

Town of Westport

2016

Master Plan

*Master Plan Update Committee
Westport, Massachusetts*



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Key Codes	v
Executive Summary	ES
Chapters	
1. Capital Facilities	1-1
2. Cultural & Historic Resources	2-1
3. Economic Development	3-1
4. Education	4-1
5. Housing	5-1
6. Land Use	6-1
7. Natural Resources	7-1
8. Open Space & Recreation	8-1
9. Traffic & Circulation	9-1
10. Water, Wastewater & Stormwater	10-1
Appendices	
A. Visioning Session March 2, 2013	A1
B. Survey and Results	B1
C. Public Workshops	C1
1. Public Workshop #1 April 12, 2014	C3
-Natural Resources	C4
-Open Space & Recreation	C5
-Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater	C6
2. Public Workshop #2 September 27, 2014	C7
- Economic Development	C8
- Housing	C9
- Transportation and Circulation	C10

3. Public Workshop #3 October 25, 2014	C11
-Creative, Cultural & Historic Resources	C12
- Capital Facilities & Human Services	C13
- Land Use	C14
4. Public Workshop #4 Education	C15
- Education	C16
D. Committee Responses	D1
Mission Statements	D2

A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

The Westport Planning Board would like to thank those individuals and organizations who have assisted in the preparation of the 2016 Westport Master Plan. Westport was able to do the majority of work in-house keeping the overall costs to a minimum. This could not have been done without the expertise of the planning staff and committee members. The overall knowledge and experience that the staff and members were able to provide was invaluable in completing the plan.

Special thanks should also be given to David Cole for his assistance in writing many of the chapters, Elaine Ostroff for her drive and determination to start the update process and see it through, Assistant Planner, Lucy Tabit for the cover photo and for her many hours of formatting and organizing the document, Town Planner, Jim Hartnett for facilitating the process and Robert Barboza for his assistance in writing and editing chapters.

In addition, over 50 Boards, Committees and Organizations participated in the process by providing vision statements and identifying goals and priorities. The Community also played a significant role in the process by responding to the survey and attending workshops facilitated by the Southeastern Regional Planning Agency and the Horsley & Witten Group.

The 2016 Master Plan Update committee,

David Cole, Co-Chair of the Committee
Elaine Ostroff, Co-Chair of the Committee
Ann Boxler
Jack Baughan
Jeffrey Bull
Jim Coyne
Gay Gillespie
Jim Hartnett, Town Planner
Sean Leach
Melissa Pacheco, School Committee Member
Nancy Rioux, School Committee Member

Westport Planning Board

James Whitin, Chairman
William D. Raus, Vice Chairman
David Cole
Marc DeRego
Andrew Sousa

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Key Codes for Responsible Parties

Chapters provide recommended prioritized goals with objectives and action items and assigns them to various entities as listed in the table below.

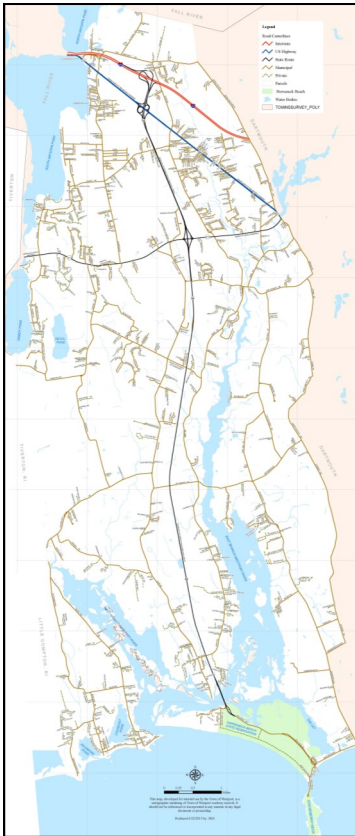
Code	Responsible Party	Code	Responsible Party	Code	Responsible Party
AC	Agricultural Commission	FC	Fish Commissioner	SC	School Committee
AHT	Affordable Housing Trust	FD	Fire Department	TWFPL	Trustees of the Westport Free Public Library
AOSTC	Agricultural /Open Space Trust Council	FINCOM	Finance Committee	VS	Veteran Services
AS	Board of Assessors	HA	Housing Authority	WCC	Westport Cultural Council
BC	Beach Committee	HW	Highway Department	WHC	Westport Historical Commission
BD	Building Department	ID	Individual Departments	WHS	Westport Historical Society
BOH	Board of Health	IT	Information Technology	WFA	Westport Fishermen's Association
BOS	Board of Selectmen	LC	Landing Commission	WLCT	Westport Land Conservation Trust
CC	Conservation Commission	MPUC	Master Plan Update Committee	WPATV	Westport Public Access TV
CD	Cemetery Department	MS	Director of Marine Services	WRMC	Water Resource Management Committee
CIG	Cemetery Identification Group	OSC	Open Space Committee	WRWA	Westport River Watershed Alliance
COA	Council on Aging	PD	Police Department	WUYS	Westport United Youth Soccer
COD	Commission on Disabilities	PB	Planning Board	WYAA	Westport Youth Athletic Association
CPC	Community Preservation Committee	RC	Recreation Commission	ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals
EC	Energy Committee	SA	Shellfish Advisory Committee		
ED	Economic Development	SAC	Selectmen Appointed Committee		

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Executive Summary

2016 Master Plan

Introduction



The Plan started out to be an update to the 2004 Plan but in response to perceived needs has grown into a document that more closely resembles a new Plan for the Town, incorporating concepts from the 2004 Plan and modifying them to address the needs of the community from the vantage point of the present day.

It is designed to guide decision-making policies regarding long term development in a manner that preserves the unique rural quality and character of Westport but also meets the pressing needs of the community, particularly in the areas of education, public safety and water quality. The Plan is intended to provide guidelines for Town officials, Town boards and committees, and the community members at large to make decisions and take actions that will be consistent with the expressed objectives and visions of the community.

One clear message emerges from this plan update: The Town needs to face up to the fact that more funding will be required in the coming years to upgrade schools and public safety facilities, to raise

the quality of the public education system, to address critical water quality problems and to meet existing and future demands for affordable and elderly housing. If the Town fails to meet these needs, the quality of life will be compromised, the expressed values of the Town residents sacrificed, and the underlying property values of the whole community will decline.

The plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 41, Section 81D of the Massachusetts General Laws. It addresses the following nine subjects that were identified in previous plans: 1) Capital Facilities and Human Resources; 2) Cultural and Historic Resources; 3) Economic Development; 4) Housing; 5) Land Use; 6) Natural Resources; 7) Open Space and Recreation; 8) Traffic and Circulation; 9) Water, Wastewater and Stormwater. Early in the planning process, school funding, school facilities and the perception of the community schools generated a significant amount of interest and the committee concluded that a tenth chapter specifically dedicated to the topic of Education was needed. Each chapter concludes with a listing of specific goals and actions that are seen as guides for plan implementation.

Executive Summary Contents

Process	ES-2
Town Survey	ES-3
Demographics	ES-3
Chapter Summaries	ES-4
Implementation	ES-13
Financials	ES-13
Conclusion	ES-14

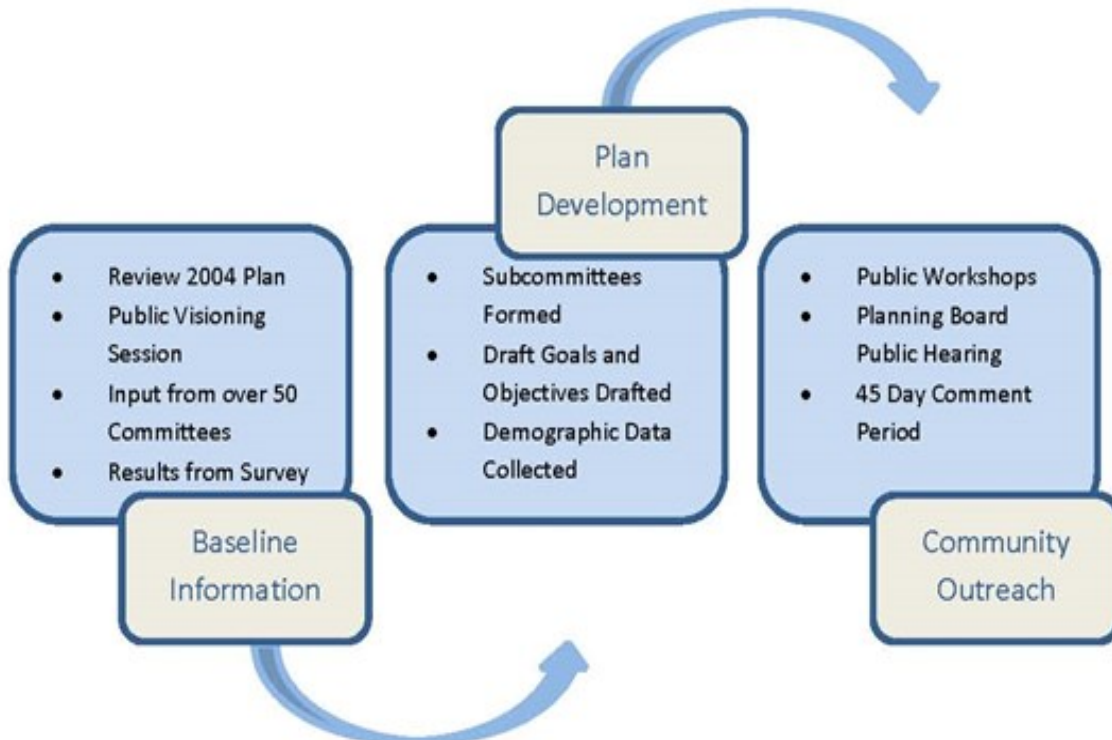
Process

The Master Plan Update Committee was established by the Planning Board on July 30, 2013. It is comprised of residents from every precinct who volunteered their time and local knowledge to work on updating the 2004 plan. From the very beginning the committee stressed the need to make the process transparent and open to the community. The Planning Board created a "Master Plan" section on their website that both promoted as well as documented meetings and events. Public participation was a priority and input was solicited during all of the planning stages. The committee met over a period of 2½ years, holding monthly meetings as a group with subcommittee meetings as needed.

The Committee sought input through a number of outreach programs and workshops. The planning began with a community visioning session on March 2, 2013, in which at least 45 residents participated. The session was facilitated by the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). Community members were asked to participate in planning exercises to discuss a vision

for the Town and what needs should be addressed to realize that vision. More than fifty committees, boards and local organizations were then asked to provide information on their vision, their goals as well as obstacles that may be preventing them from achieving their goals. In an attempt to engage more residents, a survey was mailed to every household and the results were tabulated. This information along with the 2004 action items were reviewed by the update committee and new goals and objectives were prepared for each element of the plan. The update committee then presented the goals and objectives to the public at four workshops beginning in April of 2014. These workshops were facilitated by professionals from the Horsley Witten Group who summarized the workshops and presented follow up reports to the committee. Based on these reports, the Committee revised the goals, objectives and action items to reflect comments from the public.

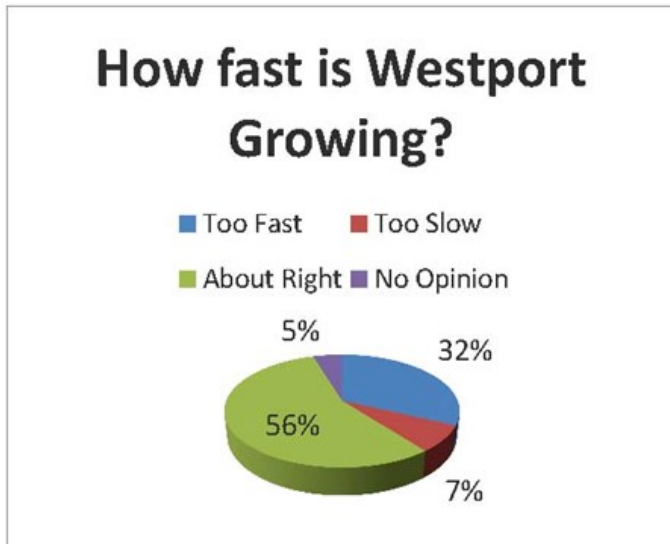
On May 19, 2015, the Committee presented the findings from the report to the Planning Board. The Board allowed for an additional 45 day comment period and at the end of the comment period the Board voted to adopt the 2016 Master Plan.



Town-wide opinion survey

In February of 2013, the Planning Board mailed 8,500 survey forms to Westport residents, of which 1,473, or approximately 17%, were completed and returned for analysis.

The main themes of responses to the survey were that the residents strongly liked the rural nature of the community and its natural environment, including the seaside, rivers, farm fields and woodlands. The majority thought the recent pace of growth of the community was about right, they had a strong preference for single family development over multi-family housing, and they preferred to see small family- and farm-related new businesses rather than big stores or more used car lots. There was concern over the perceived quality of the schools and a desire to improve schools and recreational facilities, although there was reluctance to raise property tax rates to achieve those objectives.



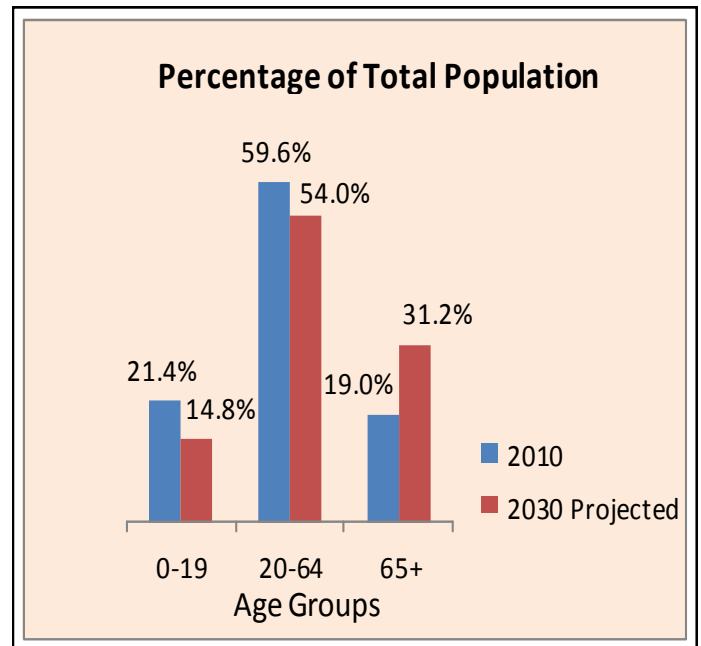
Demographic projections:

An important question for this Master Plan Update is what can be expected as to the future growth and composition of the Town's population. The best source that we have found is a set of state-

wide population forecasts that was recently prepared for the State by the Donahue Institute at UMass Amherst.¹

These forecasts predict a slowing down of population growth in the coming decades for the Southeast Region and a shift in the age structure towards fewer young persons and more seniors. They present similar projections for Westport, suggesting a 5.6% increase in the total population over the 20 year period from 2010 to 2030. That means an increase from 15,532 in the 2010 census to a projection of 16,400 in 2030. Of greater importance for assessing the need for future services is the projected shift in composition. The school-age population is projected to decline by about one third by 2030, whereas the seniors are projected to nearly double by that time.

These numbers suggest a declining demand for education services for Westport's youth and a greatly increased demand for services for seniors.



Source: UMass Donahue Institute, 2013

¹Renski, Henry, Lindsey Koshgarian and Susan Strate. *Long Term Population Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities*. UMass Donahue Institute, 2013.

Summaries by Chapter

Chapter 1. Capital Facilities and Human Services

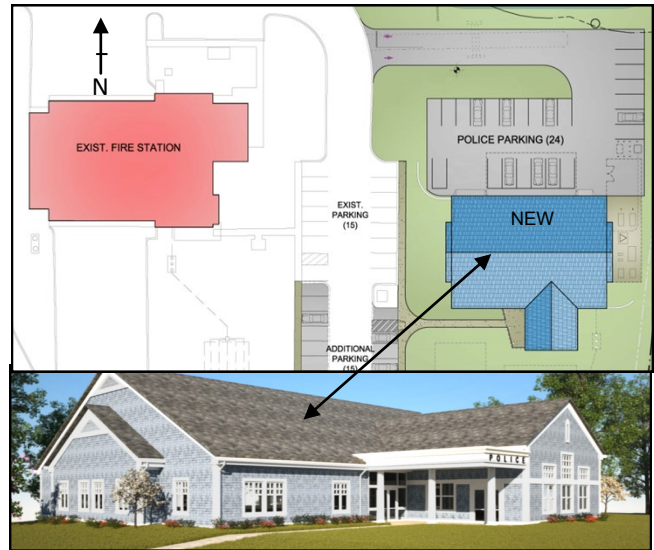
There has been one major improvement to the Town's capital facilities since the previous Master Plan. In 2010, construction of a new fire station on Hix Bridge Road was completed. This project was funded by a debt exclusion approved by the Town and will be fully paid off by 2029.

Systematic planning to meet the Town's future requirements for capital facilities and the supply of human services has been largely undermined by the Town's reluctance, at Town Meeting, to approve such plans, and at the ballot box to provide funding for such expenses. Community Preservation Act funds have been used for significant restoration and rehabilitation improvements to historic town buildings, but cannot be used for maintenance, nor for non-historic structures. Discovery of contamination -PCBs- in the Middle School has forced the school department to close the building, moving students into other facilities, including portable classrooms and other areas not designed for classroom space. Consideration of what to do with that building and how to meet the needs of the school system will be addressed in a feasibility study as part of the School Building Authority process. At the Annual Town Meeting held in May of 2015, the Town approved up to \$700,000 for the feasibility study. It is expected that the feasibility study will provide a comprehensive evaluation of educational facility needs and recommend significant amounts of new construction and refurbishing of existing facilities that will require major funding.

A wide variety of supportive human services for people over 60 are available at the Senior Center, managed by the Council on Aging, staffed with many volunteers and supported by the Friends of the Council on Aging.

The primary goal for these facilities and services is to provide and maintain adequate services for all residents as the Town continues to grow and change. Greater willingness to make use of the Town's low debt levels and good credit rating to un-

dertake debt financing in an era of low interest rates would provide needed support for meeting more of the Town's capital facility's needs.

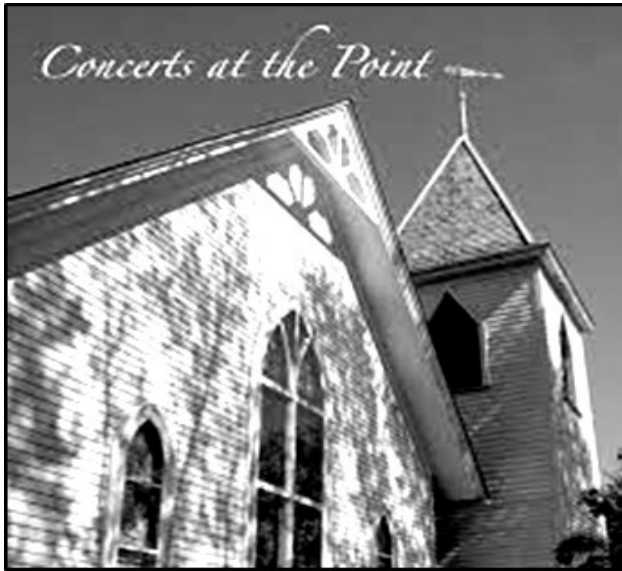


Proposed New Police Station

Chapter 2. Cultural and Historic Resources

The Town has many important resources that contribute to the vibrant cultural and historical character of the community. Cultural resources include both public and private entities. The Westport Cultural Council (WCC) is a town-appointed body which manages funding from both private and public funds. The Helen Ellis Charitable Trust provides a substantial annual source of private funds to the WCC. The WCC in turn, funds other entities engaging in numerous and diverse cultural activities. For example, the WCC managed the public and private funding that went into the design and installation of the "Bench Marks" or benches placed in five locations in Central Village. Privately funded organizations include the Westport Art Group which provides a center for local artists to work and exhibit art work. Two privately-owned art galleries in Central Village offer frequent exhibits by leading local and distant artists as well as free films, lectures and other shows. A number of prominent local artists join in open studio showings

organized by the South Coast Artists group. The Concerts at the Point series has provided six chamber music concerts and other musical programs for eighteen years, as well as musical training in the schools. It has built a strong support group and an endowment to assure financial viability well into the future. The Tiverton Community Chorus has many members from Westport and presents two concerts each year. The WCC has provided funding to these two later groups in addition to their own private funding.



Westport has many individuals, non-profits and town bodies that support and enhance our local historic heritage. Most are supported by both town, primarily with Community Preservation Act funding (CPA), and private funding. The WCC is one such town entity already discussed. The Westport Historical Commission (WHC) is active in town wide activities such as the update of the official Historic Inventory of town historic resources, including buildings, oversight of the demolition bylaw to preserve special buildings, review authority over changes in the buildings in the Westport Point Historic District which are visible from a public way, administering historic preservation restrictions on the Cadman-White-Handy House, the Wolf Pit School and the Oscar Palmer farm, overseeing CPA projects such as the microfilming and scanning of historic town records, maps and documents, care of the historic residence on the Town Farm, and CPA funded work on private historic resources and on historic town buildings such as the



Cadman-White-Handy House

Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, Council on Aging, and American Legion Hall. The private non-profit, Westport Historical Society (WHS), manages the Cadman-White-Handy House and the Bell School House. It provides regular programs and education opportunities and maintains a collection of historic documents, artifacts, and other materials for use by the public. It has sponsored major research such as the symposium on Paul Cuffe, a prominent Native American/African American citizen. The Westport Fishermen's Association (WFA) has restored the Horseneck Point Life Saving Station with aid from CPA and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) funding. The Westport Land Conservation Trust (WLCT) and Trustees of Reservation (TTOR) have leased and restored the buildings and land on the town-owned Town Farm. The Town Library has set up a climate controlled room dedicated to preservation of Westport History. A private group, the Cemetery Identification Group (CIG) under the auspices of the Historical Commission, has identified and registered all the cemeteries in Westport with the Mass Historical Commission to protect them and has set up a website with over 70,000 unique visitors to date. Individuals in Westport have recorded hundreds of oral history interviews.

The plan for the future is to expand upon these important initiatives by building awareness and encouraging participation in the cultural and historical resources of the community. In addition, efforts to increase awareness of these resources by students through collaboration with the schools will be undertaken.

Chapter 3. Economic Development

The primary goal for economic development is to pursue and develop economic activity that is harmonious with the Town's vision. Important aspects of this goal include: preserving and enhancing the economic viability of agriculture and agricultural-based businesses; preserving and expanding fish and shellfish commerce; maintaining and improving service facilities for recreational boating and water activities. In pursuing these goals the plan recommends expanding administrative capabilities of the Town to support economic development, facilitating and expediting the approval process for new initiatives, and utilizing available regional resources, including the University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth, to encourage and provide support for such initiatives. Improving public infrastructure and services, including communication facilities, water and wastewater, are also seen as critical for future economic development.



Oyster Farming

New business activities in Westport that are consistent with the Town's vision include a meat processing facility to serve the livestock farmers of the South Coast and new commercial solar farms which have both just been approved by local boards. The

Town should be promoting the recently designated Science and Technology Overlay District along with the great opportunities of tying in to the Ultra High Speed Internet system which now travels through Westport along Route 6. Also, plans for major new distribution centers in nearby towns may provide significant employment opportunities for local residents.

Economic Development should not only encourage new businesses but work to support existing businesses and encourage them to grow. There are approximately 500 small businesses currently operating in Westport with a conservative net worth exceeding 125 million. These small enterprises play a vital role in the community by providing jobs, goods and services, thereby improving the quality of life for all residents. For many of these mainly home-based businesses, modern communication services and an appealing environment are key factors in supporting and preserving them.



Westport Business 2 Business

Another goal of the plan is to recognize the important role of start-up businesses and support this idea as a developing sector. Westport has access to a variety of educational resources and support services offered by UMass Dartmouth, Bristol Community College, the local community and regional schools. These resources should be promoted and used to grow the Town's economic base.

Chapter 4. Education

Early in the update process the committee realized that education in Westport was a topic that needed to be addressed more fully and created a new chapter dedicated specifically to education. Of the many topics included in this plan, education has dominated the discussion in committee meetings, surveys and workshops and was the focus of the final workshop held on February 7, 2015. This topic has been identified as a community priority and is vital for the long term development of the Town for the following reasons:



- A high quality educational system not only benefits the students, it benefits the whole community. It has an important influence on property values, and it can be a source of pride and community identity contributing to a livable and sustainable community.
- Education can and should bring the community together, but in recent times in Westport it has tended to divide the community between those, both young and old, who want a high quality education for the children of Westport and those who are reluctant to see any increase in the property tax rate to support such a system.

There is now clear evidence that underfunding of the Westport School System over a number of years has resulted in deterioration of educational quality, families choosing to opt out of this public school system, especially at the high school level, to attend private or vocational schools, and negative impacts on property sales and values in the face of a rising property market in neighboring communities.

Compounding these problems was the discovery of PCBs in the Middle School, which, after expensive but unsuccessful attempts at removal, along with the outdated and deteriorating condition of the facility, has led to the abandonment of that building, reassigning of classes to the other three schools and

adding temporary classrooms as a short term solution.

The school department has received initial approval from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and will move forward with its

newly created School Building Committee to evaluate the department and community needs through a feasibility study. Getting accepted into this program by the MSBA was a difficult process and because approximately 45% of the costs are reimbursable from the State it is an opportunity that should be pursued. Acceptance into this program and the comple-

tion of the feasibility study will provide guidance and funding for much needed school improvements. The 2015 Town Meeting approved funding for this feasibility study.

The problems currently facing the Westport Community School System appear to go well beyond the normal day-to-day or even year-to-year problems that would typically be faced by the school administration and School Committee. The recently issued report from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, plus the expected report on the future physical facility needs of the school system, taken together, will provide a solid basis for beginning to address these problems of educational quality and building requirements.

To address these complex interrelated problems, this plan calls for the Town of Westport to establish a Special Commission to undertake the task of analyzing these reports and, working with the School Committee and the school administration, to prepare a set of recommendations for the Town as to future funding needs and possible organizational changes that would bring the school system back up to a Level 1 and fulfilling the expectations of, and obligations to the community by achieving a high quality education system. Such a commission should be jointly appointed by the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee, should consult periodically with the

Boards, and should submit their report to those Boards and to Town Meeting to provide guidance for future decisions as to funding and other related matters. The membership of the commission should include experienced local citizens and outside persons with special expertise as needed to analyze and give recommendations that will serve the interests of the Town.

Chapter 5. Housing

Over the past decade there have been several important initiatives in the housing sector to address the housing needs of Westport residents. The Town of Westport established the Westport Affordable Housing Trust Fund (the Trust) by vote at Town Meeting in May, 2009 and a Board of Trustees was appointed by the Board of Selectmen in February, 2010 to oversee the Trust. The mission of the Trust is to help people with modest incomes afford the cost of living in Westport in three primary ways: 1) convert existing buildings to affordable homes, 2) ease home costs for existing residents in need and 3) construct new affordable homes. A part-time housing specialist has been employed by the Town with support from Community Preservation Act funds. He has helped implement the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP). This program assists low income home-owners to repair and upgrade their homes.



Proposed Noquochoke Village

A Housing Production Plan was completed by the regional planning agency with the Trust in 2012

with an updated assessment of the housing needs in Westport. It highlighted the changing needs, especially the increase of the population over the age of 65 who were living alone and needing assistance and the increase of female headed households with children under 18 years of age. Over 25% of Westport residents were living in housing that was unaffordable to them. The plan identified the gap between the recommended 10% of affordable housing and what was available; Westport needs more than 400 affordable housing units to get to the recommended 10% level. The Housing Production Plan also noted that about 25 % of the population has low to moderate income and only 3.5 % of the dwelling units are affordable to them. The plan identified the challenge of zoning regulations that do not allow for a mixture of housing types, and stressed the need for more rental housing.

The Housing Production Plan stresses that new housing developments should preserve, for the public's benefit, the visual and functional characteristics of the Town that comprise the Town's heritage. It also calls for infrastructure improvements that will enhance the livability and health of residents, as well as the value of housing, such as water and wastewater services, public transportation, sidewalks for public safety, hiking and biking paths. At this time, the Trust is overseeing negotiations and plans for Noquochoke Village, a major affordable housing development of 50 rental units that will be located on 31 acres of Town owned land on Route 177 near the Dartmouth Line.

Looking to the future, the primary goal is to provide a range of housing choices that will meet the housing needs of all segments of the Town's population. This includes taking steps to increase the supply of smaller housing units for smaller families and the elderly, and to increase the supply of affordable housing - in addition to that which will be provided by Noquochoke Village.

Chapter 6. Land Use

How do Westport Residents feel about Land Use? The vast majority of respondents to our opinion survey indicated a strong desire to preserve Westport’s rural character and its natural and cultural heritage. To meet these objectives the plan’s land use strategies include a) the preservation of the Town’s coastal, riverfront and pastoral landscapes; b) the protection and encouragement of farming, fishing and recreational boating as vital economic activities; c) promotion and protection of the Town’s unique natural resources; and d) the use of smart growth planning to direct growth to the areas that have the greatest potential to absorb and benefit from it. A new element of this plan update is to take into account the anticipated potential changes due to climate change and subsequent sea level rise in making decisions about land use.

Farming activity in Westport has been transitioning from predominantly dairy farming to a much more diversified pattern that includes vegetable farms (often under Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) arrangements), vineyards, orchards, beef cattle, goat, sheep and pig farms. These tend to be smaller operations, often family-owned and operated, and involving a rural-focused younger generation. Many of these farming and forestry operations benefit from Chapter 61 tax abatements. There is need for more information on, and a better understanding of the changes in farming patterns to identify the ways in which these new operations can be supported and promoted most effectively. Community Preservation Act funds have already played a major role in launching some of these new operations on historic farm properties and there will undoubtedly be opportunities for similar supporting efforts in the future. A Farmer’s Market began in 2013, and operates weekly at the Town Farm from June until October, providing a diverse source of locally grown foods.

The implementation of these objectives is not an easy or simple task. The list of necessary steps includes but is not limited to:

- a. Begin the process of obtaining a Comprehensive Water Management Plan; this will be an integrated plan for meeting the Town’s current and future water, wastewater, and stormwater needs.
- b. Work to achieve better collaboration between Town departments, boards, and commissions to meet the complex land use planning and permitting requirements in anticipation of and as a result of future growth and the effects of climate change.

INCREASE IN PROTECTED AND PRESERVED LAND

Type	Acreage 1990	Acreage 2015	Percent Change 1990-2015
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (17 farms as of 2003)	946.0	1,974.3	+108.7%
Conservation Commission	138.7	204.0	+47.1%
City of Fall River Water Dept.	497.5	487.0	-2.1%
Westport Land Conservation Trust	170.0	1,065.0	+526.5%
Conservation Restrictions	65.0	1,235.3	+1,800.5%
Mass Audubon Society	15.3	12.0	-21.6%
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	465.3	606.0	+30.2%
US Government	1.3	1.3	0.0%
Total Protected Acreage	2,299.1	5,584.9	+142.9%

Source: 2004 Master Plan (1990), Assessor Records (2015)

- c. Develop new strategies for future residential and commercial development that are consistent with the desired preservation of the rural character and the unique natural cultural heritage.
- d. Design a strategy for economic development that is consistent with the needs and preferences of the Town’s residents.

Chapter 7. Natural Resources

The goals and objectives for natural resources in many respects parallel those relating to land use, but with some differences of focus and proposed actions.

The primary goals are to preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's natural resources. These include its ocean front and beaches, rivers and streams wetlands and estuaries, farmlands and woodlands, open spaces and aquifers and watersheds, and all its wild flora and fauna. In seeking to achieve these objectives, the highest priority should be given to improving public understanding of those actions that help to protect our natural resources as well as those that harm such resources. In addition, the plan stresses the need to identify and implement programs to bring nitrogen levels in the Westport River estuary down to sustainable levels and to address the pollution problems in other water bodies in town. Climate change is a new focus of concern bringing with it the prospect of rising sea levels, more frequent and violent storms and hurricanes as well as rising temperatures. These prospects need to be taken into account in making decisions about resource protection and land-use planning.



Horseneck Beach

The plan calls for continuation of land and open space protection programs especially in aquifer zones and sensitive parts of the watersheds, and also for protecting and preserving critical wildlife habitat in order to provide protection for endangered species. Here the emphasis is on educating the public about the need for such protection to gain better understanding of, and participation in, such efforts.

Chapter 8. Open Space and Recreation

The Town has benefited significantly from the protection of open space and establishment of new recreation areas funded by the Community Preservation Act, the Agricultural and Open Space Trust Fund, the Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Trustees of Reservations. There has been a willingness of local property owners to enter into agreements with these organizations, often at significant reduction in income for themselves. Altogether some 2,300 acres have been protected. Two important recreation programs are in various stages of development. CPA and Agricultural and Open Space Trust Council (AOSTC) fund monies were used to purchase the Santos farm on Route 177 that is in the process of being converted by the Westport Youth Athletic Association (WYAA) into an 80-acre recreation area that will contain athletic fields for baseball, softball and soccer. The Russell Davis farm on Sanford Road was purchased with AOSTC funding and has been developed to provide soccer fields for the Westport United Youth Soccer (WUYS) program. Farmland under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) has increased from 1,703 to 1,974 acres in the past decade. A project in Bicentennial Park administered



by the Recreation Commission and funded with CPA monies has been undertaken.



The main goal for the future will be to continue to promote open space and agricultural programs and to complete the WYAA fields. The long term benefits of open space in protecting the rural landscape must be made known. Such community bene-

-fits far exceed the tax revenues that are foregone on such projects.

A CPA project is underway to rehabilitate the gymnasium in the Town Annex. There is a need for more indoor community facilities including basketball courts and a fitness center which has become even more urgent with the closing of the Middle School. Handicapped access to town beaches remains a priority.

Chapter 9. Traffic and Circulation

The main goal for traffic and circulation is to improve the existing vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation network by reconfiguring key intersections and roadways. To achieve this the master plan committee is calling for a State study of the Route 6 corridor to precede the design of needed improvements. The State, at long last, is currently reconfiguring the intersection of Route 6 and Route 177, making it much safer, stormwater from the highway will now be treated before it enters the East Branch of the



Route 177 & Route 6

Westport River. A privately funded safety study in 2006, also calls for improving the Main Road/ Adamsville Road intersection and sidewalks in the Central Village area. Other studies called for improvements to several intersections, including Route 177 at Tickle Road, Sanford Road and Gifford Road. Studies also propose seeking a long-term solution for East Beach road. That road has been repeatedly devastated by hurricanes and is likely to be even more vulnerable with rising sea levels.

A second goal is to develop a framework for a future Town-wide circulation system that would be functional, economical and pleasant to use as well as meeting the requirements of public safety.

It especially mentions the desire for trail development and coordinating local trail systems with regional and State trails.

Chapter 10. Water, Wastewater and Stormwater

The 2004 Master Plan detailed many different problems with the Town's water infrastructure, from contaminated wells, aging and nonexistent stormwater controls to excess nutrients polluting the groundwater and the critically important estuaries and their watersheds. While relatively little has actually been done to address the water, wastewater and stormwater needs that were identified in the previous Master Plan, there have been important developments that provide both opportunities and guidance for moving ahead on these problems in the coming decade. The major questions now are how the Town will respond to the newly identified needs and will the Town make use of the available opportunities.

The Town's only substantial public water supply system serves 158 properties along Route 6 and up Davis Road. This water is purchased by the Town from the City of Fall River. Recently this system has been experiencing poor water quality conditions largely due to the long time period that the water resides in the distribution pipes. Efforts are underway to address this problem, but even if it is solved, it will

not provide any solution for the many individual private wells, mainly in the densely populated northern part of Westport. These wells were identified in the previous plan as having sub-standard to seriously unhealthy water. Access to clean potable water for all Town residents should be an achievable goal in the 21st century.

Stormwater runoff, mainly from roadways, creates health and safety problems and also feeds polluted water into our waterways. The Town's Water Resource Management Committee established in 2012, is developing a program to identify those sites that should receive priority treatment mainly in the form of improved catch basins that can remove contaminated sediments and treat the water before it enters our waterways.

A new report issued by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), as part of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP), confirms that there is 18% excess nitrogen in the whole Westport River system with the main concentrations in the east Branch (see figure below). This problem will worsen over time if corrective action is not taken. The DEP report specifies total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for nitrogen in both branches of the River that must be achieved to sustain the health of the

whole riverine system. The DEP offers various forms of assistance to help achieve these load levels, but also indicates that sanctions could be applied if the needed corrective actions are not undertaken.

While awaiting this final report from DEP, the Town conducted a follow-up investigation, based on the findings of the original MEP report of 2012, to identify more precisely the sources of nitrogen in the most polluted part of the East Branch, north of the Head of Westport. This investigation determined that the heaviest loads of nitrogen are entering Bread and Cheese Brook between Old Bedford Road and Route 177. This area around Route 6 is densely inhabited and has little space for installing improved denitrifying wastewater treatment systems. This is also much of the same area that has the most severe water quality problems. These two water quality issues need to be addressed in a coordinated manner to achieve efficient solutions. This investigation also confirmed that the major sources of nitrogen, at least in this area, were from septic systems and not from agricultural run-off as had been suggested in the original 2012 MEP report for the Westport River. The common problems of polluted drinking water and inadequate wastewater treatment on small properties contribute to diminishing property values. Polluted wells and the high cost of septic systems for small lots in this area has the added result of “locking in” homeowners without the ability to sell their properties at market rates.

Westport River System

Present Nitrogen Loading Rates, Target Threshold Loads, Percent Reductions Needed to Achieve the Target Threshold Loadings

Sub-embayment System	Present Watershed Load (kg N/day)	Target Threshold Watershed Load (kg N/day)	Percent Load Change Needed to Achieve Target
Old County Road	162.6	111.8	-31.2%
North East Branch	103.1	93.0	-9.8%
South East Branch	62.3	46.5	-25.4%
West Branch	32.9	32.9	0.0%
System Total	488.0	398.9	-18.3%

Target threshold watershed load is the N load from the watershed needed to meet the target threshold N concentrations
 Source: Tables ES-2 and VIII-3 in the MEP Technical Report

A potential source of financing for addressing these various water-related problems was created in 2014 by the State Legislature passage of an Act focused on improving drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. This legislation provides State funding to local communities for, among other things, preparation of comprehensive water and wastewater management plans, grants or low interest rate loans for water infrastructure projects, and authorization for Towns, at their own initiative, to enact a surcharge of up to 3% on the property tax to be used exclusively for improvements in water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. Among other things, towns are required to prepare comprehensive water management plans to participate in the benefits of these pro-

grams. Also the recent DEP report on the Westport River specifies that a comprehensive water management plan will be required for this watershed.

Thus a major issue facing the Town of Westport at this time is whether it will decide to participate in the State program and obtain State support for the planning and implementation of the water infrastructure projects that will be needed to address the water, wastewater and stormwater problems already identified. If the Town does not opt to join these programs, it will be left to address most of the water problems with limited resources. Town boards can adopt new regulations that will impose limits on wastewater systems, to keep the problem from worsening, but they are unlikely to have a significant enough impact on the fundamental problem as a whole to be the only solution.

Implementation

In the past, Master Plans have tended to be completed, shelved and then forgotten until such time as an update is required whereupon the updaters pull out the old plan to see what it said. It is our intention to try to alter this common experience. To this end,



this plan proposes that a Master Plan Implementation Committee should be established by the Planning Board, consisting of a member of the Planning Board, the Town Administrator, Representatives of the Board of Selectmen, the Affordable Housing Trust, the School Committee, the Board of Health, the Conservation Commission, the Economic Development Task Force, the Capital Improvement Planning Committee and the Finance Committee.

The Master Plan Implementation Committee shall meet semi-annually, or more frequently as needed, to identify completed tasks, update priorities as needed, review plan goals, objectives and action items to assess whether they are being met and to update them as needed. After completing this review, the Committee shall give a public presentation, at a Board of Selectmen's meeting and, possibly, at Town Meeting on its findings and recommendations for achieving the goals of the plan.

Financial Considerations

A recent report by "Westport Futures," a citizens committee on the future prospects for Westport Town finances, concluded that if the Town proceeded along its current path with no changes in current expenditure patterns or revenues that there would be increasing budgetary deficits. The report also identified a very large unfunded future liability for retirees' health insurance and pensions, items that are outside the scope of this plan.

This plan update has identified a number of areas where there will be a critical need to increase expenditures. Some of these areas, such as the police station and the school facilities, are currently being assessed and future reports will provide recommendations as to future funding requirements. Reversing the decline in educational quality will require a continuing increase in funding levels. A comprehensive plan for dealing with the Town's water quality problems is also likely to recommend significant increases in expenditures. Some of these expenditures can be financed by borrowing that will require approval of

CPA FUNDING 2003 through 2015

TYPE OF PROJECT	% OF TOTAL	CPA FUNDS \$
Recreation: Sports Fields and Playgrounds	18.2	1,366,105
Town-owned Historic Buildings, Documents & Artifacts	15.8	1,183,713
Community Housing	27.1	2,034,491
Open Space Preservation and Watershed Protection	16.9	1,270,000
Preservation of Farms	10.1	760,000
Preservation and Rehabilitation of Private Historic Sites	11.7	879,515
Preservation of Historic Cemeteries from Destruction	0.2	18,223
GRAND TOTAL	100	\$ 7,512,047

debt overrides. Others can only be met through increases in the property tax base, or possible surcharges on the property tax for the water quality improvement measures.

The Town of Westport has one of the lowest effective property tax rates in the State. This has been seen by many local residents as a positive feature, and by realtors in the past as a favorable selling point. But the evidence presented in this plan update indicates that the consequences of the low tax rate are becoming increasingly evident, especially in the quality of the education system, and this is having a serious negative effect on property sales and values. Facing up to this negative effect of the low tax rate is not only critical for meeting the Town's obligation to its younger citizens and their families, but also to reversing the apparent decline in property values and marketability.

Conclusion

This summary of the 2016 Master Plan for the Town of Westport reports on some successes and

some failures since the previous Master Plan, but, most importantly it seeks to spell out many needed actions going forward that will contribute to bringing our community more closely into alignment with the hopes and preferences of the current residents.

We have important work to do throughout the Town. We need to strengthen our school system and build public support for that task. We need to address critical water quality problems that have been clearly manifested in recent research and experience. There is an urgent need to replace public buildings such as the police station and the middle school. Affordable housing, especially for our growing senior population, must be provided. CPA financing has played a critical role in upgrading town buildings, preserving farms and open space, opening up new recreation facilities, developing new affordable housing, analyzing our water issues and other aspects of community life. Without the use of tax dollars and state funding through CPA, our community would be in much worse shape today. However, going forward, we need to find new funding to implement major projects outside of CPA .

One of the great strengths of this Town that makes it possible to provide services, despite the inadequate level of fiscal support, is the generous commitment of volunteers who participate on committees and boards, perform services for the schools, the Council on Aging and support a myriad of other activities in the Town. Without the services of these dedicated and talented citizens, the community would be much less desirable and attractive for all the inhabitants. The same holds true for the many dedicated Town employees who, despite the Town's below-average salary scales, do their best to provide quality services for the community.

The community needs to understand that the current level of funding is not only inadequate to provide quality services to the community, but it is also having a negative impact on property values. An increase in the property tax rate and authorizations of debt issues to fund major projects will be required to restore and improve the quality of these services.

There are many areas in which regulatory authority needs to be improved to help shape the kind of community that the public wants. The several Town boards and commissions, under the leadership of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, should give serious attention to updating and coordinating regulatory authority in the areas identified in this document.

Finally, we have recommended a process for attempting to see that this Plan does in fact provide some guidance for decision-making in the Town. We hope that the proposed implementation framework will be formally adopted and implemented by the responsible parties.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

CHAPTER 1

Capital Facilities & Human Services

1.1 Introduction

As with many communities facing difficult budget decisions, Westport has not maintained adequate capital facilities and human services. Most of the municipal buildings including the schools are showing their age and need to be upgraded or replaced. The Town has used existing resources, volunteer help and alternative funding sources to close the gap and keep facilities open but a long term solution is needed. Borrowing is the only realistic option available to the Town for the major capital improvement projects. A willingness to make use of the Town's low debt levels and good credit rating to undertake debt financing in an era of low interest rates would provide needed support for meeting more of the Town's capital facility needs.

The Town also needs to continue to explore creative ways to identify and fund services and needed improvements. The Town has been somewhat successful relying on volunteers and staff to develop plans and identify needs, but investing in a well-qualified consultant may prove to be a more cost effective method of developing a long range plan for the community to build and maintain facilities.

Funding sources beyond local taxes should also be identified and exhausted for smaller projects prior to targeting local revenue. One example would be using Community Preservation Act funding to finance small projects. This resource has been used to fund a number projects throughout the Town, and an effort should be made to identify more municipal projects that would qualify for CPA funding. (Figure 1-1).



Fig. 1-1 CPA funded Town Hall Annex ADA Ramps

1.2 Recent Developments

Hix Bridge Fire Station

There has been one major improvement to the Town’s capital facilities. In 2010, construction of a new fire station on Hix Bridge Road was completed. This project was funded by a debt exclusion approved by the Town and will be fully paid off by 2029. (Figure 1-2).



Fig. 1-2. Westport Fire Station 1 at 54 Hix Bridge Road

Westport Community Schools

As this report was being written, the Westport Community Schools had been authorized by the Massachusetts School Building Assistance Authority (MSBA) to undertake a comprehensive feasibility study of school facilities in the wake of the Westport Middle School closure. At the Annual Town Meeting in 2015, residents approved \$700,000 for the funding of the feasibility study for the schools as part of the state’s school building assistance program. This was a



Fig. 1-3. Alice A. Macomber School, Westport Elementary School, Westport Middle School and Westport High School

significant step in identifying the immediate and long-term needs of the Westport Community Schools. The review will include an assessment of school population projections and facility needs. The placement of eight modular classrooms at the Macomber School and the moving of grades 7 and 8 into the Westport High School are considered temporary. (Figure 1-3).

Police Station

The police department continues to struggle with the limitations and deteriorating conditions of their station. A feasibility study to determine an appropriate police facility to meet the current and future needs of the community was completed in September of 2015, by Reinhardt Associates, Inc. The study identified significant building deficiencies in the existing station, including:

- Code violations
- Safety and security concerns
- Over-crowded conditions
- Health related issues
- Substandard policing facilities
- Accessibility violations

The study identified a Hix Bridge Road site as the most reasonable and cost effective alternative to construct a new police station to meet the needs of Westport. Reinhardt Associates estimates the cost to be approximately \$8.5 million dollars. See Figure 1-4a for the current

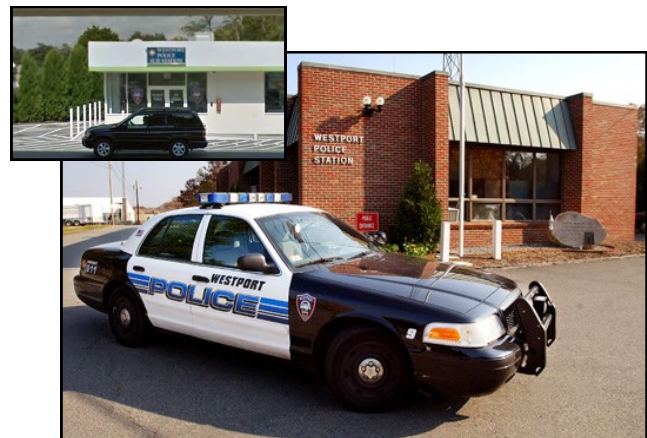


Fig. 1-4a. Westport Police Department and Substation (inset).

Westport Police Station and Sub-station and Figure 1-4b illustrating the proposed new station adjacent to the Hix Bridge Fire Station 1.

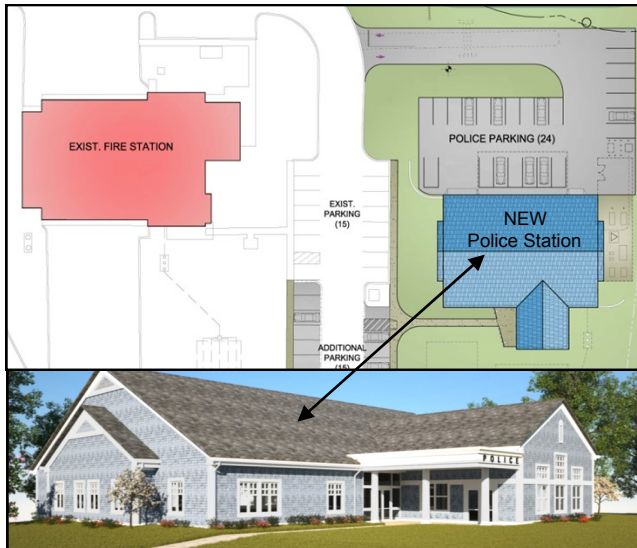


Fig. 1-4b. Proposed New Police Station

Accessibility

For a rural community with aging buildings, limited public transportation and Town roads that were not designed for pedestrians, access has been a challenge. Accessibility must be considered for future road construction projects. The Commission on Disabilities (COD) has been very active in addressing the needs of the community by evaluating and upgrading town facilities. With the utilization of grant, donations and Community Preservation Funds, accessibility improvements have been completed at a number of public buildings. The installation of an elevator at Town Hall, a handicap ramp, railings and a chair lift at the Town Hall Annex, and automatic doors at the Council on Aging are just few of the completed projects. The COD has also been involved in addressing the demands of access to recreational facilities, including designated parking and the installation of Mobi-mats along Beach Avenue as well as improvements to Bicentennial Park.

Town Hall & Annex

Recent repairs and improvements at

Town Hall include lighting upgrades, ceiling repair and painting, floor replacement, roof replacement, computer workstation and server upgrades; handicapped accessibility improvements to the Town Hall Annex were also completed in 2014. Most of these repairs and improvements were funded totally or partially by Community Preservation Funds since the buildings are historic structures. These repairs will extend the life of the buildings but a long term solution is needed. The Town should look to create a municipal office building that can house all the departments in one modern building. It was suggested at the workshop that the existing Town Hall could be enlarged by building an addition to the rear of the building large enough to accommodate all of the municipal departments, modern hearing rooms, and address accessibility needs.

