | 100% |
| Condo Units | 0 | 8 | 44 | 840 | 892 |
| Single Family Parcel Size (Acres) | | | | | |
| Average Existing House Lot | 1.47 | 0.80 | 0.53 | 0.34 | 0.73 |
| Median Existing House Lot | 0.95 | 0.69 | 0.46 | 0.29 | 0.48 |
| Zoning Minimum | 0.92 | 0.69 | 0.46 | 0.34 | |
| % Houses Not Conforming | 33% | 55% | 48% | 59% | |
| Vacant Land | | | | | |
| Buildable Acres* | 333 | 278 | 126 | 41 | 777 |
| % of Res. Zones | 43% | 36% | 16% | 5% | 100% |
| Max. Potential Houses* | 350 | 403 | 273 | 142 | 1,168 |
| *Buildable acres derived from assessor's designation of "developable" or "potentially developable" parcels. Maximum potential houses assumes all parcels are of sufficient size and shape to hold maximum number of houses. Constraints such as wetlands or insufficient frontage are not taken into account. | | | | | |

Residential Tax Burden

Residential property taxes have been growing in Walpole because residential values have been growing faster than non-residential property values, a situation facing most suburban communities in Greater Boston. The average single family house and lot in Walpole in 2003 was valued for tax purposes at \$293,000 and the average condo at \$213,000. With Walpole's FY2003 residential tax rate of \$13.93, this translates into an annual tax bill of \$4,091 for the average single family house. This is the 58th highest average tax bill among 336 Massachusetts communities, but falls about in the middle of 13 neighboring communities. While Walpole's *tax rate* exceeds many of its neighbors', average home values are so high in communities such as Dover, Needham, and Westwood that their *tax bills* easily exceed those in Walpole.



Housing Affordability

| Median Home Sales Price | | |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Year | Single-Family in \$ | Condominium in \$ |
| 2002 | 332,000 | 265,000 |
| 2001 | 293,000 | 252,500 |
| 2000 | 267,000 | 205,000 |
| 1999 | 239,000 | 189,900 |
| 1998 | 217,450 | 183,750 |
| 1997 | 195,000 | 164,500 |
| 1996 | 189,950 | 151,000 |
| 1995 | 195,000 | 145,000 |
| 1994 | 174,000 | 125,000 |
| 1993 | 170,000 | 123,100 |
| 1992 | 170,000 | 118,218 |
| 1991 | 165,000 | 127,500 |
| 1990 | 173,000 | 140,000 |
| 1989 | 178,000 | 145,000 |
| 1988 | 188,000 | 158,450 |
| Change in Median Price since 1990 | +91.9% | +89.3% |
| <i>Source: The Warren Group</i> | | |

| Comparative Median Single-Family Home Sales Prices in \$ | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Town | 1990 | 2002 |
| Dover | 345,000 | 736,000 |
| Medfield | 242,000 | 430,000 |
| Westwood | 193,000 | 420,000 |
| Norfolk | 195,000 | 379,900 |
| Sharon | 200,000 | 359,900 |
| Walpole | 173,000 | 332,000 |
| Foxborough | 163,000 | 320,950 |
| Norwood | 172,000 | 310,000 |
| <i>Source: The Warren Group</i> | | |

The cost of housing in Walpole has increased dramatically over the last decade, as it has throughout Eastern Massachusetts. In 2002, the median price of a single family home sold in Walpole was \$334,250, almost double the \$173,000 median in 1990. Condo prices rose at a comparable rate of 5.5 per cent per year over the decade, to a median of \$265,000. Prices have continued to rise, with the 2003 single family house median price increasing to \$363,000 and the median for condos rising substantially to \$316,000.

From a broad statistical perspective, the Town remains relatively affordable compared to many communities in the Greater Boston region. The most recent study of housing affordability in the 161 cities and towns of Greater Boston found that in Walpole, a household making the median household income can afford a single family house at the 2003 median sales price in Walpole. Because residents' incomes have grown along with housing prices, the middle-income household is still able to purchase a middle-priced single family home, and the percentage of income that residents pay for housing makes Walpole slightly more affordable than the state as a whole.

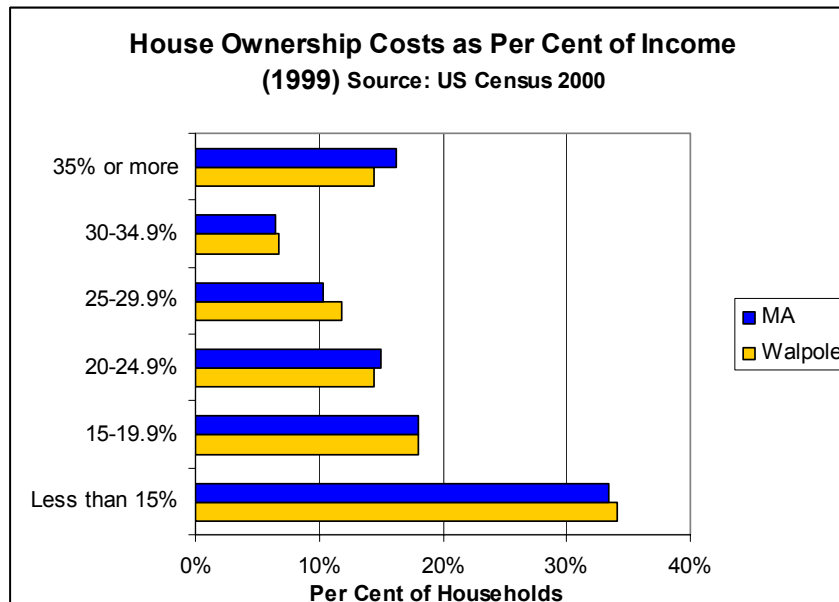
However, first time homebuyers would not find it easy to afford a home in Walpole. The study also estimated

whether a first time homebuyer, defined as a household making 80% of the town's median income and able to provide only a 10% down payment, could afford to buy a house costing 80% of the median sales price. In that scenario, the Walpole first time homebuyer could afford to buy a house priced at \$261,366, which is only 71% of the median house price. That means that for first time homebuyers in Walpole, there is an "affordability gap" of about \$30,000.²

Another typical measure of housing affordability is the number of households paying more than 30 per cent of their income for housing. In 2000, about one in five (21.3 per cent) of Walpole home owners paid more than 30 per cent of household income for housing, about one percentage point lower than statewide. Walpole also had slightly more homeowners in the enviable position of paying less than 15 per cent of income for housing, and was

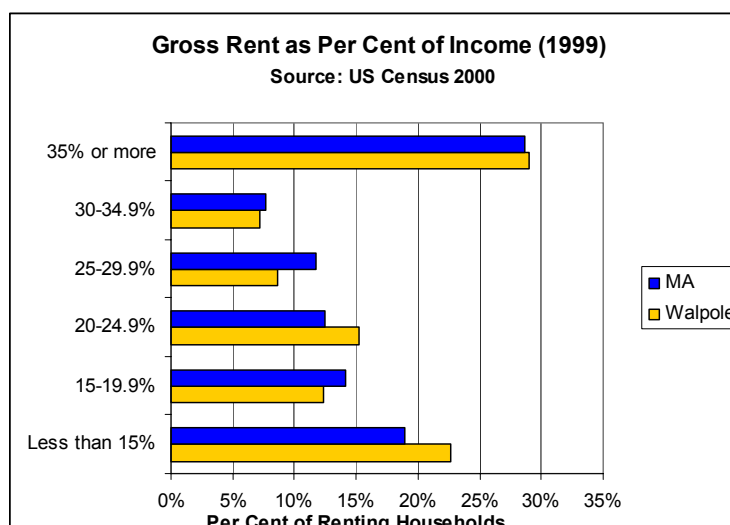
² Bonnie Heudorfer, et al., *The Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2003* (Boston: CURP, Northeastern University, April 2004), Appendix B: Affordability Gap. Housing was considered affordable if a household spent no more than one-third of its income on mortgage, real estate taxes, and insurance.

close to the state average in between the extremes. The median mortgage in Walpole in 1999 was \$1,650 or about 22 per cent above the \$1,353 statewide median, but the Town's median household income of \$74,757 was almost 50 per cent above the statewide figure.



Median rents for apartments in Walpole were \$820/month in 2000, almost 20 per cent more than the \$684 statewide median. But, again, the share of Walpole renters paying an “unaffordable” 30 per cent of income was comparable to the state level, although about 6 per cent more Walpole residents enjoyed rents below 15 per cent of income.

For both the state and Town, the percentage of renters paying over 30 per cent of income for housing is 15-20 points higher than it is for owners (36% versus 21% in Walpole). This discrepancy is due to renters having a lower average household income as a group, including the lowest income households who are effectively priced out of home ownership.



Walpole's housing costs are not out of line compared with housing costs in the Greater Boston region or in the state as a whole and the incomes of Walpole residents as a group have been increasing as the cost of housing has risen. This however, does not obviate the fact that the Greater Boston region as a whole is one of the most expensive housing markets in the nation. Although residents of this region tend to have higher average incomes than many other parts of the country, housing costs have been rising faster than incomes and other costs of living.

There are still many Walpole households for whom housing costs are high. For young people entering the housing market, the cost of a new home can be prohibitive and rising rents make it difficult to save for a down payment. At the time of the census, one-third of all Walpole households had incomes below \$50,000 and 21% had incomes below \$35,000. In comparison, 80% of the median income in Greater Boston for a family of four -- is now \$62,500. The elderly face a bigger affordability challenge as median income varies with age. Median income for people 65-74 is \$47,115, compared to \$89,220 for people aged 35-54, and median income for people 75 and older is even lower (\$26,009). Many older people live in smaller homes that do not command the high prices of the large houses built in new subdivisions, even though their houses may have increased in value. While their mortgage costs may be very low, their taxes have risen, they are on limited fixed incomes, and if they sell their houses, they still may not be able to afford to stay in town.

The following two charts show comparisons between Walpole in 1990 and 2000 and between Walpole in 2000 and the Boston region (in this case the census-defined Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas or PMSA) in 2000 in terms of the percentage of owner and renter households at different income levels and age groups who are "cost burdened" in terms of housing. Households that are cost-burdened pay more than 30% of their income for housing. The comparisons show that renters in general are more cost-burdened than owners. Among homeowners, it is young adults and owners over 75 who are more burdened. These data also show that, despite Walpole's relatively high median income, there are still hundreds of owner and renter households in Walpole with incomes less than \$50,000 who pay a high percentage of their income for housing. The third chart below shows that Walpole is not that much different from its neighboring communities in terms of the housing cost burden for elderly and lower-income households who rent.

| Walpole and the Boston Region: Owner Household Characteristics and Cost Burden, 1990 and 2000 | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Walpole 1990 | | Walpole 2000 | | Boston PMSA | |
| Median Household Income | \$51,242 | | \$74,757 | | \$55,183 | |
| Median Homeowner Income | - | | \$78,368 | | \$71,766 | |
| Ratio Total Median to Homeowner Median | - | | 0.95 | | 0.77 | |
| Total Owner-Occupied Units | 4958 | | 6046 | | 587,230 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Household Income Range | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened |
| Less than \$10,000 | 230 | 79% | 80 | 73% | 15,303 | 79% |
| \$10,000 to \$19,999 | 326 | 54% | 283 | 67% | 28,646 | 74% |
| \$20,000 to \$34,999 | 588 | 37% | 485 | 45% | 54,293 | 45% |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999 | 935 | 32% | 679 | 41% | 64,805 | 42% |
| \$50,000 or more | 2879 | 15% | | | | |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | | | 1092 | 20% | 122,016 | 27% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | | | 1209 | 18% | 103,860 | 11% |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999 | | | 1319 | 8% | 111,692 | 6% |
| \$150,000 or more | | | 899 | 0% | 86,615 | 2% |
| | | | | | | |
| Age of Homeowner | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened |
| 15-64 | 3947 | 27% | | | | |
| 15-24 | | | 0 | 0% | 1,753 | 38% |
| 25-34 | | | 488 | 25% | 55,286 | 26% |
| 35-44 | | | 1599 | 24% | 145,722 | 25% |
| 45-54 | | | 1583 | 18% | 146,585 | 21% |
| 55-64 | | | 928 | 20% | 97,768 | 20% |
| 65 and over | 1011 | 22% | | | | |
| 65-74 | | | 801 | 19% | 77,019 | 24% |
| 75 and over | | | 647 | 26% | 63,097 | 27% |
| <i>Source: US Census 1990, 2000</i> | | | | | | |

| Walpole and the Boston Region: Renter Household Characteristics and Cost Burden, 1990 and 2000 | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | Walpole 1990 | | Walpole 2000 | | Boston PMSA | |
| Median Household Income | \$51,242 | | \$74,757 | | \$55,183 | |
| Median Renter Income | - | | \$36,320 | | \$35,023 | |
| Ratio Total Median to Renter Median | - | | 2.06 | | 1.58 | |
| Total Renter-Occupied Units | 1226 | | 1159 | | 541,719 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Household Income Range | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened |
| Less than \$10,000 | 158 | 47% | 104 | 63% | 85872 | 62% |
| \$10,000 to \$19,999 | 211 | 67% | 165 | 57% | 80,313 | 68% |
| \$20,000 to \$34,999 | 252 | 45% | 273 | 73% | 104,564 | 59% |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999 | 292 | 10% | 221 | 17% | 86,963 | 25% |
| \$50,000 or more | 313 | 6% | | | | |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | | | 169 | 9% | 93,114 | 8.6% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | | | 92 | 9% | 46,165 | 2.2% |
| \$100,000 or more | | | 135 | 0% | 44,728 | 1.0% |
| | | | | | | |
| Age of Renter | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened | | % Cost Burdened |
| 15-64 | 936 | 30% | | | | |
| 15-24 | | | 31 | 0% | 49,063 | 50% |
| 25-34 | | | 315 | 19% | 160,132 | 30% |
| 35-44 | | | 179 | 39% | 115,230 | 34% |
| 45-54 | | | 196 | 45% | 73,790 | 93% |
| 55-64 | | | 83 | 35% | 45,283 | 38% |
| 65 and over | 290 | 32% | | | | |
| 65-74 | | | 102 | 47% | 41,388 | 44% |
| 75+ | | | 253 | 49% | 56,833 | 49% |
| Source: US Census 1990, 2000 | | | | | | |

| Walpole and Its Neighborhood: Renter Cost Burden (1999) | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Renter Households | % Cost Burdened | Elderly Renters | % Cost Burdened | Income Below \$35,000 | % Cost Burdened |
| Dover | 94 | 10.6% | 7 | 0.0% | 14 | 71.4% |
| Foxborough | 1,722 | 13.8% | 503 | 42.5% | 766 | 67.1% |
| Medfield | 558 | 36.6% | 112 | 50.0% | 256 | 69.1% |
| Milton | 1,422 | 33.8% | 517 | 52.8% | 644 | 63.5% |
| Norwood | 4,975 | 30.8% | 862 | 47.1% | 1893 | 67.0% |
| Sharon | 599 | 23.2% | 241 | 30.3% | 311 | 42.8% |
| WALPOLE | 1,159 | 36.2% | 355 | 48.5% | 542 | 66.2% |
| Westwood | 553 | 44.1% | 395 | 49.1% | 304 | 59.2% |
| Source: US Census 2000 | | | | | | |

Defining affordable housing

“Affordable housing” is a term with many meanings. For government purposes, it usually means subsidized housing that is deed-restricted to remain affordable over many years to households earning below a certain income threshold, typically 80 percent of the area median income. To others, it simply means housing with modest costs in the market. The definition of housing affordability is based on three statistics: median household income, the percentage of household income spent on housing, and the median cost of housing. Under most subsidy programs, housing produced with government financial assistance is targeted to people whose household income is 80 percent or less of the median for an area. The median income level set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] for the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for FY2004 is \$82,600 and 80 percent of median for a family of four is \$66,150. Housing authorities typically function as the monitoring agency for income eligibility and affordability restrictions.

Housing is considered affordable by HUD if households with incomes at or below 80 per cent of the median can obtain it while paying no more than 30 percent of their total income. An affordable home, therefore, could be one that a family of four making no more than \$66,150 a year could buy or rent with 30 percent of their income

What Does Affordable Housing Look Like?

Many people have an image of affordable housing that is based on an outdated image of high-rise public housing projects in cities. In fact, affordable housing today takes many other forms, from single family homes to garden apartments. It fits in so well with local character that people in many communities go by affordable housing every day without realizing it. The examples of affordable housing types below include single family homes in mixed income developments, garden apartments, and a duplex. (Photos courtesy CHAPA.) Mixed-income developments, where the affordable units are indistinguishable from the market rate units, and scattered-site affordable housing, in which affordable housing is scattered in small groupings throughout the community, are now the preferred ways of developing and siting affordable housing.



Chapter 40B – the Comprehensive Permit Law

For many suburban communities, the face of affordable housing is the state’s Comprehensive Permit Law (Chapter 40B). This law is intended to promote affordable housing creation by allowing developers who agree to include at least 25% below-market-rate units in their projects to go through a streamlined permitting process (the comprehensive permit) and override local zoning if the community does not have 10% of its year-round housing units designated as permanently affordable. If the permit is denied by a municipality, then the developers can appeal the denial to the state’s Housing Appeals Committee.

Housing units created under Chapter 40B must meet four tests in order to be counted toward the 10 per cent goal:

- The units must be approved for direct state or federal subsidy, for example, through the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, or the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). With the exception of the Local Initiative Program (LIP), the subsidies are financial. In the case of the LIP, towns work directly with developers but receive technical assistance from DHCD and receive standing as Chapter 40B projects. LIP projects allow towns more flexibility in making decisions about the design and site plan of a project. The state merely has to approve the affordability elements of the project: the incomes of the persons to be housed, the minimum quality of the units, fair marketing, and a maximum level of profit.
- At least 25 percent of the units must be restricted to households having incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income. The units must have rents or sales prices that limit housing costs to no more than

30% of the residents' household income. For newly constructed housing, the affordability restrictions must remain in place for at least 15 years.

- The development must be subject to use restrictions and deed restrictions ensuring that the units will remain available only to people who have qualifying incomes, and these requirements must be monitored by a public agency or a non-profit organization.
- The units must be openly marketed according to fair housing laws. However, towns can establish a local preference for their own residents.

In addition, part of Chapter 40B's purpose was to create new permanently affordable housing units. One of the reasons Massachusetts housing costs have skyrocketed in the last decade is that production of new housing for almost all income levels has been lower than the demand, and temporary affordability in existing units does not increase the amount of housing in the state.

Changes to Chapter 40B

In 2002 the state issued new regulations for Chapter 40B. These regulations provide for more rapid counting of approved units and of more types of units; more leeway for a town to deny a permit or include conditions if it has an approved affordable housing plan and has made recent progress towards the 10 percent affordable units or if the project is very large in relation to the town's population; and consideration by the Housing Appeals Committee of a community's master plan and affordable housing creation efforts.

Communities may submit an affordable housing plan for approval by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). An approved plan must be a "planned production" plan, that is, it must have goals, a timeline and strategies to produce affordable housing units to reach 10 percent of the community's total housing units. If a town shows that it has produced 40B-eligible units in the amount of three-fourths of one percent of total housing units (about 62 units per year for Walpole), it can ask DHCD for certification of its plan. A certified plan permits a town to deny a comprehensive permit, or grant one with conditions, for one year (two years if it produced 1.5 percent of total housing units). The Housing Appeals Committee is also empowered to take into account a town's master plan in any decision on a developer's appeal of a denial or a conditional comprehensive permit.

Chapter 40B may also be subject to change by the legislature or through further administrative changes as a result of the 40B Task Force that met in spring 2003. The Task Force made a series of recommendations that have been incorporated into legislation, but no changes have been made as of this writing. Among the recommendations are:

- In 40B homeownership developments, twice the number of affordable units will be counted towards a community's 10% goal.
- Communities can deny a 40B application if 40B units pending during the prior nine-month period equal at least 2% of total housing units or .5% if the community has a state-approved housing plan.

- Communities with an approved housing plan can deny a 40B application if they have permitted qualifying units equaling .5% of total housing units during the prior 12 months (this is a reduction in the current regulation of .75%).
- The agencies that provide subsidies to proposed Chapter 40B projects must take new criteria into consideration when determining project eligibility: density and size; degree of affordability; principles of sustainable development and smart growth; community impact and consistency with housing need; impact on historical resources; and the impact of other pending applications for housing development..
- The Legislature and the Governor should establish a new “growth aid” fund to provide financial assistance to communities commensurate with the costs of housing growth.

State-Approved Affordable Housing Plans

The state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) recently issued guidelines for communities that wish to develop and adopt an affordable housing plan for approval by DHCD in compliance with Chapter 40B Planned Production Regulation 760CMR 31.07(1)(i). The guidelines include the following requirements for affordable housing plans:

- Comprehensive housing needs analysis
- Affordable housing goals, including the mix of housing sought by the community and a timeframe for production of units
- Affordable housing strategies, including at least one or more of the following actions:
 - Identification of geographic areas in which land use regulations will be modified to accomplish affordable housing production goals
 - Identification of specific sites on which Comprehensive Permit applications are to be encouraged
 - Preferable characteristics of residential development such as infill development, clustered uses, and compact development
 - Municipally owned parcels for which development proposals will be sought.

Executive Order 418

Through the Housing Certification process under EO 418, the state recognizes community efforts to reduce barriers to affordable housing production and increase the supply of housing, while at the same time combining incentives and sanctions to encourage creation of new housing units. Certain discretionary state grants, including the Public Works Economic Development grants, are not available without Housing Certification, and housing-certified communities will receive bonus points in grant competitions for open space funds and other environmental grant programs. The certification process gives credit for affordable housing planning activities, efforts to identify suitable sites, zoning changes and other activities designed to promote affordable housing creation. Continued certification beginning in FY 2004 will require actual production of affordable and middle-income units.

In contrast to Chapter 40B eligibility requirements, for the purposes of EO 418 qualifying units include not only new units affordable to households with incomes 80 percent and below the median, but also new ownership

units affordable to households with up to 150 percent of median income and new rental units affordable to households with up to 100 percent of median income. In the Boston MSA, of which Walpole is a part, this means that middle income ownership units for a family of four can cost up to \$375,123 (more than the \$332,000 median price for a single family home in Walpole in 2002) and middle income rental units can cost up to \$1,855 a month.

Walpole was certified under EO 418 for FY 2003, but has not yet pursued certification for FY 2004.

Existing affordable housing

Walpole has 138 housing units considered permanently affordable, that is, the units are deed-restricted to insure affordability over a period of years. With the approval of the Gatehouse 40B project, Walpole will soon have another 150 permanently affordable rental units.

The Housing Authority owns 130 units, including housing for elderly and disabled persons, as well as families:

- 64 units for elderly and disabled persons at Neponset View Terrace
- 54 units for elderly and disabled persons at Diamond Pond Terrace
- 12 units for families at Ellis Street

In early 2004, there were 39 applicants on the waiting list for elderly/handicapped housing. People who live and work in Walpole, veterans, and people under emergency threat of homelessness are given preference on the waiting list. Walpole elderly now face a typical wait of less than a year for a unit, elderly from outside Walpole wait one to two years, and non-elderly disabled persons have a typical wait of about five years. The Executive Director of the Housing Authority states that in the last two years there was a cyclical turnover of units as long-time residents moved to nursing homes or passed away, which opened up more units than had been available in previous years. This unprecedented unit turnover is now slowing. A nonprofit organization owns an additional 8 units of permanently affordable housing for disabled persons on Pemberton Street.

The Housing Authority's twelve family units are townhouses, of which half are two-bedroom units and half are three-bedroom units. The family units turn over very infrequently. There are 90 applicants on the list for two-bedroom units and 5 applicants on the list for the three-bedroom units. There is no "typical" wait for these units and at present no units are likely to be available for a considerable time. In the view of the Executive Director of the Housing Authority, the greatest need currently is for affordable family housing.

In addition, the Walpole Housing Authority administers 95 Section 8 rental vouchers which can be used to rent private housing. Because these vouchers are "portable," that is, the holder of the voucher can leave one rental unit and take the voucher to rent another one (in Walpole or elsewhere), the units are not considered to be permanently affordable and are not counted as part of the Chapter 40B inventory of permanently affordable housing in town.

The Walpole Cooperative Bank offers low downpayment programs for first time homebuyers and special programs for senior citizens. Along with MassHousing, the bank makes presentations to the Walpole Council on Aging approximately every 18 months on loan products available to the elderly. Although these programs assist

people in owning homes, they also do not count as permanently affordable housing because the housing units are not deed restricted to preserve affordability and their value can rise with the market.

Chapter 40B and affordable housing in Walpole

Until recently, only the 138 units counted towards the Town's Chapter 40B inventory, representing only 1.68% of the Town's supply of 8,202 year round housing units. However, with the recent approval of the 300 unit Gatehouse Chapter 40B project, Walpole will gain another 300 units, raising its Chapter 40B inventory to 5.3%. Half of the units will be permanently affordable, but because this is a rental project all the units count towards 40B. The Town would need to add an additional 402 permanently affordable units to meet the 10 per cent goal *if no additional market rate units were added* to the housing supply.

However, existing approved housing in the pipeline, including the Toll Brothers development, will mean that Walpole will need to create even more units eligible for Chapter 40B to reach the 10% goal. For example, if Walpole were to add the same number of units during the 2000-2010 decade as it did during the 1990s – 1,207 units – the town's total year round housing units in 2010 would be 9,409. The Chapter 40B goal would then be 941 units, meaning that 503 Chapter 40B-eligible units would have to be added to the current 438 in order to meet the 10% goal. This amount represents 42% of the 1,207 units added in Walpole during the 1990s.

Because all the units in Chapter 40B rental developments are counted towards the 40B inventory, it is more effective for the Town to seek to meet the 10% goal with rental housing. Rental housing also tends to have less impact on the school system because of the diversity of unit sizes generally found in rental projects. The 2000 census found that the average household size of owner-occupied units in Walpole was 2.85 persons, while the average size for renter-occupied units was 1.92. The school impacts depend on the mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units. The option of meeting some of the affordable housing need with units for the over-55 demographic group of empty nesters would also produce a much smaller increase in the overall population and the school population. The average size of senior households is likely to be at or below the average size of renter households because of the number of seniors living alone. Like other housing projects with affordable elements, senior projects for ownership housing can only count the affordable units towards the Town's Chapter 40B inventory.

Affordable housing planning in Walpole

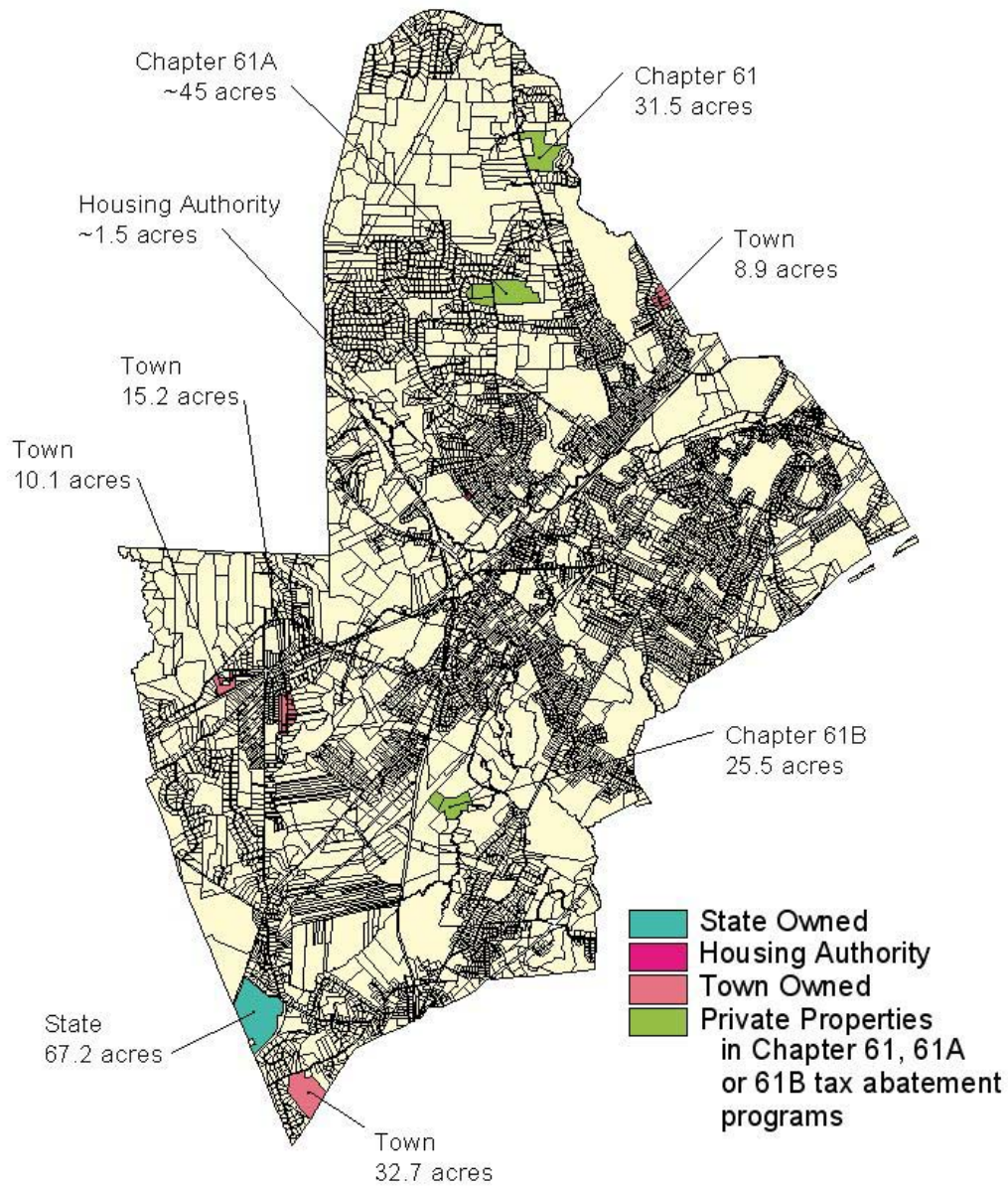
Several years ago, the Selectmen appointed a Task Force and the Town hired a consultant firm to assist the committee in analyzing housing needs and developing recommendations. The report was issued in October 2000 and at the fall Town Meeting that year an Affordable Housing Committee was established to monitor the supply and demand of affordable housing, promote creation of affordable housing, and make recommendations to the Town. Town Meeting also directed town boards and staff to plan for the preservation of existing affordable housing and to produce new affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Report included a number of recommendations. Although progress has been made, some proposals have not yet been implemented. The recommendations and outcomes to date are as follows:

- Establish an Affordable Housing Committee

- The Committee met regularly in 2001 and less often since then. The first objective was to get the town certified for the purposes of EO 418, which was accomplished, and the second objective is to meet the 10% Chapter 40B goal in 10 years. The Committee has met with several developers who have an interest in affordable housing development, but has not yet begun any relationships with nonprofit affordable housing providers. Despite the Committee's mission, it was not significantly involved in negotiations over the Gatehouse 40B project.
- Promote production of affordable rental housing
 - The Town negotiated a higher percentage of affordable housing for the Gatehouse 40B project (50% affordability rather than 25%). Environmental concerns made it difficult for another mixed income project, on Winter Street, to gain permits.
- Establish a local nonprofit affordable housing development entity
 - The Housing Authority discussed establishment of a nonprofit subsidiary and began drawing up documents. However, the proposal was ultimately not implemented because of questions about whether the board of the new entity should be the same as the board of the Housing Authority. A number of Housing Authorities have established nonprofits in order to gain more flexibility in pursuing affordable housing funding and other affordable housing opportunities.
- Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund
 - A Trust Fund has not been established.
- Establish a Special Permit process providing incentives for the production of affordable rentals above retail and commercial uses in designated areas of town
 - Incentives for affordable rentals in commercial areas have not been established.
- Promote affordable homeownership programs
 - Walpole participates in programs run by local banks.
- Establish inclusionary / incentive zoning of all developments larger than 5 units so that all new developments would include some affordable housing
 - Inclusionary/incentive zoning has not been established.

In addition, the Report identified vacant land that might be appropriate for affordable housing, including 1.4 acres owned by the Housing Authority; 67.2 acres owned by the state; and 66.9 acres owned by the town in 4 sites (12 parcels). Several private properties currently in the open space tax abatement programs for agricultural, forestry or recreational lands (Chapters 61, 61A and 61B) were also identified. The Town, of course, does not own these lands, but it does have the right of first refusal should the property-owners decide to sell the land. The competing value of these lands as open space resources was not discussed in the report.

Parcels Potentially Suitable for Affordable Housing Identified by the 2000 Affordable Housing Report



B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Walpole's future housing policy should focus on managing and accommodating residential growth and affordable housing in such a way that it minimizes the loss of the Town's remaining open space character. Similarly, the Town should encourage the creation of affordable housing that minimizes creation of additional market rate units. The best way to do this is to make sure that the Town has all the tools for promoting affordable housing at its disposal. By using a variety of tools and programs, the Town will create a diverse array of affordable housing types that fit easily into Walpole neighborhoods.

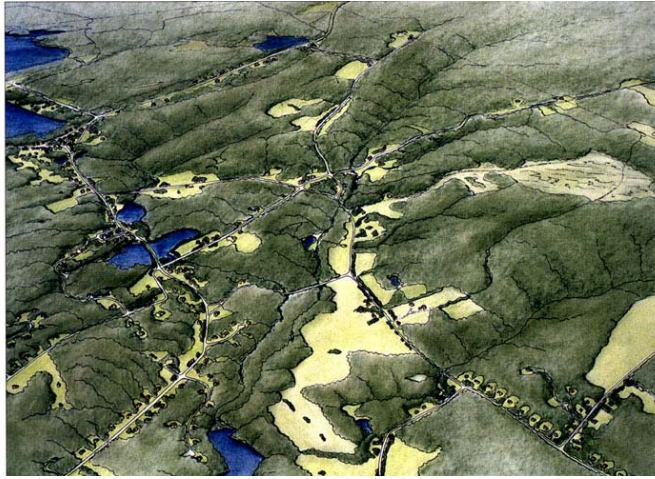
Appoint a full-time town planner.

Walpole currently has only a part-time planner. For a town of Walpole's size and complexity, a full-time planner is essential to assist the boards and commissions that have responsibility for land use issues. The Planner can also support efforts to promote affordable housing creation. However, given the demands of this work, it should not be expected that the planner should also be responsible for economic development efforts. He or she can also assist other town staff in pursuing grant funds. For example, in FY2004, Walpole was eligible to apply to the Department Housing and Community Development for \$100,000 - \$800,000 from the Community Development Fund II. This program can provide funds for affordable housing, downtown revitalization, business development, and other community development needs. By the end of this planning process, the Town was about to appoint a new full-time planner.

Rewrite the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw (Sec. 11) to require a clearer but simpler design process that emphasizes preservation of the best land from an environmental and scenic point of view, make OSRD the mandatory by-right zoning for all parcels/projects of 4 acres or more, and establish site plan review for residential subdivisions.

In 2000, the state legislature passed a law allowing municipalities to establish cluster development by right. This eliminates the disincentive of a special permit process, but still allows Towns to have oversight through the site plan review process. A carefully written bylaw along with good subdivision rules and regulations will allow the Planning Board and the public sufficient review of cluster projects.

Cluster subdivisions, sometimes also called open space subdivisions allow for flexible siting of homes on a parcel so that larger areas of open space are preserved. When correctly designed, these kinds of subdivisions can be a powerful tool for communities that wish to preserve networks of open space and promote more housing diversity. Because the Town will not be able to preserve all remaining important open space by acquisition, directing potential developers to use this kind of site design within the context of the Town's plan for preferred open space networks will help conserve the visual and environmental character of Walpole.



CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION DESIGN

Conventional Residential Development and Open Space Residential Development

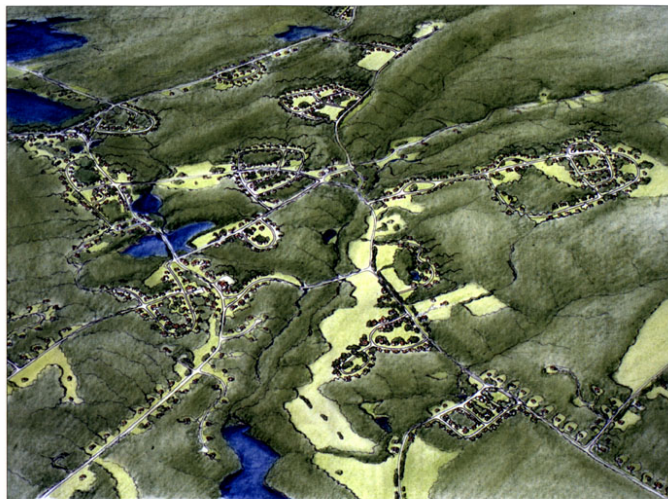
Top:

This area has a mix of open meadows and forested parcels and a few historic mill villages, as well as streams, ponds, wetlands, and farm fields.



Middle:

Most of this area is zoned for two-acre single family development. The drawing does not show development on areas of poor soils, steep slope and difficult access. Nonetheless, this development pattern results in lowered water quality from polluted runoff, fragmented wildlife habitat, and destruction of scenic vistas.



