



Chapter

Economic Development

Introduction

Dedham has a strong local economy that has a broad commercial and employment base. The central features of local economic activity include the Providence Highway retail corridor, office buildings and hotels, historic Dedham Square, and light industrial districts which provides access to a variety of goods and services through many well-recognized national chain retailers and local businesses. The Providence Highway corridor is home to Legacy Place and other shopping plazas. Complementing these more intense concentrations of economic activity are historic squares and local business districts that add local shops, restaurants, and small businesses to the variety of economic activity.

The economic development chapter explores the patterns of economic activity and employment in the Town and provides goals and recommendations to strengthen and support local conditions for strong employment and continued investment for the benefit of Dedham's residents, employment population, and properties.



Summary

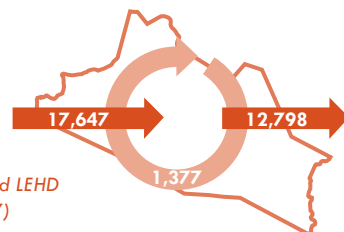
Invest in and support local businesses to provide opportunities for residents as entrepreneurs and employees, and to provide convenient access to services.



Themes Highlights

- Dedham has a diverse mix of retail, commercial, and light industrial areas that support a range of enterprises from small local, to larger regional, and national businesses.
- Economic activity is focused on the auto-oriented Providence Highway corridor, historic squares, light industrial areas, and local business districts.
- The range of enterprises supports a variety of employment. More employees commute into Dedham to work than employees who commute out of Dedham to work. Many employees do not earn enough to also live in Dedham.

The number of employees commuting into Dedham (left), working from home (center), and commuting out of Dedham (right)



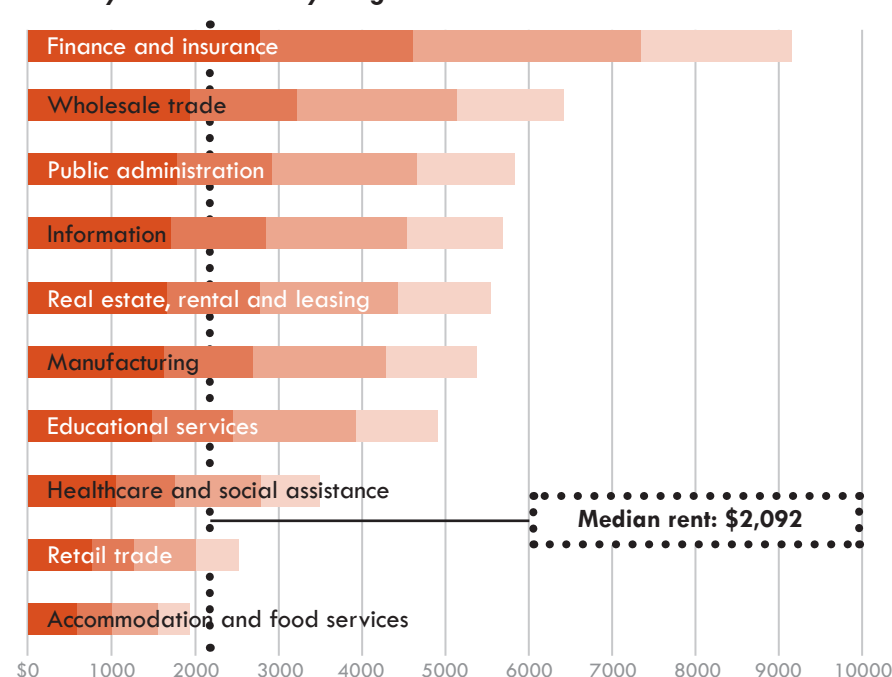
Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-2017)



Goal/Strategy Highlights

- Encourage transformative investment in the Providence Highway Corridor to create stronger economic opportunities.
- Invest in local small businesses to support smaller scale economic activity and availability of shops, restaurants, and services in walkable local business districts.

Monthly Median Industry Wages and Rent



Source: MAPC Rental Database, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) ES-202

Companion and related plans and studies

- Mixed Use Development Study (2020)
- Providence Highway: Create a Better Corridor (2020)
- Dedham Corporate Station: Creating a Connected Neighborhood (2017)
- East Dedham Village Charrette Strategic Action Plan (2017)
- Enhancing Creative East Dedham (2014)



Defining economic development terms

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, also called the COVID-19 Stimulus Package or American Rescue Plan, Pub L. No. 117-2, is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by Congress and signed into law in 2021. The intent of ARPA is to speed up the country's recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession. The Commonwealth received \$5.3 billion in federal money. These funds are flowing into programs as determined by the Governor and Legislature. Some of the funds flow directly to municipalities. Most of the funds must be allocated by 2024 and spent by 2026.

Business Improvement District (BID)

Special assessment districts in which property owners vote to initiate, manage, and finance supplemental services or enhancements above and beyond the baseline of services already provided by the local municipal government.

Creative Economy

The segment of the economy that is focused on creative industries including audiovisual products, design, new media, performing arts, publishing and visual arts. It is a transformative sector of the economy in terms of income generation, job creation, earnings, and has a strong connection to supporting vibrant mixed-use districts. Past planning efforts and policies have defined the Creative Economy as an important feature of East Dedham.

District Improvement Financing (DIF)

A locally-enacted tool that enables a municipality to identify and capture incremental tax revenues from new private investment in a specific area and direct them toward public improvement and economic development projects. A DIF has been established in Dedham for the northern portion of Providence Highway.

Median Household Income

The median household income divides income distribution into two equal parts, one half of the families earning more and half earning less. The median household income in Dedham is \$100,757 (in 2019 dollars) according to the U.S. Census 2015-2019 American Community Survey.



