



# LYNNFIELD

## 2040

Shaping our  
Future Today

### Draft Visioning Plan

January 2024

Prepared For Public Review

The Lynnfield community is invited to review the report and provide feedback during the public comment period. **The public comment period will begin on February 5 and end on March 1, 2024.** After March 1, the Lynnfield Planning Board will work with MAPC to incorporate revisions from public feedback and design the final plan.



## Acknowledgements

This project is led by the Lynnfield Planning Board, with support from Lynnfield Planning Staff, Administration, and the Select Board. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency for Greater Boston, provided technical assistance. The project is funded by a Community Compact Best Practices state grant and technical assistance funds from MAPC.

Special thanks to the Lynnfield community and their participation in the Visioning.

### Town of Lynnfield

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## A note from the Planning Board

The Lynnfield Planning Board is an independent Town board that acts on behalf of the townspeople as stewards of the Lynnfield Zoning Bylaws and the Rules and Regulations of the Planning Board governing the Subdivision of Land in Lynnfield. In making decisions, the Planning Board is guided by various Town plans and policies, including the town-wide master plan. Lynnfield's most recent master plan, completed in 2002, included aspirational goals pertaining to improved public facilities, economic development and increased socialization opportunities, many of which guided the approvals of MarketStreet, the Rail Trail, public safety facilities improvements, school expansions and other town projects.

It's been 21 years since Lynnfield's master plan was developed and the town has changed considerably during that time. The vision plan, the document that you are currently reading, is the first step to updating the Town's master plan. Select Board member Phil Crawford aptly summarized the fundamental value of a vision plan at the February 27, 2023 Select Board meeting when he said that it "...doesn't just support the work that we are doing, it defines the work that we are doing." Indeed, the importance of a town-wide vision plan is critical to successful town management and general governance, as it allows for collective reflection, exploration and imagination about what Lynnfield could become in 20 years. It asks, what is working? What isn't working? What could be improved and what should be preserved? The answers to these questions serve as guideposts to town leaders as they consider what plans and projects should be pursued and endorsed, and they will inform debate at future Town Meetings and other forums.

Our goal with this process was to develop a vision for the future of Lynnfield that reflects the aspirations, goals, and values of its residents. We worked in concert with town officials, committees, community groups, and public schools to ensure that residents had multiple opportunities to be a part of the visioning process. It is our intention that this document will serve as a roadmap for decision-making, not only for the Planning Board, but for all Town decision-makers. Our next step will be to develop a master plan that builds on the vision plan by identifying clear goals, objectives, and strategies with actionable steps to meet these expectations. In the meantime, the Planning Board will use the vision plan to make decisions on applications that come before us and will advocate for its use by other Town leaders. We hope that you will join us in being stewards of the Lynnfield vision plan too.



# Project Timeline

December 2022: Kickoff meeting with Planning Board

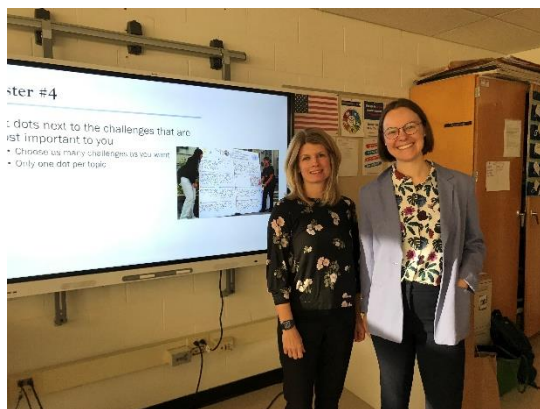
January-March 2023: Data collection to understand demographics and community characteristics

February-March 2023: Internal visioning with Town boards, committees, and departments

April-November 2023: Community visioning through an online survey, meetings with community groups, tabling at Lynnfield events, youth engagement with Lynnfield high school students, and a public forum