Town Management Structure

A study completed in 2005 by the Center for Policy Analysis, UMass Dartmouth, commonly referred to as the Barrows Report, recommended a number of changes for the Town of Westport. The report recommends changes to the Town's management structure – including strengthening the Town Administrator's position, and the conversion of elected positions such as the Treasurer and Tax Collector to appointed offices. This is a comprehensive study that should be revisited. In 2010, the Board of Selectmen appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to Reorganize Town Government. Two recommendations were presented to the 2011 Town Meeting: the recommendation to strengthen the Board of Selectmen was approved; the recommendation to strengthen the Town Administrator position was defeated.

Highway Department

Long-range planning targets should also include improvements to the Highway Department facility. With the assistance from Diman Regional Vocational High School students, mandated renovations and safety upgrades have been made to the maintenance facility in recent years, but more work remains to be done.

Council On Aging

The population in Westport is aging at a rate faster than the state average. The median age for residents living in Massachusetts is 39.1 and as of 2013, the median age of Westport was 46.4. According to the Donahue Report¹ this trend will continue, increasing the needs for elderly services. There have been a number of improvements made to the Council on Aging facility located on Reed Road but more will need to be done to address the aging population needs of the future.

Municipal Waste

The capping of the municipal solid waste landfill in 1998, and establishment of a transfer station for solid waste disposal was noted in the 2004 Master Plan report. The recycling center at the transfer station remains in operation under the supervision of the Board of Health, though its sustainability as a self-supporting enterprise was again called into question in 2015.

Town Nurse Services

A part-time public health nurse provides year-round well child clinics, immunization clinics, blood pressure checks, and other services, including the communicable disease investigation and reporting required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. There doesn't seem to be any public calls for expanded services, with the private sector assuming some of the health services functions performed by the town nurse in other municipalities.

ing this goal will be a challenge because of the electorate's consistent reluctance to provide financial support for such measures.

There is an urgent need to address the immediate deficiencies of the school buildings and the police station, and planning is already underway to address those problems. To begin addressing the longer-term problems the Town should prepare an updated capital plan based on an accurate assessment of all municipal facilities, many of which are old and historic buildings. A detailed analysis is required by a well-qualified consultant to determine which municipal buildings should be maintained, upgraded, or re-purposed for continued use, and which facilities should be taken out of service. The analysis needs to evaluate the physical condition of the major systems including:

- Roof, foundation and structural soundness
- Septic, water, interiors and heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems
- Parking, restrooms, accessibility and ADA compliance
- Long-term repairs, upgrades or maintenance needs

A secondary objective of these assessments would be to use the information to formulate a plan to reduce energy consumption in all municipal buildings and operations. Action items would include the review and updating of free energy audits offered by utility companies; a comprehensive street lighting audit with consideration of complete conversion to LED lights, or a plan for a phased conversion; and a report by the Energy Committee, with a rank ordering by priority, new opportunities for developing renewable energy resources for town buildings and municipal lands.

In addition to the physical condition, each building should be evaluated for its suitability to provide programs and services, and its ability to be utilized to meet the needs of the Town's

1.3 Goals and Objectives

The primary goal is for the town to provide and maintain adequate capital facilities and human services for all residents as the town continues to grow and change. The means for meet-

¹ Renski, Henry, Lindsey Koshgarian and Susan Strate. *Long Term Population Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities*. UMass Donahue Institute, 2013.

changing demographics. The Town must also pursue a comprehensive study of the personnel and human resources being allocated to municipal departments in order to determine if the current organizational structure serves the needs of the community in an efficient and coordinated manner. Human services includes a number of departments and organizations including but not limited to public health, council on aging, veterans assistance and education.

Another long-range objective is to ensure that town government is making maximum use of existing technologies to accomplish its service missions. All town departments need to be equipped with office software and hardware that is compatible with systems in today's professional working environment. The town website needs to be updated and standardized with user-friendly software which makes it more accessible by the public. Municipal efficiency may be improved by providing adequate training and support services to departments seeking to computerize files, filing systems, forms and applications in order to provide e-permitting and online permitting services, and the addition of online payment options. Information technology support and resources should be made available to support staff during regular working hours.

A final objective of a town-wide review of capital needs and human services offerings is to provide a long-term suitable space for municipal cemetery needs. A review should include identification of suitable sites for future cemetery expansion, following up on the 2008 Cemetery Task Force report with production of a 50 year plan for meeting projected public cemetery needs. Once potential expansion sites are identified, a town committee or appointee should be assigned to initiate contact with abutting landowners regarding purchase or donation options.

NEXT PAGE

1.4 Action Plan

Capital Facilities and Human Services

Goal 1: Provide and maintain adequate Capital Facilities and Human Services as the Town continues to grow.

Objective 1.1 Develop a comprehensive 20 year capital plan.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Engage the services of a well-qualified consulting group to evaluate the physical condition of each municipal building and each of its major systems (roof, septic, water, parking, accessibility, window/doors, HVAC, foundation, structural walls, interior walls, floors, restrooms, ADA compliance, etc.) and the costs of repairs or replacement.	BOS	1
1.1.b. Evaluate each municipal and school building for their suitability to provide the programs presently being offered and their ability to meet the needs of the Town’s changing demographics.	SC	1
1.1.c. Include in the evaluation a prioritized list of work to be completed.	SC	1
1.1.d. Maintain a complete and accurate inventory of all Town physical assets with a value greater than \$10,000.	BOS	2
1.1.e. Develop a comprehensive 10-20 year capital plan for all town departments with annual updates.	BOS	2
1.1.f. Annually fund a sufficient capital budget mainly using operating revenues.	FINCOM, BOS	3
1.1.g. Continue to improve accessibility to Town buildings and services.	COD, BOS	2

Objective 1.2 Provide the Town with a Police Station that meets the needs of the community.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Develop support for the recently released feasibility study completed by Reinhardt Associates, Inc.	BOS, PD	1
1.2.b. Fund the design and construction of a new facility adjacent to the fire station on Hix Bridge Road.	BOS, PD	1

Objective 1.3 Provide the Town with modern educational facilities that will meet the needs of the community.

Action	Resp	Time
1.3.a. Generate support for the findings to be provided through the school department feasibility study.	BOS, SC	1
1.3.b. Fund the design and construction of facilities identified in the school department feasibility study.	BOS, SC	1

Objective 1.4 Pursue a study of Town departments in terms of allocated resources, personnel, and manpower.

Action	Resp	Time
1.4.a. Determine if current organization is as efficient and coordinated as it should be.	BOS, ID	2
1.4.b. Determine if it would be feasible to combine and/or re-arrange some departments to increase efficiencies and accountability.	BOS, ALL	2

Objective 1.5 Reduce Energy used in Municipal buildings and operations.

Action	Resp	Time
1.5.a. Coordinate free energy audits at municipal buildings through the energy utilities.	EC	2
1.5.b. Coordinate a street lighting audit with the electric utility and consider conversion to LED lights.	BOS, EC	2
1.5.c. Continue to investigate opportunities (including appropriate locations as well as funding sources) to incorporate renewable energy on municipal buildings and lands.	EC	2

Objective 1.6 Maximize use of technology.

Action	Resp	Time
1.6.a. Provide Town departments with office software that is compatible in today's working environment.	BOS	1
1.6.b. Update and standardize the Town's web site to be user friendly and more accessible to the public.	BOS	2
1.6.c. Improve efficiencies by providing training and support to allow departments to computerize their filing systems, forms and applications (e-permitting, online permitting).	BOS	2
1.6.d. Provide information technology resources that would be available to support staff during working hours.	BOS, IT	2

Objective 1.7 Provide suitable places for interment.

Action	Resp	Time
1.7.a. Identify suitable sites for expansion of Town Cemetery space.	BOS, BOH	2
1.7.b. Follow-up on the 2008 Cemetery Task Force Report with a 50 year plan.	BOS, BOH	2
1.7.c. Initiate contact with land owners abutting existing cemeteries as a possibility for expansion.	BOS, BOH	2

CHAPTER 2

Cultural & Historic Resources

2.1 Introduction

The Town has cultural and historical resources both physical and human that contribute to the vibrant character of the community.

The town's rich cultural resources include a plethora from landmarks, remnants of ancient villages to annual cultural events. There has been funding from both the private and public sector in support of restoration and rehabilitation of historic assets and for cultural events in the arts and humanities. The Westport Cultural Council (WCC) is a prominent town-appointed entity with public funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and private funding from the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust. In turn, the WCC awards grants to support community-oriented

programs in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences. The events have been quality cultural programs and activities that bring the community together to create, share and inspire. In addition, since 2012, the WCC has hosted the popular annual free summer film series in partnership with a local gallery.

The town has recently experienced vibrant growth in its artistic and cultural identity that has added an important creative dimension in the local economy, popularly referred to as "*a Creative Economy*." Privately funded organizations include the Westport Art Group that provides a center for local artists to work and exhibit their products as well as instruction for young



Westport Cultural Council 2014 Summer Film Series guest Speaker and Social Entrepreneur, Geoff Kinder from Dartmouth's Round the Bend Farm, answering viewer questions on local farming following a screening of the film "Farmageddon" at the Shattuck Gallery.

artists, a new privately-owned art gallery that offers frequent exhibits by leading artists, and a number of prominent local artists who work independently and often join in “open studio” showings organized by the South Coast Artists group on several weekends each summer. Other private entities include the Concerts at the Point program that has provided 6 chamber music concerts annually for 18 years and has built a strong group of supporters who assure financial continuity well into the future. Also the Tiverton Community Chorus has many members from Westport and presents two concerts in Westport each year.

Westport’s identity can also be found in its abundant historic resources. Many of Westport’s buildings are on the state register of historic places as well as the national register. Certain historic area resources also registered are the Westport River, the Head of Westport and Westport Point. The Westport Point Historic District, established in 1973 under MGL Chapter 40, is under the purview of the Westport Historical Commission.

2.2 Recent Developments

Significant achievements in historical preservation, restoration and rehabilitation are listed below. Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding has played a large part in financing many of these projects. A complete list of CPA funding projects can be found on the CPA page of the Town website.

Town projects have included significant work in the Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, American Legion Hall and the Council on Aging buildings, Town farm apartment, as well as preservation, microfilming and scanning of historic town records, maps, and placement of historic street markers and corner signs throughout Westport. Historic stone wall preservation and clean-up of contaminated soil at the Head of Westport has also been done. Updates of the



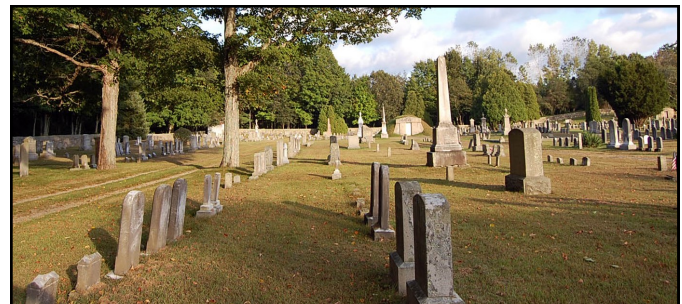
*Cadman-White-Handy House
~ then and now~*



Horseneck Point (LSS) Life-Saving Station

Westport Historic Inventory have been made. The Demolition Delay Bylaw has been extended from six months to one year. The Westport Library History Room has been built to house historic documents.

Private projects have included work on the Friends Meeting House, the Bell School, the Wolf Pit School, the Cadman-White Handy House, the Oscar Palmer farm buildings, the



Linden & Maple Grove Cemeteries, Reed Road

Westport Point Methodist Church, the Grange, the Acoaxet Chapel, restoration of the historic Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station (LSS) and the Waite Potter House stone-ender chimney. In addition historic maps, photo collections and Hicks/Handy records have been preserved.

Major accomplishments were the acquisition and opening to the public of the very significant and historic Cadman-White-Handy house by the Westport Historical Society, the restoration of the Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station by the Westport Fishermen's Association utilizing private and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) funding, and the identification and registration of all burial sites in Westport and the development of a website with complete information of those interred in Westport being made available to the public.

The Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Trustees of Reservation have leased the town-owned Town Poor Farm and restored the buildings and the land for public use. The Westport Historical Society was co-sponsor of a major symposium with the New Bedford Whaling Museum on Paul Cuffe, a prominent Native American/African American who lived in Westport in the late 18th-early 19th century. Many privately owned homes in the Westport Point Historic District as well as throughout the Town have been restored. Historic stone walls have been rebuilt in some locations to include the Head of Westport river sea walls.

A list of grant awards by the Westport Cultural Council can be found on their website at www.westportculturalcouncil.org. Recent significant cultural achievements include:

- An annual free Summer Film Series since 2012, in partnership with a private gallery.
- Annual fourth grade field trips to the Rhode Island School of Design Museum.
- Westport Library events with live reptile and raptor shows and creative storytelling for

youths. Art expositions and other shows at the Dedee Shattuck Gallery, South Coast Artists Open Studio events, and the Westport Vineyards.

- Concerts at the Point and the Tiverton Community Chorus have provided musical events.

2.3 New Goals and Objectives

Future plans are to build upon these important recent initiatives and to endeavor to make the local residents as well as visiting tourists and summer residents much more aware of these cultural and significant historical resources and to avail themselves of them.



Annual FREE Summer Film Series 2012-2015 and “No-Strings” Marionettes at Macomber Elementary School



Buoy the Winter Blues—a community fundraiser

Collectively the community has an opportunity to shape the future of how and where citizens of all ages come together to celebrate and showcase our rich cultural and historic resources. It is our hope that many persons, both residents and visitors, will engage and be part of this community through historic, cultural and artistic events – the very fibers that bind Westporters together.

One main goal is to increase awareness by school-aged children of the historical and cultural resources available to them by engaging them in meaningful activities and teaching them the need and means to protect farming and fishing activities, historic structures and our beautiful waterways and shorelines - all of which give Westport its cultural and historical identity which so many cherish.

It is our challenge to support preservation of Westport’s rural character as it develops new

social economic patterns. This can be fostered through efforts of our local resources such as the Westport Free Public Library, the Westport Art Group (WAG), the Trustees of Reservations (TTOR), the Westport Historical Society (WHS), the Westport River Watershed Alliance (WRWA), the Westport Fishermen's Association (WFA), the Grange Hall, the American Legion and other private organizations. Based on the robust events over the last few years, Westport has many options for expanding community venues for meeting and sharing. Artists, historians, fishermen and farmers can collaborate to engage our citizens and especially our youths, in celebrating Westport's unique roots.

The Community Preservation Committee can continue to seek out and fund many diverse projects to preserve, restore and rehabilitate important historical projects which will serve the public. The public should continue to point out and be willing to lead such projects. The Westport Cultural Council can promote cooperation among local business, non-profit organizations and community and private entities to provide underserved residents access to quality educational experiences in arts, history and sciences.



Oscar Palmer Farm—historic and agricultural preservation

2.4 Action Plan

Cultural and Historic Resources

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal 1. Community Assessment

Objective 1.1 Identify Current Cultural Resources

Action

- 1.1.a. Create an inventory of individuals and entities that contribute to Westport's culture.
- 1.1.b. Catalog cultural resources in Westport.
 - Identify private and town-owned relevant resources.
 - Identify neighborhood programs and activities.
 - Identify areas for future cultural and artistic expansion and growth.
 - Create maps and catalogues of attractions and cultural venues.
 - Highlight the contributions of artists and arts groups to community life and economic development, such as attracting visitors to Westport.
 - Highlight entities that create a sense of place and civic pride.

Objective 1.2 Conduct a Needs Assessment

Action

- 1.2.a. Conduct and assess a wide-ranging community survey to gather information on values, priorities, needs and opportunities of citizens.
- 1.2.b. Meet with individuals and organizations to engage them and listen to ideas.
- 1.2.c. Partner with the Economic Development Task Force and B2B to identify collaboration possibilities.
- 1.2.d. Identify barriers that limit participation in arts and cultural events.

Goal 2. Promote Arts and Cultural Resources throughout Westport

Objective 2.1 Increase awareness of the arts and culture in Westport

Action

- 2.1.a. Advertise WCC funding availability and develop new applicants.
- 2.1.b. Promote Westport's art and culture using existing social media, press, exhibits and Local Cable Access.
- 2.1.c. Promote expansion and advertisement of collaboration among non-profits and community groups.
- 2.1.d. Promote collaboration and communication among relevant groups and age groups.
- 2.1.e. Increase visibility of Westport's diverse artistic and culture share heritage.
- 2.1.f. Use technology to collect and share stories and oral history.

Objective 2.2 Support programs in the arts and culture in Westport

Action

- 2.2.a. Support creative school programs that reach beyond the traditional scope of the classroom.

- 2.2.b. Support partnerships and collaboration among diverse age groups, neighborhoods, school organizations, and local organizations to engage all Westporters.
- 2.2.c. Support and develop new opportunities for funding arts and culture.
- 2.2.d. Seek further private funding for the WCC and support its work.
- 2.2.e. Support projects focused on engagement and collaboration.

Goal 3. Cultural Resources

Objective 3.1 Communicate the importance of neighborhoods and villages to Westport's identity

Action

- 3.1.a. Establish cultural celebrations, festivals and community events.
- 3.1.b. Foster and support celebration of the diverse ethnic contributions to Westport.

Objective 3.2 Engage youths in programs and activities that recognize Westport's identity and sense of place.

Action

- 3.2.a. Encourage youth apprenticeships in cultural activities.
- 3.2.b. Develop programs where youths are involved in local storytelling and oral histories.
- 3.2.c. Encourage curriculum and school events and festivals that advance tolerance and cultural understanding.
- 3.2.d. Integrate cultural aspects in the school curriculum in all grades.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Goal 1. Complete a Community Assessment

Objective 1.1 Identify Current Historic Resources

Action

- 1.1.a. Create an inventory of entities, documents, websites and other sources within and outside Westport that contribute to Westport's history.
- 1.1.b. Continue to identify and update inventories of existing historical resources in Westport.
- 1.1.c. Advertise for assistance with identification of previously unknown historical resources.
- 1.1.d. Coordinate the resources of the Town Library, Westport Historical Commission, Westport Historical Society, and individuals.
- 1.1.e. Encourage Westporters to make known any documents, artifacts, family history, etc. that are part of Westport history.

Objective 1.2 Conduct a Needs Assessment

Action

- 1.2.a. How to find funding to support the work of the identification of historical resources.
- 1.2.b. How to coordinate through CPC of uses of CPA funding for historic projects that meet CPA qualifications.

- 1.2.c. Determine priorities of the WHC for historic preservation in Westport.
- 1.2.d. Find ways to strengthen the WHC as a financial and regulatory resource.
- 1.2.e. Find ways to strengthen the Westport High School and library financial resources.
- 1.2.f. Identify at-risk historic resources in Westport, such as town landings, historic buildings, stonewalls, trees.

Goal 2. Promote Preservation, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Historic Resources in Westport

Objective 2.1 Promote Appreciation and Economic Value of Preservation

Action

- 2.1.a. Research and compile a document on the economic importance of historic preservation and relate it to Westport.

Goal 3. Support Preservation of Historical Resources in Westport

Objective 3.1 Publicize existing resources

Action

- 3.1.a. Advertise the historic preservation projects financed by CPA, individuals, non-profits.
- 3.1.b. List on town website historic inventory lists, cemetery lists, scanned documents, links to relevant websites such as that of the Mass Historical Commission and the Westport Historical Society, demolition bylaw, WHC guidelines, locations of historical town landings, etc.
- 3.1.c. Continually update Town GIS records for historic resources.
- 3.1.d. Feature historic resources on the Town website, in local newspapers and on the internet.
- 3.1.e. Interview private citizens who restore private buildings.

Objective 3.2. Protect, Preserve, Restore and Rehabilitate Historic Resources

Action

- 3.2.a. Promote joint efforts by the WHC and CPA Committee to identify and fund historic preservation projects.
- 3.2.b. Set up and implement programs, bylaws and other means to preserve historic buildings, scenic roads, trees, stone walls, and areas.
- 3.2.c. Support interest in and help develop new historic districts.
- 3.2.d. Develop programs to prevent the destruction of at-risk historic resources.
- 3.2.e. Support the Town Library and WHS as locations for collections of documents and artifacts.
- 3.2.f. Put programs on local Cable about the work of the WHC, WHS, the library, and private citizens to preserve historic resources.

Objective 3.3 Teach appreciation of historic heritage to the youth of Westport

Action

- 3.3.a. Encourage and enable schools to conduct site visits to historical resources in Westport.
- 3.3.b. Encourage and make possible inclusion of local history in school curricula.
- 3.3.c. Foster and support celebration in schools and elsewhere of the diverse ethnic contributions to

Westport history from Portuguese farmers, Polish factory workers, African-American and Native Americans such as Paul Cuffe, the Wainer family and French Canadians to name a few.

Objective 3.4 Enhance historic recognition in Westport

Action

- 3.4.a. Pursue National Register status for the Westport Town Farm, the Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station, the Powder House at the Head of Westport, and other special buildings in Westport.
- 3.4.b. Encourage cooperation between the WHC, WHS and the CPC.
- 3.4.c. Expand the review authority of the WHC in the historic district to walls, fences and roofs.
- 3.4.d. Upgrade the historic public cemeteries in Westport: plan to beautify, name paths, and establish a Cemetery Commission.
- 3.4.e. Promote the utilization of historic resources as sources of tourism and economic development, such as heritage trails connecting to other towns, events at public venues like the Cadman-White-Handy house, the Town Farm and the Lifesaving Station.

Goal 4. Protect and preserve Westport's agricultural heritage

Objective 4.1 Identify, document and preserve Westport's agricultural heritage

Action

- 4.1.a. Identify and document the Town's historic agricultural evolution by crop, pasture, land use, and other changes. Document where sales were generally made.
- 4.1.b. Identify and document the Town's current agricultural production, land use, and other relevant factors.
- 4.1.c. Identify current land use structure as to production uses and conservation status.
- 4.1.d. Work with the Agricultural Commission, the Agricultural and Open Space Committee, the WLCT and the CPC to determine and fund priority programs that may help protect farmland.
- 4.1.e. Identify barriers to agriculture in Westport.
- 4.1.f. Support "Buy Local" initiatives.
- 4.1.g. Continue support of the Agriculture and Open Space Committee.

Goal 5. Protect and preserve Westport's Marine and Fishing Heritage

Objective 5.1 Identify, document and preserve Westport's marine and fishing heritage

Action

- 5.1.a. Identify and document the Town's historic boat building, fishing, shell fishing and whaling history.
- 5.1.b. Identify and document the Town's current boat building, fishing and shell fishing industry.
- 5.1.c. Identify barriers to the marine and fishing industry in Westport and surrounding area, such as biological and nitrogen effects on sea life, climate change, and other factors.
- 5.1.d. Identify ways to support the marine and fishing industry in Westport.
- 5.1.e. Support fishing infrastructure such as preservation of historic piers, docks, water access and landings, as well as policies that could promote small boat building and repair, and inputs into the marine and fishing industry.

CHAPTER 3

Economic Development

3.1 Introduction

For years, residents have been discussing what type of economic development would be most desirable for the Town. As indicated in the master plan survey, residents were very concerned about the different types of economic development, favoring agriculture, small in-town shops and farmer’s markets with less support for national chain stores and car dealerships. With major shopping centers located in neighboring communities, there is little need for similar facilities to be located in Westport, residents can enjoy the benefits of neighboring businesses without feeling the negative effects such as traffic and aesthetics.

The primary goal for Economic Development in Westport is to pursue and develop economic activity that is harmonious with the Town's vision of sound growth. Important aspects of this goal include preserving and enhancing the economic viability of agriculture and agricultural-based businesses, as well as preserving and expanding commercial fishing and shell fishing. Existing marinas, mooring facilities and boat repair facilities provide essential services that attract large numbers of boat-owners to make use of Westport Harbor and also generate income for the community and benefits for the residents.

The Master Plan recommends an investment to expand the Town’s administrative capabilities to support economic development, and to facilitate and expedite the approval process for new business initiatives. This goal can be accomplished by also utilizing available regional resources, including SRPEDD and UMass/Dartmouth staff and students, to evaluate and provide support for such initiatives. Improving public infrastructure and municipal services, including communication facilities, a reliable water supply, and improved wastewater treatment facilities, are seen as critical needs for future economic development.

An Economic Development program should actively encourage new businesses to locate in town, as well as work to support existing businesses and help them to grow. There are approximately 500 businesses currently operating in Westport with a conservative net worth exceeding \$125 million. These small businesses and commercial enterprises play a vital role in the community by providing jobs, goods and service, and municipal tax revenues, thereby improving the quality of life for all residents in both the short term and the long term.

3.2 Recent Developments

New commercial development in recent years has been largely limited to two primary highway corridors (Route 6 & Route 177) and the main shopping district in Central Village. Medical facilities, doctors, engineers and professional service providers have occupied new commercial space on American Legion Highway and Main Road, and several successful retail plazas



Westport Family Medicine, 827 American Legion Highway opened in 2014.

have been built along Route 6 in the past decade. A free-standing full-service pharmacy and an expanded Cumberland Farms and gas station have also improved the retail services offerings in the past few years. Further development along Route 6 is limited by the lack of municipal water and sewer service; the public water supply line from Fall River runs only to the public housing authority site at Greenwood Terrace; opposite is the newly built and still popular Kozy Nook Restaurant, supported by a Tax Increment Finance agreement with the town. Other major developments along the Route 6 corridor include a new Mid-City Steel sales facility, and the proposed construction of a meat processing facility planned by a regional livestock growing association.

Since 2010, Central Village has seen a new and improved Partner's Village Store and a neighboring art gallery created on Main Road; Bay Coast Bank built a new branch office across the street from Lees Market in the heart of the

village; Santander Bank moved into another bank's former branch; the Village at Westport over-55 housing development has created new living options for residents. LaFrance Hospitality expanded their local offerings with the renovation of an old restaurant into the Ten Cousins pizza parlor at the southern end of the business district, where the commercial zoning extends 1,000 feet back from Main Road.



Ten Cousins and the former landmark "Fred & Ann's"

The review and revisions of zoning by-laws should continue, particularly for Central Village, where a mix of desirable types of businesses and private residences should be encouraged on available land just outside the existing business zoning where further economic development appears feasible. Possible types of business zoning districts could be a village business district in Central Village and a neighborhood business district to control neighborhood convenience commercial uses in other densely populated loca-



Main Road, Central Village

tions throughout the Town. Provisions regarding parking, setbacks, and the other controlling dimensional factors of zoning would be tailored to each specific zone to achieve desired results.

The demand for commercial space in all business districts remains strong, with high occupancy rates reported in all parts of town where commercial space is available. There is little public support for major commercial development anywhere in the community, with public polling indicating no majority approval for infrastructure improvements such as water and sewer initiatives; resident voices have indicated objections to big box retailers and manufacturing operations. Town Meeting did approve creation of the Science & Technology Overlay District (STOD) in 2013, but limited access points, wetlands issues, and lack of infrastructure make quick development of the property unlikely in the near future. Town Meeting has also support-

ed zoning changes such as a site plan approval process, and other bylaws, to encourage attractive commercial development in recent years.

A new solar power bylaw approved by the Town in 2013, has stimulated several proposals to construct solar energy farms. Two private proposals have been approved - one for a 2.0 megawatt system to be located near the intersection of Route 88 and Route 177, and a second for a 2.7 megawatt system south of Old County Road between Pine Hill and Fisher Roads. In addition the Town is exploring the possibilities for a private developer to install a solar array on the closed and capped town landfill at the intersection of Hix Bridge Road and Route 88. Such solar energy production ventures should be strongly encouraged as they not only reduce carbon emissions but also can generate significant revenues for the Town without creating significant burdens in terms of municipal services.



Rendering of a large Scale solar facility located on the south side of Old County Road

In March of 2003, Westport was accepted in the Fall River Economic Target Area (ETA). This designation allows the Town to participate in a regional effort at addressing common economic development needs. The economic goals of the ETA are “to retain existing businesses and jobs, attract new development (environmentally friendly) and employment, and generate tax revenues.” Westport’s application stated, “The designation of Economic Opportunity Areas (EOA) will occur in appropriately zoned areas, consisting of environmentally sensitive industries (fishing, agriculture, tourism, and eco-tourism) and other commercial and/or industrial activities. Several site specific areas exist along Routes 6 and 177 commercial corridors which may be considered for designation and attract development, create employment, and increase tax revenues.”

Acceptance into the ETA makes the Town eligible for assistance from Southeastern Economic Development loan programs, the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, and SRPEDD. State and federal funding may be secured through leveraging private sector investment and job creation commitments, and farmers and businesses are able to apply for equipment and real estate loans through participating banks with this designation, and could be used in conjunction with Town economic development funds to provide infrastructure needs in selected locations such as the STOD.

3.3 New Goals and Objectives

Primary Objectives

In order to better position Westport to effectively pursue and develop economic activity that is harmonious with the Town’s vision of growth, the first objective is to expand municipal administrative capabilities to more effectively support economic development. This could be accomplished by enhancing the current part-time position of Economic Development Coordinator and funding it with a yearly line item in the Town budget, or adding some grant-writing capa-

bilities to that department to pursue outside funding for economic development.

The Planning Board and other town officials should continue to update Town zoning laws, as appropriate, to provide flexibility for locating appropriate business development in any areas that would support the overall objectives of the Master Plan. This could be accomplished by further streamlining the permitting process for new development by updating permit tracking and filing systems, and improving communication and coordination between municipal boards, committees and departments. Another goal is to develop standardized stormwater control guidelines for review by the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Board of Health.

A second objective is to take proactive steps to facilitate the slow and steady expansion of the economic base in Westport. The Town should update the 2004 Economic Development Plan for Westport to reflect current market conditions and options for development in the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors. The Town should actively seek state and federal grants for municipal infrastructure improvements, including water supplies, sewer service, and electronic communication systems upgrades along the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors. Municipal officials should continue to support and interact with local business groups to identify the needs and wants of the business and professional communities. Town officials should seek to further streamline the site plan review process by clearly defining expectations for business development, with a goal of reducing permitting times.

A concerted effort involving area commercial realtors and business groups should be undertaken to improve the Town’s smart development image by highlighting community goals, accomplishments of students and adult groups, and seek to diversify the Town’s business environment and attract more visitors by encouraging the Town’s creative economy sector of artists, photographers, and artisans, and promoting the

local winery, restaurants and shopping opportunities. A coordinated effort would also involve promotion of the Town’s long history and the beauty of its considerable natural resources.

A third major objective is to better utilize the regional resources that are available to the Town of Westport. Municipal officials should continue to work with the following regional economic development organizations to help promote sound commercial development: the Fall River Office of Economic Development, the New Bedford Industrial Development Commission, the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD), Fall River Chamber of Commerce, New Bedford Chamber of Commerce, and the Southcoast Development Partnership.

Westport should seek to broaden the existing working relationship with UMASS Dartmouth which can provide support for regional economic development, including the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center in Fall River; the School for Marine Science and Technology in New Bedford; the Biotechnology and Manufacturing Center located in Fall River, and more actively participate in the state’s program for agriculture tourism. The Planning Board and Building Inspector should develop a uniform signage program for local non-agriculture tourism businesses.



Horseneck Beach is one of the state’s most popular beaches and brings tourists to the community all summer.

To further promote tourism development, designated town officials should seek to establish close working relationships with the Southeastern Massachusetts Convention and Visitors Center, the Fall River and New Bedford Chambers of Commerce, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Westport Cultural Council to help promote growth of the creative economy and attract more visitors. Officials should plan and develop strategies for attracting tourists to visit and patronize local businesses.

General Goals

The overall goal is to initiate programs for desirable economic development in Westport. To demonstrate the Town’s commitment to economic development, public officials should seek to support, foster, and market local heritage businesses such as retail goods and services, marine trades, fishing, agriculture, and high-quality cultural, historical and recreational tourism. New zoning regulations should be developed to encourage the development of new businesses using emerging environmental technologies in the STOD Zoning District. Strategies to encourage new types of development should include planning for needed infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, stormwater control) especially needed in the STOD Zoning District and the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors and adjacent areas suitable for desired development.

A secondary goal is to provide increased business opportunities within Westport that are compatible with natural and cultural resources via clearly defined support mechanisms. These support initiatives would target types of small businesses that would enhance the economic vitality of Westport, and take advantage of identified natural resources. The Town should continue to promote home industries and family businesses, professional and personal services offices, and tourism related commercial ventures such as bed and breakfasts and summer rental opportunities. Every effort should be made to



Partner's Village Store (right) and the DeDee Shattuck Art Gallery (left) in Central Village are examples of a small business that enhances character and the economic vitality of Westport.

encourage the siting of small businesses that promote culture and diversity, such as artisan workshops and skilled craft retail shopping opportunities within the Town's borders.

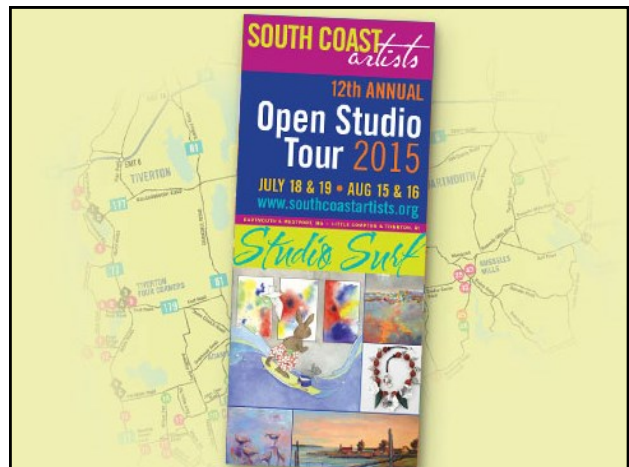
Special attention should be given to obtaining technical assistance in the form of an "extension agent" who provides for business consulting assistance, production training, and other opportunities for interested parties to develop value-added products to the Town's agricultural output. The general goals should include efforts to ensure there is no net loss of currently employed farmland by identifying at risk properties and seeking to resolve risk factors. The public relation effort to support these endeavors should help illuminate the economic and aesthetic values of agricultural lands, and help educate the community about the benefits of buying local, fresh produce.

Similar efforts should be undertaken to help preserve and expand commercial fishing and shell fishing opportunities. New opportunities exist in the expansion of existing fishing and shell fishing enterprises into new fields such as aquaculture by increasing shellfish harvest areas and identifying new plots for aquaculture ventures. Town officials should continue to support the local commercial fishing industry.

Through a partnership with the Westport Cultural Council and regional art groups, the Town should seek to encourage growth of the Town's cultural life through stimulation of the creative economy with more established town-wide events and performance venues. This partnership could help bring more quality cultural and artistic programs into local businesses and the community at large, and encourage more visitors to participate in those cultural programs.



Aquaculture



Cultural tourism

3.4 Action Plan

Economic Development

Goal 1. Position Westport to effectively pursue and develop economic activity that is harmonious with the Town’s vision.

Objective 1.1 Expand administrative capabilities to effectively support economic development.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Enhance the position of Economic Development Coordinator and fund it with a yearly line item in the Budget.	BOS	1
1.1.b. Continue to update zoning laws, as appropriate, to provide flexibility for locating businesses in areas that would support the overall objectives of the Master Plan	BOS, PB	1
1.1.c. Streamline the permitting process for development by updating permit tracking and filing systems and improve communication and coordination between boards, committees and departments.	BOS, ID	1
1.1.d. Develop standardized stormwater guidelines and review for the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Board of Health.	WRMC, PB, CC	2

Objective 1.2 Take steps to facilitate the expansion of the economic base in Westport.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Emphasize the 2004 Economic Development Plan that reflects current conditions and options for the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors.	BOS	2
1.2.b. Seek federal and state grants for infrastructure improvements including water, sewer and communication upgrades on Routes 6 and 177.	BOH, BOS	2
1.2.c. Continue to support and interact with local business groups.	BOS	1
1.2.d. Streamline the site plan review process by clearly defining expectations for commercial development in order to reduce permitting time.		
1.2.e. Identify areas for new economic development, specifically the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors.	BOS, PB, CC	2
1.2.f. Target specific parcels to be “shovel ready” for economic development.	ED	2
1.2.g. Promote the STOD district for development.	ED	1

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.h. Improve the Town’s image by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting our schools accomplishments and future goals. • Promoting the Town’s diverse business environment and attract more visitors to the Town’s creative economy: artists, photographers, winery, restaurants and shopping. • Promote the Town’s history and natural beauty. 	WCC	1
1.2.i Develop a working partnership with local commercial realtors.	ED	2

Objective 1.3 Utilize regional resources that are available to the Town of Westport.

Action	Resp	Time
1.3.a. Continue to work with regional economic development organizations to promote commercial development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall River Office of Economic Development • New Bedford Industrial Development Commission • SRPEDD - Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District • Fall River Chamber of Commerce • New Bedford Chamber of Commerce • Southcoast Development Partnership 	BOS	2
1.3.b. For tourism development, establish close working relationships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeastern Massachusetts Convention and Visitors • Fall River Chamber of Commerce • New Bedford Chamber of Commerce • Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation • Westport Cultural Council 	BOS, AC, HW, WCC	1
1.3.c. Broaden the existing working relationship with UMASS Dartmouth which can provide support for regional economic development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center, located in Fall River • The School for Marine Science and Technology, located in New Bedford. • Biotechnology and Manufacturing Center, located in Fall River. 	BOS	1
1.3.d. Participate in the state’s program for agriculture tourism.	BOS, HW, AC	1
1.3.e. Develop a uniform signage program for local non-agriculture tourism.	BOS, HW	1

Goal 2. Initiate programs for balanced economic growth in Westport.

Objective 2.1 Demonstrate Westport’s commitment to economic development.

Action	Resp	Time
2.1.a. Support, foster, and market local heritage businesses such as retail goods and services, marine trades, fishing, agriculture, and high-quality cultural and recreational tourism.	BOS	1
2.1.b. Encourage the development of new industries using emerging environmental technologies in the STOD Zoning District.	BOS, CC	2
2.1.c. Develop strategies to control and encourage different types of commercial development.	BOS, PB, BOH, CC	2
2.1.d. Develop strategies for attracting tourists to visit and patronize local businesses.	BOS	2

Goal 3. Provide increased business opportunities within Westport that are compatible with natural and cultural resources.

Objective 3.1 Target types of small businesses that would enhance the economic vitality of Westport.

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a. Continue to promote cottage industries, and family businesses, professional offices, personal services, and bed and breakfasts.	BOS,PB	2
3.1.b. Encourage the siting of small businesses that promote culture and diversity such as artisans and skilled craft shops.	WCC	1

Objective 3.2 Preserve and enhance the economic viability of prime agricultural lands and agricultural based businesses.

Action	Resp	Time
3.2.a. Identify “lead” farmers that begin value-added businesses. (Ex; cheese, jams, and sausages)	AC	1
3.2.b. Create and protect local brand, e.g. “Westport Family Farms”.	AC	2
3.2.c. Support establishment of a local high quality animal processing facility.	AC	1
3.2.d. Attract technical assistance in the form of an “extension agent” who provides for business assistance, production assistance, etc.	AC	1
3.2.e. Promote the no net loss of farmland by identifying at risk properties.	AC	2
3.2.f. Illuminate the value of agriculture, both economic and aesthetic.	AC	2
3.2.g. Educate community about the benefits of buying local.	AC	1

Objective 3.3 Preserve and expand fish and shellfish commerce.

Action	Resp	Time
3.3.a. Encourage the expansion of fish and shellfish enterprises into new fields such as aquaculture.	FC, SA	2
3.3.b. Increase shellfish harvest areas.	FC	1
3.3.c. Continue to support the commercial fishing industry.	FC	1

Objective 3.4 Partner with the Westport Cultural Council.

Action	Resp	Time
3.4.a. Encourage cultural life through a creative economy with more established town-wide events.	BOS, WCC	2
3.4.b. Partner with the WCC to bring quality cultural and artistic programs into businesses and community.	BOS, WCC	1
3.4.c. Encourage more visitors to participate in artistic and cultural programs	WCC	2
3.4.d. Develop creative place-making in an arts and culture based community and economy.	WCC	1

CHAPTER 4

Education

Westport Community Schools' vision is "to provide an exemplary 21st Century learning community whose graduates are empowered through an engaging, inspiring and personalized curriculum to meet the challenges of a global, complex and changing world ."

4.1 Introduction

Throughout the Master Plan updating process the topic of education has dominated the discussions in committee meetings, surveys and workshops, and was the focus of the final workshop held on February 7, 2015. Education has been identified as a community priority and is vital for the long term development of the Town.

A high quality educational system not only benefits the students, it also benefits the whole community. It has an important influence on property values, and it can be a source of pride and community identity, contributing to a livable and sustainable community.

Education can and should bring the community together, but in recent times in Westport, it has tended to divide the community between those, both young and old, who want a high

quality education for the children of Westport and those who are reluctant to see any increase in the property tax rate to support such a system.

There are many factors that students and their parents consider when reaching a decision to attend a school other than their home-town community school. Such factors include the number of programs offered, availability of Advanced Placement courses, graduation rates, college placement records, perceptions about the quality of the schools, and other personal reasons.

This chapter focuses mainly on the Westport Community School System, but it is important to note that there are other public and private educational opportunities available to Westport residents. Unfortunately, because of



Alice A. Macomber School, Westport Elementary School and Westport High School

the costs associated with private schools and the limited number of seats at the vocational high schools, these opportunities are limited.

4.2 Recent Developments

The Westport Community Schools and their physical facilities are facing very serious problems. There has been a growing perception in the community that the quality of education in the Westport School System is deteriorating. The perception is reportedly a significant deterrent to potential home-buyers with young children, and is impacting property values and sales. Resident families with school-age children face difficult financial choices and some 18.6% of Westport students are currently attending private schools. Another 6% compete for the limited available spaces at the regional vocational high schools. See Figure 4-1.

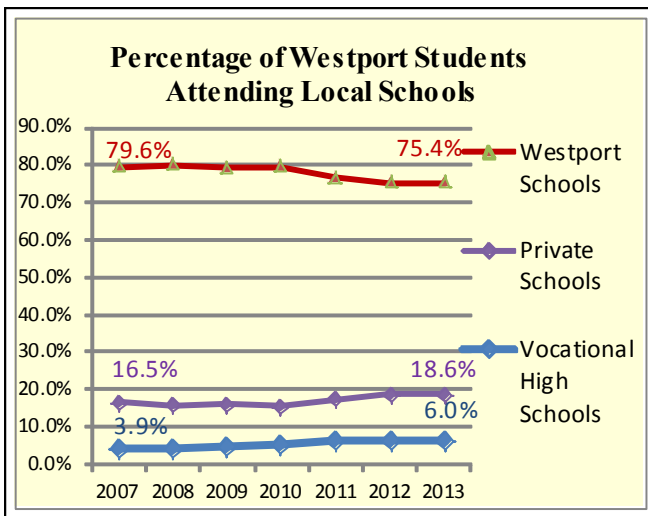


Fig. 4-1. (Source: Westport Community Schools Business Office)

Yearly budget increases have been absorbed by state mandated programs, including special education expenditures and high tuitions at the vocational schools. This has left minimal increases for general education students. Private organizations including the Westport Education Foundation (WEF), Parent Teacher Organization's, Athletic Boosters, and Music Boosters have continued to raise funds. These along with

fees for transportation, sports and after school activities have offset a small portion of the diminished financial resources, but cannot match the decline in the school budget. Net School Spending (NSS) for Westport schools has continuously ranked near the bottom of all state municipalities. See Figure 4-2. Teachers and school administrators have done their best to maintain the quality of educational offerings and have recently recorded some positive achievements, but overall it has been a losing struggle.

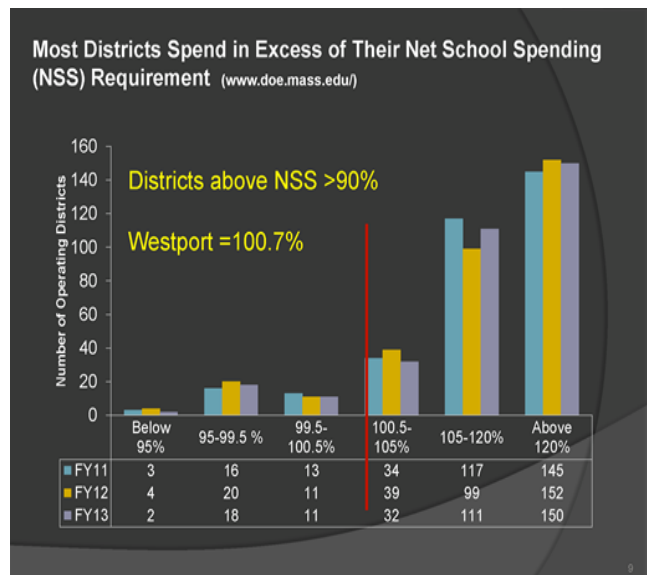


Fig. 4-2 (Source: Massachusetts Department of Educa-

While all the school facilities are showing signs of aging, the discovery of PCB's in the Middle School has led to abandonment of that building and the temporary reassignment of classes to the other three schools. Under the guidance of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), the Town has hired a consultant to complete a feasibility study for new facilities. This investigation is expected to be completed in 2016 and will provide recommendations for future action.

Reversing these trends and restoring the school system to a level of quality and achievement that the community says it wants and expects will require a special effort by the Town. To help launch this effort, it is recommended that

a Special Commission be constituted to analyze the reports on educational quality and school facilities, and address the following financial issues.

A. Reduced funding of the school system, especially for General Education students

Proposition 2½ and reduced funding from the state have severely limited school department funding as well as funding for the Town. The school department has recognized the need to address these funding shortfalls but has not had the support of the community. Additional funding for the Westport Community Schools has been sought through increases in the property tax base (Proposition 2 1/2 overrides) five times since 2010 and in each case they have first been approved by Town Meeting and then rejected by the Town at the ballot box.

The effects of these decisions in curtailing the funding of the school system have become painfully evident in the past few years.

- Expenditures per pupil in the Westport Community Schools in FY 2014 were \$12,251, This was 21% below the average spending for the 50 school districts of comparable size, which was \$15,544.¹

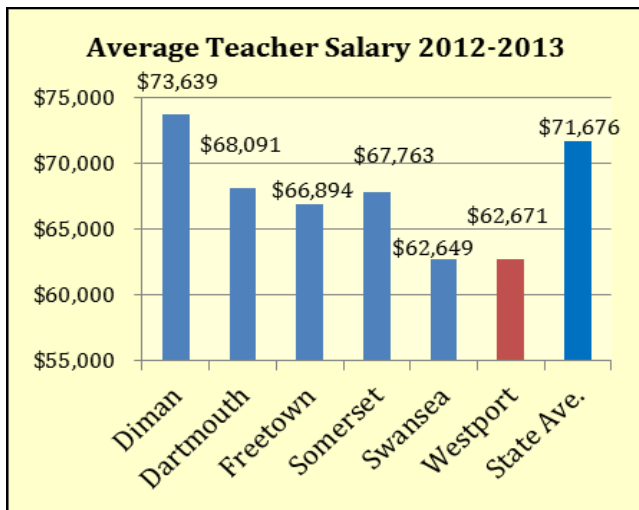


Fig. 4-3. (Source: Massachusetts Department of Education)

¹Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "District Review Report, Westport Community Schools," 2015. p.2.

- Average teacher’s salary in the Westport Community Schools in 2013 were \$62,671, 13% below the state average of \$71,676. See Figure 4-3.
- Costs for state mandated programs including special education are absorbing greater shares of the education budget. Special education programs have increased from 18.2% to 24.4% of the budget between 2005 and 2015. General education expenditures correspondingly declined from 78.3% to 67.5% during that same period. See Figures 4-4a and 4-4b.

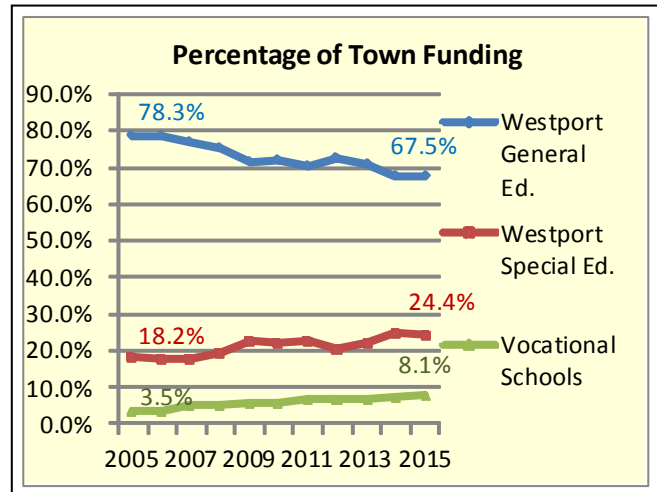


Fig. 4-4a. (Source: Expenditure Report Town Accountant)

Fiscal Year	Westport Schools		Vocational Schools	Total
	General Ed.	Special Ed.		
2005	\$ 10,524,627	\$ 2,450,147	\$ 464,680	\$ 13,439,454
2006	\$ 10,687,698	\$ 2,394,560	\$ 480,000	\$ 13,562,258
2007	\$ 11,258,808	\$ 2,611,102	\$ 745,674	\$ 14,615,584
2008	\$ 12,032,250	\$ 3,154,934	\$ 829,740	\$ 16,016,924
2009	\$ 11,758,610	\$ 3,730,077	\$ 990,688	\$ 16,479,375
2010	\$ 12,304,800	\$ 3,754,366	\$ 1,018,019	\$ 17,077,185
2011	\$ 12,302,309	\$ 3,998,772	\$ 1,166,523	\$ 17,467,604
2012	\$ 13,151,367	\$ 3,757,013	\$ 1,229,302	\$ 18,137,682
2013	\$ 12,582,271	\$ 3,935,888	\$ 1,239,715	\$ 17,757,874
2014	\$ 12,602,870	\$ 4,664,052	\$ 1,363,384	\$ 18,630,306
2015	\$ 12,943,459	\$ 4,677,230	\$ 1,553,989	\$ 19,174,678

Fig. 4-4b. Yearly Expenses

- The cost for students attending regional vocational schools is also absorbing an increasing share of the education budget. For the current fiscal year the cost per student from Westport attending the Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School is \$15,791, which is nearly 30% greater than the average cost per student in the Westport Community Schools. Total expenditures for voc/tech students from Westport that are paid for by the Town in FY 2015 are budgeted at \$1,553,989 which is equal to 8.8% of the town's school budget.
- As a consequence of the limited increases in the total school budget and the increased shares of that budget going for state-mandated special education expenses and voc/tech tuition for students from Westport, the net expenditures for regular students between 2005 and 2015 increased by 23% in nominal terms. When adjusted for the 22% inflation during that same period, it actually showed no increase. See

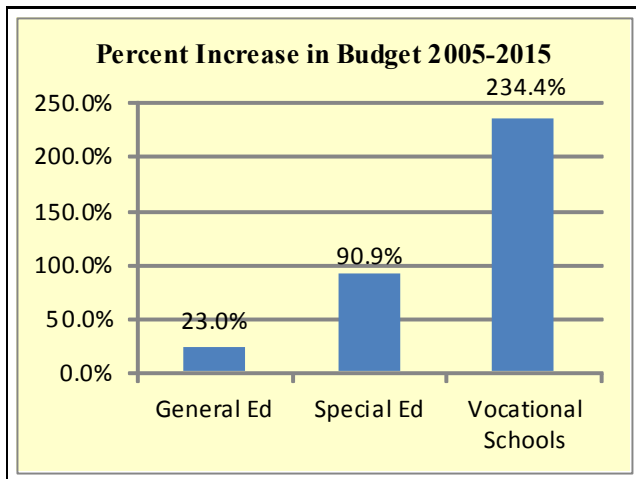


Fig. 4-5. (Source: Expenditure Report Town Accountant 2005-2015 & Annual Town Reports)

Figure 4-5.

