



Town of Westport

Master Plan

2004

Master Plan Update Committee

Westport, Massachusetts

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CHAPTER 1
*Introduction
and Background*

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Westport's updated Master Plan is designed to assist Town officials in the decision making process for the long-term physical development of Westport. It provides a vision for the future developed through numerous processes, including public meetings, presentations, surveys, and discussions with Town officials, regional planners, community leaders, business owners, and residents of all sections of Westport. Some recommendations of this Plan reflect a broad consensus and indicate actions which should be taken immediately to fulfill agreed-upon community needs, goals and objectives. Other recommendations request further study to more clearly identify strategies and to refine this vision so that it truly reflects the best data available and the consensus of the community.

The Master Plan conforms to the requirements of Chapter 41, Section 81D of the Massachusetts General Laws. It addresses the nine elements specified in the law: 1) Goals and Policies Statement; 2) Land Use Plan; 3) Housing; 4) Economic Development; 5) Natural and Cultural Resources; 6) Open Space and Recreation; 7) Services and Facilities; 8) Circulation; and 9) Implementation. The chapter titles and organization of the chapters that reflect these required elements have been customized to pertain more specifically to Westport's issues. This updated Master Plan describes many complex issues that will affect the future viability of Westport and the quality of life of its residents.

1.2 Master Plan Update Committee

The Master Plan Update Committee is comprised of Westport residents who volunteered to undertake the task of updating the previous Master Plan to reflect changes that have occurred since the last update in 1983. The Master Plan Update Committee respectfully presents this Plan to the Town in the hope that it will help Town officials to take advantage of existing opportunities when planning for the future and to respond to the many challenges which confront our growing community.

1.2.1 Composition of the Master Plan Update Committee

The Master Plan Update Committee was a successor to the Citizens Committee for a Master Plan, the formation of which was proposed by the Strategic Growth Committee in the spring of 1998. Among other activities, the Strategic Growth Committee had studied growth management issues in Westport and had sponsored several Town Meeting warrant articles. Many of the members of that Committee became active members of the Master Plan Update Committee. The first meeting of the Master Plan Update Committee was held on July 30, 1998, chaired by Planning Board Chairman Timothy Gillespie, with sixteen persons in attendance. In addition to Gillespie, the Planning Board was represented by members David Emilita, Jack Penney, and David Wallace. Members of other Town Boards, Departments, and community groups in attendance were: Jean Borges (Farmer's Association), Joe Keith (Board of Appeals), Stephen Medeiros (Assessors), and William Tripp (Fire Chief). The following individuals also were present: Joe Carvalho, Dawn Clifton, Louise Houghteling, Carlton Lees, John Perry, Tom Richardson, Byron Trefonides, and Greg Werthessen.

From 1998 to 2003 more members were appointed and several resignations were accepted. The Committee voted Timothy Gillespie and David Wallace as Co-Chairmen, and Barbara Hanley as Consultant to assist them. The membership organized into teams representing the various Master Plan elements with each element having a Team Captain, whose tasks were to coordinate the volunteers for that element and to oversee the production of that element of the plan. Over time, several teams whose elements contained multiple topics subdivided their volunteers and

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appointed team captains for each of these sub-groups. The subcommittees and members who served on them for any period of time are as follows:

Land Use - David Wallace, Team Captain

Betsy Acheson
Dave Aguiar
Jeff Bull
Ingrid Davidge
Gregg Swanzey

Housing - Carlton Lees, Team Captain

George Cataldo
Ann Chandanais
Barbara Hanley
Selena Howard
Donna Lambert

Economic Development - Phil Hudner, John Perry, Jr., Team Captains

Jack Baughan
Ann Boxler
Barbara Hanley
John Margarida

Natural Resources - Gay Gillespie, Team Captain

John Borden
Anthony Cucchi
Susan Pedreira
Gary Sherman

Historic & Cultural Resources - William Wyatt, Team Captain

Barbara Hanley
Sean Leach
Carlton Lees

Open Space and Recreation - Anthony Cucchi, Team Captain

Brenda Burke
George Cataldo
Steve Fors
Gay Gillespie
Fernando Laguinha
Steven Ouellette
Gregg Swanzey

Water and Sewer - Sean Leach, Team Captain

Judy Beavan
Ann Boxler
Brenda Burke
Robert Carroll
Deana Chase
Todd Cormier
Gay Gillespie

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Norm Michaud
Dale Thomas

Capital Facilities and Human Services, Timothy Gillespie, Team Captain

Deana Chase

Circulation - Melissa Quinn, Team Captain

Timothy Gillespie

Committee member Philip Hudner compiled and edited the manuscript and wrote numerous articles for local newspapers. David Aguiar, Susan Pedreira and Betsy Acheson videotaped Committee meetings. Anthony Cucchi of the Trustees of Reservations/Westport Conservation Land Trust and Sarah Wilkes of the Buzzards Bay Project updated the protected lands inventory from the 1999 Westport Open Space Plan. Wayne Sunderland, who became a member of the Planning Board several years after the Master Plan Committee was established, attended the 2003 public presentation of the action plan, and contributed many valuable comments and recommendations to the plan. Planning Board Administrative Assistant Gale Nigrelli wrote and coordinated portions of the plan.

Additional Master Plan Update Committee members and persons who contributed to this 2004 Master Plan Update are as follows:

Deborah Barnes	Bob Grillo	Jack Penney
Jean Borges	Tom Hancock	Brian Pontolilo
Ann Boxler	Clayton Harrison	Ann Rosinha
Colin Boyle	Cal Hopkinson	Tanja Ryden
Paul Cabral	Louise Houghteling	Peter Streng
Joe Carvalho	Joe Keith	Dale Thomas
Frances Clark	Donna Lambert	Byron Trefonides
Dawn Clifton	James Long	Daniel Tripp
Dave Cummings	Cathy Madsen	Steve Tripp
David Dionne	Debra Manchester	William Tripp
David Emilita	Stephen Medeiros	Wayne Turner
Marsha England	William Medeiros	Greg Werthessen
Gregory Franchetti	Norm Michaud	
John Gifford	John Montano	
Michael Guilmette	Sean Pariseau	

1.3 Master Plan Process and Preparation

The committee of citizen volunteers first met on July 30, 1998, and thenceforth met, in general, once or twice per month. Most meetings were taped for broadcast on the local cable TV channel. The Master Plan Update Committee, originally proposed by the Strategic Growth Committee, started, as mentioned above, as the Citizens Committee and later changed its name to Master Plan Update Committee, henceforth "the Committee".

1.3.1 Gathering Information

The Committee determined its first year's goal would be to complete an Executive Summary.

This document would briefly summarize the community's planning goals and objectives, based on previously prepared planning materials and public input from Westport citizens and officials, but would not propose specific actions. The Committee organized into subcommittees based on the

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elements of the Master Plan required under Massachusetts General Law, but modified these categories as shown above in Section 1.2.1 in order to more efficiently addresses issues important to Westport.

The Committee initiated the information-gathering phase of preparing the plan by hosting the following presentations:

Date	Presenter	Organizational Affiliation	Topic
9/10/1998	Claude Ledoux	Former Selectman, Farmer's Association	History of Zoning & Growth Management in Westport
9/10/1998	Carlton Lees	Former Town Counsel, Cable Advisory Committee	History of Zoning - Maps
12/3/1998	Gay Gillespie	Westport River Watershed Association	Open Space & Recreation Plan
12/3/1998	Normand Michaud		Water Supply Protection & History, Dam Maintenance
12/3/1998	Richard Wertz	Historic Commission	Cultural Resources - Historic Districts, Native American Burial Grounds
10/12/2000	Paul Vigeant	UMass - Dartmouth	Economic Development - South Coast Development Partnership
2001	Dave McCurdy	Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association	Drinking water issues
3/21/2001	Chris Modisette	Southern New England Forest Consortium	Fiscal impact of various land uses and cost of community services associated with each type of use.
4/11/2001	Craig Lindell, Susan Peterson	AWT/Aquapoint and Teal, Ltd.	Distributed community wastewater systems.

In 1998, the Committee prepared a Scope of Services to hire someone to review and summarize 27 existing Westport planning documents and hired Glen Miller of Bridgewater State College who finished this 64-page document in 1999.

The Committee meanwhile prepared matrices of Issues, Goals, Objectives and Strategies for the various elements of the plan, and collected additional information by reviewing literature and consulting with department heads and board members in Town government, members of local civic organizations, other Towns, and the regional planning agency, SRPEDD. The Committee also completed the Executive Summary document.

In early 2001 the Committee issued a Request for Proposals and hired the consulting firm of Beals and Thomas, Inc. Planners from the firm met with the Committee and the Planning Board staff. They reviewed the current Zoning By-Law and suggested changes. They also facilitated a more accurate revision of the Build-Out Analysis done by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, a computer model which shows projected development of Westport under the existing Zoning By-Laws and other regulatory provisions. Thirdly, the firm prepared a Resource Sensitivity Analysis, which assessed and ranked Westport's natural and cultural resources, and depicted these "environmental and cultural receptor" areas on a map, to be used to guide future development and preservation efforts to appropriate areas of Town.

1.3.2 Reaching Consensus Through Public Meetings, Surveys, Newspaper Articles

In addition to its regular bi-weekly and subcommittee meetings, the Committee held three community meetings in February and March of 2000 to solicit public comment on the Executive

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Summary document which was published in May, 2000 and approved by Town Meeting. Over the course of plan development, the Committee wrote over 35 newspaper articles, which were published in the Chronicle's Westport Forum, Shorelines, the New Bedford Standard Times and other publications. In addition to these initial community meetings, meetings were held to discuss alternative development strategies for Central Village, to solicit the views of residents of various neighborhoods, to discuss various other activities undertaken by the Committee during the course of plan development, and to explain and solicit citizen opinion on several specialized studies done during this period.

1.4 Action During Plan Development

The Committee held a session to list immediate objectives and then focused on those with the highest priorities: increase Town funding for agricultural and open space protection, obtain a water study so all could understand the nature of our drinking water supply, and obtain Town approval of a "right-to-farm" by-law. After researching each of these, slots were reserved on the Town Meeting Warrant for several articles, which are discussed below.

1.4.1 Phased Development By-Law

In 1999 the Committee, along with the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Inspector of Buildings and Board of Health, supported the proposed Phased Growth Zoning By-Law which was passed by the Annual Town Meeting in the spring of 2000.

1.4.2 The Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) of 2000, passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor, gave each town the option to participate in a state program that matches local funds for several purposes. These purposes are: the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space; the acquisition and preservation of historic resources; the acquisition, creation and preservation of land for recreational use; for the creation, preservation and support of affordable housing (which may take many forms, including housing for the elderly or assisted living.) and for the rehabilitation and restoration of the above resources. The Act required approval first by Town Meeting, then by voters in a general election. In 2001 and 2002, Westport citizens approved the Act at both Town Meeting and in the General Election, respectively. Westport subsequently established a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) composed of representatives from major Town Boards, Commissions and departments with an interest and expertise in the above resources. CPA essentially acts like a savings account, to be spent in specified amounts for the stated purposes. While there are many advantages to the CPA, one disadvantage is that the CPA funds would take time to accumulate. The local tax surcharge levy started in January of 2003; the state would make its contribution of matching funds in the fall of 2003. While supporting the CPA, the Master Plan group also began looking for a quicker solution.

1.4.3 The Preservation/Open Space Trust Fund

The Preservation/Open Space Trust Fund article for the 2001 Town Meeting was modeled after Dartmouth's that had successfully been passed by the legislature under the Home Rule provision. While the CPA acts like a Town savings account, the Trust Fund would be a non-renewable line of credit, against which the Town could borrow at a low interest rate, similar to bonds. The MPUC drafted the by-law for a debt of up to \$1.5 million and included the provision that the funds could be used for recreational land. The Trust Fund article was approved by Town Meeting, and then required approval by a Town-wide election. On voting day, many members of the farming community visibly supported passage of the Trust Fund by spontaneously bringing tractors and farm equipment to public parking areas near polling places with signs asking voters

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to vote "Yes". The Trust Fund was approved at the polls by a comfortable margin. The Town then established a Committee to administer the Trust Fund, with, like the CPC, representation from relevant areas of Town government.

1.4.4 The Agricultural Commission

The Agricultural Commission article began as a "right-to-farm" statement. As the Master Plan group considered right-to-farm by-laws from other communities, it also met with farmers to draw upon their expertise and gain their support. We came to realize that what we needed *first*, was an Agricultural Commission to give the farming community a stronger voice in the future of Westport. A group of farmers asked that the creation of a Commission be substituted on the Town Warrant, and with the Board of Selectmen approval, the article was placed on the warrant. At Town Meeting, the vote was unanimous to create the Commission.

The seven-member, five-alternate Commission began meeting as a steering group and became official with the Board of Selectmen appointments in June 2001. The "AgCom" established its own goals for its first year, including advocacy for farmers, establishing a relationship and dialogue with important Town boards such as the Board of Health and the Conservation Commission, and mailing the farming community questionnaires for their input into the work of the AgCom. The first six months of the Commission saw a workshop with forty-plus Town board members and numerous complaints or referrals from Town Boards researched and handled on behalf of farmers. Future goals will include continuing advocacy for farmers and the challenge of getting technology, marketing, and value-added expertise from resources such as the state into the hands of the farmers themselves.

1.4.5 Heritage Landscape Pilot Program

The Town applied for and was selected for participation in the Heritage Landscape Pilot Program of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. The purpose of this program was to identify and describe the various types of landscapes reflective of the cultural and natural heritage of the Town, to generally survey them, and to record certain of those sites, which were surveyed in greater depth, with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. In addition, a guidebook was created to help communities preserve their heritage landscapes.

1.4.6 Civic Initiative for a Livable New England

In the fall of 2000, Co-Chair David Wallace submitted an application on behalf of the Committee for Westport to participate in the Civic Initiative for a Livable New England's Urban Sprawl Workshops, and proposed the Central Village as a case study area. Before attending the workshop in Boston, Wallace held a meeting at Lee's Market to solicit the opinions of the business owners in the Central Village. Co-chairs Dave Wallace and Timothy Gillespie, along with John Montano from the Planning Board and Jeff Bull and Gregg Swanzey of the Committee participated in the Workshops. After the workshops in Boston, Wallace again presented the results to the Central Village business owners for their consideration and also invited residents of the Central Village to express their opinions. Each of the local meetings drew between 20 and 30 business owners, residents, and workers from the Central Village. The results of this study are presented in Appendix A.

1.4.7 Demolition Delay By-Law

The Cultural and Historic Resource Subcommittee, after reviewing several model by-laws, drafted a by-law which would require anyone who wished to demolish a structure which is listed in the Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey for Westport, to delay such demolition for a brief period of time, until the Town was able to review the value and importance of the property

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and perhaps develop a plan to move the structure or otherwise preserve it. This by-law was approved by the 2002 Annual Town Meeting.

1.5 Master Plan Organization and Format

This document is organized by chapter in a similar manner to the organization of the Executive Summary approved by Town Meeting. In general, each chapter reflects an element required by statute, but with the titles changed somewhat to reflect Westport's unique challenges and opportunities. Each chapter discusses the issues raised during preparation of the Executive Summary, additional issues and information gathered during plan preparation, analyses of those data, and proposed actions. These recommendations are presented in the final chapter. Additional technical data and information are presented in the appendices.

1.6 Continuing the Planning Process

The Committee recommends that an on-going Master Plan Implementation Committee be created to ensure that the recommendations of the Plan are explored and achieved. This Committee, if created, will assist and encourage the various Boards, Commissions, and departments of Town government to pursue the suggested actions assigned to them by the Plan. This Implementation Committee might also be charged with assisting the Planning Board in updating the Master Plan when that becomes necessary and with creating or helping to create, in concert with other committees and task forces, detailed plans to address specific areas of Town, such as the villages, or to address specific needs, such as a drinking water supply study or a highway corridor study.

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CHAPTER 2
A Vision for Westport

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

2. A Vision for Westport

2.1 Introduction

Previous Master Plans, prepared and updated from 1964 to 1983, identified issues and proposed policies and solutions to guide decision-making in Westport. During the past five years the Master Plan Update Committee has found that many of these issues remain relevant today. Westport citizens raised additional issues during the many public forums held by the Committee. The Planning Board, also, discussed and commented on the draft of the Plan, and voted to accept the Plan. In order to ensure that this vision reflects a broad community consensus, comments made by the public and by Town officials have been either incorporated into the final draft of the Plan or added as annotations. The Committee itself, while conducting research on the Plan, uncovered new issues and innovative solutions, many of which have been implemented by communities similar to Westport. This vision statement is a response to the issues and concerns that remain relevant today, and will remain relevant for the near future, and stands as our vision of our Town in the twenty-first century.

2.2 Land Use

Westport will zone for land use that balances residential, commercial and industrial growth with the preservation of rural character and the environment

The pattern of past and present land use, current land use issues and community goals guide our recommendations for future land use.

Residential and agricultural use is allowed throughout the Town. The business district covers only seven percent (7%) of the total land area, and one percent (1%) is designated for unrestricted use. Zoning must be tailored to guide growth and support the overall objectives of the Master Plan: 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 life styles of our residents; to preserve and nurture the farming and fishing industries; to provide safe drinking water; and to provide for community needs.

Water resource protection is a top priority throughout the Town and town-wide stormwater management is needed. Environmentally sensitive areas must be protected, and Westport's exceptional natural attributes must be preserved for future generations. The Plan suggests actions to accomplish these and other goals.

2.3 Natural Resources

Westport will protect its natural resources in order to preserve its healthy and enjoyable environment.

Westport is blessed with abundant natural resources, and therefore needs to take proactive measures to protect and preserve them in the face of growing development pressure.

The Westport River and Horseneck Beach provide the framework for much of Westport's character. The health of the river and shoreline is key to preserving those qualities that define Westport in terms of its cultural and economic heritage. The Plan calls for continuing and expanding on measures to revitalize the health of the river, including comprehensive dredging, a shellfish propagation program, an effective boat pump-out program, and continued monitoring of bacterial and nutrient levels. Effective stormwater management is important to control erosion and pollution of the river.

Groundwater and wetland resources have received much attention through the Aquifer Protection District and some groundwater protection measures taken by Westport's Board of Health, as well as programs run by the Westport River Watershed Alliance. These efforts need to be expanded.

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Nothing is more important to Westport's citizenry than their ability to get good clean drinking water and dispose of their septic waste safely.

The river, wetlands, woodlands and fields also provide habitat for many species of plant and animal life that need to be protected. The Plan outlines measures that will serve these interests.

2.4 Open Space & Recreation

Westport will preserve open space, support farmers and provide a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages and segments of the population.

With the passage of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), the Agricultural/Open Space Preservation Trust Fund, and establishment of the Agricultural Commission the Town has begun to address the preservation of open space and protection of our agricultural heritage. These initiatives need to be continued.

There is a real need to increase and improve recreational opportunities in Town, to provide for playing fields, indoor facilities, trails and other programs for fitness and recreation. By working with private groups, such as the Westport Youth Athletic Association, we should be able to acquire new facilities that are built and maintained without utilizing tax dollars. Westport's Recreation Commission could play an invaluable role in coordinating the Town's participation in these ambitious programs.

2.5 Historic & Cultural Resources

Westport's Historic and Cultural Resources will be identified and protected for the enjoyment and cultural enrichment of present and future generations.

Archeological study and inventory of Westport's historic and cultural resources are needed. Protection and preservation of these resources would be provided by careful regulation by land-use boards to assure that any new development takes precautions to show significant resources, including stone walls, ancient ways, cemeteries, significant trees, and any other features of the landscape that express the historic heritage of the Town.

The Plan also calls for creating a Town archive of Westport's history. This may be in the form of an addition to the Library dedicated to this archive. Funding for historic preservation projects may come from the Community Preservation Fund as well as other funding sources available through grants and state and federal programs.

Westport's historic heritage is best expressed through its farming and commercial fishing industries and its villages. The Town must preserve and protect the rights of farmers and fishermen to pursue their livelihoods and create the controls to protect the character of the villages. The Town should also protect and encourage cultural organizations, particularly those housed in older structures.

2.6 Water & Sewer

Westport residents will have well-planned, adequate water supplies, septic disposal facilities, and stormwater management provisions.

2.6.1 Water

Currently 98% of the Town of Westport depends on private wells for water supply. High priority is given to protecting and preserving existing sources and planning for future needs. Conservative restrictions on water usage, and studies of impact would be prudent in order to

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avoid the high costs that would be incurred for emergency supplies and associated infrastructure should our water supply be depleted.

2.6.2 Sewer

Westport has no existing public sewer systems, and therefore relies on private septic systems. Disposal of household wastewater poses the number one threat to groundwater and surface water contamination. Options for proper disposal should be incorporated into future land use to ensure environmentally sound policies.

2.6.3 Stormwater

Westport, under EPA Phase II stormwater directives, will now treat storm water runoff before discharging to watercourses. The Town also has a moral responsibility to: 1) continue to prevent flooding of private properties from future development; and 2) remediate the flooding of private land by runoff from Town roads with inadequate drainage provisions, by implementing design improvements on these roads, and acquiring property or easements to accommodate stormwater. The Town must adopt comprehensive policies and regulations that will address these issues, guarantee the continuance of Chapter 90 funds, and prevent costly remediation.

2.7 Circulation

Westport will have a Town-wide circulation system that is safe and convenient for all users and coordinated with land uses and economic development.

Westport is generally well served by the layout of its roads both for commuting and in-Town travel. Only minor additions to this network may be necessary in the future. Classification of Westport roads according to state and federal guidelines will aid in the development of road design standards.

Safety improvements are needed for pedestrians (especially school children), bicycles and other modes in areas where appropriate, including within the villages and at crossings on Rte 88. The Town needs to support the work of the Rte 6 Task Force to petition the state to address safety and design, landscaping and impacts from future development. Certain dangerous intersections need to be improved.

2.8 Economic Development

Westport will strongly support and maintain the vitality and competitiveness of traditional local businesses, will invite compatible new businesses, and will guide commercial and industrial development through appropriate zoning controls.

While the industries of farming and commercial fishing remain the keystone of Westport's economic activity, they are in need of strong support and creative programs to continue their vitality. The Route 6 and Route 177 corridors contain the most concentrated areas of non-farm relate businesses, yet without adequate water and sewerage it does not appear feasible to develop large retail/commercial projects in these corridors or anywhere else in the town.

New commercial enterprises such as retail goods and services, marine trades, fishing, agriculture, aquaculture, and quality cultural and recreational undertakings could complement and enhance existing businesses. In addition, Westport's scenic beauty and exceptional coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean and Westport River attract visitors who patronize local businesses during their stay. Westport has the potential for increasing tourism through innovative ventures such as a farmers market, bed and breakfasts, and country inns.

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Although several Westport business organizations promote economic development, there is a need for someone in town government to coordinate their efforts and nurture business enterprises. There also is a need to revise zoning by-laws to support shopping nodes where there are high concentrations of residences, and the concept of a compact Central Village to combine housing, businesses, and Town offices all within walking distance of each other.

2.9 Housing

Attractive and affordable housing will be available for all types of households.

The 1964 Master Plan identified a misfit between Westport's housing stock of farmhouses and other single-family detached housing and the trend toward smaller families and an aging population. These two demographic trends have continued in Westport, particularly the sharp rise in the number of elderly residents. Over the last quarter century, zoning in Westport, that has predominantly enabled single-family homes in large-lot subdivisions, has only increased the gap between housing needs and available housing stock. In order to address the housing needs of all segments of Westport's citizens and maximize the effect of the Town's investment, a solution must involve a multi-pronged strategy.

Local initiatives such as flexible zoning with possible incentives will encourage the private sector to develop affordable housing for first-time homebuyers and the elderly. Partnering between the Town and private developers or non-profits will help the Town by sharing responsibility and costs of developing such housing, while allowing the Town to designate locations. Creating districts and overlay zones for elderly housing and multi-family housing will allow their location near appropriate infrastructure and convenient support services and public transportation. Increasing the options for accessory apartments will allow families to more easily care for elders at home.

The Town may also support affordable housing by public outreach in the form of seminars for first-time homebuyers and by participating with local lenders on low-interest loan programs. There is an on-going need to continue the grant program to provide housing rehabilitation and septic repairs to existing income-qualified homeowners who find themselves unable to afford to maintain their homes.

If the regulatory environment at the state level were static, and if the Town had adequate funds and staffing resources, the Plan might recommend that a long-term strategy should be implemented to document, monitor and achieve the state-required quota of at least 10% affordable housing units, with interim targets for new units created and an annually updated review of the Town's status relative to number of housing units at projected buildout. However, given the likely changes in M.G.L. Chapter 40B, and the current state of the Town and state budgets, a more reasonable recommendation is that the Town formulate a policy toward affordable housing that is responsive to local needs and concerns, then monitor the status of the regulatory environment, the Town's affordable housing stock, and the zoning and regulatory tools that might be helpful to encourage suitable housing. When it becomes clear what the state mandate will be, the Town will then be in a position to respond to the state mandate in as efficient a manner as possible.

Westport should begin by placing primary emphasis on meeting the housing needs of its citizens identified during the Master Plan process, and next attempt to position the Town in a favorable position relative to statutory requirements as these are clarified at the State level.

2.10 Capital Facilities & Human Services

Necessary Town and Regional Services will be available to Westport residents.

Westport needs to grapple with the dilemma of providing adequate services to a growing community while facing a fiscal crisis that sees less aid coming from the state and federal government. Many Town buildings and facilities are already too small and inadequate to serve present and future needs. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee must be reconvened to update and implement the Capital Improvement Plan of 2001. If the legislature passes a bill, currently in committee, allowing towns to assess development impact fees, which will help Westport accommodate the costs of growth, a more detailed capital improvement plan will be needed to quantify the impacts of each development and to justify the fees. In the process of determining future service and facilities needs, the Town should identify and pursue grant-funding opportunities.

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CHAPTER 3
Land Use

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

3. Land Use

3.1 Introduction

This Land Use section concentrates on how the Town's people use the land: how it has been used in the past, how it is presently used, and options for its future use. Information on land use patterns forms the basis for comprehensive planning and determines, to some extent, the need for transportation, infrastructure, public facilities, and environmental protection measures.

Examining the historical progression of land use change helps in understanding the present complexity of land use. The retreat of the most recent glacier is impressed in the "grain" of the land. Low ridges and the shallow valleys between them, wetlands and water bodies all tend to run in a north- northwest south-southeast direction. Glacial retreat also influenced the way the land meets the sea, the soils and the aquifer locations. It made an attractive place to settle for 18th century farmers and seafarers. Their activities and the original villages that served them prevail today to a surprising degree but are threatened by urban sprawl reaching out from Boston and Providence. Nevertheless, their history is still evident throughout the town in the historic, cultural and pastoral resources valued by many.

The town's extensive land area and varied geography have influenced land use. Uplands, wetlands, ponds, rivers and the sea have tended to attract different uses. People who worked the land chose inland and upland, fishermen and seafarers, the edge of the river with easy access to the sea. The people lived and worked in town. Subsequently, some residents became commuters, dependent on accessibility to jobs mostly beyond town boundaries, as transportation changed with faster vehicles, paved roads and other transportation improvements.

Starting in the 19th century, the land-waterscape attracted summer residents seeking vacation spots with scenic views and nearby recreation. They chose the ponds, rivers, seacoast and attractive upland. Today, vacation houses and related activities continue to expand, consuming more open land and farmland. Increasingly, seasonal housing is being converted into year-round occupancy, particularly for retirement residences. This has created a need for a new range of social, recreational and commercial support activities.

In the late 19th century, Westport started as a bedroom community for commuters coinciding with the building of a rail line (1879) and the electric streetcar line (1892) along the current Route 6 corridor that connects Fall River and New Bedford. Residents living within walking distance of these lines had a choice of job markets in New Bedford and Fall River as well as at Westport Factory. Later, with the accessibility provided by automobiles, the job market expanded to Providence, Boston and beyond. With its abundant amenities, Westport has become a very attractive place to live for commuters. Subdivision of land into house lots has moved south from Route 6 as transportation systems have improved.

Each land use stage has left its mark on the land and has generated its own set of issues. The dynamic interaction among them raises questions today regarding different life styles, environmental objectives, historic and cultural resource survival and economic activities. The pace of change is quickening. The increasing number and size of land subdivisions and the annual number of building permits are evidence of this, although the Phased Growth By-Law has slowed growth, at least temporarily. These current land use changes are occurring with only the limited control of existing zoning by-laws, Planning Board regulations, and Conservation Commission jurisdiction under the Wetlands Protection Act.

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If we choose, future land use in town can be directed in a manner that protects and preserves the essence of Westport's character for present and future generations. The Master Plan identifies the positive features and establishes guidelines for change, so that the quality of life we enjoy may be maintained and even enhanced in the future. This section provides an overview of Westport's current land use, zoning, and regulations that protect valued resources.

3.1.1 Description of the Town

The Town of Westport, a Massachusetts South Coast community, covers approximately 50 square miles of land area, and has a population of approximately 14,000 persons as of 2000.¹ East-west roads link Westport to adjacent towns, the region and the interstate system. Except for Blossom Road, which runs northward to Fall River, the north-south roads are either internal to the town or form the eastern boundary with Dartmouth. Route 88 is Westport's principle north-south road and connects Horseneck Beach State Reservation to I-195.

Westport's natural beauty combined with its historical past results in a distinctive small-town character that sets the town apart from many of its neighbors. This rural character, combined with Westport's proximity to major metropolitan areas, has made the town increasingly attractive to new development. The town is located 54 miles south of Boston, 26 miles southeast of Providence, 8 miles west of downtown New Bedford, and 8 miles southeast of downtown Fall River. The completion of I-195 and Route 88 has facilitated commuting to and from Westport. More transportation improvements, such as the proposed extension of commuter rail services into southeastern Massachusetts, will put more development pressure on the town.

Westport buys water from Fall River to serve the Route 6 corridor from the Fall River boundary eastward to Greenwood Terrace Elderly Housing, about half the distance to the Dartmouth line. It also serves Davis Road residences. Town officials have discussed extending the water service to the Dartmouth line and tying this part of North Westport to the Fall River sewage system. Cost and Fall River system capacity remain obstacles to achieving this. The Fall River water system relies on North and South Watuppa Ponds and Sawdy Pond. Portions of all three ponds, as well as portions of their watersheds, lie within Westport.

3.2 Current Land Use

3.2.1 Land Use Map

The most widely recognized and readily available source for existing land use in Westport is the Commonwealth's MassGIS. Beals and Thomas, Inc., the Master Plan Update Committee's technical consultant, prepared Map 3-1. Town of Westport Land Use, which depicts approximate town-wide use of land. It is based on data collected in 1999.

The 21 standard land use categories used by MassGIS (LU_21 Codes) have been combined to yield the categories described in Table 3-1 below, further aggregated for discussion purposes and slightly expanded upon in Map 3-1. The aggregation is adequate for the relatively few variations in land use type within the Town.

¹ MassGIS, U.S. Census

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Table 3-1. MassGIS Land Use Code Definitions

Land Use	LU_21 Code	Abbreviation	Category	Definition
Low-Density Res.	13	R3	Residential	Greater than 1/2 AC lots
Med.-Density Res.	12	R2	Residential	1/4-1/2 AC lots
High-Density Res.	11	R1	Residential	Less than 1/4 AC lots
	10	RO	Residential	Multi-family dwellings
Commercial	15	UC	Commercial	General urban, shopping center
Industrial/Transp.	5	M	Mining	Sand, gravel & rock
	16	UI	Industrial	Light & heavy industry
	18	UT	Transportation	Docks, divided highways,railroads
	19	UW	Waste disposal	Landfills, sewage lagoons
Agriculture	1	AC	Cropland	Intensive Agriculture
	2	AP	Pasture	Extensive Agriculture
Natural Land				
Forest	3	F	Forest	Forest
Flats	14	SW	Salt Wetland	Salt marsh
Woody Perennial	21	WP	Woody Perennial	Orchard, nursery, cranberry bog
Open	6	O	Open Land	Abandoned agriculture, power lines, areas of no vegetation
Urban open/rec.	7	RP	Participation Rec.	Golf, tennis, playgrounds
	8	RS	Spectator Rec.	Fairgrounds
	9	RW	Water-based Rec.	Beaches, marinas, swimming pools
	17	UO	Urban Open	Parks, cemeteries, public & institutional green space, vacant undeveloped land.
Water	20	W	Water	Fresh water, coastal embayment
Wetland	4	FW	Wetland	Non-forested freshwater wetland

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Table 3-2 shows land use distribution by acreage and percent of Westport's total area, including fresh water bodies and coastal embayments but excluding the Westport River and other coastal areas. It also indicates the change in acreage for each land use between 1971 and 1999. Acreage is measured based on land use interpreted from aerial photography, not on the acreage of an assessors parcel.

Table 3-2 Land Use Acreage 1999² (from MassGIS MacConnell Land Use)

Land Use	Acres	% Cover	Acres Change 1971-1999 ³	% Change 1971-1999
Natural Land	19,631	59.0	-1609	-7.7
Agriculture	4,683	14.1	-464	-9.0
Residential, Low Density	3,321	10.0	1494	16.6
Residential, Medium Density	2,090	6.3	520	32.9
Water	1,253	3.8	-14	-1.1
Open Land	1,062	3.2	6	0.6
Urban Open Space/Recreation	467	1.4	8	1.7
Industrial				
Transportation	426	1.3	-7	-1.8
Commercial	241	0.7	47	24.6
Residential, High Density	63	0.2	6	10.5
Total Acreage	33,255	100.0		

3.2.2 Changes in Land Use by Acreage

3.2.2.1. Agriculture

Included under agriculture are croplands, pastures, orchards, vineyards, nurseries, cranberry bogs and similar uses totaling approximately 4,683 acres. In 1971, using similar mapping methods, the acreage in agricultural use was 5,147 acres, for a decrease of 9 percent, or 3 percent loss per decade. Between 1985 and 1999, however, the acreage lost increased dramatically to 545 acres lost, relative to the period between 1971 and 1985, when there was a slight gain in agricultural acreage.

3.2.3.2. Natural Land

In 1971, Natural Land, including for this discussion forest, non-forested freshwater wetlands, and salt marsh totaled 21,277 acres, decreasing by 7.5 percent by 1999, or about 0.3 percent per year. Loss of forest has occurred at an even pace since 1971 compared to the upturn in loss of agricultural land after 1985.

² These acreages are presented as an aid to understanding and comparing how we use our land, and how our use of it has changed over time. These data are categorized in a slightly different manner, and supplemented with additional data for the purpose of build-out analysis (see Appendix B).

³ MassGIS

3.2.3.3. Recreational Land Uses

Recreational land uses, including spectator, participatory, and water-based recreation decreased from 306 acres in 1971 to 299 acres in 1999, for a -2.2% decrease.

3.2.3.4. Urban Uses

Urban uses include residential, commercial, and industrial areas and urban open space (parks, cemeteries, public and institutional greenspace, and vacant undeveloped land). Westport urban uses increased from 5,602 acres in 1971 to 7,676 acres in 1999 for an increase of 37 percent.

These data represent an overall view of land use change; based on aerial mapping techniques, not parcel data. They are useful for general overall comparisons of how we have changed the ways in which we use our land over time. For a more detailed analysis of specific categories, please refer to the Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation, Housing, and Economic Development chapters.

3.3 Protected Land and Land Protection Mechanisms

3.3.1 Introduction

Only land with legal development restrictions in place is permanently protected from development. In Westport as of 2003 this land amounts to 3,741.9 acres, or approximately 11.2 percent of the land area. Included are lands: of the Federal Government, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, of the City of Fall River (Water Department), under Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR), under the Conservation Commission, of the Westport Land Conservation Trust, of the Trustees of Reservations, and of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Other town owned land remains open but may be used for town facilities or other purposes in the future.

Certain land protection programs provide lesser levels of restriction on land use. Chapter 61 of the Mass. General Laws provides tax abatement for agricultural, forest, and recreational land. The Town has a right of first refusal to acquire the land before it is sold. The town seldom takes advantage of these opportunities because of limited funds. The Agricultural and Open Space Trust Fund, established in 2001, provides \$1,500,000 borrowing capacity for acquisition of land or development rights. The Community Preservation Act will provide funds for open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing generated from a surtax that is supplemented annually by the Commonwealth.

Table 3-3 shows protected land acreages and the percentage of total Town land area for each category. For further discussion and breakdown by type of protection, please see Table 5-1, Open Space and Recreation.

Table 3-3. Protected Open Space 1990 - 2003

Type	Acreage 2003	Percent of Total Land Area
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (17 farms as of 2003)	1,730.7	5.2%
Conservation Commission	372.9	1.1%
City of Fall River Water Dept. ⁴	497.5	1.5%
Westport Land Conservation Trust	403.1	1.2%
Conservation Restrictions	255.8	0.77%
Audubon Society	15.3	0.05%
Commonwealth of Massachusetts ⁵	465.3	1.4%
US Government	1.3	0.0039%
Total Protected Acreage	3,741.9	100.00

3.3.2 Agricultural Preservation Act

An Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) pertains to land in active agriculture use. This most commonly known program is through the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture (DFA) that purchases development rights to farms. Farmers retain ownership to their land and the right to farm on it, but are permanently prohibited from all future non-agricultural development (such as residential or commercial development) on the land. As of 2003, APRs account for 46% of the permanently protected land areas in Westport.

The DFA has spent over \$5 million to purchase APRs on farms for a total of 1,730 acres. As of 2004 the Agricultural and Open Space Trust Council in concert with the Trustees of Reservations, the Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Commonwealth, was on the verge of substantially increasing the acreage protected.

3.3.3 Chapter 61 (Forest), 61A(Agricultural), and 61B (Recreational)

As of 2004 there were 250 properties enrolled under Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B of the Farmland Tax Assessment Act for a total of 8,320 acres. It is designed primarily for lands used for agricultural or horticultural purposes, and can cover farmlands, woodlands and recreation lands. For farms the property owner must have at least 5 acres of land in farm use, and must demonstrate minimum yearly gross sales of farm products, based on the number of acres requested for application. Required annual sales must be \$500 for the first 5 acres, and for each acre above the first five: \$5 for farmland and \$.50 for woodland. There is usually an 80% reduction in assessed value under the Chapter 61 programs. The Town boards and committees charged with acquiring land and protecting open space should examine these properties for potential acquisition, whether for preservation of open space or other uses, so that an informed decision may be made when the Town is offered the right of first refusal.

⁴ Includes water area.

⁵ Includes only land area of Horseneck Beach Reservation, does not include water area.

3.3.4 Wetlands Protection Act

3.3.4.1 Wetland Resource Areas

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter. 131 sec. 40; "the Act") prohibits any filling, excavation, or other alteration of the land surface, water levels, or vegetation in wetlands, flood plains, river front areas or other wetland resource areas without a permit from the Conservation Commission. The Act also covers banks, dunes, beaches, vernal pools, land under lakes and ponds and land under or within buffer zones. The "interests" or values protected are flood control, prevention of storm damage, pollution prevention, fisheries, shellfish, groundwater, water supply, and wildlife habitat. The Conservation Commission can, in addition to permitting, assist in identifying wetlands.

3.3.4.2 Buffer Zones

Under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, no one may "remove, fill, dredge, or alter" land within 100 feet of a wetland, or land within 200 feet of a perennial stream or river, without a permit from the Conservation Commission.

3.3.5 Zoning Regulations

Westport's zoning pattern has 3 types of districts: Business, Residential/Agricultural, and Unrestricted. Westport also has Flood Plain, Aquifer Protection, and Telecommunication Facilities Overlay districts. A minimum 60,000 square foot lot with 150 feet road frontage is required in all districts for all purposes. As currently zoned, with a full build out, business development could fill in the corridors of Routes 6 and 177, and the Central Village area. The current pattern in Business districts and the Unrestricted District in the northwest part of town bordering a portion of I-195 is one of mixed-use. Based on the existing pattern, and the fact that all 'less intense' uses are allowed in business and unrestricted zones, the actual buildout assumes that some residential development will remain and/or continue. Homes would consume the remainder of the developable land in the residence/agricultural district. One should expect the town to eventually look like its zoning map if the town is fully "built out", meaning no more developable land is left.

The Westport Zoning Map, Map 3-2, shows the existing boundaries of the 3 zoning districts; Map B-1 Build-Out Analysis - Composite Development shows what Westport will look like if all the land excluding presently protected land is developed.

3.3.5.1 Use Regulations

Residence/Agricultural Districts:

The following uses are allowed: one and two family dwellings, accessory apartment, accessory use including home occupation, home office; agricultural including greenhouses, forestry, nursery, gardening, farm; convalescent homes, hospitals, sanitariums, nursing homes; educational uses, municipal, religious uses-, resident fishermen shucking, room rental/boarding (maximum 4 per dwelling), tradesman, temporary trailer, accessory signs, limited yard sales, and auctions,

Additional uses are allowed by Special Permit from the Board of Appeals.

Business District:

The following are allowed: all uses permitted in the residential/agriculture district, auto sales (including trailer and farm equipment), auto body shop/repair, service

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stations, storage garage, banks, private club not for profit, kennels, flea market, hotel, job printing, miscellaneous retail or service business, motel, newspaper, business or professional offices, public utility, research labs, restaurants, wholesale businesses.

Additional uses are allowed by Special Permit from the Board of Appeals.

Unrestricted District:

The following are allowed: all uses permitted in the residence/agricultural and business districts, multi-family dwelling, earth removal/mining, place of amusement or assembly, club conducted for profit, public or private facilities for aquaculture.

3.3.6 Additional Districts and By-Laws

A. Flood Plain Districts:

Certain provisions apply to the flood plain inundated by the 100-year flood as designated on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps dated March 18, 1985 to July 15, 1992. New construction, major improvements and repairs must conform to the state building code as well as any applicable State or Federal agency permitting. All structures shall have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated to or above the 100-year flood level. All proposals must be consistent with the need to minimize flood damage.

B. Aquifer Protection District (APD):

The aquifer protection district encompasses those areas of the Town where groundwater flow rates equal 1400 gallons per minutes (GPM) or greater as, delineated on map that reflects (USGS) information, the map is on file in the Town Clerk's office. APD prohibits many noxious uses such as manufacture, use, storage, or disposal of toxic materials or hazardous waste, facilities such as laundromats, dumps, solid waste disposal or storage, or road salt or deicing chemicals. The regulations in the aquifer protection district are to protect the groundwater aquifers, whether located in residential/agriculture, business or unrestricted districts in the Town.

C. Telecommunications Facilities Overlay District:

This overlay district consists of all zoned business or unrestricted areas and any other areas that may be added by amendment to the zoning map. A special permit with site plan approval is required for all wireless communications towers and facilities including antennas and accessories structures. A number of standards must be adhered to.

D. Phased Development:

This section regulates the rate at which building permits may be issued for lots in subdivisions submitted after April 2000 requiring approval by the Planning Board. The purpose of this section is to promote orderly growth and not unduly strain community services, and to preserve and enhance existing community character. The provisions of this By-Law, which shall apply for 8 years, are to slow growth while the Town Master Plan is updated and Town Meeting votes for desired development controls.

3.4 Regional Context

Westport is a part of the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD), one of the Commonwealth's regional planning areas. In recent decades there has been increasing focus by state agencies on Southeastern Massachusetts, particularly the South Coast. It is an area that has been slower to

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suburbanize due to its distance from metropolitan centers and slower recovery from earlier economic recessions. As a result, the South Coast communities have remained more rural, and farming and commercial fishing have continued. Recognizing that these conditions were changing, SRPEDD and the Town through Town Meeting actions (e.g., Open Space and Agriculture Trust Fund and the Community Preservation Act) have begun to address the issues. Other organizations like the Westport River Watershed Alliance, Coalition for Buzzards Bay, the Heritage Farm Coast Trust, Westport Fishermen's Association, Westport Land Conservation Trust, The Trustees of Reservations, and others have also organized to help protect Westport. The people of Westport are among the leaders in this effort to preserve the pastoral landscape at the water's edge. Their resources, however, are limited, and pressures for building homes are increasing. SRPEDD funnels state planning grants to communities and administers many of them. SRPEDD also helps Westport with grant applications and fosters cooperation among neighboring towns in their planning efforts.

3.4.1 New Mayflower Compact

Westport is participating in the New Mayflower Compact that was formulated to address growth issues in Southeastern Massachusetts. The Compact is included below.

The New Mayflower Compact

October 25, 2000

Southeastern Massachusetts is unprepared for growth. Over the next 20 years, the region can expect 10,000 new residents per year. If present practices continue, this growth will change the region with a net result of residents paying more, getting less and having fewer choices. Vision 2020: An Agenda for the Future outlines a new direction that leads to a future with:

1. Cities that are vital centers of civic and cultural life; fully participate in the diversified economy of New England; and are excellent places to live, work and visit.
2. Towns that are physically distinct, retain individual character, and offer a high quality of life.
3. Rural areas that retain agricultural and forestry industries and preserve large areas of open space.
4. A natural environment that is restored and protected.
5. Efficient infrastructure that supports local needs through regional cooperation.
6. Prosperity for the region's present and future residents and businesses.

To achieve this vision the communities in the region voluntarily join together to implement a growth management program that preserves the interests of each town and city yet profits from unified regional actions. This program will be organized by the Regional Planning Agencies, acting together through local representation. The undersigned endorse this approach to growth management and commit to working collaboratively on the following actions:

1. Create incentives to encourage growth in areas with existing and underutilized infrastructure.
2. Provide local communities expanded planning tools, technical assistance and financial support to shape their future.
3. Reform state laws and policies that promote sprawl and discourage regional cooperation.
4. Analyze and address the full range of impacts associated with local zoning decisions and the funding of infrastructure projects.
5. Execute regional agreements that reduce competition by sharing the benefits and impacts of development among communities, and provide a means of alternative dispute resolution.
6. Preserve natural resources and protect regional water supplies through proper planning and land protection techniques.

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Communities of the Vision 2020 Region

Abington	E. Bridgewater	Mansfield	Plympton	Wareham
Acushnet	Easton	Marion	Raynham	Westport
Attleboro	Fairhaven	Marshfield	Rehoboth	Weymouth
Avon	Fall River	Mattapoisett	Rochester	Whitman
Berkley	Freetown	Middleborough	Rockland	
Bridgewater	Halifax	New Bedford	Scituate	
Brockton	Hanover	N. Attleborough	Seekonk	
Carver	Hanson	Norton	Somerset	
Cohasset	Hingham	Norwell	Stoughton	
Dartmouth	Hull	Pembroke	Swansea	
Dighton	Kingston	Plainville	Taunton	
Duxbury	Lakeville	Plymouth	W. Bridgewater	

3.5 Summary of Previous Land Use Plans

Starting in 1964, a series of master plans, growth and resource impact studies were prepared. The 1972 Comprehensive Report on the Westport Master Plan recognized that "recent development threatens Westport's rural character; related pollution threatens its rivers and ponds." It noted that Westport could guide growth through zoning, subdivision control, and location of public facilities.

A 1983 Land Use Plan goal would "control growth in Westport through the use of sound planning practices." Other 1983 goals/policies included balanced development with minimum encroachment on agricultural land, wetlands and aquifer recharge areas; protection of scenic and natural resources, preservation of recreational areas; and limited improvements to public infrastructure to address the needs and problems of present town residents.

The 1983 Plan reinforced the viability of Westport's village and town centers by encouraging new development near existing centers, by identifying and preserving their historic structures and sites and improving their traffic circulation. Development of well-planned neighborhood and community-oriented commercial services for the sale of food, convenience goods, and personal services was encouraged.

The use of zoning by-laws was proposed to insure balanced housing stock.

In 1986 the Scenic Landscape Protection Assessment goal was to identify the predominant land use and demographic trends in the area and examine their impact on the town's scenic resources. The Massachusetts Scenic Landscape Inventory was developed in 1981 by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. Again, Westport "desires to stay a predominantly rural, agricultural community." The goals were to minimize the encroachment of new development on agricultural land, wetland and aquifer recharge areas through the use of innovative land development techniques; conserve and protect the scenic and natural resources from incompatible land development for the benefit of present and future generations; preserve recreation and conservation areas so as to enhance the total environmental quality of the town.

The 1986 study reinforced the viability of village and town centers. It supported a policy to provide recreational facilities and programs appropriate for the various population groups, it proposed identifying critical cultural and natural resources and scenic landscape features, and protecting them.

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In summary, some progress has been made over the years, however many important issues identified in earlier plans remain and await action by today's citizens. They are being reasserted in this document.

3.6 Current Land Use Issues

Current land use issues are similar to those identified by previous town planning studies. While means of addressing them were suggested, action by the Town has been spotty, and many proposals have been forgotten. This, in combination with the accelerating rate of land use change, has caused the Committee to re-examine the issues. Some issues are repeated from other chapters because they have important land use implications. The issues have been grouped into categories that reflect land use concerns identified in the Executive Summary approved by the 2000 Town Meeting.

3.6.1 General

1. Meeting drinking water needs of residents.
2. Meeting the land use needs of the diverse lifestyles of Westport residents.
3. *Devising means to keep and protect the positive attributes of the natural environment.*
4. *Investigating ways to use existing land attributes as framework for changing land use (i.e. streams and wetlands, farms, stone walls, and vistas).*

3.6.2. Westport Character

1. **Preserving the landscape features that contribute to Westport Character -- scenic roads, vistas, historical and cultural resources and shoreline.**
2. Continuing farming and commercial fishing as vital economic activities, and supporting, encouraging and reinforcing public and private programs toward this end.
3. Maintaining the villages at Westport Point, The Head and Central Village by reinforcing their Village character and preventing commercial sprawl. Villages provide a different and desirable development pattern from the traditional rural and emerging suburban patterns.
4. Encouraging land use change that reduces the need to drive.

3.6.3 Residential Development

1. Providing a range of residential types.
2. Addressing urgent needs in higher density developments north of Briggs Road for: Town sewage and perhaps water; parks and playground facilities. Due to the Route 88 north/south barrier, facilities may be necessary for both its east and west communities.
3. Requiring new subdivisions to provide open space for recreation, to provide trails on existing ancient ways/cart paths; to preserve existing stonewalls and to maintain important scenic vistas.
4. Encouraging neighborhood convenience shops to reduce driving and to provide local focus.
5. Considering higher density housing for elderly and affordable housing near shopping and located in existing business zones or villages.

3.6.4 Villages

1. Recognizing that villages as well as farms and river/harbor activities are central to Westport character. Villages provide a different development pattern from farms and outlying residential areas. Village zones should be established to perpetuate Westport's traditional village development pattern with respect to building types and sizes, lot size, setbacks, street scale, pedestrian-friendly streets and sidewalks, etc.

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2. Containing villages to keep them relatively compact to reduce extensive commercial strip development.
4. Locating and clustering land uses within villages for easy pedestrian access to minimize driving among them.
5. Encouraging mixed use development with shops and other small businesses and higher density housing for elderly, small families, and singles.

3.7 Goals and Objectives

The Land Use Goals and Objectives are organized into the same categories as the Issues. A number of goals and objectives are drawn from other planning element chapters and are included here because of their relevance to land use. They are discussed in greater detail in later chapters of this report. Those altered or added since the Executive Summary was issued in 2000 are marked with an asterisk ().*

3.7.1 General Goals and Objectives

To use the Town's land and waterways to:

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

- A. Preserve positive attributes of the natural and historical environments as land use change occurs
- B. Regulate development in sensitive environmental areas including: areas with high groundwater, areas subject to flooding, areas of significant habitat and other areas that, if developed, could jeopardize the Town objectives.
- C. Implement appropriate methods to control storm water run-off and develop a town-wide storm water management plan.

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

Objectives include:

- A. Insure all residents have access to potable water. (*)
- B. Use existing land attributes for structuring land use change. (*)
- C. Maintain good communication among the town's boards, commissions and committees regarding proposed land use changes and their controls, regulations and approvals. (*)

Goal 3: Address concerns of all Westport citizens. Objectives include:

- A. Ensure the needs of residents' diverse life styles are met, consistent with other goals. (*)

3.7.2 Westport Character Goals and Objectives

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

- A. Ensure farming and commercial fishing remain vital economic activities by supporting and reinforcing public and private programs toward this end (*)
 - a. Continue and re-invigorate the APR program
 - b. Preserve and enhance marine activities, especially the fishing industry.
- B. Open Space
 - a. Continue acquisition of open space for future open use or conservation.

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Goal 2: Develop strategies to manage development to minimize impact on rural character.

Objectives include:

- A. Preserve scenic qualities and vistas on public roads and along riverside and ocean shore.
- B. Direct growth to areas that have the best potential to absorb it.
- C. Consider ways to maintain wooded and farm lands even in dense residential neighborhoods.
- D. Direct land use change to reduce the need to drive.
- E. Reinforce the character of the three villages; they provide a contrasting and desirable development pattern from the traditional rural and emerging suburban residential patterns.

3.7.3 Residential Development Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Develop strategies to encourage residential development that will preserve and enhance the natural and cultural features. Objectives include:

- A. Prepare guidelines and incentives to preserve rural character in subdivisions.
- B. Determine the best strategy for neighborhood development as to number of units, street layout, preservation of natural, historic and cultural features, and views.
- C. Allow variation of house lot sizes depending on wetlands, soils, and available infrastructure.
- D. Locate elderly affordable housing in villages and in State Routes 6 and 177 corridors near shopping.
- E. Consider convenience-shopping zones in residential areas.

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

- A. Encourage neighborhood parks and recreational facilities and trails for all ages as an integral part of development planning.
- B. Address needs in older, small-lot residential neighborhoods: sewage/water (north of Briggs Road), parks and playgrounds, and preserve remaining open space.
- C. Plan and acquire land for schools and other town facilities to serve growing population.
- D. Encourage a range of housing options that reflect the Town's rural character.

3.7.4 Villages Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Develop strategies to enhance Westport's villages and prevent strip development and sprawl. Objectives include:

- A. Configure village zones.
- B. Encourage condominiums, apartments & smaller house lots of appropriate scale within villages, as infrastructure permits it.
- C. Plan for village growth that accommodates new businesses needed to serve emerging neighborhoods.
- D. Prepare detailed plans for each of the villages that:
 - 1. describe alternatives for village growth
 - 2. add new streets
 - 3. reduce curb cuts
 - 4. control signage
 - 5. establish pedestrian access and links among businesses and stores
 - 6. introduce affordable multi-family and/or elderly housing
 - 7. develop regulations that require parking areas to be screened from public ways and be well landscaped.

- investigate options for local sewer and water infrastructure within villages.

3.7.5 Other Goals and Objectives:

Many goals and objectives listed in other chapters in this report have land use implications and are intended to be incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan.

3.8 Environmental Sensitivity Analysis

The Analysis of Environmentally Sensitive Resources is discussed in Chapter 4, "Natural Resources." It is a goal of this plan to be responsive to and protect the Town's valued natural, historic and cultural resources in its future land use development wherever possible. The following discussion considers the impact on land use for each of the major resource categories identified in the Sensitivity Analysis.

Water Supply is the resource of greatest concern. Nearly all residents rely on private well water. The number of dry or contaminated wells has been increasing throughout the town. The aquifers in the northwest corner of town and along the upper reaches of the East Branch as far south as Cadman's Neck are our greatest resource (See Map 3-2). The Aquifer Overlay Zoning District protects them, to a degree. Farms, wetlands, coastal resources, as well as residences, fall within the aquifer area. Future land use must respect and reinforce the zoning objectives.

Fall River has water rights on North Watuppa Pond (its prime reservoir), South Watuppa Pond and Sawdy Pond for water supply. The eastern portion of the watersheds for all three lies in Westport. It is in the interest of the town to protect the watersheds as a good neighbor, and particularly as leverage for future negotiations the town may have regarding buying water, and perhaps, sewer services from Fall River.

Agricultural activity is important to Westport's economy providing jobs and producing products consumed throughout our region. It is an important part of our culture and contributes significantly to "Westport Character". Besides coinciding with the aquifer in the Blossom Road area and along the East Branch, there are large blocks of farms along Sodom and Adamsville Roads and along Horseneck and Pine Hill Roads. Some of the best wildlife habitats in town lie in these areas. Additionally, it is important to preserve farmland in the north part of town to assure some open space for the relatively dense residential areas there.

Scenic roads have been identified as important because, from them, drivers experience the much-admired pastoral landscapes and water vistas. They include most of the Town's roads. Unfortunately, many of the roads are attracting new residential development that often blocks views of open land, reducing the scenic quality along the roads.

Wetlands and associated streams form a network throughout the town. They drain the upland moving water naturally to the ocean, and are an important part of the ecosystem. Developers often consider them obstacles to subdivisions but creative means can be found to assure protection of both wetlands and homeowners.

Biodiversity areas include outstanding natural areas of native plants and animals. They consist mostly of wooded upland and wetlands. Remoteness from human activity has been important to their survival.

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Historic areas are a part of the town's rich cultural heritage. As stated in Chapter 6, it is important that these areas are protected and improved as growth occurs.

Coastal Resources are one of the town's major attractions for permanent residents (including commercial fishermen), seasonal residents, day-trippers and tourists. They are extremely important to fish and bird life, and are fundamental to the water-based segment of our economy. Future zoning must recognize the prominence of coastal resources, protecting them and using them wisely.

3.9 Massachusetts Heritage Landscape

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management is administering the Heritage Landscape Inventory Pilot Project in southeastern Massachusetts. Westport has been selected as a participating community. Because this survey, completed in July 2003, is a pilot study, it concentrates on two areas that may be thought of as "Heritage Corridors", the East Branch of the Westport River and Drift Road. These two areas have been documented as valuable heritage landscapes with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, much as individual historic homes and buildings are now documented. In addition to the concentrated study of these two corridors, a town-wide reconnaissance or preliminary survey was completed. It is summarized in Table C-1 located in Appendix C. As part of the pilot project, DEM has developed a manual that may be used by the Town as a guide to both identifying and protecting all of its heritage landscapes.

3.10 Future Land Uses Alternatives

The plan considers two alternatives for the Town's future land use. They are at opposite ends of a spectrum of choices. One continues with the land use controls presently in place: zoning, and regulations. The other incorporates a series of new measures that would better protect the valued resources and planning possibilities identified throughout this report. The two alternatives are the Build Out Alternative and the Plan Alternative. They are both unrealistic alternatives because they are at the extremes. Many choices for the future fall in between and it is within this range that the future lays. It is the voters' choice.

The Build Out Alternative uses today's conditions, the base from which land-use planning starts, and carries them into the future without change. The Plan Alternative projects the future using modifications to existing controls to achieve the Goals, Objectives, and Actions described in the chapters of Master Plan Update. This Master Plan strongly supports the Plan Alternative.

The two alternatives are discussed in the response to the Land Use Issues, Land Use Goals and Objectives, Sensitivity Analysis, and the Heritage Landscape Survey.

3.10.1 Build Out Alternative

Suppose town residents decide to "stay the course" and to go with the present land use controls, adding no more. What is likely to happen as time goes on? What will the future population be? How will the infrastructure be increased? The Build Out Analysis, presented in Appendix B of the report, forms the basis for this alternative. It assumes by-laws, zoning, and regulations remain as is. There is no additional effort to help farmers, no added protection of water resources, and no new measures to protect other resources. What will Westport be like in the future?

The alternative is modified somewhat in that it has ameliorative actions that the Build Out Analysis constraints did not take into account. The two funding programs passed at Town Meeting 2001 can have an effect on land use. The Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Trust sets up a borrowing account of \$1.5 million to assist the Town in acquisition of farm and open space lands. The Community Preservation Act (CPA),

through a surtax of 2% on the real estate tax and with annual funds appropriated by the State, provides money to be used toward affordable housing, historic facilities and open space acquisition. Benefits from these two funded programs will reduce, somewhat, residential growth and add a small measure of control over future land use.

The Build-Out Analysis Composite Development Map (in Appendix B) serves as the future land use diagram for the Build Out Alternative. The land use discussion for this alternative is divided into the same constituency categories as was used previously in this chapter for Land Use Issues and Goals and Objectives.

3.10.1.1 General

Water resource protection is a top priority for the Town. The Aquifer Protection overlay district defines the aquifer areas and offers some protection to this important resource. In the northwestern corner of the town the zone coincides with farms and watershed land owned by Fall River. The aquifer along the upper reaches of the Westport River's East Branch overlaps the Route 6 corridor and is in danger of over development; development must be guided to protect it. Further water resource protection is not assumed with the Build Out Alternative.

In this alternative, the preservation of natural and historic/cultural attributes, beyond protection that already exists, relies on the new limited funding from the Agricultural and Open space Protection Restriction program, and with the help of private funds. The allocation of CPA funds may shift from preserving open space to more spending for housing and historic/cultural resources, as farms and open space are lost to development. With increasing house construction storm water collection and disposal will need to be more carefully designed and probably will require package treatment plants in order to protect the wetland, ponds, and river from deleterious effects that could harm fishing and shell fishing.

For all residents to have potable drinking water the Town may be forced to provide costly water supplying infrastructure, at least in some areas of the town. Town-owned wells with adequate buffer zones to protect them are one possible source, at least for serving limited areas. Another is buying more water from Fall River. Both may be necessary. The water will need to be piped to the users and probably be provided by local infrastructure serving only where needed rather than town-wide. The Build Out Alternative relies on the present zoning to guide land use change. Habitat preservation would remain chiefly in development constrained areas, shown in the Build-out Analysis, such as wetland and flood plain. Upland wildlife habitat would be lost.

The potential for accommodating life-style diversity, for which many residents express support, will be diminished as the town is built out with 60,000 square foot lots. A more uniform land use pattern will be created throughout the town. The areas with small lots along the Route 6 Corridor and near Sanford Road may remain, as probably will many of the large building lots and "hobby" farms in the southern part of the town. However, the Build Out Alternative implies the building out of most of the town in accordance with present zoning.

Economic diversity will be significantly altered as well, with farming and related jobs all but disappearing. If water and sewerage lines are extended to serve the Rt. 6 corridor, new commercial and industry may occur there over time.

3.10.1.2 Westport character:

A. Rural/Agriculture:

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Ultimately, farming would continue only on APR land and "hobby" farms. This farmland tends to lie in the "belt" along Adamsville and Hix Bridge Roads and along Drift and Horseneck Roads. The bulk of the farmland is located south of Old County Road, and it is also where most of the larger residential lots are located. The present rural character of the town is likely to survive better in these areas.

B. Commercial fishing:

Commercial fishing would continue at the Point but with increasing development shell fishing in the rivers may be affected by pollution.

C. Scenic Roads

Westport roads would continue to attract new housing, causing them to lose their present scenic pastoral quality. Lined nearly continuously with housing, they become suburban streets, substantially changing much of the present Westport character. However, the prevalence of wetland, particularly where it can be seen from roads, would provide some relief. Smaller traditional older homes on existing roads are vulnerable to being demolished and replaced with larger new homes in the process known as "mansionisation", thus further altering the nature of the roadside and diminishing the sense of history as seen from the road.

D. Village Definition

Villages would become less distinctive and new construction would reflect the current 60,000 s.f. lot zoning surrounding them. Westport Point is protected as a Historic District, but the Head of Westport may merge with new neighborhoods as they are built near by. Central Village lies within a nearly three miles long business zone extending 1000 feet on both sides of Main Road. This encourages a future linear village growing southward in a commercial strip development pattern. New buildings may overwhelm the historic village creating a business district devoid of local character and weakening the sense of a village.

E. Building Development:

A carefully prepared text and illustrated guidebook, to explain ways to protect valued features of the Westport Character, could serve as a valuable reference for subdivision developers and homebuilders. However, without changes in zoning and regulations, it would provide no added control to the town for protecting valued features and therefore probably have little impact.

3.10.1.3 Residential Development

A. Residential choice:

Residential choice in the Build Out Alternative would be weighted strongly towards suburban density single-family houses similar to those being built in subdivisions during 2002. It would probably occur uniformly across the town; however, near the rivers and seashore, particularly in south Westport, lot size and houses might continue to be larger. Opportunity for more dense modest sized houses on smaller lots would be limited to existing pre-zoning lots or to Chapter 40B housing, which might be distributed throughout the town. CPA funds would be available to help the town provide more affordable housing.

B. North of Briggs Road:

Along the Route 6 Corridor and north of Briggs Road generally, sewage/water line extensions connected to the Fall River systems would become more necessary, due to the

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density of development. Drinking water problems presently exist in some areas north of Briggs Road. With added housing, this could be more acute, making town infrastructure mandatory. Depending on soil and groundwater conditions, local systems might be needed elsewhere in town. Neighborhoods could be served by piped water from town wells and sewage piped locally to package sewage treatment plants.

Land could be in short supply for recreation and other expanding town facilities. New convenience stores in emerging neighborhoods could only be located with Zoning Appeal Board approval.

C. Route 6 Corridor

The Town should ask the Massachusetts Highway Department to make safety improvements and to landscape the median. Roadside landscaping with sidewalks is also needed. The corridor is likely to become more urban as the business zone is rebuilt with larger more active businesses or housing once infrastructure is provided.

D. Route 177 Corridor

Route 177 Corridor would likely grow in strip development fashion with shops and businesses serving the growing residential neighborhoods to its north and south. Potentially, it could compete with Central Village shops. Local water and sewer infrastructure might be necessary if this happens.

Planning studies for the two business corridors could provide helpful guides to their growth.

3.10.1.4 Villages

As stated above, with current zoning the distinctiveness of the villages would likely disappear. Only Westport Point would continue with clear definition because of its Historic District status. Any extension of the apparent village, or in-filling of lots within the District, would be in accordance with zoning unless the Historic District Commission can intervene. At the Point and the Head, new business activity would be limited to existing business sites, or by approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals to expand the business areas there.

Growth in Central Village is most easily achieved by expanding southward within the Business Zone that extends to Cornell Road. The resulting business area would lengthen, promoting more traffic, curb cuts and strip development. Curb cuts increase potential for accidents and slow traffic movement. While the Business Zone extends 1000 feet on both sides of Main Road, growth is limited by wetland conditions. A road to the west, in the vicinity of Town Hall would create a more compact village. It might extend from opposite Westport Commons to just north of Woods pasture. This is unlikely to happen under present zoning. Probably town water would need to be provided as well. A Central Village sketch plan is located in the Appendix A of this report.

Adding to existing sidewalks and building new walks connecting shops would aid owners and shoppers and reduce driving. Shared parking is a possibility. Town well water and packaged sewage treatment plants serving local owners within the villages might also be necessary.

The disappearance or the loss of distinction of the traditional historic Westport villages would be a substantial negative impact to the variety of existing land use patterns. The

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villages presently stand in contrast to the pastoral agricultural uses and to the suburban type subdivision. Without clear village definition and with many fewer farms, the pervading repetitive suburban landscape would be everywhere with only permanently protected land and wetlands remaining in contrast with it. This alternative reflects a worst-case scenario regarding preparing for the future by assuming the status quo regarding zoning and other land use standards.

The Build Out Alternative describes land use changes that could be expected in the town if actions were not taken to manage inevitable growth. There would be irretrievable loss of Westport character to suburbanization.

3.10.2 Plan Alternative

The Plan Alternative has been developed in contrast with the Build Out Alternative. It is conceptual in that no analysis has been done to project total future population and population breakdown into different groups as has been done for the Build-out Analysis.