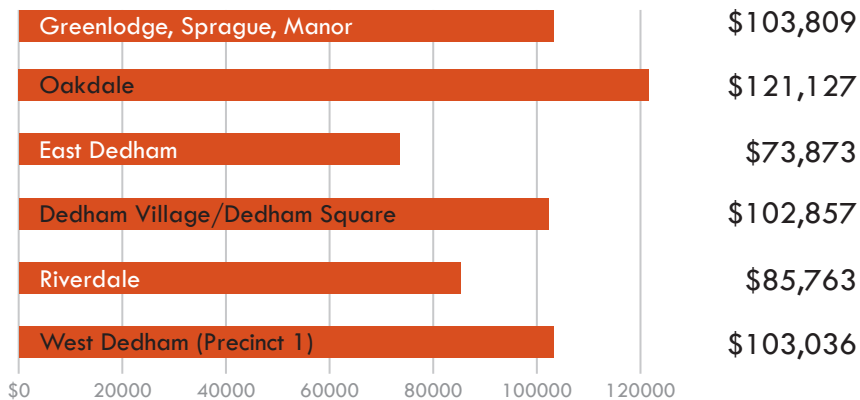
Economic development In Dedham Today

Economic Development themes

ED1 Disparities in income and poverty levels

The median household income in Dedham of \$100,757 is higher than the Massachusetts median household income of \$77,378 (2019). However, higher income households are not evenly distributed throughout the Town. For example, East Dedham is below this benchmark and Riverdale is just above it. Disparities between family and non-family households, where an individual lives alone or with unrelated housemates, is also evident. Four hundred fifty six (12.4%) non-family households live in poverty compared to 138 (2.23%) family households in poverty.

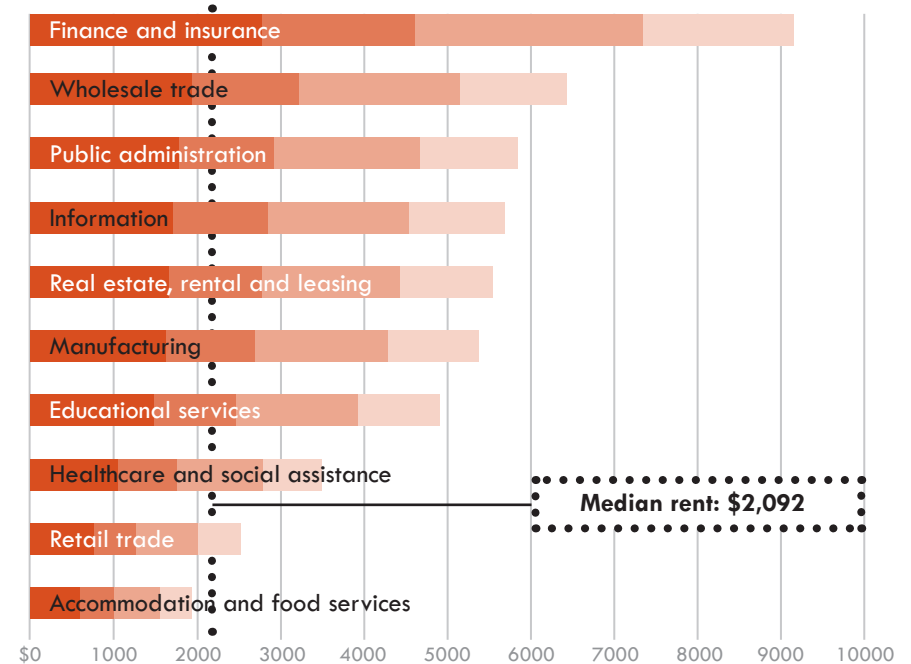
Median Household Income by Neighborhood



ED2 Employees cannot afford to live where they work

Dedham has a strong employment base, yet employees in nearly all of Dedham's top industries would be cost burdened, meaning they are spending more than a third of their household income on housing, when comparing median wages to median rent. Employees in several industries, particularly Retail Trade, Health

Monthly Median Industry Wages and Rent





Care, and Social Assistance, would be severely cost burdened, meaning they are spending more than half of their household income on housing. Individuals employed in the Accommodation and Food Services industries are effectively priced out of Dedham. Teachers are in the category of Educational Services and public employees are included in Public Administration, each would have difficulty paying median rent at entry level wages.

While the overall housing stock in Dedham offers a variety of housing unit types, there appears to be a mismatch between the size of the housing units (number of bedrooms in a home) and the size of households (number of people living in a home). This mismatch could place a cost burden on households so they have less discretionary spending to support the local economy. Particularly, if seniors cannot downsize because of a lack of smaller housing options, they may move elsewhere. At the same time, if single-family and multi-bedroom housing units aren't available on the market, many families looking in Dedham could settle elsewhere. Providing appropriate housing choices for seniors, families, and everyone in between is essential to supporting the workforce and customer base of local businesses. Furthermore, a higher concentration of housing may be needed in areas of Town where the majority of retail exists. Better aligning the proximity of local businesses with multifamily and mixed-use housing options can improve walkability, reduce travel times, and offer these businesses a reliable customer base.

ED3 Strong and diverse retail base, but difficult to access

Providence Highway provides convenient and diverse retail options for Dedham residents. However, the sheer volume of vehicular travel, high speeds, the lack of safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and unsignalized entries and exits generate hotspots for accidents. Additionally, Legacy Place is a local destination for residents across the region with its successful “lifestyle center” model. No direct or on-site bus service currently exists resulting in most visitors arriving by car at this destination.





Large gaps in transit, pedestrian, and bike infrastructure within Dedham hinder connectivity between housing, recreation, and priority development areas. Dedham is a relatively car-dependent city, with walk, bike, and transit scores reflecting the inability of residents to reliably travel by each of these modes. Furthermore, several of the priority development areas have medical, retail, and other daily needs for the most vulnerable populations who may not be able to drive (for example, households without automobiles, persons under 16 years of age, seniors, and persons with disabilities). Many of Dedham's economic activity areas are located adjacent to the Town's major



thoroughfare, Providence Highway, or in locations that are best accessed by vehicle. These patterns are both resulting from and contributing to residents and visitors almost exclusively relying on vehicles. Another indication of the predominant mode of travel is the number of commercial parking spaces at the Dedham Mall, Dedham Square, Providence Highway South, Legacy Place, and Stergis Way, totaling about 10,000 parking spaces, more than sufficient to meet demand.

ED4 Industrial areas are a unique advantage

The areas surrounding East Dedham Square, Milton Street, and the Readville are the three primary locations of Dedham's industrial base. Together businesses in these locations employ more than 1,200 people. These businesses are supported by the unique advantages of a close proximity to Boston, access to Providence Highway, Route 128, and Interstate 95, and the benefit of transit access, and the resulting ability to attract a more diverse employee base. Industrial space is facing many pressures by competing land uses and the impacts of e-commerce.

