

2009 MASTER PLAN UPDATE



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Acknowledgments

In Spring 2014, the Town of Dedham Planning Director arranged with the Geography Department of Framingham State University to have upper-level students in Geog339 (Methods of Planning Analysis and Plan-Making) prepare the five-year update of the 2009 Master Plan.

Students worked in eight teams of 3-4 students each. Their charge was to research the Action Items in the 2009 Master Plan Implementation Strategy (Chapter 12) for which their agency, board, or commission was the lead. Students met with Planning Director Richard McCarthy as well as with the appropriate town staff and officials to understand the status of each action item.

Preliminary findings were shared with the agencies, boards and commissions in March in a preliminary draft master plan update. Comments from these meetings were incorporated into the draft update. The Planning Director and Master Plan Implementation Committee would like to thank the Framingham State Project Team: Erick Bowers, Andrew Burke, Alex Butcher, Fiona Coughlan, Jessica Cox, Michelle Fernandes, Eric Gemperline, Eric Gesualdi, Daniel Ghirardi, Taylor Johnson, Allison Kelley, T.J. Liddell, James Menard, Zachary Midwood, Jonathan Niro, Tyler Ranauro, Chelsea Robinson, Kurt Rosenbaum, Stacey Rutkauskas, Joseph Schow, Daniel Topliffe, Nicole Tradakas, Kyle White, and their Instructor: Judith Otto, Ph.D., AICP.

We would like to thank Dina Guiel, a Masters of Public Administration student at Northeastern University, who built on the work of the Framingham State Students and expanded the breadth and depth of the Implementation Update. Dina worked closely with the Planning Director and the Master Plan Implementation Committee to add important details and context to the draft.

The Master Plan Implementation Committee is indebted to former members Sarah MacDonald, Laura Timmins, Paul Corey, Stanton Lyman, and Mike Humphrey. Their service in the early years of the committee significantly contributed to this Update. We are also grateful to Planning Director Richard McCarthy for his support as an ex officio member of the Master Plan Implementation Committee.

The final stage of writing was completed by members of the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) and the Planning Director in consultation with town staff as well as members of many town committees and boards. We are particularly grateful to those residents who attended MPIC meetings and engaged in dialogue with the Committee about challenges and opportunities facing the Town. Regular engagement of the public helped to keep committee members connected to the interests and concerns of residents and business owners across Dedham.

Introduction

A Master Plan is a non-binding statement of broad community goals and recommendations designed to guide the municipal decision-making process. In accordance with the requirements of General Law Chapter 41, [Section 81D](#) every town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is mandated to produce a Master Plan. Following that mandate, the Town of Dedham enacted new By-laws, [Chapter 65](#), which required the Town to prepare a Master Plan every 10 years, and between each Master Plan to prepare an update on the progress of the plan then in effect. After a thorough process of public engagement, the Town produced the 2009 Master Plan. The 2009 Master Plan described Dedham's existing conditions and presented a vision for its future, with recommendations related to land use, housing, economic development, natural & cultural resources, parks and open space, community services and facilities, and transportation. The next Master Plan will describe Dedham's facilities, strengths, challenges and opportunities as of 2020 and make recommendations for improvements over the following decade.

This document is a “progress report” on the implementation of recommendations put forth in 2009. This report begins with a matrix showing each action item and the corresponding implantation phase, followed by a summary of each item and relevant implementation details. Chapter 1 revisits the goals and objectives of the 2009 Master Plan. Chapters 2 through 11 are titled and organized as they were in the 2009 Master Plan; implementation relating to each recommendation is presented in the order of original introduction. Initiatives and Priorities that have emerged since the 2009 Master Plan are listed in Chapter 12. Where possible, hyperlinks to relevant documents and websites are included.

Preface: 2009 Dedham Master Plan Implementation Summary

The matrix below is a summary of actions taken on recommendations of the 2009 Master Plan. Progress categories include Done, In-progress and No Action. Detailed explanations pertaining to each action item can be found in the relevant chapters of this update.

	Action	Done	In Progress	No Action
3.1	Conduct a Comprehensive Review and Update of the Dedham Zoning By-laws	X		
3.2	Complete the Review and Update of the Rules and Regulations of Subdivision Control.	X		
3.3	Change the Consulting Town Planner Position to a Full-time Planning Director.	X		
3.4	Analyze the Potential of Dedham's MBTA Commuter Rail Stations for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).		X	
3.5	Create a Permitting Guide.	X		
3.6	Create Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial Districts.		X	
3.7	Inventory Large Underutilized Parcels and Examine How to Maximize their Potential		X	
3.8	Improve Communication between and among Major Boards and Expand /Opportunities for Coordination by Town Professionals Associated with those Boards.		X	
3.9	Establish an Annual Review Process to Evaluate the Town's Progress toward implementing the Master Plan, to be led Jointly by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board	X		
4.1	Include the Department of Public Works and Department of Engineering in The Development Review and Permitting Procedures Conducted by Town Boards	X		
4.2	Establish A Transportation Advisory Committee	X		
4.3	Strengthen Enforcement of Existing No-Parking Regulations on Sidewalks			X
4.4	Adopt A Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Policy			X
4.5	Create A Town-Wide Traffic Calming Policy		X	

	Action	Done	In Progress	No Action
4.6	Extend Bus Service to Employment Centers, Residential Neighborhoods, and Growth Areas such as Legacy Pland and Newbridge on the Charles	X		
4.7	Conduct a Review of Streets that Present Parking Problems to Establish Guidelines for Allowing and Managing Parking on Residential Streets			X
4.8	Maintain Sidewalks and Keep Them Free and Clear for Pedestrians		X	
4.9	Work with MassHighway to Prepare an Access Management Study for Providence Highway that Examines Access Along the Road as a Whole			X
4.10	Continue to Monitor the Local Transportation Infrastructure of Dedham Square and Make Strategic Investments to Ensure its Ongoing Vitality and Balance		X	
5.1	Complete a Comprehensive Historic Resources Inventory			X
5.2	Seek Certified Local Government Designation	X		
5.3	Study Adoption of Demolition Delay By-law		X	
5.4	Adopt a Scenic Roads By-law			X
5.5	Work with Neighboring Towns to Hire a Regional Preservation Planner			X
5.6	Encourage the Establishment of Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts			X
5.7	Formalize and Continue the Practice of Historic District Commission Review and Comment on Public Development Projects			X
5.8	Adopt the Community Preservation Act			X
5.9	Integrate Historic Preservation Objectives into existing Development Review and Permitting Procedures			X
6.1	Develop an Environmental Checklist to Assist with Developmental Review		X	
6.2	Establish a Plan and Priorities for Maintaining and Increasing the Town's Urban Forest and Public Tree Inventory		X	
6.3	Establish Municipal Policy and An Annual Budget Appropriation for Wildlife Management	X		
6.4	Increase Collaboration with Nearby Communities and Conservation Groups for Regional Water Resource and Environmental Habitat Protection		X	
6.5	Continue to Review and Revise Local Stormwater Management Regulations and By-laws to Ensure Consistency with State and Federal Requirements.		X	

	Action	Done	In Progress	No Action
6.6	Develop and Promote Public Conservation Efforts Relating to Water and Energy Resources		X	
6.7	Increase Education and Outreach Efforts to Promote Appreciation and Protection of the Town's Natural Resources.		X	
7.1	Develop A Plan to Provide Universal Access to Recreation Facilities, Parks, and Trails		X	
7.2	Encourage Neighborhood Groups to Become Stewards of Local Parks		X	
7.3	Encourage the Formation of a Trails Stewards Group		X	
7.4	Continue to Coordinate Infrastructure Improvements with Civic Beautification Efforts	X		
7.5	Continue to Identify Parcels to Form a System of Paths and Trails		X	
7.6	Protect Significant Open Space Parcels			X
7.7	Maintain A Comprehensive Open Space Inventory	X		
7.8	Continue efforts to Develop the Manor Fields Site for Recreational Use		X	
7.9	Maintain Update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) to Provide a Comprehensive Framework for Open Space Planning		X	
7.10	Make the Open Space Committee More Effective by Clearly Communicating its Roles and Responsibilities to the Public, Holding it Accountable for its Initiatives, and Giving it a More Visible Role Within Town Government		X	
8.1	Establish A Housing Partnership Committee			X
8.2	Establish A Housing Rehabilitation Program			X
8.3	Investigate Creating a Rental Housing Code Enforcement Program	X		
8.4	Encourage Rehabilitation of Deteriorated, Highly Visible Residential and Mixed-Use Buildings			X
8.5	Create a Housing Resource Guide			X
8.6	Work with Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership (SWAHP) to Promote Its First-Time Homebuyer Program			X
8.7	Identify Town-Owned, Tax-Title Properties that May be Redeveloped to Address Housing Needs			X
8.8	Complete a Housing Plan		X	
9.1	Create an Economic Development Vision and Plan		X	
9.2	Conduct Site Evaluations for Priority Sites Identified in The Economic Development Vision and Plan		X	
9.3	Investigate Additional Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites			X
9.4	Encourage Business Owners in Neighborhood Commercial Areas to Organize		X	
9.5	Participate in Marketing Strategies for Key Development Sites			X

	Action	Done	In Progress	No Action
9.6	Consider Using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreements to Support Business Development	X		
9.7	Undertake a Comprehensive Appraisal of Permitting Procedures, Marketing and Promotion			X
10.1	Continue to Develop and Institute a Capital Improvements Plan Process	X		
10.2	Create A Full-Time Facilities Manager Position for All Town and School Properties	X		
10.3	Develop asset management policies to dispose of surplus municipal property			X
10.4	Continue to Fund Capital Improvements Through Responsible Assumption of Non-Exempt Debt	X		
10.5	Continue to Seek Grants to Support Capital Improvements on A Project-By-Project Basis	X		
10.6	Encourage an Association of Dedham's Neighborhood Organizations			X
10.7	Continue to Scope the Town's Funding Needs, Match with Prospective Grants, and Dedicate Staff Time to Pursue Them			X
11.1	Review the Dedham Town Charter	X		
11.2	Improve the Development Review Process and Issues Surrounding Permitting in General		X	
11.3	Improve Representative Town Meeting by Instituting a Training Program for Town Meeting Members	X		
11.4	Undertake Strategic Effort to Improve the Town Website	X		
11.5	Have A "Point Person" Within Town Hall to Communicate with Neighborhood Groups, Maintain Contact Information, and Post Information About the Groups on The Town Website			X
11.6	Annually Review the Number of Boards and Committees in Town Government, Determine Their Continued Relevance, and Disband Committees That Are No Longer Needed			X

Chapter 1: 2009 Master Plan Goals

The Implementation Plan, outlined in the Preface of this document, was developed to meet these goals of the 2009 Dedham Master Plan:

Land Use & Zoning

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

Transportation

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

Historic Resources

- Identify and document Dedham's historic resources.

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

Natural Resources

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

Open Space & Recreation

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

Housing

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

Economic Development

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

Community Services & Facilities

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

Governance

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

Chapter 2: Population Profile

For municipal planning to be most effective, it is essential that current and projected population demographics be considered throughout all aspects of local planning and development. The importance of population demographics cannot be overstated, as it is with this information that both the public and private sector can make responsible decisions regarding resources and investments. More specifically, changes in population demographics will influence everything from housing and education needs to economic development.

As discussed in the 2009 Master Plan, Dedham's population steadily declined through the 1970's and into the early 2000's, even as the population of Norfolk County trended upward. In 2013 the Planning Board hired Professor Bluestone of Northeastern University to prepare a [report](#) analyzing demographic shifts within Dedham and the related implications for existing housing stock and future needs. Professor Bluestone presented his report, entitled "The Town of Dedham: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," in January 2014. The report contains data on the contours and growth, by age cohort, of Dedham's population over the next three decades. The report also details anticipated market demand for varied housing, driven by the changes in population configurations.

As analyzed by Professor Bluestone, Dedham's population has slowly increased in the first decade and a half of the 21st century, such that the current population approximates that reported in the 1980 Census (25,298) and there are indications that this trend of modest growth will continue. It is anticipated that most growth will occur among two age cohorts, those presently age 35-54 and those 65 and over. By the year 2040, it is expected that these two groups, supplemented by the intermediate cohort between them, will account for 55.8% of Dedham's population. It is further anticipated that household size will continue an historic decline to an average of fewer than 2.5 persons per household, thus calling for an increased supply of smaller and likely less expensive housing options.

It is also worth noting that the research presented by Professor Bluestone has been beneficial in informing the development of future master plans. For enhanced accuracy and efficiency, the Master Plan Implementation Committee will coordinate future master plans with the release of U.S. census data. This decision will help to ensure that Master Plan recommendations are made with the most up-to-date demographic information available.

The School Committee has developed its own demographic predictions that vary from those of the Bluestone Report. Ideally, the Town and the School would resolve disconnects between these reports.

Chapter 3: LAND USE & Zoning

3.1: Conduct A Comprehensive Review and Update of The Dedham Zoning By-law

The 2009 Master Plan recommended a comprehensive review of the Dedham Zoning By-law. Considering the complexity of zoning changes and the Town Meeting process it was decided to make changes to the zoning by-laws based on highest priority to lowest priority over multiple years. This approach allows for greater input and a better understanding of the changes over time. In 2011 the Town hired Professor and Land Use Attorney Mark Bobrowski to review the entire By-law. Professor Bobrowski recommended the Town prioritize specific changes over completion of a comprehensive update. Based on recommendations by Professor Bobrowski and the Planning Director the Town has made the following improvements to Zoning By-laws since 2009. A more comprehensive Zoning By-law review with opportunity for public input is planned as a part of the 2020 Master Plan Process.

In 2011:

- Automobile drive-throughs were added as a special permit option in Local Business, General Business and Central Business Districts.

In 2012:

- The Site Plan Review by-law was changed to merge parking plan review into site plan review, establishing submittal requirements, timeframe for approval, and added an appeal provision.
- The parking requirements were changed to create a waiver provision for the number of parking spaces granted through the Planning Board rather than requiring a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Conflicting and confusing parking requirements were changed.
- The wording that allowed shared parking was better defined. For example, a building that has a restaurant, retail stores, professional office space, and a doctor's office can share parking even though the amount of parking for each use is calculated at a different ratio. The distance shared parking could be off-site was increased by changing the measuring point from use to premises creating greater sharing opportunities.
- Wording about parking lot design standards was clarified to ensure that where any existing parking lot is modified, the parking lot design standards will be upgraded to the maximum extent possible. A waiver provision was provided for applicants to meet the purpose and intent of the parking lot design standard at the Planning Board's discretion.
- Exceptions from landscaping requirements were changed from requiring a variance to requiring a waiver, allowing developers to provide reasoning for the exception given that landscape requirements are general in nature and one size does not fit all. This waiver provision was added to landscape requirements for parking lots and language was clarified to make requirements clear.
- Where previously multi-family use was allowed only in the Single Residence B district, changes were made to allow it in Single Residence A district as well. The latter district predominantly contains larger estates, and this change to the by-law will allow conversion to condominiums (with up to six dwelling units per property) in exchange for protection of open space. This change will promote preservation of existing

neighborhood character while allowing for the creation of additional housing units.

- The Geographic Information System (GIS) zoning map and water resource protection were adopted as the official maps of the Town.

In 2013:

- Peer review was revised to create a clear threshold when peer review was required. The previous language was ambiguous.
- After the State legalized medical marijuana use and sale in November 2012 the Town passed a (temporary) medical marijuana moratorium by-law to allow time for considered planning around implementation of the law in Dedham.

