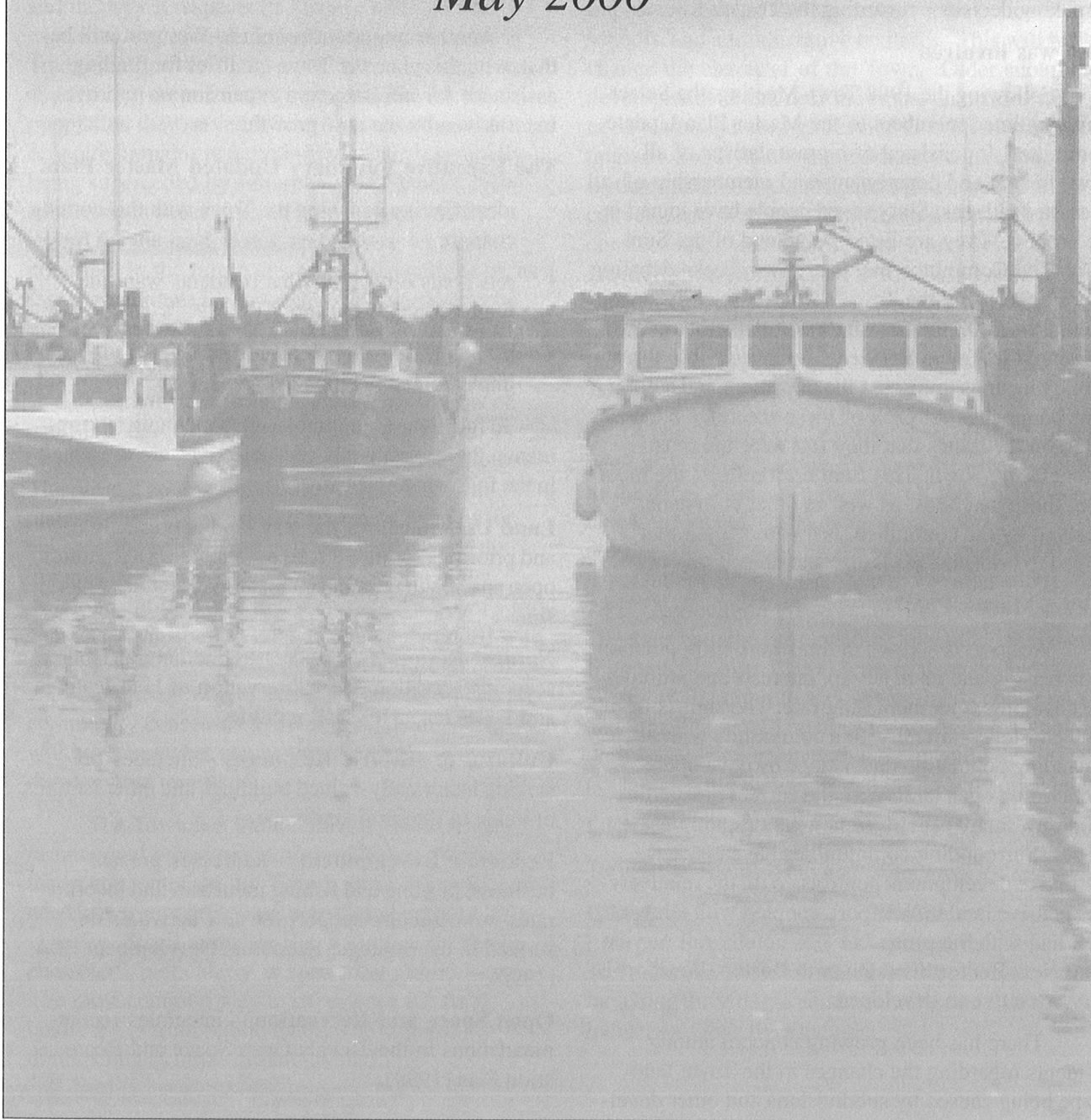


Setting A Course For Our Future

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY UPDATED MASTER PLAN

Westport, Massachusetts

May 2000



INTRODUCTION

The 1998 Westport Annual Town Meeting voted funds to prepare an Executive Summary Updated Master Plan for the Town. This vote was in response to broad citizen concerns that significant changes were taking place in our Town. In order to better understand the changes and to chart a course to address them, past Town planning was examined, reshaped as necessary, and documented. The documentation together with an expression of citizen consensus serves as a basis for further planning and implementation guiding Town boards and departments in making decisions regarding the Town's future.

Who was involved

Following the 1998 Town Meeting, the Selectmen appointed members to the Master Plan Update Committee. It consisted of representatives of all Town boards and departments and membership of all interested citizens. Sixty seven people have joined in the process. They are listed at the end of the Summary. The Committee met every two weeks debating issues concerning the Town's future. In early February, 2000, the first draft was mailed to every household in Town. Residents were invited to three public meetings to discuss the document and submit their comments. At each of these meetings attendees voted on the issues that they felt were the most urgent to the Town. This final draft reflects the input from those meetings, as well as other comments received by the committee. It was this input that helped to prioritize the issues and objectives.

Why a Master Plan?

Westport is a Town in transition. Its population is increasing and its make-up, interests and attitudes are changing at an increasing rate. The shift is from a rural coastal community to a community with an expanding population under siege by developers subdividing open land. With the current prosperous economy, many can afford new homes and businesses. Surrounding communities have enacted restrictive development controls. With the relatively inexpensive land in Westport, coupled with a low tax rate, and with the prospect of commuter rail service from New Bedford/Fall River to Boston, Westport is very attractive to developers.