Throughout the Boston region competing land uses have reduced the amount of industrial space that is available and is driving vacancy rates lower and industrial rents higher. Even when industrial space has been retained, the demand for logistics and delivery warehouses to support e-commerce in the region has grown dramatically. According to a MAPC research



report “Hidden and in Plain Sight: Impacts of E-Commerce in Massachusetts”, e-commerce now makes up about 14% of all retail sales in the country and has contributed to a 42% increase in warehouse rents in Greater Boston alone over the last two years.

These trends are likely to continue and will place more pressure on industrial areas in the coming years. Retaining these industrial areas will allow the Town to benefit from these trends and attract additional industrial uses and to these areas which will be in shorter supply and higher demand.



ED5 High tax rate may be a barrier

Dedham’s tax rate is among the highest of surrounding municipalities. The split rate residential tax rate in 2020 was \$13.72 and the commercial rate was \$28.70 per \$1,000 in assessed value. The residential rate was among the highest of its immediate surrounding municipalities and the commercial rate was the highest. This high commercial tax rate creates a potential burden on small businesses and economic development competitiveness for the Town.

Municipality	Residential Rate (2020)	Commercial Rate (2020)
Newton	\$10.44	\$19.92
Boston	\$10.56	\$24.92
Canton	\$12.23	\$25.42
Needham	\$12.49	\$24.55
Dover	\$12.84 (single rate)	
Milton	\$13.12	\$20.10
Dedham	\$13.72	\$28.70
Westwood	\$14.51	\$28.22



Economic development In Dedham Today

Additional context and data

Economic activity areas

An analysis of the economic data in the Town including metrics such as total employees and total revenue indicates that (10) distinct areas exist in the Town with concentrated economic activity. These (10) economic activity areas have clusters of major employers or single employers that include the largest number of employees in the Town and combine to include over 50% of the employment and revenue generated within the Town.

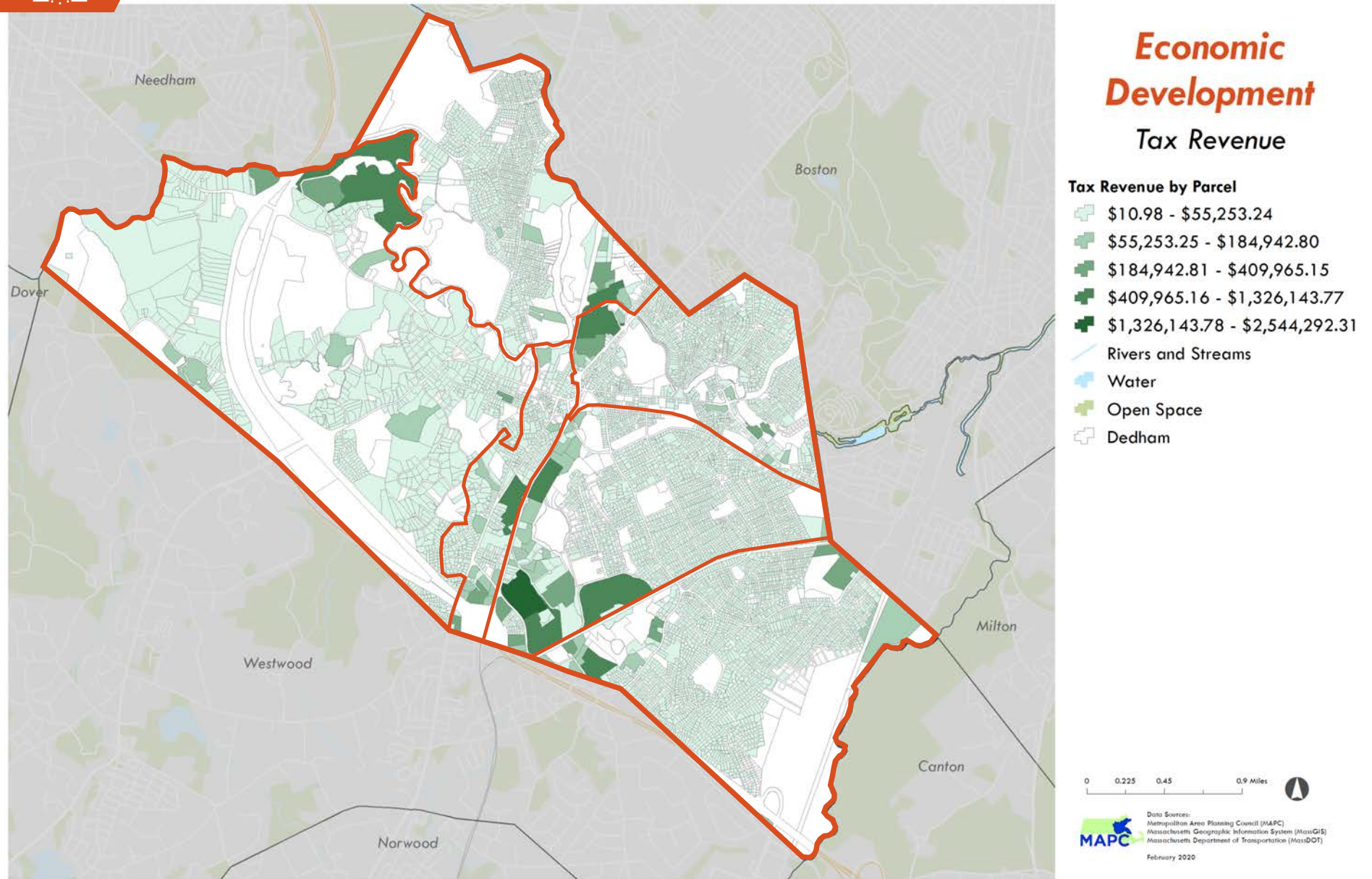
Area	Employment (number of employees)
Providence Highway South	2,056
Dedham Square	1,536
Providence Highway North/Dedham Mall	1,471
Legacy Place	1,230
Readville industrial area	626
Dedham Corporate Center	592
Milton industrial corridor	446
Norfolk Prison	347
East Dedham Square	189
Stergis Way industrial park	30