In 2014:

- Dedham passed a “medical marijuana overlay district” delineating the area in which medical marijuana could be sold, establishing permitting requirements, and setting performance standards. If the Town had not adopted specific guidelines and zoning, the default implementation of new state law would mean medical marijuana could be sold in any business zoning district.
- After an extensive planning study conducted by Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) including extensive public meetings, an Arts Overlay District was created. The boundaries of the overlay district were defined in the first phase.
- A Historic Preservation Overlay District was created in the downtown area to allow historic structures of certain size and dimension to be converted to residential use. This action will contribute to preservation of the Town’s historic assets, and has already led to the redevelopment of one historic building in a manner that meets several goals of the 2009 Master Plan, including encouraging re-use of historic buildings and providing for a diversity of housing needs.
- The wireless cell equipment by-law was streamlined such that only site plan review is required for projects. Previously these projects had required design review and ZBA approval.
- Twenty-four acres of land zoned research development and office was changed to highway business. The land is adjacent to Providence Highway and Legacy Place.

In 2015:

- The Arts Overlay District located in East Dedham was amended by creating new arts related uses and flexible landscape requirements. These changes were modeled on similar districts in Massachusetts and other states and adapted requirements to suit East Dedham, where many properties pre-date modern zoning requirements.
- The Design Review Advisory Board zoning by-law was amended. When a project triggers site plan review Design Review Advisory Board review, like other department review, became part of the Planning Board review process.
- The site plan review was changed to allow a streamlined process for minor insignificant changes.

- To support the creative arts economic development initiative for East Dedham, a section of the neighborhood zoned general business, general residence and limited manufacturing was changed to central business. The central business zoning district is more conducive to redevelopment for a village center.
- In response to a significant increase in development of multi-story and multi-use buildings, and to numerous citizen complaints about those buildings' bulk and design flaws, the Planning Board started a Master Planning process for Dedham Square. That process is expected to be completed by 2018.

In 2016:

- The Town enacted a new mixed use by-law which addressed inconsistencies and flaws that existed in earlier provisions for subsidiary apartments. The new by-law no longer regulates the number of bedrooms, removing a provision that was potentially discriminatory. The new by-law creates a clear definition of subsidiary apartments, changed parking requirements to be based upon the number of residential units, allowed commercial uses to share the parking, and makes parking requirements for subsidiary apartments uniform across zoning districts.
- A new by-law provision with a definition for brewery, distillery or winery with tasting room and modified parking requirements was created to allow this use by special permit in limited manufacturing zoning districts. Prior to this, the zoning by-laws expressly prohibited this use, causing Dedham to lose redevelopment opportunities to nearby towns.
- The Town appropriated \$50,000 to conduct a planning study for Dedham Square, called the Dedham Square Planning Study. The study will include a review of previous studies for Dedham Square, including the 2009 Master Plan, 2004 Community Development Plan, 2013 Urban Land Institute Study, and 2007 Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study. The Dedham Square Planning Study will include community meetings to gather input from residents and merchants on priorities, including design preferences. The Strategic Plan will also consider fiscal impact indicators for development scenarios which include direct and secondary fiscal benefits, as well as negative financial development scenarios. The appropriation includes the development of design guidelines to shape development in Dedham Square.

3.2: Complete the Review and Update of the Rules and Regulations of Subdivision Control

Status: Done

Comprehensive revisions to the subdivision rules and regulations were adopted on May 26, 2011 and can be found on the Town [website](#).

Subdivision regulations provide the technical standards for the subdivision of land and the provision of public infrastructure and are crucial in shaping the physical form of the community. As with zoning laws, subdivision rules and regulations should be updated periodically to ensure

that they are consistent with current planning and engineering best practices.

3.3: Change Consulting Town Planner Position to Full-Time Planning Director

Status: Done

In October 2012, Town Meeting appropriated funds for a full-time position; Richard J. McCarthy was later appointed as the full-time Planning Director. Prior to this change, the Dedham Planning Board worked with an outside planning consultant who was not a municipal employee.

As noted in the 2009 Master Plan, the Planning Director serves as professional resource to the Planning Board; coordinates with, and acts as a technical resource for, other municipal departments; conducts or directs a variety of planning studies and special planning projects; provides leadership on planning and development issues; and brings best practices to local government planning. The Planning Director is responsible for developing a capital improvements plan - a coherent, integrated approach to physical development through land use regulation and investment in infrastructure and municipal facilities - which is essential to the success of any master plan. Now that it is a full-time position, the Planning Director now has the bandwidth to coordinate the planning function with the activities of the Economic Development Director and other department heads. In the course of preparing this update the MPIC observed how essential this coordination is for the daily operations and long term interests of the Town.

3.4: Analyze the Potential of Dedham’s MBTA Commuter Rail Stations for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Status: (in progress)

Building on a concept plan for the Dedham Corporate MBTA Station that was incorporated in the 2004 *Community Development Plan*, the 2009 Master Plan recommended further study of the potential to rezone areas around the MBTA commuter rail stops (Westwood and Dedham Corporate Center) for higher-density transit-oriented development.

The Town of Dedham identified this location as having significant potential for redevelopment, particularly with the recent construction of Legacy Place. The former industrial area lacks a “neighborhood identity” as well as connectivity between the rail station, housing, Legacy Place, and nearby open space.

Transit-oriented development incorporates a combination of mixed housing, office, retail and/or commercial development, recreational opportunities and amenities, into a walkable neighborhood located within a half-mile of quality public transportation.

In 2015, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) collaborated with the Town of Dedham to

analyze land use, evaluate market potential, and assist the Town in developing the 352-acre area around Dedham Corporate Center into a connected neighborhood. The MAPC study carefully considered Dedham's growing and aging population, along with its current capacity to meet the demands of the future. Based on an analysis of office, retail, and residential market opportunity, TOD is an attractive option for Dedham, because it provides opportunity to remain competitive by meeting market demands as they relate to location, amenities, and access to jobs.

At the completion of this update, no specific transit-oriented development proposal has been formulated; the MAPC will present their final plan in mid-2017. One of the clear needs is a comprehensive circulation plan that will need public and private investment to create the building block for transit-oriented development. This would lessen the dependence on automobiles for circulation.

The Urban Land Institute built on the initial findings of the [MAPC study](#) and examined the existing conditions and examined recommendations for market responses to TOD needs.

The increased focus on planning in this area of Dedham drew General Dynamics to invest in redevelopment of a large office on Rustcraft Road, bringing 400 employees to Dedham. Dedham is working with the Commonwealth to design and fund installation of a sidewalk which would run from the MBTA Dedham Corporate Center Station north to the office building occupied by General Dynamics on Rustcraft Road and west to the intersection of Elm Street and Providence Highway. Construction of these new sidewalks is anticipated to be complete in 2121.

3.5: Create A Permitting Guide

Status: Done

In December of 2012, the Dedham Economic Department released [The Dedham Business Guide](#). The purpose of this resource guide is to assist small businesses in opening or expanding by outlining the step-by-step process of local permitting.

This 12-page guide is user-friendly and accessible, complete with sections dedicated to the specifics of different business types. The guide also includes the contact information for all relevant departments and an overview of what boards are involved in the permitting process. The guide has been seen by many as very effective and was the winner of the American Planning Association MA Chapter Outstanding Project Award 2013. It was recognized as a project of "unusually high merit."

3.6: Create Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial Districts

Status: In progress

In May 2013 general design guidelines were released under the name [Building Better: A Design Manual for Building Improvements](#). This is not a “rulebook”; rather it offers advice and information to property and business owners looking for building improvements in a coordinated manner. These design guidelines were created as a first step in meeting the Master Plan recommendations, and serve as a foundation for the necessary task of developing customized guidelines for each of the Town’s commercial districts.

The East Dedham Revitalization Committee has been working with the Town Planner, Economic Development Director, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to develop design guidelines for East Dedham. The development process includes public meetings to get input from residents and business owners so that the final guidelines will reflect the unique character of East Dedham. Dedham Square will likely be the next district to go through this process as part of the 2017 Dedham Square Planning Study. Other commercial areas will follow.

3.7: Inventory Large Underutilized Parcels and Examine How to Maximize their Economic Development Potential

Status: In progress

Encouraging redevelopment of underutilized nonresidential properties will be central to any economic development strategy in Dedham. Although a comprehensive inventory and plan targeting underutilized parcels has not been completed, the Economic Development Director and Planning Director have been working to identify relevant properties and encourage redevelopment on a case by case basis. In the absence of a comprehensive Economic Plan, the Economic Development Director and Planning Director use the principles of the 2009 Master Plan when meeting with property owners and potential developers. The balanced approach embraced in those principles allows town officials to assess a development’s prospects to provide new, high quality jobs, to enhance existing businesses, and to provide a good tax base. (This recommendation is related to sections 9.2 and 9.3.)

3.8: Improve Communication between and among Major Boards and Expand Opportunities for Coordination by Town Professionals Associated with those Boards

Status: In progress

The portion of this recommendation calling for increased coordination among employees has been pushed forward with the development of the Project Review Committee described in section 12.6. The Project Review Committee is focused on integrating the work of town staff, however, and does not address the ongoing lack of communication and integration between major town boards. This is an issue that warrants continued attention as the Town strives to improve governance and take a more proactive approach to planning and economic development.

3.9: Establish an Annual Review Process to Evaluate the Town’s Progress toward implementing the Master Plan, to be led Jointly by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board

Status: Done

In 2009 the Planning Board established the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) with the charter of tracking and supporting implementation of Master Plan recommendations. The MPIC meets monthly with the Planning Director to review implementation progress and conduct research into issues of priority for the Town to consider going forward, including items which will be important for the next Master plan, scheduled to be issued in 2020.

The Master Plan Implementation Committee is comprised of 9 members: 1 representative from the Planning Board, 1 representative from the Board of Selectmen, 1 representative from the Conservation Commission, 1 representative from the Finance Committee, 1 representative from the Sustainability Advisory Committee, and 2 appointees each by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, respectively.

Chapter 4: Transportation

4.1: Include the Department of Public Works and Department of Engineering in The Development Review and Permitting Procedures Conducted by Town Boards

Status: Done

Both the Department of Engineering and Department of Public Works have been brought into the permitting process as part of the Project Review Committee. The groups closely coordinate both formally and informally on a regular basis when projects include issues with utilities, storm drainage, and traffic layout.

The use of outside engineering firms by town boards and commissions, using applicant-funded escrow accounts to finance consulting contracts, has increased. Better coordination and cost savings could be achieved by using in-house expertise and seeking outside consultants only for specific engineering issues. For most engineering and infrastructure-related matters, adequate personnel are available in-house. The 2020 Master Plan should revisit this issue.

4.2: Establish A Transportation Advisory Committee

Status: Done

The 2009 Master Plan recommended the establishment of a volunteer transportation advisory committee that would oversee transportation planning and construction and advocate, both in Dedham and with regional and state agencies, for transportation projects in the Town.

The Board of Selectmen established a six-member Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) in 2013. The chief responsibility of the TAC is to review Traffic Calming Request Forms and to determine the eligibility of each request, based on the requirements outlined in the adopted Traffic Calming Policy. Projects endorsed by the TAC will be prioritized and presented to the Board of Selectmen for approval on an annual basis. Upon approval from the Board of Selectmen, the Engineering Department will then submit a formal request to the Town's Capital Expenditure Committee for funding of the design and construction of the recommended projects based upon the TAC's priority list.

The Transportation Advisory Committee is composed of one member of the Planning Board, one member of the Board of Selectmen, one member of the Sustainability Advisory Committee, and three members appointed by the Town Manager.

While the initial objective - establishing a TAC - has been met, this issue will likely be revisited in the 2020 Master Plan to assess effectiveness and opportunities for improvement. For instance, the committee currently meets on an ad-hoc basis as issues emerge, and most residents are unaware that the TAC could aid in addressing safety issues in their neighborhoods. Further, the committee operates with a narrow definition of transportation, focused only on vehicles. As detailed in section 12.3, the Town is in the process of developing a Complete Streets policy which would ask every board, committee and

department to expand their transportation-related practices, policies, and oversight to include consideration of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit. This expanded definition of transportation, as well as increased outreach to the public to understand the function of the TAC, could dramatically increase the committee's ability to respond effectively to transportation safety issues across town, many of which continue to be under-reported. Of note, the 2016 Livable Dedham survey found almost half of respondents were not satisfied with existing transportation options for shopping, recreation, and voting, suggesting there are continued challenges which need to be addressed.

4.3: Strengthen Enforcement of Existing No-Parking Regulations on Sidewalks

Status: No action

This item has not moved forward in an actionable way. Fully implementing this action, as recommended in the 2009 Master Plan, would require that the Police Department strengthens enforcement of the existing ordinance prohibiting the parking of vehicles on residential sidewalks.

According to the Police Department, this is a complex enforcement issue because roadway and sidewalk design must be taken into consideration in the enforcement of parking regulations. Dedham's infrastructure was not built to accommodate the number of vehicles present today and, many roads are not wide enough to accommodate street parking on both sides of the street. Further, many homes in these "problem areas" lack garages and the capacity for alternative onsite parking.

The Police Department does, however, issue warnings, which state: "This vehicle is parked in such a way that it is obstructing a sidewalk... Future violations may result in the issuance of a parking ticket." Dedham Police have attempted to maintain a balance between unobstructed access for pedestrians and the need for parking vehicles that have no other place to go. The need for adequate street width to allow the passage of emergency vehicles is considered when enforcing this ordinance.

It is the opinion of the Police Department that the problem of parking on sidewalks would be best addressed through changes to sidewalk design and greater road width requirements, rather than through Police enforcement of parking regulations.

Altering existing parking regulations to permit single-sided street parking is another option that could be considered for some neighborhoods.

In addition to more aggressive Police enforcement, efforts to increase pedestrian safety by reducing parking on sidewalks can include education campaigns and the development of a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan to encourage residents and visitors to change parking behavior. It is worth noting that this issue is related to item 4.5 about traffic calming. When cars are parked on sidewalks, rather than in the street, an unintended consequence is that vehicle speeds tend to increase in response to having more space to maneuver. By encouraging residents and visitors to

park on the street, not only are sidewalks preserved for pedestrian use, but this also serves as a traffic calming measure and prevents speeding. An education program and/or Pedestrian Safety Action Plan to help change parking behavior lines are potential areas of research for the 2020 Master Plan if the Transportation Advisory Committee and other town boards have not addressed the problem by that time. See also item 4.7.

4.4: Adopt A Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Policy

Status: No action

A Transportation Demand Management policy has not yet been developed. However, some progress has been made toward relevant objectives. The Planning Board now requires that new large developments with more than 50 employees join the Neponset Valley Transit Association. The Neponset Valley Transit Association provides several programs to get people out of single occupant vehicles. Existing employers have also been invited to join the Neponset Valley Transit Association. Dedham has also expanded the Town bus service as detailed in section 4.6.

4.5: Create A Town-Wide Traffic Calming Policy

Status: In progress

Dedham's roadway network is flanked by major highways and split by arterials that commonly experience congestion during peak travel hours, leading to cut-through traffic in many residential neighborhoods and commercial areas such as Dedham Square. Traffic calming is an infrastructure technique incorporating design features and characteristics that induce driver caution or deter travelers from using cut-through routes.

The Transportation Advisory Committee (see section 4.2) reviews traffic calming requests in accordance with a traffic calming policy document that was created by the Engineering Department and adopted in 2012 by the Board of Selectmen. This policy documents outlines a clear process which includes evaluating the necessity of intervention, and when appropriate, the type of intervention needed. Traffic calming plans are customized to fit the specific needs of each proposed location.

The Transportation Advisory Committee's purview is limited to residential streets. Further, many residents do not know the TAC is a resource for addressing neighborhood traffic issues, many of which are unreported as a result. The 2020 Master Plan should examine whether the Town should publicize the Committee expand its scope to consider the broader context of traffic flow issues in non-residential areas.