Bottom:

Two-thirds of the site has been permanently preserved by clustering the same number of houses allowed at the two-acre density on smaller lots at one side of the parcel. Most uses are single family, with provision for a limited number of accessory apartments or duplex units. The houses are clustered in neighborhood groups of 12 to 24 around a public space. Benefits include:

- Conservation restrictions to preserve farm uses and a natural buffer around the stream corridor
- Roads follow the lay of the land
- Shared driveways and parking where possible lower costs and increase yard space

Source: Peter Flinker [Dodson Associates], *South County Design Manual*, 2001

A simple methodology for planning these subdivisions has been developed and publicized by landscape architect Randall Arendt, who uses the name “conservation subdivision design” to emphasize its value as a conservation tool.³ Conservation subdivision design has four steps and reverses the process generally used in conventional subdivision design:

- 1) Identify land on the site that should be permanently protected:
 - a. Primary Conservation Area - constrained lands such as wetlands, floodplain and steep slopes
 - b. Secondary Conservation Area - environmental, scenic, and cultural resources such as wildlife corridors, mature woodlands and individual trees, stone walls and farm hedgerows, including attention to key resources and connections identified in the Town Open Space and Recreation Plan
- 2) Once these lands are identified, the rest of the site becomes the Potential Development Area. Attention should be given to potential links between the subdivision’s conservation areas and adjacent protected and unprotected open space.
- 3) Locate house sites within the potential development area to maximize views of open space.
- 4) Align streets and trails to serve the houses and provide access to open space.
- 5) Draw in the lot lines.

The advantage of this method is that it first identifies for preservation the most environmentally sensitive and scenic lands for preservation, rather than locating houses and roads first.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has prepared a model bylaw under the name Open Space Residential Design that includes the four-step design process described above. The model bylaw includes the following procedural requirements and steps:

- Use of a registered Landscape Architect in the design process
- Encouragement of a pre-application conference with the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health and any other appropriate boards or commissions.
- Submission of a Concept Plan made up of a Sketch Plan using the four-part design process and applying the by-law’s design standards and a Yield Plan showing the number of possible lots under a standard subdivision plan
- After Planning Board approval of the Concept Plan, submission of a Site Plan based on the Sketch Plan but fully engineered to include stormwater and wastewater management, utilities and other information required by subdivision rules and regulations.

The design standards include housing types and housing mix, percent of required open space (in the model bylaw, at least 50% of the site must be in contiguous open space and include no more than the total site percentage of wetlands), buffers to roads and water resources, parking and driveways, screening and landscaping, and so on.

³ The most detailed discussion is in his book, *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances*, Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999.

Typically, the total number of units that can be built in a conservation subdivision would be the same number as would be allowed under conventional development, but the conservation subdivision by right would be the only by-right option. For example, Walpole's current R zone requires one-acre lots. Therefore, a conservation subdivision on a 10-acre parcel would allow 10 homes in this typical scenario. Communities also often establish bonuses to encourage developers to meet a variety of community goals, such as protecting a higher percentage of open space, providing a percentage of affordable units, and providing housing restricted to over-55 occupants. All of these incentives should be included in a revised OSRD bylaw. The specific elements need to be worked out in more detail in the implementation phase of the Master Plan.

Promote apartment development in appropriate locations:

Currently, apartments are allowed only by special permit in the General Residence zoning district and in the Business and Central Business districts by special permit for conversions of single family houses built before 1956 to two-family homes and for housing above business uses subject to certain requirements.

- **Permit apartments over retail and transit-oriented residential development in Walpole Center by right.** Walpole Center is an appropriate place to accommodate residential development. Residents in the Town Center can walk to the commuter rail station and will help create a larger and more diverse market for downtown businesses, thus benefiting everyone who lives in Walpole. Apartments over ground floor retail should be permitted by right. The Economic Development chapter recommends establishment of a downtown overlay district that identifies potential redevelopment opportunities and that would include design guidelines to be applied to development in the downtown area.
- **Consider mixed-use development in other locations.** Higher-density residential development in conjunction with other uses, such as retail and commercial, can help the town meet its goals for accommodating senior housing, starter housing, and affordable housing. Much of this housing could be a positive source of tax revenue for the town. Potential locations include East Walpole, where somewhat higher densities in the business district can help recreate the activity that supports more neighborhood retailers and service businesses, and the Route 1 area, as part of redevelopment that includes retail or office uses.

Consider Planned Development Overlay Districts by special permit for large institutional and government properties that could be appropriate for mixed use development if they were to be privately developed sometime in the future.

The master plan process is the opportunity to think ahead about potential changes in use for some of the remaining large properties in Walpole. In addition to the Cedar Junction Prison and the Norfolk County Agricultural School, there are several important open space properties in Walpole such as the Walpole Country Club, the New England Home for Little Wanderers, the Westwood Gun Club and the Walpole Sportsman's

Association. At present there is no reason to believe that imminent changes in use are being contemplated for these properties. However, because these properties are so important, the Town must have a strategy ready should there be changes in use.

Currently these properties are zoned for conventional residential development. If the Town implements the recommendation for conservation subdivisions, this type of cluster subdivision would become the by-right development type. However, these properties are big enough that the Town should consider if some of these properties might be appropriate for uses such as a conference center, corporate campus, or spa, with or without a limited amount of housing. A Planned Development District would allow a property-owner or developer flexibility in creating a master plan for the project with the guidance and approval of the Planning Board through a special permit process. This could be a “floating” overlay district. This means that the overlay district would contain a definition of what kinds of properties and projects to which it could be applied, but it would not become valid until the Planning Board (or other authority designated in the bylaw) made a finding that the area and the proposed use meet the requirements of the district. At a minimum, general parameters should be included in the by-law, such as the range and percentage of uses, required open space percentages, and design and development performance standards.

Review and evaluate the bylaws on multifamily phasing, subdivision phasing and growth management for effectiveness, internal contradiction, and legality and amend or eliminate as appropriate. (Sections 9-H, 9-I, 9-J of the Zoning Bylaw).

These sections of the bylaw are complex and it is not clear that they fulfill their objectives. The multifamily phasing bylaw (Section 9-H) is a barrier to creation of housing over retail in Walpole Center. The “Design Criteria” point system in the subdivision phasing bylaw (Section 9-I) is of limited usefulness in attaining better subdivision design. If the recommendation is accepted to make Open Space Residential Development the mandatory by-right zoning for all remaining development sites over 4 acres, this complicated bylaw would not be needed. The growth management bylaw (Section 9-J) contains a building permit cap limit that has never been reached. The law implies that it will sunset by December 31, 2006. These kinds of laws typically cannot be extended indefinitely.

Create a Walpole Housing Partnership, based on the Affordable Housing Committee, to take responsibility for pursuing affordable housing creation.

The Affordable Housing Committee has done a good job in moving Walpole’s affordable housing efforts forward. However, it may be valuable to create a new group, including those members of the Affordable Housing Committee who wish to continue, to give the Town guidance on all affordable housing policies and proposals. The traditional name for such a group is a “Housing Partnership.” Housing Partnerships are volunteer groups, usually appointed by Boards of Selectmen, which take the lead in planning for affordable housing. Membership should include people with appropriate interest and expertise, such as public officials, business and community leaders,

attorneys, realtors, clergy, and Housing Authority representatives. The activities of the Housing Partnership would likely include the following:

- Increasing public awareness through forums and other public events
- Preparing and seeking implementation of affordable housing plans
- Establishing criteria to evaluate affordable housing proposals
- Making recommendations on the pros and cons of particular housing proposals
- Identifying public and private resources to further development
- Locating available land suitable for development
- Reviewing land use regulations and zoning bylaws
- Working with developers of affordable housing

The Housing Partnership should be responsible for working with town staff to prepare and pursue implementation of a Planned Production Affordable Housing Plan. After approval of the plan by the state Department of Housing and Community Development, the Partnership can work on creation of sufficient permanently affordable housing to meet the criteria for certification of the plan. As noted earlier, certification will allow Walpole not to accept Chapter 40B projects for a specified period of time.

The Housing Partnership should study the market for both senior housing and family housing. A Family Housing Subcommittee can evaluate the need for housing that would allow town employees and young people who have grown up in Walpole to be able to live in Town. Working with the Council on Aging, a Senior Housing Subcommittee can study the market for market rate and affordable senior housing, both ownership and rental, among local residents through a survey, evaluate different models of senior housing that are on the market (such as the continuum from independent living to assisted living to Alzheimer's care), develop a conceptual program for an over-55 development that would meet the needs of older Walpole residents, and identify town-owned or other land that would be appropriate. Through the Council on Aging, survey Walpole seniors on the extent of need for senior housing, preferences on tenure and type, etc

Revive the possibility of creating a nonprofit subsidiary of the Housing Authority.

As noted earlier, the Housing Authority board was considering this option at one point. The Housing Authority is currently the organization in Town that has most expertise in affordable housing, but it does not have access to certain kinds of funding that are only available to nonprofits. By creating this subsidiary, Walpole will be adding to the array of institutions needed for the Town to be able to take advantage of funding and other opportunities.

Seek assistance from agencies such as Mass Housing Partnership (MHP) and Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) to help in implementation of the affordable housing strategy.

There are many organizations, such as the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) and Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) that offer resources and technical assistance. MHP has assisted many communities in creating effective Housing Partnerships and creating affordable housing that is compatible with community character. It also can provide pre-development funding, technical assistance, bridge financing and assistance to communities in working on Chapter 40B proposals. In addition, the Housing Partnership should reach out to regional nonprofit housing groups, religious congregations and others that may be interested in supporting affordable housing creation.

Study the feasibility of affordable housing creation on previously-identified town-owned and other public parcels of land.

The affordable housing report identified parcels with potential for affordable housing. Some of these were privately-owned, but several were under Town control. The feasibility of residential development on parcels most likely to be suitable should be undertaken. Because the high cost of land is one of the greatest barriers to affordable housing production, if the Town can contribute or donate land to a project, it makes affordable housing creation, as well as moderately priced market housing creation much easier. The Town does not have to develop the housing itself, but it can set the framework and standards for the kind of development it seeks. Through a Request for Proposals process, the Town can offer property for sale or for lease to developers subject to development in conformity with the Town's plan for the property.

Establish relationships with nonprofit housing developers and for profit affordable housing developers and explore the possibility of Local Initiative Program or "friendly 40B" projects on town-owned land.

The Department of Housing and Community Development's Local Initiative Program provides technical assistance to local communities that produce affordable units and counts them towards the Chapter 40B inventory, while allowing a greater degree of flexibility than is available for projects with direct financial subsidies. The Town can find nonprofit or for-profit developers who will work to create affordable housing developments that are compatible with the Town's needs and with Town character.

Establish inclusionary/incentive zoning for mixed use projects and all subdivisions over a specified number of units.

As new market rate housing is created in Walpole, the number of affordable units needed to meet the town's 10% goal under Chapter 40B will continue to increase. Affordable housing creation should therefore accompany the creation of market rate housing.

Inclusionary zoning requires a developer to provide a certain percentage of affordable units within a development. Incentive zoning provides a benefit – typically a density bonus – in return for providing affordable unit. In the case of mixed use projects, such as the housing over retail proposed for the downtown, the density increases that are already part of the zoning overlay are sufficient to require 10% of units be permanently affordable.

In the case of conventional subdivision, to achieve more affordable units, the Town needs to make the development of affordable housing economically feasible for developers who might otherwise prefer a 40B application. The correct threshold number of units must also be considered. For example, if inclusionary zoning applies to all developments of 10 or more units but the incentives are insufficient, developers may prefer to build 9 bigger and more expensive houses – and recent experience indicates that they will have little trouble finding buyers. For small subdivisions, an inclusionary zoning by-law should also provide for the possibility of a payment to an Affordable Housing Trust in lieu of providing affordable units. (See below.) Walpole has relatively few large parcels available for development any more, and subdivisions are now more likely to be 5 or 6 units than even 10 or 12. It is important that the Town evaluate the market and developer behavior when setting threshold levels, density bonuses, and in-lieu payments to an affordable housing trust.

Seek legislative permission to establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Many communities have established an Affordable Housing Trust, but the state legislature must vote permission. The Fund can receive donations from both public and private sources for affordable housing creation.

Explicitly allow affordable accessory units by right in all residential zones.

Walpole currently allows the renting of rooms to not more than four persons and private guest houses in all zoning districts (except the Park, Schools, Recreation and Conservation Zone). Two-family and three-family dwellings are allowed by special permit only in the General Residential district. Accessory dwelling units are not explicitly addressed in the zoning code. Typically, an accessory unit would be a small housing unit created within an existing house without any change in the exterior of the house, or with only a small percentage change in the overall size of the house. It can have a separate entry /exit, or access can be through the principal dwelling's entries and exits.

The advantage of accessory units is that they provide more housing options without creating significant change within a lot or in a neighborhood. Sometimes called “mother in law apartments,” they are often valuable

options for older persons, but should not be limited only to people related to the resident of the principal dwelling unit.

A number of communities are looking to affordable accessory units as one way to create more affordable housing with minimum impacts. They require a deed restriction and some monitoring of the income eligibility of the tenant, but templates and systems have already been developed by other towns that limit the red tape.

Allow by right small-scale affordable single family houses and duplexes with one affordable unit on substandard, nonconforming lots, subject to limited site plan review and, if relevant, septic capacity considerations; and allow addition of a second affordable unit to make a duplex of a single family house subject to the same consideration.

Half of the existing housing in Walpole is on lots that are smaller than the minimum required under current zoning. Nonconforming lots can be a source of scattered-site affordable housing creation. Parcels that lack required size or frontage but that otherwise provide necessary water and wastewater capacity could be made legal lots for building affordable units or duplexes in which one unit is affordable. Similarly, allowing single family houses to be converted into duplexes, as long as the second unit is permanently affordable, would help meet the same goal.

Adopt the state law on tax title properties that provides for forgiveness of taxes owed to developers of affordable housing.

Municipalities can adopt a state law that allows them to forgive taxes owed on tax title properties if a new owner will develop affordable housing. Although there may not be many opportunities of this type in Walpole, it is worthwhile to have this tool should an opportunity arise.

Consider designating areas for tax increment financing incentives under the new District Improvement and Urban Housing District Financing law.

Recent state legislation allows communities to designate areas as small as a parcel but no more than 25% of the town for District Improvement Financing (DIF) and Urban Housing Tax Increment Financing Districts. A housing district would allow the Town to provide tax abatements to affordable housing developers over a specified number of years. Brownfield properties that are capable of being remediated to a level that is appropriate for housing might be among the appropriate locations for DIF and Housing TIF Districts.

Explore the feasibility of tax abatements on existing homes occupied by income-eligible households in return for affordability agreements.

The Town of Marion is developing a program for local homeowners whose incomes are at 80 percent or below the regional median in which they would receive tax abatements in return for affordability agreements that would make the homes eligible for the 40B inventory. In this way the Town would be able to increase its supply of permanently affordable housing without increasing the total number of housing units. The program will require state approval.

Seek EO 418 certification and pursue approval of an affordable housing planned production plan based on the housing element of the master plan.

In order to remain eligible for certain discretionary state programs and to be eligible for bonus points on programs for open space funding, Walpole must keep up its Housing Certification under EO 418. Starting in FY2004, certification depends on actual creation of new ownership housing units affordable to households at 150% of area median income or below, based on the assessed values of the new units, and new rental units affordable to households at or below 100% of median. (Note that this is not the same standard applied to housing eligible for the Chapter 40B list. That housing must be permanently affordable to households making 80% or less of the area median household income.) Approval and certification (after creation of sufficient affordable units) of a planned production plan can provide Walpole with the opportunity to avoid “unfriendly” Chapter 40B proposals.

According to current regulations, Walpole would have to create 62 affordable housing units a year (3/4 of one percent of the Town’s year 2000 supply of 8,202 year round housing units) as part of an approved Planned Production Plan in order to be protected against unfriendly 40Bs. In the analysis earlier in this chapter, it was estimated that if Walpole were to add the same number of units during the 2000-2010 decade as it did during the 1990s, it would need at least 503 Chapter 40B eligible units in order to meet the 40B 10% goal. This is assuming that a substantial portion of the additional housing units during the decade would be affordable housing. If Walpole were to add 62 affordable housing units a year, it would reach the additional 503 units in less than 9 years.

The matrix below suggests a distribution of affordable housing at an average annual rate of 62 units a year. This is a conservative (high) proposed rate of creation that assumes that Walpole will need somewhat more than an additional 503 units of 40B eligible housing to meet the state’s 10% goal. The mix of unit types is intended to ensure that there will be some affordable housing units that are large enough for families, as well as a range of other units for households of different sizes.

| Walpole Affordable Housing: Unit Mix Goals for 10 years | | | | |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| | 10 year total | Annual total | Average units per year | |
| | | | Rental* | Ownership |
| Single family | 100 | 10 | - | 10 |
| Condo | 100 | 10 | - | 10 |
| Multifamily (including duplex units) | 300 | 30 | 30 | - |
| Accessory apartments | 20 | 2 | 2 | - |
| Senior housing | 100 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 620 | 62 | 37 | 25 |
| *Note that for the purposes of 40B, all rental housing, both market and permanently affordable, that is produced under the 40B program counts towards the Town's 40B percentage. | | | | |

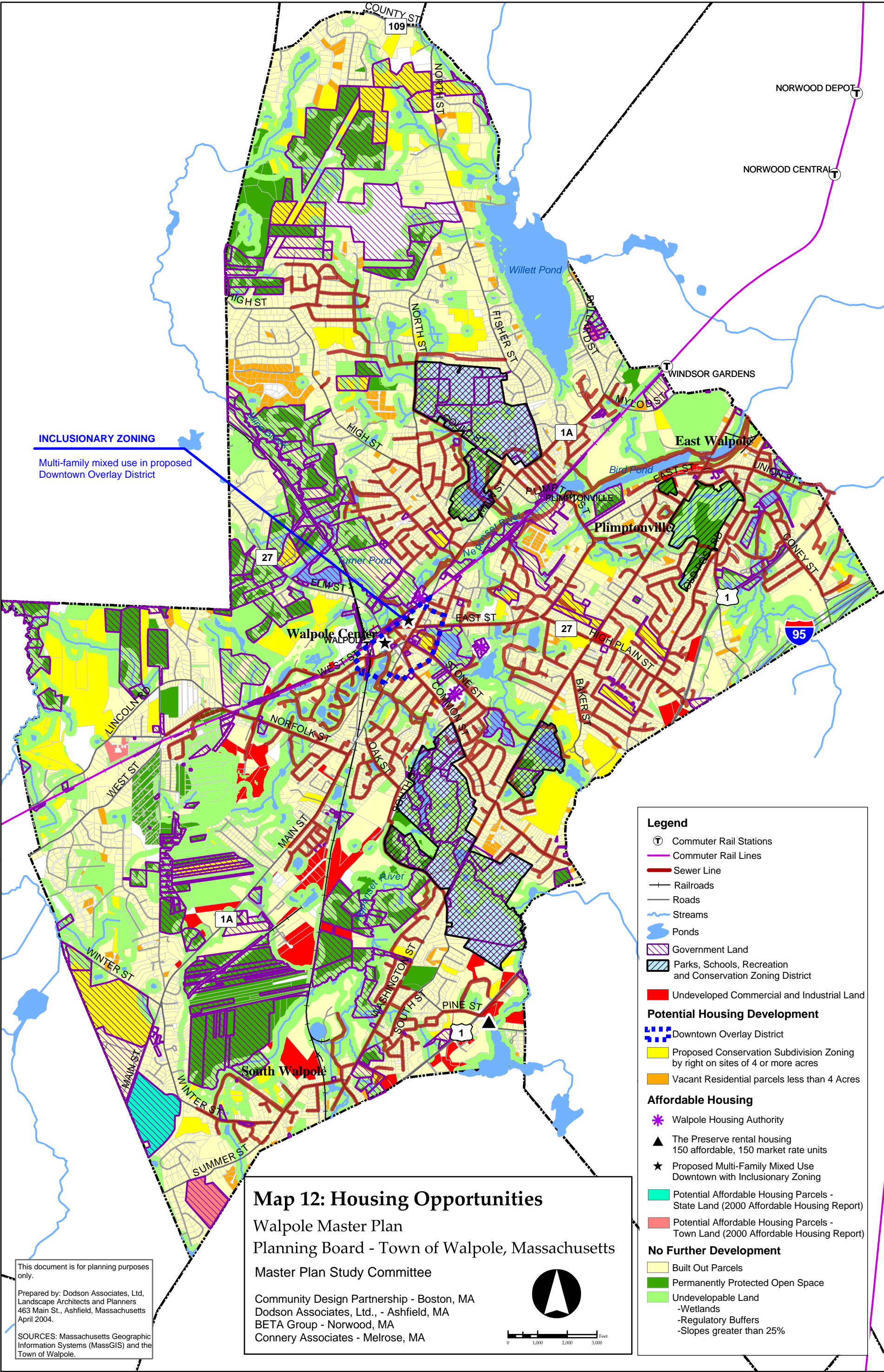
Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act.

Adoption of the CPA would provide a dedicated stream of funding for affordable housing, as well as open space protection and historic preservation. The tax surcharge combined with state matching funds has become increasingly important in helping communities shape the way that affordable housing is created in their localities. The CPA process promotes the possibility of projects that can successfully combine the three goals. Current fiscal conditions may make it difficult for the Town to consider adding new tax responsibilities, even if they are modest. However, the Town should study the benefits that the CPA has brought to communities that have adopted it and consider a plan to vote on it in a few years.

C. Maps

Map 12: Housing Opportunities

This map identifies all the parcels in Walpole that are not permanently protected from development that have four acres or more still available for development (either open parcels or parcels with a house that have 4 acres or more above the zoning district's minimum lot size). The Plan is recommending that all these parcels be zoned for mandatory and by right conservation subdivision zoning. The identified parcels include parcels currently in open space tax abatement programs (Chapter 61, 61A and 61B). In some cases these parcels appear unlikely to be developed, for example the Walpole Country Club. However, future conditions can change and it is important that the Town put into place the regulatory framework that will produce the outcomes the Town wants if development occurs. The map also identifies potential affordable housing locations.



| D. HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|--|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| Add planning staff capacity | Invest in staff to help meet residential development and affordable housing goals | Appoint a full-time planner (in process Spring 2004) | H | S | Planning Board (PB) |
| Manage residential growth to be compatible with town character | Promote preservation of remaining open space and town character while accommodating residential growth | Amend the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw (Sec. 11) to require a clearer but simpler four-stage design process that emphasizes preservation of the best land from an environmental and scenic point of view (the conservation subdivision model) | H | M | Town Planner; PB; Town Meeting (TM) |
| | | Amend the zoning bylaw to make OSRD the mandatory by-right zoning for all parcels of 4 acres or more | M | M | PB; TM |
| | | Establish site plan review for residential subdivisions | H | S | PB |
| | | Review and evaluate the bylaws on multifamily phasing, subdivision phasing and growth management for effectiveness, internal contradiction, and legality. Amend or eliminate as appropriate. (Sec 9-H, 9-I, 9-J) | M | M | Town Planner; PB; TM |
| | | Consider Planned Development Overlay Districts by special permit for institutional properties that could be appropriate for mixed-use development | L | M | Town Planner; PB; TM |
| | Promote transit-oriented development in Walpole Center | Permit apartments over retail downtown by right | H | S | PB; TM |
| | Allow apartment development in designated mixed-use areas where it would add to the tax base and have limited impact on existing neighborhoods | Establish the Downtown Opportunity District Overlay to promote mixed-use development | H | S | PB; TM |
| | | Consider mixed-use development for East Walpole center at an appropriate scale | M | M | Town Planner; PB; TM |

| D. HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | Promote the availability of over-55 housing for residents who wish to downsize their housing and stay in town | Allow over-55 apartments as part of mixed use development in the proposed Commercial/Office Overlay in the Route 1 area | L | L | PB; TM |
| Provide housing affordable to seniors, town employees and young people starting out in life and meet the Chapter 40B goal for 10% permanently affordable housing | | Create a Walpole Housing Partnership, based on the Affordable Housing Committee, to take responsibility for pursuing affordable housing creation | H | S | Board of Selectmen (BoS) |
| | Encourage creation of affordable housing that minimizes creation of additional market rate units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversion of existing units to affordable Small-scale developments with a higher percentage of affordable units Accessory units | Seek assistance from agencies such as Mass Housing Partnership and Citizens Housing and Planning Association to help in implementation of the affordable housing strategy | H | S | Town Planner; Housing Partnership |
| | | Study the feasibility of affordable housing creation on previously-identified town-owned and other public parcels of land | H | S | Town Planner; Housing Partnership |
| | | Establish relationships with nonprofit housing developers and for profit affordable housing developers | H | S | Town Planner; Housing Partnership |
| | | Revive the possibility of creating a nonprofit subsidiary of the Housing Authority | M | M | Town Planner; Housing Partnership |
| | | Explore the possibility of Local Initiative Program or "friendly 40B" projects on town-owned land | H | S | Town Planner; Housing Partnership |
| | | Establish 10% affordable unit requirement in mixed-use apartment projects, for example, downtown | H | S | PB; TM |
| | | Establish inclusionary / incentive zoning for all subdivisions over a specified number of units | M | M | PB; TM |

| D. HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | | Seek legislative approval of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund | M | M | BoS |
| | | Explicitly allow affordable accessory units by right in all residential zones | H | S | PB; TM |
| | | Allow by right small-scale affordable single family and duplexes with one affordable unit on substandard, nonconforming lots, subject to limited site plan review | H | M | PB; TM |
| | | Adopt the state law on tax title properties that provides for forgiveness of taxes owed to developers of affordable housing | M | S | BoS |
| | | Explore designation of downtown or other areas for TIF housing financing | M | M | Town Planner; Housing Partnership; BoS |
| | | Explore the feasibility of tax abatements on existing housing units occupied by income-eligible households in return for affordability agreements | L | L | Town Planner; Housing Partnership |
| | Encourage rental housing for seniors with an affordable component | Consider creating a Senior Housing Subcommittee of the proposed Housing Partnership to work with the Council on Aging to identify senior housing needs | M | M | Housing Partnership; Council on Aging |
| | | Create a conceptual program for an over-55 development | M | M | Housing Partnership; Council on Aging |
| | | Consider continuum projects, e.g., combination of apts/condos, assisted living, and Alzheimer's care on different parts of the same development site | M | M | Housing Partnership; Council on Aging |

| D. HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | Seek EO 418 certification for FY 2004 and beyond in order to keep Walpole eligible for certain state funding programs | Submit the housing strategies from the Master Plan with data on the assessed values of units created within the last twelve months for EO 418 certification. | H | S | Town Planner |
| | Submit a Planned Production Affordable Housing Plan to the state | Submit the quantitative planned production information along with the housing strategies from the Master Plan | H | S | Town Planner |
| Seek a regular funding source for affordable housing | | Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act | M | M | TM |

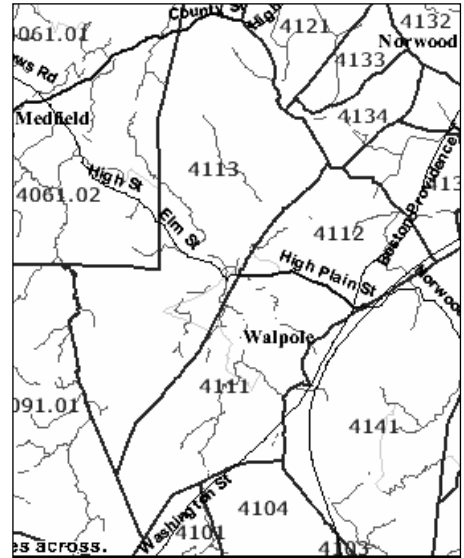
Housing Appendix: Housing comparison by census tract

Walpole has three census tracts. Analysis of demographic and housing data by census tract shows few significant differences between the different parts of Walpole. All the census tracts have comparable percentages of households with children and with persons over 60 years old. Census Tract 4113, which covers West and North Walpole, tends to have somewhat larger houses and more people who did not live there five years ago, as might be expected because new development has been more common in that part of town.

Census Tract 4111: Central and South Walpole

Census Tract 4112: East Walpole

Census Tract 4113: West and North Walpole



| | Census Tract Number | | |
|---|---------------------|-------|-------|
| | 4111 | 4112 | 4113 |
| Demographics | | | |
| Population | 7,351 | 5,945 | 9,528 |
| Households | 2,625 | 2,183 | 3,252 |
| Family Households | 1,974 | 1,604 | 2,394 |
| Non-Family Households | 78 | 109 | 84 |
| Average Household Size | 2.74 | 2.72 | 2.69 |
| Average family size | 3.24 | 3.23 | 3.23 |
| Single Person Households | 573 | 470 | 774 |
| Households with one or more people under 18 years: | 974 | 812 | 1,180 |
| Households with one or more people 60 years and over: | 966 | 723 | 1,231 |
| Households with one or more people 65 years and over: | 784 | 575 | 998 |
| Correctional institutions | 160 | 0 | 670 |
| Same house in 1995 | 5,177 | 3,750 | 5,414 |
| Different house in 1995: | 1,684 | 1,730 | 3,522 |
| Proportion of total in each census tract | | | |
| Households with one or more people under 18 years: | 21.8% | 21.5% | 23.8% |
| Households with one or more people 60 years and over: | 37.1% | 37.2% | 36.3% |
| Households with one or more people 65 years and over: | 36.8% | 33.1% | 37.9% |
| Same house in 1995 | 70.4% | 63.1% | 56.8% |

| Units in Structure | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Census tract: | 4111 | 4112 | 4113 |
| Total: | 2,681 | 2,220 | 3,328 |
| 1, detached | 2,063 | 1,534 | 2,270 |
| 1, attached | 53 | 134 | 398 |
| 2 | 48 | 196 | 82 |
| 3 or 4 | 152 | 119 | 72 |
| 5 to 9 | 197 | 92 | 94 |
| 10 to 19 | 143 | 66 | 89 |
| 20 to 49 | 0 | 79 | 31 |
| 50 or more | 18 | 0 | 292 |
| Mobile home | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Boat, RV, van, etc. | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Median number of rooms | 6.7 | 6.2 | 6.9 |
| Year Structure Built | | | |
| Total: | 2,681 | 2,220 | 3,328 |
| Built 1999 to March 2000 | 8 | 27 | 122 |
| Built 1995 to 1998 | 95 | 61 | 253 |
| Built 1990 to 1994 | 93 | 158 | 581 |
| Built 1980 to 1989 | 439 | 235 | 673 |
| Built 1970 to 1979 | 379 | 120 | 330 |
| Built 1960 to 1969 | 308 | 362 | 614 |
| Built 1950 to 1959 | 517 | 422 | 321 |
| Built 1940 to 1949 | 251 | 148 | 161 |
| Built 1939 or earlier | 591 | 687 | 273 |

| Median year householder moved into unit | | | |
|--|------|------|------|
| Total | 1989 | 1992 | 1993 |
| Owner occupied | 1986 | 1990 | 1992 |
| Renter occupied | 1996 | 1998 | 1997 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Median gross rent (1999) | \$730 | \$870 | \$833 |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|

VI. Economic Development



Goals:

- Increase property tax revenue from business properties
- Reclaim brownfield sites for new uses and protect environmentally sensitive land
- Revitalize downtown Walpole and neighborhood centers
- Improve the mix of retail and services that serve residents
- Attract new high paying jobs

A. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- The value of Walpole's non-residential property has increased since 1982, but the value of residential property increased much more.
- The number of jobs in Walpole grew 28% between 1990 and 2001. Jobs grew in the categories of Services, Construction, Government and Wholesale and Retail Trade, but declined in Manufacturing.
- The number of employers grew 10% between 1990 and 2001.
- Walpole jobs pay average weekly wages below the state and Boston metropolitan average wages.
- Walpole has relatively few jobs in the "knowledge-based" industries with high paying managerial, technical, and professional jobs.
- Nearly half of Walpole residents in the labor force work in Management, Professional and Related Occupations and 70 percent work outside Walpole.
- Walpole's commercial/industrial tax rate is somewhat higher than the rate of its nearest competitors – Norwood, Norfolk and Foxborough.

Key Challenges

- Balance business development with environmental protection and residential character.
- Redevelop underutilized properties, including brownfields after remediation of contamination.
- Attract higher value business investment.

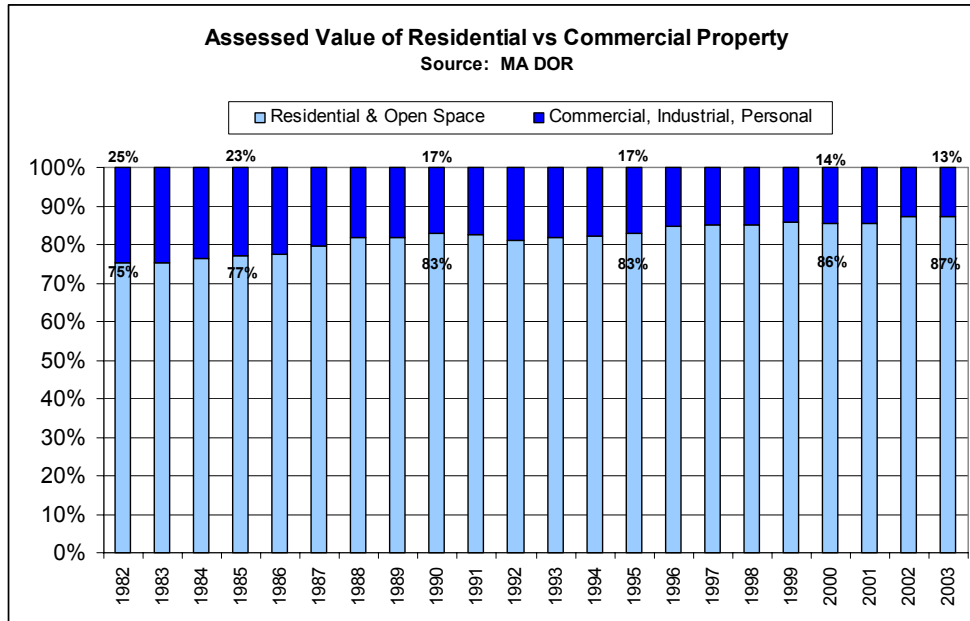
Walpole's business community has long provided jobs for local residents and served as an economic engine for surrounding towns. Early producers of bog iron, lumber, and flour gave way over the years to a diverse mix of manufacturers, distributors, and retailers. Some residents have maintained an image of the Town as an independent, working mill town even as Walpole has evolved into a prosperous suburb with close ties to the rest of metropolitan Boston. Residents continue to look to the local business community to aid town finances, deliver goods and services to residents, and, to a lesser degree, provide employment. In addition, economic development policy in Walpole must be concerned with improving the function and appearance of commercial areas.

In the public meetings and the survey, many residents said that business has been declining in Walpole. Especially because of rising property taxes and the pressure to pay for town services, there was strong support for economic development. However, contrary to public perception, Walpole's base of jobs and the value of its commercial and industrial properties continue to grow. But much faster growth of residential property values has resulted in the commercial/industrial tax base declining from about 30% of the total valuation to 13% over the last 30 years. While Walpole shifts some of the tax burden to the business community through a higher tax rate on business property, many residents seek to further expand the tax base by encouraging new, higher value commercial and industrial development.

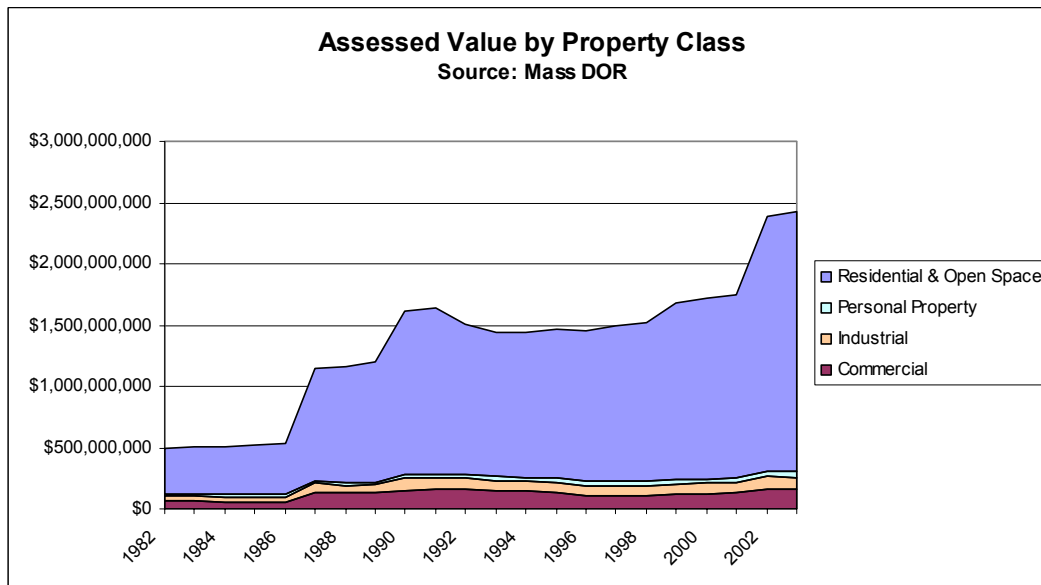
While concern is often expressed about the decline of Walpole's industrial base since World War II, the Town retains strong businesses in manufacturing, construction, and retail and wholesale trade. Yet, although the Town's economic base is relatively diversified and growing, some of the region's largest and fastest growing industries are not well represented locally, and many jobs in the town offer relatively low wages. As the economy has shifted from manufacturing to services, economic activity has expanded from stream-side mills toward the highways linking Walpole to jobs and markets in the larger region. Industrial uses are scattered on numerous sites across the town, ranging from well-kept facilities and industrial parks to contaminated brownfield sites. Retail activity has likewise expanded away from traditional locations downtown and in East Walpole to plazas on Routes 1 and 1A. Today, most of the people who work in Walpole provide services to businesses and local residents rather than manufacture goods. At the end of the work day most return to homes in other communities. Meanwhile, Walpole's increasingly well-educated and affluent residents primarily commute to jobs elsewhere in Eastern Massachusetts.