There has been growing concern among residents regarding the changes in the Town landscape being caused by subdivisions and other devel-

opment. We are a Town that depends primarily on private wells and septic systems. Our rivers and streams are increasingly sensitive to stormwater runoff. The pace of change is quickening, and if we act promptly, the Town can still shape its future.

Past Town-wide plans have sounded the alarm. Starting in 1964 and up until 1999 a series of master plans, growth and resource impact studies have been prepared. We have re-examined and built upon this past good work, updating it to current conditions and growth pressures.

Another important benefit to Westport will be that, with this plan, the Town qualifies for funding assistance for infrastructure expansion or improvement driven by the new growth.

The Executive Summary Updated Master Plan:

- identifies issues facing the Town with this coming change;
- sets goals reflecting what residents want the future Town to be; and
- lists objectives to be considered, agreed on, and implemented to attain the goals.

To fulfill the Commonwealth's planning requirements, the issues, goals and objectives are presented in the following nine categories:

Land Use – identifies the way land is presently used and priorities for future land use including agriculture, open space, villages, business, and residential subdivisions .

Natural Resources – addresses the natural landscape preservation and conservation of land features and water resources, and wildlife.

Cultural & Historic Resources – includes preserving historically-valued buildings and other features of value to the rural landscape.

Economic Development – addresses present business, farming and fishing industries and incorporates infrastructure support for new activities described in the Strategic Economic Development Plan (1996).

Open Space and Recreation – integrates recommendations in the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (1999).

Housing – concerns developing a full range of housing opportunities.

Circulation – concerns developing a system for roads, paths, walks and trails.

Capital Facilities and Human Services – concerns meeting the service and infrastructure needs for a growing population.

Water/Sewerage – covers requirements and alterna-

tives for existing and future needs.

Present Town planning issues are discussed in the introductory paragraphs for each of these nine categories. Goals contribute to a vision for the Town's future. Each stated goal is followed by objectives associated with it. Objectives are suggested actions needed to help fulfill the goal. Goals and objectives are presented by category below.

LAND USE

It is the way Westport uses its land and water and the way it respects its historic heritage that expresses our attitude toward these resources. Traditionally with a local-based economy of farming and fishing, the resources were plentiful for the population they served. Currently, while the traditional economy remains in a diminished state, it is rapidly being superseded by suburban development. New subdivisions occur in an ad hoc manner, without regard for the land, water, and history we have inherited. In the future this trend can continue or, as a few communities have done, development may be guided to preserve and protect (even enhance) the "rural landscape" Westport citizens say they value.

Currently the Town has very few means of controlling growth. The only present land-use controls are zoning, wetlands, and health regulations. The present zoning regulations promote growth patterns that do not protect, take advantage of, or enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Town. The present regulations do little to direct development in a way that preserves the Town's rural character. Westport is not adequately equipped with a physical and management infrastructure to deal with the present rate of growth. There is a need for community consensus to determine the impact growth will have and what can be done to control the development trend.

The Town has limited means to encourage farming and preservation of open space. Working farms are central to the Town's rural character and need Town support to maintain their economic viability. Small farms are also important to "rural character", particularly as seen from public ways. The most common way to experience the rural landscape is from public roads. The opportunity is diminishing as farms are subdivided.

As growth continues it will mandate road improvements and the expansion of the police, fire, schools, and administrative facilities. This will further change the character of the Town. Older suburban development in and near the Route 6 corridor will need water and sewage service as well as some road upgrade. Subdivision neighborhoods will require further amenities such as parks, playgrounds and convenience shopping. The Town will need to consider these and other requests, and develop creative strategies to provide for these needs. Business development must occur in ways that preserve and enhance the present rural character of the Town, including Westport's villages and the Town's farming and fishing heritage.

The "Westport Land Use chart on the following page lists the acreage in Westport by uses, according to the 1999 Assessor's records. Of the 15,322 acres taxed residential, 4,808 acres is considered developable. Of the Chapter 61 land, over 8,000 acres is potentially developable, and that is after subtracting APR (Agricultural Preservation Restriction) land. Together with the developable residential land, there is potentially over 12,000 acres of developable land in Westport. Taking into account wetlands constraints and area that would be used for roads, it may not be unreasonable to estimate that there could be 5000 to 6000 new building lots from this currently open land.

GENERAL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To use the Town's land and waterways to:

GOAL 1: Encourage development in ways that help preserve the natural and cultural features of the Town, its coastal, rural and historic resources, including the villages and its farming and fishing industries. Objectives include:

- Controlling development in areas of high-groundwater, areas subject to flooding, areas of significant habitat and any other areas that, if developed, could jeopardize the Town goals and objectives.
- Implementing appropriate methods to control stormwater run-off and develop a Town-wide stormwater management plan.
- Adopting site plan review and/or site development standards.

GOAL 2: Anticipate the challenges and needs that arise as the Town continues to be developed.
Objectives include:

- Establishing the position of Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board to:
 - Enable that board to deal more effectively with Westport's increasingly complex growth management needs.
 - Assist other Town Boards in formulating and implementing Westport plans and development controls.
 - Act as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) coordinator for the Town.

GOAL 3: Address concerns of Westport citizens.
Objectives include:

- Insuring that abutting land-uses are functionally compatible.

RURAL CHARACTER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Preserve existing activities and land uses that contribute to the rural character of the Town.
Objectives include:

- Farming:
 - Preserving existing and small farms.
 - Continuing and re-invigorating the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program.
- Open Space:
 - Establishing a Land Bank for acquisition of open space for future use or conservation.
 - Establishing an on-going liaison with the Westport Land Conservation Trust.
- Marine Activities:
 - Preserving and enhancing marine activities, especially the fishing industry.

