

## Public Forum March 22, 2022









#### Welcome and introduction

**Rachel Benson** 

Town of Wrentham

Director of Planning & Economic Development

## **Steering Committee**

Krista Andberg, Resident at Large
Debbie Exner, Resident at Large
Chris Gallo, Board of Selectmen
Julie Garland, Conservation Commission
John Jackson, Recreation Committee
George Labonte, Deputy Police
Chief/Resident
Jerry McGovern, Resident at Large

Jeffrey Plante, Resident at Large
Beatrice Schembri, Resident at Large
Steve Schwarm, Planning Board
Alan Selling, Open Space Committee
Everett Skinner, Jr., Planning Board
Lauren White, Resident at Large
Becca Zitomer, Commission on Disability

### **MAPC** staff



Josh Fiala, AICP AIA

Principal Planner

Project Role: Project Manager

Open Space & Recreation, Energy & Sustainability



Marah Holland
Transportation Planner II
Project Role: Transportation



Andrea Harris-Long, AICP
Senior Planner
Project Role: Historical & Cultural
Resources, Land Use



**Adi Nochur**Senior Transportation Planner *Project Role: Transportation* 



Courtney Lewis

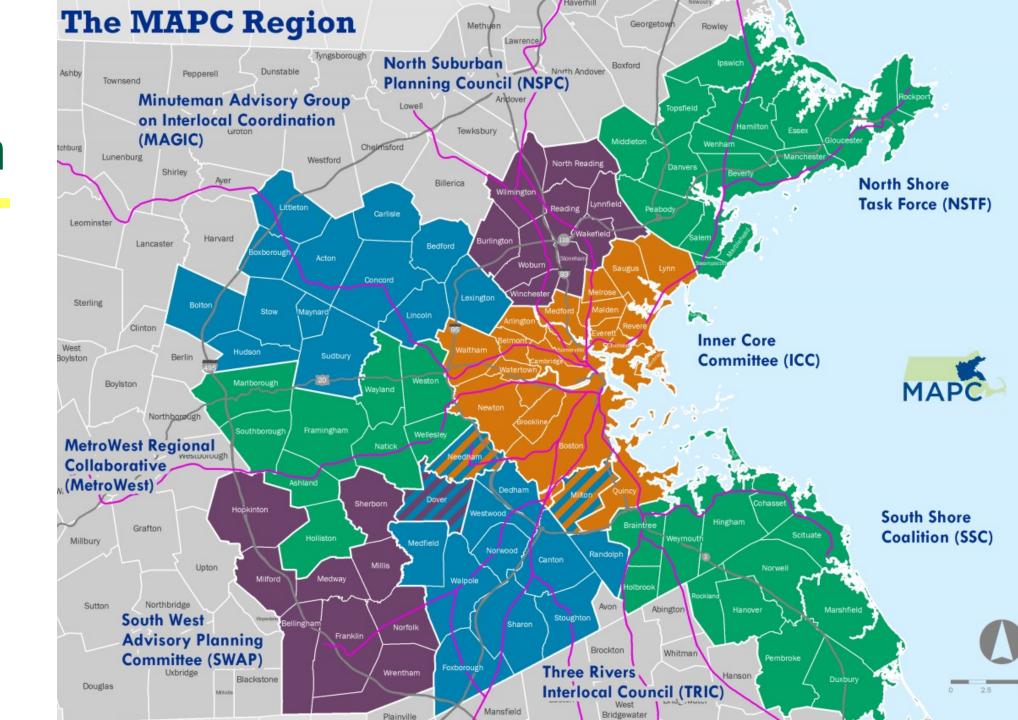
Regional Land Use Planner II

Project Role: Public Facilities & Services



**Travis Pollack, AICP**Senior Transportation Planner *Project Role: Transportation* 

## MAPC Region





#### **AGENDA**

- 1. Welcome and introduction
- 2. Land use and zoning
  - Presentation
  - Break-out discussion
- 3. Open Space and Recreation
  - Presentation
  - Break-out discussion
- 4. Transportation
  - Presentation
  - Break-out discussion
- 5. Next steps

## **Meeting Logistics**

- The Virtual Forum is being recorded and will be posted online
- Participants will be muted during presentations
- Please use the chat function for comments or questions
- You will be invited to participate in Zoom polls throughout the meeting
- Discussion will occur in small group discussion following each topic presentation

#### What is a Master Plan?

- Town-wide planning process
- Guide decision-making in Wrentham for the next 10 years
- Developed through a public process engaging residents and Wrentham stakeholders
- Built on research, analysis, and community involvement
- Vision Statement, topic goals and strategies
- Topics include: land use, open space, transportation, historical and cultural resources, community facilities, and energy and sustainability