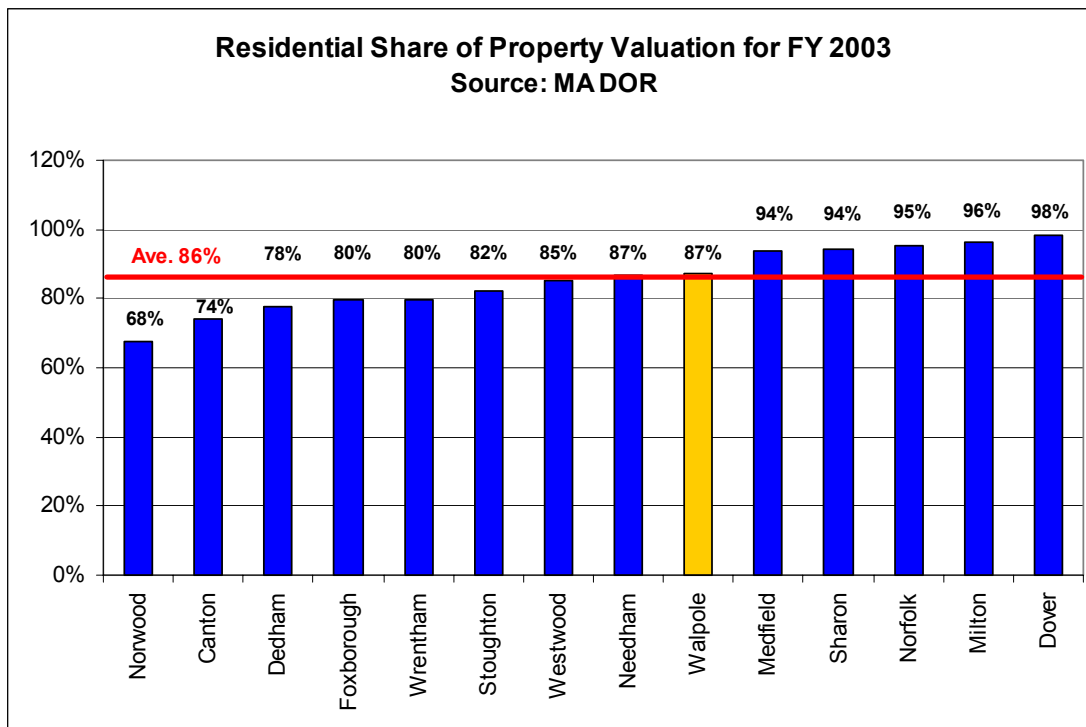
Business Property and Taxes

The property tax is the primary revenue source for Massachusetts communities. Walpole historically enjoyed a relatively high contribution from Commercial, Industrial, and Personal property (CIP), which reduced reliance on residential property taxes. However, in the last few decades, the proportion of the Town's assessed value represented by non-residential property has declined steadily, falling by half from 25 per cent in 1982 to 13 per cent in FY2003. The proportion of CIP property has been declining across Massachusetts, and in FY2002 represented 20 per cent of the state's total valuation.



Despite public perception that Walpole's commercial/industrial sector has seriously declined, the value of non-residential property has actually increased since 1982, by an average of \$9 million per year, but slowing to \$3.4 million per year since 1990. At the same time, the value of residential property increased by nine times as much, or \$1.7 billion, which substantially shrank the relative contribution from CIP property. The large residential increase reflects the building of hundreds of new houses in Walpole as well as the tremendous increase in value of residential properties that has occurred throughout Eastern Massachusetts.





While Walpole's FY2003 87 per cent share for residential property is considerably above commercial centers such as Boston, Cambridge, or even nearby Norwood, it is only slightly above the average of 86 per cent average among nearby communities and the 85 per cent average for all Massachusetts communities. Nearby affluent communities such as Sharon and Medfield, which Walpole is beginning to resemble demographically, have even lower CIP valuations -- below 10 per cent.

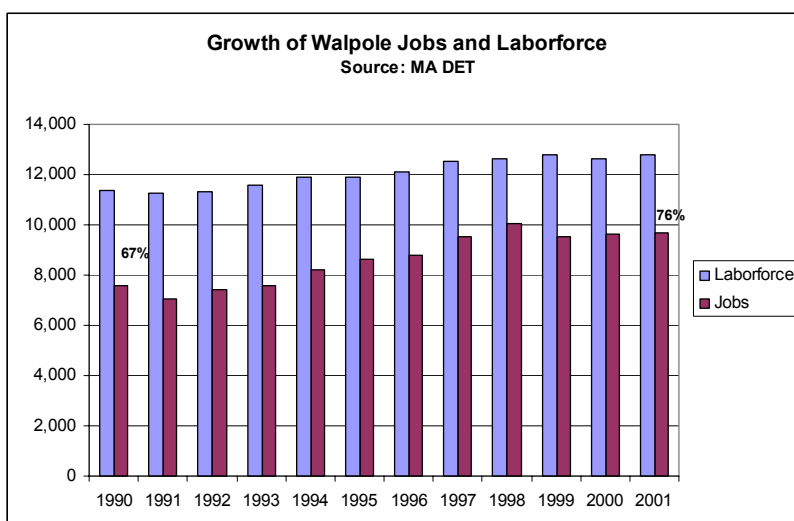
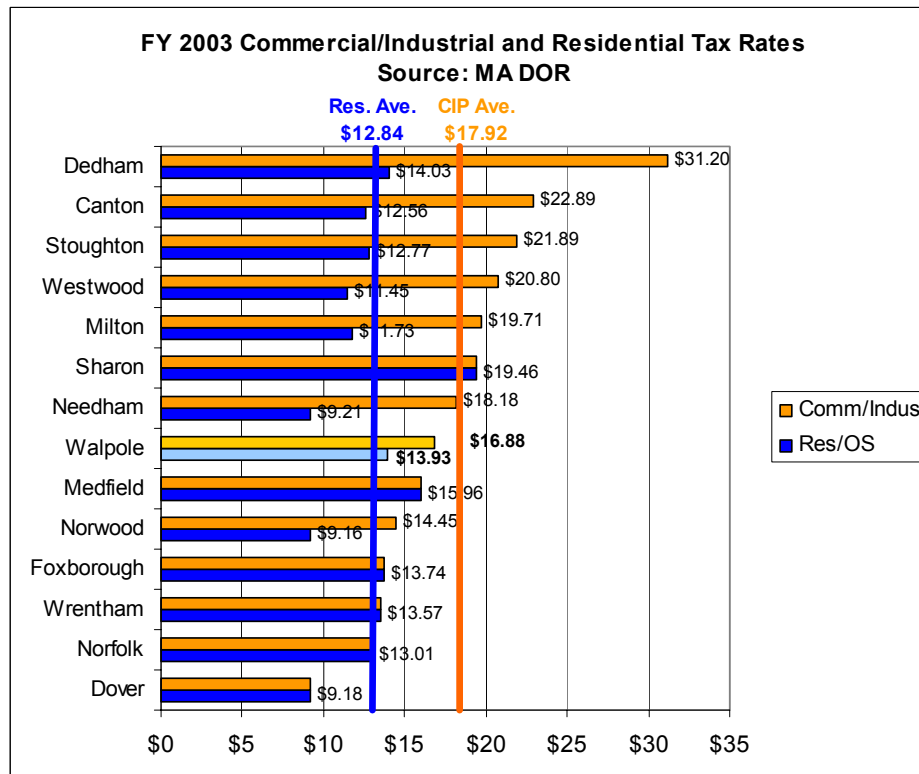
| FY 2003 Property Tax Rates per \$1,000 (Sorted by CIP Rate) | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------|
| | Residential | CIP |
| Dedham | 14.03 | 31.20 |
| Canton | 12.56 | 22.89 |
| Stoughton | 12.77 | 21.89 |
| Westwood | 11.45 | 20.80 |
| Milton | 11.73 | 19.71 |
| Sharon | 19.46 | 19.46 |
| Needham | 9.21 | 18.18 |
| Walpole | 13.93 | 16.88 |
| Medfield | 15.96 | 15.96 |
| Norwood | 9.16 | 14.45 |
| Foxborough | 13.74 | 13.74 |
| Wrentham | 13.57 | 13.57 |
| Norfolk | 13.01 | 13.01 |
| Dover | 9.18 | 9.18 |
| Group Average | 12.84 | 17.92 |

Source: DOR

"Split" Tax Rate

Walpole shifts some of the residential tax burden onto businesses with a higher tax rate on CIP property. In FY2003, this shift will lower the average single family tax bill by an estimated \$130. State law permits most communities, including Walpole, to increase the business tax burden by a maximum of 50% above what its share would be if tax rates were equal. In FY2002, Walpole shifted 18% of the burden through its split tax rate, which was at the lower end of the shift range for communities having similar amounts of commercial development that employ split rates. However, over 70% of communities in Walpole's category did not shift the burden at all.

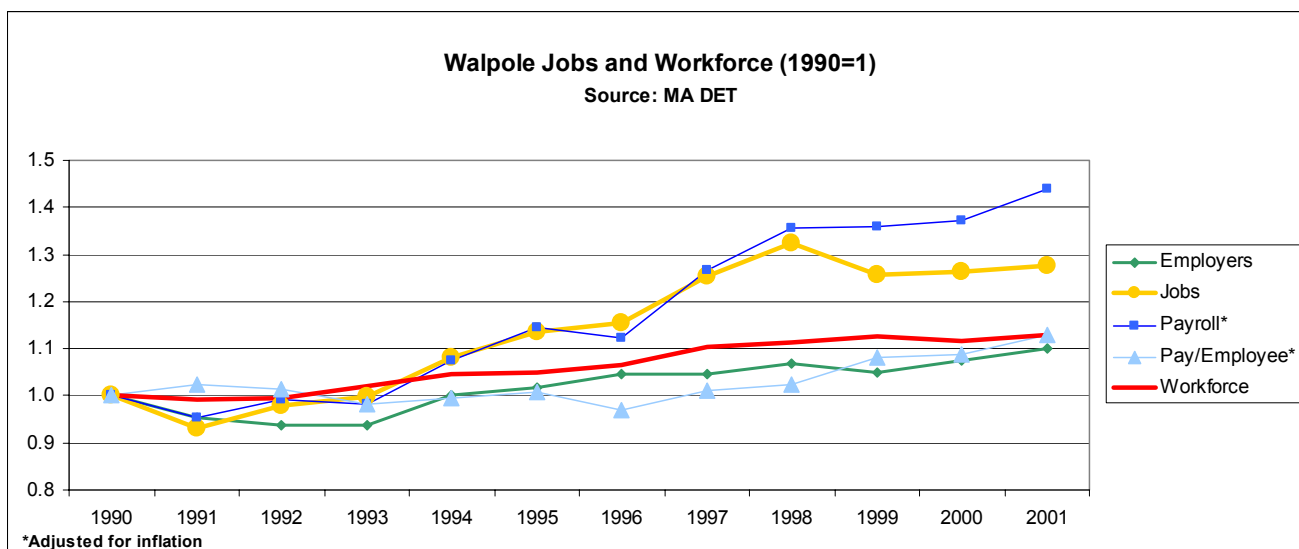
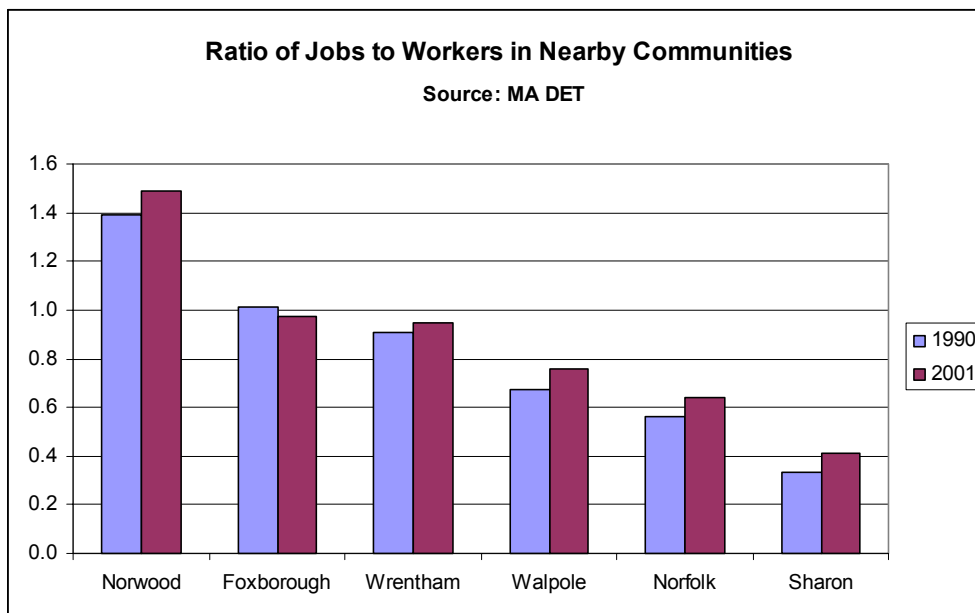
In general, communities having more commercial development use split rates more frequently than more residential communities. While split rates may be an appropriate option for communities with strong demand for commercial properties, increasing CIP taxes unreasonably can encourage businesses to locate and expand elsewhere. Walpole's FY2003 residential tax rate of \$13.93 is the fourth highest among thirteen nearby communities. Its CIP rate of \$16.88, while slightly below the group average, is above its nearest competitors Norwood, Norfolk, and Foxborough.



Employers and Wages in Walpole

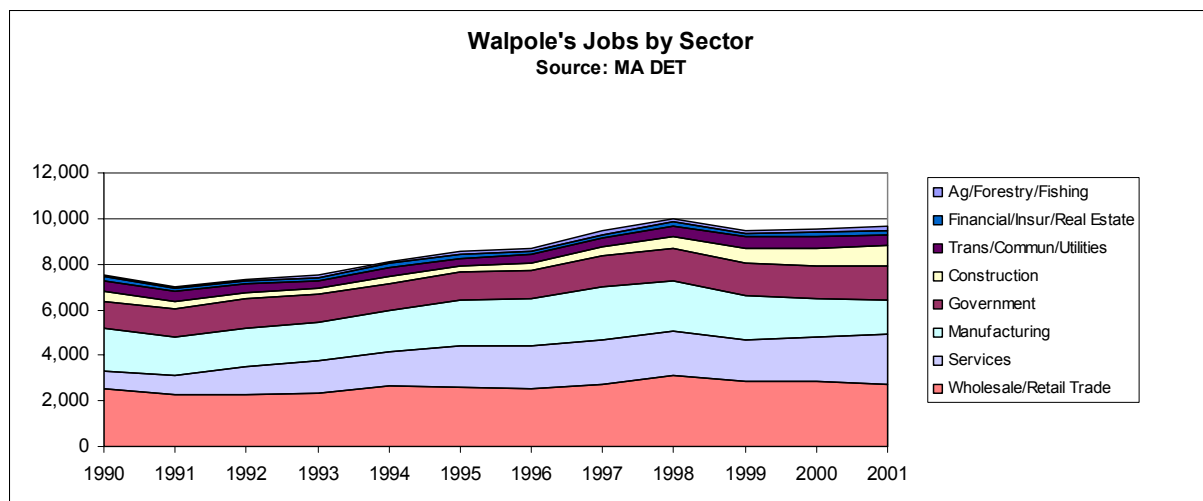
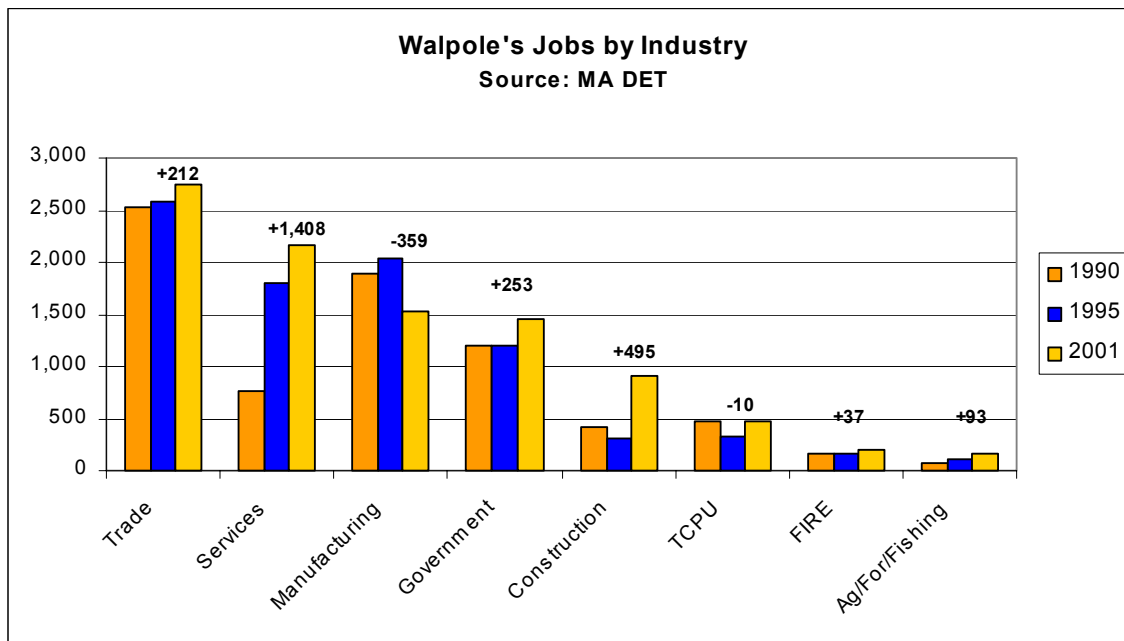
Walpole has long provided employment for area residents, first in mills and manufacturing plants but increasingly in stores, service businesses, and government. By the end of 2001, part- and full-time employment in Walpole had risen to 9,688 part- and full-time jobs, an increase of 2,100 (28 per

cent) since 1990. This growth was more than double that of the Town's labor force (13 per cent), so that Walpole's ratio of jobs to workers increased from 0.67 to 0.76. While Walpole's employers do not offer enough jobs to employ all its residents, the Town lies near the mid-range of neighboring communities in that regard. More residential and rural communities such as Sharon and Norfolk have ratios in the 0.4 to 0.6 range. Neighbors with extensive commercial/industrial zones such as Norwood or large facilities such as Foxborough's Gillette Stadium or the Wrentham Village Premium Outlet Mall have ratios approaching or exceeding 1.0, making them sub-regional employment centers that draw workers from the rest of the region.

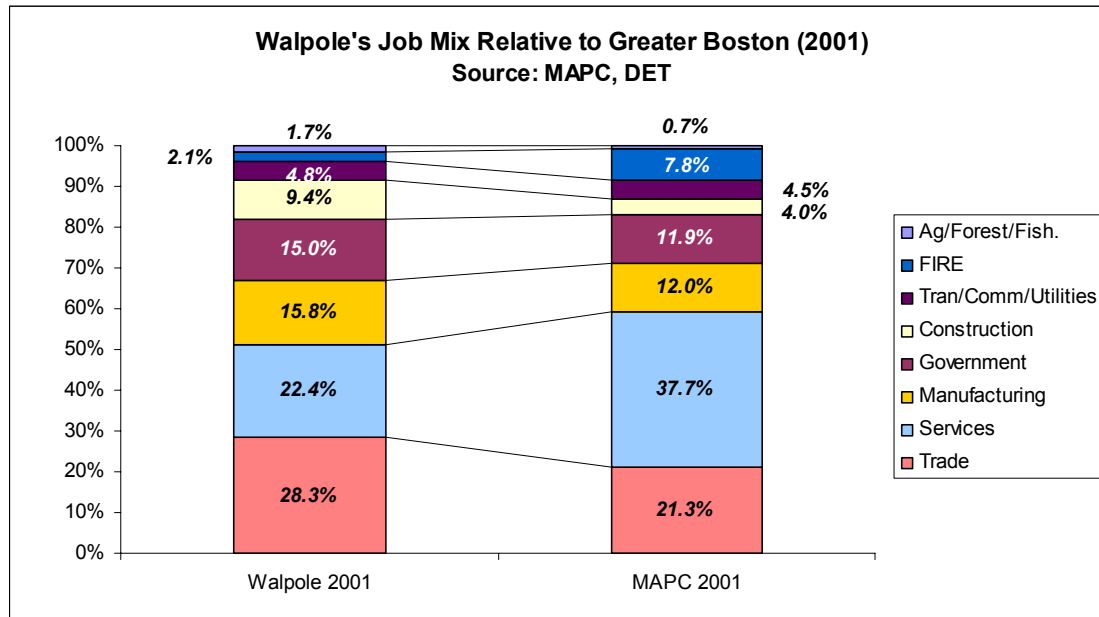


While manufacturing plant closings and layoffs in the 1990s created an impression that Walpole's economy was declining, the Town still has a substantial and growing job base. The number of employers grew by about 10

per cent to 710 over the decade, and the average paycheck grew by about 13 per cent (excluding inflation), indicating a slight growth in real hourly wages and/or an increase in the number of hours worked. Total payroll for all Walpole employers reached \$369 million in 2001. However, the mix of types of businesses in Walpole is changing as the regional economy continues to shift from manufacturing of products to delivery of services. Since 1990, Walpole businesses in the Service (1408 positions) and Construction (495) sectors added the most jobs, followed by Government (253) and Wholesale and Retail Trade (212). These gains more than made up for the decline in Manufacturing jobs (359) over the period. The large growth in Construction may reflect both the “freeing up” of skilled workers as manufacturing declined, as well as market demand from local residential growth and regional construction projects such as the Big Dig.

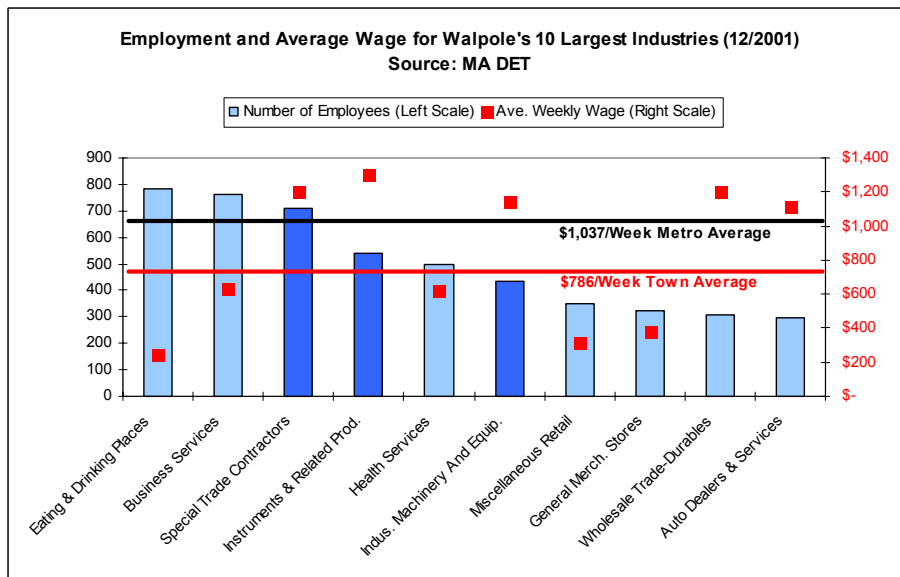


Walpole still has more jobs than the Boston Metropolitan region (101 cities and towns served by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council) in the traditional “blue collar” sectors of Manufacturing (16 per cent vs. 12 per cent regionally) and Construction (9 vs. 4 per cent), as well as in Wholesale and Retail Trade (28 vs. 21 per cent). Walpole has conspicuously fewer jobs than the Boston region in the Services sector (22 vs. 34 per cent) and in Finance/Insurance/Real Estate or FIRE (2 vs. 8 per cent).

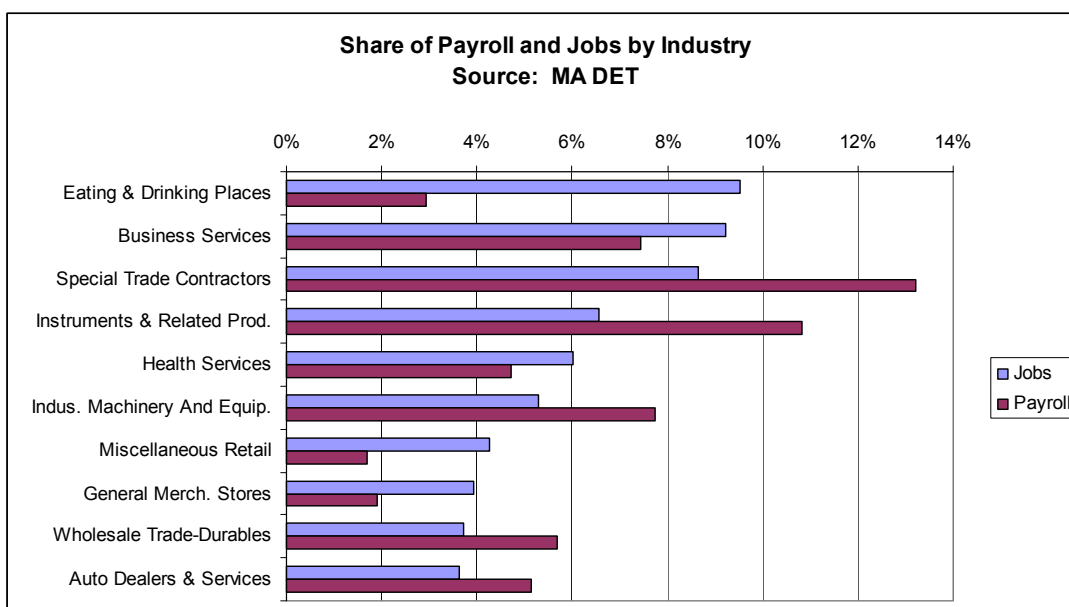


As in the nation as a whole, Walpole’s economy is dominated by services, with 68% (5,595) of Walpole’s 8,233 non-government jobs provided by 517 Service Producing companies. Another 173 Goods Producing employers provide 2,600 jobs. Over 60 per cent of Walpole’s jobs are found in 10 industries, with another 22 per cent found in the next largest 10.

Reflecting its manufacturing tradition, three of Walpole’s 10 largest industries are classified as Goods Producing: Specialty Trade Contractors, Instruments, and Industrial Machinery and Equipment. This is significant in that Goods Producing businesses have traditionally been able to pay higher wages than service businesses because they serve regional or national markets rather than just local consumers, and they add substantial value by converting raw materials into finished products. This distinction is becoming less significant as “knowledge based” service businesses such as finance, consulting, and information deliver ever more valuable services and become a larger portion of the economy. Yet, while knowledge based industries generate many high-paying jobs in the region, few are located in Walpole. Instead, a large number of Walpole’s service businesses are retailers, which offer numerous, but lower-paying jobs for the less skilled, teens new to the workforce, and adults and seniors seeking part-time or second jobs.



Walpole's three largest Goods Producing industries, as well as two others in the local top 10, Wholesale Trade in Durable Goods and Auto Dealers and Services, provide jobs that pay above both the Town and Boston Metro average weekly wage. The wide difference in wages between industries means that the impact on the local economy varies substantially from the simple count of part- and full-time jobs. So, for example, while higher paying Specialty Trade Contractors, Instruments, and Industrial Machinery businesses account for about 20 per cent of the town's jobs, they contribute over 30 per cent of the total payroll. These higher paying industries represent an existing base of businesses and skilled workers that would be desirable for the Town to retain and expand upon to increase local incomes.



Despite high employment in some higher paying industries, Walpole's average weekly wage of \$786/week for non-government jobs places local employees about 17 per cent below the statewide average of \$921 and 24 per cent below the Boston Metro average of \$1,037. Walpole's average wage is also below the neighboring towns of Norwood, Sharon, and Foxborough (the last adjusted to exclude the payrolls of professional sports teams). On an annual basis, the average wage for a non-government job in Walpole is about \$41,000, including both part- and full-time positions.

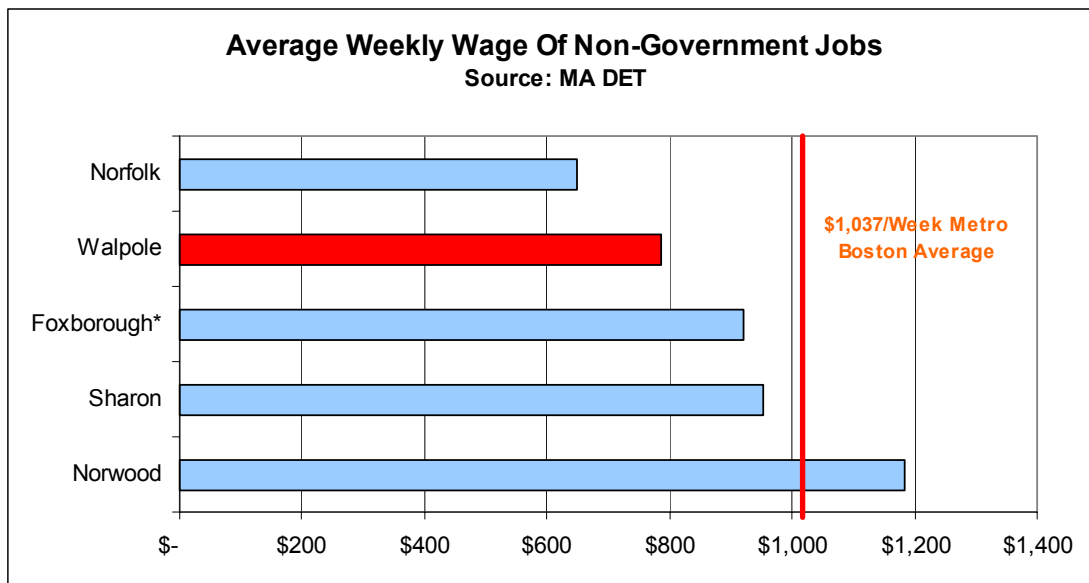


Table 1 in the Appendix compares the Town's employment base with that of the 101 MAPC communities in metropolitan Boston. Only four industries (Specialty Trade Contractors, Printing & Publishing, Auto Dealers, and Heavy Construction Except Building) pay wages in Walpole above their regional average. This may reflect local ownership of successful businesses in these categories. Most other Walpole businesses have few of the high paying managerial and professional positions found in larger companies and business centers in the region.

Of the region's top 20 industries in employment, Walpole has a substantially higher percentage of jobs (2 percentage points or more) in four: Industrial Machinery, Instruments, Specialty Trade Contractors, and Eating and Drinking Places. Of these, the first three pay relatively high wages while the latter is characterized by low paying, part-time positions. Walpole's top 20 industries also include the relatively well-paying Auto Dealers & Service Stations, as well as lower-paying General Merchandise Stores, Local & Interurban Passenger Transit, and Paper and Allied Products. The industry categories in which Walpole has strong employment numbers represent existing strengths that the Town could build upon by attracting additional companies to the Town's skilled labor force or by targeting businesses that supply these industries.

While the manufacturing industries support a skilled labor base and include successful companies that the Town would do well to retain and help expand, the State DET projects manufacturing jobs to decline statewide (-11% from 1998 to 2008). In contrast, Walpole is above the regional representation in Construction (Contractors and Heavy) and Wholesale Trade, which pay well and are projected to grow moderately. Retail industries, while lower

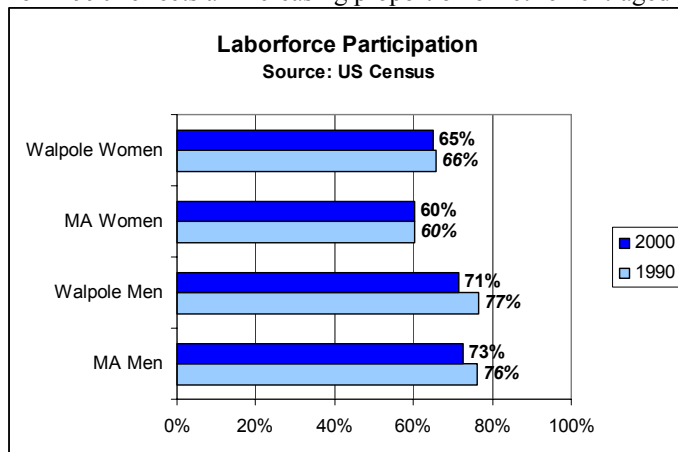
paying, include successful businesses downtown, along Route 1A, and on Route 1 that provide residents with useful services and draw shoppers from nearby towns. Strengthening the established retail sector can enhance quality of life and provide additional tax revenue, while providing entry level and part-time jobs.

In general, knowledge based businesses providing high paying managerial, technical, and professional jobs are poorly represented in Walpole. Most prominently, Engineering & Management Services has only a small presence in Walpole, but pays high wages and is growing rapidly statewide. In addition, Business Services is only slightly underrepresented in Walpole, but the local jobs pay much less than the regional average, and there are few local businesses in the high paying, fast growing Computer Software and Services segment. Significantly, these are increasingly the types of jobs in which Walpole residents work.

Industries in which Walpole is underrepresented are businesses that are present elsewhere in the region and might potentially be attracted to expand in Walpole. These include Health Services, Engineering and Management Services, Educational Services, and Security and Commodities Brokers. The Health Services industry is the largest employer in Greater Boston, accounting for 11.5 per cent of full and part-time jobs, but the proportion in Walpole is half that, probably reflecting the lack of a hospital within Town borders. While Health Services' average wage is modest, the industry is very large and relatively fast growing. The Securities and Commodities brokerage industry is also very small in Walpole, and while this category's wage and employment data are skewed by highly paid professionals unlikely to leave downtown locations, the industry is expected to expand, and back office functions and jobs for some firms have relocated from Boston to the suburbs. Educational Services is prominent regionally due to numerous private colleges and schools, but few are likely to expand geographically in the near future.

Walpole's Labor Force

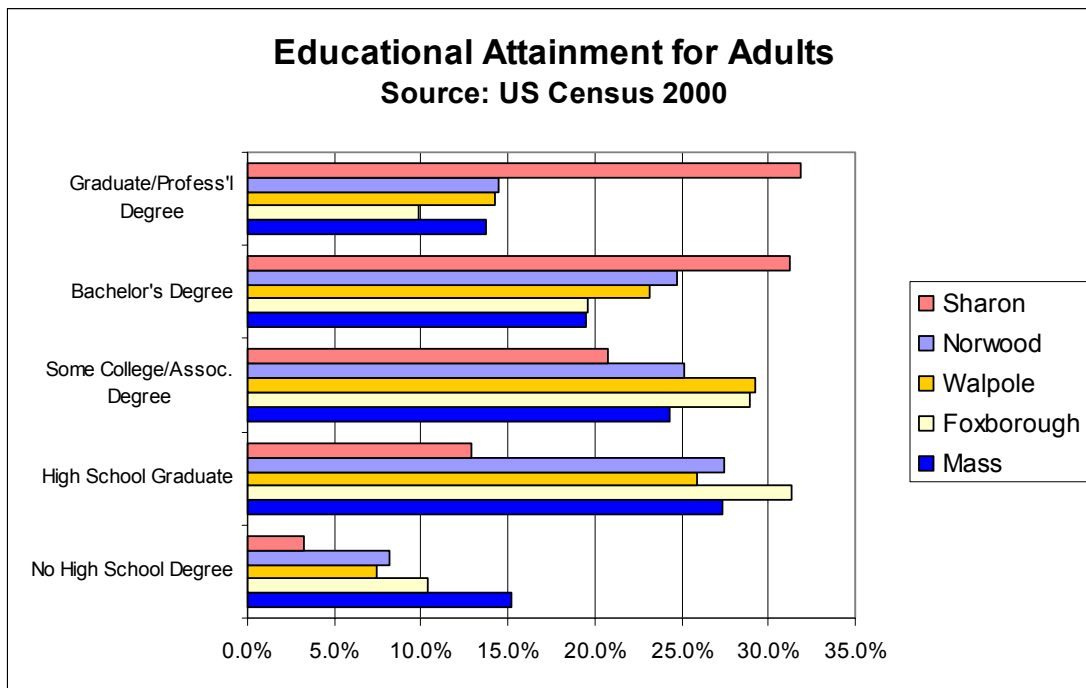
While many Walpole residents are proud of the Town's blue collar, mill town roots, census data reveal an increasingly affluent, managerial and professional labor force. Incomes and education levels are above state averages, although below some of its more affluent neighbors. The 2000 census estimated Walpole's labor force at 11,932 representing 68 per cent of the total population over 16 years of age. An estimated 65 per cent of women and 71 per cent of men are active participants in the labor force. The decline of 6% for men and 1% for women from 1990 reflects an increasing proportion of retirement-aged seniors in the population, and is similar to statewide



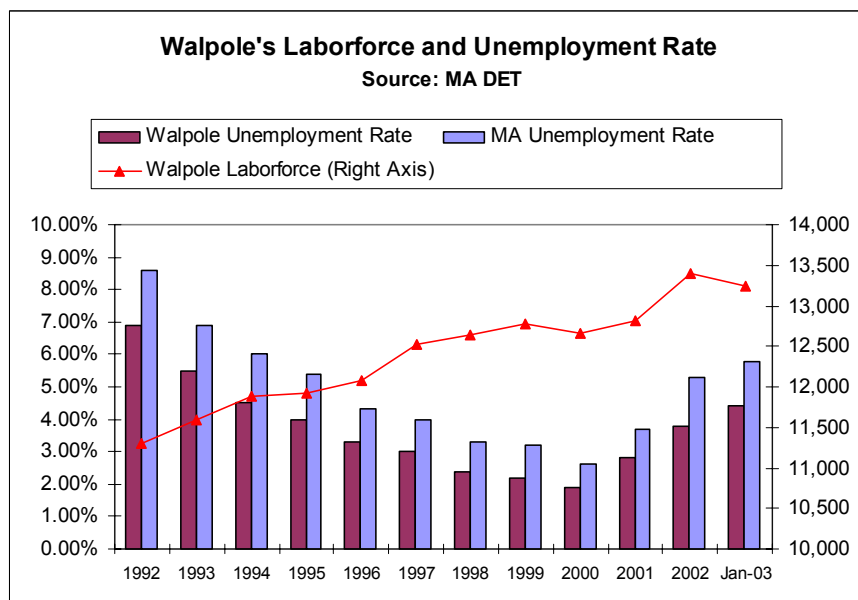
trends. Walpole's labor force increased by 5.5 per cent over the decade due to population growth, adding 586 female workers (+ 12 per cent), but only 34 men (+0.5 per cent). The state Department of Employment and Training (DET) estimated Walpole's 2000 labor force at 840 persons higher than the U.S. Census estimate in 2000, and continuing to grow to 13,245 by February 2003.