- During this same period there was a 12% decline in total student enrollment in the Westport Community Schools, so expenditures per regular student were roughly con-

stant in real terms over the decade.

B. Students and parents are choosing other schools, especially at the high school level

The number of Westport high-school level students choosing to attend private or voc/tech high schools rather than continuing on to Westport High School has increased significantly in recent years as shown in the graph below. See Figure 4-6. The reasons behind these choices are not known clearly. But what is clear is that parents are choosing to pay an average of \$9,500 to send their children to private high schools, and the Town is paying \$15,791 for each student that attends regional vocational schools.

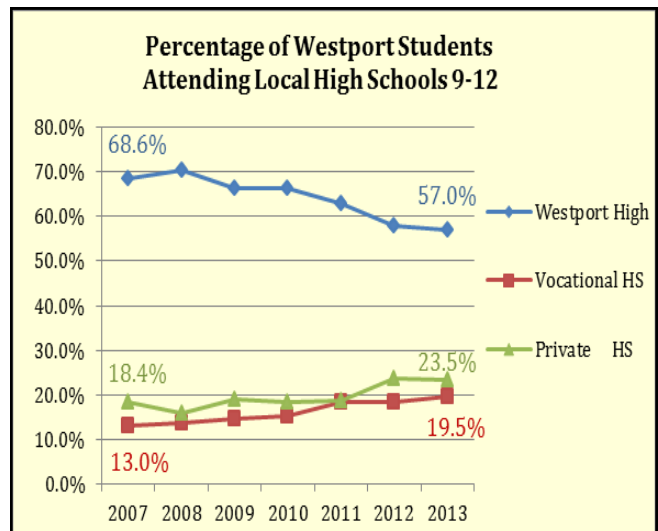


Fig. 4-6. (Source: Westport Community Schools Business Office)

C. Many qualified teachers are seeking employment elsewhere

As noted above, Westport teachers' salaries in 2014 were 13% below the state average. In addition, the cost of health insurance for Westport teachers is higher than in most other communities. While many factors can cause teachers to seek employment in other districts, the salary and benefits as well as the perceived lack of town support are major contributors. When a school district experiences multiple losses of seasoned and experienced teachers, the students lose out and the district incurs additional costs for training and hiring.

In the last three years over 25 % of the teachers in the Westport Community Schools have left, including 24 last year. In 2015, Westport High School lost three math teachers and one science teacher. As will be shown below, these are the critical areas in which the Westport High School students have tested below the state average.

D. Declining performance levels of the School System

1. The State has given the Westport School System a Level 2 classification

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2014 reclassified the Westport Community Schools from Level 1 to Level 2.² This is an indication by the state that the Westport schools are not performing at their full potential.

The Education Department undertook an on-site assessment of the school system in June 2015 and has issued a report on its findings. The report indicates that all of the schools are not performing up to expectations on what is referred to as a "Progressive Performance Index." The schools did not meet target performance levels in English, mathematics or science. Between 2011 and 2014, there was improvement in math proficiency but a decline in science proficiency. While the report noted a number of strengths in the school system, it also contained a long list of recommendations designed to bring the performance of the school system back up to Level 1 standards. The report specifically noted the need for a curriculum director and the filling of administrative positions that have recently been eliminated because of insufficient funds.

² According to the DESE guidelines a school district is classified as Level 2 if any of its schools are classified as Level 2, so many districts have a Level 2 rating; but in the case of the Westport Community Schools, all three schools primary, middle and high school received a Level 2 classification indicating that at all these levels the Westport schools were not achieving their full potential.

Grade and Subject	Proficient or Higher		Advanced		Proficient		Needs Improvement		Warning/Failing	
	Westport	MA	Westport	MA	Westport	MA	Westport	MA	Westport	MA
GR 08-ELA	91	79	11	14	80	65	5	14	3	8
GR 08-MATH	58	52	17	19	41	33	27	29	15	19
GR 08-SCI & TECH/ENG	49	42	8	4	41	38	44	41	7	18
GR 10-ELA	91	90	28	41	63	48	6	8	2	3
GR 10-MATH	74	79	36	53	38	25	22	15	4	7
GR 10-SCI & TECH/ENG	57	71	12	29	45	42	39	24	4	5

Fig. 4-7. MCAS Test scores Spring, 2012
(Source: Massachusetts DOE)

2. Performance on MCAS testing is poor, especially at high school level

The consequences of more Westport students choosing to attend high schools other than Westport High School, and the loss of experienced and specially trained teachers from the high school can be seen in the performance of students in the Westport Community Schools in state-wide MCAS test scores as seen in Figure 4-7. Comparison of 8th and 10th grade test scores on statewide tests of ELA, MATH, SCI&TECH/ENG. for WHS with state averages.³

These scores indicate that at the 8th grade level Westport Middle School students were somewhat above the state average for the Proficient or Higher category for all three test areas. But, for the 10th grade level, the Westport High

³ In recent years school systems have had to choose between two alternative testing systems for evaluating the learning achievement levels of their students. These are the MCAS and PARCC. Because it is not possible to determine whether the decision by some schools to choose one type of test and other schools the alternative may have biased the comparative performance of school systems across the whole state, we have relied on the MCAS tests for the latest year before this choice became available, namely the scores from the spring of 2012.

School students were well below the state averages, especially in math and science. The percentage of Advanced students in Westport fell far below the state averages in math and science and the percentage of Westport students in the Needs Improvement category was well above the state average.

In subsequent years the Westport High School MCAS scores have shown some improvement, but comparison with state averages is less reliable, and the level of achievement for Westport students is still below what would be a desirable level.

E. Perception of underperforming school system is impacting real estate market and property values.

Not only is the quality of the Town's educational system important to the students in the system and to their parents, it is also an important consideration for homebuyers, especially those younger families that have, or are expecting to have, school age children. Local realtors report that, while a low property tax rate is a plus factor for some potential buyers, the quality of the school system is a more important consideration for young families. The additional cost of sending several children to private high schools far outweighs any benefits from the low tax rate. Thus, the low tax rate and school quality are likely to contribute to a hollowing out of the age distribution of the population and an increase in elderly and low-income families. While some may welcome this, it is not consistent with the community preferences as expressed in the town-wide survey done in connection with the updating of the Master Plan.

Data on single home property transactions for the first seven months of 2015 compared with the same period in the previous year show very clearly that Westport is not participating in the upsurge in the South Coast real estate market. See Figure 4-8. Westport experienced negative changes in pending sales, closed sales and medi-

Changes for first seven months from 2014 to 2015 in single home transactions

Town	Pending Sales	Closed Sales	Median Price
Westport	-3.60%	-13.20%	-0.50%
Dartmouth	28.70%	28.70%	7.10%
Fairhaven	1.00%	5.90%	1.80%
New Bedford	26.90%	10.90%	9.10%
Fall River	32.90%	21.40%	8.50%

Fig. 4-8. (Source Multiple Listing Service)

an prices of single family homes while Dartmouth, New Bedford and Fall River all had significant increases in those three categories. Local realtors attribute this primarily to the negative perceptions of the quality of the school system. The fact that the median prices of homes sold in Westport declined slightly while the median prices for homes sold in the other three communities rose by 7-9% indicates that Westport homeowners could be experiencing a 7-10% discount on the value of their homes relative to the values in neighboring communities.

F. Problems with the school buildings

The Westport School System has been further saddled with the burden of discovering PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) in the Middle School as part of a school window replacement project in May of 2011. Tests found PCB levels in the air and on various interior and exterior surfaces at levels exceeding minimal safety standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency. A school-wide cleaning and remediation effort cost the town more than \$3 million, and quarterly PCB monitoring is continuing at a cost of about \$50,000 per year. This, along with the outdated and deteriorating facility, has led to abandonment of that building, reassigning classes to the other three schools, and adding temporary classrooms at the Macomber School as a short term solution.

As a result of the Middle School closing, the school department submitted a “statement of interest” to the Massachusetts School Building

Authority (MSBA) seeking assistance to improve school facilities. On January 14, 2015, the school department received initial approval from the MSBA to begin planning for new school facilities, and has created a School Building Committee to evaluate the school district and community needs through a feasibility study. Getting accepted into this program by the MSBA was a difficult process, but the MSBA recognized the community's need. As approximately 45% of the school construction costs would be reimbursed by the state authority, it is an opportunity that must be pursued. Acceptance into this program and the completion of the feasibility study will provide guidance and funding for much needed school improvements in the future.

It should be possible to fund most of the Town's share of eventual construction and outfitting costs through debt financing that can be paid off over many years. On the other hand, raising the level of annual funding for the operations of an improved school system will require an increase in the annual level of spending that can only be met through a Proposition 2 ½ override.

G. Looking to the future

The problems currently facing the Westport Community Schools appear to go well beyond the normal day-to-day or even year-to-year problems that would typically be faced by the school administration and School Committee. The recently issued report from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, plus the expected report on the future physical facility needs of the school system, taken together, will provide a solid basis for beginning to address these problems of educational quality and building requirements.

What is called for now is for the Town of Westport to establish a Special Commission to undertake the task of analyzing these two reports and, working with the School Committee and the school administration, to prepare a set of recom-

mendations for the Town as to future funding needs and possible organizational changes that would bring the school system back up to a Level 1, and fulfill the expectations of, and obligations to, the community to achieve a high quality education system. Such a commission should be appointed jointly by the Board of Selectmen, and the School Committee should consult periodically with those boards, and should submit their report to the boards and to Town Meeting to provide guidance for future decisions as to funding and other related matters. The membership of the commission should include experienced local citizens and outside persons with special expertise as needed to produce an analysis and recommendations that will serve the interests of the Town.

This chapter has identified a number of issues relating to the Westport Community Schools and has made recommendations to address these deficiencies. It is important to note however, that even with the fiscal constraints, the school system has serviced the community for many years and the students have been provided with a challenging, safe, and community friendly learning experience. Dedicated teachers and parents have gone above and beyond what is required to ensure that students are prepared for higher education and their careers. The negative perception of Westport Community Schools has been around for too long and the time has come to make Westport Schools a source of community pride. Accomplishments need to be promoted and resources need to be provided to maintain a 21st century learning environment.

4.3 Action Plan

Education

Goal 1. Prepare all Westport Community Schools students for successful careers through higher education and productive employment.

Objective 1.1 Improve the quality of the Westport School System to better serve the needs and expectations of all the school-age population.

Action

1.1.a. Appoint a Special Commission to assess and make recommendations for addressing the current problems of educational quality and physical facilities in the Westport School System as a basis for future Town decisions on the following matters:

- Funding
 - Increase funding levels to bring them closer to the state average.
 - Retain high quality teachers by providing adequate salaries and incentives.
 - Elimination of student fees.
 - Provide additional funding for advanced teacher training for more advanced courses, especially in the fields of math and science.
 - Expand the range of course offerings at all levels including art, music and foreign languages.
 - Increase the number of vocational opportunities for students within the Westport Community Schools or the local regional schools.
- Facilities
 - In cooperation with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), inspect and evaluate each building for possible reuse, disposal or sale.
 - Conduct a detailed building and property condition assessment including all external and internal systems. Incorporate results of ADA Transition Plan for school facilities.
 - Evaluate future building needs based on population projections and trends.

1.1.b. Increase the range of extracurricular and athletic activities available to students, especially at the high school level.

Goal 2. Communicate the importance and value of a quality education to all members of the Westport Community.

Objective 2.1 Promote the accomplishments and positive programs that the Westport schools and students have been involved with.

Action

- 2.1.a. Highlight the post graduation success of students.
- 2.1.b. Weekly positive press in local media outlets including social media such as Facebook.
- 2.1.c. Revise/design a district website to be more parent and community friendly with possible website feedback mechanism; link to Town Website.
- 2.1.d. Produce educational broadcasting from the Westport Schools.

Objective 2.2. Identify the benefits of a quality school district.

Action

- 2.2.a. Analyze the current impact of the school system on real estate values.
- 2.2.b. Evaluate demographic trends to determine how they will impact the schools.
- 2.2.c. Promote the school system's economic development benefits.

Goal 3. Increase engagement with the community.

Objective 3.1 Identify and build community partnerships to extend and improve communication, understanding, support, and engagement in education.

Action

- 3.1.a. Create a formal mechanism to communicate issues and needs between the Town government and the School District.
- 3.1.b. Engage the talents and skills of parents/guardians and community members. Designate School staff who will allocate time to identify and engage community members.
- 3.1.c. Explore through dialogue the possibility of Co-op programs with neighboring schools to offer more sporting opportunities as well as music, drama and club activities.

Objective 3.2 Increase use of school facilities by students, public and private groups.

Action

- 3.2.a. Expand youth programs that emphasize the use of school facilities as a positive alternative, such as sports programs, art programs, theater programs and music programs.
- 3.2.b. Explore use of facilities for public or private drama or music events and compile a listing of facilities and process for use including costs and scheduling.
- 3.2.c. Promote the availability of private funding such as the Westport Cultural Council for activities and events within the schools.
- 3.2.d. Report on results of the evaluation and propose expanded uses.
- 3.2.e. Consider other facility uses such as adult education, dual enrollment or college level courses.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

CHAPTER 5

Housing

5.1 Introduction

Westport, contains many diverse forms of housing ranging from ocean and riverfront estates, historic homes, widely dispersed farm houses, clusters of waterfront cottages, old duplex factory homes, small houses on postage stamp lots and, more recently, new modern housing developments and condominium communities that taken together house some 15,000 persons on a year-round basis with significantly more during the summer months. At this time, virtually the entire town is uniformly zoned for single family or duplex dwellings on 60,000 square foot or larger lots. The lack of public water and sewer systems tend to limit new development to standard subdivisions, driving housing costs higher.

The major housing challenges that face the Town now and in the near future include:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of local citizens and also State-mandated standards;
- Satisfying the growing demand for housing suitable for elderly residents and individuals who want to remain or move

into this community;

- Encouraging new housing projects that embody low-impact development, cluster and multi-unit development that protect open space and have favorable environmental impacts;
- Providing water and wastewater services to older residences that have failed systems and insufficient space to resolve their problems through on-site improvements.

The Housing Needs Assessment undertaken for the 2012 Westport Housing Production Plan identified a number of trends in the local housing market. The most dramatic trend was the increase in residents over 65 years of age and the number of people living alone. Households with individuals 65 years and older increased by 41.2% between 2000 and 2010, while family households with children under the age of 18 increased 4.0% over that same period. (*See Fig. 1*)

Census data from 2010 also indicated that fewer young adults and young families were liv-

Household Types: Westport, 2000 - 2010					
	2000		2010		%Change 2000-2010
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Households	5,386	100.0	6,154	100.0	14.3
Households with individuals under 18 year	1,722	32.0	1,791	29.1	4.0
Households with individuals 65 years and older	1,508	28.0	2,130	34.6	41.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Fig. 1 Source : Housing Production Plan

ing in Westport, although the numbers of single householders increased slightly; both demographic populations are more likely to consider living in smaller single family dwelling units, such as townhouses, condominiums or apartments. It is most likely that high housing costs and the lack of diversity of housing types and jobs are contributing to the decline in the numbers of young adults.

The 2012 Housing Needs Assessment also noted the considerable gap between what the town currently lists as affordable housing units as mandated by the state’s Chapter 40B Program, and the number of affordable units the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has required. As of 2012, Westport had 224 affordable units, and needed to create 417 more affordable housing units to meet the state mandate of each community having 10 percent of its housing inventory being deemed affordable.

About 25 percent of the town’s households were considered low to moderate income households (below the median family income of \$74,500) at that time, but only 3.5 percent of the housing stock was considered affordable to them, demonstrating a clear need to encourage the creation of more affordable housing. At present, because of the high demand for summer rentals, few rental units are available to year-round residents. The assessment data from 2012 indicated nearly 500 year-round renters were experiencing high housing cost burdens, an in-

crease of 127 percent over the 2000 figure. There were 2,869 households in Westport with incomes less than 80 percent of the median income for the region at the time, and 109 families with incomes below the poverty level; both numbers indicate the need for the creation of more affordable housing units in town.

Over the past decade there have been several important initiatives in the housing sector to address the housing needs of Westport residents. The Town of Westport established the Westport Affordable Housing Trust Fund (the Trust) by vote at Town Meeting in May, 2009 and a Board of Trustees was appointed by the Board of Selectmen in February, 2010, to oversee the Trust. The mission of the Trust is to help people with modest incomes afford the cost of living in Westport in three primary ways: 1) convert existing buildings to affordable homes, 2) ease home costs for existing residents in need and 3) construct new affordable homes. A part-time housing specialist has been employed by the Town with support from Community Preservation Act funds. He has helped implement the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP). This program assists low income home-owners to repair and upgrade their homes.

5.2 Recent Developments

In recent years, a small number of age-restricted condominiums (55 and over) have been added to the town’s housing inventory,

with a portion of that number constructed and sold under affordable housing guidelines. Some affordable housing has been included in the Briggs Landing subdivision, but nearly all other development has involved the construction of single family homes selling at full market rates. Efforts to increase the affordable housing inventory since 2005 resulted in the town’s Subsidized Housing Inventory increasing from 93 units (2005) to 224 units by the start of 2012.

The proposed construction of 50 units of mixed income apartment units at the town-owned Noquochoke Village property off American Legion Highway by the non-profit development partner, The Community Builders, is in the final planning stages, with construction tentatively scheduled to get underway in 2017.



Fig. 2: Noquochoke Village

The Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw was developed by the Planning Board and approved in 2007. This planning bylaw allows new subdivisions to deviate from standard design and dimensional requirements by using planning tools designed to encourage conservation/open space subdivisions which preserve or buffer significant natural and cultural features from negative impacts with the exception of one small project, developers have not embraced these new design guidelines.



Fig. 3 - Westport Harbor Waterfront Homes

Voters at the 2015 Annual Town Meeting approved a new accessory apartment by-law allowing apartments on single family lots in accessory buildings. This should provide housing units in single family neighborhoods that are appropriate for residents at a variety of stages in their life cycle.

Westport waterways continue to play a significant role in how housing is developed and used in Town. While the Town still has a number of summer communities, many of the traditional summer homes have been converted to year round dwellings. Most of the cottages along South Watuppa and Sawdy Ponds have been upgraded, expanded and occupied by year round residents. Small cottages, abutting the Westport River and Atlantic Ocean have also been rebuilt or increased in size, changing the landscape and increasing the value and use of these properties

5.3 Goals and Objectives

Among the town-wide housing objectives cited at the September 2014 public input session were the need to improve the availability of fully accessible housing for disabled persons, and the need for affordable housing for veterans. Sugges-

tions for goals to be developed included addressing use of mixed use zoning and seeking to allow greater density of housing in Central Village. There were also several mentions of the need to



Fig. 4 - Central Village Apartments

build community support and wider acceptance through a public education program for multi-family housing developments which could address immediate and future needs for affordable housing.

Among these stated objectives is the need for the town to increase its supply of smaller housing units suitable for occupancy by one or two persons, including the elderly, disabled, single people living alone, veterans and single-parent families. This goal is especially important in light of census data that indicates Westport has an aging population (median age, 45.6) already well above the county (38.6) and state average (39.1) median ages. Data shows the number of residents aged 65+ increased 41.2 percent between 2000 and 2010, and is projected to continue to increase by double digits over the next decade. SRPEDD projections suggest the town will add approximately 2,000 residents aged 65+ in the years between 2010 and 2030, with a subsequent demand for increased affordable housing for that population segment (*See Fig. 5*). Meeting this demographic need, and the need for smaller housing for single-parent families with one or more children, can be advanced by the following actions.

- A Planning Board review of the current bylaws with the Affordable Housing

Trust, to determine if any changes or amendments are needed to address current housing needs and make the bylaws more effective in supporting affordable housing. Changes could include identifying suitable areas for two-family and multi-family dwellings, and identify areas where residential and commercial uses can co-exist.

- Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals working to support the mission of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust, which has grant and loan incentives to encourage the production of local action units meeting affordable housing guidelines. These boards could work cooperatively to develop and adopt a Local Comprehensive Permit Policy that identifies preferred design, location density, building, typology (or mix of), level of affordability and other criteria to support appropriate developments.
- Provide assistance through the Affordable Housing Trust to homeowners seeking to convert existing market rate housing to new affordable housing units. They must also continue to work with local lenders, real estate agents and regional and state agencies to set up seminars and other educational programs for first-time homebuyers, including seniors looking to downsize from existing homes.
- Provide housing opportunities that will attract a wide range of buyers, including small families, college students, young professionals, and low to moderate income workforce members. In order to make the community more attractive to young professionals and families, the school system or perception of the school system needs to improve. Other factors identified by local realtors influ-

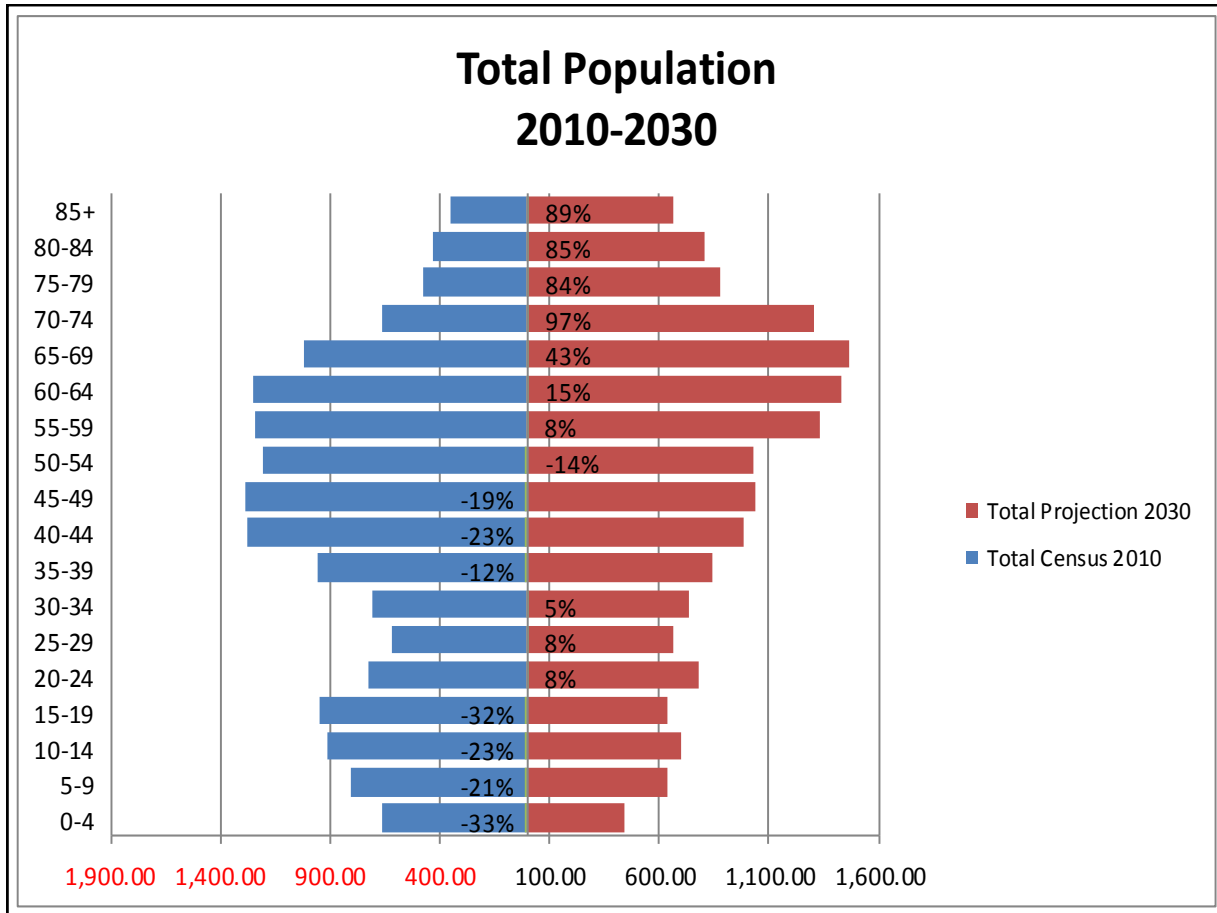


Fig. 5 - Population projection. Data source: UMASS Donahue Institute Report, November 2013.

encing home prices include taxes, quality of housing stock, jobs, and local amenities.

A secondary goal of the town’s efforts to encourage more affordable housing would be to continue to incorporate mechanisms to plan for and protect open space, recreation areas, and trails, and to minimize the impact of new development on the environment. The Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw was developed by the Planning Board and approved in 2007. This planning bylaw allows new subdivisions to deviate from standard design and dimensional requirements by using planning tools designed to encourage conservation/open space subdivisions which preserve or buffer significant natural and cultural features from negative impacts. The Planning Board should also consider the effects of climate change when drafting future zon-

ing bylaws and design regulations.

Thirdly, town officials should incorporate into the housing development process some clear mechanisms designed to preserve for the public’s benefit the visual and functional character of Westport as represented by its village centers, waterfront areas, farms, and other historic and scenic resources that contribute to the town’s heritage and the quality of life for its residents. The ultimate goal is to encourage new development that is compatible with the traditional but varied ways in which housing historically interacts with the landscape in Westport. Efforts should be made by the Planning Board to continue looking at options that will encourage denser residential zoning in village centers and shopping nodes, with specific provisions made for site design, septic system plans, and traffic circulation in such compact neighborhoods. The board also should

encourage flexible development regulations to encourage buffer zones or other ways to minimize the impact of new residential developments on farms, scenic arterial roads, waterfront areas, and other significant landscape features.

A secondary objective would be to support infrastructure improvements that will improve the livability of residents and increase the value of housing stocks. The Board of Health and Board of Selectmen should consider alternatives to individual septic systems and private wells to

allow for more flexibility in housing design and density guidelines. Subdivision regulations should be revised by the Planning Board to encourage pedestrian and vehicular improvements, including sidewalks, bicycle networks and public transportation access wherever possible. Town officials should encourage the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority to increase public transit service in the community, which is primarily auto-dependent at present, with bus service limited to the Route 6 corridor.



Fig. 6 - Central Village—Adamsville Road.

5.4 Action Plan

Goal 1. Provide a range of housing choices, balanced in terms of building type, ownership and rental, size, location, and price, that will meet the housing needs of all segments of the Town's population.

Objective 1.1 Increase the Town's supply of smaller housing units suitable for occupancy by one or two persons, including the elderly.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Review accessory apartment bylaw and change if needed to address current needs.	PB, AHT	
1.1.b. Identify suitable areas for two-family and multi-family dwellings and amend zoning bylaw to allow such uses by special permit.	PB	2
1.1.c. Identify areas where residential and commercial uses can co-exist and consider zoning changes to encourage this type of development.	PB	2
1.1.d. Formally zone selected areas where residential and commercial uses co-exist to mixed-use zoning to eliminate conflicts between these uses.	PB	2
1.1.e. Evaluate permitting smaller housing units at a greater density than currently permitted.	PB	2

Objective 1.2 Increase the Town's supply of affordable housing by supporting the mission of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Establish incentives to encourage the production of local action units.	PB, AHT, ZBA, BOS	2
1.2.b. Adopt a Local Comprehensive Permit Policy that identifies preferred design, location density, building, typology (or mix of), level of affordability and other criteria to support appropriate developments.	ZBA, AHT, BOS	
1.2.c. Continue to review tax title lands before auction for suitability for affordable housing.	AHT, BOS	2
1.2.d. Review and implement the strategies outlined in the Housing Production Plan.	AHT, ZBA	3
1.2.e. Investigate permit streamlining, install permit tracking software to make information sharing among inspectional service offices more efficient.	PB, BOH, BD, CC, AS, BOS	2

Objective 1.3 Provide assistance to homebuyers and homeowners.

Action	Resp	Time
1.3.a. Continue to work with local lenders, real estate agents and the State to set up seminars, and other housing educational programs for first-time homebuyers and seniors.	AHT	2
1.3.b. Provide financial assistance programs such as HOPP.	AHT	1

Objective 1.4 Provide housing opportunities that will attract a wide range of buyers including families and young professionals.

Action	Resp	Time
1.4.a Survey local realtors to determine what other factors influence families when considering purchasing housing in Town, i.e. school system, taxes, quality of housing stock, jobs, amenities.	AHT, ED	2
1.4.b Evaluate housing needs and preferences for families with children in the region in coordination with the Westport Community Schools.	AHT, ED	2
1.4.c. Evaluate the effects of regional job opportunities on the housing market.	ED	3

Goal 2. Incorporate into the housing development process mechanisms to plan for and protect open space, recreation areas and trails, and to minimize impact on the environment.

Objective 2.1 Allow subdivisions to deviate from standard design and dimensional requirements by using planning tools designed to allow and encourage conservation/open space subdivisions which preserve or buffer significant natural and cultural features from negative impacts, and create useful recreation areas, trails, greenways and wildlife corridors.

Action	Resp	Time
2.1.a. Amend the Subdivision Regulations to encourage residential neighborhoods by clustering housing.	PB	2
2.1.b. Review existing zoning by laws to determine their effectiveness in permitting flexible subdivision designs.	PB	3
2.1.c. Consider effects of climate change when drafting zoning by-laws and design regulations.	PB	1

Goal 3. Incorporate into the housing development process mechanisms to preserve for the public's benefit the visual and functional character of Westport as represented by its: village centers, waterfront, farms, and other historic and scenic resources that comprise Westport's heritage.

Objective 3.1 Encourage new development that is compatible with the traditional but varied ways in which housing historically interacts with the landscape in Westport.

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a. Encourage denser residential zoning in village centers and shopping nodes with specific provisions for site design, septic, circulation such as compact neighborhoods.	PB	2
3.1.b. Encourage flexible development regulations to encourage buffers or otherwise minimize impact of new residential developments on farms, scenic arterial roads, waterfront, and other significant landscape features.	PB	2

Objective 3.2 Support infrastructure improvements that will improve the livability of residents and increase the value of housing.

Action	Resp	Time
3.2.a. Consider alternatives to individual septic systems and private wells to allow for flexibility in housing design and density.	BOH, BOS	2
3.2.b. Encourage pedestrian and vehicular improvements including sidewalks, bicycle networks and public transportation.	PB, HW	2

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

CHAPTER 6

Land Use

6.1 Introduction

The Land Use Plan is an important tool to ensure that the Town is adequately prepared to respond to opportunities and challenges relating to long term growth. How the community’s land, natural resources, and public infrastructure has been used in the past, how it is presently being used, and how it will be developed in the future will all help guide long term growth.

Land use regulations, specifically zoning bylaws, are designed to guide future development, as well as control existing buildings and uses. Other regulations can also play a role in the long term development of Westport; for example, because the Town does not have a public sewer system, development must also meet the minimum septic system design standards, which in some cases may be more restrictive than zoning regulations. Because the majority of the Town depends on private wells for water, the protection of water resources has also been a top priority throughout the town; in recent years, Town officials have increasingly focused on the need to improve storm water management and protect environmentally sensitive water bodies and aquifer areas.

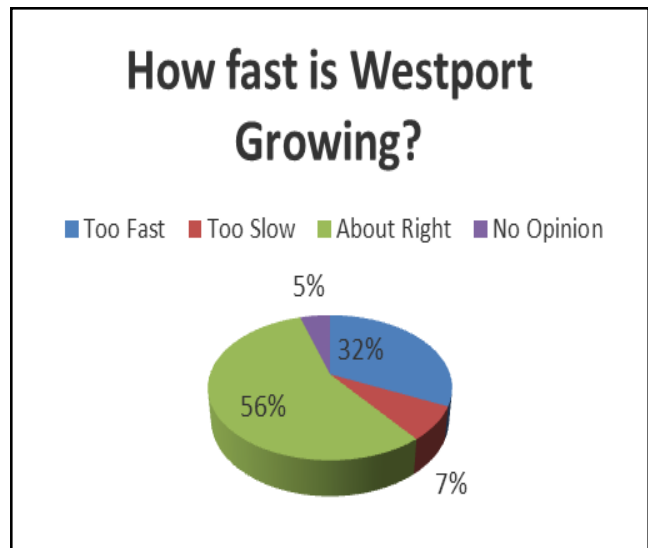
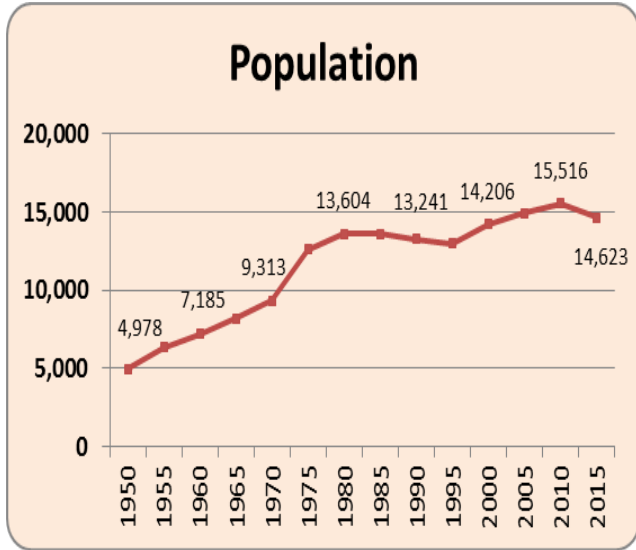


Fig. 6-1. Survey Respondents’ Feelings on Westport’s Growth Rate.

The policies and rules governing land use impact many of the other elements in the plan. For example, land development for commercial use can promote the Town’s goals for economic development, residential use may address housing goals and both will affect the Town’s ability to meet the goals of the open space, recreation and natural resource chapters. The policies, goals and action items of this chapter are designed to maintain the traditional qualities of the villages as they grow; to give structure and form to the



business districts; to provide for residential growth that meets the diverse lifestyles of residents; to preserve and nurture the traditional farming and fishing industries; and to provide safe drinking water for the community.

Public input regarding growth in Westport was sought as part of the Master Plan Survey. Residents were asked about their perception of the growth rate in Town. Just over half of Westport’s residents feel that Westport’s Growth rate is “about right,” almost 1/3 feel that Westport is growing too fast; and 7% feel that Westport is growing too slow. See Figure 6-1. In looking at what type of development the respondents would like to see, development patterns that were favored the most included low density and

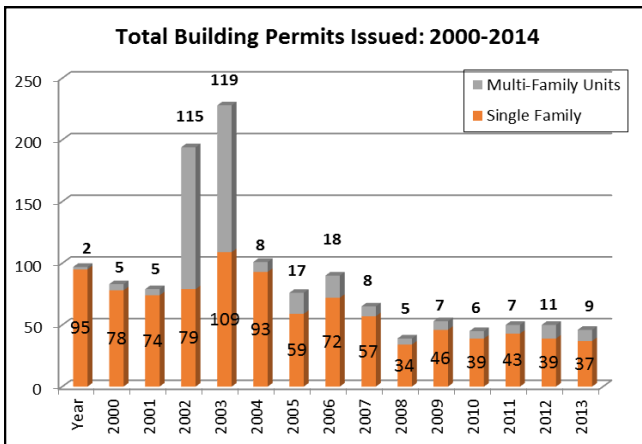


Fig. 6-2 Building statistics.

single family residential development. High density and mixed use-residential/commercial development were the most strongly opposed.

6.2 Recent Developments

A building boom from 2000 to 2010 brought significant residential development to the neighborhoods off Route 177 and Charlotte White Road, smaller subdivisions have also resulted in slow but steady growth of single family homes in the northern and central parts of town. Small subdivisions of between 10 and 20 lots have recently begun to be developed again after the recent downturn in the economy ended, and economic conditions improved. Westport has seen an increase in the size of houses being built in recent years; preferences for waterfront properties has also fueled conversions and expansion of summer properties into year-round dwellings, most notably around South Watuppa Pond, Sawdy Pond, and riverfront areas.



Fig. 6-3 Westport Point over the years

The older villages at the Head of Westport and Westport Point have remained relatively unchanged in recent years, while significant changes are in the works in the area of the Westport Factory village near the Dartmouth line, the construction of two affordable housing developments promise to impact both the residential and commercial landscape bringing an increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic flows to the area.

Lincoln Park Place development in Dartmouth, just over the Town line is adding 57 single family homes and 116 rental units to the neighborhood, along with some commercial space. The nearby Noquochoke Village apartment complex currently in the permitting process, will add 50 affordable apartments to Westport’s subsidized housing inventory. The creation of a mixed use “arts district” at the intersection of Route 6 and Route 177 was among the options for new commercial development discussed at an Oct. 25, 2014, public input session; this option would require some coordination with Dartmouth if there is interest in pursuing it.

Elsewhere in Westport, the demand for senior housing to meet the needs of an aging population has resulted in zoning changes supporting high-density housing and the preservation of open space. Recent successes in senior housing include the creation of 48 age-restricted apartment units in the heart of Central Village, and the Oak Ridge condominium community. The effort to provide new housing options for seniors and others also helped motivate voter approval of an accessory apartment bylaw at the 2015 Annual Town Meeting. Other options for high-density housing are limited by the lack of municipal sewer and water systems in most of the town, requiring private wells and shared septic systems to service any proposed multi-family housing developments.

The purchases of land by private entities for open space, passive recreation, and agricultural use has continued to increase the inventory of acreage that will never be developed for resi-



Fig. 6-4 Town Farm on Drift Road



Fig. 6-5 Coastal amenities

dential or commercial use, and to help preserve the natural resources and scenic landscapes that make Westport an attractive destination for visitors. A Right to Farm community, Westport continues to show strong support for evolving agricultural operations, riverine shell fishing, as well as the new development of aquaculture operations in Westport’s rivers and along its ocean waterfront.

6.3 New Goals and Objectives

General Goals

There are a number of amenities that attract residents to Westport but as discussed at the public workshops and noted in the master plan survey, residents treasure the rural appearance of Westport and desire the preservation of its natural resources and cultural features. Preserving these resources is the primary goal of the land use planning chapter. To achieve this goal protection of the town’s coastal, riverfront and pastoral landscapes is a priority. The Town should encourage and support public and private efforts undertaken by the Westport Conservation Land Trust, Westport Fishermen’s Association, and the Westport River Watershed Alliance. This cooperation would require maintaining continuous dialogue between these private groups and appropriate Town boards such as the Board of Selectmen, Agricultural Commission, Community Preserva-



Fig. 6-6 Westport Rivers Winery Vineyards

tion Committee. and the Agricultural and Open Space Trust Council.

A joint effort to help preserve existing family farms could be undertaken with assistance from the state Agricultural Preservation Restriction program, Community Preservation Act funding, and other funding sources. At the same time, every effort should be made to ensure that development occurring on and near agricultural lands is sensitive to preserving the value of the agricultural resources produced on those properties (see economic development section).

To promote and protect the Town’s natural and unique resources, public officials should support land uses that allow public access to waterways and recreational areas and continue to meet the needs of both year round and seasonal residents and visitors. Future zoning changes should encourage uses that both contribute to the town’s rural and historical character and stimulate the economy, such as tourism, wineries, public beaches, and historical and culture venues. Town boards should endeavor to direct both residential and commercial growth to areas of town that have most potential to absorb that growth



Fig. 6-7 Residential Stone Walls

and have the least impact on the environment.

The Town should also establish maximum land clearing limits and topographical changes for developments to minimize downstream flooding and pollution and seek to protect groundwater recharge areas through regulatory tools.

Residential Use Goals

The Town should develop strategies for residential development that will meet the community’s preferences. To provide direction to future housing development that complements the Town’s rural character, Westport needs to prepare guidelines and develop incentives to preserve rural character in subdivisions. This would include requiring subdivision developers to identify all natural and historic/cultural features to be protected, in accordance with adopted rules, regulations and by-laws designed to preserve such features. The Planning Board should consider new regulations for conservation subdivisions as a means of requiring open space and recreation areas in new neighborhoods; and encourage neighborhood recreational areas and walking trails as an integral part of development planning so as to optimize the livability of new residential developments.



Fig. 6-8 Attached and detached accessory apartments

With the increase in the age of Westport residents, the Town will have to explore options for various housing types to meet the demands of the residents. The recent implementation of an Accessory Dwelling Bylaw will assist in developing affordable housing units.



Fig. 6-9 Central Village Main Road

Commercial Use Goals

During the planning process, the subject of commercial development generated a significant amount of debate. The Town should seek to devise strategies for commercial development that will meet the needs and preferences of the community for commercial development that complements the Town's rural character. Initial steps would include educating residents, business owners, and public officials on the benefits and costs of different types of commercial developments; and planning development standards that will encourage easier pedestrian and bicycle travel between commercial sites. Measures should be considered that would make the newly created Science and Technology District more competitive with similar commercial parks in neighboring communities.

A related goal would be to develop strategies to enhance Westport's villages while preventing strip development and commercial sprawl. By reinforcing the character of established villages, the Town could encourage different and more desirable developments than the traditional rural and emerging suburban patterns

of growth. The adoption of Village Plans for Central Village, the Head of Westport, South Westport and North Westport could be used to illustrate different development scenarios and streetscape concepts, and the plans could be used to guide regulatory amendments to zoning by-laws. The town could also consider adopting zoning regulations that allow continuation of existing village density within specified areas; providing shared sewer and water service for these areas as tools for continued growth and resource protection; and improving or expanding the pedestrian network in and around the villages.

Plans for village growth should include, where appropriate and desirable, allowing multi-family housing development by special permit in villages; allowing smaller house lots in villages where public water/sewer systems are available; and establishing standards (building heights, setbacks, signage, landscaping, etc.) for "mini-mall" commercial structures. As part of this process, the Planning Board should review the zoning surrounding the existing villages and re-draw the boundaries within which higher density development could take place.

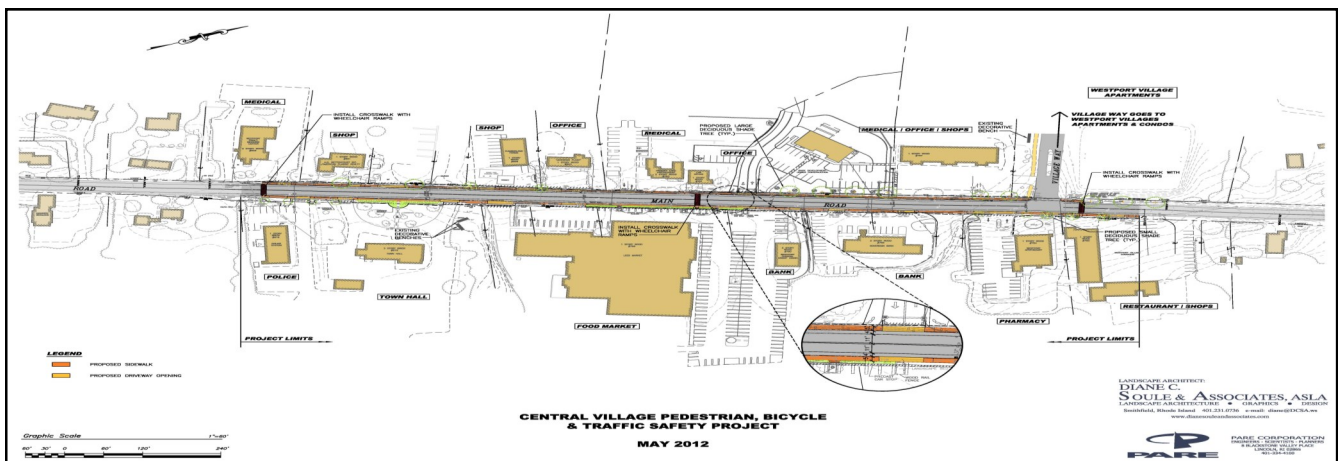


Fig. 6-10 Central Village Sidewalk plan - unrealized

6.3.1 Build-Out Analysis

The build-out analysis is an important tool used for the planning of long term growth. Build-out numbers will be used along with other planning tools to project into the future what might happen with respect to development, including residential, commercial and institutional development. It should be noted that this analysis will not be used to predict growth or the rate of development but will be used to identify the maximum number of parcels that can be developed under existing zoning.

Previous Estimates

In the 2004 Master Plan, three different reports were used to estimate the potential build-out for the Town. The first was developed using information and recommendations from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), the second used figures generated from the Growth Management Plan of 1987-1988, and the third was an estimated build-out from the 1995 Water Works Group. These estimates ranged

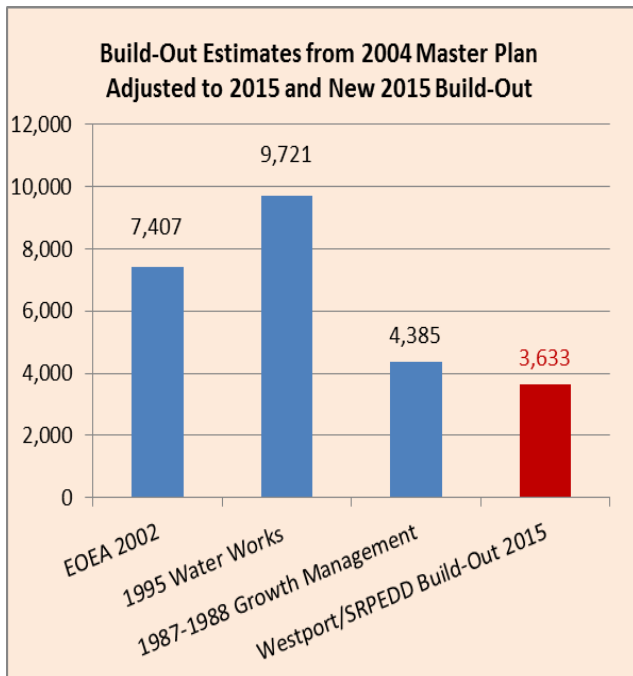
from a 2015 adjusted low of 4,385 to a high of 9,721. The new 2015 Westport/SRPEDD Build-Out estimates the total number of buildable parcels at 3,633.

2015 Build-Out Estimate

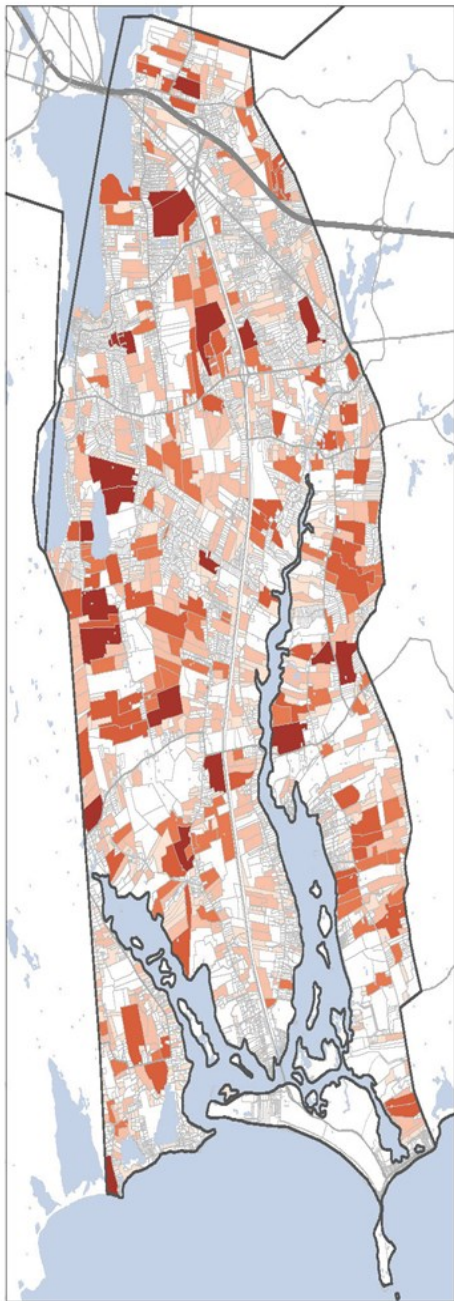
Early in the update process the committee decided that it was important to get a better estimate of the potential build-out for the Town. The committee consulted with Tim Gillespie and Claude Ledoux who had both worked on build-out estimates of their own and SRPEDD was hired through a Technical Assistance Grant to complete an estimate for the Town. Working with the Town Planner, Mr. Ledoux, Mr. Gillespie and Grant King from SRPEDD, a methodology was developed using extensive GIS information along with local knowledge to develop a build-out estimate for the community. A detailed description of the methodology and the process can be found in the Appendix.

The estimated build-out based on the latest GIS information and an extensive review by the Town shows 3,633 buildable parcels. While this is below the three estimates from the 2004 plan it is more in line with the estimates of Mr. Ledoux and the detailed estimate completed by Tim Gillespie as part of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project. His estimate, pro-rated for the whole Town, would be approximately 3,830 which is within 6% of the new build-out estimate. The methodology used in this new analysis is more in line with existing land use regulations and constraints relating to wetlands, shape and access.

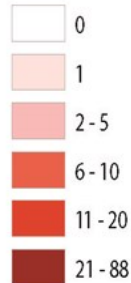
The build-out application provides a visual framework for discussing how the projected needs of residents might be addressed and planned for in the future. This will also be used to assist the Town in identifying land to be protected or developed.