January-February 2024: Community review of draft vision and report

March 2024: Planning Board adoption of final community vision and report



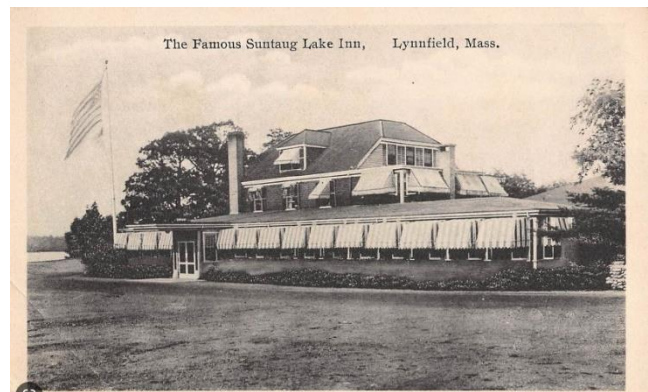


## Lynnfield, Past and Present

The Town of Lynnfield was incorporated in 1814, when it split off from the present-day City of Lynn. It was around that time that the area began to transition from a primarily agrarian economy to an industrial one. Transportation access to Lynnfield also increased during this time, with the construction of the Newbury Turnpike (Route 1) in 1806 and two railroad lines. Suntaug Lake and Pillings Pond became popular recreational destinations for visitors, especially during the summer.

After World War II, Lynnfield experienced significant growth in its housing stock and its population. Over 1,600 houses were built in the 1950s and 1960s and the population more than doubled. The once rural community was transformed into a suburb with increased public services such as post offices, fire and police stations, a new high school, new shopping centers like the Colonial Shopping Center, and an addition to the library.

Today, Lynnfield is an upper-income residential suburban community predominantly composed of single-family homes where most residents work outside of the town. In recent years, Lynnfield has seen an increase in commercial and residential development interest, including the growth of Market Street, as the Greater Boston economy has grown. The Town has responded to this increased development pressure with a variety of plans and land use regulations.





## Recent planning efforts in Lynnfield

As Lynnfield has grown and changed, the Town has undertaken a variety of planning projects to continue to best meet the needs of residents and visitors. The following summarizes key planning efforts from the 2002 Master Plan to today.

### Master Plan (2002)

Covers a range of topics, including natural resources, public facilities and services, transportation, economic development, housing, and zoning. Includes a vision statement along with goals, recommendations, and implementation actions. The general objectives of the plan are to preserve the existing character of the town, enhance Lynnfield Center through mixed-use development, provide suitable facilities for Town activities, stabilize the tax base, increase the amount of affordable housing, redevelop two of the three golf courses, and position the Town to be proactive in meeting future challenges and opportunities.

### Housing Production Plan (2006)

Focuses on meeting state-mandated affordable housing requirements in a manner consistent with the character of the community. The plan recommends a variety of types of affordable housing development including small, scattered-site development; high-density cluster development; a large rental housing development; and a mixed-use, village-style development. It also recommends adopting an inclusionary zoning policy that requires affordable units in certain residential developments.

### Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (2019)

Following the adoption of a Complete Streets policy in 2018, the Town developed a prioritization plan that outlines 15 projects where the Town would like to make improvements to enhance multi-modal travel. The top three priorities are Pedestrian Access and Safety Improvements at Lynnfield Middle School, Summer Street School, and Huckleberry Hill Elementary School; Pedestrian and Vehicular Safety Improvements surrounding the Town Common; and Main Street Sidewalk and Intersection Improvements (Lowell Street to Pine Hill Road).

### Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2018) and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Report (2020)

These two plans identify the Town's top local natural and climate-related hazards of concern and provide a suite of mitigation recommendations. Identified hazards include flooding, strong storms, and drought and extreme temperatures. Recommendations include redesigning and retrofitting aging and undersized culverts; intentionally managing Reedy Meadow/Beaverdam Brook; and evaluating town-wide water supply resiliency.

### Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022)

Includes an inventory of historic sites, open space and recreation areas, environmental assets, and lands of conservation and recreation interest along with an analysis of infrastructure and development patterns. Identifies five goals and related objectives along with a seven-year action plan for implementing those goals.



# Community Snapshot: Lynnfield Today



## LYNNFIELD 2040

Shaping our Future Today

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, American Community Survey, Ranker & Tradesman, ES-202, Census On the Map

### Population

The population increased **13%** from 2010–2020.



That's an additional 1,404 residents!



**86%** of residents identify as White.

### Community Snapshot

- 13,000 people**
- 4,536 households**
- \$147,237 median income**
- \$931,250 median sale price**
- 5,934 jobs**

### Housing

The average household size is **2.83** people.



