

Master Plan Committee

Jessica Porter, Co-Chair
Sarah MacDonald, Co-Chair
Alix O'Connell, Clerk
Josh Donati
Shaw McDermott
Margaret Adams Whitfield
James Antonizick
Dan Hart
Andrew Tittler
Sharna Small Borsellino
Nathan Gauthier
Dieckmann Cogill
Dan Maher
Justin A. Humphreys
Jay O'Brien
Scott Steeves



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DEDHAM 2030 MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, December 15, 2020, Zoom

Present:

Jessica Porter Planning Board Member
Shaw McDermott, Dedham Resident
Andrew Tittler, Dedham Resident
Nathan Gauthier, Sustainability Committee Member
Sharna Small Borsellino, Dedham Resident
Sarah MacDonald, Select Board Member
Alix M. O'Connell, Parks & Recreation Board Member
Josh Donati, School Committee Member
Justin A. Humphreys, Dedham Resident
Jay O'Brien, Planning Board Member
Margaret Adams Whitfield, Dedham Resident
Dieckmann Cogill, Dedham Resident
Dan Maher, Dedham Resident

Not Present:

Scott Steeves, Zoning Board of Appeals Member
James Antonizick, Dedham Resident
Dan Hart, Open Space Committee Member

Jeremy Rosenberger, Planning Director, opens up the 12th Master Plan Committee meeting with a quick overview of the Master Plan process, Zoom meeting protocols, and the agenda for the evening. Josh Fiala, Principal Planner at MAPC, goes over the Committee values and expectations, and an introduction to the Steering Committee. Mr. Fiala did an ice

breaker exercise for Committee members. What open space, natural or cultural resource in the Town of Dedham is your favorite or do you frequent the most, and why? Committee members each took turns responding. Mr. Fiala then shifted the conversation over to discussion about the Open House that took place on December 7, 2020.

Community Open House

There were 127 participants in total at the Open House in December. The following poll questions were asked at the December Open House:

- What neighborhood do you live in?
 - Oakdale (28%)
 - Dedham Village/Dedham Square (17%)
 - Riverdale (13%)
 - Greenlodge, Sprague, Manor (13%)
 - East Dedham (11%)
 - West Dedham (Precint 1) (10%)
 - I do not live in Dedham (8%)
- What is your age?
 - 0-18 (0%)
 - 19-34 7%
 - 35-49 (32%)
 - 50-64 (47%)
 - 65+ years (14%)
- What gender do you identify with?
 - Female (57%)
 - Male (43%)
 - Gender Nonbinary (0%)
- What race or ethnicity fo you identify with?
 - White (93%)
 - Black or African American (4%)
 - Hispanic or Latino (2%)
 - Two or more races (1%)
 - Asian (0%)
 - Natic American or Alaska Native (0%)
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0%)
- How did you lean about this meeting?
 - Facebook (29%)
 - Word of mouth (20%)
 - Email newsletter (19%)
 - Other (19%)
 - Dedham Times, Dedham Patch (9%)
 - Town website (4%)
- Have you participated in previous master plan meetings?
 - Yes (55%)
 - No (45%)

- Did you feel the set of draft economic development goals is about right for the master plan?
 - Close (55%)
 - Neutral (22%)
 - Very close (18%)
 - Not close (3%)
 - Way off (1%)
 - None of the above (0%)
- Did you feel the set of draft transportation goals is about right for the master plan?
 - Close (50%)
 - Very Close (23%)
 - Neutral (15%)
 - Not close (9%)
 - Way off (3%)
 - None of the above (0%)

Mr. Fiala then opened up the conversation for feedback on the December Open House.

Alix O’Connell shared that she was unable to attend the Open House since there was a Parks & Recreation meeting at the same time. She stated that there were others that expressed their dissatisfaction with being unable to attend due to the same reason. She asked if in the future, meeting could be scheduled on a Wednesday or Thursday since those days tend to be less busy for meetings.

Dan Maher expressed his content with the breakout rooms.