It incorporates the recommendations from the Sensitivity Analysis, the early Heritage Landscape findings, and those proposals and actions generated in each of the chapters in this report that have land use implications. In addition, it addresses the issues listed in the Land Use Chapter. It is understood that achieving all the Plan's recommendations may not be possible. Presenting them packaged in one alternative creates the greatest contrast to the Build Out Alternative and is perhaps the brightest possible future for Westport from our present perspective. It is a menu of choices for the residents to select from in accordance with their priorities and the availability of funds.

As in the Build Out Alternative, the Plan Alternative's land use concepts have been divided into the same constituency categories used previously. The Plan Alternative Map, Map 3-3, illustrates the general location and extent of the concepts.

3.10.2.1 General

As in the Build Out Alternative, water resource protection is a top priority for the Town in the Plan Alternative. The Aquifer Protection district overlay defines the aquifer areas and offers some protection to this important resource. In the northwestern corner of the town the zone coincides with farms and watershed land owned by Fall River. The aquifer along the upper reaches of the Westport River's East Branch overlaps the Route 6 corridor and development must be guided to protect it. In addition, protecting the aquifer area from the Head to Cadman's Neck should help keep the scenic qualities along the shore of that river stretch. Development criteria, along with existing site plan review and approval are needed in the aquifer protection district for some uses. Consideration should be given to increasing the requirements to assure better protection in the future. The district should be expanded to include ponds that could supplement water supply in the future (e.g. South Watuppa, Sawdy, and Devol ponds)

The South Watuppa Pond watershed in Westport falls chiefly east and south of the Pond. Lands yet to be developed in the area must be used in ways that prevent degradation of surface runoff to the pond. If the town can assure its protection it might become a useful negotiating point with Fall River for extending water supply in North Westport, particularly along the Route 6 Corridor. Extending a water line down Sanford Road as far as Briggs Road and adding a package sewer treatment system for residential areas along Sanford Road would aid in watershed protection as well. In local areas under stress smaller infrastructure systems might be provided using town wells and package sewerage treatment. Future land use

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controls must recognize the importance of water and soil capability to absorb sewage to minimize the cost of expensive infrastructure.

A town-wide storm water management plan needs to be developed. Design criteria for new subdivisions must be revised to reflect the planning and be incorporated into zoning and subdivision Rules and Regulations.

3.10.2.2. Westport Character

Westport's character is a result of many factors: pastoral landscape, scenic roads, shoreline, natural and cultural resources and villages. Features contributing to the character must be identified so they can be protected and preserved as land use change occurs.

A. Agricultural Districts

Three Agricultural Districts have been shown on the Plan Alternative Diagram. Their boundaries are only approximately established. Land use in Agricultural Districts is currently mostly farmland and woods or open land. There is little residential development within the districts. They are areas where the town should encourage farming to continue and, where possible, those lands should become permanently protected. If development does occur it should be limited to the Conservation Subdivisions that are explained later in this chapter.

The three districts are:

The West District running from Devol Pond southward between Main Road and West Branch to just north of Westport Point. It focuses on APR farms along Sodom and Adamsville Roads and includes farms and open land currently under Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B.

The East District along the east side of the East Branch from Pine Hill Road and along the east side of most of Horseneck Beach Road. APR lands on Hix Bridge and Horseneck Beach Roads area at the core of this district; also, much of the land within the area is under Chapter 61A.

The North District is in the vicinity of Blossom Road and along North Watuppa Pond. It also has restricted agricultural land at its center.

The purposes of the Agricultural District are to:

- a. Protect prime agricultural lands for future production of food and other products.
- b. Maintain an adequate agricultural land base in Westport to ensure continued economic viability for local agriculture and the availability of agricultural support services.
- c. Prevent excessive Town service and infrastructure costs, which would result from unplanned urban growth in areas more appropriate for agriculture.
- d. Preserve scenic, historic and other farming-related values, which help define the character of Westport's culture and landscape.
- e. Allow landowners a reasonable return on the value of their holdings while protecting the majority of existing farmland for use by future generations.
- f. Promote and protect the practice of farming in Westport.

Beyond just identifying prime unprotected agricultural areas, current development standards should be adopted for the districts that include requirements for: residential setbacks from agricultural land, identification of soil types (to ensure preservation of best

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farming land), identification of natural and historic features, lot size, site review of development proposals and incentives for providing permanent open space.

B. Scenic Roads

The importance of Westport's scenic roads has been discussed earlier. When driving or walking on them we see fields, scenic vistas, buildings of all periods, farming activity, woodland, etc. which conveys much of the "Westport Character". Development standards for scenic roads should be adopted that protect the important qualities. Standards could call for preserving stonewalls, preserving scenic vistas, requiring setbacks for buffer zones that screen new development from view from the road, etc. Suggested scenic roads are shown on the Plan Diagram, Map 3-3.

C. Scenic Shoreline

Another aspect of scenic viewing is from the Town's waterways. Many residents have chosen to live in Westport because its ponds, river and seashore are accessible for water activities. It is important that easy- to-find public access to these water bodies be available for residents. Maps showing public landings need to be available. Means of controlling development along the shoreline should be investigated for both environmental and esthetic reasons. Site plan review for sensitive shoreline areas, possibly by means of a Waterfront Zoning District, along with required environmental reviews is recommended.

D. Trails

Investigate the possibility of developing walking paths throughout the town, perhaps in part, connecting ancient ways and cart paths. Such a system might link natural features and/or historic sites, as well as lead to shops or town facilities. New residential developments could be required to connect to such a network where possible.

E. Town Entrances

Roadway entrances to the town should be celebrated as "gateways" and marked with landscaping and designed signs. This would help distinguish Westport from neighboring towns

3.10.2.3 Suburban Development

Regardless of any new controls, suburbanization of Westport will continue into the future. It is a good place to live, real estate market conditions are attractive, and transportation to urban centers is improving. In the face of these conditions, this Alternative proposes the following.

A. Residential Choice

There should be a choice of residential types and densities available to residents to satisfy different life style needs and affordability.

Establish higher density residential areas for low-rise multi-family units, such as condominiums or rentals preferably located within walking distance of shopping (particularly for older citizens) and/or with easy commuting access to job markets (for singles or small families) and including affordable housing. In addition, water supply from town wells or extended service from the Fall River system and local package sewage treatment systems would need to be available to serve denser development. The

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Plan Diagram indicates high density residential permitted in Route 6 Corridor/ Route 177 Corridor Business Zones and in the recommended Village Zones

Medium residential density opportunities would continue in much of the town where soils and available upland and zoning permit. Smaller lots of an acre or less should be considered where town supplied water and sewage is available. In all other areas lot size should be determined by the capability of the soils to supply potable water and absorb septic waste. This means lots of at least 1 1/2 acres in area. Soils and hydrological studies need to be performed to determine the capacity of the land and area requirements could then be specified.

Low-density residential clusters could be considered in the Agricultural Districts where groups of dwellings would have active farmland associated with them. Buffer zones might be required to separate dwellings from farms to ameliorate farming versus housing impacts and site plan approval would be necessary.

B. North of Briggs Road

- 1) *North of Briggs Road, where small lot developments exist and where the sensitivity analysis has identified the important South Watuppa Pond watershed, town supplied sewage and water systems should be considered. Current residents have identified the need for a sewage services here.*
- 2) *The proposed playground on Town land east of Sanford Road will help fill a need for open space in the area. Encouraging remaining farms in the area to continue will keep this part of town from becoming too densely developed.*
- 3) Pedestrian crossing signals on Route 88, particularly at all traffic lights should be investigated. This would increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

C. New Subdivisions

New subdivisions throughout the town should be required to identify, keep and maintain historic and cultural artifacts and natural features on the land. This includes stonewalls, ancient ways, vistas, wetlands, waterways, etc. Open space standards should be set and required in new subdivisions. This would reduce the burden on the town to provide facilities.

D. Business Zones

Small zones for business, e.g., convenience shops, should be established in residential areas and be located at important road intersections, as for example, Sanford Road and Rt. 177. This could reduce the need to drive longer distances for occasional household items.

E. Route 6 Corridor

The Route 6 Corridor needs special attention. For real improvement town water/sewerage systems are imperative. The Massachusetts Highway Department should be requested to landscape the median and sides of the right-of-way. The corridor is highly accessible to the region and beyond and could become more urban in character. Low rise, multi-family housing permitted in the corridor could serve small families (young and older). Shopping and business activities are close to hand. A detailed corridor planning study is recommended to determine its future. The needs of residents living there, the best uses for under-utilized land, and the image of the corridor all require more study.

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Business development should be encouraged in the corridor including light industry and commercial services and shops. Landscape buffers should be required between these uses and existing and/or new residential uses. The east end of the corridor lies within the Aquifer Overlay District; special attention needs to be given to the impact of new development there.

F. Route 177 Corridor

Similarly, the Route 177 Corridor/Business Zone needs detailed planning. It is a district in limbo, a haphazard mix of residential and a variety of businesses set in mostly open land. It needs to be studied for the future. The Alternative Plan Diagram indicates clustering of shops at road intersections. Areas near the clusters might contain medium density housing and more regional businesses could be sited beyond the housing, for example. Its east end also falls in the Aquifer Overlay District where development must be planned to protect the resource.

G. Town Services and Growth

Suburbanization means more houses and more families with children requiring the need for more town infrastructure. Increased capacity of schools, library, elder facilities, town offices, police and fire facilities, roads, town yard, perhaps small local water and sewage systems, etc., will be needed as population increases. This infrastructure will require new land. Study is needed to identify best locations for facilities so that land can be acquired in the right place while it is still available and affordable.

3.10.2.4 Villages

The three surviving villages are an important part of the "Westport Character". They are a direct link with the pre-automobile past containing relatively tight clusters of dwellings, religious buildings, post office, shops, business, cemeteries, etc. They provide visible concentrations of activity in contrast with rural and suburban parts of town.

Central Village planning has received more detailed consideration because of a special program concerned with urban sprawl, sponsored by the Boston Society of Architects and participated in by Master Plan Update Committee members. It was planned to a conceptual level. The results are included in the Appendix A of this report. Much of the Central Village work can benefit the villages of Head of Westport and Westport Point. Each village should be studied in detail at least to the conceptual level, and probably at a more detailed level, to guide future development. However, the following suggestions have been extrapolated from the Central Village study and incorporated into the Plan Alternative.

- A. Contain village growth to prevent strip development while allowing for growth.
- B. Institute Village Zoning to allow continuation of existing village densities and mixed residential and business activities including condominiums and low-rise multi-family residences all accomplished with site review and approval.
- C. Emphasize pedestrian access throughout the village.
- D. Encourage off-street screened parking.
- E. Within Village Zones, supply water from Town wells and have package sewage treatment systems.
- F. Locate land uses and parking to minimize driving within the village.
- G. Add new streets to make village growth more concentrated.
- H. Emphasize already existing village themes:

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Central Village is the business and town government center.
Head of Westport has a Revolutionary and industrial history.
Westport Point has a seafaring heritage

- I. Adopt a signage ordinance for the entire town.
- J. Parking is an issue in the villages, particularly in Central Village. They could benefit from a Parking Needs and Feasibility Study as an early step in the village planning process.

The recommendations of the Plan Alternative can be used as a guide for Town Boards and Commissions for decisions that they will be facing in the near future years. As growth issues are identified and problems appear, more detailed planning and study will be required to prepare actions for addressing them.

3.11 Implementation and Action Plan

Land use plans are achieved through public and private action. Zoning and subdivision control are the most common public actions to control future land use. The Zoning Act, Chapter 40A of the Mass. General Laws, stipulates that zoning amendments, usually proposed by the Planning Board, require a two-thirds majority vote of Town Meeting to be accepted. The Building Inspector is also the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO), who is charged with enforcing the Town zoning by-law as well as the State building code. The Subdivision Control Act, Chapter 41, Sections 81K-81GG, is administered by the Planning Board, and governs the subdivision of land and the laying out of new roads. The Act authorizes local Planning Boards to enact regulations governing these activities.

The State Legislature, also, initiates programs in which the Town may participate (as in the Community Preservation Act). They change over time based on funding approvals and needs identified by state governmental agencies. Locally initiated actions, some requiring legislative approval like the recent Town Meeting approval of the Agricultural and Open Space Trust Fund, are another implementation possibility. Finally private actions may be taken through non-profit organizations like the Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Trustees of Reservations that have aided the town in purchasing development rights on agricultural land and in acquiring open space, as well as preserving other valued open space land.

The Massachusetts Legislature began public hearings in the summer of 2003 to discuss the merits of the proposed "Massachusetts Land use Reform Act" (MLURA). It provides for the first major updating of the Commonwealth's planning, zoning and subdivision control statutes in 27 years. In the Act communities are encouraged to update their local master plan enabling them to develop effective land use regulations that are consistent with the plan. A few of the topics revisited in the Act are: affirmation of "home rule", zoning exemptions, zoning consistency with an approved master plan, "grandfathering", "approval not required" plans, site plan review, transfer of development rights, and affordable housing. Passage of this Act will greatly improve and broaden town options for controlling growth.

3.11.1 Growth Management

In 1993 the Westport Planning Board sponsored the "Westport Growth Management"* report, which focused on community participation strategies for managing growth, and possible regulatory actions. It was funded by an Executive Office of Communities and Development, Strategic Planning Grant. Many of the report's recommendations still hold today. There has been

* "Westport Growth Management" prepared with technical assistance of Herr & James Associates and legal assistance of Kopelman & Page, PC.

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some progress in achieving the recommended regulatory controls but the major proposals have yet to be achieved.

The Master Plan Update Committee enlarges the scope of the reports recommendations. Excerpts from the report used below are in quotation marks.

At an early consultant Planning Board Workshop (April 1993) a “revealing priority listing emerged, with these topics being selected (in descending order of final votes).

- Incentives for preserving agricultural land & open space (37 votes)
- Regulate land use on the identified aquifers (29 votes)
- Optional density averaging for residential development (25 votes)
- Appropriation of Town Funds for land acquisition (for conservation purposes) (25 votes)
- Esthetics, design, parking, signs, landscaping (for business development) (20 votes)
- Local “affordable housing” (20 votes)
- Create commercial zones other than “strip” zones (18 votes)
- Seek water supply alternatives to on-site wells (16 votes)
- Explore alternative of public sewerage (15 votes)
- Subdivision regulations for storm water detention (14 votes)
- Flexibility incentives (10 votes)
- Site plan review process (7 votes)

Generally, these priorities fall within the findings of the Update Committee.

In discussing residential development management, the report listed three outstanding concerns that also parallel present concerns.

- “A desire to see residential development managed so as to protect agricultural land. Residential building is by far the largest component of development, so it is vital that it not needlessly damage agricultural potentials.
- A desire to protect aquifers. That concern is separately addressed, but there are some specific things that can be done to avoid residential damage to aquifers.
- A desire to address problems of housing unaffordability. Both land and construction are expensive, even after a real estate bust Statewide.”

Any growth management program must offer different residential densities to provide the range of housing opportunities residents say they wish to have available in the future. The availability of safe drinking water and sewage disposal must be maintained. The plan recommends residential diversity be provided through several zoning revisions that require some further study, drafting and action by Town Meeting. The revisions include establishing: flexible zoning, conservation subdivision zoning strengthening the existing residential/agricultural zone to reflect soil capability to provide on-site water and sewage absorption, small lot zoning where Town infrastructure is present, and multi-family housing zones. A new village Zone and possible revision to the Business and the Unrestricted Zones are also recommended. These are discussed below.

3.11.2 Flexible Zoning

The present large and fixed lot zoning was originally designed to lower density, to provide land for on-site wells and septic systems, and to preserve Westport’s rural character. The actual result is that large lot zoning contributes to suburban sprawl with its impacts of increased traffic and air pollution, storm water runoff, and fracturing of the town’s natural resources.

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Flexible zoning or density averaging allows site design choices in frontage and lot size as long as the overall density of a subdivision conforms to the standards of the zoning. It would be necessary to require on site soil investigations to be certain public safety standards for drinking water and septic effluent absorption could be met. Its purpose is to achieve developments that respond to the landforms and other natural features occurring at a site. Lot size variations could make it possible to preserve stonewalls or significant views across the land, for example. Incentives of increased number of units could be built into the by-law for providing affordable housing.

Flexible zoning, which does not have a dedicated, shared open space requirement, is best applied to smaller subdivisions of 10 acres or less. For developments over this size conservation zoning is most applicable for Westport for best preserving its rural character and for protecting defined areas dedicated to shared open space.

3.11.3 Conservation Subdivision*

Subdivision tracts in Westport typically require two acres for each lot developed to accommodate the house lot, roadway, and drainage. There is seldom any open space set aside for public or private purpose. Conservation subdivision design is a means to build desirable neighborhoods and to maximize the amount of preserved open space. It is compared to a golf course development, but where open space replaces the golf course, and emphasizes natural features, based on community and environmental values that are identified early in the site development process. Houses are then carefully sited to maximize views, protect land and water resources, provide common space and create a strong neighborhood feeling. The result is a development that protects and connects important conservation or farming interests rather than just setting aside an arbitrary percentage of land. Identifying conservation lands within the context of surrounding properties provides opportunities for connecting larger areas of wildlife habitats and for linking pathways or greenways across several properties, if and when abutting land is developed or conservation/recreation restrictions or easements acquired.

Some Conservation Subdivision benefits are:

- Conservation values are part of the planning process.
- Rural character is emphasized.
- Pollution impact from stormwater runoff reduced.
- Unique and fragile habitats are protected.
- Neighborhood sprawl and isolation reduced.
- Neighborhood trails within interconnected network of open space can be provided.
- Aquifer recharge is maintained.

In addition this zoning can:

- Reduce infrastructure and maintenance costs.
- Reduce demand to acquire new public open space.
- Add valuable amenities that enhance home sales and value appreciation.
- Decrease site development and maintenance costs by designing with the terrain.

Common land resulting from this zoning would be controlled by the Town, a Home Owners' Association, a land trust or other non-profit organization, and/or be restricted for farming or

* Portions of this text and the concept came from the work of Randall Arendt, Environmental Planner

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open space use. Conservation Zoning allows lot sizes smaller than standard zoning if it can be demonstrated that safe drinking water and septic effluent absorption can be provided. It allows smaller lots, and may allow lots with different sizes and frontage that, together with open common land, provide an average density that is no greater than the standard zoning. Therefore, the resulting number of dwelling units cannot exceed that which standard zoning would allow on the same land taking soil and other constraints into consideration.

Conservation subdivision zoning is recommended for large developments throughout the town.

3.11.4 Residential/Agricultural Zone

The existing Residential/Agricultural zone needs to be examined, beyond incorporating flexible zoning or conservation zoning mentioned above, to find ways to assure that lots could provide adequate safe drinking water and capability to absorb septic effluent. This is a function of soil type and hydrology, which is the concern of the Board of Health. Its determination of the best way to strengthen requirements within this zone will be the basis for any zoning revisions. Soil and hydrological studies and specific site tests (beyond the currently used “perc” tests) may be needed or upland requirements may have to be substantially increased for 60,000 s.f. lots. It is recommended that the Board of Health, the Conservation Commission, and the Planning Board work closely together to address this issue.

3.11.5 Small Lot Zoning

In areas where Town water/sewage infrastructure is available, small lot residential zoning should be allowed. While there are no requirements for on-site wells or leaching fields, privacy, space for outdoor activities and topography would determine lot size and frontage requirements. However, such developments should be planned as small neighborhoods with associated parks, playgrounds, and other facilities needed to serve the residents and thereby reduce the Towns’ burden to provide them. Further study and discussion is needed before finalization of minimum lot areas.

There is the potential for small lot zoning to the north and south of the Route 6 Business Zone if the water line is extended beyond its present location and branches are carried northerly and southerly to the areas. Sewer service would also need to be negotiated with Fall River to make smaller lots feasible.

3.11.6 Multi-family Housing

This housing type also requires Town water and sewage infrastructure either as an extension of Fall River service if near the Route 6 Corridor or as local community wells and package sewage treatment systems. Zones permitting this housing would include the Route 6 and 177 Business Zones and the recommended Village Zones. Since it is expected that apartments and condominiums in this zone would attract small families (younger and older citizens) they are best located within walking distance of at least a neighborhood convenience store. Lot requirements, height limits, footprint and other standards need by-law drafting and Town Meeting Action.

3.11.7 Village Zoning

In order to assure the continuation of Westport’s three villages, a Village District should be created in Central Village, the Head and Westport Point. The District would encourage new development of similar density and character, as is the tradition in each of the villages. To achieve this objective, detailed planning must be prepared for each, design standards

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developed, boundaries of the zone set and means for providing Town water and sewage infrastructure to serve the zone devised. The Sketch Plan for Central Village prepared by the Master Plan Update Committee and located in the Appendix A of this report illustrates the beginning of the work that needs to be done. Westport Point is protected as an Historic District and its planning should be done in cooperation with the Historic District Commission. The Head should also be considered to become a Historic District.

Requirements will vary for each of the villages to reflect special characteristics, but, in general, they should meet the following:

- lots permitted to vary in size and frontage with minimum to be set.
- reduced setback requirements for front, side and rear yards to be based on further study and approval of Town Boards.
- shared parking, to be landscaped and screened, and reduced number of curb cuts in business/multifamily housing areas.
- design review and approval to insure maintenance of village character and meeting the objective of the village plan.
- a pedestrian focus, with sidewalks and crosswalks.
- mixed-use development.
- apartments, condominiums, affordable housing and business where feasible.
- Town-wide sign ordinance with special provisions for villages.

To achieve the desired density infrastructure, consisting of water from Town wells and package sewage treatment plants, will be necessary to serve Village Districts.

3.11.8 Business and Un-Restricted Districts

It is recommended that the Business and Unrestricted Districts be re-examined in the light of potential water and sewer infrastructure being added (along Route 6), concern for the wetlands and the aquifer where the districts overlap them, allowing multi-family dwellings within the Business District, and the continued desire to attract new business. It is proposed that planning studies be made for both Route 6 and route 177 corridors and the Unrestricted District to respond to these concerns and lead to zoning changes where they are desirable.

One possibility for the corridors is to have shopping nodes where crossroads intersect Rte. 6 (at Sanford, Davis, Guilford, Union, Washington and Highland, for example), with multi-family housing allowed in their proximity. Business uses would occur in between residential areas. Buildings in both uses should be grouped, where possible to reduce curb cuts on to these arterial roads.

The potential of the land in the Unrestricted District needs to be studied in terms of its usefulness for economic development; the District's name should be changed to more accurately describe the uses allowed within it and the uses allowed should be re-examined. Furthermore it should be determined if there is enough good quality land zoned for business and industry--especially land located with easy access to prime transportation corridors. Such land should not be in conflict with existing residential neighborhoods and with environmentally sensitive areas.

In all cases, additional careful planning, legal, and community input focused on these areas needs to be done before any re-zoning is taken up.

3.11.9 Scenic Road Protection

Chapter 40: Section 15c of the Mass. General Laws is entitled “Designation and Improvement of Scenic Roads”. Under this provision the Planning Board, ConCom, or the Historical Commission of a municipality may designate, with the approval of Town Meeting, a road as a scenic road (excepting a numbered route or a state road). The designation protects, within the right-of-way, trees, stone walls, and other attributes contributing to a roads scenic qualities. The Planning Board may make exceptions after holding a properly advertised public hearing. Designation of a road as a scenic road will not affect the town’s eligibility to receive Chap. 90 funds for road improvements.

Consideration should also be given to revising the Zoning Ordinance setback requirements on scenic roads by increasing the minimum setback, by introducing visual landscape buffers, considering site plan review for businesses and other means for protecting scenic qualities.

3.11.10 Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

The TDR concept is simple: areas of town most suitable for development (for example, the proposed Village Zones or Business Zone nodes and the Business District) are declared receiving areas allowing increased density or other incentives, leaving intact farm and wooded lands that are the sending zones from which development rights are sold. Increased densities allow for in-fill development or clusters of new buildings in the villages or business areas. It is administered by the town and is similar to the present Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) that purchases development rights from farmers restricting the future use of their land to farming. Sending, or donor, areas must be identified (for example, the proposed Agricultural Districts) in advance, as must the receiving areas. Purchasers of development rights would be allowed to develop beyond the restrictions of zoning with the limits of exception set in advance and after review and approval by the town. Receiving zones should be delineated to avoid areas identified

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as sensitive resources. For this technique to be used it must contain very strong economic incentives (e.g. significant use intensity bonuses) or be compulsory. The latter requires land developers in high intensity zones to purchase development rights of farm or open land.

The Commonwealth's Zoning Act has been construed implicitly to allow TDR's for some time, but a recently enacted amendment to the Act has placed limitations on local adoption of TDR By-laws by requiring that towns provide density bonuses to developers utilizing TDR and by specifying the special permit as the only administrative mechanism. These requirements may discourage its use. It is anticipated that impediments to its use will be removed with the Legislature's adoption of the Massachusetts Land Use Reform Act that is now under consideration. TDR has been used by several Massachusetts municipalities including Acton, Wellesley and Raynham.

A mechanism for transferring development rights that serves to assist in the implementation of the recommended zoning provisions, and thereby to guide growth, should seriously be considered as one of the planning tools by which this plan may be implemented.

NOTES

1. For the complete Action Plan for Land Use, please refer to Chapter 12, Action Plan, Section 12.1 Land Use.

2. At the Planning Board meeting of 5/6/2003 where the Land Use element was discussed, then Chairman John Montano expressed his concern with increasing density and advocated flexible zoning. Tim Gillespie noted that keeping uniform 60,000 square foot lots would rapidly consume open space and create sprawl. Wayne Sunderland favored setting aside open space within subdivisions. Sunderland also commented on existing and potential conflicts between business and residential uses sharing the same areas, such as along Davis Road. Vice-Chairman Wallace, who was leader of the Land Use element team, noted that before re-zoning articles were proposed, more discussion and public input was needed. Administrative Assistant Gale Nigrelli suggested that transfer of development rights (TDR) be considered as a land-use planning tool.

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CHAPTER 4
Natural Resources

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

4. Natural Resources

4.1 Introduction

Protection of Westport's natural resources is an essential element of the overall Master Plan. Westport's earliest settlers were attracted by this area's abundant resources: the river and its estuaries, the ocean front, shellfish beds, wildlife habitats, the 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 great 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. The Town's planning must confront this trend and point the way toward sensible growth while protecting the Westport's valuable resources.

Our natural resources serve the Town well beyond their natural beauty. They provide for recreational and commercial fishing and shellfishing, farm produce and lumber, as well as a thriving tourist industry. Of critical importance is the dependence of Westport residents on private wells for domestic water and private septic systems for waste disposal. (See Water and Sewer element.) To protect and preserve our natural resources we must manage them wisely.

Westport has taken several significant steps to protect its natural resources. In order to protect the Town's high yield aquifers, at the spring 1998 Annual Town Meeting voters passed an Aquifer Protection District Bylaw. In addition the Board of Health has adopted regulations that include: surface water protection that requires repairs of existing septic systems within 50 feet of water bodies to include systems that limit nitrogen loading; water supply well quality testing that includes tests for volatile organic compounds on all new and replacement wells; and that large capacity water supply wells drawing over 10,000 gallons/day will not adversely affect neighboring wells or water supply areas.

Certain additional measures to ensure the long-term protection of natural resources can be addressed through additional regulations or incentives; others will depend on the stewardship and vigilance of the Westport's residents.

4.2 Goals and Objectives

4.2.1 Goal 1 To preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's natural resources, including its soils, ground water/aquifer, fresh waters, salt waters, shoreline, wetlands, and wildlife and plant habitat

Objectives to address Goal One:

- Prioritize and address current impacts on the natural resources
- Preserve critical wildlife habitats
- Protect by purchasing open space over aquifer recharge areas
- Educate residents on the proper use, and impact on water quality, of pesticides and fertilizers
- Support financially and reviewing regularly the Harbor Improvement Plan
- Develop a beach nourishment plan for the dune and barrier beach area
- Consider a moratorium on the construction of docks and moorings, until a resource study of the river is completed
- Develop and enforce water use regulations that protect environmentally sensitive areas in the river and estuary.

4.2.2 Goal 2 To devise ways that allow, but control, development in order to sustain Westport's bountiful natural resources and assure that these resources are enjoyed by future generations.

Objectives to address Goal Two include developing and adopting bylaws and/or regulations that:

- Limit land clearing and alteration of the natural topography prior to development review
- Govern new development and redevelopment
- Address storm water runoff
- Protect buffer zones, wetlands and water supplies
- Promote environmentally responsible water usage and land management practices for recreational land.

4.3 Geology, Soils, Topography

Westport's most significant natural features are the Westport River and Horseneck Beach. The two branches of the Westport River cover almost 3,300 acres, provide 35 miles of shoreline and drain 85% of the Town's land area. The river serves as a breeding area and habitat for numerous species of fish, animals and plants. Horseneck Beach is a state recreation area and a barrier beach with over 4 miles of shoreline on Rhode Island Sound and Buzzards Bay. It is the Commonwealth's third most popular recreation area.

Over one half of Westport's land area is forested and many of these areas cover hundreds of acres of unbroken forestland. The variation of forest to open fields creates one of the basic landscape patterns that define Westport.

In addition to its primary purpose as an economic activity providing jobs and food, active farming creates a unique open landscape. Westport's farms provide views of agricultural areas such as: pastures, corn and other produce, vineyards, cows, horses, other livestock and a variety of small fruit orchards. Westport's open, coastal agricultural landscapes, a landscape type fast disappearing in Massachusetts, also allow the public to glimpse the coastline and river as they go about their daily activities.

The land surface of Westport is hilly, but the elevations are fairly gradual. The southern section of the Town has two large estuary areas formed by the East and West Branches of the Westport River. Westport is almost completely surfaced with good texture, well-watered loams with marshlands bordering most of its many streams. The coast is bordered by a strip of sandy soil to a width varying from ¼ to ½ mile wide. The Town has a tidal shoreline of 35 miles. Total land area is 53.01 square miles. The Town's character is mixed, ranging from extensive suburban development in the north to rural residential and agricultural in the south.

Westport is characterized by a variety of soil types that have differing implications for open space and recreation opportunities. Because Westport does not have a municipal sewer system, a large portion of Westport contains soil types that are classified as being difficult to develop. This limitation is primarily related to a high water table or to an impermeable soil layer (hardpan) that impedes water percolation. Forty-five percent of the soils fall into the category of having severe limitations due to wetness (Whitman, Scituate, Ridgebury, muck, peat, and marsh). Another thirty-one percent of the soils have severe limitations due to hardpan (Millis and Paxton). In general, the Millis and Paxton

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soils have good potential as habitat for open land and woodland wildlife and have value from an open space point of view.

Wet soils with a seasonal high water table, at or near the surface, are clearly a problem in Westport. The areas having these types of soils are generally in the valleys between the ridges and hills. Most of the development in Westport has historically occurred along the ridges where wetness is not a problem.

Because these high lands are also important for agricultural use, the Town is likely to face more pressure for development in the less desirable wet soils. The consequence of this situation is that efforts to preserve agricultural land will put the Town in direct competition with development interests. The majority of Westport has been categorized as having prime farmland soils or soils of statewide agricultural significance. "Prime" farmland is defined on a set of Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) criteria that identify soils best suited for growing crops.

Despite the presence of important agricultural soils, due to a variety of somewhat contradictory regulations, Westport must recognize that it is planning within a regulatory system that tends to push development toward farmlands. Although other areas of the world allow waste disposal systems that allow the development of marginal lands, Massachusetts is governed by Title 5, which sets limits for residential properties that use septic systems. These systems need well-drained soil conditions and thus are not suitable for high clay, high water table or highly permeable soils. Farmlands tend to have the characteristics most suitable for septic systems.

Westport also contains a significant area of dune sand and coastal beach soil and associated tidal marsh soils (2,250 acres). This area, found along Westport's Atlantic Ocean coastline, is one of the most significant landforms in the Town. A large portion of this area, composed principally of the Horseneck Beach State Reservation, is publicly owned and protected from future urban development. However, this is a very desirable location for recreation and is also a very fragile environment. Every effort should be made to manage this area for the future enjoyment of the Town's residents.

4.4 Water Resources

Please refer to Map 4-1 for a depiction of Westport's Water Resources.

4.4.1 Wetlands and Floodplain

While the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act provides significant protection for wetlands in Massachusetts, many communities have chosen to supplement this Act with local wetlands regulations in order to provide additional protection, as well as greater local control over the review of projects proposed in or near wetlands. The Conservation Commission may want to consider stronger wetlands regulations to further protect Westport's wetlands.

4.4.2 Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are temporary bodies of freshwater that provide the only breeding habitat for several rare or endangered amphibian species, as well as habitat for other animals. Ideally, a one hundred-foot wide, no-build buffer should be provided around vernal pools, since the amphibian species that breed in these pools also require adjacent upland habitat in order to survive during the adult stage of their life cycle. In the late 1980's, the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program certified eight vernal pools in Westport. Their locations can be found on the Mass GIS Natural Heritage and Endangered Species map.

4.4.3 Surface Water

There are six major bodies of water in the Town, with the Westport River system being the largest. The two branches of river cover almost 3,300 acres, provide 35 miles of shoreline and drain 85% of the Town's land area. In the tidal portion of the river, both the East and West Branch are of limited suitability for bathing and shellfishing depending on current bacterial counts. Industrial and municipal treatment plants are not present in either branch of the river, although prior to 1990 the sewage treatment system from Lincoln Park was a known source of pollution to the upper East Branch. The area around Lake Noquochoke, a secondary drinking water supply for the City of Fall River also rated as being suitable for contact recreation, just began to receive municipal sewer service in the fall of 1998.

The East Branch of the Westport River has significant shellfish resources and the estuary has more salt marsh acreage than any other embayment in Buzzards Bay. Although records indicate that eelgrass beds are plentiful in the river system, recent mapping done by the state indicates there has been a dramatic decline in the river's total eelgrass bed acreage.

Similarly, the West Branch of the Westport River also has significant shellfish resources. This estuary has the fourth greatest salt marsh acreage (after the East Branch), and more acres of eelgrass than any other Buzzards Bay embayment where eelgrass has been mapped. Here, too recent mapping demonstrates a decline in eelgrass beds.

Nitrogen Loading Evaluation

Both branches of the Westport River suffer from excessive nitrogen loading from their surrounding watersheds. Most anthropogenic nitrogen loading to the East Branch of the Westport River is derived from residential land use, closely followed by cropland, then other development and farm animals. It is worth noting that farm animals (primarily dairy cows) play a far more important role in fecal coliform loading and shellfish bed closures than in contributing to coastal eutrophication. Non-migratory birds, predominantly swans and geese (which often congregate in flocks of over 100 birds in small embayments along both branches of the river) also contribute to the problem of nitrogen loading.

Existing nitrogen loading in the East Branch is currently at 297% of the recommended limit. (Westport 1999 Open Space Plan, pg. 40). The East Branch ranks poorly in terms of water quality (falling in the lowest 25 percentile in dissolved oxygen concentrations) according to a subwatershed evaluation report produced by the Buzzards Bay Project. The study used four years of water quality monitoring data and compared 17 embayments. Similarly, existing loadings in the West Branch are 127% of recommended limits. Historical aerial photographs suggest eelgrass beds have disappeared in the upper estuary (Costa, 1988), and this finding is consistent with the effects of eutrophication.

Because the watershed still has considerable growth potential, future inputs of nitrogen may far exceed recommended limits. Additionally, because this watershed is large and includes three other municipalities and will require implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP's), nitrogen management in this watershed is expected to be challenging. Continued nitrogen monitoring is recommended.

For discussion of Aquifers and Water Supply please see Chapter 12 Water and Sewerage.

4.4.4 Shellfish Habitats

Shellfishing in Westport began with the Native Americans; however, the early settlers soon learned to utilize the river's shellfish resource. The Westport River is an estuary with two branches. The East Branch has 2,018 acres and the West Branch has 1,425 acres. In addition to the estuary's shellfish resources, an additional 18,000 acres exist off Horseneck Beach (Rhode Island Sound) and Gooseberry Island (Buzzards Bay). In 1987, inside the harbor, the river was divided into shellfish classification areas - prohibited, conditional, and unconditional. These areas were established under the auspices of the Division of Marine Fisheries and their concern to safeguard public health with regard to the consumption of raw contaminated shellfish. Pollution comes from five major categories: storm water runoff from streets and catch basins, malfunctioning septic systems, non-migratory water fowl, agriculture, and boat waste. River dredging in specific areas to increase tidal flushing could improve water quality in prohibited and conditional shellfish bed areas.

Westport's primary shellfish resources are Quahogs, American Oysters, Surf Clams, Soft-shelled Clams, Blue and Ribbed Mussels, and Bay Scallops. Since 1947 a full time Shellfish Warden has been overseeing and managing the Town's shellfish resources. Work today involves patrolling the river and checking shellfish licenses and planting or "relaying" seed shellfish (quahogs, bay scallops, soft-shelled clams, and oysters) in appropriate areas. The shellfish department also works closely with the Southeast Shellfish Association (SSA), which has an aquaculture grant to maintain a small hatchery to spawn seed and distribute the seed in two sites in the river. SSA's mission is to increase shellfish stocks in the Town. These programs along with the seed purchase opportunity from the Shellfish Seed Fund enhance the shellfish resources in the river.

In 2003 nearly 759 people obtained either a commercial or recreational shellfish license to harvest shellfish in the river.

4.4.5 Tidal and Coastal Areas and Harbor Management

4.4.5.1 Barrier Beaches

Westport has six state and federally designated barrier beaches that measure approximately 729 acres. The barrier beach, known as Horseneck Beach and Cherry & Webb Beach is one of the most popular beaches in Massachusetts. On a busy summer day, over 10,000 people visit this area. In 2003, the Town Clerk issued 2,491 beach stickers to residents for Westport's Town Beach portion of this barrier beach, known as Cherry & Webb Beach.

Barrier beaches are geologic land forms defined under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MGL CH. 131, Sec. 40) as narrow, low-lying strips of land consisting of coastal dunes extending roughly parallel to the trend of the coast. They are separated from the mainland by a relatively narrow body of fresh, brackish, or saline water by a salt marsh system. A barrier beach may be joined to the mainland at one or both ends.

Barrier beaches function significantly as flood control areas as well as feeding and breeding grounds for coastal and migratory birds. The sands of a barrier beach can absorb the force of storm waves and the reshaping of beaches and dunes by waves, providing building material for beaches down-current. Barrier beaches also ease the effects of erosion. Westport's barrier beaches play a critical role in providing a protected harbor for commercial and

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recreational fishing boats. If the river were dredged, the dredging spoils would be suitable material to nourish the barrier beach system at the entrance to the harbor.

4.4.5.2 Management of Westport Harbor Resources

Background/History

From whaling to clamming, since the early 1700s Westport has been a vibrant harbor for the fishing industry. At this time there are approximately 1,280 registered moorings and slips.

Today Westport Point is the home of the Town docks that abut historic Lees Wharf. In 2000-2001 the entire Town Dock pier and wharf area was rehabilitated. Approximately 32 commercial fishing vessels are docked here, including: 7 offshore lobster boats that fish exclusively on the outer continental shelf; 7 coastal lobster boats that fish near shore out to 40 miles; 6 inshore lobster boats that fish primarily in Buzzards Bay and Rhode Island Sound, and 1 tug boat used for installing new docks. There are also 7 working skiffs at the mud dock that are used for scalloping, quahogging, clamming and inshore lobstering. The current commercial fishing industry employs approximately 65 people at the Town docks. During the winter months many of the fishing boats tie up or convert to gillnetting.

The river is accessible from several Town landings (Adamsville, Head of Westport, and Hix Bridge) and a busy State Boat Ramp located just over the Fontaine Bridge on Rte. 88. There is also a boat ramp on Gooseberry Island that directly accesses Buzzards Bay. On most summer weekends the river and harbor are very active with boaters, Jet Ski operators, swimmers, and shellfishermen. The Harbormaster and staff regularly patrol the area from April to December. With the harbor designated a “no discharge zone”, the Mobile Pumpout vessel is busy throughout the boating season. It should be noted that many moorings have boats or houseboats that are weekend residences.

Dredging

In an effort to document existing baseline harbor/river features, in September of 2000 Col-East Incorporated completed aerial photography of the entire Westport River system. The Harbor Advisory Board and Board of Selectmen’s office have a copy of the original photographs. The photographs have also been given to the Department of Environmental Protection’s Waterways Division to use in the event of hurricane impact. It is hoped that new photos would be taken every three to five years to use as a tool to monitor changes in the river, harbor and coastline areas.

In the 2000 Annual Harbor Report, dredging of the harbor is suggested for several locations in the river and harbor areas. The proposed dredging project as outlined in the 2000 Annual Harbor Master Plan would use dredged material as beach nourishment on what is known as “boat beach“, located at the northern end of the Town’s Cherry & Webb Conservation Area. This was favorably approved in the Harbor Master Plan as the dredged materials consist of sand that had originally existed on the beach and, due to wind and water erosion, been blown off the beach into the estuary over many years. It is ideal material for beach nourishment.

At this time, 2004, two separate dredging projects are planned. One project, funded primarily by the Federal government and overseen by the Army Corps of Engineers, involves dredging the main channel of the river from inside the Knubble to the #23 green channel marker. As suggested in the Harbor Master Plan, the spoils will be deposited on the Town Beach/Conservation area as a method to restore and nourish the depleted dune/beach system in that location.

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The second project involves dredging the mud docks at the Town wharf. This is a state-funded project with funds set aside from the Environmental and Seaport Bond. Both projects require matching funds from the Town. With that in mind, for a three-year period, Westport has implemented a \$1/foot surcharge on each registered boat and has created a gift fund to which residents may make tax-deductible contributions for harbor improvements.

4.4.6 Vegetation and Wildlife

Please refer to Map 4-2 for a depiction of the various habitats found in Westport.

4.4.6.1 Forestland and General Inventory

Approximately 10% of Westport's land area is in urban land use - commercial, residential or industrial. The predominant land uses are forestland (54%), agricultural and open land (19%) and wetlands (16%). Within the category of forested land, larger hardwood forest stands are the most common, and comprise 56% of the forestland. Larger mixed hardwood forest stands (hardwoods and softwoods with hardwoods predominating) are also important, and comprise 24% of the forestland. The remaining areas are smaller hardwood forest stands (10%) and smaller mixed hardwood forest stands (8%). Coniferous forest stands cover only a very small area.

Nearly 46% of the forestland can be described as hardwood forest stands (with hardwoods comprising at least 80% of the stand) of 41 to 60 feet in height with a high canopy density (80% to 100% crown closure). Another 19% is a mixture of hardwoods and softwoods (with hardwoods predominating) also 41 to 60 feet in height with a high canopy density. Most of Westport is covered by a forest type composed of oak (especially black oak) and hickory. There is a small area where the predominant species are elm, ash and red maple and another smaller area where white and red pines predominate. Other tree species that are commonly associated with the forest cover type found in Westport are black cherry, gray birch, black locust, American beech, and northern red oak. Forested wetland areas are dominated by red maple and tupelo. Within the agricultural land category, most of the land (67%) can be described as tilled or tillable cropland, which is, or has recently been, intensively farmed. A smaller area (11%) is pasture or wild hay not suitable for tillage. Finally, a large area (19%) can be described as abandoned field, which is reverting to wild land.

4.4.6.2 Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program maintains a database on animal and plant species of the state that are unusual or threatened in some manner. This effort provides an ongoing monitoring process for protecting our most fragile resources. The Program uses a Department of Fisheries and Wildlife categorizing system consisting of the following categories: Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern.

Areas within Westport have recently been identified as habitats for the rare plant *Arethusa* (*Arethusa bulbosa*), also known as swamp-pink. At present, there are only seven current and fifteen historical sites for this species in the Commonwealth. Its preferred habitats are

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sphagnum bogs and peaty meadows. The only two state records for the endangered species Northern gamma-grass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*), are known from Westport. Reaching the northeastern limit of its range here, this rare plant is usually found in moist fields and the borders of woods and shores. Also listed as endangered is the lion's-foot (*Prenanthes serpentaria*). Westport has recorded observations of two species that are considered threatened: gypsywort (*Lycopus rubellus*), last observed in 1925, and Canadian sanicle (*Sanicula canadensis*) which was recorded as last occurring in 1990. The pinnate water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum pinnatum*), the bristly foxtail (*Setaria geniculata*) and the Plymouth gentian (*Sabatia kennedyana*) have historical occurrences in Westport and are considered to be of special concern. The Plymouth gentian was recorded in Westport in 1929, though the Town has not been field-checked for the species since.

The Westport River estuary is one of the prime breeding sites in Massachusetts for the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). In this area, ospreys have nested both on specially constructed platforms and tall dead trees along the islands and riverbanks. Ospreys were disappearing from the region in the 1960s due to the effects of DDT on their reproductive cycle and disturbance of natural habitat. In 1967 only 9 nests and 5 young were produced. Today, due primarily to the efforts of Dartmouth residents Gil and Josephine Fernandez, there are over 80 platforms with 65 active nests. In 2002 72 ospreys fledged. It is unlikely that these birds would be present in such large numbers were it not for the efforts of these individuals. Additional information is available at the Westport River Watershed Alliance and the Lloyd Center.

The Westport estuary is also the location of one of fifteen active heron rookeries in the Commonwealth. Black-crowned night herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), green herons (*Butorides striatus*), and the rare great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) have all been sighted here. Because their numbers are so concentrated during the colonial nesting season from March to August, these bird species are ecologically sensitive and vulnerable at that time. There are only nine other current nesting sites for the great blue heron in Massachusetts. Westport is also a nesting ground for the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*). The Lloyd Center has undertaken a continual monitoring program of this species. A recent study identified the degree to which nesting plovers are compatible with average human beach use. Parameters were defined to aid the plovers in successfully nesting while sharing their habitat with people.

Westport is also a habitat for the rare marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*), considered to be threatened in the state. At this time there are only seven current and ten historical records for this amphibian, which inhabits woodlands with depressions and temporary ponds. Individuals of this species were sighted as recently as October 1990.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program cites the following wildlife species as being threatened: the marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*), the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and the Persius dusky wing (*Erynnis persius persius*). The following species were sighted in Westport and are classified as being of special concern: the spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), the four-toed salamander (*Hemidactylium scutatum*), the spartina borer moth (*Spartiniphaga inops*), the New England bluet (*Enallagma laterale*), the

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least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), the common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and the Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*). There are no endangered mammal or insect species listed for Westport.

Additional information is available on-line at www.conservationmapper.org.

4.4.6.3 Fisheries and Wildlife

General Inventory & Corridors

Fisheries

Local finfish species include striped bass, American eel, black sea bass, herring, cod, scup, fluke (summer flounder), tautog, and winter flounder. The Westport River and immediate offshore areas serve as a nursery for the juvenile form of important economic species such as winter flounder, smelt, tautog, pollack, white hake, menhaden, and fluke (summer flounder). Species important for sport fishing, including striped bass, bluefish, winter flounder, tautog, and mackerel, are also present. The major economic shellfish species, which are harvested by both family and commercial fishermen, include bay scallops, quahogs, American oyster and surf clam. Soft shell clams and blue mussels are important recreational species. A recreational and/or commercial fishery also exists for green crabs, blue crabs and lobsters.

Aquaculture

For several years the Town has awarded an aquaculture grant to the Southeast Shellfish Association, Inc. for aquaculture propagation at two locations in the river. Their main effort has been to fund and maintain a hatchery at the Town docks to provide a continual stock of shellfish for seeding the river.

Herring Runs

Anadromous species, such as alewives (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) and blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), together known as river herring, have declined dramatically in Buzzards Bay during the past couple of centuries. Historically these fish were an important human food fishery in Buzzards Bay. Although not heavily used for human consumption today, they are still an important food species for many larger fish, whales, and coastal birds. Currently the primary use of herring harvested from Buzzards Bay tributaries is lobster bait.

Most herring runs in Buzzards Bay are not supporting their historical maximum number of fish. One of the primary reasons is that obstructions to migration are stopping or inhibiting the passage of fish upstream to their spawning areas. Other possible reasons that certain runs are not producing fish at their historic level are over fishing or poor water quality. In practical terms, little can be done in the short term to change water quality problems. However, it is possible to improve or restore spawning area access or reduce fish harvesting levels and see increases in the number of river herring in a stream system.

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In 1994, the Buzzards Bay Project, in cooperation with the Buzzards Bay Action Committee, allocated \$25,000 of National Estuary Program implementation funds to restore and enhance herring runs in the Buzzards Bay watershed. These funds were provided to assist communities in constructing new fish ladders or rehabilitate old ladders or river culverts to better facilitate the passage of river herring. The Town of Westport was awarded almost \$2,300 to construct and install the Albert Rosinha Herring Run, a 30-foot fish ladder at the Adamsville Dam above the Rocky Delano Brook. The fish ladder was constructed in 1996 with help from the Westport Fish Commissioners. The Westport Fish Commissioners had noticed a decrease in population of alewives over the past several years and had restricted the days for taking alewives.

There is also an historic fish ladder located at the Head of Westport, just north of Old County Road. This site offers a unique opportunity to restore not only the fish ladder, but also the millpond, and possibly the structures that once existed. Restoration of the millpond would also improve water quality at the Head of Westport, as it would serve as a detention pond, settling out soils and sediments.

Wildlife

The occurrence and abundance of wildlife in the Westport area is influenced by land use, land cover type, topography and availability of water. Wildlife associated with the predominant hardwood forestland cover type include white tail deer, eastern cottontail, grey fox, shorttail weasel, shorttail shrew, opossum, raccoon, striped skunk and several species of mole, squirrel and mouse. Common birds include the ruffed grouse, screech owl, red-tailed hawk, hairy and downy woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, blue jay, common crow, chickadee, white and red breasted nuthatch, scarlet tanager, turkey vulture, bluebird, robin, bald eagle and cardinal. Several species of reptiles, including the common garter snake and eastern milk snake, are also present.

Wildlife in the open and agricultural land habitat is generally less abundant and diverse. Common species of mammal include whitetail deer, red fox, shorttail shrew, eastern chipmunk, eastern cottontail, woodchuck, meadow mole, striped skunk and opossum. Bird species include bobwhite, ring-necked pheasant, red-winged blackbird, cowbird, mourning dove, bluebird, common goldfinch, starling, turkey vultures, wild turkeys, bluebirds, killdeer and barn swallow. Wildlife commonly associated with the wetland land cover include muskrat, mink, raccoon, otter, beaver, woodcock, catbird, cedar waxwing, osprey, harrier hawk, Canada geese, kestrel and several species of heron, duck, turtle, snake and frog

The Lloyd Center has conducted yearly studies of the piping plover on Horseneck Beach and the Westport Town Beach since 1987. These studies examine nesting and fledgling behavior in relation to human and other natural activity. Recommendations are made concerning limiting the use of off-road vehicles during the nesting and fledgling seasons, protecting the nesting areas, banning pets from the beach during critical periods and educating beach users about the bird's importance.

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Given the large areas of land in Westport that are open fields and forests, no clear wildlife corridors have been identified to date.

Again, additional information is available at www.conservationmapper.org. A detailed inventory can also be found in the 1999 Open Space Plan.

4.5 Environmental Threats and Water Resource Protection

4.5.1 Environmental Threats

The greatest threat to all water bodies and wildlife habitat is continuing growth of development and overuse of the Town's natural resources.

4.5.1.1 Point Source Discharges

There are no known point sources of pollution.

4.5.1.2 Nonpoint Source Discharges

Several sources of nonpoint discharges exist: storm water and catch basin runoff, agricultural runoff, non-migratory waterfowl, failing septic systems, and pet waste.

4.5.1.3 Groundwater Supply Problems

Leaking underground storage tanks have contaminated drinking water wells with gasoline and Methyl tertiary-Butyl Ether (MtBE). Additional contamination has occurred from underground plumes that have contributed Trichloroethylene (TCE), Chlorobenzene, and Temik to groundwater and contaminated private wells.

4.5.1.4 Westport Harbor and River Problems

Nutrient overloading in the upper reaches of the East Branch of the river have caused eutrophication. Additionally, high bacteria counts have consistently closed the river to shellfishing, and often swimming, north from Hix Bridge.

Efforts to control storm water runoff must be considered in order to improve river water quality.

Areas of the main navigable channel need to be dredged to provide ease of navigation for the existing fishing fleet.

4.5.2 Priority Areas for Water Resource Protection or Enhancement

- Westport's high recharge aquifer areas
- Westport's moderate aquifer recharge areas
- 200-foot buffers along the river and its tributaries, as well as around ponds

4.6 Resource Sensitivity Analysis

4.6.1 Introduction

Because Westport is so rich in natural and cultural resources, the Master Plan Update Committee contracted with planning consultant Beals and Thomas, Inc. to perform a Resource Sensitivity Analysis, a process that has been used by many communities in Massachusetts as an integral part of their Master Plans. This process is a typical planning process in which a resource, whether it is a natural resource such as groundwater, or a cultural resource such as historical sites, is studied in

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several stages before conclusions and recommendations are made as to how best to manage and protect it. First the resource is inventoried or mapped. Then the raw data is assessed and assembled into a more meaningful or understandable form, which allows prioritization of the most important or sensitive resources and, finally, planning for protection or management of the resource may begin. The resources analyzed for this Master Plan were both natural resources and cultural resources, such as historical and scenic areas. With the rapid increase in data available in geospatial or GIS form, planners can use computers to perform this analysis much more quickly than with the manual calculation methods formerly used, and the results can be clearly depicted graphically as overlay maps.

4.6.2 What is a Resource Sensitivity Analysis?

The final product of the Resource Sensitivity Analysis is a computer-generated or GIS map, which shows, by a gradient of color shading from light to dark, resource areas that are less sensitive to most sensitive. In other words, dark areas, representing areas where more than one resource co-exist, are the most valued and most sensitive areas, which need the most protection and management.

4.6.3 Process - What Methodology and What Data Were Used to Perform the Analysis?

The following discussion is adapted from Beals & Thomas' report to the Town, with additional explanatory material added. In order to create the Resource Sensitivity Map, two sets of information were required: a set of maps showing the extent of each resource category (such as water supply protection areas or agricultural lands), and a ranking of these resource categories to show how important each is to the community. The data used to create the maps was from MassGIS and local data, current as of 2001.

After this information was gathered, the data were processed in a geographic information system (GIS) processor. First, resource areas (e.g. aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and surface water protection areas) were merged to produce one map "layer" for each resource category (Water Supply Protection). The resulting ten map layers produced from each of ten resource categories represent the areas important for each resource category. For instance, the layer created from aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and surface water protection areas represents all areas in Westport that are important for the protection of current and future water supplies.

Table 4-1 lists in alphabetical order the ten Resource Categories, some of which are composed of several components, also listed.

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Table 4-1. Resource Categories and Their Components

Resource Category	Components
Agriculture	APR parcels Chapter 61A parcels
Biological Diversity	1000' buffer around NOAA ⁶ rare species locations 200' buffer around NHESP ⁷ certified vernal pools and potential vernal pools NHESP estimated habitat of rare wetland wildlife NHESP BioMap core habitat areas NHESP BioMap supporting natural landscape areas
Coastal Resources	300' buffer around shellfish locations 1000' modified buffer around anadromous fish locations Eelgrass areas and 200' buffer Lobster harvest areas and 200' buffer Barrier beaches 1000' public beach buffer
Flood Storage Areas	FEMA 100- and 500-year flood zones
Forested Land	Chapter 61 parcels
Historic	Culturally sensitive areas
Recreation	Chapter 61B parcels
Scenic Areas	200' buffer around scenic roads
Water Supply and Quality	Interim wellhead protection areas Aquifers Zones A, B, and C (surface water protection areas)
Wetlands and Streams	Wetlands (digitized at 1:5,000) 200' buffer around streams

These resource category layers were then assigned scores depending on the community's ranking of each resource. Table 4-2 shows the Master Plan Update Committees ranking of the ten resource categories, in order of decreasing importance.

The points assigned to each resource category were then attached to the corresponding map layer. For example, 29 points were allotted to any area in Town that fell within the water supply protection layer. A location in Town would thus score 29 points for being within this area or 0 points for being

⁶ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

⁷ Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

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outside it. These layers were then superimposed on top of one another. The result is a tally of all the points received for every location in Town.

For instance, several agricultural properties near Sodom Road also fall within the biological diversity resource layer. These areas were awarded a total of twenty-two points: sixteen because they are within the agricultural resource layer, and six because they are within the biological diversity layer.

Table 4-2. Community Ranking of Resource Categories

Resource Category	Points
Water supply and quality	29
Agriculture	16
Coastal resources	12
Scenic	9
Historic	8
Wetlands	7
Recreation	7
Biological diversity	6
Forest	5
Flood storage	1
Total	100

Map 4-3. Resource Sensitivity Analysis (Town Weighted) depicts the scores by color. Those areas that received the most points appear darker than those receiving fewer points. Those areas that appear white are outside all of the ten resource category layers.

4.6.4 Results and Discussion

4.6.4.1 Introduction

Three main sensitive areas in Westport emerged from this analysis: 1) an area in the northwest bordering South Watuppa Pond, 2) lands adjacent to the East Branch of The Westport River from Hix Bridge Road to Head of Westport, and 3) coastal areas in the southern end of Town. Following is a discussion of each of those areas. In addition to referring to Map 4-3, please refer to Map 4-4, Interpretation of Analysis for a written description of which resources categories are responsible for the sensitivity rankings on Map 4-3.

The resulting sensitive regions reflect the community ranking of resource categories (Table 4-2). Because such a high ranking was given to "water supply and quality", almost all of the significantly sensitive areas contain land that is important for the water supply.

4.6.4.2 The Region Adjacent to South Watuppa Pond

This area appears more sensitive than other Westport land chiefly because it drains into the Pond, which is a reserve water supply. Other factors make certain areas within this part of Town more sensitive; these include agricultural lands (Chapter 61A parcels), scenic roads, and landscape supporting biological diversity.

4.6.4.3 The East Branch of the Westport River from South of Hix Bridge Road to Rte 177

This second sensitive region, again, appears especially sensitive because it contains an aquifer that is potentially significant as a water supply. This region's coastal resources, agricultural properties, and wetlands make it still more sensitive. The most sensitive area within this region is Head of Westport, because that area is also culturally sensitive, containing many historical resources.

4.6.4.4 The Southern Region of Town within a Mile of the Ocean

This region contains a number of wells, the wellhead protection areas of which make them especially sensitive. However, the high sensitivity ranking in this area is also due to numerous other resources: coastal resources (including lobster harvest zones, public and barrier beaches, eelgrass growth areas, and anadromous fish areas), wetlands and streams, the Acoaxet and Westport Point culturally sensitive areas, scenic roads, and biological diversity (including BioMap core habitat, NHESP habitat of rare wetlands wildlife, and NOAA rare species locations).

4.6.4.5 Other Sensitive Areas

While the above three regions stand out as the most sensitive, Westport has areas throughout Town that stand out as sensitive when looked at from a broader perspective. These include a region near the Adamsville culturally sensitive area, the Central Village area and two aquifer areas near I-195. One last region of note is the area of primarily agricultural use adjacent to Sodom Road. This area contains many Chapter 61A parcels, demonstrating extensive agricultural use. This, one of the largest contiguous areas of temporarily protected agricultural land, lies within the largest contiguous areas of Core habitat area for rare wildlife according to NHESP's BioMap program. Within this area are also two NHESP estimated habitats of rare wetlands wildlife and many potential vernal pools, as mapped by NHESP.

4.6.4.6 Application of Results

The Resource Sensitivity Map and Interpretation of Analysis maps should be used by all Boards involved in land use decision-making. This would include the normal project reviews conducted by the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and Zoning Board of Appeals. In addition, the maps should be consulted when siting public facilities, selling Town land, and acquiring lands. Map 4-4, Interpretation of Analysis should be particularly useful for developing a strategy for land acquisition. This map shows the Chapter 61 lands in Westport, along with the resource sensitivity of each parcel. This information may be used to develop a priority list for future land acquisitions.

4.7 Environmental Regulations

Westport's Conservation Commission and local citizens are the "first line of defense" in protecting wetlands. For this reason, the Town should provide detailed public information about environmental regulations that apply to residents and businesses in Westport with respect to wetlands, water quality, and wildlife issues. This information is useful not just for developers, but also for homeowners whose yard might abut or contain a wetland area.

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In addition, the Conservation Commission and other Town boards should vigorously and responsibly enforce federal, state, and local environmental codes, regulations, and policies that protect wetland resource areas and critical wildlife habitats, including, but not limited to:

- The Federal Clean Water Act, §401 (Water Quality Certification Program)
- The Federal Clean Water Act, §404 (dredging and filling activities)
- M.G.L. Ch. 13 1, §40, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act
- M.G.L. Ch. 30, §§61-62H, the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
- Acts of 1996, Ch. 258, the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act
- M.G.L. Ch. 2 1, § I 7B, the Massachusetts Scenic Rivers Act
- M.G.L. Ch. 130, § I 05, the Coastal Wetlands Restriction Act
- Acts of 1990, Ch. 408, the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act
- 314 CNM 4.00 and 5.00, Massachusetts Water Quality regulations
- 310 CMR I 0.00, Wetlands Protection Act
- 31 0 CNM 15.00, Title V regulations
- 310 CMR 12.00, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- The Massachusetts Storm Water Management Policy
- Westport's Zoning and Non-Zoning By-laws

Westport has taken an important step toward ensuring fair and effective enforcement of these regulations by hiring a planner, who serves as the Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board, and a Conservation Agent. The Town should maintain these positions and continue to provide ample financial, administrative, and instructional resources for the review and protection of its wetlands, water quality, and wildlife interests. In addition, if necessary, the Town should retain consultants and other skilled personnel to review project applications, implement and manage applicable environmental regulatory programs, and conduct public outreach related to the protection of natural resources. Under a local wetlands protection by-law, funding for such programs would be at least partially available through project review fees.

4.8 Implementation/Action Plan

Stewardship Actions

1. Preserve critical wildlife habitats.
2. Continue certification of vernal pools.
3. Obtain funding for harbor dredging.
4. Update and support the Harbor Improvement Plan annually.
5. Continue annual beach and dune nourishment. Limit public access to dune areas.
6. Develop a Shellfish Management Plan that annually reviews the river's ecosystem and its economic value versus allowable recreational and commercial uses.
7. Maintain a shellfish hatchery to continually seed and establish productive areas in the river.
8. Restore historic fish ladders.
9. Continue working on pollution solutions.

Administrative Actions

1. Consider a fee schedule for boat pumpouts.
2. Consider restrictions on the use of "Jet Skis" from sensitive areas in the river and estuary.
3. Consider adopting a local Buffer Zone Protection by-law.

Notes

For the complete Action Plan for Natural Resources, please refer to Chapter 12, Action Plan, Section 12.2 Natural Resources.

CHAPTER 5
*Open Space and
Recreation*

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

5 Open Space and Recreation

5.1 Background

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

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

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

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

The Town has actively sought to meet the needs stated above by its actions over the last several years: the acceptance of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), the creation of an Agricultural Commission, and the establishment of an Agricultural/Open Space Preservation Trust Fund, as described in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.

Westport has also taken actions to maximize its purchasing power by considering the purchase of development rights as an alternative to the outright purchase of land. In addition, the local office of the Trustees of Reservations and our own Westport Land Conservation Trust have been active partners with the Town in negotiating deals that leverage funds from other sources, both public and private.

5.2 Goals and Objectives

It is recommended that the Open Space Committee be re-convened to implement the Open Space Plan containing the following goals and objectives.

Goal 1 To improve and sustain land conservation efforts in Westport.

Objectives

- Develop funding and institutional mechanisms for a sustained Town Land Protection Program
- Manage Town lands and resources to better preserve important open space
- Support private and alternative methods for land conservation.
- Increase awareness of the general public to the importance of preserving open space for the future.

Goal 2 To protect Westport's rural landscape.

Objectives

- Support and increase participation in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program
- Encourage enrollment in Chapter 61, 61A, 61B, and act on releases
- Amend zoning to better protect and sustain agriculture in Westport
- Encourage sustainable regional agriculture

Goal 3 To protect and restore Westport's water quality and natural resources.

Objectives

- Preserve undeveloped watershed lands in Westport
- Monitor and eliminate sources of pollution to Westport's rivers and streams
- Maintain and restore fish and shellfish resources in the Westport River

Goal 4 To preserve the Quality of Westport's Natural Resources, Groundwater, Wetlands, Wildlife, Wildlife Habitats and Coastal Areas.

Objectives

- Encourage protection of groundwater resources
- Protect wetlands and critical coastal areas bordering wetlands
- Preserve critical wildlife habitats

Goal 5 To provide and enhance indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities for Westport residents of all ages.

Objectives

- Improve town-wide recreational facilities at schools and other town properties
- Provide walking and bicycling areas
- Increase the number of ball fields and "open space" recreational facilities
- Enhance access to recreational facilities for persons with disabilities

5.3 Open Space Issues

The five biggest issues related to Open Space in Westport today are:

- Over development/uncontrolled commercial and residential development
- Increase of Chapter 40B applications
- Preserving the town's rural and historical character
- Increased development and demand for services with proposed commuter rail
- Lack of substantial funds to purchase land.

5.4 Inventory of Open Space

For a town of approximately 33,926 acres⁸, Westport has abundant open space with recreation potential; although, compared to other municipalities in Southeastern Massachusetts, relatively little of it is permanently protected or managed for public use. In Fall River and Dartmouth, for example, 50% and 25% of the municipalities, respectively, are permanently dedicated as open space. Although the Town continues to make excellent progress (see Table 5-1 below), overall only approximately 11% of Westport is under permanent protection. Much of the acreage that is protected benefits the public with respect to environmental and water supply protection, but more open space acreage available with public access for passive recreation is needed. Section 5.6.2 specifically discusses active and passive recreational needs. The Westport Conservation Commission, other government agencies and non-profit organizations, including the Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Trustees of Reservations, collectively protect open spaces in Westport totaling 3,742 acres. Figure 5-1 graphically illustrates protected open space broken down according to the type of ownership or management. Map 5-1 depicts the location of these permanently protected parcels.

