



Topic Summary

Transportation and Connectivity



Part 1: Transportation in Dedham today

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- T1.2** More non-resident employees come into Dedham everyday
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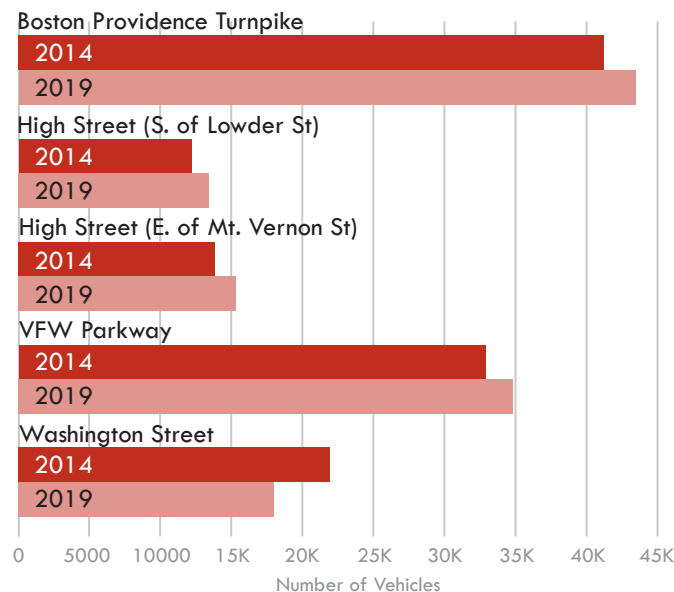
Part 1: Transportation in Dedham today

The main feature of Dedham's transportation infrastructure is the road network of 110 miles of streets, over two-thirds of which are town controlled. While infrastructure for walking and biking is lacking in many areas, there is strong interest from community members in creating a less car-centric town. In addition, MBTA bus and rail transit options have opportunities to serve more people commuting into and out of Dedham.

T1.1 Increase in traffic over the last five years

Most streets saw a five to eleven percent increase in average daily traffic between 2014 and 2019. Eighty percent of Dedham residents drive to work, while only eleven percent take transit, five percent work from home (pre-pandemic) and four percent bike, walk, or take other modes. This represents an opportunity to increase the availability, reliability, and safety of transit and micro-mobility (e.g., e-scooters) options in Dedham.

Comparison of Select Traffic Counts



T1.2 More non-resident employees come into Dedham everyday for work

Over 17,000 workers commute into Dedham during the workday, compared to the approximate 13,000 that commute out of Dedham. Therefore, the transportation connections both in and out of Dedham, especially in high employment areas, are crucial to evaluate for improvements.

T1.3 More sidewalks are needed

Fifty eight percent of Dedham's streets have a sidewalk on at least one side. Many trips that are currently being taken by car could be taken by walking if the walking infrastructure is expanded and enhanced.



T1.4 Lack of bike infrastructure

The number of people using bikes as a primary or occasional form of transportation has been steadily increasing in the region and has increased rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there are bike racks available in the business centers, on-street bike lanes and off-street paths are lacking. Since 2017, there have been 27 reported vehicular collisions with pedestrians or cyclists, all of which have been in locations without bike infrastructure.

T1.5 Ridership on the Franklin Line commuter rail has increased

The Dedham Corporate Center has seen a 97 percent increase in commuter rail ridership. As traffic increases in the Boston region, more people rely on the commuter rail for daily transportation.

T1.6 MBTA Route 34/34E bus is a main connector, but it is unreliable

The Route 34/34E bus is highly important for network connectivity but it has poor on-time performance. There are over 6,500 trips per weekday on the route, and ridership in Dedham totals around 11 percent of the entire Route 34/34E.

T1.7 Ridesharing is growing quickly and could signal unmet needs

In 2019, Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft, provided over 262,000 rides that started in Dedham. Of those, nearly twenty three percent were within Dedham. The average TNC ride distance was 6.7 miles, a distance that could be traveled by bike or public transit if those modes were more convenient.

As part of the Master Plan process, a Community Survey was conducted in the spring of 2020 and received over 1,100 responses. A follow up Topic Area Survey received over 750 responses. Responses from both surveys related to transportation are summarized here.

T2.1 Proximity to Boston is an asset

As a suburb of Boston, many people who live in Dedham find the proximity to Boston to be useful for many reasons, such as commuting to work. Approximately one third of Dedham residents commute to Boston for work, meaning that reliable and frequent transit connections to the city are essential.