## Phase I (2020 to Fall 2021)

#### Vision Statement

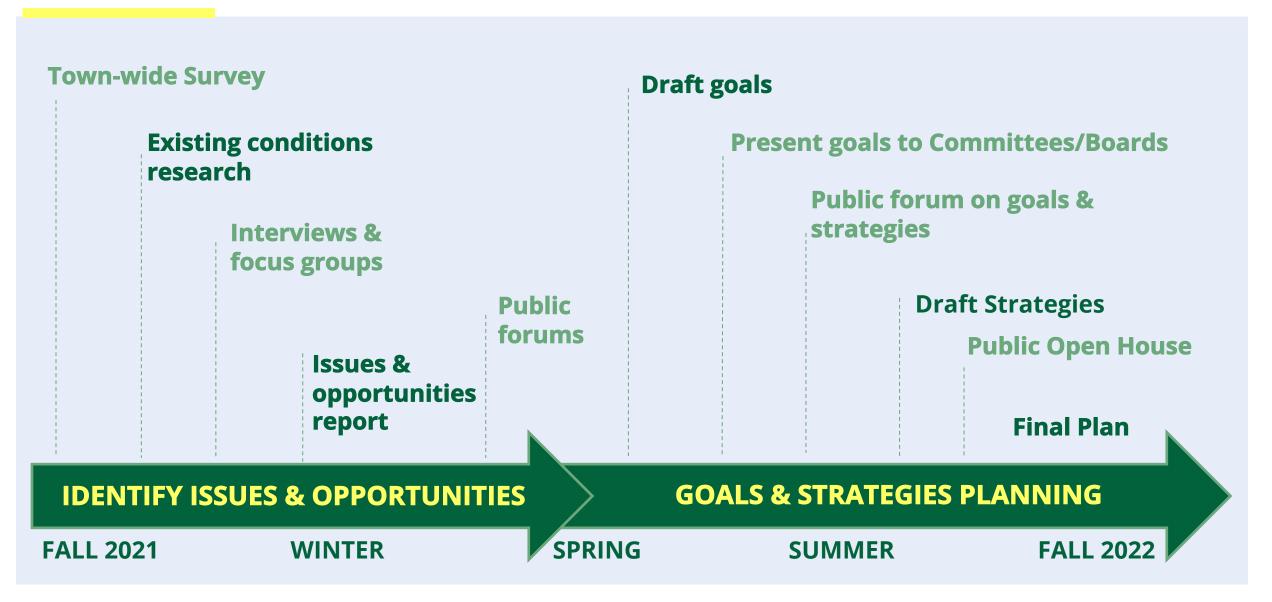
Wrentham is a charming town, proud of its Downtown and open spaces and a great place to raise a family. By 2030, we aspire to:

- Continue to cultivate a community-oriented and welcoming culture for all, regardless of race, religion, or age
- Protect more farmland and open space for cultural heritage, scenic beauty, habitat, and water quality
- Become more walkable and bikeable with sidewalks and trails
- Strengthen the Downtown with more 'Mom and Pop' shops, small businesses, homes, and places to gather
- Maintain the rural landscape by promoting sustainable land use patterns and shifting away from sprawl development
- Encourage diversity with a mix of housing options affordable to young adults, families, households with lower-incomes, and seniors
- Ensure fiscal responsibility while maintaining high-quality infrastructure and services

To effectively pursue and strike a balance between these goals, we encourage transparent governance, strong civic engagement, and volunteerism.

- Housing goals and strategies
- Economic development goals and strategies

## **Project Timeline (Fall 2021 to present)**



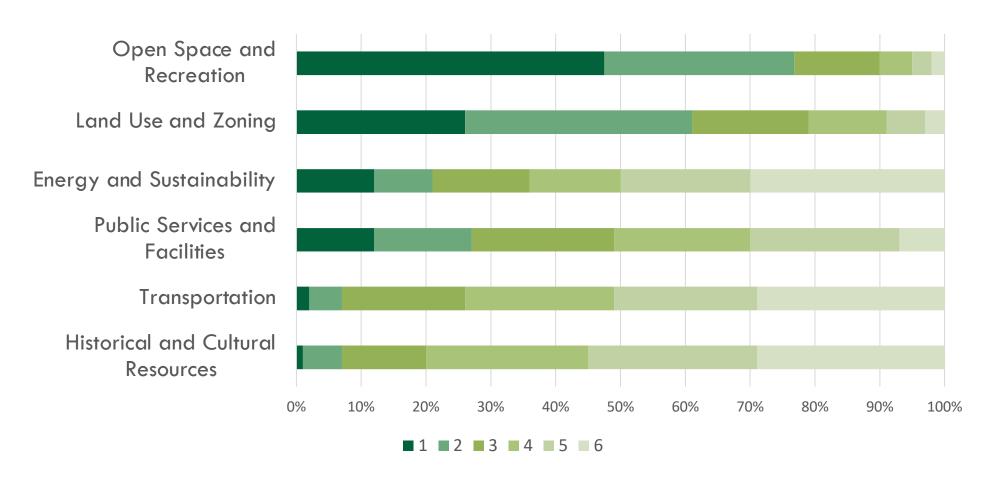
Wrentham 2030 Master Plan: Vision of Tomorrow

### **Phase II – Community Survey**

#### 777 respondents

- Distribution strategies
  - Postcard mailed to every household
  - Emails to volunteers, Town staff, Town boards, and other interested parties
  - Fliers and emails to residents of The Point at Wrentham apartments
  - Fliers at the Thanksgiving 5K
  - Included in Wrentham Public Schools email
  - Social media
  - Hard copies at Town Hall
  - Posting on electronic sign outside of Town Hall
- Open November 17 to December 20

#### Rank the Master Plan topics most important to you.



Open Space & Recreation and Land Use & Zoning ranked highest

#### Who is out there?

- Zoom audience polling questions:
  - •Do you live, work, and/or own a business in Wrentham?
  - •What is your age?
  - •What is your race or ethnicity?
  - •What is your household income?
  - •Have you participated in previous master plan events?