**40%** of households include children



**37%** of households include seniors



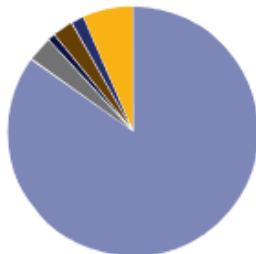
**15%** of households are renters.



**52%** of households are made up of one or two people.



The median sale price of a single-family house has increased **157%** since 2000.



- 85%** Single-Family Detached
- 3%** Rowhouse/Townhouse
- 1%** Duplex
- 3%** Small Multifamily (3-19 units)
- 2%** Medium Multifamily (20-49 units)
- 6%** Large Multifamily (50+ units)

Single-family houses make up nearly all of the housing stock in town.



**One-third** of households spend more than **30%** of their income on housing costs.

### Economy

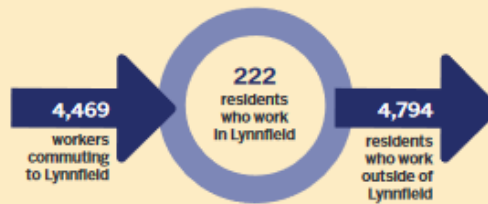
**39%** of jobs based in Lynnfield are in the service industry.

Retail Trade	1,367 jobs
Accommodation & Food Services	1,010 jobs
Transportation & Warehousing	563 jobs
Construction	482 jobs
Administrative & Waste Services	402 jobs
Professional & Technical Services	361 jobs
Health Care & Social Assistance	350 jobs

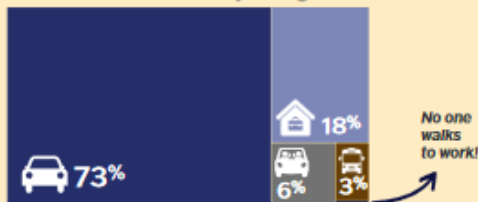
The top three industries are:

- car dealerships
- clothing stores
- restaurants

Only **5%** of people who work in Lynnfield are residents.



Most residents commute by driving alone.



No one walks to work!



# Hearing from the Lynnfield Community

## Approach to Community Engagement

The Planning Board was eager to ensure that the visioning process included feedback from a diverse array of community stakeholders, so the project team developed a community engagement strategy that was accessible, creative, and prioritized full-circle communication. In addition to the key community engagement opportunities identified here, the project team also publicized the project widely through a Town Talk video, newspaper editorials and social media outreach, water bill inserts, community newsletters, and attendance at various community meetings and events. Over 800 people participated in the townwide survey, and hundreds of people interacted with the Visioning project team at Lynnfield tabling events and civic meetings over the spring/summer in 2023.

## Key Community Engagement Opportunities



### Town-Wide Survey

Available to entire Lynnfield community

### Tabling Events

Sharing information about project

### Lynnfield High School

Activity with 10<sup>th</sup> grade social studies classes

### Town Staff Interviews

1:1 conversations with key town staff

### Community Conversations

Interviews with engaged community members

## Who we heard from

Throughout the planning process, demographic information was collected when possible to understand the various groups represented and where perspectives and lived experiences may be over or underrepresented. People who have lived in Lynnfield less than 10 years were less engaged (27% of survey respondents identify in this category). Throughout the process, people of color, people with lower incomes, and renters were underrepresented. These groups represent smaller shares of the Lynnfield population, but the Town should consider how to hear from these groups as it works to diversify both racially and socioeconomically. MAPC interviewed municipal staff to understand current Town dynamics and priorities. Planning Board members met with local community organizations to promote the project and opportunities to provide feedback. MAPC and the Planning Board engaged Lynnfield High School students to hear from younger residents – a group who was less represented in the townwide survey and other engagement activities.





MAPC and the Town also had paper copies of the townwide survey and other project materials available at community locations to reach residents who are less comfortable with online engagement. This increased the share of older adults who provided feedback.

## Community Engagement Themes

From the community engagement activities outlined previously, some themes and goals emerged as having broad community consensus. At the end of this section, topics with less broad consensus or more nuanced responses are mentioned. These topics should be further explored and discussed with community members during a future master plan update.

