



The Wellesley Unified Plan

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Town of Wellesley

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Ellen F. Gibbs
 Jack Morgan
 Marjorie Freiman
 Beth Sullivan Woods
 Thomas H. Ulfelder

PLANNING BOARD

Deborah Carpenter
 Catherine Johnson
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 Jim Roberti
 Kathleen Woodward

Wellesley Unified Plan Steering Committee

*Throughout the course of the Unified Plan's development,
 the Steering Committee worked with Town staff and the consultant team
 to guide the planning process.*

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Robert Carley, Historical Commission	Tony Bent, School Committee	Joellen Toussaint, At-large	Steve Yang, At-large
John Roslansky, Human Resources Board	Katy Gibson, Sustainable Energy Committee		Michelle Chalmers, At-large
John Hussey, Human Resources Board			

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Project Management Group

The Project Management Group worked closely with the consultant team overseeing the planning process.

Ellen Gibbs,
Board of Selectmen

Marjorie Freiman,
Board of Selectmen

Deborah Carpenter,
Planning Board

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James Ryan,
Finance and Budget Analyst

Consultant Team

Stantec • Institute for Excellence in Government • Community Circle

- Executive Summary [foldout miniposter]

Part I. Setting the Stage

- Chapter 1 – The Unified Plan and Wellesley’s Vision for the Future
- Chapter 2 – The Community Speaks
- Chapter 3 – Wellesley Today

Part II. Our Natural and Cultural Heritage

- Chapter 4 - Natural Resources and Conservation
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- Chapter 6 – Parks, Trails, and Recreation

Part III. How We Live

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- Chapter 8 – Public Health and Wellness
- Chapter 9—Economic Development

Part IV. Sustainable Systems and Networks

- Chapter 10—Mobility and Circulation
- Chapter 11—Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure
- Chapter 12—Sustainability, Resilience, and Green Practices

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- Chapter 13—Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design
- Chapter 14—Town Government Strategic Concepts
- Chapter 15—Implementation Priorities

Appendices

- Wellesley Public Health Plan
prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Town Government Best Practices Resources

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Executive Summary

Why we developed this plan

In 2016, the Wellesley Town Government Study Group recommended that the Board of Selectmen create a town-wide strategic plan based on a vision and priorities. The Planning Board was preparing to update the Town's comprehensive plan at the same time. Recognizing that the strategic and comprehensive planning initiatives would be similar and interrelated in methodology and results, the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board agreed to create one innovative, consistent, and visionary Unified Plan, which would then serve as one of the Town's principal planning documents alongside the Town-Wide



Financial Plan and Five-year Capital Budget Program.

How we developed this plan

The Wellesley Unified Plan is based on the work of a 60-member Steering Committee representing Town boards, commissions, committees, and citizens at large. The plan was also guided by a community engagement process designed to find out what residents and other stakeholders were thinking about the town's future, including multiple public meetings, online surveys, interviews and focus groups.

How we'll put the plan to work

The United Plan includes an implementation matrix setting out the What, How, Who, and When for strategies and actions to achieve the goals of the plan, as well as recommendations to enhance Town government decision-making, transparency,

customer-friendliness and efficiency. The plan will be used to guide future land use decision making, capital improvement planning, and departmental strategic and work plans. .

What's in the 2018-2028 Wellesley unified plan?

The Unified Plan covers a broad range of topics in 15 chapters about current trends, the planning process, all aspects of community life, and strategic concepts to enhance town government.