4.6: Extend Bus Service to Employment Centers, Residential Neighborhoods, and Growth Areas such as Legacy Pland and Newbridge on the Charles

Status: In progress

In August of 2016 local bus service was expanded:

- The route was expanded to include additional pick up and drop off stops throughout Dedham. The local bus operates from Monday through Friday and connects to the MBTA bus service as well as the Dedham commuter rail.
- Dedham upgraded the public transit vehicle to a bus that seats up to 18 passengers. The new vehicle was purchased through TransAction of Woburn and though Dedham does not own this vehicle, its use is designated solely to Dedham.
- Additional steps have been taken to improve route efficiency. After previously having been eliminated, wave-on stops have been re-instated for the following stops: Ames, Bridge, Paul, Tower, Turner, and Walnut Streets, Greenwood Avenue, and Dedham Square. The decision to reintroduce wave-on stops has also served as an alternative to physical stops that received considerable opposition upon proposal.

Local ridership has increased in recent years, and it is expected that this trend will continue given changing demographics and cultural trends, including both an increase in the aging population and decreased automobile ownership among the millennial generation. Recent enhancements in local transit service, however, will not be enough to meet future needs. Dedham is committed to improving transportation efficiency and plans to develop a formal transportation demand management policy in the near future. This remains an important issue for the Town of Dedham and warrants further action in the future, including research into the possibility of an on-demand system such as that being experimented with by the MBTA.

4.7 Conduct a Review of Streets that Present Parking Problems to Establish Guidelines for Allowing and Managing Parking on Residential Streets

Status: No action

Many of Dedham's residential streets are old and create parking challenges. Streets without appropriate width or those that have experienced significant traffic increases may need to be re-evaluated for parking. Guidelines should reflect current auto-ownership trends, which are substantively different from those dating from when most streets were built. Ideally, a review would look at whether the Town should convert some two-way into one-way streets to allow for additional parking and/or minimize conflicts. The Fire Department, Public Works Department, and other emergency response agencies should be involved in any review or establishment of new guidelines. This is related to item 4.3.

4.8 Maintain Sidewalks and Keep Them Free and Clear for Pedestrians

Status: In progress

This recommendation contains two discreet goals – maintaining sidewalk infrastructure and keeping those sidewalks free for pedestrians. On the former, the Town continues to make progress in maintenance and improvement of sidewalk infrastructure. The Department of Public Works has incorporated sidewalks into the pavement management system. The pavement management system assesses, programs, and budgets for sidewalk improvement needs in conjunction with roadway paving needs, which allows for more efficient use of the DPW’s time and resources, and results in more attention to pedestrian infrastructure overall.

The Town has had less success in establishing a system to keep sidewalks free for safe pedestrian use. One challenge to this goal – parking on sidewalks - has been discussed in section 4.3. Another challenge is that Dedham lacks a provision to encourage residents and businesses to clear snow and ice from sidewalks, impeding safe pedestrian access to businesses and creating safety risks for children walking to and from school. This theme came out in the 2016 Livable Dedham survey which found that 48% of respondents were dissatisfied with maintenance and snow removal of sidewalks and many expressed a need for better lighting. Residents have proposed several articles to Town Meeting which would force the Town to create standards for snow removal and establish fines for residents and/or businesses that do not comply; these articles have failed with opponents voicing concern that the Town would not establish guidelines consistent with the needs of small businesses and residents who are unable to clear snow. Given climate predictions that New England will experience a trend of shorter but harsher winters, with more high-volume snow and ice storms, it would be of benefit for the Town to revisit this issue. The Town could establish a study group to draft guidelines on snow and ice removal with input from residents and property owners to address the concerns which have kept proposed changes from passing.

4.9 Work with MassHighway to Prepare an Access Management Study for Providence Highway that Examines Access Along the Road as a Whole

Status: In progress

This has not been complete and remains a high priority. Ongoing development along Providence Highway has created a proliferation of access points. Multiple and confusing access points create risks for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Pedestrians and cyclists are placed further at risk by the lack of safe crossing points at Legacy Place, Dedham Plaza, Dedham Square, Marine Rotary, and Dedham Mall.

Ensuring safety along Providence Highway presents a challenge to Dedham because MassHighway has final jurisdiction on curb cuts, lights, and crosswalks on this roadway. The most important product of such a study would be a recommended strategy for future access requests as well as identification of access consolidation opportunities and safety improvements. The Town should approach MassHighway to assist with funding the study. The Town

appropriated money in 2016 to conduct a corridor study that will look at curb cut management along Providence Highway. In preparation for that effort the Town will conduct meetings with property owners along Providence Highway and Legacy Boulevard about the importance of working together to improve circulation. An additional financial request has been made to Representative McMurtry's office for the FY2018 State Budget to cover the gap in expected costs of the corridor study, which appears to be upwards of several hundred thousand dollars.

4.10 Continue to Monitor the Local Transportation Infrastructure of Dedham Square and Make Strategic Investments to Ensure its Ongoing Vitality and Balance

Status: In progress

Improving transportation infrastructure in Dedham Square is challenging. As a central business district, Dedham Square is a pedestrian-oriented environment, but also one that must process and accommodate significant traffic and parking. This includes a high volume of "cut-through" traffic looking to circumvent some of the main arteries which flank and divide the Town. Further, a lack of safe pedestrian and bike routes through town, and particularly across Providence Highway, serve to discourage pedestrian and bike transportation to the Square itself. While transportation infrastructure is critical for maintaining the economic vitality of this commercial district, this is not an easy task given the layout and proximity to Providence Highway.

The Dedham Square Improvement Project improved transportation infrastructure in the central portion of Dedham Square by adding and modifying traffic signals, reducing the length of crosswalks, and redesigning the Keystone parking lot, among other changes. There are several opportunities to continue this improvement such as improving safety at additional intersections, providing wayfaring signs to parking within the square, and even by adding wayfaring signs at intersections outside of Dedham Square to redirect traffic to major arteries.

These ongoing transportation issues in the Square are planned to be addressed by the Dedham Square Planning Study. Convened in January 2017 by the Planning Board, the Dedham Square Planning Study has the potential to propose specific actions to improve and coordinate pedestrian, bike, public transit and private vehicle traffic in a manner that promotes the economic vitality of Dedham Square.

Chapter 5: Cultural & Historic Resources

5.1: Complete A Comprehensive Historic Resources Inventory

Status: No action

The 2009 Master Plan recommended that the first step in a more proactive process to protect and preserve the Town's historical and cultural resources would be the completion of a comprehensive historic resources inventory.

Such an inventory would update work that was done in the 1970's, when the Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory forms did not require an analysis of the architectural, historical and contextual significance of the resources. A comprehensive inventory would also address secondary features (outbuildings and landscape features) of historical properties. Last, a comprehensive inventory would expand the scope of survey work to include neighborhoods whose historical significance may have been less apparent in the 1970s, as well as heritage landscapes, archaeological sites, and other less traditional historical and cultural resources.

The Historic Districts Commission, the municipal board charged with preservation of and advocacy for historical and cultural resources, has no budget and no professional staff. As volunteers, they would require a great deal of outside help to complete the inventory, including physical survey drafters, photographers and a professional preservation planner. Although the 2009 Master Plan recommended that applications be made for preservation funding from grant sources, such as MHC's Survey and Planning Grant Program, such programs are highly competitive and require local matching funds. Likewise, integrating the inventory information into an online database and into Dedham's GIS system requires resources beyond that which the Commission can provide.

At present, the comprehensive inventory process envisioned by past planning documents is not a high-priority item for the Town given the costs of such a project.

5.2: Seek Certified Local Government Designation

Status: Done

The 2009 Master Plan recommends that Dedham seek Certified Local Government (CLG) designation from the National Park Service through the Massachusetts Historical Commission. CLG designation would allow Dedham to apply for financial support for historic preservation from the state through the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), which allocates ten percent of their Survey and Planning Grant to CLG-designated towns. The CLG designation also allows communities to participate directly in the review and approval of National Register nominations. However, annual reports must be submitted to the MHC if continued CLG designation is desired.

According to the Historic Districts Commission, the Town of Dedham had previously sought designation as a Certified Local Government but was not successful because it had not

completed a comprehensive historic resources survey (see section 5.1). The Historic Districts Commission has since determined that there are no substantive benefits from being a Certified Local Government and is no longer actively pursuing this item. The MPIC considers this item to be complete because the appropriate board has reviewed the issue and determined it should no longer be a goal for implementation.

5.3: Study Adoption of a Demolition Delay By-law

Status: In progress

This action item has not been undertaken and is not being pursued by the Historic Districts Commission. Although the Commission supported the adoption of a Demolition Delay by-law, there was a lack of support from the Building Commissioner and the Planning Board. Further, Commission members believe that there are very few properties within the Historic Districts threatened with demolition.

The demolition delay by-law could be applied to properties other than those within Historic Districts. The MPIC suggests this issue be considered in the 2020 Master Plan.

5.4: Adopt A Scenic Roads By-law

Status: No Action

A scenic roads by-law would protect the visual character of Dedham's roadways by authorizing the Planning Board to review any proposed construction that would affect roadside trees and stone walls under the requirements of M.G.L. c. 40, s. 15c, the Scenic Roads Act. Although a proposal to adopt a scenic roads by-law was defeated at Town Meeting in the mid-2000s, the 2009 Master Plan recommended that this action item be reconfigured to increase its chances of passage by tailoring design and review standards to the conditions in Dedham; creating an inventory and photographic documentation of the roads; and through a public education strategy that would explain the benefits of the proposed by-law.

This action item falls under the scope of the Planning Board, though the Historic Districts Commission could also initiate work on this project with support from the Planning Board.

5.5: Work with Neighboring Towns to Hire a Regional Preservation Planner

Status: No action

To better plan for historic preservation in areas that are outside of each town's designated

historic districts, the Town of Dedham has contacted neighboring municipalities regarding hiring a shared regional Preservation Planner.

It was proposed that a single town would employ the planner and the surrounding communities would share that cost. No further executive decisions have been made, and it appears that there is not enough compelling interest, or financial resources, to pursue this action item at this time.

This item falls under the purview of the Town Manager.

5.6: Encourage the Establishment of Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts

Status: No action

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation (NAC) districts are viewed as a promising means of achieving the historical and character preservation of neighborhoods because the regulations they usher are less restrictive than those of local historic by-laws.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission requires that a comprehensive Historic Resources Inventory be complete before an NAC district can be established (see section 5.1). That inventory would then serve as the basis for determining specific neighborhoods that may qualify. Once a potential district is identified, the Town would need to establish a set of design guidelines, prepare an NAC by-law, and designate an NAC Commission to administer the district.

Although the Dedham Historic District Commission believes that there are districts in Dedham that would be suitable for NAC protection such as Endicott, Oakdale, the Manor and Riverdale, the Commission does not have the staff or other necessary resources to promote this concept more actively at this time.

5.7: Formalize and Continue the Practice of Historic District Commission Review and Comment on Public Development Projects

Status: No action

The 2009 Master Plan recommended that public development projects be required to gain Historic Districts Commission approval during the permitting process, allowing for the integration of preservation objectives in future projects. This could be achieved through adopting a by-law or administrative "rule" mandating the Historic District Commission's review and approval prior to issuance of building permits and certificates of zoning compliance for public projects.

Town boards and commissions are generally supportive of the Historic District Commission and the historic resources of the community. Formalizing this support with a by-law or administrative rule has not been considered a priority, but this issue should be reviewed by the 2020 Master Plan.

5.8: Adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA)

Status: No progress

The 2009 Master Plan observed that the Community Preservation Act (CPA) can be an important funding source for historic preservation, affordable housing, parks and recreation, and open space projects. This is a state program through which communities designate a nominal real estate surcharge of one to three percent toward CPA and receive state matching grants toward approved uses. In 2008, Town Meeting turned down a proposal to adopt CPA. The 2009 Master Plan encouraged the Town to continue to pursue adoption of CPA given the large number of challenges facing the Town which would qualify for CPA grants. However, it was voted down again by Town Meeting in 2011.

In 2016 a grassroots citizens group calling themselves Preserve Dedham formed to campaign for CPA adoption. Their research showed that Dedham's failure to adopt CPA in 2008 had cost the Town hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding for projects the Town has completed since that time. In November of 2016, Town Meeting passed an article to place CPA on the town-wide election ballot in April 2017.

On April 8, 2017, Dedham voters were presented a proposal to adopt a 1% surcharge on the annual property tax levy to fund CPA, with exceptions for 1) property owned and occupied by a person who would qualify for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing, 2) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable residential parcel, and 3) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of commercial or industrial property. The voters defeated the proposal. While at a technical level the CPA is simply a funding mechanism, the opposition coalesced around a "no new taxes" message.

The Master Plan Implementation Committee continues to support adoption of CPA as a critical tool to increase the town's ability to fund important projects, but recognizes that proper consideration of the CPA may require a comprehensive look at the entirety of taxation and expenditures in the Town. The 2020 Master Plan should consider this issue and explore alternate recommendations to ensure the town prioritizes investment in historic preservation, affordable housing, parks and recreation and open space if CPA is not ultimately adopted.

5.9: Integrate Historic Preservation Objectives into the Town's Existing Development Review and Permitting Procedures

Status: No action

The 2009 Master Plan recommended that historic preservation objectives be incorporated into an environmental checklist for use by town boards and commissions during the development review process, including consideration for protection of stone walls, bridges, foundations, landscapes, structures, archaeological sites, and significant architectural features; preservation of scenic road characteristics; and compliance with state and federal preservation guidelines for rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Chapter 6: Natural Resources

6.1: Develop an Environmental Checklist to Assist with Developmental Review

Status: In Progress

Since 2009, an alternative approach has been undertaken for reviewing the environmental impact of proposed projects. This includes promoting both energy-saving and green materials to build the project as well as consideration of the short- and long-term impact on the environment such as preservation of open space where possible, bike and pedestrian access to proposed project, and impact on wetlands.

A Project Review Committee composed of staff from a variety of town agencies (including the DPW Superintendent, Town Engineer, the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Conservation Commission Agent, Economic Development Director, Building Commissioner, Health Director, Environmental Coordinator, and Planning Director) was established by the Town Manager for this purpose. (See also: section 12.6 for more details on the Project Review Committee.)

The Project Review Committee meets with applicants whose projects are in the feasibility stage and conducts formal reviews of projects that are in the permitting process. This process has received very positive reviews from past applicants. It also helps to cross-educate departments about the types of issues and concerns that other departments consider, and has thus been an important step in helping town departments present a more coordinated response to proposed projects. In the future, the Project Review Committee will also notify the Historic Districts Commission of any projects located in historic districts.

The Planning Director and Environmental Coordinator in conjunction with the Sustainability Advisory Committee are in the process of developing an Environmental Checklist to assist with Developmental Review.

6.2: Establish a Plan and Priorities for Maintaining and Increasing the Town's Urban Forest and Public Tree Inventory

Status: In progress

The 2009 Master Plan proposed Dedham seek the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA designation, to provide Dedham access to funding and technical assistance for maintaining and expanding its public trees network. Tree City USA designation requires the appointment of a Tree Department (which can be within an existing department); a Tree Care By-law to determine policies for planting, maintaining and removing public trees; and the annual expenditure of at least \$2 per capita. Dedham received the Tree City USA Award in June 2010 after fulfilling all necessary criteria.

The development of a plan and priorities for maintaining the public tree inventory is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works (DPW). To celebrate the anniversary of Arbor Day in 2017, Dedham's Sustainability Advisory Committee is working with DPW to present several speakers and educational sessions about trees as well as give away free saplings to residents and businesses.

An article was proposed at Town Meeting in 2015 to require the preservation of a tree canopy for development projects. It was indefinitely postponed.

6.3: Establish Municipal Policy and An Annual Budget Appropriation for Wildlife Management

Status: In progress

A municipal policy has not yet been established, but there is an appropriation for wildlife management in the Environmental Department budget. Dedham has developed a protocol for beaver control, annually budgets for this expense, and employs an Animal Control Officer. At the time of this report in early 2017 the need for other wildlife management has not been deemed necessary.

6.4: Increase Collaboration with Nearby Communities and Conservation Groups for Regional Water Resource and Environmental Habitat Protection

Status: In progress

Dedham has been collaborating with organizations such as the Charles River Watershed Association and the Neponset River Watershed Association on regional water resource and quality issues since at least 2014. One such collaboration occurred in 2014 when the Neponset River Watershed received a grant to create a cooperative stormwater management program in which Dedham participated.