Westport contains an estimated 3,633 Buildable Lots



Buildable Lots Per Parcel



Scope of the GIS Analysis

8,973 Total Parcels
- 7,608 Parcels with No Building Potential
1,365 Build-out Parcels

Scope of the Parcel-by-Parcel Review

880 Modified Parcels
+ 485 Unchanged Parcels
1,365 Build-out Parcels

Westport Build-Out Summary Table

Buildable Lots Per Parcel	Number of Parcels	Number of Buildable Lots	Percent of Buildable Lots	Total Area (Acres)	Percent of Area
0	7,985	0	0.0%	19,431	58.4%
1	541	541	14.9%	2,883	8.7%
2-5	290	860	23.7%	4,403	13.2%
6-10	82	629	17.3%	2,380	7.2%
11-20	54	816	22.5%	2,599	7.8%
21-88	21	787	21.7%	1,550	4.7%
	8,973	3,633	100%	33,247	100%

6.4 Action Plan

Land Use

General

Many of the Goals and Objectives expressed throughout the Plan Element chapters are shared and/or interact with each other. This is most often the case with Land Use where they have impact on how the land is used. Because of this, a number of the Land Use Actions generated by the Land Use Goals and Objectives are listed, but where they are repeated in later plan element actions reference is made to that plan element because it is the prime source of the action. This minimizes repetition.

Goal 1. Maintain Westport’s rural appearance and preserve its natural and cultural features.

Objective 1.1 Preserve the Town’s coastal, riverfront and pastoral landscapes.

Action	Resp.	Time
1.1.a. Plan for changes due to climate variations and demand for use.	PB, BOH, CC, HW	2
1.1.b. Consider waterfront zoning and other regulatory tools.	PB, BOH	2
1.1.c. Prioritize land to be protected, and manage public and private funding sources to maximize the value of the land to be protected. (See open space and recreation section).		
1.1.d. Consider flexible design standards that encourage the preservation of natural and historic features.	PB, ZBA	3
1.1.e. Plan for areas of specific use addressing historical needs. (See natural and cultural resource section).	PB, BOH, CC	2
1.1.f. Identify outstanding vistas for protection.	PB, CC	3
1.1.g. Investigate the benefits of a scenic road bylaw.	PB	3

Objective 1.2 Ensure farming & commercial fishing continue as vital economic activities by supporting & reinforcing public & private programs.

Action		Resp.	Time
1.2.a.	Maintain continuous dialogue between private groups such as Land Trust and WRWA and appropriate Town boards. Work with WFA, Agric. Commission.	BOS	1
1.2.b.	Preserve existing family farms, with assistance from the APR program CPC and other funding sources.	AC, BOS	1
1.2.c.	Ensure that development on and near agricultural lands is sensitive to the value of the agricultural resource (see economic development section).	AC, PB	1
1.2.d.	Consider agricultural zoning for prime farmland and woodland; & establishing buffer areas between farmland & residential neighborhoods.	AC, PB	2

Objective 1.3 Promote and protect the Town’s natural and unique resources.

Action		Resp.	Time
1.3.a.	Support uses that allow public access to waterways and recreational areas.	PB, LC, BC	1
1.3.b.	Continue to meet the needs of both year round and seasonal residents.	BOS	2
1.3.c.	Encourage uses that contribute to the town’s character and stimulate the economy such as tourism, winery, beaches, arts and culture.	BOS	2
1.3.d.	Realize the value of the towns waterfront and zone accordingly to preserve land and permit appropriate residential and commercial uses.	PB	3

Objective 1.4 Direct growth to areas that have most potential to absorb it.

Action		Resp	Time
1.4.a.	Have detailed maps available for review by all interested parties; include soils, wetlands, aquifer district, and all protected lands.	PB, CC, BOH	2
1.4.b.	Establish and zone areas for most compatible uses.	PB, ZBA	3
1.4.c.	Tie-in land use to traffic and circulation patterns.	PB HW	3

Goal 2. Plan for the challenges and needs that arise as the Town continues to develop.

Objective 2.1 Develop Town-wide infrastructure including water, stormwater and wastewater management plan.

Action	Resp	Time
2.1.a. Develop Roadway drainage systems as required by EPA phase II requirements.	PB, BOH, CC.	2
2.1.b. Consider maximum land clearing limits and topographical changes for developments to minimize downstream flooding and pollution.	PB, BOH, CC	2
2.1.c. Protect groundwater recharge areas through regulatory tools.	BOH, PB	1
2.1.d. Ensure all residents have access to potable water.	BOH	1
2.1.e. Develop new and innovative water supply sources.	BOH	3
2.1.f. Create a Town map showing the location of existing utilities. See (water, stormwater and wastewater section).	PB, HW	2

Objective 2.2 Enable land use departments and boards to effectively deal with increasing complex growth management needs.

Action	Resp.	Time
2.2.a. Encourage multi-department and board reviews of developments.	PB, BOH,	3
2.2.b. Provide support tools such as permitting software that allow sharing of departmental information.	PB, BOH, CC	2
2.2.c. Continue implementation and update of GIS mapping and databases.	PB, BOH, CC, BD	1
2.2.d. Update subdivision and site plan regulations and coordinate stormwater regulations with all land use boards.	PB, BOH, CC	2
2.2.e. Establish funding sources to monitor development impacts and remedies.	PB, BOH, CC	3
2.2.f. Creation of a Zoning Bylaw Revision Committee to provide a comprehensive re-write to the Zoning By-law.	PB, BOS, ZBA, BD	3

Residential

Goal 3. Develop strategies for residential development that will meet the needs of the Town.

Objective 3.1 Direct housing development to complement Town's rural character.

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a. Prepare guidelines & incentives to preserve rural character in subdivisions.	PB, CC	3
3.1.b. Require subdivision developers to identify all natural & historic/cultural features to be defined in a study. Adopt rules, regulations and by-laws to preserve these features, as well as views from public ways.		
3.1.c. Use new detailed maps to guide zoning, taking into account large-scale natural and cultural resource areas, available infrastructure, etc.	PB	2
3.1.d. Consider conservation subdivisions as a means to require open space and recreation area in new neighborhoods.	PB, CC	2
3.1.e. Allow by special permit, small lot/apt/condos , mixed use development in suitable areas, if water & sewer available.	PB	3
3.1.f. Encourage neighborhood recreational areas & trails as integral part of development planning.	PB, CC	3
3.1.g. Optimize livability of residential developments.	PB	3

Objective 3.2 Explore various housing types to meet the demands of the residents.

Action	Resp	Time
3.2.a. Explore the potential implementation of an Accessory Dwelling by-law that would allow for appropriate levels of accessory housing.	PB	3
3.2.b. Assess the effectiveness of Home Occupation by-law provisions to see if adjustments need to be made (more or less restrictive).	PB, ZBA	2

Commercial

Goal 4. Develop strategies for commercial development that will meet the needs of the Town.

Objective 4.1 Direct commercial development to complement Town's rural character.

Action	Resp	Time
4.1.a. Educate residents, business owners, and officials on the costs and benefits of different types of commercial developments.	PB, CC	3
4.1.b. Include development standards that will allow for easier travel for pedestrians and bicyclists between sites.	PB, HD	3

Action	Resp	Time
4.1.c. Consider extending public sewer and water east on Route 6 to service the Business District and the Science and Technology Overlay District.	PB	2
4.1.d. Work to broaden the tax base by permitting a mix of beneficial uses such as agriculture, small retail, tourism, cultural arts and professional offices.	PB, BOS	3
4.1.e. Consider allowing by special permit the ability for businesses to expand into abutting residential districts.	PB	2
4.1.f. Allow neighborhood convenience stores at major crossroads in residential areas.	PB	2

Goal 5. Develop strategies to enhance Westport's villages to prevent strip development & sprawl.

Objective 5.1 Reinforce character of villages. They provide a different and desirable development from traditional rural & emerging suburban patterns.

Action	Resp	Time
5.1.a. Adopt Village Plans for Central Village, the Head of Westport, Westport Point, South Westport and North Westport and illustrate different development scenarios and streetscape concepts. Use the plans to guide regulatory amendments.	PB, WHC, CC, BOH	3
5.1.b. Adopt zoning that allows continuation of existing village density within specified village areas.	PB, WHC, CC, BOH	3
5.1.c. Consider the provision of centralized sewer and water service for these areas as tools for continued growth and resource protection.	PB	2
5.2.d. Improve and/or create pedestrian network in and around villages.	PB	2

Objective 5.2 Plan for village growth.

Action	Resp	Time
5.2.a. Allow developer by special permit to construct multi-family housing in villages.	PB, ZBA	2
5.2.b. Allow smaller s.f. house lots in village when public water/sewer are available.	PB	2
5.3.c. Establish standards for commercial structures, i.e. "mini-mall" - bldg. height, setback, landscaping, signage, etc.	PB	3
5.3.d. Review zoning surrounding existing villages and re-draw boundaries within which higher density development can take place.	PB	3

CHAPTER 7

Natural Resources

7.1 Introduction

Protection of Westport’s natural resources is an essential element of the overall Master Plan. Westport’s earliest settlers, some 10,000 years ago, were attracted by this area’s abundant resources: the river and its estuaries, the ocean front, shellfish beds, wildlife habitats, the inter-tidal 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 stress on these resources, and it will only increase. Groundwater, surface water and wetlands have been contaminated in some areas, wildlife habitats are shrinking, and open land is vanishing. On the other hand, climate change is expected to lead to rising sea levels, more frequent and severe storm events and rising temperatures of both air and water that will impact plant and animal life on reduced surface areas and in the waterways. The Town’s planning must try to address these trends and point the way toward sensible growth that will protect these valuable resources as much as possible.

7.2 Recent Developments

Since the previous Master Plan was issued, Westport has participated in the State-sponsored Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP) that is committed to protecting the State’s estuaries from excessive nitrogen levels. The results of this effort and remaining issues are discussed in the Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Chapter.



Fig. 7-1 Westport Harbor : Cockeast Pond

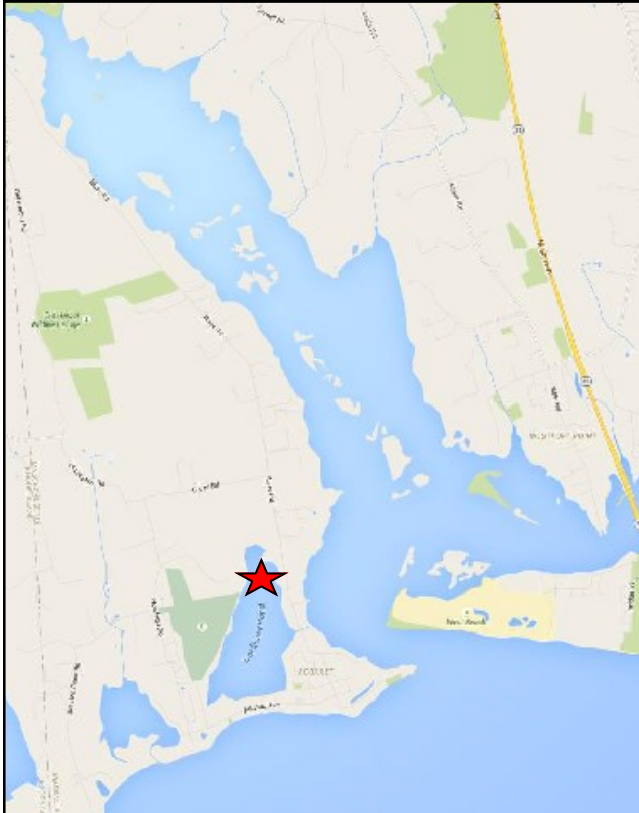


Fig. 7-2 Westport Harbor Cockeast Pond Map

The Town has adopted a number of new zoning by-laws designed to establish controls on new developments in order to minimize adverse impacts on natural resources. In 2007 the Town adopted Site Plan Approval, giving the planning board the ability to improve site design by mitigating the impact of the proposed development on the environment. The town has also adopted a number of other by-laws designed to protect the town's character and natural resources. These include the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD), the Low Impact Development Site Plan Approval and the Flexible Frontage Zoning By-laws. The purpose and intent of these regulations are to reduce the adverse effects of soil erosion, minimize stormwater runoff, provide groundwater recharge, reduce land clearing and preserve open space.

Efforts to protect or improve breeding areas for avian and aquatic species that are either endangered or of special concern have had mixed results.

- Improvements have been made in the so-called Herring Ditch that provides access to Cockeast Pond which is important for Herring breeding. On the other hand, an effort by the Westport Fishermen's Association to gain State support for exploring possibilities for improving herring access to potential breeding areas in the upper reaches of the East Branch of the Westport River has made little headway due to resistance from local residents.
- The Allens Pond Wildlife Sanctuary and the Lloyd Center for the Environment have continued to monitor and attempt to protect breeding areas for the Piping Plover, a species of concern nationally. Such protection was required by the State for four years in connection with the dredging project at the harbor entrance and the Town financed the effort, but after that period the support was



Fig. 7-3 Piping Plovers and fencing



Fig. 7-4 - Westport Beach Avenue and the Knubble at terminus

terminated. Also there is public resistance to installation of indicative fencing around Piping Plover breeding areas and both vandalism and disregard of animal control regulations are common. Efforts to inform the public of the reasons for and importance of such protective measures have met with limited success.

Similarly, disagreements over the causes of, and remedies for, changes in coastal beaches have stirred up debate but not much action:

- Erosion of coastal beaches mainly to the east of Gooseberry Point has resulted in loss of some trailer lots and forced relocation of the roadway farther inland. Proposals for beach nourishment or protective structures have faced opposition from both State authorities and local residents who think the cost would be prohibitive and the effort useless in the face of rising sea-levels and increased storms.
- Also on East Beach, suggestions that abun-

dant stones and receding beach front were due to the blockage caused by the causeway to Gooseberry Island and that a proposal to replace the causeway with a bridge would result in more sand on East Beach and better flushing of the Westport River, have been countered by doubts about the validity of the science and also by some natural renourishment of the sand on East Beach in recent years.

- The section of beach in the Harbor area along Beach Avenue has received much attention recently in connection with proposals to provide handicapped access. Proposals to both stabilize the barrier beach and provide handicapped access were passed over at the special town meeting in December 2015.

Recent efforts to promote shellfish breeding appear to be meeting with considerable success.

- The Shellfish Warden has raised the funds to expand significantly the infusion of shellfish spat into both branches of the Westport Riv-



Fig. 7-5 Oyster Farming –counting oysters

er. Periodic pollution following rain storms causes temporary closing of shell fishing areas, but the prospects for increased harvests appear to be favorable.

- Similarly, oyster breeding operations have increased in recent years with new breeding areas being set aside in both branches of the River and also in offshore areas near Gooseberry Point.
- A project to remove granite blocks around Hix Bridge and thereby improve tidal flows into the areas of the East Branch above the bridge is currently in the works. It is expected to improve natural habitat for oysters in the future. .

Cold-water streams are critically important for the breeding of several rare species of brook trout, and Westport has a significant share of such streams along the Massachusetts coast so that protection of those streams is important for these special anadromous fish.

- Land protection programs along the lower reaches of Angeline Brook by various local environmental organizations have helped preserve this important breeding ground for brook trout. But similar protections will be

needed along the upper reaches of this brook and others like it.

7.3 Goals and Objectives

The future efforts with regards to natural resources in Westport will continue to be focused on providing protection for those resources through strengthening of the regulatory structures and also through expanded educational programs to improve public awareness of the benefits derived from those resources and the importance of their protection. The many goals and objectives in this chapter give many specific action items that will be required. They provide both a sense of direction and a framework, or checklist, for monitoring future progress and encouraging effective implementation. Hopefully, they may also provide guidance for resolving some of the disagreements that have impeded action in the past.



Fig. 7-6 Hix Bridge on Hix Bridge Road

7.4 Action Plan

Natural Resources

Goal 1 To preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport’s natural resources, including its ocean front and beaches, its rivers and estuaries, its farmlands, woodlands and open spaces, its aquifers and watersheds and its wild flora and fauna.

Objective 1.1 Improve protections for beaches and waterfront areas.

Action

- 1.1.a Promote dune conservation and re-vegetation: i.e. continue to erect snow fences during winter months and develop a plan for dune grass replacement through grants and or available funds.
- 1.1.b Provide signage and public education to reduce walking and playing in dunes.
- 1.1.c Protect beaches and waterfront areas for the purpose of public use and enjoyment.

Objective 1.2 Decide upon and initiate measures for implementing nitrogen reduction to meet TMDL targets in the Westport River watershed.

Action

- 1.2.a. Inform the public of results of SMAST research that identified the principle sources of nitrogen in East Branch.
- 1.2.b. When TMDLs for Westport River are announced, work with SMAST/others to identify most efficient means of achieving targets.
- 1.2.c. Prepare a Nitrogen Reduction Plan (NRP) for achieving nitrogen targets in most efficient and cost-effective manner.
- 1.2.d. Identify and seek sources of local and state funding for implementing the NRP on a shared, equitable basis.
- 1.2.e. Obtain local and state approval of the NRP.
- 1.2.f. Establish administrative arrangements for implementing the NRP.
- 1.2.g. Begin implementation of the NRP.
- 1.2.h. Establish systems for continuing monitoring of nitrogen levels in the Westport River to assess effects of the program.

Objective 1.3 Reduce other forms of pollution in the ponds, waterways and fish and shellfish areas.

Action

- 1.3.a. Continue water quality monitoring programs for various pollutants in various parts of the Westport River.
- 1.3.b. Initiate water quality monitoring in Sawdy and Devol Ponds and other water bodies as deemed important.

- 1.3.c. Identify water bodies where pollution reduction efforts are needed.
- 1.3.d. Obtain expert assistance as needed to devise plans for addressing pollution problems in polluted water bodies.
- 1.3.e. Formulate remediation plans and seek public approval and funding for implementation of plans.
- 1.3.f. Continue to apply for CVA funds (Clean Vessel Act) to operate the Free Pump Out of Harbor and transient boats at FL Tripp fuel dock and the Free mobile Harbor pump out boats along with the waste storage facility at the State Boat Ramp.

Objective 1.4 Continue land and open space protection programs especially in aquifer zones and sensitive parts of the watershed

Action

- 1.4.a. Encourage Conservation Restrictions (CRs) and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) on private properties as appropriate.
- 1.4.b. Continue tax reduction and exemption programs for agricultural and open space protection programs.
- 1.4.c. Identify lands that are in or adjacent to the aquifer zones and other sensitive areas and seek ways to give them protection.
- 1.4.d. Enforce regulations to protect land in coastal velocity zones and barrier beaches.
- 1.4.e. Focus Conservation projects on land adjacent to rivers, streams, and ponds.

Objective 1.5 Preserve critical wildlife habitat throughout the town and provide protection for endangered species.

Action

- 1.5.a. Build partnerships with interested organizations, agents and local experts who can help with identification of areas that are critical habitat for various forms of wildlife, especially endangered and listed species.
- 1.5.b. Where programs already exist for protection of such habitat, see that they are supported and implemented.
- 1.5.c. Provide financial support for protection of breeding habitat of listed species on Town-owned property such as Town Beach.
- 1.5.d. Improve enforcement of Town by-laws and regulations designed to protect endangered wildlife species.
- 1.5.e. Evaluate the alternative ways of expanding breeding areas for endangered and listed species.
- 1.5.f. Acquire and/or protect parcels linking protected lands and wildlife corridors.
- 1.5.g. Acquire and/or protect land identified as critical habitat by Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP).

Objective 1.6 Improve public understanding of actions that will help protect our natural resources.

Action

- 1.6.a. Encourage and support private organizations such as the Westport Fishermen's Association, Westport River Watershed Alliance, Westport Land Trust, Mass Audubon and Lloyd Center that provide education and information on the importance of the Town's natural resources and how to protect them.
- 1.6.b. Encourage town bodies such as the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Water Resource Management Committee, Beach Committee and Shellfish Advisory Committee to address natural resource protection issues in their meetings and seek to educate the public as to the importance of protecting these resources.

Goal 2 To guide and control future development in order to sustain Westport's natural resources and assure that these resources will exist to be enjoyed by future generations

Objective 2.1 Implement recently adopted zoning by-laws designed to guide sustainable development.

Action

- 2.1.a. Continue to enforce recently approved Low Impact Development and Flexible Frontage by-laws in order to minimize land clearing, protect encroachment into wetland areas and reduce stormwater impacts.
- 2.1.b. Evaluate on a yearly basis the effectiveness of the by-laws and amend as needed.

Objective 2.2 Draft and obtain approval of additional bylaws and regulations that support sustainable development.

Action

- 2.2.a. Encourage departments to work together to develop a standard set of regulations relating to development and stormwater design.
- 2.2.b. Improve regulations so that applicants, boards and committees have a clear understanding of expectations during the permitting process.
- 2.2.c. Update the Planning Board's Subdivision Regulations to include low impact design standards.
- 2.2.d. Prepare and seek approval of a new bylaw requiring shared denitrifying septic systems in new development projects that are within specified proximity of sensitive wetlands and waterways.
- 2.2.e. Consider the adoption of a bylaw imposing impact fees on new development projects that impact critical natural resources such as potable water supply and endangered waterways.

Objective 2.3 Continue to Enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and other state laws that protect the environment.

Action

- 2.3.a. Provide training and funding for Town staff, committees and boards to keep well informed of changing regulations.
- 2.3.b. Improve the Town’s GIS mapping with upgraded layers showing wetland areas and other environmentally sensitive resources.

Objective 2.4 Devise and begin to implement a plan that addresses the many stormwater problems in the Town.

Action

- 2.4.a. Create an asset management program to identify and map the Town’s stormwater system, including drainage basins, drainage structures, rim and invert elevations, pipe size and material.
- 2.4.b. Develop a maintenance plan for repair, cleaning, and replacement of drainage structures.
- 2.4.c Identify and prioritize improvements to the stormwater system.
- 2.4.d Upgrade stormwater facilities to reduce flooding and provide additional treatment for stormwater runoff.

Objective 2.5 Address the potential impacts of climate change on our natural resources.

Action

- 2.5.a. Provide information on the probable inundation of waterfront properties and public facilities that could result from various extents of sea-level rise and storm surges.
- 2.5.b. Encourage the local boards and commissions to take these possible sea-level and water table rises into account in evaluating development projects and wastewater treatment systems.
- 2.5.c. Discourage construction of temporary barriers or nourishment projects that are likely to be overwhelmed or otherwise undermined by rising sea-levels and storm surges.
- 2.5.d. Encourage location of buildings and facilities to higher elevations that are unlikely to be affected by rising sea-levels or storm surges.

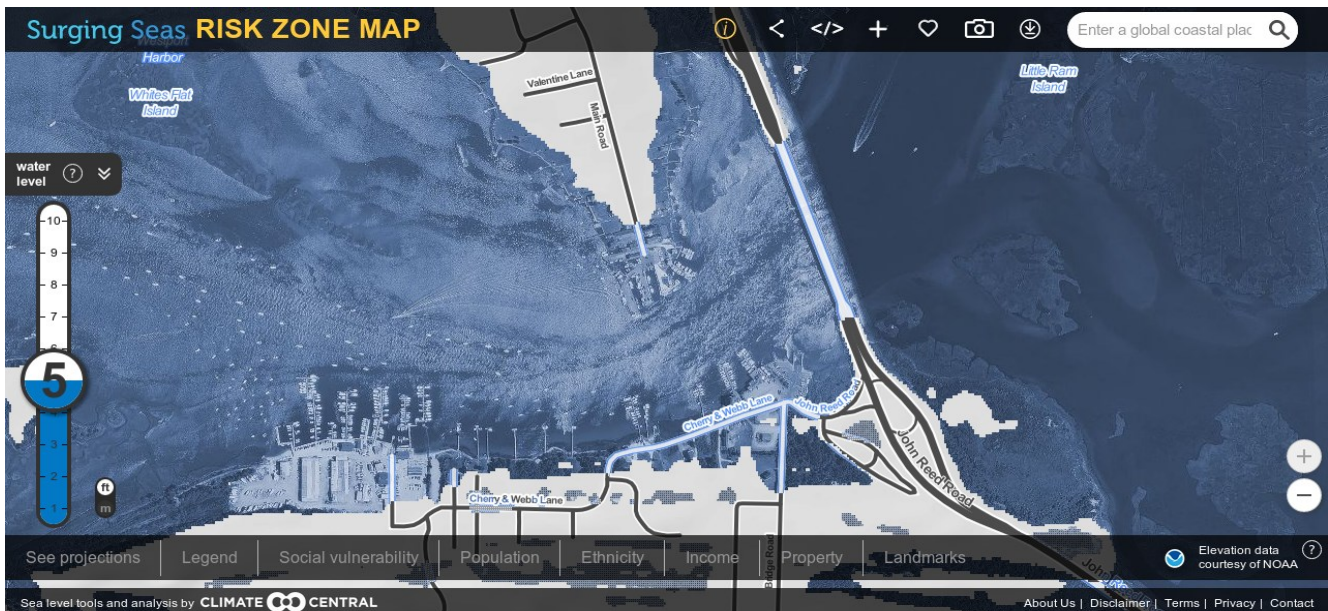


Image of projected sea level rise at Westport Point. Source: sealevel@climatecentral.org

CHAPTER 8

Open Space & Recreation

8.1 Introduction

The three biggest issues related to the preservation of open space in Westport are: the risk of over-development of commercial and residential land; the potential increase in largely uncontrollable Chapter 40B affordable housing developments; and the need to preserve the Town's rural and historical character.

Public access to the Town's waterways was also identified as a priority. The Landing Commission and the Board of Selectmen should continue to protect and promote public access, identifying and removing encroachments on Town owned land, and informing the public of their rights along the shoreline.

As a Town consisting of nearly 34,000 acres of land, Westport has abundant open space with potential for recreational use, although compared to other communities in southeastern Massachusetts, relatively little of that open space is permanently protected or managed for active public use. By comparison, 50 percent of the open space in Fall River and 25 percent of the open space in Dartmouth are permanently protected. Although the Town continues to make excellent progress towards increasing the

amount of permanently protected open space, at present only about 11 percent of Westport is under permanent protection. Most of the acreage that is under permanent protection serves the public interest by protecting water supplies and critical environmental areas, but more open space acreage with public access for passive recreation is needed. In 2015, slightly more than 35 percent of protected land was contained in 17 farms covered by Agricultural Preservation Restrictions. The Westport Conservation Commission, other government agencies, and non-profit organizations such as the Trustees of Reservations and Westport Land Conservation Trust collectively protect about 5,585 acres of land in Westport as of 2015. *See Figure 8-1 Protected Open Space 1990-2015.*

8.2 Recent Developments

The new youth athletic facilities being developed by the Westport Youth Athletic Association off American Legion Highway for public use with the aid of Community Preservation Act funding is a good example of a public and private sector partnership that can provide worthwhile benefits to the community. Similar uses of

Town-owned land in recent years include the long-term lease of Town land to the Westport Youth Soccer Association for the development of new playing and practice fields; more opportunities for such cooperative efforts should be sought out and promoted by Town officials whenever possible. Even prior to the closure of the Middle School, youth basketball leagues have struggled to find adequate facilities to use. An indoor recreational facility needs to be part of the long range plans for the community.

As part of a comprehensive updating of the Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan, Town officials could also encourage more active management of Town-owned beach properties (such as posting signage, rules, and creating marked paths and handicapped access routes) to increase public use, and encourage better envi-

ronmental management of dune grass and other natural resources on waterfront Town properties. An effort should be made to coordinate such beach protection activities with adjoining property owners and private organizations such as the Westport Fishermen’s Association, the Westport Land Conservation Trust, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay, and the Westport River Watershed Alliance.

Town officials should develop a plan for handicapped access improvements at all Town facilities, including beach area parking lots, to encourage increased use by all segments of the population. The recent installation of all-access mobi-mats at Beach Avenue have proved successful, and the Commission on Disabilities should be encouraged to duplicate the effort at East Beach and undertake a feasibility study for

Protected Open Space 1990 - 2015

Type	Acreage 1990	Acreage 2003	Acreage 2015	Percent by Ownership 2015	Percent Change 1990-2015
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (17 farms as of 2003)	946.0	1,730.7	1,974.3	35.34%	+108.7%
Conservation Commission	138.7	372.9	204	3.63%	+47.1%
City of Fall River Water Dept. ¹	497.5	497.5	487	8.80%	-2.1%
Westport Land Conservation Trust	170.0	403.1	1,065	19.06%	+526.5%
Conservation Restrictions	65.0	255.8	1,235.3	22.10%	+1,800.5%
Audubon Society	15.3	15.3	12	.21%	-21.6%
Commonwealth of Massachusetts ²	465.3	465.3	606	10.84%	+30.2%
US Government	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.02%	0%
Total Protected Acreage	2,299.1	3,741.9	5,584.9	100.00	+142.9%

[1] Includes Water Area

[2] Includes only land area of Horseneck Beach Reservation, does not include water area

Fig. 8-1. Protected Open Space 1990-2015

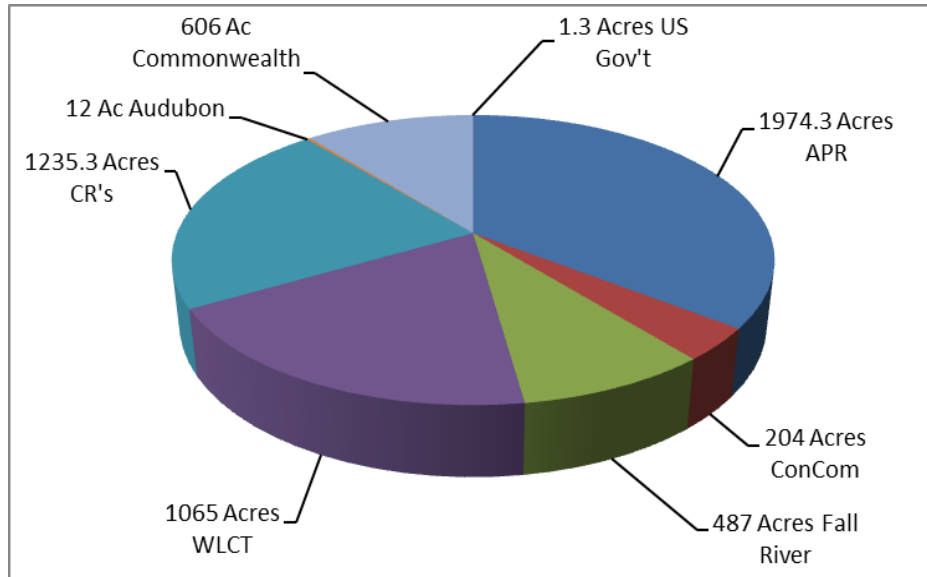


Fig. 8-2. Protected Open Space Acreage, by Owner/Manager

the installation of seasonal boardwalks at all Town beaches to improve access and protect fragile dunes along the waterfront. The plans to improve public access to Beach Avenue and abutting Town and Federal parcels of land should also be continued, with Town officials working with area residents and abutters on a Memorandum of Understanding that will provide access to points of interest in an environmentally sensitive

manner. Town officials have recently discussed different ideas to address the lack of parking at Cherry & Webb Beach. Options currently include the possibility of creating a satellite parking facility and using shuttle buses to alleviate the shortage of parking spaces at Cherry & Webb Beach, and that effort should be supported.



Fig. 8-3. Conceptual Plan for the Westport Youth Athletic Association Sports Field Complex



Fig. 8-4 Beach Avenue Mobi-mat installation.

8.3 Goals and Objectives

OPEN SPACE

In order to increase land conservation efforts in Westport, the Town needs to develop funding mechanisms to help finance a municipal land protection program. A good way to establish such a conservation fund would be to dedicate monies received from the sale of Town land and tax title properties to a special account created for that purpose. The initial deposits and later appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds could also be used to match state grants dedicated to open space preservation efforts. Residents would be encouraged to support such a conservation program if the Town could promise a long-term effort to create new public spaces in Central Village and other high-traffic sites for community use, and plan for their maintenance and future improvements. At the same time, Town officials could undertake an effort to promote the management and stewardship of more Town land by private organizations such as the Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Westport Youth Athletic Association.

Other options for supporting private efforts to help conserve vacant land could include reviewing tax title lands to see if any parcels

should be kept in Town hands as conservation land. The Town should encourage land protection by private neighborhood associations and partner with public agencies and private organizations on land protection projects whenever possible. As part of a concerted effort to increase public awareness of the importance of preserving open space, Town officials should share an updated build-out analysis with residents. An “Agriculture in the Classroom” program could be developed by the Agricultural Commission to educate younger residents on the benefits of preserving land for agricultural use, and related information could be provided to area media outlets to help convey that information to voters.

The public relations effort should include a list of Town owned properties bordering rivers, ponds and the ocean, detailing available points of public access. A list of Town Landings managed by the Landing Commission should also be distributed to the public, and various Town boards and agencies should be encouraged to host outdoor recreation events at Town properties and Town Landings to help build public awareness of these public resources. Finally, a well-publicized comprehensive review of zoning bylaws should include consideration of using tools such as cluster development and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to help preserve open space around new developments.

AGRICULTURE

To help protect Westport's rural landscape, Town officials should undertake a campaign to promote local participation in the Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR) Program by educating farmers on APR Program options. To support increased participation in the program, the Town could increase its share of the cost of APRs, and set aside funds to purchase APRs on farms ineligible for the state program. The Town should actively seek to partner with Department of Fisheries and Agriculture (DFA) and Westport Conservation Land Trust on new APR projects. Town officials should work with

Westport’s legislators to amend APR and Conservation Restriction laws to allow for implementation of best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater runoff mitigation, and to allow recreational activities on land protected by such restrictions.

Encouraging enrollment in the Chapter 61 programs should also be a long-term objective for the Town. The first step would be to educate landowners on the benefits of Ch. 61 program enrollment. The Town should consider exercising its Rights of First Refusal on Chapter 61 lands, applying conservation restrictions to the property, and re-selling the land for agricultural use. Chapter 61 roll-back taxes could be used to help finance the effort, and fund other open space projects.

While there has been a reduction in the number of dairy farms in Westport largely due to the changing economic conditions of the dairy industry, there has been a significant increase in the number of small specialty farms producing vegetables, herbs and flowers for local consumers and nearby restaurants. The Agricultural Commission should take an active role in promoting such farms and affiliated farm stands and “pick your own” farm operations, agricultural tours, and seasonal events involving Westport farms. The commission should encourage development of sustainable regional agriculture operations by participating in the promotion of a South Coast “Agricultural Green Belt” and a program matching “new” farmers with existing farmland



Fig. 8-5. Farming at the Santos Farm.

within the Town’s borders; draft a new “Living Near A Farm” brochure; assist active farmers in getting grants to improve operations; and meet periodically with the Board of Health and Conservation Commission to discuss farming issues. The Agricultural Commission shall also support “Agriculture in the Classroom” curriculum for Westport students.

RECREATION

To provide enhanced indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities for residents, the Town should undertake a comprehensive study of Town properties and school facilities with an eye towards improving the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities in Westport. The study of school facilities should include a possible upgrade of the high school fitness center/weight room and its potential for community use, and the potential for additional indoor recreational activities in school buildings. The availability of space on Town property and school grounds for new baseball, softball, and soccer fields should also be explored. In reviewing plans for future uses of municipal buildings, the Town should also consider refinishing or replacing the gym floor in the Town Annex, and improvements to the stage area in the gymnasium. The planning process should include consideration of funding options and municipal resources for the development and maintenance of new recreational opportunities. The lack of maintenance and trash disposal facilities at Town beaches and public recreation areas was cited as a priority need by residents taking part in the 2014 Master Plan workshop on Open Space and Recreation.

Apart from improvements to Town-owned land and facilities, the Town should also consider exploring the use of private fairgrounds and other facilities for additional seasonal events held in the community. The existing conditions of the Westport River and ponds within the Town’s borders should be reviewed to determine if there are suitable areas for recreational activi-

ties, including water sports.. The potential for cooperative activities at Horseneck Beach State Reservation was mentioned in workshop sessions as an option that should be explored by Town officials. The need for a public dog park in Westport was also cited as an opportunity worth exploring. Using business partnerships and sponsorships to help improve recreational opportunities and maintain public facilities was among the options mentioned at the public workshop.

The absence of sidewalks along Old County Road from the High School to the Public Library presents a serious safety risk, especially for young children wanting to walk between these facilities and the in-between elementary school. A study should be made as to the feasibility and cost of providing proper sidewalks or walkways along this section of this roadway. See Figure 8-6 for Library to High School Route.

An effort should be made to identify and develop heritage trails and bike trails in Westport, with possible connections to other South Coast trails included in the long-range planning process for new recreational opportunities for the community. This research should include the possibility of using ancient ways for passive recreational uses, and the potential extension of the bike path along the unused rail line from Fall River to Westport, with a link to the recently-expanded Bioreserve area in the north end of Town. The location of bike racks at all Town facilities, including public beaches, should be a priority, with grant funding available for such improvements. Increased opportunities for walking could be provided by planning paved sidewalks in high-traffic areas, and off-road exercise paths on public lands.



Fig. 8-6. Library to High School Route.

8.4 Action Plan

Open Space and Recreation

Goal 1. Improve land conservation efforts in Westport.

Objective 1.1. Develop Funding Mechanisms for Town Land Protection Program.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Dedicate funds from sale of Town land & tax titles to conservation fund for land acquisition.	OSTC	2
1.1.b. Apply for state matching grants for open space.	OSTC CC, CPC	3

Objective 1.2 Manage Town-owned land and resources to better protect open spaces.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Manage and increase public spaces in Central Village for community use.	OSTC, CPC	3
1.2.b. Update the Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan.	CC	1
1.2.c. Promote management & stewardship of Town land by private organizations (Westport Land Conservation Trust (WLCT), Westport Youth Athletic Association, (WYAA).	BOS, OSTC, CPC	2
1.2.d. Encourage active management and public use of town-owned beach properties (signage, rules, marked paths). Encourage environmental management of properties (dune grass).	BC	2
1.2.e. Coordinate beach protection activities with property owners and WLCT.	BC, WLCT	2
1.2.f. Identify encroachments on Town owned land, Specifically town landings and recreational parcels. Work with property owners to remove encroachments to improve public access.	LC	3

Objective 1.3 Support Private and Alternative Methods for Land Conservation.

Action	Resp	Time
1.3.a. Review tax title lands for open space protection.	CC, CPC, AC	2
1.3.b. Encourage land protection by private neighborhood associations.	PB, WCLT	3
1.3.c. Partner with public agencies and private organizations on land protection projects.	CPC, OSTC	2
1.3.d. Consider Open Space Zoning Tools (cluster, TDR, agricultural, zoning).	PB	3

Objective 1.4 Increase public awareness of importance of open space.

Action	Resp	Time
1.4.a. Share revised build-out analysis with public.	PB, CPC, MPUC, AC	2
1.4.b. Encourage "Ag in the Classroom" & other information sharing on benefits of agriculture.	AC	2
1.4.c. Provide information to press on open space matters.	OSC, MPUC, AC, CPC	2
1.4.d. Host educational outdoor recreation events.	RC	3
1.4.e. Publish list of town owned properties bordering rivers, ponds and the ocean. Publish list of "Town Landings" managed by the Landing Commission.	LC	3

Goal 2. Protect Westport's Rural Landscape.

Objective 2.1 Support and Promote Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR) Program.

Action	Resp	Time
2.1.a. Educate farmers on APR Program options.	OSTC, WCLT	2
2.1.b. Increase Town cost share for APR's & purchase APR's on farms ineligible for State program.	OSTC, CPC/ CC	2
2.1.c. Partner with Department of Fisheries and Agriculture (DFA) and WCLT on APR projects.	CPC, OSTC	2
2.1.d. Work with legislators to amend APR and CR enabling legislation to allow for implementation of stormwater runoff mitigation best management practices (BMPs) and recreational activities.	OSTC, WLCT	2

Objective 2.2 Encourage enrollment in Chapters 61A & 61B.

Action	Resp	Time
2.2.a. Exercise Rights of First Refusal (ROFR) on Chapter lands, then restrict and re-sell for agricultural use.	OSTC, CPC, BOS	2
2.2.b. Dedicate Chapter 61 roll-back taxes to open space projects.	BOS, FIN- COM	3
2.2.c. Educate landowners on benefits of Ch. 61 program enrollment.	AC, OSTC	3

Action	Resp	Time
2.2.d. Consider agricultural zoning tools (agricultural incentive zoning, cluster zoning, TDR).	PB, AC	3
2.2.e. Participate in Regional Planning.	PB, AC	3
2.2.f. Promote farm stands, "pick your own" farms, & agricultural tours & events.	AC, BOH, PB	3

Objective 2.3 Encourage sustainable regional agriculture.

Action	Resp	Time
2.3.a. Match new farmers w/ existing farmland.	AC	2
2.3.b. Promote "South Coast Agricultural Green Belt".	AC	2
2.3.c. Meet periodically with CC & BOH to discuss farming issues.	AC, CC, BOH	2
2.3.d. Draft "Living Near a Farm" Brochure.	AC	3
2.3.e. Assist farmers in getting grants.	AC	3

Goal 3. Provide & enhance indoor & outdoor recreational opportunities.

Objective: 3.1 Improve Town-wide recreational facilities.

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a. Study school facilities & Town properties for recreational needs and potential.	RC	3
3.1.b. Explore use of public and private facilities for additional seasonal events.	RC	3
3.1.c. Upgrade the High School fitness center/weight room and study potential for community use.	SC	3
3.1.d. Explore potential for additional indoor recreational facilities (Basketball, Volleyball).	SC, RC	3
3.1.e. Refinish Town Annex gym floor and make improvements to stage area.	RC	2
3.1.f. Explore creation of Public Golf Course.	RC	3
3.1.g. Construct new baseball, softball and soccer fields.	RC, WYAA, WUYS	3
3.1.h. Secure funding sources and resources for maintenance of facilities and land.	RC, WYAA	3
3.1.i. Review the conditions of Westport River and Ponds to see if areas can be used for recreational activities including water sports.	HM, RC, BC	2
3.1.j. Identify and develop heritage trails within Westport, with connections to other SouthCoast trails.	LC, WLCT	1

Objective: 3.2 Provide walking & biking opportunities.

Action	Resp	Time
3.2.a. Place bike racks at Town facilities and beaches.	RC	2
3.2.b. Encourage recreational paths on Town land and conservation land.	RC	2
3.2.c. Explore use of ancient ways for passive recreational uses.	RC, PB	2
3.2.d. Extend the bike path along the rail line from Fall River into Westport with linkages to the Bioreserve.	RC	3
3.2.e. Increase opportunities for walking by providing paved sidewalks or exercise paths.	HW, PB	2

Objective: 3.3 Enhance access to facilities.

Action	Resp	Time
3.3.a. Improve Town parking lots for handicapped access.	COD	3
3.3.b. Enhance handicapped access to all Town facilities.	COD	3
3.3.c. Further pursue easier access to East Beach and Cherry & Webb Beach.	COD	2
3.3.d. Study feasibility of seasonal boardwalk at Town beaches.	COD	3

Objective: 3.4 Improve public access to Beach Avenue and abutting Town and Federal owned parcels.

Action	Resp	Time
3.4.a. Work with area residents and abutters on a Memorandum of Understanding that will provide access to points of interest in an environmentally sensitive manner.	COD	3
3.4.b. Support the design and construction of an elevated walkway to provide access to the beach over Town owned land from Beach Avenue.	COD	3
3.4.c. Provide public access by roadway, elevated boardwalk or walking path to the Knubble.	COD	2
3.4.d. Include strategically located handicap accessible parking spaces and walkways in the proposed designs.	COD	3

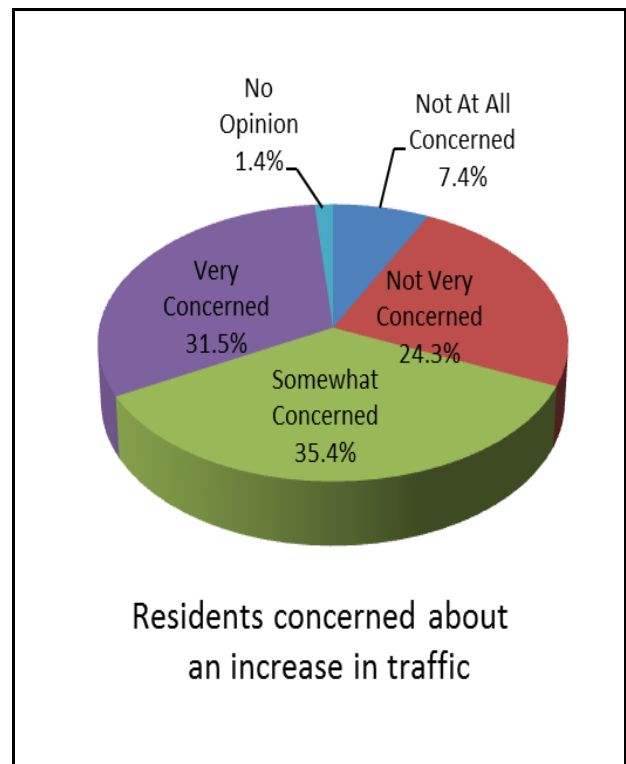
CHAPTER 9

Traffic and Circulation

9.1 Introduction

In the 2004 Master Plan, the primary goal was to study the adequacy of the existing vehicular and non-vehicular roadway/circulation network in town, with the major goal of correcting existing deficiencies at several heavily-traveled roadways and key intersections. Sub-goals included encouraging a MassDOT study of possible improvements to the Route 6 corridor; investigating options for the permanent protection of East Beach Road; considering safety and streetscape improvements on Main Road, particularly in the Central Village area; and planning a pedestrian safety project along Old County Road, from Westport Elementary School to Route 88.

A secondary goal of the last Master Plan’s Traffic and Circulation chapter was to develop a framework for a future town-wide circulation system that: 1) forms a structure for the town’s land use plan; 2) is functional, economical, and user-friendly; 3) meets the requirements of public safety officials; and 4) integrates the needs of drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and other constituencies, including recreational users seeking multi-use trails.



A 2013 survey of town residents indicated that 67 percent of respondents were concerned about issues related to increased traffic in Westport (35.5 percent somewhat concerned, 31.5 percent very concerned).

9.2 Recent Developments

Major Roadways

ROUTE 6 CORRIDOR

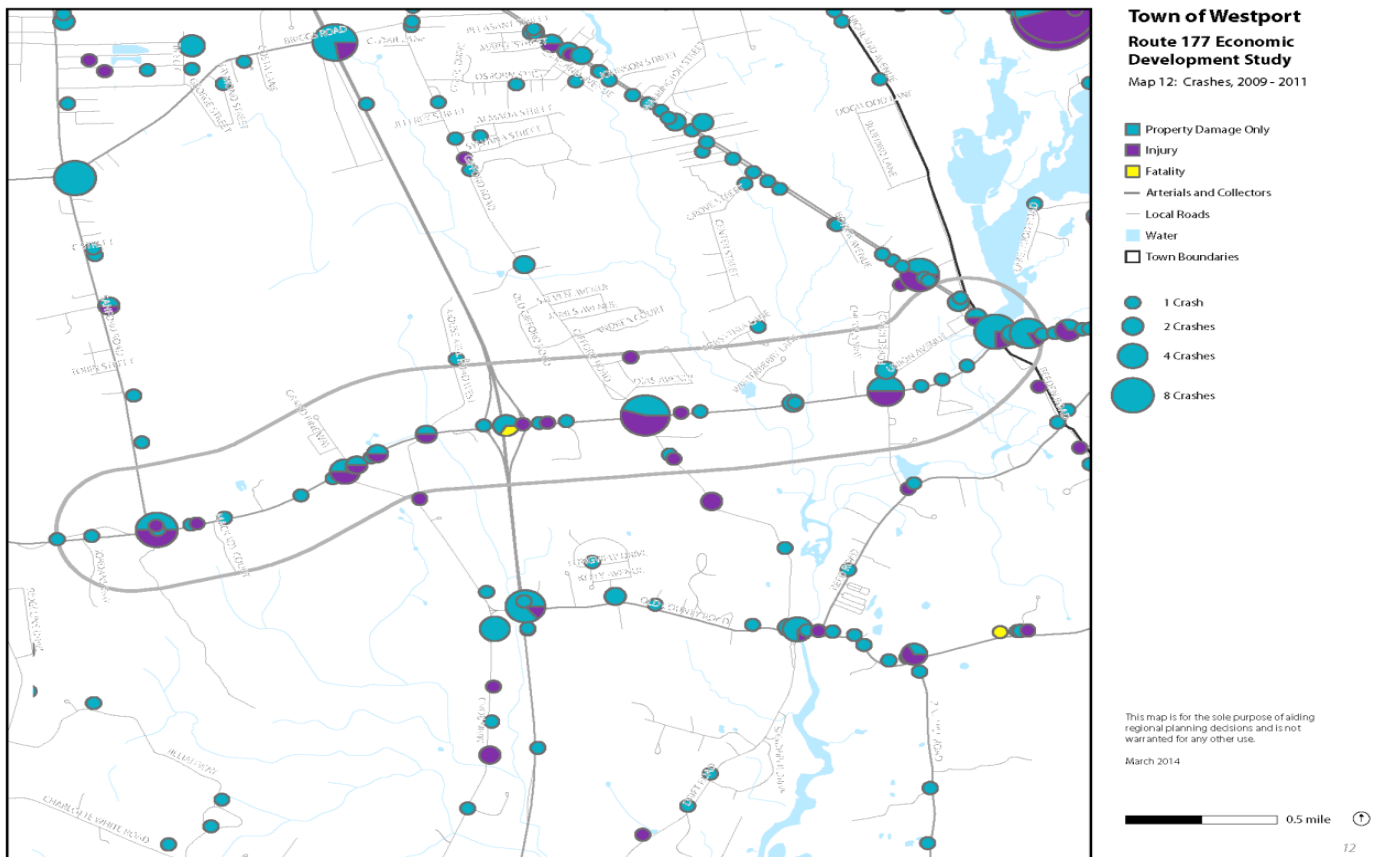
The objective of requesting a MassDOT study of the Route 6 corridor before any future improvements are made by the state remains a priority, but the focus has been shifted to addressing safety issues, including working with MassDOT and SRPEDD on accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle uses in plans for future design and construction contracts. As part of this effort, the outdated signals at Davis Road and Route 6, and the signal for the pedestrian crosswalk across Route 6 at Greenwood Terrace need to be upgraded.

Town officials have worked with Dartmouth and MassDOT officials to ensure that Westport’s interests were given consideration in the redesign of the Route 6 and Route 177 inter-

section and the Beeden Road entrance to the housing development at Lincoln Park Place. The town’s request for a safety analysis of existing Route 6 median openings and consideration of left turn lanes and additional median openings in the future should be renewed. Due to an increase in turning movements and traffic accidents at the intersection of Route 6 and Forge Road, a request should be made to MassDOT to have that intersection redesigned for needed safety improvements. Any future planning for Route 6 should also be coordinated with the possible expansion of public water and wastewater services along that corridor.

