



# Community Facilities and Services



## Part 1: Community facilities and services in Dedham today

A community facility is any town-owned asset that has been developed for a public purpose and provides community services, such as school facilities and also includes non-building facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and cemeteries. Well-designed and well-maintained facilities contribute to Dedham's quality of life and contribute to the attractiveness of the town as a place to live and do business.

Community services include municipal services and utilities such as public safety, public health, housing, recreation, public water, sewer, or municipal light service, and partner organization and contracted services such as solid waste and recycling or street maintenance. Dedham's ability to provide adequate facilities and services depends on effective capital planning, a commitment to implementation, sound asset management policies, and availability of revenue for local government operations.

### CFS1.1 Maintaining and managing town-owned facilities

Each of the town's public facilities must be maintained on a regular basis to protect the public's investment in them and provide dependable and equitable service delivery to all residents, including those in future generations. The town has a facilities manager that is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of all town and school properties. The hiring of a facilities manager was an outcome of the previous town master plan. The town facilities include new and recently renovated buildings. However, the majority of facilities have not been recently renovated, such as the Dunn Public Works Facility built in the 1960s or the Dolan Recreation

Center built in 1989. All facilities, particularly aging assets, require regular renewal and investment to avoid a backlog of deferred maintenance and facilities issues. Facility improvements and investments should be consistent with the sustainability and resilience goals and actions identified in the town's Climate Action Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan.

### CFS1.2 Public education and schools

Dedham prides itself on investing considerable resources in its public education system. The town operates its own school system, with approximately 2,556 students enrolled during the 2020-2021 school year. According to the most recent data available from the Massachusetts Department of Education, Dedham spent an average of \$20,291 per student in fiscal year 2018. The Dedham Public School District (DPS) includes seven school facilities. With the exception of the new ECEC, Dedham Middle School and Avery Elementary School, all Dedham Public School buildings are more than half a century old and have not undergone major renovations or reconstruction in the past 30 years. Dedham Public Schools are currently in the process of updating the Long Term Facilities Master Plan and identifying the best next steps in the improvement, renovation, or replacement of school facilities in Dedham.

### CFS1.3 Capital improvement plan

The Town maintains a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to guide improvements to the Town's buildings, equipment, infrastructure, and vehicle replacement. All departmental capital funding requests are annually submitted to the Finance and Warrant Committee for

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review ahead of Town Meeting. In the Fall of 2016, the town completed a Facility Condition Assessment for all school and town owned buildings and developed a Preventive Maintenance program that could be integrated into the town's work order system. The assessment identified \$10,228,775 in deficiency repairs that need to be addressed over the next 20 years. The town incorporates these recommendations for repairs into the CIP based on needs that have risen to the highest priority during the past year.

### CFS1.4 Recent facility investments

Over the past decade, the Town of Dedham has made significant investments in its public facilities and infrastructure, including renovations to the Ames Building, construction of the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC), and most recently, the groundbreaking of a new consolidated public safety building. During the Summer 2020 Town Meeting, the Facilities Department was approved to move forward with \$1,283,000 for the following four capital projects during FY21 - replacement of the pool HVAC, replacement of the Dolan Center roof, the DPW generator receiver and feeders, and the DPW fire alarm system. The town has a AAA Bond Rating and a special fund for capital improvements, known as the Robin Reyes Special Purpose Stabilization Fund. Some master plan survey participants expressed that a new high school and a multi-generational community center would be great new additions to the town's current assets.



## Part 2: Community input

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 related to community facilities and services are summarized here.

### CFS2.1 Increase energy efficiency and sustainability

Survey participants indicated that the Town should prioritize investments in public facilities that support and implement sustainability, energy efficiency and environmental stewardship in its capital improvement planning. The Town's 2018 Greenhouse Gas Inventory revealed that buildings make up approximately 60 percent of all greenhouse gas emission—both for municipal and community-wide operations. This makes energy use in municipal buildings a critical area to address climate change.

### CFS2.2 Renovate and Repair

Preventative maintenance, repair, and improvement of existing Town facilities was the second highest priority of survey respondents. Several survey participants expressed that in some cases, renovating, refurbishing, and reusing existing public facilities (including parks and open space) may be more feasible and fiscally responsible than building new facilities.

### CFS2.3 Improve transparency and oversight of capital projects

A major theme from open-ended survey responses was participant's dissatisfaction with the town's handling of recent capital improvement projects. Some respondents expressed that the Town does not publish information describing the process used to develop the capital improvement plan or provide the public with clear instructions for how to get involved in the project selection process. Transparency is critical to enable the public to engage in the process and understand the difficult allocation choices made for capital improvements.



Topic Summary

## Community Facilities and Services



### Part 3: Draft community facilities and services 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, which will be amended and updated based on feedback.

#### CFS3.1 Define benchmarks and priorities to guide capital investment and asset management policies

Benchmarks and priorities that can be established in advance and agreed upon would be useful in guiding capital investments and asset management anticipating that funds will need to be allocated amongst competing projects in a fair, equitable, and transparent manner.

#### CFS3.2 Develop asset management policies to guide maintenance, upgrade, and disposition processes

Service needs and demand for municipal buildings change over time, often leaving municipalities with obsolete or unused properties in their assets inventory. These properties can present maintenance challenges, opportunities for upgrades or changes of use, or opportunities to raise funds for other capital improvements to meet a determined public benefit through a disposition process. Dedham should establish policies to guide the identification and disposition of surplus municipal property, land or buildings, including tax-title properties.

#### CFS3.3 Enhance public facilities to advance sustainability, innovation, livability, and equity

The Town should ensure that capital improvements

(such as municipal buildings, transportation, stormwater systems, park improvements, etc.) incorporate design standards that support the environment, reduce energy use, mitigate climate change impacts, and strengthen resiliency consistent with the goals and actions identified in the Climate Action Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan. Additionally, capital improvements should prioritize improving livability and equity for residents.