## Land use and zoning

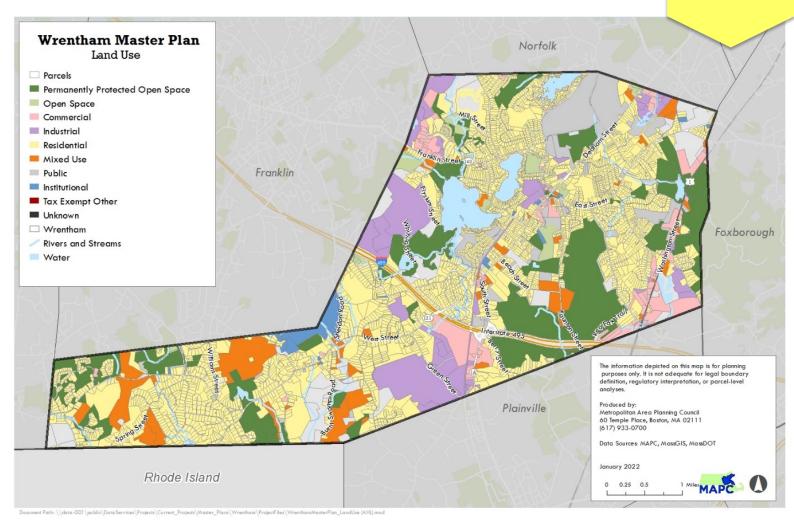
### **Existing Conditions**

#### **Quick Facts**

- 43% residential
- 22% public land
- 12% commercial/industrial

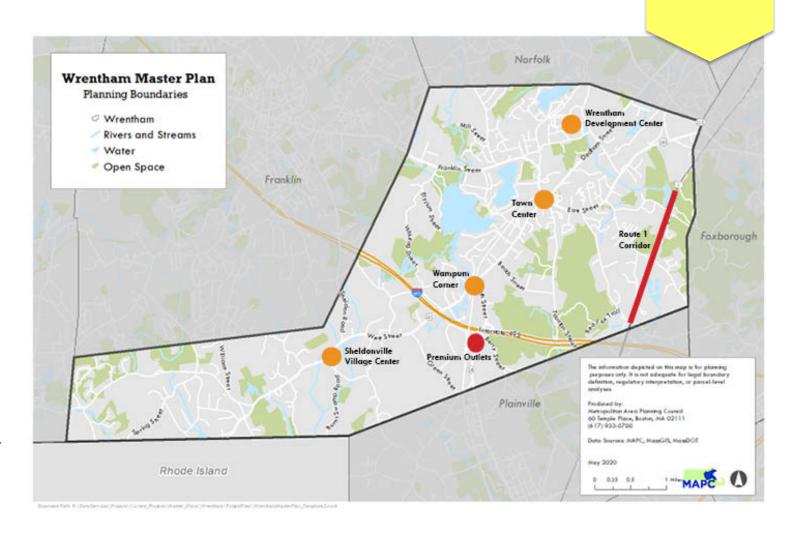
#### **Key Findings**

- Direct growth to downtown and other existing centers to prevent sprawl
- Recent successful zoning reform projects (downtown & Route 1)
- Room for more zoning reform:
  - Section 3A Compliance (MBTA Communities)
  - Open Space Residential Developments
  - Use regulations
  - Development regulations to promote walkable neighborhoods



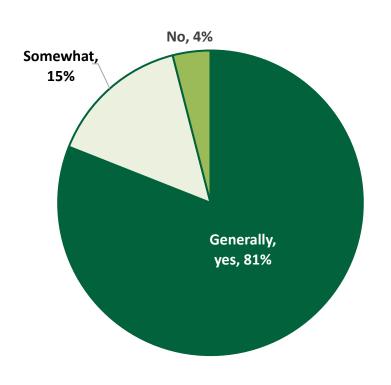
#### **Key Findings**

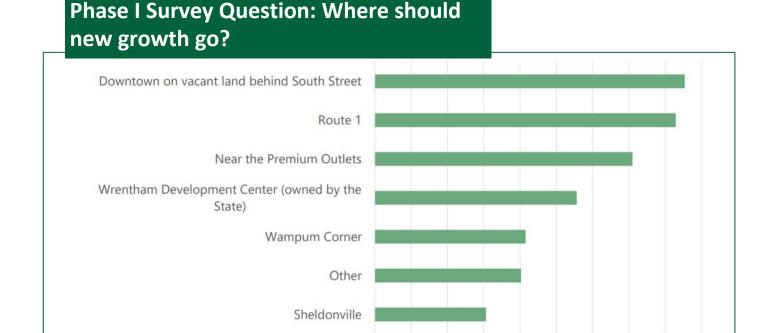
- Lack of public sewer limits the type of development that can occur
- Continuing with targeted planning and zoning efforts can ensure:
  - New development happens where infrastructure already exists
  - Public investments are strategic
  - Growth achieves goals like:
    - Preserving open space and historic character
    - Making Wrentham more walkable and bike-friendly
    - Expanding housing options