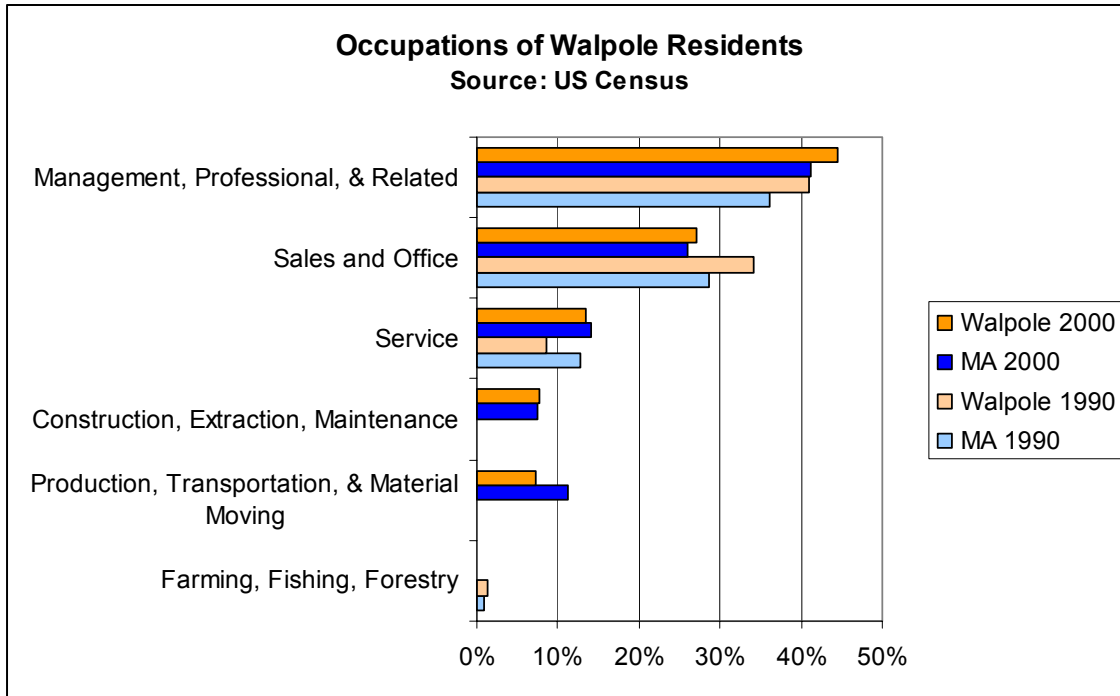
Walpole residents are better educated

than the state as a whole, with 38 per cent of adults having at least a four year college degree. Only 7 per cent have not gained a high school equivalency, half of the average state-wide. Walpole residents' educational attainment is similar to that of neighboring Norwood and Foxborough, while Sharon has a substantially higher proportion of graduate and professional degrees and significantly fewer with no college experience.



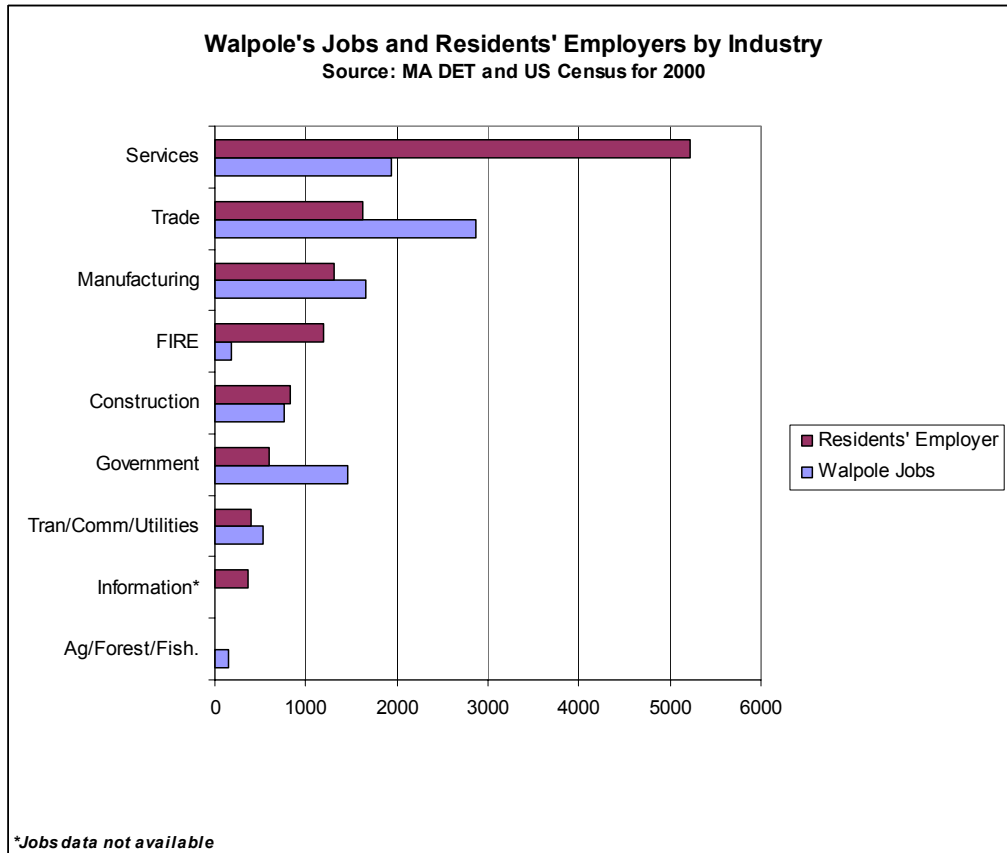
For the last two decades, Walpole has enjoyed a lower unemployment rate than the state, with the exception of one year in the 1980s. Between 1990 and 2002, the local unemployment rate ranged from 0.7 to 1.7 percentage points lower than the statewide figure while the workforce grew by 1,900 (18 per cent).



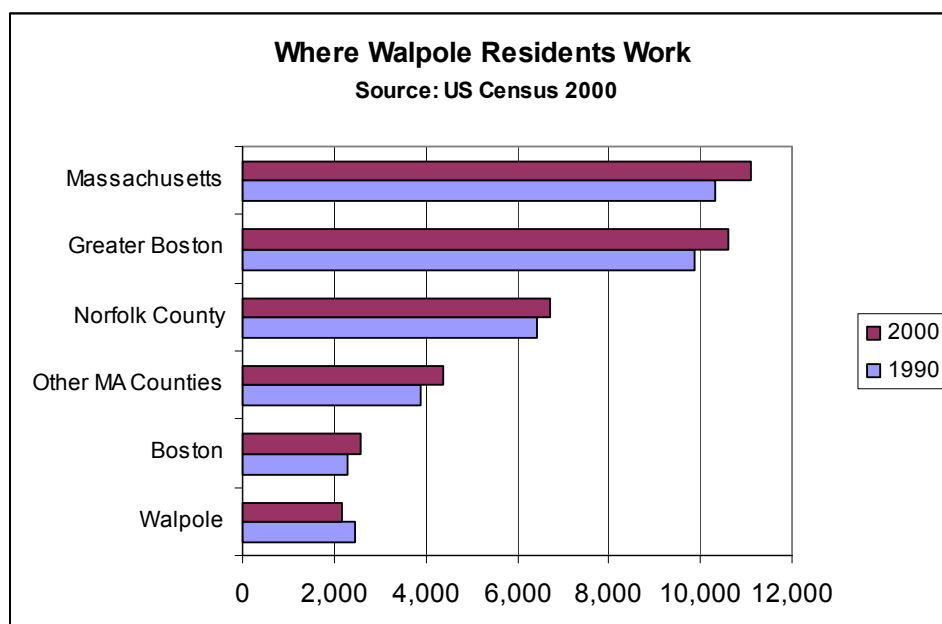


Walpole's favorable income distribution and employment picture reflects the high proportion of residents employed in Management, Professional, and Related Occupations, which tend to be higher paying and less subject to unemployment. Almost half (44.5 per cent) of the Walpole labor force is employed in these occupations, an increase from 41 per cent in 1990 and more than 3 percentage points above the statewide average. Walpole is also above the state average for Sales & Office and Construction/Extraction /Maintenance occupations. Fewer Walpole residents than statewide work in Production/Transportation /Material Moving industries, once again showing that Walpole is no longer a town of manufacturing workers. Changes in the definitions in these latter categories prevent direct comparison between 1990 and 2000.

The largest block of Walpole residents are employed in service industries, with the biggest number by far (23.5 per cent) working in Educational, Health, and Social Services. As mentioned above, these are among the largest industries in Massachusetts, but are relatively under-represented in Walpole's local jobs. Similarly, 10 per cent of residents are employed in the Financial/Insurance/Real Estate sector, which accounts for only 2 per cent of the Town's jobs. Walpole offers significantly more jobs in Wholesale/Retail Trade than it has residents working in those industries. Walpole's median household income of \$75,000 is 80 per cent higher than the \$41,000 annualized average wage for Walpole's non-government jobs.



Walpole residents increasingly work outside the town, primarily in other parts of metropolitan Boston (70 per cent of total). From 1990 to 2000, the number of Walpole residents who also worked in the Town declined by 300, to about 2,200 (19 per cent of the total). Of these, 425 worked at home, rather than for one of the Town's traditional employers. Among commuters, the largest proportion (70 per cent) travel to Boston suburbs, reflecting



the continuing dispersal of jobs from the city. Yet, the number of Walpole residents commuting to downtown Boston also rose by 250 in the 1990s and now totals more than those who work in Walpole. The destinations showing the largest percentage increases in the 1990s were those farthest away, the central city and outside Massachusetts. This reflects Walpole's proximity to both Boston and Providence. However, the largest number of people continue to commute to jobs in Norfolk county and other Boston suburbs, and only 300 go out of state.

Commercial and Industrial Land Use

Walpole's long history as a business center has led to an accumulation of industrial and commercial sites throughout the town. The sometimes haphazard location of facilities over the years has resulted in several issues that concern today's residents:

- Protecting drinking water quality by regulating development in the aquifer recharge areas
- Cleaning up contaminated brownfield sites and encouraging higher value and more attractive uses for the sites
- Improving the appearance of run down and abandoned commercial buildings and districts.

About 15 per cent of the Town (1860 acres) is zoned for business uses, 90 per cent of which (1700 acres) is designated for Industry (IND) and Limited Manufacturing (LM). Another 150 acres lie in the Central Business District (CBD) and Business (B) zones, which are intended primarily for retail and office uses. Most of the Industrial and Limited Manufacturing zones lie along the Neponset River, the two rail lines, or adjacent to Routes 1, 1A, and 27. Others are scattered around the Town in such areas as Norfolk and South Streets. The CBD covers the downtown retail area, and Business zones are scattered around the Town along major streets and intersections, and in East Walpole.

| Walpole's Commercial/Industrial Zoning | | |
|---|--------------|------------------|
| Zoning District | Acres | % of Town |
| Business (B) | 106 | 0.9% |
| Central Business District (CBD) | 46 | 0.4% |
| Limited Manufacturing (LM) | 921 | 7.5% |
| Industrial (IND) | 788 | 6.4% |
| Total Business Zones | 1,861 | 15.1% |
| <i>Source: Assessor Data</i> | | |

According to the Assessor's database, about 1784 acres in Town are actually used as either Commercial or Industrial, with 72 per cent (1,278 acres) Industrial and 28 per cent (500 acres) Commercial. About 1,263 of these acres support existing business uses, two thirds of which are industrial. About 455 acres are vacant and capable of being developed, 83 per cent of which are identified with industrial use.

| Walpole's Commercial/Industrial Land Use | | |
|---|--------------|------------------|
| Actual Land Use | Acres | % of Town |
| Commercial Uses | 506 | 4.1% |
| Developed | 427 | 3.5% |
| Vacant | 79 | 0.7% |
| Developable or Potentially Developable | 71 | 0.6% |
| Not Developable | 8 | 0.1% |
| | | |
| Industrial Uses | 1,278 | 10.4% |
| Developed | 837 | 6.8% |
| Vacant | 441 | 3.6% |
| Developable or Potentially Developable | 376 | 3.1% |
| Not Developable | 66 | 0.5% |
| Total Land Use by Business | 1,784 | 14.5% |
| | | |
| Total Developed | 1,263 | 10.3% |
| Total Vacant, but Developable | 457 | 3.7% |
| Total Vacant and Undevelopable | 74 | 0.6% |
| <i>Source: Walpole Assessor</i> | | |

The table below identifies how commercial and industrial uses are distributed among Walpole's zoning districts. Perhaps surprisingly, the B and CBD zones covering downtown and East Walpole account for only about 16 per cent of the Town's existing commercial development. And while there are 13 acres of developable vacant land in the B zone, the CBD has almost no vacant land. The Limited Manufacturing zone contains 60 per cent of the 500 acres of developed commercial land and almost 80 per cent of the 70 vacant acres that could be developed. This is due to two factors:

- Retailers are increasingly attracted to large parcels with highway access such as those zoned LM along Route 1. The Town's B and CBD zones are relatively small and located away from Route 1, which makes them less suitable for large scale retailing such as malls, discount stores, and car dealerships.
- Certain uses found in the LM zone such as warehousing and distribution are classified in the State Land Use coding system as Commercial, although they might more appropriately be termed the type of light industrial use intended for LM zoning

For industrial uses, the great majority of land that is already developed and land that *can* be developed is located in the LM and IND zones. Most of the 219 acres of existing industrial uses in other zones comprise electric utility rights of way (169 acres) and sand/gravel operations (40). Over 350 acres are classified as vacant and "developable" or "potentially developable" for industry. About 64 acres are undevelopable, probably mostly because of the presence of wetlands.

| Distribution of Commercial/Industrial Land Uses by Zone in Acres | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | Business Zones | | | | | Non-Bus. Zones |
| | B | CBD | LM | IND | Total | |
| Commercial Uses | 60 | 21 | 311 | 38 | 429 | 77 |
| Developed | 40 | 20 | 253 | 38 | 351 | 76 |
| Vacant | 20 | 1 | 58 | | 78 | 1 |
| Developable/Potentially | 13 | 1 | 57 | | 71 | 1 |
| Not Developable | 7 | | 1 | | 7 | 1 |
| | | | | | | |
| Industrial Uses | 11 | 10 | 488 | 527 | 1,036 | 242 |
| Developed | 11 | 10 | 257 | 340 | 618 | 219 |
| Vacant | | | 231 | 187 | 418 | 23 |
| Developable/Potentially | | | 204 | 150 | 354 | 22 |
| Not Developable | | | 27 | 37 | 64 | 2 |
| Total Land Used for Business | 71 | 31 | 798 | 565 | 1,465 | 319 |
| | | | | | | |
| Total Developed | 51 | 30 | 510 | 377 | 969 | 295 |
| Vacant and Developable | 13 | 1 | 260 | 150 | 425 | 22 |
| Vacant, but Not Developable | 7 | | 28 | 37 | 71 | 3 |

Source: Assessor Data

Industrial uses and aquifer protection

In the past, industry often located in swampy areas viewed as “waste land”, because the land was cheap and neighbors few. Today, however, development in such areas is regulated because of the potential for industrial chemicals to contaminate underground aquifers and surface waters. Much of the IND and LM zones in the south part of Walpole lie in the recharge area for the Town’s sole source drinking water supply, requiring measures to prevent toxic materials on those properties from percolating underground to the aquifer and eventually contaminating the Town’s wells. This becomes clear in the analysis performed in the EOEA/MAPC buildout exercise in 1999, where the amount of undeveloped land for business uses that lies in wetland or aquifer protection zones was estimated.

| EOEA/MAPC Commercial-Industrial Buildout 1999: Undeveloped Land Area in Existing Zones | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----|---------------------|------------------------|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------|
| | | Business District B | | | Central Business District | | | Industrial District | | | Limited Manufacturing | | |
| | Total - all districts | Additional land | Percent of Undev. Land | FAR | Additional land | Percent of Undev. Land | FAR | Additional land | Percent of Undev. Land | FAR | Additional land | Percent of Undev. Land | FAR |
| Total Undeveloped Land Area (sf) | 28,306,703 | 548,781 | | | 12,868 | | | 18,001,589 | | | 9,743,465 | | |
| Wetland Area (sf) | 4,605,727 | 0 | | | 0 | | | 4,249,529 | 23.61% | | 356,198 | 3.66% | |
| Upland in Aquifer Protection: Zone 1 & 2 | 1,986,380 | 0 | | | 0 | | | 1,788,392 | 9.93% | | 197,988 | 2.03% | |
| Upland in Aquifer Protection: Zone 3 & 4: | 16,750,160 | 0 | | 0.19 | 0 | | | 11,577,193 | 64.31% | 0.2 | 5,172,967 | 53.09% | 0.19 |
| Upland Outside Aquifer Protection Zones: | 4,964,435 | 548,781 | 100.00% | 0.34 | 12,868 | 100.00% | 1.5 | 386,474 | 2.15% | 0.41 | 4,016,312 | 41.22% | 0.37 |

| EOEA/MAPC Commercial-Industrial Buildout 1999: Additional Floor Area Capacity | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Business District B | Central Business District | Industrial District | Limited Manufacturing |
| | Total additional floor area (sf) | Additional floor area (sf) | Additional floor area (sf) | Additional floor area (sf) | Additional floor area (sf) |
| Additional Floor Area (sf) | 5,148,680 | 186,586 | 19,302 | 2,473,893 | 2,468,899 |
| Wetland Area | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Upland in Aquifer Protection: Zone 1 & 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Upland in Aquifer Protection: Zone 3 & 4: | 3,298,303 | 0 | 0 | 2,315,439 | 982,864 |
| Upland Outside Aquifer Protection Zones: | 475,795 | 118 186,586 | 19,302 | 158,454 | 111,453 |

Because Walpole has a sole source aquifer and geological conditions that make this aquifer very vulnerable to contamination, the Town has established the Water Resource Protection Overlay District. A large proportion of the town's industrially-zoned land is located within this overlay district, mostly in Areas 3 and 4, which are the primary and secondary recharge areas. The requirements of this district limit commercial and industrial development in these areas to one-acre lots with no more than 15% or 2,500 square feet of impervious surfaces, as well as limits on on-site sewage disposal. Greater expanses of impervious surface, up to the limit permitted in the underlying zoning district, are permitted only by special permit and with the installation of groundwater recharge Best Management Practices such as stormwater detention basins.

Given the importance of protecting Walpole's water supply, the requirements of the Water Resource Protection Overlay District cannot be viewed as excessive. A comparison of water resource protection requirements at Devens, where a relatively successful industrial district with access to sewer is located over an aquifer, shows similar limitations and mitigation requirements as well higher levels of monitoring, testing, analysis and containment.

The overlay district's controls have the effect of encouraging taller buildings with smaller footprints. Modern industry typically requires large one-story buildings with high ceilings, while office and research and development uses are more likely to use multi-story buildings. However, the lack of infrastructure, poor appearance and amenities, and less than ideal highway access characteristic of the Industrial Park, where many vacant parcels exist, make it extremely unlikely that any developer would be interested in building a multi-story office or research facility in that location.

Brownfields

There are also a number of properties in Walpole that are known to be brownfields – contaminated with hazardous materials. The Blackburn & Union Privileges Superfund site on South Street is undergoing remediation and initial reuse planning has begun. The Town received EPA funding for assessment of several other brownfields sites. A new parking lot was constructed after remediation in the Town Center with state funding. Several adjacent brownfield parcels on Route 1A are a high priority because they are within the recharge area for the Town's drinking water aquifer. The Town has completed a Phase I Assessment of this 76 acre site with EPA funding and prepared a feasibility study for golf course redevelopment with state funding. The majority of the owners of the parcels involved have expressed interest in working with the Town on site remediation, subject to resolution of specific concerns regarding compensation and relocation of their businesses. Efforts are underway to identify a private developer to pursue the opportunity.

ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1999 Comprehensive Economic Development Plan

In 1999 Walpole commissioned a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan. The plan identified a number of assets that make Walpole an attractive business location, including:

- Central location in the Metro South region
- Established position as a sub-regional commercial center
- Substantial employment base
- Diverse mix of industries
- Low unemployment

At the same time, the report identified a number of characteristics of the Town's management and regulatory system that functioned as disincentives to businesses that might have an interest in locating or expanding in Walpole. Some of these shortcomings have been addressed since the report's preparation, and the opportunity exists to identify alternatives to deal with some of the others as part of the Master Plan Process.

The report identified barriers to economic development in the following areas:

- Lack of consensus around a vision for Economic Development.
- Overly stringent and conflicting by-laws and regulatory reviews.
- Insufficient technical support and overly decentralized Town Boards and Departments.
- Lack of a formal process for cooperating and solving problems around development issues.
- Lack of participation from the business community outside the downtown.

The report's action plan prioritized three key actions for implementation: developing a consensus vision for economic development, providing leadership and monitoring progress, and instituting organizational and staffing changes. Some of the action plan elements have been implemented, but many of the specific recommendations, particularly those focused on leadership and institutional change, still await action.

2003 South Regional Technology Economic Target Area

More recently, Walpole was among 10 communities whose proposal to create the I-495/95 South Regional Technology Economic Target Area was approved by the state in July 2003. With this designation Walpole gains new tools and incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing, for economic development projects that meet certain criteria.

Although the ETA approval presents opportunities to Walpole, a perusal of the ETA application document also makes it evident that some of the other communities in the ETA group, who in some ways can be seen as Walpole's competitors, have much stronger economic development capacity than Walpole. The parts of the ETA application specific to Walpole focus entirely on brownfields. Although brownfields remediation is important to Walpole's future for a variety of reasons, the economic development priorities of the Town are not clearly set forth.

Walpole Wants Nonresidential Development – But the Market Is Slow

One significant change since 1999 is that a public consensus in favor of economic development has emerged in Walpole. The Master Plan Survey indicated that Town residents support expanding the nonresidential tax base through enhanced development in existing commercial and industrial zones, particularly on the Route 1 corridor. There is also concern about the existing brownfields and low-value industrial uses along Route 1A: some people would like to see more and better industrial development there while others would prefer less intensive uses because of the environmental conditions and adjacent residential areas. The other major goal is to make Walpole Center into a more vibrant downtown and community focus.

Although the community now has more interest in nonresidential development, particularly because of the increasing residential tax burden, the nonresidential real estate market is in a profound slump. Real estate analysts for Spaulding and Slye Colliers writing in the company's Summer 2003 market report predicted that the suburban office, R&D, and industrial markets would not recover until the return of significant job growth, which they do not expect any earlier than 2005. Data from the end of 2003 show continued weakness in suburban markets as a whole and in the 495 South submarket (to which Walpole is most similar, though it is on the edge of the South and 495 South submarkets):

| Greater Boston Commercial Real Estate Markets – 4th Quarter 2003 | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Market</i> | <i>Total Supply (sf)</i> | <i>Available Space (sf)</i> | <i>Availability Rate</i> | <i>Annual Net Absorption (sf)</i> |
| OFFICE MARKET | | | | |
| All Suburbs | 44,835,303 | 14,525,373 | 32.4% | -1,217,361 |
| 495/South | 3,012,552 | 924,146 | 30.7% | -141,582 |
| R&D MARKET | | | | |
| All Suburbs | 44,835,303 | 14,525,373 | 32.4% | -1,217,361 |
| 495/South | 3,012,552 | 924,146 | 30.7% | -141,582 |
| INDUSTRIAL MARKET | | | | |
| All Suburbs | 57,850,711 | 11,127,259 | 19.2% | -1,247,818 |
| 495/South | 9,898,526 | 2,813,251 | 28.4% | -404,442 |
| <i>Source: Spaulding & Slye Colliers</i> | | | | |

These market realities mean that in the short term Walpole is not likely to capture significant new business development and associated tax revenue. However, economic recessions are the best time to plan. This is the moment for Walpole to gain greater understanding of its economic potential, to engage in detailed planning processes, to make appropriate regulatory changes and establish appropriate incentives, to streamline and revise its permitting systems, to plan for needed infrastructure, and to hire staff to work on economic development.

Which Businesses to Recruit?

As noted earlier, Walpole at present has a somewhat diversified mix of economic sectors, with a relatively strong presence of several goods-producing industries and retail, which require light industrial facilities and retail

space. The Town has a relative lack of the “knowledge-based” service industries that typically operate in office buildings. This profile is common to Walpole’s economic subregion, which has 17% of the total supply of industrial space in the suburban real estate market, 7 % of the R&D market, and only 3% of the office market, according to the Spaulding & Slye Colliers 4th quarter 2003 market report.

Retail. Walpole’s current retail profile is inconsistent with the income demographics in Town and in the region. The emphasis in the Master Plan Survey on a desire for more “upscale” retail and respondents’ reports that they shopped more often outside of Walpole than in the town provides additional support for this point. Route 1 is currently underutilized as a retail location. Although the expected physical upgrading of the Walpole Mall will no doubt be an improvement, it represents a rather old-fashioned style of suburban retail which is increasingly being replaced by the “lifestyle center” type, which is also more amenable to mixed use configurations that incorporate office uses and high-density housing. With 132,000 square feet of gross floor area, Wal-Mart’s store in Walpole is smaller than the larger “super stores” it is now building in suburban locations that include groceries, hair salons, auto servicing, optical shops, and other services in one location. The uses along Route 1 north of the Route 27 intersection are low-value uses that do not make the most of their location. Lack of sewer infrastructure is a critical issue in attracting higher-value development.

Office. In contrast to the western and northwestern suburbs, Walpole’s subregion has not attracted large amounts of office development. Suburban office development depends on the technology sector, currently in severe recession, and on the professional services sector. Walpole is unlikely to attract developers to build speculative office buildings, so the office strategy should first be linked to office expansion needs of existing businesses in Town and to development of smaller scale office space in the downtown as part of a general revitalization program for the town center. Harwood Engineering, according to the 1999 study, is potentially interested in moving farther away from the aquifer, for example. Improvements in the amenities, attractiveness, retail and restaurant offerings in downtown can have a mutual reinforcing effect with office occupancies. Small offices, such as professional service companies, are attracted to appealing downtowns and daytime employees create a market to sustain the kinds of businesses that residents also like to see in downtown areas. Redevelopment of existing downtown properties can provide the space for new office space.

R&D. R&D uses are attractive to communities because they require high value buildings, provide good jobs, and tend to have less traffic impact than traditional office buildings because they often have fewer employees per square foot of building on average. The R&D industries are very volatile, however, and in mid-2003 there was eight times more suburban R&D space available than demand. Walpole should investigate the opportunities for R&D by creating relationships and communicating with existing businesses.

Biotechnology. The success of biotech in the Cambridge market, the potential for biotech manufacturing facilities as new products are developed, and its image as the innovative industry of the future make biotech a “glamour” sector despite the fact that it is still rather small. Walpole is unlikely to attract the research end of biotech because it lacks proximity to university and hospital research centers. Biotech manufacturing facilities also have specialized needs. They need sewer infrastructure, very large amounts of water, and a very sophisticated permitting system. Biotech firms are looking for locations where they can have rapid permitting within a context of complex

environmental requirements. In order to become competitive, Walpole would have to invest the time to become knowledgeable about biotech requirements and markets, create streamlined permitting systems, and market the town to the industry.

Manufacturing. Walpole has a manufacturing tradition and two sectors with significant employment: Instruments and Related Products and Industrial Machinery and Equipment. Large Walpole businesses in these categories include Bayer Diagnostics and Rolls-Royce Naval Marine (formerly Bird Johnson), but there are also a number of smaller manufacturing establishments. The 1997 Economic Census is suggestive in this regard, listing 38 manufacturing establishments of which only 9 had 20 or more employees (all Walpole manufacturers employed 1,431 workers in that year). Serving the market for small manufacturers requires an effort to identify them, establish relationships, monitor their needs, and seek to assist them when they want to expand or relocate.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Successful economic development initiatives in Walpole will require *leadership* to advocate for planning and investment in the future; expanded town *capacity* to understand, plan for, and execute economic development programs; more *business-friendly permitting processes* that are transparent, understandable, and systematic, while continuing to protect town environmental resources and other sensitive areas; and *communication* – with Town residents about Walpole’s market position and locational assets and the needs of business as well as with business, both in Town and in the wider market, about their needs and future plans.

The first economic development task for Walpole is to set priorities both in terms of locations and in terms of the kinds of economic development activities the Town will pursue. The 1999 Economic Development Plan identified ten separate economic sub-areas with proposed visions for economic growth in each and provided action plans for several boards and committees. The Economic Development Committee has been focusing its efforts on brownfields projects, with several notable successes, but other economic development initiatives have lacked the same attention. The Town’s ability to follow through on brownfields issues is instructive because it has an important organizational foundation: Board of Health staff have played a critical role in writing grant proposals and obtaining funding, in managing consultants, and in providing staff support to the Brownfields Committee. Other economic development activities lack this kind of strategic support. Because the Town’s capacity is finite, in terms of staff, volunteer board and commission members, and elected officials, it is important that Walpole focus its attention on a limited number of strategic locations and actions.

At a minimum, a successful economic development strategy for Walpole will require actions in the areas of zoning change, transparency and streamlining of permitting, commercial district specific plans, and leadership and organization. Changes and improvements in *all* these areas are essential. Consensus has emerged on the need to modernize and revise Walpole’s non-residential zoning language to eliminate barriers to desired development and contradictory language. It is also now accepted, in principle, that there is a need to change the business perception that Walpole does not want business development and that the permitting process is unnecessarily complex and fractured. This requires not only the zoning changes but real progress in streamlining the permitting process and assisting businesses in understanding regulatory requirements and navigating the process.

However, zoning is not the same thing as an area-specific plan, and leadership and organizational change must go beyond simplifying the regulatory process. It is important that the Town build consensus on business development in priority areas by engaging business owners, property owners and residents in more detailed planning than can be accomplished in the present community master planning process. Changing zoning sets a new framework, but it is still a fundamentally passive approach. A detailed plan should include not only proposals for physical changes to the area and performance standards but a study of market feasibility, infrastructure needs, options for public and private investment, and a marketing plan. With a detailed plan, the Town knows what it wants in specific areas and businesses have more confidence that they will be welcomed if they meet the Town's goals. Similarly, Walpole's leaders must be willing to make the argument to town residents that an investment in an economic development staff position, in planning for economic development, and in public improvements is essential to growing the tax base and will pay off in the future.

During the period 1985-2001, the number of jobs in Walpole peaked in 1998 at 10,067, declining to 9,688 in 2001. Over that 16-year period, net job growth averaged 1.5% a year, with fluctuations through recessions and booms. As noted earlier in the analysis, despite the decline in manufacturing, Walpole still retains a healthy proportion of jobs in manufacturing and higher-paying blue-collar employment. Service industry jobs will undoubtedly increase, at both ends of the income spectrum. The recommendations for economic development in this plan should help Walpole retain existing jobs and continue to add job growth at least at the same average rate. During the next ten years, therefore, Walpole can expect to add some 1,500 jobs. Given the existing jobs profile and the likelihood that there will may be some continued erosion of manufacturing positions and growth in trade and services, the majority of these jobs will probably be open to people with a wide range of education and skill levels.

Create an Economic Development staff position in Town government.

An economic development staff person working with the Economic Development Committee would be in charge of assisting businesses through permitting processes, pursuing detailed economic development planning for priority focus areas, achieving state certification needed to take advantage of financing tools, creating ongoing relationships with the industrial and commercial business community, and pursuing grant funds to help the Town achieve its economic development goals. During this planning process, the Spring 2004 Town Meeting voted to create an Economic Development Officer position.

Retain and Serve Existing Business

Given the current economic recession, Walpole is unlikely to find success with an economic development strategy focused on attracting real estate developers to build speculative buildings or on large companies. The huge oversupply in the office and R&D markets and only slightly less overwhelming oversupply of industrial space means that Walpole's first priority must be to make sure that it keeps the businesses – both large and small -- that have already chosen to locate in Walpole. Assisting those businesses in a proactive way through maintaining communication and actively helping in any search for new space or expansion is as important as improving the permitting process. By focusing first on existing businesses, the Town will begin to understand its potential markets

better, its competitive position and comparative advantages, and will be able to evaluate its ability and desire to make any changes to attract new businesses.

- **Implement the organizational recommendations of the 1999 plan**
- **Develop relationships and a strategy to serve small manufacturers**
- **Work with large companies such as Bayer and Rolls Royce to understand the needs of their industries and opportunities for expansion, recruitment of supplier businesses, and so on**

Streamline Permitting and Zoning

Walpole's zoning bylaw needs a series of improvements, both technical and substantive, some of which have been emphasized in this project. By making the zoning bylaw very clear about what kind of development is desired, the Town is more likely to get that kind of development. In addition, the Town needs to develop ways to help businesses navigate the permitting and licensing process in town hall.

- **Change business zoning language to reflect the desired businesses, for example, change the LM name and designation where the desire is for uses like office and R & D**
- **Create a booklet on how to open a business or take a development project through permitting. The Town of Westwood has a useful booklet of this type.**
- **Create a step by step check-off sheet for businesses and others who need permits**

Designate Areas for Tax Increment Financing and Other Incentives

As a member of the I-495/95 South Regional Technology Economic Target Area, Walpole is now eligible to designate Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs). These EOAs must be either a "blighted open area," a "decadent area," a "substandard area," or an area that has experienced a plant closing or large-scale layoffs since 1999. The Town must submit a plan for certification by the state of the EOAs it wishes to designate, describing how the Town will be more efficient in delivering services to the EOAs, streamline the permitting process, provide for additional demand for municipal services and infrastructure, and provide access to job training. Projects certified for EOAs will have access to certain state tax incentives. In addition, EOAs allow municipalities to set up local tax incentives: a special tax assessment that phases in the assessment of the total value of the new or redeveloped property over time or Tax Increment Financing (TIF), a property tax exemption of the increased value of a project for 5 to 20 years. Areas suitable for designation as EOAs include:

- South Street Superfund Site
- Route 1A (South Main) business areas
- Industrial Park off Route 1A
- Main Street Mall
- Route 1 North and Route 1 South areas
- East Walpole business area

- Other brownfields sites

Another new tool now available to municipalities is District Improvement Financing. This is a form of Tax Increment Financing that Walpole can use to pay for public planning and infrastructure improvements in designated areas in order to stimulate higher-value real estate investment. This tool would permit Walpole to pay for making improvements through a bond secured by a portion of the future tax receipts from new investment in the designated area. In this way, the Town would not have to raise the tax rate to make improvements, such as extending sewers to industrial areas, making traffic improvements, or expanding parking options in the downtown. All of the areas listed above would also be suitable for DIF designation.

Focus Attention on Priority Economic Development Areas

To meet its goal of increasing the nonresidential tax base, the Town must resolve to focus economic development attention on those areas which have the greatest potential for change to higher value development. This is not to say that other parts of town should be neglected, but that by learning how to mount a successful economic development program where there are strong assets to build on, Walpole will gain the experience to face more complex economic development challenges. Two areas should receive top priority attention: 1) the northern segment of Route 1, and 2) Walpole Center.