Nathan Gauthier mentioned that there were many different points that were brought up regarding the topics, however, it didn’t seem like the ideas were being documented. Mr. Gauthier was unsure how people’s comments were going to be incorporated into the planning process. Mr. Fiala responded that there were notes that were taken at each of the breakout groups. The notes will be set aside until the other topics have also been discussed. Once the Committee returns to the drafts goals for each topic, the comments from the break out groups will be integrated. Committee members’ comments from previous meetings will also be incorporated into the draft goals. Refined goals will later shared with the community.

Diecjmann Cogill shared that there was confusion about the goals and that there was a lot of information to digest. The discussion was at a very high level, but it didn’t get into the lower bullet points of each of the goals. Mr. Fiala responded by stating that the topic summaries will be shared in advance of the meetings so people can refer to them or follow up with them.

Margaret Adams expressed her concerns about people’s attention spans when covering so much information and multiple topics. Mr. Rosenberger expressed that that is the challenge if it all, and Mr.s Fiala added that MAPC is thinking about ways to maintains people’s

attention and will be inserting presentation times for each of the topic being covered in the next meeting.

Andrew Tittler expressed that the conversations went smoothly in the breakout groups and he enjoyed having the same group for both breakout sessions. He also mentioned that Economic Development and Transportation tied together well. This may not be the case for the topic areas being covered in the January Open House.

Josh Donati expressed that he would have preferred having two different groups so that participants can listen to the different perspectives and ideas of multiple people.

Mr. Fiala went through the different sections of the master plan and their correlation to one another. He stated that each of the topics will be interrelated and shared the timeline for the upcoming meetings.

Topics Area: Natural, Cultural, Historic Resources

Courtney Lewis, Regional Planner at MAPC, opened up the conversation about Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources. He went over community character, which is made up of people (past & present), activities/events (past & present), and the physical environment (natural & built).

Natural Resources

Dedham's natural resources play a very critical role in supporting the environmental health and social viability of the community, protecting the Town's natural resources, which include water resources, wetlands, tree cover, conservation areas, and plant and wildlife habitat. These are all key to sustaining Dedham's cultural economy and environmental health. They are also very closely ties to the Town's historic and cultural resources. In fact, Dedham's rivers and streams play a defining role in the development of the Town with its founding as this very exclusive and highly religious agricultural community, and then later, in its transformation to a more industrial mill Town. Today, these resources provide opportunities for residents to engage in healthy recreational activity and remain tremendously important to the Town's history, culture, and sense of place. The Charles and Neponset Rivers wind through the Town and make up portions of its northern and eastern borders, and Motherbrook, which is credited for being the first man-made canal in the U.S., connects the two rivers. In its early days, the canal was used by many industries for its water power.

Last year, the Town completed its open space and recreation plan. The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is a plan that provides information about the community and its environmental and recreational resources. It also acts as a guide that allows residents and the Town to map out things that they want to achieve or improve in their parks and open spaces in the next set of years. By completing the OSRP, cities and towns become eligible to apply for grant funding from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Those funds can then be used to improve existing open space or acquire new land for conservation or recreation purposes. Along with the OSRP, the Town also completed a Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Both of those plans were done concurrently. MAPC plans to

take all of the valuable work done in both of these plans and incorporate it into the element of this master plan.

Mr. Lewis showed a map of the Town's parks and open space. It showed that open space can vary in ownership level, level of protection, as well as use. Parks and open space can be used for active or passive recreation. Passive recreation typically requires minimal facilities and includes activities like walking, hiking, and fishing. Whereas active recreation usually involves more structured activities that require special facilities or development, and they include things like playgrounds, swimming pools, athletic courts and ball fields.

Parks and open space can provide several benefits to a community. These include: promoting healthy lifestyles; increasing access to healthy foods; capturing and cleaning storm-water; stabilizing neighborhoods; cleaning soil; creating habitats for wildlife; promoting social interaction; improving air quality; providing flood protection.

Improved walking, biking, and transit options is something that has come up over and over again throughout this planning process, and transportation and connectivity ties directly into that discussion of parks and open spaces. We have to look at how we build better and safe connections between neighborhoods, open space, and recreation areas, and we also have to look at how to provide greater access to the historic and cultural amenities that really draw people in. 75% of Dedham residents are within a 10-minute walk from a park, however, if you look at the Town forest, for example, which is Dedham's largest holding of conservation land, you'll see that there's very limited access because of its location between the north and south bound lanes of I-95. It's a great amenity to have, but it's not beneficial to residents or visitors if there's limited or no access to these spaces.