## **Survey Findings: Land Use**

#### Do results from the Phase I Survey reflect your priorities?





30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

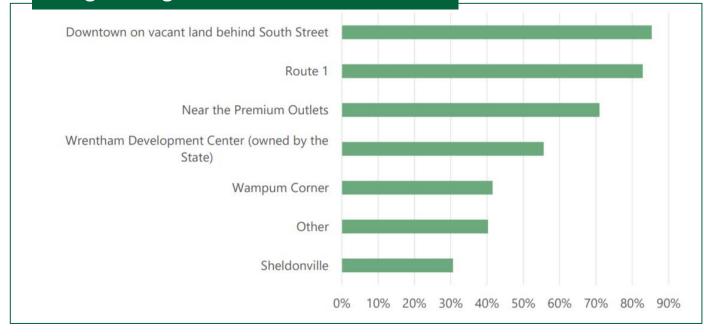
#### **Comments about growth**

"There is so much lost potential at the Wrentham Development[al] Center. Having this site developed could be a win-win for WDC and Wrentham residents. Every time I walk there, I envision the building being utilized for artists, housing, [and students]."

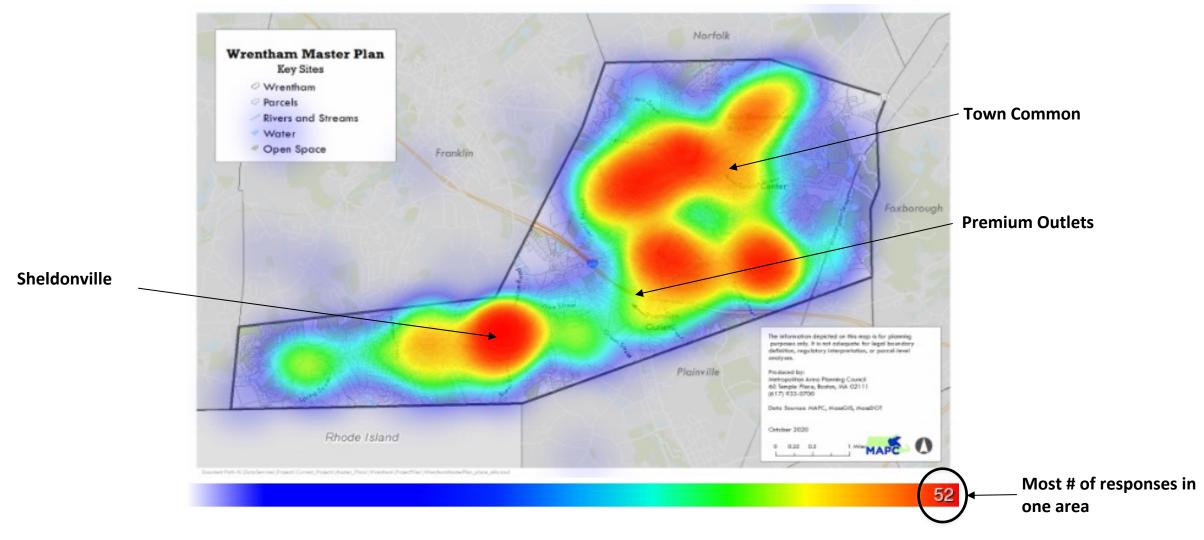
"My priority would be more [small business] development downtown and in Wampum Corner"

"Growth should respect historical nature of the town"

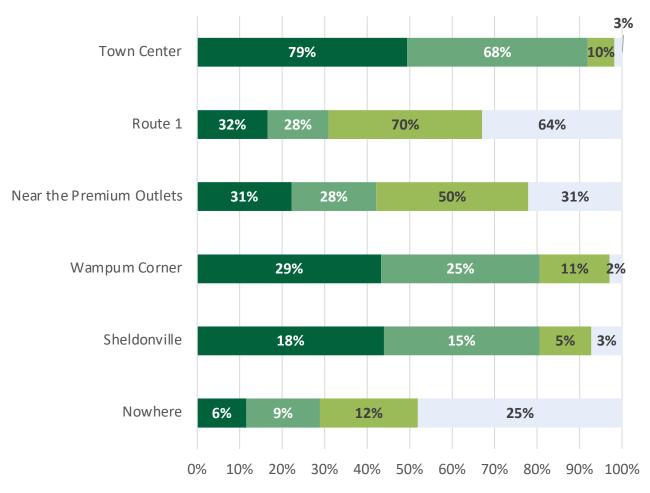
## Phase I Survey Question: Where should new growth go?



#### Where do you want to see less growth?



#### Where do you want to see different development types?



■ Pedestrian-friendly retail, restaurant, or office

■ Pedestrian-friendly retail, restaurant, or office with housing above (mixeduse)

■ Smaller scale, auto-oriented retail, restaurant, or office

Larger scale, auto-oriented retail, restaurant, or office









## **Land Use | Draft Goals**

- Promote walkable neighborhoods in existing village centers to avoid sprawl
- Advance preservation of open space and rural landscapes
- Continue strategic planning and zoning efforts to help shape how growth occurs
- Leverage public and private investments to strengthen existing centers
- Partner with the State to help shape the future of the Wrentham Developmental Center

Encourage sustainable development that maximizes existing infrastructure, promotes walkable, connected neighborhoods, and protects rural lands and open space.