Table 5-1. Protected Open Space 1990 - 2003

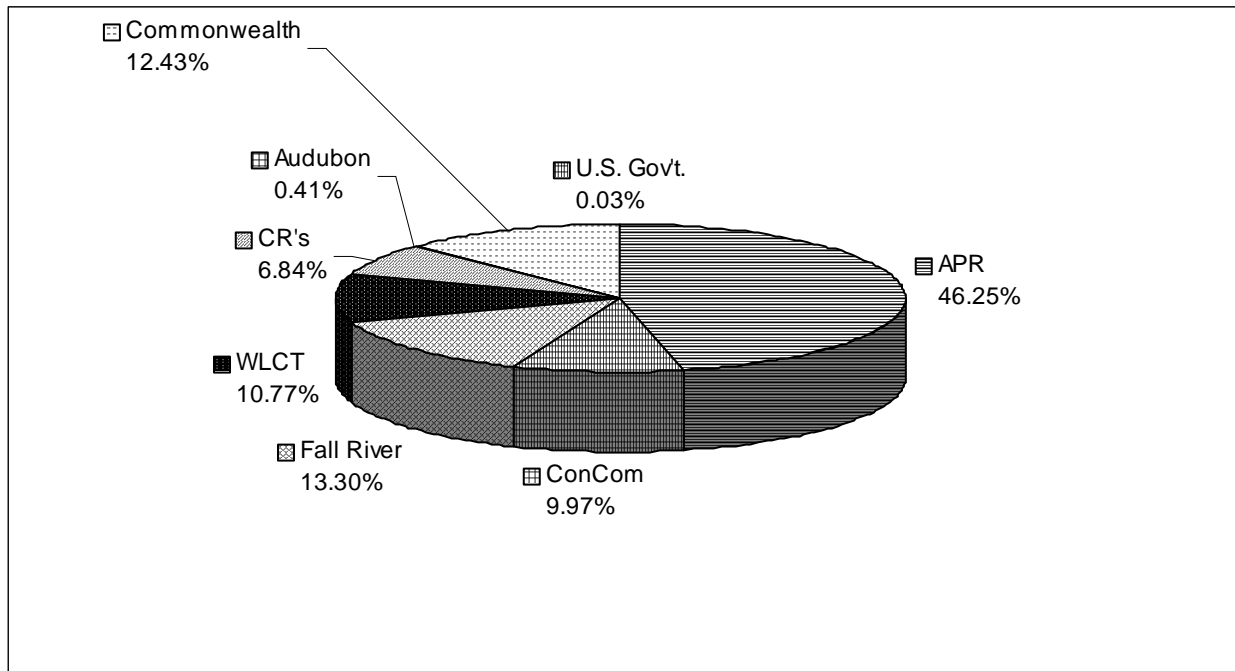
Type	Acreage 1990	Acreage 2003	Percent by Ownership 2003	Percent Change 1990-2003
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (17 farms as of 2003)	946.0	1,730.7	46.25%	+82.9%
Conservation Commission	138.7	372.9	9.97%	+168.9%
City of Fall River Water Dept. ⁹	497.5	497.5	13.30%	0.0%
Westport Land Conservation Trust	170.0	403.1	10.77%	+137.1%
Conservation Restrictions	65.0	255.8	6.84%	+293.5%
Audubon Society	15.3	15.3	0.41%	0.0%
Commonwealth of Massachusetts ¹⁰	465.3	465.3	12.43%	0.0%
US Government	1.3	1.3	0.03%	0.0%
Total Protected Acreage	2,299.1	3,741.9	100.00	+62.8%

⁸ Approximate acreage, based on conversion from 53.01 sq. miles. Acreages noted are for comparison purposes, not build-out analysis, and may include small water bodies.

⁹ Includes water area.

¹⁰ Includes only land area of Horseneck Beach Reservation, does not include water area.

Figure 5-1. Percent Protected Open Space Acreage, by Owner/Manager



5.5 Trends in Open Space

Much of Westport’s unprotected open space (see Table 5-2, below) includes recreational areas in town, such as public beaches, parks, playgrounds, and other lands that fall under the jurisdiction of the school department, private recreational areas and private lands in the Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B programs, and lands in tax title that may have a future recreational or conservation value. Recently there have been requests to release lands in the Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B programs for residential development.

The Preservation Trust Fund enabling legislation, filed and signed in the fall of 2001, allows the town to borrow up to \$1.5M to purchase land for agriculture and natural resource protection. The Preservation Trust Fund Council should be included in the process of the town’s “right of first refusal” on Chapter lands. Map 5-2 depicts the parcels in Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B.

Table 5-2. Unprotected Municipal Land Including Recreational Land

Type	Acres
Town Forest	28 acres
Town Landings (10 designated public landings)	17.26 acres
Town Cemeteries	120 acres
Tax Title Land	varies
<u>Town Parks:</u>	
Bicentennial Park	12 acres
Community Center Playground	0.5 acres
Head of Westport Playground	2.39 acres
<u>Town/School Facilities:</u>	
Alice B. Macomber School	13 acres
Greenwood Park School lot	3.5 acres
Elementary School/ Middle Schools	37 acres
High School	29.2 acres
Town Beaches	95.9 acres
Total Unprotected Municipal Acreage	>359 acres

5.6 Analysis

5.6.1 Resource Protection Needs

The following statements express Westport’s critical needs as identified by the Open Space Committee through the use of resident surveys and a Community Meeting.

5.6.1.1 Farmland needs to be protected.

Farming is one of Westport’s major industries. The best approach to ensure that land remains in farming is to ensure that farming remains a viable economic activity. Local efforts to encourage cooperation between farmers and to minimize the negative impacts to farmers from environmental regulations while still protecting the environment are good examples of the type of needed effort. To date, the Department of Food and Agriculture has spent approximately \$7 million to purchase Agriculture Preservation Restrictions (APRs) on 17 farms in Westport. These APRs make up 45% of all the land protected in perpetuity in Westport. However, APRs account for only 4% of Westport’s total land area. Continued pursuit of local Agricultural Preservation Restrictions should be strongly encouraged. Protecting Westport’s farms equals preservation of the town’s rural character.

5.6.1.2. Areas of environmental importance should be protected, especially along the rivers.

Many of the environmentally important and scenic areas (rivers, bay, ponds, and unique features such as critical plant and wildlife habitat areas) are also areas experiencing increasing development pressures. In addition to the visible aspects of the environment that need to be protected, water quality of both the surface water bodies and groundwater needs protection. Both branches of the Westport River have experienced water pollution from both point and non-point sources of pollution. Currently, 23% of the shellfish beds are closed due to bacterial contamination, and another 53% are conditionally or seasonally closed. Westport is without a municipal sewerage treatment plant, so residents rely on private septic systems. In many areas the soils do not properly support these systems and overloading of the systems often occurs. Protection strategies such as

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acquiring land, conservation restrictions, and adopting appropriate zoning regulations are important methods to pursue. Options for regulatory protection mechanisms include flexible residential zoning, agricultural district zoning, aquifer protection zoning, a town wetlands bylaw or a water's edge zoning district.

5.6.1.3 Westport needs to actively pursue the acquisition of additional conservation easements and conservation lands for passive recreation and educational uses.

Westport has relatively few conservation areas controlled by the town that are used by town residents. In light of increased development pressures, it is important for the town to prioritize environmentally sensitive and unique lands and pursue methods to obtain the development rights, outright ownership, or protection by a flexible density zoning by-law. This will enable Westport to provide additional recreational/education areas.

5.6.2 Community Needs

Map 5-3 depicts the existing inventory of recreation facilities and lands.

This section has several purposes:

- Evaluate the amount of recreation land and facilities currently present in Westport
- Identify areas where needs exist today
- Project needs for the year 2008 based on estimated population growth and changing demographics, and
- Compare Westport's current and future resources and needs with those for the Southeastern Massachusetts region as a whole, as described in the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*.

It is important to note that the analysis that follows uses a combination of methods for determining need.

- Existing and proposed recreation facilities were compared with quantitative standards based on population levels. Although this method is broad and subject to criticism because it doesn't reflect local preferences or budgets, it does provide a sense of how Westport's facility inventory compares with generally accepted averages for communities of similar sizes.
- The surveys distributed by the Committee measured perceived need in the general population.
- The Open Space Committee through its own deliberations, a Community Meeting, and through work with the Buzzards Bay Project, developed its own understanding of the town's current and future needs.

When pulled together, these three approaches produced an assessment of need that the Committee feels is subjective enough to reflect Westport's local preferences while being objective enough to give the town a clear sense of whether it is providing services that will keep the town within, or ahead, of service levels expected of municipalities in 2008.

Quantitative Assessment

The current population level (1997) used in this assessment is 13,389 people. The average number of new homes built during the early 1990s was 65 units per year. Assuming 2.7 persons per household and a 65 unit per year growth rate, Westport's population will climb to 15,144 by the year 2008. If one assumes a halving of that rate or

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a 33 unit per year pace, Westport's population will rise to 14,280 by the year 2008.¹¹ Given current market conditions, population trends, and the fact that the largest number of building permits approved in recent history occurred in 1998, this level of growth is within the scope of the population projections elsewhere in this Plan, and in all likelihood will become a reality.

In terms of long-term growth, a buildout analysis of the town performed during the 1987 Growth Management Plan indicated that there are 6,200 acres remaining of prime buildable land and 11,000 acres of marginal land. Assuming a 75% buildout rate on the prime land and a 50% rate on the marginal land, this results in 7,067 potential lots. This translates to an additional 20,000 people when the town reaches buildout. For the purposes of this plan, facility needs were assessed only for the next decade. The 1987 Growth Management Plan estimate of an additional 20,000 residents at buildout correlates well with the 24,924 residents estimated by the corrected EOE A Buildout Analysis performed in 2002, which estimate will likely be revised downward as more development occurs and the estimate becomes more constrained by known factors.

5.6.3 Recreational Needs

The National Recreation and Park Association has established a set of standards for assessing how communities compare in providing recreational opportunities to their citizens (See Table 5-3). According to these standards, Westport's largest deficiencies are in bicycle paths, nature and equestrian trails, playgrounds and tot lots, picnic areas, basketball courts, ice arenas, and football fields.

The Town's need for basketball courts and playgrounds was also echoed by residents who responded to the survey. Survey respondents would also like to see the condition of tennis courts, boat ramps, and beach access points upgraded. In a survey question asking residents to comment on which recreational facilities the town needs more of, permanently protected open spaces with public access was the most desirable. Bike paths and nature trails were rated second and third, respectively. The Board of Selectmen has appointed a bike path committee to study the feasibility of creating a multi-purpose path that would connect with neighboring towns that are also discussing such possibilities. When survey respondents were asked if they would have use for a bike path, 66% answered affirmatively. The Bike Path Committee, just recently performed its own survey of 2,000 residents (with 400 responding), and found that 78% of the households responding support development of a bike path in Westport. The Committee is still evaluating survey data to determine the most appropriate location for a path.

¹¹ During plan preparation the 2000 census count of Westport's population was 14,183 and the Town census population for 2003 was 14,584--confirming the higher growth rate estimate.

Table 5-3. Westport Recreation Facilities, Needs and Supply

FACILITY	NPS STANDARD	PUBLIC SUPPLY	PRIVATE SUPPLY	YEAR-ROUND DEMAND, 1997 (Pop. 13,389)	SUMMER DEMAND, 1997 (Pop. 20,070*)	YEAR-ROUND DEMAND, 2008 (Est. Pop. 15,150)	SUMMER DEMAND, 2008 (Est. Pop. 22,000)	COMMENTS
Trails	<i>(miles)</i>	<i>(miles)</i>	<i>(miles)</i>	<i>(miles)</i>	<i>(miles)</i>	<i>(miles)</i>	<i>(miles)</i>	
Nature/Hiking	1 per 2,500	4	0	5.4	8	6.1	8.8	Horseneck Beach State Res., Cherry & Webb
Equestrian	1 per 6,250	0	0	2.1	3.2	2.4	3.5	
Bicycle	1 per 2,000	0	0	6.7	10	7.6	11	
Family Play	<i>(areas)</i>	<i>(areas)</i>	<i>(areas)</i>	<i>(areas)</i>	<i>(areas)</i>	<i>(areas)</i>	<i>(areas)</i>	
Playgrounds, Tot Lots	1 per 1,000	5	0	13.4	20	15.2	22	Macomber School, Elem. School, Park at Head Landing, Bicentennial Park, Community Center Playground
Skateboarding	No standards available	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bicentennial Park
Rollerblading	No standards available	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bicentennial Park
Picnic Areas	1 table per 300	18	0	44.6	66.9	50.5	73.3	Community Center Plgd (4), Senior Center (2), Horseneck State Res.(12)
Court Games	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	
Tennis	1 per 1,500	2	10	8.9	13.4	10.1	14.7	Acoaxet Club (10 private), Middle School (2 public)
Basketball	1 per 1,000	5	2	13.4	20	15.2	22	Public - Macomber High, Middle, and Elem. Schools, Community Ctr Plygd, Head Landing; Private - St. George, Our Lady of Grace

Table 5-3. continued) Westport Recreation Facilities, Needs and Supply

FACILITY	STANDARD	PUBLIC SUPPLY	PRIVATE SUPPLY	YEAR-ROUND DEMAND, 1997 (Pop. 13,389)	SUMMER DEMAND, 1997 (Pop. 20,070*)	YEAR-ROUND DEMAND, 2008 (Est. Pop. 15,150)	SUMMER DEMAND, 2008 (Est. Pop. 22,000)	COMMENTS
<i>Court Games (cont.)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	<i>(courts)</i>	
Volleyball	1 per 3,000	6	1	4.5	6.7	5.1	7.3	Public - High, Mid. & Elem. & Macomber Schools, Comm'ty Ctr (2); Private - Our Lady of Grace
<i>Diamond sports</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	
Baseball/softball	1 per 3,000	5	1	4.5	6.7	5.1	7.3	Public - High School (3), mid. school (1), elem. sch. (1), private - Pine Hill Rd.(1)
Ice Arena	1 per 10,000	0	0	1.3	2	1.5	2.2	
<i>Field Sports</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	<i>(fields)</i>	
Soccer	1 per 10,000	2	0	1.3	2	1.5	2.2	High & Middle Sch.
Football	1 per 20,000	0	0	0.67	1	0.76	1.1	
<i>Golf Course</i>	<i>(holes)</i>	<i>(holes)</i>	<i>(holes)</i>	<i>(holes)</i>	<i>(holes)</i>	<i>(holes)</i>	<i>(holes)</i>	
NPS Standard	18 per 12,500	0	9	1.9	2.9	2.2	3.2	Acoaxet (private) Club
<i>Swimming</i>	<i>(facility)</i>	<i>(facility)</i>	<i>(facility)</i>	<i>(facility)</i>	<i>(facility)</i>	<i>(facility)</i>	<i>(facility)</i>	
Pools	1 per 20,000	0	2	0.67	1	0.76	1.1	Westport Campground (private)
Beaches	50 sq. ft. per person	487.3 acres	13.3 acres	15.4 acres	23 acres	17.4 acres	25.3 acres	Public - Horseneck Bch. State Res./ Gooseberry, East Bch, Cherry & Webb; Private - Westport Harbor, Elephant Rock, Bakers Beach

The need for equestrian trails came up on a small number of surveys as a “write in” suggestion. The segment of the population involved with horseback riding tends to be a select group, with most people having some sort of facility on their own property for their personal use.

The town has very little public recreational land that is not beach or river-related. Besides the various school sites and the town beaches, there is presently very little additional public land suitable for recreational activities in town. Without town-owned land, options for developing future recreational facilities are few. The schools do have an assortment of facilities, but the schools are not distributed evenly throughout the town. Residents who live in certain areas of town, such as the most southern and northern ends, must drive 5-10 miles to use these facilities.

Until recently, for those youngsters who are not involved with a school sports team, there were few recreational opportunities, athletic or otherwise, particularly during the school year. The newly formed Community Center Committee at the Earle School Community Center is working to provide recreational and organized activities for all ages. The center will provide after-school programs, activities, and act as a meeting place for children. However, there is still a need for play areas for preschoolers. Except for the jungle gyms and playgrounds at the elementary school and the Community Center playground, the other play areas available for preschoolers are in considerably poor condition.

At this time, the Community Center staff is addressing the need for organized activities or facilities for adults. Currently, there are privately owned and operated softball fields located on Pine Hill Road, available for adult recreational opportunities. The northern end of Westport is still in need of more recreational facilities.

There is another important perspective to take in the analysis of this data. Private facilities play a large role in Westport's recreation supply. Of the 91 active recreation and conservation sites inventoried for this Plan, 59 are in private ownership (this includes the categories of Chapter 61B, private recreation, and private conservation land.) In times of limited public funds and high liability insurance costs for towns, private provision of recreation services can play an important role in the overall recreation picture.

There are pros and cons to this situation.

The positive aspects for the larger private sector role in recreation and open space provision include the continuation of tax payments to the town, maintenance costs are borne by the private sector, and improvements can be made outside of the political process.

The negative aspects to this situation include potential limited access based on ability to pay, no guarantee of permanence, and the higher costs associated with private ownership versus public ownership.

5.6.4 Regional Recreation and Open Space Needs

The Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which was written in 1988 and updated in 1993, looked at open space and recreation needs all across Massachusetts and determined that the five major policies of most importance to the Southeastern Region, of which Westport is a part, were:

1. Development and expansion of recreation facilities
2. Maintenance of recreation facilities

3. Acquisition and protection of water supply areas
4. Acquisition and protection of recreation areas
5. Acquisition and protection of conservation areas.

The SCORP identified the following specific needs for the southeastern Massachusetts region:

1. Developing and expanding water-based recreation facilities,
2. Acquisition and protection of wildlife habitats and scenic areas,
3. Development and expansion of handicapped access, and
4. Development of trail corridors.

Westport plays an important role in providing beach access and camping experiences for the Southeastern Region. The 650,000 cars that visit Horseneck State Beach Reservation each season clearly indicate the regional role that this facility plays. The town's campsites, numbering over 100, also meet a need much greater than for Westport alone.

When reviewing the recreational objectives for this region and comparing them with Westport's own needs and the limitations identified in this study, several points stand out. First, in terms of expanding water-based recreation facilities, there is little opportunity for the state to expand Horseneck Beach without losing the town's beach areas. Additionally, the area is already seeing the impacts of an increased visitor population at Horseneck Beach: litter, vandalism, habitat disturbance (piping plover) and unsafe conditions for residents using the beach during the after hours. Therefore, this plan does not recommend expanding Westport's ocean-based activities.

Westport is also blessed with the two branches of the Westport River. Expanding water-based recreation activities could also mean providing more access to the rivers. Again, however, the town is seeing the impacts of over-use in some areas and additional access should be approached with caution. Boat pollution, crowded waterways and habitat disturbance are all common problems. Currently, there are several landings along the rivers, but almost all of them have either insufficient parking spaces, are in poor condition, or are not well known among townspeople. The Open Space and Recreation survey found that some Westport residents are not satisfied with the access they have to the water or the condition of town beaches and landings. The condition of these access points needs to be addressed, however, this Plan recommends only modest efforts to increase river access. The rivers are too fragile an ecosystem to open them to great increases in use. In general, Westport should be concentrating on providing more land-based recreational facilities and protecting the environments of the bay and rivers rather than expanding the general public's access to those resources.

The next two regional needs (wildlife and scenic resource protection, and handicapped access improvements) both mesh well with Westport's objectives. For information on handicapped access, please see the section on Special User Needs on the following page.

Westport has placed and will continue to place emphasis on protection of the natural environment. A good example of where this type of policy overlaps with economic development interests is in shell- and fin-fishing. Hundreds of acres of Westport shellfish beds have been closed due to contamination (see map of Shellfish Bed Status in the Environmental Problems section in the Westport Open Space Plan of 1999). Environmental protection and remedies of point and non-point pollution will clean up shellfish beds and open up significant economic opportunities for residents. The same is true of pollution prevention efforts for the bay where the fishing industry is slowly declining. Rather than opening up harbor space for more recreational watercraft and thus placing additional pressure on working fishing vessels, the town should be working to provide an ongoing, affordable harbor for the town's fishing operations.

Expansion of trail corridors has been discussed during the course of creating this Plan. There are differing views on this subject, but this Plan is proposing the following policy:

Trails that link residential areas to commercial areas or link park areas to park areas or that provide safe recreational use for specific population groups, such as the elderly, should be encouraged by the town and supported financially when possible. The Town of Westport need not financially support trails through natural areas; however, town policy should encourage private owners to develop or allow such trail systems through their properties.

In summary, Westport's open space objectives of protecting the rural and natural environment mesh well with the region's needs (groundwater protection was one of the main needs cited by rural communities across the state.) Residents also feel that Horseneck State Beach Reservation is currently providing a major regional recreation facility and that rather than encourage the state to expand this facility, the town should work to provide expanded access to natural areas for its own population on its own land.

5.6.5 Special User Needs

As of the 1990 U.S. Census, Westport is reported as having 549 mobility or self-care limitation persons in town, which when compared to the town population in 1990 (13,852 people), represented 4.0% of the population. Census 2000 reports 1,328 persons with a physical or self-care disability in the total population of 14,183, which represents 9.4% of the Town's population, a two-fold increase over the 1990 rate of disability. According to the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) *Fact Book*, mobility or self-care limitation refers to those people that have had a health condition that lasted for 6 or more months and which made it difficult to take care of their personal needs. In addition to these people, Westport is also home to 615 people (4.4% of the population) on work disability, and 283 persons (2.0% of the population) who are prevented from working due to their medical conditions.

In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was federally adopted, placing strict regulations on schools, businesses, industry and government to meet compliance guidelines set forth to ensure that no person shall be discriminated against based on a physical disability. As part of the process to create this Plan, each and every town conservation or recreation facility has undergone an evaluation for accessibility according to the guidelines set forth by ADA. Inspections were performed by former Conservation Agent, Chris Capone, with assistance from Sarah J. Moran, a member of the disabled community.

Recently, the Board of Selectmen appointed a seven-member Recreation Department and a Community Center Committee. Their role is to oversee recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities. Westport has only one Town owned and managed playground, Community Center Playground. This playground was just recently constructed and is in complete compliance with ADA Section 504 requirements. The two town beaches, East Beach and West Beach do not meet ADA regulations and transition plans to remediate these areas can be found in the Appendix of the 1999 Open Space Plan.

All parcels of land under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission exist in a natural undeveloped state, as either forestland or wetlands. No facilities of any kind exist on any of these sites. It is the intent of the Conservation Commission to preserve these areas in their natural

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condition; therefore, evaluations for these areas and recommendations for their remedies have been omitted.

5.7 Implementation/Action Plan

The following are the actions recommended by the Open Space Committee for each goal.

Note: The Open Space Report 1999 page 239 – page 252, details the specific town boards and related committees that would address each objective.

Goal 1- To improve and sustain land conservation efforts in Westport.

Recommended Actions

- Work closely with the Preservation Trust Council to allocate funds for purchase of open space and resource areas.
- Perform a build-out analysis of the entire town.
- Dedicate money received from sale of town surplus or tax title lands to Conservation fund for land acquisition.
- Make maximum use of state and private funds and programs to protect open space.
- Tax title lands should be critiqued annually by Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission
- Permanently protect historic and land conservation values of the Town Farm through the use of Historic, Agricultural and Conservation Restrictions.
- Encourage development of a village open space in the Central Village Business District through acquisition of lands.
- Encourage Town partnerships with private land conservation groups.
- Encourage private neighborhood land planning associations.
- Encourage preservation of lands of historic value through permanent Historic Restrictions.
- Encourage “Ag in the Classroom” for schools programs.
- Open Space Committee shall meet annually with town boards to review Open Space implementation plan.
- Open Space Committee shall provide information on open space matters to the local press in order to educate the public.

Goal 2 To protect Westport’s rural landscape.

Recommended Actions

- Promote farmers’ applications to the MA DFA and APR programs.
- Appropriate funds to the APR fund at the Annual Town Meeting.
- Allow town APR fund to be used for acquisition and resale of important farmlands released from Chapter 61A.
- Encourage private landowners to enroll in the tax deferral programs (Chapter 61, 61A, 61B).
- Authorize Chapter 61 and 61B roll-back taxes collected by the town be dedicated to the Conservation Fund and 61A roll-back taxes to the APR fund.
- Develop town policy to encourage town’s rights of first refusal for Chapter 61 and 61A lands to a qualified Land Trust or similar organization.
- Study the possibility of amending zoning bylaw to create separate Agricultural Districts.
- Participate in regional planning to support agricultural economic development.
- Promote agricultural green belts in SE Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

- Match new farmers with existing agricultural lands.

Goal 3 To protect and restore Westport's water quality and natural resources.

Recommended Actions

- Support efforts to acquire private lands surrounding the Copicut Reservoir to protect drinking water supplies.
- Focus conservation spending on lands or restrictions directly along the river corridor, its tributary streams and ponds.
- Improve onsite wastewater treatment and explore alternative systems to help landowners upgrade from cesspools and malfunctioning septic systems. Encourage betterment programs.
- Encourage the agricultural community to address agricultural runoff.
- Encourage the Town to apply for state funding to assist with stormwater remedying projects, particularly those that would improve water quality for shellfishing and swimming.
- Continue water quality monitoring to identify problem areas and to evaluate remedial projects.
- Restore the dam and fishway at the Head of Westport to extend spawning area for anadromous fish, such as herring and shad.
- Support Town and private shellfish restoration projects for quahogs, scallops, and oysters.

Goal 4 To preserve the Quality of Westport's Natural Resources, Groundwater, Wetlands, Wildlife, Wildlife Habitats and Coastal Areas.

Recommended Actions

- Educate residents living in the Aquifer Protection Districts to the existing Aquifer Bylaw.
- Increase minimum lot sizes in the Aquifer Protection Districts.
- Discourage the development of industries that generate, use or store hazardous materials that may contaminate local water supplies.
- Protect land over aquifers by purchase or conservation restrictions.
- Protect these sensitive areas either by purchase or conservation restriction.
- Encourage public acquisition of dwellings and buildable lots in the coastal velocity zone and barrier beaches; and maintain parcels as publicly accessible open space.
- Ensure existing dune re-vegetation/fertilization program.
- Implement a wetlands bylaw to increase protection of buffer zones.
- Acquire and permanently protect parcels that "link" protected lands that create open space greenbelts and wildlife corridors.
- Acquire lands identified in the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) for conservation. Expand NHESP inventory efforts.

Goal 5 To provide and enhance indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities for Westport residents of all ages.

Recommended Actions

- Encourage acquisition of land for use by seasonal fairs and festivals.
- Recycle land fill for town park.
- Re-study Rock Street Park for recreational uses.
- Study town land at Head for passive recreation.

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- Study school facilities and town properties for long-term need and recreational facilities such as a swimming pool and ice rink.
- Encourage recreational plans for the Macomber School and abutting Bicentennial Park.
- Place bike racks at town beaches.
- Encourage multipurpose recreational paths on existing and future town and private conservation lands.
- Encourage a feasibility study for a multipurpose trail, using the east portion of the Rte.88 layout, and creation of an additional parking lot in the Rte. 6 area for trail users.
- Encourage creation of a public golf course.
- Encourage more ball fields.
- Encourage more soccer fields.
- Improve parking lots for handicapped citizens.
- Improve handicapped access to all town facilities.
- Study feasibility of providing seasonal boardwalks at East and Cherry & Webb Beaches.

NOTES

For the complete Action Plan for Open Space and Recreation, please refer to Chapter 12, Action Plan, Section 12.3 Open Space and Recreation.

During the Public Meeting in February 2002, a resident asked for better bicycle and pedestrian access to the beaches. In addition, a letter was received in response to the Westport Forum article supporting a bike path near the beaches.

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CHAPTER 6
*Cultural and Historic
Resources*

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

6. Historical and Cultural Resources

6.1 Goals and Objectives.

It is the goal of this sub-committee to preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's cultural and historic resources and devise ways to allow but control development in a manner which protects our heritage for present and future generations. Objectives include:

- Identify and preserve private cemeteries, Native American sites, and burial grounds.
- Identify and protect ancient ways and cart paths. This includes:
 - Incorporating them into the Town's GIS system.
 - Establishing incentives for developers to preserve them.
- Identify, designate, and preserve historical and cultural landmarks.
- Establish regulations that require developers to show existing stone walls and encourage their preservation.
- Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw to provide sufficient time to investigate alternatives to demolition of older or historic buildings and/or landmarks. [Adopted]
- Consider establishing additional local historic districts.
- Consider establishing a site design review board.
- Outline methods and incentives that would encourage development consistent with the Town's historical and rural character.
- Support and maintain Westport's fishing and farming industries, which are essential to the historical and rural character of the Town.
- Identify public right of ways.
- Increase awareness of and use of the Town Poor Farm as a cultural and historic resource. The Town may wish to consider improving public access for recreational use.

6.2 Inventory of Cultural and Historic Resources

6.2.1 Agricultural Resources

The soil and climate of Westport are suitable for farming, particularly dairy farming, and one of the basic activities in town has been – and to some extent remains – farming. Farming is threatened by economic factors, of course, and also by encroachment by housing developments. It is also threatened by the desires of newer residents to live in a bucolic but quiet and odor-free environment.

The long views of farmlands along our roadways are among the most cherished in Westport, reminding us of our history, our present, and our future. In Westport, 8,320 acres are enrolled in the Chapter 61A tax relief program as of 2001, giving the town right of first refusal before the land is developed and converted to another use. This is down from 8,529 acres just two years ago. Otherwise, Chapter 61A provides little protection of our farming heritage. Not all farmland is enrolled in 61A. Approximately 1,500 acres are under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program, permanently severing development rights from the land. This translates to more than 7,000 acres of unprotected farmland in the Town.

A downward spiral that begins with needing a second job to pay bills jeopardizes farmers. Farmers must tap into technology and resources from state and federal assistance with little extra time. Roadside lots are frequently sold off for extra funds, and ultimately large farmsteads are vulnerable to development as land prices become more tempting. Our way of life is dependent on farm sustainability and viability and several farmers have been successful in figuring this out.

There is a direct correlation between a farmer's comfort with available technology and his or her success. This is no longer just the farmers' problem—it is ours if we want to preserve the rural character of the land for future generations.

Viewing agriculture as having potential for economic development is the key to its preservation. We cannot have farms without the farmer. Protection of the geography essential to Westport translates to advocating for the farmer who will bring his or her methods up to date in order to be both a profitable and sustainable steward of the land.

6.2.2 Marine Resources

The other traditional backbone of the Westport economy has been fishing, first for whale as well as finfish, and more recently for crustaceans and finfish. The catch annually brings a good deal of money to the Town and supports a sizable population of fishermen. Shell fishing is threatened by pollution of the rivers, and sea fishing requires constant maintenance of dock facilities.

6.2.3 Scenic Resources

Westport is a pretty place, and many of its most attractive features are in danger of being lost through over development. There are numerous fine vistas over fields and woods to the rivers and the ocean; and the roads are often lined by trees and fine old stone walls: every new house is apt to destroy both a vista and a section of treed property and stone walls.

6.2.4 Historic Resources

The first structure in Westport – soon destroyed during King Philip's War – was constructed at the Head about 1671. There are to our knowledge no seventeenth century structures still standing in town. There are many, however, from the eighteenth century, notably the Handy House of 1712. We tend to lose one or two of these structures annually either to decay or development.

6.2.4.1 Historic Sites

The Historical Commission has studied and listed many of the historic structures in Town. This list is available at the Free Public Library, the Historical Society, and Town Hall, and the original resides with the Massachusetts Historical Society. A Demolition Delay By-Law, which provides some protection for these older structures, was approved by the 2002 Town Meeting. The Commission did not investigate ancient industrial sites and the location of ancient ways and cart paths; nor did it list cemeteries – Native American and American – that lie on private property.

6.2.4.2 Historic Areas/Districts

There is an Historic District at Westport Point overseen and to some extent protected by the Historical Commission. Residents of the area are planning to extend the District to the north. There is talk about creating an Historic District also at the Head of Westport, and that would be a very good idea.

6.2.5 Cultural Resources

The life of a town is enriched by the numerous organizations that spring up in answer to various needs. Some of these organizations are political, others religious, others still with a particular purpose. Old ones will fade, newer ones be created. We should recognize the importance of these organizations, such as the Westport Art Group, the Westport River

Watershed Alliance, the Westport Historical Society, the Holy Ghost Club, as well as the Grange and Veterans' organizations in Town. It might be well also to recognize certain of the business enterprises such as Lees' Market and White's Restaurant.

6.3 Analysis of Cultural and Historic Resources

6.3.1 Heritage Landscape Program

The Heritage Landscape Program is a pilot program of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and is designed to select and protect certain scenic areas of historical interest in various towns, including Westport and to educate the public and municipalities about how to identify and preserve their heritage landscapes. They have studied Drift Road, and the East Branch of the Westport River, have prepared Massachusetts Historical Commission survey reports on these corridors, and have incorporated them into the Town's inventory of significant historical or heritage areas, thus now designating them as worthy of study and protection. It would be a very good thing if from this program – or some other – a recommendation would emerge for a by-law that would protect stonewalls, at least along the old roads such as Drift, Horseneck, Sanford, Adamsville, Main.

6.3.2 Areas in Need of Protection

Most areas in Town are in need of protection, and it should be in fact one task of the Long-Range Planning Update Committee to select areas in town that do not need protection and are thus suitable for development. Farms are threatened, rivers are polluted, older structures are torn down or allowed to collapse, stone walls are uprooted, ancient ways are ignored or used as road frontage for development, older industrial establishments are unidentified and neglected, cemeteries on private property are neither mapped nor protected.

6.4 Implementation/Action Plan

The Cultural and Historic Resources sub-committee recommends the following to the full committee and the Town:

- 1) All cemeteries be plotted and a by-law created that protects all burial grounds, these cemeteries to include Indian burial plots.
- 2) Ancient Ways and Cart Paths are a contentious issue, but we recommend that as many as may be located and mapped. Landings and other access to the water should also be plotted.
- 3) A list of the structures listed in the Historical Commission book be made available to the Building Inspector so that he may determine whether proposed developments will destroy or compromise significant structures. [This action was completed after passage of the Demolition Delay by-law].
 - 3a) We further recommend that an archaeological survey of the area north of the Head be undertaken to locate early industrial establishments. The Town should be very careful in approving the demolition or alteration of older buildings and construction on land that contains industrial remains.
- 4) We recommend that the draft regulations for builders under consideration by the Planning Board be adopted, and that these regulations serve to protect stonewalls and large trees.
- 5) We have drafted and presented a Demolition Delay By-Law to the Committee, and that By-Law will appear on the warrant for the 2002 Town Meeting. [This by-law was passed.]
- 6) We would encourage residents of the Point to extend their Historic District to the north; and residents of the Head to develop a Historic District there.
- 7) We recommend that methods and incentives be developed for individuals and developers that will encourage them to preserve historical and cultural resources (as defined above).

- 8) We recommend that the Town not pass any legislation or allow any developments that will impinge on the rights of farmers and fishermen to pursue their business.
- 9) We recommend that the Update Committee adopt a resolution that will protect the historic roads in town (named above) from destruction of the stonewalls that border them. It may be that a by-law (such as the one in Dartmouth) should be adopted.
- 10) The Town Farm, miraculously saved from sale or loss to the Town, is a treasure. We recommend that the property be preserved, and that serious attention be given to the potential recreational use of the land; and possible other uses for the structures.
- 11) We recommend that cultural organizations, particularly if they are housed in older structures, be protected and encouraged.

NOTES

For the complete Action Plan for Historical and Cultural Resources, please refer to Chapter 12, Action Plan, Section 12.4 Historical and Cultural Resources.

One Planning Board member felt that a form of historic district that was less restrictive would be preferable for any new areas of Town that might be zoned for historic preservation.

CHAPTER 7
Water and Sewerage

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

7 Water and Sewerage

7.1 Introduction

In terms of population, Westport is the largest community in southeastern Massachusetts without a municipal water system and one of the largest without a municipal sewer system. Lack of such public systems has served to slow growth somewhat thus far, but without careful planning and aggressive efforts to protect existing groundwater resources and enhance management of private septic systems and stormwater runoff, the negative impacts on Westport in the future could be profound.

As recognized in previous sections, the presence or absence of a public or large-scale private water system in any part of Town will have a major impact on the development patterns of the community. This must be recognized in any projections of growth or plans for future land use. For example, the development of a light industrial park, which could broaden the tax base and provide local employment opportunities, would be unlikely without municipal water and sewer.

Currently, 98% of Westport households depend on private wells for their water supply. Stormwater and its run-off are the sole known sources for recharge of the existing groundwater, which is the source of drinking water for almost all of Westport. Increases in impervious areas, filling of wetlands, and other impacts of development severely decrease stormwater recharge. As the town becomes more densely populated and the number of dwellings, commercial establishments, and industries increase, adequate private well supplies to meet consumption demands will become extremely difficult to find and the danger of pollution of these private wells will also increase. Additionally, this type of supply does not provide the fire protection that a growing community requires. However, it is unlikely the entire town will ever be serviced by a public water supply, thus it will be critical to enhance protection of the existing groundwater supplies.

Westport relies almost exclusively on on-site septic systems to meet the sewage disposal needs of its residents. Although on-site septic systems are adequate under many circumstances, the village areas and portions of North Westport tend to lack the required land for adequate disposal. In addition, malfunctioning on-site septic systems may pollute adjacent wells, and nearby ponds and streams. Instances of pollution have been observed in north Westport and along South Watuppa Pond. Westport has no public provisions for disposal of sanitary sewage; given the huge infrastructure costs for developing municipal sewage treatment, it is unlikely to have any in the near future. This fact conditions development in Westport, and must be recognized in planning for future land use.

In the fall of 2003, the business community under the guidance of an *ad-hoc* "Water-Sewer Committee" donated the funds necessary for a preliminary design and assessment for a water and sewerage system in the north end of Town. The firm of Camp, Dresser & McKee has been hired to produce the initial plan, expected to be finished in the spring of 2004, for extending both water and sewer lines from Fall River further into the north end of Westport, primarily along Rte 6. This plan will include costs for a final design, proposed areas to be served by water, sewer, or both, and necessary information to receive monies from the State Revolving Funds. Following up on this effort,

the Town has also appointed an official Water-Sewer committee to recommend to the Board of Selectman necessary or desirable changes in local by-laws, regulations and policies. If funded by Town meeting, the design will be completed by the summer of 2004, with possible funding for construction available in 2005.

The town Highway Department currently maintains Westport's road system; however the town has no comprehensive stormwater management plan. Most problems with stormwater occur on older "non-engineered" roads that were initially adequate for handling runoff but are increasingly vulnerable to drainage and episodic flooding problems. The EPA has promulgated new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II standards that must be followed by any new construction, or any major reconstruction of existing roads. These standards act to improve run-off quality, however at a cost that will surely stretch existing Town department budgets. Although the Town has complied by filing its initial Notice of Intent, complete compliance with this document and implementation will place additional burdens on departments to re-write regulations, review project applications, inspect projects, and monitor progress towards compliance with the NOI.

7.2 Existing Conditions

7.2.1 Water

Despite plentiful wetlands, Westport does not have plentiful groundwater. This apparent contradiction may be explained by the fact that the predominant soils in town are not sand and gravel types, but rather soils with a very firm substratum (hardpan layer) that restricts the vertical movement of water recharging the aquifer. This results in rainfall running off ridges and hills into valleys where swamps develop because of the poor permeability of the soils. These issues came to light in the U.S. Geological Survey Water-Resources Investigations Report 95-4234 entitled "Stream flow, Groundwater Recharge and Discharge, and Characteristics of Surficial deposits in Buzzards Bay Basin, Southeastern Massachusetts" (1995).

Westport's surface water resources (South Watuppa Pond, Devol Pond, Sawdy Pond, and Lake Noquochoke) seem obvious solutions to providing a public water supply. Unfortunately all "rights" to surface waters with the exception of Devol Pond, are owned and managed by the City of Fall River. At this time a small area in the northern section of Westport is serviced with Fall River water. Map 4-1 Water Resources depicts surface and groundwater resources.

In 1964, concerned about future pollution and lack of knowledge regarding the town's water resources, the town hired the firm of Camp, Dresser, & McKee (CDM) to research and report on their findings. In May 1965, the Town of Westport received, "Report on a Public Water Supply", May 1965, Camp, Dresser, & McKee. The report's overall conclusion summarized that, "Comprehensive geological studies of the town, together with the test well information, indicate that a municipal well supply with adequate capacity is not available and alternative means will have to be utilized,"¹²

Approximately 98% of Westport residences depend on private wells; almost 100% have private individual septic systems for waste disposal, with the exception being recent affordable housing projects build under General Law Ch. 40B, which have small, on-site treatment plants. Over

¹² "Town of Westport Massachusetts, Report on a Public Water Supply System", Camp, Dresser, & McKee, May, 1965.

recent years the presence of gasoline, pesticides, nitrates, Methyl tertiary-Butyl Ether (MtBe), Trichloroethylene (TCE), Chlorobenzene, and fecal pathogens have shown up in many private wells. After extensive well drillings at 29 selected sites for potential groundwater supplies, only one site was suggested for a possible public water supply. Unfortunately the water quantity was insufficient to service a large population and the supply itself would require extensive treatment for iron and manganese. By 2010, a total consumption of some 2 million gallons per day (mgd) might be expected during the summer months in Westport (Summary, Camp, Dresser & McKee, 1965). Using an estimated combined summer and year- round population of approximately 20,000 by 2010, that same report indicated "an average daily consumption for the proposed initial system of about 0.3 mgd (million gallons per day), and this can be expected to increase to approximately 0.9 mgd by 1990 and 1.4 mgd by 2010. We estimate that consumption on the maximum day, which represents the maximum total amount of water used during a 24-hour period, will be approximately 0.9 mgd initially, 2.7 mgd in 1990, and 3.8 mgd by the year 2010."

The town's only known significant aquifer areas generally follow the east and west branches of the Westport River and Bread and Cheese Brook. The 1995 United States Geological Survey (USGS) report concerning the availability of a drinking water supply and recharge area,¹³ concludes that most of Westport's surficial deposits are glacial till on top of bedrock, and therefore provide very little water recharge for potential water supplies. The exceptions to this are the areas along the barrier beach, and the upper East Branch of the Westport River, to Lake Noquochoke, through the Shingle Island River, that consists of stratified drift. These aquifer areas were carved out during the glacial period and contain glacial outwash and gravelly soils conducive to groundwater recharge and aquifer formation. Within these areas the stratum is not of sufficient depth (greater than 50ft.) to provide for an adequate large-scale public water supply. Even in some of these areas that are favorable for finding groundwater, the potential for development of wells is limited because excessive pumping could induce salt water into the aquifer along the river, where salt or brackish conditions exist. The soils in these areas are important to protect primarily for their recharge capabilities to serve private drinking wells. This area is now the designated Aquifer Protection District.

The Town's best option for low-supply community groundwater for development lies in North Westport, along Bread and Cheese Brook north of the Head, all the way to North Watuppa Pond and the Town line. If Westport were to develop satellite municipal water systems, this is where supplies may be found for the Head of Westport village and, possibly, the existing schools. If the Town were to encourage industrial or large-scale commercial or residential development dependent on private wells, this is where it might be feasible. In this critical area, however, site designs for commercial, industrial and high-density residential development must minimize the area of impervious surfaces, and control and clean up runoff, as well, to preventing potential contamination of water resources.

The majority of Westport's land area can be categorized as having a low (less than 25 gallons per minute) potential groundwater yield. This fact severely limits any type of development that would utilize more than a minimal amount of water. For example, single-family home development can take place, but industrial development dependent upon wells would not be

¹³ "Stream flow, Groundwater Recharge and Discharge, and Characteristics of Surficial Deposits in Buzzards Bay Basin, Southeastern Massachusetts", USGS, Water-Resources Investigations Report 95-4234 (1995).

successful in most parts of Town. The lack of a municipal water system for industrial purposes will inhibit commercial development in most parts of Town.

The City of Fall River holds flowage rights to North Watuppa Pond (which it uses for domestic supply) and its watershed, which includes flowage rights to Noquochoke Lake; to the Copicut and Shingle Island Rivers which feed the Lake; to Sissons Pond; and to Bread and Cheese Brook and the flow from Noquochoke Lake, both of which feed Sissons Pond. Although land on one small corner of the pond is in Westport, this land is owned by Fall River. Although Sawdy and Devol Ponds are entirely within Westport, and flow into South Watuppa Pond, which is largely in Westport, Watuppa Reservoir Company owns the flowage rights to all three ponds. These waters are used for industrial purposes in Fall River. The terms accorded to the Watuppa Reservoir Company regarding South Watuppa Pond allow it to maintain the water level from five to seven feet above the natural level of the pond.

A pipeline from Noquochoke Lake to South Watuppa Pond with a spur to North Watuppa can be opened for re-supply of the ponds, although the quality of water is such that it is used to feed the domestic supply in North Watuppa only with the express permission of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

It is unlikely that the entire town will ever be serviced with a large public water system. The area north of Route 177 is the area most likely to be given first consideration. For most residents, the service improvement brought by public water will be marginal. Most present inhabitants have good wells that give little trouble. Perhaps the major service gain for these people will be the virtually perfect reliability of a public system, with only rare interruptions. Water quality should be better than that of water from many individual wells, and pressure need never be a problem. For those residents with poor wells, the service improvement will be substantial. Some families, even with normal rainfall, must "ration" their use of water, and some have been faced with the expense and inconvenience of developing new wells when old ones failed.

Just as the lack of municipal **sewer** will inhibit development in most parts of town due to poor soils, the lack of a municipal **water** system will inhibit development in most parts of town due to limited groundwater resources.

Most types of commercial development are dependent on strategic location. High cost of land, unfavorable topography, and lack of public utilities are major deterrents. Provision of public water may, in some cases, have a significant impact on commercial development potential. To attract some types of commercial development, such as restaurants and hotels, provision of public water would be a necessity. For other types, it would have a lesser, but certainly a positive, effect.

Industrial development has somewhat similar variability in its need for public water. For many industries, though, availability of a dependable source of high quality water for process use is essential. Provided that the supply volume developed is adequate, public water is certainly an attraction for such industries.

Other industries, having no need for process water and relatively little concern over insurance costs, will prefer the convenience of public water over development of their own wells. The overall effect of providing public water to industrial development areas is certain to be positive, and would remove one of the present barriers to the expansion of the economic base of the community.

The only fire hydrants now available in Westport are along Route 6. Fire protection in other areas must depend upon water carried in tankers or on water pumped from a nearby source, if available. The major reason for Westport's poor fire insurance rating (Class D) is apparently the lack of public water for firefighting. Provision of public water would lower insurance costs in those areas of the Town that are serviced and, presumably, would reduce the average annual fire loss. Fire hydrants might also be seen as necessary to protect the investment of any company seeking to build a commercial or industrial development of any size in Westport.

Some institutional uses that would provide funds for the Town might be affected by provision of public water. The State Police have been considering a new facility in either Westport or North Dartmouth; availability of water might be a factor in their decision. While the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Plan anticipates no other major regional facilities likely to locate in Westport, other needs unforeseen in that Plan might well arise, and are more likely to locate in Westport if water is available.

In summary, the City of Fall River and the Watuppa Reservoir Company hold, between them, rights to all of the flowing and ponded surface water of any consequence north of Route 177 and the Head of Westport. Independent development of surface water sources in that area therefore appears unlikely as a means of obtaining water, although this does not necessarily exclude surface water as a source. Westport probably does not have sufficient groundwater to support a municipal system without sources being supplemented from outside the town. Fall River is the only neighboring community with a large enough resource to supply Westport. The possibility of purchasing water from Fall River is not a new idea. Groundwater as a source is unaffected by those rights. Unless the town reverses its policy and decides to develop municipal water, it will have to rely on low-density development and discouragement of large water users to preserve its limited resources.

7.2.2 Sewerage

Westport relies almost exclusively upon on-site septic systems to meet the sewage disposal needs of its residents. Although successful under most circumstances, there are potential problems with this approach. Malfunctioning on-site septic systems may pollute adjacent wells and nearby ponds and streams. As noted previously, instances of pollution have been observed in north Westport and along South Watuppa Pond. Currently, Westport has no public provisions for disposal of sanitary sewage, and in all probability will not have any for many years. Surveys of surrounding communities with sewage treatment facilities indicate neither the capability, nor desire, to expand or to annex areas of Westport. This fact conditions development in Westport, and must be recognized in planning for future land use.

Experience the world over has shown that living at urban density with water being constantly recycled—drawn as drinking water, replaced through on-site septic works as waste, then redrawn (at least in part) as drinking water again—will in time lead to health hazards. Even if the entire community were composed of single-family homes on ½ acre lots, there would be concern (some health experts advocate no less than a 2 acre site for homes with both wells and disposal works). Because much of Westport is developed on far smaller lots, in time, a general health problem could easily develop, at least in the north end of the Town. A recent study in Wellfleet Village on Cape Cod, an area with density similar to parts of North Westport and also lacking both public water and public sewerage, suggests that over half of all the wells there are in danger of pollution, as indicated by presence of such pollutants as detergents, benzene compounds, and bacterial sources. In addition, the improper storage of fuel and siting of gas stations and fuel depots have caused major groundwater contamination in many areas of Westport. The emergency need caused by MtBE contamination of their wells, allowed citizens in the Davis Road area to tie into the Fall

River water supply system. However, other sites such as Central Village, Adamsville Road, and Sanford road would require an enormous amount of infrastructure for the same type of relief.

Since the inception of Title V (The State Sanitary Code), requiring inspection and upgrade of existing on-site disposal systems, problems with individual sewage disposal systems have been identified more frequently and shown to be fairly evenly distributed around the Town. Areas in the immediate vicinity of wetlands, such as along Route 6, understandably have more frequent problems than have areas with more permeable soils and lower water tables. Existing large commercial facilities in all probability have the most severe problems. The difficulty of siting both an on-site sewage disposal system and a potable drinking water well on the same lot in densely populated areas has become apparent. This problem is most acute in the "villages", which sometimes lack adequate land to use even a shared disposal system, without tremendous infrastructure costs.

Lack of public sewerage affects residential development in several ways. Soil characteristics limit density and location of development; in extreme cases, prohibition of development is necessary to protect public health.

If the soil is suitable, public water is provided, and the water table is low, lots measuring 40,000 square feet and smaller may prove to be satisfactory for on-site sewage disposal for many years. If, however, the permeability of the soil is poor, the ground slopes excessively, the water table is high, and drinking water must be obtained on the site, far more land is required; and, in some cases, safe sewage disposal is not possible at all.

The effects of a lack of public sewerage are felt on both residential and non-residential development. Lack of sewerage does not slow residential development; in fact, it causes increased land consumption for development, impinging upon open space areas, and environmentally sensitive areas. Without sewerage, on-site systems, with their potential problems become scattered randomly throughout Town, even in areas that are unsuitable for on-site systems or that should be protected, for open space or environmental reasons. The lack of sewerage does, however, slow industrial development, and has a slight inhibiting effect on commercial development. Lack of sewerage would severely hamper the Town's ability to attract industry and diversified commercial development. Although lack of sewerage does not prohibit commercial and industrial development, one must be cautious in projecting the potential types and locations of such growth.

Public health considerations might justifiably suggest prohibition of development in certain areas because of a lack of sewerage. These areas, which are the most desirable for development, would be lowland areas along both branches of the Westport River, where the land is subject to occasional flooding. The flooding of cesspools and septic tanks can cause serious pollution, and might suggest prohibition, by one means or another, of residential development of land below, say, eight or ten feet above mean sea level. One means of accomplishing this would be an overlay zoning district.

Anywhere that soil tests indicate on-site disposal would not work, the Board of Health should prohibit development; in areas where soil tests are satisfactory but other legitimate public health concerns exist, the Board of Health should regulate or condition development.

As stated previously, individual septic systems containing household wastewater are the most common means of disposal in Westport. While in the more rural areas, this may be adequate, the village areas tend to lack the land area needed for adequate disposal. Over the past three years

the Board of Health has granted, on average, 90 variances a year to Title V, some in extremely sensitive areas. The lack of alternative disposal options severely limits the Town's ability to control septic disposal provisions. One very disturbing trend over those years is the increase in the number of wells found to be contaminated when they were tested, as required, for variances. This trend towards contaminated wells is also apparent throughout the Town in general. An extensive review of Board of Health files reveals that approximately 15% of the well samples on record fail to meet drinking water standards set forth by the state. While these results represent a small sampling throughout the Town, this disconcerting trend bears monitoring.

Intensive residential shoreline development, if based in porous soils, has contributed to the pollution of surface waters and the wildlife habitat and marine environment they provide. It is interesting to note, however, that in the Town of Wareham, where such intensive development has taken place (though generally on good soil), pollution counts in the various waters have actually gone down over the past thirty years, perhaps reflecting changes in technology in commercial and industrial waste disposal and the construction of sewerage infrastructure.

Table 7-1. lists the most common soil types in Westport, the percent of Westport's land area they cover, and their limitations for septic systems.¹⁴ Septic limitations are taken from Table 11. Sanitary Facilities, Septic Tank Absorption Fields of the Soil Survey. There are nine possible conditions that are unfavorable for septic systems: flooding, shallow depth to bedrock, ponding, wetness (shallow depth to high water table), slow percolation rates, poor filtration, steep slopes, and large stones. The four most prevalent limitations for septic absorption fields in Westport are slow percolation, ponding, wetness and poor filtration. For most soils with limitations in Westport, the limitations are characterized by the USDA as "severe". Ninety-seven percent of the land area of Westport is comprised of soils that have at least one severe limitation for septic. This does not mean that 97% of the Town is undevelopable. Within areas generally categorized as having severe limitations there may be smaller areas of good soils. The general characterization of the soils in an area should be used to identify potential problems and design in response to them. Although soils with limitations for development are found throughout Town, some areas of soils may indicate a need for specific zoning regulation, such as the excessively well-drained soils with poor filtration capability located above or adjacent to important water resources in the Aquifer Protection District and shoreline areas. Other than in those areas, the changes in soil quality occur at such a fine scale, that it is not possible to zone for the intensity of land use based on Soil Survey mapping.

The most common limitation for septic systems in Westport is slow percolating soils, generally due to hardpan. Seventy-eight percent of the land area of Westport is potentially covered by soils which pose a severe limitation to siting septic systems because they perc slowly.

The next most common limitations are ponding and wetness, each of which are potentially problematical for 27% of the Town's land area. Lastly, poor filtration capability is found in 14% of Westport's soils.¹⁵

¹⁴ According to the most recent, October 1981 USDA Soil Survey for Bristol County, Massachusetts, Southern Part. Areas computed by GIS using digitized version of soil survey provided by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in summer 2003.

¹⁵ Because some soil units have more than one severe limitation, these percentages total more than 100%.

Several tools are available to the Town to protect public health, with the most obvious being the State Sanitary code (Title V). The provisions of Title V are compulsory, not voluntary; the Board of Health is obliged by State law to enforce them. The requirements are minimal, but if enforced, they will prevent homes being built, as they sometimes are in Westport, in areas where the water table is virtually at the surface of the ground.

In coastal areas subject to hurricane and other coastal storm flooding, Board of Health control can be used to regulate development in some cases, probably not in others. However, there are several other means of preventing unwise coastal development.

Table 7-1. Westport Soils with Severe Septic Limitations

Limitation	Soil Description	Percent Of Land Area	
Percolation (hardpan)	Charlton & Paxton fine sandy loams (FSL's), including rocky, rock outcrops, stony, very stony and extremely stony FSL's	33.5%	
	Pittstown loam	0.01%	
	Ridgebury FSL's, including very stony & extremely stony FSL's	7.01%	
	Whitman FSL's including extremely stony FSL's	23.0%	
	Woodbridge FSL's, including very stony & extremely stony FSL's	14.6%	
	Total % with severe limitation due to poor percolation	78.1%	
	Ponding	Pawcatuck & Ipswich peats	3.22%
Freetown muck, ponded		0.21%	
Scarboro muck		0.79%	
Whitman FSL's, including extremely stony FSL's		23.05%	
Total % with severe limitation due to ponding		27.3%	
Wetness (High water Table)	Deerfield loamy sand	0.24%	
	Freetown muck	4.06%	
	Ninigret fine sandy loam	0.02%	
	Pipestone loamy sand	0.09%	
	Pittstown loam	0.01%	
	Ridgebury FSL's, including extremely stony FSL's	7.01%	
	Sudbury fine sandy loam	0.20%	
	Swansea coarse sand	0.01%	
	Swansea muck	0.31%	
	Walpole fine sandy loam	0.02%	
	Wareham loamy sand	0.23%	
	Woodbridge FSL's, including very stony & extremely stony FSL's	14.56%	
	Total % with severe limitation due to wetness (high water table)	26.76%	
	Filtration	Beaches ¹⁶	0.36%
		Pawcatuck & Ipswich peats	3.22%
Agawam fine sandy loam		0.08%	
Deerfield loamy sand		0.24%	
Gloucester-Hinckley Complex, includes undulating or rolling, very stony		3.10%	
Hinckley gravelly fine sandy loam		3.12%	
Merrimac fine sandy loam		0.58%	
Ninigret fine sandy loam		0.02%	
Pipestone loamy sand		0.09%	
Scarboro muck		0.79%	
Sudbury fine sandy loam		0.20%	
Swansea coarse sand		0.01%	
Swansea muck		0.31%	
Udipsamments, hilly (sand dunes)		1.63%	
Walpole fine sandy loam		0.02%	
Wareham loamy sand		0.23%	
Windsor loamy sand		0.34%	
Total % with severe limitation due to poor filtration capacity	14.34%		

¹⁶ Beaches have not been specifically characterized for septic limitations by NRCS. They are noted as not suitable for most uses, except recreation. They have been placed with poor filtration soils in this table, but obviously may have wetness, flooding, and percolation problems as well.

First, Chapter 426 of the Acts of 1963 provides that no dredging or filling along coastal waters may take place without a permit issued by the Board of Selectmen, which is only to be issued upon demonstration that the development will not jeopardize public health, safety, or welfare. Second, Section 2 of Chapter 40A, G.L., authorizes zoning control over lands subject to "seasonal or periodic flooding". This would apply to any land below 10 feet or so above mean sea level. Within such an area, development may be prohibited or subjected to special restrictions and conditions

7.2.3 Stormwater and Drainage

All but a few small areas of Westport may be classified into one or another of four major drainage basins. The largest of these is the area drained by the East Branch of the Westport River and its tributary brooks and creeks. The area drained by one of those tributaries, Bread and Cheese Brook, has been designated as a separate basin because of its size. Another large basin is drained by various means into the interconnected Devol, Sawdy, South Watuppa, and North Watuppa ponds. Finally, there is the area drained by the West Branch of the Westport River and its minor tributaries. In addition to these major areas, there are smaller areas, which drain directly into either Westport Harbor, into the Ocean, or into smaller brooks going directly into the ocean.

Typically, the divisions between these basins occur in areas of relatively flat topography, so the exact line dividing basins probably moves from time to time with even minor erosion action. This flat topography at major divides results in large areas with relatively slow water motion, and in large areas of swamp.

The two most unusual characteristics of drainage in Westport are the above-mentioned extensiveness of poorly drained areas, and the exposure of some areas of Westport to tidal flooding. Flooding has occurred as recently as November 1963, when East Beach road was partially washed out. Catastrophic damage occurred in 1938; major flooding occurred in 1944 and in 1954.

The Town presently does not have a comprehensive stormwater plan. The adoption of such a program would greatly enhance the synchronization necessary between the pertinent Town boards that deal with such issues. The EPA has slowly promulgated guidelines and regulations requiring communities of a certain size to provide stormwater treatment prior to discharge. Westport will be required in the near future to comply with these "Phase II" standards in order to obtain state and federal monies. Improvements to the current stormwater systems would require permits, and designs appropriate to the areas involved.

Westport's road system is currently maintained by the Highway Department. Most problems with stormwater occur on the older "non-engineered" roads that initially were adequate in handling run-off. As development and population increased more drainage problems became symptomatic. Road drainage lines are normally short, release water into receiving streams at many points, and consist of many (several hundred in Westport) separate facilities, not all interconnected. These emergency "fixes" have, by default, become the policy, allowing untreated stormwater to enter waterways and wetlands areas, and have changed drainage patterns within watershed areas. A noted example of this is the inadequacy of numerous culverts along Drift Road. This inadequacy is the direct result of improvements upstream made in conjunction with construction of Route 88. These changes caused faster runoff and concentrated it into fewer streams, with resultant flows too large for existing structures under Drift Road to handle. Just as Route 88 altered patterns in the East Branch basin, so will Route 195 alter patterns in the Bread and Cheese basin, and adjustments on local roads may again be required.

The clear public responsibility for road drainage is being handled in three ways. First, as roads are reconstructed with public funds, adequate provisions to handle present and future drainage should be incorporated. Second, new subdivisions are required to provide drainage systems satisfactory to the Planning Board. Third, numerous localized problems are being eliminated one at a time, largely based on requests of abutting property owners.

The major Westport deficiency in this area of responsibility is that drainage is not being adequately provided for on roads being surfaced with local, as opposed to Chapter 90, funds. Drainage structures are an investment in lower future costs, and should be provided, even if this means slower progress in street paving.

7.3 Goals and Objectives

7.3.1 Water

Although planning reports and feasibility studies have been prepared proposing the development of limited water and sewer systems, it has been the policy of the Town of Westport to remain with on-site wells and septic systems. The pitfalls of the current practice of indiscriminate siting of wells in a scattered pattern throughout the town are obvious. Wells being sited next to gasoline stations, and in close proximity to disposal systems, while legal, may need to be changed if the Town cannot provide alternatives. However, this practice can also provide valuable information about the state of the aquifer in the Town. It is then probably a good idea to mandate the reporting information of all well sampling data to the Board of Health, in as a precursor to a town wide water study. This study may lead to important policies and considerations that will severely alter the Town's direction. If municipal service were to be developed in either area, the most likely means of development would be in conjunction with the City of Fall River. In view of the fact that Fall River and Fall River interests own considerable water rights in Westport, there has been some question concerning feasibility of development of water supplies by the Town.

In addition to a ground-water supply, there are two other possible sources of supply for the Town of Westport, namely a surface supply from within the town, or the purchase of water from a neighboring community having an adequate water supply. Both sources were investigated in detail.

Thus, Westport has two main goals for management of the water and sewer needs of its residents and businesses:

- Strengthen protection of existing groundwater resources for private water supply, including pollution prevention through management of stormwater etc.

- Plan for the development of municipal water and sewer for at least portions of North Westport, where the existing land use patterns and resources are inadequate to sustain safe drinking water in the future.

7.3.2 Sewerage

A malfunctioning system can pose a significant health risk, be detrimental to the environment, and costly to repair. A broad spectrum of means is available to accomplish the previously discussed objectives of keeping land subject to flooding from being unwisely developed. In upland areas, there is the simple and proper method of denial of a sewage disposal permit in any case where the water table or soil conditions are so poor that safe sewage disposal cannot be assured, as required by Article 11 of the State Sanitary Code adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

A treatment plant and outfall south of Head of Westport could service much of the north of Westport by gravity collection without resorting to expensive uphill force mains or lift stations; however the ensuing problems associated with such a discharge render this option unfeasible. The same location could service an area of Dartmouth. Sewage cannot reasonably be drained into Fall River for any type of regional system. A capital expenditure for sewage treatment in the next six years is most unlikely. Designation of a site for a treatment plant is unwise, because the optimum location, given Westport's topography, cannot be forecast a generation or more in advance.

It would seem to be impractical and foolhardy to think that the Town could come up with the resources to construct a treatment plant that would inevitably discharge into the river or the ocean, let alone construct the infrastructure to collect and pump the wastewater. To accommodate future growth and development the Town may become more dependent on alternative technologies, shared systems, and, possibly, regionalization with surrounding communities. Even for individual homeowners, sometimes the best solution to their septic disposal problems, both economically and environmentally, is to coordinate with their neighbors and build a shared system. Presently, a "decentralized" or distributed infrastructure for wastewater management is technologically available and economically achievable at a lesser cost than conventional sewer. Simple modifications can be made to existing systems to supply the needs of several residences. These systems are typically known as cluster systems and can work well in rural areas where trouble spots are spread over large areas within a town. These systems allow for centralized maintenance with a shared cost spread over several residences. They allow for the best siting of a disposal system.

Maintenance and construction of these systems requires a comprehensive management program to be established and funded. These management "agencies" can be private, governmental, or a collaborative depending on the needs and desires of the community. An overall community needs evaluation and selection of any management entity, if needed, should be carefully considered to take maximum advantage of available resources, including expertise, grant funding, and other public and private funds. Most importantly, public education and participation in decision making is vital to establishing an effective wastewater management plan. The public has a vested interest in the choices available. Future economic development and expansion of the tax base will be dependent on the ability to provide an economically and environmentally viable method of treatment and disposal. The complexity of the issue will require the education of citizens, some of whom are using individual septic systems for their first time; real estate professionals who have a vested interest in being able to sell properties, especially in the highly desirable but sensitive waterfront areas; perspective business operators; and government leaders who are charged with the enforcement of local by-laws and regulations. All this will come at an increased cost, but will pay dividends to future generations.

For the next generation at least, Westport should attempt to guide development in such a way that public sewage disposal is unnecessary. In the near future, when small "package" plants to service localized areas may become less costly and more maintenance-free than today, Westport may be able to economically service any concentrated areas where problems have developed. On-site disposal methods may be far better by then.

Although the technology of sewage disposal changes quite slowly, future changes are sufficiently probable that to guide development today in anticipation of a possible future centralized public system is neither advisable nor reasonably accomplished.

Both alternative technologies with enhanced treatment, and “cluster” systems, which provide affordable and attractive options to conventional systems, are now being used, although infrequently. A model cluster system was installed at Cadman’s Neck, but required neighborhood cooperation and overcoming procedural red tape before final approval.

If Westport were to develop a municipal sewer system, connection to Fall River is the only viable option. Federal and state laws prohibit or restrict the discharge of sewer effluent into the ocean or into any of the rivers or streams in Town, most of which are classified as “anti-degradation.” Since the Fall River sewage treatment plant has been designed with capacity to accept projected flow from Westport, federal or state funding would not be likely for any other proposed alternative. If sewers are developed in Westport, the priority areas should be along South Watuppa Pond (for protection of this potential reservoir) and the Route 6 – Gifford Road area (over the best aquifer). These areas also have higher incidences of septic system failures. In areas without town sewers, the Town should pursue a policy of low-density development and inspection and maintenance of existing systems.

7.3.3 Stormwater and Drainage

Before discussing the relationship of drainage problems to other elements in the Master Plan, it is important to clarify the area of local public responsibility for drainage provisions.

1. Where watercourses intersect roads, there is a clear public obligation to insure provision of adequate bridges, culverts, and other drainage facilities to allow for the free flow of water. Provision may be through expenditure of public funds or through subdivision control.
2. Where periodic damage is done to presently developed private property by flooding which can be prevented through reasonable expenditures, and where multiple ownerships prevent private solution of the flooding problem, it may well be in the best interests of the community to invest public funds for flood prevention in order to protect health and welfare, and also to bring the secondary benefit of increased valuations in the areas affected.
3. Expenditures of public funds for open land reclamation may or may not be justifiable, depending upon circumstances. Such expenditures, if made at all in a “land-rich” community such as Westport, are only reasonable in those cases where the return to the town in taxes on resultant development will balance public costs.
4. Massachusetts law makes it clear that localities may accept the responsibility of keeping development out of the flood, as well as the traditional job of keeping the flood out of developments. This can be accomplished through a variety of legal means. The major issue is the whether the Town is willing to commit to doing so.
5. Streams and wetlands in a natural condition are an irreplaceable asset; many feel that there is a public responsibility for this generation to preserve them for the use and enjoyment of future generations. This concept is generally unquestioned, but the actual expenditure of public funds to accomplish it is frequently opposed.

7.4 Implementation/Action Plan

7.4.1. General

1. Create a Westport Water and Sewerage Commission to initiate enactment of a Betterment Act, to acquire necessary land for drainage, sewerage, or well head protection, to purchase land for future water supply wells, and to work with regional and sub-regional organizations in planning for water and sewerage districts.

7.4.2. Water

1. Develop a municipal water system to serve those areas of northern Westport that are presently experiencing problems with the contamination of private wells.
2. Consider enlarging the Aquifer Protection District to include the entire Town or, if too restrictive, the areas around secondary drinking water supplies, *i.e.* South Watuppa Pond, Devol Pond, and Sawdy Pond. Because Westport's groundwater supply and access to surface water is limited, it is important to protect known existing supplies and sources.