PART I

Setting the Stage: Our Vision for Tomorrow and Wellesley Today

PART II

Our Natural and Cultural Heritage

PART III

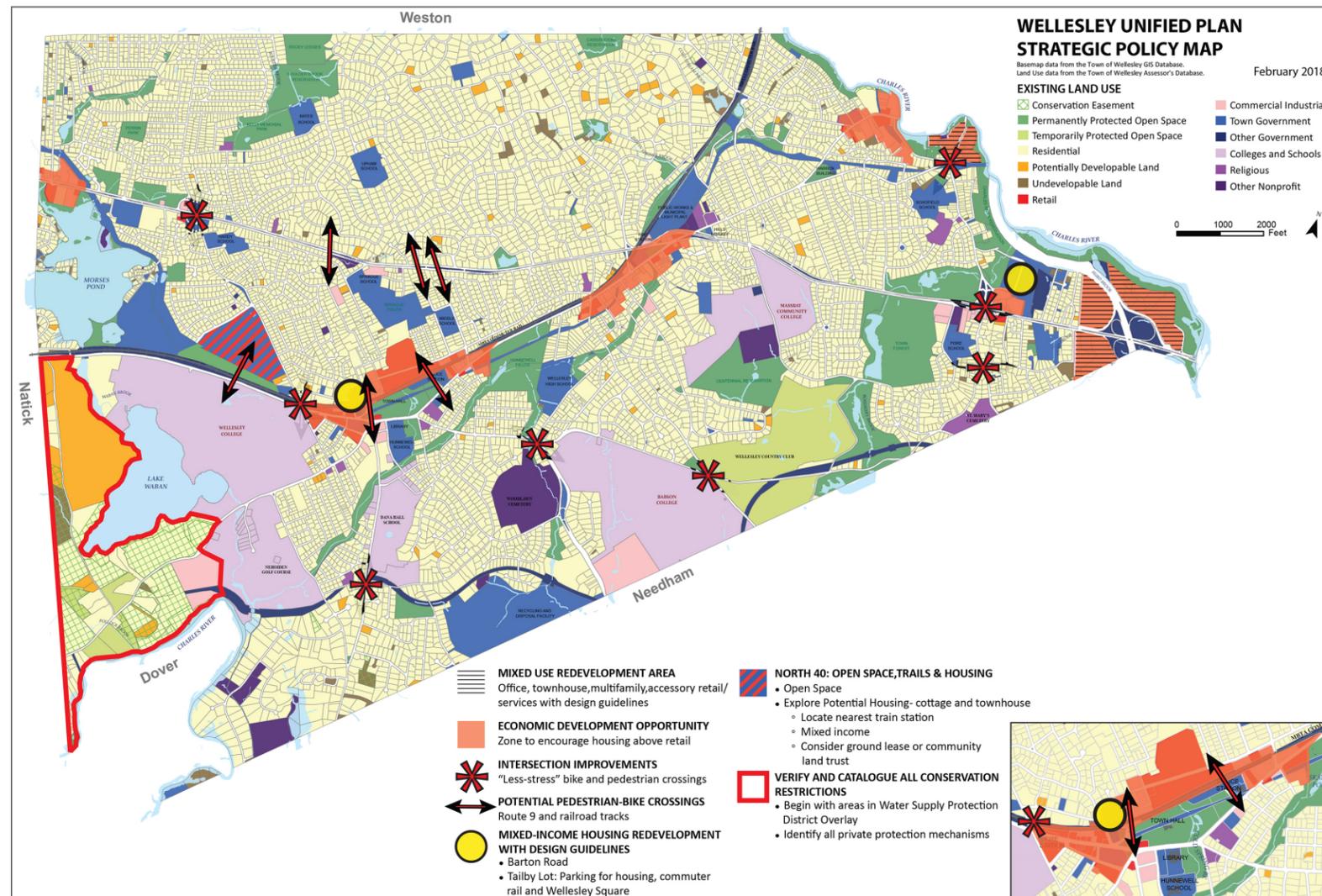
How We Live

PART IV

Sustainable Systems and Networks

PART V

From Plan to Action



Our Vision

In 2040...

Wellesley is a town recognized for its welcoming community culture and exemplary town services; commitment to education and life-long learning; a quality of life that enhances the health and social well-being of its residents; respect for the environment and support for sustainability, conservation, and protection of physical and historical assets; and for its dynamic and thriving business community. Wellesley is recognized for its fiscally sound, well-managed, innovative, and accessible town government that has strong citizen participation and a highly-motivated, collaborative and talented professional staff.

Our Values guide the plan



Diversity: Establish, implement and support ongoing initiatives to maintain Wellesley as a community that welcomes a diversity of people and households.



Sense of Community: Foster a sense of community and community-building through support for inclusive services and facilities, town-wide events, multi-generational activities, and community gathering places.