# Land Use and Zoning Break-out Discussion



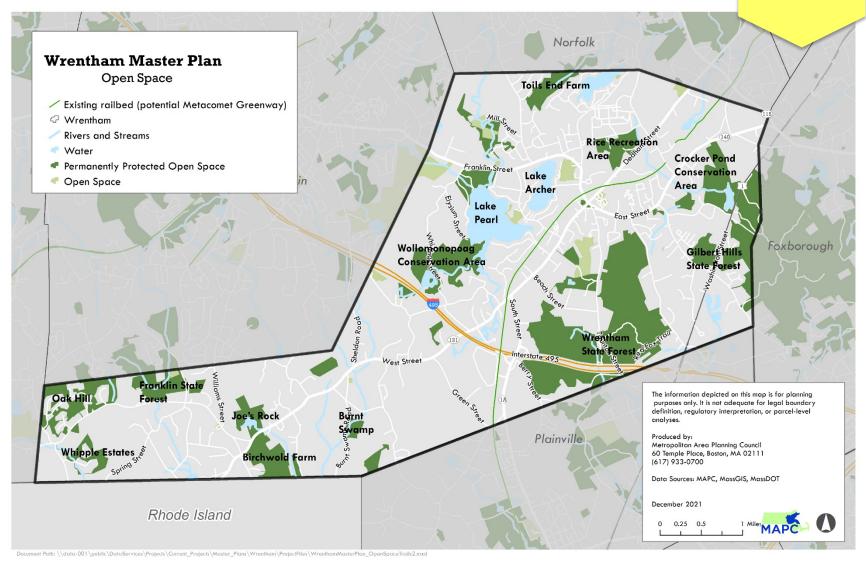
## Open space and recreation

#### **Quick Facts**

- 3,200 acres (23%) of
   Wrentham land is permanently protected open space
- 1,740 acres is open space with limited protection while receiving tax benefits

#### **Key findings**

- Open space protection is of highest priority to the community
- Big Apple Farm and Cook's
   Valley Farm are unprotected
   and vulnerable to development
- Open Space Committee is actively working land protection
- Population growth has been correlated with loss of open space in Wrentham, but it could be different.



## Open space and recreation

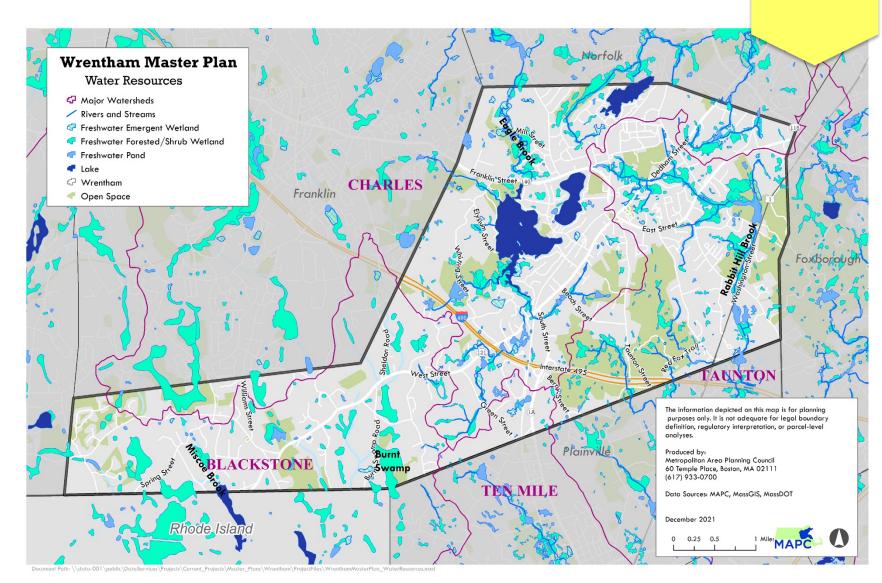
**Existing Conditions** 

#### **Quick Facts**

 The headwaters of four different watersheds are in Wrentham: Blackstone, Charles, Taunton, and Ten Mile Rivers

