

# Wellesley Today

This chapter provides a succinct overview of conditions in Wellesley based on information collected from existing plans, data, interviews, and initial surveys when the Unified Plan project began in fall 2016. Every effort was made to find the most recent reliable and consistent data, but in some cases data are not available after 2014 or even 2010, depending on the topic

## A. Accomplishments of the 2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

The Town of Wellesley has been using planning for nearly 100 years to maintain and enhance the town's quality of life, and the Town has a good track record of implementation. The planning process for the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update included a Steering Committee and an extensive program of public communication and participation. The plan covered all of the required elements of a Massachusetts comprehensive plan, but the planning work was strategically focused on the most difficult and complex issues facing the town.

These included the impact of tear-downs and mansionization on neighborhood character; identification of development opportunities to diversify housing types and provide affordable housing; continued preservation of village commercial districts; preservation of open space; and improved management of traffic and parking. The plan identified three potential sites for redevelopment and nine mixed-

use development scenarios; laid out a detailed affordable housing plan; and included an inventory of open space.

In many respects the Town did a good job in implementing the 2007 Plan. The Town completed or continued ongoing projects included in the plan. Successful implementation is particularly evident in the categories of natural resources and open space, public facilities and services, and transportation. Under the categories of housing and residential character, and economic development, there were some important implementation efforts, but other recommended actions were not studied or undertaken. Recommendations to clarify zoning, design standards, and other land use regulations, as well as initiatives to make it easier to navigate the regulations, were generally not addressed.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF IMPLEMENTATION

**Housing and Residential Character.** The Town took some action on seven out of seventeen recommended implementation actions, such as the establishment of Large House Review, authorizing Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs) and establishing one NCD, authorizing local historic preservation status for single buildings, adding some affordable housing units to the town's inventory, and approving multifamily housing in certain areas such as the Grossman's site (Waterstone). The Town's adoption of inclusionary zoning in 2005 and the Community Preservation Act has resulted in incremental increases in affordable housing. Although the Town did not adopt an Affordable Housing Production Plan, over the course of the last ten years, the affordable housing inventory as defined under the State's Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Law has risen from 4.6% of housing units to 6.2%.

**Economic Development.** For most people who live in Wellesley, "economic development" means that the town's commercial villages have successful and useful retail and other small businesses. Most residents do not think about the office park located off I-95 as part of Wellesley's economic and commercial tax base. Implementation included a study of the Natick Line commercial area and a cost-benefit study of a split (commercial-residential) tax rate. After the study, the Board of Selectmen decided not to establish a split rate. During the recession, residents became concerned

about empty storefronts in Wellesley Square and a committee was formed, but the end of the recession attracted new businesses. Other economic development recommendations were not implemented, such as: improved communications with the business and institutional community, targeted recruitment of businesses to serve residents, or actions to promote redevelopment and modernization of the Wellesley office parks.

**Land Use.** Some land use actions were implemented under other plan elements, such as Housing or Natural and Cultural Resources. The one major goal in the land use element focused on strengthening zoning regulations and design guidelines and their enforcement. The plan recommended five zoning actions to clarify language and provide more flexibility, including a recommendation to recodify the Zoning Bylaw within ten years, none of which were implemented. A recodification project was begun but never completed. The plan also recommended that informational materials be created about the land use system to inform residents and others about land use issues and permitting procedures in Wellesley, and that this information be made widely available on the web site, in Town offices, and so on. Except for Design Review Board documents, these recommendations were not implemented.

**Natural and Cultural Resources.** The 2007 Plan provided information, analysis, and recommendations to help advance the preparation of an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan, which was completed in 2015. The Town implemented many actions recommended in the Natural and Cultural Resources element, which included many long-term initiatives in progress. Natural resources accomplishments include: review of stormwater and watershed-protection regulations; continued implementation of pond restoration and the Morses Pond management program; implementation of the Fuller Brook Park Restoration Master Plan; and development of a public shade tree inventory and an annual tree-planting program. Cultural resources accomplishments included: completion of the historic property inventory from the 1990s; enabling single-property historic districts; passage of the Neighborhood Conservation district bylaw.

**Open Space and Recreation.** As was the case with other elements, CPA funding supported some of the Open Space and Recreation actions implemented by the Town. Implementation actions included: expansion of the trail system.; permanent protection of park and conservation land with conservation restriction or zoning; mandatory cluster zoning (Natural Resources Protection Zoning) for remaining private open space; implementation of the playing field and playground improvements capital plan; state approval of the Open Space and Recreation Plan; and identification of a potential aquatic facility project.

**Transportation and Circulation.** Improving traffic flow and mitigating congestion, better parking options in the commercial villages, and offering more transportation alternatives were the focus of this element. Implementation included: creation of advisory groups or committees to look at transit and intersection improvements; updated traffic signals to optimize traffic flow; participation in regional transportation groups; addition of MWRTA bus service to Wellesley; sidewalk improvements.

**Public Facilities and Services.** The plan focused on catching up with deferred maintenance on Town facilities and creating new systems to keep the Town's facilities in good conditions. Accomplishments included: school renovations; construction of a new High School; updating of the main library; creation of the Facilities Management Department (FMD) and incorporation of asset management systems by FMD and DPW; new Public Works building and Municipal Light Plant; continued rehabilitation of the sewer system and lift stations.

## B. Wellesley at a Glance

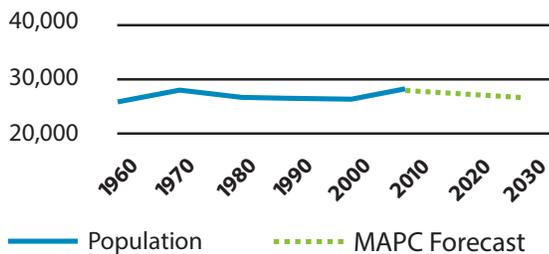


# Wellesley at a Glance

## Who we are

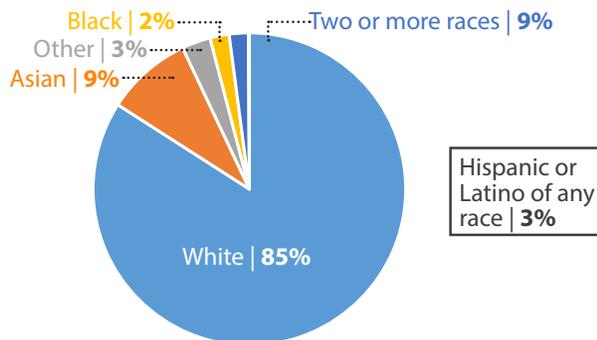
- Wellesley's population in 2016 was estimated at 28,940, including approximately 4,000 people living in group quarters like dormitories.
- Wellesley has grown slightly since 1990 but the population has remained relatively stable since the 1960s.
- 86% of Wellesley residents have at least a bachelor's or associate's degree, the highest rate in the country.
- Wellesley had the fourth-highest median income in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2014, according to the U.S. Census.

### POPULATION TRENDS IN WELLESLEY

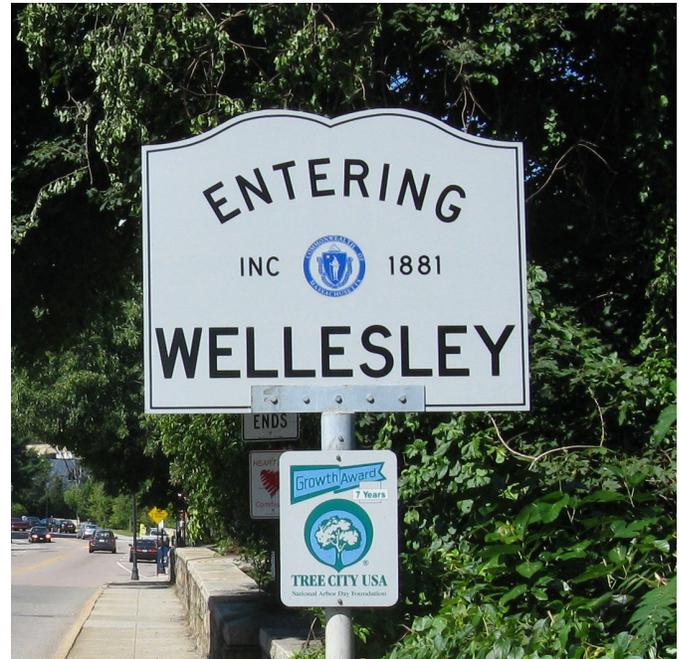


Source: U.S. Census, ESRI Business Analyst, MAPC

### POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: U.S. Census, 2016



### HOUSEHOLD TYPES

TYPE	% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
Family households (related by blood, marriage, adoption)	77%
Households with children under 18	44%
Households without children under 18	56%
Single person living alone	22%

Source: U.S. Census 2010-2014 ACS

### HIGHEST MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN MASSACHUSETTS, BY TOWN, 2014

Town	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Weston	\$201,200
Dover	\$176,250
Sudbury	\$169,505
Wellesley	\$159,615
Carlisle	\$157,500

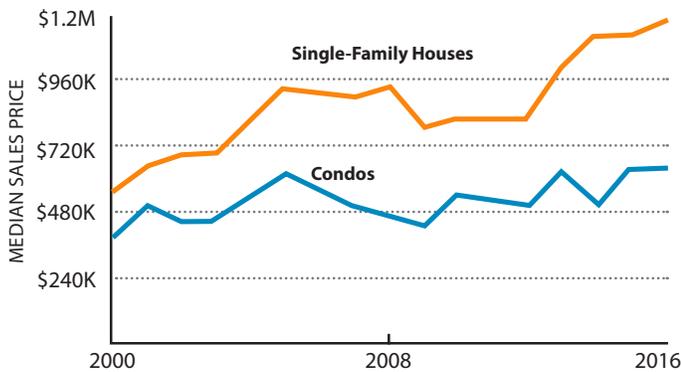
Source: U.S. Census, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

# Our home, environment and health

## Housing

- There were 9,189 housing units in Wellesley according to the 2010 U.S. Census. Town data show a decline in the number of total units to 9,079, due to replacement of small multi-unit buildings with single-family homes.
- Most Wellesley residents live in single-family houses and 77% of Wellesley houses are owner-occupied.
- 76% of Wellesley residents moved into their home after 2000.

### ▶▶ MEDIAN SALES PRICE BY YEAR



Source: The Warren Group

- The median sales price of single-family houses in Wellesley has increased over the past 10 years, from \$976,500 in 2006 to \$1,252,500 in 2016.
- According to 2014 data, nearly one-quarter of Wellesley homeowners and one-third of renters pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs.
- The median tax bill for single-family houses is approximately \$12,000, while the average tax bill is about \$14,000.
- The number of residential demolition permits in 2015 was 95; in 2016, 85; and in 2017, 57.

### ▶▶ HOUSING BY UNITS IN STRUCTURE

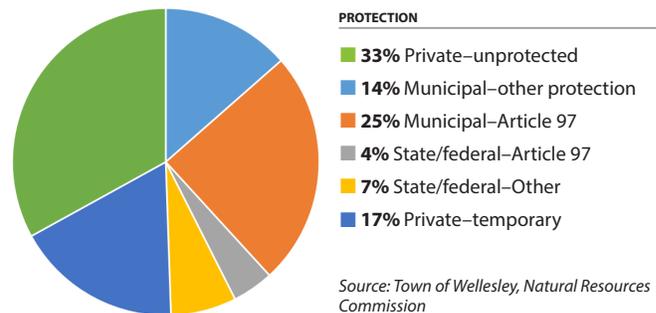


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

## Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

- Wellesley has 6 streams, 14 wetland systems, 2 large ponds, and 10 small ponds.
- 33% of Wellesley is undeveloped.
- Approximately 1,000 acres (about 15% of the Town's land area) have some kind of protection against development.

### ▶▶ UNDEVELOPED LAND



Source: Town of Wellesley, Natural Resources Commission

- The Town has a total of 43 miles of trails of which 26 miles are marked with directional medallions.
- The Town offers around 1,000 recreation programs each year. The Recreation Department generates more revenue from program fees than it spends on program expenses.
- Wellesley has 3 National Register Historic Districts (2 of which are aqueducts), 7 individual properties listed on the National Register, 4 local Single-Building Historic Districts and 1 Local Historic District.



Photo of Morses Pond by Suzy Littlefield

## Public Health

- Wellesley performs better on key indicators of health than the state, Norfolk and Middlesex counties, as well as comparable communities.
- Health issues of concern in Wellesley are social isolation, particularly for elderly people who live alone, and stress and mental health issues for teenage youth.

# Where we work and how we get around

## Economic Development

- Wellesley is an employment center, with 16,710 jobs in town in 2016 according to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.
- Employed Wellesley residents tend to work in knowledge-worker positions in education, health care, professional services, finance and management.

### TOP SIX EMPLOYERS

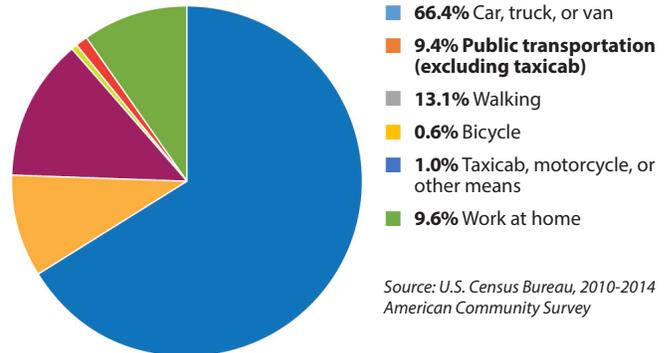
BUSINESS	NATURE OF BUSINESS	EMPLOYEES
Town of Wellesley	Government	1,232*
Sun Life Assurance	Insurance	1,158
Wellesley College	Higher education	1,100
Babson College	Higher education	975
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care	Insurance	398
Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates	Healthcare	352
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,215</b>

Source: Town of Wellesley, Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Wellesley local employers  
 \*Including 804 employees of Wellesley Public Schools

## Transportation

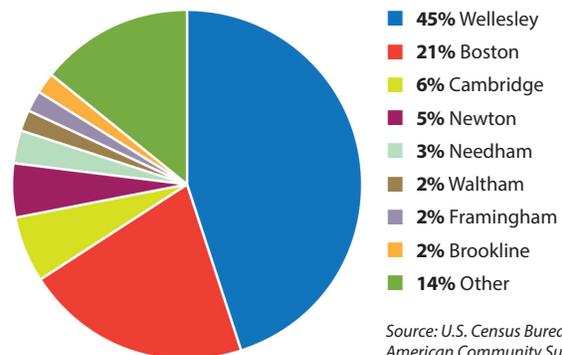
- Two-thirds of Wellesley working residents drive to work, mostly alone. Almost 10% take public transportation, 13% walk to work, and less than 1% bike to work. Nearly 10% work at home.
- Route 9 and Washington Street are the busiest corridors, with over 50,000 daily trips near the I-95 intersection.
- Wellesley has one marked bicycle lane on a limited segment of Washington Street.
- According to 2014 estimates, there are approximately 1.9 vehicles per household (or around 16,000 cars) in Wellesley.
- There are 3 MBTA commuter rail stations in Wellesley; two MWRTA bus lines serve the town.
- An estimated 45% of Wellesley residents work in Wellesley, while 21% commute to Boston
- Nearly one-third of the people who work in Wellesley also live there.

