



Walpole Master Plan

Approved by Master Plan Steering Committee June 12, 2023



Walpole Master Plan

Walpole Planning Board

John Conroy, Chair
John O’Leary, Vice Chair
Catherine Turco-Abate, Clerk
Philip Czachorowski
Sarah Khatib, Member (term ended June 3, 2023)
Paul Smith, Member (term started June 3, 2023)

Walpole Master Plan Committee

Philip Czachorowski, Chair
Catherine Turco-Abate, Vice Chair
Dean Bebis
Kari Denitzio
Janet Fasanello
Andrew Flowers
John Hasenjaeger
Jenn Karnakis
Glenn Maffei
Michael McGrath
Donnell Murphy
Ashley Clark
Meg Kundert (through 03/21/2022)

Town Staff

Patrick Deschenes, Director of Community Development

Master Plan Logo

Cara Morris, Walpole High School

Consultants

Barrett Planning Group LLC
Community Circle
BETA, Inc.
Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture

Photography

Judi Barrett
Fiona Coughlan, AICP
Martha Lyon
David Hagan
Eric Hurwitz
Joann McGull

Contents

Letter to the Community, Philip F. Czachorowski, Chair	1
Master Plan Vision and Goals—	1
<i>Our Master Plan Goals</i>	3
Inventory and Assessment—	4
<i>Economic Development</i>	5
<i>Open Space and Recreation</i>	14
<i>Natural Resources</i>	22
<i>Land Use</i>	35
<i>Climate Change</i>	43
<i>Housing and Residential Development</i>	55
<i>Transportation</i>	64
<i>Community Facilities and Services</i>	77
<i>Historic and Cultural Resource Areas</i>	92
<i>Community Health</i>	99
Key Planning Issues—	106
Implementation Plan	114
Bibliography—	148
Appendix: Master Plan Survey Summary (2022)—	157

To the residents and Town officials of Walpole,

As Chair of the Walpole Master Plan Steering Committee and on behalf of Katie Turco-Abate, Vice-chair, and the members of the Committee, I want to thank you for your input to the Walpole Master Plan. This master plan, the fruit of months of work, defines a vision for Walpole's future and provides a comprehensive plan for our community's physical growth. It establishes a framework for future policy decisions and sets priorities for developing and maintaining our infrastructure. It will help manage growth and change while conserving our natural resources.

State law mandates that Planning Boards create a master plan every 10-20 years which reflects the vision and goals of the community. Working with our consultants, Barrett Planning Group, we gathered input through public forums, surveys, and small group meetings. We met the challenges of COVID-19 using additional methods like Micro Boards and Comment Boards to ensure that we got a wide, representative set of responses.

The plan covers 10 areas: economic development, open space and development, natural resources, land use, housing, transportation, municipal facilities, climate change, historic and cultural resources, and community health. The plan starts with the vision and goals of the community followed by a section with an inventory and assessment for each of the areas. This section was based on the extensive research done by Barrett Planning as well as interviews with department heads and input from the community and committee members. For each of the areas, there is a summary of key findings. The next section is an assessment of key planning issues facing the town.

The last section is the recommended implementation plan with 102 actions grouped by policy statements. These were recommended by the consultants and then discussed, modified, and voted on by the committee. The actions cover a range of level of complexity and timeframe. Some can be easily implemented. Others will require considerable resources and complex planning.

Adoption of the master plan requires only a majority vote of the Planning Board. It does not mandate any action as that is up to town meeting and the appropriate Town boards and committees. What it does do is establish a blueprint for zoning and policy changes, infrastructure projects, and long term planning.

I want to thank Judi Barrett of Barrett Planning and her team for the tremendous job they did in gathering input, collecting and analyzing data, and writing the plan. They brought deep expertise and experience to the project. I also want to acknowledge and thank Patrick Deschenes, Walpole Economic Director, for helping with the administration of the committee and guiding us in the process. He was critical to the success of the committee. A special thanks to the Planning Board who sponsored the plan and to Jim Johnson, Town Administrator, the Select Board, and all Town officials and boards who supported our work. Lastly, I want to thank each of the committee members. Each member represented a respective board or committee and they brought specialized knowledge and experience to cover each of the areas. The process was lengthy and I thank them for their commitment and dedication to the Town of Walpole.

The logo on the report cover was created by Cara Morris, a graduate of Walpole High School. We thank her and all of the art students in Ms. Engels' art class last year who entered submissions for the logo.