### Balanced Community Growth

Many current residents chose to live in Lynnfield because of its quiet, small-town character. They're concerned that new development will negatively impact the town due to demands for increased town services, including school enrollment and water supply, and loss of the natural environment. At the same time, 40% of survey respondents expressed fear of housing instability due to high housing costs, including property taxes. Seniors noted that there are limited options for downsizing and longtime residents said that their children cannot afford to stay in Lynnfield. Two-thirds of survey respondents who moved to Lynnfield in the past three years had a difficult time finding housing, and this is likely to continue as housing supply is limited.

The survey highlighted an opportunity for neighborhood planning aimed at strategically improving key areas in town. 76% of survey respondents noted that a vibrant Lynnfield Center is important, while slightly fewer (62%) believe South Lynnfield should be a vibrant activity center. Lynnfield would be well-served to focus planning efforts in existing centers, while finding ways to preserve the small-town feel of outlying areas of town that are more interspersed with open space and natural resources.

Residents also shared an openness to pursuing economic development and job growth, partly to support the tax base and partly to make town center and South Lynnfield more vibrant, as long as it doesn't change the residential character of the town. 21% of respondents are supportive of more economic development initiatives, and another 45% of respondents are open to the idea but need more information. On the whole, there is **a desire for thoughtful planning that balances growth with its impact on residents**. 68% of respondents note that loss of natural resources is one of Lynnfield's greatest challenges, calling for strategic and efficient land use decisions that advance environmental goals. 78% of respondents identified open space and natural resources as important community features; 70% identified parks and trails as important. Lynnfield High School students agree that open space and natural resources are vital community features. High school students also acknowledged that Lynnfield's rising housing costs are a great concern for keeping existing residents and attracting young people back to Lynnfield. Through a new master plan, the Town can continue to have conversations with community members about how to balance expanded housing options and affordability with the desire to preserve open space and natural resources.



## Perspectives from Lynnfield Community Members

*“I bought my home 30 years ago and cannot afford to move within the Town.”*

*“The only people I went to school with (K-12 in Lynnfield) who will be able to afford to have their own place in Lynnfield (not their parents) are people who are in VERY well-paying professions.”*

*“[I’m leaving Lynnfield] because I still live with my parents and want to move out on my own now that I’ve graduated college. There is nothing at all within the budget of either my current job or my immediate job prospects.”*

*“I would like to see the Town retain its character. Neighboring towns such as Middleton have become so overcrowded and congested with traffic that I breathe a sigh of relief when I get back home after driving through them.”*

*“Keep the town small and avoid allowing developers buying up properties followed by tearing down these homes and building very expensive homes.”*

*“Maintain small town feel with lots of green space and accessible natural areas.”*

*“I would like to see us preserve and enhance our history and historic buildings. The colonial look of the town is what gives it its charm.”*

*“Incorporating water needs in development and enforcement of water restrictions to protect our drinking water. Water restrictions are routinely ignored by most residents and by LCWD.”*

*Youth: “I would change how affordable the houses are so the town can be more diverse.”*

## Emerging Goals

As the Town advances from visioning to creating a new master plan, feedback gathered in this process can inform potential goals for future master plan topic areas: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Open Space & Recreation, and Transportation. These ideas should be refined through a more comprehensive planning process.

- Explore land use techniques, applying strategically in key areas of Lynnfield, that can better address changing housing needs while also considering environmental goals (e.g., water quality, water supply, tree protection).
- Expand the local housing supply to support residents’ needs at all phases of life. This could include allowing accessory dwelling units by-right; allowing smaller housing options like duplexes or triplexes in some parts of Lynnfield; or incentivizing “starter home” housing types.
- Pursue economic development initiatives to attract new commercial uses that diversify the local tax base without changing residential character of town. Initiatives can be tailored to attract locally owned businesses and well-paying jobs that align with local housing costs.
- Continue to invest in trails and parks so Lynnfield residents have options for recreating and traveling.