### HOW RESIDENTS GET TO WORK



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

### WHERE RESIDENTS WORK

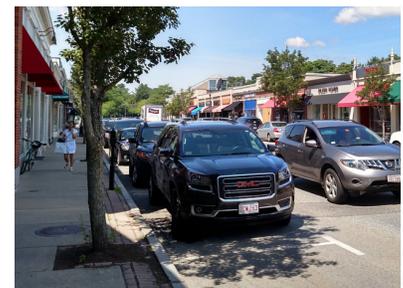


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

## Wellesley's Commercial Centers

Wellesley has three traditional commercial villages:

- Wellesley Square
- Wellesley Hills
- Lower Falls
- In addition, Linden Square and the Fells area on Weston Road offer shopping, and the Worcester Street/ Cedar Street area offers some consumer services and businesses.





# *Understanding Wellesley Today*

**FOR A BETTER WELLESLEY TOMORROW**

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## Introduction

### **What is the Wellesley Unified Plan?**

The Wellesley Unified Plan is an innovative initiative to combine an update of Wellesley's 2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan with a citizen-based holistic vision for the future and a strategic analysis and recommendations for Town government to enhance implementation of the plan. Through the Unified Plan process, Wellesley residents are invited to participate in creating a vision for the town as a whole: what kind of place should Wellesley be in the next ten to twenty years, both as a social and a physical community? What are the values and principles that should guide Wellesley in achieving that vision? With the vision, values and principles in mind, the plan will identify goals, strategies and actions designed to achieve the vision, including best practices and recommendations that can help Wellesley's highly democratic and decentralized town government implement the plan in order to achieve the citizens' vision.

### **What is the purpose of this document?**

Understanding Wellesley Today is a document designed to provide a succinct overview of conditions in Wellesley today and the way that a diverse group of people interviewed and surveyed for the plan perceive conditions in Town. This document, which will be accompanied by a short summary, Wellesley At A Glance, puts a wide range of information in one place that can serve as a foundation for the visioning process

In addition to interviews, this document is based on research and analysis of socio-economic and other data. Every effort was made to find the most recent reliable and consistent data, but in some cases data is not available after 2014 or even 2010, depending on the topic. Sources and dates are provided, but because of the 2007-2009 Great Recession and subsequent recovery in the Boston area, numbers from earlier years may not fully represent conditions today.

In each of the "Wellesley Today" sections, key data and maps are presented. Quotes from the interviews and survey are also provided under the heading "Wellesley Voices." Interviewees were promised anonymity to encourage frank discussion. Each section ends with "Findings" and "Challenges." Findings are key data or information for thinking about the future and the Challenges call out issues that are difficult to resolve or require complex trade-offs.

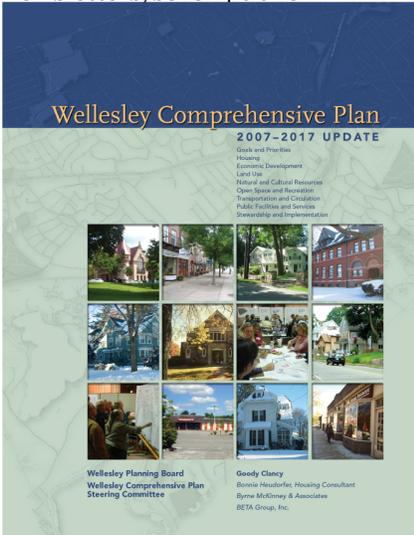
# How did Wellesley implement the 2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan?

The Town of Wellesley has been using planning for nearly 100 years to maintain and enhance the town’s quality of life. Updates to the Town’s comprehensive plan have been created approximately every ten years (including 1965, 1981, 1994 and 2007), and the Town has a good track record of implementation.

## Accomplishments of the 2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

The planning process for the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update included a Steering Committee made up of the Planning Board and Town Meeting members, an extensive program of public communication and participation including a project website and newsletters; seven public meetings—town wide and by precinct; a meeting with business and institutional stakeholders; Steering Committee member visits to Town boards and commissions to report on the plan; reports to Town Meeting and the Board of Selectmen; and public review of the draft plan before adoption.

The plan encompasses all the required elements of a Massachusetts comprehensive plan, but the planning work was strategically focused on the most difficult and complex issues facing the town. These included the impact of tear-downs and mansionization on neighborhood character; identification of development opportunities to diversify housing types and provide affordable housing; continued preservation of village commercial districts; preservation of open space; and improved management of traffic and parking. The plan identified three potential sites for redevelopment and nine mixed-use development scenarios; included a detailed affordable housing plan; an inventory of open space; 19 maps; and an implementation chapter coordinated with the Town’s capital plan.



## Overview

In many respects the Town did a good job in implementing the 2007 Plan. Over the last ten years the Town completed or continued several ongoing projects included in the Plan. Successful implementation is particularly evident in the categories of natural resources and open space, public facilities and services, and transportation. For housing and residential character, and economic development, some important implementation efforts did take place, but other recommended actions were not studied or undertaken. Recommendations to clarify zoning, design standards, and other land use regulations, as well as initiatives to make it easier to navigate the regulations, were generally not addressed.

## HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

The 2007 Plan included an element on housing and neighborhoods and a framework for Affordable Housing Planned Production that met State criteria for approval. “Mansionization” and its effect on town character and some diversification of housing types and affordability were central to the planning discussion. The housing element was organized by three goals:

- Maintain the primarily single-family character of Wellesley’s housing stock.
- Maintain the physical form of Wellesley’s residential neighborhoods by balancing community standards with individual interests.
- Promote the creation of housing units other than single-family homes to provide housing options for people across a range of income, age, family size, and needs, while complementing town character and meeting the state goal of 10% affordable housing.

The Town took some action on seven out of seventeen recommended implementation actions, such as the establishment of Large House Review, authorizing Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs) and establishing one NCD, authorizing local historic preservation status for single buildings, adding some affordable housing units to the town’s inventory, and approving multifamily housing in certain areas such as the Grossman’s site (Waterstone). The Town’s adoption of inclusionary zoning in 2005 and the Community Preservation Act has resulted in incremental increases in affordable housing. Although the Town did not adopt an Affordable Housing Production Plan, over the course of the last ten years, the affordable housing inventory as defined under the State’s Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Law has increased from 4.6% of housing units to 6.2%.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For most people who live in Wellesley, “economic development” means that the town’s commercial villages have successful and useful retail and other small businesses. Most residents do not think about the office park located off I-95 as part of Wellesley’s economic and commercial tax base.

Economic development goals in 2007 included:

- Maintain a diverse array of independent businesses.
- Create mixed-use environments in commercial areas.
- Fund an economic development specialist to work more closely with business and institutional property owners.
- Create a system of regular communication among Town government, the business community, and local institutions in support of the Town’s economic goals.
- Support and enhance the buildout potential of non-resident property for the purpose of increasing the Town’s tax revenue by studying the potential impact of allowing additional development capacity in Wellesley’s office park.

Implementation included a study of the Natick Line commercial area and a cost-benefit study of a split (commercial-residential) tax rate. After the study, the Board of Selectmen decided not to establish a split rate. During the recession, residents became concerned about empty storefronts in Wellesley Square and a committee was formed, but the end of the recession attracted new businesses. Otherwise, there were no additional efforts to improve communications with the business and institutional community, to attract specific types of businesses to serve residents, or to promote redevelopment and modernization of the Wellesley Office Park.

## LAND USE

Some land use actions were implemented under other plan elements, such as Housing or Natural and Cultural Resources. The one major goal in the land use element encompassed several strategies and actions:

- Strengthen Town zoning regulations and design guidelines and their enforcement to ensure continuity of town character and quality of life.

The plan recommended five zoning actions to clarify language and provide more flexibility, including a recommendation to recodify the Zoning Bylaw within ten years, none of which were implemented. A recodification project was begun but never completed. The plan also recommended that informational materials be created about the land use system to inform residents and others about land use issues and permitting procedures in Wellesley, and that this information be made widely available on the web site, in Town offices, and so on. Except for Design Review Board documents, these recommendations were not implemented.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The 2007 Plan provided information, analysis, and recommendations to help advance the preparation of an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan, which was finally completed in 2015. The Town implemented many actions recommended in the Natural and Cultural Resources element, which included a number of long-term initiatives in progress. Adoption of the Community Preservation Act prior to the comprehensive plan helped provide funding for open space, recreation, and historic preservation projects, in addition to the affordable housing projects mentioned earlier. The element had two main goals:

- Restore, preserve and enhance open space and sensitive natural resources for protection of water resources, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and enrichment of community character.
- Preserve cultural resources, including cultural landscapes, to maintain and enrich community character.

Accomplishments include:

- Review of the 2005 Stormwater Bylaw, implementation of Phase II Stormwater Regulations, and minimizing of erosion and nonpoint pollution through zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Review of the Watershed Protection Overlay District and Wetlands Protection Bylaw, currently being undertaken by Mass Audubon.
- Continued use of Best Management Practices to mitigate the impacts of local and regional development through zoning, stormwater, and wetlands regulations.
- Continued public awareness campaigns on the harmful effects of nonpoint source pollution.
- Continued implementation of the Pond Restoration Program.
- Completion and implementation of the Morses Pond Management Study.
- Monitoring and management of restored ponds.
- Development of a public shade tree inventory to identify all shade trees by size and species and implementation of an annual tree planting program.
- Completion of the historic property inventory from the 1990s.
- Expansion of the voluntary historic plaque program to include properties at least 50 years old.
- Potential protection of individual historic properties through enabling single-property historic districts.
- Passing of the Neighborhood Conservation District bylaw.

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

As was the case with other elements, CPA funding supported some of the Open Space and Recreation actions implemented by the Town. One goal encompassed all of the strategies and actions for the Open Space and Recreation element:

- Preserve and enhance the Town’s open space system.

Implementation actions included:

- Expansion of the trail system.
- Permanent protection of park and conservation land with conservation restriction or zoning.
- Mandatory cluster zoning (Natural Resources Protection Zoning) for remaining private open space parcels.
- Implementation of the Fuller Brook Park Restoration Master Plan.
- Implementation of the playing field and playground improvements capital plan.
- Update and state approval of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Sharing of institutional recreation facilities (with Babson College).
- Identification of a potential aquatic facility project.
- Continuing wide variety of recreation programs.

## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Improving traffic flow and mitigating congestion, better parking options in the commercial villages, and offering more transportation alternatives were the focus of this element. There were four goals:

- Reduce traffic volume, especially during peak hours.
- Seek improvement of traffic flow on regional routes.
- Manage parking to support commercial districts.
- Encourage alternative means of transportation.

Because so much regional traffic impacts Wellesley at peak commute times, the Town has limited options, outside of alternative transportation modes, to influence the amount of regional traffic. Intra-town traffic issues also continue to be difficult. Attempts to reduce the impact of school-related trips to the high school were not successful. Implementation included:

- Creation of advisory groups or committees to look at transit and intersection improvements.
- Incorporation of MassHighway design standards for Town projects.
- Updating of traffic signals to optimize traffic flow.
- Stricter traffic demand management requirements in project permitting.
- Active participation in regional transportation groups.
- Addition of MWRTA bus service to Wellesley.
- Parking improvements, including enhanced lighting.
- Initiation of a program to provide marked bicycle routes.
- Sidewalk improvements.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

This element was focused on catching up with deferred maintenance on Town facilities and creating new systems to keep the Town's facilities in good conditions. The element had seven goals:

- Maintain school excellence.
- Provide additional community meeting space.
- Create systematic oversight of Town facilities and infrastructure.
- Improve public safety response times and operations.
- Enhance DPW and Municipal Light Plant operations.
- Clarify town policies on private street maintenance.
- Develop a uniform policy for street acceptance.

Implementation actions included:

- Updating of many schools, including renovation of Schofield and Fiske Schools and Middle School.
- Construction of a new High School.
- School budget overrides to address funding shortfalls in the school system.
- Creation of the Facilities Management Department (FMD) and incorporation of asset management systems by FMD and DPW.
- Public safety grants for staff and new fire department pumper truck.
- New DPW building and MLP.
- Continued rehabilitation of the sewer system and lift stations.
- Establishment of a betterment system and acceptance policy for private roads.

# Wellesley Today

## POPULATION

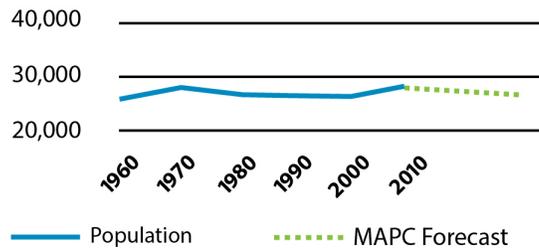
### How many people live in Wellesley today?

- Wellesley’s population was estimated at 28,940 in 2016.
- According to 2014 data, 86% of the Wellesley population lived in households and 14% lived in what the U.S. Census calls “group quarters,” such as dormitories or nursing homes.

### Is Wellesley growing?

- Wellesley has grown slightly since 1990 but the population has remained relatively stable since the 1960’s.
- The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the UMass Donahue Institute project a modest increase in households and population in the next 10 years but a modest decline in population by 2035.