T2.2 Traffic congestion remains a main challenge

The greatest challenge identified in the survey and one of the most important topics to address in the master plan was traffic congestion. Dedham is very car-centric, and 80 percent of residents drive to work. Even with reduced commuting traffic in 2020 due to COVID-19, residents noted that traffic congestion remains a challenge. Presently, driving is the easiest way to get around. By funding and building new infrastructure such as bus improvements, more bike lanes and sidewalks, Dedham can reduce its reliance on cars.

T2.3 Pedestrian and bike safety remains a challenge

Strengthening safe walking and biking in the town was identified as the number one transportation challenge facing Dedham. Since 2017, there have been 27 reported vehicular collisions with pedestrians or cyclists. Of those, 60 percent involved were pedestrians and 40 percent involved were cyclists. Half of the pedestrian crashes were in areas without sidewalks, and all bike crashes were in areas without bike infrastructure.

T2.4 Improved sidewalks would best meet travel needs

Improved sidewalks were identified as the transportation improvement that would best serve survey respondent's needs. Walkability was the top priority mentioned by survey respondents for Dedham in the next ten years. Currently, most of the sidewalks and crosswalks are concentrated in two major economic districts, however, they could be expanded throughout the town.





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Part 3: Draft transportation and connectivity goals

These draft goals have been developed based on the data about Dedham today, the community surveys, and input from the 16 member Master Plan Committee, and public. The final goals will frame the strategies and actions to be defined through this master plan process to guide town policies and decision making over the next ten years. We are soliciting input on these goals, they will be amended and updated based on feedback.

T3.1 Build and improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure

Both walking and biking are desirable forms of transportation for Dedham residents, yet safe infrastructure doesn't exist throughout the town. Building out a network of connected walking and biking routes would be beneficial to increasing physical activity and decrease traffic congestion.

T3.2 Focus on street safety

Crashes are clustered in many areas of Dedham, and there are multiple clusters in Dedham's environmental justice areas (see map). The town should focus its initial street safety efforts on these areas, and create a proactive system to improve other unsafe areas in its street network.

T3.3 Manage parking

In the business districts, parking is seen as a challenge at peak times. Some parking management strategies, such as implementing parking meters and adopting dynamic pricing, can help to increase turnover of spaces during high demand times. In areas with excess parking, Dedham could designate TNC pick up/drop off areas and delivery areas, or programs to convert strategic locations to other uses, such as outdoor dining, additional green space, or amenities.

T3.4 Increase transit reliability

Enhance transit with first and last mile connections, micro-transit options, and transit-oriented development. Ridership at the Dedham Corporate Center commuter rail stop nearly doubled between 2012 and 2018. The 34/34E bus route has significant opportunities for improvements, such as dedicated bus lanes and queue jumps, that would make it more reliable for daily users. Although current transit ridership is down due to COVID-19, Dedham should plan for long-term improvements to ensure bus and rail service is not negatively impacted once traffic increases again.