Dedham is a very car dependent community. Most errands and day-to-day activities require access to a car. The most walkable areas of Town are downtown, East Dedham, and Oakdale. Even in some of those areas, the Town has partial sidewalk infrastructure with approximately 42% of streets lacking a sidewalk on at least one side. The Town is also served by MBTA with five bus route and two commuter rail stations. The Town has very limited bike infrastructure, and although there are some projects that have been recently undertaken, many people have expressed a desire for increased connections for biking and walking.

Mr. Lewis went over the results of the survey question: Do you have any additional reflections on this topic or natural, cultural and historic resources data? Participants expressed an appreciation for community assets like the Mother Brook Arts Center. They also expressed a need to protect and provide access to parks and open space, and they also highlighted how valuable these spaces are serving as and how they serve as community gathering spots.

Dedham's parks and open spaces provide recreational opportunities and programming for residents that enhance both quality of life and community character. The Town also has a variety of natural resources that support environmental health, and they're also considered local and regional assets. Although there are issues with connectivity, the Town has taken

steps towards improving walkability by enrolling in the state's Complete Streets Program and by developing a prioritization plan to address some of those connectivity issues. Some of the challenges that exist include funding for maintenance and expansion of parks. There's also a lack of connectivity too parks and those valuable open spaces.

Zoom breakout rooms took place for 5 minutes. Committee members gave an overview of what was discussed in their group. Ms. O'Connell mentioned that Group 1 spoke about categorizing open spaces between state and town owned. Open spaces are not just recreational. Most of the conversation consisted of how we use open spaces and whether they're used for just the public and general use. Ms. Porter mentioned that Group 2 thought the first asset was a little strongly stated. There are a lot of things that Dedham doesn't offer and that people are used to going into other communities for.

Historic Resources

Dedham is made up of diverse neighborhoods, each with its own unique features and history attached to it. The Town is also very fortunate to have an extensive collection of well-preserved buildings that are of architectural and cultural significance. Historic structures, neighborhoods, and districts all serve as living records of where a town has been, and they also aid in teaching future generations about Dedham's collective history. The oldest parts of the Town were settled in and around Dedham Square. Dedham has 447 resources that have been identified as historically significant. Of that total 293 have been recognized by the state as historically significant through designation as a national registered property, a national historic landmark, or a contributing element to the national register historic district. The Town also has 3 designated local historic districts. Two of those districts overlap with the overall Dedham Village Historic District.

These designation are important for determining eligibility for preservation funding programs, however, they don't necessarily guarantee protections of these properties. Only seven historic resources within the Town actually have preservation restrictions attached to them. The good thing is that municipalities also have the option to adopt regulatory tools to help support historic preservation. Some of these tools include preservation restrictions, local historic districts, neighborhood conservation districts, demolition delay bylaw, scenic road bylaw, Community Preservation Act (CPA). Specifically in Dedham, the Town uses preservation restrictions and local historic districts, which are under the pervue of the Historic Districts Commission.

When asked about the history in Dedham, survey respondents expressed the need to acknowledge and elevate the Town's indigenous history. They also expressed support for the adaptive reuse of historic structures. Some people also noted that although the Town has these unique and diverse neighborhoods, Dedham history and architecture are perceived as being closely tied to and mostly visible in Dedham Village or Precinct 1. A number of people expressed that it's important to highlight and acknowledge resources outside of those areas.

For assets, Dedham has this rich and interesting history, an extensive inventory of well-preserved structures, and several prestigious designations that could potentially provide tax advantages to property owners. Some of the challenges include that many historic narratives and resources are well recognized and celebrated, but others have been excluded and would benefit from being highlighted or officially recognized. Another challenge is making sure that the right regulatory tools are in place to help with upkeep and preservation of these valuable resources. And, of course, limited funding for preservation efforts is also a very big challenge. Dedham has a very rich history that is tied to the land, and MAPC has highlighted a few of the historic structures in Town. It's important to acknowledge that history isn't just about tangible objects that have been left behind, it's also people, stories, events, and experiences. The thing that is even more important to acknowledge is that the perspective in which history has been told and the differing accounts of how these events were experienced.