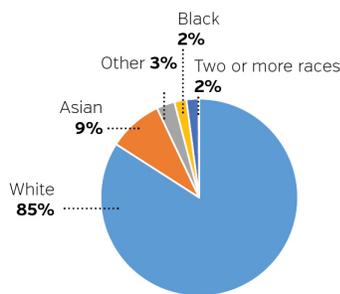
#### POPULATION TRENDS IN WELLESLEY



Source: U.S. Census, ESRI Business Analyst, MAPC

### What kind of household, racial and ethnic diversity exists in Wellesley?

#### POPULATION BY RACE



Source: SuburbanStat.org, U.S. Census, 2016

#### HOUSEHOLD TYPE

TYPE	% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
<i>Percentages do not add to 100% because not all categories are listed.</i>	
Married-couple family households	68%
Household with children under 18 living with parents	44%
Single occupant	22%
Two occupants	31%
Three or more occupants	48%

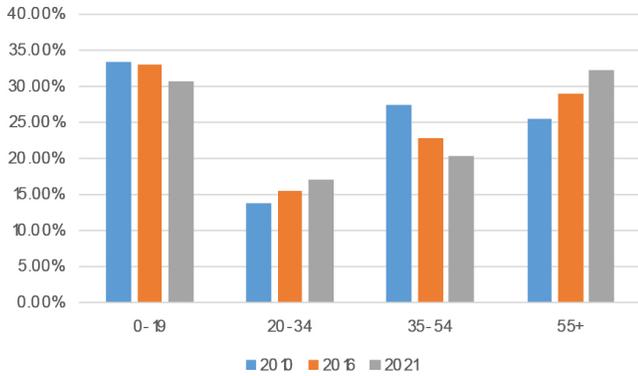
Source: U.S. Census, 2014

3% of residents identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race and less than 1% identified as some other race than those shown above.

## What is the age composition in Wellesley?

Wellesley is aging. The number of very young children (0-9 years old) in Wellesley decreased between 2010 and 2016, while the number of people over 55 years old increased. The median age in Wellesley in 2010 was 37 years. There are relatively few “millennials” (people born 1980-2000) in Wellesley compared to other age groups. Projections show these trends continuing.

**AGE DISTRIBUTION IN WELLESLEY  
2010-2016 CHANGE AND 2021 PROJECTION**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI

## What is the median household income in Wellesley?

**MASSACHUSETTS TOWNS WITH HIGHEST  
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2014**

Town	Median Household Income
Weston	\$201,200
Dover	\$176,250
Sudbury	\$169,505
<b>Wellesley</b>	<b>\$159,615</b>
Carlisle	\$157,500
Sherborn	\$155,564
Southborough	\$149,375
Bolton	\$144,461

Source: U.S. Census 2010-2014 ACS

- Wellesley had the fourth-highest median income in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2014, according to the U.S. Census.
- Few Wellesley households live below the poverty line—3.5% of households in 2015, compared to 11.6% statewide.

## How many students live in Wellesley?

Wellesley is home to three college campuses: Wellesley College, Babson College and a campus of Massachusetts Bay Community College. Together these three enroll approximately 10,700 students, approximately 40% of whom live on campus. 484 students are enrolled at Dana Hall School, a private school, and 124 of those students live on campus.

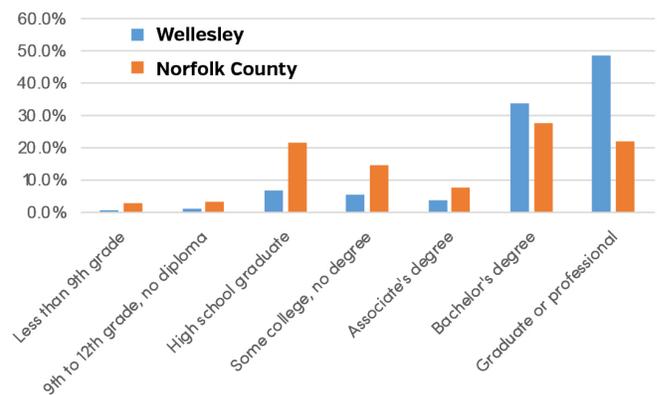


Image: Wellesley College Aerial. Credit: Soe Lin

## How educated is Wellesley?

86% of Wellesley residents have at least a bachelor’s or associate’s degree, the highest rate in the country.

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

## Findings

- Wellesley has a relatively stable population that has fluctuated around 27,000 to 28,000 people since the 1970s. The 2016 population was estimated at 28,940. State and regional organizations project that the number of households and the population will increase slightly by 2025, declining thereafter to stable numbers around 28,000. Similarly, the Wellesley Public Schools 2013 Demographic Study forecasts a decline in total school enrollment between 2016-2024.
  - The number of households can grow without substantial increases in population because the average household size is getting smaller.
  - Wellesley's median age in the 2010 census was estimated at 36 in 2015 by the Census Bureau and is expected to increase as the Baby Boom generation ages. Approximately 4,000 college and boarding students live in Wellesley, which has an effect on the age composition statistics.
  - The age composition of Wellesley's population indicates that two age groups are moving out of town. Young adults from Wellesley move to go to college and/or to other cities or metro areas. Adults 70 years old and older are downsizing and moving to other locations.
  - The age groups that are moving into Wellesley are adults in the 35 to 44 year old range, with their children.
- 

- Two-earner families with children have less time to devote to volunteer activities in town.
- The majority of Wellesley households (66%) do not include children under 18.
- Wellesley has become more diverse in recent decades. For example, Asians made up 11% of the town's population according to the 2010 census, an increase of 68% since 2000.
- Between 2005 and 2014, Wellesley's GINI indicator (a statistical indicator of the distribution of income) dropped from 0.53 to 0.50. While this indicates that Wellesley has less income disparity than before, this could be due to moderate- and low-income families' leaving Wellesley or a greater proportion of wealthy individuals coming to the community.

## Challenges

- Balancing the needs of all ages and household types
- Welcoming new residents into town government volunteer roles
- Long-term ability to attract enough residents for town elected and appointed positions

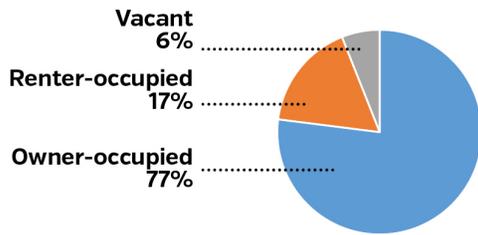
# HOUSING

November 2016

## How many housing units does Wellesley have?

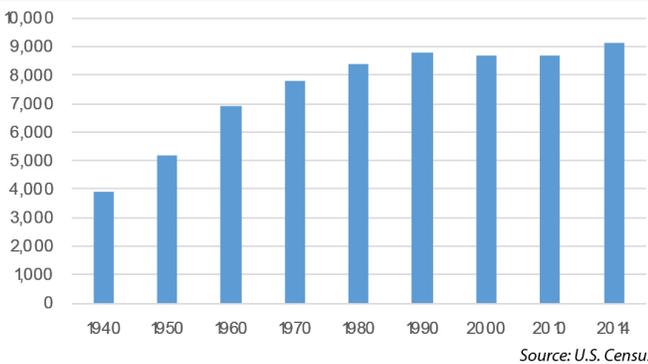
- There were 9,189 housing units in Wellesley according to the 2010 U.S. Census.
- Wellesley is a mature residential community with relatively little open land available for development.
- 83% of Wellesley households are owner-occupied.

### HOUSING VACANCY AND TENURE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS Estimates 2010-2014

### TOTAL HOUSING UNITS



Source: U.S. Census

### HOUSING UNITS BY UNITS IN STRUCTURE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

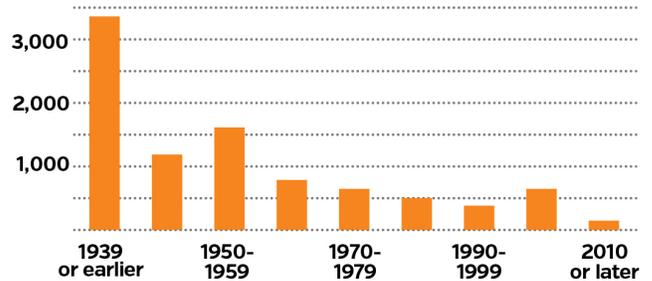
## How long have today's households been in their homes?

Seventy-six percent of Wellesley residents have moved into their homes since 2000. While some may have moved within the town, only 7% of renters and homeowners have lived in the same housing unit in Wellesley since before 1970. The median year that a householder moved into their Wellesley home is 2001.

## How old is Wellesley's housing stock?

- Most of Wellesley homes were built before 1960.
- 36% of Wellesley homes were built in 1939 or earlier.

### TOTAL HOUSING UNITS IN WELLESLEY BY YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

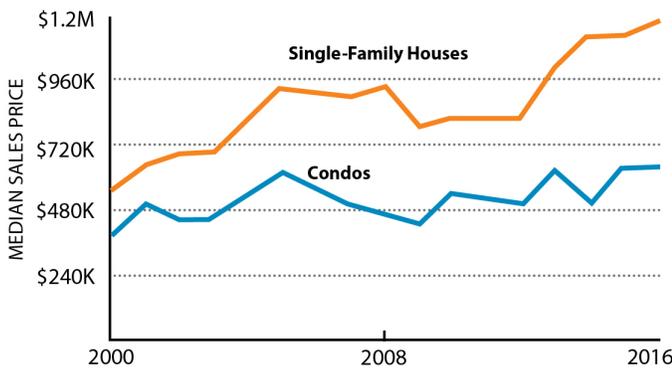


- Older homes in Wellesley tend to be smaller than new ones.

## How much does Wellesley housing cost?

- The median sales price of single family homes in Wellesley has increased over the past 10 years, from \$976,500 in 2006 to \$1,252,500 in 2016. The median means that half of the prices are above this number and half are below it. According to Town data, the median single-family sales price in 2017 had risen to \$1.45 million.
- The price of condominiums has also risen, though at not so steep a rate. Condos in Wellesley are generally too expensive to be considered first time homebuyer opportunities.

**MEDIAN SALES PRICE BY CALENDAR YEAR**



Source: The Warren Group

**MEDIAN SALES PRICE—WELLESLEY**

YEAR	SINGLE-FAMILY	CONDO
2016	\$1,252,500	\$680,000
2015	\$1,177,250	\$645,000
2014	\$1,180,000	\$520,000
2013	\$1,068,750	\$639,999
2012	\$897,700	\$532,500
2011	\$880,000	\$529,875
2010	\$900,000	\$560,000
2009	\$856,500	\$452,000
2008	\$1,010,000	\$502,000
2007	\$963,250	\$525,000
2006	\$976,500	\$587,500
2005	\$971,250	\$632,000
2004	\$880,000	\$550,000
2003	\$759,750	\$452,500
2002	\$737,000	\$445,000
2001	\$691,250	\$514,000
2000	\$592,750	\$390,000

Source: The Warren Group

## How do Wellesley's property taxes compare to its neighbors?

- Wellesley residents pay more in property taxes than residents in some neighboring towns, and the average single-family tax bill for a Wellesley household rose 33% between 2004 and 2016. While Wellesley's tax rate is lower than that of some nearby towns, the values of homes tends to be higher, leading to a higher average single family tax bill. According to Town data, the average single family home tax bill was \$14,333 and the median tax bill was \$12,167.

**AVERAGE SINGLE-FAMILY TAX BILLS FOR WELLESLEY AND ITS NEIGHBORS**

COMMUNITY	AVERAGE SINGLE-FAMILY TAX BILL IN 2004, CORRECTED FOR INFLATION	AVERAGE SINGLE-FAMILY TAX BILL, 2016	PERCENT INCREASE	2016 RESIDENTIAL TAX RATE (PER \$1,000 ASSESSED VALUE)
Dover	\$10,767.36	\$14,149.00	24%	\$12.88
Natick	\$5,258.24	\$6,868.00	23%	\$13.57
Needham	\$6,658.56	\$9,587.00	31%	\$11.54
Newton	\$8,743.68	\$10,728.00	18%	\$11.38
Wellesley	\$9,369.60	\$13,971.00	33%	\$11.83
Weston	\$14,384.64	\$18,762.00	23%	\$12.16

Source: Mass. Department of Revenue

### How much affordable housing does Wellesley have?

- According to 2014 data, nearly one quarter of Wellesley homeowners and one third of renters pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs.
- In 2017, 6.3% of housing units in Wellesley meet the State affordable housing goal for the purposes of Chapter 40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law. This percentage includes market rate units in approved mixed-income developments.
- The Wellesley Housing Authority (WHA) has 194 units. The WHA shares an Executive Director with the Needham Housing Authority.
- Since 2006, Wellesley has added 75 subsidized units in non-WHA developments totaling 303 units. The subsidized units include:
  - » 36 age-restricted (55 years and older) units
  - » 57 rental and 18 ownership units
  - » 23 units in chapter 40B projects
  - » 48 units through inclusionary zoning
  - » 4 units funded by the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation

### How many new single-family houses are built each year in Wellesley?

- While annual building permits for new single-family houses have ranged from the 50s to 60s in recent years, the majority are replacement houses. The net gain in single-family housing between 2014 and 2018 is 11 units. New homes do not necessarily represent increased density or net number of housing units in Wellesley, however, as many new-construction permits were issued for new houses replacing existing homes that were torn down.

### How many houses are being torn down to make way for larger replacement houses?

The number of single-family home demolition permits decreased from 95 in 2015 to 57 in 2017. Demolitions tend to be concentrated in the western part of town.