7.4.3. Sewerage

1. In view of the low likelihood that a public sewer system will ever be built, we urge the Board of Health, the Planning Board, and the Selectmen to strictly enforce the health regulations governing disposal works. In the past, permits have been granted for construction on sites where the water table is so high that sewage disposal problems are inevitable. Permitting such development does not serve the public interest.
2. The Board of Health should institute a program of septic system inspection and maintenance, and well testing to identify problem areas, to be funded in the form of a betterment fee, or permit fees.
3. Delineate and create a sewer service area. This may be combined with the water service area, operate under the same guidelines and cover the same area. Expansion of the sewer system beyond the boundaries of this area would be strictly regulated. The cost of the system would be borne primarily by service area residents through assessments and user fees.
4. The sewage collection system for northern Westport will probably need to tie into the Fall River Sewage Treatment Plant. Most streams in Westport have been given an anti-degradation classification, which places a severe restriction on effluent discharge. The Fall River Sewage Treatment Plan was also designed to accept effluent from Westport and the collection system is located so that an interconnection with Westport is possible.
5. An inspection and maintenance program with varying degrees of municipal involvement is the best alternative for addressing the sewage disposal needs of the remainder of Westport. Under the most basic approach, the Town could inspect systems and issue an order for the owner to take remedial action (pumping the septic tank, enlarging the leaching field, etc.). A more complicated approach would have the Town inspect systems and take responsibility for making any needed repairs. Any costs would be billed to the owner, possible at the same time as tax bills are issued.

7.4.4. Stormwater and Drainage

1. Continue the present program of road drainage improvements, with a definite sum allocated for this purpose for each year in the six-year Capital Improvement Program, but with no specific six-year schedule of projects. Urge Mass. Highway to considerably enlarge the culverts under Route 6 for Bread and Cheese Brook in order to correct the flood conditions in that area.
2. *Conduct an engineering study of means to improve drainage in the Bread and Cheese basin. This study can be financed through either a local appropriation or through an interest-free loan from the federal Community Facilities Administration, under Section 702 of the federal Housing Act of 1954. The federal government under the Accelerated Public Works Program might*

conceivably reimburse in part the construction of any improvements. Other grant monies and programs should be investigated

3. The Town should not attempt to provide flood control for presently vacant land. Require **any** new development on vacant land to provide adequate provisions for handling drainage. The Town should develop any new engineering standards and regulatory tools needed to enforce this provision.

4. The Board of Health should carry out their legal responsibility in preventing development in unsuitable areas; the community should consider adoption of additional controls over development in flood-prone areas.

5. Stream improvements should be coordinated with the Conservation Commission.

6. Adopt additional building regulations and zoning by-laws for the flood prone areas

These might be in the form of special building code provisions applicable to flood zones only. Special hurricane codes have been adopted by Narragansett and Warwick, Rhode Island, and include such provisions as specification of the lowest permissible floor elevations, and foundation construction methods to be employed.

Lastly, these lands may be publicly acquired. Either the Commonwealth or the Conservation Commission could acquire the lands in most danger, which often are lands of great conservation value. The earlier listed control methods might be thought of as only interim measures until public acquisition can be made.

NOTES

1. For the complete Action Plan for Natural Resources, please refer to Chapter 12, Action Plan, Section 12.5 Natural Resources.

2. During the public meeting held in February 2003, a resident expressed concerns about denser development increasing stormwater runoff to streams and causing off-site intermittent streams to become perennial, thus imposing additional regulatory limits on abutting properties. This resident was also concerned about whether the quantity of water available in the aquifer is sufficient to sustain new development and existing residents' wells. Questions were asked about how a proposed Water and Sewer Commission would be empowered, via state or local authority, and what its duties would be. Concerns were expressed about how clean the effluent from new alternative technologies is and about septic system maintenance, and protecting existing private wells as new development occurs.

3. For additional information not available when this plan was written, please see the Water Assets Study conducted by EOEA, scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2004.

CHAPTER 8
*Traffic and
Circulation*

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

8 Traffic and Circulation

8.1 Goals and Objectives

The goals of the circulation element of this Master Plan are to :

- Study the adequacy of the existing roadway/circulation network of Westport's roadways
- Recommend the future framework for a Town-wide circulation system that forms a structure for the land use plan and which is functional, economical and pleasant to use for daily living. The system must meet requirements of the Town public safety officials and also integrate the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and other users, including commuters and recreational users.

The objectives of this circulation element which are to meet this goal include the following:

- Develop a classification system for all roads in Town;
- Prepare an inventory of Town roads to identify traffic usage, road conditions and deficiencies;
- Identify the Town's preferences regarding future roadway construction, subdivision roads, and dead-end streets;
- Identify areas of the Town circulation network that need improvements;
- Recommend by-laws and regulations regarding future road development;
- Identify potential locations of sidewalks;
- Identify potential recreational path networks both within Town and connecting to other towns; and
- Evaluate the need for public transportation.

8.2 Introduction

8.2.1. Existing Conditions

Automobile

The network of roadways within Westport provides a system for circulation of people, goods and services among existing land uses, and provides access to sites of future development. SRPEDD reports¹⁷ that there are 154.27 miles of roadways within Town. This road network is comprised of 98.77 miles classified as Local Roads, 36.54 miles of Collectors, 15.3 miles of Arterials, and 3.66 miles of Interstate. Because of the expense and impacts associated with construction of new roadways within the network, it is generally assumed that future land development in Town will utilize the existing roadway network, with the exception of relatively short access roadways for residential or industrial purposes, serving a limited use.

Because roadways are used by everyone, everyday, the road network of a Town is an important infrastructure element. Town roadways provide both access within Town and access to roads leading out of Town. Westport's roadway network is "anchored" by State Route 88, which acts as a north/south spine to provide direct access between local roads throughout town, and Route 6 and Interstate Route 195 near the north end of town. As such, most commuter traffic (and seasonal out-of-town beach traffic) utilizes Route 88, for trips out of town, instead of local north/south roadways. Route 6, Route 177 and Old County Road provide access to neighboring towns to the east and west.

¹⁷ SRPEDD Region Natural Hazard Disaster Mitigation Plan, April 2004.

Westport is conveniently located for commuters working in Fall River (eight miles north of Westport); New Bedford (eight miles east), Taunton (15 miles north), and Providence, (26 miles northwest). An increasing number of residents also commute to Boston (54 miles north). Westport is served by I-195, which passes through the northern end of Town and connects Westport with Fall River, New Bedford and Providence and also Route 24, which provides highway access to Taunton and Boston. State Routes 88 and 177 and 6, also serve Westport.

Access within Town needs to address convenience, as well as recognizing the unique nature of Westport. The “Westport quality of Life” is a significant issue with Town residents, and the Town roadway network needs to address this issue. Town residents value the “rural and historic” nature of the town, and as such, embrace roads which have rural characteristics, such as curves and stone walls. Also, because many of the Town roads (other than subdivisions) were originally laid out around private lots/farms, they often do not provide a “most direct” route between areas. Additionally, the East Branch and West Branch of the Westport River create obstacles for roadway layout, in that bridges are required. This causes inconvenience for users; however, most Westport residents are willing to tolerate some inconvenience in order to protect the rural nature of the Town.

Previous masterplans for Westport have focussed on maximizing efficiency of access within Town, including identification of possible new roadway routes, which would “connect” areas that are currently not directly accessible. These proposals are discussed in more detail in Section 8.3. However, in general, it is recognized that construction of any new roadways of significant length would require significant funding, as well as landtaking, and, as such, Town priorities at this time do not include addressing new road construction purely for in-Town accessibility.

When new roadways are proposed, another consideration is the impact on nearby Town residents. In the past, plans recommended roadway connections between subdivisions; however, Westport residents have repeatedly indicated their disapproval of such proposals. Typical Westport subdivision roads, which usually include cul-de-sacs and meandering low-speed roadways, are valued for “family quality of life”, and connections of new roadways into existing subdivisions are perceived by many to decrease the quality of life by creating more traffic and safety concerns. Recommendations concerning new roadways are included in Section 8.7.

Identification of deficiencies in the existing roadway network, including hazardous intersections/ and/or roadways, and roadways requiring upgrading, will provide the Town with a checklist for road improvement projects. Also, identification of particular road improvements that will be required in conjunction with future land use will help provide the framework for future Town growth.

Rail Service

Commuter rail to Boston is accessible from stations at Lakeville and Attleboro. The extension of commuter rail to New Bedford and Fall River within the next ten years will place additional pressure on local roads. Passenger service via Amtrak is available from Providence to Boston and New York.

Bus Service

Westport is a member of the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), which provides fixed-route service between Fall River, Westport, Dartmouth and New Bedford.

SRTA and the Council on Aging also provide transit services for the elderly and disabled.

Air Service

New Bedford Regional Airport is a Primary Commercial Service (PR) facility. Its services include general aviation, air cargo, scheduled passenger flights and military aviation. It has 2 asphalt runways 4,998 and 5,000 feet long, 6 hangars, an FAA contracted control tower, and Instrument Landing System. Approximately 100 aircraft are based there [Data from SRPEDD, see footnote 1].

Bicycle, Pedestrian, Equestrian

Westport has no public bicycle, hiking, or bridle trails. Sidewalks exist in limited areas of Town, such as the Central Village and Head of Westport, but are not connected into a meaningful network.

8.3 Past Master Plans

The first Master Plan was prepared in 1964, and another in 1972, which was then amended in 1983. Over the years, there have been some significant changes to the Town's roadway system, and the benefits to the Town have been overwhelming.

At the time of preparation of the 1964 Master Plan, Route 6 was a heavily traveled and high accident roadway, because it was "the major artery between Fall River and New Bedford, as well as for Cape Cod traffic". Route 195 was under construction, and the 1964 Master Plan anticipated that the new Interstate would improve conditions on Route 6 by reducing the traffic volume.

The 1964 Master Plan also noted that Route 88 had just been constructed and the Town was looking forward to the fact that beach traffic and commuter traffic would have a direct route through Town, instead of using local roads. However, because ramps to Route 177 from Route 88 were not originally constructed, nor was a signal installed at Briggs Road, the Master Plan recommended these improvements. As we know, these improvements were made and Route 88 has served as a major "backbone" of the Town, by keeping the majority of commuter traffic and seasonal beach traffic off local roadways, such as Main Road, Gifford Road, Drift Road, and Horseneck Road. Route 88 has provided Westport with the unique luxury of being able to preserve long stretches of rural stonewalls that border many local, relatively narrow roadways, because these roads are used primarily by local traffic.

The roadway recommendations from past Master Plans, which primarily addressed improvements for access, are listed below:

A new by-pass roadway constructed from the intersection of Hebrides Road and Main Road to connect to Adamsville Road, to provide a direct access for commuter traffic from Adamsville;

A new roadway connecting Roberts St. to Narrow Ave. and Sodom Road, to provide access around Devol Pond; and

A new on-ramp to Route 195 west from Sanford Road.

As discussed previously, the Town priorities for construction of new roads to improve convenience of access, at this point in time, are not high. Therefore, in order to ensure that the recommendations included in this Master Plan are relevant (and viable), proposals for the new roads discussed in past

master plans are not included herein. In particular, adding a new on-ramp to Route 195 west from Sanford Road is not recommended.

Other recommendations included in past master plans addressed bridge crossings for access over the east Branch of the Westport River:

Maintain Hix Bridge or investigate a new bridge from Charlotte White Road to Pine Hill Road; and

Improvements to East Beach Road to alleviate problems with washouts during storm events, or a new bridge from John Reed Road to Horseneck Road;

Section 8.7 includes discussion and recommendations regarding recommendations included in past Master Plans.

8.4 Inventory of Existing Roads

By making an inventory of the existing roads in the Westport roadway network, a “report card” can be generated which tabulates traffic usage, roadway conditions, and deficiencies. The report card can then be used to identify priorities for road improvements and revisions, to coincide with the Town’s vision for the future.

Seventeen (17) roads in Westport have been classified by the State; improvements to these roads are eligible for State/Federal Funding programs. (See Table 8-4 in Section 8.6 for Roadway Classifications.) These roads usually connect to other Towns (regional) or connect heavily travelled roadways within Town. State numbered roads, such as Route 6, Route 88 and Route 177 have the highest traffic volumes, and therefore usually have the highest accident rate.

The regional planning agency which addresses studies of Westport's state roads is the “Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District” (SRPEDD), which compiles traffic volume and accident data for the state roads. SRPEDD also collects traffic data on local roads if the data is available from specific traffic studies. The traffic volumes (counts) identify the most heavily travelled roads in Town, allowing governmental agencies to then determine if a road’s physical characteristics are adequate for the traffic use. Accident data for roads and intersections may justify conducting engineering studies and implementing design improvements for hazardous locations.

8.4.1 Traffic Volumes

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 8-1 SRPEDD ADT Volumes, below). 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 2.4 %, which corresponded to growth between 1990 and 2000. This factor was used to estimate year 2002 traffic for the roads, and the following are the estimated traffic volumes for the year 2002. (No traffic data available: East Beach Rd., River Rd., Cross Rd., Tickle Rd., Old Bedford Rd., Horseneck Rd.).

Table 8-1. SRPEDD ADT Volumes (Vehicles per Day)

Road	2002 (VPD)
Interstate I-95	59,200
Rte. 6	10,600
Rte. 88	10,000

Am. Legion Hwy (Rte 77)	7000
Sanford Rd.	6750
Old County Rd.	5500
Adamsville Rd.	4850
Main Rd.	4000
Hix Bridge Rd.	3550
Briggs Rd.	3350
Reed Rd.	2400
Charlotte White Rd.	2350
Blossom Rd.	1900
Old Pine Hill Rd.	700

8.4.2 Accident History

8.4.2.1 Roadway Accidents

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

Table 8-2. SRPEDD: Westport 1996-1998 Accident Summary

Location	1996	1997	1998	3-Year Total
Route 6	55	89	85	229
Route 177	30	35	41	106
Route 88	21	28	45	94
Main Rd.	29	37	24	90
Sanford Rd.	17	15	23	55
Old County Rd.	19	9	9	37
Sodom Rd.	11	12	13	36
Pine Hill Rd.	15	6	9	30
Old Bedford Rd.	3	11	16	30
Gifford Rd.	13	12	5	30

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. Review and compilations of the individual accident data reports (at the Police Dept.) would enable pinpointing specific problem areas, if so desired, and could be tracked via GIS mapping.

As discussed, state roads tend to have the highest accident rates, primarily due to their high traffic volumes. As seen in Table 8-2, Route 6 has the highest accident rate for Westport. In addition to the high traffic volume on the roadway, the number of driveways and intersecting side streets contribute to conflicts related to turning vehicles, which also tends to increase accidents. The physical make-up of Route 6, (a divided highway with a median strip), is considered one of the safer roadway designs. This is because the median restricts turning to “right turn only” for cars entering Rte. 6 from most driveways and side streets, thereby eliminating the problems of turning left across traffic. One condition on Route 6, however, which

may contribute to accidents are at the “median cuts” which are used for U-turns. Because there are not “left turn lanes” for vehicles waiting to turn left, vehicles tend to slow down, then stack in the left through-lane of Rte 6, which creates the potential for rear-end accidents. Section 8.7 contains suggested roadway improvements to decrease accidents.

8.4.2.2. Intersection Accidents

The following SRPEDD Intersection Accident Data also covers the years 1996 – 1998. 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.)

Table 8-3. SRPEDD: Westport 1996-1998 Intersection Accident Summary

Location	1996		1997		1998		3 Year Total
	P	I	P	I	P	I	
Route 6/ Sanford Rd.	11	6	8	5	9	8	47
Route 88/ Briggs Rd.	5	2	3	3	3	1	17
Route 88/ Old County Rd.	4	1	2	0	4	2	13
Route 88/ Route 6	2	2	3	1	3	1	12
Route 88/ Hixbridge Rd.	2	0	4	0	4	1	11

The intersection with the highest accident rate in Westport is the intersection of Route 6 and Sanford Road, with 47 accidents in 3 years. This intersection also ranked 4th highest within the 100 “Most Dangerous” intersections in the total southeastern Massachusetts region (which includes the cities of Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton, as well as numerous towns). The highly dangerous ranking of this intersection regionally indicates significant safety concerns, which should be addressed by an improvements project. Currently, there are no separate left-turn lanes at the intersection, and the signal timing does not include separate left turn green phases. Recommended actions for improvements at the intersection are included in Section 8.7. The Town is currently working with Mass. Highway on plans for this intersection.

Four intersections that had the next highest accident rates in Westport were all signalized intersections of Route 88 with intersecting streets; however, the number of accidents (11 to 17 in the three-year period) was significantly fewer than at the Route 6/Sanford Rd. intersection. At signalized intersections, most accidents are associated with turning vehicle conflicts. Because much of the Route 88 traffic is associated with intersecting roads, the number of turning vehicles at the intersections is quite high, as reflected by the accident rates at these locations. Another condition at the Route 88 intersections that may contribute to accidents is the current pavement striping on Route 88 at the intersections, which allows two lanes for through traffic on the intersection approach. This creates confusion because the extra lane drops immediately beyond the intersection, creating an unsafe condition because the two through-moving vehicles must merge into a single lane. This condition is especially dangerous during the summer season when beach commuter traffic is using this highway, since it encourages speeding and risky maneuvers. Recommended study topics for improvements at the Route 88 intersections are included in Section 8.7.

8.4.3. Identification of Roads and Intersections of Concern

8.4.3.1. Survey of Local Officials, Police Dept., Highway Department

In addition to SRPEDD accident data, Westport Town officials, who are intimately familiar with the Town's roads, were interviewed to solicit additional information on roadways and intersections safety problems. All officials recognized that the Route 6/Sanford Road intersection is probably the most dangerous in Town. Fire officials noted that the traffic light at Briggs Road and Route 88 has an emergency pre-emption system that stops traffic when the emergency vehicles need to go through the intersection. This is beneficial in that the intersection signal stops all traffic except the emergency vehicles, thereby increasing safety. The fire officials also noted that if the Central Village Fire Station were located on Hix Bridge Road, it would be desirable for a pre-emption system to be installed at the Route 88/Hix Bridge Rd. intersection also. Additionally, fire officials noted that fire trucks (and other large vehicles) have significant problems turning left onto Adamsville Road from Main Road. Therefore, if the new Fire Station were located south of Adamsville Road (such as on Hix Bridge Road) improvements to the intersection would be needed to accommodate left-turning fire trucks.

8.4.3.2. General Observations of Road/Intersection Deficiencies

Finally, general observations made by residents and traffic design professionals were gathered to identify other areas with potential safety concerns and/or which needed other improvements.

The following road issues were noted as needing additional study:

- Main Road/Adamsville Road Intersection – The existing islands cause confusion at the intersection. Also, the turning angle created by the island for vehicles turning left onto Adamsville Road is too sharp, and large vehicles have difficulty making the turn. The islands also cause safety concerns for vehicles turning left onto Main Road, because the trees on the island obstruct the line of sight.
- Main Road – Extending from Village Commons Plaza to Town Hall – Numerous driveways cause confusion/conflicts for turning movements.
- Route 6 – at some median openings, U-turning vehicles stack in the left through-lane, which creates a safety potential for rear end collisions.
- Route 6 / Route 177 intersection (at Dartmouth Town Line) – Route 6 westbound traffic turning left toward Route 177 stacks in left through lane, increasing the potential for rear-end accidents.
- Route 88 intersections with: Briggs Road, Old County Road, Charlotte White Road, Hix Bridge Road and Drift Road – Double through-lanes on Route 88 are striped at the intersection, then merge into a single lane after the intersection. This increases safety concerns relative to merging and “passing on the right”.

- East Beach Road – During major storm (hurricane) events, the roadway is overtopped by the ocean, particularly at the narrowest section of the causeway (the “Let”). The flooding destroys the roadway pavement, which requires significant repairs after such storm events. Additionally, local environmental and fishing groups have noted that it may be beneficial to “open the Let” to allow the free flow of water between the ocean and the East Branch of the Westport River, which may increase flushing and improve the water quality of the river.
- Rte. 177 intersection with Sodom Road - Left-turning movements of westbound traffic and line of sight problems.

Recommendations for addressing these concerns are included in Section 8.7.

8.4.3.3. Road Conditions

In general, the physical conditions of the roads in Town are adequate for their use. The roads with the highest traffic volumes – Route 6, and Route 88 are generally in good condition. Route 88 was recently improved by the State and it is in very good condition. Route 6 is considered fair to good, with no glaring deficiencies, although the pavement is cracked at some locations and the median and intersection curbing is in need of improvements. The other state-classified roads in Town are also in generally good to fair condition, as are the majority of the local roads.

The State is currently performing construction improvements to the two major bridges in Town – the Route 88/Fontaine Bridge and Hix Bridge. The bridge improvements are anticipated to improve the structural elements of the bridges, and new pavement, curbing and sidewalks will also be provided.

The only road in Westport that experiences significant deterioration is East Beach Road. During major storm events, the road is often over-topped by the ocean and the pavement structure is destroyed. Repeated repairs to the roadway have been made after storm events; however, since the road geometrics have not been improved, it is anticipated that the road will continue to be destroyed at uncertain intervals, coinciding with severe storms. Recommendations addressing improvements to East Beach Road are included in Section 8.7.

The Town Highway Surveyor prioritizes improvements to roadways in Town, utilizing the Highway budget and State Chapter 90 funds; this system appears to be generally functional for keeping the roadways in adequate condition. Improvements to State roadways are prioritized by the Town and the State, and sometimes require involvement of State representatives to bring the need for particular road projects to the attention of State government. In addition, Westport may need to be competitive in meeting the "smart growth" policies of the Commonwealth Capital program to be competitive in receiving state funding.

8.5. Non-Motorized Travel Issues

Demands for the following improvements were revealed during the initial and on-going public meeting during the Master Planning process – opportunities for non-motorized travel and recreation – including pedestrians, bicyclists, and rollerbladers.

8.5.1. Sidewalks

Sidewalks provide a safe area for walkers – both for recreational/exercise and people walking to a destination, such as school or shopping. A well-constructed sidewalk enables seniors who might have difficulty navigating uneven surfaces to walk for exercise and errands, and increases the independence of those who can no longer drive.

Sidewalks also contribute to a “village-type” character, may promote slower vehicle speeds, and reduce traffic when people walk between destinations instead of driving.

Currently, there are few sidewalks in Westport, with the majority being located within the Westport Point village area, in the Head of Westport area, and along Old County Road between the Middle School and the Head of Westport. Typically, when people walk in Westport, they must use the roadway shoulder or the adjacent unpaved areas. It is recognized that the majority of local roads have “tight” right of way widths, often bordered by stonewalls, within which both the roadway and utility poles must be located. Since the road pavement is generally centered in the right of way, there is often not adequate clearance to provide sidewalks beside existing roads.

Some of the “state” or wider local roads, however, do have clearance for sidewalks and the Town should consider the addition of sidewalks at some locations, based on current and future pedestrian traffic.

Some general observations regarding potential sidewalk locations are:

Old County Road - Between Route 88 and the Middle/Elementary School. Currently, there is a sidewalk that extends approximately 200 feet east of Route 88, and then abruptly ends. Children often walk along this road between the High School and the Middle School, Town Library, and the Head of Westport village. They are forced to use the unpaved grass areas next to the road, which have uneven surfaces and are not maintained. A sidewalk on one side of Old County Road, extending from the end of the sidewalk near Route 88 to the Middle School would provide a safe way for all pedestrians using this section of roadway. Also, because a sidewalk currently exists between the Middle School and the Head of Westport, a sidewalk would provide a continuous pedestrian route between the Head of Westport and the High School. Because children are the majority of pedestrians on the road, for their safety and welfare, construction of this sidewalk should be considered a priority.

Main Road - Within the Central Village “business” district between Kirby Lane and Hix Bridge Road. Currently, given the layout of existing commercial establishments and inconvenience of pedestrian accessibility, there is not much pedestrian activity in the Central Village area. Pedestrians must utilize the side of the road, which presents safety concerns. Construction of sidewalks within Central Village should be considered to promote a “village-type” character and to allow and encourage safe pedestrian travel between the commercial uses, the community/civic centers (Town Hall, and recreation opportunities at Town Hall Annex) and senior housing on Main Road. Sidewalks would also help define future “pedestrian-friendly” business opportunities and village development along Main Road, within the business- zoned district.

8.5.2. Bicycle Paths / Multi-use Trails

Bicycling is another important means of non-motorized travel and, due to their wide use along Town roads, improved accommodations for bicyclists should be considered. “Sharing the road”

is the primary condition of bicycle travel in Westport, and this requires adequate pavement width, in addition to mutual respect between bicyclists and motorized vehicle operators. Westport's local roadways are generally wide enough to allow two vehicles and "single file" bicyclists. Granted, a wider roadway is desirable for bicycles, but many roads in Town have narrow right-of-ways, which restrict widening unless stonewalls and poles are moved or removed. The two modes of travel can coexist, if bicycles stay in single file and if drivers slow down to safely pass them. There are, however, safety concerns for bicyclists (and walkers) who use roadways, because of visibility problems and motor vehicle speeds, which are difficult to enforce.

Proposals for off-road (or parallel-to-road) multi-use trails/bikepaths, for non-motorized travel have been the subject of various studies within Town. Town residents have indicated in surveys that they are in favor of investigation of increased "off-road" opportunities for bicycles and other non-motorized modes of travel. Such types of trails would offer bicyclists, rollerbladers and walkers a facility separate from the road, and safe from motor vehicle conflicts.

The State supports trails that offer travel within municipalities and are also part of a regional network linking communities and major destination points. Other towns have made use of abandoned railroad rights-of-way for trails -- Fall River is currently constructing a trail along the abandoned railroad that will terminate at the Westport Town line near Route 6. Ideally, a Westport trail would connect to the Fall River trail; however, the rail line in Westport is still used. Also, because of its east/west orientation along only the northern part of Town, it does not provide access to the central portion of Town or the Beach area, where typically bicyclists would desire to travel. One possible opportunity for an "off-road trail" addresses use of the Route 88 public "corridor" (right-of-way) to generally parallel the roadway, off road, through the undeveloped/ unused portion of the right-of way. Given the layout of the Route 88 corridor, the opportunity exists for the trail to extend from Route 6 to Horseneck Beach. The possibility of connecting to the Fall River trail also exists, if a trail could be incorporated into roadway improvements that the State performs to Route 6, or if utility easements could be used in conjunction with roads. Trails that are within a State right-of-way would require close coordination with the State during planning and design, as they would be subject to State and environmental regulations. Other possible routes for trails, which could be investigated are along old rights of way (ancient ways) or on private land via easements.

Typically, the studies of trail opportunities take place at a local level. In years past, a Town-appointed "Bikepath Committee" performed a study and prepared a proposal for a trail along Old County Road. Many residents, however, did not support the proposal, because of concerns with safety and vehicle conflicts. It was generally observed that the Old County Road right-of-way would not provide an adequate offset between the roadway and the trail, and it was felt that because of their close proximity, conflicts between road and trail users would create safety concerns. There is continued interest in the study of multi-use trails in Town, and local efforts are currently taking place for preparation of a study.

8.6. Classification of Roadways

Seventeen roads in Westport have been classified by the State and are thus eligible for State/Federal programs which provide funding for construction of improvements. The roads classified by the State and their classifications are given below:

Table 8-4. State Classification of Westport Roads

State Classification

Road	Interstate	Rural Major Collector	Rural Minor Collector
Route I-195	X		
Route 6		X	
Route 177 (Am. Legion Hwy.)		X	
Route 88		X	
Adamsville Road		X	
East Beach Road		X	
Hix Bridge Road		X	
Horseneck Road		X	
John Reed Road		X	
Old County Road		X	
Pine Hill Road		X	
Blossom Road			X
Briggs Road			X
Old Bedford Road			X
Reed Road			X
Sanford Road			X
Tickle Road			X

The remaining roads in Town are classified as “Local roads”. Local Roads can be further classified into categories such as : “Local Roads of Regional Significance”, “Local Roads of Scenic or Historic Value”, “Subdivision Roads”, and “Unpaved Roads”. The local (and some state classified) roads that are considered “Scenic” are listed below and discussed in the Chapter entitled "Land Use".

Table 8-5. Scenic Roads

- Adamsville Road, from Main Rd. to RI line (agricultural)
- Drift Rd. from Head of Westport to Route 88 (agricultural)
- Gifford Rd. from Rte 6 to Old County Rd. (Residential)
- Hix Bridge Road, Main Road to Dartmouth (agricultural)
- Horseneck Rd. from Hix Bridge to East Beach (agricultural)
- Main Road from Central Village to Westport Point (residential)
- Pine Hill Rd-Sissons Corner to Hix Bridge (transportation)
- Sodom Road from Charlotte White Rd. to Adamsville Rd. (transportation)

Classifications of local roads can also be used to develop design and construction requirements according to traffic volume, speed, and other criteria. These requirements may be used to update standards for road construction in new subdivisions, as well as for upgrading existing Town roads to handle changes in the nature and volume of traffic as the Town grows. Road standards must be coordinated between the Westport Zoning Bylaws, General Bylaws, and Subdivision Control Regulations to improve consistency of the regulatory process and road design. Recommendations regarding the further classification of local roads and coordination with Town Bylaws and Regulations are included in Section 8. 7.

8.7. Implementation/Action Plan

8.7.1 Mitigation Measures Corresponding to Roads/Intersections of Concern

Route 6/ Sanford Road Intersection

The State Massachusetts Highway Department is currently performing a study for improvements at the intersection. The Town should request that the State prioritize the design and construction of the improvements.

Route 6 Corridor

The Town should request that the State perform a study of the Route 6 corridor before they design any improvements. In light of the safety concerns with the existing median layout, the Town should request that the State perform a safety analysis relative to the median openings. Such a study could support the need for left turn lanes or determine if additional openings are needed, which would reduce the number of vehicles turning at each opening. The State could also investigate other alternatives for the road to benefit the Town and reflect Westport's vision for the future of this roadway. The Town may request additional landscaping of the median or addition of street trees, and increased sidewalks. The study may also address the option of changing the 4-lane roadway to a 2-lane roadway with separate left turn stacking lanes at median openings, or shifting the roadway within the right of way. By narrowing the road, or shifting it off-center in the right of way, opportunities for inclusion of a "multi-use trail" for non-motorized modes of travel, including pedestrians, within the Route 6 corridor could also be investigated.

Main Road/Adamsville Road Intersection

Based on the volume of traffic utilizing Adamsville Road, and the safety concerns related to turning movements (particularly left turns onto Adamsville Road), and restricted sight lines for left turns onto Main Road, the Town should consider improving the intersection with new island geometry.

East Beach Road

Based on the continued problems with the road being destroyed during storm events, the Town should address permanent improvements to the road. The road is classified as a state road which is eligible for Federal and State funding. Because of the environmental impact of existing conditions and proposed solutions, additional grant funding may be available to address both maintenance and environmental issues. The Town should coordinate with the State to study options for alleviating the flooding, such as raising the roadway and providing equalization culverts to allow flow between the ocean and the River, or excavating the "Let" and constructing the roadway on a filled causeway with a bridge over the opening.

Route 88 intersections with Briggs Road, Old County road, Charlotte White Road, Hixbridge Road and Drift Road

Based on safety concerns at the intersections, the Town should request that the State revise the striping at the intersections, for the right lane to be a "right turn only" lane, thereby alleviating the "double through" lanes.

Route 6/Route 177 intersection

The Town should coordinate with Dartmouth regarding petitioning the State for a safety study of this intersection, and determine whether improvements are needed, such as a left turn stacking lane from Route 6 westbound onto Route 177.

Main Road

As previously discussed, the number of curb cuts on Main Road between Village Commons Plaza and Town Hall currently causes confusion and safety concerns for traffic on the roadway. Included in the Land Use section of this plan, are discussions of Village Zoning, which might include streetscape regulations, (see Section 8.7.4 below). However, due to the existing significance of Main Road to the Town, as the primary shopping and civic center of Westport, improvements to the streetscape of Main Road, with or without additional regulations, should be considered a priority. These improvements may include sidewalks, landscaping, such as street trees, and amenities, such as benches and pedestrian scale streetlights. Additionally, as discussed in Section 8.7.4 below, the Town should consider requiring “shared driveways” and/ or frontage roads along this section of Main Road. Incentives should be provided to existing businesses to encourage them to consolidate existing driveways, which would decrease the number of vehicles turning at multiple driveways. Additionally, it would be prudent for the Town to implement regulations concerning future development along Main Road, specifically regarding requirements of “shared driveways”, to help prevent exacerbation of the existing problems.

Rte 177 intersection with Sodom Road

Needs a further study of safety issues regarding sight lines, left turns, etc.

8.7.2 Proposed Recommendations for Sidewalk Improvements

For the safety and welfare of the pedestrians who use this road, primarily schoolchildren, the Town should prioritize installation of a sidewalk on one side of Old County Road, from Route 88 to the Middle School. A sidewalk on the north side would connect the Middle School and library to the existing sidewalk, which extends to the Head of Westport. A crosswalk across Old County Road will be required to connect to the existing sidewalk on the south side of Old County Road near Route 88, which then connects to the crosswalk across Route 88. Due to the conflict of vehicle turning movements at the intersection of Old County Road and Route 88, a “mid-block” crosswalk on Old County Road should be considered, located 200-300 feet east of the intersection. The exact location of the crosswalk should be based on adequate sight distance for vehicles and pedestrians to maximize safety.

8.7.3 Proposed Recommendations for Multi-Use Trails

Because Town residents have indicated their support of “multi-use trails”, Town officials should support study of trail opportunities within Town, whether by a Town-appointed committee or volunteer “grass-roots” groups. If any trail proposals are considered viable, the Town should conduct public awareness forums and obtain consensus at the town, regional, and State levels. Town support is critical in the funding process, which would usually require a combination of Federal, State and Town funds.

8.7.4 Proposed Town Regulations for Future Growth

Subdivision Connections. Based on the significant concern voiced by Town residents regarding connection of new roadways to existing subdivision roadways, it is recommended that the

Planning Board regulate the connection of any new roadway to an existing subdivision (residential) roadway.

Frontage Roads/Shared Access in Business Zones. Based on safety concerns related to numerous curb cuts for commercial uses along Town roadways, it is recommended that the Town promote the use of "frontage" roads and "shared access" for adjacent business-zoned uses along business-zoned roadways in Town. A bylaw and regulations should apply to new developments and also address incentives for retrofitting existing driveways of adjacent uses into shared accesses. The Planning Board would develop the by-law and regulations.

Village Streetscapes. Village Zoning recommendations (See Land Use section), address the planning for and regulation of new development in the villages and the identification of village boundaries. The Town should investigate funding sources for village streetscaping of existing public roads, addressing landscaping, textured crosswalks, sidewalks and amenities such as pedestrian-scale streetlights, benches, etc. and should sequentially implement the proposed streetscape provisions in the existing villages, including Central Village, Head of Westport, and Westport Point. The Planning Board should develop bylaws and regulations for new village development. Implementation of improvements to existing streets using State funding will require the Board of Selectmen to apply for funding and coordinated planning between that Board, the Highway Department and the Planning Board.

8.7.5 Recommendations for Public Transportation

Westport needs to coordinate public transportation with the location of higher-density housing, elderly housing and commercial development. If zoning is changed to accommodate higher density residential development in some areas, and if the commercial strip zones are re-configured to encourage commercial nodes, a more detailed public transportation plan may then be developed. The expected large increase in the elderly population will require more extensive van service for this segment of the population.

The coming of commuter rail to Fall River and New Bedford will require coordination at the regional level. Increased traffic on certain Westport roads generated by commuters to the rail stations will require study. Commuter parking lots may be needed. Commuter vans may alleviate some of the expected increase in traffic on local roads.

NOTES

- 1. For the complete action plan for Traffic and Circulation, please refer to Section 12.6 of Chapter 12.**
- 2. Map 8-1 illustrates Westport's circulation system as well as many of the existing problems and recommendations discussed in this chapter.**
- 3. At the public meeting held on February 26, 2003 the on-going problem of East Beach Road washing out was a concern of attendees. During discussion of the Circulation element by the Planning Board, then Chairman John Montano expressed concern with the safety of East Beach Road in the summer, when it is shared by motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. In a related comment from the public at the meeting of February 26, 2003, a desire was expressed for provisions to get to the beach by means other than driving.**
- 4. The inevitable increase in traffic in the Central Village was an issue raised at the public meeting of February 26, 2003 by a Central Village resident. This Master Plan suggests a detailed study be made of traffic and parking provisions in the villages, especially**

- Central Village. During the Planning Board discussion of this plan element, support was voiced for sidewalks in the Central Village.**
- 5. During the Planning Board discussion of this element, it was suggested that East Beach Road improvements might be handled as a hazard mitigation project under federal requirements for same, and that the project might be eligible for funding under a federal or state program.**

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CHAPTER 9
*Economic
Development*

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

9. Economic Development

9.1 Introduction

For years there has been an ongoing discussion among town residents about what, if any, economic development Westport should promote. We have attempted to discuss economic development within the context of the Master Plan, and to point out the opportunities and problems with various economic development strategies.

The most ambitious and detailed work on economic development in the recent past is the Strategic Economic Development Plan prepared by the Westport Local Partnership in 1996 (1996 Plan). This Plan was the result of much work by residents working with a planning consultant and reflects extensive citizen input. Parts of this chapter are edited versions of that document.

Since the 1996 Plan was prepared, changes have occurred in Westport and the surrounding Southeastern Massachusetts landscape. The economy has gone from stagnant to robust to mild recession and hopefully soon back to growing. Fall River and New Bedford have become more economically sound, and their economies continue to shift from garment and fabric dependence to service and light manufacturing/distribution. Their industrial parks have grown and prospered, and have one of the largest net growth areas for employment. The fishing industry is in weaker shape than the recent past, and prospects are not good for a rebound in the near future.

Westport has continued to grow in population and residential development. Housing construction is one of the biggest sources of employment, with most of it being in single-family housing. Multifamily housing has been promoted recently under the state's Chapter 40B affordable housing law. There have not been any new medium or large businesses established in Westport in several years. Map 9-1 Westport Businesses depicts the general distribution of existing businesses in Westport. This map does not purport to depict every business, but gives a general idea of the location of business activity in the Town.

In spite of the 1996 Plan, there has not been a look at economic development with respect to either the financial impact on the Town or maintaining the desirable attributes of the community.

At the time of the 1996 Plan several assumptions drove many of the proposals. The key ones were: a casino in New Bedford, a Coastal Zone Research Laboratory in New Bedford, the Port of New Bedford would receive funding for improvements, the New Bedford Airport would be significantly expanded, the MBTA rail line would be extended to Fall River and New Bedford, and water and sewer service from Fall River could be secured in the near future. The emphasis was on developing the Route 6 corridor, and to a lesser extent, the Route 177 corridor for industrial and commercial, including an industrial site at the northwest corner of Route 6.

Changes in the landscape since 1996 that affect earlier assumptions and plans are that the casino, with its anticipated spin off, has not happened, water and sewer from Fall River is still a wish, with actual service years away, and that both Fall River and New Bedford have recently been very active and successful in attracting tenants to their industrial parks. These parks provide employment opportunities for the region, but have made industrial development in Westport less likely. Industrial development that does come to this region will probably locate in fully serviced industrial parks that offer many amenities and can provide favorable financing incentives through their industrial commissions, although certain large regional businesses, such as Quaker Fabrics, have typically expanded outside of industrial parks.

9.2 Goals and Objectives

The industries of farming and commercial fishing remain the keystone of Westport's economic vitality. Its exceptional coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean and Westport River attract visitors who patronize local businesses during their stay. Westport should build on what it has and promote tourism to attract more visitors.

Goal 1

Position Westport to effectively pursue and develop commerce that is harmonious with the Town's vision.

- Expand administrative capabilities to effectively support economic development.
- Review and update the 1996 Strategic Economic Development Plan.
- Seek federal and state grants for water and sewerage program on Route 6.
- Pursue the dredging of the Westport River to ensure the viability of fishing and other marine activities.
- Enhance and streamline the permit process.
- Address the visual environment for site design, landscaping, signage, lighting, and parking.
- Encourage the development of new industries using emerging environmental technologies.
- Discourage additional used car lots.

Goal 2

Initiate programs for balanced economic growth in Westport.

- Develop strategies for attracting tourists to visit and patronize local businesses.
- Develop strategies to control the types of commercial development.
- Support and interact with local business groups.

Goal 3

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

- Promote cottage industries and small family businesses such as professional offices, personal services, and bed and breakfasts.
- Preserve and encourage the economic viability of prime agricultural lands and agricultural based businesses.
- Preserve and encourage the economic viability of prime commercial fishing based businesses.
- Preserve and expand fish and shellfish ventures along the shoreline and encourage the expansion of those activities into new fields such as aquaculture.
- Cluster businesses to minimize strip development.

9.3 Assessment

9.3.1 Assets

Overall, Westport exhibits many positive assets that make it attractive for economic development.

Access

Westport is easily accessible from Interstate Highway 195. The New Bedford Municipal Airport is nearby, and access to Boston will be enhanced with the proposed extension of the commuter rail.

Available Labor Force

As of May 2001 the total labor force in Westport was 7,669. Of this number, 306 were unemployed, for an unemployment rate of 4%. Many residents commute to other communities for employment.

Training and Education

The University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Bristol County Community College, and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, offer extensive and unique educational resources. In addition to Westport High School, Diman Regional Vocational High School and the Bristol County Agriculture School in Dighton provide excellent courses for high school students. UMASS Dartmouth recently opened the Graduate School of Marine Sciences and Technology in New Bedford, and the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center in Fall River. Private schools in the area also offer specialized training and education.

9.3.2 Economic Target Area Designation

In March of 2003 Westport was accepted in the Fall River Economic Target Area. This designation allows Westport 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.”

In addition, 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.”

Westport is eligible for assistance from:

- *Southeastern Economic Development loan programs*
- *Small Business Development Center*
- *Massachusetts Office of Business Development*
- *Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District*

State and federal funding may be secured through leveraging private sector investment and job creation commitments. Farmers and businesses are able to apply for equipment and real estate loans through participating banks.

9.3.3 Route 6 Corridor

Land Use

The Route 6 corridor extends from the Fall River town line in northwest Westport to the Dartmouth town line where it intersects with Route 177. Route 6 also intersects with Route 88, which extends from Interstate 195 to the Horseneck Beach and East Beach areas.

Anchored by Whites Restaurant and the Hampton Inn on the western end, the Route 6 corridor contains a mix of commercial and residential uses with numerous houses converted to commercial uses. Route 6 contains 3 shopping plazas (Watuppa, Westport, and Pond View), two financial institutions (Bank of America, previously Fleet Bank) and the Westport Federal Credit Union), and the main Westport Post Office.

When first traveling the Route 6 corridor one gets the impression that there are areas of open land which might be developed. However, much of it is wetlands or saturated soils extending north and south. The largest area of wetlands is approximately one mile of Route 6 frontage centered near the interchange with Route 88. Another mile to the southeast is the crossing of Bread and Cheese Brook running in a north to south direction under Route 6. Approximately two-thirds of a mile southeast of Bread and Cheese Brook is another area of extensive wetlands extending southward, eventually forming a branch that joins Bread and Cheese Brook south of Route 177. A few small lots near the Route 88 interchange were previously filled in. They are shallow lots and wetland regulations prohibit additional filling. The only major business along this stretch of road is Mid City Steel, located just east of the Route 6 intersection with Davis Road. Mid City Steel is set back from Route 6 on a previously filled area completely surrounded by wetland with the exception of an entry road to the south and the Old Colony Railroad, Watuppa Branch right-of-way, on its northern boundary.

Infrastructure

Water and sewer has been extended from Fall River into Westport only to the point of the Hampton Inn area. Water extends to Greenwood Terrace, and north on Davis Road. Without adequate water and sewerage it does not appear feasible to develop large retail/commercial projects in the Route 6 corridor. However, some land currently occupied by used car lots and residences, and other low-intensity uses could be converted to other more intensive commercial uses.

9.3.4 Route 177 Corridor

Land Use

The land use pattern along the Route 177 corridor is a mixture of residential and open space lightly interspersed with commercial facilities. There are a number of residences that have offices or businesses on the residential property. Most of these businesses, whether in the home or separate commercial enterprises, cater to local clientele.

There are numerous wetlands and saturated soils along Route 177. Tributaries to the east branch of the Westport River include a branch known as the Noquochoke River near the Dartmouth town line, and the Bread and Cheese Brook with another secondary tributary occurring between Forge Road and Gifford Road. Wetland areas exist just west of Gifford Road, and on either side of Route 88, along with a very large wetland just east of Sanford Road.

9.3.5 Business Zoning

All business uses are permitted in the business zone with the exception of tire storage yards, which are permitted in the unrestricted zone by special permit of the Board of Appeals.

9.3.6 Villages

In 2001, the Boston Society of Architects led a multi-discipline charrette at Northeastern University that resulted in two conceptual designs for Central Village. The majority of those

attending a public meeting to review the two designs favored the compact design. It depicts the Town Hall as the focal point. Clustered around Town Hall would be housing, businesses, and Town offices all within walking distance of each other. Housing would be a mix of affordable, senior, and market rate houses, apartments, and condominiums. Shared off street parking would facilitate shopping without having to drive from one establishment to another. Farm stands would be encouraged to continue because they enhance the agriculture nature of Westport. The area immediately surrounding Town Hall could be landscaped to form a village green or park (see Appendix A.).

Such innovative concepts of village design should generate interest in Westport and encourage businesses to invest in its future.

9.3.7 Constraints

There are two major constraints for economic development:

- *Lack of adequate water and sewerage to support large sites and buildings.*
- *Lack of an organizational entity to oversee the economic development process.*

9.4 Recommendations

1. Establish the position of Economic Development Officer to initiate, coordinate, and nurture business enterprises that contribute to the economic prosperity of Westport.

Westport has been unable to effectively encourage and manage economic development because it does not have anyone in Town government whose responsibilities are targeted to economic development with the resources to support such an endeavor. Local businesses and organizations are carrying out much of the Town's economic development efforts, but they need help. Establishing the position of an Economic Development Officer is an essential step in assuring Westport's prosperity.

The Economic Development Officer would work with all types of businesses, engaging in a wide range of activities including planning and regulatory issues, grant submissions, small business development and management, and business recruitment and retention. He or she would have ultimate responsibility for the successful implementation of all aspects of economic development

2. Revise the 1996 Strategic Economic Development Plan to reflect current conditions and options for the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors.

Although the 1996 Strategic Economic Development Plan contains a number of recommendations that were feasible at the time, changes have occurred that render parts of the plan obsolete. The plan should be updated to reflect current conditions and be updated on a continuing basis.

3. Update zoning laws, as appropriate, to provide flexibility for locating businesses in areas that would support the overall objectives of the Master Plan.

Zoning laws review and revision, particularly for villages where a mix of certain types of businesses and residences should be able to co-exist. Also, along the Routes 6 and 177 corridors, some business zones might be extended where further economic development or redevelopment appears feasible.

Two possible types of business zone districts would be a village business district in Central Village and a neighborhood business district to control neighborhood convenience commercial uses in locations throughout the Town. Provisions regarding parking, setbacks, and the other controlling dimensional factors of zoning would be tailored to the specific zone to achieve desired results.

Westport's natural beauty combined with its historical elements result in a distinctive small town character that sets the town apart from many of its neighbors. Zoning laws should be viewed from this perspective. Because of this consideration, it is recommended that the Town prohibit the issuance of new Class Two licenses which permit used car lots.

4. Initiate a site plan review process and possible design review for planned commercial ventures and structures in order to ensure the quality of the general functioning, safety, and visual aesthetics of commercial areas.

Westport residents are concerned with the appearance and design of Westport business areas, particularly along the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors, and to some extent along Main Road. Site plan review under zoning can address many of these issues. Aesthetic issues may best be addressed by an advisory board. Therefore, it is proposed that Westport institute site plan review under zoning and consider the creation of an advisory review committee to recommend design guidelines for commercial and public buildings in Westport.

An advisory design review process could help improve the appearance of Westport over time without necessarily adding to the red tape and cost of project approval.

5. Support, foster, and market local businesses such as retail goods and services, marine trades, fishing, agriculture, and high-quality cultural and recreational tourism.

Westport and its vicinity are already a major Massachusetts tourist destination. Horseneck Beach is one of the state's most popular state run facilities. The town also contains a significant number of seasonal housing units that increase the population base during the summer months. Countless travelers pass through Westport annually on their way to and from Cape Cod and hundreds of thousands visit the outlet malls and marine attractions in nearby New Bedford and Fall River.

New commercial enterprises such as retail goods and services, marine trades, fishing, agriculture, aquaculture, and quality cultural and recreational undertakings could complement and enhance existing businesses. In addition, Westport's scenic beauty and exceptional coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean and Westport River attract visitors who patronize local businesses during their stay. Westport has the potential for increasing tourism through innovative ventures such as a farmers market, bed and breakfasts, and country inns. Performances of Concerts at the Point are inevitably sold out, demonstrating the demand for quality entertainment, in this case, music. The auditoriums of the Westport High School and Middle School could be used for different types of performances such as plays and concerts. Westport would benefit not only from a cultural standpoint, but also from income generated by fees and patronage of local businesses by visitors.

6. Revise the cumbersome and time-consuming process for obtaining permits.

Westport should review its permit process to ensure that it is simple and direct while at the same time meeting its obligation to safeguard the public interest. Shuffling applicants from one board to another wastes time and fosters a bureaucratic and anti-business atmosphere. It is recommended that a person in the Town offices be designated to guide applicants through the permit process. This person could be the recommended Economic Development Officer.

7. Encourage aquaculture and marine sciences uses

Provide businesses that specialize in aquaculture and marine uses with special consideration and status in zoning bylaws. Incorporate zoning to encourage aquaculture and marine-related uses in appropriate areas with appropriate site planning controls.

Utilize regional resources.

Regional outreach and cooperation by the Town for commercial enterprises and tourism would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of economic development efforts. Because of Westport's limited population base and financial resources, strategic initiatives in collaboration with regional agencies and other municipalities are recommended.

For commercial development, establish close working relationships with:

- 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
- Westport Business to Business

For tourism development, establish close working relationships with:

- Bristol County Convention and Visitors Bureau SRPEDD - Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
- Fall River Chamber of Commerce
- New Bedford Chamber of Commerce

UMASS Dartmouth recently created two centers that provide unique support for regional economic development.

- **Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center, located in Fall River**
- **The Center for Marine Science and Technology, located in New Bedford.**

8. Support and participate with Westport business organizations.

Local business organizations, such as Westport Business to Business, play an important role in attracting and assisting business. The Town, through a new Economic Development Officer, should work closely with these organizations and provide whatever support it can.

9. Establish a farmers market.

Westport should pursue the concept of establishing a farmers market where local farmers could set up stalls to collectively sell their produce. Farmers markets exist throughout the

United States and usually draw large crowds. A farmers market would draw out of town visitors and not only benefit local farmers, but restaurants and retail businesses as well.

10. Participate in the state's program for agriculture tourism.

The Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture has a Bureau of Markets that "promotes the viability and sustainability of Massachusetts' food and agriculture businesses through marketing and educational activities". In conjunction with this program, the Massachusetts Highway Department has an Agriculture Signage Program that "allows for the placement of agriculture directional signs along state roadways for farms located off these roadways." With Routes 6, 88, and 177, Westport has abundant opportunity to have signs directing travelers to local farm stands and agri-tourism destinations.

11. Develop a uniform signage program for local non-agriculture tourism.

Complementing an agriculture signage program could be a local signage program directing visitors to various businesses and restaurants located throughout Westport. Included in the program should be local artists and skilled craftsmen who, although relatively unknown, produce products of exceptional quality. The Town could encourage local enterprises that would benefit from tourism to participate in a uniform signage program for Westport. Signage programs in Vermont have proven very successful in promoting local businesses.

12. Actively pursue the dredging of the Westport River.

The Westport River is an integral part of Westport's well being. Dredging the river is critical to the prosperity of fishing and aquaculture, a paramount concern of Westporters.

NOTES

1. Please refer to Section 12.7 of Chapter 12 for the complete Action Plan for Economic Development.
2. At the Public Meeting of February 26, 2003, a suggestion was made that the position description of the suggested Economic Development Officer could include the function of Revenue Enhancement Officer.
3. At the Planning Board meeting of March 25, 2003 Vice-Chairman David Wallace suggested that the Town do more to attract environmentally sensitive tourism. The Board also discussed a coordinated system of attractive signs directing tourists to local businesses.
4. At the Planning Board meeting of April 8, 2003, Wayne Sunderland emphasized the need to plan the Rte 177 corridor as well as the Rte 6 corridor.

CHAPTER 10
Housing

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

10. Housing

10.1 Introduction

An examination of Westport's current housing stock along with the demographic and housing market characteristics of the Town, region and State will allow the Town to identify its housing needs and develop a strategy to meet those needs. The Town of Westport's housing stock is comprised of single-family, duplex, multi-family, mobile homes, summer homes and accessory apartments. Ownership types include rental housing, condominiums and owner-occupied housing. Although diverse types of housing are present, the vast majority of homes are single-family detached, owner-occupied.

Westport's "Executive Summary" for the Updated Master Plan, completed in May of 2000 and accepted by Town Meeting, is the product of an extensive series of public meetings held by the Master Plan Update Committee to obtain public input into the issues facing the community. This document identifies three overall categories of housing issues affecting the Town as it enters the twenty-first century. These issues may be summarized as follows:

Issue 1

As a region, Southeastern Massachusetts traditionally lagged behind other areas of the Commonwealth in economic development and income. As a result, many current residents, especially seniors, others on fixed incomes, and younger residents are unable to afford the "standard" homes on large subdivision lots being created in Westport as a result of the current housing market and regulatory environment.

Issue 2

Increased valuation and taxes in areas such as Westport Harbor, which attract buyers of seasonal second-homes and those seeking a desirable retirement community, create financial hardship for year-round resident elders on fixed incomes who cannot afford to stay in their long-time homes. Westport lacks affordable housing alternatives for seniors and programs to assist those who would prefer to remain in their homes.

Issue 3

Westport's regulatory environment results in virtually the entire Town being uniformly zoned for single-family or duplex dwellings on 60,000 square-foot or larger lots. The Zoning By-Law and Subdivision Regulations thus:

- drive housing costs higher;
- limit development to "cookie-cutter" subdivisions
- fail to provide for affordable housing;
- fail to plan for and protect open space, recreation areas and trails, and scenic areas;
- fail to preserve for the public's benefit the Town's character as represented by its:
 - a) village centers
 - b) waterfront
 - c) farms
 - d) other historic and heritage resources, and
 - e) environmentally-sensitive areas.

10.2 Goals and Objectives

10.2.1. Executive Summary Goals and Objectives

The Executive Summary addresses the above issues by establishing a series of "Goals and Objectives" based on the public visioning process. The Housing Goals and Objectives section of that document contains the following goals, objectives and actions, which, for the sake of conciseness and clarity have been re-organized and condensed. In the course of completing this Master Plan Update, as further data have been obtained and analyzed, additional issues have been identified, and additional public response has been received, additional goals, objectives and actions have been added to those identified below. In addition, this Housing Chapter attempts to incorporate relevant suggestions and requirements of the Housing Certification portion of Executive Order 418 and the Community Development Plan portion of that Order. The following, and all additional "Goals and Objectives", will be discussed further in later sections of this chapter.

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

Objective 1. Increase the Town's supply of smaller housing units suitable for occupancy by one or two persons, including the elderly.

Action 1

Amend accessory apartment by-law to increase flexibility.

Action 2

Allow subdivisions to deviate from standard design and dimensional requirements by using planning tools such as the Special Permit process, designed to further the Town's specific housing goals, such as varying size, type, density and cost of units.

Action 3

Identify suitable areas for multi-family and condominium units and amend zoning bylaw to allow such uses by special permit/site plan approval or by inclusion within an overlay zone.

Action 4

Identify and zone suitable areas to allow assisted living and/or congregate housing.

Objective 2. Increase the Town's supply of affordable housing in general.

Action 1

Establish a local initiative to encourage a certain percentage of affordable and/or elderly units in new subdivisions (via zoning bonuses, exemption from phased development bylaw, etc.).

Goal 2: Incorporate into the housing development process mechanisms to plan for and protect open space, recreation areas and trails, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Action 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 an organized, useful system of recreation areas, trails, greenways and wildlife corridors.

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**
- **other historic and scenic resources that comprise Westport's heritage landscapes.**

Action 1

Incorporate into the housing development process mechanisms to vary density, lot sizes and setbacks, etc.

Action 2

Enact denser residential zoning in village centers and shopping nodes with specific provisions for site design, septic, circulation etc.

Action 3

Institute flexible development regulations to encourage buffers or otherwise minimize the impact of new residential developments on farms, scenic arterial roads, waterfront, and other significant landscape features.

10.2.2. Additional Goals and Objectives from Issues Raised During Plan Development

During the course of preparing this Master Plan, an unprecedented number of new Comprehensive Permit (Chapter 40B) applications were filed in Westport, leading to much controversy. The Town was unprepared to cope with the Comprehensive Permit process, and will be unprepared to cope with the additional demand for services and facilities, and, in particular, drinking water, unless it begins to plan for future demand, generated not only by affordable housing projects, but also by growth in general. The higher density of 40B developments however, does generate specific concerns about the impact on the existing wells of neighboring property owners, given Westport's shallow and limited aquifer. It is not known how much growth is sustainable using private wells, as opposed to extending public water from, for example, Fall River, which owns the rights to surface water bodies in Westport.

In a short period of time, the Town has learned how to work with proposers of 40B developments to somewhat address the Town's housing needs and to address residents' concerns such as environmental impact, water supply, and traffic, and has, in fact, approved several 40B projects. Until Westport reaches the state's target percentage, which is that 10 percent of the housing units in Town must be classified "affordable" as defined by the state, Westport will be subject to having its local bylaws and regulations overridden by the Comprehensive Permit process. Westport's percentage of affordable units as of 2003 was 1.68%. The Board of Selectmen have responded to these challenges by creating a Housing Partnership to organize the Town's response to Comprehensive Permit applications and to lead the Town's efforts to meet the housing needs of those who live or work in Westport. As of 2004, the number of affordable units was over 4%.

As a result of these events, several additional **Actions** under **Goal 1, Objective 2**, have been added to supplement those in the Executive Summary. The following three actions will need to be considered and re-considered in light of the downturn in the economic condition of the State

and Town since this Plan was initiated, and in light of the fact that the State has several different affordable housing proposals currently under consideration in both the legislature and the executive branch to significantly amend Chapter 40B. Although many residents have expressed hope that, by identifying eligible units and petitioning the State to count them as affordable units, the Town may achieve 10% affordable units, the number of potentially eligible units is too low to make a significant contribution to reaching that target. It is difficult to see how the Town could achieve even the interim target of 0.75% affordable units each year via local initiative without a significant increase in investment and commitment to doing so. This is unlikely to happen, given the current fiscal condition of the Town. Although the end result may be unattainable given the Town's current resources, the Town should still identify and document affordable units, monitor and respond to developments at the State level to enable the Town to avoid inappropriate Comprehensive Permit developments, and work through the regional planning agency and local legislators to influence State housing policy.

Add to Goal 1, Objective 2:

Action 2: Consider developing a detailed plan or strategy for creation of housing that serves the needs of residents of Westport and the region and works toward meeting the State's target, currently 10% affordable housing units, and interim objectives, currently 0.75% affordable units produced each year.

Action 3: Review the Town's Zoning By-Law and administration to strategize changes that will document and encourage the creation of units that will meet State criteria for being defined as "affordable" (for example, document that accessory apartments will be rented at no cost or at affordable rates to relatives).

Action 4: Work cooperatively with developers and the State to obtain a high level of local preference in new affordable housing developments.

10.3. Summary of Previous Master Plans

10.3.1. 1964 Master Plan

This Plan did not contain an "Action Plan" with goals and objectives but did suggest several suitable ways in which residential development could be guided in the future and included proposed zoning and subdivision regulations, some of which were adopted.

Population and Family Size

In 1964, 60% of Westport's population belonged to typical large-sized families, and nearly 40% of the dwellings in Town were occupied by only one or two people. Nearly 20% of the population was 55 years and older, largely single or "empty-nester" couples with no children at home.

In addition, the authors noted that many sound, older homes remained vacant as older persons moved out of Town when their families gradually grew smaller, because the predominant type of housing was comprised of large homes that were not easily adjusted to suit diminishing family size.

This plan stated that, if housing recommendations were based solely on population characteristics, Westport should have 60% of its housing stock as large-sized, single-family homes, and 20% for older singles and couples. Presumably the remaining 20% would be for singles and couples with no children who are younger than 55.

Residential Land Uses

The authors discuss several types of residential use and note appropriate locations for them. They first describe the area north of Rte. 177 as being in the process of development into smaller lots, with housing suitable for moderate-income working families. Because there is little farming in this area and it is very conveniently located for working commuters, they suggest it be zoned General Residential.

The inland area south of Rte. 177 is characterized by the rural atmosphere created by its farms and villages. This area is deemed suitable for an Agricultural Residential district. The authors note that this area has become more suitable for commuters since Rte 88 has been constructed.

Several areas were described as suitable for Multi-family Residential development, depending on good access, soils with good sewage disposal characteristics and a combination of locational advantage and land cost that makes development feasible. This type of housing would be suitable for the small household size which was becoming increasingly common, and because of the small numbers of children found in such housing would contribute well to the tax base. Whether such development should be permitted is left to the policy-makers. The authors note that development of apartments near existing village centers would reinforce them as "centers" and might provide convenient access to amenities for small families and older persons. They also note that apartments with waterfront locations would prove attractive to many persons. Given the increased recognition of the fragility of the coastal environment and resultant increased regulation of coastal resource areas, as well as the increased cost of insurance in these zones, this is likely not an appropriate location for apartment buildings or condominiums.

A fourth type of housing, Seasonal Residential is seen as being best located south of the Head of Westport along the water. However, even in 1964, the authors note an increase of year-round homes in areas formerly dominated by summer homes. Lastly, the potential for construction of motels, inns and guesthouses is discussed. The authors note that, within the various districts, the types of housing are tending to become more mixed, with seasonal, agricultural, estate and small-lot residential uses existing or being built within the same area of Town.

10.3.2. 1972 Master Plan

The 1972 Master Plan update was unable to use 1970 census data; therefore some of the data could not be compared with the 1964, 1983 and 2003 plans.

Seasonal Homes

Although in 1964 seasonal homes were seen to be becoming less dominant in traditional summer-home neighborhoods, the 1972 Plan reports that 33% of all existing and 10% of all new dwellings were still seasonal.¹⁸ The plan reports the number of seasonal units in 1970 as either 789, 992 or 1054. The authors expressed a wish for more seasonal homes due to the lower costs of community services used by these residents and the net annual revenue of approximately \$300,000 the Town received in property taxes from seasonal homes. Noting the rising cost of land and the change in commuting patterns, the 1972 Plan predicts a relative reduction in seasonal home building. This was indeed the case, as

¹⁸ Inconsistent data from one section of that plan to another indicate approximately 20-30% of existing homes were seasonal in 1970.

seasonal homes decreased from 20-33% of all units to 13% as of the 1983 plan. The plan noted that Westport had an abundance of waterfront and waterview property that the plan authors considered suitable for seasonal residential development in order to increase tax revenue, but that development should be directed away from flood-prone areas.

Decrease in Household Size

The 1972 plan noted a sharp decrease in average household size, as predicted by the 1964 plan, averaging 2.5 in 1970, down from 3.36 in 1960. Nearly one-third of dwelling units were occupied by only one or two persons, and nearly one-sixth had five or more persons. The trend confirms the need for smaller housing units noted by the 1964 plan. Housing was being produced at a rapid rate, averaging 139 units permitted per year between 1964 and 1971, with the highest rate at 269 in 1971.

Housing and Income Issues

Because, according to the 1972 plan, 65.3% of Westport residents had family incomes below \$10,000, this plan suggested that if property taxes were raised, families of limited income would be unable to maintain their homes, leading to "blight".

10.3.3. 1983 Master Plan Update

The 1983 Master Plan Update noted 5,405 housing units, including seasonal (722) and vacant units (129), a 39% increase in the number of housing units between 1970 and 1980. Single-family homes comprised 85% of the housing stock in 1980, unchanged from 1970. Owner-occupied homes comprised 81% of the stock. Housing quality was very good, with only 2% of units lacking complete plumbing and only 3% having more than one person per room.

Based on a Water Quality Management Plan, this plan update projected that 1,750 new units would be constructed between 1980 and 2000, or an increase of 32%, to 7,155 units. The number of units was expected to increase at a greater rate than the population increased due to declining family size. Although family size declined, the number of housing units did not approach 7,155, nor did the rate of increase approach 32%. The number of year-round units in 2000 was 5,545, an 18% increase, while the total number of housing units in 2000 was 6,143, an increase of 14%.¹⁹

This plan also projected that only 40% of the new residents would locate north of Rte 177, as opposed to the 54% residing in that area in 1980. The authors anticipated the greatest pressure for new growth to occur in the center of Town, north of Adamsville and Hix Bridge Roads and south of Rte 177. This projection appears accurate, judging by the locations of new subdivisions (shown on Map 10-1 Zoning and Absolute Development Constraints). A substantial amount of undeveloped land remains in this area; therefore this trend may be expected to continue.

The 1983 policy goal was to construct housing balanced as to type, location and price. Attached housing, such as townhouses, was suggested, because of: 1) the lower cost to build and maintain per unit and 2) the suitability of this housing type for seniors and younger couples. The action to implement this goal was to revise zoning to allow cluster development in appropriate areas.

¹⁹ For comparing projected to actual growth, U.S. Census data is used. Local assessors' data may indicate slightly larger numbers for each point in time; however the overall trend is the same.

Another suggested action was to allow a density bonus to developers in exchange for certain site amenities such as recreation facilities or highway improvements beyond the subdivision site boundary. The plan cautioned that unbuildable land such as wetlands must be excluded from the site capacity calculations for cluster development.

These policy goals are still relevant; however no progress has been made towards their achievement.

10.4. Background Information

10.4.1. Housing Demand in Westport

Housing demand is affected by a variety of factors including demographic variables such as age distribution of the population, household characteristics, and household income. In addition, it is affected by market conditions and external variables such as the proposed extension of commuter rail to Fall River and New Bedford, which will have an affect on both population characteristics and market conditions.

10.4.2. Age Distribution - Westport Population

According to the U.S. Census, Westport's total population was 13,852 in 1990. By 2000, it had risen to 14,183, for an increase of 2.4 per cent.²⁰ Table 10-1. compares the changes in significant age cohorts of the population between 1990 and 2000. First-time homebuyers and renters tend to be in their twenties to mid-thirties. Statewide, the age group between 20 and 34 decreased by 37.14% from 1990 to 2000. Bristol County saw a 31.7% drop, while 12 nearby Southeastern Massachusetts towns averaged a 33.96% decrease. This age cohort decreased by 42.71% in Westport, 15% greater than the state, 35% greater than the county, and 26% greater than the average decrease of nearby towns. One factor for the decline of this cohort is the lack of suitable first-time homebuyer and rental housing coupled with a lack of jobs in Westport and surrounding communities.

**Table 10-1.
Age Distribution in Westport, Selected Neighboring Towns, Bristol County, and
Massachusetts, 1990 and 2000**

Age Group	1990	2000	% Change, Westport	% Change, Selected SE Mass Towns ²¹	% Change, Bristol County	% Change, MA
0-5	711	652	-8.30	1.28	-4.04	-3.69
5-14	1,755	1,828	4.16	12.10	12.42	18.73
15-19	1,079	878	-18.63	2.67	-1.63	1.42
20-24	1,036	658	-36.49	-22.33	-19.51	-21.29
25-34	1,833	1,719	-6.22	-11.63	-12.19	-15.85
35-44	2,357	2,257	-4.24	12.22	18.17	15.74
45-54	1,803	2,389	32.50	55.14	42.54	45.54
55-64	1,377	1,728	25.49	27.13	6.00	6.09

²⁰ In 1990 the local census showed a smaller population than the federal decennial census, 13,241. In 2000 the local census showed a higher number than the federal, 14,206. The local rate of increase is therefore 7.3% from 1990-2000.