WESTPORT LAND USE 1999	
LAND USE	ACRES
Residential (already developed 10,524 acres) (potentially developable in residential area - 4,808 acres)	10,524 + 4,808=15,322
Chapter 61 (forest taxation, potentially developable)	517
Chapter 61A (farm taxation, potentially developable with the exception of APR lands which are permanently protected from development) Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) 1,285 acres	8,529
Chapter 61B (recreation taxation, potentially developable)	371
Tax Exempt Land (US Government, City of Fall River, schools, churches, graveyards, Westport Land Conservation Trust lands, Westport Art Group, Granges and VFW, Westport Fairgrounds, Housing Authority, Westport Town Conservation	2,516
Undevelopable Lands	1,984
Commercial (hotels, motels, warehouses, piers, wharves, commercial greenhouses, malls, farm buildings)	694
Industrial (manufacturing, quarrying, utilities)	82
Total Acreage	30,015

GOAL 2: Develop strategies to manage development to minimize impact on rural character. Objectives include:

- Directing growth to areas that have the most potential to absorb it.
- Considering ways to maintain wooded and farm lands especially in dense residential neighborhoods.
- Preserving scenic qualities and vistas on public roads.
- Study scenic road provisions and options.
- Designating additional roads as Scenic Roads.
- Establishing greenways on some roads to push vertical development away from roads (to protect vistas).

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT (EXISTING & NEW) GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Develop strategies to encourage suburban development in ways that will help preserve and enhance the natural and cultural features of the Town. Objectives include:

- Preparing guidelines and incentives to preserve rural character in subdivisions.
- Allowing variation of house lot sizes depending on wetlands, soils, and available infrastructure.
- Determining the best direction of patterns for neighborhood development as to number of units, street layout, preservation of natural, historic and cultural features, and views.

GOAL 2: Optimize the livability of suburban development. Objectives include:

- Encouraging neighborhood parks and recreational facilities and trails for all ages as an integral part of development planning.
- Improving the infrastructure of parks, water, sewerage, and streets in the Route 6 corridor residential neighborhoods.
- Encouraging a range of housing options that reflect the Town's rural character.

VILLAGES GOAL & OBJECTIVES

Develop strategies to enhance Westport's villages and prevent strip development and sprawl.

- Configure a village business zone.
- Encourage condominiums, apartments & smaller house lots of appropriate scale within villages, as infrastructure permits.
- Develop a plan for village growth that accommodates new businesses needed to serve emerging neighborhoods.
- Prepare detailed plans for each of the villages that:
 - investigates alternatives to concentrate village growth
 - adds new streets
 - reduces curb cuts on arterial roads
 - controls signage
 - establishes walkways for pedestrian access and links among businesses and stores



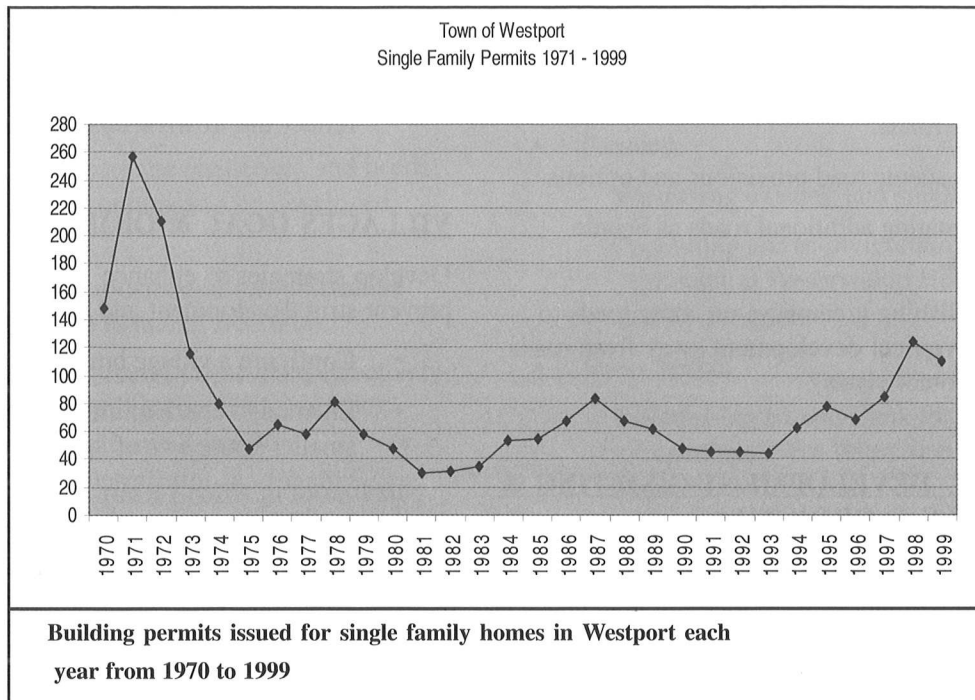
- introduces affordable multi-family and/or elderly housing
- develops regulations that require parking areas to be screened from public ways
- Investigate options for local sewer and water infrastructure within villages.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

(Refer to specific sections of the Summary)



NATURAL RESOURCES

Westport's earliest settlers were attracted by this area's abundant resources: the river and its estuaries, the ocean front, shellfish beds, wildlife habitats, the intertidal zone of beaches, salt marsh and primary and secondary dunes. These assets, together with the farmland, woods, wetlands, ponds and upland wildlife, provide a wonderful mix of resources for residents and tourists. Development is putting great stress on these resources, and it will only increase. Ground water, surface water and wetlands have been contaminated in some areas, wildlife habitats are shrinking, and open land is vanishing. Our planning must confront this trend and point the way toward sensible growth while protecting the resources we value.