**DEMOLITION AND SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION PERMITS, 2009 TO 2016 (THROUGH 11/30)**



Source: Town of Wellesley

TOWN OF WELLESLEY, MA

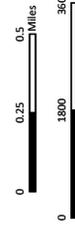


# Residential Demolitions 2014-2016

Prepared for  
**The Unified Plan**  
by the  
IT Dept. GIS Office

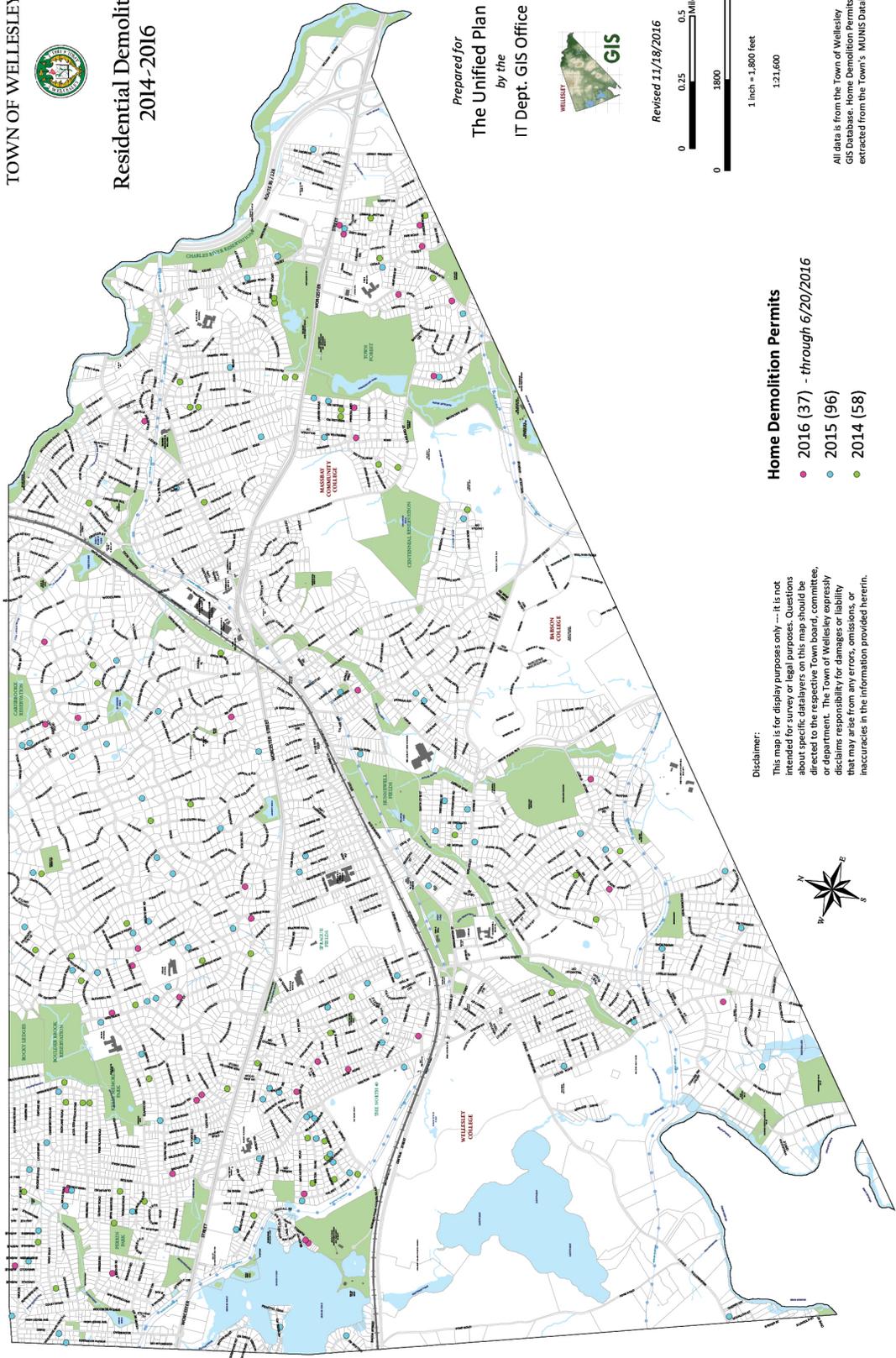


Revised 11/18/2016



- Home Demolition Permits**
- 2016 (37) - through 6/20/2016
  - 2015 (96)
  - 2014 (58)

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All data is from the Town of Wellesley GIS Database, Home Demolition Permits extracted from the Town's MUNIS Database.

TOWN OF WELLESLEY, MA

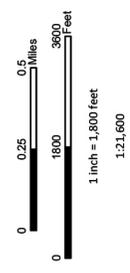


# EXISTING LAND USE

Prepared for  
The Unified Plan  
by the  
IT Dept. GIS Office

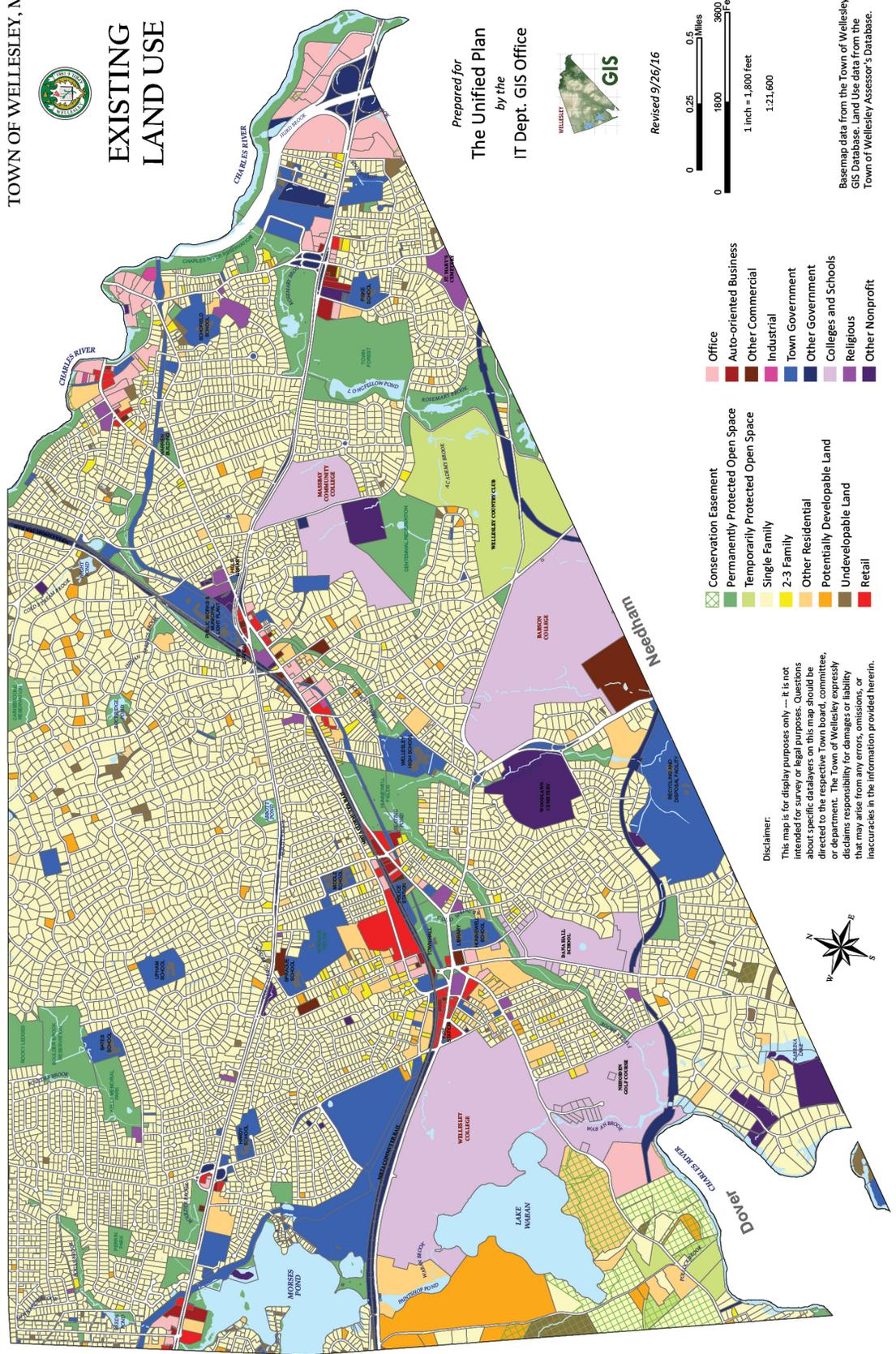


Revised 9/26/16



Basemap data from the Town of Wellesley GIS Database. Land Use data from the Town of Wellesley Assessor's Database.

Weston

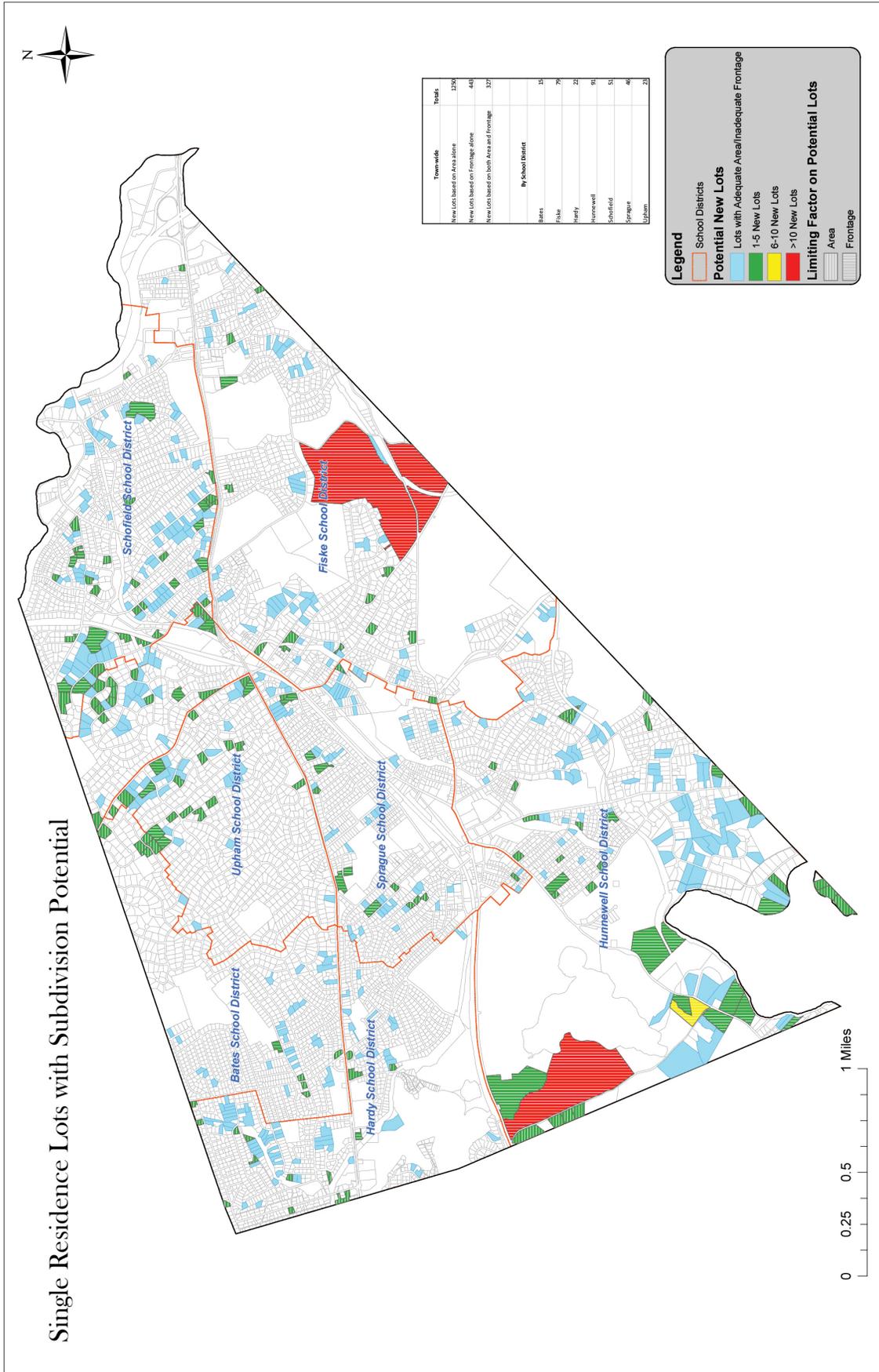


- Conservation Easement
- Permanently Protected Open Space
- Temporarily Protected Open Space
- Single Family
- 2-3 Family
- Other Residential
- Potentially Developable Land
- Undevelopable Land
- Retail
- Office
- Auto-oriented Business
- Other Commercial
- Industrial
- Town Government
- Other Government
- Colleges and Schools
- Religious
- Other Nonprofit

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Natick



## Findings

- Single-family, owner-occupied homes will continue to make up the vast majority of housing in Wellesley.
- Wellesley is a mature community with limited options for developing new single family homes other than through redevelopment. According to the Town, under current zoning there is potential for 327 net new single-family lots.
- While Wellesley has established a Large House Review Bylaw since the last comprehensive plan, teardowns and large replacement houses remain a concern for many people.
- Wellesley real estate is among the most expensive in Massachusetts.
- According to state data, 6.3% of Wellesley housing units are considered affordable for the purpose of Chapter 40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law. Communities with 10% of affordable units are not subject to Chapter 40B.
- Wellesley has made considerable progress since 2007, when 4.7% of housing units were affordable.
- Wellesley has a limited inventory of condominiums, rental housing, and multifamily housing units.

- Older residents who wish to downsize to somewhat smaller and less expensive market-rate housing find it difficult to locate suitable housing.