²¹ Acushnet, Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton, Freetown, Swansea, Lakeville, Mattapoisett, Rochester, Fairhaven, Rehoboth, Somerset.

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65-74	1,174	1,144	-2.56	3.03	-13.03	-6.97
75-84	599	725	21.04	36.87	22.49	18.13
85+	128	205	60.16	58.01	31.70	26.55
TOTAL	13,852	14,183	2.39	11.5	5.60	5.53

U.S. Census, 2000.

Looking at the middle and older age cohorts, one notes that the 35-44 year-old group decreased by 4.24% in Westport, whereas this group increased state, county-wide, and among the 12 towns studied by 15.74, 18.17, and 12.22% respectively, again perhaps reflecting a lack of suitable housing and job opportunities.

The age cohorts between 45 and 64, which includes the "baby-boomers", shows an increase of 57.99% in Westport, higher than Bristol County (48.54%) or the State (51.63%), but less than the average for the 12 study towns (82.27%). Many of this group, which comprised 29% of Westport's population in 2000, have children who have, or will be leaving home. As they approach retirement, this group may create a demand for smaller homes or different types of housing from the standard 4-bedroom single-family on a 60,000 square foot lot, which Westport's current zoning encourages. Discussions with the Building Department indicate a trend for persons in this age cohort to move from the southern portion of Westport to North Westport, where smaller homes on smaller lots are more available. In addition to the aging of the resident population, Westport's attractiveness as a retirement community is leading to in-migration of older persons, which would potentially add to the demand for smaller housing types tailored to an aging population. The trend toward having fewer children, along with the trends toward two-wage-earner families and single-parent households will tend to make it difficult for wage-earners and heads of household to care for their elderly family members. This will create a greater demand for a variety of solutions, including assisted living arrangements that allow elders to age in place gracefully.

The population aged 65 years and older, which comprised 14% of the total population in 2000, has increased dramatically compared with county and state increases. Westport gained 79% in that age cohort, whereas Bristol County gained 41% and the State 38%, respectively. The increase in the elderly in Westport is similar to that for the 12 other towns investigated, which averaged a 98% increase in this age group. In addition to smaller housing types, such as apartments, condominiums and accessory apartments, assisted living facilities are needed if this segment of the population is to be enabled to remain in Westport. The current deficit of these housing types in Westport often leads to fragmentation of families.

10.4.3. Household Characteristics

The average size of American households continues to decrease due to increases in divorce, single-parent families, and the trend toward having fewer children, among other factors. In keeping with this nationwide trend, the average size of the Westport household decreased from 3.36 in 1960 to 2.5 in 1970, then increased slightly to 2.8 in 1990. In 2000, the average household size decreased slightly to 2.62. In 1960, 40% of Westport's dwellings were occupied by only 1 or 2 people; in 1970 nearly 33% were occupied by 1 or 2 people; by 2000, 56% of Westport's 5,386 households were made up of only 1 or 2 people, and 20% consisted of householders living alone. While the number of households has increased by 8.8% since 1990, the number of family households has increased only 5.8%, whereas the number of non-family households (householders living alone or sharing a home with non-related people) has increased by 19.2%. This decrease

in household size and increase in non-family households has not resulted in a concomitant increase in the number of smaller housing units being built. The multi-bedroom single-family detached home on a large lot is still the norm in Westport.

Conversations with real estate agents indicate a demand from first-time homebuyers and empty nesters for 3-bedroom homes with 1-1/2 to 2 baths. In addition, many homebuyers are planning ahead for the time when they may need to provide housing for elder family members or for themselves. These buyers are looking for homes where, even if the home is a two-story structure, there is a bedroom on the first floor or a room that may easily be converted to a bedroom.

10.4.4. Household Income

In addition to age and household size, the median income of a community influences the demand for different types of housing as well as its affordability. Table 10-2 shows the distribution of household income in Westport and the trend between 1989 and 1999.

Table 10-2.
Income Distribution of Households in Westport, 1989 and 1999²²

Income Range	1989	% of Total	1999	% of Total	Per Cent Change
Less than \$25,000	1525	30.8	1064	19.7	-30.23
\$25,000-\$34,999	742	15.0	470	8.7	-36.66
\$35,000-\$49,999	1062	21.4	903	16.8	-14.97
\$50,000-\$74,999	1046	21.1	1271	23.6	21.51
\$75,000-\$99,999	357	7.2	783	14.6	119.33
\$100,000-\$149,000	178	3.6	595	11.1	234.27
\$150,000 or more	44	0.9	295	5.5	570.45
Total	4954	100.0	5381	100.0	8.62
Median Household Income		\$37,092	\$55,436		49.46

The most evident pattern is that the median income has increased dramatically in 10 years, from \$37,092 to \$55,436 or an increase of 49.5 per cent. This likely reflects the increasing affluence of persons moving into Westport, rather than increasing economic opportunities and wages for existing long-term residents. The median household income for the U.S. in 1999 was \$41,994 up 40% from 1989, while that for Massachusetts was \$50,505, up 37%. Thus, Westport's median income seems to be rising about 10% faster than that of the nation and state. Westport's median income is also somewhat higher than the median income for the Town's Metropolitan Statistical Area (the Providence-Fall River-Warwick MSA), which has a median income of \$52,800.

The other item of note is that, while Westport experienced a 30% reduction in the number of households in the lowest income bracket, slightly better than that of the State and Bristol County, a significant number of Westport's households, approximately 20%, still have incomes of less than \$25,000.

²² U.S. Census, 2000.

Westport's moderate-income households, earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 increased dramatically, by 142%, while statewide this segment increased only 45%. Westport's growth in this segment mirrored that of Bristol County as a whole, which rose 138%. The number of medium income households in 2000 was 49.1 %.

The higher end of the income spectrum also saw very significant growth between 1989 and 1999. The number of households earning \$150,000 or more showed the largest increase of any category, at 570%, and the total increase in household incomes over \$100,000 was 805%.

Table 10-3. shows the 1999 median incomes for 12 southeastern Massachusetts towns. Westport's median income compares favorably with the other towns and with the medians for Bristol County, \$43,496, and the State, \$50,502.

**Table 10-3
Comparison of Median Incomes in Bristol County Towns, 1999**

Town	Median Income	% Change
Fairhaven	\$41,696	38.5%
Dartmouth	\$50,742	44.4%
Acushnet	\$51,500	44.1%
Somerset	\$51,770	42.2%
Swansea	\$52,524	30.9%
Westport	\$55,436	49.5%
Mattapoisett	\$58,466	44.5%
Dighton	\$58,600	43.6%
Rochester	\$63,289	50.7%
Freetown	\$64,576	41.9%
Rehoboth	\$65,353	45.3%
Berkley	\$66,295	54.1%
Lakeville	\$70,495	57.1%
Bristol County	\$43,496	38.0%
Massachusetts	\$50,502	36.7%

Source: U.S. Census

The federal government uses two measures of poverty for different purposes. *Poverty thresholds*, issued by the Census Bureau are "the statistical version of the poverty measure" used to calculate the number of people living in poverty in any given geographical region. *Poverty guidelines*, issued by the Dept. of Health and Human Services are "the administrative version of the poverty measure", are more simplified, and are used to determine eligibility for certain federal and state programs, such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG's). Although both measures are updated annually, because of the timing of the release of the threshold data, the *guidelines* are used to determine poverty status at a given moment for the purposes of grant eligibility. The 1999 guidelines would reflect the thresholds for 1998. The 1999 and 2002 HHS Poverty Guidelines are given in Table 10-4. The poverty thresholds for 1999 and for 2001 (the most recent available) are given in Table 10-5.

Table 10-4 1999 and 2002 HHS Poverty Guidelines 48 Contiguous States and D.C.		
Size of Family Unit	Poverty Level	
	1999	2002
1	\$8,240	\$8,860
2	11,060	11,940
3	13,880	15,020
4	16,700	18,100
5	19,520	21,180
6	22,340	24,260
7	25,160	27,340
8	28,980	30,420
For each additional person, add	2,820	3,080

**Table 10-5
1999 and 2001 Poverty Thresholds**

Size of Family Unit	Poverty Level	Poverty Level
	1999	2001
1	\$8,501	\$9,039
2	10,869	11,569
3	13,290	14,128
4	17,029	18,104
5	20,127	21,405
6	22,340	24,195
7	25,912	27,517
8	28,967	30,627

In 1999, the percent of Westport individuals living below the poverty level was 4.9%, up slightly from 4.3% in 1989. Although the poverty rate in Westport is thus less than one-half that of the State (9.3%) and for Bristol County (10.0%), on average, 695 individuals are living below the poverty level in Westport. Of these, 165 are 65 years old and over; 173 are under 18 years old. This indicates a need for affordable housing for both the elderly and for households with children and perhaps a need for rent subsidies and other social services as well as for subsidized housing rehabilitation. More partnership between Town government, churches, and other non-profits could help meet this demand.

10.4.5. Major Characteristics of Westport's Housing Supply

The vast majority of homes in Westport are single-family homes located on large lots and served by individual wells and septic systems. In 1990 the population density was the 5th lowest in Bristol County, at 276.7 persons per square mile. In 2000, population density had only climbed to 283.4 persons per square mile, the fourth lowest in Bristol County. Although several areas have existing homes on small lots, particularly in the north end of Town and in the villages, many of these homes are sited on land unsuitable for individual septic systems, and are experiencing related problems as owners seek to expand their homes and increase lot coverage. The remainder of the developable land is zoned for 60,000 square foot lots, which drives up the cost of housing and makes it uneconomical to construct smaller homes, because of high land and infrastructure costs. Flexible zoning that allows clustered lots with smaller frontage, such as cluster and conservation subdivisions, generally bring down the cost of infrastructure by shortening road length and associated lengths of drainage and utility line installations.

10.4.5.1. Existing Housing Stock and Projected Growth

Between 1990 and 2000, Westport's housing stock increased by 262 units, from 5,881 to 6,143 units, or by 4.4%. This represented a net average increase of 26 units per year. In Massachusetts as a whole, total housing units increased by 6.0%, and in Bristol County units increased by 7.8% during this time period. Table 10-6. shows the percentage increases in 12 selected neighboring towns.

**Table 10-6
Percent Change in Total Housing Units for
Selected Neighboring Towns
1990-2000**

Town	% Change 1990-2000
Fairhaven	2.4%
Dartmouth	13.0%
Acushnet	10.3%
Somerset	8.0%
Swansea	10.9%
Westport	4.5%
Mattapoisett	7.6%
Dighton	14.3%
Rochester	21.8%
Freetown	4.2%
Rehoboth	21.4%
Berkley	33.6%
Lakeville	16.7%
Bristol County	7.8.0%
Massachusetts	6.0%

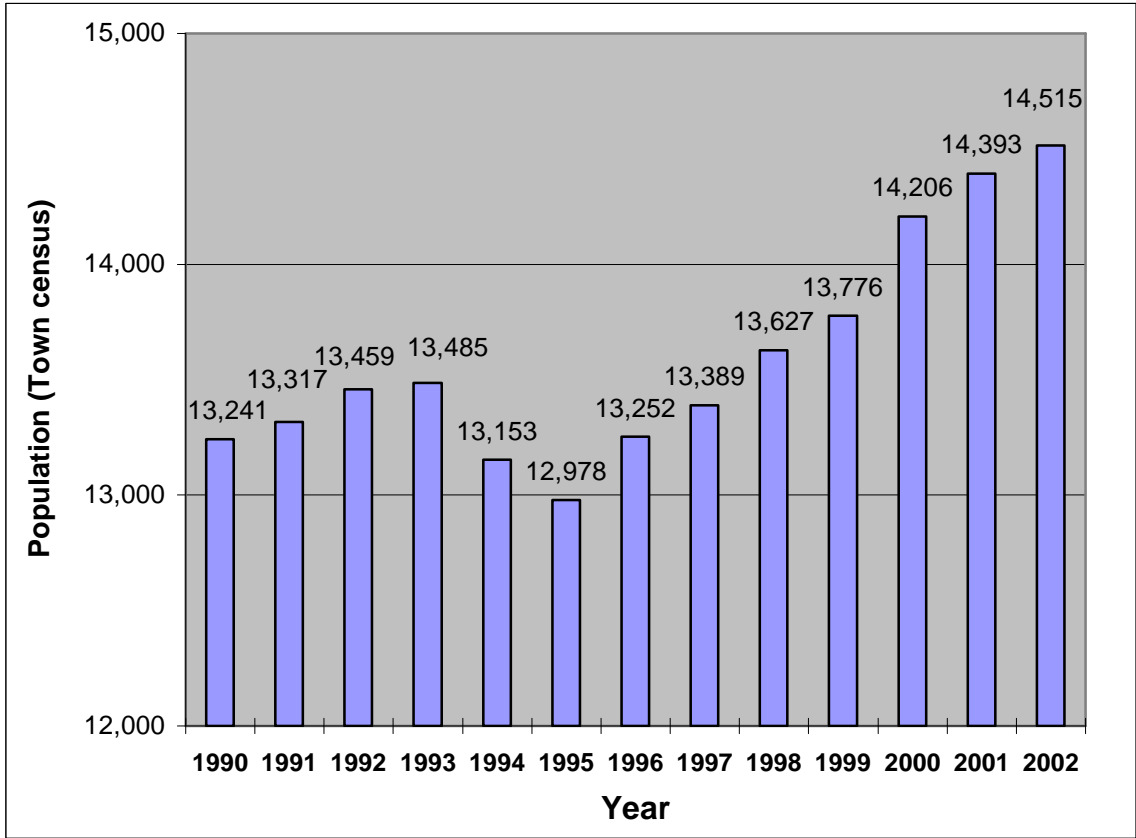
According to the decennial census, Westport has the second lowest production of housing among these towns; however, looking at recent trends, from 1996 to the present, as shown by local data, indicates that the growth rate of both population and home building permits has increased dramatically in the last 5 to 6 years. Table 10-7. lists data obtained from the Building Department on the number, type and construction cost of new homes constructed between 1990 and 2002.

**Table 10-7
Housing Units Constructed from 1990 through 2002 (Building Permits)**

Year	Single Family		Duplexes			Multi-Family			Accessory Apts.	
	Units	Const. Cost	Bldgs.	Units	Const. Cost	Bldgs	Units	Const. Cost	Units	Const. Cost
1990	48	\$7,261,645	1	2	\$250,000	0	0	\$0	2	\$51,000
1991	45	\$4,987,000	5	<10	\$276,000	0	0	\$0	4	\$22,000
1992	45	\$4,879,000	1	2	\$80,000	0	0	\$0	3	\$60,000
1993	44	\$ 5,265,000	0	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	7	\$30,500
1994	62	\$9,511,850	1	2	\$123,600	0	0	\$0	3	\$6,022
1995	78	\$12,966,890	5	10	\$657,425	0	0	\$0	4	\$67,900
1996	68	\$8,523,037	1	2	\$196,020	0	0	\$0	2	\$309,420
1997	85	\$13,211,482	0	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	3	\$106,120
1998	124	\$19,956,210	5	10	\$41,200	0	0	\$0	2	\$334,630
1999	115	\$19,734,231	0	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	2	\$20,000
2000	95	\$18,052,789	0	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	2	\$10,000
2001	78	\$15,348,759	1	2	\$202,240	0	0	\$0	3	\$84,000
2002	74	\$11,859,507	0	0	\$0	0	0	\$0	5	\$467,048

Figure 10-1, population growth according to the local annual census from 1990 to 2001, shows a clearly increased rate of growth from 1996 to the present of 1.7% per year.

Figure 10-1.
Population Growth - Westport Annual Census - 1990 to 2001



From 1990 through 1995, Westport issued an average of 54 building permits for single-family housing units per year. In recent years, from 1996 through 2002, building permits have increased to an average of 91 units per year. The mean number of permits per year from 1990 through 2002 was 74. The number of building permits issued is considerably higher than the average increase in housing units per year according to the census. To some extent this may be due to demolition and replacement, to counting of completed units only, and by not counting accessory apartments by the census.

10.4.5.2. Housing Generation and Buildout

A look at the number of units projected by the EOEa buildout analysis, Table 10-8, will give an upper bracket for the number of houses that might be present when the Town is finally "built out"; however, since the buildout analysis is only a default scenario, the Town will certainly modify these numbers by revising zoning as time passes, and this number will likely decrease, due to the limited areas zoned for commercial use under current zoning. Over the long run, also, sea level change is expected to decrease the land acreage significantly in Westport. In contrast, a decrease in projected single-family homes at buildout might be offset by changes in zoning which allowed more multi-family and elderly units. In addition, buildout analyses tend to become more accurate as Towns become more built-out, and the

projected numbers tend to decrease as parcel-based analyses are used. Using the rates of permit issuance noted above for the last 7 years, 91 units per year for single-family houses, the projected buildout of 9,036 units would be reached in 40 years (high-level estimate). Using the 1990-1995 rate, build-out would occur in 68 years (low-level estimate, 54 units/yr). Using the average over 1990 through 2002 yields build-out in 50 years (mid-level estimate, 74 units/yr). This translates to town-wide build-out of single-family homes by, on average, the year 2050, with a range of 2040 to 2068 under existing zoning and other regulations.

Table 10-8.

Housing Units in Westport projected at Build Out by EOEa Buildout Analysis

Zone	Single-Family	Duplex	Multi Family	Total Units
Residential/Agricultural	8,815	930	0	9,745
Business	221	26	4	251
Unrestricted	0	0	0	0
Total	9,036	956	4	9,996
Affordable Units Required				1,000

At the rate of permitting over the years from 1990 to 2002, the number of all types of housing units increased by an average of 80 units per year, with a lower rate of 62 per year from 1990 to 1995 and a rate of 96 per year from 1996 through 2002. This represents an increase of 1.0% to 1.6% per year. Using the twelve-year average of 1.3%, projects that over the decade from 2000 to 2010 housing units would increase to 6,975 units by 2010. This projection must be compared, however, with those obtained by other methods.

The M.I.S.E.R.²³ projections for Westport's population in 2010, based on the 1990 census (2000 projections not yet available) are as follows:

- Low-level: 14,432
- Mid-level: 15,230
- High-level: 17,106

The mid-level M.I.S.E.R. projection for 2000 was 7% higher than the actual population reported by the U.S. Census.

However, based on Westport's average household size in 2000 of 2.62 persons, the mid-level population projection for 2010 would project 5,813 housing units, fewer than the 6,143 units reported in Census 2000. The high-level population projection projects 6,529 housing units in 2010, an increase of 399 units over 10 years, or 40 units per year, a 6.3% increase. Given that Westport's population is already at 14, 515 in 2002 according to the local census, and growing at an average of 1.7% per year, the high M.I.S.E.R. projection seems the most reasonable of their projections as it is closer to the 16,611 projected by a linear projection of local census figures and produces a building permit rate of 40 units per year. Using the M.I.S.E.R. rate projects buildout to occur in 71 years, or in 2071.

To summarize, projecting the year of "complete" build-out from Westport's history of building permit issuance produces an estimate of 2050, with a low estimate of 2040 and a high estimate of 2068. Using the M.I.S.E.R. population estimate produces buildout at 2071.

²³ Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Massachusetts.

Considering that the actual developable acreage is likely overestimated, using 2040 to 2050 as the time to build-out is a reasonable estimate.

In recent years the number of demolitions in Westport has risen fairly sharply (Table 10-9). Although not all demolitions are of homes, there has been a significant jump in demolitions since 1996, and these are mainly demolitions of homes, rather than other types of buildings. This trend will be slowed by the Demolition Delay By-Law for historic buildings, but in general, will mean that smaller, more affordable, older homes will decrease.

Table 10- 9
Demolitions in Westport, 1990-2002

Year	No. of Demolitions
1990	5
1991	8
1992	7
1993	6
1994	11
1995	3
1996	11
1997	14
1998	12
1999	9
2000	18
2001	15
2002	43

10.4.5.3. Single-Family and Multi-Family Housing

Table 10-10 compares the percent of duplex and multi-family housing in Westport with that in selected neighboring towns, Bristol County and Massachusetts. While this type of housing represents 42 to 44% of all housing statewide and in Bristol County, in the rural towns of southeastern Massachusetts it represents on average only 11% of the housing stock. Westport is barely above this average at 12%. The percentage of single-family housing versus duplex and multi-family has not changed in Westport since the 1990 decennial census.

Although the major contributing factor to increased housing prices is the rising cost of land, which may be addressed by increasing density, construction costs may be reduced by developing duplex and apartment units. Based on Building Department figures, the average cost per unit for single-family construction, exclusive of land costs, from 1990 to the present was \$159,500; the cost per unit for duplexes was \$60,900, while that for accessory apartment units was \$35,700.

Table 10-10
Single-Family vs. Multi-Family Housing in Westport and Neighboring Towns
Bristol County, Massachusetts, 2002 Census

Town	Single Family	Duplex	Multi-Family	%Duplex	%Multi-Family	% Multi-Family + Duplex
Acushnet	3,046	252	295	7.6%	6.5%	14.1%
Fairhaven	5,440	688	1104	9.5%	15.2%	24.7%
Dartmouth	9,535	699	1012	6.2%	9.0%	15.2%
Somerset	5,890	554	699	7.8%	9.8%	17.6%
Swansea	5,427	292	351	4.8%	5.8%	10.6%
Westport	5,359	499	272	8.1%	4.4%	12.5%
Mattapoisett	2,814	139	219	4.4%	6.9%	11.3%
Dighton	1,963	104	172	4.6%	7.5%	12.1%
Rochester	1,589	20	25	1.2%	1.5%	2.7%
Freetown	2,809	114	56	3.8%	1.8%	5.6%
Rehoboth	3,353	176	68	4.9%	1.9%	6.8%
Berkley	1,795	24	6	1.3%	0.3%	1.6%
Lakeville	3,445	30	121	0.8%	3.3%	4.1%
Bristol County	117,550	24,434	71,419	11.3%	32.9%	44.2%
Massachusetts	1,494,616	308,465	795,900	11.8%	30.4%	42.2%
Average Neighboring Towns						10.7%

10.4.5.4. Owner and Renter Occupied Housing and Housing Stock Condition

As noted in previous master plans, the great majority of homes in Westport are owner-occupied, comprising 82.8% of all occupied units in 2000, according to the U.S. Census, up from 80.9% in 1990. As in most communities with a majority of owner-occupied housing, the condition of the housing stock is high. The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that only 39 units lacked complete plumbing facilities, while 24 lacked complete kitchen facilities, and 25 lacked telephones. The number of units lacking plumbing and kitchen facilities declined slightly since the 1990 census, indicating that these problems are slowly being remedied. Although the number of units without telephones has increased slightly, in a resort community some seasonal variability is expected, especially with the trend toward using cell phones instead of landlines. The number of units with more than one person per room, which indicates overcrowding, remained the same as in 1990, seventy-three units, or 1.3%.

Although in 2000, 21.3% of the housing stock was greater than 60 years old, and 42.6% was greater than 40 years old, relatively few units are overcrowded or in poor condition. There are, however, a number of elderly residents whose homes are in need of repair. Westport is addressing this need through the CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant. Discussions with Building Inspector Robert Maltais and his staff indicate several general areas where housing exists that is in disrepair. These include the Greenwood Park area, several units in the 1600's area of Drift Road, an area off Sanford Road (Sunrise Ave., Sunset Ave, and Velvet Ave.) where small "A&P tea" lots have septic problems requiring raised septic systems and where the water tables are only about one foot below grade; and certain portions of the Tickle Road area around the 217 block of Oak Street and LaTessa, going down toward South Watuppa Pond and within the adjacent subdivision.

The Town has provided rehabilitation assistance for several households in recent years, including a home on Conserve Ave. that was severely damaged by fire and rehabilitated in 2002 and has also assisted with many septic system upgrades.

10.4.5.5. Access to Drinking Water and Sewer

In 1990 only 2.7 percent of households were served by public sewer systems, and only 4.2 percent were served by public water supplies.²⁴ In 2000 these figures were barely changed, as more single-family homes were built and no new multi-family or commercial projects were developed which required extending these public utilities, which are owned by the City of Fall River. The number of new housing units and their locations and type are constrained by the preponderance of soils that are unsuitable for individual septic systems and the limited quantity of water present in the shallow sand and gravel aquifers. Although general recommendations may be made, based on current knowledge, regarding zoning different parts of Town for different types and densities of housing, the number of housing units the Town can sustain and where they should be placed very much depends on a detailed water supply study and a policy on community package treatment plants or other innovative provisions for handling sewage. The Town may mitigate these limitations somewhat by coordinating with Fall River to extend water and sewer lines to areas where this would be both feasible and desirable from a comprehensive planning perspective. See Chapter 7, Water & Sewer and Chapter 3, Land Use, for in-depth discussions of these topics.

10.5. Westport's Housing Needs

10.5.1. Indicators of Need for Homes for First-Time Homebuyers - Adult Children of Residents

10.5.1.1. Length of time on the market for Homes for Sale

As of July 2003, a single-family house in Westport, selling for between \$350,000 to \$450,000 is estimated by local realtors to be on the market for 1 to 9 months before it comes under a sales agreement. The turnover time for other types of housing, such as water-view and very high-end homes is much more variable, as is that for less expensive homes, as these properties are more variable in condition and may appeal to a limited market. The turnover time frame for typical new homes demonstrates a high demand for houses in Westport. The Planning Board office experiences a steady stream of potential buyers and agents interested in contacting developers about lots before they have even been created by the subdivision process.

10.5.1.2. Vacancy Rates

Another measure of demand for housing is the vacancy rate of year-round homes. The vacancy rate for year-round *ownership* units in Westport from Census 2000 is 0.6%, not significantly different from the rate in 1990, 1.0%. This represents only year-round vacant units that are available for sale, not seasonal, recreational or occasional-use dwellings. Westport's year-round ownership vacancy rate is not significantly different from the state rate of 0.7% in 2000. Westport's vacancy rate for year-round *rental units* was 2.5% in 2000, compared to 5.7% in 1990, and 3.5% statewide in 2000. These low vacancy rates indicate a high-level of need for both ownership housing units and rentals, both statewide and in Westport.

²⁴ U.S. Census 1990

10.5.1.3. Market prices of homes for Sale - 2002

Banker and Tradesman reported an average sales price of \$251,000 for the 68 single-family home sales they compiled in Westport for the period January 1, 2002 through August 30, 2002. Data obtained for additional sales during this period increased the total number of single-family home sales to 83. The median sales price for the 75 sales for which individual data was available was \$225,000. Table 10-11 shows the distribution of these sale prices.

Table 10-11
Single-Family Home Sales²⁵
January 1, 2002 through August 30, 2002

Sale Price	Number of Units Sold
less than \$100,000	7
\$100,000-\$149,999	5
\$150,000-\$199,999	21
\$200,000-\$249,999	14
\$250,000-\$299,999	12
\$300,000-\$349,999	8
\$350,000-\$399,999	3
\$400,000-\$449,999	3
\$450,000-\$499,999	4
\$500,000-\$549,999	1
\$550,000-\$599,999	1
\$600,000-\$649,999	0
\$650,000-\$699,999	2
\$700,000-\$749,999	0
\$750,000-\$799,999	0
\$800,000-\$849,999	0
\$850,000-\$899,999	0
\$900,000-\$949,999	1
\$1,180,000-\$1,189,999	1
Total Housing Unit Sold	83

Table 10-12 shows that between 1990 and 2000, the median sales price of a single-family home in Westport as reported by Banker and Tradesman increased from \$126,000 to \$158,500, for an increase of 26% over 10 years. In the past two years, from 2000 to 2002, the median single-family home price has increased to \$211,000, an increase of 33%.²⁶ For the 75 homes in Table 10-11 for which individual sales prices were available, the median sales price was even higher, at \$225,000. The *average* price of a single-family home in Westport in 2002 is \$251,000.²⁷ Thus, Westport home prices over the last two years have been increasing at a rate more than six times the rate of increase in the 1990's (16.6% per year versus 2.6% per year).²⁸ Whereas condominium prices increased 14% from 1991 to 2000, or 1.6% per year, in the two years from 2000 to 2002, condo prices increased 49.4%, or 25% per year. Thus the rate of increase of condo prices in the past two years is sixteen times that of the 1990's.

²⁵ Banker & Tradesman, Domania, Motley Fool Real Estate

²⁶ Banker and Tradesman, 1/1/2002 through 8/30/2002

²⁷ Banker and Tradesman, 1/1/2002 through 8/30/2002.

²⁸ Banker and Tradesman

Table 10-12
Median Housing Sales Prices in Westport, 1990 - 2002²⁹

Year	Single-Family		Condominiums	
	Median Sales Price	No. of Sales	Median Sales Price	No. of Sales
1990	\$ 126,000	88	\$ -	2
1991	\$ 122,000	75	\$ 85,000	3
1992	\$ 119,000	99	\$ -	1
1993	\$ 115,000	107	\$ -	2
1994	\$ 125,000	100	\$ -	1
1995	\$ 125,000	75	\$ 60,000	3
1996	\$ 145,000	99	\$ -	0
1997	\$ 125,000	125	\$ -	0
1998	\$ 139,000	139	\$ 58,500	3
1999	\$ 145,000	153	\$ 90,000	3
2000	\$ 158,500	131	\$ 97,000	4
2001	\$ 174,000	139	\$ -	1
2002	\$ 211,000	66	\$ 145,000	3

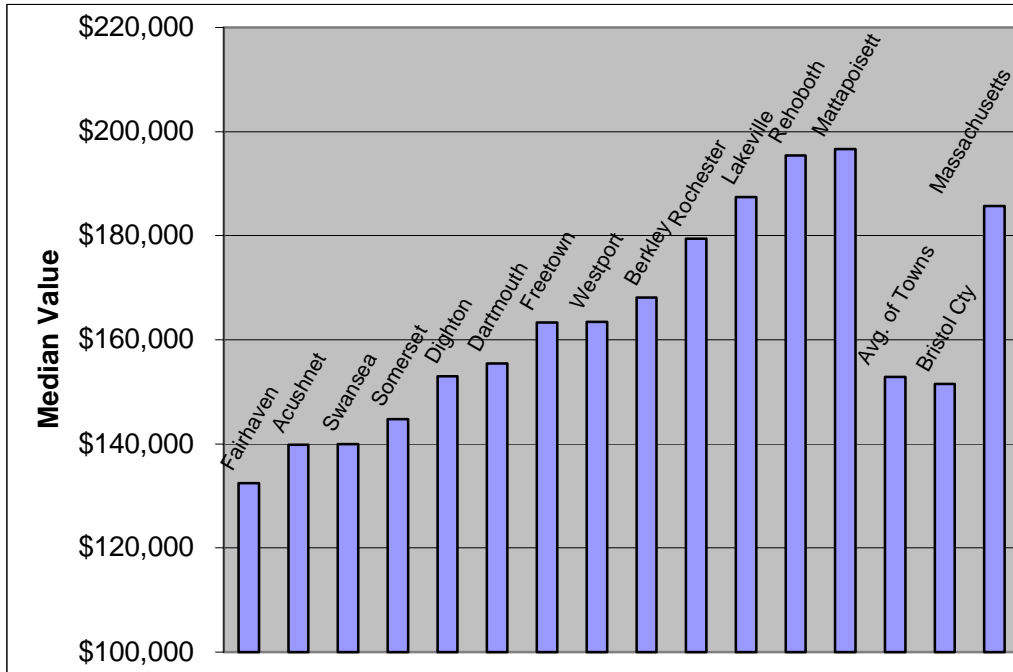
In September 2002, the Boston Globe reported the highest monthly average price of a single-family home on record in Massachusetts at \$369,077. They also reported a 20.5 percent hike in condo prices from August 2001 to August 2002, when the average price of a condominium in Massachusetts rose to \$263,991. Housing demand and low interest rates in 2002 and 2003 have created a very active real estate market. In 2003, the typical new, mid-range, single-family home in Westport would sell for \$350,000 to \$450,000.

Whereas from 1990 to 2000, the median household income in Westport was increasing at approximately 5% per year, and median home prices were increasing at 2.6% per year for single-family and 1.6% per year for condominiums, in the past two years the increase in median home prices (16.6% per year for single-family and 25% per year for condominiums) is estimated to have greatly outstripped increases in income.

Figure 10-2 compares the median value of a housing unit in Westport with that for surrounding towns, the region, and the state. Because these data were obtained from owner responses to the 2000 U. S. census, the values are lower than actual sales prices for the period, and significantly lower than current (2003) prices, and should only be used for comparison among communities.

²⁹ Banker and Tradesman

Figure 10-2.
Median Values of Homes in Westport compared with other neighboring communities, Bristol County, and the Commonwealth



10.5.1.4. Affordability Gap for Median Income Housing

Although many benefited from the economic growth of the late 1990's, there are many segments of Westport's population whose incomes may not have significantly improved and who cannot afford the high housing prices of the current market. These include young families, moderate-income professionals, young adults who grew up in Westport, and individuals in occupations where wages have not kept pace with housing costs. Housing for the elderly represents a special case which is discussed elsewhere.

Entry-level Town employees, especially those in single-income households, would have difficulty finding housing affordable to them in Westport. In an interview with Police Chief Keith Pelletier, he expressed a preference for police officers to live in Westport, but noted that the typical salary of approximately \$40,000 for entry-level police officers and firemen is not sufficient for them to easily find housing here. Similarly, the base salary for entry-level teachers in Westport's school system, \$35,904, discourages them from living in the community. Union positions in general government generally pay even less than the above two categories. These positions have varied hourly rates and varied numbers of hours worked weekly, as well as different numbers of workers working in each position. However, the average yearly base salary of the positions listed in the union contract is approximately \$28,000, with an approximate range of \$23,000 to \$39,000. Lack of affordable housing, combined with low pay scales may limit Westport's ability to attract qualified public employees.

In addition, housing supply and affordability are issues related to economic development potential. The President and CEO of MassDevelopment, Michael P. Hogan, notes in their

newsletter for October, 2003, Volume 1, Issue 3, "Businesses looking to grow and expand in Massachusetts continue to voice concern over housing costs and the lack of availability."

According to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), monthly payments for mortgaged properties should not exceed 30% of a household's gross income. The "affordability gap", the difference between the median housing cost and the price a family earning the median income could afford, is calculated below.

The median household income for the Providence-Fall River-Warwick Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), that encompasses Westport, is \$54,100, slightly lower than Westport's median, \$55,436. At 150% of the median income (which is considered "middle income" for the Area) or \$81,150 an affordable purchase price is \$261,226 or less. The resulting mortgage payment of approximately \$1742 per month, plus taxes and insurance of \$300 per month approximate 30% of the monthly household income of \$6762. The discussion in 10.5.1.3. on home sales indicates that house are available in this price range.

Low or moderate income qualifying households for home ownership is considered to be 80% of the median income or \$43,280. An affordable purchase price at this income level would be \$118,800 or less. The resultant mortgage payment of approximately \$789 per month, plus taxes and insurance of \$300 per month approximate 30% of the household monthly income of \$3607. Between January and August 2002 there were only 7 homes sold in this price range in Westport.

The above figures are based on the following assumptions, as proposed by DHCD in the E.O. 418 Housing Certification instruction package: 5% down, 7.5% APR mortgage for 30 years, 30% of income for housing costs, and \$300/month for taxes and insurance. The median household income is not broken down by family size. Neither the single-family housing nor the condominiums currently being produced are affordable for purchase by those households on low to moderate incomes.

In addition to the basic calculations above, other factors may affect the ability to afford and finance housing, including:

- Interest rates, recently at a 20-year low, will likely rise.
- Purchasers of homes in Westport's FEMA flood hazard areas are subject to additional costs of \$65 or more per month for the required flood insurance.
- Purchasers of condominiums must factor in the cost of monthly condo fees, which may range from \$50 to \$300 per month. This may offset the fact that condo owners' homeowners insurance is usually included in the condo fee.
- Duplex or multi-family properties, which potentially produce income for the buyer, also typically incur additional costs for insurance, maintenance, and management compared to single-family homes.
- Other variables that enter into qualifying for a mortgage, such as credit history and type and amount of debt may affect the ability of an individual to obtain a mortgage as well as the terms available to that individual.

Table 10-2 demonstrates that 69% of Westport households have incomes of \$75,000 or less and would not qualify for a medium-income (\$81,150) housing. More than 28% of households have incomes lower than the low-to-moderate category (\$43,280) and would not qualify for home ownership were they to enter the housing market.

Although the cost per unit for duplex and multi-family developments such as condominiums is lower than that for single-family units, given the current prices of condominiums in Massachusetts, it appears that low-income families will need to continue to rent, as they are unlikely to find even older, smaller homes or condominiums in their price range.

Affordable rent according to the Department of Housing and Community Development is \$1353 per month. For qualifying rental, low and moderate income is 80% of the median, or \$43,280; middle income is 100% of the median income, or \$54,100. Source: E.O. 418 instructions FY2003. These figures are based on the larger Providence-Warwick-Fall River statistical area, not on Westport alone.

10.5.2 Indicators of Need for Rental Housing

10.5.2.1 High Market rents and Lack of Available Rentals

Classified advertisements for rental housing in the local newspapers, The Chronicle, Westport Shorelines, the Standard Times, and the Fall River Herald, often contain no listings for year-round rentals in Westport, whether apartments or houses. Typically zero to three ads appear for rentals in Westport. Rents for houses in Westport range from \$600 per month for a one-bedroom cottage suitable for one person to \$ 2000 per month for a larger house. A sampling of the rental ads from the above newspapers for 2001 and 2002 produced the following results:

Table 10-13.
Typical Rental Costs, Westport, 2001-2002

Type of Housing	No. of Bedrooms	Seasonal/Year-Round	Rent/Month
House	2	Winter	\$1,000
House(s)	1	Year-Round	\$ 750
House	1	Year-Round	\$ 800
House	3-4	Year-Round	\$1,350
Duplex	3	Year-Round	\$ 850

Discussions with several realtors confirm the price range shown above and the fact that demand for rentals far exceeds availability. The median rent reported by the Bureau of the Census in 2000 was \$652. Based on a sample of only 19 units, the median asking rent reported by Census 2000 was \$469. This information does not categorize the units as to size, summer, winter or year round rentals, or other variables, such as rentals to family members. Because of the shortage of rental units, those that are available may be inappropriate. For example, they may not have enough bedrooms for a family with children, or they may not be constructed or furnished to suit the accessibility needs of a frail elderly person.

10.5.2.2 Rental Housing for Older Residents

Only one apartment complex is designated for older residents, Greenwood Terrace, managed by the Westport Housing Authority. Given the diverse needs of older residents from the age of 55 to 85 and older, Westport has a need for a spectrum of housing types with varying levels of social and medical support to suit the sub-groups of this rapidly-increasing segment

of the population. Several 40B projects restricted to 55 and older residents are currently in progress and are discussed below.

Of 1,551 households receiving social security, the mean Social Security income is \$10,754. Of the 1,118 households receiving retirement income, the mean retirement income is \$17,848. For non-family households, single males 65 years of age and over have a mean income of \$33,750, while single females 65 years of age and over have a mean income of \$12,449, according to U.S. Census 2000. There is a need to provide rental housing to accommodate these residents who need smaller, affordable housing units.

10.5.2.3 Family Rental Housing

The median family income in Westport is approximately \$65,000; however the median for a single parent, female head of household family is \$38,491. This range indicates a need for family rental housing.

10.5.2.4 Non-family Rental Housing

The median income of households consisting of a male living alone was \$36,985; for those with a female living alone, the median income was \$15,672. This range indicates a need for non-family rental housing.

The amount and types of rental housing needed in Westport needs to be further evaluated.

10.5.3 Westport's Existing Supply of Affordable Housing

The existing inventory of affordable housing as reported by the Department of Housing and Community Development through October 1, 2001, consists of 93 subsidized housing units, or 1.68% of the 5,545 year round units, however by 2004 the inventory had risen to over 4%.

The Westport Housing Authority manages 48, 1-bedroom rental units of affordable housing for persons 60 and older at Greenwood Terrace, located at 666 State Road. This complex currently has a waiting list of approximately 38 people--13 Westport residents and 24-25 non-residents, some of who were former Town residents. The Authority would like to increase the number of elderly units on this site. The authority has received grants or commitments of funds to upgrade the septic and fire alarm systems and to rehab the building envelopes of the seven buildings.³⁰ Because this site is situated on one of the few public transit routes in Westport, it is well suited to elderly housing.

10.5.4. Affordable Housing Generation, Comprehensive Permits (Mass. Gen. L. Ch. 40B)

Several 40B projects are presently at various stages in the permitting and construction process. As of October 2003 their status is as follows:

Edgewater Apartments: Developed by Parallax Corporation and located on Borden Street, this project was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals on January 16, 2001. It consists of a total of 72 rental apartments restricted to 55 yrs and older, in two phases of 36 units each, 25% of which, or 18, are designated as affordable, the rest market-rate. Under construction in phases, with some units available by the end of 2003, the whole project is scheduled to be

³⁰ Liz Collins, Chair, Housing Authority and Selectperson, 2002; Westport Annual Report, 2003.

completed by 2005. Tax incentives will likely allow 9 additional units to be designated as affordable in each phase, for a total of 54 affordable units, 27 in each phase.

Watuppa Estates: Eighty-seven single-family units, of which 22 would be designated affordable were proposed off Tickle Road in 2001, by Delphic Associates, then withdrawn. Re-submitted as a larger proposal, **Briggs Landing**, in August 2003.

Lincoln Heights: Two low-to-moderate income single-family homes were proposed to be built by extending Lincoln Avenue, by Lincoln Heights Ltd. in 2002. The Zoning Board approved the project in 2003.

Brookmeadow Estates: Fifty-two single-family homes were proposed in 2003 located on an extension of Brookwood Drive. Of these units, 16 would be designated affordable. The project was conditionally approved pending resolution of a title issue. Several legal challenges filed by various parties.

Strawberry Fields: Fifty-two condominium units with 16 restricted to low-moderate income households were proposed in 2002. The Zoning Board denied the project in 2003. The developer has indicated he will re-file his application. Application was re-filed.

Westport Senior Village: Located on the west side of Main Road in the Central Village, this elderly housing project, submitted in 2002, and approved in 2003, consists of two phases. The first phase proposes 30 condominium units, to be sold at market rate, and 48 apartments, designated affordable. Construction started in 2004.

Changes in the definition of affordable units in the Chapter 40B regulations would allow Westport to count additional units such as group homes and accessory apartments created after July 1, 2002 as part of the Town's affordable housing inventory. However, documenting the affordability of accessory apartments to meet State criteria for inclusion in the affordable housing inventory will be problematical and time-consuming, as will monitoring the status of these accessory dwelling units when ownership of the property changes.

**Table 10-14
Subsidized Housing Unit Generation**

Project	Approval Date	Building Permit Issued	Description	Units	Affordable Units
Edgewater Apartments	1/16/01		Age-restricted, 36 units, 27 Affordable per phase	72	54
Phase I		6/17/03	12, 2-BR apts.		
			24, 1-BR apts.		
Phase II			12, 2-BR apts.		
			24, 1-BR apts.		
Lincoln Heights	1/22/03		8, 2-3BR single-family detached	8	2
Brookmeadow Estates	5/30/03, under appeal		3-BR single-family detached	52	13
Westport Senior Village	6/23/03		48, 1-BR apts.	48	48
			30, 2-BR condo's	30	0
	Total Approved			210	117
Strawberry Fields	under review		2-BR Condo's	54	16
Briggs Landing	under review		183 age restricted		
			117, 3/4-BR single-family detached	117	30
			66, 3-BR townhouse condo's	66	16
	Total Under Review			237	62
	Total Potential Units			447	179

Assuming all approved proposed affordable units were built, the Town's affordable housing inventory would increase by 117 units to 210; assuming all the units in projects under review (not necessarily a valid assumption), would bring the total to 272. Based on current rates [see Table 10-7], in the 5 years, from 2003 to 2005, approximately 91 building permits will be issued per year for market-rate housing units built under conventional permitting, added to the permits already issued for 2001 and 2002, leads to an estimated 435 additional units by 2005. Adding the 93 market rate units approved under 40B would bring the Town's total year-round housing inventory to 6,073, of which 210, or about 3.4% will be affordable, still far short of the 10% needed to avoid comprehensive permit projects.

Assuming all 40B units under review were built would bring the total units to about 6,427, of which 272 would be affordable, or about 4.2%.

Assuming a total of 9,996 housing units at total buildout predicts a need to create 1,000 affordable units. Construction of all units currently proposed under comprehensive permits would bring the Town about 27% of the way to that goal. If the 10% requirement stands, the Town can either wait until another 728 units are built under 40B, or propose local initiatives to produce these units gradually.

Addressing Westport's housing needs may be done with or without strategizing to meet the requirements of Chapter 40B or to produce a Housing Strategy which meets the requirements of the Commonwealth; however, producing a Housing Strategy and implementing that strategy will be necessary for the Town to be eligible for certain state programs and grants and to be exempt from comprehensive permits. The Town may decide to continue on its current course until

private developers, utilizing comprehensive permits, have produced the number of affordable units required by the Commonwealth. This is a policy decision the Town should address. As of 2003, Westport's affordable housing inventory eligible for consideration under Chapter 40B stood at 1.68%³¹ of the total year round housing stock of 5,545 units. In order to create affordable housing at the rate required for new housing to meet the 10% goal under Chapter 40B, the Town would need to produce 10 affordable units per year if current building rates continue. This production rate would not, however, erase the already existing deficit of 8.32% or 462 units. In order to meet the Planned Production goal (760 CMR 31.07(1)(i)), the Town would need to demonstrate that affordable units are being produced at a yearly rate 0.75% of its 5,545 total year-round units, or 42 units per year. The Town does not have the resources to do this on its own. Inclusionary zoning amendments proposed by the Zoning Reform Working Group to the Zoning Act and the Subdivision Control Law, which require that developers provide a certain percentage of affordable housing in each new development, may assist towns in achieving state-mandated quotas, or at least not falling even further behind their quota. Changes in those quotas and in 40B itself may render these calculations somewhat irrelevant, although it is unlikely, given the extreme need for housing in Massachusetts, that the Commonwealth will do away completely with measures to increase affordable housing.

As this document is being written, the provisions of General Law 40B have been altered by changes in the regulations of DHCD and by Executive Order of former governor Swift. An impressive number of bills, including regional initiatives, have been introduced into the legislature to amend or abolish Chapter 40B; however, abolition is extremely unlikely. If the Town does not meet the current target of 10% affordable units, or planned production of new eligible units at a rate of 0.75% of the total year-round units per year, both the type of affordable housing and its location will be chosen by developers, not the Town. The housing needs identified in this plan, therefore, will not necessarily be addressed. In addition, the other goals identified by this plan, particularly the land use, environmental and zoning recommendations, will not necessarily be addressed.

If the Town chooses to formulate a housing policy, it should address both the current rate of production of new affordable units, the existing deficit of affordable units and the number of units projected at buildout. Over 15 years a goal of 31 affordable units per year would erase the existing deficit as of 2000, of 462 affordable units, which represents the difference between 1.68% and 10% of total year-round stock being affordable units. Obviously, changes in growth rate and refinement of the number of units possible at buildout will require re-evaluation of the yearly goal. For the 35 or so years after 2015 until buildout is reached in approximately 2050, affordable units should be produced at a rate of approximately 14 per year in order to reach 1,000 affordable units at buildout. These numbers are merely initial gross estimates, subject to considerable revision as development constrains the possibilities and make estimates more accurate. Changes in the regulatory environment continue as this plan is being written. Changes in the definition of "eligible" affordable units under Chapter 40B may increase the Town's affordable percentage somewhat. The Town, however, will need to document units and apply to the Commonwealth in order to obtain credit for all affordable units. The Housing Partnership and perhaps the Housing Authority would be the logical parties to take on the task of coordinating the Town's administrative response to these changes in the regulatory environment, while the Planning Board deals with recommended zoning changes.

10.6 Addressing Westport's Housing Needs

³¹ In 2004 this figure increased to over 4%, the exact figure was in flux as of this writing.

10.6.1. Current Progress

The creation in the fall of 2002 of a Housing Partnership by the Board of Selectmen will serve to focus affordable housing efforts and to provide assistance to the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Housing Authority. This newly reconstituted Westport Housing Partnership could increase its ability to meet these and other challenges by expanding its membership to include more than just representatives of various Town boards. By including business and community leaders, concerned citizens, and clergy, the Partnership could acquire members with a variety of interests and expertise and bring the private and religious sectors into the process of providing fair housing opportunities. Establishing sub-committees within the Partnership, with different functions, such as reviewing comprehensive permits, reviewing and recommending zoning changes with respect to expanded housing options, and monitoring affordable and subsidized units would maximize productivity by efficiently applying individual members' expertise to their particular area of interest.

The Demolition Delay By-Law passed by Town Meeting in 2002 to allow the Town to find ways to preserve properties on the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey may have as a possible side effect the preservation of smaller-sized, more affordable houses. The trend toward "mansionization", however, is expected to continue in Massachusetts. Among its many other provisions, the Massachusetts Land Use Reform Act (MLURA), currently under consideration by the legislature, provides for more local authority to regulate the maximum size of buildings. Some municipalities have considered instituting a fee to be paid into an affordable housing fund, when a house in the affordable range is demolished and replaced by a much larger, more costly unit.

10.6.2. Issues in Development of Rental and First-time Buyer Housing and Affordable Housing in General

1. Lack of Diversity in Housing Types

As noted previously, there are very few multi-family and duplex units in Westport. Although most Westport residents likely prefer single-family homes, for some residents, they are either inappropriate or unaffordable. Multi-family development is both less costly to build and may be used in different ways to address the housing needs of different sectors of the population. As rental units, multi-family is suitable for children of residents or small families who are not ready to, or cannot afford to, purchase a home and for seniors for whom the maintenance responsibility of even a condominium is too burdensome. Age-restricted multi-family housing also provides seniors of limited mobility a built-in social setting and allows efficient delivery of social services. As condominium ownership units, multi-family housing provides an entry into homeownership for first-time homebuyers, a transitional form of housing for seniors who need low maintenance housing but not assisted living, and vacation homes for Westport's seasonal visitors.

2. Appropriate Locations for Affordable Housing at Increased Densities

General recommendations of areas suitable for zoning at increased densities have been made in Chapter 3, Land Use.

With extension of public water and sewer, multi-family housing is possible in the Rte 6 corridor and should be clustered in nodes at existing major intersections with shopping and services nearby as designated in the Land Use chapter. This corridor is on the SRTA bus route and will be close to the proposed MBTA commuter rail. Similar opportunities exist

along the Rte 177 American Legion Highway corridor. Where shopping and service nodes do not exist, mixed use development, such as new "village centers" which provides new commercial as well as residential development should be encouraged to create new, liveable communities.

More public discussion is needed to achieve consensus on density issues. Incentive zoning, where a certain amount of increased density is allowed in certain areas of a subdivision in exchange for either (1) affordable units eligible for counting towards the Town's subsidized housing inventory, or (2) a monetary contribution to a Town Affordable Housing Trust Fund, might, as an additional benefit, distribute affordable housing more equitably throughout new developments. The Town could consider a policy whereby anyone who benefits significantly from up-zoning to greater density or intensity of use, whether by special permit, variance, or density bonuses makes a contribution to the Town's affordable housing fund or affordable units.

Both multi-family and mixed-use developments need to be sited with due regard for environmental factors, such as soil suitability and water supply, as well as impact on and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to Title V issues, siting, size and scale of buildings, circulation and parking, lighting, landscaping and buffering are a few of the issues that must be addressed with higher-density development, such as multi-family and mixed use. Accordingly, at a minimum, special permit with site plan review/approval is recommended. If design guidelines are adopted, design review would also be appropriate. Performance, design and construction standards should be clearly delineated to expedite review and not add unnecessary costs.

Different segments of the population prefer and need different designs and amenities, and would prefer to live in different locations. There is a danger that the same lack of diversity and lack of design seen in single-family subdivisions will be carried over into condominium and apartment developments, producing projects in which citizens live by necessity, not choice.

3. Appropriate Housing for First Time Buyers

Previous discussion noted the preference for first-time homebuyers and empty-nesters for smaller, 2-3 bedroom homes rather than the typical 4-or more bedroom homes currently dominating new construction in Westport. Allowing smaller lot sizes in exchange for deed-restricted affordable units may encourage building these smaller homes. Pre-existing small lots that the Town may take for tax title could be made available for non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity to develop as smaller homes.

4. Phased-development

The phased development by-law, in effect until 2008, does not explicitly refer to single-family development, or, indeed, to residential development, but appears to be aimed at this type of unit. It is unclear how this bylaw might be applied to multi-family and condominium or to commercial developments, but it might be advisable to exempt elderly housing, accessory apartments and affordable housing eligible for inclusion in the 40B affordable units quota from this by-law.

5. 10% Target for Affordable Units

In order for the Town to meet its State target of 10% affordable units it will need to provide incentives for developers to build more than 10% affordable units into new developments.

Since much of the high cost of housing is due to land costs, if the Town chooses to address this issue, it must zone for greater density in appropriate areas where favorable natural factors, transportation, services and infrastructure exist or may feasibly be provided in the future. In addition the Town should pursue alternative means of reaching this goal, by local initiative of Town government and by partnering with the private sector.

10.7. Implementation/Action Plan

Implementation of the recommendations of this section while striving to conform to the goals and objectives of other plan sections will be one of the most challenging projects to emerge from this plan. Success will require a coordinated and multi-pronged approach with cooperation among all relevant Town boards and departments and other public and private entities. Achieving public consensus on housing issues will be time-consuming, but essential. In order to supplement its limited financial and staffing resources, the Town should actively pursue outside funding sources and assistance.

10.7.1. Public Education

Often banks and real estate agents are willing to offer seminars for first-time homebuyers covering both the process of purchasing a home and the responsibilities of home ownership. Occasionally these seminars have been held at White's of Westport. The Town could make meeting space in Town buildings available and coordinate such seminars. This action is encouraged by DHCD and gains the Town credit towards Housing Certification under E.O. 418. Housing Certification qualifies the Town for participation in certain grant programs and gives the Town more points in competitive grant applications. In addition to educating prospective homebuyers, the Town needs to be aware of the impact of lack of affordable housing on its citizens, employees and on attracting economic development.

10.7.2. Continue Current Housing Initiatives and Support Existing Programs

- Continue efforts to increase and document the number of affordable units.
- Increase ability of Housing Authority to continue to manage and maintain existing affordable housing and to develop new housing through use of CPA funds.
- Continue thorough review of 40B Projects. Newly-formed Housing Partnership should work with ZBA, Building Inspector, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Board of Health to develop standard guidelines for reviewing 40B projects and negotiating with developers.
- Investigate whether documenting accessory apartments created since July 1, 2002 for inclusion in affordable unit inventory under Ch. 40B would be cost-effective. If so, document affordable rents or no-rent status of such units as they are created. Apply to DHCD for official inclusion in affordable housing inventory.
- Use Community Preservation Act funds in various ways: for purchasing land for development of affordable housing, for matching funds grants, for supporting expansion of existing housing projects, for housing studies. In April 2003 the CPC Committee began an initiative to work with developers by sending a letter to 40B developers regarding working with that Committee on housing issues.

- *Strive to maintain affordability through deed restriction for as long as allowed by law. Projects with deed restrictions should be monitored and their required continued affordability enforced by the Housing Authority, Housing Partnership or a non-profit agency. One of the above agencies should oversee and review the eligibility of units being developed to ensure progress toward meeting the State's affordable housing goal of 10%.*

10.7.3. Increase Westport's affordable housing opportunities by public/private partnerships, participation in a wider variety of state housing initiatives and regional cooperation.

- Through participation in state programs, Housing Partnership should pursue opportunities for direct financial assistance to first-time and moderate-income homebuyers.
- Funds from sources such as CPA could be earmarked for the Housing Authority to under-write loan guarantees for low-/moderate-income homebuyers. Local lenders may agree to provide home mortgages at below market rate interest rates in return for loan guarantees. In some areas, banks will offer mortgages at one percent below market rate, for example.
- *Review tax title or donated land for its suitability for housing, and either develop affordable units itself or work with other agencies to develop affordable housing on such sites. Tax title land is in demand for various uses, such as to correct road drainage, for public wells and community septic systems, for recreation, for historic site and open space preservation, and for sale to balance the budget. Obviously, building housing on this land would create an increased need for services and is a policy decision that must be discussed. However, different housing types create different levels of demand for services; the Town could choose the housing type.*
- Work with non-profit agencies such as Habitat for Humanity, local religious institutions, etc. to increase the Town's capacity over what Town government may accomplish on its own.
- Pursue increasing the Town's capacity to produce affordable housing by partnering with adjacent communities such as Dartmouth on cooperative efforts.
- Large parcels of land may be preserved for multiple public purposes by leveraging funds designated for open space preservation as a match for open space grant money or other outside funding, and designating a smaller portion of a property for housing. A site plan must be developed clearly showing the acreage available for housing and that remaining as open space in order to qualify for any open-space grant program. At least one Massachusetts community has used this mechanism to develop elderly housing while preserving open space.
- The Town might investigate land banking, to acquire land at the current price in anticipation of future public housing needs, for example, an increased need for elderly housing as that segment of the population is expected to increase substantially.

10.7.4. Revise Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to promote construction of new affordable housing.

10.7.4.1. Zone for Mixed-Use to encourage multi-family in Business Districts, clustered around "shopping nodes" which provide neighborhood retail goods and services along Rte. 6 and Rte. 177. Allow Mixed-Use Village Zones in other areas.

10.7.4.2. Promote accessory apartments in homes and above businesses. Review and consider reducing waiting period requirement and footprint limitation for accessory apartments.

10.7.4.3. Establish percentage goals, such as a minimum of 10 percent, for permanently affordable housing units in new developments of 10 units or more as part of a Residential Growth Management Strategy. Encourage zoning and subdivision reform at the State level to formalize ability of Towns to require affordable housing in new subdivisions through inclusionary zoning.

10.7.4.4. Adopt a zoning by-law to allow increased density in exchange for affordable units in areas where there will be little environmental impact. Research required density needed to produce an incentive for such development. Require such new construction to be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

10.7.4.5. Pursue Source of Funds for On-Going Implementation of Housing Initiatives and More Detailed Strategic Housing Plan

Administration and management of housing programs is presently shared among many departments and agencies. Administering the CDBG housing rehabilitation grant, for example, is done on a part-time basis by staff members associated with the Selectmen's office and/or Building Department. Housing rehabilitation needs are often identified by inspectors or agents in the Building Department, Health Department, or Veteran's Agent.

The Housing Authority manages the Town-owned affordable housing development, but is not closely integrated into the other departments of Town government, thus housing issues tend to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Each individual or department working on a certain aspect of housing issues has information and expertise, but this information is not efficiently shared due to a lack of organizational structure and permanent staff.

If the Town is to undertake more housing initiatives, which will require ever greater understanding of technical and legal issues and more time spent in administering grants and other programs, it will likely be more efficient to use staff dedicated to these activities who are able to respond quickly to funding opportunities and individual citizens' emergency housing needs and who can actively monitor and document affordable unit creation for compliance with state mandates.

A Strategic Housing Plan would identify such needs and would clarify the roles of the Housing Authority, Housing Partnership, and other entities so that the Town's capacity to implement housing recommendations is increased. Additional planning is needed also to more specifically define and implement the actions suggested by this Master Plan and perhaps assist in any re-zoning the Town chooses to pursue.

Notes

1. For the complete Action Plan for Housing, please refer to Chapter 12, Action Plan, Section 12.8 Housing.

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CHAPTER 11
*Capital Facilities and
Human Services*

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

11 Capital Facilities and Human Services

11.1 Introduction

As Westport develops, the burden on services and facilities will also increase. The need for improved or expanded town facilities is potentially driven by three factors in any community: 1) town population growth, 2) the desire for improved services and recreational opportunities, and 3) the need to correct current facilities' deficiencies and space shortages. Westport is experiencing all three factors. There are many concerns in the face of current development pressures. One immediate concern is to identify the specific potential land needs of different Town departments and then develop strategies to acquire land to meet those needs before most of the suitable and desirable parcels are developed privately. In a climate of diminishing state and federal funds, the challenge for Westport is to meet the needs of its citizens without driving the tax rate beyond their reach.

In the past, in order to stay under the Proposition 2 ½ cap, capital expenditures, maintenance and repair work that exceeded a department's annual budget was often completed on an emergency basis. Historically Westport's Annual Town Meeting has seldom considered long-range approaches to meeting anticipated needs. The immediate needs of large departments with substantial capital improvement needs have subdued appropriations directed towards smaller departments and long-range planning.

More recently Westport has seen a need to take a more planned approach. The Town has been resourceful in utilizing existing resources and leveraging volunteer help and alternative sources of revenues to fund improvements. The Head School on Reed Rd. was converted into a senior center. The Earle School was wheelchair accessed and houses seven offices as it was converted to the Town Hall Annex and Community Center. A community playground was built at the Annex. New courts have been built behind the Community Center and with the help of the Police Department the Bicentennial Park now includes a skate park. A 3.3 million dollar bond was passed for school renovations and repairs. More storage space was built onto the Briggs Road Fire Station. The landfill was capped and converted into a recycling center and transfer station. In 1999 Town Meeting established a Capital Improvement Planning Committee. The 2000 Town Meeting voted to adopt a Phased Growth By-Law, the express purpose of which was to slow growth to give the Town time to plan. In 2001 Town Meeting approved a \$1.5 million Agricultural/Open Space Preservation Trust Fund aimed at helping the Town preserve farmland and other open space in Town. The Town has already taken advantage of the Trust Fund by purchasing thirteen acres of the Russell Davis farm on Sanford Road; more projects are under consideration. At the 2002 election voters adopted the Community Preservation Act, which is a state sponsored program designed to raise money for agricultural/open space preservation, historic preservation and affordable housing. Such actions demonstrate the Town's resolve to proactively plan and manage Westport's growth

Over the next several years, the Town will need to explore creative ways to fund services and needed improvements. We must focus immediately on strategies to acquire land to meet the present and future needs of some departments. We should be prepared to acquire, as they become available, strategically located land parcels that will potentially allow expansion of current facilities or building of new facilities for:

- Fire Station, Police Station or Public Safety Facility
- Schools and playing fields
- Public Water Supplies
- Waste Water Facilities

- Highway Department
- Recreational Facilities
- Additional land for Town cemetery
- Stormwater management along several public roads with severe drainage problems

In light of escalating needs for the Town and diminishing availability of funds to meet these needs, Westport must, more than ever, utilize every opportunity for generating revenue. After the Town audit for fiscal year 2003 the auditors provided the town with a Management Letter (Appendix D.) which they do every year after he audit. The Management Letter suggests ways Town government could improve its efficiency and make the best use of opportunities for raising revenues. In the area of revenue enhancement, the auditor recommended the following:

- "Review all departmental fees and miscellaneous receipts. Consideration should be given to a possible 20 to 30% increase in fees and charges.
- Continue to review all receivable balances, specifically departmental and tax title. Allocate the necessary resources to assure these are administered as efficiently as possible...
- Assure that the Town is taking optimum advantage of all State and Federal reimbursement programs. (See further discussion regarding grants administrator"

- **Grants Administrator**

The Town recently terminated the position of Grants Administrator. This is an essential position to any Town government. This person assures that the Town is receiving all the State and Federal Grant and reimbursement money it is entitled to receive. Quite often, the "found" money more than pays for the position. Under Chapter 645, the State reimburses from 60% to 90% of all School Building construction costs*. The fact that the Town has gone through two multi-million dollar School construction projects in the last twelve years without receiving any reimbursement under Chapter 645 is an unacceptable oversight and exemplifies more than ever the need for such assistance. Consideration may be given to combining a grants administrator for both Town and School, as quite often it is not a full-time job. ** "

* (Westport's experience is closer to 55% on some qualifying projects)

** (In 2003 the Board of Selectmen established a policy of hiring a consultant grant writer for specific grants, which is a positive step towards expanding the revenue enhancing capabilities of the Town.)

The Management Letter of 2002 urged the Town to go for a Property Tax over ride to serve the general operating and debt service. Westport typically resists general over rides, and seldom approves over rides targeting specific debt exclusions. Proposition 2 ½ included the over ride provision to enable towns to meet capital improvement needs and periodically adjust their tax levy to compensate for the inevitable pressure on their budget caused by increases that pushed expenses beyond 2 ½%. The frequent failure of over rides to pass in Westport has presented a revenue crisis that has been addressed by removing or reducing services. Since Westport is considered by the State to be a "growth community" it will inevitably need to both expand existing services and facilities and respond to new demands generated by population growth and by potentially more intensive new commercial and industrial land uses. In addition to growth pressures, the Town, by law, must respond to increased requirements, especially regulatory requirements such as stormwater management and provision of affordable housing, transferred by the federal and state government to

the towns, or face reprisals, such as fines or loss of eligibility for state and federal funding. The Town needs to devise ways to fund the operating budget, service debt, and fund capital improvements without continuing the trend of cutting existing Town services. Proposition 2 1/2 overrides are likely to be needed initially and from time to time, as recommended by the 2002 management letter, to build municipal government capacity, but the Town's long-term response should include transferring some of the cost of development and provision of services to developers and users through impact fees and increased fees for services that reflect the actual cost of providing those services. Increased fees for direct services are relatively easy to administer, but must reflect actual costs. The Department of Revenue provides guidelines for costing services for municipalities.

Development impact fees, which can be very difficult to implement and administer, are another mechanism to fund the increased demand for services and facilities caused by growth. They require a detailed capital improvement plan in order to be implemented and to resist legal challenge, and may require that a home rule petition be approved by the state legislature. It should be noted, also, that there are costs inherent in administering programs such as development impact fees. Additional staff positions would likely be necessary to administer such programs.

11.2 Goals and Objectives

Our goal is to provide and maintain adequate capital facilities and human services as the town continues to grow.

Objectives:

1. *Determine how escalating real estate trends in Westport will impact the future land needs of the Town and how that development will increase stress on existing services and facilities.*
 - *Inventory existing Town land and fixed assets of the Town. (This task was substantially completed in Spring, 2003)*
 - *Assess current use and potential future uses of municipal lands.*
 - *Identify parcels suitable for acquisition to meet future needs in various areas of Town.*
 - *Develop creative strategies to acquire land for the future expansion of the departments, the community facilities and human services, as well as for recreation, conservation and open space.*
 - *Continue to monitor the effect of Town growth on public school enrollment and determine level at which a major infrastructure expansion is triggered by this increased enrollment. The major impact from new developments is routinely felt several years after the development is built, since school age children don't enter the system for four to five years. This emphasizes the importance of forecasting school enrollments years in advance, so the Town can anticipate major impacts.*
 - *Evaluate the need for imposing impact fees for certain larger developments to offset the increased burden on Town services and infrastructure.*
2. *Pursue a study of Town departments in terms of allocated resources, personnel, and manpower to:*
 - *Determine if current organization is as efficient and coordinated as it could be.³²*
 - *Determine if it would be feasible to combine and/or re-arrange some departments.*
 - *Assess the pros and cons of a Westport DPW.*
 - *Evaluate the need to expand the Town nurse department.*
3. *Using available resources, including current staff and volunteer help:*

³² Annual Town Meeting of 2004 approved an article to contract with the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth to conduct such a study.