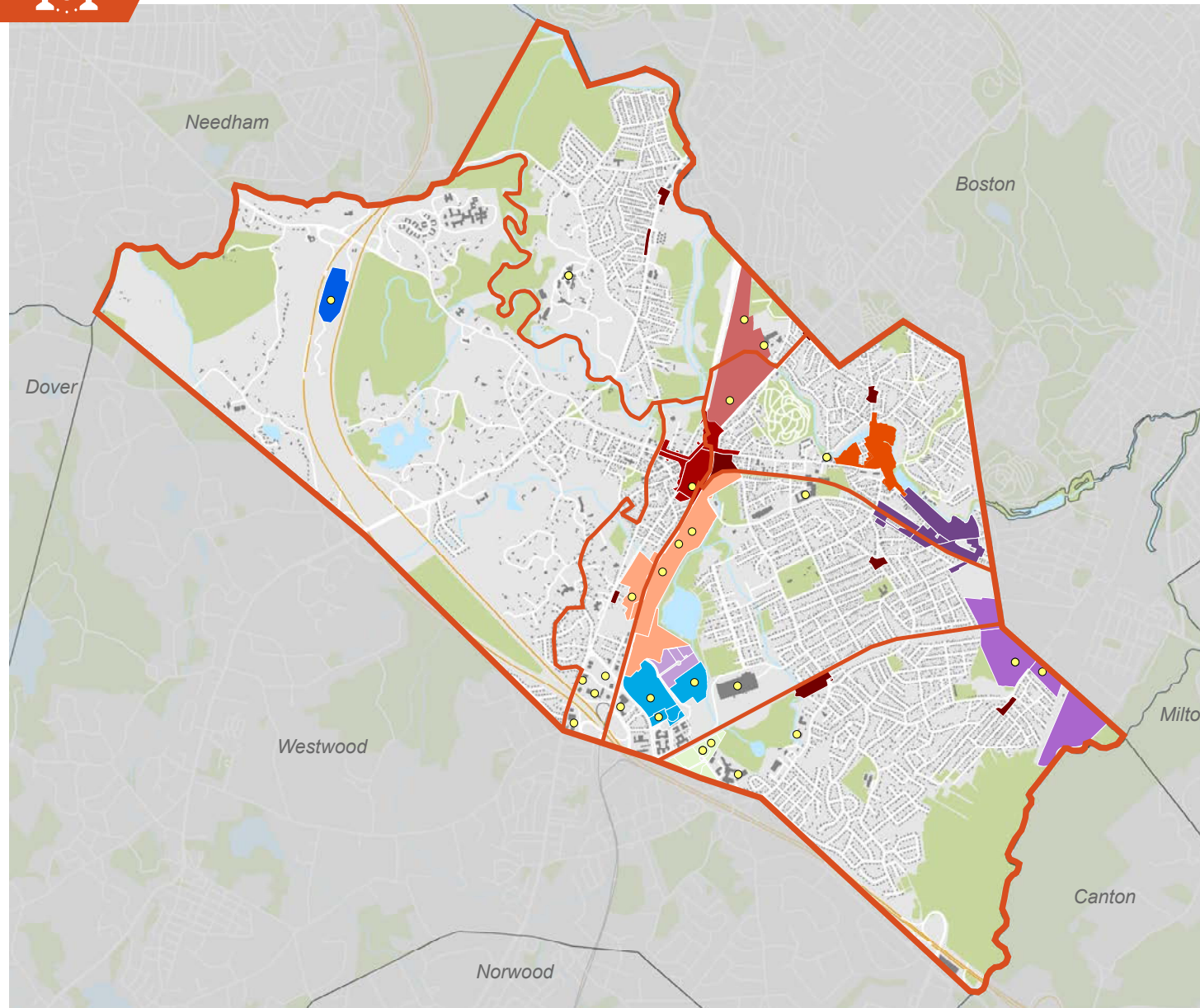
The areas of economic activity account for about 50% of revenue and employees in Town. Employment density is strongly concentrated around Providence Highway South and Legacy Place. However, business establishment density is more concentrated on Providence Highway South and Dedham Square. The remainder of revenue and employees in the Town are dispersed in local business districts outside of these major employment centers.

These economic activity areas are highlighted on the following page with a map that highlights the tax revenue generated from these locations. The other area highlighted on the tax revenue map that is not listed as an economic activity area is the NewBridge on the Charles area. Following the tax revenue map with the economic activity areas is a map showing the clusters of the largest employers in Dedham as they compare to these highlighted economic activity areas. Other major employers are identified that fall outside of one of the economic activity areas and include public and private schools, and clusters of businesses on Rustcraft Road and Allied Drive.

Industries in Dedham

The two largest industries in Dedham by both number of employees and number of establishments are Health Care and Social Assistance (3,451 employees) and Retail (3,448 employees). These two industries have much lower average weekly wages compared to the highest earners in Dedham. Healthcare and Social Assistance employees earn an average of \$869 per week and retail employees earn an average of \$626





Economic Development

*Biggest Employers
(100 or more employees)*

Alimed Inc
Amazon Distribution Center
American Red Cross
Animal Rescue League
Atrius Health
Best Buy
BJ's Wholesale Club
Costco
Dedham Health & Athletic Complex
Dedham High School
Dedham Institution for Savings
Dedham Savings Bank
Dedham Town Administrator
Fox Twenty Five WFXT TV
General Dynamics
Hilton-Boston/Dedham
Holiday Inn-Boston/Dedham
Lowe's Home Improvement
NewBridge on the Charles
Noble & Greenough School
Norfolk Country Offices
Showcase Cinemas De Lux
Star Market
Super Stop & Shop
The Linden
Whole Foods

0 0.225 0.45 0.9 Miles

Data Sources:
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

February 2020

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Industry	Number of Establishments (2018)
Health Care and Social Assistance	174
Retail Trade	154
Professional and Technical Services	131
Manufacturing	103
Accommodation and Food Services	77
Finance and Insurance	59
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	34
Wholesale Trade	33
Public Administration	26
Educational Services	24
Information	23

per week. The highest paid employees in Dedham work in Utilities with an average of \$3,679 per week and Finance and Insurance with an average of \$2,290 per week.