Our natural resources serve us well beyond their natural beauty. They provide for recreational and commercial fishing, farm produce and lumber, as well as a thriving tourist industry. Of critical importance is the level that Westport residents depend on private

wells for domestic water and private septic systems for our waste disposal. If we want our natural resources to continue to serve us well into the future, we must manage them wisely.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's natural resources, including its fresh waters, salt waters, shoreline, wetlands, and wildlife and plant habitats. Objectives include:

- Preparing a master plan for prioritizing and addressing current stress and impacts on the Town's natural resources – the ecology and environment of the Westport River, wetlands, ponds, ocean shoreline and barrier beaches.
- Preserving critical wildlife habitats.
- Permanently protecting open space over aquifers and shielding recharge areas from waste water contamination.



Westport land permanently protected (APR)
and land under Chapter 61, 61A & 61B,
including prime agricultural land and forests,
all potentially developable.







Map prepared by:
Buzzards Bay Project National Estuary Program
2870 Cranberry Highway, E. Wareham, MA 02538



1 0 1 2 Miles

Chapter 61 Tax Classifications

-  Ch. 61 - Forestry
-  Ch. 61A - Agriculture
-  Ch. 61B - Open Space
-  Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)

- Purchasing land in known aquifer areas, to protect aquifer.
- Supporting financially, and reviewing regularly, the recent Harbor Improvement plan.
- Establishing buffer zones around the harbor area to encourage natural vegetation and prevent surface runoff from entering the River. Buffers should address recreational uses such as golf courses, equestrian centers, etc.
- Considering more stringent local regulations to protect wetlands and/or water supply.
- Educating residents in the use of pesticides, fertilizers and their impact on water quality.
- Establishing overlay districts for ACEC(Area of Environmental Concern)areas to protect endangered species and vernal ponds.
- Developing a beach nourishment plan for the dune and barrier beach areas.
- Considering temporary moratorium on the construction of docks and moorings, pending current resources study of the Westport River.

- Developing and enforcing water use regulations that promote safe and environmentally sound activities on the Westport River and estuary.

GOAL 2: Devise ways that allow, but control, development in order to sustain Westport's bountiful natural resources to assure that they may be enjoyed by all future generations. Objectives include:

- Considering the writing of a by-law to limit land clearing and alteration of natural topography prior to development review.
- Adopting a nitrogen loading by-law to govern new development and redevelopment.
- Developing more comprehensive stormwater regulations.
- Developing regulations that promote environmentally responsible water usage and land management practices for recreational land uses such as playing fields and golf courses.



The shoreline of the East Branch of the Westport River at Hix Bridge

CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

Westport residents have a strong sense of their Town. As current development trends continue, efforts must be made to identify, designate, and protect historical and cultural sites including: private cemeteries and native American burial grounds; ancient ways and cart paths, stonewalls; landmarks and historic sites that honor the heritage and rural character of the Town, as well as the traditional fishing and farming industries. Currently, the Town has an Historic Commission which oversees and maintains the architectural integrity of the only Historic District designated at Westport Point. The Town also has an active Historic Society, which is a private organization, headquartered at the Bell Schoolhouse at the Head of Westport. They oversee the Town's historic records and offer educational programs.

GOAL:

To preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's cultural and historic resources and devise ways to allow but control development in a manner which protects our heritage for present and future generations.

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify and preserve private cemeteries,

Native American sites, and burial grounds.

- Identify and protect ancient ways and cart paths. This includes:
 - Incorporating them into the Town's GIS system; and
 - Establishing incentives for developers to preserve them.
- Identify, designate, and preserve historical and cultural landmarks.
- Establish regulations that require developers to show existing stone walls and encourage their preservation.
- Consider adopting a Demolition Delay By-law to provide sufficient time to investigate alternatives to demolition of older or historic buildings and/or landmarks.
- Consider establishing additional local historic districts.
- Consider establishing a site design review board.
- Consider outlining methods and incentives that would encourage development that is consistent with the Town's historical and rural



Small cemetery off Main Rd.

character.

- Support and maintain Westport's fishing and farming industries which are essential to the historical and rural character of the Town.

- Identify public right of ways.
- Increase awareness of and use of the Town Poor Farm as a cultural and historic resource. The Town may want to consider improving public access for recreational use.

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Westport envisions itself as an economically vital community. The longstanding industries of farming and commercial fishing, while struggling, remain the keystone of its economic activity. They are extremely important to the Town and deserve continuing public support. However, a diversified employment base can provide job opportunities across the entire economic spectrum and add to the industrial and commercial base. The Town's natural and cultural resources need to be emphasized as the principal attraction. It is what makes Westport unique as a place for business and for homes. Compatibility and mutual support between business and our environment can lead to the success of both. It can create jobs, expand the tax base, promote tourism and enhance the quality of life for residents. Current Business Zones need to be investigated for compatibility with environmental resources. Water and sewage service along the Route 6 corridor and the Route 177 Business Zone may need to be provided. Additionally, it should be recognized that accelerating changes in federal, state, and local requirements have overwhelmed the volunteer boards elected to guide and direct Town resources. It is appropriate to employ a professional to coordinate and execute programs for balanced growth in Westport, as deemed essential by elected boards. An economic development program is just one example of need.

GOAL:

Provide increased business opportunities within the Town that are compatible with Natural and Cultural resources.