ROUTE 177 INTERSECTIONS

Route 177 continues to see an increase in traffic flows due to recent development in Westport, Dartmouth, and Tiverton, resulting in an increase in the number of traffic accidents at various intersections with this roadway. Town officials need to work with SRPEDD, MassDOT, and the Joint Transportation Plan-



EAST BEACH ROAD

The objective to mitigate the repeated destruction of East Beach Road by storm events by seeking permanent improvements to the roadway remains unfulfilled. The roadway was damaged by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012, and was reconstructed in the summer of 2014; the washed-out road bed was relocated approximately 40 feet north of the previous location to provide additional protection from storm surges and flooding.

A long-term solution to the storm surge problem, and a plan for addressing erosion along the shoreline still needs to be developed. The road is eligible for state and federal funding for permanent improvements, and those funding sources would need to be investigated as part of the planning for a long-term solution.



ning Group to plan for signal upgrades and other safety improvements to the Route 177 intersections at Tickle Road, Sanford Road, and Gifford Road. Design should also accommodate the increased traffic related to prospective development of Noquochoke Village and Lincoln Park in Dartmouth.

MAIN ROAD

The 2004 objective to address the safety concerns related to turning movements at the Main Road and Adamsville Road intersection by redesigning the island geometry remains unresolved. As traffic volume increases, recommendations should be developed to facilitate safe left turns onto Adamsville Road from Main Road, and to improve restricted sight lines for left turns onto Main Road from Adamsville Road.

The recent proposal to reconstruct Main Road in the Central Village area and include sidewalks and crosswalks was abandoned after business owners expressed concerns about how

the project might impact their businesses. The proposed reconstruction plans should be revisited after engagement with businesses and residents to review the concerns regarding sidewalks and driveway improvements, with incentives considered to encourage business owners to develop shared driveways or frontage roads. The Planning Board, when considering plans for property development in Central Village should work with developers to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle use. This should be a priority as the Central Village is the primary local retail center in Westport, as well as the location of all of the town's municipal offices. It is also a primary location for new residential development

OLD COUNTY ROAD

Public input has indicated that pedestrian safety issues for that portion of the road between Westport High School and Westport Middle School should be addressed. Planning should be undertaken for the installation of a sidewalk on the north side of Old County Road



from Route 88 to the Westport Middle School, Westport Elementary School, and Westport Free Public Library, connecting the schools and library to the sidewalk at the Head of Westport. The planning and design work should include the installation of a crosswalk at the intersection of Route 88 and Old County Road to connect the new sidewalk to the existing sidewalk on the south side of Old County Road.

Modifications to the intersection of Main Road and Old County Road to improve traffic circulation around Westport High School should also be considered as part of the planning process; increasing parking spaces, period lighting and the utilization of traffic calming techniques to improve public safety at the Head of Westport should also be considered as part of the long-term planning for upgrades to this portion of the heavily traveled roadway.

9.3 Goals and Objectives

USE OF CHAPTER 90 FUNDS

A general objective for the next five years is to budget a portion of the Chapter 90 funds allocated to Westport each year (approximately \$675,000 per year) to pay for design work for priority road projects so those projects can be included in the regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and undertaken with state and federal funds. Funding from the Chapter 90 program can be used for a variety of transportation

projects, including road paving and reconstruction, drainage improvements, and road striping. On larger road reconstruction projects, using Chapter 90 funds for planning and design needs would be a cost effective means of getting these projects included on the TIP.

Action items related to this objective would include development of a five-year plan to address road striping needs throughout the town. More people are walking and the striping provides a measure of safety for them. In addition to recommendations for major roadways listed above, another specific action item would be budgeting sufficient Chapter 90 funds to design work for a needed increase in pavement width and drainage improvements for Charlotte White Road so this roadway could be added to the regional TIP.

TOWN-WIDE OBJECTIVES

Westport needs to develop a framework for a functional and economical town-wide circulation system as part of its planning for future growth. This framework would form a structure for the land use plan; meet the requirements of public safety officials; and integrate the needs of drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians and recreational users. A study of trail development/improvement opportunities by a town-appointed committee working in cooperation with government officials, volunteer groups and non-profit organizations should be undertaken to support the public demand for multi-use trails expressed during public meetings on potential revisions to the Master Plan. Every effort should be made to coordinate development of a local trail system with regional and state trails and open space plans.

To encourage alternative modes of transportation such as walking and cycling, the town should adopt and apply the existing standardized guidelines for bike lanes, crosswalks and handicapped access to public facilities. This plan would include limiting curb cuts, promoting use of shared commercial driveways and frontage roads along business-zoned roads, and encourag-

Table 9-3. State Funding for Road Improvements

Year	Funding Source	
	Chapter 90	Pot Hole Recovery
FY 2010	\$468,808	
FY 2011	\$484,672	
FY 2012	\$630,152	
FY 2013	\$676,376	
FY 2014	\$677,443	
FY 2015	\$1,015,534	\$101,553
FY 2016	\$678,915	\$101,553

ing the retrofitting of individual driveways to the shared access circulation system. The extension of the pedestrian/bike path from Fall River into Westport, and connecting with the Dartmouth pedestrian/bike path should be encouraged as part of a town-wide circulation system. An effort should be made to identify, improve, and maintain public access to waterways over public ways



and at town landings.

Town officials should coordinate streetscape design improvements with Central Village zoning regulations to encourage traffic calming measures that would support pedestrian-friendly villages. Zoning changes could encourage clustering development in areas suitable for higher densities so that public transportation can be efficiently provided from areas of greater population density in town to target destinations such as village centers, healthcare facilities, employment centers, commuter rail lines and other public transportation nodes. The town should coordinate these efforts with the regional planning agency and state officials to address related transportation needs such as commuter parking lots and shuttle van locations that would facilitate efficient access to commuter rail.

New state and federal regulations require the town to identify and maintain all components of the stormwater management system, an inte-

gral part of any public transportation system. As part of an overall effort to identify, acquire and manage municipal assets, the town should develop an asset management system for street layouts, easements, drainage facilities and related stormwater management structures. Development of this system would require identifying all public and private drainage structures; obtaining right of entry or easements permitting the town to maintain its stormwater management system, and creating layouts for any public roads that do not have a defined right-of-way. Part of the effort should include working to eliminate any roadways with duplicate names or similar names. Development of an asset management system for street layouts, drainage easements, drainage facilities and related structures will allow the town to meet state and federal requirements, and provide the Highway Department with some of the resources needed to effectively manage and maintain its public circulation system.

There has been substantial residential development throughout the town over the last 20 years. The planning board, highway department, conservation commission and the water resource committee need to evaluate the effectiveness of current stormwater and street construction requirements. Based on this review, changes to the Subdivision Rules and Regulations should be made to ensure development has minimal impact to the environment and stormwater systems and roadways are designed to address public safety and long term maintenance issues.

Based on the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Road Inventory Year-End Report 2010, there are 152.21 total centerline miles in the town of Westport. This road network is comprised of 96.59 miles classified as Local Roads, 36.58 miles of Collectors, 15.38 miles of Arterials, and 3.66 miles of Interstate.

Route 88, is a north-south state highway and at just over 11 miles, it is the longest Massa-



Table 9.4.1. SRPEDD ADT Volumes (Vehicles per Day)

Road	Location	2013 (VPD)
Interstate I-195	East of Route 24 NB	68700
	Dartmouth Line	64200
Route 88	South of Old County	7900
	North of Route 6	20100
Am. Legion Highway (Route 177)	East of Route 88	6700
Sanford Road	South of Route 6	5600
Old County Road	At Dartmouth Line	5500
	West of Beeden Rd	5800
	East of Route 88	5100
	West of Route 88	3800
Adamsville Road	West of Main Road	3700
Main Road	North of Charlotte White	3200
Hix Bridge Road	Dartmouth Line	1700
Briggs Road	West of Route 88	3200
Reed Road	At Dartmouth Line	1700
Charlotte White Road	East of Main Road	4100
Blossom Road	North of Old Bedford	1350
Old Pine Hill Road	North of Hix Bridge	550

achusetts state route to be situated in only one town.

TRAFFIC VOLUME

Traffic data for roads typically address “Average Daily Traffic “ (ADT), which is the traffic for an average 24-hour period. Because

SRPEDD does not perform traffic counts annually on all the roads, SRPEDD provides data from different years. (See Table 9.4.1 SRPEDD ADT Volumes). In order to estimate the roadway volumes for a particular year, the volumes are projected by applying a growth factor. SRPEDD provided a growth factor of .5 %, which corre-

Table 9.4.2 SRPEDD: Westport Accident Summary

Location	3-Year Total 1996-1998	2012	2013	2014	3-Year Total
Route 6	229	120	114	51	285
Route 177	106	36	42	32	110
Route 88	94	10	15	5	30
Main Rd	90	18	28	23	51
Sanford Rd	55	13	22	17	52
Old County Rd	37	10	9	11	30
Old Bedford Rd	30	0	4	0	4
Gifford Rd	30	3	1	0	4

sponded to growth between 2008 and 2013. Table 9.4.1 shows the estimated traffic volumes for the year 2014.

ROADWAY ACCIDENTS

The following accident data for roads, provided by SRPEDD, covers the years 1996-1998, and the most recent 3-year span for which data is available, 2012-2014.

The accident data provided gives an adequate overview of the general accident rates for certain roads within Town. Unfortunately, the accident data does not specify the exact location or conditions of the accidents; therefore specific conclusions cannot be drawn regarding improving safety along the roads.

INTERSECTION ACCIDENTS

The following SRPEDD Intersection Accident Data also covers the years 1996 – 1998, and the most recent 3-year span for which data was available, 2006-2008. The chart below summarizes accidents by typical categories according to severity:

P = Property Damage Only

I = Injury Resulting

F = Fatality (No fatalities occurred in the study period.)

The intersection with the highest accident rate in Westport is the intersection of Route 6 and Sanford Road, with 33 crashes in 3 years. The intersection has been identified as having safety issues since 2006. In 2009 a project was completed that included signal and intersection improvements including separate left turn lanes to enhance traffic operations and safety for pedestrians and vehicles at the intersection. Although the intersection still rises to the top of high crash locations in Westport, the number of crashes has dropped by more than 25%.

The next four intersections have significantly fewer crashes than the intersection of Route 6 at Sanford Road. Most crashes are associated with turning vehicle conflicts. At un-signalized intersections limited sight distance and gaps in main stream traffic also pose a safety issue forcing exiting motorists to misjudge when it is safe to proceed.

Table 9.4.3 SRPEDD: Westport 2006-2008 Intersection Accident Summary

Location	3-Year Total 1996-1998	2006		2007		2008		3-Year Total 2006-2008
		P	I	P	I	P	I	
Route 6 / Sanford Rd	47	8	4	8	2	8	3	33
Route 177 / Route 88	17	6	1	1	0	3	1	12
Route 177 / Gifford Rd	13	2	1	5	2	1	0	11
Route 6 / Route 88	12	6	1	2	0	0	1	10
Route 88 / Hix Bridge Rd	11	2	1	2	0	3	2	10



9.4 Action Plan

Traffic and Circulation

Goal 1. Improve the existing vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle roadway/circulation network by reconfiguring key intersections and roadways.

Objective 1.1 Mitigate deficiencies of the Rte 6 corridor - request a State study of this corridor before future design improvements.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Request a safety analysis of median openings, including need for left turn lanes and/or additional openings & alternative designs.	BOS, HW	1
1.1.b. Continue to work with Dartmouth and MassDOT to ensure the intersection of Route 6 and Route 177 is constructed in a manner that is beneficial to the Town of Westport.	BOS, HW	2
1.1.c. Work with MassDOT and SRPEDD to encourage Pedestrian and Bicycle accommodations in future design and construction contracts.	BOS, HW	2
1.1.d. Work with MassDOT and SRPEDD to upgrade the signalized intersection at Davis Road and the signals at Greenwood Terrace.	BOS, HW	2
1.1.e. Request that the intersection of Forge Road and Route 6 be redesigned to address the increase in traffic accidents.	BOS, HW	2

Objective: 1.2 Mitigate deficiencies of Main Rd./Adamsville Road Intersection.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Address safety concerns regarding turning movements, particularly left turns onto Adamsville Road from Main Road. Consider new island geometry.	BOS, HW	3
1.2.b. Address safety concerns regarding restricted sight lines for left turns onto Main Road from Adamsville Road. Consider new island geometry.	BOS, HW	3

Objective: 1.3 Mitigate destruction of East Beach Road during storm events by seeking permanent improvements.

Action	Resp	Time
1.3.a. Investigate sources of funding for permanently improving this road, which is classified as a State road, thus eligible for both State & Federal funding.	BOS, HW	3
1.3.b. Coordinate with the State to study options to alleviate existing flooding problem, including raising roadway and providing equalization culverts to allow flow between ocean and River or excavating the Let and constructing the roadway on a filled causeway with a bridge over the opening.	BOS, HW	3

Objective 1.4 Support using, Federal, State and Town funding as well as Chapter 90 funding to improve the condition of Town roads.

Action	Resp	Time
1.4.a. Develop a five year plan to address striping needs throughout the town.	BOS, PB, HW	3
1.4.b. Leverage a portion of the Chapter 90 funds each year to pay for design work so that projects can be included in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and paid for with State and Federal Funds.	BOS, HW	1
1.4.c. Consider adding Charlotte White Road to the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan in order to make improvements to pavement width and drainage.	BOS, HW	2
1.4.d. Work with MassDOT and Department of Conservation and Recreation to make improvements to John Reed Road, including pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.	BOS, HW	1

Objective 1.5 Mitigate safety deficiencies of Route 177 intersections.

Action	Resp	Time
1.5.a. Work with the Joint Transportation Planning Group to include upgrades to the intersections of Tickle Road, Sanford Road and Gifford Road on Route 177.	BOS, PB, HW	3

Objective 1.6 Improve the streetscape and safety of Old County Rd and Main Rd, particularly in the Central Village, which is the civic and primary local retail center of Westport.

Action	Resp	Time
1.6.a. Consider moving forward with the Central Village Street improvement plan with modifications to address concerns of local businesses regarding sidewalks.	BOS, PB, HW	3
1.6.b. Consider requiring and/or providing incentives to encourage shared drive-ways or frontage roads, particularly by businesses, in the Central Village section of Main Road.	PB	3
1.6.c. Install a sidewalk on the north side of Old County Rd. from Rte. 88 to the Middle School, connecting the School and library with the existing sidewalk at the Head of Westport.	BOS, HW	3
1.6.d. Install a crosswalk at the intersection of Route 88 and Old County Road to connect the proposed north sidewalk to the existing sidewalk on the south side.	BOS, HW	3
1.6.e. Consider modifications to the intersection of Main Road and Old County Road to improve circulation around the High School.	BOS, HW	2
1.6.f. Provide parking and utilize traffic calming techniques to improve public safety at the Head of Westport.	PD, HW, BOS	2

Objective 1.7 Encourage alternative modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling.

Action	Resp	Time
1.7.a. Adopt and apply standardized guidelines for bikes, crosswalks and handi-cap access.	BOS, PB, HW	3
1.7.b. Extend the pedestrian/bike path from Fall River into Westport along the existing rail line.	BOS, PB	3
1.7.c. Identify and maintain public access to waterways over public ways and Town Landings.	LC, HW	1

Goal 2. Recommend a framework for a future Town-wide circulation system that:

- forms a structure for the land use plan;
- is functional, economical and pleasant to use;
- meets the requirements of Public Safety officials; and
- integrates the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and others, including commuters and recreational users.

Objective 2.1 Support the public demand for "multi-use" trails expressed during public meetings on the Master Plan.

Action	Resp	Time
2.1.a. Support a study of trail development/improvement opportunities by a Town-appointed committee or through Town government cooperation with volunteer or non-profit group(s).	RC, CC, PB	3
2.1.b. Coordinate local trail system with regional and State trails and open space plans.	RC, PB	2

Objective 2.2 Plan for circulation as part of planning for future growth.

Action	Resp	Time
2.2.a. Limit curb cuts, encourage shared commercial driveways and frontage roads along business-zoned roads. Encourage retro-fitting individual driveways to shared access system.	BOS, PB	4
2.2.b. Coordinate streetscape design improvement with Village Center zoning to	PB	4
2.2.c. Coordinate and encourage clustering of development in areas suitable for higher densities so that public transportation can be efficiently and conveniently provided from areas of greater population density within the Town to target destinations, such as village centers, healthcare facilities, employment centers, and commuter rail or other public transportation nodes.	PB	3
2.2.d. Coordinate with State and Regional Planning Agency to address transportation needs such as commuter parking and vans to facilitate efficient access to commuter rail.	BOS, PB	4
2.2.e. Promote and expand public transportation to meet the needs of local veterans and seniors.	COA, VS, BOS	1

Objective 2.3 Identify, acquire and manage Town assets.

Action	Resp	Time
2.3.a. Develop an asset management system for street layouts, easements, drainage facilities and structures.	BOH, HW, PB	4
2.2.b. Locate and identify all private and public drainage structures.	BOH, HW	3
2.2.c. Obtain right of entry or easements permitting the Town to maintain stormwater systems.	BOS, HW	3
2.2.d. Create layouts for public streets that do not have a defined right-of-way.	HW, PB	4
2.2.e. Work to eliminate duplicate and similar street names.	FD, PD, PB	3

CHAPTER 10

Water, Wastewater & Stormwater

10.1 Introduction

The previous Master Plan laid out an agenda for undertaking the design and implementation of a water and wastewater system in the north end of the Town, primarily along Route 6, that would have been connected with water and sewer lines from Fall River. This undertaking was presented to the Westport Town Meeting in May of 2004, and was not approved by the required two-thirds majority. In the succeeding decade, little has been done to address these urgent water and wastewater problems. There were other recommendations for actions to address the then-existing water, wastewater and stormwater problems in the Town in the previous plan. Most of those recommendations were not taken up and the problems have become more severe.

10.2 Recent Developments

There have been several new developments during this period that have, on the one hand, clarified the severity and the location of the water and wastewater problems in this same area, and, on the other hand, provided some new instruments or mechanisms for addressing these problems.

Within the framework of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP), the School of Marine Sciences and Technology (SMAST) at the



Fig. 10-1 Bread & Cheese Brook

University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, completed a study of the Westport River in 2012. The report from SMAST identified the Upper East Branch of the Westport River as the part of the river having the highest levels of nitrogen that, if not reduced, could eventually lead to eutrophication, or the death of the river as a source of fish and shellfish. While the report indicated that one sub-watershed was the principle source of excess nitrogen and that it was apparently due mainly to agricultural operations and failed septic systems, subsequent research by SMAST has narrowed both the location and the dominant source of the problem, namely septic systems in the vicinity of the intersection of Bread and Cheese Brook and State highway 6. These may be either failed sys-

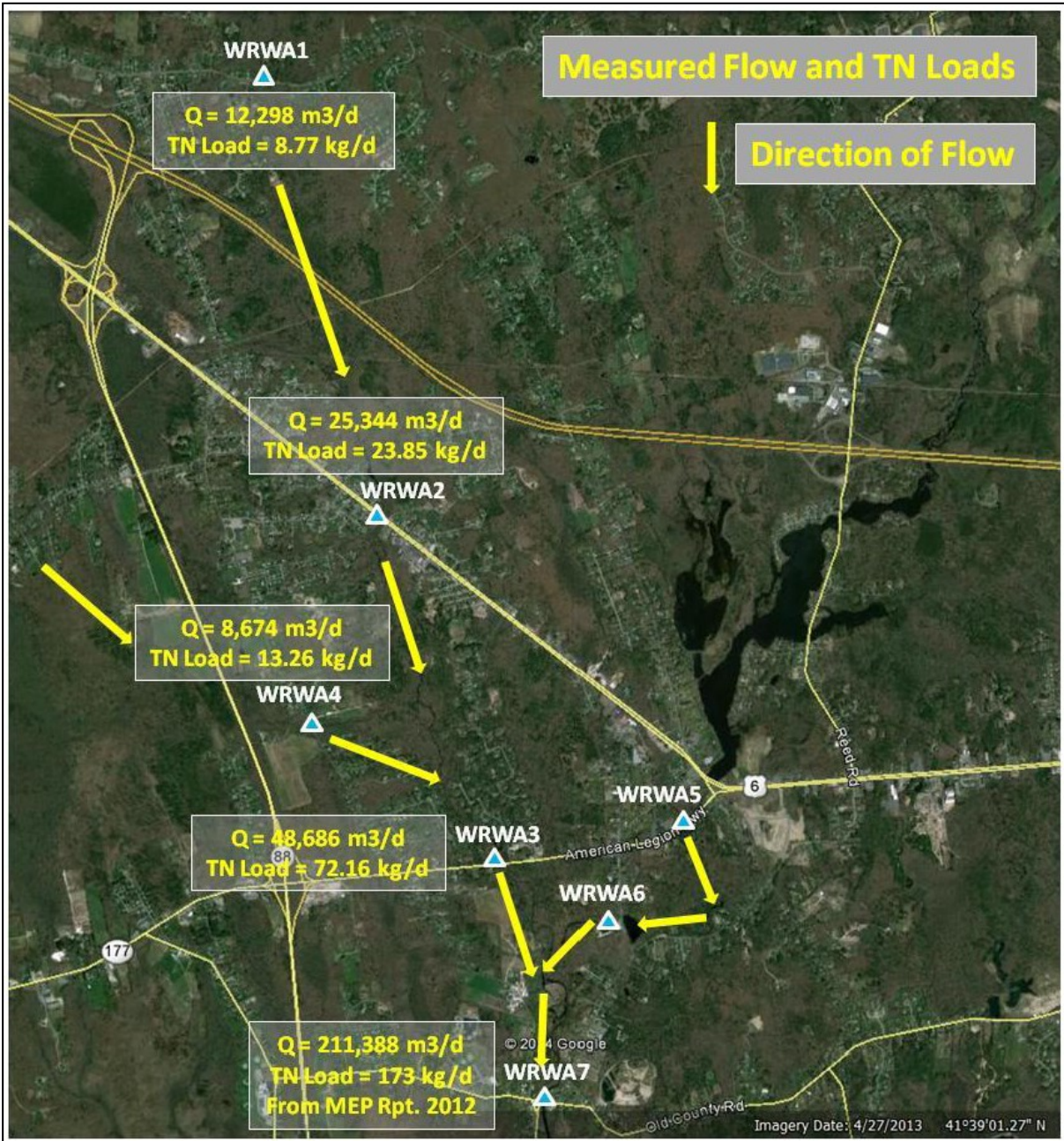


Fig. 10-2 Bread & Cheese Brook sub-watershed (3) stream gauge results.

Source: The School of Marine Science and Technology, Technical Memorandum, Stream, Flow and Water Quality Monitoring in Bread and Cheese Brook (2012-2014)

tems or systems that do comply with Title V requirements, but still have minimal effect in reducing nitrogen. This pinpointing of the problem area and source can help to focus efforts at finding solutions to the nitrogen problem.

Finally, after a very long wait, the State Department of Environmental Protection has is-

sued a draft report entitled “Westport River Estuarine System Total Maximum Daily Loads for Total Nitrogen.” This report confirms excess nitrogen levels in the Westport River that were earlier estimated in the SMAST report and specifies the target TMDLs for two sentinel stations in the East and West Branches of the River. The new DEP report does not take account of the

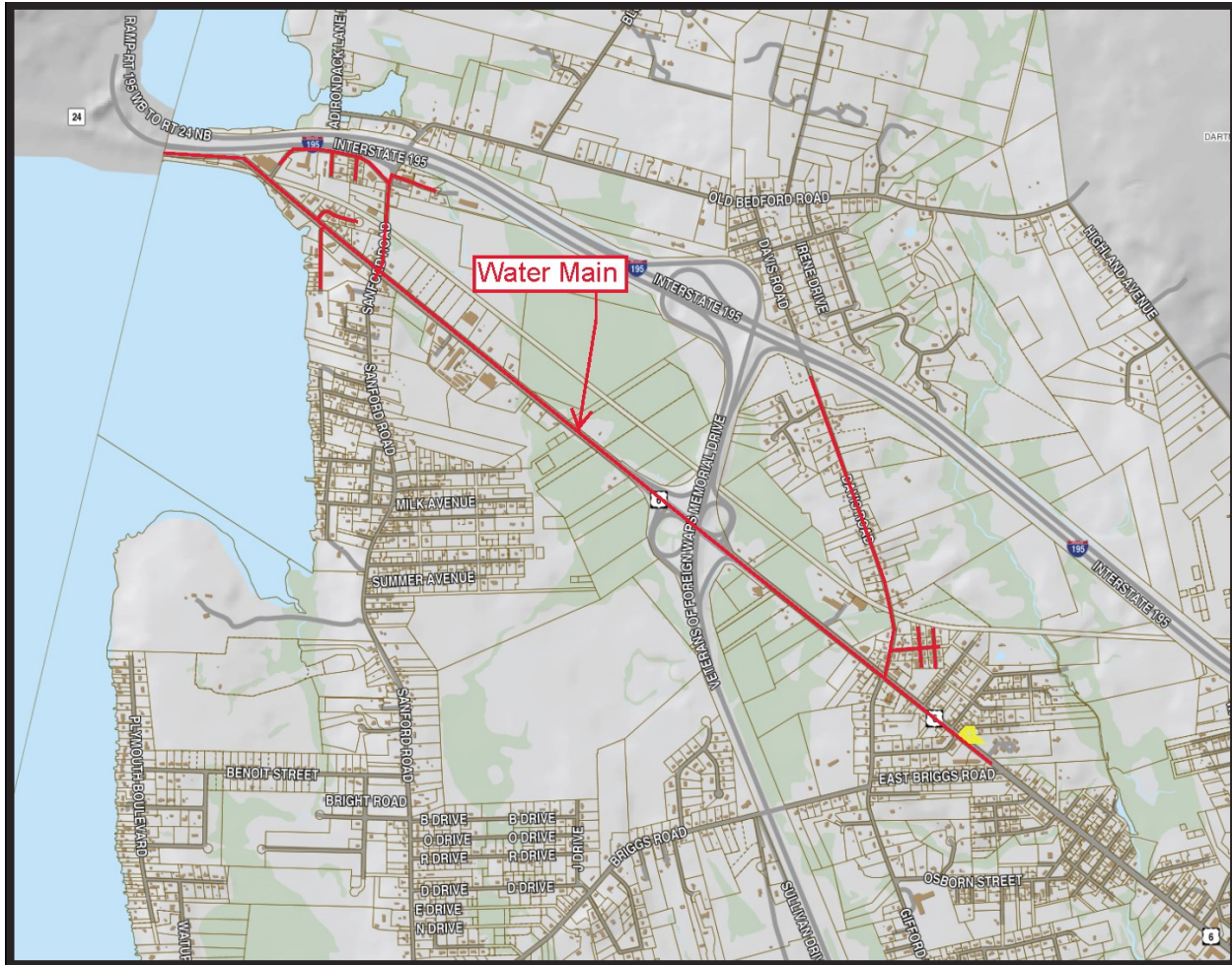


Fig. 10-3 Approximately 4.8 miles of water main installed in Westport, serving 130 Residential Properties and 30 Commercial Properties.

more recent investigations undertaken by the Town that provided more precise information on sources and locus of the nitrogen entering Bread & Cheese Brook. But it does require that the Town undertake a comprehensive water management plan and take steps to implement such a plan, for which the State will provide guidance and possible financial support. It also suggests that the State may apply sanctions if the Town does not initiate remedial measures to move toward the specified nitrogen targets.

The one area along Route 6 that has been receiving potable water from Fall River has been experiencing problems with water quality and the Town has been faced with the possibility of having to make major expenditures to satisfy State standards for water quality for this very limited

facility. This raises the question as to whether this problem could, or should, be addressed in a broader expansion of both water supply and wastewater treatment linked to Fall River along Route 6.

The prevalence of old and failed onsite septic systems in several densely settled parts of the town present continuing health problems through pollution of individual wells. They also have an adverse impact on property values and the possibilities of sale of properties because of the difficulties of installing Title V compliant septic systems on the very small lots. Property owners and residents in these areas are faced with both the increased expenditure to purchase bottled water and the loss of value of their properties.

The Town did decide in 2012 to join the DEP-sponsored Community Septic Management Program that provided low interest rate financing for repairs of failed septic systems. Initially the Water Pollution Abatement Trust provided financing at 0% interest rate to the Town which then on-lent the funds to borrowers at 2% for up to 25 years. This program proved very popular and the initial funding of \$250,000 was dispersed quickly. The State then raised their rate from 0% to 2% and the Town, after some further deliberation, raised the on-lending rate to homeowners to 4% and requested a second tranche of \$250,000 from the State. There has been a significant drop-off in the popularity of this program since the increase in the interest rate.

With respect to new opportunities, the State has recently approved “An Act improving water and wastewater infrastructure.” This act provides for DEP to give grants for development of local water and wastewater management plans, and to administer a matching grant program for communities seeking to join a regional water and wastewater management system (such as with Fall River and/or Dartmouth). It further authorizes low interest financial assistance to local governmental units for water infrastructure projects; and provides for cities and towns, by local option, the ability to levy a water infrastructure surcharge on property taxes up to 3% as a source of financing to support maintenance, improvements and investments for municipal drinking, waste and storm water infrastructure assets. The act also gives priority for grants and loans to municipalities that join with neighboring communities in preparing plans and implementing solutions for their shared water resource problems. Finally, it requires comprehensive water resource planning to qualify for many of the potential benefits, and also requires a municipal entity, such as a water/wastewater commission, board or company to collect and administer the funds generated by the property tax surcharge.

10.3 Goals & Objectives

The overriding goal for the Town of Westport with respect to this area of planning is to provide safe and affordable drinking water supplies, wastewater disposal and stormwater improvements to meet the present and future demands of the community. There are currently many problem areas that need to be addressed, but there are also new opportunities and instruments available to tackle the problems.

The Town needs to consider and then decide whether it wishes to participate in the various programs authorized by the new State legislation and, if so, whether to enact a surcharge on the property tax for these purposes, what level of surcharge, what form of municipal entity to be established to implement these programs, and whether to join with one or more neighboring communities in connection with the planning for and implementation of remedial projects.

One of the main objections to the water/wastewater planning that was rejected by Town Meeting in 2004 was the understanding that individual property owners would have to pay the full cost of any new systems as the Town had no alternative sources for funding some portion of the project. The new State program for improving water and wastewater infrastructure would provide mechanisms by which the Town could both share in the cost of the needed improvements and provide the management for any new systems if it chose to do so.

Undertaking comprehensive water, wastewater and stormwater planning was also something that the Town, in the past, chose not to do because it would have had to support the full cost of such planning. The new State legislation again provides both partial funding for such planning, as well as special incentives for regional, or multi-municipality planning, and it requires the completion of such plans for the Town to qualify for other forms of financial support from the

In order to accommodate future development, municipal water and sewer resources will be needed.		
Should the town...		
Answer Options	Yes	No
Install water and sewer lines in advance to meet the expected needs of future development?	42.0%	58.0%
Encourage use of shared wastewater systems that reduce cost per installation and avoid large scale sewer systems?	67.8%	32.3%
Require developers to install shared water and wastewater systems if and when a development project is undertaken?	74.0%	26.0%
Not impose any requirements for shared or community water or wastewater systems?	29.5%	70.6%
Not undertake to install any water or wastewater systems at all?	26.4%	73.8%
Do you not know or do you have no opinion?	32.0%	84.0%

Fig. 10-4 Results from the Master Plan survey showing various options for accommodating future development.

State in the future. The potential benefits of undertaking such planning in the near future now appear to outweigh significantly the costs.

The Town of Westport has long borders with the neighboring towns of Dartmouth and Fall River. There is already a link with Fall River for water supply and the city has unused wastewater treatment capacity as well as a commitment to provide such services to Westport. Dartmouth already provides municipal sewer services to the areas around Lake Noquochoke that are important factors in minimizing the amount of nitrogen load entering into the upper reaches of the East Branch of the Westport River. Both Dartmouth and Westport are planning or already implementing new commercial and residential development projects in the area around the intersection of Routes 6 and 177. These factors reinforce the importance of coordinating the planning of water/wastewater/stormwater facilities in the three municipalities in addition to responding to the State incentives for coordinated regional planning.

The assumption of this Master Plan update for the water/wastewater/stormwater sectors is that such planning will be undertaken, that it will include, as appropriate, some aspects of planning with neighboring communities, and that the resulting plan will provide a much more solid



Fig. 10-5 Angeline Brook

and informed basis for defining specific action programs and policies that should be considered for implementation in the coming decade.

In the meantime, while awaiting completion of a comprehensive plan and its associated policy, management and project recommendations, the Town should continue its existing programs for maintenance of the limited public water supply system, enforcement of existing regulations on new and existing wastewater systems and maintenance of the limited stormwater facili-

10.4 Action Plan

Water, Wastewater and Stormwater

Goal 1. Provide safe and affordable drinking water supply, wastewater disposal and stormwater improvements to meet existing and future demands of the Town.

Objective 1.1 Determine whether the Town should participate in the State's Water Infrastructure Improvement Program.

Action:

- 1.1.a. The Town Government should undertake an assessment as to whether, and in what ways, the Town might participate in the State's Water Infrastructure Improvement Program (WIIP).
- 1.1.b. The results of this assessment should be presented to Town Meeting for a final determination as to whether and how the Town might participate in the Program, and if Town Meeting approves, take the proposal to a Town ballot at the next election.

Objective 1.2 Develop a comprehensive plan to address water, wastewater and stormwater issues.

Action:

- 1.2.a. If the Town at Town Meeting and by public ballot votes to participate in the WIIP, the town should then solicit financial support from the Town, State and private organizations to fund a comprehensive planning effort.
- 1.2.b. Engage the services of a well-qualified consulting group to prepare the plan.
- 1.2.c. Elicit the support of town boards and private organizations to provide the best available information and suggestions to support the efforts of the consulting group.
- 1.2.d. Explore the possibilities of incorporating some elements of possible connections with the neighboring towns of Dartmouth and Fall River in the scope of the planning to achieve better outcomes at lower costs.
- 1.2.e. Educate the town boards and public as to the costs and benefits of implementing the comprehensive plan.
- 1.2.f. Engage the town residents and leadership in a broad effort to understand issues and participate in decision-making to arrive at the most efficient, feasible and acceptable solutions to water-related problems.

Objective 1.3. Based on comprehensive plan, begin implementation of priority programs in each sector.

Action:

- 1.3.a. Initiate action on priority measures to address potable water-related programs.

1.3.b. Initiate action on priority measures to address wastewater-related programs.

1.3.c. Initiate action on priority measures to address stormwater-related programs.

Goal 2. While awaiting results of comprehensive plan, move ahead with addressing critical, urgent problems in all three areas.

Objective 2.1 Continue to work on resolving water quality problems along Route 6.

Action:

2.1.a. Identify parcels that might be used for water treatment facility.

2.1.b. Continue to work with Fall River to improve water quality prior to reaching Westport.

Objective 2.2 Continue to implement septic upgrade programs and related septic improvement measures.

Action:

2.2.a. Promote the DEP-sponsored Community Septic Management Plan that provides low interest rate financing for repairs of failed septic systems.

2.2.b. Identify grants and funding opportunities to offset the additional costs of nitrogen reducing septic systems.

Objective 2.3 Improve Maintenance of Existing Stormwater Facilities.

Action:

2.3.a. Locate, assess and record existing stormwater facilities, including, basins, pipes, ponds, and outfall locations.

2.3.b. Begin testing of outfalls and prioritize areas that need additional treatment.

2.3.c. Identify areas in need of upgrades to reduce flooding.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX A

Master Plan 2014 Visioning Session Public Forum

Introduction

Background

The current Master Plan for the Town of Westport was completed in 2004. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 41, Section 81D (M.G.L. ch. 41, s. 81D) states that the Planning Board “shall make a master plan...and from time to time may extend or perfect such plan”. A Master Plan that is less than ten (10) years old is considered to be a current plan. Acting proactively, the Westport Planning Board requested funds of the Westport Annual Town Meeting of May 2012 to initiate a master plan update. This request was approved and the Planning Board initiated efforts to update the Westport 2004 Master Plan.

In January 2013, the Planning Board invited Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to assist the Town of Westport in facilitating a Visioning Session with the goal of receiving input from town residents on issues the town is facing and ideas for future growth. While there are nine (9) required sections of a Master Plan, seven (7) of which are topic areas, it was decided to center this public forum around four (4) of the elements for the town’s 2014 Master Plan: Land Use, Economic Development, Capital Facilities and Traffic and Circulation. Existing municipal planning documents can complete the remaining three (3) topic areas. The Housing section of the

Master Plan can be generated from the 2012 Housing Production Plan and the Natural and Cultural Resources and the Open Space and Recreation sections can be from the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Visioning Session was conducted on Saturday, March 2, 2013, 10:45 AM to 1:00 PM at the Town Hall Annex, located at 856 Main Road. The Planning Board, in collaboration with SRPEDD, established an agenda and created handouts and other relevant informational materials for the visioning public forum. The Planning Board informed Westport residents about the purpose and importance of the visioning public forum by advertising in local newspaper publications, placing a notice and agenda posted on the town’s website, and by including a notice within the Master Plan survey that was mailed to each household.



Process

A. Breakout Sessions

The forum began with an introduction by SRPEDD describing the purpose of Master Plan visioning by addressing the following questions: What is a master plan? Why is a Master Plan relevant? What are the major planning elements that comprise the document? This discussion was supplemented with handouts provided to attendees and a Power-Point presentation.

The forum participants divided into three (3) “break-out” groups (the Capital Facilities and Traffic and Circulation elements were combined). Three (3) SRPEDD staff persons and the Westport Interim Planner facilitated discussions in each breakout group.

The breakout facilitation process consisted of two steps:



Step One: Introduction of participants, a brief outline of process, handout and discussion of the topic area’s Action Plan, goals, objectives and actions identified in Westport Master Plan, 2004. Items completed from 2004 to the present were identified; the items not completed were used as a starting point to initiate ideas and discussion on the specific planning element. Each person was encouraged to offer ideas which were then followed by an open, group discussion. During the process, the facilitator took notes, transcribing the ideas on large note paper in bullet form. This portion of the session took about 50 minutes.

Step Two: Participants compiled and reviewed the written ideas and notes to identify important themes and issues for the associated planning element. A spokesperson was selected from each breakout group to discuss the central themes and ideas in the general group



assembly. This process took about 10 - 15 minutes.

B. General Group Reporting

All participants reassembled for a general session to listen and provide input on central themes and ideas presented by a spokesman from each group. After each presentation, feedback and additional input was generated by the entire group. This took about 30 minutes.

C. Closing Remarks

The forum was closed with a special “thank you” expressed to all who participated in the session and contributed valuable input and ideas on important topics for the Town of Westport. Participants were asked to review each group’s Facilitator’s Note Sheets and vote on four (4) of the listed items from each of the planning elements that they believed to be most important. Future plans for work on the Master Plan were outlined and participants were told to look for a summary of their work to be posted on the Planning Board’s web page.



Summary of Priorities

All participants were asked to vote on what ideas and themes they considered as priorities for each element using colored stickers (“sticky dots”) provided to them at sign-in. Results of the voting were tabulated and are presented below.

Below is a compilation of ideas and issues generated from the breakout groups. They are summarized as general themes and are followed by the discussion points in order of the number of votes each received. This information can be used as the town develops master plan goals and objectives.

A. LAND USE

Land Use Priorities for Consideration

LAND USE THEMES

- ✓ Balance Permanent Conservation amongst Forest/Agricultural/ Coastal preservation efforts and include public access
- ✓ Provide Public Access to town-owned coastal landings
- ✓ Use Growth Projections and Numbers as a basis for decisions
- ✓ Drinking Water and Aquifers for development and preservation
- ✓ Incorporate Regulatory Changes allowing mixed-use development
- ✓ Plan for Climate Change: Readiness and impact

Ideas are listed by the total number of votes and are identified as follows:

1. Protect Water/Aquifers for drinking water and desired growth – 12 votes.
2. Provide access to town-owned coastal landings – 9 votes.
3. Plan for Climate Change – 7 votes.
 - Revenue
 - Marshes as sponges
 - First defense
4. Need for the use of rigorous metrics as a basis for decision-making (i.e. projections and num-

bers) – 6 votes.

- 5-1. Increase public access to Harbor and improve circulation to East Beach – 5 votes.
- 5-2. Understand and mitigate river and nitrogen loading (agriculture and visitors stays) – 5 votes.
- 5-3. Central Village as a “Go To” place – 5 votes.
- 6. Incorporate mechanisms for permanent conservation of forest, agriculture, and coastal areas including public access - 4 votes.
 - Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) (active/inactive/soils)
 - Chapter 61
 - Fee simple
 - Need for open space within ½ mile of compact development (residential)
- 7. When a 40B development is proposed, work with the developer to alleviate the negative impacts of compact development – 3 votes.
 - Septic problems
 - Over riding zoning
 - Negotiating for a positive 40B
 - Good relationship with developer
 - Some have been disastrous
- 8. Create distinct zoning for Residential and Agriculture uses – 2 votes
- 9-1. Undertake Regulatory change – mixed-use or special permit village commercial uses; convenience or country store - 1 vote.

9-2. Functional Railroad – 1 vote.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Priorities for Consideration

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THEMES

- ✓ Streamline Permitting with improved communication and coordination between municipal boards and committees on project review - including electronic permitting
- ✓ Expand marketing for Westport economic development using an online marketing brochure
- ✓ Expand and reorganize town web site: Provide more information on the town government, boards and committees, tourism, agriculture, economic development, planning
- ✓ Identify and reconfigure development districts town-wide
- ✓ Develop shoreline zoning to encourage appropriate low impact development (LID) opportunities, developments should be located in appropriate coastal areas and include public access to water as a Priority



Ideas are listed by total number of votes and are identified as follows:

- 1. Develop cultural tourism - 12 votes.
- 2. Coordinated review of streamlined permitting process and electronic permitting between boards and committees - 9 votes.
- 3. Encourage more value-added agricultural opportunities – 8 votes.
- 4-1. Define what economic development is and how it fits into Westport’s character – 7 votes.
- 4-2. Establish shoreline zoning to encourage low impact development (LID) including infrastructure

to support aquaculture. Development to provide public access as a priority - 7 votes.

- 5-1. Review low impact development (LID) options in the southern end of Westport at Hix Bridge Rd /Main Street - 5 votes.
- 5-2. Identify mixed-use - Define mixed-use and how it fits in Westport – 5 votes.
- 6-1. Review and analyze infrastructure costs relative to municipal finances - cost benefit – 4 votes.
- 6-2. Vision: “No Big Box!” Want office and professional business with low impact, providing jobs and taxes – 4 votes.
- 7. Develop opportunities to capture boating visitors – look at moorings, town dock, shuttle service to retail areas and other town destinations – 3 votes.
- 8-1. Encourage extended stay tourism for overnight and/or weekend stays generating additional business (ancillary) opportunities – 2 votes.
- 8-1. Encourage business that would attract secondary opportunities or other venues, like tourism, history, arts, entertainment, B&B – 2 votes.
- 8-2. Create appropriate zoning for development areas and tie this effort to water and sewer extensions – 2 votes.
- 9-1. Facilitate Bed &Breakfasts – 1 vote.
- 9-2. Guide infrastructure to areas with limited impact – 1 vote.
- 9-3. Reorganize the website to include more online information – 1 vote.
 - Tourism/Economic Development/Planning/ Services/Activities etc.
 - Marketing and brochure for Economic Development that defines vision, town-wide target areas, incentives, etc.

C. CAPITAL FACILITIES

Capital Facilities Priorities for Consideration

CAPITAL FACILITIES THEMES

- ✓ Provide additional recreation facilities for the children of Westport (ball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts) and maintain the existing recreation facilities
- ✓ Develop community wastewater facilities, possibly incorporating decentralized facilities
- ✓ Explore options for providing improved facilities:
 - Improved wastewater systems at the high school
 - Westport Police Department building is in poor condition
 - Harbormaster facilities in poor conditions and docks are overcrowded
- ✓ Conduct a Needs Assessment for school facilities and use the information to determine expansion and/or consolidation and what to do about Middle School facility PCB contamination
- ✓ Need for meeting places for the public, such as a “Community Room”
 - A place for larger audiences with public meetings and events
 - Identify existing and/or potential new options to establish public meeting space

Ideas are listed by total number of votes and identified as follows:

- 1. Improve the wastewater system at the high school – 13 votes.
- 2-1. Develop more facilities for other activities – 12 votes.
- 2-2. Need for a community wastewater facility – 12 votes.
- 3. Expansion and consolidation of schools taking into consideration the Middle School’s issue with PCB contamination and limited land – 10 votes.
- 4. Create public/private partnerships to assist with capital facilities improvement - 10 votes.
- 4. Improve public meeting places for town boards/ committees and community events – 8 votes.

5. Investigate Cemetery expansion including review of the existing report regarding both land availability and capital - *3 votes*.
6. Take advantage of the change in rules of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) that now allow repair of recreation facilities – *1 vote*.
7. Expansion of the Police Station which is currently in poor condition – *1 vote*.
8. How to address the maintenance of historic buildings – *0 votes*.

- Acquire additional access points
 - Acquire more facilities
2. Re-open Beach Avenue access – *9 votes*
 3. Develop a map showing existing infrastructure and utilities (water, sewer, street lights gas lines, electric and fiber optics) – *7 votes*
 - 4-1. Identify town road rights-of-way (ROW) and layouts – *5 votes*
 - 4-2. Identify town landings and access points; include list in Master Plan – *5 votes*
 - Map deeded access points owned by the town and make map available to the public
 - 4-3. Roadway marking and striping – make sure roads had adequate markings and are properly striped – *5 votes*
 - 5-1. Mitigate damage to East Beach Road - *1 vote*
 - 5-2. Be sensitive to the conflict between resource protection and access – *1 vote*
 - 5.3. Initiate review or planning for the interconnection of roads between subdivisions — *1 vote*
 - Board voted to adopt the updated master plan.

D. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Traffic and Circulation Priorities for Consideration

TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION THEMES

- ✓ Improve pedestrian connections with sidewalks in congested areas such as the Middle School to High School
- ✓ Establish or develop dedicated Bike Paths
- ✓ Identify town road rights-of-way (ROW) and layouts
- ✓ Open existing Public Access points
- ✓ Identify Town Landings
- ✓ Re-open Beach Avenue Access

Ideas are listed by total number of votes and are identified as follows:

- 1-1. Establish or develop dedicated bike paths – *13 votes*
 - study adequacy of existing roads and non-vehicular areas; i.e. walking trails, bike paths and easements
- 1-2. Install sidewalks in congested areas; Middle School to High School – *13 votes*
- 1-3. Open existing waterfront and river public access points – *13 votes*
 - Provide and Maintain Public Access to water recreation
 - Open current access points to make them useable by the public in order to not lose them

APPENDIX B

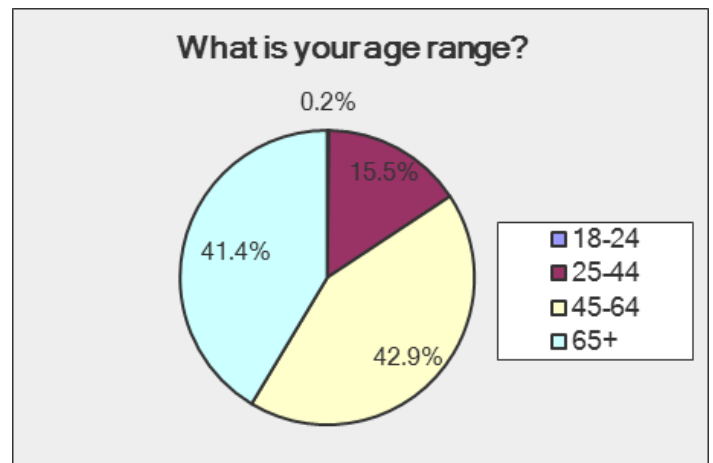
Master Plan Results of Town Wide Opinion Survey

Introduction

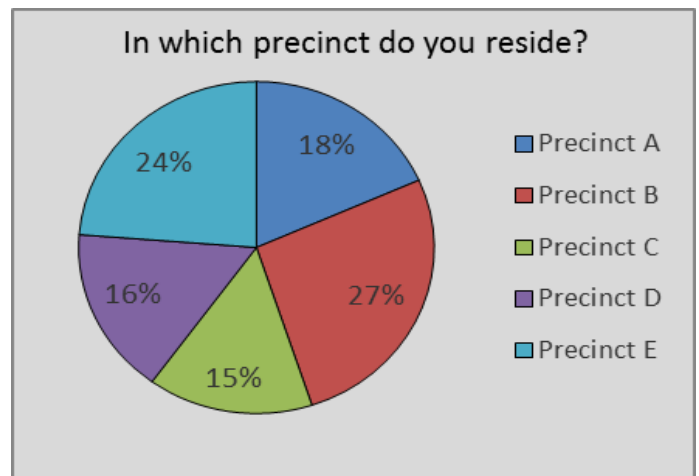
In February of 2013, the Planning Board mailed 8,500 surveys to Westport Residents. The survey questions were developed by members of the Master Plan Update Committee and respondents were invited to complete the survey online or by hand. Of the 8,500 surveys that were distributed through the mail, 1,473 or approximately 17 % of the surveys were completed and returned for analysis. Approximately 275 were entered online and 1,200 were mailed back to the planning board and entered by the staff. The survey is just one of the many methods that was used to gather input from town residents on issues the town may be facing and ideas for future growth.

Respondent

The typical respondent was a year-round resident who has lived in town for more than 10 years, is over the age of 45, and does not have school age children. Results showed that more than 78% of the respondents did not have school age children. Of the 22% that did, only 62% attended Westport Schools.



The response rate from the community was fairly well dispersed with the five precincts responding at rates between 15% for Precinct C and 27% for Precinct B.