## Connected Community

Lynnfield residents expressed **a desire for community cohesion and gathering**, a theme that was also present in the 2002 Master Plan. 76% of survey respondents said that it is important for the Town to provide social opportunities for youth, seniors, and others. Lynnfield High School students love Lynnfield's sense of community most. This desire for community includes maintaining and improving public facilities like the library, schools, and other gathering spaces, and providing new recreational opportunities, such as a multigenerational recreation center. 74% of respondents think that it is important for Lynnfield to be a community where everyone can thrive. 64% of respondents said that it is important for the Town to address access to health and social services. Having a **revitalized town center** with a variety of businesses was also seen as a way to bring people together in so-called "third places." Having things to do and places to go is very important to Lynnfield High School students. Residents also expressed **a desire for improved transportation connections around town**, especially well-maintained sidewalks and safe bicycle facilities. 67% of residents believe multi-modal transportation options are important. High School students noted that Lynnfield's lack of bike paths and sidewalks are some of Lynnfield's greatest challenges. Having the ability to move around Lynnfield and see neighbors out and about is something that residents of all ages would like to see more.

### Perspectives from Lynnfield Community Members

*"Would like to see more non-chain restaurants in town and a better use of both Post Office square and Lynnfield Center. The stores do not really appeal to our family, would love to see kids' activities, a gym, a local restaurant, etc."*

*"[I envision an] improved town center – make it a place people want to work at, shop at, and walk or bike to."*

*"Creating a vibrant town center and South Lynnfield shopping area should be a priority."*

*"[I envision] a vibrant town center where small business can thrive, residents can gather and build community, and young families can build connections/relationships."*

*"All of those abandoned office spaces behind the center, as well as the front of the center itself, should be re-hauled. it is perfect space to create places for community to come together for purpose."*

*"[I envision] a bustling town center that has numerous different businesses (not three banks) that give residents a reason to go there and spend their money."*

*"We want Lynnfield to be a family town with parks and activities for children through high school."*

*"Outside of MarketStreet, what is there to do in Lynnfield? Would like more recreation opportunities – bike paths! Maybe a movie theater or something that gets people out of their homes."*

*"[I envision] a community center to be shared with youth and seniors."*



*“Building the rail trail and creating more walking and biking paths will help the town be healthier, friendlier, more just, and more pleasant to live in.”*

*“Lynnfield needs to provide greater access to bike and walking trails both for recreational purposes but also to improve access to key areas in town with increasing traffic. Greater focus on open spaces and trails that residents can use for community activities and to move around town will not only address environmental concerns but also improve the quality of life in Lynnfield for all ages.”*

*“It's upsetting that we feel no closer to a bike path than when it was voted in at town meeting. The sidewalks are terrible, and kids often have to ride bikes in the streets. Either fix the sidewalks or make bike paths on the streets please!”*

*“[I envision a] walkable town with amenities, good schools and access to housing.”*

*“Children are riding bikes after school in the streets which is a massive danger to both them and car drivers. Bike paths must be built to protect both bikers and car drivers.”*

*“[I would like] increased availability of public spaces for community groups.”*

*“Would love to see more vibrant areas in town and local transportation options that can help young teens and young adults be occupied and have entertainment.”*

*“Sidewalks and roads are beyond awful. Some locations don't even have sidewalks.”*

*“A rec center would be invaluable.”*

*Youth: “We need more community spaces in general.”*

*Youth: “I would add more fun things because it is kind of boring sometimes.”*

*Youth: “I love how Lynnfield has many opportunities for people to be included in the community.”*

## **Emerging Goals**

Feedback gathered can inform potential goals for future master plan topic areas: Community Services and Facilities, Open Space and Recreation, Housing, and Economic Development. These ideas should be refined through a more comprehensive planning process.

- Add more safe ways to recreate and see neighbors for everyone, but particularly younger and older residents who may have fewer mobility options.
- Establish a plan for revitalizing town center with a variety of businesses, housing choices, and community gathering spots, in a way that respects Lynnfield's history and heritage.
- Continue improving public amenities that serve diverse users (e.g., school, library, arts) and evolving public programming.
- Consider a thorough assessment of Lynnfield's transportation network and opportunities to improve connectivity both within town but also to neighboring towns and frequented amenities.