Dedham continues to be a leader in these collaborations, assisting the Neponset River Watershed Association is submitting grants for this program and attending regional meetings. As a result, the Town has co-created stormwater outreach materials that can be viewed on either the Engineering or Environmental Department page under Stormwater. Through the partnership with the Neponset River Watershed Association the Town has been able to secure grants to cover the cost of completing projects to keep our streams cleaner, like the Mother Brook project. Mother Brook is an important, historic waterway in Dedham that connects the Charles and Neponset Rivers. It is the first man made canal in the United States. Unfortunately, over the years Mother Brook has been impacted by stormwater runoff and other pollution. Last year, the Town of Dedham partnered with the Neponset River Watershed Association and was awarded a grant from the Mass Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency to clean up the polluted stormwater entering Mother Brook. Over the past several months, the Dedham Department of Public Works has been busy constructing several stormwater treatment structures. These structures allow road runoff to soak through the ground and be naturally filtered by soil and plants, instead of carrying pollution into Mother Brook. There are two new bioretention areas on Colburn Street and Sawmill Lane, and one other structure to be built on Avery Street. Bioretention areas—also known as rain gardens—are low areas that use soil and plants to filter and treat runoff. They prevent pollution from entering our streams.

It is important that Dedham continue to work with neighboring communities since natural resources and environmental habitats don't observe municipal boundaries. Actions taken by one town, within their own boundaries, may very well impact surrounding towns. In recent years, Dedham's Environmental Director worked successfully with the Town of Westwood to secure funding through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for a study of pedestrian and biking needs of both towns. This could be a model for partnering with other towns to protect environmental habitats and water resources.

6.5 Continue to Review and Revise Local Stormwater Management Regulations and By-laws to Ensure Consistency with State and Federal Requirements.

Status: In progress

Dedham's Conservation Commission obtained Town Meeting approval in 2015 for significant changes to Dedham's stormwater rules. Those changes provided regulatory relief for homeowners by "deregulating" smaller residential projects: exempting the smallest projects and allowing others to proceed with a simplified administrative approval.

In 2017 the Conservation Commission will be proposing and adopting a wider set of changes to align Dedham's stormwater rules with new federal stormwater discharge requirements set to take effect July 1, 2017. That federal Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit contains a wide range of requirements that will affect multiple departments. Dedham's Environmental Coordinator, assisted by the Neponset Stormwater Partnership, will be responsible for developing, tracking and integrating permit-driven changes through the impacted departments (Engineering, DPW, Building Department, Planning Department, Parks and Recreation and Dedham Schools.)

The Conservation Commission also has requested funding at the 2017 Spring Town Meeting to analyze and make changes to Dedham's local wetlands by-law, which augments state wetlands regulations. The Commission will be examining whether the local wetland by-law sufficiently protects Dedham's streams, ponds and wetlands and our water supply, and will also examine the possibility of "deregulating" minor actions by Dedham homeowners.

In 2018 the Conservation Commission plans to examine its wetlands and stormwater fees to ensure that larger developments adequately cover the costs of reviewing those projects.

6.6 Develop and Promote Public Conservation Efforts Relating to Water and Energy Resources

Status: In progress

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

LEED By-law/Standard for Municipal Buildings

The Sustainability Advisory Committee has offered energy-saving ideas for municipal building projects such as the new Town Hall, the new Early Childhood and Education Center, and the upcoming Public Safety Campus encouraging Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) development where possible. In 2011 Dedham installed solar panels on the roofs of the High School and Town Hall. The Sustainability Committee recommends a universal policy, in which any new municipal building would be built to LEED performance standards. The Sustainability Committee has also recommended the Town adopt performance standards across municipal and private sector businesses such as a LEED rating system.

Renewable Energy Fund

In November 2015, the Town of Dedham adopted a Renewable Energy Fund that was approved by the Attorney General's office in the spring of 2016. This fund allows for the proceeds from sale of the Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) generated by the solar panels at Dedham High School and Town Hall to be set aside in a special fund for energy conservation projects in the school and other municipal buildings.

Education and Outreach

The Environmental Department has made education and outreach around energy conservation and natural resource protection a key priority. The Department has teamed with the Sustainability Advisory Committee to host numerous public engagement events including Earth Days, Earth Hours, Green Fairs, speaker series, movie viewings, workshops, Arbor Days, community wide cleanups and Dedham Trails Day.

Residential Energy Efficiency and Solar

The Environmental Department and Sustainability Advisory Committee have brought energy conservation and renewable energy to residents through public meetings on the topic, videos and community solar coaches. The Town signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Next Step Living (NSL) in 2012 and within 6 months the Town had 25 homes with solar panels installed, up from just four homes before the program was established. Prior to going solar every home received an energy audit. As of November 2015, 550 residents have had a home energy assessment. This project played an important role in helping the Town grow its solar capacity and for residents to understand if their home was eligible for solar, but it is no longer in

existence. The Sustainability Committee and Environmental Coordinator are now looking for the next step to fill the void left by NSL and are considering a program through the Mass Clean Energy Center called Solarize Mass.

Community Aggregation of Electricity

The Town Manager in partnership with the Environmental Coordinator launched a community aggregation program in November 2015 in which the Town joined 24 other communities in the bulk purchase of electricity. The program allows residents and businesses to significantly reduce their electricity rates through a bulk-purchasing contract. Dedham has worked with the consultant Good Energy to secure a fixed-term contract that will protect residents and businesses from future spikes in electricity prices. The group is expected to see an estimated \$15 million in aggregate savings in the region when compared to the current Eversource and National Grid published winter utility rates.

The Town of Dedham has adopted a green municipal aggregation model that increases the amount of renewable energy available on the grid effectively and affordably. Residents and businesses in Dedham will receive an additional 5% renewable energy above the state's standard Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) of 10%. Through construction of new sources of renewables, the purchase of Class 1 renewable energy will add cleaner, local, renewable energy to the grid in Massachusetts and across New England. The Town of Dedham is forging the way for a greener future, being one of only two communities in the state to set the default for local renewable energy at 5%.

6.7 Increase Education and Outreach Efforts to Promote Appreciation and Protection of the Town's Natural Resources.

Status: In progress

Through the Town's Environmental Coordinator and the Sustainability Advisory Committee, Dedham has been working to engage the public in natural resource protection by encouraging citizen participation in volunteer programs such as water quality monitoring, species counting and reporting, and trail maintenance. For several years now, the Committee has also been offering bi-annual Recycle Days for polystyrene foam (Styrofoam), on-site paper-shredding, textiles and scrap metal. The Committee has expanded communication efforts to include social media to get out the word about efforts and opportunities to protect the Town's natural resources.

In November 2015, the Town of Dedham adopted a Renewable Energy Fund that was approved by the Attorney General's office in the spring of 2016. This fund allows for the sale of the Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) generated by the solar panels at Dedham High School and Town Hall to be set aside for energy conservation projects in the school and municipal buildings.

Also see section 6.6.

Chapter 7: Open Space & Recreation

7.1: Develop A Plan to Provide Universal Access to Recreation Facilities, Parks, and Trails

Status: In progress

Since 2009, the Town has taken steps to improve access to recreation facilities for people of all abilities. The Parks and Recreation Department has worked with the Commission on Disability (COD) and the Building Department to identify and address facilities in need of better access. Access has been improved at Barnes Memorial Park and Riverside Park. The parking lots at Fairbanks Park, Condon Park, and the Dolan Recreation Center have been improved to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The restrooms at the Dolan Recreation Center and at the Dedham High School field have also been made ADA-compliant. Condon Park is now fully accessible.

While there is not a single map of Dedham's parks, fields, and trails, the Parks and Recreation Department does maintain a [list](#) of parks and fields under the jurisdiction of that department. Developing a comprehensive map, with symbols to designate which facilities have key features such as accessible parking, rest rooms, water fountains, and seating, would greatly improve access for people of all ages and abilities interested in exploring active and passive recreation opportunities in Dedham.

The Town is currently reviewing the feasibility of COD recommended changes to the sidewalk area at the Dolan Recreation Center. Parks and Recreation is also in the midst of a \$2.4 million renovation of Gonzalez Field. When the Gonzalez Field renovations are complete in Fall of 2017, it will meet all ADA recommendations. Plans for future construction of the Manor Fields have been designed to include ADA compliance. (For more information in the Manor Fields, see item 7.8.)

The 2009 Master Plan further recommended that, as a town-wide trail system is developed, all components of the trail system be designed for universal access. The Parks and Recreation department is overseeing development of a Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan in conjunction with an Update to the Open Space and Recreation Plan of 2010. The Master Plan will be developed over the course of 2017 with extensive input from Dedham residents via public meetings, surveys, interviews, and community workshops. Meeting ADA compliance will be a critical part of the plan, and the working committee includes a member of the Commission on Disability to ensure accessibility issues are considered throughout the process.

7.2: Encourage Neighborhood Groups to Become Stewards of Local Parks

Status: In progress

The Parks and recreation Department maintains relationships with several neighborhood groups which act as stewards of local parks and parcels.

Park/Space Maintained	Civic Group
Condon Park	Mother Brook Community Group
Mill Pond Park	Mother Brook Community Group
Oakdale Common	Oakdale Square Alliance
Various parks	Encounter Church
Various parks and open space	Dedham Civic Pride

7.3: Encourage the Formation of a Trails Stewards Group

Status: In progress

As with several other recommendations, this item is dependent on the active interest and labor of citizen volunteers. Two groups of such volunteers have organized around these goals; their accomplishments are evidence of how impactful volunteer groups can be in augmenting the work of town employees.

Dedham Trails is the trails marketing arm of the Environmental Department, and was created out of a collaboration between the Environmental Coordinator and residents. It is not currently a volunteer organization or a friends group, but the Town hopes it will expand into a “Friends of the Dedham Trails” group in the future. It is the face of trails in Dedham and hosts both a Facebook page and a website: www.dedhamtrails.org. It has played an active role in advancing many of the tasks highlighted in the 2009 Master Plan. Dedham Trails is responsible for improving community awareness of Dedham's natural resources, coordinating community service events, and providing support for the trails as needed.

Dedham Trails was born out of the idea of creating a water trail on the Charles River, described in section 7.5 of this Update. The Environmental Coordinator secured a Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Recreational Trails Grant that funded much of the canoe launch construction, and worked with numerous private organizations to secure financial donations to complete maps and signage of the Water Trail. This project was successfully completed with little cost to the Town.

Dedham Trails hosts an annual event at the Dolan Center Boat Launch to promote the trails system and educate the public about the diverse natural resources Dedham offers. The Parks and Recreation Department has formed a partnership with L.L. Bean and through their use of the canoe launch they provide a yearly donation to the Department to better the experience on the water for residents and visitors. L.L. Bean runs canoe and kayak lessons out of the Dolan Center launch and has provided the Town in exchange with canoes, kayaks, paddles, life jackets, as well as signage and reduced fees for water sport classes.

The [Friends of the Dedham Heritage Rail Trail](#) group formed in 2015 to help generate support and resources for the conversion of abandoned rail beds to parks which can also serve as bike and walking paths. The group has focused its efforts on the 1.5 mile abandoned railway that stretches from East Street to the Readville train station, which they have called the Dedham Heritage Rail Trail. When the Town undertook a feasibility study in 2016, the Friends group raised donations to expand the scope to include meetings with abutters so that abutter interests would be represented in the feasibility study. The group has also organized numerous clean ups of the abandoned rail bed and has suggested they would be willing to help with maintenance of the trail if it is built.

The Master Plan also recommended that a “point person” be designated at Town Hall to respond to questions and comments and to help coordinate town and volunteer efforts. This task has been completed, and all inquiries may be directed to the [Dedham Environmental Coordinator](#).

7.4: Continue to Coordinate Infrastructure Improvements with Civic Beautification Efforts

Status: In progress

The Master Plan noted that in some communities, conflicts arise between citizen groups seeking to beautify public space and the operations and management needs of Public Works Departments. Dedham has tried to improve coordination with groups such as Dedham Civic Pride so that there is a balance between the efficiency and public safety of the roadway network and visual quality. For example, in 2016 Dedham Public Works partnered with Dedham Civic Pride to assist in weeding and planting of a new divider at the intersection of Dedham and Pine Streets.

7.5: Continue to Identify Parcels to Form a System of Paths and Trails

Status: In progress

The Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee have begun the task of identifying parcels of land requiring acquisition that would connect existing paths and trails. Parcels contiguous to existing protected open space will be prioritized to expand the amount of open space and to contribute to the formation of a system of paths and trails. Access may be obtained through easements from private property owners to allow limited public access through the property.

The Open Space Committee has been working with the Commonwealth Department of Conservation and Recreation to locate and prioritize properties of interest to be included in this inventory.

Responsibility for developing this system may migrate to the Parks and Recreation Department

depending up on the outcome of the Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan process, which began in 2017.

In addition, several trails have been completed since 2009. Maps of some of these trails can be found [here](#):

- **Dolan Recreation Center – Whitcomb Woods**

Under the direction of the Environmental Coordinator the Student Conservation Association (SCA) built a bridge and cleared the path connecting a piece of trail in April 2014. By employing SCA – an AmeriCorps program - the Town saved \$10,000 and was able to employ graduate students looking to expand their knowledge of land conservation and management.

This trail begins by the Dolan Recreation Center on Common St. and heads northeast to Whitcomb Woods, a part of the Wilson Mountain Reservation. Previously, there was a gap in the trail behind Emeritus at Wilson Mountain Assisted Living Center. The Town recently acquired a parcel, which eliminates the gap and connects the trail originating behind the Dolan Center to Whitcomb Woods and to the Newbridge on the Charles trail network, contributing to the formation of paths and trails.

- **Dedham Water Trail**

A “water trail” along the Charles River connects several conservation areas. This trail includes five public boat launch spots, which are near many of Dedham's parks and conservation lands. The Environmental Coordinator applied and was awarded funding from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Recreational Trails Grant program to complete this project. This trail is also home to significant historic and ecological sites, which are marked with signage along the route. In July of 2014 the Dedham Water Trail was designated a National Recreational Trail by the United States Department of the Interior Secretary Sally Jewel. National Recreational Trails are part of a national system of trails and greenways on water and over land combining nature, wildlife, outdoor activity and history. We are very proud to that the Dedham Water Trail has received this national recognition and honored to be included America’s national system of trails. A map of the Water Trail is available [here](#).

- **Mother Brook Trails**

In East Dedham there is a trail network that leads from Mill Pond Park on Colburn Street along the backside of Condon Park through the woods to Mother Brook and then across to Oakland Street and eventually to the Mill Condominiums. This trail system was built as part of an Eagle Scout Project in 2014-2015. It is marked but could benefit from improved signage. Additional Eagle Scout projects are being considered for the space behind the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center.

Several additional trail projects are in the planning stages:

- **Dedham Heritage Rail Trail (DHRT)**

As mentioned in section 7.3, a feasibility study was initiated in 2016 to explore the possibility of converting a 1.5-mile stretch of abandoned railway which runs from East Dedham to Dedham Square into a linear park and cultural greenway. The project would convert the unused space into a path suitable for pedestrian and bike use, while also incorporating public art, community gardens, and recreation use for Dedham Public Schools athletic needs. The proposed DHRT would also broaden the sense of community in that it will connect adjacent neighborhoods to one another and to Boston, ultimately allowing cyclists to commute from Dedham into the city.

While the Dedham Heritage Rail Trail is discussed in this chapter as a way to address Open Space & Recreation needs facing the Town, its benefit would go beyond simply expanding access to trails. Given aging demographics, the DHRT would provide an accessible, level path for senior citizens in need of recreation options. The fact that runs through neighborhoods, rather than near more rural town borders, means many residents could access the trail without having to drive to it. Furthermore, the trail would help address other Master Plan objectives, such as reducing traffic congestion and increasing transportation corridors for pedestrians and cyclists. The DHRT's proximity to the Avery, Middle, and High Schools means it would provide a safe route to school for many students, and has the potential to reduce heavy traffic congestion caused by vehicle drop-offs. The DHRT would ultimately connect to a point near the Readville MBTA station, allowing residents to walk or bike to the commuter train. An existing system of trails in Boston will soon connect to the DHRT route, which would allow cyclists to commute to downtown Boston.