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify growth potential for existing enterprises. Special attention to new or expanding agribusinesses.
- Encourage value added approaches to fishing and farming industries to enhance their continued viability.
- Identify enterprises that could be invited to

settle in Westport in harmony with Town vision.

- Identify support activities to enhance opportunities for clean water management.
- Identify additional revenue opportunities available to the Town.
- Establish the position of Economic Development Officer. This position could be filled by the Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board.
- Prepare financial plan for Rt. 6 water and sewage. Identify potential excessive density problems due to large number of very small lots that were grandfathered which could come on stream with available public water and sewerage.
- Seek federal and state grants for water/sewage program on Rt. 6. Coordinate financial plan with Town Treasurer.
- Identify specific zones of development using town documents from Planning Board and Conservation Commission as well as previous Town plans.
- Support and promote business groups.
- Coordinate the permit process to enable new or expanding enterprises to achieve business goals within the Town vision.



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

In 1999, the Town's Open Space Committee completed the update of its Open Space Plan. Sections of the plan have been incorporated as the foundation for the Cultural and Historic Resources, Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation elements of this Executive Summary Updated Master Plan. The Town has an active Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, and Recreation Committee whose efforts contribute to sustaining the quality of life enjoyed by Westport's residents.

With the increased pressure from development, preservation of open space and farmland becomes a serious issue. The Town must assume a more proactive role in facilitating and encouraging agriculture in Westport which will help preserve open space and the Town's rural character.

Protection of areas of environmental importance, especially along river corridors is important. River corridors offer unique habitat for wildlife and vegetated buffers that help reduce the amount of surface run-off into the rivers. At this time, surface run-off from both point and non-point sources of pollution has permanently closed approximately one quarter of the Town's shellfish beds, and conditionally closed significantly more.

To ensure open space, passive recreational opportunities, and protection of the Town's natural resources, the Town needs to pursue acquisition of conservation easements and lands for passive recreation and educational opportunities.

According to the Open Space Survey, the following issues regarding recreation need to be addressed: public access to permanently protected open space; handicap accessibility to beaches and river areas; development of bicycle paths, nature and equestrian trails, playgrounds, and tot lots, picnic areas, sports facilities such as basketball courts, ice arenas, football/baseball/soccer fields, and indoor multi-use sports and recreation facilities.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Improve and Sustain land conservation efforts. Objectives include:

- Developing funding and institutional mechanisms for a sustained Town Land Protection Program/Land bank
- Managing Town lands and resources to better



Overlooking the East Branch of the Westport River.

preserve important open space;

- Supporting private and alternative methods for land conservation;
- Increasing awareness of the general public to the importance of preserving open land for the future.

GOAL 2: Protect the rural landscape.

Objectives include:

- Supporting and/or increasing participation in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR);
- Encouraging enrollment in Chapter 61, 61A, 61B, and act on the Town's right of first refusal when these properties get taken off the program and are offered for sale;
- Amending zoning to better protect and sustain agriculture in Westport;
- Encouraging sustainable regional agriculture.

GOAL 3: Protect and restore the water quality and natural resources. Objectives include:

- Preserving undeveloped watershed lands in Westport;
- Monitoring and eliminating sources of pollution to Westport's rivers and streams;
- Maintaining and restoring fish and shellfish resources in the Westport River;

GOAL 4: Provide and enhance indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities for residents of all

ages. Objectives include:

- Improving town-wide recreational facilities at schools and other town properties.
- Identifying and improving public access to Town landings.
- Supporting an active Recreation Commission
- Providing recreational paths.
- Increasing the amount of ball fields and open space recreational facilities.

- Enhancing access to recreational facilities for persons with disabilities.
- Building a municipal golf course that is environmentally sensitive and addresses the concern of nitrogen loading.

Specific actions for most of the above objectives and responsible agencies who can work on the actions, can be found in the 5-year Action Plan of the 1999 Open Space Plan.

HOUSING

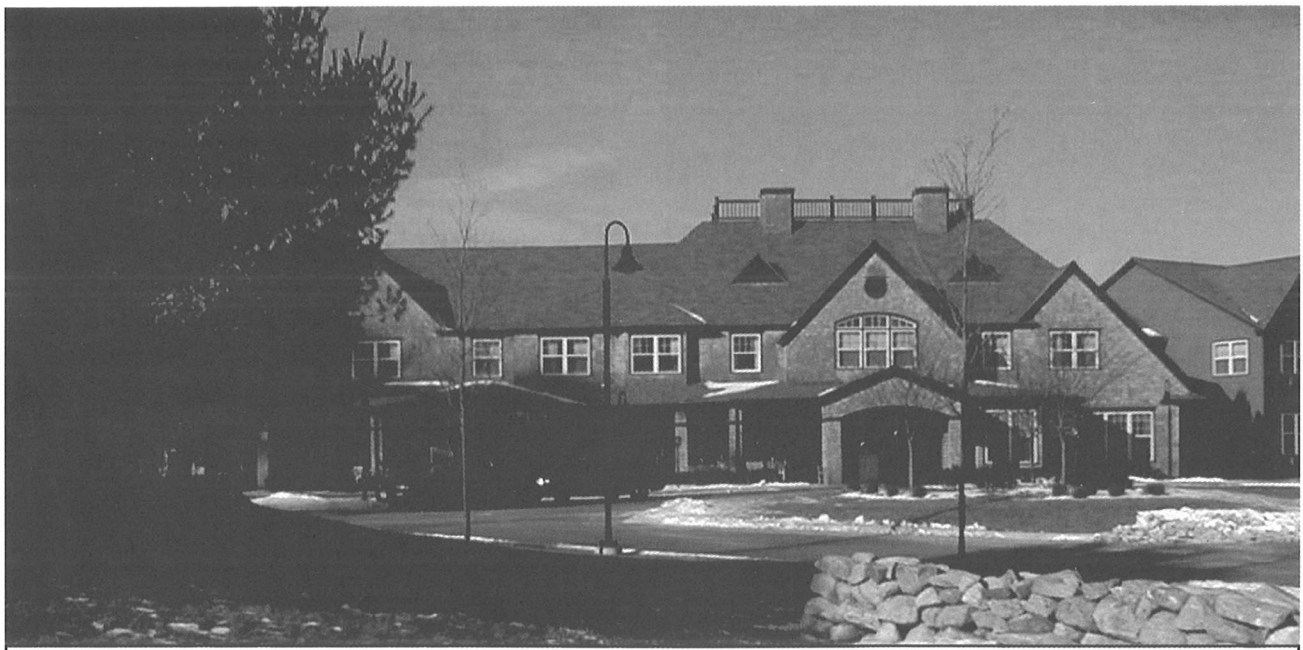
Westport's desirability as a vacation spot, a location for second homes, and as a retirement community has both benefits and drawbacks for year-round residents. The additional taxes paid by seasonal residents without the increase in infrastructure costs, such as schools, is a substantial benefit to the Town. However, the increase in value of land and residences in the areas of seasonal homes results in increased taxes for the year-round residents living in these areas. The Westport Harbor area is a prime example of the effect of seasonal homes on valuation of the entire area. In many instances a substantial increase