Walpole is fortunate to have an abundance of natural, civic, social, and cultural resources, a town with a strong sense of community and civic action. This master plan holds a vision and a plan for the future that will make our town an even better place to live and will help fulfill that vision. I urge all residents to read this report, in particular, those sections on the vision and goals, the summary of the key findings, and the implantation plan.

Best regards

Philip F. Czachorowski

Chair, **Walpole Master Plan Steering Committee**



Section 1

Master Plan Vision and Goals

Walpole is a town that ...

- *Supports the local economy and promotes Downtown Walpole as the civic, social, and cultural hub of the Town;*
- *Takes care of its open spaces and recreation areas through investment and stewardship;*
- *Appreciates and protects its natural resources;*
- *Preserves its small-town ambiance as it adapts to growth and change*
- *Works to be more resilient to climate change through shared responsibility by government, residents, and businesses;*
- *Has a wide range of housing choices;*
- *Provides safe, pleasant streets that pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars can share, and easy access to public transportation;*
- *Protects and promotes its history and cultural resources;*
- *Takes pride in its municipal buildings and schools; and*
- *Provides services to protect the health and safety of all residents.*

... **Has a vibrant, prosperous Downtown** that attracts residents and visitors alike, with many options for shopping, dining, and community gathering. **Economic investment and new development both in Downtown and East Walpole** are in keeping with the scale and character of the surrounding area. Façade improvement programs and design guidelines work together to beautify Downtown, improve property values, and strengthen the local economy.

... **Preserves, manages, and connects its open spaces and recreation areas.** Bird Park, Adams Farm, Jarvis Farm trails, the Town Forest, and Memorial Pond, among many others serve the public's need for quiet places to enjoy, rest, and play. Well-maintained, equitably located recreation facilities offer a range of indoor and outdoor options for all ages.

... **Appreciates and protects its natural resources,** encouraging residents to do their part to safeguard the environmental assets on which the health of the community depends.

... **Preserves its small-town feeling, strong sense of community, the character and value of its built environment, and New England charm** by managing growth with sound land use policies, respecting its long-time residents, and welcoming new people. It is a town that remains a safe and great place to bring up children.

... **Protects its resources for future generations to enjoy** by improving resilience to the impacts of climate change. Walpole works to increase recycling and the use of renewable energy sources in public buildings.



Electric car charging stations exist in central locations. Residents and businesses are supported in their efforts to live and work sustainably.

... **Has a wide range of homes that meet the needs of people at various stages of the life cycle.** Walpole's housing options help to keep the town a welcoming place for all types of households and people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Higher-density homes are located near the train station.

... **Provides ways to travel other than by car, with safe and pleasant infrastructure for walking and biking.** Walpole has good access to public transit, including enough parking for commuters and efficient "first mile/last mile" connections between neighborhoods and the train.

... **Protects and promotes its history and cultural resources** by increasing public awareness of local history in many ways and by protecting historic buildings and landscapes. The emphasis on arts and culture, especially in the Downtown and East Walpole, play an important part in the town's economy and respect for its heritage.

... **Maintains and updates its municipal facilities,** including those most used by the community, such as the schools, the Senior Center, the Library, and Town Hall. Town-owned facilities are used to their full potential and enjoyed by many as well-loved venues for community building. Older buildings such as the Old Town Hall and Blackburn Hall have been put to new uses.

... **Promotes the health and well-being of all residents** with gathering places for social and cultural events and access to public services. Partnerships

between town government, businesses, and local civic, social, and charitable organizations help to engage all neighborhoods in the life of the community and ensure that everyone who lives in Walpole feels welcome to be there. The Town's website provides timely, easy-to-access information. Municipal services meet the needs of all residents and help to protect public health and safety by ensuring good air and water quality.

Our Master Plan Goals

GOAL 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Increase economic activity and diversify the tax base, provide more jobs, and more shops and restaurants for residents to enjoy.

GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION. Provide a network of connected and well-maintained open space and recreation facilities, ensuring equitable access to these for all residents.

GOAL 3: NATURAL RESOURCES. Conserve and protect the town's natural environment and biodiversity through land and water management, regulation, and public education.

GOAL 4: LAND USE. Ensure that new development is in keeping with the scale, uses, and characteristics of the specific neighborhoods, including the Downtown.

GOAL 5: CLIMATE CHANGE. Build Walpole's human, financial, and infrastructure resources to advance sustainability in climate change resilience priorities.



GOAL 6: HOUSING. Increase the range of housing types and the affordable housing supply to meet needs of people throughout various stages of the life cycle.