There are challenges to developing this trail, including the requirement of building a new bridge and a culvert. In addition, portions of the trail pass close to residential property; one of many challenges would be to provide mitigation for these neighbors in the form of fencing and/or landscaping. As the Town works to identify viable solutions to existing development challenges, this project remains in the feasibility stage. The Town commissioned a feasibility study in 2016 with Weston & Sampson, supported by funding from the Dedham Land Trust, Friends of Dedham Heritage Rail Trail, Dedham Savings Bank and a grant from the MA Department of Health. The draft feasibility was released in the winter of 2017 and the Town plans to release the final version of the study in the spring of 2017. Once the study is released a public meeting will be held to present the findings and solicit input. The Environmental Department applied for and was awarded a \$50,000 grant that could be applied towards the design and engineering of the trail. The Town would then seek additional funding from Town Meeting for design and engineering costs. If passed, the Town would work towards getting the project to the 25% design phase to be eligible for funding from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

For more information on this project, please see the Dedham Environmental Department [project page](#) and [Dedham Trails](#).

- **Fowl Meadow**

Fowl Meadow is a large wetlands area that extends to Boston, Milton, and Canton. In Dedham it is bordered by Route 95 and the Canton line. Some Dedham residents have suggested that the Town both recognize the existing paths in the Fowl Meadow area and consider developing trail connections between the Fowl Meadow and other open spaces in Dedham. The Town's Open Space Plan should include that future work.

- **Dedham Town Forest**

This project would include the addition of a new trail through the local woods of Dedham. This could include the Town Forest, which is a 77-acre parcel, an "underutilized resource due to its isolation," according to [Dedham Trails](#). A system of trails was created at this site in the 1970s. As part of an Eagle Scout project in 2015, the trails were re-marked and re-cleared. A sign was placed at the entrance of the Town Forest. This forest has limited parking access, which makes it difficult for visitors but it remains a spot with great opportunity and varied natural resources. The most urgent need is maintenance to continue the work of the Eagle Scouts.

- **Wigwam Pond**

In 2015, Representative Paul McMurtry earmarked \$100,000 money for a canoe and kayak launch, a trail, and boardwalk at Wigwam Pond. The money is in a fund with the Town and the next step is to create a plan for how to implement improved access. It will involve the Environmental Department, Open Space, Conservation, and the Planning Department. The Environmental and Planning Departments have been tasked with engaging a consultant to come up with a plan.

Improved access to and development of trails around Wigwam Pond is being pursued by the Open Space Committee. Existing access near the "A Tent for Rent" facility is not routinely maintained, neither well marked or publicized. In addition, it is not easily accessible for kayaks or canoes, and has outgrowth impeding access in the water.

A better access point on property off Stergis Avenue is available. It would require the property owner agreeing to allow public access.

7.6: Protect Significant Open Space Parcels

Status: No Action

Dedham completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2010, which makes the Town eligible to apply for Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND), Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) and Land and Water Conservation Fund grants. The Open Space Plan outlined suggested criteria for prioritizing open space acquisitions but also

recommended that the Town create a more detailed acquisition plan.

However, creating a prioritized list as recommended by the Open Space Plan has downsides. One drawback of such a plan is that opportunities to acquire properties or conservation restrictions for them occur independently of their position ranking on an acquisitions list. Further, having a prioritized list reduces the Town's negotiating power, especially if the list has been made public.

In place of a detailed acquisition plan, the Open Space Committee has been working with the Dedham Land Trust – a private foundation – to identify potential properties and fundraising options. Given the lack of budgeting and prioritization on property acquisition, the Open Space Committee could reach out privately to landowners of significant parcels to work with them before properties go on the open market.

7.7: Maintain A Comprehensive Open Space Inventory

Status: In Progress

The [2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) contains a comprehensive open space inventory, including ownership type (public, private, or private non-profit, as well as the agency that manages the property), size, and uses. Appendix 5 of the plan lists privately owned parcels that abut existing open space.

The development risk analysis and priority ranking recommended in the 2009 Master Plan have not been completed. The Dedham Land Trust (DLT) heightened the Town's awareness for the need for funding mechanisms to preserve land that is not currently protected from development through their attempt to preserve a parcel of land on Haven Street. Given that Dedham voters opted not to adopt the Community Preservation Act in 2017 the Town will not have that funding mechanism to protect priority land. The Town will need to continue to work with the DLT and other groups to prioritize and fund acquisition of priority parcels.

7.8 Continue efforts to Develop the Manor Fields Site for Recreational Use

Status: In progress

In 2016 the Parks and Recreation Department finished an engineering report for the Manor Fields project and secured all necessary approvals from town boards to proceed. The next step is to evaluate the need for the project and secure approval from Town Meeting to fund construction. The Parks and Recreation Department has held off on these last steps until the Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is completed in 2017. The expectation is that the Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan will determine the need and ideal timing for implementing this project.

7.9 Maintain Update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) to Provide a Comprehensive Framework for Open Space Planning

Status: In Progress

The Parks and Recreation Commission and the Open Space and Recreation Committee are combining efforts to develop a Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan will update the 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan will follow the format and all requirements of the Division of Conservation Services, and will incorporate public input through public surveys, community meetings and workshops, and individual interviews. The Parks and Recreation Commission and Open Space and Recreation Committee initiated this effort as a joint plan to ensure the results would be unified and integrate the needs of Parks and Recreation with Open Space and Recreation to avoid presenting conflicting concepts or priorities.

7.10 Make the Open Space Committee More Effective by Clearly Communicating its Roles and Responsibilities to the Public, Holding it Accountable for its Initiatives, and Giving it a More Visible Role Within Town Government

Status: In progress

The 2009 Master Plan determined the Open Space Committee was not being fully utilized, and encouraged the Town make this committee more distinct from the Conservation Commission.

Since 2009 there have been incremental changes to the responsibilities of the Open Space Committee that more clearly identify the Open Space Committee as the Town's lead for stewardship and development of Dedham's open spaces. While that has addressed overlaps with the Conservation Commission, that action has in turn highlighted both disconnects and overlaps with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The latter has traditionally focused on ballfields and neighborhood parks, and has tended to leave the protection, use and development of Dedham's open spaces, walking trails and access to rivers and ponds to others.

In 2017, Dedham appears to be at a cross roads as respects how it manages open spaces. Parks and Recreation could assume wider responsibility for all of Dedham's open space and recreation resources, or could continue to focus on ball fields and playgrounds. If the latter, the Open Space Committee should be invested with the formal and explicit responsibilities for parks and recreational activities and sites that are not going to be overseen by Parks and Recreation.

The Master Plan Implementation Committee recommends that Parks and Recreation use public input into its own planning process to help clarify what it wants its role to be regarding Open Space. If it chooses to incorporate open space more fully into its responsibilities, that will require the Parks and Recreation Commissioners to implement the policy, budget and operational changes necessary to ensure that Dedham's open spaces have an effective steward.

Chapter 8: Housing

8.1: Establish A Housing Partnership Committee

Status: No action

The housing partnership has not been established, and no actions have been taken to secure the partnership proposed. However, economic and housing conditions have changed such that while this issue is still relevant, the needs and emphasis have changed since the 2009 recommendation.

In 2009, when the Master Plan was finalized, there was an ongoing economic recession and Dedham was faced with the problem of housing affordability stemming from growth pressures from both residential and commercial development. Economic conditions have since improved. A [study](#) conducted by Professor Bluestone of Northeastern University found that in 2000, Dedham had a median household income that was 12 percent higher than in the Greater Boston region; this increased to 17.5 percent by 2010. In 2010, the median family income for Dedham was over \$100,000. Since 2009, Dedham has thrived compared to many communities across the Commonwealth and across the United States.

Given the recent resilience in Dedham's economic and housing conditions, several of the housing recommendations of the 2009 Master Plan are less relevant than they were then. Many of the prescribed action plans are addressed by the Dedham Housing Authority, which aids low-income residents through programs such as Low Rent Public Housing and the Housing Choice Voucher Program. For example, the housing authority provides assistance to renters by subsidizing the difference between the market rent charge and what a low-income renter can afford.

Future housing needs in Dedham are expected to move towards smaller homes and rental properties. According to the Northeastern University study, the average household size in Dedham has steadily declined, falling from 3.1 to 2.6 persons between 1980 and 2010. A significant portion of Dedham's population includes residents in their 50's and 60's; and the percentage of residents who are senior citizens (aged 65+) has increased substantially over the past decade and will continue to increase. As this population ages, it is expected that many will seek to decrease their home size, creating an increased demand for multi-unit housing. Observing this phenomenon, in 2016 the Planning Board and Town Meeting approved the first Planned Residential Development (PRD) following the by-law provisions enacted at the beginning of the decade.

Dedham's proximity to Boston and to public transportation is attractive to young professionals and families, which may also increase the demand for single family homes, rental units and condominiums. Providing more suitable housing for seniors who wish to transition to smaller homes or apartments would free stock for young professionals and families.

With these conditions of increased economic and social diversity in mind, Dedham will soon have a greater need for affordable housing and housing assistance programs than in the past.

Dedham originally considered the question of establishing a housing partnership based on the housing market in the years before 2009, but housing needs have changed since then.

Although no one is currently tasked with implementing this item, the likelihood of forming a housing partnership in the future has improved based on data uncovered by the Northeastern University study. The study outlines emerging housing issues and areas of focus. If the housing partnership is established, it will likely work on different issues than those identified in the 2009 Master Plan.

8.2: Establish A Housing Rehabilitation Program

Status: No action

Although implementing this item is still a possibility, additional staff would need to be hired to administer it. Given current budget constraints, it is likely that this item will not be implemented unless the Town sees that there is a pressing demand for this program.

The 2009 Master Plan recommended that Dedham seek Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to pay for this program, either on its own or on a regional basis with a neighboring municipality. The CDBG program requires that people receiving housing rehabilitation assistance meet strict income guidelines, i.e., incomes up to 80 percent of area median income, adjusted for household size. Funds are available to municipalities through a highly competitive application process, and municipalities with demonstrated capacity to administer such grants are given preference.

Given that there is currently no staff member assigned to administer this program and that responsibility for housing issues and enforcement is not centralized, it seems unlikely that Dedham would be a successful applicant.

8.3: Investigate Creating a Rental Housing Code Enforcement Program

Status: No action

This program has not yet been created. In the absence of a committee or staff member that specifically deals with housing issues (Action 8.1), there is no one with the responsibility to advocate for such a program.

8.4: Encourage Rehabilitation of Deteriorated, Highly Visible Residential and Mixed-Use Buildings

Status: No action

In Spring 2009 the Town completed an inventory of prospective sites in East Dedham. However, funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which targets “urban blight,” is extremely competitive, especially for suburbs like Dedham where the need is perceived as less pressing than in urban areas.

It is unlikely that Town Meeting would establish a Redevelopment Authority or Community Developing Organization to undertake comprehensive urban renewal efforts. Nevertheless, the Building Commissioner, Economic Development Director, and Planning Director intend to look for opportunities for rehabilitation and redevelopment of deteriorating buildings as potential projects arise.

8.5: Create A Housing Resource Guide

Status: No action

The Housing Partnership Committee has not yet been established (see section 8.1), and consequently there is no primary entity charged with advocacy for housing. It is likely that this item will not be implemented until a greater need for the guide develops, due to the current lack of staff assigned specifically to housing issues.

8.6: Work with Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership (SWAHP) to Promote Its First-Time Homebuyer Program

Status: No action

The Southwest Affordable Housing Partnership was a regional housing advocacy organization based in Dedham. In 2009, SWAHP had established a First-time Homebuyer Program that offered grants of up to \$3,000 to qualifying applicants as a means of bridges the affordability gap. However, the organization has since dissolved, and the Town is not staffed to oversee such a program if it were still in existence.

Housing prices in Dedham likely provide a barrier to first-time homebuyers. As of 2011, roughly 30% of Dedham’s households had annual incomes between \$150,000 and \$200,000. In 2011, the median value of the housing stock was \$457,838. The Northeastern University demographic study noted that, like many other towns in the region, the cost of Dedham’s housing stock has increased over the past two decades. This increase has made access to low-cost housing in Dedham difficult. Dedham’s housing prices did not drop dramatically with the 2009 recession,

and the cost of living in Dedham remained high compared to other cities outside the Greater Boston region.

8.7 Identify Town-Owned, Tax-Title Properties that May be Redeveloped to Address Housing Needs

Status: No action

Dedham should identify town-owned land and properties (including tax-title property) that may be suitable for development or redevelopment to meet needs such as affordable elderly housing, affordable family housing, “starter” homes, or other types of housing identified in a needs assessment. Through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, Dedham may be able to attract interest in development of such properties.

8.8 Complete a Housing Plan

Status: In progress

Town Housing Plans critically analyze the housing needs of residents, identify opportunities to meet those needs, develop strategies for meeting defined gaps and identify action and "leads" to do that work. While Dedham's Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan includes a housing component, it appears to the Master Plan Implementation Committee that this component exists on paper only and has not been used by any Town department to address housing needs.

Housing needs in Dedham that have been identified by the Planning Board, Livable Dedham, and the Master Plan Implementation Committee include expanded housing options for Dedham seniors (e.g., downsizing opportunities, over 55 housing developments and expanded assisted living and similar facilities); exploring increased density in the already developed Legacy Place area and in areas adjacent to the Dedham Corporate train stop; and providing affordable housing options for Dedham residents.

A housing plan with a thorough needs assessment, strategies to address identified needs, and clearly defined responsibilities for specific actions would help Dedham determine what actions it wants to take to address these housing needs in a way that it best for Dedham.

The Committee also notes that the percentage of affordable housing units in Dedham continues to decrease to just above 10%. When we go below 10% outside developers may once again choose to use the state's "40B" law to sidestep local development rules and build large housing complexes – multi family or single-family - in Dedham.

While the Planning Board requires that multi-unit developments include affordable housing units, that action alone will not prevent future 40B projects. A Housing Plan can ensure that the multiple and varied housing needs of our residents - families with modest incomes, people with special needs, and senior households - are addressed in a way that fits with our Town's character.

In 2016, at the direction of the Planning Director, a group of University Masters in Public Administration students at Northeastern University prepared a Housing Production Plan which serves as a first step to completing this initiative. To advance this item further, the Town would need to do modeling based on geographic areas, density, and types of housing. This modeling could lead to zoning by-law and other changes to encourage the type of development the Town desires.

Chapter 9: Economic Development

9.1: Create an Economic Development Vision and Plan

Status: In progress

In April 2013, Dedham and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) collaborated to develop an interactive planning charrette in the East Dedham area to determine how the community viewed the strengths and challenges of the area, and how to best complement or address them. Based on this process, the Town's Economic Development Department proposed that East Dedham's economic development be centered on establishing a creative economy. This strategy focuses on encouraging the area to support a growing arts community which can be a catalyst for continued economic growth. The Town has taken several steps toward meeting this objective, including partnering with the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center and establishing an Arts Overlay Zoning District.

In 2013, the Town leased the former Avery School building to the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center (MBACC), a newly formed non-profit organization, to establish an anchor for the desired creative economy. In Spring 2012 Town Meeting had voted to empower the Town to engage in an unconventional lease with the MBACC through which MBACC would take on a bulk of the operational and maintenance responsibilities for the building in exchange for reduced rent.

The MBACC has created studio space for visual and performing artists, offers performance space for local and national performing groups, and has raised significant funds through public and private grants. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has granted the organization over \$400,000 - \$210,000 in the form of a 1-1 matching grant to install a new heating system, and \$200,000 toward program expansion and operation. These grants have allowed MBACC to significantly improve the building infrastructure at great benefit to the Town, including installation of a new heating system, roofing repairs, plumbing and bathroom renovations.