in taxes has resulted in substantial hardship for the year-round residents with limited income. Conversely, this also means lower taxes for residents living elsewhere in Town since seasonal houses require fewer services.

For many years, Southeastern Massachusetts has been one of the lowest economic, wage, and family income areas of the state. A substantial number of Westport senior citizens live on low or minimal retirement income, and are unable to obtain affordable housing. At the other end of the age



The Landing at South Part, Fall River - With adequate provision for water and sewage, multi-family and condominium housing allows for higher density and more affordable housing. It is one technique that could help diversify Westport's housing opportunities as well as contribute to the preservation of open space.



Heritage at Dartmouth
An Assisted Living Facility

spectrum are young couples and families who have grown up in Westport but who are now unable to buy or rent homes in the Town. Although some work in high-paying jobs, many are employed at minimum wage.

Approximately 98% of Westport is zoned for single or two-family dwellings which has resulted in construction of one-family dwelling units located on single-family house lots. This tends to drive up housing costs, and widens the gap in housing affordability. It further limits all development to cookie-cutter subdivisions with no flexibility to provide for affordable housing or to preserve the rural character of the town.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

GOAL 1: Provide a range of choices for housing that meets the needs of all Westport residents and that is consistent with the existing and desired rural character of the town. Objectives include:

- Investigating the feasibility of amending the Accessory Apartment By-Law to provide more flexibility in housing options.
- Establishing procedures for subdivisions to be built with Special Permit to accomplish specified goals in housing.
- Encouraging construction that is balanced in terms of type, location, and price, and that

will meet the needs of specific populations of the Town.

- Establishing procedures in subdivision development that:
 - provide affordable housing.
 - protect open space.
 - provide recreation areas, bike trails, scenic areas.
 - provide phased in construction.
 - create visual buffers between development and scenic arterial roadways that protect the town's rural character.

GOAL 2: Allow for flexibility in zoning that will provide safe and affordable housing options for our seniors, young adults, families and lower-income residents, and that will also protect the environment and the rural character that we currently enjoy. Objectives include:

- Adopting residential zones that recognize, protect, and enhance the different existing development environments:
 - to preserve the Town's rural character and historic resources.
 - to strengthen village centers.
 - to preserve the waterfront and other

development-sensitive natural areas.

- to control the spread of suburban housing.
- to plan and/or mandate open spaces, parks, and green spaces to preserve the Town's rural character, protect natural and historic resources, and enhance the villages.
- Amending Zoning By-Laws to allow for flexibility in housing. This may involve:
 - varying lot sizes in different areas.
 - allowing multi-family units on designated areas or with special permits.
 - allowing condominiums on designated areas or with special permits.
 - providing for assisted living facilities and/or congregate housing on designated areas or with special permits.
 - expanding or adding housing authority units.
 - establishing special residential areas adjacent to shopping areas with conditions specific to such areas.
 - require a percentage of affordable housing in subdivisions.

CIRCULATION

Roads provide one of the most essential and basic services to the community. Westport's roads range from ancient gravel cart paths to multi-lane thruways. The new roads being built in subdivisions are usually built to a higher standard than the existing Town roads they adjoin. In order for Westport to plan responsibly, we must classify our existing state, Town and private roads according to design speed, vehicle volume capacity, construction type, curb cut spacing, etc. The road infrastructure provides the framework for land development, access to carry out our daily living, and allows others to pass through our community. Different levels of service are required for roads meeting each of these functions. There are esthetic considerations too. Many of the roads are scenic and driving them is a pleasure.

Today's subdivisions are primarily built with dead-end streets terminating in a cul-de-sac. The Planning Board regulations limit dead-end streets to no more than 1200 feet. With our current zoning, a dead-end street cannot serve more than sixteen lots. For a developer to gain more lots, another egress for the subdivision must be provided, thereby creating a through street. The privacy afforded by dead-end streets and the benefit of reduced traffic volume in front of homes has resulted in these street configurations being preferred by most new home buyers. The proliferation of dead-end streets makes it more difficult for the Town to efficiently provide services from police, fire, highway and school departments, so a plan to expand the road network to improve this situation must keep in mind that any significant hookups between existing Town roads will most likely have to be built by the Town. Our challenge for the future will be to determine a Town



A typical cul-de-sac at the end of a subdivision dead-end street.

consensus on a road network plan, and how to integrate the present development trends into that plan.