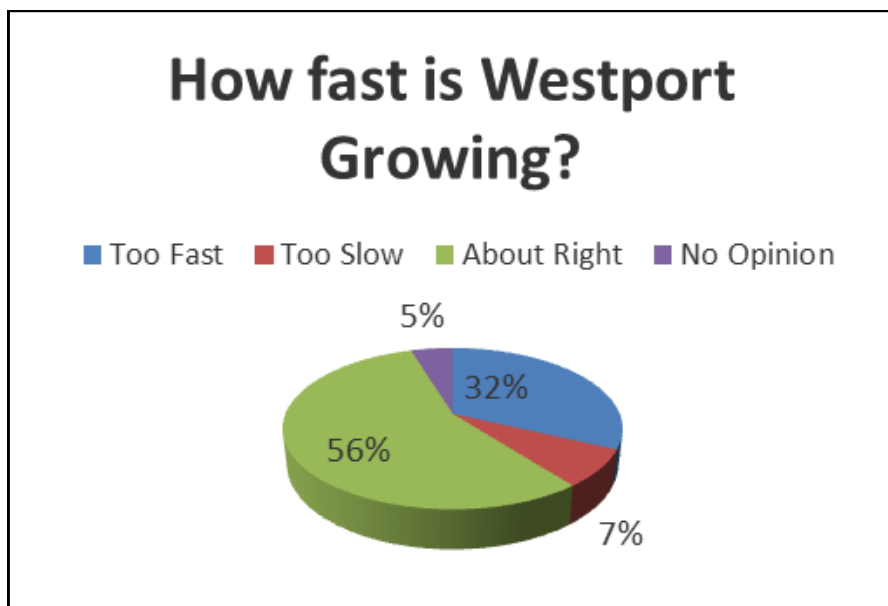


Residents were asked to indicate their level of concern with regard to specific types of growth in Town. For the four questions that were asked approximately 25% were not very concerned while 2/3 are somewhat concerned or very concerned.

Answer Options	Not At All Concerned	Not Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned	No Opinion
An increase in school enrollment	13.6%	26.0%	33.4%	22.9%	4.2%
An increase in traffic	7.4%	24.3%	35.5%	31.5%	1.4%
Access to beaches and recreational facilities	10.3%	25.7%	33.5%	28.8%	1.8%
The size & scale of commercial development	9.0%	23.8%	32.3%	33.0%	1.9%

Residential Development

In looking at what type of residential development the respondents would like to see it is clear that the majority favors low density development as opposed to high density and mixed use-residential/ commercial development. Single family development was also strongly favored over multifamily residential developments.



Please tell us how you feel about the following types of development that could occur within Westport.						
Answer Options	Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Some-what Oppose	Strongly Oppose	No Opinion
Low density residential-1 ½ acre or larger lots (~ 60,000 sq. ft.)	39.6%	29.7%	17.6%	6.6%	4.4%	2.1%
Medium density residential-1 acre or larger lots (~ 40,000 sq. ft.)	9.0%	26.9%	24.0%	19.0%	16.4%	4.6%
High density residential- 1/2 acre or larger lots (~ 20,000 sq. ft.)	3.1%	8.8%	14.6%	20.5%	43.6%	9.4%
Mixed use-residential and commercial that is on the same lot	3.9%	14.2%	28.3%	22.7%	24.4%	6.4%
Commercial retail	8.6%	31.5%	31.7%	14.3%	10.2%	3.7%
Commercial office	9.1%	33.0%	33.4%	12.6%	8.9%	3.1%
Single family residences	34.1%	41.5%	18.2%	3.2%	1.8%	1.2%
Multifamily residences (apartments, condos, townhouses)	4.9%	16.7%	23.5%	26.0%	23.7%	5.2%
Accessory Apartments	6.3%	18.9%	32.2%	20.5%	15.6%	6.4%
Age restricted housing that is for adults 55 years and older	13.8%	36.4%	33.5%	8.7%	5.4%	2.1%
Affordable housing: housing affordable to a family earning less than 80% of the area median income. This is \$57,500 per year for family of 4.	8.5%	21.3%	27.4%	18.6%	19.9%	4.3%

Commercial Development

Commercial retail and commercial office development had a favorable response if done without town funds. More than 70% feel the Town should not provide more support/incentives for new businesses if they impose a cost for the Town budget. When asked the question, Would you support designating areas in town for expedited permitting (local permitting to be completed within 180 days of application), the response was less decisive with 51% in favor and 49% opposed.

In general the community favors improved services showing their support for each of the following items. There is less support for these services when taxes have to be increased in order to provide them.

Please indicate if you favor or oppose the following activities in Westport and if yes, are you willing to pay higher property taxes.				
Answer Options	Oppose, not needed	Favor, but not for higher taxes	Favor even if higher taxes	No Opinion
Improving school facilities and education standards	10.6%	45.3%	41.2%	2.9%
Purchase open space for conservation	18.0%	47.9%	29.1%	5.0%
Maintenance and capital improvements for town buildings	7.3%	61.1%	29.1%	2.6%
Improving recreation activities	16.3%	55.1%	24.0%	4.6%

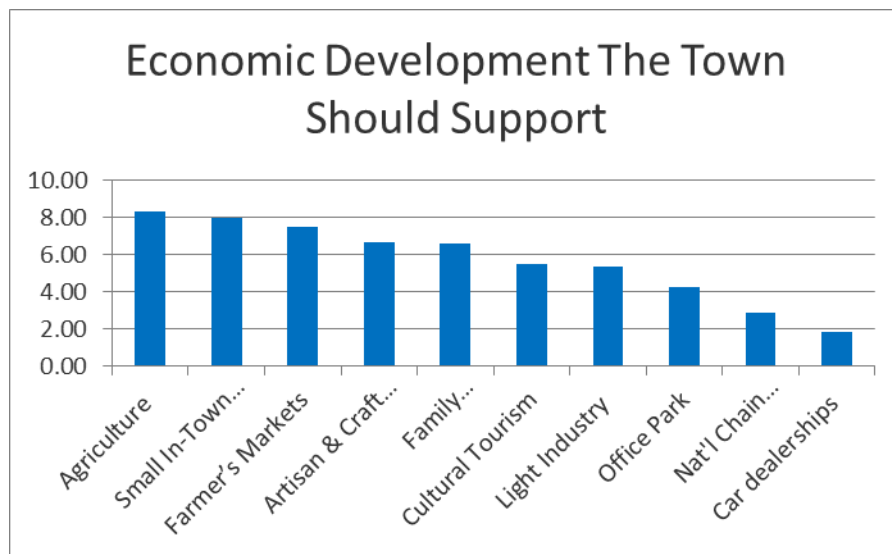
Residents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with current efforts by the town. Approximately 50% of residents felt that the Town was handling the needs of the Town about right while more than 1/3 believed the Town was not doing enough.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with current efforts by the town.				
Answer Options	Too Much	About Right	Not Enough	No Opinion
Expansion of commercial opportunities	15.5%	51.0%	28.6%	5.0%
Protection of Town's natural resources	7.6%	55.3%	35.2%	1.9%
Implementation of nitrogen reduction measures to protect the health of the Westport River	6.6%	50.9%	36.7%	5.9%
Addressing water, wastewater and stormwater problems in locations with critical problems	4.6%	44.8%	45.7%	4.9%
Provision of educational opportunities	2.3%	45.3%	45.0%	7.3%
Provision of library services	2.2%	67.6%	25.5%	4.7%
Provision of recreational facilities and services such as parks & playgrounds	2.0%	59.2%	34.5%	4.2%

In order to accommodate future development, municipal water and sewer resources will be needed. Should the town...		
Answer Options	Yes	No
Install water and sewer lines in advance to meet the expected needs of future development?	42.0%	58.0%
Encourage use of shared wastewater systems that reduce cost per installation and avoid large scale sewer systems?	67.8%	32.3%
Require developers to install shared water and wastewater systems if and when a development project is undertaken?	74.0%	26.0%
Not impose any requirements for shared or community water or wastewater systems?	29.5%	70.6%
Not undertake to install any water or wastewater systems at all?	26.4%	73.8%
Do you not know or do you have no opinion?	32.0%	84.0%

In terms of transportation, improving the condition of roadways, bicycle access and safety were the most pressing needs; and there is little consensus on issues such as sidewalks, congestion, traffic calming and mass transit.

As for the types of development that the respondents considered, the strongest preferences were given to agriculture, small in-town shops and farmers markets. Lower ratings were given to car dealerships and used car lots, national chain restaurants and office parks



There were also three open ended questions that were reviewed, and while the answers varied there were some common themes. There were 1205 written responses to the first question. What do you like most about living in Westport?

Open Response - What do you like most about living in Westport?		
Most Common Reponses	Responses	Percentage
Rural Community/Country Living	368	30.5%
Coastline and Beaches	286	23.7%
Quiet, Peacefulness and Tranquility	212	17.6%
Open Space and Natural Resources	162	13.4%
Family Farms and Farmland	122	10.1%
Low Taxes	101	8.4%
Quality of Life and Community	97	8.0%
Public Safety	54	4.5%
Small Businesses	50	4.1%
Law Traffic Congestion	35	2.9%
Schools	27	2.2%
Elderly Services	8	0.7%
Artists	4	0.3%
<i>answered question</i>	1205	
<i>skipped question</i>	268	

The second question asked: What do you like least about living in Westport? There were 1,051 responses to this question listing a wide range of concerns. While there was not an overwhelming consensus on any particular issue there were a couple of common themes. The most common was the schools, it was mentioned 154 times. The school responses ranged from too many requests for tax overrides to the need for better schools. The majority of respondents wanted to see more support for the school system.

The next highest response was Town politics, the majority of respondents want the Town to work together and get away from petty politics. Taxes and used cars were also mentioned often in the questionnaire. Some feel the taxes are too high, while some noted the need to spend more on schools and infrastructure.

What do you like least about living in Westport ?	
Most Common Refer-ences	Referenced
Schools	154
Politics	141
Taxes	75
Sidewalks	35
Cars	69
Growth	14
Transportation	10
Parking	10

2013 Town-wide Survey

Planning Board

856 Main Road

Westport, MA 02790



Tel. (508) 636-1037

Fax (508) 636-1031

www.westport-ma.com

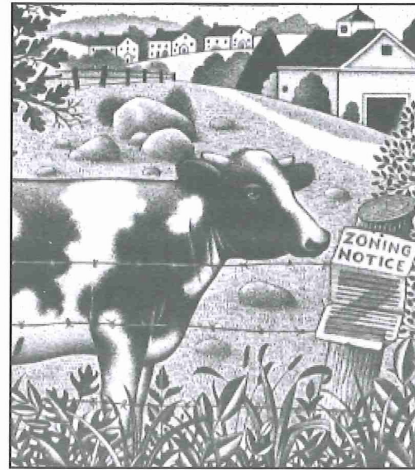
Planning@westport-ma.gov

Westport Master Plan Update Survey

Greetings,

As part of the process of updating the Town's 2004 Master Plan, the Westport Planning Board needs your opinion to begin to shape the future direction of Westport. A master plan reflects a community-wide consensus of the direction the Town wants for the future. You can see the 2004 Master Plan at www.westport-ma.com

This survey is the first step for the Master Plan Update. The update will include assessments of existing resources and issues, projections of future conditions and needs, and consideration of collective goals and desires. The Master Plan will be developed with community input over a three year timeframe. Your input is critical to this process. Please take a few minutes to share your opinions by completing this survey. The results will help our elected and volunteer community leaders begin to develop recommendations to shape the future growth of the Town.



The enclosed survey has 4 pages of questions. You can complete the survey online at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WESTPORT_MP as soon as convenient, or use this paper copy. **Please return completed survey no later than March 31, 2013.**

For each one, please circle the number that best represents your response. If you are not sure, don't know, have no opinion, or if a question does not apply to you, circle the "NO" response. Responses will be tabulated and a report of the results will be periodically updated on the Town website. Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation. If you can't complete online, please use the enclosed envelope to return your completed survey to the Planning Board box at the Library, Council on Aging, Town Hall, or Town Hall Annex, or mail to Westport Planning Board, 856 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to get involved with the planning process, please contact us by email at masterplan@westport-ma.gov or by phone or letter. **The next step is the 2-part Visioning Session at the Town Hall Annex on March 2, 2013, 9:00 till 10:30 am and 10:45 am to 1:00 pm.** Join us for a full morning.

We welcome your involvement, and value your opinion.

The Westport Planning Board:

David Emilita, Jim Whitin, Bill Raus, Elaine Ostroff and David Cole

Thanks for completing this Westport Master Plan Update Survey. We look forward to your responses.

Are you a year-round resident? Seasonal resident? Other? _____

How long have you resided in town either year-round or seasonally? 1-5 Years 6-10 Years 11-25 Years 25+ Years

Are you registered to vote in Westport? Yes No In which precinct do you reside? _____

What is your age range? 18-24 25-44 45-64 65+

How many persons are residing in your residence currently? _____ How many in the summertime? _____

Do you have school aged children? Yes No

If yes, are they in the Westport School System? Yes No

1) Please share your thoughts regarding growth.

	Too Fast	Too Slow	About Right	NO
Do you think that the town of Westport in general is growing?	1	2	3	6

2) Please indicate your level of concern with regard to growth in Westport.

	Not At All Concerned	Not Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned	NO
a. An increase in school enrollment	1	2	3	4	6
b. An increase in traffic	1	2	3	4	6
c. Access to beaches and recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	6
d. The size & scale of commercial development	1	2	3	4	6

3) Please indicate your level of satisfaction with current efforts by the town in the following areas:

	Too Much	About Right	Not Enough	NO
a. Expansion of commercial opportunities	1	2	3	6
b. Protection of Town's natural resources	1	2	3	6
c. Implementation of nitrogen reduction measures to protect the health of the Westport River	1	2	3	6
d. Addressing water, wastewater and stormwater problems in locations with critical problems	1	2	3	6
e. Provision of educational opportunities	1	2	3	6
f. Provision of library services	1	2	3	6
g. Provision of recreational facilities and services such as parks & playgrounds	1	2	3	6

4) Please tell us how you feel about the following types of development that could occur within Westport.

	Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	NO
a. Low density residential-1 ½ acre or larger lots (~ 60,000 sq. ft.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Medium density residential-1 acre or larger lots (~ 40,000 sq. ft.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. High density residential- 1/2 acre or larger lots (~ 20,000 sq. ft.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Mixed use-residential and commercial that is on the same lot	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Commercial retail	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Commercial office	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Single family residences	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. Multifamily residences (apartments, condos, townhouses)	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. Accessory Apartments	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. Age restricted housing that is for adults 55 years and older	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. Affordable housing: housing affordable to a family earning less than 80% of the area median income. This is \$57,500 per year for family of 4.	1	2	3	4	5	6

5) Do you have aging parents or children over 18 living at home? Yes No Describe your situation.

6) Do you use wind, solar or other renewable resources in your home? Yes No _____

Is sustainability important to you? Yes No

7) In order to accommodate future development, municipal water and sewer resources will be needed. Should the town...

- a. Install water and sewer lines in advance to meet the expected needs of future development? Yes No
- b. Encourage use of shared wastewater systems that reduce cost per installation and avoid large scale sewer systems? Yes No
- c. Require developers to install shared water and wastewater systems if and when a development project is undertaken? Yes No
- d. Not impose any requirements for shared or community water or wastewater systems? Yes No
- e. Not undertake to install any water or wastewater systems at all? Yes No
- f. Don't know or No opinion

8) Please indicate if you favor or oppose the following activities in Westport and if yes, are you willing to pay higher property taxes.	Oppose, not needed	Favor, but not for higher taxes	Favor even if higher taxes	NO
a. Improving school facilities and education standards	1	2	3	6
b. Purchase open space for conservation	1	2	3	6
c. Maintenance and capital improvements for town buildings	1	2	3	6
d. Improving recreation activities	1	2	3	6

9) What is the most pressing transportation need?	Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
a. Improve condition of roadways	1	2	3	4	6
b. Reduce congestion	1	2	3	4	6
c. Traffic calming	1	2	3	4	6
d. Lack of sidewalks	1	2	3	4	6
e. Mass transit options	1	2	3	4	6
f. Bicycle access and safety	1	2	3	4	6

10) Should the town provide more support/incentives for new business opportunities even if they impose a cost for the town budget? Yes No

11) Would you support designating areas in town for expedited permitting (local permitting process to be completed within 180 days of application)? Yes No

12) Rank in order of priority—1=high, 10=low, the types of economic development the Town should support/encourage:

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ Small In-Town Shops | _____ Family Restaurants/ Deli |
| _____ National Chain Restaurants | _____ Office Park |
| _____ Light Industry (non polluting) | _____ Cultural Tourism |
| _____ Agriculture (farms, nurseries, (organic vegetables) | _____ Farmer's Markets |
| _____ Artisan & Craft Businesses | _____ Car dealerships and used car lots |

13) What do you like most about living in Westport?

14) What do you like least about living in Westport?

15) Please use the space below if you have any additional comments.

**Opportunity for more
input!**

Please come to share your ideas
with your fellow Westporters!

Saturday March 2, 2013

Town Hall Annex - 856 Main Road

9:00 to 10:30 AM:

**Priorities for Protection
& Development**

10:45 AM – 1:00 PM

**Master Plan Visioning
Session**

Please RSVP to: (508) 636-1037 or
planning@westport-ma.gov

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX C

Workshop 1 Summary

Public Workshop #1

The Westport Master Plan Committee (MPC) hosted the first public workshop on the Master Plan Update on Saturday, April 12, 2014 from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM at the Westport Public Library. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce and gain public input on three of the ten Master Plan elements:

- Natural Resources;
- Open Space and Recreation; and
- Water, Wastewater and Stormwater.

An interactive break-out exercise was used to elicit community input regarding local challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to these elements. Twenty-one (21) participants registered on the sign-in sheets representing a variety of Westport stakeholders. The following is a summary of the feedback received at the workshop.

Registration (9:00 – 9:20 AM)

As participants arrived at the workshop, they were greeted by the Town Planner, members of the MPC and/or the consultant team from the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW). Agendas, nametags, and handouts were provided as they signed in at the registration table. Refreshments were donated by the MPC members. There were posters showing the

community survey results and community maps on display for participants to view during this time as well.

Opening Remarks and Presentation (9:20 – 10:00 AM)

Jim Hartnett, Westport's Town Planner, greeted the participants and provided an introduction to the Master Plan Workshop, which included a summary of the work that has been done by the Master Plan Committee to date as well as an outlook on the work that needs to be conducted for the Master Plan Update in the future. He introduced the Town's consultant, HW, and described HW's role in the process, which is to facilitate the four public workshops that will take place as part of the Master Plan update.

HW then provided a presentation, which included: an overview of the Master Plan Update process; a summary of the three elements that were the focus of this workshop (Natural Resources; Open Space and Recreation; and Water, Wastewater and Stormwater); and an introduction to the break-out exercise.

The presentation on the overview of the Master Plan update process included: the background and purpose of the Community Master Plan; some example projects that came out of the 2004 Master Plan; and the tasks to accomplish for updating the Master

Plan. The Westport Master Plan will be comprised of ten elements, three of which were the focus of the day’s workshop.

The next portion of the presentation “set the stage” for the late morning break-out exercise by providing a summary of the challenges and opportunities related to each of the three focus elements. The draft goals and objectives related to each element were also briefly presented. HW then introduced the purpose and directions for the break-out exercise itself.

Break-out Exercises (10:00 – 11:30 AM)

Participants had the opportunity to partake in two break-out groups on two different elements. The first break-out groups were randomly assigned, and the second were chosen by the participants. Therefore, each participant had the opportunity to voice his or her opinions related to the topic of his or her choice.

HW facilitators guided each break-out group through a discussion of challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to each of the three focus elements. A group discussion format was used to answer two questions:

1. What are the top challenges and opportunities related to [Element Topic (Water, Wastewater and Stormwater; Open Space and Recreation; or Natural Resources)]?
2. Are these challenges and opportunities addressed sufficiently and accurately by the proposed Master Plan goals and objectives or do you have any suggested edits or additions?

Each question was allotted approximately 20 minutes for discussion. After the facilitator read the first question aloud, group members worked individually for a few minutes to write down their thoughts. Each group member was then provided the opportunity to share one idea. If time allowed, group members could provide additional ideas after each

person shared their first idea. After everyone shared their ideas, the facilitator worked with the group to identify the top two or three common themes that emerged from the discussion of the first question, or individual points that really resonated.

This process was repeated for the second question. For the second question, a “bubble diagram” was used. The bubble diagram was presented on a poster, and included key phrases that described each goal and objective. This was intended to discourage word-smithing of the goals and objectives themselves and re-focus the group toward determining whether any larger issues, goals or objectives were absent.

The following includes a summary of the public input received through the break-out exercises for each element.

Natural Resources

Group #1

Challenges and Opportunities (prioritized items are in bold font):

Challenges

- **Varying opinions based on geographical, political and economic interests/goals.**
- **Development and related planning for development.**
- **Funding for ongoing services and other related needs.**
- Stormwater runoff.
- Balancing public use and preservation/protection.
- Balancing development and infrastructure.
- Who is responsible for maintenance (e.g., downed trees, blocked dams)?
- Pollutants in soils that contaminate wells.
- High demand on resources (e.g., beach permits).
- Abuse of natural resources and litter.

Opportunities

- **Water conservation: education; allow graywater re-use; cisterns; protection; awareness of water recharge issues.**
- **Protect farming way of life, rural character, and Westport's heritage of hunting, farming and fishing.**
- Public education on Westport's water resources.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives:

- Objective 1.6, *Improve public understanding of actions that will help protect our natural resources*, should either be moved up to the first objective under Goal #1 or it should be its own goal.
- "Securing funding for watershed planning" should be a goal under Natural Resources or under Water, Wastewater and Stormwater.
- There should be an action item under Objective 2.1, *Implement recently adopted by-laws designed to guide sustainable development*, to better incentivize the bylaws (e.g., LID bylaw) for developers so that they are used more frequently.
- In addition to the action items provided for Objective 1.6, *Improve public understanding of actions that will help protect our natural resources*, there should be action items that address the following:
 - Address public apathy about natural resources.
 - Have a multi-pronged approach to communication that incorporates as many mechanisms as possible, which includes direct mail.
 - Recognize the seasonal population and the public education that is required to reach this audience.
 - Provide a central location for communication, and ensure public awareness of it.
 - Work on a watershed scale, and collaborate regionally with other towns in the watershed.

Group #2

Challenges and Opportunities (prioritized items are in bold font):

Challenges

- Preventing degradation and pollution of natural resources.
- Achieving understanding of long-term effects of natural resources.
- Balancing protection of resources while allowing public access.
- Enforcement of environmental degradation of natural resources.
- Collaboration and coordination of town departments and resources.
- Balancing current use of land to insure Westport's heritage.
- Balancing costs versus protection.
- Balance new development and natural resource protection.

Opportunities

- **Promote spirit of sharing, responsibility and ownership over natural resources.**
- **Educate the public about threats to the aquifer, drinking water; disseminate information effectively.**
- What are our natural resources? There is a need to assess them, prioritize them, and quantify what they are.
- More public awareness of natural resources – education of importance of protecting resources.
- Explore ways to reduce trash and keep the environment clean.
- Work with homeowners and the agricultural community regarding fertilizer runoff for nitrogen reduction and impact on resources.
- Draw more on federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Consider replacing current Open Space Residential District (OSRD) bylaw with Open Space Design (OSD) bylaw.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives:

- Objective 1.6, *Improve public understanding of actions that will help protect our natural resources*, should be moved up to the first objective under Goal #1. It should also be expanded to incorporate the concept of improving public sense of ownership over natural resources.
- Objective 1.1, *Improve protections for beaches and waterfront areas*, should explicitly include riverfront areas and streams.
- In addition to the action items provided for Objective 1.1, *Improve protections for beaches and waterfront areas*, there should be an action item that addresses the need to protect beaches and waterfront areas for the purpose of public use of these resources.
- In addition to the action items provided for Objective 1.2, *Decide upon and initiate measures for implementing nitrogen reduction to meet TMDL targets in the Westport River watershed*, there should be an action item that addresses the need to incorporate the projected impacts of climate change.
- In addition to the action items provided for Objective 1.6, *Improve public understanding of actions that will help protect our natural resources*, there should be action items that addresses the following:
 - Need to increase signage about natural resources, similar to the signage provided for Horseneck Beach.
 - Need public education about the importance of wetlands.
- There should be an objective under Goal 2, *To guide and control future development in order to sustain Westport’s bountiful natural resources and assure that these resources are enjoyed by future generations*, that addresses the need to work watershed scale, and collaborate regionally with other towns in the watershed. **Note that Group #1 also mentioned the need for this, but suggested it as an action item under Objective 1.6, *Improve public understanding of actions that***

will help protect our natural resources.

- There should be an action item under this objective relating to the fact that working regionally will help with securing state and federal level grant funding.
- There should be an additional objective under Goal 2, *To guide and control future development in order to sustain Westport’s bountiful natural resources and assure that these resources are enjoyed by future generations*, that addresses the need to incorporate climate change considerations.

Open Space and Recreation

Group #1

Challenges and Opportunities (prioritized items are in bold font):

Challenges

- **Entry ways to open spaces, including beaches, are littered with trash**
 - **People are not taking out what they take in**
 - **There are no trash facilities**
- **Parking is limited at existing facilities and resources.**
- **Limited river access with parking; limited ocean access with parking.**
- **Additional athletic fields are needed, such as facilities for basketball, baseball, and softball. It is difficult to get practice time.**
- **Not doing a very good job providing recreational opportunities or access to existing resources for the very young and very old. Not necessarily disabled, but may have limited abilities.**
- **It is unclear who does maintenance of public open spaces (trails, trash, etc.) and where resources will come from to support maintenance.**
- Hix Bridge boat ramp is damaged.
- There are no designated areas for water sports on the river (water skiing)

- Running and biking is difficult on Main Road towards the water.
- There lacks a “joyful experience of sharing resources.” Can folks be encouraged to share their access to river or other natural areas for the public good?
- Trash is disposed of at public receptacles.
- Forge Pond – there is no maintenance of pathways and they are difficult to pass. Who does this? The Land Trust?
- There is a lack of off-road recreational walking paths and trails. Some should be paved to accommodate those with different abilities.
- Overnight parking for boat ramp is needed.

Opportunities

- **An indoor public fitness center at the high school.**
- **Work with private property owners to connect with public open space through trails. Develop ways they can be relieved of liability, policing and trash pick-up.**
- **Publish what is available (public open spaces) and where to access. More P.R.**
- Develop trails near the river.
- Organize a “hazardous waste day”, and include farmers.
- Promote trash collection; creation of a dog park.
- The Town is not recognizing potential opportunities at Horseneck Beach. Could the Town get special access/rates for entry? Holding local events?

Comments on Draft Goals and Policies

- Should the goal *Preserve the quality of natural resources*” and its related policies be in this chapter?
- It was commented that the first three goals and policies did a good job covering open space, but there needed to be more for *Enhance indoor and outdoor recreation*.
 - Promote more recreation
 - Improvements need to be made

- Use landscapes and natural resources for recreation and provide more access [recreation that has a lesser impact on resources like boating, walking trails, bike paths, etc.]
- Add an objective to make sure public ways are known and accessible. Promote them, improve access, and develop a campaign that encourages the respect of natural resources to instill a sense of ownership by users.
- Use public/private partnerships for maintenance. Look for alternative funding sources.
- Expand *Enhance access for disabled persons* to add or include the very young and very old. Seniors may not be disabled but might have limited abilities.

Group #2

Challenges and Opportunities (prioritized items are in bold font):

Challenges

- **There is no disabled access to local beaches. There is a lot of ground to cover from the parking lot to the beach.**
- **There is a need for more pathways for walking. DNRT has done a good job.**
- **There is a lack of information about what open spaces are open to the public. It is not on a website and there is no signage.**
- **There needs to be more town support for “recreation,” including programs for all ages. This includes funding and staff. The master plan should explore this more.**
- Roads are narrow for on-street bike paths.
- A dog park is needed in town. People go to Attleboro.
- Projects are not finished. A lot has been started and not done. Some are public and some are private. Construction of athletics fields was an example.
- A recreation center is needed.
- Preserving open space to benefit the envi-

ronment and community members.

- Securing funding for recreational opportunities for our youth.
- Balancing real estate tax exemption and public benefit. 4,000 acres was preserved in the last 10 years by the Trust which resulted in a loss of revenue. Need to identify the public benefit.
- Traffic.
- We are an increasingly aging community, we are not considered disabled.

Opportunities

- To increase disabled access to local beaches
 - There is an old road behind Horseneck Beach that is used for emergency access.
 - The road near Bakers Beach – who owns this? State? This might provide easier access.
 - Let it be known that state beaches are free to those 65 and older.
- **There is an opportunity to share and integrate resources between the town and the schools. Dartmouth has done a lot of programs. Costs could be shared.**
- **Students doing community service can help with trail maintenance.**
- Connect to a regional bike path system along tracks in the north end. Can connect to Fall River and Cape Cod. Could continue west to Rhode Island/Warren/Bristol. This would tie communities together.
- The Trust is trying to sign its properties.
- Trust members to volunteer with maintaining trails more regularly.
- Have community input to help recreation committee develop programming. Identify low cost projects and programs and look for alternative forms of funding.
- There is unused talent in the community (retirees).
- Look for business partnerships and sponsorships for recreational funding. Example was Fall River Celebrates America.
- Some streets can be made more bike friend-

ly.

Comments on Draft Goals and Policies

- There should be a new goal: *Balance real estate tax with public benefit.* Under this goal the town should evaluate the funding impact and public benefit, ensuring there is a public benefit or intended public benefit.
- Broaden “disabled persons”: Enhance access for a range of abilities.
- Enhance recreation by identifying funding sources for maintenance.
- Improve town-wide recreation and include schools. The schools own large amounts of land for recreation.
- Look for alternative ways for maintenance. High school youth; UMASS-D and BCC have community service requirements; and the Sheriff’s office could also be a resource.
- Increase opportunities for walking.

Water, Wastewater and Stormwater

Group #1

Challenges and Opportunities (prioritized items are in bold font):

Challenges

- Educate public/participation about the over-all capacity of drinking water.
 - Future projection.
- Cloudy/green water.
 - Well water.
 - Route 6 side.
 - Filtration.
- Runoff pollution.
- “Creative stormwater.”
 - Town/developers’ reluctance.
- Change people’s way of thinking.
- Farm runoff.
 - Floodplain issues.
- How’s the landfill?
- Pay for improvement.
- More urbanized areas have no centralized

services.

- Funding.
- “Don’t tell me what to do” attitude.

Opportunities

- **Individual opportunities to remediate existing problems beyond maintenance.**
- Moving away from Title 5.
- People can contribute.
- Nitrogen load metric.
- OSRD rarely used – opportunity to revise.
- Water testing (free).
- Aquaculture as a filter.
- Bridge at East Beach – flushing.
- Subsidies?
- Management system?
- Comprehensive water plan.
- Coordinate with Fall River.
- Water Resource Committee.
- Provide a Big Picture.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives:

- Generally, there should be more focus on education.
- Need to incorporate the issue that many homeowners in the problem areas with failing systems do not have the ability to pay for upgrades.

Group #2

Challenges and Opportunities (prioritized items are in bold font):

Challenges

- Over-development and associated runoff and wastewater.
- Town-owned land – need to clean out.
- Septic system/wells – failures affect neighbors.
- Septic design.
- School system water quantity (e.g., High School).
- Street runoff (volume).
- Title 5 on the river.
- Watershed goes into Fall River, Dartmouth, Little Compton, Tiverton.
- Stormwater Management where State is re-

sponsible (Rt. 6 and 177).

- Commercial areas that have small lots.
- Balance with recreation and public access.
- School septic are problematic.
- Runoff from Harbor and River; topography is an issue.
- Funding.

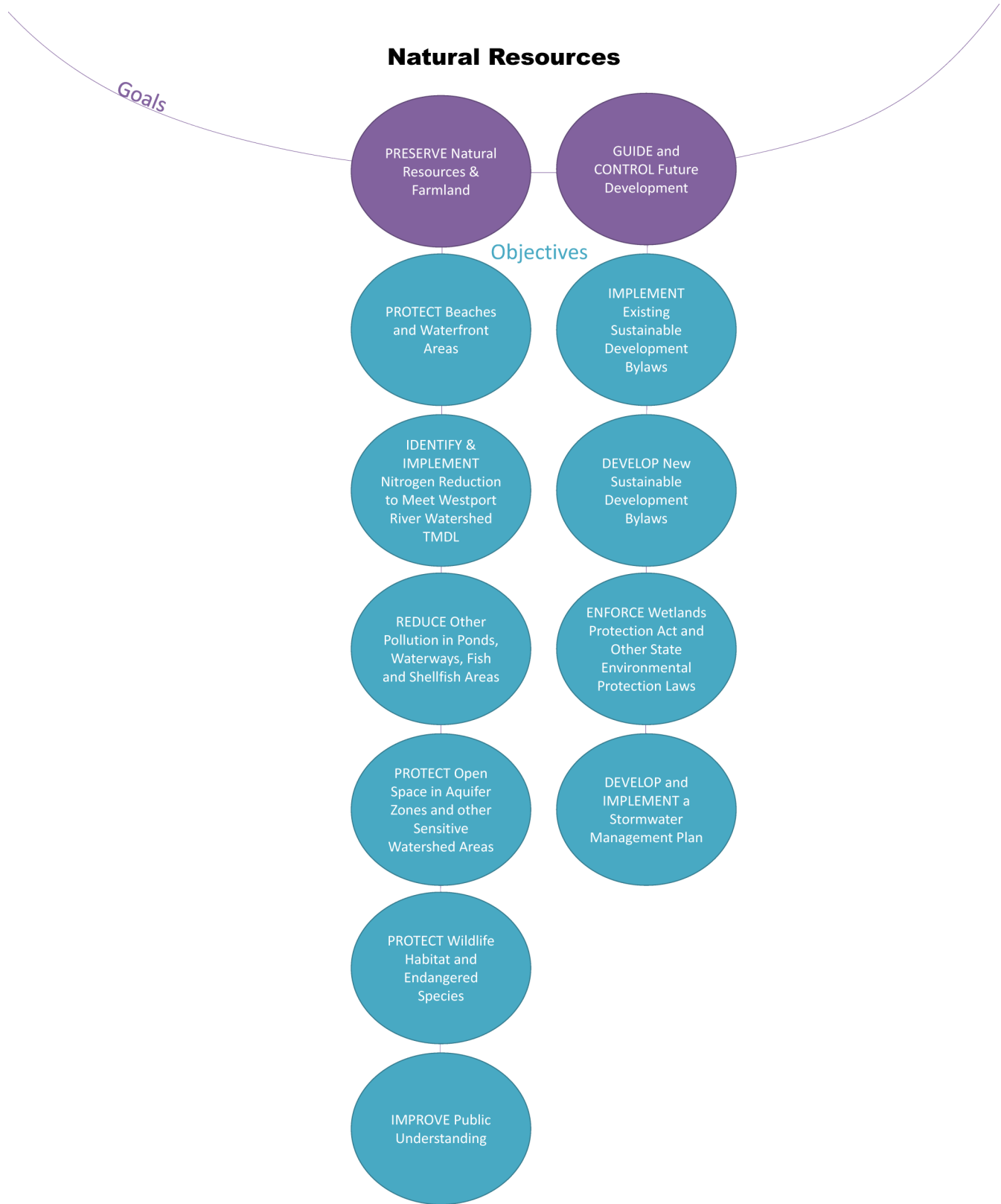
Opportunities

- Hazardous waste day.
- Identify sites for future wells (1995 study).
- River “Title 5 Endangered Embayment.”
- Bylaws for existing development.
- TMDL values from state.
 - Comp Plan would result.
 - Enforcement issue provides motivation.
 - Where are the pipes?
- Shared systems (specifically as they relate to commercial areas on small lots).
- Incentives for good development.
- Regional approach.
- Coordinate groups.
- Balance Title 5.
- Research and use A/I systems – push this issue.
- Education.
- Options needed for really tough lots.
- Water underlies all decisions.

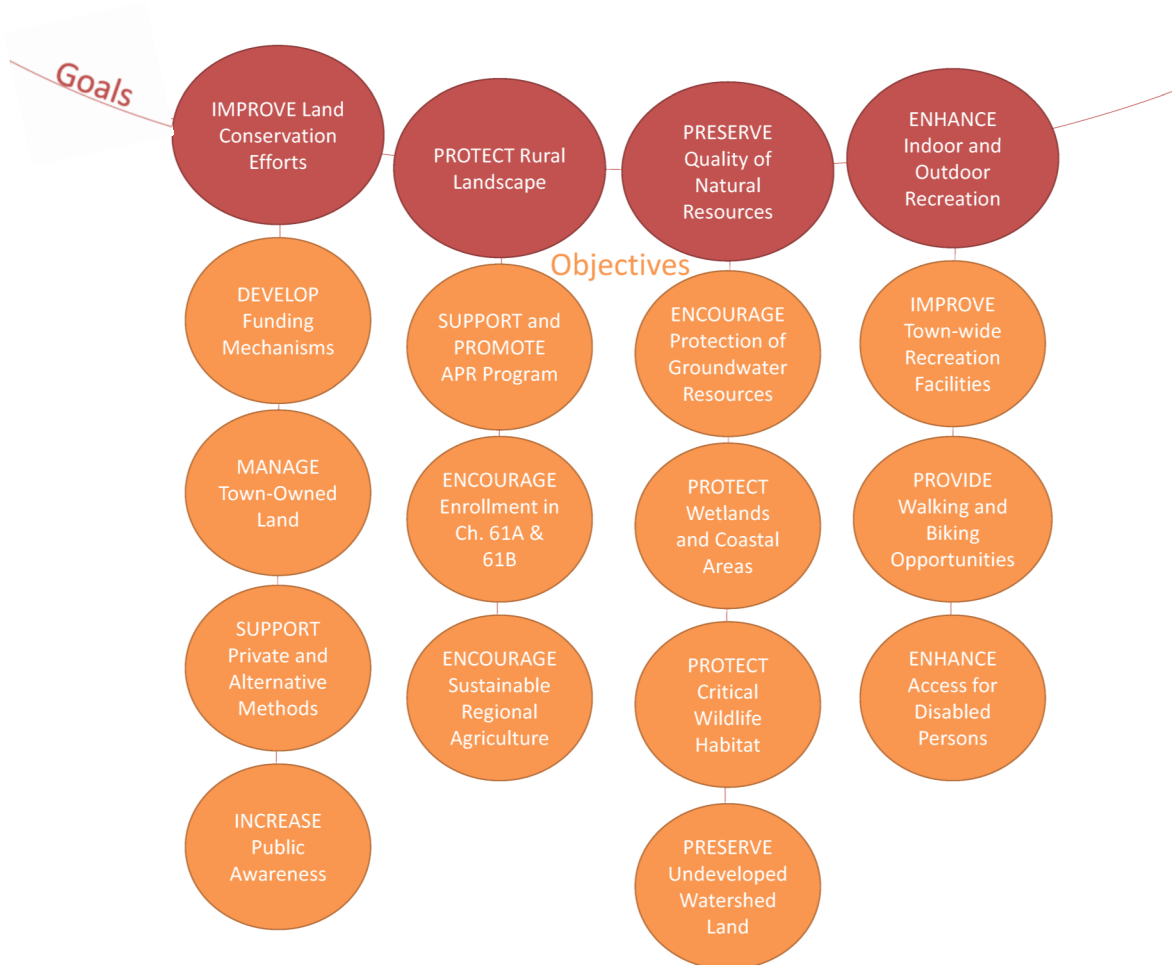
Closing (11:30 AM – 12:30 PM)

After the break-out exercises, participants convened into a general session. HW facilitators reported out to participants on the top challenges and opportunities that were discussed among their groups, as well as the modifications that were suggested for the draft goals and objectives. Jim Hartnett, Westport Town Planner, then closed the meeting, thanking the public for coming to the workshop and for providing valuable input for the plan. Participants were encouraged to contact the Planning Department, Planning Board, or Master Plan Committee with any follow up questions or comments. Participants were also invited to attend the next three Master Plan public workshops, which will be held in Fall, 2014.

HW Bubble Worksheets follow.



Open Space and Recreation



Workshop 2 Summary

Public Workshop #2

The Westport Master Plan Committee (MPC) hosted the second public workshop on the Master Plan Update on Saturday, September 27, 2014 from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM at the Westport Public Library. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce and gain public input on three of the ten Master Plan elements:

- Economic Development;
- Housing; and
- Transportation and Circulation.

An interactive break-out exercise was used to elicit community input regarding local challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to these elements. Seventeen (17) participants registered on the sign-in sheets representing a variety of Westport stakeholders. The following is a summary of the feedback received at the workshop.

Registration (9:00 – 9:20 AM)

As participants arrived at the workshop, they were greeted by the Town Planner, members of the MPC and/or the consultant team from the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW). Agendas, nametags, and handouts were provided as they signed in at the registration table. Refreshments were donated by the MPC members. There were posters showing the

community survey results and community maps on display for participants to view during this time as well.

Opening Remarks and Presentation (9:20 – 10:00 AM)

Jim Hartnett, Westport's Town Planner, greeted the participants and asked Elaine Ostroff, member of the Planning Board and Co-Chair of the MPC to provide an introduction to the Master Plan Workshop, which included a summary of the work that has been done by the MPC to date and future meetings. The Town's consultant, HW was introduced and their role in the process, facilitating the four public workshops that will take place as part of the Master Plan update.

HW presentation began with an overview of the Master Plan update process that included: the background and purpose of the Community Master Plan; some example projects that came out of the 2004 Master Plan; and the tasks to accomplish for updating the Master Plan.

HW then "set the stage" for the break-out exercise. They summarized the challenges and opportunities related to each of the three focus elements. The draft goals and objectives related to each element were also briefly presented. HW then introduced the purpose and directions for the break-out

exercise itself.

Break-out Exercises (10:00 – 11:30 AM)

Because of the small group, participants were asked to divide themselves into two break-out groups and all three topics were discussed by each group.

HW facilitators guided each break-out group through a discussion of challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to each of the three focus elements. Each topic was addressed individually. For each topic, the group was asked two questions:

1. What are the top challenges and opportunities related to [Economic Development, Housing or Transportation and Circulation]?
2. Are these challenges and opportunities addressed sufficiently and accurately by the proposed Master Plan goals and objectives or do you have any suggested edits or additions?

Each question was allotted approximately 30 minutes for discussion of each topic. After the facilitator read the first question aloud, group members worked individually for a few minutes to write down their thoughts on a worksheet. These worksheets would be collected at the end of the workshop. Each group member was then provided the opportunity to share one idea, noting that their other ideas written down would also be considered. If time allowed, group members provided additional ideas after each person shared their first idea. Responses were recorded on a flipchart.

This process was repeated for the second question. Instead of writing responses on the flipchart, a “bubble diagram” was used. The bubble diagram poster-size in the center of the table, and included key phrases that described each goal and objective. Word-smithing of the goals and objectives themselves was discouraged and the group focused on determining whether any larger issues, goals or

objectives were absent. Responses were noted on the bubble diagrams.

The following includes a summary of the public input received through the break-out exercises for each element.

Economic Development

Group #1 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Existing strip commercial development
- Lack of tax revenue
- Water and sewer
 - Low tax rate implications and tax trade off
 - Lack of infrastructure
- Understanding the private sector (ROI)
- Monetize without compromise
- There is no cultural brand.
- There is no infrastructure for micro enterprises, such as capital and training.
- Age demographic
- NIMBY culture
- School system reputation
- Run government more like a business
- Town landing
- Social divide
- Housing costs
- Zoning compatibility between districts

Opportunities

- Proximity to UMASS and the hospital and medical school
- Enhance and reinforce agriculture and “farm to table”
- There is an culture of accepting economic development
- Are there opportunities for fishing spinoffs?
- Marketing Westport’s assets
- There is a good foundation of arts and culture.

- Aquaculture industries
- Transportation network is pretty good.
- Is the town's location an asset?
- Cultural legacy
- Marine
- Food science
- Positive image with investors: "We make it here."
- Culture of creators
- Large business, small fiscal impact
- Town landing
- Seasonal real estate, service people: demand will rise
- Promote costs
- Connect generations
- Existing jobs, people and families

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- The town lacks services, land and infrastructure for economic development – water and sewer
- There is no land for an industrial park. Zoning is restrictive, no water and sewer service.
- The town has not defined what type of economic development is right for Westport, a small community. What fits? What's happening now? Do we keep the status quo?
- Lack of social services for the aging population
- Understanding the Town's role in economic development activities, promoting economic development in Westport.

Opportunities

- Route 6 has water and sewer from Fall River, access to fiberoptics. However, the developer has to pay to access.
- People working from home only need internet and no other facilities (e.g. water/sewer)
- Need to rethink what is here, the types of businesses

- Waterfront and fishing – are there opportunities to have support businesses like refrigeration? Right now the product leaves town for processing.
- The town to market the "Westport" brand.
- Access to the water.
- Regional opportunities available to Westport: ATMC in Fall River.
- The Science and Technology overlay district exists on Route 6 to attract the types of startups coming out of ATMC.
- What types of funding opportunities are out there?
- Business to Business
- Solar farm, doesn't require water and sewer but uncertain how much money comes into town and does not add jobs – no employees onsite.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

- Under Goal 1. *Pursue and develop commerce*, the town needs to clearly define what economic development means to Westport.
- Under Objective 1.1. *Expand administrative capabilities to support economic development*, include cross-departmental support.

Housing

Group #1 Flipchart

General Comments

- Should we reduce from 60 to 40?
- There needs to be more acceptance of multi-family projects and affordability.
- Is there a regional solution?
- Balance between wage and eligibility?

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Low income requires subsidy
- Lack of small accessible housing (mobility,

etc.)

- Lack of accessible neighborhoods, being walkable
- Affordable homes are needed for elderly
- Land and housing is expensive.
- Low variety, even for moderate income \$50,000 - \$70,000
- Moderate affordable
- Package septic systems: why don't we see more of these?
- Housing are not being passed to other family members. Why? Is it taxes?
- Developers of multi-family won't build here.
- Fall River and New Bedford are absorbing all the families for affordability
- Perception of affordable
- 10% requirement of 40B – poor design

Opportunities

- Low income requires subsidy
- Central Village: zoning isn't working for density
- Westport Factory
- North Village Overlay: allows up to 50 units, including rental
- Lots of land, but is it good land?
- Package septic systems: why don't we see more of these?
- Mixed use area vs. zoning
- Co-housing models, like Sandy Wood in Tiverton, RI
- High income jobs
- Modify zoning with inclusionary requirement, but there is the septic issue
- There are two apartment complexes: Oak Ridge and Edgewater

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- There is a need for veterans housing.
- There is no alternative to downsize. There are some in the North End on Main Road,

but not adequate. There are no amenities, no connection to community or the outdoors.

- NIMBYism.
- Zoning does not encourage connections between neighborhoods.
- Lack of public water and sewer systems.
- Limited land.
- There are empty town buildings and vacant town-owned land that could be used to develop affordable housing, but it is not a priority of the town's executive body. Larger projects become a priority.
- In addressing the need for water and sewer: public wells require a lot of land.
- Seasonal housing should be included.
- Need also to develop housing that is affordable, which requires a spectrum of housing types. This requires smaller lots, which can incorporate open space.
- The town's population is aging and there are no young families. Is that sustainable?
- Town needs to understand who is building homes and who is buying homes in Westport, and why.
- There is a lack of units that are accessible to those with disabilities.

Opportunities

- The town has an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- Put affordable housing everywhere so it isn't concentrated in one place.
- Connect neighborhoods with the larger community.
- New construction that has a sense of "Westport" in its character, identity, and place-making. This adds value.
- Increased density can increase neighborliness, particularly open space preservation where homes are concentrated on one part and the rest left as open space.
- Natural resources.
- Educate public about what is affordable housing and who lives in affordable units.
- Second homes are increasing. There is less

impact on town services, and could lead to rentals. Is there a market for it?

- There are empty town buildings and vacant town-owned land that could be used to develop affordable housing.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

- Objective 1.1. *Increase supply of smaller housing units.* There needs to be equal emphasis on homes that are “affordable” (smaller units, smaller lots, etc.) and “affordable housing” that meets the mission of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust (Objective 1.2). Units that are accessible to those with disabilities should also be included in both these objectives.
- Objective 1.2. *Increase the supply of more affordable units.* There should be more connections between the Westport Affordable Housing Trust and the Planning Board.
- Objective 1.4. *Provide a wider range of housing options.* The group stressed the need to understand why people move to Westport, or do not.
- Objective 2.1. *Encourage flexible design standards to protect open space.* The town should also use this approach in protecting agricultural lands, where subdivisions allow activities can continue.
- Objective 2.2. *Incorporate climate change into Zoning By laws.* Also consider affordability for homeowners in new requirements.
- Objective 3.1. *Encourage new development to be compatible with surroundings.* The town should consider Central Village design guidelines.
- Objective 3.2. *Support infrastructure improvements that improve livability.* Connecting with the Westport itself and other neighborhoods through physical improvements as well as civically and socially. Improvements should also be accessible to those with disabilities. The town needs to understand the tradeoffs of denser development, and the ser-

vices needed.

Transportation and Circulation

Group #1 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Lack of pedestrian safety.
- Lack of transit, but not set up for it.
- Medical center on Route 177 needs improvements. There are a lot of accidents.
- Lack of signage for basic rules.
- Rate of improvements doesn’t match traffic.
- Route 177 needs better access management.
- Zoning facilitates dead ends. Future connections are not covered (Beach Avenue) and access management is not considered (Route 177).
- Vegetation/stripping.

Opportunities

- Aging population is pent up demand for transit.
- Clover leaf at I-195/Route 6/Route 88 is under appreciated.
- There are no opportunities.
- Route 88 protects residential development and has easy access.
- Traffic is good, but needs management.
- Speed control – speeding is bad for walking and biking. More enforcement is needed.

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Lack of public transit expect on Route 6.
- SRTA service on Route 6 needs improvements/awareness. There is no park and ride.
- There is growing demand for public transit with changing demographics and for those with disabilities.

- It is hard to walk and bike on local roads. Vegetation needs maintenance along roadways to increase shoulder for walking and biking.
- The town attracts road races (cyclists) that don't necessarily lead to benefits for the town, and adds to safety problems.
- Adding bike infrastructure (lanes, etc.) changes the character of the road.
- Lower speed limits on town local roads plus increased enforcement.
- Lack of options for the aging/elderly and those with disabilities on getting to appointments. Options focus on local appointments and not those out of town.
- Central Village is not safe for pedestrians and bikes.
- Westport is a car-oriented community. It's spread out.