## Challenges

- Very high cost of housing and residential land resulting in:
  - » Tear-downs of smaller houses and small multifamily buildings (such as two- and three-family buildings) and their replacement with larger houses on the lot
  - » Lack of suitable housing for downsizing households
- High cost of producing affordable housing
- Reaching the 10% affordable housing goal
- Mitigating impacts of large replacement housing on neighborhood character, impervious surfaces, and tree canopy
- Aligning zoning with actual and desired use of property



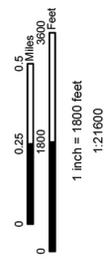
# GROUNDWATER RESOURCES



TOWN OF WELLESLEY,  
MASSACHUSETTS



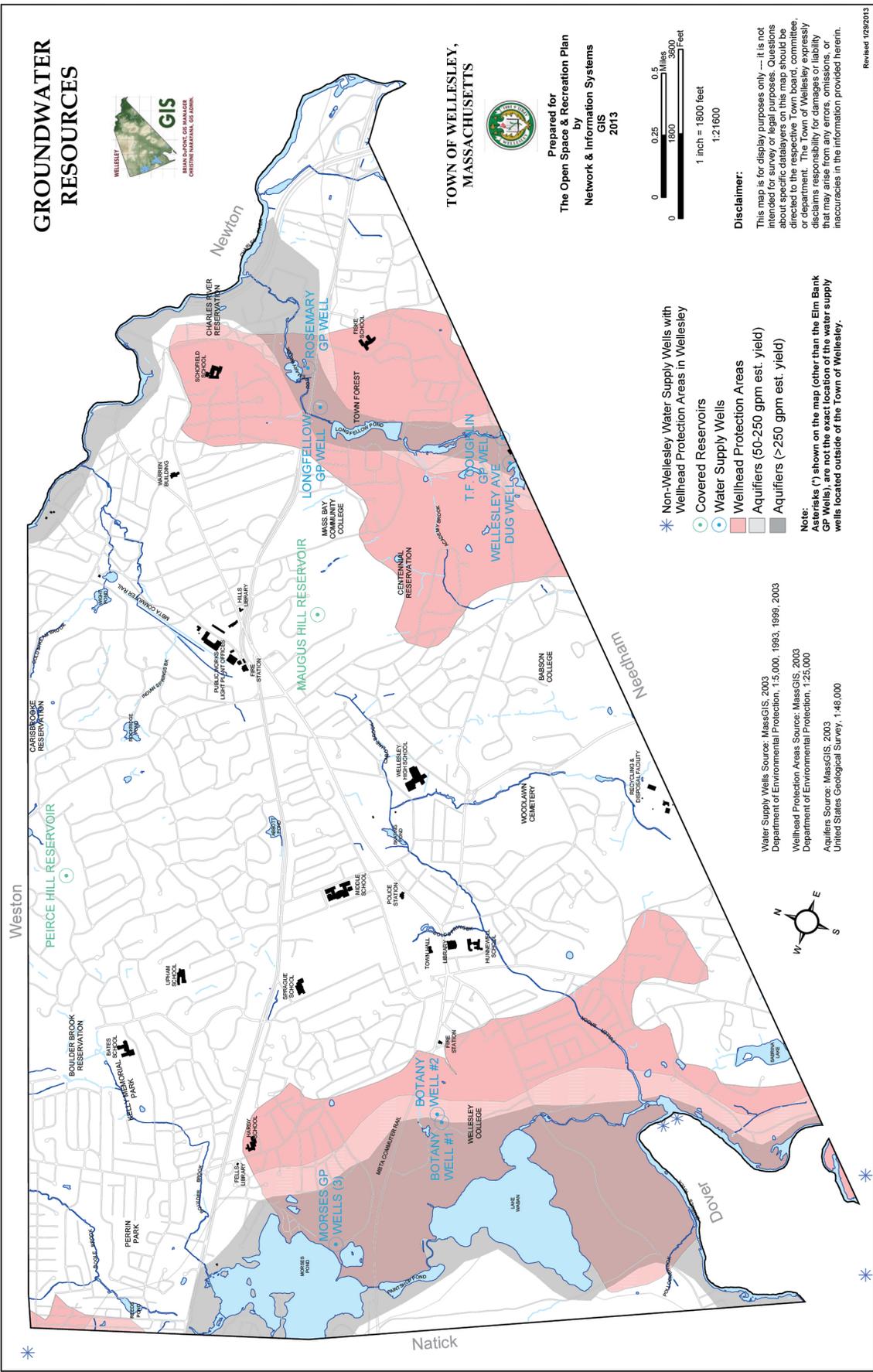
Prepared for  
The Open Space & Recreation Plan  
by  
Network & Information Systems  
GIS  
2013



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Revised 12/29/2013



- \* Non-Wellesley Water Supply Wells with Wellhead Protection Areas in Wellesley
- Covered Reservoirs
- Water Supply Wells
- Wellhead Protection Areas
- Aquifers (50-250 gpm est. yield)
- Aquifers (>250 gpm est. yield)

**Note:**  
Asterisks (\*) shown on the map (other than the Elm Bank GP Wells), are not the exact location of the water supply wells located outside of the Town of Wellesley.

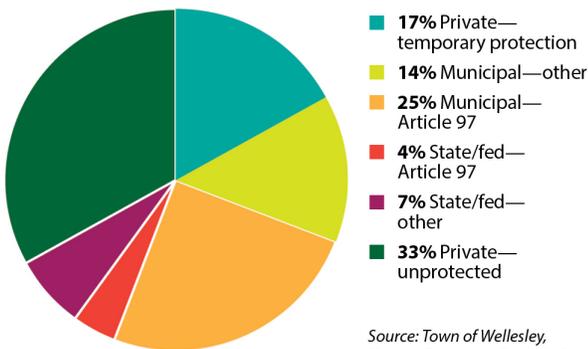
Water Supply Wells Source: MassGIS, 2003  
Department of Environmental Protection, 1:5,000, 1993, 1999, 2003  
Wellhead Protection Areas Source: MassGIS, 2003  
Department of Environmental Protection, 1:25,000  
Aquifers Source: MassGIS, 2003  
United States Geological Survey, 1:48,000



## How much park land and open space does Wellesley have?

- Thirty-three percent of Wellesley’s approximately 6,624 acres of land are not developed (2,213 acres), including a mix of local, state, federal and privately owned land. Approximately 29% percent of open space (642 acres) is protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. Of these 642 acres, the Town owns 545.45 (25%) and the remainder of these protected acres 96.15 (4%) are State-owned. Another 255 acres are temporarily protected by the Chapter 61 program.
- A State-approved Open Space and Recreation Plan was completed in 2015.
- The Wellesley Conservation Council, a private non-profit organization, maintains ten sanctuaries totaling 44 acres. Eight of the ten sanctuaries are located entirely within Wellesley, one includes land in both Wellesley and Needham, and one is located within Weston.

### OPEN SPACE BY OWNERSHIP & PROTECTION—2014



Source: Town of Wellesley, Natural Resources Commission

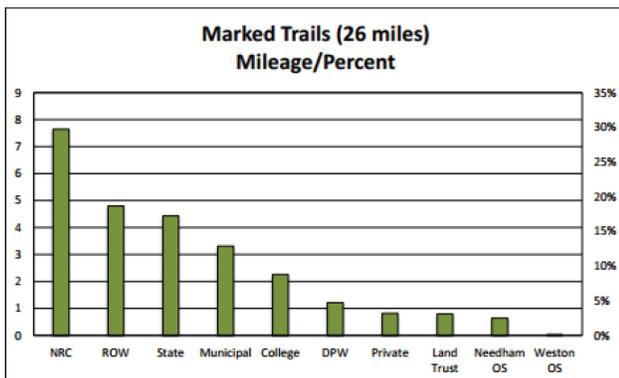
### OPEN SPACE BY SIZE, 2014

CONTROL	PROTECTION	ACRES		
Town-owned	Municipal—other	845	300	38%
	Municipal—Article 97		545	
Other owners	State/fed—Article 97	1,368	96	62%
	State/fed—other		153	
	Private—temporary		388	
	Private—unprotected		730	
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,215</b>		<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Wellesley, Natural Resources Commission

## How many trails are there in Wellesley?

The Town has a total of 43 miles of trails of which 26 miles are marked with directional medallions. These marked trails are managed by over 10 different entities\*. Wellesley trails are part of the Charles River Link, a 16-mile, six-town regional trail extending from Newton to Medfield.

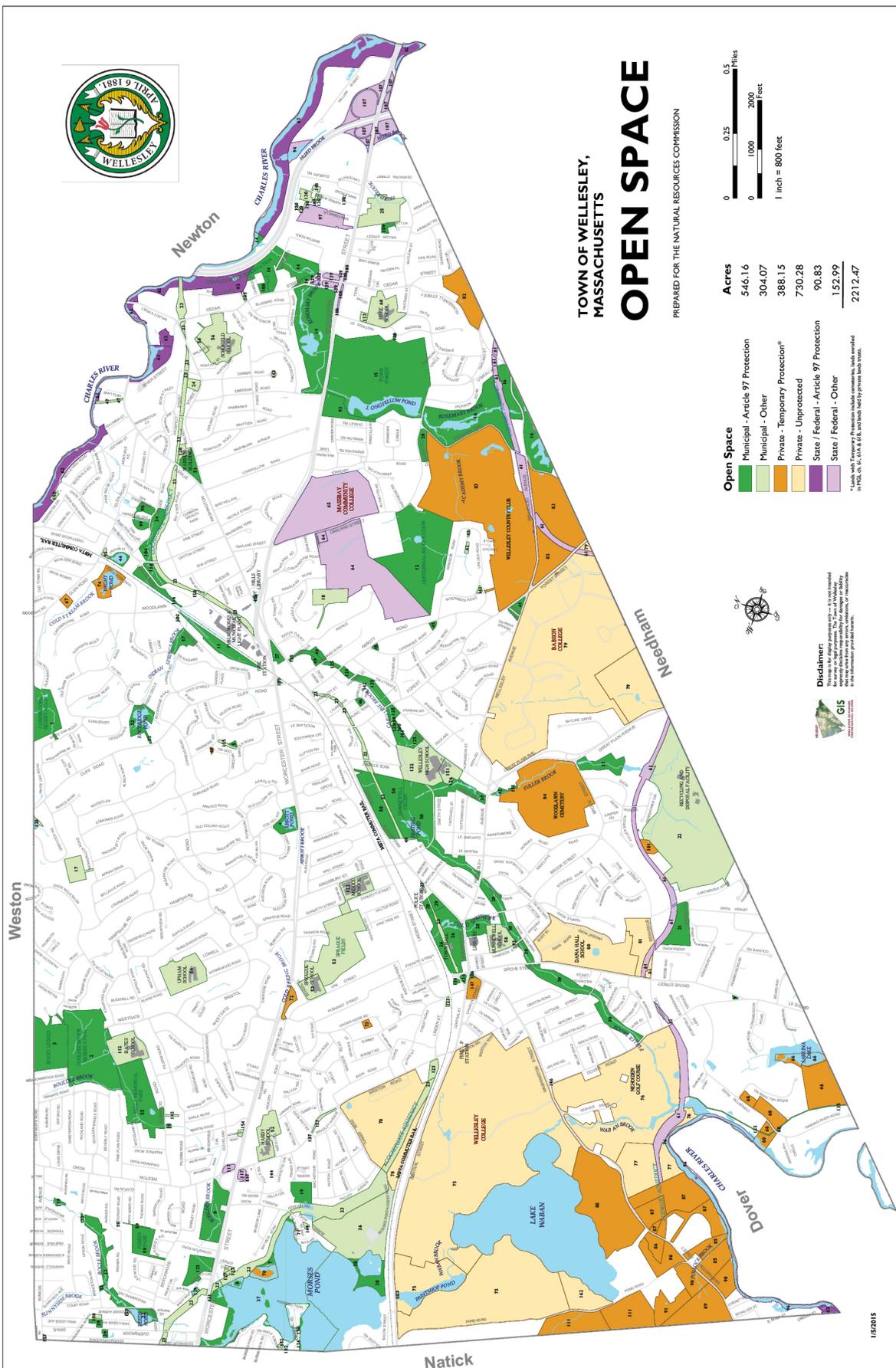


NRC: Conservation Land, Parkland, Playing Fields, Beach  
 ROW: Roadways, Sidewalks, Shoulders  
 State: DCR, MVRRA, MassBay Community College  
 Municipal: Cochituate Aqueduct, Lower Falls Riverway, MLP  
 \*Colleges: Wellesley, Babson, Olin, Nehoiden Golf Course  
 DPW: Water Department, Utility  
 Private: Waterstone, Wellesley Country Club, Homeowners Trust, Sisters of Charity, Residential  
 Land Trust: Wellesley Conservation Council  
 Needham OS: Ridge Hill Reservation  
 Weston OS: George & Nancy Bates Woods

### TRAILS IN WELLESLEY

TRAIL NAME	LENGTH OF TRAIL (MI)
Beard Trail	1.1
Boulder Brook Reservation Trail	1.0
Brook Path	2.3
Carisbrooke Reservation Trail	0.5
Centennial Reservation Trail	1.7
Charles River Path	3.2
Crosstown Trail	5.9
Esker Trail	0.8
Guernsey Path	2.2
Longfellow Pond Trail	0.8
Morses Pond Trail	1.2
Rockridge Pond Trail	0.4
Sudbury Path	4.6
WCC Guernsey Sanctuary Trail	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.3</b>

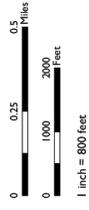
Source: Wellesley Trails Committee



# TOWN OF WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS OPEN SPACE

PREPARED FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

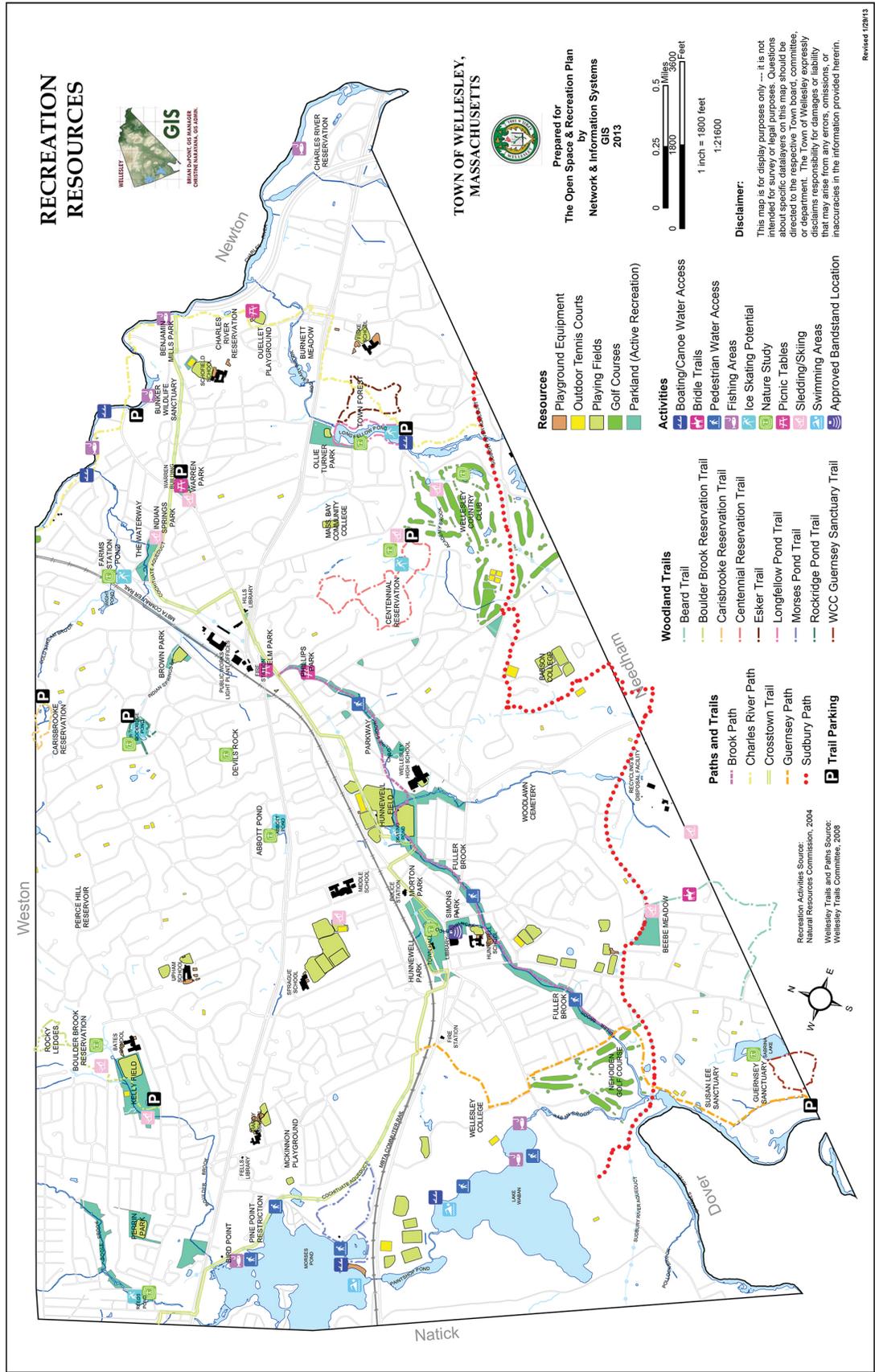
Open Space	Acres
Municipal - Article 97 Protection	546.16
Municipal - Other	304.07
Private - Temporary Protection*	388.15
Private - Unprotected	730.28
State / Federal - Article 97 Protection	90.83
State / Federal - Other	152.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>2212.47</b>