Route 1. The most valuable economic development location from the point of view of enhancing the tax base in Walpole is the area between the northern segment of Route 1 and Route 95. It has quick access to an interstate highway and a major arterial and is not affected by the Water Resource Protection District. This area has strong potential for enhanced retail uses and mixed use development in the short and medium term, and potentially office and R & D uses in the longer term. Given the region's demographics, retail potential is not being met with the existing tired retail offerings at the mall (which is reportedly planning a facelift). In addition, there is a successful medical technology facility, Bayer Diagnostics, on Coney Road just off I-95. Although there is currently a large oversupply of office and R & D space throughout metropolitan Boston, this kind of use has potential in the long term. Unfortunately, part of this area has been zoned and developed for single family residential use, which makes redevelopment more complicated. The Town should consider the potential of higher-density residential uses in a mixed-use environment from the point of view of increased tax revenues. Age-restricted housing and apartments with few bedrooms tend to be revenue-positive for towns because they do not attract many families with school-age children. In some communities, age-restricted housing now takes the form of developments containing a continuum of housing types, from condominiums for active seniors, to assisted living centers, to Alzheimer's care facilities. All of these are revenue-positive and can provide nearby market support for adjacent retail centers.

Downtown. Walpole Center has many assets, including a commuter rail station, several viable "Main Street" style blocks, land for parking, civic uses that anchor the district, and public assets that can be leveraged to make improvements. Public improvements combined with new zoning and financing incentives can attract more private investment in existing downtown buildings and promote redevelopment of underutilized sites. With the commuter rail station at the edge of downtown, Walpole also has excellent conditions for mixed use development. Apartments over ground floor retail uses will encourage the downtown market by providing more customers and,

since most are likely to have two or fewer bedrooms, they are also likely to create a net tax benefit to the Town because there will be few schoolchildren in such complexes. This “transit oriented development” or TOD is being promoted by the state administration and will likely be favorably viewed in competitions for state funding.

Establish a New Zoning Framework and Undertake Detailed Planning for Economic Development Priority Areas

Route 1 – northern segment

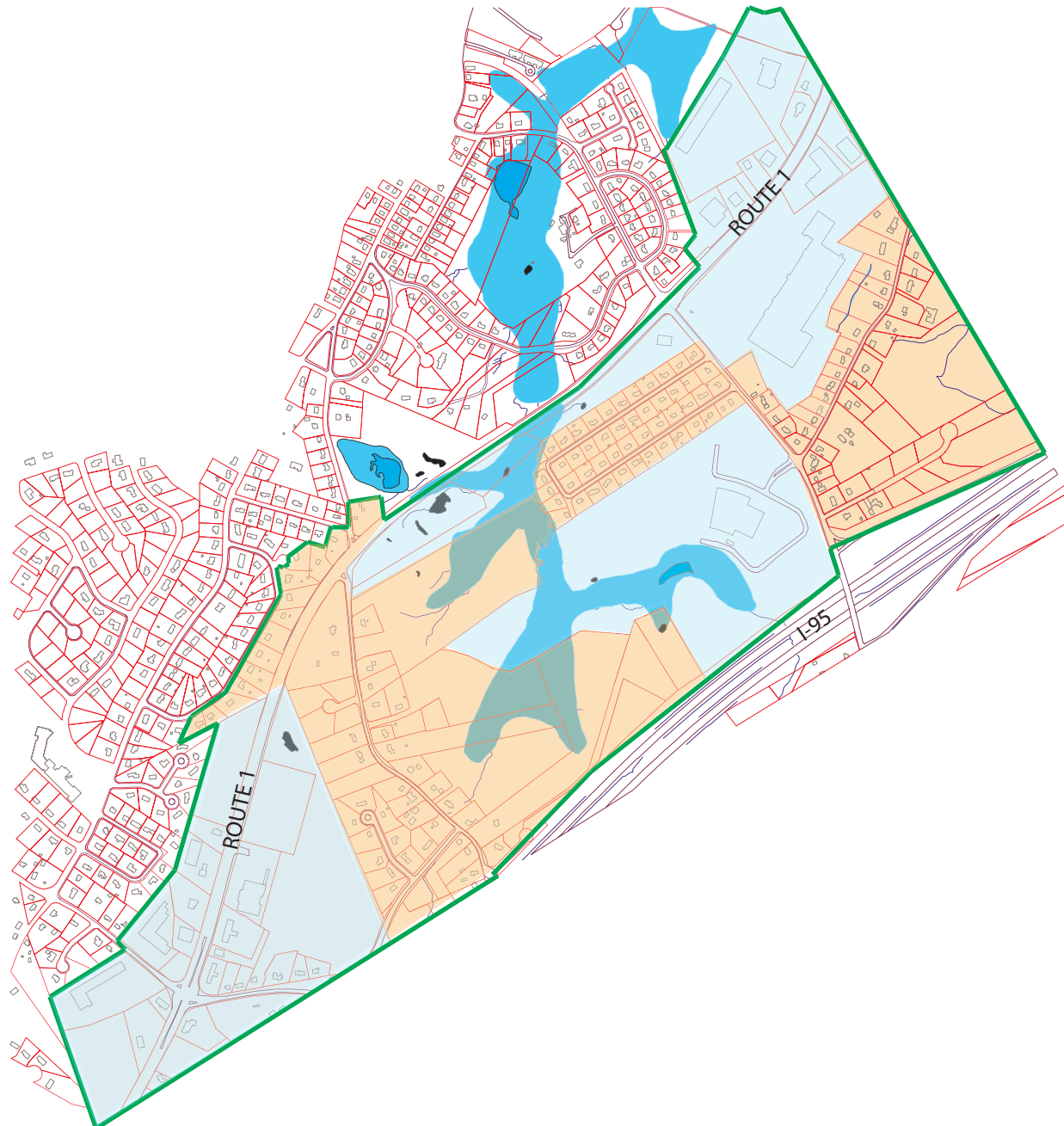
Zoning:

- Change LM zoning to a business designation and eliminate contradictions
- Establish a Commercial Incentive Overlay District that gives by-right development to commercial areas with site plan review and requires a special permit for commercial development that meets certain threshold requirements in the residentially-zoned areas. The ultimate goal is to transition this area over the long term towards uses that provide higher tax revenues. Although the zoning proposal contains protections for the existing residential areas in this district, it is understandably controversial in those neighborhoods. Implementation will require careful discussion and evaluation of the pros and cons of including the residential areas in the Commercial Incentive Overlay District. The Overlay should be created for the commercial areas, at a minimum.

Planning:

- Prepare a detailed plan for the future of this area working closely with businesses and residents, including a study of market opportunities and infrastructure needs
- Consider designating the commercially zoned parts of this area as Economic Opportunity Areas and/or DIF districts
- Consider high density residential as part of a mixed-use precinct – it can be revenue positive for the town
- Incentives

PROPOSED ZONING CONCEPT - ROUTE 1 NORTHERN SEGMENT



BASE ZONING

- Commercial/Office (New)
- Residence A (Existing)

ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT

Commercial Incentive Overlay

- Objective:
 - Allow for expansion of non-residential uses in a way that is not detrimental to residential uses
 - Provide long-term opportunity for transition of residential to commercial

Overlay Over Commercial Base Zoning By Right:

- Higher density allowed by right for a range of retail, office and R & D uses
- High standard of screening and buffering required between commercial and residential uses

Overlay Over Residential Base Zoning By Special Permit:

- Special permit from Planning Board required for commercial redevelopment if:
 - 5-acre minimum site
 - Site is contiguous to existing commercial use

Downtown Design Standards and Design Guidelines

Design standards are statements of preferred design outcomes, not prescribed ways of reaching those outcomes. Project proponents must show during site plan review how they expect to meet the standards and the Planning Board and its design advisors must evaluate their proposal to see if the standards will be met.

Design guidelines are usually viewed as being more detailed and often provide more explicit guidance through the use of drawings and photographs to show project proponents what is desired and what is not acceptable. Guidelines may cover issues such as preferred building materials, types and minimum sizes of plantings, scale, massing, articulation of facades, relationship of buildings to outdoor spaces and to street and district edges, and so on. Design guidelines are typically prepared as a booklet and are based on a study of historic, existing, and desired development in the area the guidelines will cover.

Design standards appropriate to the downtown district include:

- Heights and setbacks should provide a suitable transition to abutting or nearby lower-scale residential uses
- Where relevant, the historical context should be respected
- Ground floors and more active uses in a building should be facing public streets, pathways and parks, for example, retail and consumer service stores, and restaurants. Windows and doors that normally serve active spaces are encouraged to be prominent in the building facades.
- Ground floors in general should be 25% to 50% transparent, with the greatest amount of transparency for retail uses.
- Open space and landscaping should be designed and located to provide interest at the street edge and, in the case of larger open spaces, at a minimum, visual access to the public.
- Landscaping should include groundcover, shrubs and trees known for long life, low maintenance requirements and seasonal interest.

Walpole Center

Zoning and regulation:

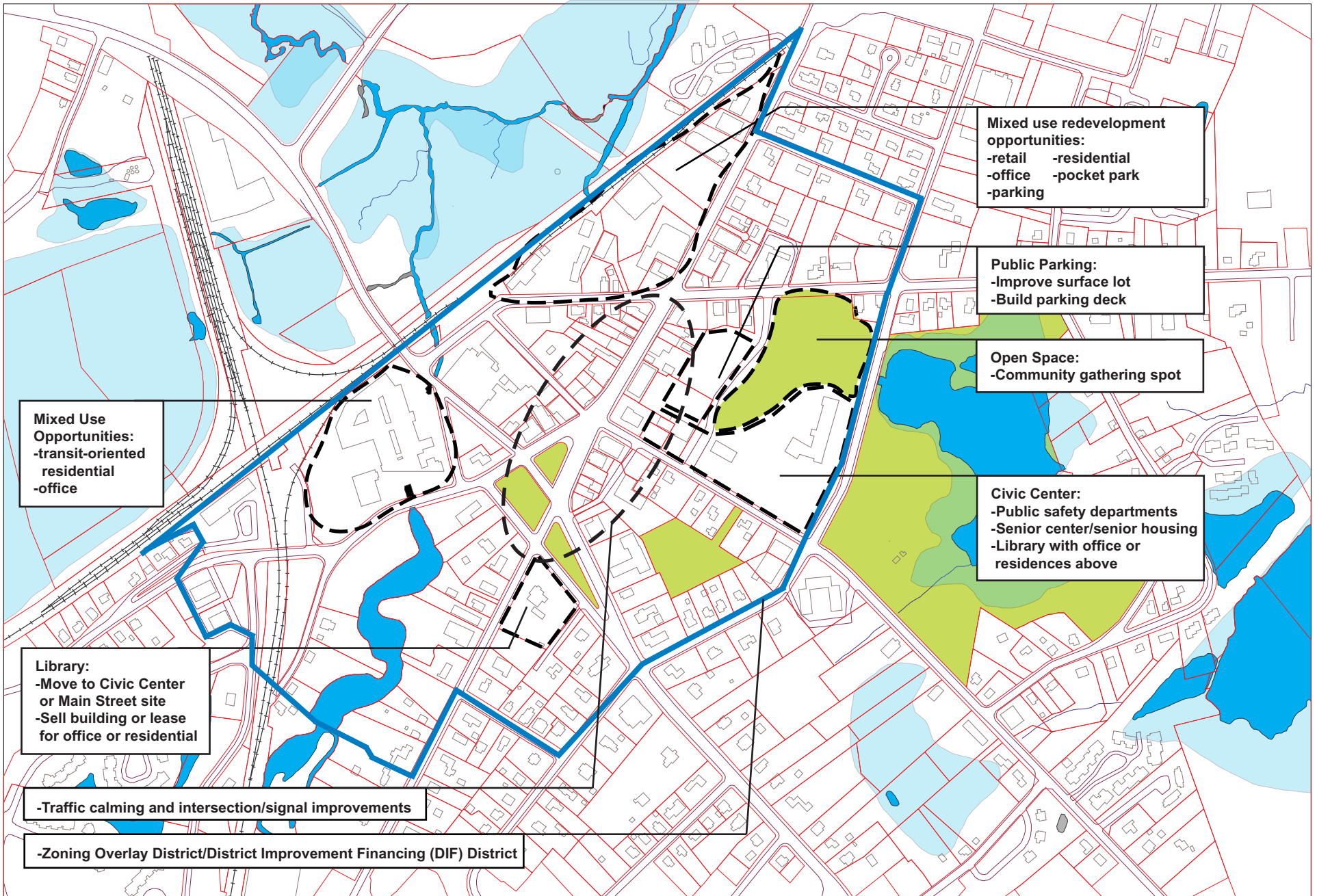
- Establish a Downtown Opportunity Center Overlay District to encourage redevelopment, particularly mixed-use development
- Design Review Options
 - General design standards
 - More detailed design guidelines booklet to assist both the Planning Board and the project proponent
 - General design standards to be applied by the Planning Board through site plan review, with the assistance of an architect and/or landscape architect consultant
 - Downtown Design Review Board with at least two members who are design professionals to give advisory opinions to the Planning Board based on the design guidelines or design standards.

Planning:

Create a downtown revitalization plan working closely with merchants, downtown business association, and residents that includes consideration of the following:

- Redevelopment opportunities including the Main Street Mall and Kendall Mill
- Transit-oriented residential development
- Feasibility and financing study for a parking garage on the site of the current town-owned parking area. If the current area were redesigned, it could accommodate over 150 parking spaces. Two or three floors of parking above the surface would dramatically increase the amount of parking downtown. Parking decks and garages typically cost \$10,000 - \$15,000 per space, making a simple 300-space deck cost approximately \$3 million.
- Design Guidelines booklet

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS



Downtown Design Standards and Design Guidelines (cont'd)

- Building entries should be located to promote safe pedestrian crossing of streets and encourage walking as a preferred mode of travel from building to building within the downtown. Relate building entries to crosswalks; site buildings to reinforce the expected pedestrian pathways within the lot and connecting to adjacent areas, including open space.
 - Buildings should be designed and located to minimize shadows on abutting lots and on significant open spaces.
 - Outdoor lighting should be designed to provide minimum lighting necessary to ensure adequate safety, night vision, and comfort, while minimizing light pollution
 - Surface parking should be located preferentially at the rear of the building and should include landscaping, including trees, to provide visual buffers and shade.
 - If there is parking on the ground floor of a building, it should be faced at the street edge with a commercial space.
 - Loading docks and trash operations should be located to minimize visual and operational impacts on residents and neighbors.
 - Buildings should be designed to use natural resources and energy resources efficiently in construction, maintenance, and long-term operation.
- Redevelopment of town-owned buildings and land to keep civic uses as an anchor for downtown
 - Create a “civic center” that combines new facilities for town offices, police, fire, and possibly the library – either consolidated on the present town hall site along the east side of the Stone Street frontage, or using a restored old town hall and the land all along Stone Street from Main Street to School Street.
 - If consolidated on the present site and the town does not want to restore the Old Town Hall (one of only two properties in Walpole that listed on the National Register of Historic Places), sell it (or offer a long-term ground lease) for adaptive reuse as condominiums and do the same with the other smaller parcels where the fire department is now located, so that these sites could be used for mixed uses.
 - Build a mixed use library with affordable apartments or office space (town offices?) above and sell the existing library for mixed income apartments or for office space
 - Create a combined senior center and senior housing complex by renovating and enlarging the present town hall
 - Consider relocating the athletic fields to make the open space an attractive park that is linked by pedestrian pathways to Main Street and to the open space and pond across School Street.
 - Vehicle and pedestrian circulation plan
 - Public investment options:
 - Establish a District Improvement Financing district coterminous with the Overlay District

- Consider making the Main Street Mall an Economic Opportunity Area
- Apply to state funding programs such as the Community Development Fund to support revitalization investments
- Organization and Programming
- Consider joining with the Downtown Business Association to create a public-private partnership such as a Main Streets organization that would raise funds to hire a downtown manager

Create a new Highway Business Zoning District and amend the Zoning Bylaw to Encourage Higher Value Uses

Creation of a new zoning district, Highway Business (HB) for Route 1 nonresidential areas currently zoned Light Manufacturing (LM) will recognize the difference between Route 1 and other commercial districts in Walpole. The proposed HB district is similar to LM except that research and laboratory uses are changed from special permit to allowed by right and lot coverage and height is increased.

The Light Manufacturing and Industrial zoning categories have inconsistencies and should be revised and/or replaced with zoning categories that reflect desired uses. Each area currently zoned as LM or IND must be examined in the context of its neighboring area, transportation capacity, potential environmental impacts and market potential to determine an appropriate category.

Amend the Zoning Bylaw to make it consistent with Town economic development goals, eliminate inconsistencies and improve ease of understanding and administration

During the course of this planning process, a series of technical zoning amendments were identified by the Zoning Subcommittee and changes were proposed and passed at the Fall 2003 Town Meeting. Changes that will be proposed at Fall 2004 Town Meeting, in addition to the proposed HB district and the Downtown Overlay District, include:

- Revision of Site Plan Review requirements
- Amendment of the Sign Bylaw to differentiate the requirements for commercial districts according to the type of district, for example, allowing larger signs on Route 1 than in Walpole Center.
- Amendments to the Parking Regulations for specific uses
- Amendments to Dimensional Criteria to refine definitions
- Amendments to definitions to enhance clarity

Prepare a broad, area-wide market study for the Main Street/Route 1A business area and study the feasibility of sewerage the industrial park

Industrial and commercial development along Route 1A faces a number of challenges, from contamination and environmental sensitivity to lack of sewer and unattractive aesthetics. Without town leadership, the Route 1A brownfields sites and the Industrial Park will continue to languish. These areas should be designated as Economic Opportunity Areas and DIF Districts so that the Town has as many tools as possible at its disposal. Although a market study for a proposed golf course on the brownfields on the north side of Route 1A was completed as part of the Phase I Assessment project, a wider market study identifying the market feasibility of all kinds of development is needed so that the Town can evaluate options for infrastructure and other improvements.

Prepare an East Walpole market study and economic revitalization plan.

The state recently awarded Walpole a \$1 million Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant to fund roadway, streetscape, and park improvements. Most of the funds will go to improvements on Washington Street, Chestnut Street and Union Street and they will enhance the impact of already-funded repairs to the Washington Street bridge and the East Walpole first station. PWED projects are intended to promote opportunities for economic development, but they are for infrastructure. A market study can identify the realistic opportunities for economic development in this neighborhood.

Although once a center of industry, East Walpole is now primarily residential. Residents desire a more lively neighborhood business center, but if the East Walpole business zone may be too large for the amount of business that can be supported there. By concentrating the business zone and changing the remaining area to residential zoning, it is more likely that the neighborhood center will be successful. Another option would be to consider a mixed-use commercial/residential/office district with the appropriate scale for East Walpole. The Town should consider making this area an Economic Opportunity Area and DIF District in order to provide maximum flexibility for redevelopment.

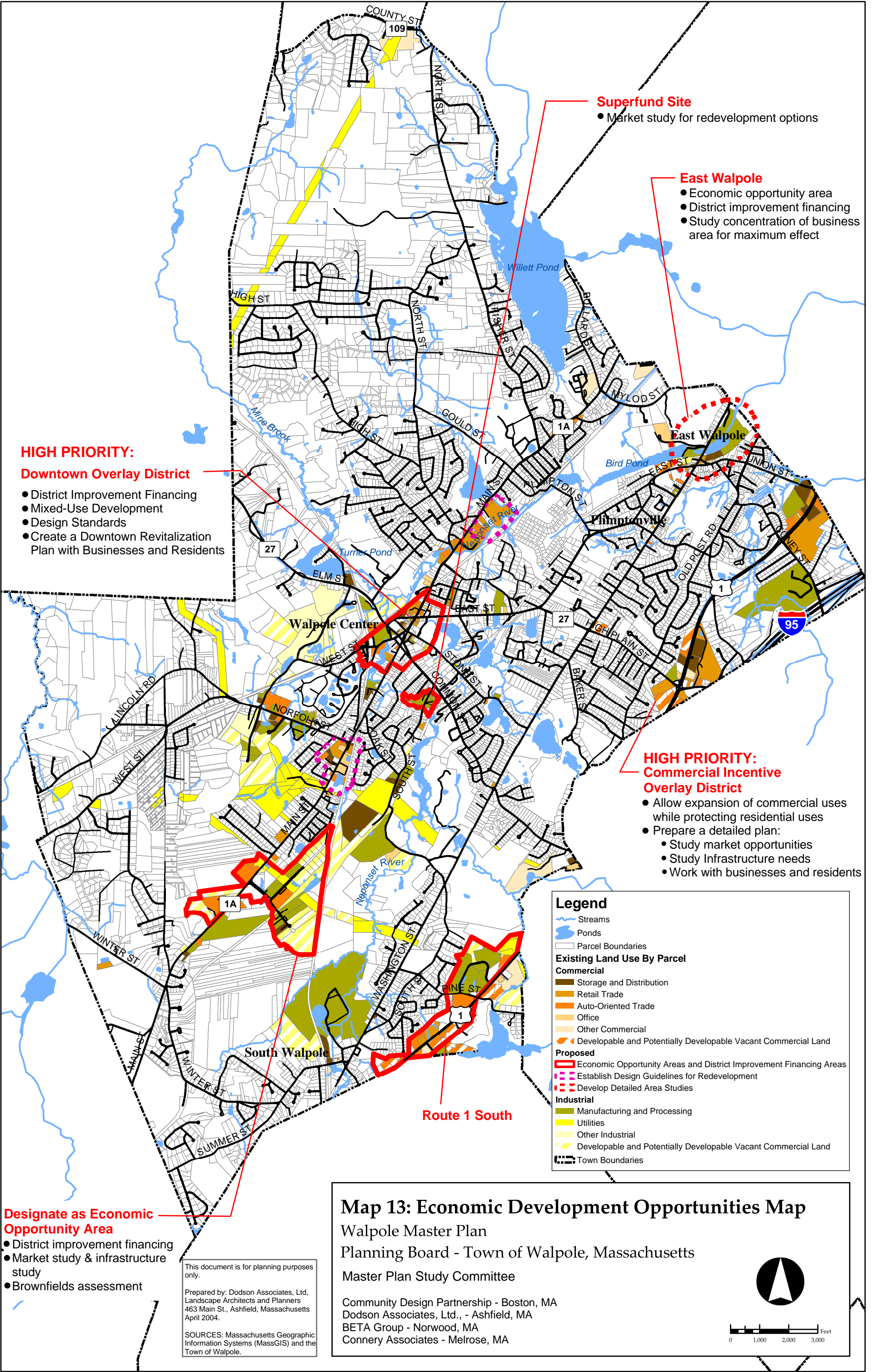
Remediate and redevelop the South Street Superfund site to connect to downtown revitalization

The South Street Superfund Site should also become an Economic Opportunity Area and DIF District. An EPA grant has funded visioning workshops, redevelopment concepts, and a neighborhood survey. The next step will be a market study. Redevelopment concepts for this site should take into account the relationship of this area to the downtown.

C. Maps

Map 13: Economic Development Opportunities

This map shows the existing commercial and industrial land uses in Walpole as well as proposed locations for economic development opportunities including high priority areas for new overlay districts, Economic Opportunity Areas, and study areas for market opportunities and infrastructure improvements.



| D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| Make Walpole more business-friendly | | Appoint an Economic Development Officer (in process Spring 2004) | H | S | Board of Selectmen |
| Increase property tax revenue from business properties | Retain and serve existing businesses | Implement the organizational recommendations of the 1999 plan | H | S | Eco Dev Officer; Eco Dev Committee |
| | Streamline zoning and permitting | Create a booklet for businesses: <i>How to Open a Business in Walpole or similar</i> | H | M | Eco Dev Officer; Eco Dev Committee |
| | | Create a step by step guidance sheet for businesses and others who need permits | H | S | Eco Dev Officer; Eco Dev Committee |
| | | Change business zoning language to reflect desired businesses -- e.g., create the Highway Business district -- and make amendments to site plan review, the sign bylaw, definitions, parking, and other technical amendments | H | S | Planning Board (PB); Town Meeting (TM) |
| | Identify economic development focus locations | Establish a Downtown Opportunity Center Overlay District | H | S | PB; TM |
| | | Establish a Commercial Incentive Overlay District for the Route 1 North Area | H | M | PB; TM |
| | | Prepare detailed plans for focus areas, including market studies and incorporation of town facilities needs | M | M | Eco Dev Officer; Town Planner; Eco Dev Committee; PB; Greater Downtown Business Association |
| | | Prepare an East Walpole market study and revitalization plan | M | M | Eco Dev Officer; East Walpole Civic Association |
| | | Identify areas for EOA designation and DIF designation | H | S-M | Eco Dev Officer; Eco Dev Committee |
| | Reclaim brownfield sites for new uses | Prepare a market study for the Route 1A area and the Superfund Site | M | M | Eco Dev Officer; Brownfields Committee |

| D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | and protect environmentally sensitive land' | area | | | |
| | | Study the feasibility of sewerage the industrial park | M | M | Sewer & Water Commissioner; Sewer & Water Dept. |
| Improve the mix of retail and services that serve residents | | Establish zoning and incentive programs that promote redevelopment of the Walpole Mall and downtown | H | S | Eco Dev Officer; Town Planner; PB; Eco Dev Committee |
| | | Establish design standards or design guidelines for all commercial areas in order to upgrade their appearance over time | M | M | Town Planner; PB |
| | | Study the feasibility and financing options for a parking deck or garage downtown to support improved retail options and downtown housing | M | L | Town Planner; Eco Dev Officer |
| Attract new high paying jobs | Focus first on the expanding from the existing base of high-wage jobs | Develop relationships and a strategy for serving small manufacturers | H | M | Eco Dev Officer |
| | | Work with the large companies in Walpole such as Bayer and Rolls Royce to understand the needs of their industries and opportunities for expansion, recruitment of their suppliers, etc. | H | M | Eco Dev Officer |

Appendix: Economic Development Data

| Industries With the Most Jobs in Walpole and Metropolitan Boston | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Metropolitan Boston's 20 Largest Industries by Number of Employees | Per Cent of Metro Jobs | Per Cent of Walpole Jobs | Metro Boston Average Weekly Wage | Walpole Average Weekly Wage | 1998-08 MA Job Growth |
| Health Services | 11.5% | 6.0% | \$ 866 | \$ 615 | 20.1% |
| Business Services | 10.2% | 9.2% | \$1,103 | \$ 633 | 45.2% |
| Eating & Drinking Places | 6.6% | 9.5% | \$ 336 | \$ 243 | 10.3% |
| Engineering & Mgmt. Services | 6.3% | 1.2% | \$1,655 | \$1,300 | 27.8% |
| Educational Services | 5.1% | 0.8% | \$ 834 | \$ 741 | 8.0% |
| Wholesale Trade-Durables | 3.6% | 3.7% | \$1,435 | \$1,199 | 5.6% |
| Miscellaneous Retail | 3.1% | 4.3% | \$ 501 | \$ 310 | 4.4% |
| Social Services | 3.0% | 2.3% | \$ 474 | \$ 367 | 26.6% |
| Specialty Trade Contractors | 3.0% | 8.6% | \$1,120 | \$1,202 | 3.1% |
| Food Stores | 2.9% | 2.5% | \$ 422 | \$ 348 | 6.5% |
| Securities/Commod. Brokers | 2.8% | 0.2% | \$3,046 | \$2,171 | 40.8% |
| Depository Institutions | 2.5% | 1.1% | \$1,133 | \$ 884 | -4.1% |
| Whole. Trade-Nondurables | 2.2% | 2.3% | \$1,166 | \$1,138 | 5.6% |
| Instruments & Related Prod. | 2.1% | 6.5% | \$1,406 | \$1,299 | -6.9% |
| Electronic/Elec. Equipment | 1.8% | 0.1% | \$1,445 | \$ 934 | -9.3% |
| Insurance Carriers | 1.7% | <0.1% | \$1,236 | N/A | -3.4% |
| Industrial Machinery | 1.7% | 5.3% | \$1,454 | \$1,148 | -14.9% |
| Printing & Publishing | 1.6% | 0.4% | \$1,163 | \$1,715 | -9.3% |
| Apparel & Accessory. Stores | 1.6% | 1.7% | \$ 502 | \$ 249 | 6.5% |
| Legal Services | 1.4% | 0.6% | \$1,769 | \$ 966 | 12.9% |
| | | | | | |
| Other Large Walpole Indus. | | | | | |
| General Merch. Stores | 1.3% | 3.9% | \$ 419 | \$ 381 | 6.5% |
| Auto Dealers & Service Sta. | 1.3% | 3.6% | \$ 894 | \$1,115 | 6.5% |
| Local & Interurban Transit | 0.7% | 3.0% | \$ 533 | \$ 489 | 5.1% |
| Paper & Allied Products | 0.3% | 2.3% | \$ 848 | \$ 884 | -12.5% |
| Bldg. Mat. & Garden Supplies | 0.6% | 2.1% | \$ 697 | \$ 789 | 6.5% |
| Personal Services | 1.2% | 1.6% | \$ 462 | \$ 541 | 23.9% |
| Heavy Const., Except. Bldg. | 0.7% | 1.5% | \$1,296 | \$1,804 | 3.1% |
| | | | | | |
| Key | | | | | |
| Walpole's Top 10 Employers | | | | | |
| Walpole Below Metro Ave. | | By 2.0%+ | | | |
| Walpole Above Metro Ave. | | By 2.0%+ | | \$1,037+ | |
| Industry Above Metro Ave. | | | \$1,037+ | | |
| Source: MA DET | | | | | |

| Jobs in Walpole by Industry | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| SIC | Industries Employing Workers In Walpole | Number of Establishments | Number of Employees | Average Weekly Wage | Ave. Weekly Payroll |
| 58 | Eating And Drinking Places | 48 | 784 | \$243 | \$190,512 |
| 73 | Business Services | 44 | 760 | \$633 | \$481,080 |
| 17 | Special Trade Contractors | 74 | 711 | \$1,202 | \$854,622 |
| 38 | Instruments And Related Products | 4 | 539 | \$1,299 | \$700,161 |
| 80 | Health Services | 29 | 496 | \$615 | \$305,040 |
| 35 | Industrial Machinery And Equipment | 9 | 436 | \$1,148 | \$500,528 |
| 59 | Miscellaneous Retail | 39 | 351 | \$310 | \$108,810 |
| 53 | General Merchandise Stores | *** | 323* | *** | |
| 50 | Wholesale Trade-durable Goods | 50 | 306 | \$1,199 | \$366,894 |
| 55 | Automotive Dealers & Service Stations | 20 | 299 | \$1,115 | \$333,385 |
| 41 | Local And Interurban Passenger Transit | *** | 244* | *** | |
| 54 | Food Stores | 13 | 206 | \$348 | \$71,688 |
| 51 | Wholesale Trade-nondurable Goods | 17 | 192 | \$1,138 | \$218,496 |
| 26 | Paper And Allied Products | *** | 190* | *** | |
| 83 | Social Services | 12 | 189 | \$367 | \$69,363 |
| 52 | Building Materials & Garden Supplies | 7 | 171 | \$789 | \$134,919 |
| 7 | Agricultural Services | 25 | 158 | \$541 | \$85,478 |
| 56 | Apparel And Accessory Stores | 4 | 141 | \$249 | \$35,109 |
| 72 | Personal Services | 33 | 130 | \$371 | \$48,230 |
| 16 | Heavy Construction, Ex. Building | 3 | 127 | \$1,804 | \$229,108 |
| 34 | Fabricated Metal Products | 6 | 126 | \$676 | \$85,176 |
| 75 | Auto Repair, Services, And Parking | 24 | 117 | \$730 | \$85,410 |
| 42 | Trucking And Warehousing | 16 | 112 | \$878 | \$98,336 |
| 79 | Amusement & Recreation Services | 10 | 111 | \$314 | \$34,854 |
| 87 | Engineering & Management Services | 40 | 101 | \$1,300 | \$131,300 |
| 20 | Food And Kindred Products | 4 | 100 | \$540 | \$54,000 |
| 60 | Depository Institutions | 9 | 92 | \$884 | \$81,328 |
| 15 | General Building Contractors | 26 | 83 | \$976 | \$81,008 |
| 82 | Educational Services | 3 | 65 | \$741 | \$48,165 |
| 49 | Electric, Gas, And Sanitary Services | *** | 60* | *** | |
| 81 | Legal Services | 11 | 53 | \$966 | \$51,198 |
| 14 | Nonmetallic Minerals, Except Fuels | *** | 50* | *** | |
| 65 | Real Estate | 11 | 46 | \$838 | \$38,548 |
| 76 | Miscellaneous Repair Services | 8 | 43 | \$831 | \$35,733 |
| 57 | Furniture And Home Furnishings Stores | 7 | 43 | \$729 | \$31,347 |
| 64 | Insurance Agents, Brokers, & Service | 6 | 37 | \$1,548 | \$57,276 |
| 27 | Printing And Publishing | 7 | 36 | \$1,715 | \$61,740 |
| 39 | Miscellaneous Manufacturing Industries | *** | 32* | *** | |
| 48 | Communications | 7 | 24 | \$888 | \$21,312 |
| 88 | Private Households | 23 | 24 | \$336 | \$8,064 |
| 86 | Membership Organizations | 5 | 16 | \$1,011 | \$16,176 |
| 24 | Lumber And Wood Products, Except Furniture | *** | 14* | *** | |
| 78 | Motion Pictures | *** | 14* | *** | |
| 62 | Security And Commodity Brokers | 4 | 13 | \$2,171 | \$28,223 |
| 28 | Chemicals And Allied Products | *** | 11* | *** | |
| 36 | Electronic & Other Electric Equipment | 4 | 10 | \$934 | \$9,340 |
| 70 | Hotels And Other Lodging Places | 3 | 10 | \$227 | \$2,270 |
| 23 | Apparel And Other Textile Products | *** | 5* | *** | |
| 25 | Furniture And Fixtures | *** | 5* | *** | |
| 32 | Stone, Clay, And Glass Products | *** | 5* | *** | |
| 47 | Transportation Services | *** | 5* | *** | |
| 61 | Nondepository Institutions | *** | 5* | *** | |
| 63 | Insurance Carriers | *** | 5* | *** | |
| 67 | Holding And Other Investment Offices | *** | 4* | *** | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 89 | Services, Not Elsewhere Categorized | *** | 3* | *** | |
| | Total Goods Producing | 173 | 2638 | \$1,134.52 | \$2,992,864 |
| | | | | \$58,995 | Annualized |
| | Total Service Producing | 517 | 5595 | \$621.30 | \$3,476,174 |
| | | | | \$32,308 | Annualized |
| | All Industries | 690 | 8233 | \$785.74 | \$6,468,997 |
| | | | | \$40,858 | Annualized |
| | <i>Government Jobs not Included</i> | | | | |
| | <i>*Estimated ***Suppressed for confidentiality</i> | | | | |
| | <i>Source: MA Division Employment & Training</i> | | | | |

| Employment and Wages in Walpole | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|--------|------------|---------------------|-------------|---------|---------|----------|------|-------|------|----------|
| | | | | E M P L O Y M E N T | | | | | | | | |
| Year | Total | Avg | Establish- | Total | Agriculture | Govern- | Const- | Manufac- | TCPU | Trade | FIRE | Services |
| | Annual | Annual | ments | | Forestry | ment | ruction | turing | | | | |
| | Payroll | Wage | | | Fishing | | | | | | | |
| 1985 | 144,854,906 | 18,445 | 501 | 7,853 | 62 | 1,161 | 358 | 2,142 | 567 | 2,580 | 128 | 753 |
| 1986 | 156,579,000 | 19,172 | 559 | 8,167 | 61 | 1,150 | 426 | 1,995 | 650 | 2,820 | 156 | 797 |
| 1987 | 159,251,500 | 20,464 | 602 | 7,782 | 68 | 1,190 | 467 | 1,541 | 681 | 2,839 | 180 | 701 |
| 1988 | 179,596,906 | 22,257 | 646 | 8,069 | 65 | 1,209 | 557 | 1,752 | 641 | 2,864 | 190 | 686 |
| 1989 | 185,325,257 | 23,050 | 654 | 8,040 | 73 | 1,220 | 504 | 1,817 | 549 | 2,857 | 177 | 746 |
| 1990 | 186,120,491 | 24,496 | 645 | 7,598 | 68 | 1,203 | 411 | 1,891 | 477 | 2,534 | 164 | 761 |
| 1991 | 185,286,828 | 26,185 | 615 | 7,076 | 66 | 1,230 | 311 | 1,700 | 435 | 2,270 | 142 | 835 |
| 1992 | 197,277,091 | 26,555 | 605 | 7,429 | 79 | 1,287 | 269 | 1,665 | 392 | 2,273 | 135 | 1,250 |
| 1993 | 201,027,781 | 26,496 | 604 | 7,587 | 91 | 1,174 | 284 | 1,730 | 338 | 2,363 | 141 | 1,382 |
| 1994 | 222,788,206 | 27,113 | 646 | 8,217 | 94 | 1,188 | 312 | 1,793 | 427 | 2,689 | 156 | 1,465 |
| 1995 | 243,107,220 | 28,163 | 656 | 8,632 | 111 | 1,201 | 303 | 2,038 | 330 | 2,588 | 161 | 1,802 |
| 1996 | 245,305,874 | 27,923 | 674 | 8,785 | 117 | 1,263 | 302 | 2,072 | 376 | 2,529 | 160 | 1,878 |
| 1997 | 284,666,185 | 29,886 | 674 | 9,525 | 141 | 1,369 | 375 | 2,335 | 391 | 2,739 | 178 | 1,910 |
| 1998 | 311,875,343 | 30,980 | 689 | 10,067 | 134 | 1,406 | 513 | 2,209 | 450 | 3,114 | 183 | 1,973 |
| 1999 | 320,180,868 | 33,534 | 677 | 9,548 | 135 | 1,406 | 678 | 1,928 | 486 | 2,864 | 161 | 1,835 |
| 2000 | 337,264,599 | 35,102 | 694 | 9,608 | 150 | 1,464 | 760 | 1,657 | 535 | 2,871 | 177 | 1,946 |
| 2001 | 368,912,476 | 38,079 | 710 | 9,688 | 161 | 1,456 | 906 | 1,532 | 467 | 2,746 | 201 | 2,169 |
| TCPU = Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities FIRE = Finance, Insurance and Real Estate | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Note: Changes in industry definitions occurred in 1988, so data prior to that year are not strictly comparable to the more recent data. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training (ES-202 Series) | | | | | | | | | | | | |

III. Circulation and Transportation

.....