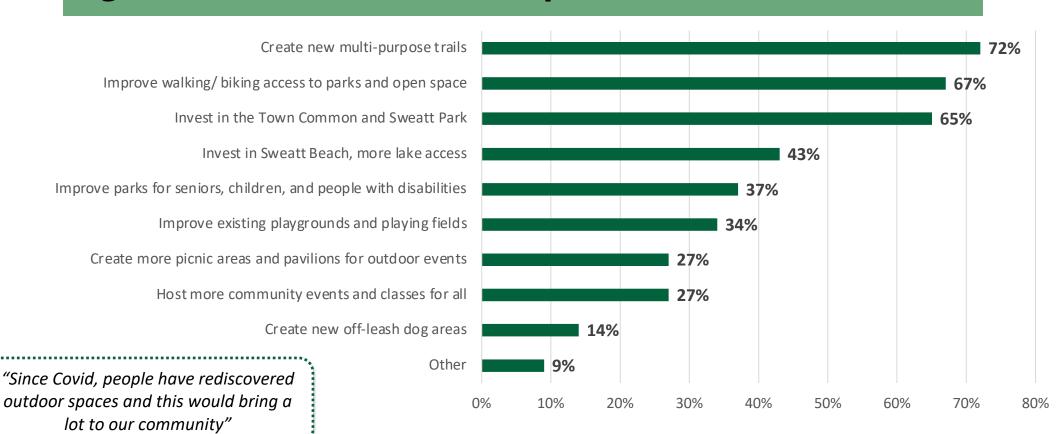
#### **Key findings**

- Wetlands have enormous value for water quality by absorbing pollution, retaining water to replenish aquifers, and managing storms and flooding
- Regulations intended to protect water quality including the Watershed Protection District, require relatively large areas of land per home which prevents the development of more walkable neighborhoods.

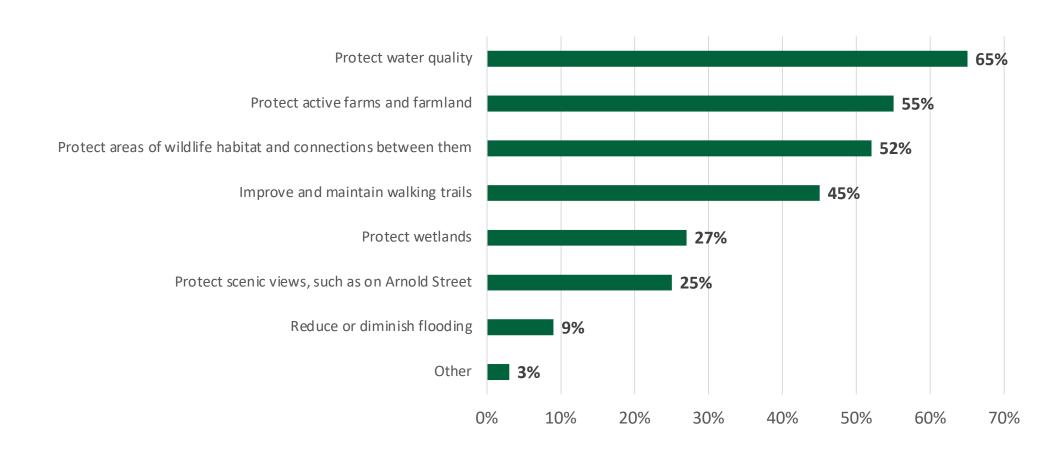


## Open space and recreation

## Over the next 10 years, what are the most important goals for recreation? Choose up to 5.



## Over the next 10 years, what are the most important goals for open space? Choose up to 3.



## Open space and recreation

**Potential draft goals** (responding to existing condition and survey themes)

- Protect watersheds and maintain water quality
- Advance open space preservation and protection
- Expand multimodal connections and access to open space and recreation (for example, the Metacomet Greenway)
- Invest in and improve existing resources, recreation facilities, and programs strengthening accessibility and inclusiveness
- Protect sensitive habitats and wildlife corridors
- Others?

Protect the Town's natural resources while improving the open spaces and recreation amenities, facilities, and programs that support a high quality of life.