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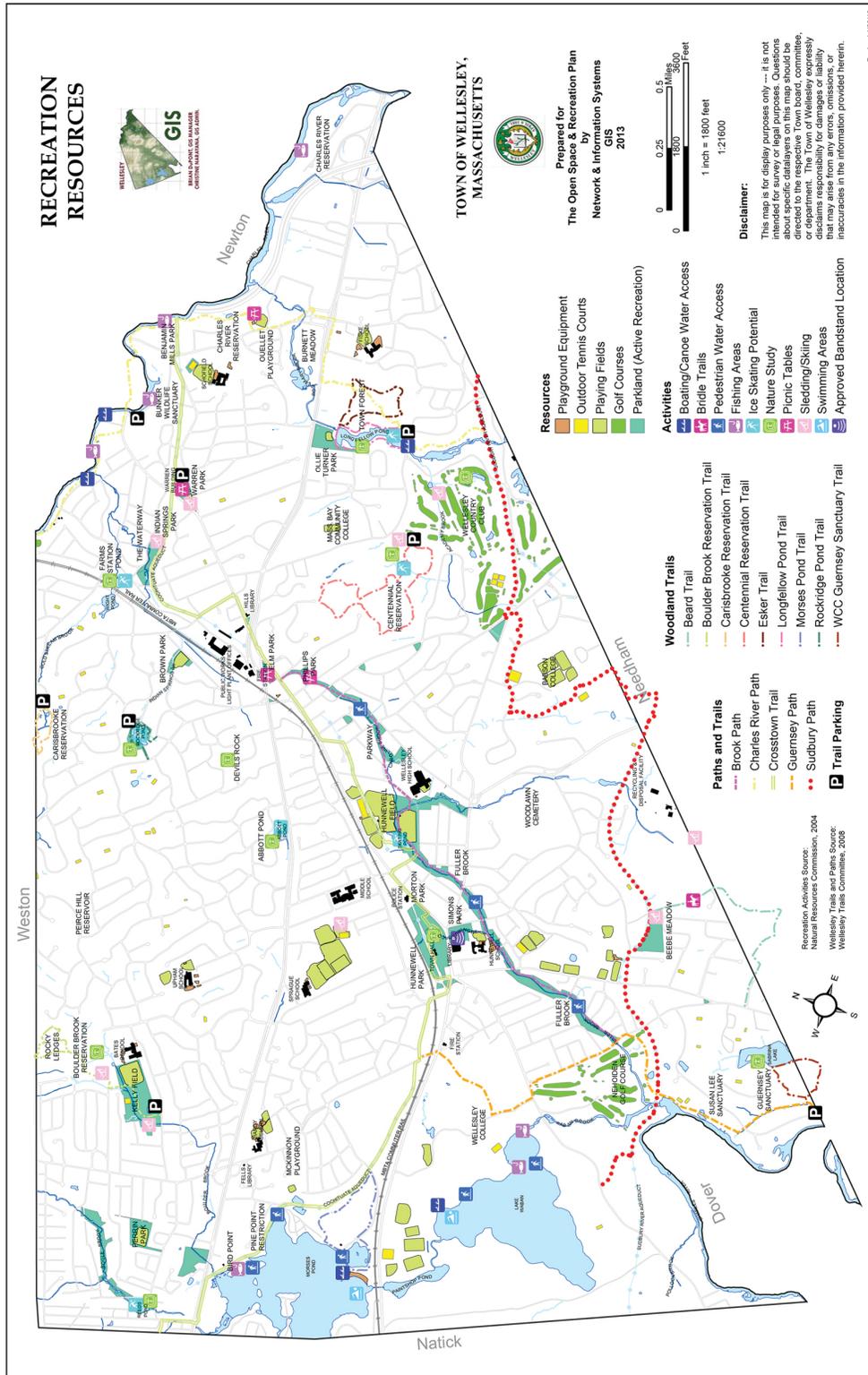
\* Lands with Temporary Protection include commonwealth lands enrolled in PDES, Ch. 91A & 91B, and lands held by private land trusts.

11/2015



# What are Wellesley's recreation offerings?

The Town of Wellesley offers 1,086 recreation programs, and 31,210 participants took part in activities offered by the Wellesley Recreation Department in 2015. There are 25 fields available for recreational purposes in Wellesley. In 2015, the Recreation Department generated \$1,191,441 in revenue from program fees, while its program expenses totaled \$1,081,648.



**How many designated historic districts and structures does Wellesley have?**

Wellesley has three National Register Historic Districts, seven individual National Register properties, four Single-Building Historic Districts and one Local Historic District. Except for buildings in the Single-Building Historic Districts and the Cottage Street Local Historic District, Wellesley’s historic properties are not protected in any way from alterations or demolition. Wellesley has one Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD), Denton Road, and another has been proposed for Standish Road. NCDs are created when residents of a specific area vote that they would like to preserve certain aspects of the character of the area.

The historic buildings on the National Register include:

- The Eaton-Moulton Mill, ca. 1853
- Wellesley Farms Railroad Station, ca. 1893
- Wellesley Hills Branch Library, ca. 1927
- Isaac Sprague Memorial Clock Tower, ca. 1928
- Old Wellesley High School ca. 1894
- Wellesley Town Hall ca. 1881-85
- Wellesley Congregational Church and Cemetery, ca. 1918-22

The single-building historic districts include:

- 379 Weston Road
- 38 Lowell Road
- 26 Elmwood Road
- 126 Woodland Road

The historic districts on the National Register include:

- The Hunnewell Estates
- The Cochituate Aqueduct
- The Sudbury Aqueduct

**What kinds of community groups are there in Wellesley?**

Wellesley has numerous community organizations, 501(c)3 nonprofits and religious institutions including, but not limited to the following selection:

- Wellesley Hills Congregational
- Wellesley Congregational Church
- Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church
- Wellesley Baptist Church
- MetroWest Baptist Church
- Saint Paul’s Catholic Church
- Christ Church United Methodist
- Temple Beth Elohim
- Wellesley Weston Chabad Center
- Wellesley Community Children’s Center
- Wellesley Community Center
- Wellesley Friendly Aid Associates

**What is Wellesley’s carbon-reduction goal?**

- The Town of Wellesley has a goal to reach a 25% reduction in emissions by 2020 and offers clients of its Municipal Light Plant the option to purchase energy from 100% renewable sources.

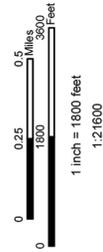
# CULTURAL RESOURCES



## TOWN OF WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS



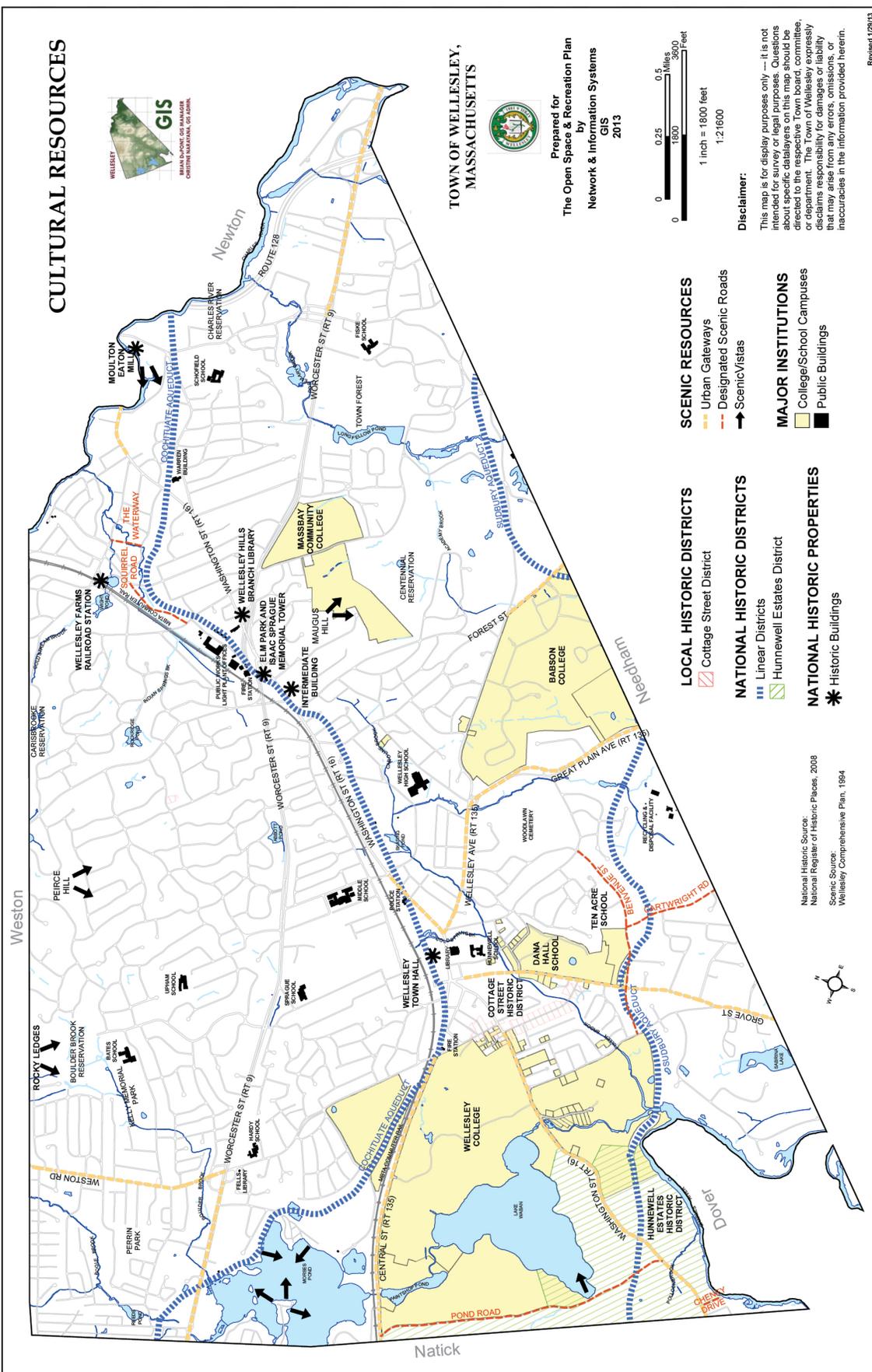
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Revised 1/29/13



- SCENIC RESOURCES**
  - Urban Gateways
  - Designated Scenic Roads
  - Scenic/Vistas
- MAJOR INSTITUTIONS**
  - College/School Campuses
  - Public Buildings
- LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS**
  - Cottage Street District
- NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS**
  - Linear Districts
  - Hunnewell Estates District
- NATIONAL HISTORIC PROPERTIES**
  - Historic Buildings

National Historic Source:  
National Register of Historic Places, 2008  
Scenic Source:  
Wellesley Comprehensive Plan, 1994



## Findings

### Natural Resources

- Wellesley's 2,212 acres of undeveloped land provide valuable environmental services to the town, for example through cooling temperatures in summer and absorbing stormwater and pollutants.
- Approximately 17% of Wellesley's land is protected from development.
- The Town's pond-management projects are successfully reducing erosion and creating healthier environments.
- Flash floods are an issue near Morses Pond and along Route 9.
- The town's Wetlands Regulations are being updated. In many cases they are more stringent than the state Wetland Protection Act.

### Open Space, Trails and Recreation

- The Town's restoration project for Fuller Brook Park is nearing completion.
- There are 43 miles of trails in Wellesley, 26 miles of which are marked. The trail system segments cross property managed by 10 different entities.
- The Wellesley Recreation Department offers over a thousand programs annually.
- Recreation Department programs are fee-based, and the fees cover all expenses except staff salaries. The department typically contributes as much as \$100,000 back to the town budget every year.
- The 900 Worcester Street project is expected to bring an aquatics center and skating rink, among other indoor recreation facilities, through a public-private partnership.

### Historic Resources

- Wellesley has 3 National Register Historic Districts (2 of which are aqueducts), 4 Single-Building Historic Districts, 1 Local Historic District, and 7 individual properties listed on the National Register.
- Since a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) bylaw was passed, one NCD has been established.
- Properties listed on the National Register are subject to review if they would be affected by federal projects but are otherwise unprotected from alteration or demolition.