Goals:

- Improve traffic flow and reduce speeding on town roads
- Coordinate downtown traffic improvements with revitalization goals
- Improve traffic and pedestrian safety
- Mitigate traffic impacts of development
- Create a network of pedestrian and bicycle routes
- Improve parking and access to the train station

A. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- Approximately one in five employed Walpole residents works in Boston and one in five works in Walpole. The remainder is employed throughout the metropolitan region.
- 85% of employed Walpole residents drive to work alone.
- Fewer than 7% of employed Walpole residents use commuter rail to get to work.
- Route 1 and Route 1A carry more traffic than any other roads, in some locations with recorded traffic volumes of more than 20,000 vehicles per day. Route 27 carries nearly as much traffic east of Route 1A.
- These three roads also have more accidents than any others in Walpole.

Key Challenges

- Find the balance between improving traffic flow, controlling speeding, and improving safety
- Improve traffic in downtown without detracting from revitalization goals
- Make Walpole more friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists
- Improve the attractiveness of commuter rail with improved parking

| Walpole Residents' Place of Work | | |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| <i>total workers 16+</i> | <i>11406</i> | <i>100.0%</i> |
| Boston | 2260 | 19.8% |
| Walpole * | 2167 | 19.0% |
| Norwood | 1148 | 10.1% |
| Dedham | 347 | 3.0% |
| Newton | 284 | 2.5% |
| Westwood | 280 | 2.5% |
| Wellesley | 271 | 2.4% |
| Braintree | 263 | 2.3% |
| Canton | 240 | 2.1% |
| Quincy | 231 | 2.0% |
| Needham | 227 | 2.0% |
| Medfield | 215 | 1.9% |
| Franklin | 203 | 1.8% |
| other | 3270 | 28.7% |
| <i>*includes those who work at home</i> | | |
| <i>Source: Census 2000 sample data</i> | | |

Travel Patterns

Walpole residents travel to dispersed locations throughout Eastern Massachusetts to get to work. About one-fifth work in Boston and another fifth in Walpole, with the remaining 60 percent traveling to a variety of locations in the South Shore and elsewhere. Therefore, despite the existence of a commuter rail station and a compact town center, Walpole is very auto-dependent. In 2000, the Census reported that there were an average of 1.88 vehicles per household in Walpole, and 68.4 percent of households had at least two vehicles. Only 4.6 percent of households (most of them single-person households) had no vehicle available.

Census data also showed that approximately 722 people (6.3 percent of workers) use public transportation to get to work. This

| Means of Transportation to Work (Workers 16+) | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------|-------|------|--------|-------|
| | 1990 | % | 2000 | % | Change | % |
| Drove alone | 8,457 | 80.3 | 9,718 | 85.2 | 1,261 | 14.9 |
| Carpooled | 827 | 7.9 | 470 | 4.1 | -357 | -43.2 |
| Public transportation (inc. taxi) | 706 | 6.7 | 722 | 6.3 | 16 | 2.3 |
| Bicycled or walked | 210 | 2.0 | 62 | 0.5 | -148 | -70.5 |
| Motorcycle or other | 56 | 0.5 | 8 | 0.1 | -48 | -85.7 |
| Worked at home | 274 | 2.6 | 426 | 3.7 | 152 | 55.5 |
| <i>Source: Census 2000 sample data</i> | | | | | | |

statistic includes both rail and bus, but the majority travel on commuter rail. In the Master Plan survey, slightly more than 10 percent of respondents were regular users of commuter rail, but nearly 40 percent said they never use the train.

Of course, commuting to work is not the only source of traffic. Walpole residents make many non-work-related trips: to reach retail and services in town and neighboring communities, to take children to school and activities, business trips during the day, and so on. Public transportation options are limited, new houses and subdivisions on larger lots tend not to be connected to a continuous sidewalk system or to nearby retail or services, and bicycle travel is dangerous on many roads. Especially in North Walpole, development patterns have put pressure on what was a rural road system. With only a few ways to travel out of this part of Town, the few collector roads, such as North Street, inevitably become congested.

Transportation Issues

In the survey and public meetings, the transportation issues that emerged repeatedly concerned congestion in specific well-known locations including Walpole Center, Route 27, Route 1A and North Street, and Coney Street. Residents also expressed a desire for repair of existing sidewalks and installation of new ones and for more trails and paths in open space areas. The most important improvement identified for public transportation was more parking.

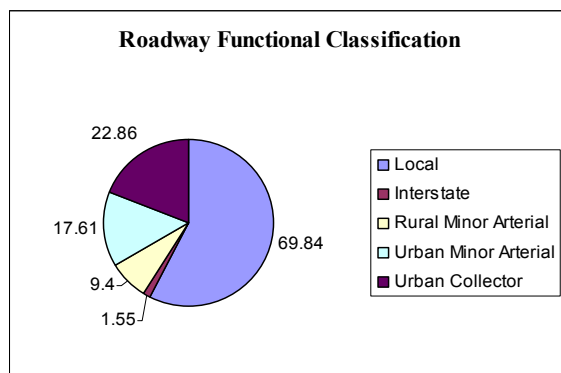
In addition to the Town's priority projects and concerns voiced by residents, key traffic and transportation issues in Walpole include the following:

- Route 1A congestion, traffic flow and safety at key intersections along the corridor.

- Perceived speeding on Route 27.
- Neighborhood traffic issues such as cut through traffic, truck traffic impacts, and pedestrian safety.
- Management of roadway maintenance.

Roads

Roadway Functional Classification



Roadways are classified based on the federal roadway functional classification system. This system categorizes roadways by function and includes the following types of roadways in Walpole: Interstate, Urban Minor Arterial, Rural Minor Arterial, Urban Collector, and Local Streets. Interstate roadways like I-95 in Walpole are multilane, high-speed, limited access freeway systems. Urban minor arterial roadways are moderate speed facilities that include state routes and connect cities and towns in an

urbanized area. Examples in Walpole are Routes 1, 1A, and 27.

Urban collectors are moderate to lower speed roads that connect the arterial roadway system to the local road network. Important collector streets in Walpole include Washington Street, Coney Street, East Street, West Street, and Fisher Street. These roads transition between higher speed arterial roads and low speed local streets. Rural minor arterials are moderate speed facilities that include state routes and connect cities and towns in rural areas. Local streets are the lowest classification of roadway and are generally low speed narrow streets that provide access to local neighborhoods and residential properties. A majority of town roads are rural residential local roads, with most businesses located on Route 1, Route 1A, and the downtown area. As shown in the chart, 58% or 70 miles of all roads in town are designated as local streets.

Traffic Volume

Walpole's arterial and collector roads carry significant traffic through town. Other than Interstate 95 traffic, Route 1 and Route 1A are the highest volume roadways in town. Route 27 also carries significant traffic passing through town from adjacent communities. The Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) maintains a traffic volume database of many roadways throughout the entire state. For the Town of Walpole, traffic volumes have been collected on Route 1, Route 1A and several other roads for a few years between 1992 and 2000. Interstate 95 does not have any recorded historic traffic volumes in Walpole. As shown, in 2000 Route 1A north of Kendall Street carried the highest recorded traffic volume in that year, with a volume of 21,200 vehicles. Route 1 south of Old Post Road has a recorded traffic volume of 27,000 vehicles per day in 1994.

| ROUTE/ STREET | LOCATION | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| INDUSTRIAL RD. | EAST OF RTE.1A | | | | | | | | | | 1,600 |
| PINE ST. | EAST OF RTE.1 | | 350 | | | | | | | | |
| PINE ST. | WEST OF RTE.1 | | 1,300 | | | | | | | | |
| RTE. 1 | SOUTH OF OLD POST RD. | | 27,000 | | | | | | | | |
| RTE. 1 | SOUTH OF PINE ST. | | 21,000 | | | | | | | | |
| RTE. 1A | AT NORFOLK T.L. | 8,500 | 9,000 | | 10,200 | 9,600 | | 9,500 | 10,200 | | 9,800 |
| RTE. 1A | AT NORWOOD T.L. | 13,024 | 13,145 | 13,184 | 12,833 | 12,537 | 12,856 | 12,534 | 11,990 | | 12,016 |
| RTE. 1A | NORTH OF KENDALL ST. | | | | | | | | 21,200 | | |
| RTE. 1A | SOUTH OF FISHER ST. | | | | | 16,300 | | | | | |
| RTE. 1A | SOUTH OF NORFOLK ST. | | | | | 14,100 | | | | | |
| RTE. 27 | EAST OF RTE.1A | | 13,000 | | | 14,900 | | | 19,500 | | |
| SUMMER ST. | EAST OF SHUFELT RD. | | | | | | | | | | 5,800 |

Safety

Crash data was collected from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) database. The latest year available from MHD is 2001. The table lists crashes on the entire road and at key intersections, but the data does not always distinguish between intersection and roadway collisions, so the numbers in the table are for the entire road and at key intersections. The intersection collisions are included in the road totals, but are shown to indicate problem locations. There were three fatal collisions in town in 2001: one on Interstate 95, one on Route 1A, and one at an unidentified location.

Route 1A has the highest incidence of crashes of any road in town. This is also one of the most heavily traveled roads in town with average daily traffic volumes over 20,000 vehicles in some locations.

In the survey and public meetings, Walpole residents were asked to choose from a list provided by the Police Department which intersection they find the most dangerous. The three most-often cited are on high-volume roads: East Street and School Street; East Street and High Plain Street; and Route 1 and Coney Street.

| 2001 Crash Data | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Road | Crashes |
| Route 1A | 171 |
| Route 1 | 98 |
| Route 27 | 89 |
| Washington St | 37 |
| I-95 | 27 |
| Common St | 19 |
| West St | 15 |
| North St | 14 |
| Coney St | 10 |
| Pleasant St | 8 |
| Winter St | 7 |
| Plympton St | 5 |
| South St | 5 |
| Intersections (included above) | |
| Route 1 at Route 27 | 25 |
| Route 1 at Coney Street | 17 |
| Washington Street at Short Street | 10 |
| Route 1A at Front Street | 9 |
| Source: MassHighway | |

Public Transportation

The MBTA provides commuter rail and bus service for Walpole to and from downtown Boston. There are two commuter rail stops in town, the major one in Walpole Center and a minor stop in Plimptonville at a small 5 car gravel lot. The Plimptonville stop does not serve significant vehicle traffic, but is for picking up and dropping off passengers. A third commuter rail stop, Windsor Gardens, is very near to the Walpole line in Norwood. As noted earlier, census data show 722 people using commuter rail to get to work.

MBTA bus service includes Routes 34/34E from Walpole Center / Dedham Line to the Forest Hills Orange Line T Station via Washington Street. The total running time for the bus from Forest Hills to Dedham Mall is between 52 and 62 minutes. The buses travel primarily on Washington Street, make several stops in Walpole Center along Main Street, and use Route 1A and Route 27.

Planned Transportation Improvements

The Walpole Highway Department has developed a list of priority transportation improvement projects. Two of these projects, removal of the Washington Street Bridge over the abandoned rail line and the replacement of the Bullard Street Bridge, are programmed in the metropolitan Boston Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for 2004 – 2008. This means that these projects have been funded. The remaining projects are on the Supplemental list, which means that they have been requested by the Town but no action has yet been taken to assign funding or schedule these projects for implementation.

| Town Priority | Location | Problem | Required Action |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | Washington Street Bridge Removal Cost: \$360,000 in state funds | The existing bridge over abandoned railroad tracks is structurally deficient and its condition is continually deteriorating. The bridge is unsafe for pedestrian traffic, with the only sidewalk closed by order of MHD due to severe stringer deterioration. | Funded on the 2004 TIP. |
| 2 | Route 1A/Winter Street Safety Improvements Estimated cost: \$500,000 At 25% design phase. | Currently, there is no safe method for pedestrians to cross this major north-south route. Additionally, the east-west traffic cannot safely cross Route 1A either, due to intense volumes, and poor sight distance. | This project will install new sidewalks and provide signalized and channelized intersections to increase traffic flow and protect pedestrians. Adjusted vertical alignment will provide greater sight distance, important to local traffic, as well as emergency respondents to the three abutting correctional institutions. |
| 3 | Route 1A Corridor Improvements at North Street and Willett Street | North/Main and Willet/Main are experiencing congestion due to lack of signalization and segments of sidewalks missing along the roadway. The lack of signalization is causing traffic congestion and safety issues. This project will replace sections of existing sidewalk and improvement of the intersections at North/Main and Willet/Main. | This project will provide better channelization and upgraded sidewalks to decrease congestion and improve pedestrian access and safety. This project includes the signalization of the North Street-Main Street intersection and the Bullard Street-Willet Street-Main Street Intersection. |
| 4 | Bullard Street Bridge Cost: \$417,900 in federal and state funds. | The Bridge is rated structurally deficient by MHD because it is experiencing rapid concrete deterioration and spalling. | Funded on the 2006 TIP. This project will renovate the existing bridge, providing two lanes of traffic and a sidewalk system for pedestrians. The current weight limit will be removed and the structural integrity of the bridge will no longer be in question. |
| 5 | Coney Street Interchange with Route 95 Estimated cost: \$6.5 million | Reduce traffic burden on local roadway system. The area has congestion at the intersection of Coney and Route One due to the limited access to Route 95. | Better access to Route 95 would be expected to decrease congestion and increase the Level of Service (LOS) in this area. New signals and channelization of traffic to and from Route 95 and Route 1 and upgraded sidewalk system will improve conditions for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Trucks and heavy vehicles will have safer, faster access to their delivery points on Route 1. |
| 6 | Route 27 (East Street) Roadway & Sidewalk Improvements | Provide a more even and stable driving surface while re-establishing lane striping to provide a more uniform travel path. Sidewalks would receive attention where needed. | The existing roadway would be repaved, minor curbing repair and sidewalk repair would be performed. This is especially important since there are several 34E MBTA bus stops along the route. |

The state recently awarded Walpole a \$1 million Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant to fund roadway, streetscape, and park improvements in East Walpole. Most of the funds will go to improvements on Washington Street, Chestnut Street and Union Street. PWED projects are intended to enhance opportunities for economic development. These improvements will enhance the benefits from the repairs to the Washington Street bridge that are being funded by state transportation funds and the renovation of the East Walpole fire station.

Current Transportation Studies

A study of circulation improvements to Main Street in downtown is currently underway. The consultants are studying four alternatives:

- Making West Street one way outbound
- Creating an exclusive left turn lane on Main Street northbound plus optimized signal timing
- Creating four lanes on Main Street at all intersections plus optimized signal timing
- Creating a one-way circulation system on Main, East and Elm Streets plus optimized signal timing

In addition to studying these alternatives, the consultants agreed to evaluate safety issues at the intersection of East Street and School Street, which is known to be a high-accident location.

In considering the alternatives for improvements to Main Street traffic, it is important to make sure that the alternative chosen does not conflict with the Master Plan's emphasis on downtown revitalization. Improving the traffic flow into, through, and around Walpole Center is a desirable goal, but it should be balanced with assuring that downtown is seen as a destination – not just a place to pass through as quickly as possible – and that it becomes more rather than less pedestrian friendly.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Coordinate implementation of the downtown traffic study recommendations with downtown revitalization goals.

Traffic improvement and circulation alternatives for downtown should be evaluated to make sure that they will contribute to retaining and enhancing the character of downtown Walpole, especially the attractiveness and safety of the pedestrian environment, and that they reinforce downtown as a destination, not just a through travel route to other destinations in town. Traffic improvements should also serve the broader goal, developed in other chapters of this plan, to make Walpole Center a lively mixed-use center with additional housing as well as enhanced retail and services.

- **Do not make the sidewalks smaller and the street wider.** Downtown Walpole sidewalks are already quite narrow and offer limited space for streetscape improvements. If feasible, the sidewalks should be widened. Wider streets encourage faster speeds. The objective should be to facilitate ease of movement by vehicles on Main Street, but not necessarily more speed.

- **Parking lanes should not be removed on Main Street.** On-street parking is not only valuable to merchants in downtown, it provides a sense of protection for pedestrians on downtown sidewalks. The parked cars keep them from being directly exposed to the impact of moving traffic close to the sidewalk.
- **Evaluate the potential impact on merchants and revitalization plans of any one-way circulation plans.** Walpole Center is a destination and implementation of revitalization plans should make it more of a destination. One-way circulation plans can make store visibility and access more difficult and complex and they also encourage higher speeds.
- **Evaluate optimal traffic signal timing along Main Street downtown and the entire length of Route 1A.** This and other interventions to improve traffic flow should be evaluated before any physical solutions that would detract from the tight physical organization of buildings and street edges downtown.

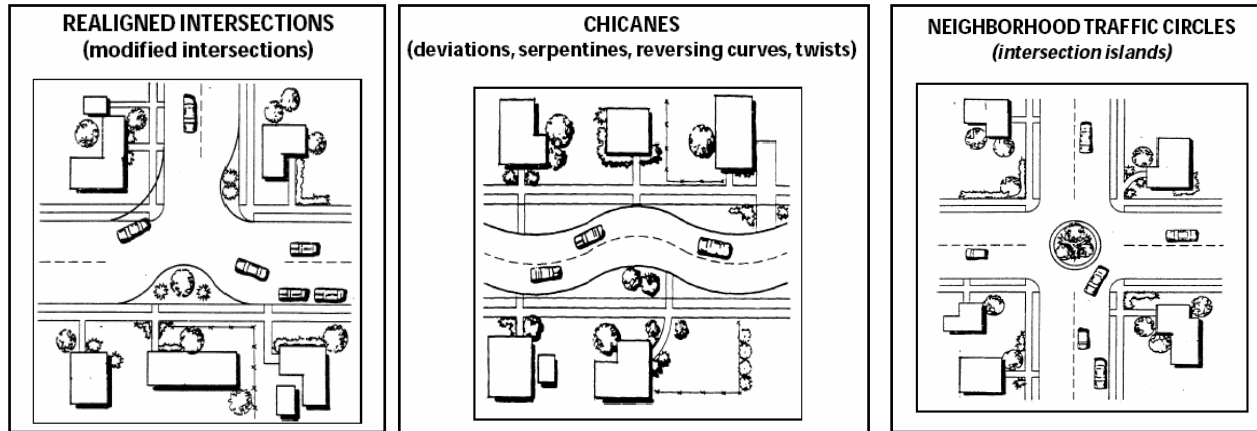
Develop traffic calming policies and strategies to reduce speeds on town roads.

Speeding, cut-through traffic, truck traffic and congestion can be mitigated with traffic calming strategies. Although enforcement actions can help reduce speeding when motorists become aware of enforcement, drivers also tend to return to higher speeds. Traffic calming elements at strategic locations can moderate speeding and discourage high-speed cut-through traffic without constant enforcement, stop signs or traffic signals and at limited expense. Traffic calming strategies can include narrowing of wide intersections, small traffic circles, raised crosswalks or speed tables, chicanes and other small physical changes in the road. Traffic calming strategies are also relatively inexpensive compared to other road improvements or repeated enforcement actions. The typical cost for installation of a traffic calming element ranges from \$5,000 to \$20,000. The appropriate traffic calming strategies for specific roads and intersections require analysis of each location.

When locations that might benefit from traffic calming are identified, selection and design of the appropriate strategies should be undertaken with the advice of an ad-hoc neighborhood traffic calming committee in the affected area.

An effective traffic calming strategy has the following characteristics:

- The prevailing speed becomes the desired speed for the road.
- Drivers tend to choose speeds within a narrow speed distribution.
- A constant speed is possible over the entire project length.
- It is compatible with all transportation modes.
- It is effective 24 hours a day.
- It is inexpensive to build and maintain.
- There are no parking impacts.
- Convenient access to adjacent streets and properties is maintained.
- There are no negative emergency response impacts.



Traffic Calming Strategies

Source: Reid Ewing, *Traffic Calming: State of the Practice* (Washington, DC, 1999).

Manage truck traffic on local streets.

The dispersal of commercial and industrial establishments throughout Walpole makes management of truck traffic a complex issue. Truck traffic should be surveyed and where possible, truck routes should be designated that remove truck traffic, especially tractor trailers, from local residential streets that are not designed for this kind of traffic.

Study high-crash intersections and implement improvements.

Several intersections have historically had poor safety records, but they are not currently on the Town's priority list for improvements due to limited funds. These include East Street / School Street, East Street / High Plain Street, and Route 1 / Coney Street. The East Street/School Street intersection has been evaluated by the consultants studying downtown traffic improvements. They recommended a series of short term improvements to increase visibility and reduce speed on East Street and, based on a preliminary evaluation, suggested a signal at that intersection. Similar safety studies should be completed to identify the cause of the high crash rates at the other locations. The other East Street intersection is also known to have sight distance problems. Removal of vegetation or other sight obstructions can mitigate problems, though changes to the geometry of the intersections may be necessary. Although the Route 1/Coney Street intersection could see improvements if the I-95 interchange were reconfigured, this very costly project is not expected to be funded in the near term.

Evaluate speeding concerns on Route 27 for potential speed limit changes or traffic calming.

The Town may petition the state to reduce the posted speed limit on Route 27. However, this requires a speed study to determine the 85th percentile speed on the road. Because actual observed speeds are often 10 to 15 mph higher than posted speed limits, the state is unlikely to reduce speeds significantly below that which is posted already and the limit could even be adjusted upward if the 85th percentile speed is found to significantly exceed the

posted speed limit. Another option after a survey of speeds on the road would be to investigate potential traffic calming techniques. However, implementing traffic calming on arterial roads is more difficult than on typical neighborhood and residential streets because state numbered routes must meet stricter MassHighway design standards.

MassHighway is becoming more friendly to well-designed innovative traffic solutions. Under the new Community Roads Program, exemptions from rigid design standards are allowed on roads that meet certain criteria. The goals of the program are to protect and enhance community character, enhance safety, extend the service life of existing roads, reduce maintenance costs and protect the environment.

Improve parking and pedestrian safety at the train station and explore ways to integrate the train station more effectively into the downtown.

The location of the commuter rail station at the edge of downtown means it is not a visible part of downtown. Parking is currently insufficient and pedestrian routes from the train station to parking areas can be dangerous.

- **Explore traffic and pedestrian mitigation at the main West Street crossing from the station to parking areas.** Improvements could include raised crosswalks or simple strategies such as installation of concrete pavers in the roadway at the crosswalk, orange traffic cones in the crosswalk, or new crosswalk painting.
- **Continue to pursue additional train station parking with the MBTA.** There is a severe need for more parking at the commuter rail station and the MBTA has looked at several options without a final resolution of the problem. Locating the parking closer to downtown would be beneficial for downtown revitalization. It might be possible to interest the MBTA in contributing to creation of a downtown parking structure that could serve commuters as well as downtown employees, shoppers and other visitors to downtown.
- **Consider innovative long term solutions to integrating the train station into the life of downtown.** Possible ideas include relocating the platform and ideally, the historic station structure, closer to the center of downtown where it could serve as a focus of activity, further encouraging transit-oriented development.

Establish traffic impact study special permit requirements in the zoning bylaw for developments of certain types and sizes

Large developments or developments of certain types generate more traffic than other land uses. For example, businesses with drive-through pick-up operations active during peak hours, medical offices, big box shopping centers and general office buildings all generate more traffic than, for example, residences, R & D businesses, or warehouses. The zoning bylaw should include a requirement that certain uses and certain threshold sizes must provide a study of traffic impacts, including impacts on pedestrians, with the scope of the traffic study (the intersections and road segments to be included) to be developed in consultation with the town planner and the

town engineer. All uses with drive-through windows should be included as well as all development projects that would be expected to generate at least 1,000 vehicle trips per day based on standards in the Institute of Traffic Engineers *Traffic Generation Manual*. The bylaw should include criteria for determining at what level of impact the project proponent would be required to mitigate the traffic impacts forecast for the development.

Create a signage system for public parking in downtown Walpole, restripe and landscape the town parking lot in the short term, and study the feasibility of a parking deck.

Downtown Walpole is lucky to have several large parking lots behind buildings on Main Street, but the may be underutilized because of the lack of highly visible signs to direct drivers to their entrances. It is important to advertise the existence of easy and abundant parking in the downtown. Moreover, the public parking lot behind Main Street could accommodate a large number of cars and would feel more appealing and safer if the lot were to be improved with a new organization of parking stalls, restriping, addition of trees and other landscaping, and clear pedestrian pathways.

As discussed in the economic development chapter, a parking structure could serve many parking needs and support downtown revitalization.

Create a pedestrian and bicycle master plan for Walpole

In the public meetings and the survey, residents were interested in more opportunities to walk and bike in Walpole. Safe walking and biking is particularly important for young people. A pedestrian and bicycle master plan should evaluate pedestrian and bicycle safety and amenities on existing roads and propose enhancements in addition to mapping potential new routes.

- **Continue to require sidewalk construction for all new developments and promote connections with existing sidewalks and paths whenever feasible to increase the extent of continuous pedestrian routes through town.** While it is important to extend the continuous sidewalk network in many areas of Town, it also possible to provide safe pedestrian routes in areas that may not seem appropriate for standard sidewalks. Protected walking areas in road shoulders or stone dust paths can be effective ways to provide for safe walking.
- **In all new roads, and where feasible in road reconstruction, provide marked bicycle travel lanes.** Linking these bicycle routes to local destinations and regional bike routes will enhance the potential use of bicycles for work or shopping trips as well as for recreation.
- **Create routes that can eventually link important open space, historic and community destinations in a town-wide network and connect to regional routes.** The Master Plan chapter on Open Space and Recreation and Map 8 – Recreational Priorities show concepts for bicycle routes and pedestrian trails. The Town should insure that in any road redesign there is provision for a safe pedestrian paths and sufficient room for safe bicycle travel.

- **Add countdown pedestrian timers to busy signalized intersections located in the downtown.** Pedestrian traffic signals with countdown timers increase pedestrian safety at busy intersections because they let pedestrians know how much time they have to cross the street.

Establish a Pavement Management System to support a program of regular road maintenance and improvements as part of a public works asset management system.

Seventy percent of all road mileage in Walpole is local, so the Town would benefit from the most up to date methods of maintaining local streets. A modern public works asset management system is a cost-effective way to keep roads and other assets in good repair. The system would allow Walpole to predict maintenance needs, set priorities, and program funds accurately. A Pavement Management System is a computerized system that allows the Highway Department to efficiently program improvements. Existing software systems can help the town keep a database of pavement conditions linked to the Town's GIS system. With an annual pavement condition survey, a priority list of roadway improvements based on the extent of pavement deterioration can be generated for the capital improvement plan.

Consider using a portion (such as 20%) of transportation excise tax revenue for roadway improvements and maintenance.

Several Towns are considering setting aside funds on an annual or biennial basis for road improvements and maintenance. If this proposal is not feasible under present conditions, it should be reconsidered in the future as a way to provide a defined and continuing source of funding for local road maintenance.

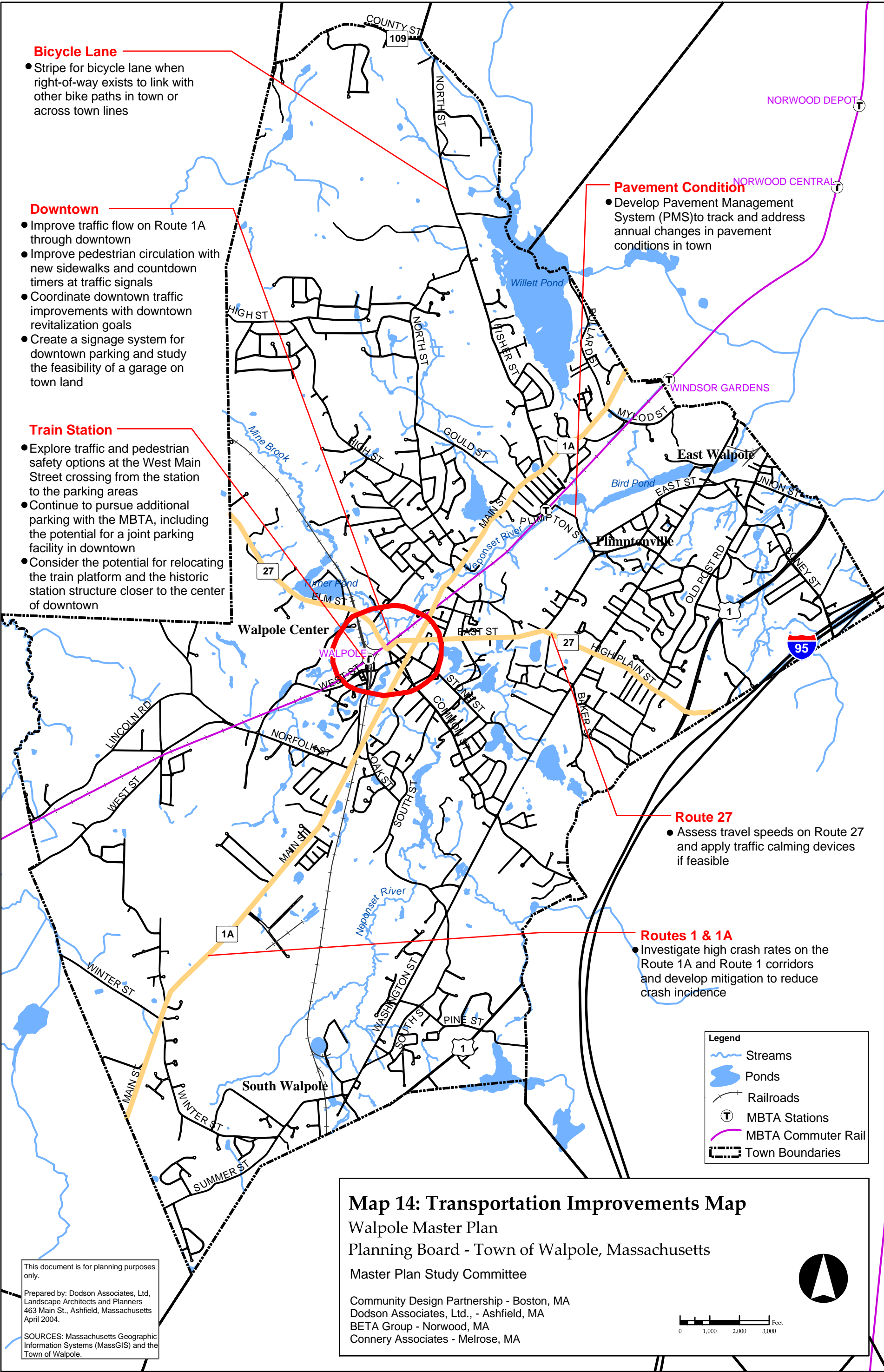
Continue to actively pursue state and federal funding for transportation improvements.

Walpole should continue to actively pursue roadway projects through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to advocate with the MBTA for more commuter rail parking and other public transportation improvements. This includes attending MAPC Regional Transportation Advisory Council meetings when necessary and tracking the prioritized list of projects for the region on a monthly basis.

C. Transportation and Mobility Map

Map 14: Transportation Improvements Map

This map shows major transportation improvement opportunities in the Town Center and major traffic routes.



| D. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| Improve traffic flow and reduce speeding | | Develop traffic calming policies and strategies to reduce speeds on town roads | M | M | Public Works |
| | | Evaluate speeding concerns on Route 27 for potential speed limit changes or traffic calming | H | S | Public Works; Police |
| Improve traffic safety | | Study high-crash intersections and implement improvements | H | S | Public Works; Police |
| | | Manage truck traffic on local streets | M | M | Public Works; Police |
| Coordinate downtown traffic improvements with downtown revitalization goals | | Avoid strategies that degrade the pedestrian environment and reduce access or visibility of merchants | H | S | Public Works; Eco Dev Officer |
| | | Create a signage system for public parking in downtown, restripe and landscape the town parking lot, and study feasibility of a parking deck. | H | S | Public Works; Eco Dev Officer; Town Planner |
| Mitigate the traffic impacts of development | | Establish traffic impact study special permit requirements in the zoning bylaw for developments of certain types and sizes | H | M | Town Planner; Planning Board (PB); Town Meeting (TM) |
| Create a network of pedestrian and bicycle routes | Provide safe routes for walking and biking throughout town | Continue to require sidewalks in all new developments and promote connections with existing sidewalks and paths | H | S | PB; Sidewalk Committee |
| | | In all new roads, and where feasible in road reconstruction, provide marked bicycle lanes | M | M | Public Works |
| | | Create routes to link community destinations in town-wide route and connect them to regional routes | M | L | Town Planner; PB; Public Works |
| | | Add countdown pedestrian times to busy signalized intersections in downtown | L | M | Public Works |
| Improve parking and access to the train | | Explore traffic and pedestrian mitigation at the West Street main crossing from the station to parking areas | M | S | Public Works; MBTA |
| | | | | | |

| D. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|--|-----------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | | Continue to pursue additional train station parking with the MBTA in the context of downtown revitalization | H | L | Public Works; MBTA |
| | | Consider innovative long term solutions to integrating the train station into the life of downtown, potentially through relocating the station closer to downtown | L | L | Town Planner; PB; Public Works |
| Improve road repair and maintenance systems | | Establish a computerized Pavement Management System as part of a public works asset management system | M | M | Public Works |
| | | Consider using a set portion of transportation excise tax revenue for roadway improvements and maintenances | L | L | Board of Selectmen (BoS) |
| | | Continue to actively pursue state and federal funding for transportation improvements. | H | S | BoS; Public Works |

IX. Community Facilities

.....



Goals:

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Water Master Plan Update.
- Integrate wastewater management, aquifer recharge needs, and town land use and growth management goals
- Continue upgrading stormwater management information and controls as part of implementation of Phase II Stormwater Rules
- Raise public awareness about the steps that individuals, households and businesses can take to conserve water and reduce stormwater amounts and pollution effects.
- Plan ahead for municipal facilities in a downtown civic center as an anchor for downtown revitalization
- Study the needs and options for creation of a Community Center
- Include planning for town facilities in the Town's Capital Improvement Program.

A. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- A number of town facilities located in Walpole Center are not adequate for their uses and/or do not meet requirements such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access, including the Police Department, the Fire Department, Town Offices, the Library, and the Senior Center.
- The Old Town Hall building, which is one of only two buildings in Walpole listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and now serves as the Police Department, has roof leaks, water damage, other repair and rehabilitation needs, and it does not comply with ADA requirements.
- There is no comprehensive wastewater management policy that relates sewer extension to town policies on residential and economic development or recharge of the aquifer.

Key Challenges

- Increased future water supply in Walpole is believed to be limited to the potential of two additional wells.
- Walpole's dependence on a sole source aquifer and the MWRA system has consequences for the recharge of the aquifer.
- The Town lacks clear policies and criteria for allowing or encouraging sewer extensions by private developers, or coordination of these decisions with overall policy on residential and business development.

Water Supply

This description of water supply issues is based on the December 2000 Water Supply Yield Assessment Study by the firm of Woodward & Curran, and Sewer and Water Department information.

As noted earlier in the Natural Resources chapter, Walpole depends for its drinking water on a sole source aquifer requiring special protection because of the geological conditions and the lack of viable alternative sources of drinking water to completely replace the current sources if they were to become contaminated. Walpole depends on 11 wells in two aquifers within the larger Head of the Neponset Aquifer: School Meadow Brook Aquifer (7 wells) and Mine Brook Aquifer (4 wells). Water is treated at two plants, the recently upgraded Harold E. Willis plant at Mine Brook, and a plant at School Meadow Brook built in 1998. Eight storage tanks with a total capacity of approximately 8 million gallons maintain pressure throughout the system, provide fire flows, and ensure supply for peak demand and emergencies. Water is distributed through approximately 140 miles of water mains. In the Old Post Road High Pressure Zone, storage facilities are insufficient to meet fire protection needs.

The water system has a total capacity of 7.52 million gallons per day (mgd) if operated 24 hours a day and 5.01 mgd when operated at the recommended 16-hour daily operation. However, the water from the Mine Brook aquifer has high levels of iron and manganese, requiring frequent cleaning of the wells and equipment. The upgrades to the Harold E. Willis treatment plant have improved the system's capacity to deal with these conditions. In addition, satellite wells have been constructed in this aquifer to ensure that wells can pump at their rated volume for longer periods without reductions in volume and costly cleaning. Average daily demand in 1999 was slightly over 3 mgd and maximum daily demand was estimated at 4.38 mgd. Walpole controls two identified sites for future wells, both in the Mine Brook Aquifer, one of which has been proven to supply 1 mgd and another with an estimated yield of 0.5 mgd. Walpole also maintains interconnections with the towns of Foxboro and Norwood which could be used in an emergency situation.