Emma Boast, from MAPC, shares information about the larger territory on which Dedham sits around the time of colonization. She spoke about the presence of water being so important to Dedham's built environment and historical development and also the role of these waterways for Native American people as transportation routes, conduits of trade and communication and what that might tell us about where these stories related to the land and landscape that we ought to share more widely. Ms. Boast shared a case study, The Pasanageset Project, about a park open space and heritage trail that was created high Quincy high schoolers in collaboration with the Massachusetts tribe. She also shared an image of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry, who was a black regiment in the Civil War who trained on Camp Meigs in Readville/Dedham. Ms. Boast took a moment to acknowledge William B. Gould and recognize the memorial of him that will be established in Dedham. There was also an effort to rename a park after him, which was also successful. Jay O'Brien took

Zoom breakout rooms took place for 5 minutes.

Cultural Resources

Arts and culture support communities in expressing their identity and in Dedham, they are important contributors to the Town's character as well as the economy.

In addition to natural and historic resources, Dedham's arts and cultural organizations, civic and religious institutions, creative enterprises, and special events are all a source of pride representing cultural life in the Town. A cultural asset is something that has value because of its contribution to the community's creativity, knowledge, traditions, culture meaning and vitality. They can be places that you visit to express your cultural identity and or the resource that one uses to pursue a creative practice. They can be tangible assets, such as cultural facilities, specific buildings, or physical work of art. They can also be intangible or temporal things, such as annual events, shared cultural stories, and cultural landmarks and icons that no longer exist. History is not only about looking back at the past but also shaping what the future looks like and things that our residents can do present day to shape a better tomorrow.

The creative economy is defined as industry groups and occupations with a focus on making and sharing cultural goods, services and ideas. Those resources are primarily clustered around Dedham's historic civic core. A few are also located in the East Dedham Arts Overlay District. This 95 acre overlay district was established to encourage development, preservation, and enhancement of arts related uses. Dedham's creative industries are an important element to the Town's economy and they can and should be leveraged for additional economic growth. Several neighborhood anchors are located in and around that Arts Overlay District, and they include things like local businesses, parks, schools, a community center, an indoor pool, and the Mother Brook Canal.

A study was recently completed showing historic resources related to the Mother Brook Canal. The purpose of the study was to identify resources that may be eligible for listing on the national register of historic places. The proposed boundaries mainly consist of those areas that abut the canal.

Mr. Lewis went over the survey results. For the first question respondents were asked: When do you feel the greatest sense of belonging in Dedham? Some people shared that it's when they walk or bike in Town and make those connections with neighbors just in passing. Going out for coffee or having dinner somewhere. Others expressed feeling unwelcome, unheard, and overlooked by the community. The second question asked: Is there a particular place or event that sparks that feeling? Respondents described places like Dedham Square and activities that take place in that space. Others talked about institutions like schools in the Town, the library, and events like Flag Day, the summer concert series, and the Endicott Car Show.

For assets, Dedham has an established artist community as well as an Arts Overlay District. The Town also has a number of active art and cultural organizations, institutions and community anchors. The Town also hosts a number of well-attended community events. Some of the challenges include communicating the value of arts and culture in economic terms, limited funding for arts and culture, fostering a stronger sense of community, inclusivity, and neighborliness, and racial, ethnic and socioeconomic divides.

Inclusivity ranked as the third top most important word in the initial community survey for goals for the Town. Ms. Boast highlights inclusion as a priority for the master plan and specifically as something to think about vis-à-vis cultural resources. She goes over the patterns of residential segregation and redlining that had previously taken place in Dedham.

Mr. Lewis went over what makes a community inclusive and why it is important to build an inclusive community. He then goes over the topic goals.

Zoom breakout rooms took place for about 13 minutes.

Mr. Fiala opens up the conversation up for comments from the Committee.