## Transparent and Well-Run Town Government

Lynnfield has a strong culture of volunteerism, with many residents offering their time and energy to keep the town running. However, residents' needs are outpacing the capacity of both town staff and volunteers. Many residents feel like they don't know what's going on in Town Hall; the lack of communication has led to a distrust of town government and frustration with all involved, based on comments provided in the survey. 92% of survey respondents said that a well-functioning town government is an important community feature, with 83% noting that accessible town services is also important. Comments highlighted that residents want a better understanding of ongoing Town initiatives and projects, including capital improvements such as the rail trail and policy changes like zoning and property tax rates. At least 70% of respondents said that municipal finances and local tax rates, maintenance of municipal facilities, or issues with town governance were among Lynnfield's greatest challenges. 67% of respondents identified community-wide communication infrastructure as an important topic that the town needs to address. 63% of respondents identified opportunities for shared services with neighboring towns as an important topic that the town needs to address to help lower municipal costs. Public health and safety are identified as important topics by 79% of respondents, highlighting these as areas to shift focus.

### Perspectives from Lynnfield Community Members

*"Should concentrate on the necessities of Lynnfield like clean water not the luxuries."*

*"Please finish the rail trail that was voted in several years ago."*

*"Move the rail trail project forward faster."*

*"[My priorities are] lowering taxes and improving efficiency and accountability."*

*"I like this town but man my property tax is through the roof and it just seems to be more of the same around here."*

*"[I envision the Town] being good stewards of the resident tax dollars and delivering a legacy to our children of being fiscally responsible and careful stewardship of public resources."*

*"Leadership needs to be more transparent about their decisions for the Town."*

*"Communication and access to town management and resources in Lynnfield appears to have frozen somewhere in the 1950s. Scheduling and contact with town management must be brought up to modern standards."*

*"I'd like employees who work for the town to be trained in customer service. I don't think most people understand their role in helping residents and/or I wonder if they work in an environment that is not supportive of them."*

*"There needs to be a leadership change as it's become quite clear the different boards aren't always working for the well-being of the Town. There has to be more honesty and transparency from leadership who are actively working to represent town residents and listening to what is being asked such as bike paths and road paving being done."*



*“Diversifying political positions so that more younger people have the ability to shape the future of Lynnfield and have their voice heard is extremely lacking in this community and needs to change. There should be limitations as far as how long people can hold positions of power and how many political affiliations they can hold.”*

*“Move to a 5 person select board like most towns our size. Inhibits decision-making. Too much authority in the hands of a few.”*

## Emerging Goals

As the Town advances from visioning to creating a new master plan, feedback gathered in this process can inform potential goals for future master plan topic areas: Community Services and Facilities and Economic Development. These ideas should be refined through a more comprehensive planning process.

- Keep the public apprised of project timelines and share updates when work is stalled.
- Explore innovative communication techniques to keep Lynnfield residents and other stakeholders informed. This will improve relationships between residents and Town officials (those elected, appointed, and hired).
- Engage similarly sized communities to expand shared services.
- Adopt new tools that support transparent governance. This can help Lynnfield residents understand municipal finances and connections to property taxes.

## Topics to further explore

The following topics received less broad consensus, but a significant share of Lynnfield residents care about these topics. The Planning Board and Town administration should consider ways to further engage community members on these topics as part of a future master plan update.

### Diversify the local economy

Lynnfield has undertaken few economic development initiatives beyond permitting the Market Street development since the 2002 Master Plan. Lynnfield residents often voiced displeasure with the Town’s reliance on the residential tax base and increasing property taxes. Review of the Town’s zoning map shows that there are few areas available for commercial growth, and existing commercial centers are somewhat underutilized. Additionally, while Lynnfield has nearly 6,000 jobs, many of these do not pay wages that match local housing costs. 40% of these jobs are in retail, accommodation, and food services. This jobs-housing mismatch results in very few people who are able to afford to live and work in Lynnfield – only 5% of Lynnfield residents do. It is notable that 19% of survey respondents noted that they want better access to job opportunities that meet their needs in Lynnfield. 4,469 workers commute into Lynnfield every day, while 4,794 residents leave for work. 42% of respondents do not think it is important to be able to live and work in Lynnfield. This commute pattern increases traffic and impacts health outcomes for Lynnfield residents. The survey indicated that despite all this, only 28% of respondents think it is important to address Lynnfield’s local economy. Another 28% of respondents answered as “neutral.” 24% said this is not important at all. When the town updates the master plan, it will be



important to initiate conversations around the importance of resilient local economies that can help pay for quality public services and facilities. Expanding options for Lynnfield workers to live in town and Lynnfield residents to work in town will also have positive impacts on local traffic and health concerns.