# Open Space Break-out Discussion



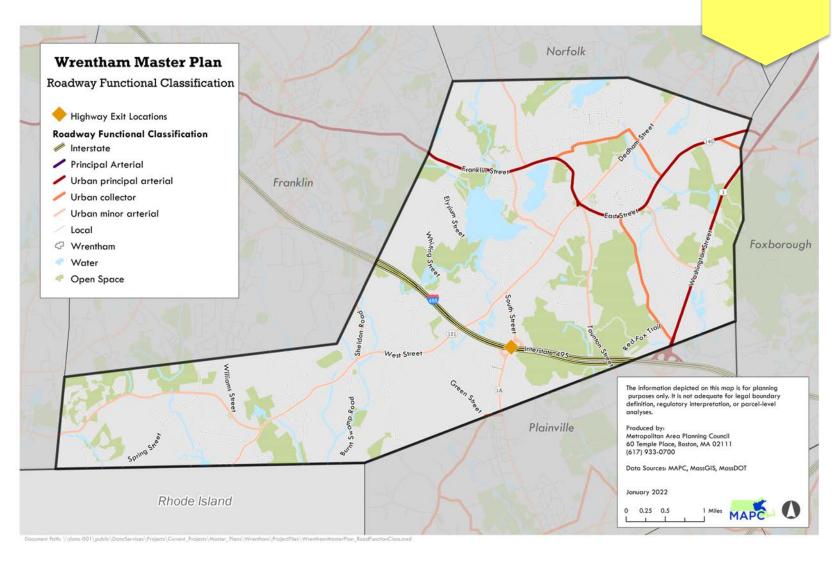
## **Transportation**

## **Transportation**

### **Existing Conditions**

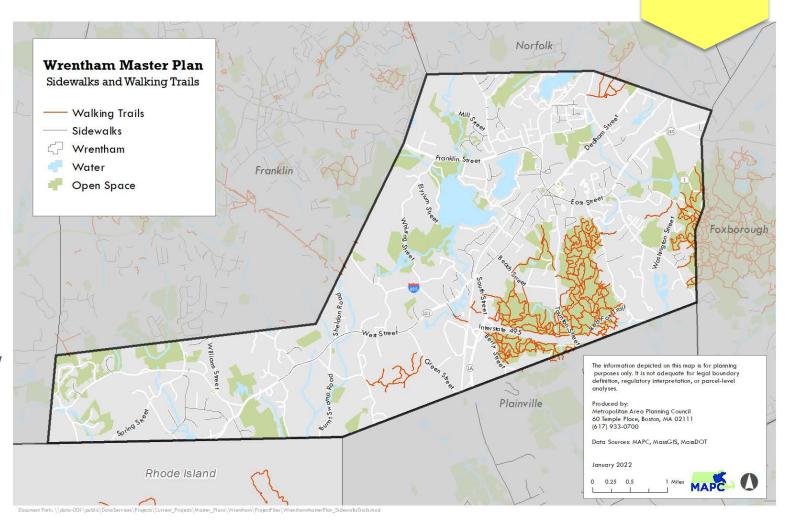
#### **Quick Facts**

- 96 total miles of roadway, 26 miles are state roads
- Avg household drives 80 miles per day
- Only 25% of Wrentham's streets have sidewalks on at least one side, only 2% have sidewalks on both sides; No bicycle facilities
- More than \$15 million in funding is needed to repair existing roadways
- Vehicle crashes average about 350 crashes per year
- Pedestrian activity doubled over the past two years
- Bicycle activity more than doubled in 2020, but then fell below pre-pandemic levels in 2021



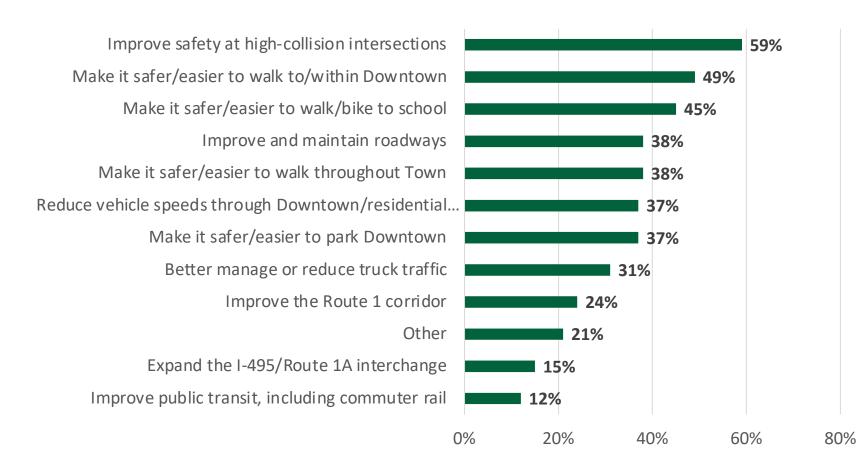
#### **Key findings**

- The car-centric nature of Wrentham limits the ability for residents to use other means of transportation, such as walking, rolling, biking, and public transit.
- Safe, accessible, and enjoyable walking infrastructure is lacking throughout town, but highly desired by residents.
- Opportunities for a greater range of mobility options exist in Wrentham, but additional program support is needed.
- Downtown parking is plentiful, but better management of existing spaces would allow for more efficient usage.
- Although nearly 70% of the town's street network is town-controlled, there are crucial streets in Wrentham's downtown that are state-owned.