Dedham is home to 1,103 establishments representing a range of different industries (EOLWD, 2020). The three largest industries are Health Care and Social Assistance (174 establishments), Retail Trade (154) and Professional and Technical Services (131). These diverse industries support a wide range of employment opportunities for a total of 17,861 employees in Dedham prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes both residents who work in Dedham as well as those who travel from outside of Dedham to work (EOLWD ES-202). In 2020, monthly employment

numbers averaged 15,500, about 2,000 fewer (EOLWD, 2020). The industries of Healthcare and Social Assistance (3,451), Retail Trade (3,448) and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (2,002) employ the most individuals overall. The industries that employ the most Dedham residents include Educational Services and Health Care and Social Assistance (4,103), Professional, Scientific and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services (1,729) and Finance and insurance, and Real Estate and Rental Leasings (ACS 2017 5-year estimate).

There is a total of 1,377 people who both work and live in Dedham, 12,798 people who live in Dedham but work outside of Dedham and 17,647 people who work in Dedham but live outside of Dedham (LEHD On the Map). The average weekly wage for an employee of a business in Dedham is \$1,037 (EOLWD ES-202). The highest paid wages are Utilities (\$3,679), Finance and Insurance (\$2,290) and Professional and Technical Services (\$2,204).

An individual employed in all of Dedham's top industries except for the Finance and Insurance industry is cost burdened when renting the median priced one-bedroom home in Town. Employees in several industries, particularly Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance are severely cost burdened. Individuals employed in the Accommodation and Food Services industries are effectively priced out of Town. The difficulty for individuals to both live and work in Dedham, demonstrated by this analysis, likely contributes to high percentage of Dedham employees



who are not Dedham residents and the associated higher commuting traffic in and out of Town. Those that must commute for employment face higher day to day travel costs and greater constraints on their time. This pressure could cause individuals currently working in Dedham to seek employment elsewhere, particularly if they are not currently residents of the Town.

Largest employers in Dedham

The employer data is pulled from InfoGroup USA (2016) and does not reflect past 2016. We filtered for employers who have 100 or more employees. We would require updated information on the Amazon Distribution Center and the Papa Gino's bankruptcy to bring this chart into better alignment with beginning of the year in 2020.

Access to jobs and services

Large gaps in transit, pedestrian, and bike infrastructure within Dedham impact connectivity between housing, recreation, and economic activity areas. Dedham is a relatively car-dependent city, with walk, bike, and transit scores reflecting the inability of residents to reliably travel by each of these modes. Furthermore, several of the priority development areas have medical, retail, and other daily needs for the most vulnerable populations who may not be able to drive (for example, households without automobiles, persons under 16 years of age, seniors, and persons with disabilities). Many of Dedham's economic activity areas are located adjacent to the Town's major thoroughfare, Providence Highway, or in locations that are best accessed by

Company name	Number of employees	Revenue estimate	Average weekly wages for industry in Dedham
Legacy Place (65 businesses)	1,230	Not available	\$482
Norfolk County Offices	347	Not available	\$1,457
American Red Cross	300	Not available	\$869
Security 990 Washington Street	275	\$100-500 million	\$1,382
Nobles Day Camp	250	\$20-50 million	\$482
Dedham Savings Bank	211	\$50-100 million	\$2,290
Alimed Inc.	200	\$50-100 million	\$1,338
Fox Twenty-Five WFXT TV	200	\$50-100 million	\$1,420

vehicle. These patterns are both resulting from and contributing to residents and visitors almost exclusively relying on vehicles. On Providence Highway particularly, and near the areas of economic activity generally, the sheer volume of vehicular travel, high speeds, the lack of safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and unsignalized points of entry and exit generate hotspots for accidents. Another indication of the predominant mode of travel is the number of commercial parking spaces at the Dedham Mall,



Dedham Square, Providence Highway South, Legacy Place, and Stergis Way, totaling about 10,000 parking spaces, more than sufficient to meet demand.

Market conditions

The market conditions for the Town of Dedham include an evaluation of real estate indicators such as price per square foot for commercial and industrial buildings – this includes recent construction and previously existing space based on recent CoStar data. A summary of the general characteristics of each major submarket in Dedham is provided in the table below.

The comparison of the overall scale of these submarkets is interesting. The retail area and number of buildings is far larger than the office and industrial areas in Dedham. Compared to nearby communities of Canton and Norwood, Dedham has more retail space than Canton which has 928,000 square feet

Submarket	Total area (gross square feet, SF)	Total buildings (number)	Average market rent (per SF, 2020)	Vacancy rate (2020)
Industrial	998,000	41	\$10.36	8.8%
Office	1,600,000	68	\$22.55	7.3%
Retail	2,500,000	124	\$28.04	1.9%
Multi-family Residential	755 (units)	12	\$2.53	4.4%

(SF) and about the same amount as Norwood. Dedham has far less industrial space than both Canton which has 5.9M SF and Norwood which has 4.1M SF. Dedham is closer to the amount of office space, but still below when compared to Canton which has 3M SF, and Norwood which has 2.6M SF.

Industrial Submarket

Dedham is part of the Providence Highway South Submarket that includes the towns of Canton, Dedham, Norwood, Stoughton, and Westwood. The industrial activity is supported by the convergence of Providence Highway, Route 128, and Interstate 95. In Dedham, the primary industrial areas include Stergis Way, Milton industrial, and Readville. The average industrial rents and vacancy rates vary by industrial area in Dedham. Among those areas, average rents are highest in Stergis Way and vacancy rates are lowest there as well. For the past 10 years, average industrial rents have been increasing across Dedham industrial areas with about a 40% increase over that timeframe. The average market rent per square foot across the Boston Metro Market for industrial is higher at \$11.76.

Office Submarket

The submarket Dedham is a part of typically attracts a variety of administrative and back-office uses in the manufacturing, financial, and data processing industries. Many of the largest users own their space with leasing typically driven by smaller, local firms. In Dedham, the primary office areas include Dedham Square, Legacy Place, Dedham Corporate Center, an area of



Elm Street and an area of Eastbrook Road. The average office rents and vacancy rates vary by office area in Dedham. Among those areas, average rents are highest in Dedham Corporate Center. The vacancy rates are also the highest in Dedham Corporate Center. For the past 10 years, average office rents have been increasing across all Dedham office areas with about a 20% increase over that timeframe. Office vacancies were lower in 2020 than they had been in 2010. The average market rent per square foot across the Boston Metro Market for office is substantially higher at \$40.95. Office space in Dedham is comparatively very affordable.