Water withdrawals are regulated by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) through a 20-year permit that began in 1992 and divided into 5-year periods. The current permit for the period 2000-2005 allows a total average daily withdrawal of 3.25 mgd, which will increase to 3.34 mgd for the period 2005-2010. Using population projections prepared in 1999 by MAPC – and therefore without benefit of the results of the 2000 census – Woodward & Curran projected average daily demand at 3.33 mgd in 2010 (just below permitted levels) and 3.57 mgd in 2020. However, the projected population numbers they used were considerably higher than even the highest projections prepared by the Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER) after the 2000 census. For example, the MAPC projection for 2020 was 26,644 total population while MISER's high estimate of projected population for the same year was 24,947 and its low estimate was 21,954.

The Woodward & Curran study found that during the 1989-1999 period, 22-33 percent of Walpole's water was unaccounted for, well above the goal of 15%. The Town has instituted comprehensive leak detection and metering programs. Other recommendations include the measuring of flushing and fire fighting flows, and modification of the fee structure to provide incentives for water conservation. While the town issues a report every

year on water quality that contains information on water conservation, the study recommended that a more active public education program be considered.

Wastewater Management

About half of Walpole's residential households and the majority of its businesses are connected to the town sewer system. The system has approximately 80 miles of sewer pipe and 5 wastewater pumping stations. In addition, there are at least 9 private pumping stations that service sewer systems installed to serve specific subdivisions or businesses. Wastewater from the sewer system is discharged to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) collection system.

The largest unsewered areas in Walpole tend to be located in north and west Walpole, where development is more recent and lot sizes are larger. However, there are scattered areas in all parts of Walpole that are not connected to the sewer system, including areas within the Town's Water Protection Overlay District. In 2000, Vollmer Associates prepared a Sewer Master Plan for the potential sewerage of the entire town. The plan includes numerical priority ratings for unsewered areas based on the following criteria:

- Location in wellhead protection areas
- Existence of high groundwater
- Exceptionally slow or exceptionally fast percolation rates
- High septage pumping rates
- Nearness to 200-foot surface water buffers
- Lot size
- Age of system

The result of this priority ranking was that, in general, unsewered areas near wells and within the Water Resource Protection District were given higher priority than areas in the far north or west of town.

Currently there are no plans to sewer the entire town because of a number of considerations, including cost. Although sewer systems are necessary in certain areas for public health reasons, because of the potential to contaminate groundwater, the town also has to consider the fact that sewer outflows go outside the watershed into the MWRA system and ultimately to Boston Harbor. This means that water is being taken out of the town's underground aquifer but the same amount of water is not being returned to the aquifer in recharge.

Extension of the sewer system currently occurs when developers build new subdivisions in the Water Resources Protection District or where lot sizes or other conditions require it. The Town has not looked at the sewer system as a component of broader policies on residential and nonresidential development. For example, the Route 1A industrial park area received a medium priority ranking in the Sewer Master Plan. However, the lack of sewer in the industrial park is one of the reasons that there is no high value industrial development at that location. Similarly, the amount and kind of residential development in the town, as well as recharge of the aquifer, is affected by the decision to allow developers to build and connect sewers privately. Communal wastewater systems that permit recharge may be more appropriate in some parts of town than new sewers.

Stormwater Management

Part of Walpole is subject to the US Environmental Protection Agency's Phase II Stormwater rules that require regulation of discharges from municipalities in urbanized areas that operate a storm sewer system and regulation of construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land. The Phase II rules are intended to control the volume and rate of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces (primarily pavement and roofs) and to control the concentration of pollutants in the runoff.

There are six minimum measures of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that municipalities are expected to implement. Guidance on the rules and numerous fact sheets and public outreach materials are available on the EPA website and on the state Department of Environmental Protection website.⁴ The six minimum measures with selected possible actions are:

- Public education and outreach on stormwater impacts
 - Distribute education materials or conduct equivalent outreach activities.
 - Inform individuals and households about the steps they can take to reduce stormwater pollution, for example, septic system maintenance, proper use and disposal of fertilizers and garden chemicals, protection of streamside vegetation, and proper disposal of household hazardous waste.
 - As needed, target commercial, industrial and institutional entities likely to have large stormwater impacts.
 - Encourage programs that promote stewardship of natural resources and their associated ecosystems.
- Public involvement and participation
 - Involve the public in developing and managing the stormwater program through advisory committees, citizen monitoring efforts, and program coordination.
- Detection and elimination of illicit discharges
 - Develop, implement and enforce a program to detect illicit discharges.
 - Identify priority areas more likely to have illicit discharges.
 - Develop procedures for tracing sources of discharges, removing it, and assessing program results.
 - Screen outfalls in dry weather.
 - Stencil storm drains.
 - Promote public reporting of illicit connections or discharges.
- Control of stormwater runoff from construction sites
 - Regulatory controls on erosion and sedimentation
 - Requirements for BMPS and waste control measures on construction sites
 - Site plan review measures that incorporate consideration of potential water quality impacts

⁴ EPA: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmeps/menu.cfm>

DEP: <http://mass.gov/brp/stormwtr/phiihelp.htm>

- Procedures for receiving and considering public information, for site inspection, and for enforcement
- Post-construction management of stormwater in new development and redevelopment
 - Preventive actions such as site design strategies (like conservation subdivision development) that minimize impervious surfaces
 - Infiltration and filtration practices such as porous pavement and bioretention
 - Vegetative practices such as grassed swales or filter strips
- Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations.
 - Operation and maintenance program for municipal operations
 - Training in preventing and reducing pollutant runoff

Walpole has been implementing some of these BMPs, for example, the Board of Health sponsors a hazardous household waste disposal day and offers information on septic system maintenance. The Town should take credit for meeting these requirements of the Phase II Stormwater rules. With the increasing use of the town web site and the availability of numerous public information materials on line, it would be valuable for the Town to create links to these materials. These links should appear on the individual pages of a variety of town departments and boards and commissions, including Sewer and Water, Public Works, Board of Health, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and the “environment” page. It might also be valuable to centralize the information on a “Protect Walpole’s Waters” page because that is a goal that almost everyone in town strongly supports.

Town Buildings and Facilities

Walpole has recently upgraded school facilities but is now facing the need to improve the municipal facilities in downtown, as well as meet additional facilities needs. A Municipal Facilities Study Committee has been meeting and receiving reports on the physical condition and program appropriateness of the Library, Police Department, Fire Department, Town Hall, and other facilities.

The public safety departments have the highest priority need for new facilities. Their current buildings are unsuitable for the needs of modern police and fire departments and are not generally handicap-accessible, as required by law. The Library and Town Hall also need more space and upgrades. The current Senior Center in a wing of Town Hall is inadequate and the Council on Aging would like to see a new Senior Center in a downtown location. In the Master Plan survey and community meetings there was also discussion of a need for a Community Center, particularly to provide activities for youth other than team sports.

Luckily, Walpole has the tremendous asset of almost 16 acres of town-owned land in downtown. This land is very underutilized and gives the Town abundant flexibility and opportunity, both for its own facilities and services and for promoting downtown economic development and a livelier, more attractive and more functional town center. Some of the potential opportunities for downtown revitalization have been discussed earlier in the recommendations for housing and for economic development. In analyzing options for new municipal facilities, the Town should take advantage of the opportunity that this downtown land offers to think of the municipal facility planning process as an

integrated whole with positive multiplier effects for the whole community. The municipal facilities plan will likely have to be implemented in phases, but it should not be simply a building by building plan.

Among the options that could be pursued to make the most of the Town's opportunities are creation of a civic center or municipal campus of town facilities; sale of the current library and creation of a new library, possibly with offices or affordable apartments above, as has been done in communities like Portland, OR, and Vancouver, BC; creation of a senior center with senior housing; sale or long term lease of Old Town Hall for historic restoration and new uses such as offices or housing; construction of a parking deck or garage for municipal and downtown parking; creation of a new Town Green as a community gathering place as a focus for the new civic center and community facilities.

| <i>Town-Owned Parcels in Walpole Center</i> | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Town-Owned | ID | bldg value \$ | land value \$ | acres | total value \$ | Current Use |
| 33 WEST ST | 33-19 | 263400 | 116100 | 0.36065200 | 379500 | Historic Society |
| 65 COMMON ST | 33-221 | 696200 | 241400 | 0.76216710 | 937600 | Library |
| 980 MAIN ST | 33-34 | 488200 | 124400 | 0.44765840 | 612600 | Old Town Hall |
| 20 STONE ST | 33-35 | 686100 | 101300 | 0.19742880 | 787400 | Fire Station |
| STONE ST | 33-36 | 0 | 17900 | 0.07438017 | 17900 | Vacant Land |
| STONE ST | 33-37 | 0 | 168100 | 1.00000000 | 168100 | Vacant Land |
| 135 SCHOOL ST | 33-38 | 1940000 | 1594000 | 11.98000000 | 3583400 | Town Hall and Open Space |
| STONE ST | 33-42 | 0 | 100500 | 1.13000500 | 100500 | Vacant Land |
| | | | <i>Total acres</i> | 15.95229147 | | |
| <i>Source: Assessor's Data</i> | | | | | | |

Cemeteries

In West Walpole, the Plain Cemetery has very few cemetery plots remaining. There is town-owned property across the street that could be designated for an extension of this cemetery.

Financial Trends and Indicators

A review of Walpole's finances in recent years and analysis of recent budgets show that the Town is following a conservative financial path. Planned reductions in staff and services due to the economic downturn and cuts in state aid make Town funding of major new initiatives unlikely in the near term, but in the FY 2005 budget message the Town Administrator lauded town staff for delivering town services well under difficult circumstances. Town employees number 169 full time and 74 part time employees. School employees, including aides and custodians number 830.

- The Town is fully exploiting its current tax levy limit, but has considerable capacity to increase revenue by overriding Prop 2 ½ again. However, a substantial override was passed in 2001. An increase in the levy limit of \$500,000 due to state revaluation of telecommunications assets is expected pending resolution of industry appeals.

- Walpole is permitted under state law to shift more of the property tax burden to Commercial/Industrial (CI) property. However, its current CI tax rates are already slightly above its nearest neighbors and its average residential bills are in the mid-range of surrounding towns.
- Walpole's spending per pupil accounts for half of Town budget appropriations, and considerably more of total spending when the schools' share of benefits and debt service are included. Even so, total Town spending per pupil has only risen close to the state average in the last year.
- Walpole has a moderate level of debt relative to other Massachusetts communities. While the Town is following a conservative policy of allocating free cash and one time revenues to capital requests, the Town will need to address \$10+ Million in facilities projects in the next few years.

Financial Position

- Walpole's FY2004 budget includes overall spending growth of 2.02%. The budget reflects an increase of \$1.1 Million in insurance and benefit costs and will involve laying off up to 40 town and school staff if local aid from the state is cut by the anticipated 15-20%. The FY 2005 budget increases by 4.5%, reflecting a 12% increase in insurance and 9% increase in solid waste costs. While layoffs occurred in FY2004, no new positions were programmed for FY2005.
- Walpole's bond rating increased from "A1" to Aa3 in 1998 and has remained steady since then. This Moody rating is at the low end of the highest quality category of municipal debt. The Town's rating is now in the top 30% of Massachusetts communities.
- Between 1990 and 2003, the trend in end of year free cash has varied. Amounts rose in 1997 and 1999 and dipped in 1998 and 2000. Since 2000, funds have increased steadily to \$2.065 million in 2004.

Revenue Composition

- In the 1990 to 2004 time period the composition of major Town revenues varied as follows:

| <u>Source</u> | <u>Maximum %</u> | <u>Minimum %</u> |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Local Property Taxes | 62.47 (FY04) | 54.54 (FY90) |
| State Aid | 18.41 (FY01) | 14.74 (FY93) |

- Local receipts varied between 15.45% and 21.10% over the same time period.

Revenue Sources (FY2004 Proposed):

- 72.8% from property tax levy
- 15.6% from local receipts
- 8.6% from State local aid
- 2.9% Other

Property Taxes (2003)

- Walpole has the 79th highest total property value (2002 EQV) of 351 Massachusetts communities, or about \$110,000 per person (#131).
- "New Growth" in the tax base averaged about \$560,000 over the last five years, and is estimated at \$700,000 for FY2004.

- Commercial/Industrial/Personal Property has declined to 13% of Assessed Value from 25% in the 1980s due to much greater growth in the value of residential property.
- Walpole taxes to the full extent of its current levy limit. Voters passed a \$3.7 Million override in 2001, but the Town has capacity under Prop 2 ½ to raise property taxes an additional \$30 Million through overrides.
- Walpole shifts the tax burden from residential to commercial and industrial property by about one third of the maximum amount allowed by the state, reducing the average single family tax bill by about \$130. While C/I property accounts for 13% of the Town's property value, it contributes 15% of the taxes levied.
- From 1989-99, the average tax bill for single family homes grew by 43% while median family income grew by 48%.
- Walpole's average single family tax bill of \$4,091 is 54% above Norwood's and 13% above Foxborough's. However, it is 33% below the bills in Sharon and Medfield.

FY2004 Operations Budget Appropriations

- 49.7% Education
- 16.7% Assessments & Benefits
- 10.8% Public Safety
- 7.1% General Government
- 6.7% Public Works
- 6.2% Debt & Interest
- 2.1% Culture & Recreation
- 0.7% Health & Human Services

Education Spending (FY2001)

- Spending of \$6,461/pupil was 15% below the statewide average, and 11% below the median for K-12 districts. Preliminary FY2002 data show Walpole's spending rising 18% to within 4% of the statewide average.
- Spending/pupil increased 27% from FY 1997 while enrollment rose by only 1%.
- The Town passed debt exclusions for 4 school projects in the 1990s, which amount to \$1.2 Million in the FY2004 plan levy.

Capital Improvements and Debt

- As of FY2001, the annual cost of servicing Walpole's debt amounted to 6.34% of the budget. This fell squarely in the middle of Massachusetts communities.
- The FY2004 budget includes \$1.16 Million in capital spending, but no new debt will be incurred.
- About \$25 Million in capital spending requests have been identified for FY 2005-08. \$8 Million for a new library in 2006 accounts for almost one third of this total, with Water & Sewer projects totaling another \$9 Million, and Roads \$3 Million. However, the plan does not yet include other major town facilities projects such as new town facilities.
- During the 1990s, the lowest year for the Stabilization Fund was 1995 at \$44,745. The year 2000 brought much higher figures which dipped slightly and then increased to \$1,044,683 in 2003.

| Override History | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|---|--------------------|
| <i>Type of Override</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Purpose</i> | <i>Amount (\$)</i> |
| Capital | 1991 | To retain architect, re: School | Loss |
| | | Total Capital Overrides | N/A |
| Debt Exclusion | 1991 | Refurbish Boyden School | 163,077 |
| | 1992 | Refurbish Boyden School | 131,031 |
| | 1993 | Refurbish Boyden School | 123,111 |
| | 1994 | Refurbish Boyden School | 115,191 |
| | 1994 | Construct addition to Old Post Rd. School | 126,788 |
| | 1995 | Refurbish Boyden School | 107,271 |
| | 1995 | Construct addition to Old Post Rd. School | 157,080 |
| | 1996 | Refurbish Boyden School | 99,351 |
| | 1996 | Construct addition to Old Post Rd. School | 143,090 |
| | 1997 | Refurbish Boyden School | 91,431 |
| | 1997 | Construct addition to Old Post Rd. School | 132,740 |
| | 1997 | Design new Elementary & Renovate High | 432,000 |
| | 1998 | Refurbish Boyden School | 86,133 |
| | 1998 | Construct addition to Old Post Rd. School | 122,390 |
| | 1998 | Design new Elementary & Renovate High | 333,030 |
| | 1999 | Refurbish Boyden School | 87,213 |
| | 1999 | Construct addition to Old Post Rd. School | 112,040 |
| | 1999 | Design new Elementary & Renovate High | 14,795 |
| | 1999 | Purchase Adams Farm | 875,243 |
| | 2000 | Refurbish Boyden School | 30,264 |
| | 2000 | Construct addition to Old Post Rd. School | 101,690 |
| | 2000 | Design new Elementary & Renovate High | 22,230 |
| | 2000 | Purchase Adams Farm | 451,861 |
| | | Equip,Const.,Refurbish Addition to HS | Win |
| | | Purchase Parker Property | Loss |
| | | Purchase Land/Conservation Purpose | Loss |
| | | Construct New & Renovate High School | Loss |
| | | Construct New Elementary School | Loss |
| | | Equip & Construct New Elementary School | Loss |
| | | Capping of Lincoln Road Landfill | Loss |
| | | Total Debt Exclusion | 4,059,050 |
| Operating Overrides | 1991 | General Operating expenses | Loss |
| | 1992 | Fund Solid/Hazardous Waste Budget | Loss |
| | 2002 | General Operating expenses | 3,709,259 |
| | | Total Operating Overrides | 3,709,259 |

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to implement the recommendations of the Water Master Plan Update.

- **Implement additional water conservation measures and incentives.** Although the Town has implemented many recommended conservation techniques, additional measures, including pricing, should be pursued.
- **Aggressively promote water conservation efforts by individuals, households and businesses.** Use materials created by nonprofit organizations and other sources on water conservation for

widespread distribution to town residents and businesses, web site links, etc. Programs to promote the use of water-conserving showers and toilets can also be organized through existing channels.

Integrate wastewater management, aquifer recharge needs, and town land use and growth management goals.

- **Commission a comprehensive wastewater management plan that integrates sewer planning, recharge needs, and town goals.** A new understanding of wastewater management alternatives and impacts, coupled with understandable criteria for making decisions about sewer extensions, whether paid by private or public funds, should be developed through a comprehensive wastewater management plan.
- **Include town economic development and residential development goals in making decisions about priorities for sewer extensions, while keeping public health objectives paramount.**

Continue upgrading stormwater management information and controls as part of implementation of Phase II Stormwater Rules.

- **Review town development regulations to ensure that they include sufficient controls on stormwater impacts.**
- **Identify priority areas and systems for monitoring and institute training and systems for town departments.** Nonpoint source pollution, particularly stormwater runoff, is now the biggest source of water pollution. In many communities, volunteers have stenciled storm drains and organized ongoing programs to monitor stormwater discharges. At the same time, the Town should become a model of stormwater management in its own operations.

Raise public awareness about the steps that individuals, households and businesses can take to conserve water and reduce stormwater amounts and pollution effects.

- **Broadly distribute materials prepared by government and nonprofit agencies on Best Management Practices.**
- **Create a “Protecting Walpole’s Waters” web page on the town web site with links to BMP information sources.**
- **Contact industrial, warehousing, trucking and similar establishments with information on BMPs relevant to their operations.**

Plan ahead for municipal facilities in a downtown civic center as an anchor for downtown revitalization and include facilities planning in the Town's Capital Improvement Program

- **Consider alternative sites and combinations of uses, such as the following:**
 - Consolidate municipal uses on the present Town Hall site along the east side of the Stone Street frontage.
 - Restore and use Old Town Hall and the land all along Stone Street from Main Street to School Street.
 - Sell Old Town Hall or offer a long-term ground lease for adaptive reuse and restoration as offices or condominiums. Do the same with the other smaller parcels where the fire department is now located, so that these sites could be used for mixed uses.
 - Build a mixed use library with affordable apartments or office space (perhaps town offices) above and sell the existing library for mixed income apartments or for office space.
 - Create a combined senior center and senior housing complex by renovating and enlarging the present Town Hall.
 - Relocate Stone Field to create a Town Green linked by pedestrian pathways to Main Street and to Memorial Park.
 - Build a parking structure to serve downtown employees, customers, overflow resident parking, or possible train station parking.
- **Explore tax increment financing, grants, and partnerships with private or nonprofit developers to help finance improvements or construction:**
 - Create a District Improvement Financing area in downtown (with the same boundaries as the proposed Mixed-Use Opportunity District) to give the Town the tool of Tax Increment Financing to fund public improvements through 30-year bonds secured by the additional tax revenue expected to be generated.
 - Consider bonding against the value of town property to help pay for improvements.
 - Partner with private developers for combining public uses with housing, office or retail space.
 - Explore opportunities for state Community Development Fund II financing for economic development and/or housing improvements downtown that could be linked to town facilities planning.

Study the needs and options for creation of a Community Center, perhaps in combination with a Senior Center

Participants in the Master Plan process expressed interest in creating a Community Center to serve all members of the community, but particularly young people who are not focused on team sports. A Community

Center with a Senior Center could become a focus for recreational activities, public meetings, adult education courses and other activities.

Plan ahead for cemetery needs

The Plain Cemetery is nearly full and could be extended by town-owned property across the street. The space available in other cemeteries should be monitored.

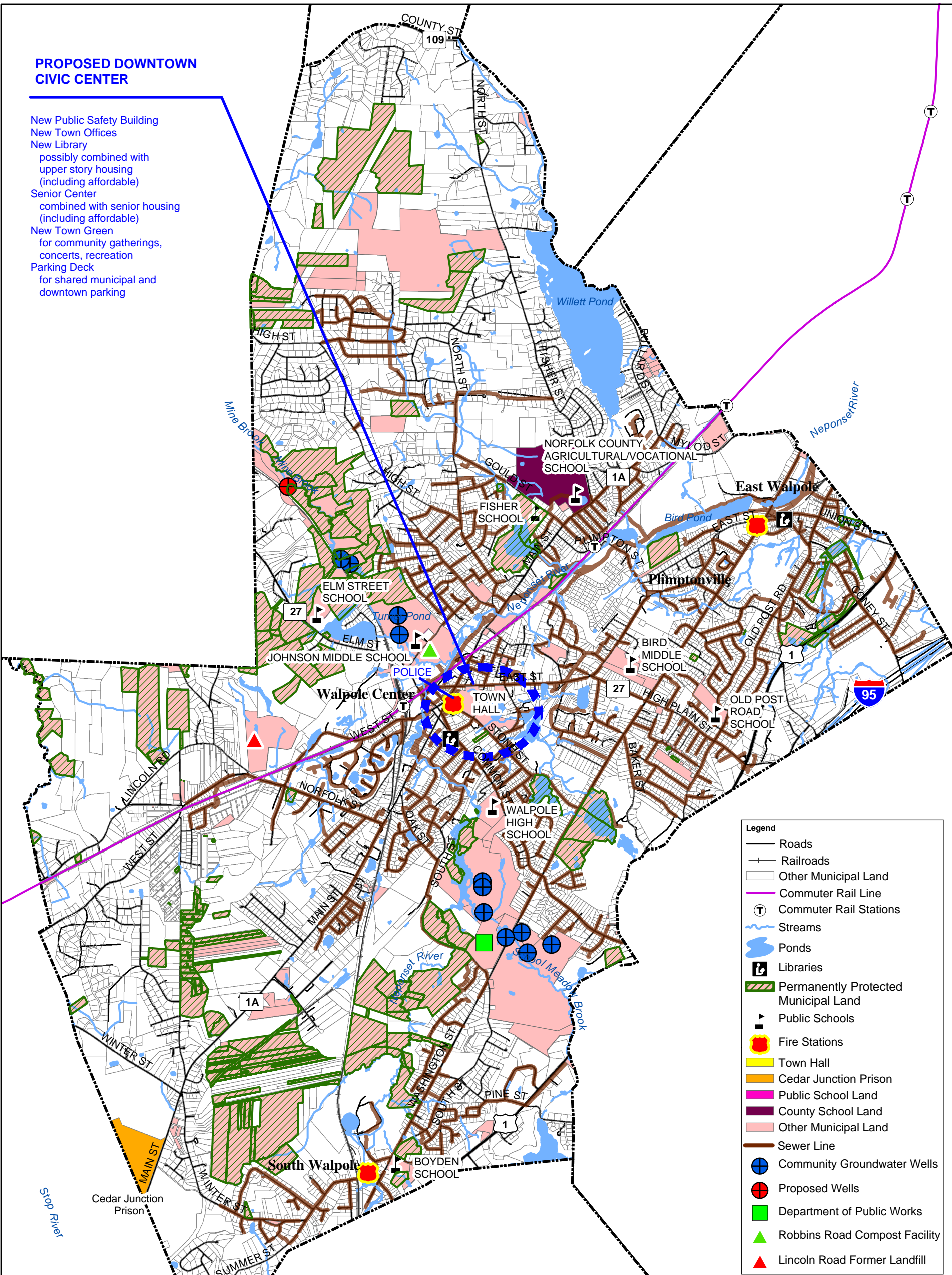
C. MAPS

Map 15: Community Services and Facilities Plan

This map identifies existing town facilities and infrastructure and proposed changes. The focus of the recommendations is on the creation of Civic Center of town facilities in Walpole Center. Map 10, which focuses on open space and recreational facilities, shows recommendations for new athletic fields at Lincoln Road Landfill site, after capping is complete, and permanent protection for the Town Forest and Adams Farm lands, as well as certain other town-owned lands.

PROPOSED DOWNTOWN CIVIC CENTER

- New Public Safety Building
- New Town Offices
- New Library
 - possibly combined with upper story housing (including affordable)
- Senior Center
 - combined with senior housing (including affordable)
- New Town Green
 - for community gatherings, concerts, recreation
- Parking Deck
 - for shared municipal and downtown parking



Map 15: Community Services and Facilities Plan

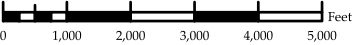
Walpole Master Plan
Planning Board - Town of Walpole, Massachusetts
Master Plan Study Committee

Community Design Partnership - Boston, MA
Dodson Associates, Ltd., - Ashfield, MA
BETA Group - Norwood, MA
Connery Associates - Melrose, MA

This document is for planning purposes only.

Prepared by: Dodson Associates, Ltd,
Landscape Architects and Planners
463 Main St., Ashfield, Massachusetts
April 2004.

SOURCES: Massachusetts Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS) and the Town of Walpole.



| D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|--|---|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| Continue to implement the recommendations of the Water Master Plan Update. | Conserve water before drilling more wells | Implement additional water conservation measures and incentives. | H | S-M | Sewer & Water Commissioners; Water Dept. |
| | | Aggressively promote water conservation efforts by individuals, households and businesses. | H | S | Water Dept. |
| Integrate wastewater management, aquifer recharge needs, and town land use and growth management goals | Develop an integrated wastewater management policy | Commission a comprehensive wastewater management plan that integrates sewer planning, recharge needs, and town goals. | M | M | Sewer & Water Commissioners |
| | | Include town economic development and residential development goals in making decisions about priorities for sewer extensions, while keeping public health objectives paramount | H | S | Sewer & Water Commissioners; Planning Board (PB); Eco Dev Committee |
| Continue upgrading stormwater management information and controls as part of implementation of Phase II Stormwater Rules | Reduce nonpoint source pollution to Walpole's water resources | Review town development regulations to ensure that they include sufficient controls on stormwater impacts. | M | M | Town Planner; Town Engineer |
| | | Identify priority areas and systems for monitoring and institute training and systems for town departments. | M | M | Public Works |
| Raise public awareness about the steps that individuals, households and businesses can take to conserve water and reduce stormwater amounts and pollution effects. | | Broadly distribute materials prepared by government and nonprofit agencies on Best Management Practices. | H | S | Public Works |

| D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACTION PLAN | | | Priority | Time Line | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Goals | Policies | Strategies | <i>High (H)</i> | <i>Short (S)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Medium (M)</i> | <i>Medium (M)</i> | |
| | | | <i>Low (L)</i> | <i>Long (L)</i> | |
| | | Create a “Protecting Walpole’s Waters” web page on the town web site with links to BMP information sources. | M | M | Conservation Commission; Public Works; Pond Management Committee; volunteers |
| | | Contact industrial, warehousing, trucking and similar establishments with information on BMPs relevant to their operations. | M | M | Town Planner; Town Engineer |
| Plan ahead for municipal facilities in a downtown civic center as an anchor for downtown revitalization | Use town facilities and improvements to support other town goals | Consider alternative sites and combinations of uses | H | S | Board of Selectmen (BoS); Municipal Facilities Study Committee |
| | | Explore tax increment financing, grants, an partnerships with private or nonprofit developers to help finance improvements or construction | M | M | BoS; Eco Dev Officer |
| | Include planning for town facilities in the Town’s Capital Improvement Program. | Prepare to include facilities costs, scheduling and financing options for the CIP | H | M | BoS; Town Manager |
| Consider creating a Community Center | | Study the needs and options for creation of a Community Center, possibly in combination with a Senior Center | M-L | M | Recreation; Council on Aging |
| Plan ahead for cemetery needs | | Evaluate the need for more cemetery space and consider expanding the Plain Cemetery with town-owned land across the street. | M | M | BoS |

X. Managing Growth in Walpole

.....

Walpole is maturing into a settled suburban community. At the same time, it has a business economy providing almost 10,000 jobs, including well-paid manufacturing jobs. Although there are remnants of the rural past, there is relatively little open land that is easy to develop. As the Town has moved closer to buildout, residents have become more sensitive to the erosion of now-limited amounts of open space and concerned about development impacts. Walpole will have to face challenges and make trade-offs in order to successfully protect its natural and cultural resources, manage future residential growth, and attract higher-value commercial and industrial investment. Like many communities, Walpole finds itself trying to reconcile competing “goods”:

- The need to protect the Town’s environmentally-sensitive sole source aquifer for drinking water
- The desire to maximize protection of remaining open space and green community character
- The need to manage housing development and gain more permanently affordable units eligible for the Chapter 40B list
- The need to encourage higher value nonresidential investment
- The desire to improve the appearance of business areas and the type and variety of goods and services available to residents in town

The best way to balance a number of different objectives is to try to solve more than one problem or to attain more than one goal simultaneously through a set of interrelated strategies. Sometimes, new incentives and frameworks can create multiple benefits in the same geographical location in Town or one action can have beneficial consequences in terms of natural resources, scenic character, traffic, and housing choice. In this Master Plan, a number of strategies appear in several different chapters because they can advance the goals in different areas. The five key action areas identified in the Executive Summary exemplify this approach:

- Revitalize Walpole Center into a “smart growth” center with apartments or office space above shops, anew civic center for municipal facilities, improved streetscape and parking, and a new Town Green.
- Target economic development efforts to create a higher-value nonresidential tax base and improve the appearance and traffic function of all business zones.
- Manage housing development to preserve open space character and create affordable housing.
- Protect natural and cultural resources in a Green Network and a Heritage Network.
- Invest in people and process in town government.

In each of these action areas, the strategies proposed are interrelated. For example, the proposal for establishing conservation subdivision development models will not only protect open space in larger blocks, it will reduce stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution, preserve more natural vegetation, and help create the Green Network. In moving forward with these strategies and using them as a guide to decision-making, the Town will position itself to actively manage change rather than having to react to change that has already occurred.

A. Proposed Future Land Use

The previous chapters and maps in the Master Plan identified geographic locations best suited to preservation and environmentally sensitive management as well as areas that should be focus areas for development and redevelopment. In addition, the Plan proposes strategies to be employed throughout the town to improve existing and future land uses.

- **Lands for permanent protection**

- Focus on wellhead protection areas and the primary natural resource priority areas identified in the Green Network.

- **Lands for enhanced management**

- Focus on private lands in the previous category that cannot be brought into permanent protection, secondary natural resource priority areas identified on the natural resource maps, and upland buffers to streams, ponds and wetlands.

- **Lands for limited development**

- Designate development sites of 4 acres or more to be designated for mandatory, by right conservation subdivision zoning or planned development districts.

- **Lands for development and redevelopment**

- Commercial and industrial areas to be designated as Economic Opportunity Areas, particularly the proposed Downtown Overlay District and the proposed Commercial Incentive Overlay district at the Route 1 north segment
- Study areas for market analysis and design guidelines at East Walpole center and the Main Street shopping centers at North Street and at Norfolk Street
- Assessment, market studies, and remediation for brownfields sites such as the South Street superfund site, Route 1A sites, and other brownfields ; upgraded standards and design at all existing business development areas

B. Standards, Streamlining and Communication

Part of the purpose of the Master Plan is to identify the ways that Walpole can clarify the message it sends about what kind of development is desired or not. Development standards and design guidelines tell people who want to build in Walpole what the Town's expectations are for development quality, especially as it affects the public interest in environmental health; impacts on infrastructure, traffic, and the pedestrian environment; and, not least, the general public appearance of a development. Once the message is clear, then the Town needs to establish procedures to encourage expeditious processing of project permitting and offer streamlined opportunities for project proponents who meet the Town's goals.

Project Review Communication Improvements

Procedural improvements in reviewing projects can help identify potential problems early in the process and make the process run more smoothly.

- A booklet on Walpole permitting and licensing procedures for businesses, as well as a check list, should be created. Many models are available from other communities that could be modified for Walpole.
- Technical review meetings by town staff should be held for large projects or projects deemed to be otherwise sensitive because of location. The Town Planner would call the meeting based on his or her knowledge of projects being discussed and representatives of Planning, Building Inspection, Conservation, Engineering, Water & Sewer, Historic Commission, Public Safety/Emergency Services, and any other relevant departments should attend.
- As a project goes through the permitting process, it should be accompanied by a project check-off list showing that relevant departments have seen the plans and have either checked off that they do not have any jurisdiction (for example, where there are no protected resources, the Conservation Commission would not have jurisdiction) or that the project has completed that permitting stage satisfactorily. A building permit should not be issued until all relevant departments have checked off.

Planning Board/Neighborhood Communication

It would be valuable for the Planning Board to schedule two meetings a year to invite neighborhood associations and all interested residents or business owners to come to the board to discuss concerns. Meetings could also have a theme to promote public awareness of innovations, such as downtown redevelopment, Route 1 development, conservation subdivisions, and so on. The Planning Board could arrange for representatives from state department, from nonprofit organizations or others to give short presentations on topics of interest.

Board and Commission Communication

Board and commission members are volunteers who donate time from their busy lives to town affairs. As a result it is common that there is little communication among members of different boards unless a structure is set up to promote interaction. One potential method of creating more communication among boards and commissions used by many communities is to have an annual meeting. In some places it is called a retreat, in others “informal town meeting,” or it could be called a policy summit. Potential agenda items might be:

- Boards and Commissions identify operational issues and policy issues
- Each board or commission briefly explains what they do and any issues they are facing
- Identification of opportunities for more coordination between boards and commissions
- Identification of broad policy concerns that need attention
- Master Plan Update – how these concerns fit in with the master plan framework and agenda
- Speaker on an issue of interest to town decision makers

C. Stewardship of the Master Plan

The everyday demands of town government and turnover in town staff and officials sometimes make it difficult to seek guidance from a Master Plan in daily decision making. Effective implementation of a master plan requires stewardship – someone has to feel responsible for monitoring progress and bringing changes to the attention of the community. An Implementation Committee must be appointed to take on that role. The Committee will work with town staff and officials to develop a more refined set of priorities and a detailed schedule of implementation actions. In addition, the Committee should report annually to the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting on the progress of implementation, discussion unforeseen opportunities and barriers and changing conditions. Every five years, public meetings should be organized to review and modify the principles and priorities of the master Plan, so that it remains a useful guide for town decision making. The Planning Board has already begun the process of setting up a Master Plan Implementation Committee whose membership at a minimum will include members of the Planning Board, the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission.

. The Zoning Subcommittee created as part of this planning project is expected to meet several times to prepare for the discussion of zoning amendments at the Fall 2004 Town Meeting. A permanent Zoning Advisory Committee would be a valuable addition to Walpole's standing committees. In addition to working on the zoning agenda that emerges from this Master Plan, a Zoning Advisory Committee can serve the town by reviewing and reporting on all zoning amendment articles submitted for town meeting.