Town Character: Establish policies, practices and criteria for the preservation of the character of the town's residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and open spaces.



Excellence in Service Delivery: Provide a broad array of services to residents and other users of town services; maintain a strong customer service orientation that strives for excellence in every aspect of service delivery.



Education: Support best-in-class public education, library, recreational and senior services.



Healthy Lifestyles: Enhance the health and wellness of residents through public health initiatives, educational, social and recreational opportunities; create the conditions for healthy lifestyles through easy access to healthful food, medical and psychological care, support systems, non-motorized transportation options, and town facilities.



Connectivity of People and Places: Provide safe, accessible, and efficient transportation choices including public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, to connect people to town destinations and the region.



Conservation and Sustainability: Make resource-efficient choices to conserve energy,

water, and materials; improve water and air quality and reduce carbon emissions; develop and implement sustainable practices to adjust to changing environmental conditions.



Town Asset Management: Maintain, protect, preserve, and enhance the Town's physical assets including facilities, infrastructure, parks, open space, and natural resources.



Business-Friendly: Support existing and new businesses in commercial areas that complement and enhance our community, while protecting quality of life and environmental resources.



Collaboration: Leverage resources and expertise of local private businesses and institutions, as well as neighboring towns and regional agencies, to achieve mutual goals.



Best-Practice Implementation: Establish best practices and priority-based resource allocation systems to support town services, infrastructure and capital investments in a fiscally-prudent manner; conduct long-range fiscal/financial planning that includes appropriate metrics for evaluating progress and adjustment to changing financial conditions.



Democratic Government and Citizen Participation: Promote participation and engagement in town governance and decision-making.



Transparency: Facilitate public access to information, making it easy to understand how town government works, how decisions are made and how to get involved; encourage input from and effectively communicate with residents and other stakeholders.



THE BIG PICTURE

21st-Century Wellesley is a thriving, mature, historic, suburban community, known for its high quality of life. Lively village centers, an excellent school system, commuter rail connections, substantial open space, and beautiful neighborhoods coexist successfully with colleges and professional offices. The challenges facing Wellesley increasingly require interrelated management, preservation, and development strategies where all interests have to work together pre-emptively for collective decision-making.

- As Baby Boomers age, a generational transition is occurring, and older residents who wish to downsize find few options in town.
- The town is nearly built-out under current zoning and housing has become very expensive. Participants in the planning process would like to see more diversity in town

and identified more affordable housing and different kinds of housing as important to diversity.

- Regional arterial roads carry heavy traffic through town, especially during rush hour. Residents would like more alternatives to the car—safe walking and biking networks, traffic demand management, and public transportation.
- Good stewardship of natural resources and open space remains a widely-shared priority for Wellesley.
- Wellesley’s residents value its citizen-led government but also would like it to be more strategic, efficient, transparent, and focused on service to citizens and customers.
- Like all mature communities, Wellesley needs to use strategic redevelopment to achieve multiple goals and identify opportunities that solve more than one challenge at a time.

Natural & Cultural Heritage

NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

- Continue to improve and maintain ponds’ and streams’ water quality and habitat and avoid erosion.
- Continue to maintain and increase the urban forest.
- Update the town’s wellhead-protection planning and collaborate with communities that share its aquifers.
- Permanently protect and manage existing Town-owned open space with appropriate zoning and conservation restrictions.
- Continue to use zoning, easements, management agreements and other tools to promote protection of open space character and natural resources for large private open space tracts.
- Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan in a timely manner.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Update and maintain a historic property inventory for State and National Register listing.
- Develop a historic landscape plan for Wellesley.

- Expand public awareness of historic preservation through awards programs, illustrative materials to promote compatible renovation of historic properties, and developer and contractor education.
- Combine the Historical Commission and Historic District Commission to provide integrated leadership and regulatory experience.
- Work toward developing an arts and culture center in Wellesley.

PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

- Maintain and improve active recreation areas, including athletic fields and programs.
- Expand and enhance the existing trails network within Wellesley and to adjacent towns.
- Improve data collection about use, satisfaction, and demand for recreation facilities and programs, as well as changing needs

How We Live

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Amend the zoning bylaw to allow for more diverse housing options.