T3.5 Plan for electric and autonomous vehicles

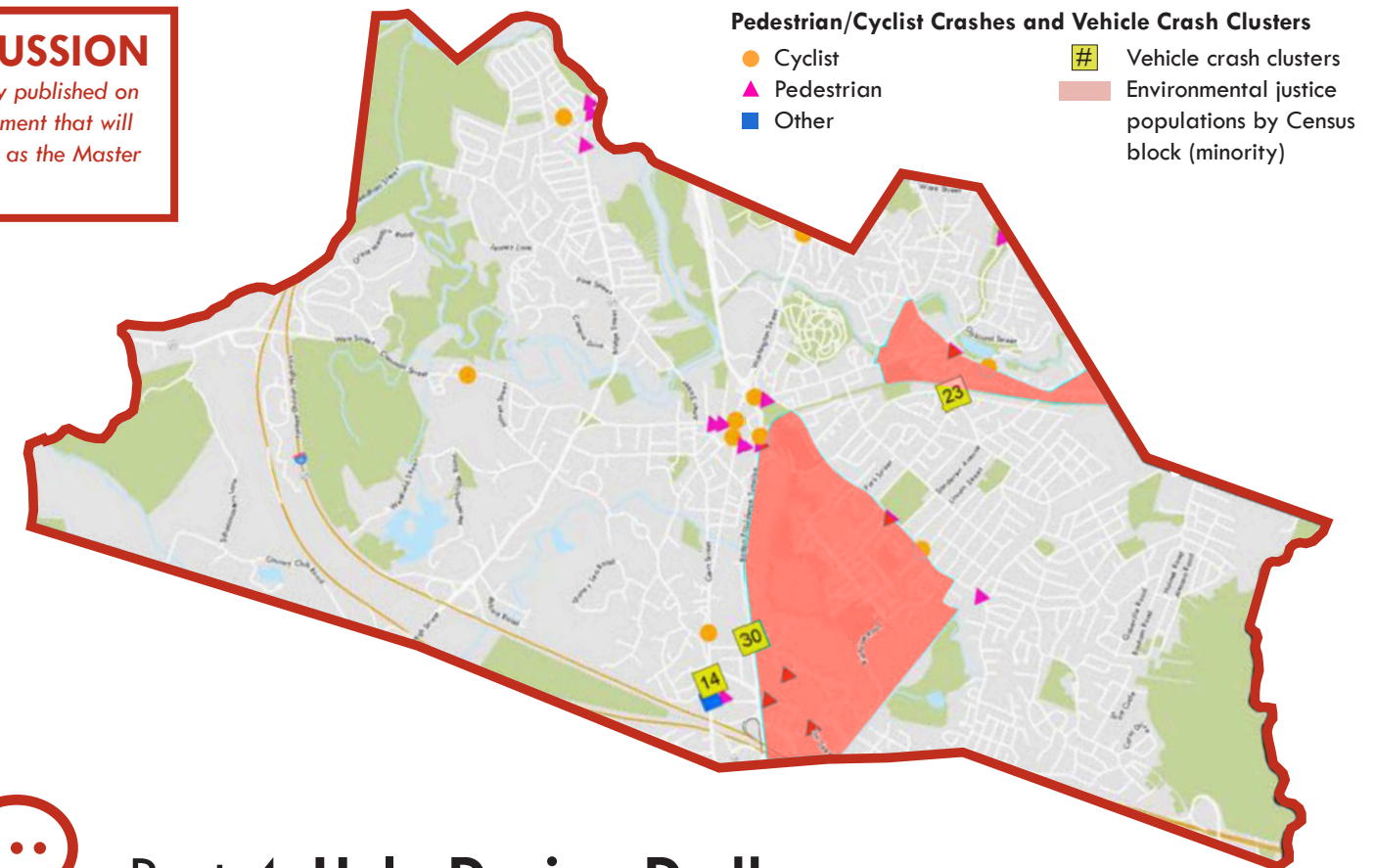
The Town should take advantage of electric vehicle incentives at the state level and be flexible in parking requirements and design. Autonomous vehicles may not need as much parking, and electric vehicles will need designated spaces with charging capabilities.

T3.6 Improve project implementation

No town staff position is currently responsible for transportation, including grant pursuit, and coordination with neighboring municipalities and the Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association. All transportation projects should be viewed as an opportunity to implement town goals through current DPW plans, repaving plans, and upcoming transportation projects. To address capacity challenges, the Planning Director could work with existing committees to identify funding opportunities and upcoming projects to incorporate transportation improvements.

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

This is Version 2.0 of this summary published on 11-30-2020. It is a working document that will be updated to integrate feedback as the Master Plan progresses.



Part 4: Help Design Dedham

This topic summary and the set of draft topic goals has been prepared to share draft content that is developing through the Designing Dedham 2030 Master Plan process. The draft topic goals remain a work in progress and will benefit from your feedback. Are your transportation and connectivity priorities for the town represented? Please send us your feedback, questions, or comments.

Comments

<http://designingdedham2030.org>

Or by sending an email to:

Jeremy Rosenberger, Dedham Planning Director at jrosenberger@dedham-ma.gov, or

Josh Fiala, MAPC Principal Planner at jfiala@mapc.org.

Additional Information

A video recording of a Master Plan Committee meeting focused on Transportation is available at:

<http://bit.ly/DD2030-Committee-08-18-2020>

Community Open Houses

Additionally, you are invited to attend a series of Community Open Houses that will present and discuss each of the topics.



An open house on **December 7th, 2020 at 7:00 pm** will focus on Economic Development and **Transportation**.

Register for this event at:

<http://bit.ly/DD2030-12-07-2020>

An open house on **January 26th, 2021 at 7:00 pm** will focus on Housing, Public Health/Livability, and Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources.

An open house on **March 23, 2021 at 7:00 pm** will focus on Land Use, Municipal Facilities and Services, and Governance.

Visit <http://designingdedham2030.org> to see summaries of each topic area and join the mailing list for updates or other opportunities to be part of the process.