In addition to making building improvements, MBACC has connected residents of Dedham to cultural resources within Dedham and around the region. The organization has served the community by offering art classes for all ages, community meeting space, free and low-cost cultural events, and twice yearly Open Studio events which allow visitors to engage in hands on activities and meet artists where they work. MBACC has also promoted Dedham as an arts destination for the region to spark continued economic development in East Dedham. Open Studios, gallery exhibits, and similar events have attracted hundreds of visitors from outside Dedham. MBACC is currently renovating a portion of the building to open a restaurant which would be a welcome addition to the neighborhood and likely encourage further investment in East Dedham.

The group has also partnered with civic and corporate groups, as well as Eagle Scouts and Girl Scouts, to make improvements to the open space surrounding the Art Center. There is a park for passive recreation behind the building in the site of the former playground. They've also built an accessible trail in the wooded area behind the building which takes visitors to the Mother Brook.

Plans include a boat launch and a pottery studio.

In 2014, Town Meeting adopted an Arts Overlay Zoning District for East Dedham, which has been very successful in helping to convert several buildings into housing units, studio spaces, and art galleries, as well as many other uses. The Arts Overlay District provides incentives for property development and redevelopment that will cater to uses consistent with an arts and creative economy.

The Economic Development Department intends to replicate the plan-making process used in East Dedham and ideas of the creative economy plan in other areas of town. A similar process of community engagement has been used to develop options for encouraging redevelopment of the Transit Oriented Development area identified surrounding the Dedham Corporate MBTA commuter rail station. (See Section 3.4 for more details.) In Spring, 2017, a Dedham Square Planning Study will begin, with the objective of establishing an economic vision for the central business district as well as design and planning guidelines. Similar projects are budgeted to examine the Allied Drive area in 2017 and MBTA Readville acreage, Route 1 Corridor and Gateways, and the opportunity for Historical Designation of the Mother Brook in 2018.

While these efforts have targeted specific economic districts, Dedham would benefit from a town-wide strategic economic development plan. This would allow the Town to develop a holistic approach to commercial development and marketing. The 2020 Master Plan should investigate the benefits of such an approach and can draw on the experience of neighboring towns, such as Natick, who have completed this process.

9.2: Conduct Site Evaluations for Priority Sites Identified in The Economic Development Vision and Plan

Status: In progress

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 43D provides a tool for promoting targeted economic and housing development with priority access to relevant grants, expedited permitting processes, and increased visibility to developers. To date, two Priority Development Sites have been designated under MGL 43D: Keystone Lot in 2008; and 180 Rustcraft Road in 2010.

The Town had pursued building a new municipal campus at the Rustcraft Road site, but citizen feedback indicated that residents preferred to keep municipal functions closer to their existing location. With Town Meeting approval, the Town re-acquired the former Ames Schoolhouse on Washington Street in Dedham Square. Renovations of the building will be complete in Fall 2017 to serve as a combined Town Hall and Senior Center Complex.

Site evaluations were completed for the following sites, to consider options, best uses, and potential marketing plans for each site:

Keystone Lot

- In the Urban Land Institute’s Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study, the rejuvenation of the Keystone lot was identified as being essential to the revitalization of the square and the downtown. Measuring approximately 63,000 square feet (1.45 acres) and situated between Route 1 and the business district, the lot provides Route 1 commuters with a physical and visual gateway into the downtown.
- Redevelopment of the Keystone property would allow the physical boundary between it and the business district to be completed in a manner that is complementary to economic revitalization in the downtown. This plan however does require that alternative location(s) be established for municipal employees and visitors to the downtown area, as the 138 parking spaces in this lot are currently utilized daily to meet these parking needs.

180 Rustcraft Road parcel

- In 2015, General Dynamics leased the 136,000-square-foot space from 100-180 Rustcraft Road and now employs roughly 400 people at this location. Upon moving into this site, the company also erected an additional building. Recent building improvements have raised the assessed value of the building by approximately 50%, providing additional commercial revenue to town which helps decrease the tax burden on residents.

The Town is now in a position where there are more opportunities for redevelopment than new development. In 2017 and 2018, several of these areas will be studied including Dedham Square, Wigwam Pond, Allied Drive, and the MBTA Readville Parcel (as noted in sections 3.4 and 9.1).

9.3: Investigate Additional Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites

Status: No action

Dedham designated the Town’s first 43D Priority Development Site (PDS), the Keystone Lot, in 2008, and installed new permitting software to help expedite the permitting process. In 2010, a second PDS, 180 Rustcraft Road, was designated (see Action 9.2). Dedham’s permitting process now exceeds the 43D program’s standards for expediting priority development. While Dedham should continue to consider priority sites for development, doing so within the 43D program may not have any advantages over actively planning within the existing town process. Further, given the types of parcels available in Dedham, this tool may not be of great use going forward. Dedham has over 8,000 parcels, but very few (less than one percent) are at least two acres large, the type usually targeted by this development tool.

9.4: Encourage Business Owners in Neighborhood Commercial Areas to Organize

Status: In progress

Dedham has seen firsthand that partnering with community groups can help spur economic development and infrastructure improvements. Within commercial areas, community groups that include business owners have been effective in working with the Town to ensure improvements meet the needs of a given area and are implemented efficiently and effectively.

An example is the Dedham Square Improvement Project, a six-million dollar traffic and safety improvement project in Dedham Square completed in 2014. The involvement of Dedham Square Circle (DSC), a non-profit organization representing residents, property owners and business owners, delivered valuable resources during the planning and implementation of the project. DSC provided critical input from merchants and residents to ensure planning for the project represented the needs of these stakeholder groups. DSC also helped influence public opinion such that Town Meeting approved a \$4.8 million investment in the project, and aided the Town in gaining grants from the state to fund portions of the project. Having the active involvement of DSC also meant merchants needs were represented during construction, and the Town collaborated with the group in advertising and publicity programs to help insure the project would ultimately spur increased economic development in the Dedham Square Commercial District. In the brief period since completion of the DSIP, multiple new shops and restaurants have opened and several parcels have been redeveloped, suggesting that the project did provide an economic stimulus as intended.

More recently, the idea of sparking economic development in East Dedham around the concept of the creative economy has begun to take hold. The procurement of similar partnerships will continue to be vital for the growth of Dedham's creative economy. The East Dedham Revitalization Committee and Mother Brook Community Group should play a role in engaging merchants to be an active part of the process of driving infrastructure and economic improvements.

Several commercial areas have natural alliances with existing community groups, such as East Dedham with the Mother Brook Community Group, Oakdale Square with the Oakdale Square Alliance, the Manor with the Manor Neighborhood Group, and Dedham Square with the Dedham Square Circle. However, in some commercial areas, such as along Bridge Street, merchants do not have an existing partnership and would benefit from coalescing to have a greater voice into town planning decisions. The Town's approach has been to allow critical mass to rise so groups form on their own, rather than being organized by town officials. However, the Economic Development Department is exploring mechanisms for the Town to provide greater support to community groups once they do form, such as district management approaches such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). A BID is a public/private partnership in which property and business owners elect to contribute to the maintenance, development and promotion of their commercial district, with the commitment that the Town does the same. The use of this type of tool would enable fiscal support for activities performed by neighborhood organizations. (For more information on community groups, see Section 10.6.)

9.5: Participate in Marketing Strategies for Key Development Sites

Status: No action

In FY 2014, Dedham's Economic Development Director submitted a budget request of \$5,000 to the Finance Committee to fund a priority development site marketing strategy. This proposal was not funded. The 2020 Master Plan should revisit this goal and consider reframing marketing efforts as a function to be improved in all ongoing operations rather than as a discrete project.

9.6: Consider Using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreements to Support Business Development

Status: In progress

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public financing method that can be used to subsidize infrastructure and redevelopment projects. TIF is a mechanism by which municipalities can encourage economic development by designating projects in which future property tax revenue would be diverted or exempted according to a given time table.

In 2014 Dedham signed a TIF agreement with MS Walker to encourage redevelopment of 110 Meadow Road. Under this agreement, MS Walker is fully exempt from real estate property taxes for the first 5 years and partly exempt for the following ten years; after 15 years they would be required to pay 100% of assessed real estate taxes.

Each Economic Opportunity Area and TIF agreement requires approval by the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC). In addition to local tax relief, the TIF provides a five percent Investment Tax Credit and a ten percent Abandoned Building Tax Deduction, as well as eligibility for predevelopment and/or Brownfields financing. Dedham is a part of the Quincy Economic Target Area.

A TIF might be an incentive for redevelopment in other areas of Dedham going forward, including for mixed-use or housing development. The Economic Development Department continues to consider this tool when consulting with potential developers.

9.7 Undertake a Comprehensive Appraisal of Permitting Procedures, Marketing and Promotion

Status: In progress

The Planning Director and Economic Development Director meet with commercial brokers and property owners on a regular basis to discuss redevelopment opportunities that are consistent with community needs. Part these discussions includes needs from a market perspective to see

what the Town can do to facilitate redevelopment. Further, evaluation of future trends are discussed to gauge where the Town might fit in.

The former Economic Development Director developed marketing and promotion materials for the Town. However, without consensus on the marketing approach and materials they were not adopted none of it was brought forward. The current Economic Development Director works with other communities to promote the Town and the region.

The 2020 Master Plan should consider whether this objective could be combined with the effort to update zoning by-laws and the sign code, taking a comprehensive approach to make zoning, permitting, marketing and promotion processes more transparent, predictable, and standardized.

Chapter 10: Community Services & Facilities

10.1: Continue to Develop and Institute a Capital Improvements Plan Process

Status: In progress

One of the most significant proposals in the 2009 Master Plan was the recommendation that the Town identify a dedicated source of revenue for capital projects. In 2009 the Commonwealth empowered towns and cities to establish a local Hotel and Meals Tax; Dedham Town Meeting voted to levy such as tax beginning in 2009. Dedham's Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting decided to commit the revenue from those taxes to capital projects with the establishment of the Special Purpose Stabilization Fund, called the Robin Reyes fund in honor of a beloved former town Treasurer. Revenue from the Hotel and Meals Tax provides approximately two million dollars a year for the Special Purpose Stabilization Fund. These funds are used exclusively to pay debt service for capital improvement (sometimes called "bricks and mortar") projects in town.

Dedham has adopted a debt management policy, an investment strategy, and a capital policy and process that includes a clear flow chart showing how capital planning decisions are made. The Building, Planning and Construction Committee, the Capital Expenditure Committee, the School Building Rehabilitation committee, and the Mitigation Funds Committee all make recommendations to the Finance Committee on different aspects of capital project development and funding.

For FY2015, the Capital Expenditure Committee recommended to the Finance Committee that \$7.09 million be funded in capital projects, including \$2.2m for roads and sidewalks and \$1.6m in sewer improvements. A substantial portion of capital funding came from the hotel and meal tax.

Noting significant recent progress in formalizing capital planning, the 2009 Master Plan recommended additional steps to further systematize the capital planning process in a 5-6 year plan document. These steps include the following:

1. Evaluate a condition of all municipal assets – buildings, roads, sewers, playgrounds, fields, and parks and recreation facilities – and analyze both their capital needs and the relationship between these needs and departmental operations;
2. Consider the basic necessity of each public facility, possibilities for combining functions with other facilities, and possibilities for disposition of surplus assets;
3. Set capital improvement priorities and address the maintenance of town facilities;
4. Include a financing plan that includes tax revenues, enterprise funds, and outside resources such as grants or other non-local revenues, and incorporates the Town's long range approach to financing capital improvements; and
5. Articulate the Town's fiscal policies; embrace clear, locally accepted criteria for funding projects from capital reserves or bond authorizations; report the estimated fiscal (tax rate) impact of the financing plan; and apply generally accepted debt evaluation criteria to the financing plan so that local officials and Town Meeting members can make informed decisions.

10.2: Create A Full-Time Facilities Manager Position for All Town and School Properties

Status: Done

In March 2014, the Town changed the Facilities Manager position from part-time to full-time status. This municipal employee is charged with the responsibility of overseeing all municipal properties and implementing the Town's ongoing maintenance plan.

The Facilities Manager collaborates with department heads, architects and engineers to prioritize maintenance needs, maintain and upgrade buildings, and to supervise construction projects. The Facilities Manager is also responsible for supervising Facilities and Maintenance Department support staff, including, an assistant manager, plumber, electrician, and carpenter. The expanded role has included oversight of all facilities, town and school, and has reduced costs and improved efficiency in responding to the short- and long- term needs of town and school buildings.

The Facilities Manager is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the following properties:

- Central Fire Department
- East Dedham Fire Station
- Department of Public Works and Engineering Building
- Department of Public Works Garage
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Dolan Center
- Town Pool Hall
- Parks and Recreation Garage
- Dedham Public Library
- Main Library
- Endicott Estate
- All school facilities

10.3: Develop Asset Management Policies to Dispose of Surplus Municipal Property

Status: No action

This item has yet to be completed.

The Board of Selectmen, in consultation with the Assessor, department heads, and boards and commissions, will be responsible for crafting surplus disposal policies. The Planning Board and Housing Partnership Committee is expected to identify municipal owned properties, including tax title properties, that are suitable for (re)development to meet housing needs. While these policies have not been drafted, the Financial Management Policy group has begun meeting again to update the existing policies and consider new ones.

10.4: Continue to Fund Capital Improvements Through Responsible Assumption of Non-Exempt Debt

Status: Done

Historically, Dedham has avoided carrying non-exempt debt. Unfortunately, however, this policy resulted in the deferred maintenance and replacement of town facilities, the consequences of which have proven to be costly over time.

More recently, Dedham has worked to responsibly increase its amount of non-exempt debt, to ensure that necessary capital improvements are funded. In doing so, Dedham's bond rating was elevated to "AAA" in 2013, which in turn allows the Town to borrow money at lower interest rates.

The Town now holds annual strategic planning meetings, at which capital project proposals can be planned, coordinated, and prioritized. The Long-Range Forecasting tool tracks debt retirement over the next 10 years, allowing town officials to understand when funds will be freed up for additional capital spending. The coordination of project planning (through the CIP process; see Action 9) with project financing has led to greater efficiencies in deployment of scarce town resources.

10.5: Continue to Seek Grants to Support Capital Improvements on A Project-By-Project Basis

Status: In progress

To date, grant funding has yet to be secured for the Town's most recent capital improvement projects. These projects involve the Municipal Campus, including the renovation of the former Ames School building to house Town Hall and a Senior Center, a project which will be completed in Fall 2017. The next phase of this project will be a Dedham Public Safety Building housing the Police Station and Main Fire Station on Bryant Street. The Town proposes to fund this project through the issuance of municipal bonds. The Town will repay the bonds using the funds accumulated in the Robin Reyes Special Purpose Stabilization Fund.

10.6: Encourage an Association of Dedham's Neighborhood and Civic Organizations

Status: No action

Prior to 2009, Citizens for Dedham Neighborhood Alliance initiated the process for development of a master plan and encouraged the formation of neighborhood groups around the Town. While that organization has gone dormant, several neighborhood groups have formed across the Town.

Achieving full involvement of all neighborhoods remains an objective. Neighborhood and civic groups strengthen democracy and governance, resulting in a more informed and inclusive community. They serve as advocates and communication channels for residents, increase government transparency, and assure community involvement in decisions that impact the neighborhoods. Neighborhood and civic organizations also provide leverage for the Town by supplementing staff resources with volunteer labor. In recent years, such groups have helped with town beautification efforts, marketing efforts for economic development, attaining grants for town infrastructure improvements.