Retail Submarket

In Dedham, the three primary retail areas include Providence Highway North/Dedham Mall, Providence Highway South, and Legacy Place. The average retail rents and vacancy rates vary by retail area in Dedham. Among those areas, average rents are highest at Legacy Place and vacancy rates are lowest there as well. For the past 10 years, average retail rents have been increasing across Dedham retail areas with about a 30% increase over that timeframe. Retail vacancies were lower in 2020 than they had been in 2010. The average market rent per square foot across the Boston Metro Market for retail is lower at \$25.35.

Multi-family Residential Submarket

In the submarket Dedham is a part of households typically choose to own rather than rent, but those who do rent pay significantly less for quality product than they might compared to urban areas. Rents for 4-Star and 5-Star properties are a full 20% less than the metropolitan average. In Dedham, the three multi-family residential areas include Dedham Square, Legacy Place, and south of Legacy Place. Dedham Square includes 103 units, Legacy Place includes 48 units that are under construction. South of Legacy Place includes 585 units. For the past 10 years, average multi-family rents have been increasing with about a 30% increase over that timeframe. The occupancy rate in that timeframe has remained relatively steady between 94% to 98%. The average market rent per square foot across the Boston Metro Market for multi-family is substantially higher at \$11.76.



Compared to nearby communities of Canton and Norwood, Dedham has less multi-family inventory. Dedham has 755 multi-family units, compared to 1,377 in Canton and 2,745 in Norwood.

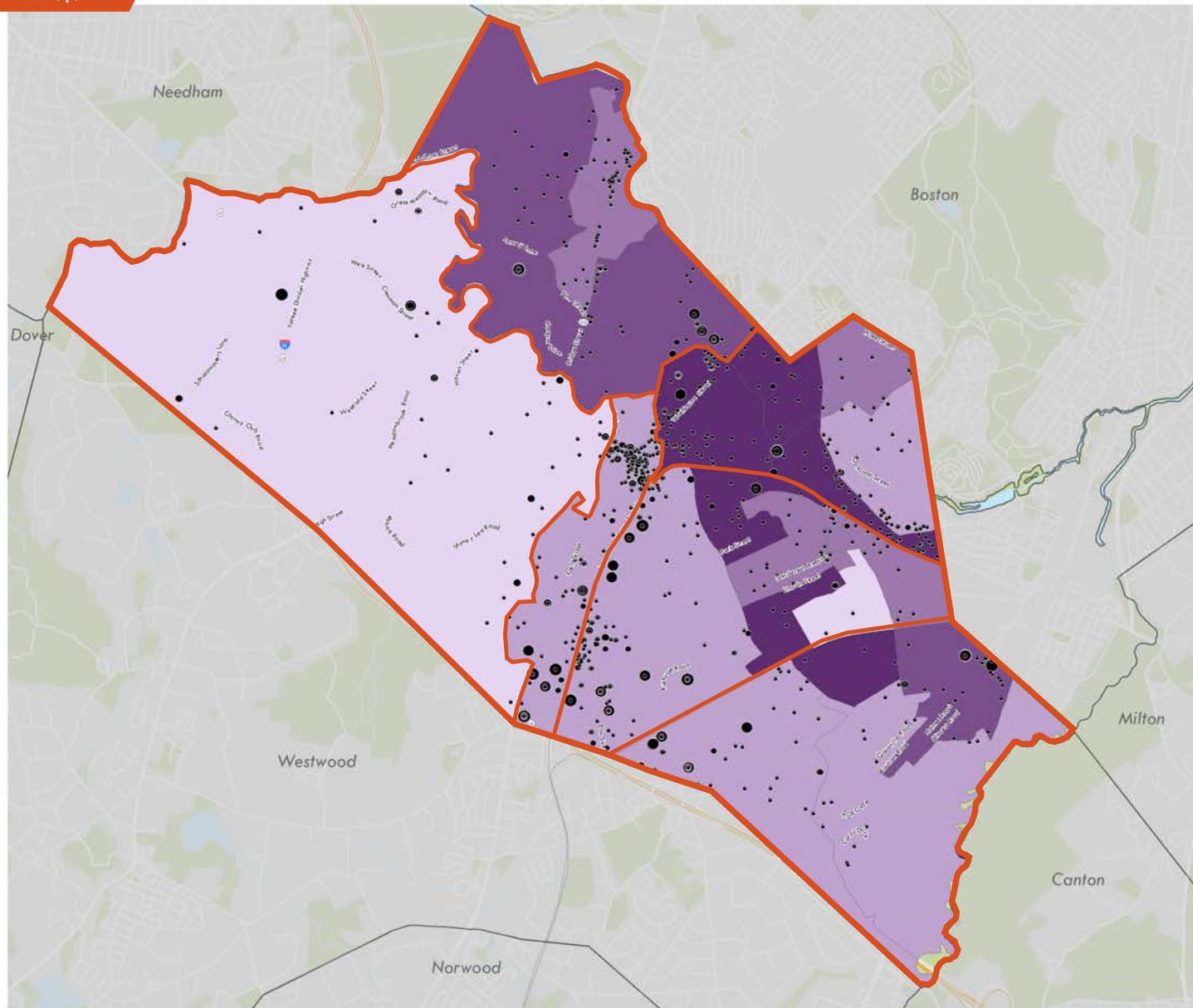
Housing affordability

While the overall housing stock in Dedham offers a variety of housing unit types, there appears to be a mismatch between the size of the housing units (number of bedrooms in a home) and the size of households (number of people living in a home). This mismatch is observed in every neighborhood and has implications for nearby economic activity areas. In neighborhoods where single-person households are mismatched with larger houses, this mismatch could place a cost burden on households so they have less discretionary spending to support the local economy. Particularly, if seniors cannot downsize because of a lack of smaller housing options, they may move elsewhere. At the same time, if single-family and multi-bedroom housing units aren't available on the market, many families looking in Dedham could settle elsewhere. Providing appropriate housing choices for seniors, families, and everyone in between is essential to supporting the workforce and customer base of local businesses. Furthermore, a higher concentration of housing may be needed in areas of Town where the majority of retail exists. Better aligning the proximity of local businesses with multifamily and mixed-use housing options can improve walkability, reduce trips times, and offer these businesses a reliable customer base.