- *Facilitate more dialogue between departments.*
- *Better coordinate the review and permitting processes for private land development.*
- *Monitor the Town's land requirements for public facilities, the current use of town-owned land, and the availability of suitable parcels for acquisition.*
- *Create balanced strategies to meet the Town's needs as Westport continues to grow.*

11.3 Existing Conditions

11.3.1 Introduction

Map 11-1 shows all land currently owned by the Town and the present location of Westport's public facilities, including Town Administration offices, public schools and the School Administration offices, Police Department, two Fire Stations, Highway Department, Cemetery Department, Housing Authority, Harbormaster & Wharfinger, Senior Center, and the Town Recycling Center and Solid Waste Transfer Station.

In 2001 the Capital Improvement Planning Committee produced a report outlining a five-year plan for capital projects and improvements for the Town. Town departments represented in the report were the Police, Harbormaster, Council on Aging, Board of Health, Highway Department, Selectmen (Town Hall, Town Hall Annex), Library, Fire Department and Schools. The total capital outlay required to meet this goal was almost \$8 million, with \$3.1 million coming from a Capital Planning Article and \$4.9 million from bonds and grants. The plan sought to complete these projects and improvements by the end of 2005. With the recent fiscal difficulties that the Town has been experiencing, very little has been done to meet the goals outlined in this plan. Those needs still exist. Each year that passes sees those needs growing more urgent, and new issues arise that add to the laundry list of improvements and projects that are needed to attain even a minimal level of Town services. The Town has reconvened the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, and that group has worked hard to address the Town's needs in this important area of planning. They presented recommendations at the 2004 Annual Town Meeting. The Town meeting voted to place the recommended items on a special election ballot the following summer, and all but one failed to pass at that special election. Such results point to the need for a more creative strategy to assure that these important Town needs are recognized by the Townspeople as essential and receive the funding they require.

The 1999 Open Space Plan includes in Appendix A a Section 504 self evaluation of Westport's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This is a comprehensive assessment of all Town facilities and identifies improvements needed in order to comply with the Act. The Town has performed many of the listed improvements, but it is essential that the Town's 504 Coordinator identify where improvements remain to be performed and advocate for them. In 2004, the Town discussed increasing accessibility at the Town beach.

11.3.2 Town Offices

11.3.2.1 Town Hall

In the 2001 Capital Improvement Plan the following projects and improvements were listed for the Town Hall:

- 1. Upgrade ceiling lights (\$30,000)- to be completed in 2001. Nothing has been done as of March 2003 to complete this project.*
- 2. Drywall Ceilings (\$10,000) – to be completed in 2001. Nothing has been done as of March 2003 to complete this project.*
- 3. Repair Town Hall parking lot (\$50,000) – to be completed in 2002. Nothing has been done as of March 2003 to complete this project.*
- 4. Computer Upgrade (\$80,000) – to be completed in 2003. Some computer upgrading has been achieved, but more needs to be done to complete the Local Area Network (LAN) and tie together Town departments both in the Town Hall and Town Hall Annex. In*

2004 the Selectmen hired a computer network administrator to coordinate the completion and administration of the Town's computer network. At the 2004 Annual Town Meeting funds were appropriated to launch the final phase of upgrading the system and completing the LAN. Once the system is functional, there will be a need for staff training in using the system and any new software associated with the network. The role of the Network Administrator will expand to servicing the network, supporting network users, troubleshooting problems as they occur.

5. Town Hall Floors – (\$25,000) – to be completed in 2004.

In 2000 the Town purchased a new emergency generator for the Town hall for \$20,000. A new boiler was recently installed, but some more service to the heating system is still needed. The building does not have central air conditioning, and that is another item on the wish list of Town employees. The new HVAC system at the Town Hall Annex is substantially complete, with some bugs still being worked out. Individual units from that building have been made available to the Town Hall.

The Town Hall is also in need of exterior repairs, including repointing of the exterior brick. The Town Hall windows are in urgent need of either complete overhaul or replacement. The front steps, which had deteriorated to such an extent that the front entrance was closed for several months, were repaired by Town employees in 2002 and the entrance re-opened.

Another serious issue is the poor state of the plumbing system in the building.

In 2004, the Selectmen proposed a project to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to address the exterior brick, the windows and the ceilings. The CPC presented the project to the Town at the 2004 Annual Town Meeting and it was approved for funding with CPA funds. One major improvement to the Town Hall within the last ten years was the addition of an elevator on the south side to make the building handicap accessible.

11.3.2.2 Town Hall Annex

The Town Hall Annex resides in the old Milton E. Earle School building at 856 Main Rd., just over 300 yards south of the Town Hall. The Town decided in the 1990's to preserve the building and modify its use to accommodate Town offices that were overcrowding the Town Hall. The Annex now houses land use and inspectional services departments (Building Department, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, and Planning Board), Human Services (Town Nurse and Veteran's Agent) and the Public Educational Government (PEG) Cable Access TV office. The Cable Access TV office's mission is to teach residents how to express themselves via Westport's public access TV network. The Town has hired two part-time coordinators for the cable access network. Through their efforts and that of the Cable Advisory Committee, the technical capacity and sophistication of the network has increased in recent years; for example, there is greatly increased replay capability and more sophisticated in-house graphics and editing capability. Bringing cable access TV more closely into Town government has benefited the Town in several ways. The two coordinators are able to respond much more effectively to the Town's specific needs than in the past. In addition, the location of the office in the Annex allows easy access by the public.

A large meeting room on the first floor accommodates public meetings by many Town boards. The Annex also serves as the Community Center. A basketball court on the ground level is used extensively by Town leagues. It is also used by local residents for informal basketball, health and dance classes, and as a good general gathering place for local activities. It serves as the polling station for precinct B. Events such as plays by a community theatre group and some musical events have also been held there. The Town leases a portion of the basement to the Codimonk Pre-School.

Within the last five years the Annex was made handicap accessible via an exterior wheelchair ramp and an interior stair lift. Vinyl replacement windows were installed and the south parking lot was repaved. The Town has just completed installing a new HVAC system. Students and staff from the Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School performed the

work, which was a money saving strategy conceived by the Town's Building Inspector, who has taken on the job of handling building improvements and repairs at the Annex. In the 1990's, parents and other volunteers built a community playground on the north side of the Annex, which enjoys virtually constant use. The Recreation Commission built outdoor basketball courts behind the Annex, as well as a beach volleyball court. There are plans to build a bandstand for outdoor plays and concerts, supported by private donations and local businesses. In the summer of 2003 a stage was constructed and summer concerts were held. As an office building, the Annex lacks certain amenities to make it a more comfortable place to work. There is no place for employees to take breaks or eat lunch other than their offices or in small rooms such as the copy room and rest room area. There is little storage room for public records. The wiring and phone systems are also sub-standard. Access to the Internet is restricted to dial-up access.

In the 2001 Capital Improvement Plan the following projects and improvements were listed for the Town Hall Annex:

1. *Replace Annex Roof (\$30,000)*
This project was to be completed in 2001 and it has been completed.
2. *New/Used Generator (\$25,000)*
This was to be completed in 2001. In 2000 the Town Hall got a new generator and the old one was to be moved to the Annex. However, further study revealed that it was not a viable option, so the Annex does not have a generator as of March 2003.
3. *Exterior sidewalls and insulation (\$30,000)*
This was to be completed in 2001. It was completed in the latter part of 2002.
4. *Computer Upgrade (Part of Town Hall project mentioned previously)*
*The most important element of this project remains to be completed, and that is the completion of the Local Area Network (LAN) that will connect all Town departments. The LAN will also serve to make the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS) more accessible to Town departments. **
** GIS Maintenance – The Town needs to appropriate money to update the Town's GIS. It is presently only current to January, 2000. New subdivisions need to be digitized, and the reconciling of the GIS to the Assessor's Office needs to be completed. The Town created a revolving fund dedicated to maintenance of the GIS and funded through fees paid by developers. This fund will ultimately support GIS maintenance, but the Town needs to appropriate funds beyond the revolving fund to bring the system up to date.*

The preservation of the Milton Earle School building has proven to be a winning situation for the Town. A significant historic structure was saved, and it is providing valuable service to the Town at a time when Westport is struggling to maintain services due to the fiscal crisis.

11.3.3 Public Safety

11.3.3.1 Public Safety Land/Building Committee

Historically Westport has housed the Police and Fire Departments in separate facilities. Both departments are experiencing a need for upgrading and expansion, as indicated by the following profiles. In 1999 the Selectmen appointed the Public Safety Land/Building Committee to investigate the needs of the Fire and Police departments and to make recommendations on how best to meet those needs, including the feasibility of building a Public Safety building that would house both the Police and the Central Village Fire Station. Their report concludes:

“Land planning and cost considerations lead the Committee to conclude, after considerable discussion, that further planning should focus on development of a joint facility and that such future planning should proceed as expeditiously as possible.”

This concept is not fully supported by both departments. Given the urgency of resolving the needs of both departments and the fact that available land to meet those needs becomes a more serious issue as time passes, Westport must grapple with this problem immediately.

11.3.3.2 Police Department and Facilities

Westport's Police are housed in one building next to the Town Hall at 818 Main Rd. The building was constructed in 1976. A Police substation was established in 2000 in a vacant storefront next to the Cumberland Farms at the intersection of Rte. 6 and Davis Road. A summary of the deficiencies of the main building as expressed in the final report of the Public Safety Land/Building Committee states:

- 1. The building is 25 years old, and several of the building systems and components are at or beyond their useful life. Notable are the heating system, the windows, and the potable water system.*
- 2. The staff of the police station has outgrown the present size of the building. This is due to both an increase in staff, and the changing nature of police work. Much of the modern police force involves work by officers in an office environment. This includes various types of administrative work, interviews, interrogations, computer usage, meetings and training. Some interim measures have been undertaken to maximize the building, notably finishing off the basement for training, storage, offices and locker rooms and exercise.*
- 3. The building does not meet several present building, life safety, and accessibility codes and police department certification requirements.*
- 4. The building lacks adequate locker rooms and has no shower facilities.*

Another shortcoming of the existing facility is lack of space to park or garage vehicles. Mechanical work is farmed out to local garages. There are 10 to 15 operational cruisers, both marked and unmarked.

Communications equipment has been upgraded over the last several years, although there are still problems with it. In 1997 the police had one transmitting tower and one portable radio. They now have walkie-talkies for each officer and four receiving towers located around town. Degraded phone lines, wear and tear on equipment and some inconsistency in the manner in which the equipment is used and maintained by individual officers contributes to some of the problems, but some incompatibility of hardware has complicated the issue. The department has been dealing with the problems in house due to budgetary constraints. There are now twenty eight (28) officers on the force. Federal standards suggest that with our population of 14,000, Westport should have 33 officers. The leadership of the Police force feels more officers are required due to the fact that Westport covers over 50 square miles, four miles wide and fourteen miles long, and borders two urban centers. There is also the added burden of serving the summer visitors who visit Horseneck Beach. Ten officers have been added since 1997. A Federal program to help towns upgrade their police forces subsidized six out of the ten, which helped ease the strain on upgrading the force. The Federal subsidy has run out, which forced the department to downsize from 33 officers to the current 28, which is all the Town of Westport tax base will accommodate when State and Federal funds to municipalities are shrinking.

At present there is one Administrative Assistant who handles the routine administrative duties for the force and supervises dispatch. This person is overloaded with work and has a difficult time completing tasks due to interruptions caused by phone answering duties and dealing with visitors to the Police station. There is a serious need for a Head Dispatcher position to handle those duties.

By applying for grants and State and Federal reimbursement programs, the Police Department has actively pursued revenue enhancement and received \$1.2 million in grants over the last few years, despite not having the staff time to pursue every grant available to them.

11.3.3.3 Fire Department and Facilities

Westport's Fire Department is housed in two facilities. The oldest is the Central Village Station; the more modern facility is at Briggs Road at the intersection with Rte. 88. The Briggs Rd. Station has recently received a new addition.

At this time two stations are adequate to cover the Town; however the Central Village Station needs to be relocated or have substantial modifications done to solve some of the problems. Some replacement vehicles must be specially ordered to fit into the station, which adds an extra cost to the vehicle. Much of the equipment is old and needs frequent service and repair. Some trucks are antiques and are getting harder to repair due to the difficulty in getting parts. Unlike the Highway Department, the Fire Department does not have its own repair garage or mechanics. Except for some minor service, the major repairs are done by outside mechanics. The report of the Public Safety Land/Building Committee lists in detail the present problems with the current equipment and the Central Village Fire Station.

Westport mans its stations with a five-man shift: three in Central Village and two at Briggs Rd. These five people must provide for fire and ambulance response. Most of the time it is adequate, but the difficulty in attracting new recruits, particularly to the call firefighters, sometimes puts a strain on the department. Ambulance calls represent most of the emergency vehicle runs from the two stations. Out of 2027 runs by the primary emergency vehicles in the year 2000, 1371 were ambulance runs; nearly 68%. The Town voted to have two ambulances on 24hour call in the mid 1980's, and it is beginning to look as though there should be three ambulances to meet the growing needs of the Town.

11.3.4 Public Health and Works

11.3.4.1 Municipal Solid Waste (B.O.H.)

Westport completed the capping of its landfill in 1998 and now handles its solid waste through a transfer station and recycling center located at the old landfill site on Hix Bridge Rd. Some residents subscribe to a private trash collection service, which helps reduce the load on the transfer station. In capping the landfill Westport acquired a new roll-off truck and five roll-off containers. Town Meeting approved the purchase of a new loader. The Town has a contract with the city of New Bedford to receive our solid waste at the Crapo Hill landfill; it is delivered by the new roll-off truck driven by one of two Board of Health Transfer Station employees.

Given the hours spent by one employee handling equipment and delivering containers to Fall River, there is usually only one attendant at the guard shack to monitor trash entering the transfer station. There is a need for one additional attendant to monitor the recycling center. Westport's recycling center handles a wide range of recyclables, including cardboard, newspaper, junk mail, metal, glass (clear, brown & green), fluorescent bulbs, crankcase oil, paint, tires and batteries. It provides a space for the local Music Boosters to sort and handle returnable bottles and cans. One continuous challenge for the Board of Health is finding markets for recycled materials. The State keeps a list of dealers who will receive certain materials, but the list changes frequently and occasional gaps occur.

The recycling center is not a big money maker for the Town, but balancing those materials we do get money for against those we have to pay to get rid of reduces dramatically the volume of trash we need to truck to New Bedford at the cost of \$67 to \$87/ton.

11.3.4.2 Town Nurse

Westport's Town Nursing Department exists in the person of one Registered Nurse. The office is located in the Town Hall Annex at 856 Main Rd. and is open on Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The services provided by the Town Nurse include:

1. *Well Child Clinic*
Clinics are held once a month with an attending physician and provide all State mandated immunizations, lead screenings and health exams.
2. *Adult Immunizations*
The Nursing Department provides Tetanus Diphtheria Boosters, Diphtheria, Flu, and Pneumococcal injections. Flu clinics are held yearly.
3. *Blood Pressure Clinic*
Held at the Town Hall Annex every Monday 9:00 am to 12:00 noon and at the Senior Center every 3rd Tuesday of the month. Clinic includes healthy life choices and education regarding medication and nutrition.
4. *Other services include maternal and newborn home visits, WIC (Women, Infant and Child) Satellite Program once a month, glucose screenings, B12 injections per order of physician, TB testing, other vaccines for high risk adults, referrals, loan of durable medical equipment, and communicable disease investigation and reporting as required by Mass Dept. of Public Health (MDPH).*

The Nursing Department feels it provides adequate service to the Town at this time, although they do recognize some gaps in the visiting nurse programs, controlled by Medicare, which dictates the length and number of visits it will pay for. There are private nursing organizations that provide service, but for some residents it is beyond their reach financially and the Town would be providing a needed service if it could contribute more to this need. Adding an LPN as one additional staff person in the Town Nurse's office would improve services provided, but the need is not urgent at this time.

11.3.4.3 Highway Department

Westport's Highway Department is located behind the Town Hall at 820 Main Rd. in the middle of Central Village. Its primary building is a metal building containing the office, repair garage and sign shop. That building was built over forty years ago and is in need of maintenance. The office space is too small and there will be a need for more garage space in the not too distant future. Accessory structures include a pole barn for storing salt and another smaller metal structure for cold storage. There are also aboveground fuel tanks that supply all Town vehicles.

There are eleven (11) full time employees, one office clerk, a General Foreman and the Highway Surveyor. The department has lost two positions recently due to cutbacks. The Highway Department does most of its own maintenance and repairs on vehicles and equipment. Ninety percent of the department vehicles are garaged in the main building. Some equipment is so old that parts are hard to find and the Town will need to consider some major capital expenses to replace them in the near future. The department owns a grader that is over 30 years old.

A high percentage of the work done by the department is tree work. In order to make that work more efficient the Town would need to invest in a bucket truck. As an alternative, the Town might consider contracting that work out to a private contractor, since providing that service by Town employees may not be as cost effective when considering equipment costs and using Highway Department staff.

The base communications system is out of date and in need of upgrading. Radios in vehicles are upgraded with the vehicles.

Subdivisions built in the last several years have been constructing more sophisticated stormwater management systems than in previous years. The proliferation of stormwater retention and detention ponds, as well as alternative drainage structures, has created new and more complex maintenance responsibilities for the Highway Department. This new task has not burdened the department yet, since these new systems are still relatively clean and haven't experienced degradation or overgrowth over time. The need to attend to these

systems will come over the next few years and represents a substantial burden to the present resources available to the department. It is inevitable that this workload will translate into a demand for higher appropriations for the Highway Department at Town Meeting. To make this situation even more serious, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed new stormwater management requirements for cities and towns mandating more oversight on any work impacting the discharge of stormwater into rivers and streams. Not only will this increase the workload for the department, it will require the Town to pay for engineering services to meet the new regulations. This may push the Town to consider a permanent position of Town Engineer and perhaps the formation of a Department of Public Works (DPW). This would help not only highway maintenance, but also serve to consolidate Town resources to more efficiently and economically manage and maintain public facilities. With talk of future expansion of public water and sewer in parts of the north end, the Town needs to consider forming a Water and Sewer Commission.

Chapter 90 highway funds, which are allocated from the State yearly to all Towns and Cities in the Commonwealth, have historically provided the bulk of the necessary revenue for road improvement projects in Westport. Chapter 90 funds may not be used for routine patching and maintenance, which must be funded from the Highway budget. Chapter 90 funds may be used only for "road improvement" projects, and Westport primarily uses its Chap. 90 money for road overlay projects. Previously, Westport has received approximately \$500,000 of Chapter 90 funds every year; however, recent crises at the State level have dramatically cut into State funds to municipalities, and Chapter 90 funds have been reduced severely. Only \$163,000 came from the state in FY00, and in FY03 and 04 that number fell further to around \$80,000. It is unknown when this situation will improve. If any road improvements are to be undertaken, it would be prudent for the Town to seek innovative strategies to raise needed revenues through means other than impacting Westport's tax rate. Chap. 90 funds may be "saved" from year to year. They can then be applied to projects of larger scope. Because the cost of a roadway reconstruction project (for new pavement, drainage improvements or widening) is significant, Towns often cannot fund a "major" construction project with their Chap. 90 money. However, the State allows Chap. 90 funds to be used for the design of road improvements to roads, which then qualify for State/Federal construction funding. Other communities similar to Westport have used their Chapter 90 funds in this way to obtain significant road construction of some local roads to be funded by the State. In Westport, roads classified as "Rural Major Collectors" on the state classification list, including East Beach Road, Adamsville Road, Old County Road, Hix Bridge Rd. and Pine Hill Road, would be eligible for projects of this type. Improvements to State roads in Town will be totally funded by the State, but they must be coordinated through the State planning agency and Massachusetts Highway Department. This is how the recent improvements to Route 88 were performed. Other state funds or grants may also be available for certain road improvements, including enhancements or safety improvements, for which the Town could apply. Such strategies are dependent on local State Representatives and the Highway Surveyor being involved with regional and state agencies in leveraging available State and Federal funds for local road projects.

11.3.4.4 Cemetery Department

Westport's Cemetery Department manages 36 cemeteries under perpetual care. There are four primary cemeteries where interments are still performed. They include the cemetery at Westport Point, Maple Grove and Linden Grove on Reed Rd., and the Beech Grove Cemetery on Main Rd. The department is staffed by one department head and two permanent employees. Part time help has been employed in the summer, but the current fiscal crisis has suspended that opportunity for the department to get much needed extra help in its busiest season.

Housed in a small shed at the Beech grove Cemetery, the department garages what equipment they can. There is a small storage shed at the Reed Road location. All maintenance equipment, such as mowers and trimmers, is transported from the main building to the various cemeteries around town. The building is in need of expansion and maintenance. Historically any improvements to the buildings have been done by the cemetery staff. Limited staff and time have prevented some building projects from being completed. They own two dump trucks, a trailer and one pickup truck.

The Highway Department offers substantial assistance to the Cemetery Department with heavy equipment and manpower for some land clearing operations. It is a Highway Department backhoe that performs the excavations for interments.

There are many more than 36 cemeteries in Town; it would be beneficial to map all of them in the Town's GIS. This would not only help the Cemetery Department manage these assets, but it would help the Town protect these invaluable cultural and historic resources and help the Veteran's Agent to efficiently service veteran's graves. If the department had more staff and equipment they could provide maintenance to more of the local cemeteries.

The most pressing need perceived by this department is that of acquiring land for meeting the needs of the Town well into the future. It is estimated that there may be enough land at the Beech Grove Cemetery to provide service for another 60 to 80 years. If a study of the Town Forest reveals that it would be the best location for the new Central Village Fire Station or Public Safety Building, that period of service could be cut in half. This is a long range planning issue that the Town must address.

11.3.4.5 Harbormaster

The primary issue facing the Harbormaster is siltation caused by sand washed into the river from the sand dunes. In his report to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee in June of 1999 the Harbormaster stressed the need for dredging of the entire working harbor and reconstruction of the jetty at Horseneck Point (Boat Beach).

Funding for this project is a serious concern. The recommendation for the Capital Improvement Plan was for the Town to set aside \$50,000 per year as matching funds, starting in the year 2000, until State and Federal money was available. Due to fiscal emergencies faced at Town Meeting, that money has not been put aside. In fact, \$25,000 that was reserved for that purpose was swept into the General Fund to help reduce the deficit.

In 2002 the urgency to address the river dredging moved the Selectmen to form a committee dedicated to moving that project forward. Since no funds had been put aside for this purpose, the committee is seeking any other means to fund the project. State and Federal funds are available, and the committee has received support through the Community Preservation Committee to contribute to the Town's share. Some funds are also available from an enterprise fund that was established to support these kinds of projects.

The dredging project is divided into two separate projects. The first addresses the main channel from Half Mile Rock to just west of Crack Rock. The channel will be dredged from 100 to 150 feet in width, and 9 feet in depth at low tide. This is a Federal project run by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Town has already contributed \$25,000 as matching funds and may have to come up with as much as \$100,000 more. Sampling studies of the bottom material has determined that it is suitable for beach renourishment, so it will be pumped onto the beach. It is expected to begin in the fall of 2005.

The second dredging project focuses on the area around the Town docks at the Point. This is a State project with local matching funds and in-kind services. Sampling studies have determined that the bottom material will not be suitable for beach renourishment, which places an additional burden on the project to locate a disposal site. Two options are being considered. The first is ocean disposal, requiring finding a suitable ocean site. The second is upland disposal, and a site for that is being sought. The Town gravel pit on Drift Rd. is being

considered. This project may only be performed in November, December and January. There is a lengthy permitting process that is underway and it is the hope of the dredging committee to have the permitting in place before the end of September 2004 and start the project the following November.

The health of Westport's river and working harbor has a direct impact on the health of our commercial fishing industry as well as all activities related to recreational boating and fishing. This is a resource that cannot be ignored and the Town must support the strategies put forth by the committee to guarantee the success of the project.

11.3.4.6 Wharfinger

The Town Wharf at Westport Point was completely rebuilt in 2001. Money raised through docking fees goes into an enterprise fund that supports the department. At this time the wharf is in good shape and under good management.

11.3.4.7 Landing Commission

The Landing Commission serves to maintain landings in Town that exist for the purpose of giving Westport's residents access to the Town's rivers and ponds. Map 11-1 shows the known Town Landings, as well as the two Public landings at Gooseberry Island and the foot of the Fontaine Bridge. Access to Westport's rivers and ponds is an important amenity for Westport residents, and it is vital that the Town protect the rights of its citizens to take advantage of these special resources. Some landings are no longer used or maintained. Some are heavily used and the commission spends most of its meager budget on the maintenance of these facilities. The notable Town landings that are most heavily used include one on the south side of Hix Bridge, one at the Head, and one off River Road near Adamsville.

11.3.5 Schools

Westport's schools represent the largest department in Town in terms of facilities and personnel. They also utilize over 65% of the Town's annual budget. The schools are particularly vulnerable in times of fiscal difficulty since much of the annual increase in the costs of running the schools are driven by mandates by the state. They are also subject to contractual agreements with a large labor union. Current development trends are yielding subdivisions that house young couples raising or planning to raise families. For the Town this represents a potential burden on the tax base, but one that will not be felt until those children grow to school age and enter the system. This is one area where long range planning is essential to anticipate the future impacts of new development. Westport must plan, design and construct renovations and/or additions to existing school facilities in order to be prepared for the impacts of this growth.

11.3.5.1 The Alice A. Macomber Primary School

The Alice A. Macomber Primary School is a Pre-kindergarten through Kindergarten facility currently housing approximately 250 students in 29,000 sq. ft. on approximately four acres. Built in 1956 with a four-classroom addition constructed in 1966, the program offers Integrated Pre-school, Early Elementary Development, Full Day Kindergarten. The grounds contain a recently renovated playground and fields used by some Town athletic teams.

11.3.5.2 The Westport Elementary School

The Westport Elementary School, serving Grades 1 through 4, currently houses 650 students in 60,000 sq. ft. set on five acres. Built in 1977, it is a square building constructed around a central open courtyard. The grounds contain playing fields used by a variety of Town sports teams. The WES is the newest public school facility.

11.3.5.3 The Westport Middle School

Built in 1970, the Westport Middle School serves Grades 5 through 8 and currently houses approximately 650 students. The 108,000 sq. ft. building consists of two levels. The grounds contain athletic fields and tennis courts.

11.3.5.4 Westport High School

Westport High School is a complex that consists of 123,340 sq. ft. currently housing approximately 485 students. Built in 1954, with additions at both north and south ends constructed in 1972, this building also houses the central administration offices and the district maintenance department for the school system. In 1999, Town Meeting approved a 3.3 million dollar bond for school repairs, with most of the projected work targeted for needed high school renovations. The high school is underwent NEASC reaccreditation in 2001-02 and 2002-03.

11.3.5.5 Westport Community Schools Administration Offices

The Westport Community Schools Administration Offices and the district's Maintenance Department are located in two converted classrooms and several offices at the northern end of the Westport High School.

11.3.5.6 Regional Schools

Westport, along with Fall River, Somerset, and Swansea, support the Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School and Diman Regional School of Practical Nursing. In each class year Diman prepares approximately 20 Westport students to enter employment as skilled apprentices or to go on to more advanced technical training.

11.3.5.7 Current Status of Facilities

*Upon the completion of several system wide building renovation projects currently underway, the schools will meet all American with Disabilities Act requirements. Facilities maintenance is also addressed in the district's strategic plan for 2000-2005, **Destination: Excellence**, which was developed through extensive community participation. The plan gives readers a glimpse of the upcoming programs and initiatives that Westport citizens can expect to see in the future, including "more extensive facilities planning, improved reading and writing across the curriculum, and increased achievement of all students in keeping with 21st century workforce standards."*

11.3.5.8 The Specific Westport Community Schools Action Plan

*The Westport Community Schools' overall action plan is incorporated in its 2000-2005 strategic plan document, **Destination Excellence**. This comprehensive plan, developed through series of focused discussions reflecting the views of a broad cross section of the community, provides the guiding principles in setting the direction for the school system. In this report, emphasis is placed on "a healthy, safe, and structured environment...conducive to learning", "(an environment) that supports and encourages quality teaching," and facilities that "ensure that Westport Community Schools enhance the value of the community." The School Committee has set, as one of its ongoing priorities, the need to: advocate for quality facilities that can accommodate smaller class size despite enrollment growth; provide accessibility to state of the art technology and information systems; and, adhere to national and regional school accreditation standards.*

To meet the objective within this goal, the School Committee has established a School Growth Planning Subcommittee, which has continued to monitor the status of the system's facilities as they reflect the academic goals of the instructional program. In December 2001, the subcommittee recommended, and the School Committee approved, a Long Range Planning study to assess the current status of the system's facilities, as well as its enrollment trends. That study, conducted by the McGuire Group, was completed in May 2002.

In addition, the renovations scheduled for completion by Fall 2003 include complete renovation of the high school science labs in order to provide a more suitable environment for instructional needs in this area. Other renovations in three of the system's four schools, while not undertaking any structural changes, do improve the quality of the learning environment through renovated heating, lighting and flooring systems.

11.3.6 Library

After eighty years in varied locations, the Westport Free Public Library moved to its current home at 408 Old County Road in 1971. The current 7,056 sq.-ft. building, constructed in part

with federal funds, is a one-story, flat roofed, cinder block structure. The stucco sides with a false facade of shingles give the appearance of a mansard roof. The Library is maintained primarily by Town funds, supplemented by state grants and trust income.

The interior of the library provides an open floor plan housing eleven public service areas including circulation (176 sq. ft.), reference (541 sq. ft.), and public access computers (36 sq. ft.). The adult collections are located in the following areas: fiction (532 sq. ft.), non-fiction (770 sq. ft.), new books (176 sq. ft.), large print (36 sq. ft.), audiovisual (54 sq. ft.), and periodicals (96 sq. ft.). The children's area is approximately 704 sq. ft.; and the young adult area 162 sq. ft. Current shelving is filled to capacity with 35,000 books, 300 audiocassettes, and 300 videos.

A separate multipurpose room with an adjacent small kitchen can accommodate up to sixty people. It serves a dual function, providing an 882 sq. ft. space for library programs and community meetings.

With the exception of the front door, which must be opened manually, the Library is handicapped accessible. A 7,500 sq.-ft. parking lot provides one handicapped and fifteen regular parking spaces.

In 1971 the Westport Library was 2,800 sq. ft. below the minimum space requirements recommended by the American Library Association for a town the size of Westport. In fiscal year 1999 (FY'99), 0.87% of the Westport "municipal pie" was spent on the library. For libraries in the same population group (10,000-14,999), the average was 1.45%; and statewide the average was 1.35%. When compared with other libraries in its population group for FY'00, Westport ranked 44 out of 49 for total appropriated municipal income and 45 out of 49 for total operating expenditures. It is clear that while the Town has under funded this department, the Library has been a well-managed and maintained facility, with support from the Friends of the Westport Library, and has served the population well.

11.3.7 Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities have been inventoried and assessed in the Open Space and Recreation section 8.3B and 8.5.3

11.3.8 Social Services

11.3.8.1 Senior Services and Needs

The Council on Aging is housed in the Senior Center located at 75 Reed Road. Built in 1907 as the Head School, renamed as the Hazel Tripp Building, the building underwent renovations, and the Senior Center opened in 1996, with renovations continuing in the basement area. The primary function of the Council is to identify and meet the needs of Westport's elder population and to inform elders and the community of available services. To fulfill this mission there are four branches to the department.

- *Social Services, which include help with concerns about health insurance, pharmacy programs, fuel assistance, Medicare advocacy and various health care needs which include working with various other Town Departments.*
- *Dial a Ride Transportation - Currently the COA has 4 vans with drivers who are first aid and CPR trained.*
- *Senior Social Day Program - currently open 5 days a week from 9 to 3. The program is self-sufficient.*
- *Senior Center Programs and Activities include physical classes aimed at keeping healthy and active; creative arts and craft classes and activities; education opportunities including using current technology; and just plain having food and fun.*

The Friends of the Council on Aging is a volunteer group of citizens who lend support throughout the year to help this department deliver needed services.

In order to assess how they were meeting the needs of the Town's elders, the council conducted the 2001 Town of Westport Needs Assessment of Persons Age 55 and Older. From this survey it is clear the three main concerns of the elderly are:

1. *Having to give up their home and be dependent on others.*
2. *Isolation.*
3. *Transportation.*

Senior Services and Needs - Meeting the above 3 needs will keep the Council busy for the foreseeable future. The elders will need the Town's continued support.

11.4 Implementation/Action Plan

11.4.1 Impact of growth on Capital Facilities and Human Services

1. Examine and evaluate current use of Town owned land
2. Strategize acquisition of land to meet Town needs
3. Study long range impact of growth on Capital Facilities and the threshold at which major improvements or expansion would be triggered.

11.4.2 Town Department Study

1. Evaluate current organization of departments.
2. Study benefits of combining/reorganizing some departments.
3. Evaluate benefits of forming a Westport Department of Public Works (DPW).
4. Make decision on recommendation of Public Safety Land/Building Committee
 - a. If decision is made to proceed with a Public Safety Building combining the South End Fire Station and the Police, evaluate existing Town owned land to site the facility. If none can serve that purpose, conduct a land search to identify and acquire the necessary land.
 - b. If decision is to keep both departments separate, conduct a land search to meet the needs of both departments.
5. Hire additional employee for solid waste transfer station.
6. Acquire land for expansion of cemetery.
7. Plan/Design/Construct addition to Library
8. Plan/design/construct renovations and/or additions to existing school facilities.
9. Continue implementing improvements to Town facilities to meet compliance requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
10. Complete construction of the Local Area Network in Town offices and provide for local administration and maintenance of the network through a new Town position or private contractor.
11. Appropriate funds to complete the implementation and upgrading of the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS).

11.4.3 Revenue Enhancement

1. Study available options to leverage more money from State for road maintenance and improvements.
2. Aid all Town departments in finding revenue enhancement opportunities to support their programs.
3. Increase user fees where appropriate to enhance the Town's revenue stream.

NOTES

- 1. For the complete action plan for Capital Facilities and Human Services, please refer to Section 12.9 of Chapter 12.**
- 2. During the public meeting of February 26, 2003, a member of the public expressed the opinion that "things are going to change" and that it is important that there be continuity in the management of Town government functions by professional staff because there will be more problems to be addressed as the Town grows, there is a limited pool of volunteer government officials, and the number of hours people are willing to serve as volunteers will be inadequate to respond to these challenges.**
- 3. One member of the Planning Board questioned whether the Town was ready for a Department of Public Works, and suggested a small engineering department instead.**
- 4. Proposition 2 1/2 overrides continue to be a controversial topic among Planning Board members and the general public.**

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CHAPTER 12
Action Plan

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

12.0 Action Plan

The actions listed below represent suggestions and recommendations to be considered by the indicated boards, commissions and departments. Although in some cases quite specific, they represent a starting point; the Master Plan Committee fully expects that changes and improvements will result through board and commission review and suggestions that arise during the public hearing process. Certain suggested actions, such as Board of Health regulation and subdivision regulation changes, fall under the regulatory authority of Town boards and commissions, and may be enacted by those bodies, generally after a public hearing. Other more extensive actions such as re-zoning require, in addition to a public hearing, approval by Town meeting.

The recommended actions are also to encourage cooperation among various Town Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Departments to protect, preserve, and develop cultural, natural, and economic resources for the future of Westport. The proposed actions are organized generally by the Goals and Objectives presented in each of the Planning Element chapters. They represent an assessment of what actions need to be taken and by which Town governing body.

This chapter assembles the recommended actions from each Element of the Plan and organizes them first by element, then by suggested time frame:

- 1 = Immediate** Actions to be implemented within one year--may be on-going.
- 2 = Short-Term** Actions to be begun within one year and accomplished within 3 years.
- 3 = Medium Term** Actions to be accomplished within five years.
- 4 = Long Term.** Actions to be accomplished within ten years.

For a graphical description of the major points of this Action Plan, please refer to Map 12-1, the Action Plan map. In Table 12-1 below, the parties responsible for implementing each action are designated according to the following codes:

Table 12-1 Responsible Party Codes

Code	Responsible Party	Code	Responsible Party	Code	Responsible Party
AC	Agricultural Commission	HC	Historic Commission	SAC	Selectmen Appointed Committee
AS	Assessors	HM	Harbormaster	SCH	School Dept.
BD	Building Dept.	HP	Housing Partnership	SESA	Southeast Shellfish Advisory Assoc.
BOH	Board of Health	HW	Highway Dept.	SW	Shellfish Warden
BOS	Bd. of Selectmen	ID	Individual Departments	TFPL	Trustees of Free Public Library
CC	Conservation Commission	MPUC	Master Plan Update Comm.	TM	Town Meeting
CIPC	Capital Improvement Planning Comm.	OSC	Open Space Committee	TR	Treasurer
CPC	Community Preservation Comm.	OSTC	Agricultural/Open Space Trust Council	WLCT	Westport Land Conservation Trust
F	Fire Dept.	P	Police Dept.	WRW A	Westport River Watershed Alliance
FC	Fish Commissioners	PB	Planning Board	ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals
FINCOM	Finance Committee	RC	Recreation Commission		
HA	Housing Authority	SA	Shellfish Advisory Committee		

It is widely recognized that "town planning" is an activity that is performed by all sectors of a community: public and private, groups and individuals. This Master Plan has benefited from the participation of a broad spectrum of individuals and organizations in its creation.

Westport has numerous active civic and non-profit organizations that play important roles in the various areas covered by this Master Plan, according to their interests and expertise. The Action Plan portion of this Master Plan is chiefly concerned with the role of Town government; therefore, the lead agency or agencies in this Action Plan are Town departments, boards, and commissions. There are several additional reasons for this:

1. The Town does not have the authority to assign actions to private organizations, which are usually governed by Boards of Directors;
2. Most of the responsibilities and authority granted by statute to governmental agencies cannot be delegated to private organizations;
3. Private organizations may come into existence, and then be disbanded, leaving their assigned actions unfinished.
4. Even other governmental agencies, such as the regional planning agency, SRPEDD, or the Economic Development Commission, cannot be assigned actions by the Town.

The Master Plan Update Committee therefore would like to recognize the significant contributions that these organizations make to the Town, and expects that the Town's lead agency or responsible party for each action will seek assistance and advice from the appropriate civic and non-profit organizations and other levels of government.

12.1 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. Manage Development to preserve Westport's natural & cultural features

Objective 1.1: Preserve the natural condition of coastal, riverfront and pastoral landscapes (See Natural Resources)

Objective 1.2: Regulate Development in areas with environmental constraints such as shorelines, significant habitat. (See Natural Resources)

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a Consider waterfront zoning, site plan review and other regulatory tools.	PB, BOH, CC.	2

Objective 1.3: Develop Town-Wide Stormwater Management Plan (See Water and Sewerage)

Objective 1.4: Preserve positive attributes of the natural and historic/cultural environments as land use changes. (See Natural and Cultural Resources)

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

Objective 2.1: Ensure all residents have access to potable water. (See Water and Sewerage)

Objective 2.2: Enable PB to effectively deal with increasing complex growth management needs.

Action	Resp	Time
2.3.a. Review and strengthen subdivision regulations.	PB	2

Objective 2.3: Assist boards in formulating and implementing plans & development controls.

Action	Resp	Time
2.3.a. Continue implementation & update of GIS.	PB	2

Goal 3. Address concerns of all Westport citizens.

Objective 3.1: Keep in touch with the Community regularly

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a. Seek input from all citizens by scheduling meetings regarding land use issues in several parts of Town.	Resp. Bd.	1-3
3.1.b. Continue Westport Forum in local newspapers.		

Land Use - Westport Character

Goal 1. Preserve and protect existing activities & land use that contribute to Town Character

Objective 1.1: Ensure farming & commercial fishing continue as vital economic activities by supporting & reinforcing public & private programs.

(see Economic Development)

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Maintain continuous dialogue between private groups such as Land Trust and WRWA and appropriate Town boards. Work with WFA, Agric. Commission.	BOS	1

Objective 1.2: Farming: (a) Preserve existing family farms. (b). Continue & re-invigorate APR program (See Economic Development, Open Space & Recreation)

Objective 1.3: Open Space: (a) Continue funding Agr. & Open Sp.Trust to protect significant land. b) Continue liaison with private land conservators. (see Open Space and Recreation)

Goal 2 Develop strategies to manage development to minimize impact on rural character.

Objective 2.1: Preserve scenic qualities & vistas on public roads, along the riverbank & ocean shore.

Action	Resp	Time
2.1.a. Investigate zoning and other regulatory strategies to achieve above objective.	PB	2
2.1.b Identify outstanding vistas for protection	PB	2

Objective 2.2: Direct growth to areas that have most potential to absorb it.

Action	Resp	Time
2.2.a. Have detailed maps available for review by all interested parties; include soils, wetlands, aquifer district, and all protected lands.	PB, CC, BOH	2

Objective 2.3: Consider ways to maintain farm & wooded lands

Action	Resp	Time
2.3.a. Consider agricultural zoning for prime farmland and woodland; & establishing buffer areas between farmland & residential neighborhoods.	AC, PB	3

Objective 2.4: Direct land use change that reduces the need to drive.

Action	Resp	Time
2.4.1. Allow by special permit, small lot/apt/condos , mixed use development in suitable areas, if water & sewer available.	PB	3
2.4.2. Allow neighborhood convenience stores at major crossroads in res. areas.	PB	3

Objective 2.5: Reinforce character of villages. They provide a different and desirable development from traditional rural & emerging suburban patterns.

Action	Resp	Time
2.5.1. Adopt Central Village Plan; study plan options for other villages.	PB, HC, CC, BOH	3
2.5.2. Adopt zoning that allows continuation of existing village density within specified village areas.	PB, HC, CC, BOH	3

Land Use - Residential

Goal 1. Develop strategies for residential development that will help preserve & enhance natural & cultural features.

Objective 1.1: Direct housing development to complement Town's rural character.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Prepare guidelines & incentives to preserve rural character in subdivisions.	PB, CC	3
1.1.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.		

Objective 1.2: Guide growth to preserve natural, historic, and cultural features by zoning areas of Town appropriately

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Use new detailed maps to guide zoning, taking into account large-scale natural and cultural resource areas, available infrastructure, etc.	PB	2

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Objective 1.3: Encourage recreation areas in new subdivisions.

Action

1.3.a. Consider conservation subdivisions as a means to require open space and recreation area in new neighborhoods.

Resp	Time
PB	2

Objective 1.4: Consider locating convenience shopping zones in some residential areas.

Action

1.4.a. In high-density development allow "convenience store" sites, by special permit, when and where appropriate.

Resp	Time
PB	3

Goal 2. Optimize livability of development.

Objective 2.1: Address needs in older, existing, small-lot residential areas (sewage/water N. of Briggs Road, parks, playgrounds).

(see Water and Sewerage)

Action

2.1.a. Appoint committee to negotiate with Fall River for public water, and study sewage possibilities.

Resp	Time
BOS, PB, BOH	1

2.2. b. Determine available land(s) for parks, etc.

OSTC, BOS, RC	1
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Objective 2.2: Encourage neighborhood recreational areas & trails as integral part of development planning.

Land Use - Villages

Goal 1. Develop strategies to enhance Westport's villages to prevent strip development & sprawl.

Objective 1.1: Configure village business zones.

Action

	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Review zoning surrounding existing villages and re-draw boundaries within which higher density development can take place.	PB	2
1.1.b. Consider new zone allowing continuation of Village density, redundant setbacks, etc. for each village.	PB	2
1.1.c. Site Plan Review.	PB	2

Objective 1.2: Encourage (1) condominiums, apartments & (2) smaller house lots in villages as infrastructure permits.

Action

	Resp	Time
1. 2.a. Allow developer by special permit to construct multi-family housing in villages.	PB	2
1.2.b. Allow smaller s.f. house lots in village when public water/sewer are available.	PB	2

Objective 1.3: Plan for village growth to accommodate new business needed to serve emerging neighborhoods.

(see Economic Development)

Action

	Resp	Time
1.3.a. Establish standards for commercial structures, i.e. "mini-mall" - bldg. height, setback, landscaping, signage, etc.	PB	2

Objective 1.4: Investigate options for local sewer & water infrastructure within villages.

(see Water and Sewerage)

Action

	Resp	Time
1.5.a. Study different options for package treatment plants and community wells and make recommendations to PB	BOH	3

12.2 Natural Resources

Goal 1. Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance Westport's natural resources.

Objective 1.1: Protect coastal resources

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Update and support Harbor Improvement Plan	HA, SW	1
1.1.b. Develop a plan for dredging river and other identified sites.	HA, SW	1
1.1.c. Obtain funding to dredge designated sites (mud docks) and a portion of main River channel.	BOS, HA	2
1.1.d. Develop a shellfish mgt. plan ASAP.	SA, BOS	1
1.1.e. Maintain shellfish hatchery by continuing shellfish propagation to ensure a continual harvest of marketable shellfish.	SA, BOS	2
1.1.f. Consider a dock moratorium until active plan is in place that will address & prioritize sensitive areas.	HA, CC, BOS	3
1.1.g. Address funding need for increased boat pump outs	HM, HA, BOS, BOH	2
1.1.h. Locate, prioritize & restore areas where fish ladders exist and once existed.	FC	4
1.1.i. Consider restoring fish ladders to improve the resource area i.e. Head of Westport & Trout Pond.	FC	4
1.1.j. Consider using dredge material from river dredging project to re-nourish and rebuild the end of Cherry & Webb beach where it is eroded.	CC, HA	2
1.1.k. Protect coastal velocity zones and barrier beaches by encouraging acquisition of properties within these areas by public entities for appropriate public use and public access.	CC	4
1.1.l. Protect eelgrass and shellfish - consider regulating use of personal watercraft in sensitive areas.	HA, SA, BOS	3
1.1.m. Partner with WRWA to address Phragmites areas at Hix Bridge.	CC	2

Objective 1.2: Protect groundwater and wetland resources.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Seek legal deed restrictions from property owners on land identified in aquifer areas.	CC, PB, BOS	1
1.2.b. Seek conservation restrictions on important water resource properties.	CC	3
1.2.c. The town should consider measures to strengthen regulations & bylaws to protect groundwater and surface water sources, and wetlands.	BOH, CC, BOS	1
1.2.d. Implement, enforce and develop public awareness of the Aquifer Protection Bylaw. Many residents are unaware that there is an aquifer bylaw or that they may reside in the district.	BOS, CC, BOH	2
1.2.e. Increase size of Aquifer and Water Protection Districts by including additional areas. Suggested sites are Devol Pond, Sawdy Pond, and So. Watuppa Pond.	BOS, CC	3

Objective 1.3: Protect and preserve critical wildlife habitat.

Action

- 1.3.a. Use the NHESP Atlas and new BioMap to identify significant habitat areas.
- 1.3.c. Acquire parcels that link protected lands to create greenbelts and wildlife corridors.

Resp	Time
	3
CC	4

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.a. Continue solutions for addressing pollution - along Rte. 6 & Bread & Cheese Brook
- 2.6.b. Work with DFWLE to solve the wildfowl problem - too many geese/swans.
- 2.6.c. Conduct public education on lawn care.
- 2.6.d. Work with farmers on BMP's and solutions
- 2.6.e. Review pump out records of residents on river, lake, ponds, ocean.
- 2.6.f. Improve or maintain storm catch basins in sensitive areas
- 2.6.g. Continue monitoring to evaluate improvements

Resp	Time
SA, CC, DMF	3
SA, CC, DMF	3
SA, CC, DMF	2
AC, BOH	2
BOH	1
HW, BOH	3
BOH	3

12.3 Open Space and Recreation

Goal 1. Improve land conservation efforts in Westport

Objective 1.1: Develop Funding Mechanisms for Town Land Protection Program

Action

- 1.1.a. Dedicate \$\$ from sale of Town land & tax titles to conservation fund for land acquisition.
- 1.1.b. Apply for state matching grants for open space.

Resp	Time
OSTC	2
OSTC,CC, CPC	3

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

Action

- 1.2.a. Protect Town Farm through historical preservation and conservation/agricultural restriction.
- 1.2.b. Manage and increase public spaces in Central Village for community use.
- 1.2.c. Meet annually with appropriate boards to review Open Space Implementation Plan.
- 1.2.d. Promote management & stewardship of Town land by private organizations (WLCT, WYAA)

Resp	Time
CPC,HC	2
OSTC, CPC	3
CC,OSTC, CPC,OSC	2
BOS, OSTC, CPC	2

Objective 1.3: Support Private and Alternative Methods for Land Conservation

Action

- 1.3.a. Review tax title lands for open space protection.
- 1.3.b. Encourage land protection by private neighborhood associations
- 1.3.c. Partner with public agencies and private organizations on land protection projects.
- 1.3.d. Consider Open Space Zoning Tools (cluster, TDR, agricultural. zoning)

Resp	Time
CC,CPC, AC	2
PB,WCLT	3
CPC, OSTC	2
PB	3

Objective 1.4: Increase public awareness of importance of open space.

Action

- 1.4.a. Share revised build-out analysis with public.
- 1.4.b. Encourage "Ag in the Classroom" & other information sharing on benefits of agriculture.

Resp	Time
PB,CPC, MPUC, AC	2
AC	2

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- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| 1.4.c. Provide info to press on open space matters. | OSC,
MPUC,
AC,CPC | 2 |
| 1.4.d. Host educational outdoor recreation events | RC | 3 |

Goal 2. Protect Westport's Rural Landscape

Objective 2.1: Support and Promote 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 DFA and WCLT on APR projects | CPC,
OSTC | 2 |

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

- | Action | Resp | Time |
|--|------------------|------|
| 2.2.a. Exercise 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,
FINCOM | 3 |
| 2.2.c. Educate landowners on benefits of Ch. 61 program enrollment | AC,OSTC | 3 |
| 2.3.b. Consider agricultural zoning tools (agricultural incentive zoning, cluster zoning, TDR) | PB,AC | 3 |
| 2.3.c. Participate in Regional Planning | PB,AC | 3 |
| 2.3.d. Promote farm stands and "pick your own" farms, & agricultural tours & events | AC,
BOH,PB | 3 |

Objective 2.3: Encourage sustainable regional agriculture

- | Action | Resp | Time |
|--|---------------|------|
| 2.4.a. Match new farmers w/ existing farmland. | AC | 2 |
| 2.4.b. Promote "South Coast Agricultural Green Belt" | AC | 2 |
| 2.4.c. Meet periodically with CC & BOH to discuss farming issues | AC,CC,
BOH | 2 |
| 2.4.d. Draft "Living Near a Farm" Brochure | AC | 3 |
| 2.4.e. Assist farmers in getting grants. | AC | 3 |

Goal 3 Protect & Restore Water Quality & Natural Resources

Objective 3.1: Preserve undeveloped watershed lands in Westport

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a. Support efforts to acquire open space surrounding Copicut Reservoir to protect water supply.	BOS, CC	2
3.1.b. Focus Conservation projects on land adjacent to rivers, streams, and ponds.	OSTC, CPC,BOS	2

Goal 4. Preserve the quality of Westport's natural resources, groundwater, wetlands, wildlife, habitat & coastal areas

Objective 4.1: Encourage protection of groundwater resources.

Action	Resp	Time
4.1.a. Protect aquifer by purchasing land or conservation restrictions in Protection District.	OSTC, CPC	2

Objective 4.2: Protect wetlands and coastal areas

Action	Resp	Time
4.2.a. Purchase land in coastal velocity zone & barrier beaches for open space	OSTC, CPC	3

Objective: 4.3. Protect critical wildlife habitat

Action	Resp	Time
4.3.a. Acquire & protect parcels linking protected lands and wildlife corridors.	OSTC, CPC	3
4.3.b. Acquire land identified as critical habitat by Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP).	OSTC, CPC	3

Goal 5. Provide & enhance indoor & outdoor recreational opportunities.

Objective: 5.1. Improve Town-wide recreational facilities

Action	Resp	Time
5.1.a. Re-study Rock Street Park for recreational uses.	RC	3
5.1.b. Study school facilities & Town Properties for 7 needs & recreational potential.	RC	3
5.1.c. Encourage rec. plans for Macomber School and Bicentennial Park.	RC	3
5.1.c. Explore use of fairgrounds for additional seasonal events.	RC	3

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Objective: 5.2. Provide walking & biking opportunities

Action

- 5.2.a. Place bike racks at Town facilities and beaches.
- 5.2.b. Encourage recreational paths on Town land and conservation land.
- 5.2.c. Explore use of ancient ways for passive recreational uses.
- 5.2.d. Encourage feasibility study for multi-purpose trail along Rte. 88.

Resp	Time
RC	2
RC	2
RC,PB	2
RC	3

Objective: 5.3. Increase number of ball fields & open space recreation facilities

Action

- 5.3.a. Explore creation of public golf course.
- 5.3.b. Acquire & develop ball fields & soccer fields
- 5.3.c. Re-develop landfill into park.

Resp	Time
RC, CPC	3
RC, CPC	2
RC	4

Objective: 5.4. Enhance access to facilities for disabled persons.

Action

- 5.4.a. Improve Town parking lots for handicapped access.
- 5.4.b. Improve handicapped access to all Town facilities.
- 5.4.c. Study feasibility of seasonal boardwalk at Town beaches.

Resp	Time
RC	3
RC	3
RC	3

12.4 Historical 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 & cultural resources.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Incentives for developers to preserve history	PB	1
1.1.b. Archaeological Survey of Town		2
1.1.c. Development of historic districts	HC	1
1.1.d. Identify ancient ways	MPUC, HC	2
1.1.e. Map cemeteries into GIS system	MPUC	2
1.1.f. Study development of Town Farm	MPUC	4
1.1.g. Preserve historic roads; stone wall by-law	MPUC, PB	1

12.5 Water and Sewerage

Goal 1. Protect Drinking Water Sources and Develop Water Supply Alternatives

Objective: 1.1: Protect Drinking Water Sources

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a. Conduct comprehensive groundwater study	BOH/BOS	4
1.1.b. Review existing "protection" regulations/current practices	BOH, BOS, CC	1
1.1.c. Identify "high-risk" septic disposal areas (high-density residential areas, poor soils)	BOH, BOS, CC	1
1.1.d. Implement stricter septic and solid waste disposal guidelines	BOH	1
1.1.e. Regulate residential density based on water yield/soil types.	PB, BOS	2
1.1.f. Locate high-risk businesses away from private/public supplies	PB, BOS	2
1.1.g. Engineering review requirements for all projects for impact to groundwater	BOS,BOH, PB	3
1.1.h. Acquire fee ownership or protective easements on parcels significant to protection of drinking water.	BOH,BOS	4
1.1.i. Implement comprehensive septic system inspection program.	BOH,BOS	4
1.1.j. Implement comprehensive sampling program for water quality.	BOH	4

Objective 1.2: Develop water supply alternatives

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Explore regionalization of water sources with Fall River	BOS	2
1.2.b. Develop alternative/community systems of water supply	BOS,BOH	4
1.2.c. Expand existing public water supplies	BOS,BOH	4
1.2.d. Strategically plan extension of public water systems	BOS,BOH	3
1.2.e. Before selling tax title lands, review as potential sites for community water supply and/or improved septic disposal.	BOS	2

Goal 2. Stormwater management

Objective: 2.1: Adopt comprehensive stormwater management plan and regulations

Action	Resp	Time
2.1.a. Adopt guidelines for retention/detention ponds.	BOS,BOH, PB, CC, HW,BD	2

2.1.b. Regulate allowable area of impervious surface coverage.	BOS,BOH, PB, CC, HW,BD	2
2.1.c. Adopt further guidelines and regulations for floodplains.	BOS,BOH, PB/ CC, HW,BD	2

Objective: 2.2: Obtain additional land or easements for stormwater facilities.

Action	Resp	Time
2.2.1. Adopt Betterment Act for taking easements/land for drainage purposes.	BOS	4

Goal 3. Better Management of Septic/Sewerage Disposal

Objective: 3.1: Regulation and policy change to improve septic/sewerage disposal

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a. Encourage/implement alternative disposal alternatives.	BOH	2
3.1.b. Implement septic siting restrictions.	BOH	3
3.1.c. Mandatory inspection/pump-out guidelines	BOH,BOS	3
3.1.d. Development soil suitability requirements/cluster zoning.	PB	3

Objective: 3.2.: Land Acquisition

Action	Resp	Time
3.2.a. Implement satellite treatment areas/acquire land for same.	BOH,BOS	2
3.2.b. Before tax title sales, review potential use of parcels for siting disposal fields.	BOS	2

12.6 Traffic and Circulation

Goal 1. Study the adequacy of the existing vehicular and non-vehicular roadway/circulation network.

Objective 1.1: Mitigate deficiencies of Rte 6/Sanford Rd. intersection.

Action

1.1.a. Route 6/Sanford Rd. intersection - encourage State to prioritize the design & construction of improvements at this intersection.

Resp	Time
BOS,HW	1

Objective 1.2: Mitigate deficiencies of Rte 6 corridor - request a State study of this corridor before they design improvements

Action

1.2.a. Request a safety analysis of median openings, including need for left turn lanes and/or additional openings & alternative designs; increased sidewalks; option of changing

Resp	Time
BOS,HW	1

1.2.b. Request additional landscaping and/or street trees.

BOS,HW	2
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1.2.c. Request additional sidewalks.

BOS,HW	2
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1.2.d. Request State study the option of changing the 4-lane highway to 2-lane with separate left turn stacking lanes at median openings, or shifting the roadway within the right of way to provide increased opportunities for non-motorized modes of travel, including pedestrians.

BOS,HW	2
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Objective: 1.3. Mitigate deficiencies of Main Rd./Adamsville Road Intersection.

Action

1.3.a. Address safety concerns regarding turning movements, particularly left turns onto Adamsville Road from Main Road. Consider new island geometry.

Resp	Time
BOS,HW	3

1.3.b. Address safety concerns regarding restricted sight lines for left turns onto Main Road from Adamsville Road. Consider new island geometry.

BOS,HW	3
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1.3.c. Address increased volume of traffic on Adamsville Road using this intersection.

BOS,HW	3
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Objective: 1.4: Mitigate destruction of East Beach Road during storm events by seeking permanent improvements.

Action

1.4.a. Investigate sources of funding for permanently improving this road, which is classified as a State road, thus eligible for both State & Federal funding.

Resp	Time
BOS,HW	3

1.4.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
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Objective 1.5: Mitigate deficiencies at intersections of Rte. 88 with Briggs Rd, Old County R, Charlotte White Rd., Hix Bridge Rd, and Drift Road.

Action	Resp	Time
1.5.a. Request the State revise the striping at the intersections for the right lane to be a "right-turn only" lane, alleviating the safety problems caused by the "double through" lanes.1.4.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	2

Objective 1.6: Mitigate safety deficiencies of Rte 6/ Rte 177 intersection.

Action	Resp	Time
1.6.a. Coordinate with Dartmouth to petition the State to study the safety of this intersection and install improvements, such as possibly a left-turn stacking lane from Rte. 6 westbound onto Rte. 177.	BOS,HW	1

Objective 1.7: Improve the streetscape and safety of Main Rd, particularly in the Central Village, which is the civic and primary local retail center of Westport.

Action	Resp	Time
1.7.a. Consider additional sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping, pedestrian lighting, benches, and other amenities.	BOS,PB, HW	3
1.7.b. Consider requiring and/or providing incentives to encourage shared driveways or frontage roads, particularly by businesses, in the Central Village section of Main Rd.	PB	3

Objective 1.8: Improve pedestrian safety, especially for schoolchildren, along Old County Rd.

Action	Resp	Time
1.8.a. 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
1.8.b. Install a "mid-block" crosswalk, with adequate sight lines, across Old County Rd. to connect proposed north sidewalk to the existing sidewalk on the south side, which connects with the Rte. 88 crosswalk.	BOS,HW	3

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

- (1) **forms a structure for the land use plan;**
- (2) **is functional, economical and pleasant to use,**
- (3) **meets the requirements of Public Safety officials, and**
- (4) **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.

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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.		

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

Action	Resp	Time
2.2.a. Investigate prohibiting connection of new roadways to existing subdivision roadways.	PB	2
2.2.b. Limit curb cuts, encourage shared commercial driveways and frontage roads along busines-zoned roads. Encourage retro-fitting individual driveways to shared access system.	BOS,PB	4
2.2.c. Coordinate streetscape design improvement with Village Center zoning to encourage traffic calming, pedestrian-friendly villages.	PB	4
2.2.d. Sequentially implement Village Center zoning in the Central Village, Head of Westport, and Westport Point.	PB	4
2.2.e. 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.f. 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

12.7 Economic Development

Goal 1 Position Westport to effectively pursue and develop commerce 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 Establish the position of Economic Development Coordinator to initiate, coordinate, and nurture business enterprises that contribute to the economic prosperity of Westport.	BOS	1
1.1.b. 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, where possible.	BOS,ID	1

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

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a Revise the 1996 Strategic Economic Development Plan to reflect current conditions and options for the Route 6 and Route 177 corridors.	BOS	2
1.2.b Seek federal and state grants for water and sewerage program on Route 6.	BOH,BOS	2
1.2.c Support and interact with local business groups.	BOS	1
1.2.d Pursue the dredging of the Westport River to ensure the viability of fishing and other marine activities.	BOS,SA, HM	3
1.2.e Initiate a site plan review process for planned commercial ventures and structures in order to ensure the quality of the general functioning, safety, and visual aesthetics of commercial areas.	BOS,PB, BOH,CC	2
1.2.f Identify specific areas for new economic development.	BOS,PB, CC	2

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

Action	Resp	Time
<i>1.3.a For commercial development, establish close working relationships with:</i>	BOS	2
<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 		

1.3.b For tourism development, establish close working relationships with:	BOS,AC, HW	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bristol County Convention and Visitors Bureau SRPEDD - Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District • Fall River Chamber of Commerce • New Bedford Chamber of Commerce 		
1.3.c Establish a close working relationship with two centers of UMASS Dartmouth that provide unique support for regional economic development.	BOS	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center, located in Fall River • <i>The Center for Marine Science and Technology, located in New Bedford.</i> 		
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 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.	BOS,CC	2
2.1.c Develop strategies to control the 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 2.2: Target types of small businesses that would enhance the economic vitality of Westport.

Action	Resp	Time
3.1.a Promote cottage industries and small family businesses such as professional offices, personal services, and bed and breakfasts	BOS,PB	2
3.1.b Cluster businesses to minimize strip development.	PB	2

Objective 2.3: Preserve and enhance the economic viability of prime agricultural lands and agricultural based businesses.

Action	Resp	Time
3.2.a Establish a farmers market.	AC	2

Objective 2.4: Preserve and expand fish and shellfish commerce.

Action

3.3.a Encourage the expansion of fish and shellfish enterprises into new fields such as aquaculture.

Resp
FC,SA

Time
2

12.8 Housing

Goal 1. Provide a range of housing choices, balanced in terms of type, 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. Amend accessory apartment by-law to increase flexibility [unclear what this means].	PB	2
1.1.b. Allow subdivisions to deviate from standard design and dimensional requirements by using planning tools such as the Special Permit process, designed to further the Town's specific housing goals, such as varying size, type, density and cost of units.	PB	2
1.1.c. Identify suitable areas for multi-family and condominium units and amend zoning bylaw to allow such uses by special permit/site plan approval.	PB	2
1.1.d. Identify areas suitable for assisted living and/or congregate housing and re-zone to allow these uses.	PB	2
1.1.e. Formally zone selected areas where residential and commercial uses co-exist to mixed-use zoning to eliminate conflicts between these uses and provide areas zoned for smaller housing units.	PB	2

Objective 1.2: Increase the Town's supply of affordable housing in general.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Establish a local initiative plan to encourage a certain percentage of affordable and/or elderly units in new subdivisions (via zoning bonuses, exemption from phased development bylaw, permit fast-tracking, etc.). Investigate adopting a formal Local Initiative Plan (L.I.P.).	PB, HP, ZBA, BOS	2
1.2.b. Develop a detailed plan for creation of housing that serves the needs of residents of Westport and the region and works toward meeting the Commonwealth's target of 10% affordable housing units.	HP	3
1.2.c. Review tax title lands before auction for suitability for affordable housing. Consider working with non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity to build affordable housing on this land.	TR, HP	2
1.2.d. Review the Town's Zoning By-Law and administration to strategize changes that will document and encourage the creation of units that will meet the state criteria for being defined as "affordable" (for example, document that accessory apartments will be rented at no cost or at affordable rates to relatives).	PB, BD	2
1.2.e. Work cooperatively with developers and the state to obtain a high level of local preference in new affordable housing developments.	ZBA	1
1.2.f. Investigate permit streamlining, install permit tracking software (GeoTMS) 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

1.3.a. 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.

Resp
HP

Time
2

Goal 2. Incorporate into the housing development process mechanisms to plan for and protect open space, recreation areas and trails, and environmentally-sensitive areas.

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

2.1.a. Investigate cluster by right, conservation subdivision, density averaging and other innovative, flexible subdivision zoning methods with strong regulatory controls to ensure good design, meaningful open spaces and linkages natural resource protection, while reducing cost to developer of building unnecessary infrastructure, and lowering the cost of new housing.

Resp
PB

Time
2

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

3.1.a. Incorporate into the housing development process mechanisms to vary density, lot sizes and setbacks, etc.

Resp
PB

Time
3

3.1.b. Consider denser residential zoning in village centers and shopping nodes with specific provisions for site design, septic, circulation etc.

PB

2

3.1.c. Consider 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

3.1.d. Develop a Residential Design Guideline Manual to communicate desired residential development characteristics to developers.

PB

3

12.9 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: Determine how escalating real estate trends in Westport will impact the future land needs of the Town and how that development will increase stress on existing services and facilities.

Action	Resp	Time
1.1.a Inventory existing Town Land.	PB, AS	1
1.1.b. Examine and evaluate use of land presently owned by Town.	PB, AS	1
1.1.c. Develop creative strategies to acquire land for the future expansion of Town government offices, schools, community facilities and human services, as well as for passive recreation, conservation and open space.	PB, BOS, OSTC, CPC, CIPC	2

Objective 1.2: Pursue a study of Town departments in terms of allocated resources, personnel, and manpower.

Action	Resp	Time
1.2.a. Determine if current organization is as efficient and coordinated as it should be.	BOS, ID	2
1.2.b. Determine if it would be feasible to combine and/or re-arrange some departments.	BOS, ID	2
1.2.c. Study available options to leverage more money from the State for road maintenance and other highway projects.	HW	1
1.2.d. Evaluate the need for a DPW	SAC	4
1.2.e. Evaluate the need to expand the Town Nurse Office	BOH, COA	4
1.2.f. Decide issue of Public Safety Building that would combine South End F Station and P, as opposed to separate facilities.	BOS, P, F, TM	1
1.2.g. Acquire land for new facility to house either the Public Safety Building or South End F Station	BOS, TM	1
1.2.h. Hire additional employee for the solid waste transfer station.		
1.2.i. Acquire additional land for the expansion of the Cemetery	BOS, TM	4
1.2.j. Plan/Design/Construct Addition to Library	TFPL, TM	4

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Appendix A
*Civic Initiative for a More
Liveable New England -
Central Village Case Study*

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

Appendix A

Civic Initiative for a More Livable New England

Central Village Case Study Westport, Massachusetts

NOMINATION FOR NEW MAYFLOWER COMPACT AWARDS
GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
May 20, 2002

INTRODUCTION

In September of 2000 the Westport Planning Board and the Town’s Master Plan Update Committee applied to the Boston Society of Architects *et al* to have Westport as one of its case studies in a Regional Charrette entitled “How We Live, A Civic Initiative for a Livable New England” to be held in April 2001. Westport’s Central Village was selected as one of the case studies for the charrette. In March 2001 the “Westport Central Village Case Study Problem Statement” was submitted (see **Exhibit #1**, below).