While the Town encourages the formation of neighborhood groups, no actions have been taken to create collaboration between neighborhoods and between neighborhood and other civic organizations. The neighborhood groups that have formed have increased a sense of community and improved the quality of life in those neighborhoods:

Mother Brook Community Group

The Mother Brook Community Group (MBCG) serves as the East Dedham neighborhood association. It meets roughly once a month to connect and advocate for all the neighborhoods connected by Mother Brook, the oldest man-made waterway in America and a true gem of the entire town. MBCG was a key supporter of the creation of the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center and sponsored the articles at Town Meeting that created the East Dedham Revitalization Committee and the Mother Brook 375th Anniversary committee, among others. MBCG regularly sponsors cleanups and other initiatives to improve Mother Brook and the entire East Dedham community. A representative of MBCG has a formal seat on the East Dedham Revitalization Committee, ensuring the MBCG has a voice in developing strategies and projects which will impact East Dedham.

Manor Neighborhood Association

The Manor Neighborhood Association (MNA) started out as a neighborhood watch group working with the Dedham Police Department to resolve an ongoing crime issue in the neighborhood. Once the crime issue was resolved, the group voted to transition to a community organization to improve the quality of life within the Manor Neighborhood. The MNA is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit providing opportunities for new and longtime residents to meet at social events, meet local elected officials, and provide volunteer opportunities, while continuing to be vigilant on crime prevention and improving quality of life in the neighborhood.

Oakdale Square Alliance

The Oakdale Square Alliance (OSA) was formed in the spring of 2010 to promote, enhance, strengthen and improve the economic vitality, visual appearance and character, cultural and historic resources, accessibility, and overall quality of life in Oakdale Square. The group strives to promote preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic commercial, civic, and residential buildings in and around Oakdale Square and to support, promote, and encourage the utilization of Oakdale Square as an economic, social and historical center in Dedham.

OSA hosts neighborhood clean ups twice a year, sponsors an annual community holiday event, and partakes in National Night Out (a nationwide program that promotes public safety) with the Dedham Police Department. In addition, OSA has played a prominent role in fundraising and completing a mural celebrating the neighborhood, and works with Dedham Civic Pride to beautify the Square with flower containers and benches.

Dedham Square Circle

The Dedham Square Circle has a mission of invigorating Dedham Square by increasing its economic prosperity, promoting its rich history, arts and culture, and aesthetically enhancing the Square's physical environment to benefit the entire community. While it is not explicitly a neighborhood association, the organization does encourage involvement of Dedham Square residents as well as merchants in their community events and economic development efforts.

Riverdale Neighborhood Association

The purpose of Riverdale Neighborhood Association is to open channels of communication, to share information and concerns of residents and business owners in hopes of strengthening the Riverdale Community. Riverdale Neighborhood Association participates in the Dedham Police National Night Out program, and has plans to expand programming and communication going forward.

With the recently redesigned town website, there may be increased opportunities to facilitate collaboration between neighborhood groups. The Town is hoping to enable this in part by including a civic calendar on the Town website.

10.7 Continue to Scope the Town's Funding Needs, Match with Prospective Grants, and Dedicate Staff Time to Pursue Them.

Status: No action

Some town departments have more experienced staff than others when it comes to seeking out and applying for grant funds, whether through local banks, private donations, or state and federal grants. Grant applications are a lengthy process and require setting aside time outside of the daily required work load to research, seek letters of support and apply. Departments often do not have the resources to support staff to dedicate time for the grant application process. Nevertheless, departments should be encouraged to work collaboratively and regionally on grant processes, and to pool expertise and knowledge.

Dedham's public facilities needs do not have to be supported entirely by the Town budget. External funding sources, namely grants, are available to fund a variety of facilities needs, although they may be competitive. One reason the Town has benefitted from partnering with neighborhood and merchant groups is that these groups have helped raise funds and secure grants for town projects, such as a recent grant toward improving recreation space and access at Wigwam Pond.

Chapter 11: Governance

11.1: Review the Dedham Town Charter

Status: Done

As a preliminary step in considering issues of governance, the Board of Selectmen appointed the Charter Advisory Committee (CAC) in March of 2012. The CAC met over a period of 18 months and made its final report to the Selectmen in August of 2013, before the Committee was dissolved in the following month. The recommendations that the Selectmen moved forward were voted on at the November 18, 2013 Special Town Meeting. Those amendments were then sent to the Mass. House and Senate and were in final committee the week of March 17, 2014. They were then added to the April 12, 2014 Annual Town Election for consideration by Dedham voters.

At the April 12, 2014 Town Election, the following substantive changes to the charter were made:

- Stipends for elected officials were eliminated;
- The Town Administrator position will become a Town Manager position; and
- The Charter and by-laws shall be required to be reviewed at five-year intervals.

11.2 Improve the Development Review Process and Issues Surrounding Permitting in General

Status: In progress

The Town Manager created a review process in 2016 for all relevant town department heads to meet to review permits in a timely and complete manner. This process is currently coordinated by the Assistant Town Manager. This process needs to be operated with more urgency and transparency to improve permit approval time and speed the development process of applicants.

Past attempts to purchase and integrate new software to automate the permit process and make it accessible via the internet have been incomplete. To rectify this, the Town Manager in 2017 is attempting to purchase and install new software which will automate the permit process, including permits and payments. This process will also link permits and land use requests to the Town's GIS system. If approved by Town Meeting, the installation of this software and operating system will be under the supervision of the Town Finance Director and the Assistant Town Manager during 2017-18.

The Town Manager should be responsible for collecting and publishing data about the amount of time it takes to receive, review and complete permit requests as a baseline for quality improvement. Other improvements to the review and permitting processes have been advanced through the completion of recommendations 3.5 and 4.1.

11.3: Improve Representative Town Meeting by Instituting a Training Program for Town Meeting Members

Status: Done

A training for new Town Meeting members takes place each year between the annual election in April and Town Meeting in May. The Town Moderator conducts the training sessions with help from the Town Manager, who explains the budget process, and the Assistant Moderator who explains procedural rules. The training also includes information about the history and process of Representative Town Meeting.

These trainings have been an effective way to introduce new members to the nuances of the Town Meeting process and procedures. It is likely they help to demystify the process and encourage people to run for Town Meeting seats. While the results have not been measured specifically, the number of people running for Town Meeting seats has seen an uptick in the past few years.

11.4: Undertake Strategic Effort to Improve the Town Website

Status: Done

The Town commissioned a comprehensive IT study in 2015 to determine needs of the website as well as other technology needs and challenges. In 2016, the Town Economic Director led a task force to redesign and rebuild the website. The task force gathered input from the community via a town-wide survey and public meetings. At the end of 2016 a new website was launched which has been designed to better meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

As a part of the process the site was built to make the operation and updating of the website sustainable for town staff. Staffing procedures and expectations have been strengthened to ensure it is regularly updated to serve as a tool for civic engagement.

11.5: Have A “Point Person” Within Town Hall to Communicate with Neighborhood and Civic Groups, Maintain Contact Information, and Post Information About Groups on the Town Website

Status: No action

No special “point person” to communicate with Neighborhood and other Civic Groups has been hired or designated as of April 2017, and this has not been adopted as a priority by the Town Manager or the Board of Selectmen.

The Town website has been redesigned to include more information about civic groups and activities, and has the potential to provide a town-wide civic calendar. Without a specific point

person at Town Hall with responsibility for interacting with civic and neighborhood groups, though, it is unlikely this objective will be met in a systematic and comprehensive manner. This is unfortunate, since Dedham has seen an uptick in engagement from new and existing civic organizations which contribute to quality of life and often provide leverage to town staff, boards and committees.

An example is the recent formation of Livable Dedham, a volunteer group of Dedham residents and employees dedicated to making the Town a great place to live, work, play, learn & enjoy for all ages. They ascribe their work to the tenets of the World Health Organization's "age-friendly environments." (<http://www.who.int/ageing/age-friendly-environments/en/>)

In spring 2016 Livable Dedham administered a survey of Dedham residents to gather opinions of the current "livability" of Dedham. The survey examined how effective Dedham's current characteristics are in supporting residents who want to remain in Dedham actively aging in place; 71% of respondents indicated they desire to remain in Dedham as they age. Data from this survey is incorporated through this update and will help to inform the work of the 2020 Master Plan. The rich data collected by this civic organization, and its potential to inform town planning, is a good example of how the Town would benefit from taking a more comprehensive, proactive approach to working with civic and community groups.

11.6: Annually Review the Number of Boards and Committees in Town Government, Determine Their Continued Relevance, and Disband Committees That Are No Longer Needed

Status: No action

While the Town Manager or Board of Selectmen could initiate action to create, combine or discontinue town committees, there is no regular or annual process in place to do so.

Chapter 12: New Initiatives and Priorities

The 2009 Master Plan included an implementation plan to meet the overall goals listed in Chapter 1 of this document. Since that time, several additional action steps have been identified and prioritized. Some of these have resulted from the work of town boards and committees, others are a result of changing information available to the Town or issues which have emerged as being of high priority for towns and cities in the Commonwealth. These new initiatives and priorities are discussed in this chapter.

An advantage of this chapter is that by pulling these issues out of their topic area, it is easier to see the interconnections between many of the challenges and opportunities facing the Town. Connecting open space impacts recreation and quality of life issues, and it also has the potential to address transportation needs. Changing demographics impact not only housing policy, but also things like parks and recreation needs, transportation, school enrollment, facilities needed, and Library demands. The issues outlined in this chapter help illuminate how important it is that all town departments, committees, and boards consider their role in meeting the objectives of the Master Plan.

12.1 Pass the Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. It's been in place in the Commonwealth since 2000 and 172 municipalities had adopted the CPA as of March 2017. Monies are raised locally through a surcharge of not more than 3% and receive state matching grants toward approved uses. In 2008, Dedham Town Meeting turned down a proposal to adopt CPA. The 2009 Master Plan encouraged the Town to continue to pursue adoption of CPA given the large number of challenges facing the Town which would qualify for CPA grants. However, it was voted down again by Town Meeting in 2011.

In 2016 a grassroots citizens group calling themselves Preserve Dedham formed to campaign for CPA adoption. Their research showed Dedham's failure to adopt CPA in 2008 had cost the Town millions of dollars in funding for projects the Town completed in the interim. In November of 2016, Town Meeting passed an article to place CPA on the town-wide ballot. On April 8, 2017, Dedham residents voted **not** to adopt a 1% surcharge on the annual property tax levy to fund CPA, despite exceptions for: 1) property owned and occupied by a person who would qualify for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing, 2) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable residential parcel, and 3) \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of commercial or industrial property.

Opposition to CPA successfully coalesced around a "no new taxes" message. The Master Plan Implementation Committee continues to support adoption of CPA as a tool to increase the town's ability to fund projects, but the committee recognizes the need to integrate the case for CPA with a broader discussion of the Town's taxation and spending policies. Programs that were to rely upon CPA funding – like affordable housing – will need to find alternative funding sources.

12.2: Improve Cycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure to Support All Forms of Transportation

The 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan highlighted citizen interest in reducing carbon footprints. One key component of reduction of carbon emissions is providing the infrastructure for alternative means of transport. While alternative transit is implicitly part of many of the Action items of the 2009 Master Plan, there was no explicit action item for expanding facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. (See Actions 7.1, 3.4, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.3, and 7.5)

Three projects illustrate the potential benefits of this item:

- The Capital Planning Committee has recommended funding for a new sidewalk on Rustcraft Road. New sidewalks will make this area more attractive to redevelopment, connect transit with business and shopping areas, and will greatly increase pedestrian and cyclist safety along this busy street. The Town recently secured a state grant to build these sidewalks with construction anticipated to be complete in 2021.
- “Sharrows” are pavement markings to guide cyclists and drivers on streets that are too narrow for separate bike lanes. The markings show where cyclists should ride to avoid being hit by drivers opening their vehicle doors. The pavement markings also alert motorists to watch for cyclists. Sharrows were painted on Sprague Street in fall 2013. Sprague Street is located south of town center and is also near railway tracks and the Neponset River. This makes it a viable location for bike routes, especially if the bike lane was repainted on East Street from the East Street Rotary to the 128 Rotary. However, failure to maintain these markings has resulted in the disappearance of this bike lane, an important reminder that bike lanes should be included as part of regular road maintenance.
- Improvements to Dedham Square have made the area safer and more pleasant for cyclists and pedestrians. A traffic signal with a pedestrian phase, wider sidewalks, narrower street crossings, bike racks, and restructured parking all make Dedham Square more convenient and attractive for visitors to the area. The Town continues to look for opportunities to decrease traffic congestion and encourage alternative transportation in this area. With the design of the Public Safety Building, the Town will consider ways to improve the safety of the intersection at Bryant and Washington Streets which remains quite dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Some of Dedham’s Public Schools have taken limited part in the [Safe Routes to Schools](#) program. Currently, the Town lacks a safe and comprehensive system of sidewalks. This is magnified by the fact that Providence Highway bisects natural walking and bike routes for many students who attend the Middle School, High School, and Avery Elementary School. Consequently, Dedham would benefit from a significant effort at improving safety for students who walk and bike to school, including full participation in the Safe Routes to School program. This is the type of project that could benefit from collaboration across boards such as the School Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, and Parks and Recreation Commission along with the Department of Public Works.

12.3 Implement a Complete Streets Program to Increase Safety and Accessibility for All Modes of Transportation in Dedham.

The 2009 Master Plan approaches Dedham's transportation needs in a fragmented and uncoordinated way, with separate descriptions for motor vehicles, buses, bicycles and pedestrians. Since 2009, many Massachusetts towns, including Dedham, are moving to adopt a coordinated approach and the Commonwealth has a mechanism to do that: The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has adopted Complete Streets, a national program which offers grants to communities working to create "complete streets", defined as a street that "provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes -- walking, biking, transit and vehicles -- for people of all ages and abilities."

Dedham's Department of Public Works is working with the Board of Selectmen to have the Town of Dedham adopt a "complete streets" policy, which would include not only motor vehicles but also pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation access in the planning, design and construction or renovation of streets, parks, sidewalks and parking lots. Expanding the definition of transportation to include pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation will also provide the Planning Director and Planning Board with useful guidelines and tools for ensuring new development is safe and accessible for people using all forms of transportation.

Massachusetts cities and towns can apply for two streams of funding: Technical assistance to develop a prioritization plan (up to \$50,000), and construction funding (up to \$400,000, not including design as an expense). The Director of Public Works hopes to use complete streets funding to extend and add sidewalks in Dedham to improve accessibility and safety.

12.4: Continue to Research and Design New Zoning Initiatives

Ensuring that new zoning initiatives adopted by Dedham are appropriate and capable of producing intended outcomes, requires significant work in terms of research and design. Sometimes this work is done by town staff, other times it is completed by interns from academic institutions or by paid consultants. Going forward, consideration of environmental impacts of design standards should be incorporated in any new initiative, with a lens for Low Impact Development, Stormwater runoff and infiltration, and best management practices to reduce heat island effect.

Based on the findings of a housing study prepared by Northeastern University, an intern is currently working on language for a by-law to replace the existing Planned Residential District (PRD) with a new Flexible Residential District that will contain provisions for cluster development and will allow a range of housing types.

A draft report on parking requirements has been completed by a consulting engineering firm. The report makes recommendations as to the number of spaces that should be required in relation to particular land uses, and provides recommended design guidelines. The Planning Director is preparing revisions to the zoning by-law on parking which will be ready for consideration by

Planning Board in time to place the parking requirement zoning revisions on the warrant for the November 2017 Town Meeting.

Spurred by public concerns raised by some Dedham residents in 2015 and 2016 questioning the design, scale and purpose of multi-use, multi-story buildings in and near the Square, the Planning Board began a process to review and change design and development rules for Dedham Square in January 2017. The Town has allocated funds for this Dedham Square Planning Study which will include a review of zoning by-laws as well as establish design guidelines and economic development strategies. The process is expected to be complete in 2018.