Unemployment

As previously discussed, housing affordability is directly related to employment opportunities and compensation. Periods of unemployment can lead to housing instability. While the unemployment data on the following map is pre-COVID-19 pandemic, the relative differences in unemployment rates by neighborhood are more important to point out and are more likely to persist through future unemployment changes. East Dedham shows the largest area with the highest unemployment rate. Oakdale and Greenlodge, Sprague, Manor also show areas with elevated unemployment with some areas also showing the highest rates. Riverdale shows the next consistently elevated rates. Unemployment rates in Dedham Village/Dedham Square are modest and rates in West Dedham (Precinct 1) are low.

The other data feature of the map is the businesses shown with number of employees. It is interesting to see the clusters of large employee businesses do not correspond with the low unemployment rates. An observation that is consistent with the fact that most Dedham residents are employed outside of the Town. Most of the employees for those Dedham businesses are commuting in to Dedham to work in those positions.



Economic Development

Unemployment

Businesses by Number of Employees

- 0 - 14
- 15 - 42
- 43 - 80
- 81 - 150
- 151 - 347

Unemployment Rate

- 0% - 1.2%
- 1.3% - 2.6%
- 2.7% - 3.5%
- 3.6% - 4.2%
- 4.3% - 13.2%
- Rivers and Streams
- Water
- Open Space
- Dedham



Data Sources:
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
February 2020



Economic development Community Priorities

As part of the Master Plan process, through the extensive community engagement process detailed in Chapter 1 including community surveys, community open houses, and other opportunities for community conversation, themes and priorities heard from the community were identified related to economic development and are summarized here. While the themes and priorities heard from the community are reflected in the economic development themes earlier in this chapter, these items deserve additional recognition and in some cases repetition due to the frequency these themes and priorities were mentioned by the community.

ED1 **Redevelop industrial areas**

Survey participants believe that East Dedham Square has great potential to build on its industrial legacy, bounty of natural resources, and a great walkable community feel and focus there should continue to address lacking infrastructure and diversity of retail options. The Readville area received a similar mixed response, with its greatest assets being confluence of rail infrastructure and access along with the potential for redevelopment.

ED2 **Strengthen retail areas**

Survey participants believe that Dedham Square has the potential to continue to sustain small businesses given its historic and vibrant context. Providence Highway elicited similar optimism for sustaining its vast retail and service options, but in a more vehicle-oriented context.

ED3 **Maintain a sustainable commercial tax base**

Survey participants responded that maintaining a sustainable commercial tax base is the most important challenge facing the Town of Dedham. The next most important challenges included access to good jobs and improving areas of commerce, services and amenities.

ED4 **Increase small businesses and wages**

Survey participants responded that increasing small local businesses was the most important economic development activity, followed by increasing wages for employees. These priorities could be coupled with the top centers of economic activity where respondents would like to see changes including Providence Highway, East Dedham Square, Readville, Bridge Street, and Dedham Square.



Economic development Goals and Strategies

Summary: Invest in and support local businesses to provide opportunities for residents as entrepreneurs and employees, and to provide convenient access to services they need.

ED1 Goal 1: Invest in neighborhood business districts with a focus on creating an environment for more independently owned businesses and improving pedestrian access.

It is important to both strengthen centers of employment and economic activity in Dedham and increase small business density and job growth in local business districts. Investing in local economic development at neighborhood centers could also provide an opportunity to increase infrastructure for pedestrian and bicycle use in a town that has heavy reliance on vehicles, advance previous recommendations, such as the East Dedham Square Arts Overlay District, and support local business districts in neighborhoods such as Riverdale.

Strategy ED1.1: Review the zoning and regulations in each neighborhood business district to ensure alignment with the goals for each district and to encourage equitable public and private investments balanced with historic preservation

Strategy ED1.2: Leverage Town investments to support neighborhood business districts including public realm, placemaking, sidewalk, and streetscape improvements and using Town-owned property effectively to support the goals of the district

Strategy ED1.3: Host Town-organized events and programming series to activate districts. Work closely with local organizations that promote art and culture, such as Mother Brook Arts and Community Center in East Dedham

Strategy ED1.4: Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to develop a brand identity for districts to attract new visitors, residents, and businesses

Strategy ED1.5: Establish a wayfinding strategy program, an effective signage program that will help visitors and residents navigate district amenities and landmarks, to connect neighborhood business districts to pedestrian infrastructure and surrounding natural resources like Wigwam Pond and the Charles River

Strategy ED1.6: Expand the capacity of businesses and create stronger connections to the public realm beyond storefronts through the increased use and activation of outdoor spaces such as through outdoor dining or displays



ED2 Goal 2: Strengthen support for small businesses that focuses on improving current systems and building additional capacity.

There are opportunities to build sustainable commercial revenues by strengthening small businesses within Dedham. Central commercial districts, like Dedham Square and East Dedham Square, need small businesses to thrive if they are going to continue to be community destinations. Small business support should evolve to help small businesses continue to thrive in Dedham and may include enhanced technical assistance, establishing a chamber of commerce, and the offering the opportunity for municipal support through locally-sourced procurements.

Strategy ED2.1: Work with local community partners and business owners to undertake a detailed small business district assessment to better understand the specific conditions and challenges unique to the different areas of Dedham

Strategy ED2.2: Establish a small business liaison position within the community development department dedicated to supporting small business owners and future entrepreneurs in Dedham to navigate the regulatory environment or pursue grants or other funding sources and support

Strategy ED2.3: Identify a dedicated funding source for staffing, grants for future positions related to small business support

Strategy ED2.4: Define Dedham economic activity areas' competitive advantages and develop strategic marketing materials accordingly





ED3 Goal 3: Improve the ability for people who work in Dedham to live in Dedham by encouraging affordable housing, improving living wages, and attracting better paying employment opportunities.

People who choose to work in Dedham should be able to afford living in Dedham. Expanding the range and quality of job opportunities available in Dedham can help meet this goal, particularly in continuing to strengthen its retail and industrial base. Addressing the current gap between wages and housing costs is critical to addressing housing affordability. Building out a strong workforce development program to improve Dedham residents' employment opportunities is as important as continuing to invest in affordable housing options.