GOAL 7: TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION. Address traffic congestion and improve alternative modes of travel including walking, biking and connections to, and parking, for public transit.

GOAL 8: MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES. Maintain and update municipal facilities and ensure that municipal services meet the needs of residents and protect public health.

GOAL 9: HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES. Celebrate Walpole's history, protect historic resources, and increase the presence of art and culture in Town.

GOAL 10: COMMUNITY HEALTH. Invest in resources and services to protect the health and well-being of Walpole residents, especially the town's most vulnerable people.



Section 2

1. Inventory and Assessment

2.1.

Economic Development



Key Findings

- **Employment.** While Walpole did not escape the rise in unemployment that came with COVID-19, the town has recovered well and has outperformed the recovery pace of the state, the county, and many neighboring communities.
- **Pride in Downtown.** Residents really appreciate Downtown Walpole. It supports local businesses, services, and green spaces, and it is one of the Town's economic engines. However, residents say Downtown needs more types of businesses and that the existing mix of services is lacking.
- **Zoning and Permitting.** Members of the business community and the Economic Development Commission say the zoning and permitting process is overly difficult and fails to encourage entrepreneurs to locate their businesses in Walpole.
- **Place of Work.** More Walpole residents have found employment outside of the Town than within it, making it a net exporter of jobs. This is likely due to the availability of higher-wage jobs nearby, e.g., in Norwood, or Boston.
- **Getting to Work.** Walpole wage-earners depend primarily on a car to get to work. Together, carpoolers and solo drivers account for 82 percent of Walpole commuters. However, public transit users as a commuter category have the highest median earnings. Automobile users only overtake public transit users in median earnings when the categories of single-occupancy commuters and carpoolers are combined. This is probably because the commuter rail and MBTA bus lines that operate in Walpole run to Boston, where many higher-paying jobs can be found. Boston is the second-highest commute destination for Walpole residents, second only to Walpole itself.
- **Tax Base.** Walpole's town government relies primarily on property taxes to support public services. Walpole has a split tax rate, i.e., with businesses shouldering a larger share of the tax levy than their share of the Town's total assessed valuation. Today, both residential and non-residential tax rates are at their lowest levels since 2012, but this reflects the significant growth that has occurred in Walpole's property values.

Introduction

A community's economy is guided by its location, the types of industries and other commercial activity it attracts, the education and skills of its working-age population, and the economic uses of its land. Every town is part of a larger economic region or area connected by employment, trade, water, and roads. The boundaries of economic statistical regions tend to correspond with land use patterns, utilities, and transportation systems that support the movement of goods and people. For statistical purposes, Walpole is part of the Boston-Cambridge-Newton Metropolitan Statistical Area ("Boston Metro Area," a large economic region that includes much of Eastern Massachusetts between Interstate Route 495 and Boston).

Economic development is associated with the benefits of business growth and job creation, expanding a community's tax base, improving goods and services for residents, and enhancing the value of commercial properties. Walpole has many characteristics of a workforce suburb (primarily providing housing for workers employed in other communities), yet it is poised to attract new businesses within its borders.

For Walpole and most towns, the property tax is the most important source of local government operating revenue. Public schools, public safety and emergency services, and human services are examples of government activities that can work efficiently or flounder depending on the strength of the community's tax base. While the tax base matters, it is also important to understand what the

tax base is not. Not every employer pays property taxes, so the tax base is not a good indicator of the size or health of the local economy. For example, app-based rideshare/delivery workers and self-employed people with home-based businesses do not pay commercial property taxes, yet these jobs and their wages play an important part in Walpole's local economy. The gig economy worker and people working at home are an example of economic activity that has changed significantly since the emergence of COVID-19.

Labor Force Characteristics

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education can open employment opportunities, so educational attainment can be a key indicator of the kinds of jobs available to a community's labor force. **Table 2.1.1** shows that 94.0 percent of Walpole residents have at least a high school diploma or GED (compared to 90.6 percent across Massachusetts), and 53.2 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 43.6 percent across Massachusetts). While Walpole has a smaller proportion of residents with advanced degrees than Norfolk County has, it is consistent with the statewide proportion.

PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT

According to estimates from the American Community Survey,¹ more Walpole residents work in Walpole than in any other community. The number of residents working locally may have increased during the pandemic, but even before March 2020, some 2,690 people working in Walpole also lived in Walpole (21.7 percent). Boston closely followed Walpole as a popular work location for Walpole residents with 2,359 workers (19.1 percent), and the next most common destination was Norwood, with 903 Walpole commuters (7.3 percent).