12.5: Develop an Arts Overlay District and the Mother Brook Arts Community Center

The Arts Overlay District (AOD) is a pragmatic pro-growth decision that was informed by the rise of Open Studio events across the Commonwealth and a demonstrated interest within Dedham. Established to preserve and enhance arts-related uses and an emerging creative economy, the AOD in East Dedham was proposed and adopted at Town Meeting in May 2014. Development of this nature is designed to encourage creative professionals to live and work in East Dedham, helping to facilitate a vibrant mixed-use village environment.

The Arts Overlay District was initiated with the goal of establishing East Dedham as a pedestrian-friendly center for retail, business, housing, and office uses. Development in the AOD is governed by zoning by-laws, except in the specific case of arts-related use developments. For projects incorporating arts-related uses, exceptions may be permitted.

Keeping in line with Dedham's commitment to historic preservation, the Avery Elementary School, which was built in 1921 and retired in 2012, was repurposed to be the home of the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center, a non-profit organization. (See section 9.1 for more details.)

12.6: Develop A Project Review Committee

The Project Review Committee was created to expand on the 2009 recommendation of developing an environmental checklist to assist with the review process for proposed projects. (See Section 6.1)

The Project Review Committee is an informal process designed to help property and business owners navigate the permitting process for development and redevelopment. Within this process, when an applicant is contemplating a development project in the Town, the Town Planner arranges meetings between of the relevant departments prior to filing including the Town Manager's office, Fire Department, Engineering, Building, and Conservation. This way representatives from each department can advise on issues that the applicant should anticipate, and outline steps necessary to get through the permitting process. In addition to streamlining the

permitting and approval processes, this collaborative approach increases collaboration between the various departments by giving departments better insight into one another.

12.7 Engage in a Process of Continuous Improvement for Town Boards and Committees

Like most towns, elected and appointed members of town boards and committees are responsible for a significant portion of Dedham's governance. These positions are volunteer ones, and many do not require specific training or experience. While these boards and committees have a great deal of responsibility, many practice without support and structure for their effective functioning. Among boards, there are not consistent practices for things like communicating with the public, taking public comment and soliciting input, attending committee and subcommittee meetings, communicating with other town officials, or orienting new members. Dedham has recently enrolled in a State program called Community Compact which aims to, among other things, incorporate municipal best practices for staff and boards. This is an important step in ensuring Dedham's boards operate effectively. Further areas to explore include:

- Supporting members of town boards and committees by developing clear expectations for meeting attendance and participation, recording requirements (minutes), and communications with public
- Establishing trainings about requirements and practices such as open meeting law compliance, email and communication norms, and decision making processes. The Town has begun holding training sessions on open meeting law for some board members; this program could be expanded to include members of all boards and committees as well as the public
- Publicizing and facilitating access to training information and resources from State and other municipal sources
- Facilitating communication between boards and committees, particularly where projects require interaction with multiple boards
- Establishing expectations and process for annual review of membership and election of officers
- Establishing regular process for reviewing expiration dates of appointed members' terms; consider establishing a standard calendar for appointments of standing committees (i.e. all terms expire in January) to make annual review more practical.

12.8 Increase Civic Engagement by Improving Technology and Communications Processes for Town Departments, Boards and Committees

Technology and Communication norms and expectations have changed faster than practice, making it difficult for towns and cities with constrained resources to keep up. Over the past few years, several highly-charged issues have stressed the communication systems of various departments and boards, increasing demand that the Town take a more proactive approach to engaging the community about important decisions and issues. In the 2016 Livable Dedham

survey, almost half of respondents (49%) expressed dissatisfaction with communication about activities and events in town. The Town has recently taken steps to improve communication, including commissioning a review of IT practice and capability in 2015 and redesigning the Town website in 2016; the Town plans to transition to an on-line payment program in 2018. Additional actions the Town should explore toward meeting this goal are:

- Reviewing standard resident communication mechanisms, format, recipients and content, including but not limited to mailings and meeting notices for all boards and committees and publicizing town events and development projects
- Providing training opportunities for town employees including communication, customer service, and coalition-building
- Establishing clear and consistent process and accountability for meeting postings, minutes, and outreach to public.

12.9 Review Implications of Changing Demographics on Town Services and Departments Including Housing, Transportation, Health, and Parks and Recreation.

Since the 2009 Master Plan, the Town has collected new information about residents' needs based on demographic shifts. These include Professor Bluestone's report from 2013, the Livable Dedham survey of 2016, and information about decreased enrollment in Dedham Public Schools which was presented to Town Meeting in 2016. [See Chapter 2 and Chapter 8 for more details.] Based on these findings, the Master Plan Implementation Committee has identified the following priorities for consideration by the appropriate town staff and board members:

- **Housing**
 - Encourage development and redevelopment of 2-bedroom condominiums and apartments to provide appropriate housing stock for older residents who wish to move out of their houses without leaving Dedham
 - Review of Zoning By-Laws and other planning and economic tools
 - Perform audit of Affordable Housing to determine ratio of affordable housing and make projections for the next 5 years based on demographic data
 - Research opportunities to develop housing near amenities desired by older adults including transportation, shopping, and recreation.
 - Explore options for assisting residents with home modifications that would allow them to age in place.
 - Assess Dedham's supply and demand for housing with services, such as assisted living.
- **Transportation**
 - Continue to review options for improving public transportation, including expanded hours and stops for town bus and/or on-demand system.
 - Review of pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety across town, including major thoroughways and developments such as Legacy Place as well as an assessment of needed repairs and lighting of sidewalks.

- **Parks and recreation**
 - Encourage program development to enable increased recreation and learning opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
 - Encourage open space protection and use to enable increased recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

12.10 Support the Dedham Public Schools to Develop a Comprehensive Master Plan

In 2016, Dedham Town Meeting approved construction of a new Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) to provide facilities for preschool and kindergarten education with a planned opening for the 2018/2019 school year. The new facility will be built at the site of the former Dexter School on Rt. 109, and will replace the current ECEC building which is in severe disrepair.

Public meetings about the ECEC proposal raised several issues for the Town to consider. Research reviewed by the School Building Rehabilitation Committee and Dedham Public Schools (DPS) has revealed that Dedham's enrollment dropped significantly from projections since the last DPS Five-Year [Strategic Plan](#) was completed in 2008. This decline in enrollment raises questions about the Town's ability to support 4 separate elementary schools (Riverdale, Oakdale, Avery and Greenlodge.) Additional concerns were raised at 2016 Town Meeting regarding the physical condition of the Town's older schools: Dedham High, Oakdale, Riverdale and Greenlodge. The 2008 DPS Master Plan recommended that after the ECEC is relocated to Dexter the other schools be renovated/replaced in this order: Oakdale, Riverdale, Greenlodge. While the DPS Master Plan was updated in 2013, this was done without public hearings and with a focus on where to place a new ECEC building. It did not address the question of whether continuing to have a separate, stand-alone PreK and Kindergarten makes sense in the medium- or long-term for the Town or the school system. The 2013 DPS Master Plan also did not include a plan for renovating the remaining school buildings.

The Town remains faced with a decision of how to best utilize and, if appropriate renovate its remaining schools. Dedham has been fortunate to receive assistance from the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the past three school building projects – with MSBA covering about 60% of the costs for the Middle School, 50% of the Avery School, and 32% of the ECEC's total project cost. While this has been a critical source of funding school building improvements, the percentage of MSBA contribution per project has gone down over time for Dedham projects, as it has statewide. In addition, given that MSBA has provided three grants to Dedham over a relatively short period of time (beginning with the new Middle School which opened in 2006), it is unlikely the Town would receive significant support from the MSBA in the next ten years. The lack of certainty in receiving State funding increases the pressure on the Town to develop a Master Plan for the schools that will be financially sustainable.

The School Committee's goals for the 2016-2017 school year include establishing a committee to develop a long-range master plan for the district. The Town should provide funds and support to ensure the School Committee engages in a Master Plan development process that fully

engages all stakeholders. The Master Plan should consider how best to manage infrastructure needs, with consideration of enrollment trends and anticipated demographic shifts, so that it can deliver on the district's goal of striving for educational excellence over the next 10-15 years.

12.11. Examine Ways the Dedham Public Library Can Increase Use by Residents and Innovate to Meet Needs of 21st Century Life

Under the leadership of a new Library Director, the Dedham Public Library is currently undergoing a major revitalization and redesign of its collections, programs, services, and spaces to better serve the community in the modern age. The collections are being upgraded, library learning and community spaces are being redesigned and repurposed, and technology is being integrated throughout the collections and buildings.

These improvements are being done to ensure the Dedham Public Library can provide:

- Freedom of access to information and ideas
- Freedom of inquiry
- Lifelong learning opportunities
- Literacy (early, basic, digital, and specialized literacy) supports across the community

Additionally, the Dedham Public Library is examining ways to provide better access to outstanding public library services across the community. For example, a recent survey administered by the Library revealed that the current hours of operation do not allow for equitable access. Almost half of the Dedham community reported that the limited hours offered by the library were inconvenient and limited their ability to use the library. Working individuals and families were particularly impacted by the limited hours. The Library is examining a variety of options to increase equitable access to services and more complete hours of operation.

12.12 Develop a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

The Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC), the regional planning agency of Metropolitan Boston has stated the following policy objective: "It is critical that each municipality consider climate change adaptation and mitigation given the magnitude of climate change impacts on the environment, developed areas and infrastructure, the economy, and public health in the Boston Metro region." MAPC is drafting a Climate Change Strategy for cities and towns, the working draft of which is available [here](#).

Scientists project changes in climate and weather patterns which will create challenges for Dedham's public health, safety, infrastructure and natural resources including increased temperature during some portions of the year (especially summer); increased extreme weather conditions such as drought, intense storms, intense precipitation (snow or rain), and flooding; and weather that creates more hospitable conditions for insects and pathogens. Recent [studies](#) suggest the Northeast US is even more vulnerable to flooding and sea-level rise, so much so the Mayor of [Boston](#) has recently increased the city's focus on climate change preparation. Several

communities have initiated climate action and climate mitigation plans to ensure an ongoing integration of climate preparedness strategy into daily decisions of planning and building departments, parks and recreation services, health departments, public works, and school districts.

The Environmental Coordinator's role as co-chair of the New England Municipal Sustainability Network (NEMSN) gives the Town access to webinars and other resources for municipalities to address climate change preparedness and sustainability. Fourteen Mayors of Greater Boston have signed a climate change mitigation commitment with a compact that outlines action steps municipalities can take on issues such as transportation, building, energy efficiency, and waste. While the compact is designed for cities, not towns, and is missing some key elements, it could be a useful resource to the Town as Dedham considers how to develop future actions. Given the amount of development currently underway in Dedham, the Town should immediately consider:

- Updating the Town's 2010 Climate Action Plan
- Incorporating climate preparedness strategy into routine building, development, and renovation processes and reviews.
- Investigating renewable energy options for upcoming municipal projects, such as the combined Police/fire safety campus and incorporate a building standard on the level of energy efficiency and sustainability that it will build too, as have many communities. This will save time and money so as not to recreate the wheel each time a new building is built or retrofitted.
- Developing mitigation plans to begin implementing now, such as strategic tree planting to increase number of mature trees for shading at public buildings including around schools and parks.

The Sustainability Committee and the Environmental Coordinator have begun due diligence to establish scope and budget of such a project, which requires professional expertise to be comprehensive.

During the summer of 2017, the Town's Environmental Department will work with a graduate student from the University of New Hampshire to update the Town's greenhouse inventory and Climate Action Plan. The hope is that an updated, comprehensive Climate Action Plan will be completed by the summer of 2018. The Town should incorporate the plan into the workings of each department, ultimately to be integrated at the capital and budget planning level.

12.13 Integrate Sustainability Goals and Practice into the Fabric of the Town

Status: No action

Mainstreaming adaptation of sustainability goals throughout town plans, processes, and functions (i.e. through building codes, land use plans, capital improvement processes, hazard mitigation plans), including working across departments and with the private sector is necessary to create a sustainable community.

Boston can serve as a model for educating residents, business-owners and property owners about their energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. The city has successfully implemented a Building Energy Reporting and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) to help taxpayers save money and conserve energy.

In Dedham, meeting this goal would require a memo from the Town Manager and Finance Committee Chair directing Town and School staff to take actions such as seeking out energy efficient products, purchasing products with a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled material, purchasing vehicles that meet the EPA fuel efficiency standards or hybrid cars, and requiring municipal and private construction contractors to use low emissions vehicles.

12.14 Look for Opportunities to Link Neighborhoods, Shopping Areas, and Open Spaces

Dedham's commercial districts, recreation and open spaces, and residential neighborhoods are linked by roads and serve drivers but remain largely inaccessible for cyclists and pedestrians. The Town also has a major thoroughfare (Route 1/Providence Highway) bisecting it without a single safe pedestrian crossing point. Department heads, the Town Manager, and the Board of Selectmen should seek opportunities to make it as easy for pedestrians and cyclists to go from their home to a supermarket, ball field or school as it already is for a driver to do so. This goal, which has emerged as a central theme of this Master Plan Update, needs to become embedded in the Town's priorities and integrated into every day actions and decisions. In Dedham, there are many opportunities to knit the Town back together by making it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to safely traverse from one neighborhood to another. They include:

- providing safe crosswalks or even bridges across Route 1/Providence Highway
- extending and expanding sidewalks for recreation and safety, including creating a safe way to access Cutler Park by extending the sidewalk on Needham Street which currently ends at the intersection of Rosemary Road
- adding additional and reinforcing existing crosswalks
- retrofitting Legacy Place to provide sidewalk access along Legacy Boulevard
- creating safe and scenic sidewalk/path from Marine Rotary to West Roxbury on Charles River side.

This objective should apply to private sector developments as well as municipal projects, and in some cases (like Legacy Place, Dedham Mall, and Dedham Plaza) include retrofitting existing private sector developments. Several towns across the Commonwealth that have implemented similar plans and could be used as a resource.

12.15 Institute a Gateways Initiative to Improve Entrances to Town

One of the challenges of urban areas is that towns often do not have clear or natural boundaries. This is true in Dedham as well, particularly along multiples lengths of the border with Boston.

Thoughtful planning of “Gateways” is a strategy for creating or reinforcing a town’s identity and sense of place. Gateway planning also helps signal a transition to drivers, alerting them to residential neighborhoods and encouraging them to reduce speed and watch for pedestrians and cyclists. Given the number of high speed arteries surrounding and dividing the Town, Dedham has a particularly critical need to create clear transitions for drivers entering the Town. The Gateways Initiative is an ongoing project to evaluate each gateway to town on an individual basis.

In 2014, Dedham Square Circle, Dedham Civic Pride, and the Town of Dedham collaborated to enhance the gateway to Dedham Square with a marker at the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Providence Highway to highlight the entrance into Historic Dedham Square. Additional “Welcome to Dedham” markers have been placed at other key gateways.

While projects to create a “Gateway to the Manor” project were rejected by Town Meeting in 2014 and 2015, the Town continues to work on improving safety on Sprague street and at MacDonald square near the entrance to the Manor Neighborhood. An improvement plan includes new and reconstructed sidewalks and ramps, crosswalks, and granite curbing. These improvements would reduce vehicle confusion and increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. While it is no longer considered a “gateway” project, this improvement plan would help delineate the Manor residential neighborhood from the commercial buildings nearby and would help establish a better sense of transition from Boston into Dedham.

Representative Paul McMurtry is working to improve the entrance into Dedham from the VFW Parkway, but funding has not yet been secured.

12.16 Begin Developing Process and Budget for 2020 Master Plan

The MPIC estimates the process of writing the 2020 Master Plan will take approximately three years once the process is initiated in late 2017. We recommend the Town take the following steps to ensure a comprehensive master plan can be delivered by 2020 after a process of thorough research and public engagement:

- Draft and distribute an RFI (Request for information) to gather information on current best practice for developing Master plans, as well as budget expectations.
- Develop a comprehensive Master Plan process which thoroughly engages all stakeholder groups
- Present Town Meeting with a request for funding an external consultant and any necessary surveys to achieve or exceed the standard of excellence achieved by the 2009 Master Plan.