Ms. MacDonald stated that her group discussed the voices that weren't captured at the last Open House, which included artists, musicians, some of the civic organizations that are working to provide arts and cultural programs. Ms MacDonald wanted to flag that to make

sure the Committee does reach out to these groups. Ms. Porter shared that her group discussed word-smithing, and highlighting all of the different institutions and civic groups that help make a rich community and cultural life in Town and ways to shore those up and help them collaborate.

Next Steps

- Second round of topic summaries
- Promote open house on 1/26/21
- RSVP for the open house on 1/26
 - <https://bit.ly/DD2030-01-26-2021>
- Topic Area presentation on Community Services and Facilities and Governance on 01/19/21 at 7:00 pm

Chat Messages

Jessica Porter to Everyone : Hi Everyone - thanks for being here!

Carolina Prieto: Good to see everyone!

Andrew Tittler: Jeremy -you got super faint. Either my computer did something funny or your mike is dimming out.

Sarah MacDonald: I hear OK...

Andrew Tittler: I had no idea! Thank you Shaw!

Sarah MacDonald: I have to hop to another meeting briefly at 7, but I'll be right back!

Carolina Prieto: Thank you for sharing Shaw

Andrew Tittler: Should call on Dieckmann, too!

Carolina Prieto: If anything else comes up, feel free to put it in the chat!

Courtney Lewis (MAPC): What stands out to you/what's resonating about info that was presented?

Courtney Lewis (MAPC): Does the list of assets/challenges seem to be on the right track?

Jessica Porter: For those who are new to our meetings, we're glad you are here! We encourage you to participate in the breakout sessions

Sharna Borsellino: Can we get the % of the 42% of streets without sidewalks that are privately owned for our next meeting?

Andrew Tittler: Recalling the lists of roadwork DPW does every year on public ways, I would want to check the assertion that most of the streets in town are private. There are some, certainly. A majority? The Town just accepted Liana Lane, which is pretty minor.

Emma Boast (she/her), MAPC: ASSETS:- A number of activities for youth and a wide range of programming options within parks and recreational facilities
- A variety of natural resources that are both local and regional assets
- Progress toward safe and Complete Streets

Emma Boast (she/her), MAPC: CHALLENGES:^{[[[}_{SEP]}- Funding for maintenance or expansion of existing parks and acquisition of new parks.
- Poor overall connectivity (e.g., trails, bike lanes, and greenways) and quality of experience getting to parks, open space, and recreation centers.

Leah Kane to Everyone : Sorry, I can't participate, I'm also making dinner.

Dimitria dimitria@herbchambers.com: <https://www.dedham-ma.gov/home/showpublis-heddokument?id=204#:~:text=A%3A%20Private%20streets%20have%20a,never%20constructed%20to%20acceptable%20standards>.

Jessica Porter: This summer a Dedham High grad, Cookie Duncan, did an internship in which she researched the history of Wigwam Pond. She wrote up an illuminating description that I'm hoping could be used in multiple ways, including on a marker at the pond access point

Carolina Prieto: Have to drop off early. Thank you all! Talk soon.

Emma Boast (she/her), MAPC: @Jessica - That's wonderful! Thank you for sharing.

Courtney Lewis (MAPC): 1.Preserve, restore, and promote Dedham's natural, cultural, and historic resources. 2. Design and create welcoming and inclusive spaces and programs that serve a diverse community and enable residents to participate in and take advantage of all that Dedham has to offer. 3. Utilize parks, recreation, open space, trails, greenways, and waterways to promote health and exercise, connect residents, foster social interaction, and increase community cohesion. 4. Create an equitable and connected multimodal network that improves access for residents of all ages and abilities to parks and open space, economic and educational opportunities and community resources and services. 5. Increase arts and cultural access and education for all Dedham residents and support creative placemaking to strengthen community. 6. Communicate and promote the value and economic impact of arts and culture in the creative economy.

20:58:48 From Courtney Lewis (MAPC) to Everyone : clewis@mapc.org

20:58:52 From Courtney Lewis (MAPC) to Everyone : Courtney Lewis

Emma Boast (she/her), MAPC: Emma Boast | eboast@mapc.org - feel free to reach out!

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 19 at 7:00 pm.