Opportunities

- Routes 88, 6 and 177 are well connected and opportunities for development.
- Bicycle path along Route 88 ROW, north to south can connect to the Providence-to-Cape Cod bikeway being planned. It could also serve commuters to Fall River.
- Are school buses/routes an opportunity to include the elderly?
- Route 88 saved Westport. It saved Main Road and Horseneck Road.
- Is there an opportunity to encourage traffic to Route 177 from Old County Road? Commuters to UMAS. And East-West main thoroughway is needed.
- Water transportation alternatives.
- Are mini-ports, used to divert barges, an opportunity? Route 88 is a large roadway to handle trucking.
- Increase opportunities to cross Route 88.
- Park and ride stops along Route 88 for cyclists/shuttles to local roads
- The town is lucky to have 3 state-maintained roads.
- The Council on Aging has expanded its trans-

portation options, but still limited.

- Rural Uber? Rideshare opportunities for local and regional destinations (e.g. doctor's appointments).
- Conservation land could incorporate bike and walking paths, making connections between places, like schools. Surfaces need to be wide enough and materials that are smooth.
- Route 88 could be used as a bus corridor, with park-and-rides at lights within the easement. Summer bus shuttle is an option.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

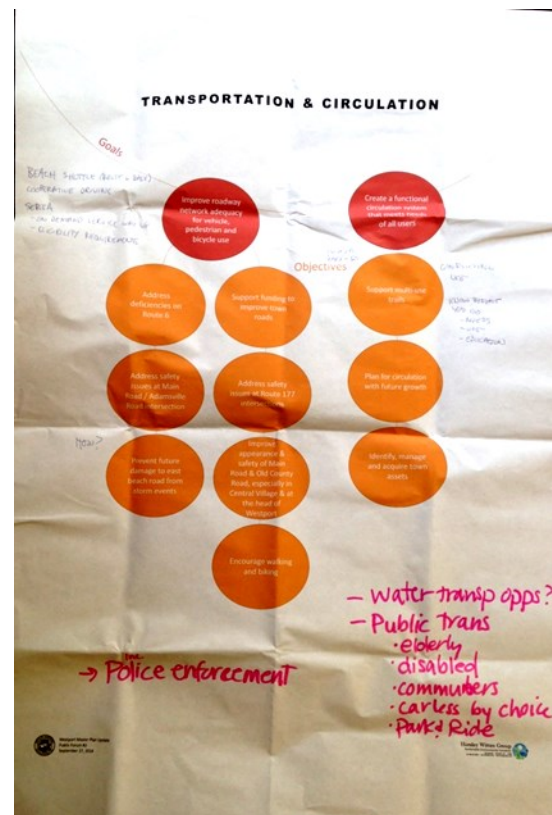
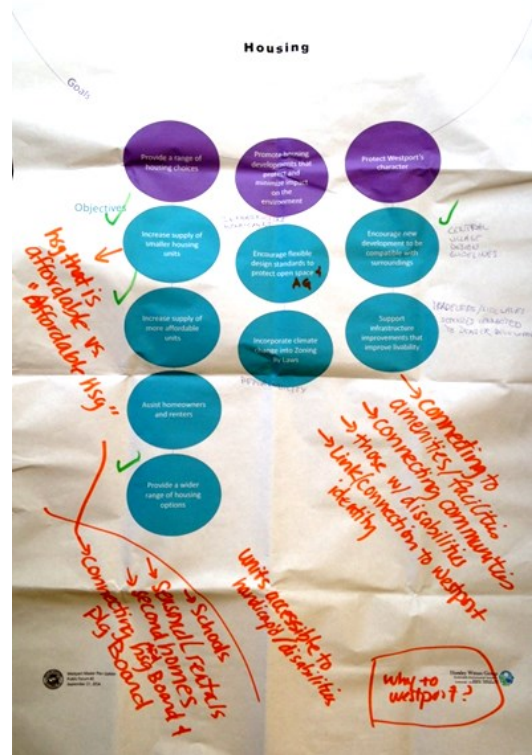
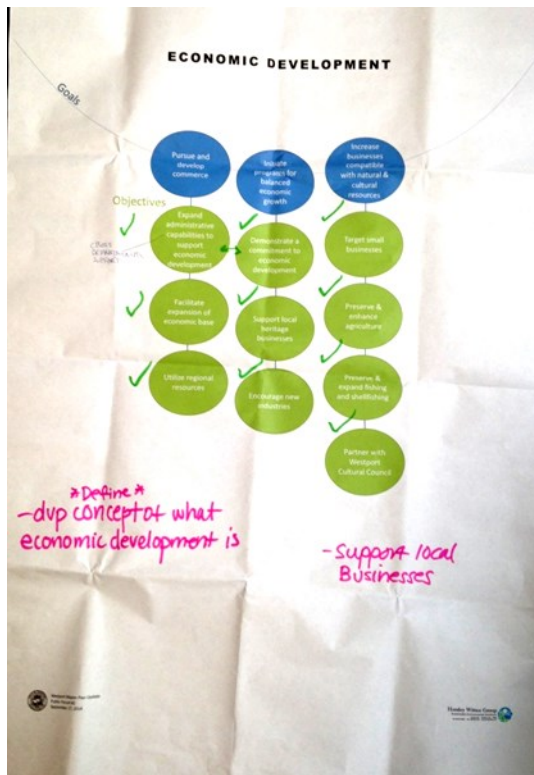
- Under Goal 2, *Create a functional circulation system that meets the needs of all users*, another objective needs to be added to explore public transportation in a variety of forms, including park and rides on Route 6 for the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), seasonal and/or commuter shuttle service within Westport, transit services for seniors, transit services for persons with disabilities, and those who wish to be carless by choice. An action item might also be coordination with SRTA to increase outreach in the community and better information and improved facilities at existing bus stops to encourage usage.
- Under Goal 2, the Town should be an objective that considers water transportation alternatives.
- Under Objective 2.1. *Support multi-use trails*, ensure outreach/education efforts, "Know before you go," about access and usage of trails/properties. The physical barriers some users by encounter to these trails and sites should also be explored and how to overcome them.

Closing (11:30 AM – 12:30 PM)

After the break-out exercises, participants

convened into a general session. HW facilitators reported out to participants on the common themes that were discussed among their groups. Jim Hartnett closed the workshop by thanking the public for coming and for providing valuable input for the plan. Participants were encouraged to contact the Planning Department, Planning Board, or Master Plan Committee with any follow up questions or comments. Participants were also invited to attend the next two Master Plan public workshops, which will be held October 25th and November 15th.

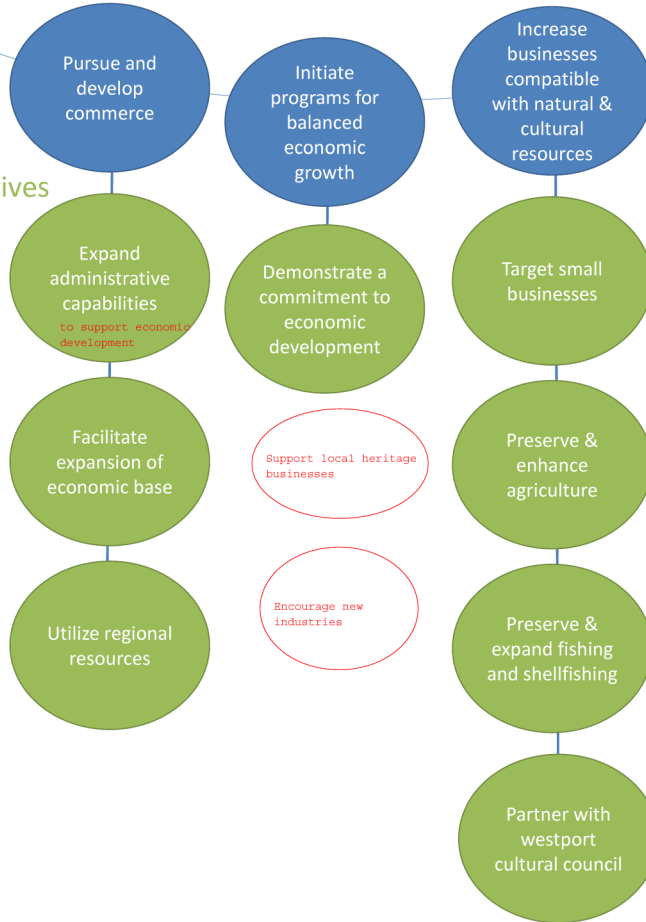
HW Bubble Worksheets follow.

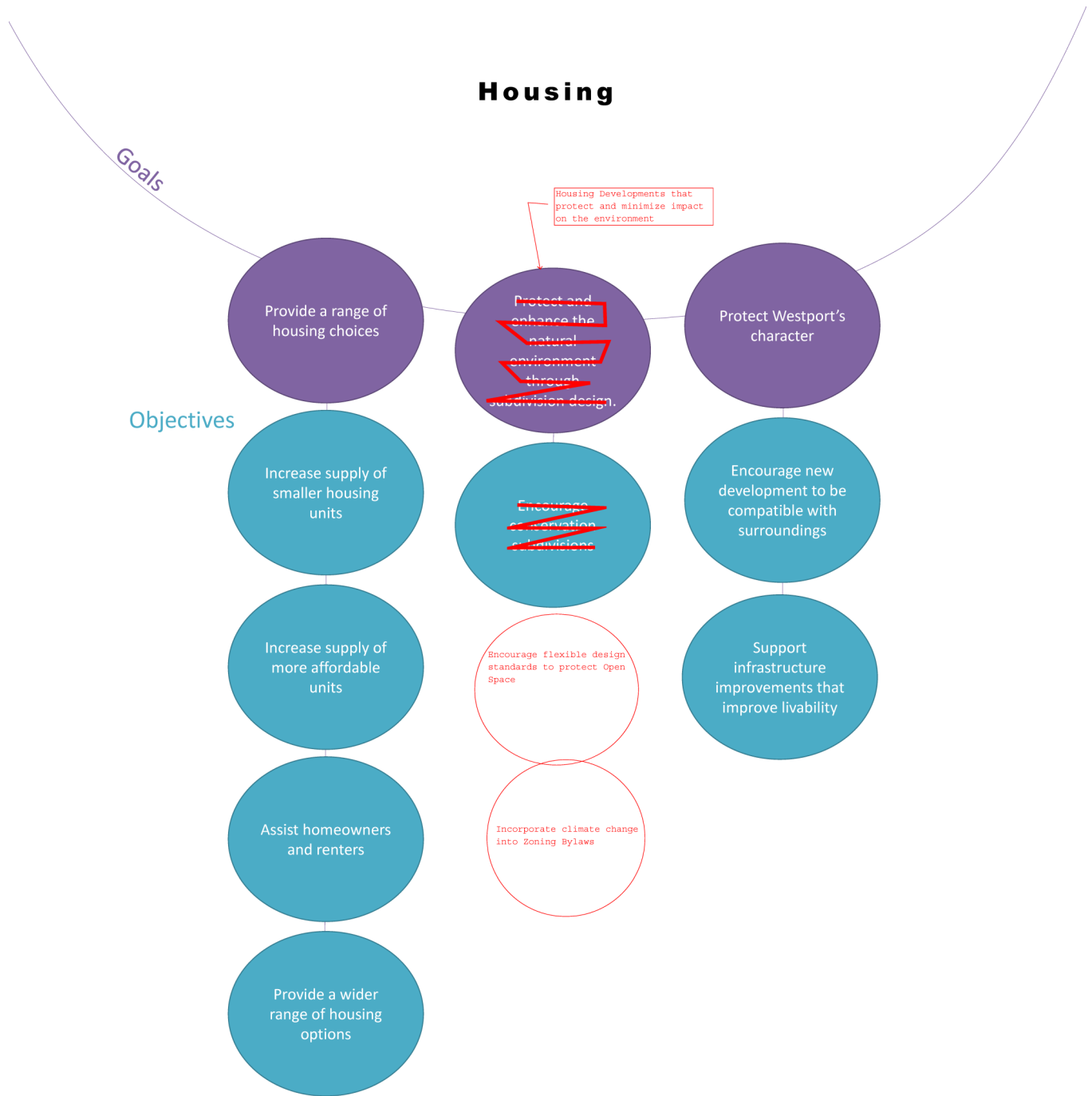


ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goals

Objectives





TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

Goals

Improve roadway network adequacy for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle use.

~~Study roadway network adequacy for vehicular and non-vehicular traffic~~

Create a functional circulation system that meets needs of all users

Integrate the needs of drivers, pedestrians and bicycles

Objectives

Address deficiencies on route 6

Support funding to improve town roads

Support multi-use trails

Address safety issues at main road / adamsville road intersection

Address safety issues at route 177 intersections

Plan for circulation with future growth

Prevent future damage to east beach road from storm events

Improve appearance and safety of main road, especially through central village

and Old County Road, especially central village and at the head of Westport

Identify, acquire and manage Town assets

Encourage walking and Bicycling

~~Make old county road easier to walk~~



Workshop 3 Summary

Public Workshop #3

The Westport Master Plan Committee (MPC) hosted the first public workshop on the Master Plan Update on Saturday, October 25, 2014 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Westport Public Library. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce and gain public input on three of the ten Master Plan elements:

- Creative, Cultural and Historic Resources;
- Capital Facilities and Human Services; and
- Land Use.

An interactive break-out exercise was used to elicit community input regarding local challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to these elements. Eighteen (18) participants registered on the sign-in sheets representing a variety of Westport stakeholders. The following is a summary of the feedback received at the workshop.

Registration (9:00 – 9:20 AM)

As participants arrived at the workshop, they were greeted by the Town Planner, members of the MPC and/or the consultant team from the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW). Agendas, nametags, and handouts were provided as they signed in at the registration table. Refreshments were donated by the MPC members. There were posters showing the

community survey results and community maps on display for participants to view during this time as well.

Opening Remarks and Presentation (9:20 – 10:00 AM)

Jim Hartnett, Westport's Town Planner, greeted the participants. He introduced the Town's consultant, HW, and described HW's role in the process, which is to facilitate the four public workshops that will take place as part of the Master Plan update.

HW provided an overview of the Master Plan, the update process, including the background and purpose of the Community Master Plan, some example projects that came out of the 2004 Master Plan, and the tasks to accomplish for updating the Master Plan. The Westport Master Plan will be comprised of ten elements, three of which were the focus of the day's workshop.

HW then "set the stage" for break-out exercise by reviewing draft goals and objectives related to each element that would be discussed. HW then introduced the purpose and directions for the break-out exercise itself.

Break-out Group Exercise I: Creative, Cultural and Historic Resources and Capital Facilities and

Human Services (10:00 – 10:45 AM)

The group was divided among two tables. HW facilitators guided each break-out group through a discussion of challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to two focus elements: Creative, Cultural and Historic Resources and Capital Facilities and Human Services. Each topic was addressed individually. For each topic, the group was asked two questions:

1. What are the top challenges and opportunities related to the topic?
2. Are these challenges and opportunities addressed sufficiently and accurately by the proposed Master Plan goals and objectives or do you have any suggested edits or additions?

Each question was allotted approximately 20 minutes for discussion of each topic. After the facilitator read the first question aloud, group members worked individually for a few minutes to write down their thoughts on a worksheet. These worksheets would be collected at the end of the workshop. Each group member was then provided the opportunity to share one idea, noting that their other ideas written down would also be considered. If time allowed, group members provided additional ideas after each person shared their first idea. Responses were recorded on a flipchart.

This process was repeated for the second question. Instead of writing responses on the flipchart, a “bubble diagram” was used. The bubble diagram poster-size in the center of the table, and included key phrases that described each goal and objective. Word-smithing of the goals and objectives themselves was discouraged and the group focused on determining whether any larger issues, goals or objectives were absent. Responses were noted on the bubble diagrams.

The following is a summary of the discussion that came out of both groups.

Creative, Cultural and Historic Resources

Group #1 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Zoning does not allow for artist space and other mixed uses.
- The survey already performed reached a small portion of the town’s residents. How do we reach more people to understand their concerns and interests? To get more volunteers?
- Getting newer residents to accept rural culture.
- The limited school curriculum restricts outreach to students about local history.
- The Town has limited financial resources to maintain structures.
- Competing uses for land.
- Some organizations have difficulty managing their administrative duties versus maintaining their historic buildings (e.g. finances).
- How do we monetize our culture and history without being Disney? Keep it authentic.
- Insufficiently defined hubs. The town is geographically large and resources are dispersed.
- No marketing – can we leverage the Bristol County Tourism Bureau, local universities and colleges?
- There are a number of town buildings that are not being used.
- Transportation is limited and it is difficult to get students/seniors to sites.
- There is a disparity between the villages and the rural areas of town. There is a different mindset (ethnic, social, economic). Residents rarely cross paths, and tend to stay in their neighborhoods.

Opportunities

- There are 500 members of the Historic Society. There is great interest in the town’s historic resources.

- The Handy House is open and there are a lot of activities happening there. 350 people attended Artisan Day.
- Community wide there is a heightened awareness of historic structures.
- Historic structures have not been destroyed. For example, the town farm (poor farm) is preserved, and there are lots of activities. Many towns no longer have their historic town farms.
- There are lots of engaged families.
- There are lots of creative citizens of all ages. Many are working artists and historians. They are an untapped resource. There is room for collaboration.
 - W.A.G. (Westport Art Group)
 - Dedee Shattuck Gallery
- Villages have the potential to become creative hubs.
- Schools offer many opportunities to engage students in historic and cultural activities/awareness.
- The Town has approved Community Preservation Act funds.
- Opportunities to be part of South Coast artist gallery tours.
- Westport's rural culture is important to protect, right to farm, fish, hunt, burn wood. It's important to articulate what it means to be rural, have acceptance by the community.
- Each village has a different character, and there are opportunities for collaboration to promote community's culture and history.
- There may be an opportunity to create an arts district.
- There should be more events to celebrate and promote Westport's culture that includes agriculture, fishing, and maritime heritage. Both historic and on-going.
- There are a lot of religious institutions that could be partners.
- Need to tap "local legends" through discussions, lectures and storytelling.

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Walkability throughout the Town.
- Lack of connectivity between separate unique areas.
- A range of demographics throughout the Town.
- Mapping of and access to information is limited.
- Access to historical documentation is limited.
- Funding for education, arts, and music within the school system and Town overall is limited.
- The value of the Town's cultural identity is vaporous.
- Pedestrian safety throughout the Town (limited sidewalks).
- Lack of public transit options.
- The identification of new talent and energy for improved participation.
- Unmonitored demolition of built environment (history of the Town).
- The need to educate the youth on the Town's cultural history.
- The ability/capacity to implement a long-range plan.
- Establishing a coherent vision amidst conflicting viewpoints.

Opportunities

- Town is not yet fully built out.
- Richness/diversity of the Town's existing history and culture.
- Opportunity to build on existing successes.
- Range of demographics.
- Variety of evolution of village development.
- Utilization of farming/agricultural preservation efforts.
- Creation of a community identity (Westport Matters).
- Creation of a cultural district.
- Incorporating retail and restaurants as a critical part of the existing culture.

- Where appropriate, the capacity for mixed-use zoning.
- Specific community groups (outside of government) need to come forward and rise up as stakeholders.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

There was general agreement that the draft goals and objectives would address the challenges and opportunities discussed.

There was a comment that the terms “agriculture” and “maritime” are specific. Using the term “rural” would be more appropriate and encompass Westport’s culture.

HW recommendations moving forward

- The identity of Westport as a rural community rich in local heritage could be one of the most important aspects of the Master Plan and should be a focal point for the Master Plan document as a whole.
- Residents are divided on many issues and, anecdotally, the tension often arises with folks who moved to the Town in recent years in contrast with those who were raised in Westport or have lived there for decades. Issues related to tax rates, housing diversity, infrastructure investment, public access to the water, and school facilities often show a sharp split in opinion between these two broad groups. It is the strong opinion of HW staff that the promotion of the local rural heritage in Westport is the best opportunity to create town-wide excitement and pull people together before tackling some of the more challenging questions. We believe this should be one of the top priorities for the Town emerging from the Master Plan process.
- HW recommends the Master Plan call for a citizen-led group (e.g., Working Group, Task Force, etc.) to begin shaping a brand for the community that promotes these strengths through a more formal marketing strategy.

Capital Facilities and Human Services

Group #1 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Limited funding and revenue
- The town’s geographic size makes it difficult to get things done. Services are spread out.
- There is a perception of needs and a perception of how much it costs for town services (e.g. fire, police, and transportation for students).
- PCBs.
- Lack of awareness by the general public of what it takes to run a program or department – the human resources needed.
- The town owns a lot of buildings, old buildings. Which are no longer useful? Which should be rehabilitated? Which are historic?
- Maintenance is a cost burden. Money is going down and needed services are going up.
- There is a general common goal in the general use of facilities, but cost drives how facilities are getting used.
- There is an increase in the number of seniors, and their needs will be changing in the future.
- 2 ½ override, structural deficit
- Getting utility costs down. There is a committee but need town staff to manage.
- There are shared services programs through Central Planning, but Westport is not involved. There could be opportunities with 911 services and rubbish collection.
- There is no long-term planning.
- Only one town staff person is designated for building maintenance.
- Technology is needed at town hall, but requires money.
- The single tax rate cannot support what is expected. It is too low and does not bring in revenue.
- There is an imbalance of age groups. The

town is getting older and worries about keeping families in town.

- Declining school age population and increasing elderly population.
- Land conservation reduces tax revenue.
- There is lack of consensus.
- Need to protect the right to water resources.
- The large number of water courses results in a large number of crossings. The challenge is to keep them maintained, and protect water quality.
- There is limited public transportation.
- There is a lack communication between government departments which results in duplicate efforts. It reduces opportunities to share and coordinate resources.
- Some areas of town do not participate in government and their voices are not heard.
- Funds to maintain buildings compete with programs that go on in each building.
- Can the number of polling stations be reduced?

Opportunities

- Can we share resources with neighboring communities, such as dispatching, veterans' services, and water supply?
- Share resources within the town (e.g. software), but difficult to coordinate.
- There are people committed to the town.
- The talented people that live in town are underutilized. They need to be involved.
- There are lots of access to opportunities to be active and healthy, open space and recreation.
- People have historic perspectives.
- It is a small town and people know each other.
- There is a common pursuit to protect rural culture.
- The low tax rate makes the town affordable.
- Town debt is low.
- The Council on the Aging is strong, and provides great services, has capacity to meet future needs.
- The town has enough buildings to meet

needs.

- Buildings can support multiple uses. E.g. schools can offer adult education after hours, after-school programming.
- There are a lot of private groups to tap to help fill the gaps in town services. E.g. watershed group, fishing association, art group.

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Individual departments function in silos.
- Lack of top-down management (based on form of government...lack of information sharing).
- Low tax base (and pride in this).
- Limited institutional awareness of municipal services.
- Dated/antiquated website.
- Lack of a local newspaper for information sharing.
- Presence of PCBs in construction materials at the middle school share concerns for reuse.
- Priorities/attitudes towards spending within the Town.
- Accessibility/awareness of services available.
- Looking at new facilities...needs vs. costs, and secondary impacts on sense of place.
- Limited daycare, assisted living, elderly housing offerings.
- Non-centralized municipal services...no one really knows where to go, a directory is needed.
- Determining the highest and best use of town facilities.
- Public meeting space is limited.

Opportunities

- Improved opportunity for better communication, information sharing, etc. with an improved website.
- Expansion capacity at Town Landing/docks for better utilization.

- Model the success of the C.O.A. for other programs/departments.
- Creation of a newspaper/newsletter for improved public relations.
- Centralized meeting space at Town Hall annex.
- Expansion of aquaculture.
- Expansion of new technologies for septic designs.
- Expansion of public parking through Town holdings and improved pedestrian safety.
- Creation of a forum where existing residents are engaged and can contribute (engagement of existing talents).
- What more can the Town do regarding alternative energy?

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

- There was general agreement that the draft goals and objectives would address the challenges and opportunities discussed.
- There was specific discussion around the fact that the Town should be doing more green/alternate energy projects.

HW recommendation moving forward

- Although not discussed in the breakout groups, HW believes the Town may benefit from some training for the purposes of streamlining their operations. There are several groups that provide this type of training, sometimes referred to as “Lean” training. This type of outside perspective is often very valuable for addressing many of the issues brought forward in the break out groups (e.g., departments working in silos). The Master Plan language could call for the exploration of this type of training as part of economic development/facilities planning.
- The Master Plan language should also call for a state-of-the art website. This came up in discussions around facilities, but it also dovetails with discussions around culture and economic development.

Break-out Group Exercise II: Land Use (10:45 AM – 11:30 AM)

For this exercise, each group had a zoning map and was asked about the character of existing commercial and residential areas, which areas could be transformed and which need support to maintain their existing character. Specific questions were:

1. How would you characterize the different commercial areas? How do you envision them in the future? Staying the same or being different?
2. Are there unique residential areas with their own character? How do you envision them in the future? Staying the same or being different?
3. Are there areas with a mix of commercial and residential? What is unique about these areas? How do you envision these areas in the future?

The following is a summary of the discussion that came out of both groups.

Areas Zoned Commercial

- **Route 6**
 - Traditionally Route 6 supported those driving to Cape Cod before the interstate was built (e.g. hotels, restaurants). Right now it is predominantly used car dealers, auto repair shops, metal recycling and restaurants. It was noted that there are not chain establishments.
 - There was a study of Route 6 that identified three distinct areas: (from west to east) commercial, residential, and mixed use. There was a recommendation to expand zoning boundaries along the roadway to encompass an entire lot, as well as changes to the use table in the zoning by-law.
 - A 43R mixed use arts district is envisioned at the intersection of Route 6 and Route 177. Coordination with Dartmouth

is needed, but there is little interest. The area lacks water and sewer. There is a grant for the state to improve the intersection.

- Route 6 has ultra-high speed Internet appropriate to high-tech businesses. This is preferred rather than retail. How does the town attract these types of businesses?
- Water and sewer is available from Fall River, but the developer would have to pay to connect to the service lines in the roadway. The Town doesn't have these resources.
- Uncertainty of 'unrestricted area' in proximity to commercial corridor.

- **Route 177**

- The boundaries of commercial zoning along Route 177 could be different at the intersection with Route 88 to accommodate larger commercial concepts that look for highway access.
- Area between Route 6 and Route 177 is referred to as the "Crossroads". Boundary size may need to increase in its distance from the road to enable commercial development.
- Traffic/capacity is a major concern here and commercial use needs to take this into account.
- The potential for conflicts with residential component exist.

- **Central Village**

- The southern boundary of the commercial zoning around Central Village should be further north. Perhaps it could stop around Perry's Bakery.
- Increasing density and making the area more walkable is desired, but the lack of water and sewer is a barrier. Is a public water supply the answer?
- Adaptive reuse should be a priority as

there are some historically significant structures. These structures aren't registered...but are significant nonetheless.

Areas Zoned Residential

Distinct neighborhoods in Westport are:

Harbor
The Point
South Westport
North Westport
Head of Westport
The Factory (though probably more commercial than residential)

A marine zone or overlay might be a tool to promote maritime uses.

Open space residential development is allowed under special permit. Should it be by right?

HW recommendations moving forward

- Language in the Master Plan should reflect the desire to explore improvements to the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw. The Commonwealth's model bylaw was recently replaced by a Natural Resources Protection Bylaw. The most important aspect of this new guidance is the use of by-right zoning for these innovative subdivisions. This approach makes it more advantageous for the developer to apply these more environmentally sensitive techniques.
- Although not discussed in the break out groups, HW recommends the Master Plan include language calling for the exploration of other housing models such as Cottage Zoning. This traditional neighborhood model has shown great promise in several Massachusetts and Rhode Island communities. The quality of design is excellent, the market demand is high, community satisfaction is high, and the development of this style of housing helps to create options for single homebuyers and seniors looking to down-size.
- The Master Plan should call for a specific examination of zoning boundaries. HW rec-

ommends the inclusion of a map that generally circles areas that should be reconsidered. For example, rezoning the lower portion of the Main Street commercial district to residential going south from Perry's Bakery seemed to make sense to participants at the meeting.

- There are other overarching issues related to zoning districts beyond the extent of commercial district boundaries. HW recommends the Master Plan call for the creation of a Zoning Bylaw Revision Committee (ZBRC). This group would have a two to three-year charge aimed at making significant changes to the bylaw. Issues that would be addressed could include (but would not be limited to):
 - Where appropriate, altering the delineation of certain districts to better reflect the needs of desired uses and the current delineation of property lines. The use of fixed distances from a road to delineate district boundaries may be a hindrance to economic development.
 - New housing types (see comment above).
 - The development of design guidelines for different districts.
 - Creating distinct commercial districts for Main Street, Route 6, and Route 177.

HW Bubble Worksheets follow.

Closing (11:30 AM – 12:00 PM)

After the break-out exercises, participants convened into a general session. HW facilitators reported out to participants on the common themes that were discussed among their groups. Jim Hartnett closed the workshop by thanking the public for coming and for providing valuable input for the plan. Participants were encouraged to contact the Planning Department, Planning Board, or Master Plan Committee with any follow up questions or comments. The next workshop will discuss education and will be scheduled after the first of the year (2015).



CAPITAL FACILITIES AND HUMAN SERVICES

Goals

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

Objectives

Develop a 20-year Capital Plan

Study Town Departments in terms of allocated resources, personnel and manpower

Reduce energy use in municipal buildings and operations

Goals

LAND USE

Maintain Westport's rural appearance by preserving natural and cultural features

Preserve coastal, riverfront and pastoral landscapes

Ensure farming and commercial fishing continue as vital economic activities

Promote and protect the Town's natural and unique resources

Direct growth to areas that have most potential to absorb it

Plan for the challenges and needs that arise as the Town continues to develop

Develop a Town-wide infrastructure plan addressing water, stormwater and wastewater management

Enable land use departments and boards to effectively deal with increasing complex growth management needs

Develop strategies for residential development that will meet the needs of the Town

Direct housing development to complement Town's rural character

Explore various housing types to meet the demands of the residents

Consider the effects of Climate Change on Land Use and the Environment

Develop strategies for commercial development that will meet the needs of the Town

Direct commercial development to complement Town's rural character

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

Reinforce character of villages through land use tools

Plan for village growth

Objectives

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Workshop 4 Summary

Public Workshop #4

The Westport Master Plan Committee (MPC) hosted the first public workshop on the Master Plan Update on Saturday, February 7, 2015 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Westport Public Library. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce and gain public input on the Education Element.

An interactive break-out exercise was used to elicit community input regarding local challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to these elements. Twenty-four participants registered on the sign-in sheets representing a variety of Westport stakeholders. The following is a summary of the feedback received at the workshop.

Registration

As participants arrived at the workshop, they were greeted by the Town Planner, members of the MPC and/or the consultant team from the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW). Agendas, nametags, and handouts were provided as they signed in at the registration table. Refreshments were donated by the MPC members. There were posters showing the community survey results and community maps on display for participants to view during this time as well.

Opening Remarks and Presentation

Jim Hartnett, Westport's Town Planner, greeted the participants. Elaine Ostroff, Westport Planning Board member and Chair of the MPC provided an overview of the update process. Westport Community School Superintendent, Ann Marie Dargon, also addressed the group and encouraged them to visit their website to view their vision and district goals.

The Town's consultant, HW, was introduced. Their role in the process has been to facilitate four public workshops as part of the Master Plan update. HW provided an overview of the Master Plan, the update process, including the background and purpose of the Community Master Plan, some example projects that came out of the 2004 Master Plan, and the tasks to accomplish for updating the Master Plan. The Westport Master Plan will be comprised of ten elements, the final element, Education, was the focus of the day's workshop.

HW then "set the stage" for break-out exercise by reviewing draft goals and objectives related to Education. HW then introduced the purpose and directions for the break-out exercise itself.

Break-out Groups

Three sub-topics of education were discussed:

- Community engagement and public relations.
- Facilities.
- Financial resources.

Due to the limited time available, each attendee was able to participate in two break-out group discussions. For the first round, HW assigned attendees to one of the three tables by having them count off. Attendees were free to pick their preferred topic for the second break-out group.

HW facilitators guided the discussion of their break-out group around two questions:

1. Are there any big ideas missing from the draft goals and objectives?
2. What specific actions can we do to achieve these goals?

After the facilitator read the first question aloud, group members worked individually for a few minutes to write down their thoughts on a worksheet. These worksheets were collected at the end of the workshop. Each group member was then provided the opportunity to share one idea, noting that their other ideas written down would also be considered. If time allowed, group members provided additional ideas after each person shared their first idea. Responses were recorded on a flipchart.

Each break-out group had a bubble diagram poster-size in the center of the table that depicted key phrases of each goal and objective related to the sub-topic. Attendees were encouraged to use the diagram to answer the two questions. Refinement related to new big ideas or action items was made to the diagram.

The following is a summary of the discussion that came out of both groups.

Communications and Public Relations

The discussion of communications and public relations focus around what both groups identi-

fied as the “myth,” that Westport Community Schools did not offer a quality education, and this was the largest challenge to overcome. The accomplishments of existing students and faculty as well as alumni need to be showcased as a way to rise above the negative image.

One of the “big ideas” discussed to meet this challenge was identifying an advocate and/or liaison on behalf of the Westport Community Schools. They would be the point person between the schools and the general public. Their job would be to attend meetings of diverse committees, organizations and groups, including town meeting, to provide information about what is happening in the schools. Parents should also be encouraged to be advocates for their schools. Many are unfamiliar, or even intimidated, by the town meeting process. It is important to educate them on the governmental process and how they can use the meeting to promote the schools and gain support for school funding. Offering child care and other incentives to encourage them to attend town meeting (and other organized meetings to promote schools) should be part of the effort.

In addition to having an advocate, the school department and committee need to establish a two-way communication with the public, drawing them into the schools in a variety of ways. Some examples might be internships with local businesses and organizations, guest speakers in the classroom, increasing activities for the general public at schools (e.g. adult education classes or exercise classes) and promoting school-sponsored events such as sports or cultural activities.

Revisions to the draft goals and objectives were also provided by the groups during discussion. Specifically, Goal 1 should put less emphasis on college and standards, and focus on broader career routes and goals instead of standards that move students forward to be successful. A more overarching goal should also be drafted should state that the goal of public education is to prepare students to be re-

sponsible, engaged and productive citizens.

Below are notes from each group discussion that were taken on flipcharts.

Group #1

Big Ideas

- Using technology to engage community.
- Understand how funding impacts the quality of schools.
- The community doesn't understand the quality of education in Westport and those that do attend and their success.
- Get the community more involved – even those without children. Create pride, and promote what students are doing (e.g. sports)
- How the schools influence the outlook of the town, e.g. known for not funding schools
- Also non-technical ways to communicate with community.
- Establish a process to coordinate the use of school buildings. Get the public in the school buildings through events, adult education, online classes.
- The negative thinking about the school system and its effects on property values – it is a misunderstanding = “the myth” = it is a good school system and graduates have gone on to be successful.
- There needs to be two-way communication between the school department and the public/community.
- Private choice to send children to other schools is impacted by “the myth”.
- Engage the public to be a part of the school, multi-generations.

Actions

- Identify a school liaison/concierge as a person to call to use facilities, media to promote school. Some of this already goes on, but needs to be expanded.
- Reach out to other organizations (e.g. envi-

- ronmental groups) to come into schools.
- Have a routine, or regular schedule of activities, e.g. a monthly open house when there is something to see at the school, fun activities.
- Have a monthly info-mercial to share and reinforce positive aspects about the schools
- “Get people into the building” – some ideas: workout/gym after 5 pm.
- Barriers to getting into schools:
 - Doors/locks.
 - Insurance requirements.
 - Maintenance during after hours.
 - Security.
- Create a volunteer network of different groups/organizations/town committees to share with new concierge.
- Work with local businesses and organizations to establish student internships (use those with positive experiences to promote to others); e.g. working with seniors, “seed savers” project.
- Streamline the process to access school buildings.
- Hold community classes lead by school staff in school buildings – go over lessons that are being taught, e.g. new math.
- Develop a way to share opportunities and events with the communities.
 - All town departments/events linked online.
 - Online “one stop shop” for whole town – simplify the town’s current website.
 - Use multiple ways to reach out.
- “Partying” – hold events, encourage different groups to get together.

Group #2

Big Ideas

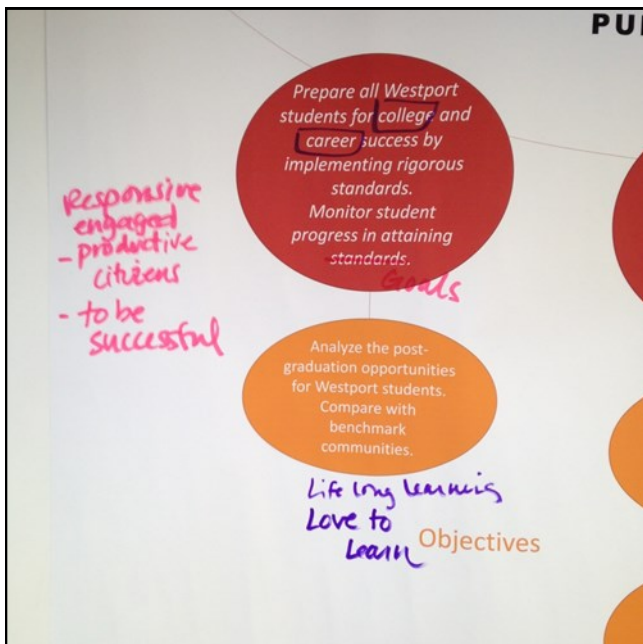
- Focus on the real purpose of public education – to develop citizenship skills, be responsible and engaged citizens
- There needs to be more positive advocacy for the schools that leads to...

- support of funding
- more kids staying in the public school system
- All citizens of town benefit from a good school system. A good school system attracts young families that become involved in the local community.
- Create a system that the community takes pride in and develops students in what they pursue.
- The school department needs to be prepared for moving projects forward: know how much projects are going to cost, do their homework, before going before the Board of Selectmen and the public. There needs to be better communication.
- Not all students go to college, and the objective on the chart needs to be broadened [see notes on bubble chart].
- Add lifelong learning to objectives [see bubble chart].

- Pride is needed. If people have pride, they talk about it in schools.
- Establish neighborhood schools.

Actions

- Establish neighborhood schools as a way to reach out and bring public into schools.
- Advocates for the school system that promote the positive and good things going on.
- Grants to develop democracy education.
 - Community interaction, they see what's going on in the school.
- Get kids into the community through community service.
- Parents are missing at town meetings – how to get them there.
 - Provide a place for them that is welcoming.
 - Educate about the government process.
 - There is a perception at town meeting that they are only voting for money.
 - There could be an informational session before voting at the town meeting.
 - Need to make provisions for parents (e.g. child care).
 - Build up momentum to the town meeting.
- Have meetings/ “Coffees” on different topics related to the schools.
- The school system has a product to see – use the 3 goals pitch.
- School department – stay the course and follow through a project to completion to show accomplishments.
- Develop talking points that are consistent, like a “Campaign”, something that is relevant across mandates, government, elected officials.
- Get parents to choose public schools
- Have community members with expertise or a skill set come into the school, get them to see inside the schools.
- Establish partnerships with businesses and environmental groups – a career day
- There is a loss of parents volunteering at the high school.



- The school department should develop three goals that half the town population knows. Keep them simple, understandable and bold.
- There needs to be an advocate for the school system that goes to each town meeting to promote it.

- Why are parents not sending their kids to public schools – ask. The Superintendent is doing this now.
- Have representatives advocate for Chapter 70 funding for fair distribution – Westport’s contribution to be proportional to others at Diman and Bristol Aggie.

HW Recommendations Moving Forward

- Setting high educational standards and improving student performance have typically been the goals of a school committee, which has the resources and knowledge base to develop policies and implement actions to meet these goals. This is no different in Westport. The Westport School District Improvement Plan lays out the District’s goals and strategic focus areas district-wide and by school. There are two approaches the Town could incorporate these into the master plan. The first approach is to ensure that draft Goal 1 and its objectives and action items are in alignment with the District Improvement Plan. An alternative approach is to reference the District Improvement Plan. The latter approach would ensure consistency as the District updates its plan.
- The master plan is an opportunity to provide the connection between the school district and the public, particularly with those that do not have children. It is an opportunity to “take a step back” to look at the big picture, and focus on assessing the impacts a quality education can have on a community as a whole. For example, a community with a reputation of having good schools will attract young families, which may be looking for starter homes they can afford and jobs within a short commute. With this in mind, the master plan can lay out goals and objects to build a communication strategy that promotes Westport Schools and attempts to dispel the myth that it is not a good school system. The Goal 2 and its objectives in the draft master plan are consistent with what was heard at the workshop.

- The draft master plan also has a goal to increase engagement between Westport Schools and the community (Goal 3). Discussions during the workshop clearly support this goal. Many of the actions that were mentioned at the workshop are part of the draft, particularly bringing the public into the schools for special sporting or cultural events, adult education classes, and other activities. This item is linked to the Facilities discussion and barriers that exist in gaining access to school buildings by the public outside of the school system.

Facilities

Similar to Communications and Public Relations, the groups that discussed Facilities felt there was a need to bring the general public into school buildings to help bring the community together and strengthen ties between the school system and the community at large. Some thought that the Town needed a large meeting space where larger groups could meet and where cultural events could take place and the schools were an opportunity to meet this need. They are currently underutilized. Efforts should be made to inform groups about the space, encourage use, and remove barriers where possible. Bringing groups into the schools can increase awareness of what’s going on there and in turn garner financial support for schools. It can also cultivate more engagement between the community, the schools and school programs.

School buildings must also meet the needs of students and faculty to offer a quality education. Older schools have equipment that is broken, highly worn, or outdated. Modernization is needed. HVAC upgrades to improve temperature control and sound-proofing needs are also critical. Improving school facilities also extends to the water supply systems and septic systems at the schools, some suggesting that they are reaching the end of their useful life and are already causing problems

Several participants pointed out that a segment of the school population is not being serviced, particularly those not interested in attending college, or not immediately attending post-secondary education. The students will enter the workforce after high school but with fewer skills than those exiting vocational schools. Westport’s schools need to address this concern, and it will mean some new and different facilities to serve this population. One approach would be to dedicate some building space(s) to activities that will help non-college bound students gain skills to make them competitive in the business environment. Some mentioned that Westport students have only 23 slots at Diman each year, and these are filled based on merit, leaving perhaps the most likely vocational oriented students with a less than ideal curriculum.

Finally, some participants noted that due to funding cuts, there are fewer extracurricular activities. This affects the school and the community in two very significant ways. First, the facilities that supported the extracurricular activities are deteriorating and/or being neglected, wasted and forgotten. Secondly, the loss of these activities is affecting the vibrancy of the schools themselves, the amount of engagement with parents, volunteers, and the community as a whole, altogether to the detriment of students and educational excellence.

Below are notes from each group discussion that were taken on flipcharts. The “Facilities” worksheets handed in by individuals are found in Attachment B.

Group #1

Big Ideas

- Larger meeting space is needed for community events.
- Sharing auditoriums & Athletic Fields.
- Adjustable classrooms to meet changing needs in education.
- Outside the class learning.

- Community members into the classroom.
- Public support and engagement.
- Facilities not over-arching.
- Facilities, problem solving, critical thinking, arts.
- Ask the educators and the students what they need.
- Strengthen K-8 facilities.
- Tap into programs outside Westport.
- Furniture needs updating.
- Concern with interim plans; appropriate use of resources.
- Central place for gathering – Town center.
- Can we maintain it? \$\$
- Opportunity for outdoor facilities.
- Potential for expansion; acquisition for the long term.
- Build public support for facilities.
- Keep it simple; better focus on school objectives.
- Should there be discussion of distributed facilities.

Actions

- Items need to begin now.
- Long term active building committee.
- Comprehensive look at all building issues needed – need professional advice.
- Make use of Roger Williams University services – Architectural outreach.
- Can Bristol Community College provide services in Westport Schools?

Group #2

Big Ideas

- Options for all students; competitive skills; some students left out.
- Multi-use school facilities.
- Long range Planning (10-15 years).
- Large auditorium.
- Prepare and ACT on the plan.
- HVAC/Sound proofing all schools.
- Basic infrastructure needs – Water and

Wastewater.

- Better coordination among public and private facilities.
- Combine facilities in one/central location.
- Attention to equipment needs.
- Modernize IT.
- Space flexibility and accommodate modern needs.
- Changing demographics driving need for more integrated school/community uses.
- Improve interconnectedness with the community.

Actions

- Educate public on school needs.
- Publicize facts on school facilities/availability.
- Address facilities' needs so that the Superintendent may focus on education.
- Act on the recommendations.
- What do students need? Build it! Vocational & College Prep.
- Need more extracurricular activities; limited investment being made to support these.

HW Recommendations Moving Forward

- Action items, and perhaps an objective, should focus very concretely on the dissemination of information. As with the school budget recommendations below, the Town should set up a formal system for gathering, organizing, and publicizing information on school facilities. Organized transparency will be critical to building trust and leveraging investment.
- Consider some bartering with professional development organizations. If they have equipment or furniture they could provide to the schools that would be useful, the school could provide classroom space in return.

Financial Resources

There was significant overlap between the

Financial Resources group discussion and those of other groups, particularly related to issues of public perception. While participants were quick to begin the discussion with the observation that funding for schools is inadequate, they were much more interested in discussing the public perceptions around this issue. According to participants, the disconnect between the reality of the school budget and the broader perceived reality is perhaps the largest barrier to solving the problem. In the view of participants at the table, there's a significant financial gap between what the school system can afford to provide and what students should have in order to have the educational experience residents want them to have.

The reality of the budget situation is that parents are required to pay fees for many activities and services that were once provided as part of the normal course of everyday public school experience. Additionally, money raised by volunteers plays a significant role in closing the gap on some of these basic services. Some participants were concerned that parents were "burning out" on donating their time and money for services and supplies that they feel should be provided through public funding. For those in the community not directly involved with the school system or without school aged children, there is often a perception of "things seem to be going fine". Without the day-to-day contact with the issues, many residents are not exposed to the reality of the budget situation and, therefore, do not approach funding issues at Town Meeting with any real sense of urgency.

Another barrier to increasing school funding that was voiced by both groups is a general lack of trust in local government spending. There were several anecdotes about prior municipal initiatives that did not achieve the results tax payers expected. These individual events add to the mistrust created by what participants felt was poor communication by the Town on financial issues. The manner in which budgets, projects, and overrides are presented can leave residents confused and/or misinformed. There

were many suspected reasons for this, but most felt that a lack of centralized management in town government makes it next to impossible to integrate information across department effectively and present information in a manner that is transparent and informative.

Finally, another theme that came from both groups is the encouragement of multi-use and revenue generating utilization of school buildings. While some participants approached this cautiously and others with great enthusiasm, there was consensus that the idea should definitely be explored. Reaching out to regional groups, especially those that provide classes and training, was viewed as an important next step in identifying potential “customers” who might want to rent classroom or other facility space.

Below are notes from each group discussion that were taken on flipcharts. The “Financial Resources” worksheets handed in by individuals are found in Attachment C.

Group #1

Big Ideas

- Need more funding.
- Perception of the school formula is that there is adequate money.
- Parent and community members feel that success of the schools indicates that funding levels are adequate.
- Local resources need to increase.
- How do we get support?
- How do we buffer impact of regional school formula?
- Can there ever be enough?
- There’s lots of money – we don’t know how to “talk to it.”
- There is too much focus on new school spending (% has increased).
- Parents are burning out with fees.
- Adversarial school committee and staff.
- Funding is a guessing game.

- Free cash (informational).
- Override will be impossible – there is a lack of trust.
 - ◆ Middle school example.
 - ◆ No tracking.
 - ◆ Mobile unit cost example.
- When override doesn’t pass, there’s no public reaction.
- State funding gets cut.
- Regional vocational is now a competition – college prep.
- Lack of alumni involvement – parents “drop out” when kids move on.
- Reduce dependence on taxes.
 - Look town-wide.

Actions

- Issues need to be communicated to the lay person in a way that’s clear and comprehensive.
 - Town needs to work HARD on developing effective communication pieces.
 - Budgets and issues need to be effectively organized and summarized.
 - Residents need to see school budget in context of entire budget.
- Separate overrides, don’t put them all in one package.
- Transparency must be provided on where money is going. This may be the most important issue regarding trust in local government spending.
- Talk to universities.
 - What are they looking for?
 - How do we better engage universities and funders?
- Volunteer investment is not documented and communicated to the broader community.

Group #2

Big Ideas

- How does funding occur now?
 - More than town government funding.

- PTO contribution.
- Think of schools as “profit centers” (Barrington “Shorelines”) – partnerships.
- 2/3 of the town is not engaged in school – no children/no school kids.
- Should we consider a professional Grant writer? Fundraiser?
- Careful management of money with transparency.
- Bond (temporary) vs. override (permanent).
- “Race to the Top” = example of an opportunity that should be used to generate excitement
- Measure what we accomplish – is my investment paying off?
- Public invited in and informed – there is a policy in place.
 - Rental fee is charged if someone is not from the school.
- Large amount of money spent on a specific area, but residents don’t support with a vote.
- Marketing – physical connection to tax dollars.
- What’s the history on reduced funding? Parents are covering the difference.
- 501(c)3 as a possibility.

- The first word in the Goal “Provide”...replace with “invest”.
- Explore school buildings as multi-use facilities.
 - College rental.
 - Adult education.
 - Regional.
- Squarely address real cost of equipment and salaries. This is not the 1970’s! Provide education on the cost of good personnel.
- Clearly answer “What is the override for?”

HW Recommendations Moving Forward

- The action items listed above should be discussed within the committee and potentially refined for inclusion in the plan.
- The discussion of transparency and communication regarding budgets and spending was very compelling and gets to the heart of a big issue in Westport. HW recommends that a new goal should be included here about this issue. Language would be worked through by the committee, but by way of illustration it could sound like “Implement a comprehensive and transparent system of communication regarding the municipal budget”. Objectives underneath this might deal with coordinating municipal departments, providing educational materials, and doing outreach specifically for budget issues.

Closing (11:30 AM – 12:00 PM)

After the break-out exercises, participants convened into a general session. HW facilitators reported out to participants on the common themes that were discussed among their groups. Jim Hartnett closed the workshop by thanking the public for coming and for providing valuable input for the plan. Participants were encouraged to contact the Planning Department, Planning Board, or Master Plan Committee with any follow up questions or comments.

Actions

- How do we educate?
 - Create a cost scenarios including the cost of ‘no action’.
 - Invest in voter education/civic education.
 - Start with basic goal of quality education.
- A working group had existed – revisit.
- School committee – Can provide leadership. Provide information. Be an advocate.
- Door to door education campaign. Develop the facts.
 - Cost of different actions.
 - Reality of budget.
 - Reality of sources.
 - Why it’s good.
- Conduct a cost/benefit of renting out school space.