- Update the Affordable Housing Policy and pursue strategies to meet state 10% affordable-housing goals under Chapter 40B.
- Pursue mixed- and mixed-use redevelopment of appropriate Town-owned property.
- Allow multifamily and townhouse uses in office parks.
- Explore housing for a portion of the North 40 parcel.
- Connect neighborhood destinations such as parks, schools and retail areas with safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle routes.

PUBLIC HEALTH

[Prepared by MAPC]

- Foster formal and informal connections to strengthen social capital and intergenerational ties.
- Adopt an age-friendly and intergenerational approach to community buildings and spaces.
- Support the mental and emotional wellness of children and youth.
- Continue the focus on school-based social and emotional instruction.
- Promote unstructured play and offer time and space for it to occur.
- Promote walkability, physical activity, tree planting, and exposure to outdoor natural environments.

- Implement best practices related to elimination of gas leaks.
- Integrate use of a health and equity impact checklist into local decision making.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Invest in proactive economic development by creating an economic development policy group and identifying staff support.
- Support a diverse array of independent businesses in the commercial villages by working with merchants’ associations, actively recruiting desired business types, enhancing walkability, and improving other physical conditions.
- Identify zoning and other changes to encourage mixed-use development in commercial areas.
- Study options and take steps to rezone office districts to promote an enhanced non-residential tax base.

Sustainable Systems/Networks

MOBILITY AND CIRCULATION

- Support a multimodal transportation system and use multimodal level of service measures (MLOS) when making street improvements.
- Achieve MassDOT Complete Streets certification to develop and fund a safe and convenient multimodal system.
- Establish a mobility policy committee to provide ongoing policy guidance for town coordination and investment in transportation.
- Develop a bicycle and pedestrian network concept and designs for safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Route 9 and the railroad tracks.
- Pursue additional parking options for commercial villages, including management, structured parking, and bicycle parking.
- Seek improvement of transportation flow on regional routes by working with regional and state transportation agencies, publicizing bus access to commuter rail, and similar measures.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Continue to maintain a facilities master plan and capital improvements program (CIP), and identify how projects in the CIP are related to achievement of the Unified Plan vision and goals.
- Continue to maintain school excellence.
- Continue to maintain exceptional library services.
- Explore options to include community enrichment spaces and resources (such as meeting space, a gymnasium, and arts and culture space) in town buildings.
- Adopt a systematic evaluation rating system for infrastructure to create a common set of evaluation metrics across town government.
- Implement best management practices for stormwater that promote infiltration and improve water quality.

SUSTAINABILITY, RESILIENCE, AND GREEN PRACTICES

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with state goals.
- Incorporate energy conservation and renewable energy sources into all existing and new Town facilities.
- Incorporate sustainability and resilience, into the mission of every Town department, as appropriate.
- Expand the number of electric vehicle charging stations in Wellesley.
- Promote green and sustainable building practices in the private sector through the Town’s development standards.
- Raise public awareness and promote private landscape practices that are pesticide-free, avoid excess fertilizer runoff, avoid the use of invasive ornamental plants, and promote infiltration of stormwater.
- Take advantage of state and regional programs to prepare for climate change

From Plan To Action

LAND USE, ZONING, AND URBAN DESIGN

- Rewrite the Zoning Bylaw, design standards and guidelines to align with the Unified Plan.

- Update the Design Review bylaw and 1989 Design Review Handbook
- Review the permitting process to make improvements.
- Clarify regulatory requirements and design standards so that permitting for desired projects can be streamlined

TOWN GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC CONCEPTS

- Use the Unified Plan annually in preparing and approving departmental work plans, operational budgets, and capital improvement plans and support a culture of strategic planning in town government.
- Use data to drive decision-making in town government and to measure progress in meeting goals.
- Work towards creating an open data portal to provide user-friendly financial and project information.
- Design Town processes around customer needs rather than Town organization.
- Foster a culture of customer-service among Town employees.
- Optimize the use of technology across town government for consistency, excellence, and productivity.
- Study the feasibility of adopting priority-based budgeting processes.
- Assure a continued presence of high-quality volunteers by developing a recruitment program.



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