Proposed Master Plan Implementation Committee

- Appointed by Planning Board or Board of Selectmen
- Seven residents to serve three year renewable terms
- Refine priorities and implementation schedule
- Work closely with the Zoning Committee (see below)
- Annual report to Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, and/or Town Meeting on implementation progress – what has been accomplished, what is in planning stages, what barriers have arisen, what circumstances and opportunities have changed, etc.
- Five-Year Review: public meetings to review principles and priorities of the Master Plan as well as implementation progress

Zoning Advisory Committee

- Group to take responsibility for continuing to work on the zoning agenda of the Master Plan
- Work closely with the Master Plan Implementation Committee
- Review and comment on any other zoning amendment articles submitted to Town Meeting

D. Map

Map 16 – Proposed Land Use

This map shows the proposed future land use in Walpole, organized in three categories:

Lands Proposed for Permanent Protection and Enhanced Management

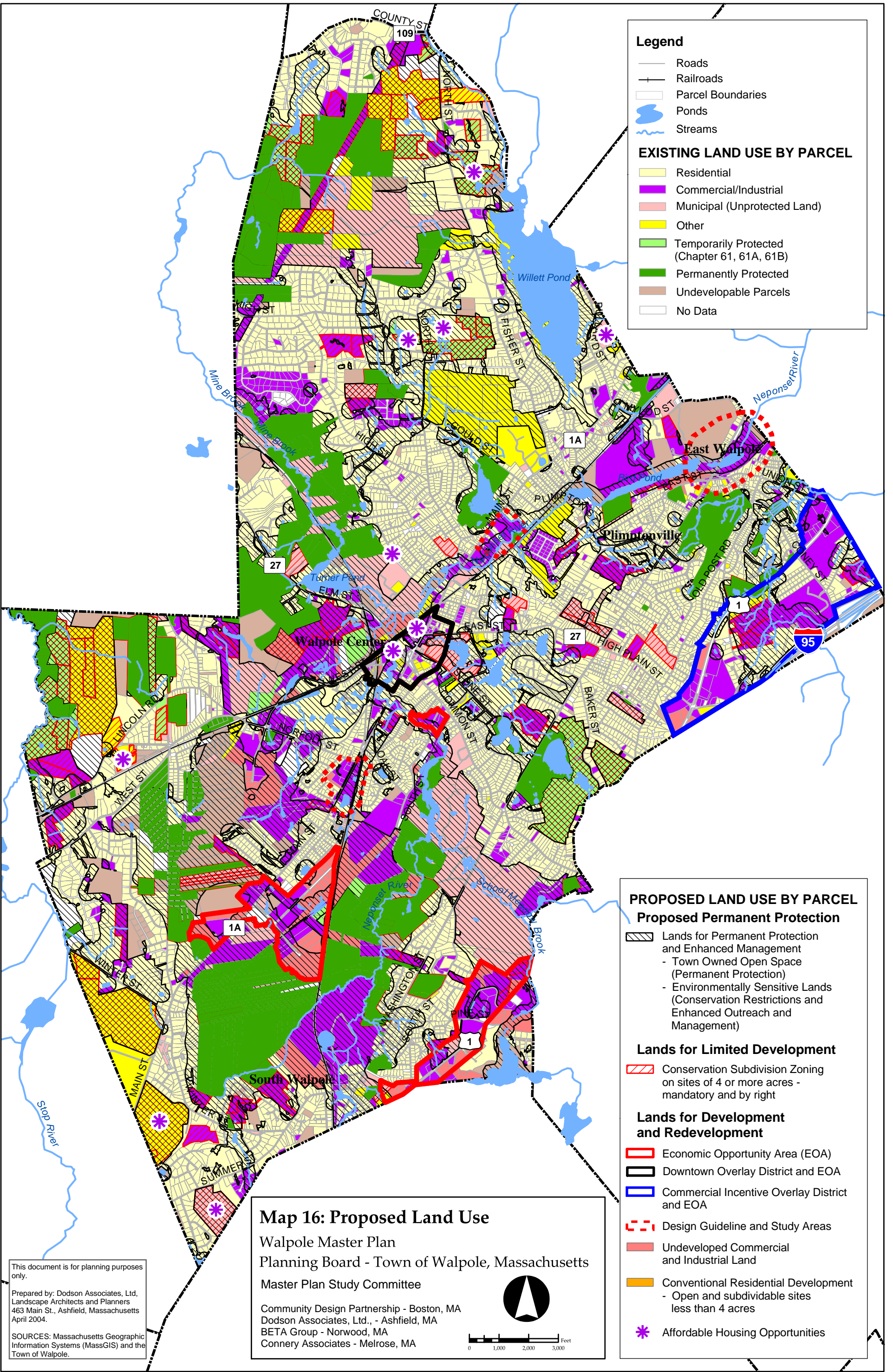
- Town-owned open space that is not currently permanently protected, such as the Town Forest and Adams Farm, should be brought into permanent protection.
- Environmentally sensitive lands not owned by the town should be protected by negotiating conservation restrictions on the appropriate areas of relevant parcels if possible. If the lands cannot be brought under conservation restrictions, outreach programs should be undertaken to encourage enhanced management by private landowners through the use of best landscape practices.

Lands for Limited Development

- These parcels are lands of 4 acres or more that should be zoned for mandatory, by-right conservation subdivisions. This category includes private, public, and nonprofit lands and in some cases overlaps with the previous category because the conservation subdivisions would include conservation restrictions on the common land within such a subdivision. In addition, the lands in the previous category that are identified for enhanced management might be offered for development in the future and conservation subdivision zoning would shape the character of that development.

Lands for Development and Redevelopment

- These lands include remaining open residential parcels of less than 4 acres, which can be subject to conventional infill housing development as well as the mixed use and commercial/industrial areas identified for special attention as Economic Opportunity Areas.



Zoning: Proposed Amendments

.....

Zoning Warrant Article Proposed by the Zoning Subcommittee and Passed at Fall 2003 Town Meeting

Part 1. Definitions and Use Terms

To see if the Walpole Town Meeting will amend the zoning bylaw as follows:

- a. In section 1-C Definitions delete the current definition "Accessory Use" in its entirety and replace it as follows: *Accessory use or Structure. A use or structure of a nature customarily incidental and subordinate to those of the principal use or structure.*
- b. In Section 1-C Definitions after the term "Principal Structure" add a new definition as follows: *Principal Use: The primary use to which the premises are devoted , and the main purpose for which the premises exist.*
- c. In Section 1-C Definitions replace the word "loan" with the word "loam".
- d. In Section 1-C Definitions amend the definition "Building Height" by deleting the word "highest" in the second sentence and in place insert the word "*median*".
- e. In section 1-C Definitions amend the definition "Recreation" by deleting the term "siding" with the word "*skiing*".
- f. In Section 1-C Definitions delete the definition "Shopping Malls" in its entirety and substitute the following: *Retail Sales and Services. An individual store or a group of stores under one ownership whose principal use is the sale of goods at retail.*

Further, in Section 3B4 as a related item, amend item a. "Store for the sale of goods at retail" by replacing it with the term "*Retail sales and services less than 10,000 square feet*"

Also, delete the term 3b4aa "Shopping Malls (small)" in its entirety;

delete the term 3B4bb "Shopping Malls (medium)" and replace with *aa Retail Sales and Services, more than 10,000 square feet but less than 20,000 square feet*; and assign the use allowances exactly as currently indicated for 3B4bb Shopping Malls (medium).

and delete cc. "Shopping Malls (large)" and replace it with *bb Retail Sales and Service greater than 20,000 square feet* and assign the use allowances exactly as currently indicated for 3B4cc Shopping Malls (Large).

And re-letter the current 3B4dd as 3B4cc.

- g. In Section 1-C Definitions after the definition "Earth" add the following definition: *Education Use: uses of land, buildings or structures for providing learning in a general range of subjects on land owned or leased by the Commonwealth or any of its agencies , subdivisions or bodies politic, and including the use of land, buildings, or structures for providing facilities for research, public education and public display which are owned and operated by the commonwealth or any of its agencies, subdivisions or bodies politic. Further, educational uses shall be construed to include any use of land, buildings or structures for providing learning in a general range of subjects on privately owned land by any educational entity accredited by the appropriate regulating authority.*

- h. In Section 1-C after the definition “Building Height” add the following definition: *Charitable and Philanthropic Institutions. A private facility accredited and recognized by the state and federal government as charitable non-profit organizations and providing medical, social, or educational services.*
- i. In Section 1-C after the definition “Private Guest House” add the following definition: *Private for profit school. A school operated as a business, generally providing instruction in a limited range of subjects such as, but not limited to, driving and flight training schools, computer training or repair schools, auto repair schools, and all similar training activities established as business enterprises.*
- j. In Section 1-C after the term “Non-conforming Use” add the following definition: *Private Club, Association or Lodge. A private club or organization primarily for the benefit of its members.*
- k. In Section 1-c after the term “Adult Paraphernalia Store” add a definition as follows: *Autobody Repair. Establishments for metal crafting, autobody repair, autobody painting, paint spraying or interior customizing cars, trucks, and all types of motorized vehicles.*

Part 2 Use Regulations

- a. Amend use item 3B1b by replacing the current term “Religious, sectarian, denominational or public education purpose” with the term *Educational Uses*.
- b. Amend use item 3B1c “ Library, museum, art gallery or community building” *by allowing said use in the CBD, LM and IND Districts, i.e. remove the designation “X” and replace with the designation “A” in said noted zoning districts.*
- c. Amend use item 3B1d “Private school offering general education courses” by removing the current use item in its entirety and replacing it as follows: *Private school for profit, and prohibiting said use in all districts except in the CBD, LM and IND districts where they shall be permitted by special permit i.e. SP3.*
- d. Amend Section 3B1e, “Dormitories...” by removing the current use term and all associated zoning district use designations replacing the current term and use designations as follows: *Charitable and philanthropic institutions, and further, allowing said uses in all zoning districts.*
- e. Amend Section 3B1m by deleting the current use item “Non-profit club, lodge or other social, cultural, civic or recreational” and all associated zoning district use regulations and replace it as follows: *Private Club, Association or Lodge, and further allow said use by special permit i.e. SP2 in all districts except in the B and CBD where they shall be allowed by right.*
- f. Amend Section 3B3g , “use of floor other than ground floor....” by correcting a typographical error, i.e. replace the word “unite” in the second line with the word *unit*.

- g. Amend Section 3B3h “ Residential treatment or rehabilitation center....” *by deleting it in it’s entirety and replacing leaving said section as a reserve.*
- h. Amend Section 3B3n “Raising and keeping a small flock of poultry, saddle horses etc. *by deleting the clause “only with the approval of the Board of Health.”*
- i. Amend Section 3B4c “Salesroom storage, area for auction of automobiles ...”. *by removing said section in its entirety and keeping said section as a reserve line item. Further, amend Section 3B4d (which is exactly the same as 3B4c but permits repair services) by maintaining the current zoning district use regulations and also allowing said use in the B district by special permit i.e. SP3.*
- j. Amend Section 3B4f “ Medical and dental labs...” by permitting said use by right in LM and IND district.
- k. Amend Section 3B4 by adding a new use item as follows; *ff Autobody Repair further, allow said use only by special permit (SP3) in the B, LM and IND Districts.*

Part 3 Parking Regulations

- a. Amend Section 5-A by deleting the reference to subsection 7 in the first paragraph and inserting the term *subsection 8.*
- b. Amend 5A (9) by adding the clause *,and / or any variance condition as required,* at the end of the current sentence.

Fall 2004 Proposed Zoning Amendments

The following zoning proposals have been reviewed by the Walpole Zoning Committee and approved for further public review and eventual submission to the Fall 2004 town meeting..

2.0 Amendments for Review

Article -----Amendments to Section 7 Site Plan Review

Purpose; to replace the current confusing and ineffective site plan review regulations and replace said regulations with an revised and reformatted Section 7.

To see if the Walpole Town Meeting will vote to amend Section 7 of the Town's zoning bylaw by removing in its entirety the existing Section 7 and replacing it with a new Section 7 as follows

Section 7 Site Plan Review

7-A. Purpose and Intent. It is in the Town's interest to promote functional and aesthetic design, construction, and safe maintenance of all development and to minimize any harmful effects on surrounding areas, while simultaneously respecting the provisions of M.G. L. c. 40A sec. 3. The intent of the Site Plan Review process is to regulate rather than prohibit uses through reasonable conditions that may be required by the Planning Board concerning location of buildings, signs, open space landscaping, parking areas, storage areas, access and egress, drainage, sewage, water supply, and fire safety

7-B Applicability. Site Plan review is required for (a) all new multi-family, commercial and industrial construction, and all multi-family, commercial and industrial additions (including outbuildings), alterations or reconstruction exceeding 500 gross square feet or an expansion of the current building footprint by not more than two-percent (2%) whichever is the greater, (b) construction or creation of any new parking lot or the expansion, or redesign of an existing parking lot with more than six (6) parking spaces, (c) creation of all outdoor storage areas for vehicles, machinery or supplies, or expansion of existing areas by more than 5% (d) all uses requiring a special permit, except one and two family residences. Municipal uses and institutional uses shall also be subject to Site Plan review.

7-C Relationship to Special Permit Process. When a project requires both a special permit and site plan review the Planning Board, in order to expedite the review process, shall consider both requirements as part of one public meeting or extensions as required. Within the prescribed review period for a special permit, the Planning Board shall take all actions relative to the proposal regarding site plan review and special permit conditions. In all instances, projects requiring a special permit shall be required to conform to the standards and criteria for a full site plan review, see sections 7G and 7H.

7-D Relationship to the Building Permit. The Building Inspector shall not issue a building permit unless and until a Site Plan review has been completed for all applicable development. In the instance of a full site plan review; no building permit shall be issued until a letter with Site Plan conditions, if any, has been forwarded to the building inspector by the Planning Board. Further:

(1) No occupancy permit shall be issued for any activity or use within the scope of this section unless a Site Plan has been approved, and constructed in accordance with the approved Site Plan.

(2) No activity within the scope of this section shall be carried out without an approved Site Plan. Any work done in deviation from an approved Site Plan shall be a violation of this Bylaw, unless such deviation is approved in writing by the Planning Board. The Planning Board shall review the request for

deviating from the approved site plan and make findings that the public health, safety, and public utilities will not be adversely impacted and that the proposed deviations are not a significant detriment to the achievement of any of the purposes set forth in this section.

(3) Approval of a Site Plan under this section shall not substitute for the requirement of obtaining a special permit or other forms of relief as required by the Zoning Bylaw.

7 E Site Plan Review Committee: Composition

The Planning Board shall function as the Site Plan Review Committee. Further, the Planning Board may request assistance of architects and engineers and other professionals during its deliberations consistent with peer review procedures and guidelines established by the Commonwealth. Only Planning Board members may be party to any vote or binding agreement. A majority vote of the full Planning Board shall be required to approve all site plans and site plan review conditions.

7-F Limited Site Plan Review

Any person desiring approval for a limited site plan review under this section shall submit a time stamped project description to the Building Inspector or designee for a determination whether the development plan qualifies for a Limited Site Plan Review. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to prepare a project description that accurately conveys the nature, scale, conceptual design or layout, and the general physical, operational relationship of the proposed project to the surrounding area, and any additional information the applicant may deem pertinent. As part of the project description submission the applicant may request waivers from site plan submission criteria listed in section 7 I that the applicant believes is not germane to the proposed development.

Within 10 days of receipt of the project description, the Building Inspector or designee shall make a decision regarding the applicability of limited or full site plan review, and a decision on any requested waivers from site plan conditions or submission materials. At any time during the 10-day period the Building Inspector may request additional information from the applicant, and to facilitate the acquisition of said materials the Building Inspector may grant a one time extension of up to 10 days.

The Building Inspector or designee may consult with the Town Planner and Town Engineer any other applicable town officials or departments. Further, the Building Inspector or designee shall put in writing the reasons waivers that may be granted, and said waiver decision shall be made part of the site plan application. The decision to grant waivers shall be subject to but not limited to the following: existing man made site conditions, existing natural conditions, the limited scale of the proposal, limited lot size, and pre-existing and germane site data. If a decision regarding the applicability of limited site plan review is not made within 10 days, the application shall be deemed subject to a limited site plan review, and the 21 day limited site plan review period shall commence. Applications that qualify for limited site plan review shall not require an endorsement of the Planning Board.

Applications for Limited Site Plan Review shall be deemed appropriate for review if either of the following two conditions is satisfied and the proposed use is allowed by right.

- (1) The proposed building or addition has a gross area of not more than 2,500 square feet or less.
- (2) The proposed addition or new building would result in the creation of not more than six parking spaces or an increase of less than 10% in the current parking capacity, whichever is greater.

Further, no application for a limited site plan review will be approved if the property and/ or buildings in question have been approved for a limited site plan review for on site development or improvements within the previous ten years.

If the application is determined to be consistent with the limited site plan review criteria, the Building Inspector or designee shall notify the applicant, and upon written notification the 21 day limited site plan review period shall commence, see section 7-J for site development standards.

Within 21 days of the decision regarding the approval of a limited site plan review process the Building Inspector shall approve the application as submitted or approve with conditions. The Building Inspector or designee may consult with other town departments, as he or she deems necessary. However, lack of comments from other Town Departments shall not cause the review period to be extended.

However, during the 21 day review period for limited site plan review, if the Building Inspector or designee finds that a particular proposal, regardless of size or parking expansion characteristics may create significant public safety problem the Building Inspector or designee may require a Full Site Plan Review, with or without waivers from the full site plan review submission criteria, see section 7 H. In said instance, the Building Inspector or shall put his or her reasons in writing, and said document shall be made part of the site plan submission materials for full site plan review.

7-G Full Site Plan Review Submission and Review Procedure

1. The applicant shall submit nine (9) copies of said plan with application for approval thereof, including a Town of Walpole Development Impact Statement, and review fee directly to the Planning Board. Upon receipt of the application and associated material the Planning Board shall time stamp the request for Site Plan Review Application. Neither the time stamping nor the site plan review shall take place until all required materials have been submitted. The Planning Board, within 5 days, shall be responsible for distributing one copy to each of the following; the Conservation Commission, Engineering Department, Town Planner, Building Inspector, Board of Health, Police Chief, Fire Chief,, and the Water and Sewer Department. All town departments listed above shall have 35 days to submit comments to the Planning Board, failure of any local department to respond within the 35 day period shall not preclude the Planning Board (SPRC) from proceeding with the Site Plan Review schedule.

2. The Planning Board shall hold a public project meeting with the applicant no later than 35 days after submission of the proposed Site Plan to the Planning Board.

3. The Planning Board shall hold as many meetings as necessary within a 65-day review period to review the proposal. However, no later than 65 days from the date of the submission, the Planning Board shall provide recommendations in writing to the Building Inspector, except that at the request of the applicant the Planning Board may grant an extensions of the review period. At the conclusion of the 65-day review period or an extended review period, the Planning Board shall approve the application as submitted or approve with conditions.

4. If no action is taken within 65 days or during the extended review period, the application shall be deemed approved as submitted.

5. One copy of the approved Site Plan shall be provided each to the applicant, and all Town reviewing departments. Further, one copy, in an electronic media format acceptable to the Town, shall also be provided to the Town Engineer.

6. An As-Built Plan and a letter of certification shall be submitted to Building Inspector, prior to the granting of an occupancy permit, by a Registered Engineer, Registered Architect, Registered Landscape Architect or Registered Land Surveyor, or combination thereof, as appropriate. Said certificate shall indicate, that all work has been done substantially in compliance with the approved Site Plan, or any modifications to the site plan as approved by the Planning Board, see section 7D(2)

7-H Full Site Plan Review Submission

The Walpole Planning Board shall adopt and from time to time amend the required site plan review submission materials.

(The following section is recommended to become part of the planning board's rules and regulations, it is presented below not as a part of this zoning amendment but only as information as to the nature of the technical submission requirements.

The Site Plan shall include one or more appropriately scaled maps, but not to exceed one inch equals forty feet, and stamped by a Registered Engineer, Registered Architect, Registered Landscape Architect or Registered Land Surveyor, as appropriate to the work involved, except that the water and sewer portion of the Site Plan must be stamped by a Registered Engineer. At minimum, a Site Plan submission shall include the following as applicable:

- 1) Cover letter describing the nature and location of the project and the site, including a legal description of the property, complete dimensions and area, the zoning classification(s) that apply to the property, assessor's map and lot numbers, and the name and address of the property owner and the applicant, if different from the property owner.
- 2) Parcel lot lines for the proposed project and surrounding parcels, and a locus plan at a scale of 1 inch per two hundred feet.
- 3) Complete parking and traffic circulation plan, if applicable, showing location and dimensions of parking stalls, driveway openings, dividers, islands, bumper stops, required buffer areas and planting beds.
- 4) Proposed surface treatment of paved areas and the location and design of drainage systems with drainage calculations prepared by a registered engineer.
- 5) Location of existing and proposed buildings and public or private ways on the project site, including all public and private easements.
- 6) Height and use of all buildings abutting the proposed project, including a building or buildings directly across from the proposed project but separated by a public or private right of way.
- 7) Estimated average daily traffic and peak hour traffic to be generated by the proposal. Further, a traffic impact plan indicating impacts, if any, to surrounding intersections servicing the project site if the proposed project generates more than 500 vehicular trips per day. The determination of traffic generation rates shall require professional analysis standards prepared by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) or any similar professional organization acceptable to the Planning Board.
- 8) Rendering of all facades of proposed buildings.
- 9) Location, size and type of signage.
- 10) Foundation lines of the proposed buildings, gross floor area, and building height
- 11) Location of solid waste containers.
- 12) Existing and proposed topographical contours of the property taken at two-foot (2') contour intervals by a registered engineer or registered land surveyor.
- 13) The location of wetlands, streams, water bodies and other natural features located on the property or within 100 feet of the perimeter of the site.
- 14) Areas subject to a 100 year flood, if any.
- 15) Existing and proposed utilities and storage facilities, including sewer connections, septic systems, wells and any storage tanks, noting applicable approvals, if received.
- 16) Lighting plan showing the location, height, direction, and intensity of existing and proposed external light fixtures.
- 17) A landscaping plan showing the location, name, number and size of plant types, and the locations and elevation and/or height of planting beds, fences, walls, steps and paths of the existing site and proposed site plan.
- 18) Location of all required open space.

- 19) Location and type of all historically significant structures, historic walls or similar features, including an indication of their protective status, if any.
- 20) Location of all water resource protection areas if any portion of the size lies within 1,000 feet of a DEP approved or interim groundwater or surface water protection zone.

Additional information may be required by the Planning Board, as reasonably necessary, to make determinations required by this section of the bylaw.

7-I Site Plan Review Criteria

At minimum, the SPRC shall review all Site Plans for the following:

- 1) Consistency with the design and character of the surrounding area, such as but not limited to height, mass, setbacks, and traditional building materials.
- 2) Consistency with the Site Development Standards of this bylaw.
- 3) Consistency with any sign or design guidelines, landscaping and buffering requirements issued by the Planning Board.
- 4) Consistency with the Walpole Master Plan and with the most recent Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- 5) Protection and enhancement of important existing site features, natural and man-made.
- 6) Protection of adjoining premises against detrimental uses by provision of surface water drainage, sound and light barriers, preservation of light and air, noise impacts, and preservation of views when possible.
- 7) Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site, the location of driveway openings in relation to traffic and/or adjacent streets, see section 7H(7)
- 8) Adequacy and arraignment of parking and loading spaces, and the ability of the Site Plan to accommodate parking in areas other than the front of the building.

7-J Site Development Standards

Applicants for both Limited and Full Site Plan Review must make every reasonable effort to achieve consistency with the following site development standards:

- 1) Conserve and protect natural features that are of some lasting benefit to the site, its surrounding area and the town at large.
- 2) Protect slopes in excess of fifteen (15%) percent against erosion, runoff, and unstable soil, trees and rocks. Appropriate measures shall be taken to stabilize the land surface from unnecessary disruption. Stabilization measures shall be the responsibility of the property owner.
- 3) Buildings, structures, fences, lighting, and fixtures on each site shall be placed so as to not interfere with traffic circulation, safety, appropriate use and enjoyment of adjacent properties.
- 4) All roadway and driveway design shall take into consideration safe sight distances at intersections and along all traveled ways, in accordance with appropriate AASHTO requirements. As much as possible, clear sight distances shall take into account topography, density of dwelling units or intensity of use, and horizontal and vertical alignment.
- 5) Provide adequate illumination of parking lots and other areas for vehicular and pedestrian circulation. In a residential district, no freestanding illumination devices shall be installed to a height exceeding fifteen (15') feet. All illumination shall be directed and/or shielded so as not to shine beyond the perimeter of the site or interfere with traffic.
- 6) All areas designed for vehicular use shall be paved in accordance with the roadway and parking lot design standards the Town of Walpole.
- 7) All utility service transmission systems, including but not limited to water, sewer, natural gas, electrical and telephone lines, shall, whenever practicable, be placed underground.

- 8) All surface water runoff from structures and impervious surfaces shall be collected on site, but in no case shall surface water drainage be directed across sidewalks or public or private ways. In no case shall surface water runoff be drained directly into wetlands or water bodies. Drainage systems shall be designed using Best Management Practices to minimize the discharge of pollutants by providing appropriately designed vegetated drainage channels and sedimentation basins that allow for adequate settling of suspended solids and maximum infiltration. Dry wells, leaching pits and other similar drainage structures may be used only where other methods are not practicable. Oil, grease, and sediments traps to facilitate removal of contaminants shall precede all such drainage structures.

7-K Site Plan Review Fees

The Planning Board shall adopt site plan review fees for full and limited site plan review, and for modifications to an approved site plan. The limited site plan fee and modification of site plan review fee shall be less than the fee charged for full site plan review. All site plan fee information shall be available at the Walpole Planning Board.

Further, the Planning board shall require, as it deems necessary, the peer review of any or all reports and documents submitted by the applicant. The applicant shall be required to fund all peer review studies consistent with the requirements established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

7-L Appeals

Applicants for a Site Plan review for projects allowed as of right may appeal any conditions approved by the Building Inspector as part of limited site plan review or Planning Board as part of a full site plan review to the Walpole Board of Appeals. All projects requiring site plan review may also appeal any site plan conditions to the Massachusetts Superior Court.

Article--- Amendments to the Section 6 Sign Bylaw

The purpose of the amendment is to clearly differentiate the required sign requirements for the different commercial districts. For example, currently signs along Route 1 are restricted to the same size allowed in the Walpole Center

To see if the Walpole Town meeting will amend the zoning bylaw pertaining to the regulation of signs as follows:

- A. Amend Section Accessory Signs. Essentially, the following creates a separate set of sign standards for accessory and standing signs in the, LM, HB and IND Districts. In section 6F, first sentence delete the initial clause *In an area in a non-residential district*, and replace it with **"In the CBD or B district,"**.

The purpose of the following amendment is to insure that there is a proper buffer between a sign in a commercial district and a residence in a residential district. It removes the potential of having a non-conforming house in a commercial district preclude the conforming commercial use from having a permitted sign.

- B. In Section 6F(3) in the fifth line delete the language "existing dwelling or residential property boundary line" and replace it with **"existing residential district zoning boundary line"**.
- C. Create a new subsection 6F1 as follows:

The purpose is to permit the scale of commercial signs in the Town along Route 1 to be consistent with a highway location.

Accessory signs in the LM HB and IND district shall be subject to the same regulations as provided in section 6F above. Accessory signs attached to walls in the HB and IND districts shall be permitted to be 10% of the wall area to which they are attached but not more than 100 square feet, except if the sign is located along US Route 1 where 150 square feet shall be allowed. Directory signs shall be determined on the basis of two square feet for each establishment; and standing signs shall be permitted to 100 square feet, except if located along US Route 1 where 150 square feet shall be allowed. However, standing signs shall be not less than eight feet from ground level, and shall be internally illuminated by a steady light and directed to the lettering only, unless as part of site plan review the Planning Board determines that an alternative exterior lighting plan is consistent with the materials used for the sign and the associated lighting plan is not detrimental to abutting uses.

A ground sign, defined as a standing sign attached ground along base of the sign, may be substituted for a standing sign in the LM, HB and IND Districts, if it meets the setback and lighting requirements of a standing sign, and further that at no point does the sign exceed five feet in height.

Article Amendments to Section 5 Parking Regulations

Purpose: to address issues that have arisen in the administration of the zoning bylaw regarding off-street parking requirements and the location of commercial storage containers.

To see if the Walpole Town Meeting will amend Section 5 of the zoning bylaw Parking Regulations as follows:

A. Add to the initial paragraph of Section 5-A, Required Spaces, the following sentence:

All parking spaces required by this section shall be paved, signed, and stripped in accordance with the requirements of the Town of Walpole.

B. Amend section (2) (i) and (ii) by removing the requirement for one space per dwelling unit and replacing it with 0.75 spaces per unit. *(refers to assisted living units).*

C. Amend 5-A (6) by removing the term "six hundred (600)" and replace it with one thousand (1000). *(refers to off-street parking for industrial uses)*

D. To address the issue of long term storage containers on site it is recommended to Amend Section 5A by adding new subsections as follows:

(10) Storage Containers. Any storage container supporting the principal commercial or industrial activity on site shall require a special permit from the Planning Board. At a minimum the Planning Board shall require that storage containers be located in areas currently providing off-street parking and that a one for one, appropriately located and constructed, replacement off-street parking spaces are provided. Further, that for every 50 gross square feet of lot area used by the storage container, one additional off-street parking space shall be provided, appropriately located, and constructed.

Article Amending Section 4 Dimensional Criteria.

Purpose: to further refine the definition of height by adding language expressly limiting the number of stories, and further to clarify and provide standards for the provision of at grade parking under a building.
To see if the Walpole Town Meeting will amend Section 4-B, Chart of Dimensional Regulations, as follows:

A. Amend Section 4B Chart of Dimensional Regulations (section 4-B) by amending the column entitled Maximum Building Height (feet) by adding the term **“but not more than 2.5 stories”** for the following districts Park , School, Recreation and Conservation; Rural; Residence A; Residence B; General Residence.

B. Amend the District entitled Business in Section 4-B by adding the number 15,000 for the column “Required Lot area” and 100 for the column “Required Lot Frontage”. Also, by amending the column entitled Maximum Building Height (feet) by adding the term **“but not more 3 stories”**.

C. Amend the District entitled Central Business District (CBD) in Section 4-B by amending the column Maximum Lot Coverage by Structures from 75% to 90%; By structures other than Impervious Surfaces from 75% to 90%; Maximum Building Height (feet) by adding the term **“but not more 4 stories”**.

D. Amend the Chart of Dimensional Regulations, as follows:
Amend the column Maximum Building Height as it pertains to Limited Manufacturing by adding the term **“but not to exceed 3 stories”**

E. Further adding a new footnote (r) in the explanatory notes the to Schedule of Dimensional Regulations Section 4-B to read as follows: When at least 30 parking spaces are provided at grade but under the building and screened from view or below grade in the Highway Business or industrial districts, the building height shall be permitted to be increased by 12 feet and one additional story. Further place the footnote(r) in the column heading ‘Maximum Building Height’

Article Create a new zoning district; Highway Business HB

Purpose; to recognize the distinct difference of commercial property along Route 1 from other commercial properties in the town and create a zoning district to permit development that will further the Towns economic and fiscal goals.

A. In the following sections add the term Highway Business or HB
Section 2A, after the term LM add the term and define as follows:

HB Highway Business District: The purpose of this district is to provide for retail, office, research and development, assembly, and manufacturing uses and all accessory uses related to said uses consistent with uses along a major regional highway.

B In Section 3-B Schedule of Use Regulations add a new the column HB after the column marked LM. Further, maintain all the use allowances as provided in the LM district except for the following:

3B-5 m Research , experimental or testing laboratory other than as accessory to a permitted use shall change from a special permit SP1 to allowed (A).

D. Further, in Section 7-F Street and Sideline Plantings add the term HB after the term LM.

E. Amend the Section 4-B Chart of Dimensional Regulations, as follows:

After the term Limited Manufacturing add the term **Highway Business (HB)** and further maintain all the dimensional regulations presently applied to LM except for the following Maximum Lot Coverage 50%; By structures other than Impervious Surfaces 90%; Maximum Building Height (feet) by deleting the number 40k and replacing it with 45k and adding the term **“but not more 4 stories”**.

Article Amending a new zoning district Downtown Overlay District (DOD)

To see if the Walpole Town Meeting will add a new section to the bylaw , Section 13 as the Downtown Overlay District (DOD)

13 A Statement of Purpose: The Downtown Overlay District (DOD) is designed to promote economic health, encourage mixed use and transit oriented development and enhance the appearance and function of Walpole Center as a thriving New England “Main Street” district.

13 B DOC Boundaries

(1)The DOD shall be overlaid over the Central Business District and the Industrial Zoning District abutting the Central Business District. The boundary of the DOD is shown on the Zoning Map, which map is hereby incorporated and made part of this bylaw.

13 C Existing Zoning

(1) The owners of property shall maintain all zoning rights consistent with the zoning district applicable to their property. However, if an owner elects to develop consistent with the DOD, the rules and regulations of the DOD shall apply. Where the DOD is silent on a zoning regulation the requirements of the underlying zoning shall apply.

13 D Permitted Uses. All uses in the DOD shall require a special permit from the Walpole Planning Board.

(1). Mixed Use. The provision of commercial and residential uses in one building (mixed use) shall be allowed in the DOD. Mixed use buildings shall be required to locate residential uses on floors above the ground floor on portions of the building that front on a public right of way, or any façade of a building that in the opinion of the Planning Board is more suited to commercial development and the economic development of Walpole Center.

Any mixed use development shall provide for a distinct and separate entrance on the ground floor for the upper story residential uses.

13 E Prohibited Uses.

(1). Drive through facilities of any type

(2). Manufacturing uses.

13 F Dimensional Regulations. Dimensional and density regulations in the DOC shall be as follows:

(1). Minimum Lot Area: 10,000 square feet

(2). Minimum lot frontage 50 feet

(3). Side yards: 0 when abutting an adjacent commercial or mixed use, 30 feet when abutting a residential zoning district boundary line.

- (4). Front yard: a *maximum* setback of 10 feet, except in the case of pedestrian open space open to the public such as plazas, terraces, parks with benches for public use, café seating and similar publicly accessible spaces
- (5). Rear yard: 20 feet
- (6). Lot Coverage by Structures: 85%
- (7). Lot coverage by impervious surface: 85%
- (8). Maximum building height 55 feet and five stories
- (9). Lot area per dwelling unit: 1,200 square feet

13 G Parking Regulations. Parking regulations in The DOC for all underlying districts shall be consistent with Section 5 of the Town of Walpole Parking regulations except for the following:

- (1) One (1) off street parking space per studio, or one-bedroom unit.
- (2) One and one-half (1.5) off street spaces for two bedroom units.
- (3) Two (2) off-street parking spaces per three or more bedroom unit.
- (4) Artist live / work space shall require one (1) space per artist live / work unit.
- (5) All or a portion of the off street parking requirement for any DOC development may be met by certification from the Building Inspector that a public or private parking facility within 1,200 feet has the capacity to accommodate the proposed use; for DOC residential uses intending to use public parking supply, the determination of capacity shall be measured between the hours of
6 PM to 7:30 AM.
- (6) No off-street parking shall be permitted in the required front yard setback of any residential or mixed use development.

13 H Affordable Housing. All multi-family housing over 10 units developed consistent with DOD regulations shall provide 10% of the total number of dwelling units, rounded to the closest or larger whole number in instances where 0.50 occurs, as affordable units. The affordable housing units shall be equality distributed in terms of unit type in the proposed development and shall be consistent with the regulations in effect at the time by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

13 H Site Plan Review. All development occurring as a result of the DOD shall be subject to Site Plan Review Section 29-25, as applicable. The following design objectives shall be considered during site plan review and implemented, as required and practicable via the site plan review process. Further, at the discretion of the Planning Board.

- Height and setbacks should provide a suitable transition to abutting or nearby lower scale residential uses.
- Where relevant historic context should be respected.
- More active uses in a building should be designed to face public streets.
- Building entries should be located to promote safe pedestrian crossing of streets and encourage walking as the preferred mode of travel.
- Open Space should be designed to be connected through-out the DOC and designed to create interest at the street edge and where possible views to the interior.
- Buildings should be designed to minimize shadow impacts on open space.
- Outdoor lighting should be designed at the minimum level to insure security.
- Surface parking should be located preferably at the rear of buildings.
- Loading docks and trash operations should be screened and located to minimize visual and noise impacts
- Buildings should be designed to use natural light and energy resources efficiently in construction, maintenance and long term operation.

Article Clarification of various zoning issues and new definitions

Purpose: to address issues of clarification and definition that have been discussed during the zoning review process

Proposed Definition. Add to Section 1-C after the term Adult Video store

A. **Artist Live / Work Space:** A residential use that permits up to 50% of a residential dwelling unit to be used for the production of art or various arts and crafts. Additionally, for the purposes of this bylaw, it shall also be construed to mean a building or buildings where a portion of the total space is used for residential purposes and other portions for the production, showing, and sale of art or various arts and crafts.

B. Amend Section 3B3j: Remove the term Boarding or lodging house, from the start of the sentence and replace it with the term **Bed and Breakfast**.

C. Amend Section 3B3m: Add the term **Rooming House**, to the beginning of the sentence.

D. Add a new subsection to Section 3-f temporary uses as follows

- (1) Uses such as Christmas tree sales shall be considered a temporary uses and allowed in all commercial districts for a period not to exceed 35 days. A permit for temporary use from the building inspector shall be required. The building inspector may impose site plan conditions to insure that public health and safety issues are served.
- (2) Canopies of any type shall be permitted on a property within the required set backs. However, canopies that are not constructed as an integral part of a building and are not permanently affixed to a building shall be considered temporary structures and shall require a permit from the building inspector. In all residential districts canopies shall be limited to a duration of 14 days in any one calendar year; canopies in commercial districts shall be limited to 135 days in any one calendar year. The location of all canopies shall be subject to all set back requirements, unless the canopy is used only to provide shelter from the elements at a point of access. Further, the building inspector may impose site plan conditions to insure that public health and safety issues are served.

E. After the term Lot, add the term **Multifamily Housing**. For the purposes of this bylaw multifamily housing shall be considered as 4 or more units in one structure or on one lot.

F. Amend Section 4 C Special Conditions section (b) by deleting the term “resource area “ in line 5 and replacing it with the term “wetlands and water bodies”. Further by removing the term “ and or the Town of Walpole’s Wetlands Bylaw after the term Chapter 131 , Section 40 on lines 5 and 6.