Pedestrian walks and recreational paths need to be studied as well. Existing cart-paths may be used for these purposes, keeping pedestrians well removed from roads and vehicle conflicts. Sidewalks exist in Westport's villages—the Head, Central Village and Westport Point. However, they are conspicuously missing from most other residential and commercial areas. These amenities are important elements of all residential and commercial roads to provide safety to pedestrians.

GOAL : Provide a Town-wide circulation system that forms a structure for the land use plan and which is functional, economical and pleasant to use for daily living and public safety, and which

integrates the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and others participating in recreational activities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a classification of all roads in Town which will:
 - address appropriate traffic usage and volume,
 - consider the location of the road in terms of its proximity to scenic vistas and other significant town resources,
 - include ancient ways and cart paths.
- Determine whether the Town will encourage or prohibit future tie-ins to dead-end streets.
- Evaluate/studying the need for public transportation.
- Steer the development of new and existing roads into compliance with a Town-wide circulation plan for an efficient roadway network that offers safe and efficient travel throughout the town, while acknowledging that most new subdivision roads will be dead-end streets.
- Develop a policy concerning location and construction of sidewalks with specific standards.
- Develop a plan for a recreational path network,



A typical sidewalk in a residential subdivision

which may include bike paths, conservation trails, jogging paths, based on a basic set of standards supported by a consensus of polled residents. Issues such as proximity of the path to existing roadways and methods to enhance safety could be settled prior to the development of the plan to help steer a committee to choose available options.

- Work with adjacent towns to connect with their recreation path network.

CAPITAL FACILITIES & HUMAN SERVICES

As Westport develops, the burden on services and facilities will also increase. One primary concern is to acquire land for Town facilities and services before most of the suitable and desirable parcels are developed privately.

Over the next twenty years, the Town may need to acquire land that is centrally located for the expansion and rehabilitation of the police and fire departments as well as for new school facilities. The Town may want to consider combining the police and fire departments with the highway department into one single “public safety building”. In the near future the Town will also need to acquire land for a new cemetery.

Westport will need to acquire funds to:

- maintain and repair current buildings;
- expand and maintain the Council on Aging according to demand;

- renovate and enlarge the Public Library in order to meet the increasing need for public services;
- develop and maintain a Community Center and recreation facilities;
- expand the offices of the Harbormaster and Shellfish Warden.





The Westport Council on Aging is housed at the Senior Center on Reed Rd.

GOAL:

Provide and maintain adequate capital facilities and human services as the town continues to grow.

OBJECTIVES:

- Determine how escalating real estate trends in Westport will impact the future land needs of the Town and how that development will increase stress on existing services and facilities.
 - Inventory existing Town land.
 - Examine and evaluate use of present land.
 - Examine and evaluate other land in the Town that could be used in the future.
 - Develop creative strategies to acquire land for the future expansion of the departments, the community facilities and human services, as well as for passive recreation, conservation and open space.
- Pursue a study of town departments in terms of allocated resources, personnel, and manpower:
 - to determine if current organization is as efficient and coordinated as it should be.
 - to determine if it would be feasible to combine and/or re-arrange some departments,
 - to evaluate the need for a DPW.
 - to evaluate the need to expand the Town nurse department.
- Commit funds to hire full-time personnel to:
 - facilitate more dialogue between departments,
 - oversee land-use management,
 - create balanced strategies to meet the Town's needs as Westport continues to grow.

WATER/SEWERAGE

The future growth and economic development of Westport will in part depend on the Town's ability to maintain and administer existing water systems, to obtain potable water, and to dispose of wastewater in an environmentally sound way. Most of the Town's residences and businesses are served by privately owned wells with one service per well. As the Town population has increased, so has the contamination of existing and potential water supply sources,

particularly in densely populated areas such as Westport Point and areas adjacent to Route 6 and Sanford Road. The Board of Health knows of contamination in 15% of the private wells in Town. A Town-wide survey of private wells could identify more incidents of contamination and contribute to a comprehensive plan that addresses this most critical issue.

For the disposal of solid waste, Westport

currently operates a transfer station on an 'as needed' basis. Private waste pick-up is available at a direct fee to residents.

GOAL:

Maintain and provide environmentally sound water and sewerage systems and solid waste disposal to service business and residential needs and to develop environmentally sound practices that will protect the health of the town's aquifer, groundwater, and related water resources as Westport continues to grow.

OBJECTIVES:

- Evaluate the need to establish a single distinct board or department to deal with water related issues to:
 - oversee and administer existing water systems along Route 6,
 - evaluate potential water supply sources for public and/or private use,
 - develop and protect potential water supply sources,
 - investigate and designate possible future sites for Town wells,
 - investigate regionalization and/or work with surrounding communities to connect in with their water systems, sewerage and waste disposal services,
 - implement and enforce environmentally sound waste management programs in septic, sewerage, and solid waste disposal,
- develop environmentally sound stormwater management practices,
- provide buffer zones to public water supplies,
- protect water supply from inappropriate large-user draw down at the expense of the water needs of the community,
- encourage alternative treatment/collection and water and sewer technologies, especially self-contained treatment systems for light industrial/office buildings, municipal buildings and multi-unit housing,
- educate residents about septic systems and wells.
- Encourage more recycling/composting.
- Investigate the best options for solid waste disposal for Westport.
- Develop a hazardous waste tracking system that will:
 - identify 'large' generators of waste and users of hazardous materials
 - monitor their disposal and handling practices.
- Modify zoning in areas of high groundwater and/or poor soils.
- Establish and/or modify regulations to protect groundwater.