## **Survey Findings: Transportation**

#### What transportation improvements are most important?

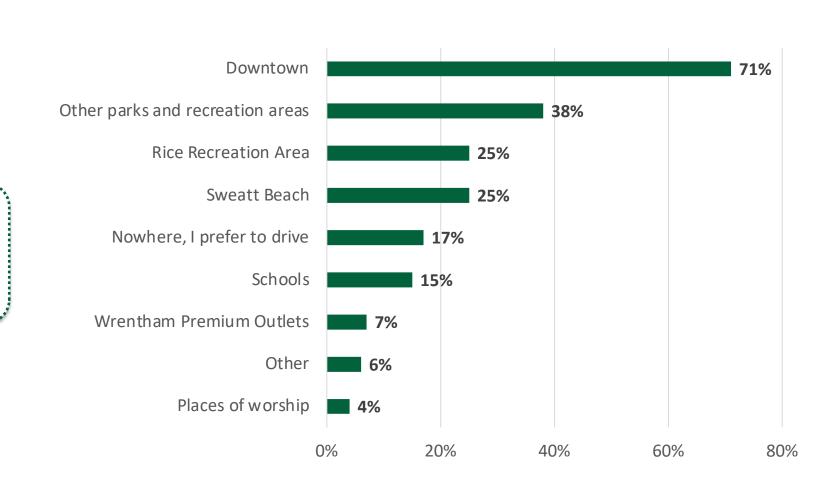


## Where would you go more often if it were easier to get there via walking, biking, or transit? Choose up to 3.

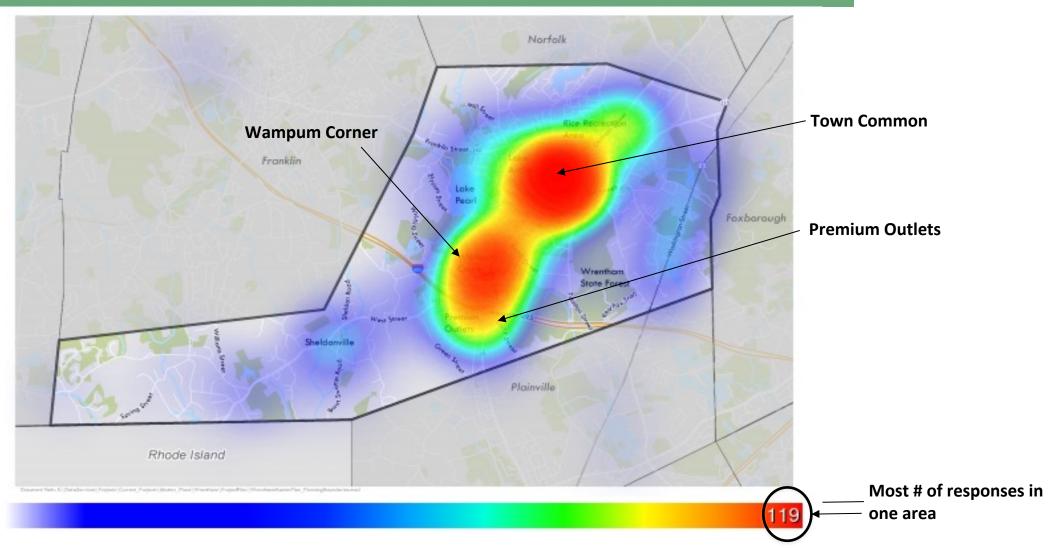
"Extremely interested in the **bike path development**"

"Sidewalks on busy streets would make running and biking from home possible in Sheldonville."

"More accessible transportation options for **people with disabilities**AND **seniors**"



#### Where should roadway improvements be prioritized?



## **Transportation**

**Potential draft goals** (responding to existing condition and survey themes)

- Assess parking needs and implement parking management strategies in Wrentham's downtown
- Decrease dependance on single-occupancy, private vehicles and increase use of GATRA's transit options in Wrentham
- Support walking, biking, and rolling infrastructure, especially walking infrastructure within and connecting to the downtown as well as other key destinations
- Increase roadway safety for all road users, especially the most vulnerable (people walking and biking, children, seniors, people with disabilities)
- Plan for electric and autonomous vehicles, as well as other potential future transportation technologies

Encourage sustainable mobility that maximizes existing infrastructure, promotes walkable, connected neighborhoods, and contributes to environmental health.



# **Transportation Break-out Discussion**



## **Next steps**

## **Next steps**

- Join us next Tuesday March 29<sup>th</sup> for the second forum of this series:
  - Historical and Cultural Resources
  - Community Facilities and Services
  - Energy and Sustainability
- Review of the questions, comments, and feedback gathered
- Refinement of the goals, and development of strategies
- Next Master Plan Committee Meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

#### Register for the event at:

#### https://mapc.ma/Wrentham-forums

#### Join us for two Master Plan Public Forums!

Please register for one or both events at:

https://mapc.ma/wrentham-forums

Come share your ideas at <u>two public forums</u> about the key issues and opportunities facing Wrentham and the goals that should be identified to address them.

The topics at the **first public forum** will include **land use**, **open space**, and **transportation**. The topics at the **second public forum** will include **historic and cultural resources**, **community facilities and services**, and **energy and sustainability**.

This pair of public forums is part of the Vision of Tomorrow: 2030 Master Plan process, which has included two town-wide surveys, focus groups, in-depth analysis, and more and will culminate in a Master Plan to guide the Town's priorities for the next 10 years.

To learn more please visit the project webpage: www.mapc.ma/WrenthamVision

Tuesday, March 22 7:00PM - 8:30PM Zoom Meeting

(with in-person option)

Topics: land use, open space, transportation

Tuesday, March 29
7:00PM - 8:30PM
Zoom Meeting
(with in-person option)

Topics: historic and cultural resources, community facilities and services, energy and sustainability



#### Visit the project webpage at:

#### www.mapc.ma/WrenthamVision



#### **News & Updates**



#### **Next steps**

Attend our March forums! Come share your ideas at two public forums about the key issues and opportunities facing Wrentham. Both events will be held on Zoom.

- Tuesday, March 22, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
   This forum will focus on land use, open space, and transportation.
- . Tuesday March 29 7 nm to 8:30 nm

**Draft Existing Conditions Overviews Available.** These documents outline the current state of land use, zoning, open space, recreation, natural resources, and transportation in Wrentham.

Download Draft Land Use and Zoning Existing Conditions

<u>Download Draft Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources Existing</u>
Conditions

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 $\underline{\textbf{Download Draft Transportation and Connectivity Existing Conditions}} \ \underline{\mathbb{P}}$ 

**Phase II Survey Results Released.** 777 people filled out the survey, which was



## Public Forum March 22, 2022