Strategy ED3.1: Integrate housing and economic development planning strategies to guide future housing production that is affordable to those who work in Dedham but are currently priced out of the community in industries like Accommodation and Food Services and attractive to those who may seek to live in Dedham but are currently commuting into the Town for work everyday

Strategy ED3.2: Establish an economic development committee dedicated to stewardship of workforce, with a particular focus on industries that may need to train new employees to replace many approaching retirement, and investment opportunities in Dedham as well as regional opportunities and partnerships

Strategy ED3.3: Encourage continued partnerships between the Blue Hill Technical Regional High School and other workforce development partners in the area to facilitate internship opportunities in local industries

Strategy ED3.4: Convene a working group composed of private sector, workforce development, and community development stakeholders to evaluate current industry strengths and challenges as well as regional opportunities and partnerships for employment

Strategy ED3.5: Incentivize the investment in growing industries such as biotech, medical research, and clean energy, among others

Strategy ED3.6: Partner with property owners and developers to address current challenges to attracting businesses and investment



ED4 Goal 4: Retain a strategic balance and mix of uses across the Town to respond to future economic trends in industrial or other uses and align growth and changes with the community's vision.

Throughout the region, areas of flexible commercial and industrial use are shrinking due to encroachment by other types of development. These are important areas in Dedham in which to retain flexibility to respond to future opportunities. Currently, there is a competitive industrial base in Dedham that could benefit from increased investment. Not only could the industrial sector provide more job opportunities for Dedham, it could spur growth with its close proximity to the Boston border and in locations near transit access. Exploring land use opportunities that promote industrial business development could be an option to retain these important economic development opportunities for the future.

Strategy ED4.1: Create a baseline assessment of industrial and commercial land use areas in the Town today and define an approach or policy to these areas to retain future flexibility by reducing loss and encroachment by other uses

Strategy ED4.2: Leverage historic preservation to retain a mix and scale of the types of spaces that will support local small businesses. Connect these types of spaces to support for the creative economy and local entrepreneurship.

Strategy ED4.3: Leverage workforce development programs currently underway and refocus on industrial job opportunities

Strategy ED4.4: Establish “district” liaisons for specific economic development activity areas including industrial areas like Milton Industrial Corridor, Readville Industrial Area. Liaisons will be involved in future areas of planning work including site location, workforce development and beyond to make sure there is a collective voice that reflects stakeholders.

Strategy ED4.5: Form an “on-call” Committee of Town leaders, Town Manager, Finance Committee, Economic Development, who can react quickly to incoming economic development funding, such as through the American Recovery and Funding Act (ARPA), to quickly and strategically allocate to Town needs and priorities.



ED5 Goal 5: Focus transformative growth and future redevelopment on the Providence Highway corridor including enhanced pedestrian and bicycle circulation and connections.

The Providence Highway corridor should continue to strengthen its retail base to provide job opportunities and convenient access to retail and services for Dedham residents. Improving transit, walking and biking access, and connections to the corridor would improve economic development, access to employment, and could provide the platform for renewed and transformative investment in this critical economic corridor.

Strategy ED5.1: Undertake a community and property owner visioning process to articulate the desired vision for future land use and development patterns to complement the vision for the street infrastructure. Incorporate results from the roadway redesign process and integrate any land that may be recovered from the redesigned roadway network

Strategy ED5.2: Conduct an analysis to review characteristics of corridor parcels including ownership, use, building to land value ratio, year built, and tenant information to better understand each parcels potential for change

Strategy ED5.3: Conduct a market demand analysis to evaluate trends in industrial/commercial real estate in the study area and market subregion along with an assessment of current key indicators to create a baseline understanding of the market position of the study area

Strategy ED5.4: Conduct a suitability analysis of relevant parcels for redevelopment on the Providence Highway corridor to create more compact walkable places

Strategy ED5.5: Use the strategies under Goal 5, to define public and private infrastructure and development needs to add specific details to the previously established District Improvement Financing (DIF)



Economic development Implementation

Critical next steps

In the Implementation Chapter of the Master Plan, a more detailed level of actions is added under each goal and strategy. The actions are associated with responsible parties, a suggested timeframe, and potential external funding or resources that may be helpful, if available. The following critical next steps highlight several of these actions that would provide tangible steps toward progress on the top priorities that have been identified for economic development.

ED1 Establish regulations and standards to allow and encourage outdoor dining and retail beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

This action would set the stage for the continuation of an economic development program that is well liked and successful. Local regulations may be required to carry the outdoor seating and display areas forward along with standards for making the investments more permanent with compliance for longevity, maintenance, accessibility, and design. The lead responsibility would be the Planning Department in close coordination with the Community Development and Public Health Departments. The timeframe for this action would be near-term, to occur within 1 to 3 years of the conclusion of the Master Plan process. Potential resources include example regulations and standards that have

been developed by other cities and towns in Greater Boston including the City of Boston and the City of Salem.

ED2 Undertake a small business assessment to guide support needed in different areas of Dedham

This action would set the stage for working with local community partners and business owners to strengthen support for small businesses. A detailed small business district assessment including clusters of small businesses across Dedham could identify the specific needs for each district. Once the needs are better understood, the supportive activity may include strengthening existing partners, such as Dedham Square Circle, or working collaboratively to support new partners such as a Chamber of Commerce, Business Improvement District, additional business associations, or non-profit groups. The most relevant support activity would be dependent on the needs of specific business areas. The lead responsibility would be the Community Development Department. The timeframe for this action would be near-term, to occur within 1 to 3 years of the conclusion of the Master Plan process.

ED3 Initiate a community and property owner visioning and district planning process for the Providence Highway corridor



This action would articulate the desired vision for the future land use and development patterns of the Providence Highway corridor, complement the recent roadway improvement planning, contribute tangible next steps for the District Improvement Financing established for the area, and set the stage for zoning changes to align with the community vision.

The Providence Highway corridor was almost completely developed by the mid-1980s. The corridor was originally developed under limited manufacturing zoning. The Highway Business (HB) zoning district was created based on recommendations of the 1996 Master Plan. It recognized the retail and commercial uses along Providence Highway and that require large land areas and an orientation to highway travel. This approach could be updated based on the community vision that is articulated and with the intent of creating more compact nodes that are walkable while also providing convenient vehicular access.

The lead responsibility would be the Planning Board and Planning Department in close coordination with the Community Development Department. The timeframe for this action would be near-term, to occur within 1 to 3 years of the conclusion of the Master Plan process. Potential resources include the planning grants from MassDevelopment's Site Readiness Program, or technical assistance from MAPC's District Local Technical Assistance.