#### CFS3.4 Proactively assess funding needs and dedicate staff to pursue external resources

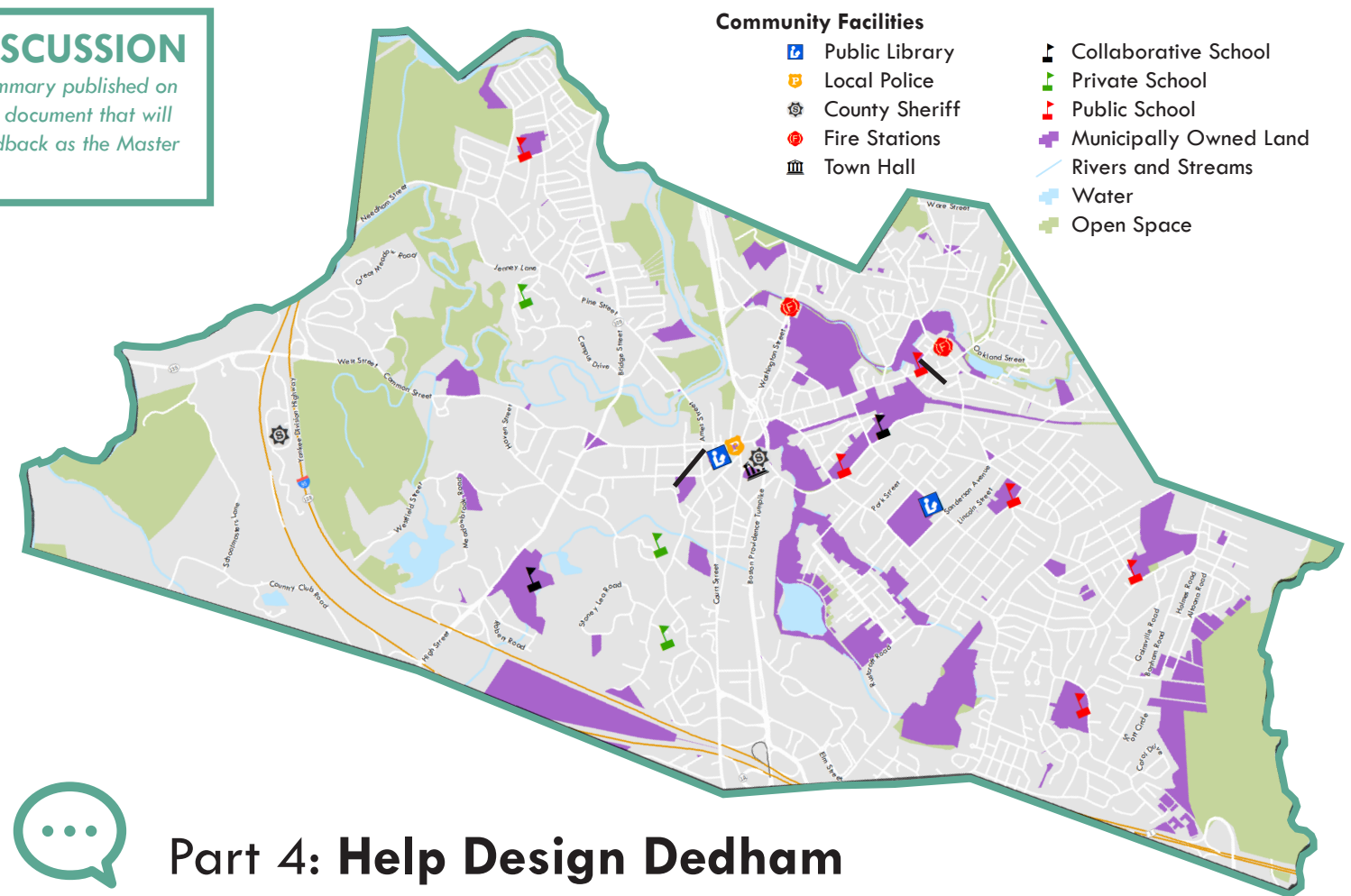
Dedham's public facilities needs do not have to be supported solely by the town budget. Where possible, the Town should identify and seek alternative funding strategies for capital improvements. External funding and financing sources, namely grants and low interest loans, are available to fund a variety of facilities needs, although they may be competitive and require time and effort to pursue. Currently, Dedham is at a disadvantage competing for particular public funds since it does not participate in the Community Protection Act. Changes to town policies that would optimize the ability to pursue external funds should be prioritized.

#### CFS3.5 Explore the expansion of town services to advance equity

The town should ensure that all residents have the access, support, and ability to participate in the full range of town services provided, and regularly review the services provided to adapt to the evolving needs of the community. Procedures for this type of assessment should be established. Currently, among the services provided in the town and surrounding area, social services for families in need appear to be lacking. New town services or facilities such as teen programming or a youth center could help address such a service need.

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### 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 community facilities and services 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 [rosenberger@dedham-ma.gov](mailto:rosenberger@dedham-ma.gov), or

Josh Fiala, MAPC Principal Planner at [jfiala@mapc.org](mailto:jfiala@mapc.org).


#### Additional Information

A video recording of a Master Plan Committee meeting focused on Community Facilities and Services is available at:

<https://bit.ly/DD-2030-Committee-01-19-2021>

#### 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 **March 30th, 2021 at 6:30 pm** will focus on **Community Facilities and Services**, Governance and Land Use and Zoning.

Register for this event at:

<https://bit.ly/DD2030-03-30-21>

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.