- Properties in the Single-Building Historic Districts and Cottage Street Local Historic District may not have external alterations or be demolished without review from the Historic District Commission.
- In addition to the Historic District Commission, Wellesley has a Historical Commission, which promotes historic preservation.
- A Demolition Review Bylaw passed at 2017 Annual Town Meeting covers demolition requests for residential buildings from before 1950. The Historical Commission reviews the demolition request to see if the structure is preferably preserved with a delay period of twelve months to seek an alternative to demolition.

## Challenges

- Balancing the need and value of open space with other town initiatives and priorities.
- Balancing private property rights with regulation.
- Identifying historic resources that are preferably preserved and promoting their preservation.
- Providing sufficient outdoor and indoor recreation facilities for current and future use.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NOVEMBER 2016

## Is Wellesley an employment center

The biggest business sectors in Wellesley are educational services, finance and insurance, healthcare and social assistance, and professional, scientific and tech services. Together these types of businesses provide 64% of the 16,710 jobs in Wellesley as of September 2016.

BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES IN WELLESLEY BY SECTOR				
SECTOR	BUSINESSES		EMPLOYEES	
Retail Trade	120	8%	1,612	10%
Finance & Insurance	187	13%	2,681	16%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	343	24%	1,845	11%
Educational Services	34	2%	4,094	25%
Health Care & Social Assistance	212	15%	2,079	12%
Accommodation & Food Services	53	4%	1,294	8%
Other	495	34%	3,105	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,444</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,710</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

## Who are the biggest employers in Wellesley?

Primary centers of employment in Wellesley include the three colleges, the Lower Falls area, the office park at William Street and the retail centers like Wellesley Square and Linden Square.

### PRINCIPAL EMPLOYERS (EXCLUDING THE TOWN)

BUSINESS	NATURE OF BUSINESS	EMPLOYEES	% OF TOTAL TOWN EMPLOYMENT
Sun Life Assurance	Insurance	1,158	8.55%
Wellesley College	Higher Ed	1,100	8.13%
Babson College	Higher Ed	975	7.20%
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care	Insurance	398	2.94%
Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates	Healthcare	352	2.60%
Roche Brothers	Grocery	277	2.05%
Mass Bay Community College	Higher Ed	253	1.87%
Dana Hall School	Private School	255	1.88%
Wellesley Country Club	Private Club	239	1.77%
Elizabeth Seaton Residence	Healthcare	200	1.48%
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,207</b>	<b>38.40%</b>

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Wellesley local employers

## Where are Wellesley's commercial centers?

Wellesley has three traditional commercial/retail villages: Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills and Lower Falls. In addition, Cedar Street, Linden Square and the Fells area on Weston Road offer retail shopping.



## What kinds of retail establishments are there in Wellesley?

Nineteen percent of Wellesley's retail establishments are eating and drinking places like restaurants, 18% are home furnishing stores and 13% sell apparel and accessories.

RETAIL TRADE BUSINESSES BY TYPE	
RETAIL BUSINESS TYPE	% OF BUSINESSES
Home Improvement	3%
General Merchandise Stores	1%
Food Stores	8%
Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, Auto Aftermarket	11%
Apparel & Accessory Stores	13%
Furniture & Home Furnishings	18%
Eating & Drinking Places	19%
Miscellaneous Retail	27%

Source: Copyright 2016 Infogroup, Inc. All rights reserved. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2016.

## What kinds of jobs do Wellesley residents have?

INDUSTRY FOR EMPLOYED WELLESLEY POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OLDER		
SECTOR	RESIDENTS EMPLOYED	
Retail Trade	773	6%
Finance, insurance and real estate	1,827	15%
Professional, scientific, management and administrative	2,449	20%
Educational services, health care and social assistance	4,219	34%
Other	3,118	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,386</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Employed Wellesley residents tend to work in knowledge-worker positions in education, health care, professional services, finance and management. Wellesley residents typically have a lower unemployment rate than the state average: 2.5% in Wellesley compared to 2.7% in Massachusetts in late 2016, according to the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

## Findings

- Wellesley is an employment center as well as a bedroom community, with most jobs in the Wellesley Office Park, the town's colleges, and the commercial village districts.
- More people are employed in the education, insurance, health care, and professional services sectors than in retail. The biggest employers are Sun Life Assurance and Wellesley College.
- A substantial minority of the Wellesley labor force works in town. In 2000, MAPC data showed hometown employment as 35%. More recent data based on the percentage of the labor force that works at home or walks to work, suggest that this relatively high percentage employed in Wellesley continues to be the case.
- As is the case in many affluent communities, the commercial villages tend to attract upscale stores and chain retail because store rents tend to be high. Some residents find it more difficult to do simple errands for daily life in the villages without having to drive.

## Challenges

- Keeping a local retail and business mix in the commercial villages
- Keeping retail that supplies daily needs in the commercial villages
- Attracting desired retail when storefronts become empty
- Maximizing the benefit to the town of the Wellesley Office Park

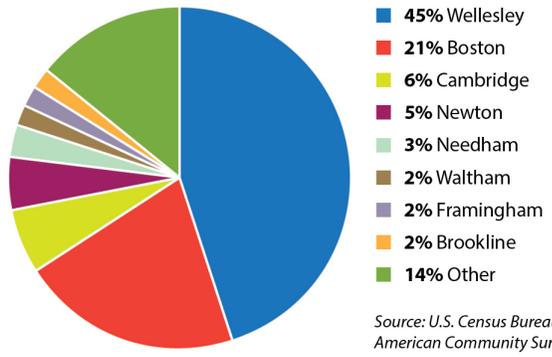
# TRANSPORTATION

## Where do Wellesley residents work and how do they get there?

- A majority of working Wellesley residents drive to work alone in a vehicle.
- Forty-five percent of Wellesley residents work in Wellesley. Twenty-one percent commute to Boston.

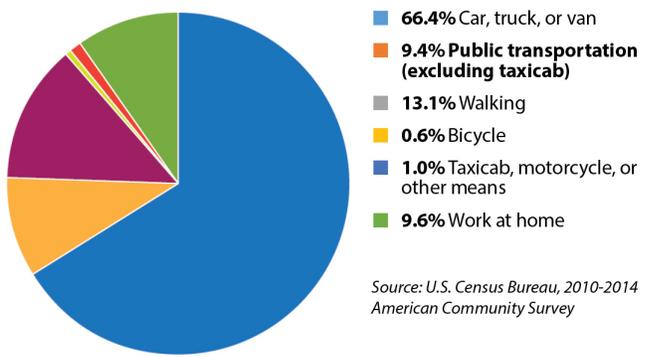
- Nearly all of Wellesley residents work in Massachusetts (97%), but most residents work outside of Norfolk County (53%), reflecting those who may commute to employment centers like Boston or Cambridge.

### WORK DESTINATION FOR WELLESLEY RESIDENTS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

### MODE OF TRAVEL FOR COMMUTING EMPLOYED RESIDENTS OVER 16 YEARS OF AGE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

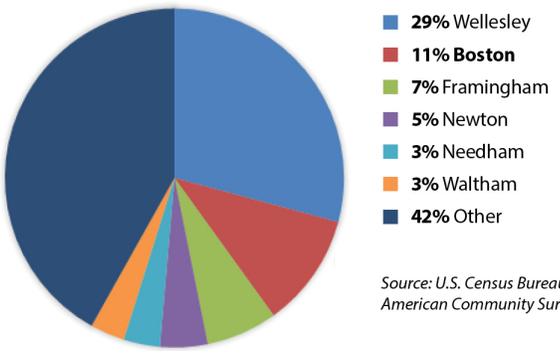
## Where do people who work in Wellesley come from?

- Nearly one third of people who work in Wellesley also live in Wellesley.

## How long is the commute?

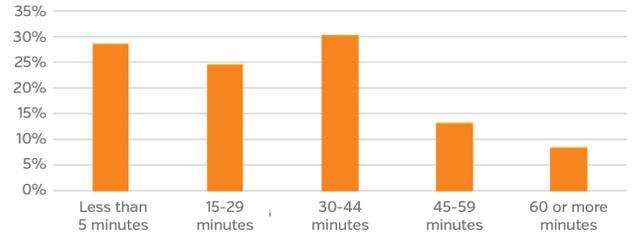
- Most working Wellesley residents can get to their jobs in under 45 minutes.

### ORIGIN OF PEOPLE WHO WORK IN WELLESLEY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

### TRAVEL TIME TO WORK FOR EMPLOYED RESIDENTS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

## How much traffic is on Wellesley's major streets?

Besides I-95, Route 9 and Washington Street are the busiest corridors in Wellesley with peak traffic reaching over 50,000 daily trips near the intersection of Route 9 and near the office park near I-95.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRIPS ON MAJOR ROADS



Source: ESRI

## What are the transportation alternatives to the car in Wellesley?

There are three Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) commuter rail stations in Wellesley: Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills and Wellesley Farms on the Framingham/Worcester Line with service between Worcester and Boston. The MetroWest Regional Transit Authority's (MWRTA) #1 and #8 buses also serves Wellesley, making connections from Natick to Wellesley College, Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills, MassBay Community College, Lower Falls and the Woodland MBTA Station. The colleges provide shuttles for their students, staff and faculty.

Wellesley has one marked bicycle lane on a limited segment of Washington Street. The Department of Public Works (DPW) is creating new bicycle markings on Cliff Road and Kingsbury Street.

## How many traffic accidents are there in Wellesley and where do they happen?

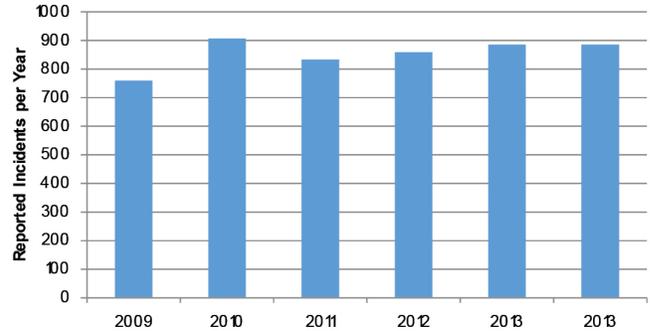
There were 885 incidents in 2013. The average number of reported incidents did not change significantly between 2009 and 2013. MassDOT has flagged the intersections along Route 9 and Route 16 shown in the Highway Safety Improvement Program Clusters map below as locations with a high number of reported incidents.

### HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM CLUSTERS



Source: MassGIS

### WELLESLEY ANNUAL REPORTED INCIDENTS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

## How much parking does Wellesley have?

On-street metered parking is available in Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills, and Lower Falls. The town also has approximately 400 metered and all-day parking spaces throughout nine commuter and commercial lots.

### PARKING LOTS

LOT	VEHICLE SPACES	ACCESSIBLE PARKING	BIKE PARKING
Wellesley Farms	199	4	16
Wellesley Hills	51	—	—
Wellesley Square	224	2	—

## How many cars do Wellesley residents own?

According to 2010-2014 estimates, there are approximately 1.9 vehicles per household in Wellesley. With an estimate of 8,594 households for the same time period, that results in approximately 16,329 cars in Wellesley.

## What ongoing traffic improvements are under way in Wellesley?

Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) roadway improvements are finishing construction on Route 9 and Overbrook Drive in Wellesley. MassDOT is also in the bid phase for roadway improvements on Route 9 from Dearborn Street to the Natick town line and Route 9 and Kingsbury Street.

## Does Wellesley have a Complete Streets policy?

A Complete Street is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. Wellesley is not currently registered with the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program, which provides access to state funding, and has not passed a Complete Streets policy. The Town of Wellesley Bicycle Safety Committee recommended the Town pursue Complete Streets initiatives in April 2015.

## Findings

- Two-thirds of Wellesley working residents drive to work alone, a relatively low number compared to similar communities. Almost 10% take public transportation, 13% walk to work, and less than 1% bike to work. Nearly 10% work at home.
- There are nearly 2 cars per household.
- Four major roads carry regional traffic through Wellesley and experience the greatest congestion: I-95 at the town's eastern border; Route 9/Worcester Street; Route 16/Washington Street; and, to a lesser extent, Route 135/Central Street.
- Traffic congestion around schools at the beginning and end of the school day is significant.
- The majority of reported accidents are on Routes 9 and 16.
- Traffic signals on Route 16 are coordinated and camera controlled to enhance traffic flow.
- Wellesley has a variety of alternatives to the car: three commuter rail stations give access to the Worcester-Framingham Line; MWRTA bus service that connects with the rail stations and the Woodland Green Line MBTA station; the colleges run shuttle services for their students.
- Bicycles can use the 26-mile, town-owned system of marked off-road trails, but there is only one on-road marked bicycle route on a segment of Washington Street. A proposed bicycle network was developed in 2013.
- Some parts of Wellesley have ample pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks and safe crossings, but walkability is not consistent across all of the town's neighborhoods.

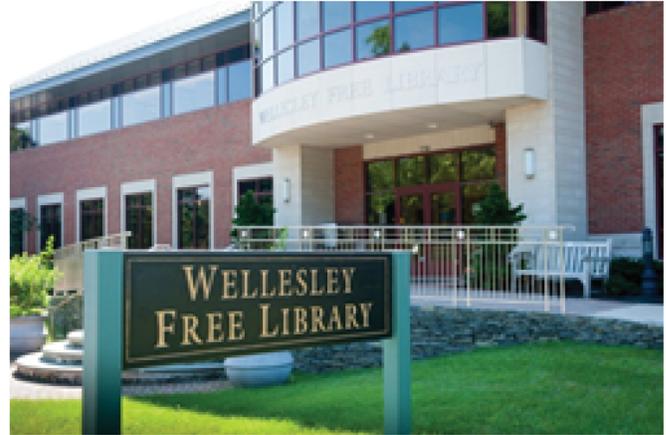
## Challenges

- Additional improvements to traffic flow on arterial streets
- Creating a safe and convenient bicycle network linking town destinations
- Enhancing pedestrian networks for safety and convenience
- Creating solutions to school traffic congestion
- Adopting a Complete Streets policy
- Providing sufficient parking where needed
- Improving trails and pedestrian and bicycle connections to abutting communities.

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### What does the Wellesley Free Library offer?