PUBLIC MEETING RESPONSE

The Master Plan Update Committee was gratified by the citizen response at its three public meetings. New issues were suggested, objectives were discussed and commented on, and a "sticker vote" held at the end of each meeting helped the Committee establish priorities for action. The priority list from the sticker vote is long, but the most frequent responses follow below. Town Boards and Committees that may lead the planning in each case are indicated in parentheses.

- Conduct a careful Town-wide study of present potable water and sewerage conditions, and identify long term goals and objectives for addressing them to accommodate growth (Board of Health, Selectmen, Planning Board);
- Study housing needs considering options to meet them and methods to achieve them (Planning Board, Housing Authority);
- Identify the natural and built features that contribute to "rural character" and develop ways of preserving them into the future (Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Historic Commission);
- Build upon the 1996 Strategic Economic Development Plan to encourage "low

impact” businesses to preserve the Town’s natural and cultural features (Appointed Committee)

- Continue Capital Facilities planning (All Town Boards, Departments & Committees)
- Plan village development to introduce housing and new business, and devise methods to preserve Town village character (Planning Board, Historic Commission)
- Continue to develop and support Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping (Planning Board, Board of Assessors)
- Establish the position of full-time Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board (Planning Board);
- Continue with the Master Plan Update Committee to advise and support the integrated Town planning.

As previously stated, these were the topics that received the most sticker votes at the three public

meetings, but that in no way diminishes the importance of the other goals and objectives expressed in the Summary. As we move on to develop the comprehensive Master Plan, all of the goals and objectives will be evaluated, assigned priorities, and integrated into a definitive implementation plan. Many of these planning activities can be achieved simultaneously. In fact, it is best that they are not done in isolation, but with frequent integration of their findings. Critical to the success of the planning efforts will be the availability of a full-time coordinator, most likely in the person of the Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board. Another major factor that will contribute enormously to the success of the Town’s planning efforts will be the availability of a fully functional Geographic Information System (GIS) coupled with our Local Area Network (LAN). Both of these elements should be on line before summer, 2000. They will revolutionize the way Westport does its business and help move us into a new era where we will truly have better control over our own destiny.

CONCLUSION

The work on some of these objectives is already underway. There is an article on the 2000 Annual Town Meeting warrant for an Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board. Another article proposes a Phased Growth By-law. The Board of Health has begun a study of potable water and sewerage. The Open Space Committee has produced an Open Space and Recreation Plan that addresses many of the objectives of this Summary. The Capital Facilities Planning Committee has been at work for over a year. The GIS base mapping will be complete in spring 2000. The linking of Town departments through a Local Area Network (LAN) is almost complete. The Master Plan Update Committee is hopeful that many of the listed objectives will be addressed at the 2001 Annual Town Meeting. This would be followed by work on other planning priorities. Town Boards and departments must lead the way in accomplishing this work. However, professional expertise will be needed for technical and/or complicated tasks. This assistance will require Town funding. In addition to Town funding, the Executive Summary Master Plan will qualify us for state grants. Master Planning is a continuing dynamic process and funding will probably be needed annually.

The primary objective remains the same today as it was in 1964, when Westport first developed a Master Plan, and that is to provide a roadmap for the future of our town. The Executive Summary Updated Master Plan is also a reflection of the hard work of a number of your fellow citizens, and echoes thoughts and ideas that have been expressed in a multitude of plans and studies that have been generated by the Town over the past thirty five years. If utilized in the proper manner, this roadmap will facilitate the implementation of ideas that will preserve the qualities of Westport that we all hold dear, as well as put the control of our future growth in our own hands.

Implementation of these objectives will fall into the hands of the pertinent boards and committees, but the vision for the plan must always be held aloft by the town leaders so that we do not stray from the path. Newly elected or appointed employees of the Town should be made familiar with the Plan and given to understand that one of their most important tasks will be to carry on the work of implementation.

The following list of residents includes committee members and other residents who attended meetings of the Master Plan Update Committee. Most of these citizens, in some measure, contributed to this document.

Betsy Acheson	Deb Barnes	Anita Baron	Jack Baughan
Jean Borges	John Branco	Paul Cabral	Joe Carvalho
George Cataldo	Ann Chandanaïs	Deana Chase	Dawn Clifton
Norine Collins	Roberta Costa	Ron Costa	Janine DaSilva
Ken DeCosta	David Dionne	Jack Dolan	Richie Earle
David Emilita	Gregory Franchetti	John Gifford	Gay Gillespie
Timothy Gillespie	Mary Ellen Gomes	Liz Gotonska	Michael Guilmette
Clayton Harrison	Michael Healy	Cal Hopkinson	Louise Houghteling
Joe Keith	Priscilla Lawrence	Sean Leach	Carlton Lees
James Long	Debra Manchester	John McDonough	Stephen Medeiros
Normand Michaud	John Montano	Wes Norman	Shawn Pariseau
Jack Penney	Paul Pereira	John Perry	Tom Richerson
Sara Ries	Annie Rosinha	Phillip Rulon	Tanja Ryden
Gary Sherman	Peter Streng	Michael Sullivan	Henry Swan
Gregg Swanzey	Richard Tongue	Byron Trefonides	Daniel Tripp
Steven Tripp	William Tripp	P.E. Truesdale	Wayne Turner
David Wallace	Greg Werthessen	Richard Wertz	



856 Main Road
Westport, MA 02790

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