### **Racial and social equity**

In 2020, the Planning Board adopted a resolution regarding past discrimination and present and future solutions. The resolution acknowledged government's role in racial discrimination and specifically historical planning and zoning practices that led to racial and socioeconomic segregation. The resolution recommitted to making the Town of Lynnfield "a welcoming place for all." Beyond the Planning Board's commitment through this resolution, a community-based group – Lynnfield for Love – works "to create a more connected Lynnfield community by fostering an appreciation and understanding of diversity and promoting kindness, equality, and justice for all people."

In the townwide survey, 64% of respondents said racial and social equity is important to varying degrees. 16% of respondents said this is not important, while 19% of respondents were neutral. When asked how welcoming and inviting respondents feel Lynnfield is to residents of different groups, 39% of respondents said Lynnfield is not very welcoming to people with lower incomes. 27% of respondents do not think Lynnfield is welcoming to those whose primary language is not English. 25% of respondents said Lynnfield is not very welcoming to people of color. Interestingly, survey respondents only felt confident that Lynnfield is very welcoming to young families (64% of respondents noting this).

While there is some consensus that racial and social equity is important, the survey responses highlight that community conversations about actions towards advancing racial and social equity and expanding inclusivity are necessary. For example, Lynnfield can become more racial and socioeconomically diverse through expanding access to more affordable forms of housing (rental homes, accessory dwelling units without an occupancy requirement, and smaller housing types like townhomes or duplexes); however, many comments received in the survey are opposed to these ideas.

### **Climate Resiliency and Adaptation**

Related to previous themes concerning preservation of natural resources and balanced growth is Lynnfield's need for climate resiliency and adaptation. 64% of respondents noted this is one of the greatest challenges facing Lynnfield. Lynnfield's suburban, auto-centric development patterns are less energy efficient. Conversations around land use decisions and impacts to the climate and natural resources should be considered in a future master plan update. Furthermore, adapting Lynnfield's existing infrastructure to endure extreme weather events and other climate-related hazards will be critical in the coming years. The townwide survey highlighted that residents are expecting improved resilience and adaptation, and the town should explore the many different actions that can be taken as part of the master plan update.



# Looking Ahead: A Vision for 2040 and Beyond

## Vision

Lynnfield is a quiet, suburban community with outstanding schools, friendly neighbors, and a transparent, modern government. People can walk, bike, and roll safely through town to get to school, shops, and recreational areas. Lynnfield Center and Post Office Square are vibrant retail centers with local businesses that cater to residents' needs and help create a sense of community. New housing provides opportunities for seniors to downsize and young families to buy a home. Affordable housing is expanded to allow Lynnfield workers to be closer to their jobs. The Town acts in a fiscally responsible way to maximize resources and manage individual tax burdens. Economic development opportunities are explored to better balance the local economy and tax base. Actions are taken to preserve existing natural resources and make the Town more resilient and adaptable to future impacts of climate change and other natural hazards.

## Guiding Principles

A vision provides a description of where a community wants to be in the future; principles provide guideposts for how to get there and give town officials a common framework from which to make municipal policies and administrative decisions, which strengthens accountability and improves community confidence. Community engagement for this plan indicated support for establishing the following principles to help advance municipal governance in Lynnfield:

### ***Fiscal Responsibility***

Lynnfield considers cost-savings measures like exploring shared services, co-locating municipal services in public facilities, forecasting maintenance costs for long-term financial planning, etc.

### ***Transparent Communication and Representation***

Lynnfield continues to find new ways to keep residents, business owners, and other community members engaged in local governance and decision-making. Town Meeting is a welcoming and modernized process that allows for a variety of residents to participate. Boards and Committees are comprised of diverse voices and lived experiences.

### ***Lifelong Community***

Lynnfield offers quality services and amenities for residents of all ages and abilities. Housing choices support a variety of lifestyles, from new graduates and young families to aging adults.

### ***Environmental Stewardship***

Lynnfield considers impacts of decisions on existing natural resources and continues to find ways to preserve environmental resources necessary for climate resilience and adaptation.

### ***Balanced Growth***

Lynnfield recognizes that growth is necessary to maintain quality public services and amenities and community vibrancy, but this growth should be balanced by strong land use, transportation, housing, and economic development policies that maintain Lynnfield's small-town feel, natural resources, and quality of life.