- The Wellesley Free Library has three branches: the Main Branch, the Hills Branch and the Fells Branch. The new Main Branch opened in 2003. The Fells Library is operated through private support from dedicated residents.
- Approximately 60% of Wellesley residents have a library card. In addition to books and other materials, the library is a cultural destination. It offers classes, technical training, and gathering and meeting spaces.
- The Massachusetts Library System (MLS) bestowed the first ever “Stronger Together” Award upon the Wellesley Free Library for its contributions in strengthening library excellence in Massachusetts.
- In FY2017, there were 359,246 visits to the the library system. Upgrades to the nearly 20-year-old main building are planned.



### How many attend Wellesley public schools?

Wellesley has 10 public schools (seven elementary, one middle school, one high school, and a pre-school) and enrolls approximately 5,000 students each year. Wellesley has dropout rate below 1%, and 95% of graduates plan on post-secondary education.

### How many students attend private schools in Wellesley?

There are 6 private elementary, middle and/or high schools in Wellesley with a total enrollment of 1,166 students, the largest of which is Dana Hall School.

### What are the new major projects in town?

- The Massachusetts School Building Authority in late 2017 approved initial eligibility for school construction. Town evaluation of options and sites will continue through the eligibility process.
- Within the last decade, the town purchased two large properties: 900 Worcester Street and the “North 40.” An aquatic and ice rink facility managed by a private business is under construction at 900 Worcester Street. Several types of land use have been discussed for the North 40; a committee will be formed to determine its ultimate use.
- The Council on Aging recently opened a new senior center.

### What infrastructure is the Town focusing on?

- The Facilities Management Department has resolved deferred maintenance issues and is now developing a comprehensive maintenance/replacement program, as well as working on new projects.
- The Town is preparing to update and upgrade its stormwater-management policies and activities in order to comply with federal and state regulations. DPW is beginning to implement green infrastructure such as bioswales and permeable pavement.
- The town has an effective recycling program.

## Findings

- Wellesley has 29 public buildings, including schools and the Municipal Light Plant.
- The library system gets almost 20% of its support from private sources.
- The Municipal Light Plant operation is in excellent physical and financial condition, with up-to-date infrastructure, \$65 million in assets and no debt.

## Challenges

- Reaching consensus on the future of the North 40
- Reaching consensus on the HHU school process
- Keeping up to date with technology for library patrons
- Preserving programs of regular investment in infrastructure
- Integrating sustainability practices, such as green infrastructure, into town facilities and services
- Providing sufficient meeting space for town organizations and residents

# PUBLIC HEALTH

## How is Wellesley's health?

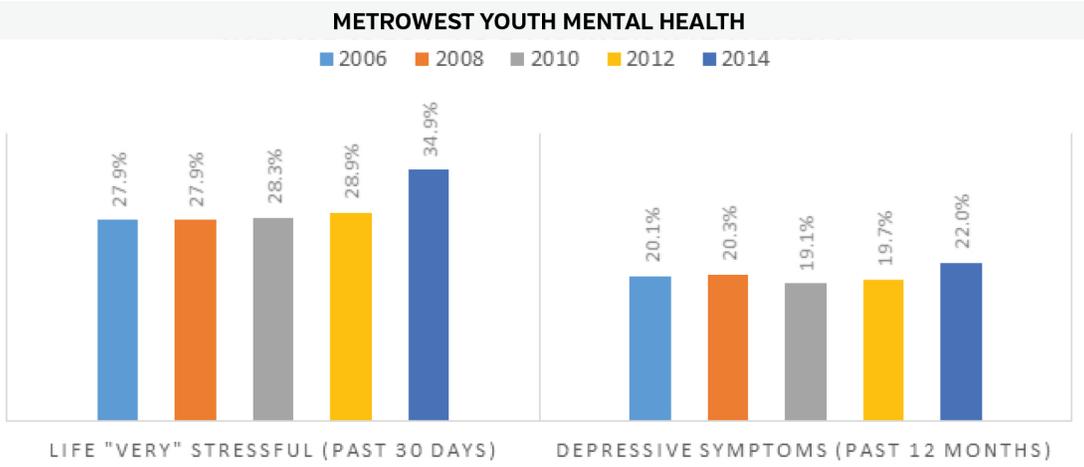
- According to data on hospitalizations, health behaviors, and other key indicators of current health in Wellesley, the Town is healthier than the Commonwealth across nearly all indicators. Wellesley also tends to be healthier than Norfolk and Middlesex counties and even outperforms comparison communities for certain key indicators including aging and mortality. The town did not perform statistically significantly worse than the state on any indicators.
- Although Wellesley tends to be healthier than its state and surrounding counties, social isolation, stress, and mental health have been identified through qualitative and quantitative data as areas of concern.

## What are the town's most important health issues?

- Increasing rates of stress and mental health issues, particularly among youth in the 9th through 12th grades.
- A 10-15% increase in the proportion of 9th through 12th graders reporting less than 60 minutes of exercise 5 or more days per week
- Social isolation among adults, especially elderly adults living alone.
- Growing need for pre- and post-operative services for aging Baby Boomers who live alone.



*Source: Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Deaths Data, 2008-2012.*



*Source: Metrowest Adolescent Survey, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014*

## Findings

- Wellesley performs better on key indicators of health than the State, Norfolk and Middlesex Counties, as well as comparable communities.
- There are over 100 medical reserve corps volunteers in Wellesley, mostly nurses.
- Health issues of concern in Wellesley are social isolation, particularly for elderly people who live alone, and stress and mental health issues for teenage youth.
- Fewer high school aged youth get sufficient exercise every week.
- As the Baby Boom generation ages and more people are living alone, pre- and post-operative care is becoming a bigger issue.
- Wellesley is not immune from the opioid crisis in Massachusetts. According to the Massachusetts Department of Health, there were two confirmed unintentional deaths from opioids in town in 2015. Comparable communities, such as Lexington, Natick, Needham, Wayland, Weston and Winchester, have also experienced small numbers of opioid overdose deaths in recent years.

## Challenges

- Maintaining and enhancing a sense of community in Wellesley for all residents.
- Providing sufficient mental health services for residents
- Creating interesting and fun activities for teenagers that will attract them to be involved and avoid unhealthy choices.

# TOWN GOVERNMENT

## Who directs Wellesley town government?

Wellesley voters. Once a year, Wellesley's registered voters go to the polls to elect members of 13 public entities (boards, commissions, committees, authorities, and persons), including the Town Clerk, the Town Meeting Moderator, and 240 members of Town Meeting.

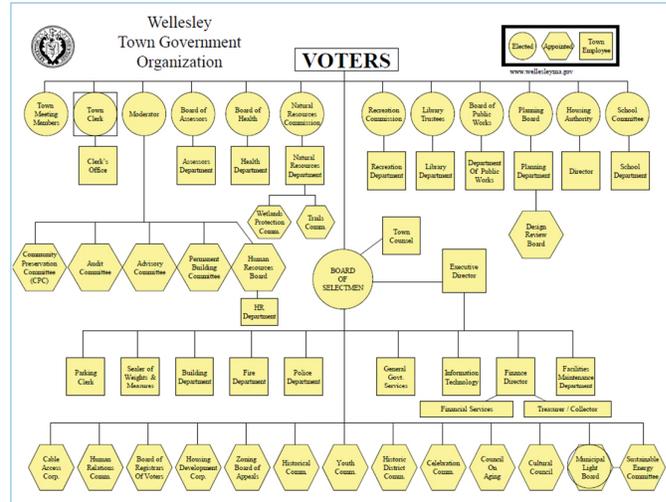
- There are 58 entities on the Wellesley Town Government organizational chart and 42 line items in the town budget,
- As of 2015, the town had 1,232 employees (of which 804 are school staff).
- Typically, 18% of the registered voters in Wellesley (approximately 3,000 out of 16,000 people) participate in the March annual town elections.

## What's working well in town government?

Wellesley town government generally functions well and is perceived as being high-functioning by both employees and elected and appointed officials.

- The town has a group of strong and experienced department heads, many of whom are leaders in their respective professions. They meet and build relationships to get things done. Each department independently performs its duties well.
- Wellesley town government is fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who devote countless hours to public service. As one interviewee pointed out, the town could not afford to pay for all of the time and expertise donated to government service.

- Town government reflects Wellesley's financial commitment to its departments, boards and commissions. Staff pay scales are competitive with peer towns.



## Who is accountable for the performance of town government?

Wellesley voters hold their government accountable through elections.

- There is no one entity, office, or person with overall accountability for performance. Wellesley does not have a single person or group responsible for managing the operations of town government or for overseeing quality of results.
- Each elected entity is responsible for the policy, department(s), staff, and budget in its area of responsibility.
- The Executive Director works for the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and shares responsibility with the BOS for some staff departments.

## How are town government functions managed?

The decentralized nature of town government means that some key management support functions are the responsibility of the boards and commissions rather than a central administrative body.

- Except for the Finance Department, which supports most of Town government, support functions that municipalities typically administer for all department, such as information technology (IT) and human resources (HR), are applied in a decentralized way by individual boards and commissions.
- Independent IT and HR functions carried out by many boards and commissions results in duplication of function and inconsistent levels of professionalism across entities.
- Decentralized IT increases cost and complexity as well as the chances for failed IT project implementation because of lack of specialized skills in the boards and departments. Some departments, such as the library, may have specialized requirements to coordinate with regional partners.
- Decentralized HR decreases standardization and fairness and can expose the town to liability as a result.

## How does Wellesley make budget decisions?

On an annual basis in October and November, each department, board, or commission is notified by the Finance Department and Board of Selectmen of a standard percentage increase guideline for purposes of creating its budget, a “one size fits all” approach to different parts of government.

- Boards and departments with larger existing budgets receive larger absolute increases and as a result have greater ability to take on new projects. Boards and departments with smaller existing budgets receive smaller absolute increases.
- With this percentage increase guideline as the foundation, proposed budgets are created, with justifications for amounts requested above the standard increase.
- Operating and capital budgets are not considered together.
- Annual operating and capital budgets are connected to strategic plans or a town-wide priority plan. Departments with strategic plans use them in preparing their budgets. The Town-Wide Financial Plan and the Five-Year Capital Plan are part of the overall budgeting process.
- While many budget documents are created and shared electronically, there is no single, central electronic records repository that provides transparency at each step of the budget creation and approval process across the town.
- The Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee review the budget requests with department heads and/or board, committee, or commission chairs. and makes a recommendations to the final decision-makers, the elected Town Meeting members.

## How are decisions made?

The authority to make major decisions rests with the Town Meeting Members. When major decisions come up outside of Annual Town Meeting in the spring, there can be a Special Town Meeting in the fall.

- For all other decisions about the operations of government, authority and responsibility for decision-making is vested in the individual boards and commissions of town government.
- Elected officials do not receive professional training beyond ethics, conflict of interest and the open meetings law. They are not trained in the operations or administration of town government, and so are self-taught decision-makers.
- There is no standard method of making decisions and no standard way of setting priorities across the Town.
- Other than the Five-Year Capital Plan, there is no centralized database of projects under consideration, so staff and members of boards and commissions have no way of knowing the decisions that are coming in their pipeline.
- While some interviewees expressed the opinion that decision-making works well, many others were frustrated at the lack of transparency into the decision-making process of other parts of government, and about the length of time the deliberative and democratic decision-making process in Wellesley takes.
- Four strategic plans, from the School Department, Library, Public Works and the Natural Resources Commission are published online. There is no consistent framework across the plans and they are not explicitly tied to capital or operating budgets.

## How do decision makers communicate across town government?

Opinions were divided about communications within town government, with some feeling strongly that communications are good and others assessing the situation as needing improvement..

- The lack of formal communication channels for providing transparent status updates on projects contributes to the feeling that communication is weak.
- Examples of good communications typically focus on individual strong relationships that facilitate information exchange, particularly on the staff level.
- Critics cite the inconsistent transparency of departments, boards and commissions in their sharing of public information, as well as the ad hoc nature of interpersonal communications based on longstanding relationships.

## How does the Town communicate with the public?

The Town of Wellesley public website provides residents information on their government, for those with the skill to navigate the site.

- In some cases online transactions for doing business with the Town are available.
- What is less available is information on how government works, how the town spends its taxpayer dollars, and what major projects are under review.
- With no central web communications authority, each department, board or commission is responsible for posting information about its work, and the opportunities for the public to learn or contribute via open meetings.
- Many interviewees expressed frustration with the inability to easily see what meetings are happening and what projects are being proposed.
- One group organizes its volunteers to attend every public meeting in town just in case something is mentioned about their work, because they are not able to rely on published agendas or minutes of meetings to provide information accurately and timely.

## Findings

- Wellesley Town Government operates effectively, with a strong culture of volunteer public servants, the leadership of outstanding department heads, and low turnover among a devoted workforce in which relationships facilitate getting things done.
- The town has optimized efficiency within individual departments, boards and commissions, but has not chosen to optimize efficiency across operational entities or administrative functions (such as IT and HR) for a truly efficient town-wide government.
- Ongoing operational decision-making is made via distributed authority in the individual boards and commissions, often by volunteers who are not experts in municipal operations. Policy-making and administrative functions are not handled separately but instead are all the responsibility of the elected and appointed officials.
- Budget decisions are not universally tied to strategic plans and are created in a process that begins with the assumption all parts of government receive the same percentage increase.
- Very few people both inside and outside town government have a full understanding of how decisions get made in town government.
- Availability of information for public decisions is inconsistent in availability, quality, and timeliness across the town, and very little information is digitized or shared electronically among departments.
- The lack of “roadmaps” to the permitting and enforcement system makes it complicated and frustrating for residents to navigate.
- The Town does not have a centralized purchasing department; rather, purchases are made by individual departments.

## Challenges

- Developing a town-wide community vision and set of goals and strategies to guide all the entities in town government as they fulfill their roles (this is the purpose of the Unified Plan process)
- Balancing Wellesley’s highly democratic and citizen-led government tradition with the time- and cost-efficiency benefits of contemporary best practices in government administration
- Making information about all the entities and activities of town government and the activities of boards and commissions consistently available and up to date for everyone in the Wellesley community
- Developing strategic plans with standard requirements across town government, tying them to budget development, and incorporating timelines and measurable targets for stated goals
- Building budget transparency with a system for creating and tracking budgets throughout the life cycle and making budget information available online.
- Balancing efficient provision of support services to multiple departments with the independence of boards and commissions
- Providing public-friendly information on how to navigate complex systems