EDUCATION

Goals

Prepare all Westport students for college and career success by implementing rigorous standards. Monitor student progress in attaining standards.

Communicate the importance and value of a quality education.

Increase engagement with the community.

Analyze the post-graduation opportunities for Westport students. Compare with benchmark communities.

Promote the accomplishments and positive programs of Westport schools and students.

Identify the benefits of a quality school district.

Objectives

Exercise Introduction:

- Focus on Big Picture
- Action Items
- Opportunity to Participate in 2 Groups



APPENDIX D

Mission Statements

Introduction

Town Boards and Committees were requested to provide basic information for inclusion in the process of revising the 2004 Master Plan. Committees and Boards listed a contact name and number and a thoughtful review of their mission statement. The following is what each department and committee who responded provided.

On May 30, 2013, the following letter was issued to 52 boards and committees as well as civic non-profit organizations that work with the Town.

Dear Committee:

The Master Plan Update Committee has started work on the Town's 2004 Master Plan. The process started on March 2, 2013 when a public workshop and visioning session was held to receive input from the town on different elements of the plan. The committee also mailed out 8,500 surveys to town residents to get their thoughts on various issues the town is facing and ideas they may have for future growth.

To assist with the next phase of the development the committee is contacting town committees, boards and organizations so that they become participants in the development of the plan. To do this we are asking the various groups including yours to provide

the committee with some general information regarding your mission statement as well as concerns that may need to be addressed in the near future. We are asking that the attached questionnaire be completed and mailed back to the Master Plan Update Committee by June 30, 2013. The questionnaire is just a guide and you may submit additional information as needed.

In addition to the questionnaire a copy of the 2004 Action Plan is included for your review. We are asking that your group review the various chapters pertaining to your organization, noting items that have been completed, items that are no longer relevant and any items that may be missing.

The 2004 master plan and results of the recent town wide survey can be viewed at <http://planningboard.westport-ma.com>. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire or need additional time, please contact Jim Hartnett, Town Planner at (508) 636-1037.

In the pages that follow, the responses and information from the committees and boards that responded in 2013, can be found.

Affordable Housing Trust

Submitted by: Leonardi Aray
Phone: 617 270-3912,
e-mail: leonardi@larayarchitects.com

Mission Statement

To help people with low and moderate incomes afford the cost of housing in Westport

Goals:

- Convert Existing Buildings To Affordable Homes
- Ease Home Costs For Existing Residents In Need
- Construct New Affordable Homes

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

1. That there is still stigma attached to affordable housing;
2. The need for more affordable housing, especially the need for more rental properties as well as rental assistance;
3. The need for relief from zoning to help create affordable housing.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

1. Collaboration with the Board of Selectmen around the needs for affordable housing in Westport.
2. Zoning changes to support more housing density in selected areas.
3. More promotion/education regarding the need for the range of affordable housing in Westport - using the data on growing numbers of people below the poverty level living in Westport as well as data on Town employees.
4. More involvement of the churches/religious organizations as partners/allies in getting out the message; include women's groups, fraternal organizations, neighborhood associations, etc.
5. More use of tax title property for affordable housing.

Agricultural Commission

Submitted by: Shirley D'Agostino-Robbins
Email: M0069@aol.com

Mission Statement

Identify, protect, and support Farming and Farm Families.

Vision Statement

A Town that is educated about and supports Agriculture.

Strategic Plan for Agriculture

VISION: A Town that is educated about and supports Agriculture.

MISSION: Identify, protect and support Farming and Farm Families.

GOALS:

1. Productive, economically viable Farms

Westport:

- A. Retains farmers
- B. Attracts new farmers
- C. Has an infrastructure that supports agriculture
- D. Has no net loss of farmland.

2. Supportive, Proactive Community

- A. Westport's Master Plan reflects AgCom goals
- B. Town residents, boards and staff, state and US congressional delegations, and state and federal agencies, are educated and understand agriculture, its value and the needs of farmers.
- C. Appointed and elected town boards and officials are farm friendly; Town boards and staff make decisions that support agriculture.

3. Secure, Healthy Farm Families

- A. Young people see agriculture as a positive career/job option for their future
- B. Communication is improved within and among Farm Families
- C. Farm Families achieve farmstead tax relief, secure affordable housing and health insurance.

ACTION STRATEGIES

1. Productive, economically viable Farms

GOAL	ACTIONS
A. Westport retains farmers because farming is profitable.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify “lead” farmers that begin value-added business. (Ex. Cheese, jams, sausages; use Dartmouth Grange Kitchen. 2. Nurture business ideas through farmer education and access to business planning and marketing assistance. 3. Access capital to support business ideas through grants, investors and philanthropy. 4. Use media to publicize progress and successes of value-added and niche-market ventures. 5. Create and protect local brand, e.g. “Westport Family Farms”.
B. New Farmers know Westport is farm-friendly and are attracted to Westport.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tie into <u>Farm Transfer Network of New England (FTNNE)</u>; use town website. 2. Develop, and keep current, an inventory of affordable land through “FTNNE”; work with new farmers to find affordable housing. 3. Continue communication with SouthEast Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) Farms Forever Program. 4. Offer legal services to set up Limited Liability Corps (LLC), Sub S Corporations. 5. Access <u>Land for Good</u> farm transfer planning through SEMAP.
C. Westport has the infrastructure it needs to support its farms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain a local good quality animal processing facility. 2. Get USDA service office in Bristol County to provide conservation and natural resource technical and financial assistance to farmers. 3. Attract a mechanic group to service Westport farms. 4. Attract technical assistance in the form of an “extension” agent, who provides for business assistance, production assistance, etc. 5. Create and promote accessible agricultural youth programs.
D. Westport has <u>no net loss</u> of farmland.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify high-risk Chapter 61, 61A, and non chapter lands. 2. Communicate priorities to land trust, planning board, open space committee and all boards. 3. Educate all boards, trusts and committees of the consequences of not protecting farmland for the future.

2. Supportive, Proactive Community

GOAL	ACTIONS
A. Appointed and Elected Town Board, Commissions, and Committees are farm friendly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AgCom stays abreast of board membership.. 2. AgCom makes recommendation for farm-knowledgeable membership to the appointed boards.
B. Town Boards and Staff make decisions that support agriculture.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate board members and staff about agriculture. 2. Use media to raise visibility of agriculture (Ex: effect of town board decisions on agriculture).
C. Town residents, Town Boards and Staff; State Congressional Delegation; and State and Federal Agency reps are educated and understand Agriculture, the value of Agriculture and the needs of Farmers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create an agriculture education plan that includes: Getting people “on the farm”. 2. Illuminate the value of agriculture, both economic and aesthetic. 3. Communicate the Westport School System to use local food.
D. Master Plan reflects AgCom goals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share and discuss our goals with the Planning Board.
E. Encourage Buy Local.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the Westport School System to use local food.

3. Secure, Healthy Farm Families

GOAL:	ACTIONS
A. Westport youth view agriculture as a positive career/job option for their future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agricultural youth programs are strengthened and provide a support network for young people interested in agriculture. (4-H, FFA, Grange, in the public school systems and in the community). 2. If farms are profitable, children will stay.
B. Farmers and farm families are able to communicate better with each other.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve farm families’ ability to communicate via websites and email. 2. Continue the Annual Farmer’s Dinner with Dartmouth AgCom. 3. Encourage and create opportunities for farmers to meet more often.
C. Farm families receive farmstead tax relief.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research farmstead tax relief, so that farmers who have lands along rivers are not penalized for their home sites, taxes as though they were “McMansions” lots. 2. Continue to work with Dartmouth AgCom to address issue.
D. Support affordable housing that targets farm families.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise issue with Housing Partnership Committee. 2. Research town zoning laws and educate farm families.
E. Reduce health insurance costs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research ways to reduce costs.

Beach Committee

Submitted by: Jeff Bull
Email: bull.jefferson@gmail.com

Mission Statement

To work with Westport town departments, residents and recognized experts on beach related issues in order to develop and recommend to the Board of Selectmen, regulations, policies, and operating plans which enhance the protection and management of Westport's town beaches and their natural resources.

Natural Resources 12.2

1.1j. Promote dune conservation and re-vegetation. Provide signage and public education to reduce walking and playing in dunes.

Open Space 12.3

12.3.1.2.d Encourage active management and public use of own-owned beach properties (signage, rules, marked paths). Encourage environmental management of properties (dune grass).

12.3.4.5.4b Coordinate beach protection activities with property owners and WLCT.

12.3.4.5.4c. Develop handicap access where possible at town beaches.

12.3.4.5.4c Further pursue easier access at East Beach and Cherry Webb Beach.

Capital Improvement

Develop long-term capital improvement plan.

Board of Commissioners

Submitted by: Charles W. Nichols (III) “Wally”, Chairman
Address 1 Bent Oak Run Westport MA 02790
Phone: (508) 636-8833
Email: wally.nichols.3@gmail.com

Mission Statement

To act in an advisory capacity to the Town Treasurer and to consult with him regarding specific Trusts, as requested.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

There has not been an official meeting for quite some time.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

N/A

Board of Health

Submitted by: Dr. John Colletti, Chairman
Address 856 Main Road
Phone: (508) 636-1015
Email: Health@Westport-ma.gov

Mission Statement

To Protect Public Health and Safety through the administration of State and Local Regulations, by controlling disease, promoting of sanitary living conditions, and protecting the environment from damage and pollution.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

Protection of water supplies, surface and ground waters.

Control and monitoring of potential problems detrimental to Public Safety and Health such as food and water borne issues as well as EEE, West Nile Virus (WNV) and any other potential health risks.

Comprehensive wastewater treatment and management plan in harmony with future and current land use, development and growth.

Emergency response issues and Planning in co-operation with other town departments as well as state and federal home land security.

Conflict between land uses that cause perceived nuisances.

Transfer Station:

Improvements of solid Waste Disposal Plans, with plans to expand services.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

Comprehensive wastewater treatment and management plan in harmony with future and current development and growth and needs.

Cooperation and planning with all Town Departments

Educational programs for the public.

Capital expenditures for facility improvements.

Updating and enhancement of record keeping, tracking and reporting.

Capital Improvement Committee Capital Investment Planning Committee

Submitted by: John J. Baughan – Vice Chair
Phone: (774) 644-7373
Email: jjbaughan@aol.com

Mission Statement

This committee is designated by Town Bylaw 5000 to include 10 individuals by function. The Mission is to collect, discuss, and forward investment potential projects to Fincom, and the Board of Selectmen as scheduled by them in order to be placed in the annual budget. These projects are examined regarding benefits to the Town from such investments long term.

Other specific duties are described by town bylaws 5001,02, 03 and 04. The Mission includes preparation of a 6 year financial projection for capital projects with year one being the current financial budget. This enables town managers to prepare a consolidated financial projection for the Town.

3 citizens are appointed by the BOS, and 7 are specific town employees.

Commission On Disability

Submitted by: Stanley Cornwall, Chairman
Address: 856 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790
Phone: 508 636 –5751
Email: shcsr6@aol.com

Mission Statement

To make Westport a better place to live by being a resource to the town that will bring about the full and equal participation for people of all abilities in all aspects of life.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

1. Lack of accessibility for people with disabilities in open space and recreation. Specifically, at all town beaches, many landings, some open space and recreation areas.
2. Lack of reasonable access at the Middle School, especially in auditorium and cafeteria.
3. Lack of communication access at public meetings. Most widespread is the poor audio access for people who are hard of hearing.
4. Lack of communication about accessibility and accommodations that are required and should be available for people with disabilities. This should be posted on the Town website and in print materials.
5. Non existent and/or inconsistent policies in local businesses to accommodate people with disabilities.
EX: heavy doors, no communication about how to request assistance; no awareness about the impact of scents and chemicals for people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

1. Town to take leadership in promoting compliance with the ADA in its procedures and policies with widespread communication using Town website and posted notices.
2. Employment policies and personnel procedures should incorporate non discrimination procedures.
3. Building inspector to enforce access requirements with respect to new construction and major alterations as outlined in Mass 521CMR.
4. Accessible publications, in print and on the web, with information about Westport services available from various departments for people with disabilities.
5. Town committees should be addressing both the civil rights as well as the needs of people with disabilities as well as publicizing what is available in their promotional materials.

Community Preservation Committee

Submitted by: William D. Raus, Chairman
Address: 816 Main Road
Email: CPC@westport-ma.gov

Mission Statement

The mission of the Community Preservation Committee is to study the needs of the Town of Westport in cooperation with various Town boards, institutions, organizations, and citizens and to solicit and evaluate proposals for the use of CPA funds for the maximum benefit to the Town of Westport. The CPC will recommend to the Town Meeting those projects which it feels will best achieve the purpose of the Community Preservation act legislation which includes open space, historic preservation, affordable housing and recreation. Proposals should be consistent with the Town's long term planning goals

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

The Community Preservation Committee recognizes that the Community Preservation Act specifically addresses needs that cannot be sufficiently supported by the Town but are essential elements that define the character of the Town. The CPA affords the Town the opportunity to partner with other agencies, organizations and individuals to put forth projects that preserve the Town's history, save open space and farm land, create affordable housing opportunities, and enhance passive and active recreation. All of these resources and elements have been well served by Westport's Community Preservation Act Funds and we are hopeful that the Town will continue to see the value of this program for as long as there are historic resources that need preserving, open space and farmland that needs protection, citizens who require affordable places to live and ample recreational opportunities.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

We would like to engage more fully other committees and groups in Town to make them aware of the resource that is the Community Preservation Fund and to recognize the powerful tool it can be in helping them achieve goals that might otherwise seem unattainable.

Conservation Commission

Submitted by: Chris Capone, Conservation Agent
Address: 856 Main Road
Phone: (508) 322-0192
Email: CCAgent@westport-ma.gov

Mission Statement

To oversee and protect Westport's extensive inland and coastal wetlands, riverfront and retain its natural resources. Our primary responsibility is to review wetland delineations and permit applications for activity in or near wetland and riverfront areas as under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Wetlands Act and the Rivers Protection Act, as well as ensuring compliance.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

The reduction of phosphorous and nitrogen in the town's rivers and streams.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

Updated software and equipment.

Council on Aging

Submitted by: Christine Quinn
Address: 75 Reed Road
Phone: (508) 636-1026
Email: coadirector@westport-ma.gov

Mission Statement

The primary function of the Westport Council on Aging is to identify and meet the needs of Westport's elder population and to inform elders and the community of available services.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

1. Transportation – Need a transportation delivery system that is efficient and capable of expanding services to meet the needs of more elders.
2. Council on Aging Building Expansion – The use of the Senior Center has increased regularly due to steady growth in Day Care and programs offered as well as greater need for assistance. The current building limits the COA's ability to increase the number of Day Care participants and expand some programs to additional users.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

1. Consider expanding Westport Action Plan to include transportation with appropriate Goals and Objectives that would help to support the work we are doing to meet the senior/elder needs.
2. Consider adding "Making Westport a Healthy Community". There is much in the literature on this. This would lend support to our need to expand Day Care services, exercise classes and other programs. All help to keep seniors healthy.

Economic Development Task Force (EDTF)

Submitted by: John J. Baughan
Address
Phone: (774) 644-7373
Email: jjbaughan@aol.com

Mission Statement

The EDTF mission is to identify and assist development desirable business enterprises to settle and grow in Westport. The purpose is to continue to grow town revenue streams from taxation and individual employment in private sector jobs. Such employment would ideally derive from industries such as agriculture, fishing, technology, tourism, and others that are environmentally suitable.

Recommendations to other departments regarding zoning, conservation, health etc, to be assistance in this regard to meet the mission. The EDTF reports to the Board of Selectmen and are appointed by them. They employ personnel as necessary to provide skills to identify appropriate opportunities through a budget approved by Town Meeting,

Finance Committee

Submitted by: Charles Baron, Chairman
Address: 816 Main Road
Email: charles.baron@bc.edu

Mission Statement

The Finance Committee's mission is to enhance the ability of Town Meeting to function effectively as the town's legislative branch. It attempts to do so by proposing a recommended budget for each fiscal year, by providing information and recommendations regarding warrant articles that have financial impact, by monitoring and fine tuning, where appropriate, the expenditure of funds appropriated, and by making efforts to improve citizen access to and understanding of the financial operations of the town. It also makes recommendations for the long term viability and integrity of the financial health, operations and systems of the Town.

Key Issue that needs to be addressed

How best to organize and combine the various financial offices in town to improve efficiency and accountability. In particular, whether any or all of the current financial officer's positions should be made appointed rather than elected and organized under one supervisory financial officer.

What would help our group accomplish its goals and objectives:

1. Improved broadcasting equipment for televising meetings.
2. Improved computer and internet equipment and programs for communication with each other and with town residents.

Fire Department

Submitted by: Chief Brian R. Legendre
Address: 54 Hix Bridge Rd
Phone: 508-636-1110
Email: Chieflegendre@westport-ma.gov

Mission Statement

The mission of the Westport Fire Department is to protect life, property, and the environment from fire, medical emergencies, hazardous materials, natural disaster, and terrorist related incidents. We will do this through emergency mitigation, code enforcement, public education, and training.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

1. The Fire Department constantly struggles with the lack of a public water supply to utilize for firefighting operations.
2. The Department also has issues getting down several roadways and/or laneways due to the width of the lane and the lack of a proper turnaround.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

1. With that the planning board can help by continuing to require subsurface water tanks for fire suppression in all new subdivisions with four lots or more.
2. Continue to require and enforce the minimum state mandated 18 feet width with a proper cul-de-sac or hammerhead to allow apparatus to turn around.

Harbor Advisory Committee

Submitted by: John Azevedo
Address: 9 Riverview Drive
Phone: (508) 636-3413

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Westport Harbor Committee is to advise the Board of Selectmen and ensure that Westport Harbor and Waterways is a viable operational and financial entity, providing a full array of boating and marine related opportunities for the public.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

The Harbor Advisory Committee would like the town to establish a long term plan to address the repair and or replacement of the Hix Bridge boat ramp. The town needs to develop a revenue source capable of repairing and maintaining the ramp. The small fees collected and retained by the town will not support repairs that may be needed in the future. The ramp is under the control of the Landing Commission. The Harbor master places floats each boating season at the ramp for boaters to use and has been maintaining it with the help of the Highway department. The ramp is not, nor has it ever been part of his budget or the Harbor Enterprise Fund. The Harbor Advisory feels that the ramp at Hix Bridge gets heavy use during the summer and that it may need considerable repairs in the next 5 to 10 years.

Landing Commission

Submitted by: Carl Tripp, Chairman
Address: 816 Main Road
Phone: (508) 636-4058
Email: carl@fltripp.com

Mission Statement

The mission of the Westport Landing Commission is to preserve, protect and best utilize deeded public water access under the purview of the Landing Commission. The mission involves property management, education, advocacy and collaborative action that we feel best reflects our townspeople's views.

Publish list of town owned properties bordering rivers, ponds and the ocean. Publish list of “Town Landings” managed by the Landing Commission.

Cooperate with other town committees to maintain and restore water access and nearby parking to “ancient” landings to ocean and river.

Narrows Redevelopment Committee

Submitted by: James Whitin - Chairman
Address: 816 Main Road Westport, MA 02790
Phone: (508) 636-4572
Email: jimwhitin@mac.com

Mission Statement

The Town of Westport would like to build on the synergies developing just over the town line, within 3/4 of a mile at the ATMC complex and Meditec facility in Fall River and capture some of the emerging opportunities attracting them to the Narrows Redevelopment Area. The redevelopment area could offer small businesses, start-ups and other entrepreneurs growing out of the incubator at ATMC with commercial space and underutilized properties leading to new development opportunities. In addition, the area offers several locations, including the recently approved Science and Technology Overlay District (STOD), that could be appropriate for mixed use development and redevelopment providing potential worker housing and other residential options that could potentially support any new business or commercial development. It is anticipated that these new private investments will create long term, higher wage employment, generate much needed local tax revenues, encourage ancillary business activity and leverage public sector assistance to facilitate revitalization.

Goals

The Narrows Redevelopment Committee shall work with local businesses, the Economic Development Task Force, property owners, other interested parties, boards and committees to determine how best to recommend potential changes of zoning boundaries and or other changes to rules and regulations to facilitate the developing synergies within these areas of Town to:

Promote and protect the residential neighborhoods

Promote and facilitate economic development in the commercial areas,
including the STOD, where appropriate

Consider zoning changes that accomplish the above goals

Please also refer to the *Narrows Redevelopment Area Report from 2009* for a thorough review of some of the discussions and options.

Personnel Board

Submitted by: Thom Shaughnessy, Chairman
Address: PO Box 3195
Phone: (774) 264-9098

Mission Statement

Goals action items:

1. Have each department review its duties / responsibilities to see if what's in place is accurate, relevant, and updated and then submitted to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) by the start of the new calendar year. Or when appropriate if changes occur. If there's a change of some significance, make sure the BOS's office is made aware of it in a timely basis.
2. Are dates for reports being met with appropriate information---one example: are reports being made on a timely basis of meeting minutes with members in attendance so as to comply with the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law requirement? If not, the town may be liable for some financial penalties for non-compliance. Some may say that won't happen and maybe it won't but if you're reading this, I'm, sure it got your attention. And, that law was put in place for a reason, whether anyone in town likes it or not. I have some ideas on how to make the reporting for this a lot easier and I'd be willing to share this in the very near future with the appropriate personnel.
3. It would help tremendously if each department / board can review the information in the Town personnel by-laws to check for the accuracy of that information on that department / board. Each department should be able to give some pretty basic information on its personnel but that doesn't seem to be the case.
4. The head of each department / board should be the person charged with this responsibility and given deadlines for its submission. Obviously, this doesn't always happen but a good faith effort should be made---this report is an example.
5. I have not seen a copy of the TMP but it may make sense for some departments / boards to have goals & objectives listed in a 1-3-5 year timetable. This won't apply to all departments / boards but for some it will and those should be identified; as an example the Police and Fire departments come to mind as does the Tax department as well as the Economic Development Commission. And, I'm sure there are others.

Planning Board

Submitted by: James K. Hartnett, Town Planner
Address: 856 Main Road
Phone: (508) 636-1037
Email: Hartnettj@Westport-ma.gov

Mission Statement

The mission of the Planning Board is to guide the orderly development of the Town, through zoning, comprehensive plans, and site plan review using processes that encourage public participation. The Board administers the development of land, subdivisions and zoning in an effort to influence long term development with the goal of maintaining the positive aspects of the Town while working to eliminate or mitigate the negative aspects.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

1. Negative impacts of storm water runoff as it relates to subdivisions, residential and commercial development.
2. Completion of subdivisions currently in default. Policies and procedures that ensure subdivisions and commercial developments are constructed properly and completed in a timely manner with proper surety.
3. Outdated and conflicting Zoning By-Laws and related Rules and Regulations. Updating is needed to guide orderly development while preserving the rural character of the Town.
4. Lack of essential planning tools limit informed development within priority development areas of town. This includes completion of a number of on-going planning projects including, the 2004 Master Plan Update, design guidelines for Central Village, and zoning changes for newly designated commercial zones.
5. Inability for the public to fully participate in public meetings given the limitation of the audio systems in public meeting spaces.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

1. Better cooperation, communication and coordination between boards, committees and departments.
2. Additional resources including increased staffing levels and modernization and maintenance of computer software and hardware.
3. Updated permitting filing and tracking system and town wide permitting software.
4. Improved public access to information on Town's Web site and during public hearings.

Police Department

Submitted by: Lt. John Bell
Address: 818 Main Road
Phone: (508) 636-1122

Mission Statement

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

Traffic study on Route 177 in the area of Robert Street, to address the increase in the speed limit as you approach the Robert Street intersection. Route 177 is posted 45 MPH except for intersections where it is posted 40 MPH. The Robert Street/Tickle Road intersection is posted at 50 MPH and there is a flashing yellow light which means “use caution”

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

Traffic study in the area of Route 177 and Tickle Road and meetings with the State regarding this area.

Recreation Commission

Submitted by: Tim Gillespie, Chairman
Address: 137 Horseneck Rd., Westport, MA 02790
Phone: 508-642-4935
Email: tgillespie@charter.net

Mission Statement

The mission of the Westport Recreation Commission is to provide leisure, educational arts and sports programs, opportunities, facilities and services that enhance the quality of life for all residents of Westport.

The primary goal is to enhance the quality of life for all residents of Westport by offering programs and opportunities that appeal to a diverse population and encourage community spirit and cohesiveness.

This mission shall be achieved by:

- Stimulating community involvement
- Promoting physical health and well-being for Westport residents
- Providing alternatives to loneliness and isolation
- Encouraging fun and reducing stress
- Seeing a direct return on town revenue through highly visible programs for the benefit of all.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

The Town has recently authorized an increase to the members of the Recreation Commission from five (5) to seven (7). We need to fill those seats with enthusiastic and willing citizens who understand the role of the Recreation Commission and are prepared to participate in the work of the commission. For a period of years between 1998 and 2002, the Recreation Commission worked with a budget provided by the Town and had on staff a part time Recreational Coordinator. During that time the Commission was proactive in presenting programs to the community that served the mission of the Recreational Commission. Due to budget constraints of the Town, the budget for the Commission was cut in 2003. The position of Recreational Coordinator was eliminated. The Commission has had no Town supported budget of any kind since 2003.

The period from 2004 to the present saw a decline in the activities of the Recreational Commission. With no budget and no Coordinator the Commission was severely inhibited from conducting programs and attending to the maintenance and upgrading of Town facilities. Fund raisers provided some revenue, but all revenues were returned to the general fund and did not serve to support recreational programs or facilities.

The Recreational Commission cannot fulfill its mission without Town support. A budget for personal services and expenses must be provided if the Town expects to have a functional and proactive recreational program. With a budget, the Commission could hire a Coordinator. The coordinator could lead the Town into a new era of a robust and engaging Recreational Commission. This would facilitate the return of new programs and more consistent support for the Town recreational facilities.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

Support at Town Meeting to re-establish a funded Recreation Department in the Town would be the first important step in fulfilling the Town's obligation to provide widespread recreational opportunities to Westport's citizens. Such a budget would enable the Commission to hire a part time Recreational Coordinator, and an expense budget would enable the Coordinator and the Commission to conduct programs and maintain and improve facilities.

Recent changes in the Community Preservation Act have made it possible to use Community Preservation funds to preserve and improve existing recreational facilities. Such a source of revenue augments the budget of the Recreational Commission, which puts less of a burden on the Town to provide all or most of the needed revenues to support the Recreation department.

WESTPORT ACTION PLAN – 2004

12.3 Open Space and Recreation

1.4.d Host educational outdoor recreational events:

(This remains an important objective of the Commission. Lack of funds and staff to coordinate such events is a major obstacle.)

Goal 5. Provide & enhance indoor & outdoor recreational opportunities.

Objective: 5.1. Improve Town-wide recreational facilities

Action

5.1.a Re-study Rock Street Park for recreational uses. *(This is a private property that did house a private collection of some exotic animals. The Commission does not see it as a project we can pursue. Its use as a recreational opportunity existed on so far as the owner of the property was willing to make it open to the public. The property no longer houses animals or shows any evidence of being "Rock Street Park".)*

5.1.b Study school facilities & Town Properties for needs and recreational potential. *(Westport school facilities do not have the ability to offer extensive opportunities for Town recreational programs. Playing fields are not expansive enough to serve the Town needs beyond that of the schools. With the work of private groups such as the Westport Youth Athletic Association and the support of the Community Preservation Fund, new playing fields are being developed that will help serve the growing needs of the local sports leagues.)*

The Town should continue to study available land in Town for any potential benefit it could provide in the way of recreational opportunities. Since the beginning of the Community Preservation Act in Westport, the Town has partnered with the Westport Land Trust and Trustees of Reservations to save open space in Town, much of which is providing passive recreation to Westport citizens.)

5.1.c Encourage rec. plans for Macomber School and Bicentennial Park. *(The Recreation Commission is presently engaged in a program to rehabilitate and upgrade both Bicentennial Park and the Community Playground at the Town Hall Annex. This work is being supported by revenues from the Community Preservation Fund and private donations. The Macomber School has a playground that serves the needs of the facility well at this time and the Recreation Commission has no plans to address that facility.)*

5.1.e Explore use of fairgrounds for additional seasonal events. *(This is still an important objective.)*

Objective: 5.2. Provide walking and biking opportunities

Action

5.2.a Place bike racks at Town facilities and beaches. *(This is still an objective.)*

5.2.b Encourage recreational paths on Town land and conservation land. *(This is being done and will remain a priority of the Commission.)*

5.2.c Place Explore use of ancient ways for passive recreational uses. *(This is still an objective.)*

5.2.d Explore feasibility study for multi-purpose trail along Rte 88. *(There is still a need for safe pedestrian and bicycle paths in Town. Although the feasibility of a trail along Rte 88 faces many challenges, it is still a worthy project to study.)*

Objective: 5.3. Increase number of ball fields & open space recreational facilities

Action

5.3.a Explore creation of public golf course. *(There is much support for a local golf course open to the public, but available land is limited. The Commission would support such a project but is not planning to pursue it actively in the near future .)*

5.3.b Acquire and develop ball fields & soccer fields. *(The work of local private groups, such as the Westport Youth Athletic Association, is actively engaged in the pursuit. Soccer fields have been built off Sanford Rd. the WYAA complex off Rte 177 is just getting underway in their construction phase. The Commission does not see a pressing need in this area at present.)*

5.4.c Re-develop landfill into park. *(This faces many obstacles and is not an immediate objective of the Recreation Commission.)*

Objective: 5.4. Enhance access to facilities for disabled persons.

Action

5.4.a Improve Town parking lots for handicapped access (*The Recreation Commission as presently formed has limited ability to effect improvements to Town parking lots. This would be more appropriately handled by the Board of Selectmen and the local Commission on Disability .*)

5.4.b Improve handicapped access to all Town facilities. (*This is work being addressed by the Commission on Disability. A project is underway improving access to the Town Hall Annex, being funded by the Community Preservation fund. The Recreation Commission is playing no role in this endeavor.*)

5.4.c Study feasibility of seasonal boardwalk at Town beaches. (*The Recreation Commission would like to see improved access to Town beaches and thinks it should work with the Town Beach Committee and local Disability Commission to move this forward.*)

Shellfish Advisory Committee

Submitted by: John Borden
Address: 1477 Main Road
Phone: (508) 636-3051

Mission Statement

To promote and enhance a healthy Westport River System and increase shellfish resources as funding allows. Also, to expand conditional areas through water testing with the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). A healthy river provides as bountiful recreational and commercial shellfish industry.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

1. Opening the Let and Causeway for better water flow.
2. Increase shellfish harvest area.
3. Purchase a 24' Carolina-type skiff for shellfish distribution of Relay and seed.
4. Demo material needs to be removed from the West side of the Hix Bridge.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

1. 24' Carolina Skiff
2. Finding for additional man power
3. Continue collaboration from the State and DMF.

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development

Submitted by: James Hadfield, Transportation Planning Mgr.
Paul Mission, Director of Highway Planning
Address: 88 Broadway, Taunton, MA
Phone: (508) 824-1367
Email: jhadfield@srpedd.org; pmission@srpedd.org

Mission Statement

It is the mission of SRPEDD to plan for the future of southeastern Massachusetts that includes expansion of economic opportunity, protection of natural and historic resources and development of excellent physical and cultural amenities. We plan for the future of our region by researching, providing technical assistance, preparing by-laws and ordinances, programming funds and preparing plans in transportation planning, comprehensive planning, economic development and environmental planning.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

Objective 2.2.b (under section 12.6 Traffic and Circulation) – limit curbs, encourage shared commercial driveways and frontage roads along business-zoned roads.

SRPEDD would like to see the community implement this – it improves vehicular safety.

See the attached summary of problems identified as part of the Route 6 Westport/Dartmouth safety study, 2003.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

N/A

Water Resource Management Committee

Submitted by: Tony Vieira, Chair (and Selectman)
Address: 816 Main Road
Phone: (508) 636-5603
Email: acvieira@charter.net

Mission Statement

The Westport Water Resource Management Committee was formed in July 2012. It is a nine member committee consisting of one member selected from each of the five voting precincts, one person representing the Westport River Watershed Alliance, a member from the Board of Health, a member from the Agricultural Commission and the Highway Surveyor.

The committee has been charged to develop consensus and advise the Board of the Selectmen on overall water resource management policies. Recommendations are made and grants requests through the approval of the Board of Selectmen. The committee is charged with developing and promoting overall water management recommendations through coordination with the Board of Health, Highway Department, WRWA, State agencies and others as needed to address town-wide water related issues,

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

- 1) To follow and implement the recommendations on the MEP Report
- 2) Continue estuaries research and formulate recommendations
- 3) Address present storm water issues with recommendations
- 4) Explore easement options in storm water remediation
- 5) Address public drinking water challenges with short term and long term recommendations
- 6) Review storm water site plan reviews for private development with recommendations on effectiveness and fiscal management challenges
- 7) Protect groundwater and service water resources
- 8) Provide options for failed septic systems
- 9) Recommend guidelines for storm water management
- 10) Address DEP recommendations with present public water supply from the City of Fall River
- 11) Explore options for water level on the South Watuppa Pond
- 12) Develop action plan with timetables for above objectives.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

- 1) Environmental Engineering support
- 2) Build consensus with special interests for overall town-wide goals and objectives.

Westport Business to Business (B2B)

Submitted by: Elaine Ostroff
Address: 832 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790
Phone: 508 636 6537
Email: elaine@ostroff.org

Mission Statement

The **Westport Business to Business** is a not-for-profit association of companies and individuals joined together to promote the interests of businesses located in Westport and surrounding communities. Our members work together for the mutual benefit of their business and their relationship with other companies and the general public.

The **Westport Business to Business** is concerned with issues that directly effect town businesses and our community. The WBTB encourages all members to do business with other members and we encourage local businesses and residents to do business locally.

Issues:

1. Need more information regarding local businesses and services
2. No accurate information on businesses in Town records (to be confirmed)
3. No contact person for various business segments
4. Limited meeting spaces in town
5. Business development in the Head of Westport
6. Current development of industrial areas in wetlands
7. Current zoning doesn't support business development
8. Lack of high speed Internet
9. Lack of timely response to business needs (note Crosby & Baker warehouse)

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

1. Support business nodes in all areas

Westport Community Schools

Submitted by: Melissa Pacheco, Westport School Committee
Address: 19 Main Road
Phone: (508) 971-0773
Email: mpacheco@westportschools.org

Mission Statement

The mission of WCS is to inspire, prepare and challenge our youth through a rigorous differentiated and relevant curriculum that extends beyond the classroom to include experiences in the community and that nurtures the academic, artistic, physical and social potential of every student.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

- As we move forward with our school building/addition plan, we will need to ensure community support.
- Working collaboratively with town departments on mutually beneficial areas such as technology and utilities
- Ensuring our students success through community support, not only financially, but programmatically. Examples include working with other town departments and area businesses on projects, such as coop programs, volunteer opportunities, classroom enrichment projects, etc.
- Highlighting our schools great accomplishments and future goals.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

- Support of our Community
- A more positive outlook on our successful schools – let’s all start talking about the positive things that are currently underway! Highlighting our success stories as a town, i.e. from schools to town departments
- A mechanism/procedure for creating collaborative projects – town wide goal? Request for proposals from interested parties? Town blog? Set town wide collaboration goals?

Westport Cultural Council

Submitted by: Suzanne Thomlinson Chair
Address: 72 Meadowbrook Lane
Phone: (508) 636-0730
Email: srthomlinson@charter.net

Mission Statement

The Westport Cultural Council works to foster quality cultural programs and activities that bring the community together to create, share, and inspire. With funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Helen E. Ellis Charitable Trust, the Council awards grants to support programs in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed in the town's master plan:

- Celebrate and preserve Westport's diverse cultural history.
- Increase exposure to the arts and humanities by the Westport community.
- Support creative school programs that reach beyond the traditional scope.
- Engage all Westport residents in cultural activities.
- Promote good design in public places.

What would help the Westport Cultural Council accomplish its goals and objectives?

- Collaboration with other town committees to share ideas and resources.
- Increase in Council membership from seven members to nine members.
- Access to town resources such as mailing lists and media for promoting Council activities and events.
- Technical assistance with social media and Council Web site to expand presence and reach of Council.
- Ideas for increasing awareness of the Council's activities and for obtaining feedback from the community.

In addition to the issues and goals specified, we discussed an overall concern. The 2004 master plan includes a chapter devoted to cultural and historic resources. The resources cited refer exclusively to the town's history; for example, cemeteries, stone walls, ancient ways, and historic buildings. Westport's history is a valuable asset and contributes richly to the quality of life here. The Westport Cultural Council accepts as its mission the promotion of a broad spectrum of cultural activities, featuring the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences. We believe that the master plan should reflect the vibrant personality of our town by recognizing a wider definition of culture.

Westport Educational Foundation

Submitted by: Westport Education Foundation
Address: P.O. Box 3213 Westport, MA 02790
Phone: (774) 627-2121
Email: info@westporteducationfoundation.com

Mission Statement

- Raise private funding for innovative academic enrichment programs to enhance the core curriculum in the Westport Community Schools.
- Be the channel through which the Westport community contributes to education and strengthens the future of the town.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

- Strengthen public education in the town.
- Increase educational opportunities for all members of the Westport community.
- Increase opportunities for the town to leverage the talents and skills of members of the community, so that they may be shared not only by the schools but the town as well.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

- Recognize the Westport Education Foundation as a vital link between the community and public education.

Westport Fisherman's Association

Submitted by: Jennifer Gelinas, Program Coordinator
Address PO Box 83 Westport Point MA 02791
Phone: (508) 916-7878
Email: wfa@westprotriver.org

Mission Statement

To protect, preserve and improve the water quality of the Westport River, marches, tributaries and all surrounding waters

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed:

- The Town being on board addressing nitrogen loading in the river.
- Stay vigilant with respect to bacterial pollution
- Scallop, lobsters, herring all but vanished from local waters. A concerted effort to find out why.
- Initiate projects that will help allow herring to get to historic spawning habitat.
- With marshes slowly but steadily disappearing from the West Branch more so that the East Branch, and considering that they are an integral part of a productive, healthy estuary we feel it is important to make the public aware of the issue and work to understand why it is happening and what can be done about it.

What would help your group accomplish your goals and objectives:

- Town support in the areas of nitrogen loading concerns and vigilance with respect to bacterial pollution in the river and its tributaries.

Westport Historical Society

Submitted by: Jenny O’Neill, Director
Address: PO Box N-188 Westport MA 02790
Phone: (508) 636-6011
Email: WWW.WPTHISTORY.ORG

Mission Statement

The mission of the Westport Historical Society (WHS) is to engage the public in the exploration of the town's rich history and culture, to inspire a spirit of discovery through educational programs and encourage active participation in the preservation and interpretation of our past.

The Society collects and shares this history. Its goal is to foster the imaginative process of connecting to the past, making it relevant to our present and vital to the future of our community.

The predominant activity of the WHS over the next 5 years will be the ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Handy House. Given the scope of this project, the Society is unlikely to have the resources to initiate major new activity within the town. The Society's role as collector and keeper of significant objects/documents that relate to the history of the town remains a significant ongoing activity.

In the long term the Handy House also has the potential to become a significant regional tourist attraction. Its proximity to the Town Farm strengthens this opportunity to draw visitors from neighboring towns. The well preserved architectural heritage of this area, such as at the Head of Westport and Westport Point together with its special rural and coastal character are great assets for the town. Over the next few years the WHS will seek to emphasize these assets (when possible coordinating with regional organizations such as TTOR) to encourage cultural tourism and to foster partnerships between the business community and the cultural community.

Westport Land Conservation Trust

Submitted by: Trip Millikin, President, Board of Directors
Address: POST OFFICE BOX 3975
Phone: (508) 636-9928
Email: tripmillikin@gmail.com

Mission Statement

In reviewing Westport's 2004 Master Plan, we see that great progress has been made in many areas, including the preservation of Westport's forests, open spaces and natural resources. These achievements have come through partnerships and collaborations between Town Boards and committees, private non-profit organizations, and individuals.

Since the launch of our partnership with The Trustees in 2001, WLCT has protected over 2,100 acres of land in Westport, for a total of 3,909 acres protected in Town since 1972. All land owned by the Land Trust is open to the public. During these past 10 years the Land Trust has taken steps to add parking lots, trails and trail information on seven of the largest and/or most scenic properties in an effort to encourage use of these very special properties. The seven properties marked with parking areas, signage and trails are:

- Old Mill Property on Reed Road
- Forge Pond property on Forge Road
- Brookside property on Route 177
- Herb Hadfield property on Adamsville Road
- Dunham's Brook property on Main Road
- The Let Conservation Road at bottom of the East Branch of the Westport River
- Old Harbor Wildlife Refuge on Old Harbor Road

All are open to hikers and walkers. Some are open to hunting, some allow equestrian use, and others feature water access and are available for fishing and boating. These properties encompass nearly 400 acres, or about half of the land owned by the Land Trust.

There are now 24 farm parcels protected with Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs), nine of those facilitated by WLCT and The Trustees in the last decade. In addition, we have protected and sold two farms to local farmers:

- a 10-acre farm at the intersection of Adamsville and Sodom Roads, protected with an APR, and sold to vegetable farmer Andrew Orr;
- the 29-acre Oscar Palmer Farm, protected with conservation and historic preservation restrictions, and sold to goat farmers Norm Anderson and Laurie Marinone.

We have also protected since 2004 several farm properties using Conservation Restrictions instead of APRs:

- Lee Tripp Farm on Horseneck Road

- Temple Farm on Sodom Road
- White property, Fisherville Lane
- Chardon property, Drift Road
- Burns property, Horseneck Road
- Barnett property, Cornell Road
- Brayton property, Main Road
- Santos property on Route 177
- Hadfield property on Drift Road
- Van Sloun property on Hix Bridge Road,
- Gonet property on Old Horseneck Road (Nightingale/Mathews now)
- Edwards property on Pine Hill Road

All of these projects are the result of successful collaborative partnerships with the Town of Westport and/or the Massachusetts' Department of Agricultural Resources.

We have protected more than 1,000 acres of private land through Conservation Restrictions in the last ten years. This land remains on the tax rolls, but the conservation restrictions ensure that the properties' natural resources are forever preserved for the benefit of all Westporters.

All of these protection projects, done in partnership with The Trustees of Reservations, along with many in partnership with the Town of Westport, represent great progress toward achieving a number of the goals and objectives set in the 2004 Master Plan.

The Land Trust has also contributed significantly to increasing awareness about land protection and the value of open spaces through its annual workshops about Chapter 61, 61A and 61B. The stewardship program launched in 2008 brought people on to Land Trust properties, trailed and untrailed, to monitor property lines, clear invasive plants, observe fish inventory work, open blocked fish migration pathways, create and clear trails, bird watching, wild flower prospecting, and generally to take a closer look at the precious land around us here in Westport.

All told, the Land Trust has made significant contributions to the following portions of the 2004 Master Plan:

12.1 Land Use - General

Goal 1. Manage Development to preserve Westport's natural and cultural features

- Objective 1.1: Preserve the natural condition of coastal, riverfront and pastoral Landscapes.
- Objective 1.4: Preserve positive attributes of the natural and historic/cultural environments as land use changes.

Land Use - Westport Character

Goal 1. Preserve and protect existing activities and land use that contribute to town character.

- Objective 1.1: Ensure farming and commercial fishing continue as vital economic activities by supporting and reinforcing public and private programs.
 - Objective 1.2: Farming: (a) preserve existing family farms.
 - Objective 1.3: Open Space: (b) continue liaison with private land conservators.
- Goal 2. Develop strategies to manage development to minimize impact on rural character.
- Objective 2.1: Preserve scenic qualities and vistas on public roads, along the riverbank and ocean shores.
 - Objective 2.3: Consider ways to maintain farm and wooded lands.
- 12.2 Natural Resources
- Goal 1. Preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's natural resources.
- Objective 1.1: Protect coastal resources.
 - Objective 1.2: Protect groundwater and wetland resources.
 - Objective 1.3: Protect and preserve critical wildlife habitat.
- 12.3 Open Space and Recreation.
- Goal 1. Improve land conservation efforts in Westport.
- Objective 1.4 Increase public awareness of importance of open space.
- Goal 2. Protect Westport's rural landscape.
- Objective 2.1a: Support and promote APR program.
 - Objective 2.1c: Partner with DAR and WLCT on APR projects.
 - Objective 2.2: Encourage enrollment in Chapter 61 A and 61 C.
- Goal 3. Protect and restore water quality and natural resources.
- Objective 3.1: Preserve undeveloped watershed lands.
- Goal 4. Preserve the quality of Westport's natural resources, groundwater, wetlands, wildlife, habitat, and coastal areas.
- Objective 4.2: Purchase land in coastal velocity and barrier beaches for open space.
 - Objective 4.3: Protect critical wildlife habitat.
- Goal 5. Provide and enhance indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Objective 5.2: Provide walking and biking opportunities.
 - Action 5.2.b: Encourage recreational paths on Town owned land and conservation land.
- 12.4 Historic and Cultural Resources
- Goal 1. To preserve the past and increase awareness of Westport history.
- Objective 1.1: To preserve, protect, maintain and restore historical and cultural resources.

Recommendations for next Master Plan:

Together with the Town we have seen great progress towards achieving many of the Town's goals and objectives set forth in the 2004 Master Plan. As always, there are many more opportunities ahead of us to preserve Westport's natural, historical, and agricultural resources. We are hugely supportive of the current update work and offer the following suggestions for the Town's next Master Plan.

Continue the work already identified in the 2004 Plan under the headings of General Land Use, Natural Resource Protection and Preserving the Character of Westport. The categories are solid; the Town along with its various partners has made substantive progress since 2004 and there is plenty of room to keep going.

The Land Trust expects to continue its land protection work apace with its excellent partner, The Trustees of Reservations. There is more farm land to protect through APR and Conservation Restriction, more critical biomass lands surrounding headwaters of cold stream brooks and other tributaries of one of our town's key natural assets - the Westport River. There is opportunity to develop more hiking trails and to continue spreading the word about the importance of open space to human, animal and botanical life, especially in the face of climate changes and a rising ocean.

Westport River Watershed Alliance

Submitted by: Matthew C. Patrick, Executive Director
Address: P.O. Box 3427, 1151 Main Road
Phone: 508-636-3016
Email: Director@wrwa.com

Mission Statement

The Westport River Watershed Alliance (WRWA) is a nonprofit, environmental education and advocacy group formed in 1976 to protect and conserve the natural resources of the Westport River and its 100-square watershed located in Southeastern Massachusetts at the entrance to Buzzards Bay. WRWA has helped the Town of Westport address numerous issues that negatively impact the waters of the watershed. Since 2006, WRWA has used \$209,110 in Watershed Improvement Funds (WIF) raised from its membership to improve the quality of the water in the Westport River watershed. WRWA has the most comprehensive environmental education (Pre K to 12) program aligned with the Commonwealth's standards in operation over 30 years.

What are the key issues that your group would like to see addressed: We reiterate the Objectives and Action items that we will help the Town to address. We italicized Action items that we think are necessary to consider and would like added.

Objective 1.3: Develop Town-Wide Storm water Management Plan

Objective 2.2: Enable PB to effectively deal with increasing complex growth management needs.

2.3.a. Review and strengthen subdivision regulations *to address storm water run-off and community or individual home septic system issues that meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nitrogen loading issues in salt water or phosphorus loading for fresh water assigned to the Westport River in the Mass. Estuaries Project plan.*

Objective 1.4: Investigate options for local sewer & water infrastructure within villages.

Action

1.5.a. Study different options for package treatment plants and community wells and make recommendations to PB. *Investigate options of composting or urine diverting toilets and denitrifying septic systems that meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nitrogen loading issues in salt water or phosphorus loading for fresh water assigned to the Westport River in the Mass. Estuaries Project plan.*

12.2 Natural Resources

Objective 1.1: Protect coastal resources

Action

1.1.f.a. Consider a dock moratorium until it can be determined what type of treated wood is acceptable for commercial dock building.

1.1.m. (replace existing with following) Partner with WRWA to remove granite bloc from under Hix Bridge to increase tidal flow to remove sediment to improve the health of oysters and other shellfish north of Hix Bridge.

1.1.l. Partner with WRWA to determine and address the sources of fecal coliform bacteria in the West Branch that eliminates the availability of shellfish.

Objective 1.2: Protect groundwater and wetland resources.

Action. *We will be interested in helping in all the Action items in this category.*

1.2.c. The town should consider measures to strengthen regulations and bylaws to protect groundwater and surface water sources, and wetlands.

Objective 1.3: Protect and preserve critical wildlife habitat.

Action

1.3.d. Continue to upgrade or replace culverts that block fish passage

Goal 2. Devise Ways to allow but control development to sustain natural resources

Objective 2.1: Decrease non-point sources of pollution.

Action

2.6.h. Consider composting and urine diverting toilets to meet TMDLs for nitrogen and phosphorus

2.6.i. Promote the Community Septic Management financing program to help people upgrade outdated septic systems to meet TMDLs.

2.6.j. Consider adopting bylaw restricting the use of fertilizer and pesticide (within 100 feet of a wetland, pond, lake, tributary or river.

Goal 2. Protect Westport's Rural Landscape

Objective 2.1: Support and Promote APR Program

Action

2.1.d. Work with legislators to amend APR and CR enabling legislation to allow for implementation of stormwater runoff mitigation best management practices (BMPs) and recreational opportunities.

Goal 3 Protect and Restore Water Quality and Natural Resources

Objective 3.1.: Preserve undeveloped watershed lands in Westport

Action

3.1.c. Ensure that CRs allow for stormwater runoff mitigation BMPs by suggesting amendments to enabling legislation or including provisions in contract.

Goal 5. Provide and enhance indoor and outdoor recreational facilities

Objective: 5.2. Provide walking and biking opportunities

Action

5.2.e. *Propose amendments to APR enabling legislation that permits walking and biking trails on APRs.*

12.5. Water and Sewerage

We will be comprehensively involved with all of the Goals, Objectives and Action items in this section. Planning Board requires ongoing developer/owner responsibility for monitoring and maintenance of retention ponds and other stormwater mitigation infrastructure? To the best of my knowledge once a retention pond is installed and accepted by the Town, there is no follow-up inspection program to make sure they are continuing to operate as specified nor is there any requirement that a property owner or homeowners' association must make needed repairs or improvements to a failed retention pond or other stormwater remediation structure.