Exhibit #1. WESTPORT CENTRAL VILLAGE CASE STUDY PROBLEM STATEMENT

(Submitted by the Westport, Massachusetts Planning Board and the Westport Master Plan Update Committee)

Westport’s Central Village is in transition from the sleepy “main street” with a small cluster of buildings that it was at the beginning of the twentieth century to a busy market and local government center spread along ¾ of a mile on Main Road. **General growth and planning issues in the village concern choosing a direction for the future that will meet citizen objectives for the town center. However, the objectives have yet to be fully defined and it is hoped that the case study can clarify them by examining future growth alternatives and evaluating how each addresses current village issues.** For example: The advantages and disadvantages of a compact village versus a linear village will be perceived by the way each addresses the current village issues. With the completed comparison matrix in hand and with sketches illustrating what each alternative would be like, citizens will have a basis for choosing a future direction for village growth. This is illustrated by the following matrix:

ISSUE	ALT. 1 LINEAR CENTRAL VILLAGE	ALT. 2 COMPACT CENTRAL VILLAGE
CIRCULATION/TRAFFIC/CURB CUTS-Safety, new roads		
PARKING-Visual Screening, sharing, Town parking, site plan review		
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES-Land form wet land		
WATER SUPPLY-Reliance on wells, ground water contamination		
WASTE WATER-High water table-failed “perc” tests		
HOUSING-Existing, new affordable & elderly housing		
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS-No recognition presently, shuttle from future Town parking		
TOWN FACILITIES-New fire & police stations, town yard location, new town green		
HISTORIC RESOURCES-How to be protected & integrated		
UNRELATED LANDUSE-Active farms in Business Zone		
GROWTH POTENTIAL-Where? In each alternative		
ZONING CHANGES-Recommended for each alternative		
ESTIMATED INVESTMENT TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES		
OTHER ISSUES-Arising from discussion		

The “Executive Summary Updated Master Plan”, prepared by the Master Plan Update Committee and accepted by Town Meeting last spring, identifies the following goals and objectives for the villages:

- Develop strategies to enhance Westport’s Villages and prevent strip development and sprawl.
- Configure a village business zone.
- Encourage condominiums, apartments and smaller house lots of appropriate scale within villages, as infrastructure permits.
- Develop a plan for village growth that accommodates new businesses needed to serve emerging neighborhoods.
- Prepare detailed plans for each of the villages that investigates: alternatives for concentrated village growth, new streets, reducing curb cuts, signage controls, walkways linking the various activities, introducing affordable multi-family and/or elderly housing, and regulations which require screening view of parking from public ways.
- Investigate options for local sewer and water infrastructure within villages.

Consideration of building a “town green” might also be added to the study for Central Village.

Recently the Committee has been asked, “What is so bad about continuing linear village development as we have it?” It is a response to this question, in the light of the stated objectives of the Executive Summary, which the Planning Board and Master Plan Update Committee are asking the Civic Initiative Case Study to address.

End of Exhibit #1

In April 2001 an information packet (see **Exhibit #2**, below and Map A-1 Town-Wide Map) was submitted, intended to be a brief of existing conditions for charrette participants.

Exhibit #2



CENTRAL VILLAGE

Westport, Massachusetts

Case Study



Submitted By:
The Westport Planning Board and Master Plan Update Committee - April 12, 2001

PLANNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To accommodate village growth while preserving and enhancing the Town's environmental and cultural heritage. Surrounding wetlands and topography limit east-west development. Existing valued farmland occupies portions of the Business Zone (See Map A-2 Central Village Existing Land Use). Valued buildings from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries (See Map A-4 Westport C.V. Historic Buildings) are important to the village character.
2. To consider opportunities, benefits, and constraints of adding to the village infrastructure. Should there be new streets added to the village to provide development sites near the center of the village? Should local piped water supply from a Town well, and wastewater lines to a package treatment plant be considered? (A number of wells have been contaminated and surrounding open land has had failed "perc" tests.)
3. To consider changes (improvements) to Central Village access by introducing a new interchange on Route 88 and/or by adding local roads. Hix Bridge Road and Adamsville Road provide the major links to the east and west respectively. They collect traffic moving north-south on Route 88 and on several local roads as well as serving as an inter-community link to Dartmouth (east) and Tiverton and Little Compton, Rhode Island (west). Charlotte White Road, to the north of the Village and oriented east/west also collects north-south traffic bound for Central Village.
4. To consider local circulation improvements within the village by limiting curb cuts, introducing Town parking to be shared by businesses, and by providing pedestrian paths linking business and government facilities.
5. To provide sites for senior assisted living and affordable housing at a village density within walking distance of shopping.
6. To review Town facilities in the village and recommend locations for new facilities. A new larger fire station is being studied on the north side of Hix Bridge Road west of Route 88. A new & larger Police Station is needed. Should a Town Green be considered? Should the Town Yard (public works) be located away from the village?
7. To help the Town decide on future growth by considering alternative village forms for their responsiveness and compatibility with the above goals and objectives, and for their cost effectiveness.

STUDY BOUNDARY

The village is entirely within the Central Village Business Zone, which is to be the study area. Main Road runs north-south and provides the only access. The Business Zone follows Main Road extending east and west 1000 feet on each side of the road. It runs from 1,000 feet north of the Kirby Road intersection with Main Road to the Cornell Road intersection in the south. Between Kirby Road and Hix Bridge Road the Zone extends eastward beyond the 1,000 feet to Route 88. The Zone also includes all corners of the Hix Bridge Road-Route 88 intersection. It is possible that the study will consider land to the west of the Business Zone if new access is thought to be required.

See Map A-3 Westport C.V. Central, (curb cuts, businesses) and Map A-5 Westport Central Village 4/12/2001 (topography and wetlands). Numerous photos of businesses, residences and government and institutional buildings, submitted for the charrette as part of Exhibit #2, have been omitted from the current document.

ECONOMIC INFORMATION

There has been little economic analysis completed of the activities of Central Village. Generally for the Town, farming and commercial fishing are the longstanding industries. While they are struggling, they remain the keystone of the economic activity. Beyond these, the Town's natural and cultural resources, which presently attract tourists and summer residents, need to be emphasized as the principal attraction.

For Westport, the general economic goal is to increase business opportunities within the Town that protect, preserve, and enhance its natural and historic/cultural resources, and preserve the various aspects of its Massachusetts heritage landscape. Other objectives for economic growth are to: identify growth potential for existing enterprises; identify generic enterprises that could be invited to settle in Westport in harmony with Town vision; identify support activities to enhance opportunities available to the Town. The Central Village economic objective is to accommodate growth in business and Town government activities and added housing while maintaining its New England Village character. In some sectors Central Village has become a regional market center. The principal food/dry goods supermarket, several banks, the medical clinic, the drug store, and several specialty shops pull customers from the adjacent towns of Dartmouth, MA and Tiverton and Little Compton, RI. The following is a list of major shops, Town government facilities and churches/organizations.

Businesses serving the immediate region--

- Lees Market, an independent full service supermarket
- Westport Apothecary
- Westport Medicine Center, a medical clinic
- Compass Bank
- Sovereign Bank

Other businesses probably with range beyond town boundary market area--

- Country Woolens, clothing
- Partners - gifts, books, homemade baked goods, etc.
- The Westporter - catering & restaurant
- Westport Federal Credit Union

and with a more local focus--

- 2 Dental Offices
- Offices for lawyers, real estate, travel
- Restaurant & pizza shop
- Service shops, 2 dry cleaning, 2 hair cutting, etc.
- Service Station & variety shop

Government functions

- Town Hall
- Town Hall Annex, some Town offices, Community building and adjacent playground
- Town Yard east of Town Hall
- Police Station
- Fire Station

Churches/Organizations

- St. John the Baptist Church and Christian Education Center
- Quaker Meeting House
- Grange

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

Elderly assisted living and/or affordable housing, under a comprehensive permit, may be proposed for open land behind businesses fronting on the west side of Main Road approximately opposite Lees Market. In addition, the Medical Center is filled to capacity and may be seeking additional or new space.

A new fire station is being studied on a site north of Hix Bridge Road just west of Route 88.

End of Exhibit #2

The charrette was held April 27th, 28th, and 29th, 2001 at Northeastern University. Westport's case study was one of eighteen or so and was the most rural. Nearly all of the cases were in the Boston Metropolitan Area but Westport's location on the edge of urban sprawl had special significance. Participants in the Westport case study were:

Timothy Gillespie, Planning Board Chairman
John Montano, architect and Planning Board member
David Wallace, architect and Planning Board member
Gregg Swanzey, Master Plan Update Committee, Westport
Jefferson Bull, Master Plan Update Committee, Westport
Shannon Goheen, Landscape Designer, Cape Cod
Andre Fisk, Land Use Planner, Maine
Jennifer Hrabchak, Planner, MIT Doctoral Candidate

Two visions for Central Village's future were developed at the charrette. These were presented to the community on September 20th. A newspaper article under the heading of Westport Forum (9/3/01) announced the meeting along with a flyer sent to residents, business and property owners in the Business Zone. A follow-up newspaper article about the meeting was circulated. These are displayed in **Exhibit #3**, below, along with a letter received from a local business owner.

Exhibit #3 WESTPORT FORUM (9/3/01)

The Master Plan Update Committee is holding an information meeting on Central Village planning on Thursday, September 20th at 7:00 PM in the first floor meeting room of Town Hall Annex. All residents, particularly those living and working in the Central Village Business Zone, are encouraged to come.

Last spring in this column there was a report about an up-coming three-day planning charrette to be held in Boston at the end of April entitled, "How We Live: A Civic Initiative for a Livable New England." A charrette is a term used by architects for an intense day and night work effort concentrating on producing solutions to a particular design problem. The focus of this charrette was dealing with various ramifications of urban sprawl.

Westport's Central Village planning was one of a dozen cases studied by a group of over a hundred architects, planners, economists, lawyers, etc., as well as citizens from each of the case study communities. Five members of the Master Plan Update Committee, including three from the Planning

Board, participated in the Central Village planning effort and they were assisted by three planners from elsewhere in Massachusetts and Maine.

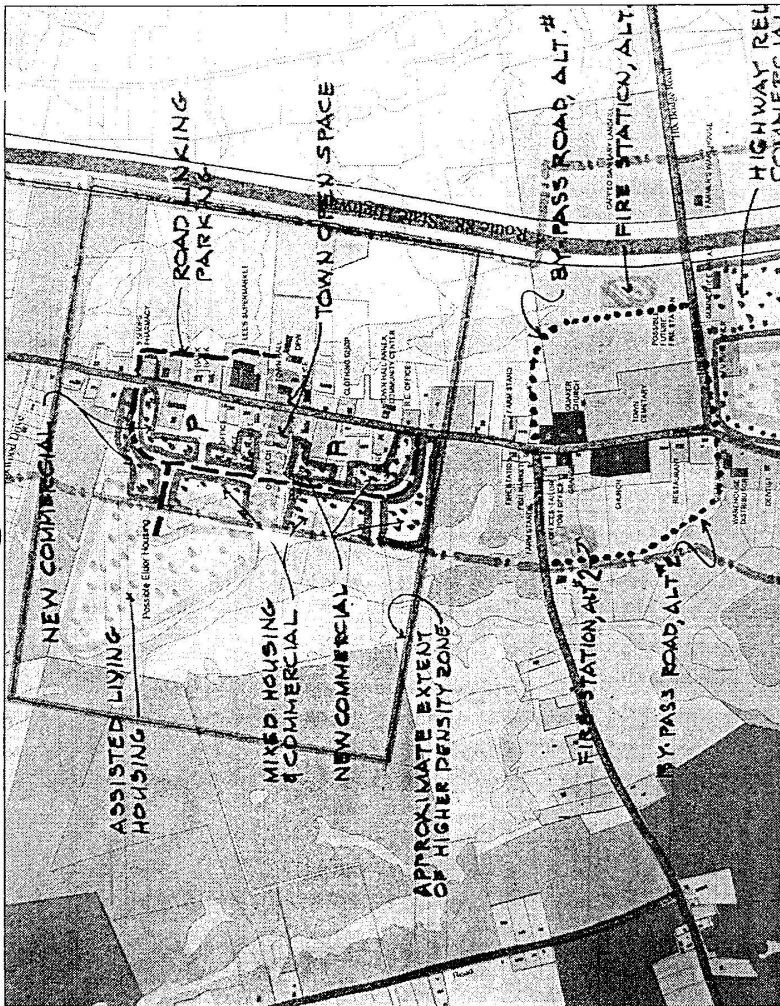
Most of the case studies involved large and complex portions of urban or suburban municipalities. Central Village was the smallest and least urban of the lot. However, the charrette organizers believed it was a worthy subject because the village is typical of a number of towns in Southeastern Massachusetts that are feeling the pressures of sprawl reaching out from Boston and Providence. The earlier that impacted towns can prepare for oncoming growth, the better their chances are to protect and enhance the resources that are valued. As the center of town government and shopping, the Village is one of our areas facing growth pressures. How residents want it to be in the future is an issue the Master Plan Update Committee is concerned about.

Two sketch plans for the future shape of Central Village were produced at the charrette- a linear growth scheme and a compact growth scheme. The linear plan has village activities continue to expand along Main Road. The compact growth plan favors village expansion to east and west of Main Road in the vicinity of Town Hall. Both plans suggest moving the southern boundary of the Business Zone northward to reduce the spreading out of village functions. The advantages and disadvantages of the schemes have been preliminarily evaluated by considering the capability of each to accommodate: anticipated growth, shared parking, fewer curb cuts on to Main Road, shared localized water and sewage treatment using package systems; creation of open space, protecting farms in the existing Business Zone and other factors. These sketch plans have advanced the Master Plan Update Committee's thinking about Central Village.

Existing conditions such as land use in the entire Business Zone as well as traffic, the number of curb cuts, and number of parking spaces serving businesses, and building age were inventoried and mapped in preparation for the charrette.

The Committee's next step is to get community reaction to the sketch plans. They are meant to stimulate resident discussion, to create ideas for their revision, to reflect more accurately the way we want the village to be in the future. We look forward to seeing you on the 20th, when the plan sketches will be described and your comments will be welcomed.

Residents comment on Central Village Master Plan



This closeup of the proposed compact scheme for Central Village shows more open space around Town Hall, a connecting road behind Town Hall that leads to other parking lots, and assisted living housing. The lower portion of the map shows two possible sites for future fire stations and two possibilities for bypass roads.

By Peggy Aulisio
A "compact scheme" for Central Village was the clear preference of the nearly 70 local residents who attended a public meeting on Thursday, Sept. 20. The compact design calls for a denser business area than the linear business center that exists now. A continuation of the linear scheme was the other alternative presented.

David Wallace, who is a member of the Master Plan subcommittee on Central Village and a member of the Planning Board, led the public forum and presented the concepts the committee has come up with so far.

The Central Village business area extends from Ellie's Place at 1402 Main Road to the intersection with Kirby Road. The width is constrained by wetlands on each side and varies, but runs about 500 feet on each side of Main Road in some locations.

The Central Village subcommittee is just one of several that are working on a Master Plan, or long-term vision, for the town. The Master Plan was undertaken to help Westport prepare for the intense growth pressures that are occurring in the region. Mr. Wallace said the Master Plan will help the town steer that growth in a direction residents can support.

Some of the ideas for a Central Village call for adding more green area around Town Hall to make it more parklike. Some plans call for the town yard, which is behind Town Hall, to be moved, although a new location hasn't been selected. Adding green areas around Town Hall would make the Central Village area more appealing, Mr. Wallace said.

One problem in the Central Village involves all the "curb cuts" or entrances and exits from stores and businesses. As traffic increases, the curb cuts cause traffic to stop frequently, which can result in more accidents. One idea the subcommittee is suggesting calls for more parking behind buildings, such as Lees and the Town Hall, with connector roads between them.

Mr. Wallace said the subcommittee has also discussed adding a parallel road to Main Road. The exact location hasn't been determined yet, but one possible design shows a road that would intersect with Adamsville Road.

If a new fire station is built on Adamsville Road, the parallel road could make it easier for fire trucks to come and go without dealing with the already busy intersection at Main Road and

(MORS)

Adamsville Road.

Any road that is built has to deal with the constraints of private property, however, Tim Gillespie, who serves on the Central Village Master Plan subcommittee and is chairman of the Planning Board, said that if the plans in some areas look a little lopsided, it's because every effort was made not to intrude on private property.

Once a Central Village concept was approved, the town could ease zoning requirements to allow for higher density. The zoning could allow for diminished front and side yard setbacks, resulting in a look more like Westport Point. Sidewalks would also be added.

One resident, who said he liked the compact village plan, said, "I want to be able to walk to things."

Mr. Wallace said the committee wants to keep the three farms in particular that add to the character of Central Village. They are Wood Farm, Paul Costa's farm and Village Corn Crib.

Plans for the Central Village also include the possibility of town sewer and water. Putting

those in place could solve some of the town's problems with private wells in the area, Mr. Wallace said. He said the town water would probably come from one or two deep town wells.

Affordable housing is another component of the Central Village plan. Mr. Gillespie said that establishing specific zoning would make it possible for the town to control how affordable housing looks. He said, "It empowers the town to control our destiny rather than leave it in the hands of developers."

Mr. Gillespie also said the plan helps the town concentrate activities in the village area while preserving more open space in the countryside.

Mr. Wallace said the town will have to determine the investment needed to make its plans a reality. But he said that much of the investment could come from developers, who will be happy enough to have the opportunity to build in such a prime business area.

"We have to do it piecemeal," Mr. Wallace said, "but you've got to have this total vision."

received
4/9/01

Partners Village Store

999 Main Road
P.O. Box 3051
Westport, Ma. 02790
29 March 2001

David Wallace
Master Plan Update Committee
Westport, MA

Dear Mr. Wallace.

Congratulations on your very organized meeting for the Central Village Business Community on March 20. I hope that we will be able to participate again in the future. I commend you in your necessary efforts to prepare for the inevitability of the future and the changes that will come. The following are some of the thoughts I have had since the meeting.

I would like new businesses encouraged to use existing buildings rather than replacing them with impersonal structures. Also the ability to maintain some of the existing open space that now exists would help to maintain the more rural character as additional commerce encroaches. Requirements for setback, landscaping and lighting would also be beneficial.

Signage is very important to legislate to allow for visibility and desired style and placement while discouraging more of the Cumberland Farm type. An attractive centralized map indicating area businesses would help to unify the area and serve as both promotion and information. Good locations for such a map would be the Town Hall and Lees Supermarket.

Parking is probably one of the biggest problems faced by Central Village businesses. In our case it is limited by septic system placement. If possible, joint parking behind some of the smaller adjoining businesses would be more attractive. Also the possibility mentioned at the meeting of making Town Hall parking available and clearly designated.

Sidewalks from the most commercially populated area by the Commons to the Corn Crib would serve as another unifying feature and promote safe walking. Another might be from Fred & Ann's down to Gooseberry Health Foods. I have walked that stretch and traffic is a deterrent.

Septic systems are a convenient regulating force, which should be continued as long as possible to provide control over future expansion. The controlling benefits of septic systems outweigh any benefits it might provide such as increased parking space and water and land use. Does the Town currently have or need regulations for septic system failure or contamination by businesses?

Thank you and good luck.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J Hall", written in black ink.

Jennifer Hall

Phone: 508 636-2572 fax: 508 636-2529 email: info@partnersvs.com

End of Exhibit #3

Visions for the Future of Central Village, Westport, MA

Two visions were developed at the charrette for the future of Central Village. The intent of the Planning Board was to present them, along with the response to the matrix of the case study problem statement, to residents and business people. A direction for future growth could then be selected and means of implementation prepared to achieve the vision. The preparation of the two alternative visions was an important first step for the town in guiding growth in the village. The visions are one, Linear Village, and two, Compact Village.

Vision One (See Map A-6 Linear Village Alternative)

The **Linear Village** vision is a continuation of the present village form, which runs along Main Road in a north-south direction. To minimize sprawl leading to strip development it proposes: establishing a Village Zone within the Business Zone that would reduce lot size side yard and front yard requirements to achieve a density similar to the 19th century villages; encouraging the “filling in” of open lots and farm sites near the center of activity at Town Hall and Lees Supermarket; and introducing sidewalks and a localized water and sewer system to serve the central area. Areas for senior and affordable housing have been located near the center to the west of Main Road and along Hixbridge Road.

Two new roads are proposed. One to the east of Main Road interconnecting existing parking areas at Town Hall, Lees Market, Compass Bank, Westport Apothecary, and the Commons Mall. This gives shoppers an alternative route to Main Road when driving among these popular destinations. The second road proposal offers a new connection between Adamsville Road and Hixbridge Road. Presently drivers have to use Main Road for this east-west movement and it can cause traffic congestion. It is anticipated that this will worsen with time. Two possible locations for the new road are indicated and the choice of which to build would depend in part on the location of a proposed fire station. It could offer a second emergency path for fire engines.

On Hixbridge Road between Main Road and Route 88 the plan indicates a site for mixed-use commercial and senior and/or affordable housing. Near the southwest corner of Hixbridge Road and Route 88 businesses could focus on beach traffic to and from Horseneck Beach State Park. A small park setting for Town Hall is proposed to develop a symbolic focal point in the linear Central Village. Village zoning is recommended to allow for building, which adds to the village character.

Vision Two (See Map A-7 Compact Village Alternative)

The **Compact Village**, vision two, builds upon the present village center by expanding it to the west. A new street is created running parallel to Main Road for new shops and other business activity. Housing would be encouraged in this area as well. Shared parking would be provided in the center of the newly formed “blocks”. It is proposed that the new street be linked visually to Town Hall with a park located between it and Main Road directly in front of Town Hall. It would extend around Town Hall and become focal point and gathering place. Senior and affordable housing is proposed to the west & north of the new street. Sidewalks would be located throughout the center to connect new shops and existing shops, housing and other activities. A town operated well and packaged sewage treatment plant would serve the center area.

As in the Linear Vision a new road is proposed to link existing parking areas at Town Hall, Lees Market, Compass Bank, Westport Apothecary, and the Commons Mall to reduce shopper driving on Main Road.

Also similar to the linear vision a new road is introduced to serve traffic and as an emergency route between Adamsville Road and Hixbridge Road to ease traffic on Main Road. Denser village housing is encouraged along Hixbridge Road mixed with commercial uses and at the southwest corner of Hixbridge Road and Route 88 highway oriented business could develop to serve beach goers heading for and coming from Horseneck Beach State Park. New zoning allowing for village density through altering front, side, and rear yard requirements has been recommended in the compact village scheme, but it would be configured to lead to a more compact village form.

Smart Growth

The two visions promote “ Smart Growth” in the following ways:

- Respects environmental constraints of wetlands east and west of Main Road;
- Encourages viable higher density mixed use zoning where work, shopping and living can co-exist;
- Limits propensity for area to become a sprawling strip;
- Provides for elderly and affordable housing;
- Provides for open space & symbolic focus at village center;
- Enables new building opportunities while honoring the historic nature of Westport;
- Mitigates existing traffic safety issues;
- Provides shared parking to encourage increased pedestrian circulation; and
- Provides local packaged water& sewage systems infrastructure.

A summary of features of the two visions follows:

Vision 1: Improved Linear Town Center

- Expand commercial space through infill on agricultural sites and other open land
- Shorten/narrow business district to contain development
- Expand higher density affordable and market rate housing
- Create sidewalks through district to encourage walking
- Ease traffic with Hix Bridge/Adamsville link
- Water & Sewage infrastructure extends along Main Rd.
- New park at Town Hall

Vision 2: Compact Town Center

- Expand commercial/mixed use opportunities around existing retail concentration
- Create focal point at town hall with new town green
- Expand higher density affordable and market rate housing within walking distance to center
- Create shared parking, sidewalks to encourage walking
- Ease traffic with new Hix Bridge/Adamsville connection
- Shorten business district boundary to ensure compact center
- Create zone allowing higher village density
- Water & sewer infrastructure serves village density zone efficiently because of its compact configuration.

There remain a number of obstacles to be overcome to achieve one of these visions. They are:

Obstacles

- Time: - Vision must be chosen
 - Consensus building is slow
 - Developers do not wait
 - Gaining Town Meeting support
- Zoning: - Existing zoning must be changed to introduce a new “Village” Zone.
- Money: - Buy land, build infrastructure, hopefully developers can be directed to do this
- Private Landowners: - Implementation depends on their cooperation
- Wetlands: - Constrain east-west expansion but allow more room to west
- Limited Water Resources: - Need for public water supply & sewage treatment through local town wells and local package sewage treatment systems
- Width of Main Road: - Setback of existing structures may cause problems installing sidewalks

The following next steps are envisioned to progress toward a Central Village plan for the future:

Westport Charrette-This has been held see below and newspaper article. (Exhibit #3)

Master Plan Integration-This is in process.

Zoning changes-future Town Meetings.

Revisions and adoption of CIP for public infrastructure

Consider RFP and work with assisted living facility developer and new businesses

Step one has been taken. In September an informational meeting was held to which all Town residents were invited, particularly those who lived and/or worked in Central Village. Business owners and landowners were among the participants. After presenting the two visions along with a preliminary evaluation regarding the success of each in dealing with the issues, a good discussion ensued. A straw vote taken at the end of the meeting indicated that the Compact Vision was an overwhelming favorite of those present. The next step is the incorporation of the visions, with a recommendation, into the Town Master Plan Update presently being prepared.

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Appendix B
Build-Out Analysis

Appendix B. Build-Out Analysis

B.1 Introduction

B.1.1. What Is a "Build-Out" and Why Is It Useful?

B.1.1.1. Definitions - What do the terms "Build-Out" and "Build-Out Analysis" mean?

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) in its publication "The Buildout Book" defines "Build-Out" or "Buildout" as the state reached by a community when no additional development is possible because every piece of land is either already developed, permanently protected, or prohibited from being developed by constraints on development [such as wetlands or floodplains].

EOEA defines a "build-out analysis"-- in particular, the analysis that agency performed for all 351 Massachusetts communities--as "a series of GIS maps depicting existing and potential development and constraints on development based on existing local zoning and regulations".

A "Build-out" analysis is:

- a **planning tool**, to be used in conjunction with other planning tools, to project into the future what might happen with respect to development, including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development.
- It is **based on both the physical characteristics of the land** (including both constraints on and opportunities for, development) and the **legal or regulatory constraints** imposed by federal, state, and local bylaws and regulations.
- It is a **projection**, not a **prediction**, of what will happen in the future.
- In its most complete form, it requires computer modeling to accomplish, thus is usually outside the scope of local planning boards and master plan committees to accomplish on their own without outside help.
- It can project changes in land use, population, housing, commercial, industrial and institutional development, solid waste generation, water usage, and municipal services required, among other things.
- It can generate "**Default**" or "**Do-Nothing**" **Build-out projections** based on the current situation, i.e. acres of land zoned for particular uses within various zoning districts, zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations currently in place, or
- It can generate "**What-If**" **Scenarios** to test-drive various recommendations for changing zoning, regulations, districts, etc.
- It is accompanied by **maps** of the Town.

B.1.1.2. Why Is a Build-Out Analysis Useful?

- It produces projections Town government may use to determine how many new municipal facilities might be needed when development in Town has "max'ed" out and to acquire land in appropriate areas of Town.
- The maps may help citizens and officials to visualize **opportunities for locating municipal buildings, places to encourage or discourage new private development of various types, and resources that require protection.**
- The numerical results provide a framework for discussing how the projected needs of future residents might be addressed and planned for in advance, so that the Town can set aside or purchase land, for example, and in other ways provide in an orderly way for the needs of the future.

B.1.2. What Are the Different Types of Build-Out Analysis Methodologies?

There are many different ways to conduct a build-out analysis. The methodology chosen depends on the time, data, and funds available. Three basic types are land use level build-out, parcel level build-out, and site design level build-out.

The land use build-out is the methodology used in the current Westport build-out. This method uses land use aerial mapping to determine the areas that are developable and the physical constraints on development. It relies on accurate, up-to-date mapping and is the least time-consuming and expensive method, costing approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000. It will tend to overestimate somewhat the potential future house lots compared to the parcel level build-out.

A parcel level build-out has the potential to be more accurate, but requires much more time and requires that accurate assessors parcel land use data be in a GIS database. The Water Works Group Build-Out of 1995³³ used this type of analysis, but not in conjunction with GIS. Therefore the accuracy is not as great as it potentially could be at the current time. This type of analysis costs approximately \$25,000.

The site design level build-out is not normally used on a town-wide scale.. It requires that site designs be drawn for every vacant parcel. In a town such as Westport with many vacant parcels, it would be very time-consuming and costly. It might be used for planning a small area of town, such as a village or a highway corridor.

B.2 Previous Build-Out Scenarios

B.2.1. Introduction

Two previous build-out analyses using various methodologies were conducted. In 1987-88 a land used based build-out analysis was done as part of a Growth Management Study performed by LandUse Inc. This analysis used land use mapping to estimate constraints such as wetlands and floodplains, however the large amount of data currently available from MassGIS and Westport GIS was not available at that time. In 1995 the Water Works Group conducted a parcel-based build-out analysis, which relied on local parcel data, but which did not have the benefit of the natural factors mapping currently available on GIS, therefore was not a true analysis the buildable area of each individual parcel. In all build-out analyses, including those above-mentioned and the current EOE analysis some factors must be input as general factors, such as 10-15% allowance for roads,

³³ Town of Westport--Build-Out Study, July 27, 1995, Water Works Group, Inc., P.O. Box 197, Westport.

buildable acreages discounted by 25 to 50% for wetlands and floodplains, etc. An original EOE analysis conducted in 1999 was felt to have used grossly incorrect assumptions, such as the area of wetlands, and the frontage required by zoning. According, the Master Plan Update Committee contracted with Beals & Thomas, Inc. (BTI) to work with EOE to re-calculate the analysis, using new wetland and land use GIS datalayers and more accurate assumptions.

B.2.2. Growth Management Plan of 1987-88³⁴

The figures generated by this plan are compared with the EOE build-out later in this chapter. This analysis predicted that the greatest impact of growth expected would be caused by the increase in school-aged children. An additional 800 school-aged children were projected by the year 2000. The actual increase was 516. The plan estimated that the school system was operating at 59% capacity at that time and could accommodate this growth. The authors noted, however, that if a majority of growth occurs in one sector of town, then there may be the need to site a new facility. Similarly, this plan noted that growth in the southern portion of town may necessitate a new fire substation, staffing and equipment. The authors proposed that the Town would need to consider increasing the size of the police force as a result of growth, but that the police station is adequate for the next decade (1988-98). Other future needs discussed were library expansion, solid waste disposal, and the capacity of Town Hall. Replacement of Hix Bridge was recommended within 5 yrs. An additional 1250 acres of land were projected to be developed by 2000. The projected new dwelling units were quite close to the actual growth that occurred in that time frame. However, the growth in population was less than projected, to some extent due to smaller household size. The dwindling economy may have led to ex-migration of younger workers, especially at the beginning of this time frame.

B.2.3. 1995 Water Works Group Build-Out

The results of this build-out are discussed in a later section. The analysis results only included projected dwelling units and population. The building lot area used was incorrect. Also, the assumption was made that APR's could be converted back to residential development.

Comparing analyses can be useful for gauging the validity of the current analysis and for seeing how economic, demographic and regulatory changes have affected the projections. For example, the nationwide trend toward smaller households leads to more residential land consumption to house fewer people. Increasing stormwater regulation means more land must be set aside for roads and associated drainage, leaving less land for house lots. The Rivers Protection Act takes additional acreage out of development.

³⁴ The Westport Growth Management Plan (1987-1988) LandUse, Incorporated.

B.3 EOE A Build-Out 2002

B.3.1 Methodology

B.3.1.1 Data Sources

Data was collected and reviewed by the Town's consultant, Planning Board Administrative Assistant and the Planning Board Chairman and several Master Plan Update Committee members. Data sources included the Westport Zoning By-Law and Rules & Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land, the 1999 Westport Open Space Plan, the MacConnell land use MassGIS layer of 1999, the new 1:5000 GIS wetlands datalayer, data from discussions and other documents provided by Town officials.

The Westport Zoning Map GIS layer previously produced by MassGIS was only a generalized graphical representation. New zoning datalayers for both underlying districts and the Aquifer Protection overlay district were constructed by then Planning Board Chairman Tim Gillespie and staff. The Open Space Inventory Map was updated from the 1999 map with the help of the Westport Land Conservation Trust. The land use information was updated for changes since 1999 by the addition of a "recent subdivisions" GIS layer prepared by Tim Gillespie. The various data sources available for identifying wetland resources were reviewed and the Department of Environmental Protection/Wetlands Conservancy Program 1:5000 Mass GIS layer was identified as being most accurate and up to date. This choice agrees with the recommendation of EOE A in their Scope of Services and with the findings of other towns that have done build-outs and found that the National Wetlands Inventory seriously underestimated the extent of wetlands.

B.3.1.2. Assumptions and Methodology Overview

1. The assumption is that development will occur on land that is not now developed. Developed land includes the following categories from the MacConnell Land Use Inventory, with land use codes in parentheses: spectator and water-based recreation (8,9), residential (10,11,12,13), commercial (15), industrial (16), transportation (18), waste disposal(19), and water (20). Land used for mining (5) refers to gravel banks. The assumption is that they are available for re-development, as they are commonly re-used for residential subdivision, shopping centers, golf courses and other uses.
2. Developed land is subtracted from the total area of the town and categorized to leave a GIS layer showing undeveloped land with its associated zoning district designation.
3. Permanently-protected open space is defined by EOE A as, "land which is either held in fee ownership by a government agency or a private non-profit organization for the purpose of conservation or water supply protection or land with deeded limitations on development *e.g.* conservation restriction, APR or other permanent legal interest."
4. Permanently-protected open space acreage is subtracted from undeveloped land to produce a datalayer of undeveloped, unprotected land.
5. **Absolute Constraints on Development**
Only areas that can neither be built upon nor contribute to how much building is allowable are mapped as absolute constraints. Whether there are any absolute constraints in a town often depends on whether there are any restrictive local bylaws and regulations that treat resource areas such as wetlands and floodplains. In Westport, for example, wetland area may be counted towards meeting the 60,000 square-foot building lot area requirement. Therefore, wetlands on a lot are not an absolute constraint. Since building is allowed in flood plain areas if it complies with the provisions of the Zoning Bylaw

Flood Plain Districts and has all permits required by federal, state, and town agencies, flood plains, also, are not an absolute constraint on development. In fact, there appear to be no additional absolute constraints on development in Westport other than developed land and permanently protected land.

6. After subtracting the areas of absolute constraint from the unprotected, undeveloped land, one is left with the area of unprotected, undeveloped land which could potentially be developed or contribute to development.

7. Partial constraints on development may allow only a certain percentage of the gross area to be developed. Examples of partial constraints on development in Westport are wetlands and floodplains. The Aquifer Protection District is not considered a partial constraint in Westport because it does not restrict the density or significantly restrict the type of development in the overlay district.

8. After determining what partial constraints exist, the map layer showing developable land is overlain with the map layer showing land which is partially constrained, and produces a map showing potentially developable land with all the partial constraints noted and the zoning districts identified.

9. Summary tables are produced from the polygon attribute table for potentially developable land from Step 8. One table gives, for each zoning district (Residence/Agricultural, Business, and Unrestricted) the total developable area with each type of constraint.

B.3.1.3. Analysis

After producing the summary tables, further analysis is undertaken to estimate the impacts of build-out by zoning district.

For the Residence/Agricultural district, the number of residential units that may be developed is estimated. For the Business district, the total square footage of commercial building floor area is estimated. Since Westport has no restrictions on residential building in non-residential districts, it is assumed that residential units will continue to be built in these mixed-use districts at a ratio similar to the ratio of residential to business or unrestricted use that exists today. Since Westport has not met its quota of affordable housing, it is also assumed that some multi-family housing via comprehensive permits will be built in business districts, especially since along the Rte 6 corridor, there is water service from Fall River, and there is a proposal to build multi-family under Chapter 40B in the Central Village business district.

The estimate of the number of future residential lots in a district takes into account the area of lots required for roads, irregular lots, and the frontage and area requirements.

The estimate of commercial/industrial floor area square footage also takes into account parking requirements, percentage lot cover, height restrictions, and local regulations.

B.3.2 Results

B.3.2.1. Build-Out Impacts Summary

Table B-1 is a revised version of the Build-Out Impacts Summary table produced by Beals & Thomas and EOEA in 2002. Map B-1, Composite Development, shows developable land, land with partial constraints, and land with multiple constraints. The original 1999 EOEA analysis was thought by Westport to be inaccurate because it contained wrong assumptions on zoning and out of date data. It calculated 20,174 developable acres and projected 36,591 additional residents. The current analysis has significantly reduced that estimate, but still represents a worst-case scenario. The numbers in Table B-1

will likely be revised downward as more land is developed and the actual constraints on development become clearer. However, the analysis may underestimate growth due to demolition of older small houses and replacement with larger units. This analysis shows only what may happen under current zoning. Alternative scenarios may be developed showing the impacts of build-out under different zoning patterns using the Alternative Futures Tool available from EOE. Table B-2 compares the current Build-Out Analysis with previous studies. It can be seen that the current study lies in between the figures from the Growth Management Study and those from the Water Works Study.

Table B-1. 2002 EOE Build-Out Analysis Summary Table

BUILD-OUT IMPACTS SUMMARY			
Total area excluding River & embayments (acres)	31,658	(approx. 49.46 sq. miles)	
Buildable Land (acres)	17,739		56%
No constraints		13,419	42%
Single partial constraints		3,662	12%
Multiple partial constraints		659	2%
Non-Buildable Land, Water (acres)	13,919		44%
New Residential Lots	9,513		
New Dwelling Units	9,996		
New Residential Subdivision Roads (miles) [1]	138		
New Commercial/Industrial Floor Area (sq. feet)	10,201,950		
Additional Residential Water Use (gallons/day) [2]	1,869,305		
Additional Commercial/Industrial Water Use (gallons/day) [3]	765,146		
Additional Municipal Solid Waste, Recycled (tons) [4]	9,097		
Additional Municipal Solid Waste, Non-Recycled (tons) [5]	3,689		
Additional Residents [6]	24,924		
Additional Students [7]	3,491		
Additional Road Miles	138		

Notes:

1. Based on the assumption that 50% of the new residential lots will have frontage on new subdivision roads.
2. Based on 75 gallons per day per person.
3. Based on 75 gallons per 1,000 square feet of floor space.
4. Based on 730 lbs per person per year.
All waste estimates are for residential uses only.
5. Based on 296 lbs per person per year.
6. Based on 2.62 persons per household (2000 US Census).
7. Based on 0.367 students per household (2000 US Census).

Table B-2. COMPARISON OF BUILD-OUT ANALYSES

	Vacant Lots Available for Build-Out	Additional Lots from Subdivisible	Acreage Available for Build-Out	Dwelling Units	Population

		Parcels			
1993 BUILD-OUT Water Works Group¹					
Existing in 1987				5,119	13,485
Potential at 1993 density of 2.63 people per dwelling unit	264	12,392	21,403	12,392	32,644
Total at Build-Out				17,511	46,129
¹ Assumes all parcels >3 Ac subdivisible, 2.63 persons per household, 1.5 acres building lots (zoning is 1.3 acres), wetlands count as acreage, APR's are fully convertible. Only calculated D.U.'s & Pop.					

1987-88 Growth Mgt. Plan^{2,3,4,5}					
Existing (1987)				4,554	13,688
Potential from prime developable land at build-out			4,673	3,393	10,517
Potential from add'l acreage with partial constraints			5,500	3,667	11,368
Total potential			10,173	7,060	21,885
Total at Build-Out				11,614	35,573
² Prime developable acreage excludes public land and land with environmental constraints. Raw acreage discounted 25% for roads, frontage, density, etc.					
³ Partially constrained land discounted 50% for wetlands, poor soils.					
⁴ Arithmetic not consistent between calculations for prime land and constrained land. Consistent arithmetic would give 3,993 lots for constrained land, and 7,386 total potential lots.					
⁵ Based on 1987 household size of 3.1 persons					

Table B-2. COMPARISON OF BUILD-OUT ANALYSES (continued)

	Vacant Lots Available for Build-Out	Additional Lots from Subdivisible Parcels	Acreage Available for Build-Out	Dwelling Units	Population
2002 EOE A Build-Out					
Existing (2000 Census)				5,821	14,183
Potential from Buildable Land no constraints (acres)			13,419		
Buildable Land single constraint			3,662		
Buildable Land with Multiple partial constraints			659		
Total potential ⁶			17,740	9,996	24,924
Total at Build-Out				15,817	39,107
⁶ Population based on 2.62 persons per household (U.S. Census 2000)					

B.3.3. Summary and Future Actions

From 1990 to 2002, housing units (almost all single-family units) increased by an average of 80 per year. At 0.367 students per household, an additional 29 school-aged children may be projected per year, and by 2010 (from 2004) an additional 205 school-aged children, most of whom will attend Westport public schools (approximately 15% attend private schools). The actual increase in students, however, seems to be approximately 64 additional per year, perhaps because more children are living in the newer housing units being developed. One must look both at housing unit creation and demographics to project future demand.

By estimating the cost of community services for each housing unit and for each square foot of commercial development then calculating revenues versus expenses, one can estimate the fiscal impact of future development and test-drive differing scenarios for zoning the Town.

Projected water use will be further refined by the EOE A Water Assets Study of 2004, and will allow for better estimates of the limits to growth and be helpful for detailed water supply planning and protection. Estimates of solid waste generation and increases in road mileage have implications for staffing and facilities development for the Board of Health and Highway Department. Roadway miles at build-out are expected to be double the length of roads in Westport today. Provisions for stormwater management and possible acquisition for stormwater detention and infiltration will become even more critical. The increase in traffic must be planned for by creating a hierarchy of roads.

Certain impacts of build-out are less able to be quantified. It is clear, however, that with the length of roads doubling, the vegetated rural landscape will be cleared in some areas, and scenic views will be obstructed in other areas along the roads. The views that most people enjoy from the roads will be much different from today unless provisions are enacted to cluster development away from roadsides and to preserve vegetated buffers between new development and the roads.

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Appendix C
*Heritage Landscape
Reconnaissance Survey*

Appendix C. Heritage Landscape Inventory Reconnaissance Survey

Survey No.	Address	Historic Name	Landscape Prime Type 1	Landscape Prime Type 2	Landscape Sub Type 1	Landscape Sub Type 2	Description/Comments	Intensive Survey
0	--	Farm selected w/Agriculture Commission	Agricultural		Farm		Not determined	Yes
1	Adamsville Road, from Main Rd. to RI line	Adamsville Road	Transportation	Agriculture	Road	Farms	19 th -20 th century, high land, view of harbor, stage route, gristmill and pond at R.I. end. Important, threatened, and fun(?), highest concentrated APR's	No
2	Drift Rd. from Head of Westport to Route 88	Drift Road	Transportation	Agriculture	Road	Farms	18 th -20 th century, scenic farms, river views, stone walls-Wood Ashley Farm. Town Poor Farm-variety of scale, 5 APR, 22 ch. 61s	Yes
3	Gifford Rd. from Rte 6 to Old County Rd.	Gifford Road	Transportation	Residential	Road	Neighborhood	18 th -20 th century, scenic, old houses, close to highway is more vulnerable.	No
4	Hix Bridge Road, Main Road to Dartmouth	Hix Bridge Road	Transportation	Agriculture	Road	Farms	18 th -20 th century, continuation of Adamsville-only east/west route-town owned land=dump, crosses river--vineyard.	No
5	Horseneck Rd. from Hix Bridge to East Beach	Horseneck Road	Transportation	Agriculture	Road	Farms	19 th -20 th century, similar to Main Road but bigger scale. Gentlemen farms, 6 APRS, fairly well protected by status and owners	No
6	Main Road from Central Village to Westport Point	Main Road	Transportation	Residential	Road	Neighborhood	19 th -20 th century, long business zone, farms-to Hist. Dist., "gentlemen farms", 2 cemeteries, 1 APR, 16 in Ch. 61, 1 farm in business district zoning	No

Appendix C. Heritage Landscape Inventory Reconnaissance Survey (continued)

7	Pine Hill Rd-Sissons Corner to Hix Bridge	Pine Hill Rd, old and new	Transportation	Residential	Road	Neighborhood	19 th century, farmland, some of best views, Hidden Brook Farm is stable-Westport Fair Grounds	No
8	Sodom Road from Charlotte White Rd. to Adamsville Rd.	Sodom Road	Transportation	Agriculture	Road	Farms	19 th -20 th century, high wall around-corn, pasture, some dairy farms, development rapidly moving south., 1 APR, 13 Ch. 61A's	No
9	Westport River, East Branch	Westport River East Branch	Natural		River		18 th -20 th century, commercial and recreational fishing, industrial sites-ships built at Head taken down to Point, pollution and development, active shellfish bed	Yes
10	Westport River, West Branch	Westport River West Branch	Natural		River		18-20 th century, was working river w/channel, once coal barges-not as active as East Branch	No
11	Old County Rd., Drift Rd., East Branch, Gifford Rd.	Head of Westport	Civic		Village		18 th -20 th century, town landing, non-conforming gravel pit, everyday view of what sustained Westport-1 store, should be Hist. District.	Yes
12	Main Rd.	Westport Point	Civic	Residential	Village	Neighborhood	18 th -19 th century, factory gone, most of houses gone, made yarn, not much left	No
13	Blossom Road at Old Bedford	Samson Potato Farm	Agricultural		Farm		19-20 th century	No
14	Main Street	Santos Farm	Agricultural		Farm		19-20 th century, high visibility-just below business district, combine w/Main Road	No
15	Drift Road	Smith Family Orchard/Apple farm	Agricultural		Orchard		19 th century, orchards w/farm stand, extends to river	No

Appendix C. Heritage Landscape Inventory Reconnaissance Survey (continued)

16	Sodom Road	Farm on Devo Pond	Agricultural		Farm		19 th century, large farm, part sold for development	No
17	Drift Road	Town Farm	Agricultural	Residential	Farm	Single family	18 th century, excellent 18 th century and expanded (19 th century). Shingled dwelling, out buildings, views approx. 40 acres, combine w/Drift Road. Issue of town ownership.	No
18	Drift Road	Wood- Ashley Estate	Residential	Agriculture	Estate	Farm	19 th century, 53 acres to East Branch-mid 19 th century house w/out buildings, contiguous w/conservation land. Study w/Drift Road.	No
19	Adamsville Road	Gray's Grist Mill	Industrial		Mill		19 th century, at bridge over West Branch and town line, owner interested in preservation-do with Adamsville	No
20	Head of Westport	Gifford Grist Mill	Industrial	Archaeo-logical	Mill Site		19 th century, some foundation and dam remain.	No
21	Route 6	Old Stone Factory Mill remains	Industrial	Archaeo-logical	Mill Site		19 th century, foundations-info in 20 th century booklet.	No
22	Main Road	Town Wharf	Commercial		Maritime		19 th century, commercial fishing- 2 wharves for town next to Lee's Wharf at harbor, recently redone, next to private land	No
23	Multiple	Cemeteries	Burial		Burial grounds		18 th -20 th century, many cemeteries on scenic roads-town owned and private, 50-60 cemeteries in town	No

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Appendix D
Management Letter
Year Ended June 30, 2003

*TOWN OF WESTPORT
WESTPORT, MASSACHUSETTS*

MANAGEMENT LETTER

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2003

(complete text, format condensed from original 9 pages)

December 12, 2003

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen
Town of Westport
Westport, Massachusetts

We are presenting, for your consideration, our comments and recommendations regarding internal control and other matters. The purpose and extent of our study and evaluation of the Town's system of internal control is described in our separate report issued under the date of December 12, 2003, in conjunction with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996.

The comments and recommendations presented are intended to improve the system of internal accounting control or result in other operating efficiencies. The factual accuracy of our comments has been discussed with management so as to obtain their concurrence prior to the development of our recommendations for improvement. Matters commented on represent findings during the audit and have not been reviewed subsequent to December 12, 2003.

A management letter is critical by nature because its purpose is to identify areas where improvements can be made. Accordingly, we have not commented on the many positive attributes of the Town's financial management systems. It is also important to understand that it is generally not practical nor cost effective to achieve ideal control in the complex governmental accounting environment.

We hope that these comments and suggestions will prove useful in meeting the Town's management goals. We would be happy to provide such further information and assistance in pursuing these recommendations as the Town may wish.

Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the courtesy and assistance provided to us by Town personnel during the course of our audit.

Very truly yours,

Tucci & Roselli
Certified Public Accountants

Evaluation of Town Operations

Introduction

The Town of Westport "the town" appears to finally be making some financial progress after three consecutive years of struggle. Undesignated fund balance on a GAAP basis reached \$642,225 as compared to \$180 in the prior year. This will probably result in a positive free cash of around \$200,000. Most notable in the improvement was the town's ability to better manage its appropriations and more funding from the Commonwealth in the form of local aid than what was originally anticipated. A virtual collapse in the entire region's economy had been predominantly responsible for the significant financial constraints that had shackled the town. Free cash which once stood at over \$1,000,000 had been completely exhausted to supplement the three previous years' budgets and local aid receipts only 12 months ago were in serious jeopardy of being heavily cut as well as a proposition 2 ½% over-ride not being able to pass. It appears the town has survived the latest financial ordeal and has regained some measure of financial stability. The town should continue to maintain and replenish reserves such as free cash and should continue to focus in the following areas in accomplishing such:

- Review all departmental fees and miscellaneous receipts. Consideration should be given to a possible 20 to 30% increase in fees and charges.
- Continue to review all receivable balances, specifically departmental and tax title. Allocate the necessary resources to assure that these are administered as efficiently as possible. (Please note that significant improvements have been made in the ambulance collection area.)
- Assure that the Town is taking optimum advantage of all available State and Federal reimbursement programs. (See further discussion regarding grants administrator).

The Town maintains the following strategic reserves that may be used for various purposes, but their use should be strictly monitored, as these are the only reserves the Town presently has.

- **Stabilization** - available amount \$993,110 - I suggest that the use of this fund should be for extreme emergencies and for one time capital expenditures.
- **Pension Reserve** - available amount \$1,130,181 -To supplement the Pension assessment appropriation only.
- **Free cash** -estimated at about \$200,000. It is important that the town begin to replenish this critical component of its reserves.
- **Overlay** - available amount approximately \$263,815- approximately half should be restricted for abatements, the other half only for one-time budget items.

Financial Statement Reporting

The town is happy to report that it has successfully implemented the major reporting requirements of GASB 34. Although a very challenging endeavor, the town was able to allocate the necessary resources to accomplish this mission. As a result, the financial statements now track Community Preservation, Stabilization and Pension Reserve in separate reporting components and the Harbormaster and Waterways is presented as an Enterprise Fund. In addition, the town now has an inventory of all fixed assets greater than \$5,000 and is now able to monitor capital activity in a manner it was never able to before. We applaud the town's efforts in satisfying this very daunting task.

Building Department Receipts

We noted that receipts remitted by the building department are not remitted in accordance with the town policy for turnovers that requires departments to turnover funds on a weekly basis. More specifically, a turnover was made on 11/19/02 for \$2,104 and the next one was not made until 12/22/02 for \$5,338 and later followed on 12/31/02 for \$4,739. It is important that all town departments follow proper cash receipt policies in order to safeguard cash and provide for the most accurate and efficient record-keeping of funds.

Management action/discussion :

Veteran's Receivables (repeated from previous years)

Presently, no outstanding list or any form of backup exists to support the outstanding Veteran's receivable amount exceeding \$50,000 on the balance sheet. Essentially, it is impractical at the present time to determine if this is in fact the accurate balance in this account. We suggest that this amount is investigated and an appropriate determination is made with respect to its accuracy

Management action/discussion:

Single Audit Act

SPED

Of 40 SPED students sampled from the 12/1/01 count submitted to the Department of Education, 3 were not receiving services on 12/1/01 and should not have been included in the report.

Management action/discussion:

Single Audit Act (continued)

Title 1

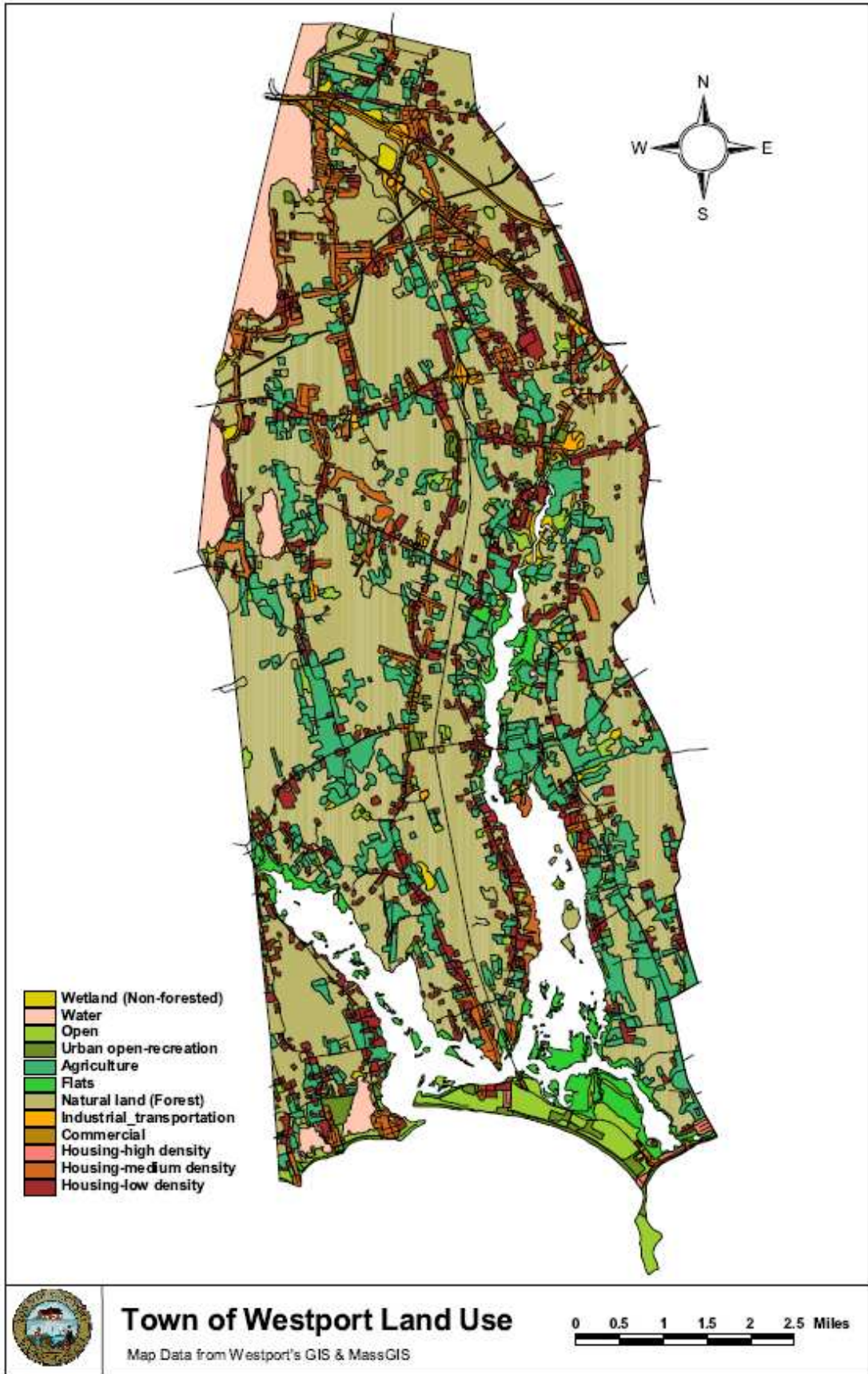
Title 1 funds were not drawn down in a consistent, quarterly amount as anticipated based upon DOE guidelines. In particular, the last draw-down of Title I funds was requested at the end of February 28, 2003. The DOE allows only a 60-day advance request on grant funds; these funds were received on March 26, 2003, more than 60 days before the end of the school year. Since this grant is primarily for salary and personnel expenditures, it is believed that a majority of the grant funds would be expended on salary equitably until the end of the school year. Therefore it would appear that the funds have been drawn down about 30 days early.

Management action/discussion:

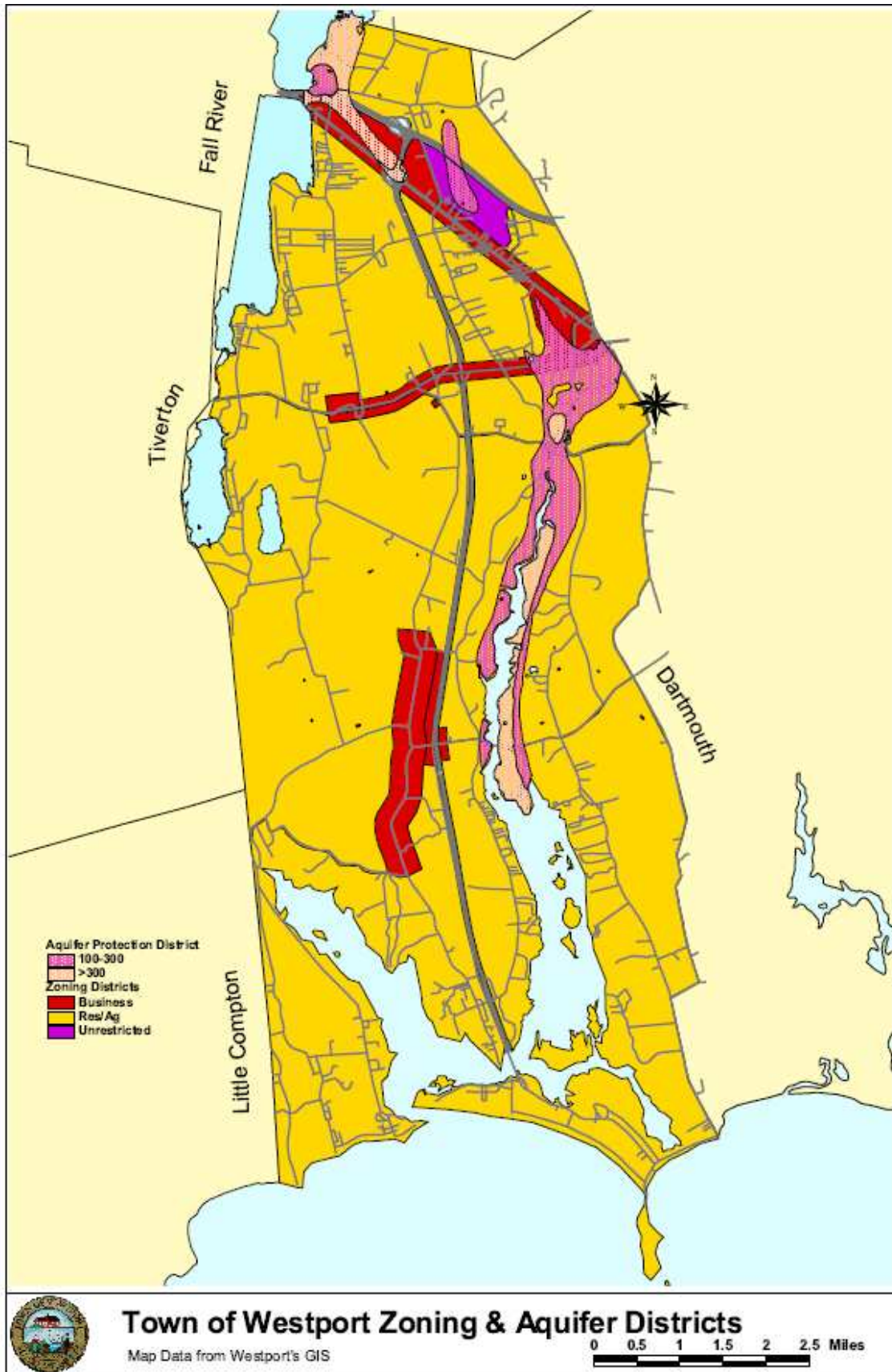
Grant's Administrator (repeated from prior years)

The Town in recent years, terminated the position of Grant's Administrator. This is an essential position to any Town government. This person assures that the Town is receiving all the State and Federal Grant and reimbursement money it is entitled to receive. Quite often, the "found" money more than pays for the position. Under Chapter 645, the State reimburses from 60 to 90% of all School Building construction costs. The fact that the Town has gone through two multi-million dollar School construction projects in the last twelve years without receiving any reimbursement under Chapter 645 is an unacceptable oversight and exemplifies more than ever the need for such assistance. Consideration may be given to combining a grant's administrator for both Town and School, as quite often it is not a full-time job.