## Making the Vision a Reality

### Recommendations

Once a vision is established, the town must take concrete steps to achieve it. The following recommendations are the first steps to implementing the vision plan.

#### Adopt Vision Plan

The Planning Board and Select Board should adopt the vision plan. The Planning Board, as the main implementers of the vision, should share the vision plan with Town boards and committees. Planning staff should share the vision with other town departments. Administratively, town staff should revisit decision-making processes and find ways to integrate the findings and recommendations of vision plan to ensure consistency with community desires and needs.

#### Develop a new Master Plan

Throughout the visioning process, it was clear that Lynnfield residents are prepared to dive deeper into the policy topic areas traditionally covered in a master plan. The vision is the first step in Lynnfield updating the 2002 master plan. The Planning Board should initiate the master plan update process, continuing to engage with the vision serving as a basis.

The townwide survey and feedback received at in-person events offers a wealth of qualitative data, including several ideas for specific goals, strategies, and actions for the town to undertake. The Master Plan update should more thoroughly examine existing conditions and engage the community more deeply in all of the various topic areas. This vision plan connects themes heard through the community engagement to future master plan topics.

Lynnfield could fund a master plan update with local funds, but the Town can also pursue regional and state planning grants that help communities undertake long-range planning efforts. MAPC recommends applying for a [Community One-Stop for Growth Planning Grant](#) to help fund a master plan update. The Town could also apply for a MAPC Technical Assistance grant to help fund the update.

This visioning process engaged a wide variety of Lynnfield stakeholders, and this engagement can serve as the basis for the master plan update. Additional outreach methods should be employed, such as a townwide mailer, focus groups with residents and workers who are usually under-represented, pop-up events or presentations at community gathering spots and meetings, etc.

#### Improve Town Communication and Transparency

At the culmination of the visioning process, the Planning Board should provide an update to community members in the new Lynnfield newsletter and continue to provide substantive updates to keep residents informed. The Town's Town Talk video series and local Lynnfield newspapers are excellent resources for sharing information. Business owners should be engaged to establish



deeper community ties. Community conversations about challenging topics like local tax base and financial considerations, racial and social equity, climate change resiliency and adaptation, housing, and economic development should occur so residents are more informed as they participate in a master plan update and ultimately vote on individual proposals at Town Meeting. Lynnfield should consider best practices like Beverly's [Community Conversations series](#) (a partnership with a local theater) where experts and community members come together to discuss emerging trends and topics. These forums can also be leveraged to provide updates on town initiatives such as the rail trail project, roadway projects, capital improvement projects, etc.

### Considerations for Future Planning Efforts

Even robust public engagement that uses a variety of outreach methods and communication channels will only engage a small percentage of a community's population. The project team learned valuable lessons that should be applied to future planning efforts in Lynnfield, especially a future master plan update:

- Identify community members who are well-connected and are trusted in the Lynnfield community. Establish a liaison engagement model to help share information and encourage participation when engagement opportunities arise.
- Prioritize talking with community members who have less influence in local government, including younger residents, renters, people of color, people with lower incomes, people who are new to Lynnfield, and people who work in Lynnfield but do not live in town.
- Include the business community in conversations about economic development, housing, and land use regulations.
- Regularly ask people how they want to be engaged. When engaging with people, collect demographic information for tracking who is and is not represented.
- Budget appropriately for expensive but effective outreach methods, like townwide mailers, yard signs and large banners, etc. can be used to broaden reach.



## Resources and Background Information

Throughout the project, materials and information has been available on the project webpage: <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/lynnfield-2040/>.

### Key Background Materials for Further Information

Introductory [Town Talk video](#) with Town Administrator Rob Dolan and Planning Board Chair Brian Charville

Relevant Planning Board Presentations

- [March 1, 2023 Meeting](#) – presentation on “community snapshot” data
- [July 26, 2023 Meeting](#) – findings from spring/summer engagement activities, including the townwide survey results

[Community Snapshot Infographic](#)

[Community Survey Results](#) (summary slides and complete results)

November 29, 2023 Open Housing [Recording](#) and [Presentation](#)

### Data sources utilized to understand community characteristics included:

- US Decennial Census
- American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates
- Census On the Map
- MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- MASS Department of Transportation
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, ES-202 Employment and Wage Data