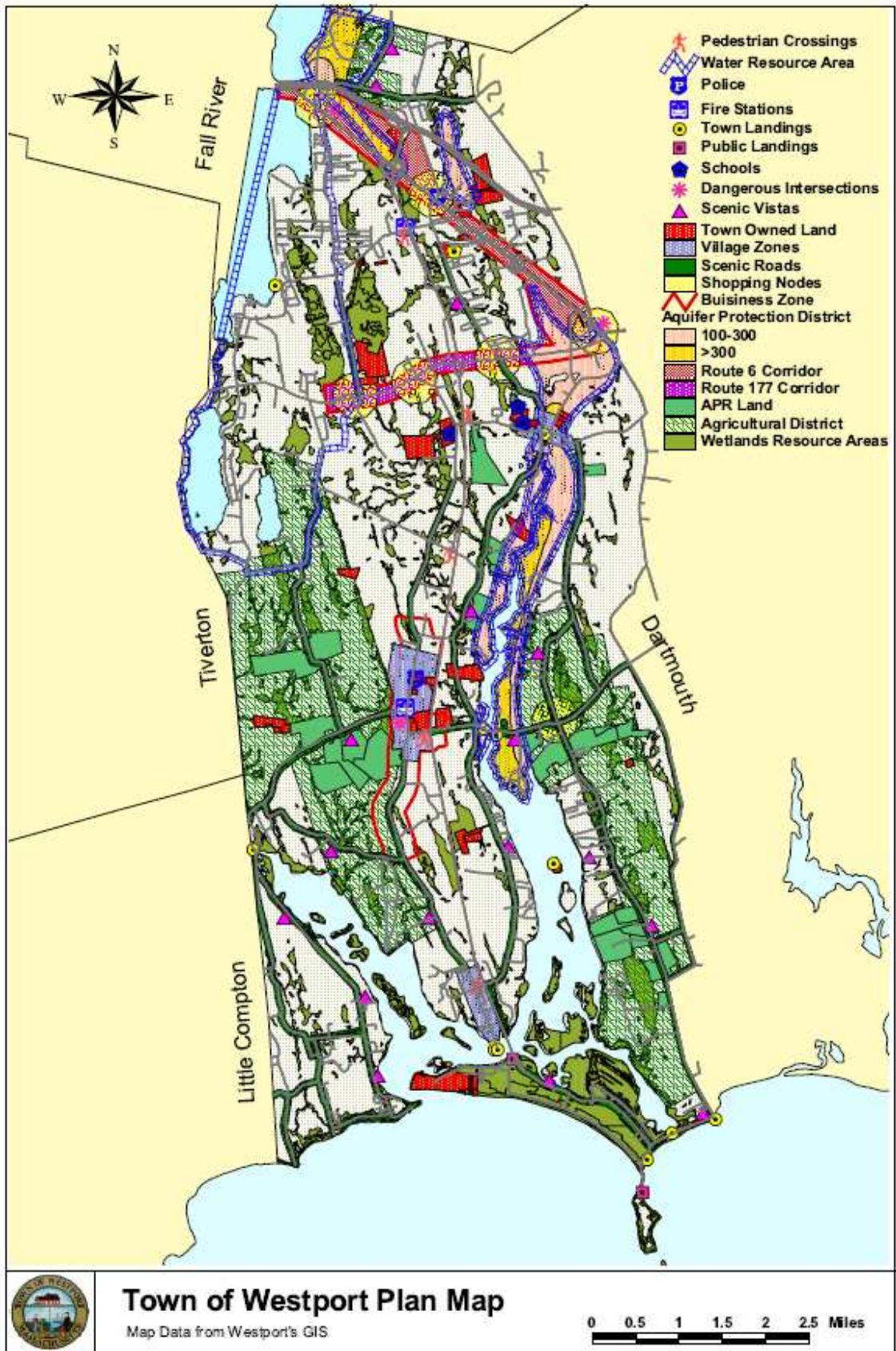
Appendix E
Maps



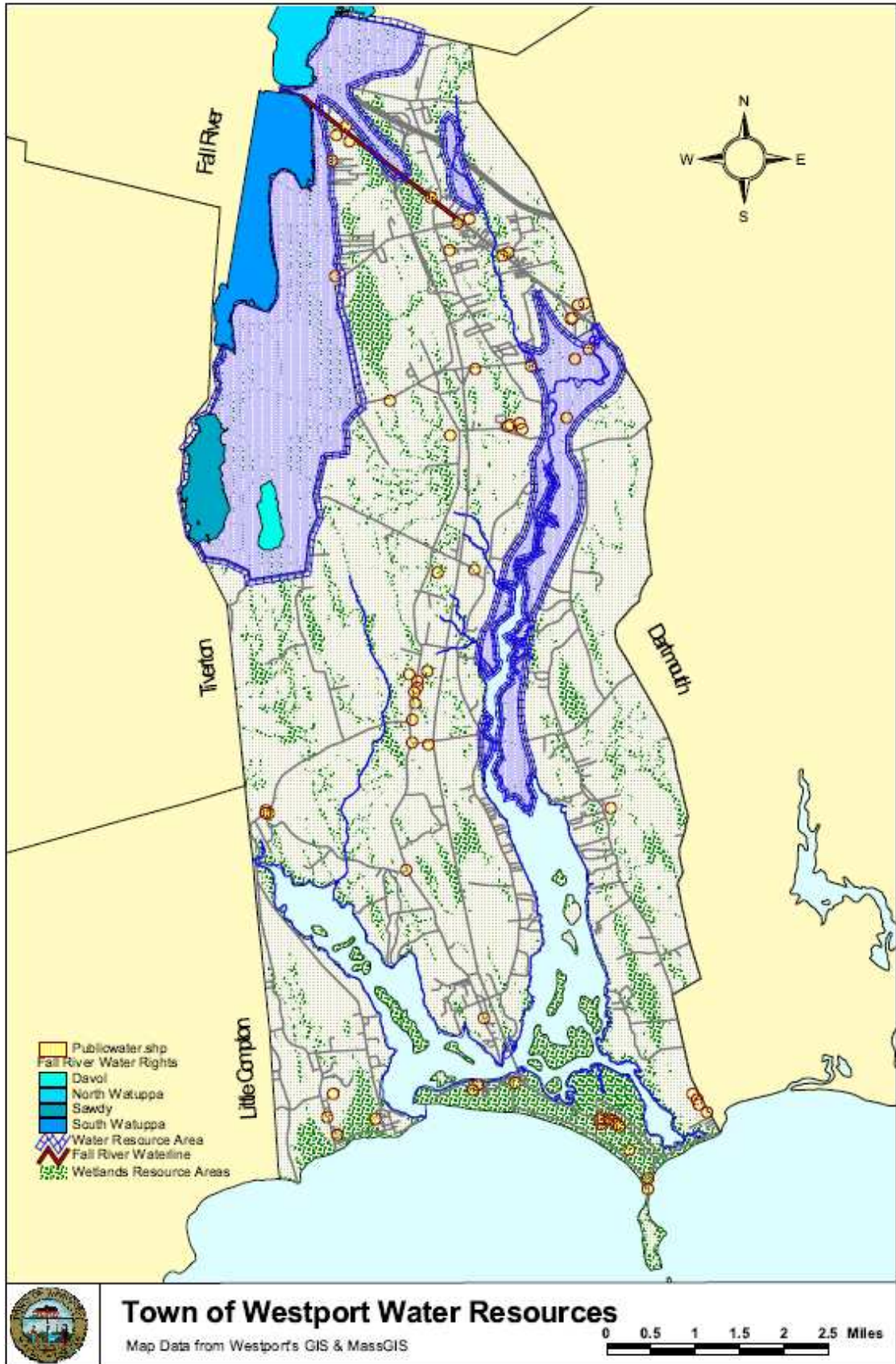
MAP 3-1 Town Of Westport Land Use



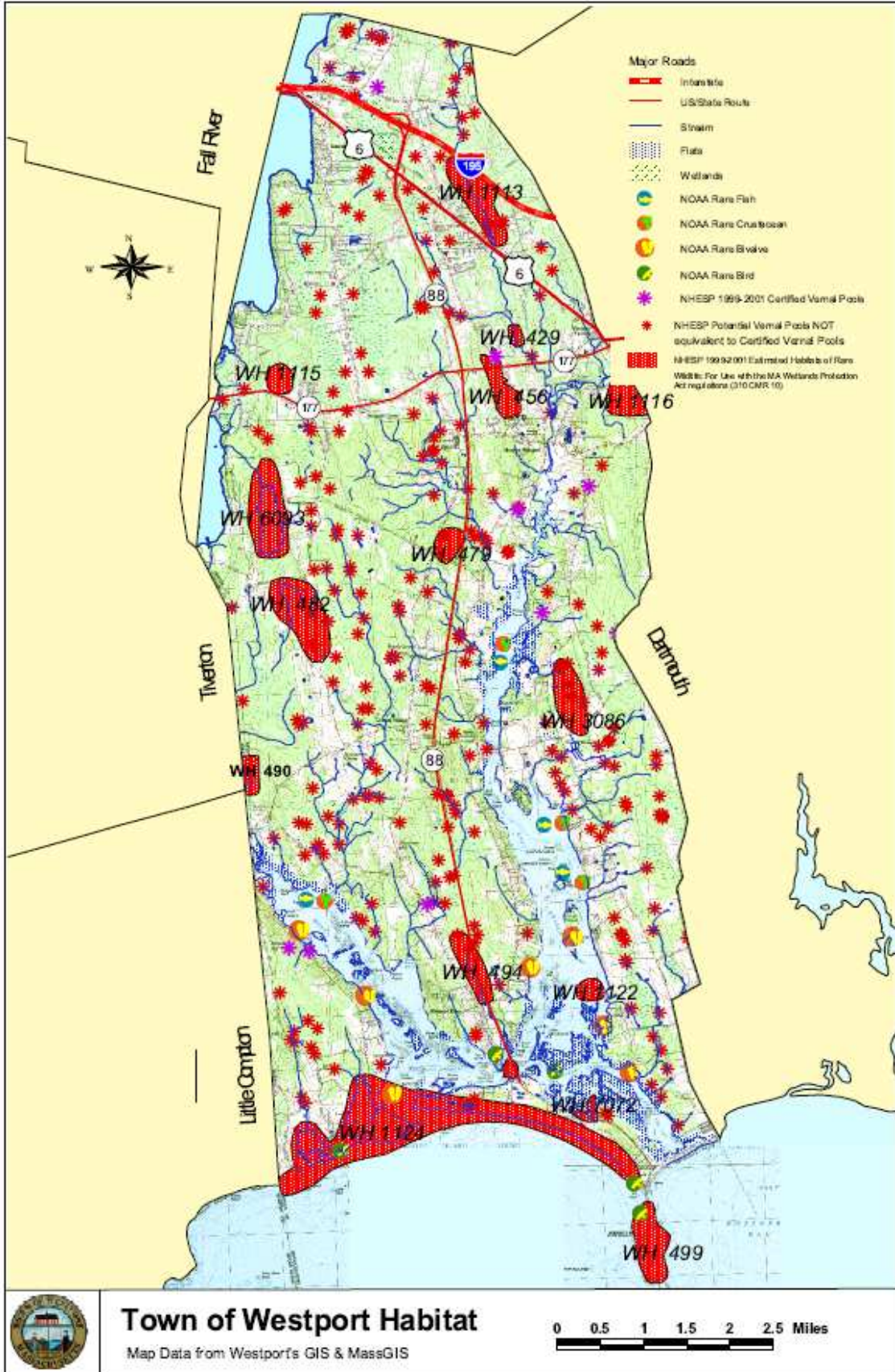
Map 3-2 Westport Zoning Map



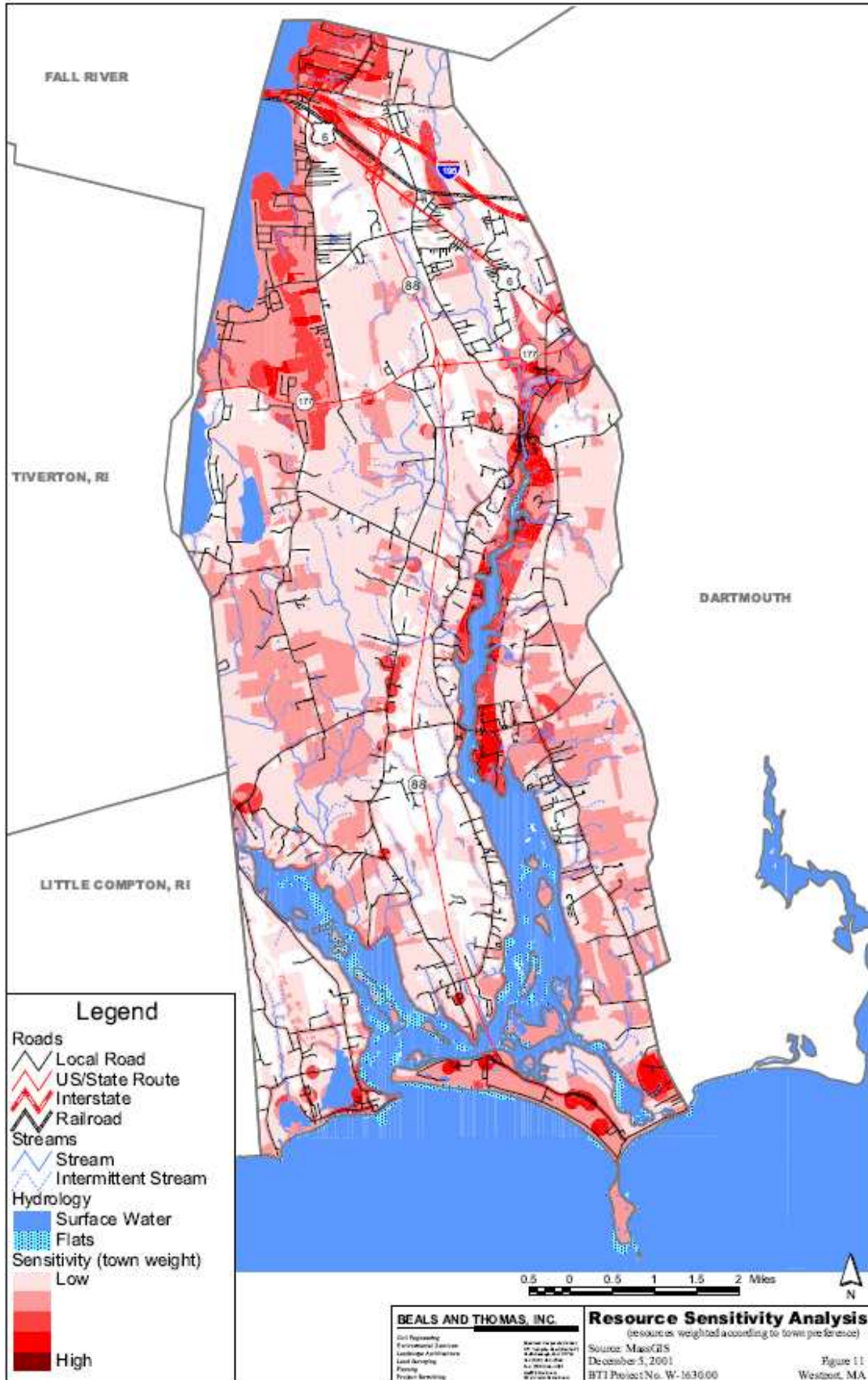
Map 3-3 Town of Westport Plan Map



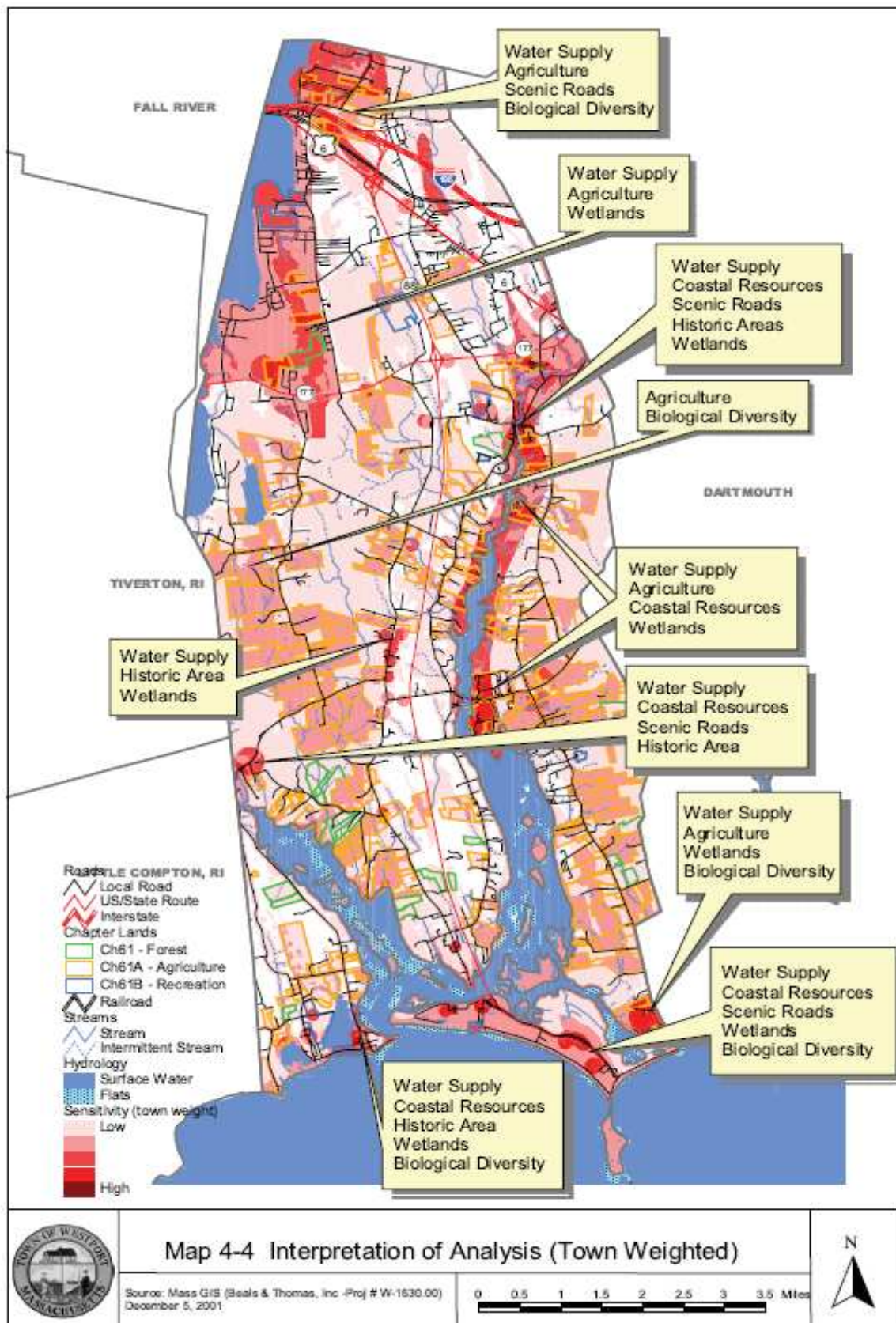
Map 4-1 Water Resources



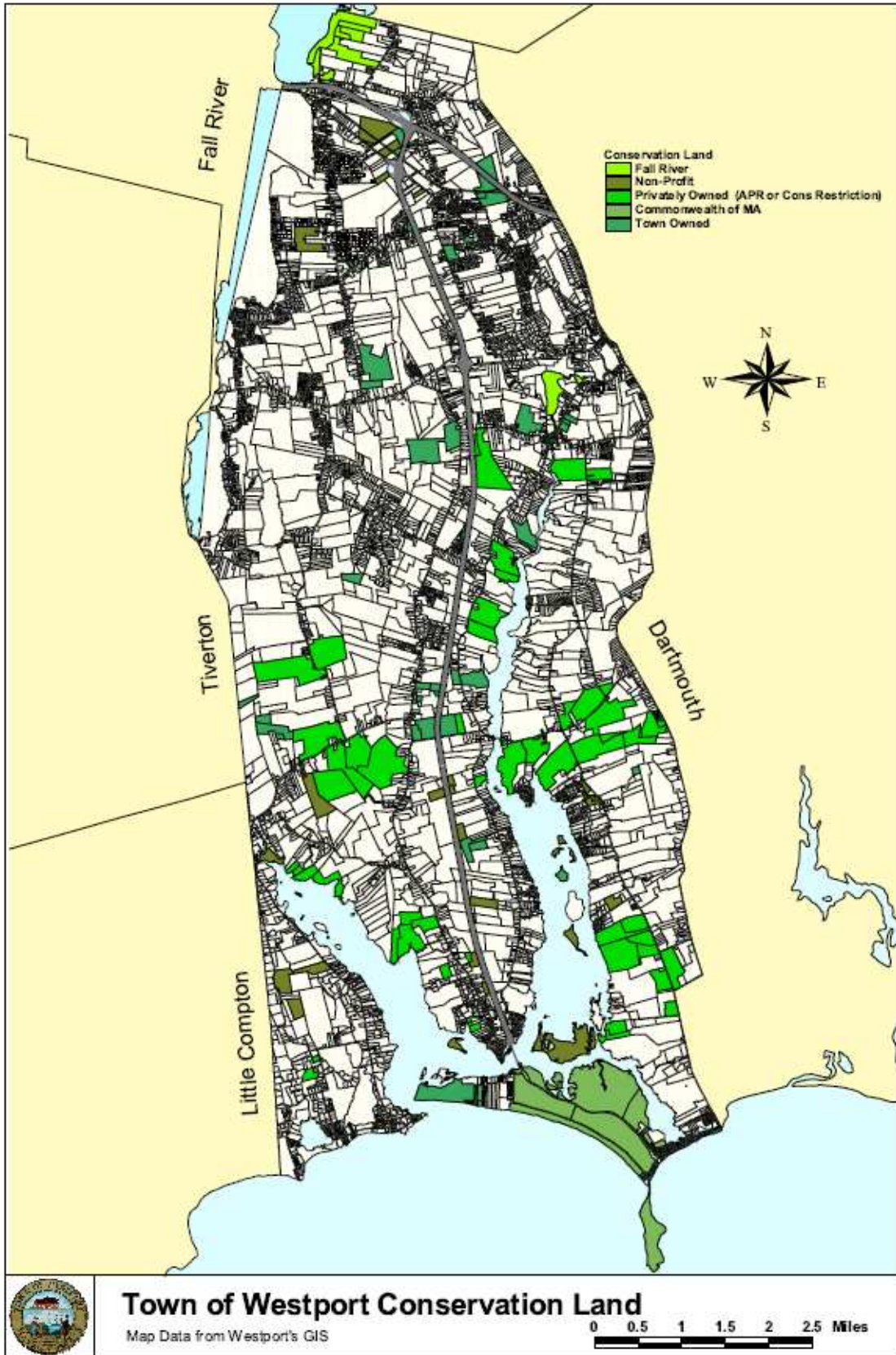
MAP 4-2 Habitat



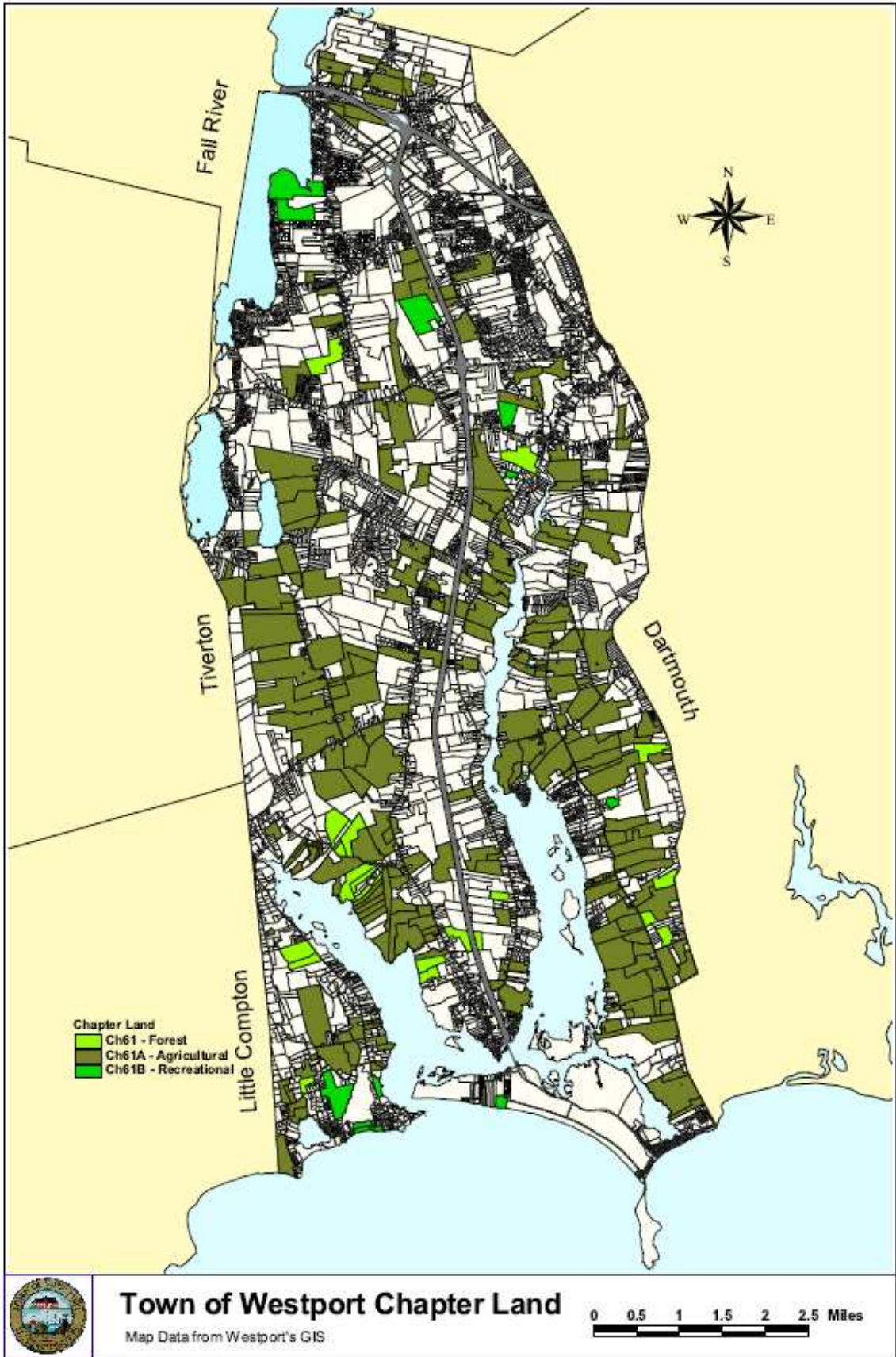
MAP 4-3 Resource Sensitivity Analysis (Town Weighted)



MAP 4-4 Interpretation of Analysis (Town Weighted)



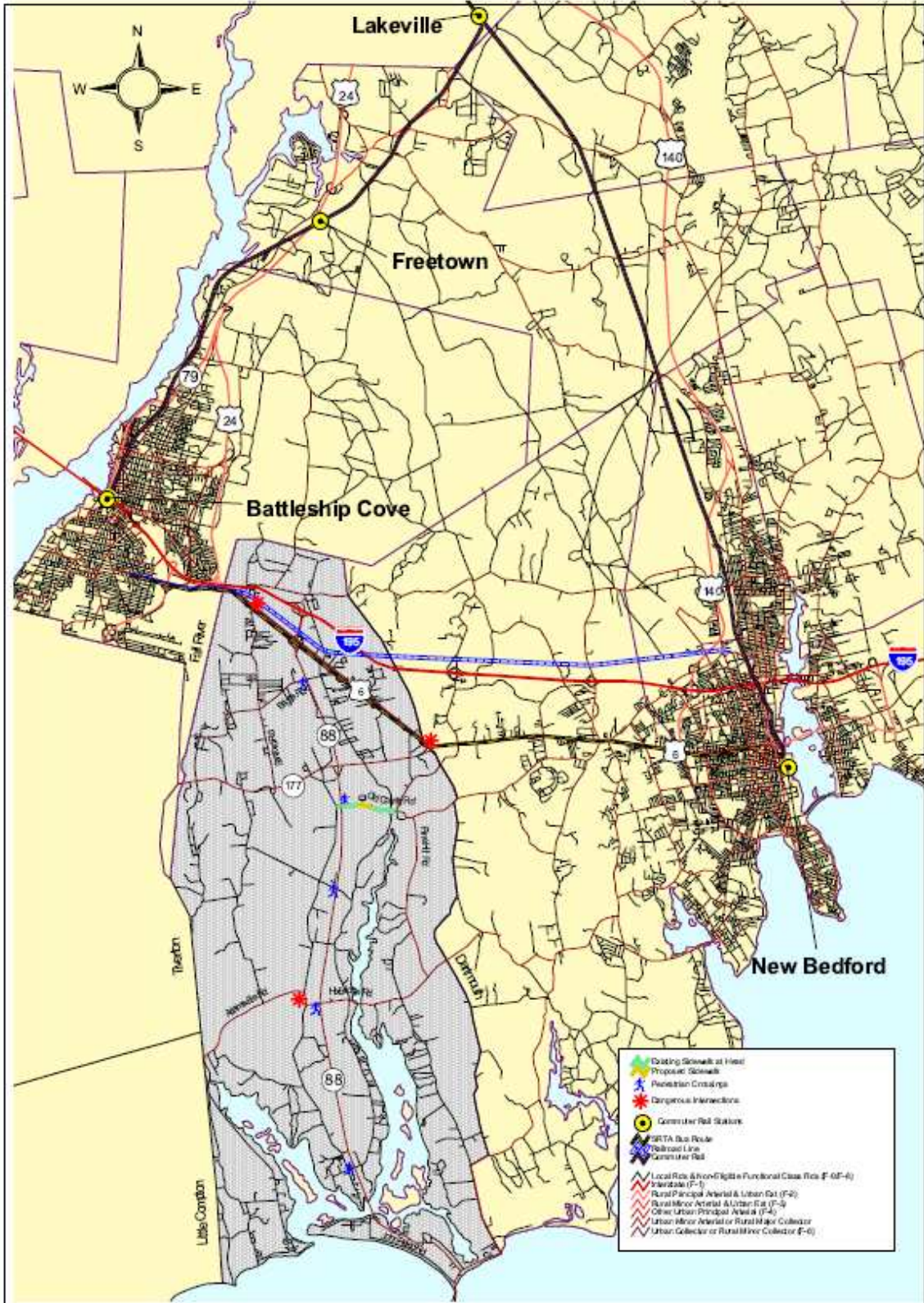
MAP 5-1 Conservation Land



MAP 5-2 Chapter Land



MAP 5-3 Recreational Facilities/Land

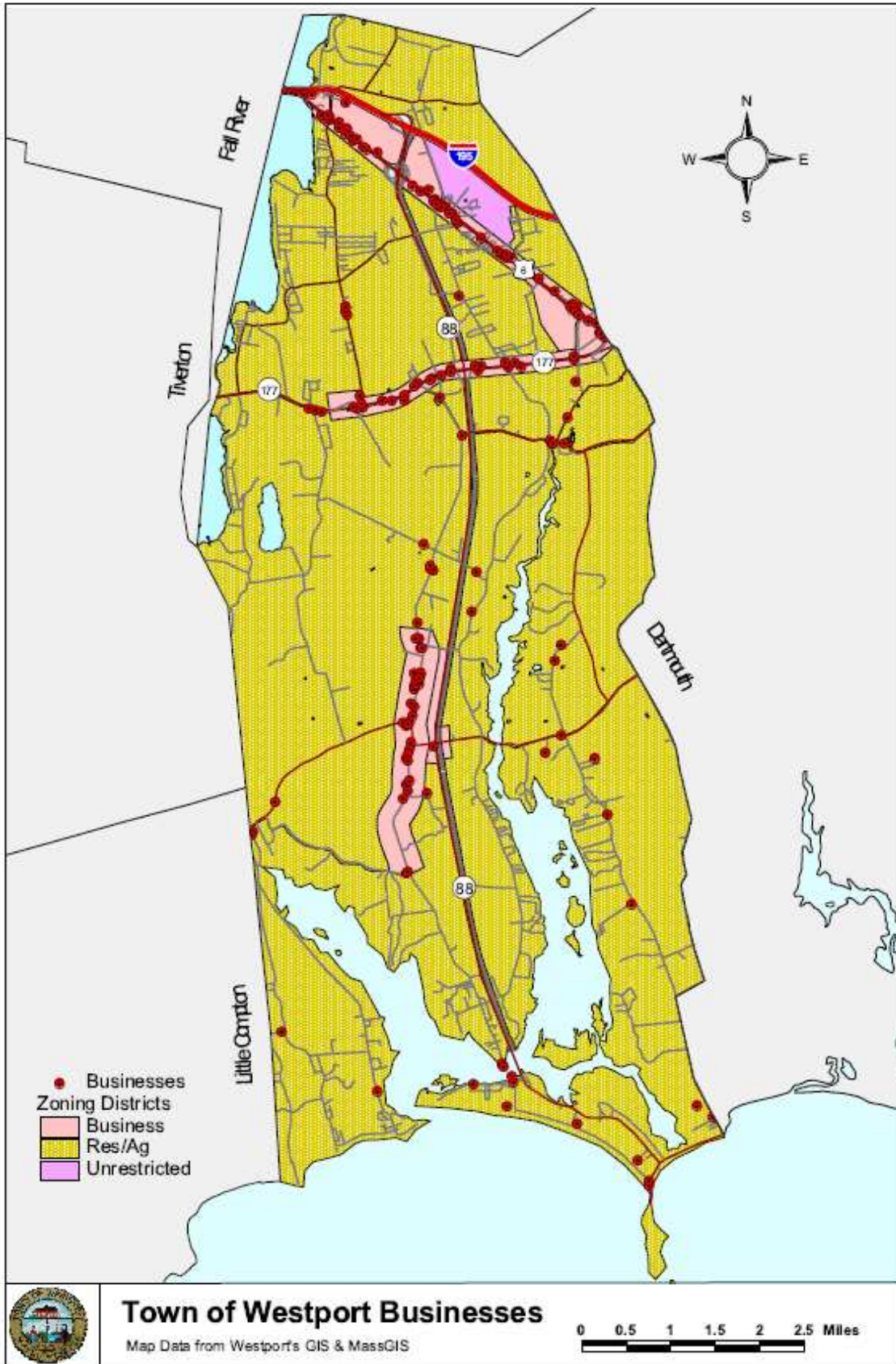


Town of Westport Transportation

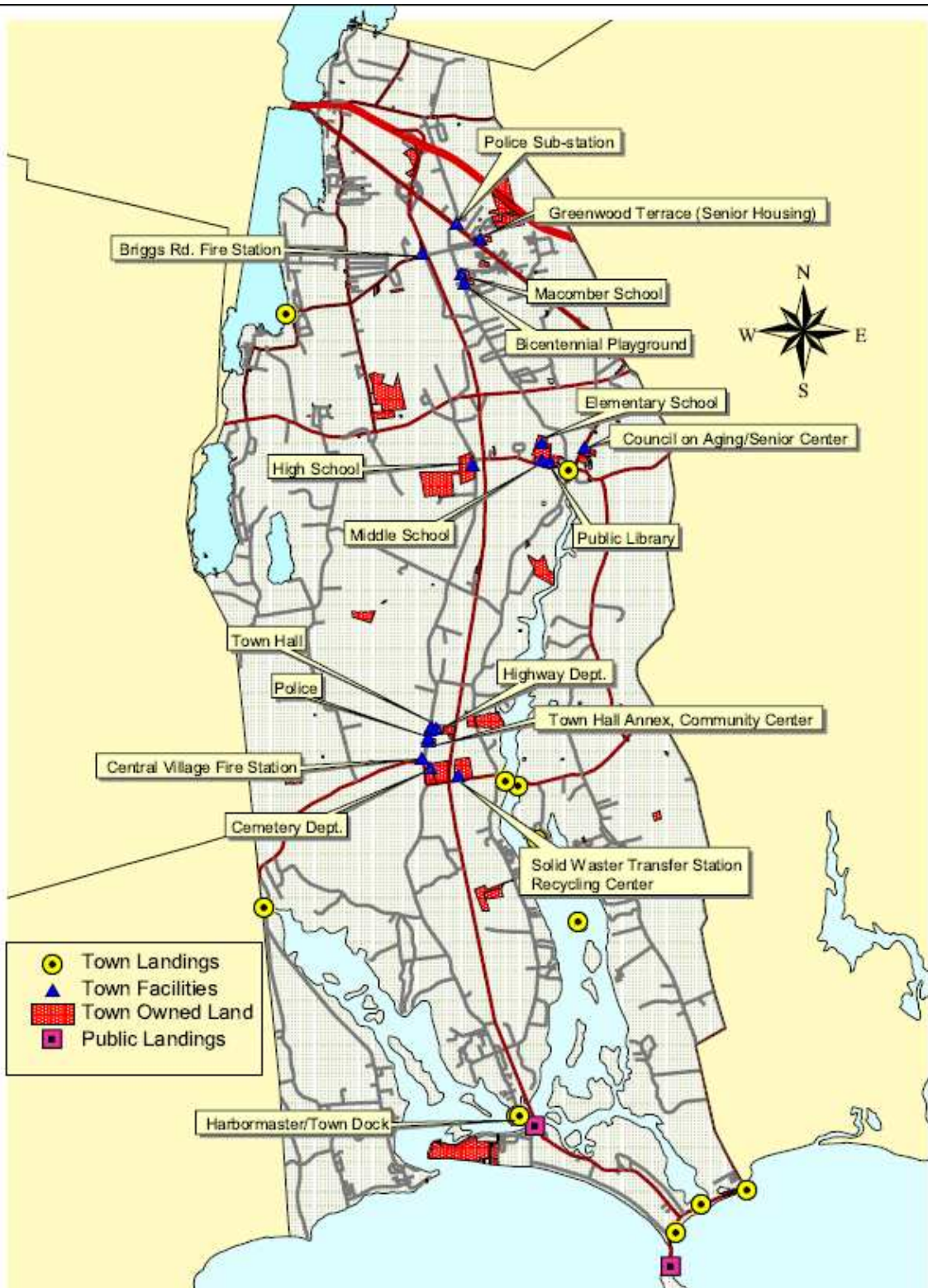
Map Data from Westport's GIS & MassGIS

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

MAP 8-1 Transportation



MAP 9-1 Westport Businesses

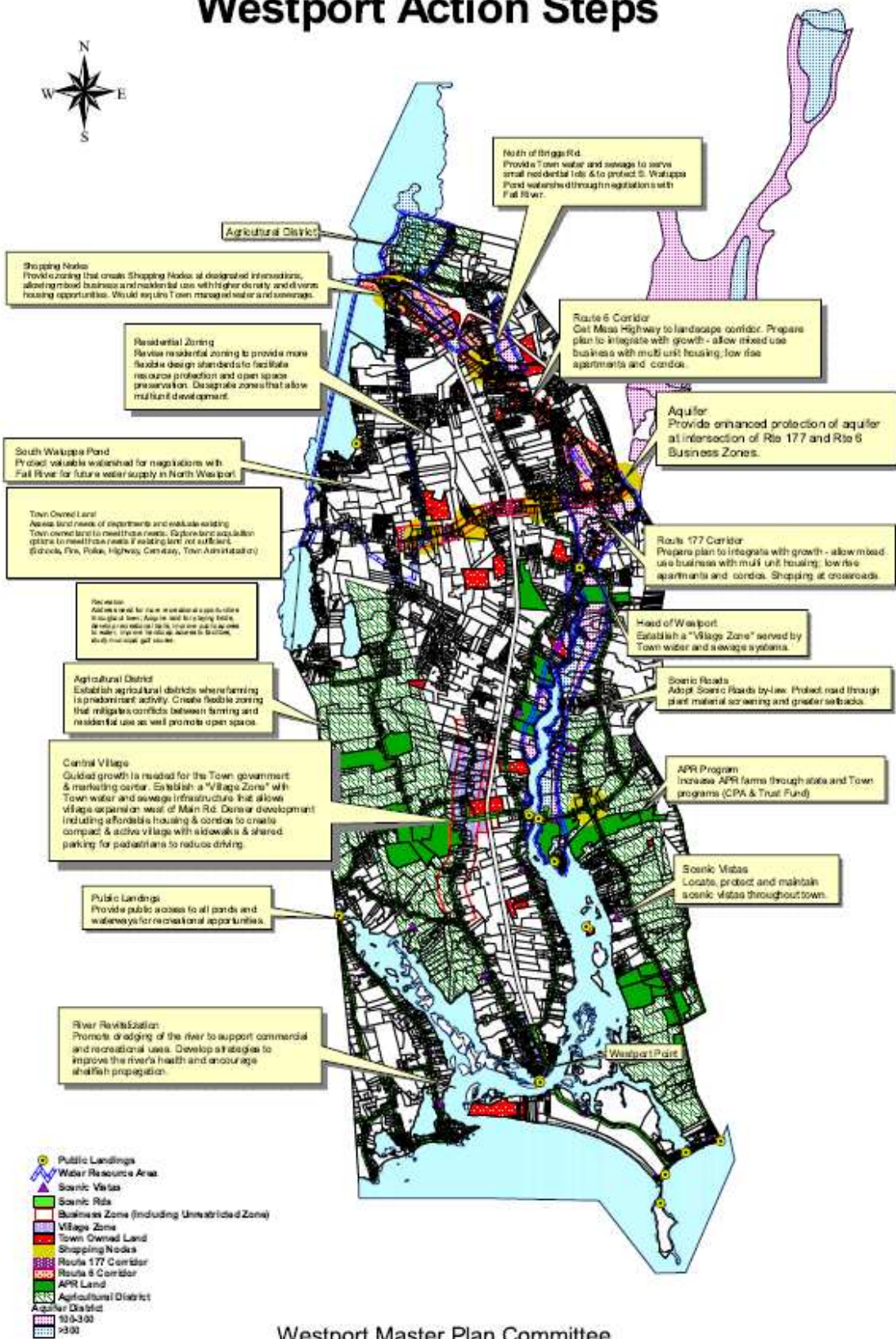


TOWN OF WESTPORT Capital Facilities/Town Land

Westport Master Plan Update Committee 2004

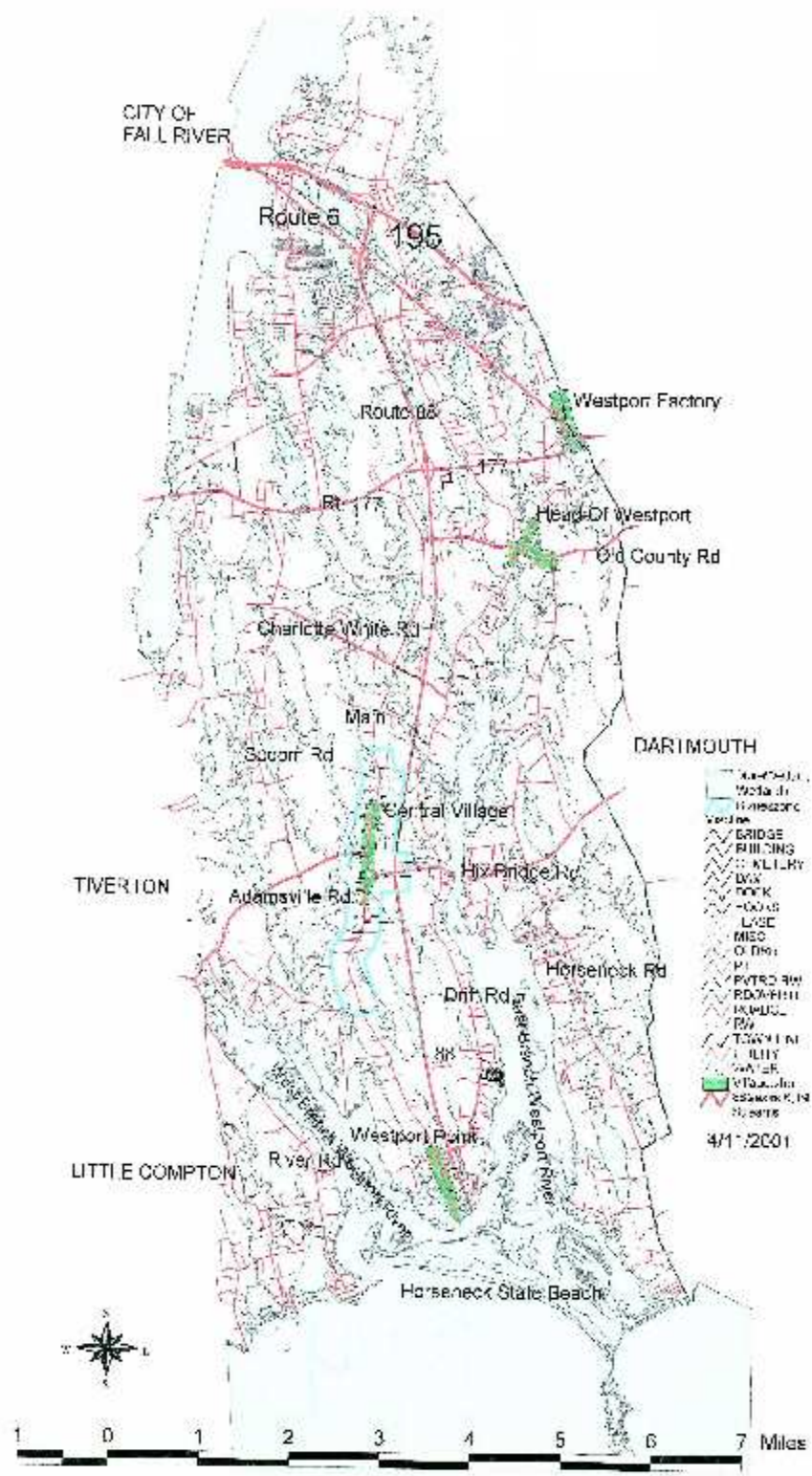
MAP 11-1 Capital Facilities/Town Land

Westport Action Steps

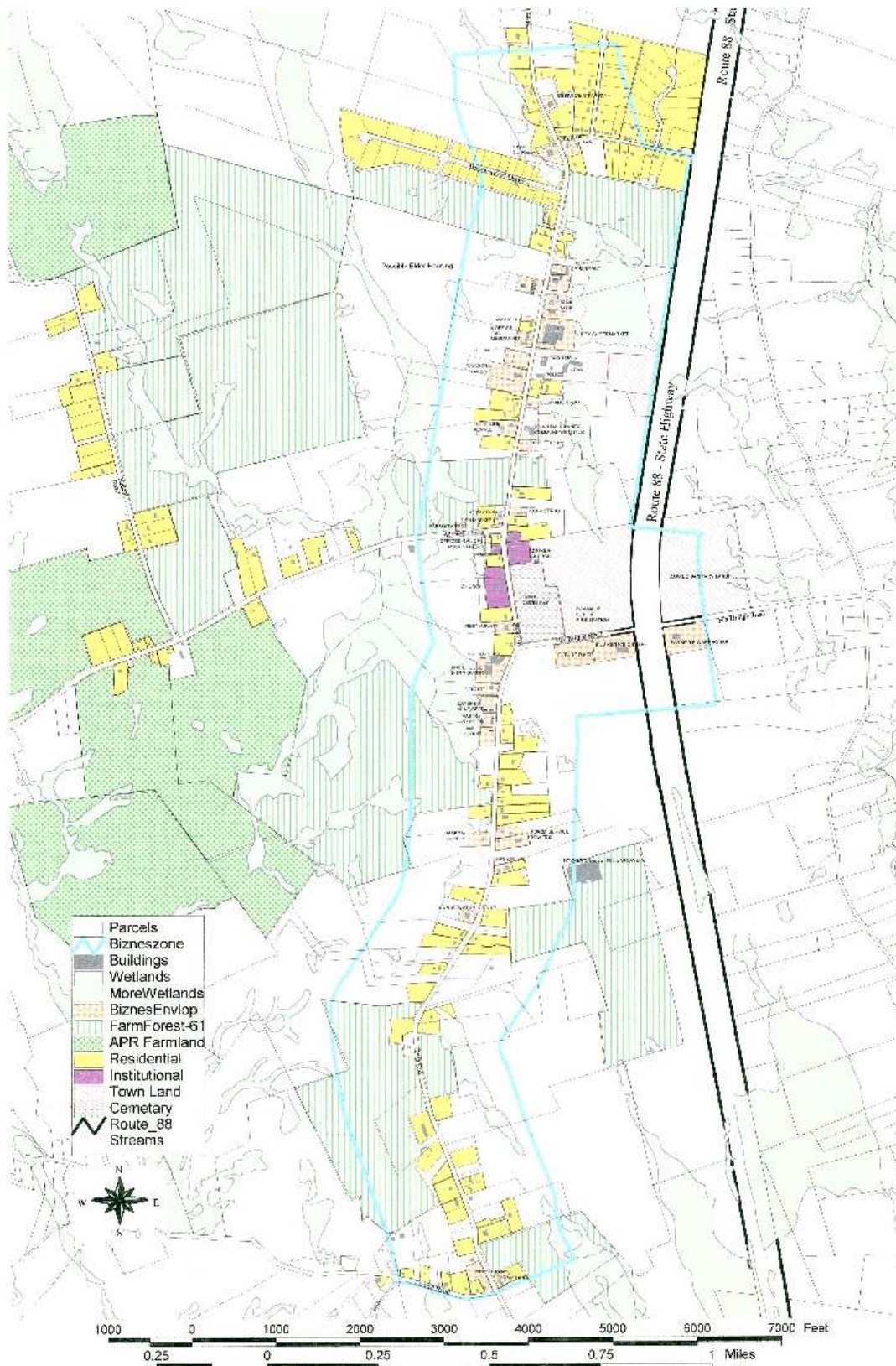


Westport Master Plan Committee

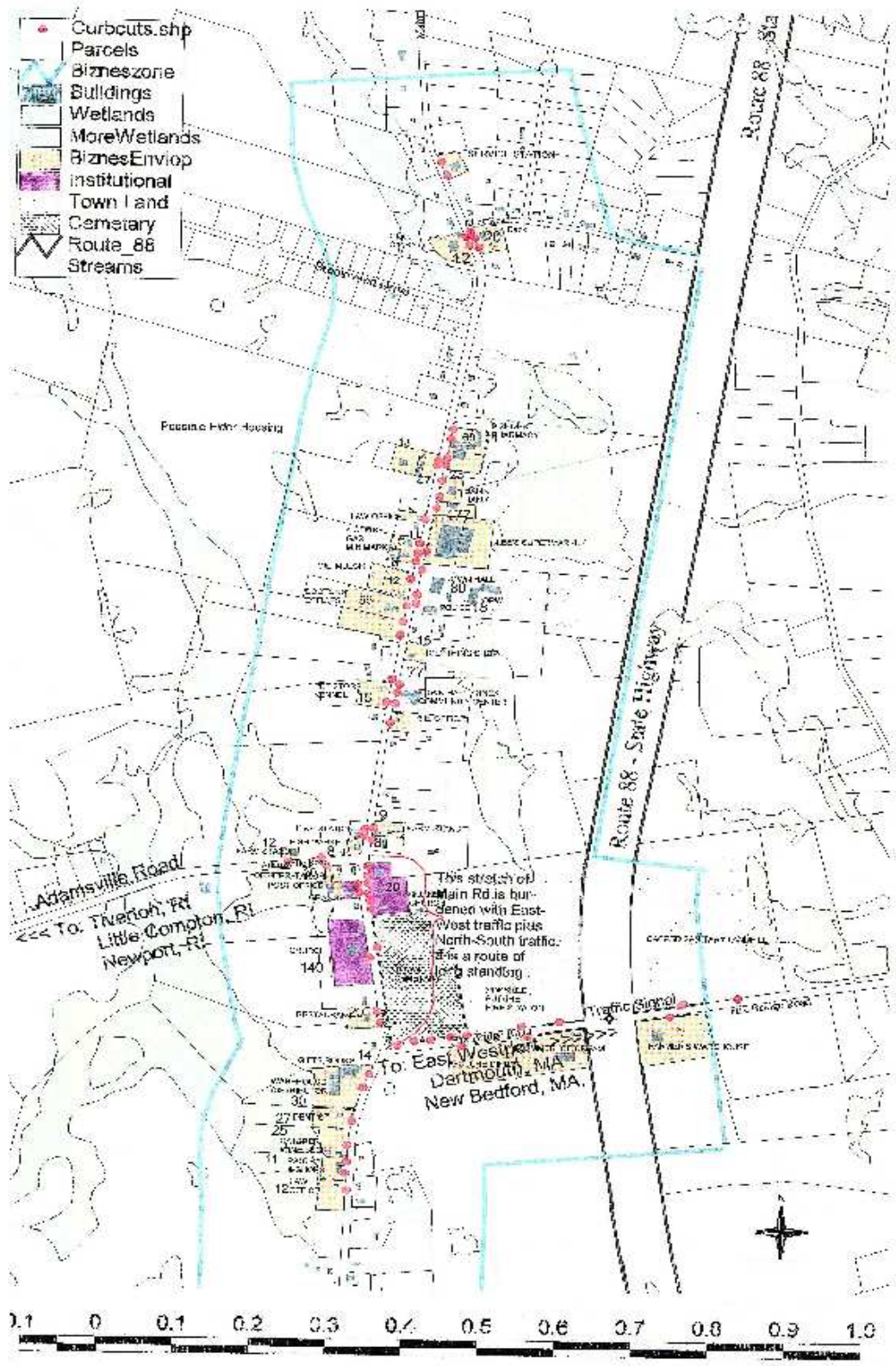
MAP 12-1 Westport Action Steps



Map A-1 Town-Wide Map, Westport, MA

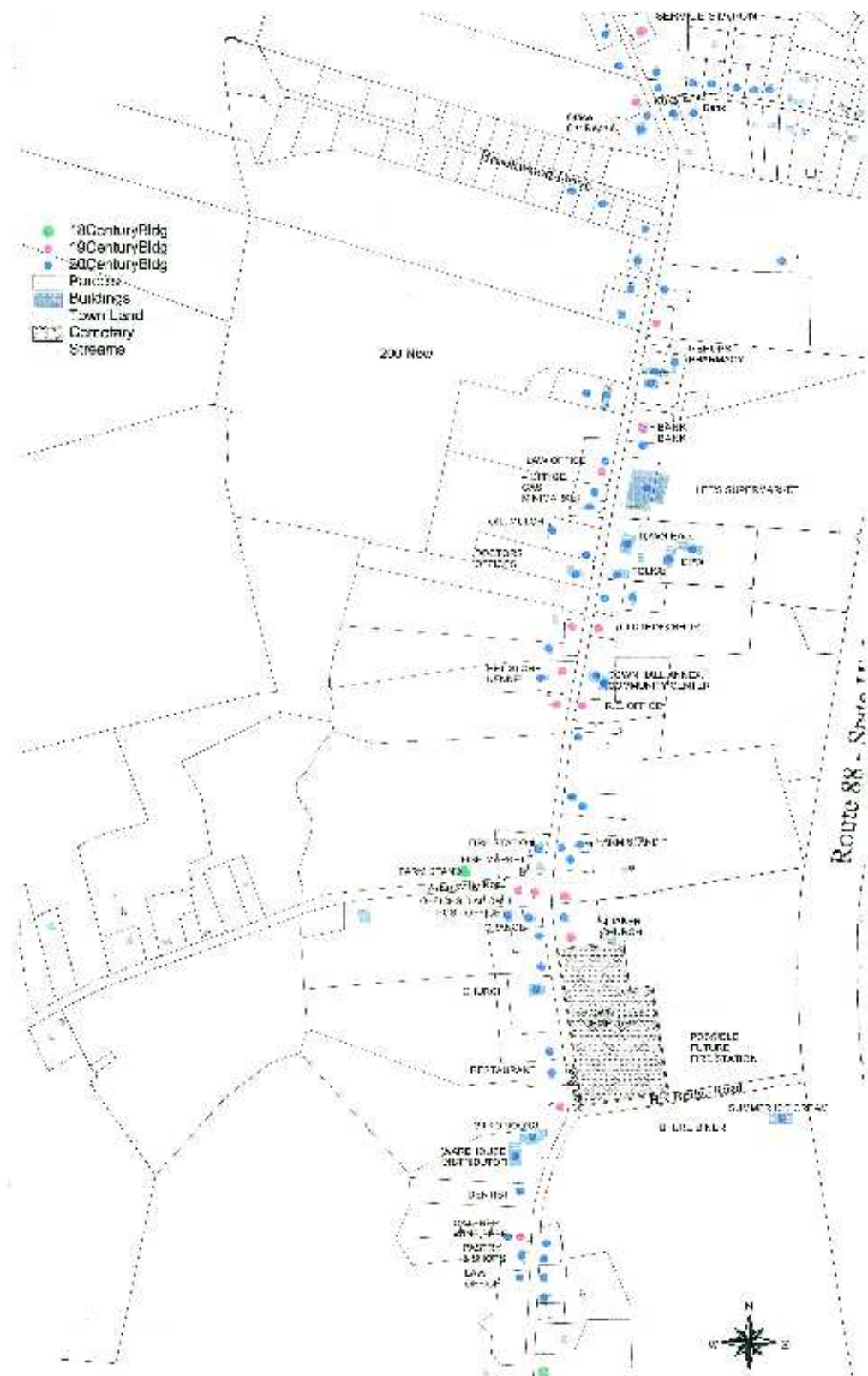


Map A-2 Central Village - Existing Land Use 4/9/2001

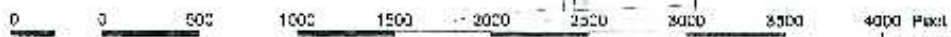


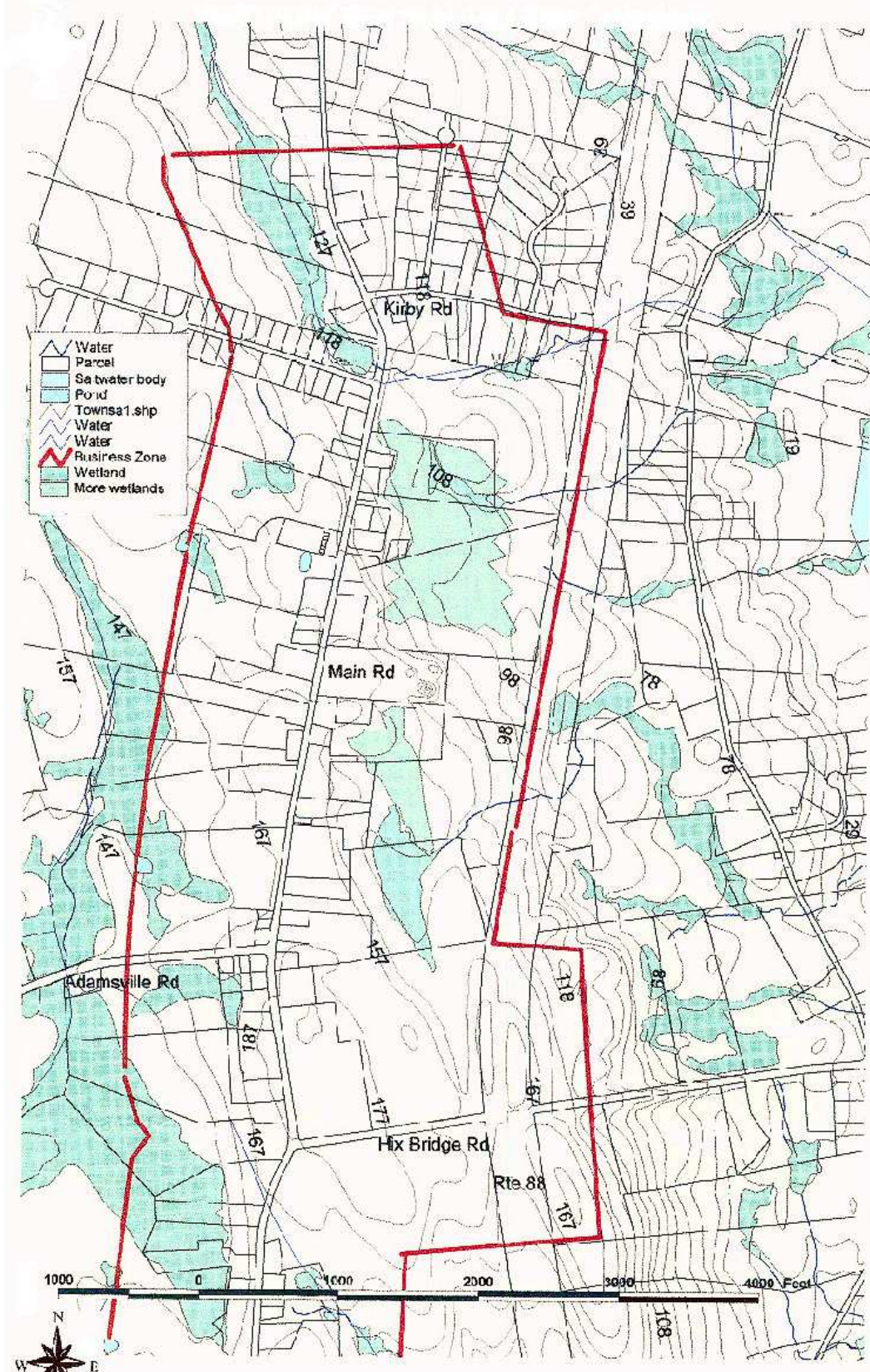
Map A-3 Westport Central Village - Central (curb cuts).

4/10/2001

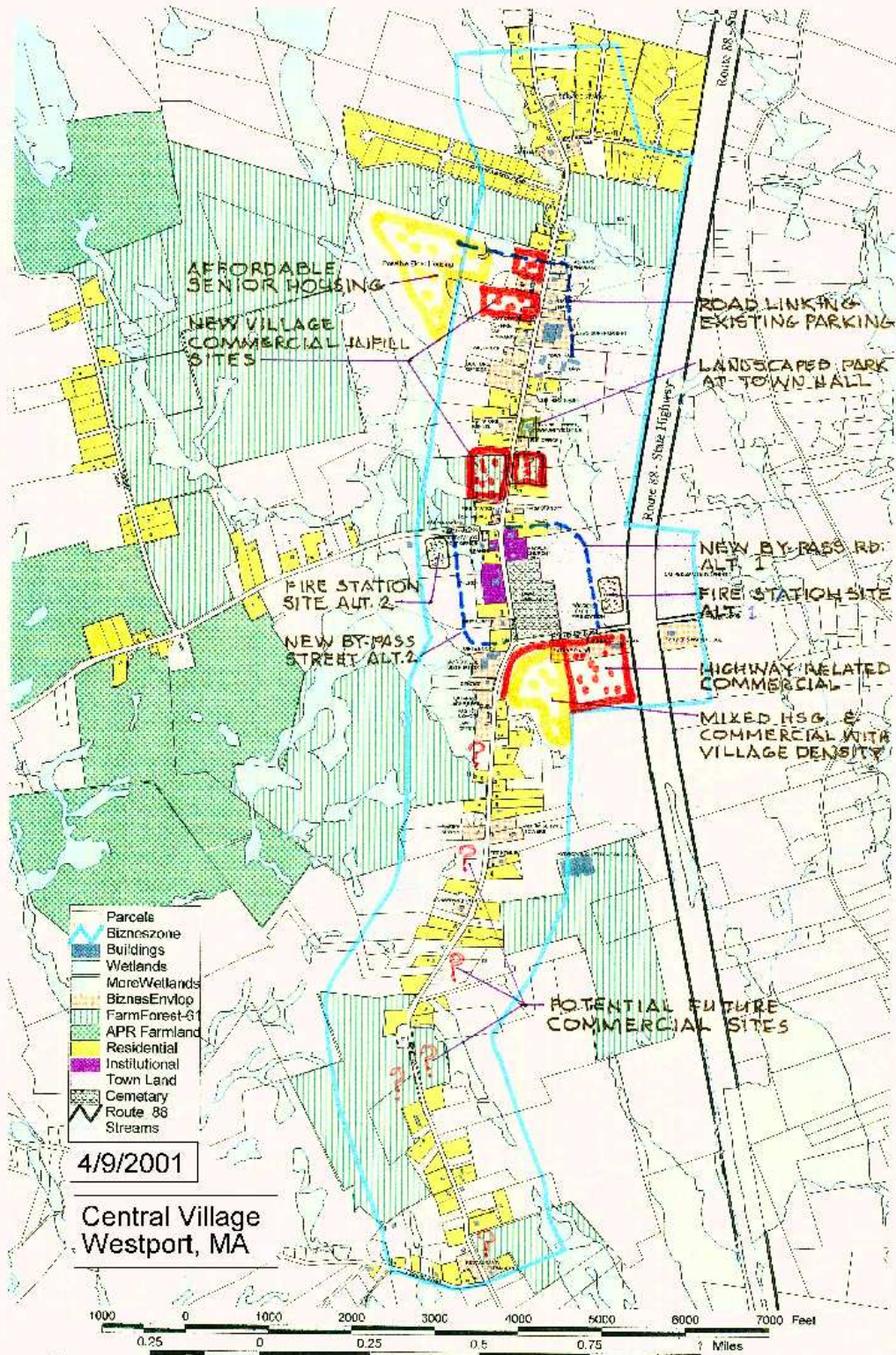


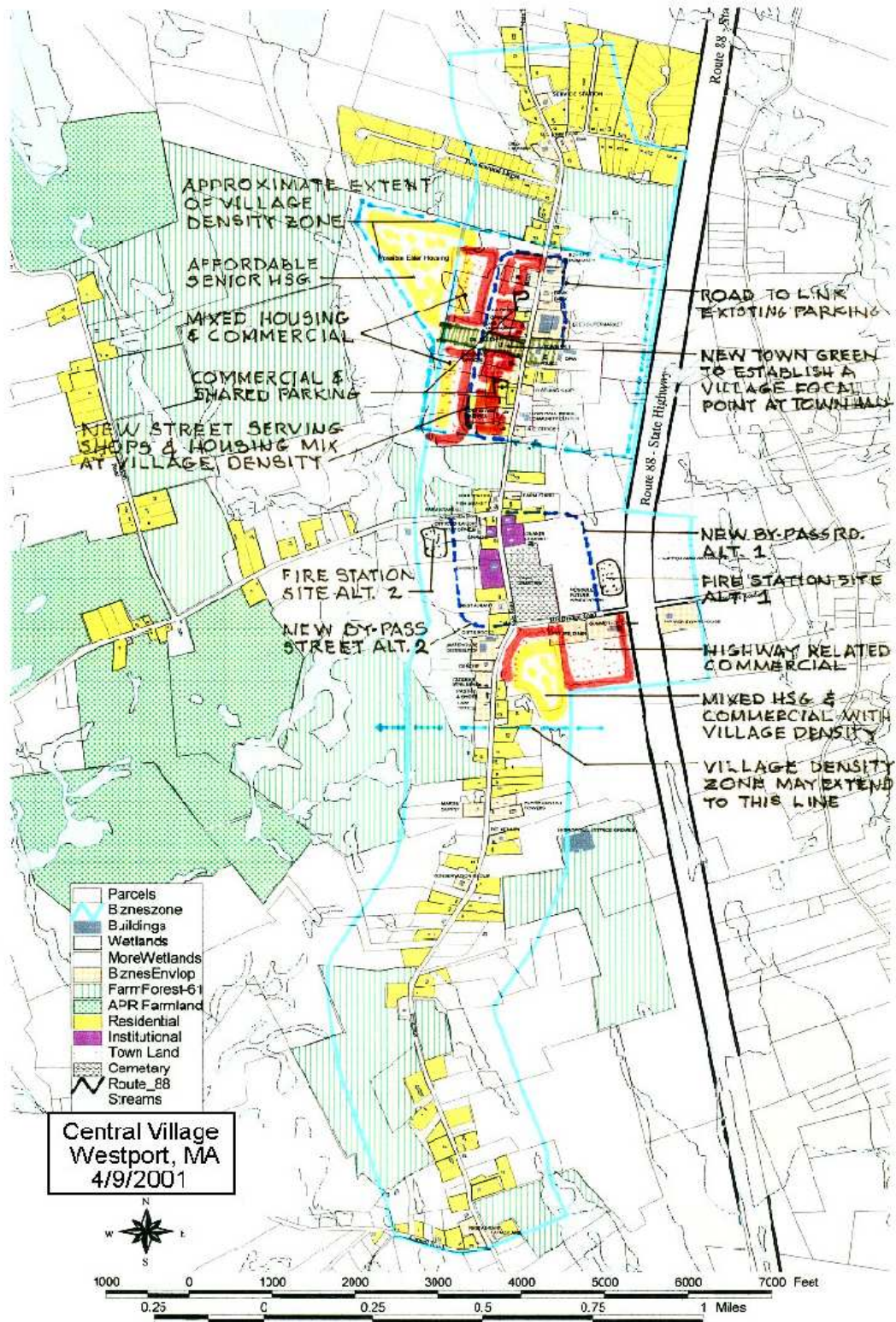
Map A-4 Central Village Historic Buildings



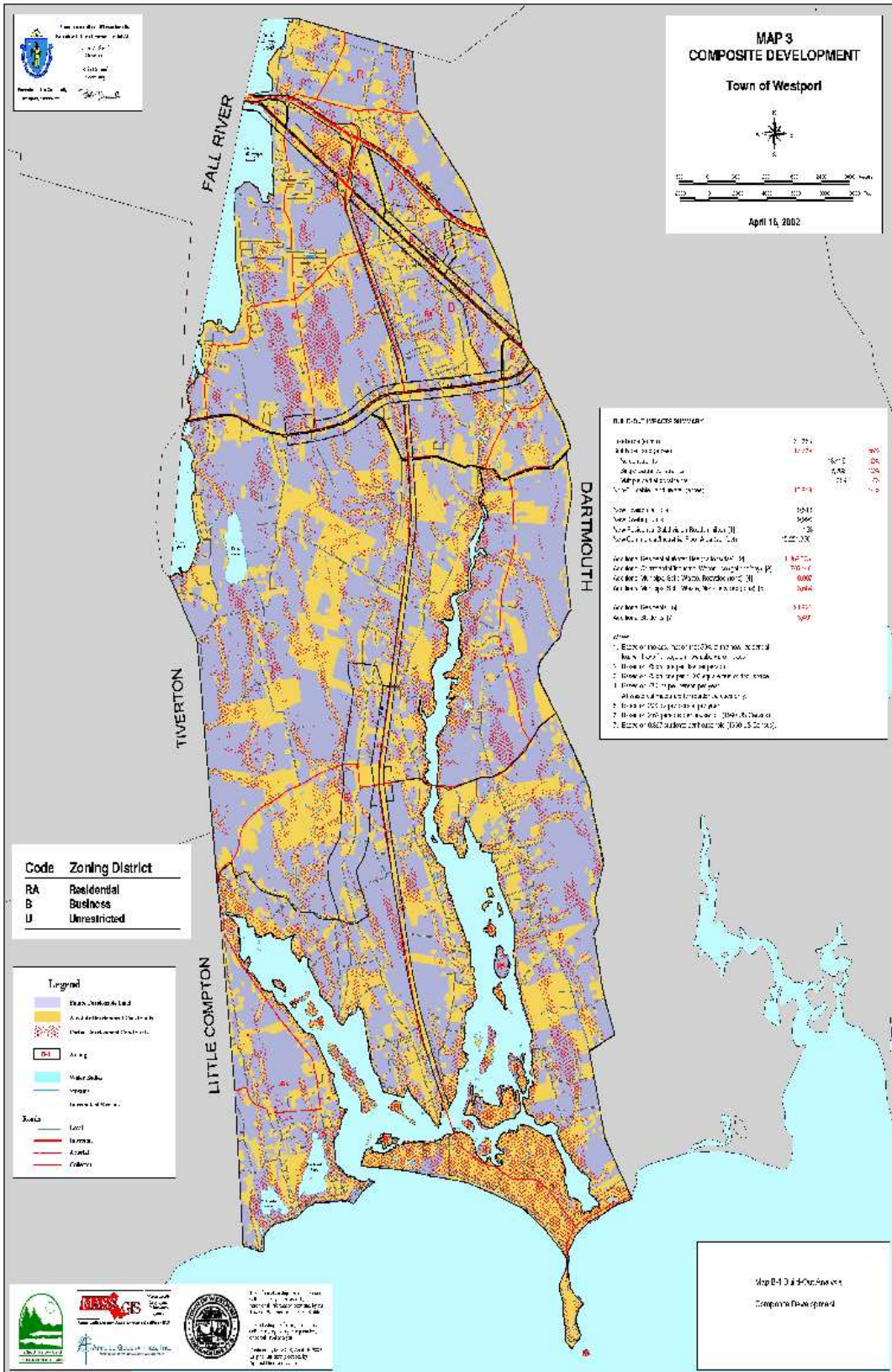


Map A-5 Westport Central Village 4/12/01 (topography, wetlands)





Map A-7 Compact Village Alternative



**MAP B-1
COMPOSITE DEVELOPMENT**
Town of Westport

April 16, 2002

Code	Zoning District
RA	Residential
B	Business
U	Unrestricted

Target	Description
[Light Blue]	Blank Acreage Land
[Yellow]	Land Available for Development
[Orange]	Water Development Potential
[Blue]	Water
[Light Blue]	Wetlands
[Light Blue]	Watershed
[Light Blue]	Watershed

Category	Value	Percentage
Blank Acreage Land	1,274	100%
Land Available for Development	1,274	100%
Water Development Potential	1,274	100%
Water	1,274	100%
Wetlands	1,274	100%
Watershed	1,274	100%



Map B-1 Build-Out Analysis
Composite Development

MAP B-1 Build-Out Analysis – Composite Development