The American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates for 2015-2019 indicate that relative to nearby comparison communities,² the proportion of Walpole residents who work in their own community (17.7 percent) is lower than all but two towns (Norfolk at 16.4 percent and Sharon at 13.3 percent).³ **Figure 2.1.1** illustrates that across the Commonwealth, 31.0 percent of workers live and work in the same community, so much lower rates can indicate that there are relatively few jobs available. Towns with large proportions of commuters are often referred to as "bedroom communities."

Table 2.1.1. Highest Level of Education Completed

Highest Degree Earned	Walpole	Norfolk County	Massachusetts
Less Than High School	6.0%	6.0%	9.3%
High School/GED	34.0%	33.0%	39.4%
Associate degree	6.9%	7.4%	7.6%
Bachelor's degree	33.7%	28.6%	24.1%
Graduate/Professional Degree/Doctorate	19.5%	25.0%	19.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimate, Table B15003.

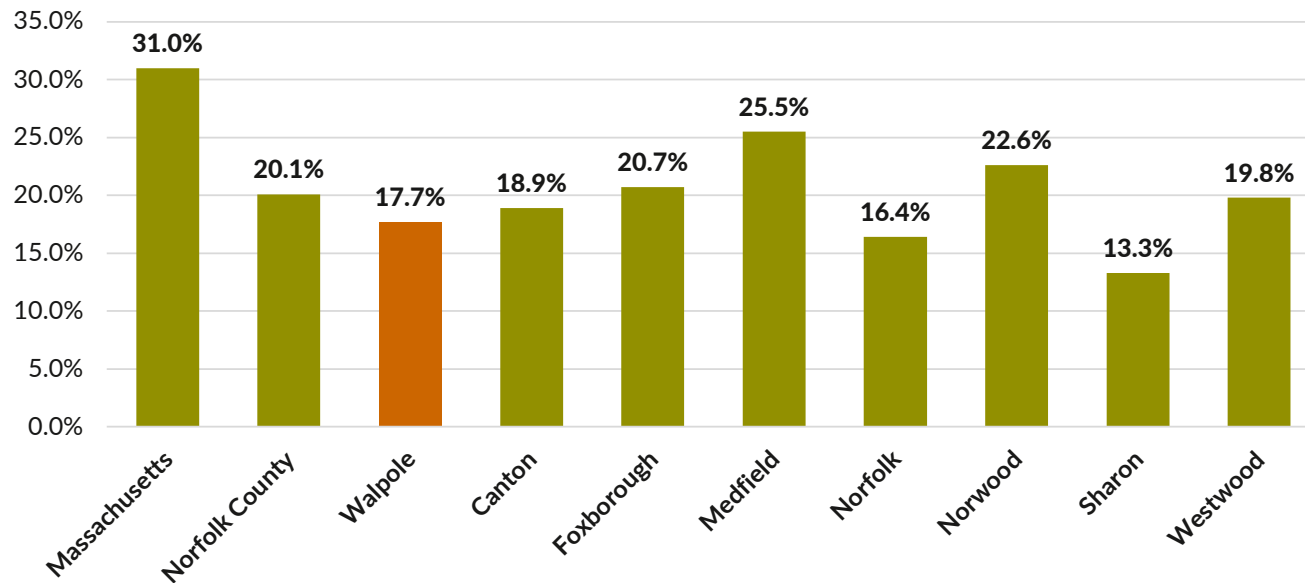
¹ American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates. For commuter estimates, the 2015-2019 ACS is the most current data source.

² Comparison communities are Canton, Foxborough, Medfield, Norfolk, Norwood, Sharon, and Westwood.

³ See also, Section 2.7, Transportation.

Figure 2.1.1. People Working in Their Town of Residence

(ACS 5yr 2015-19, Table B08009)



A more detailed visualization of both the workplace destinations of Walpole workers and where non-residential Walpole workers commute from can be found in Section 7.

GETTING TO WORK

Walpole is conveniently located close to Interstate 95 and US-1, and it has one operational Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) commuter rail station on the Franklin line.⁴ These options offer easy access to Boston and the surrounding region, but public transportation is relatively limited and as a result, more than 75 percent of commuters drive to work. **Figure 2.1.2** shows that personal vehicles are by far the most popular choice among Walpole commuters, which suggests that Walpole remains a car-dependent community.

Table 2.1.2. Median Earnings by Transport Means for Labor Force

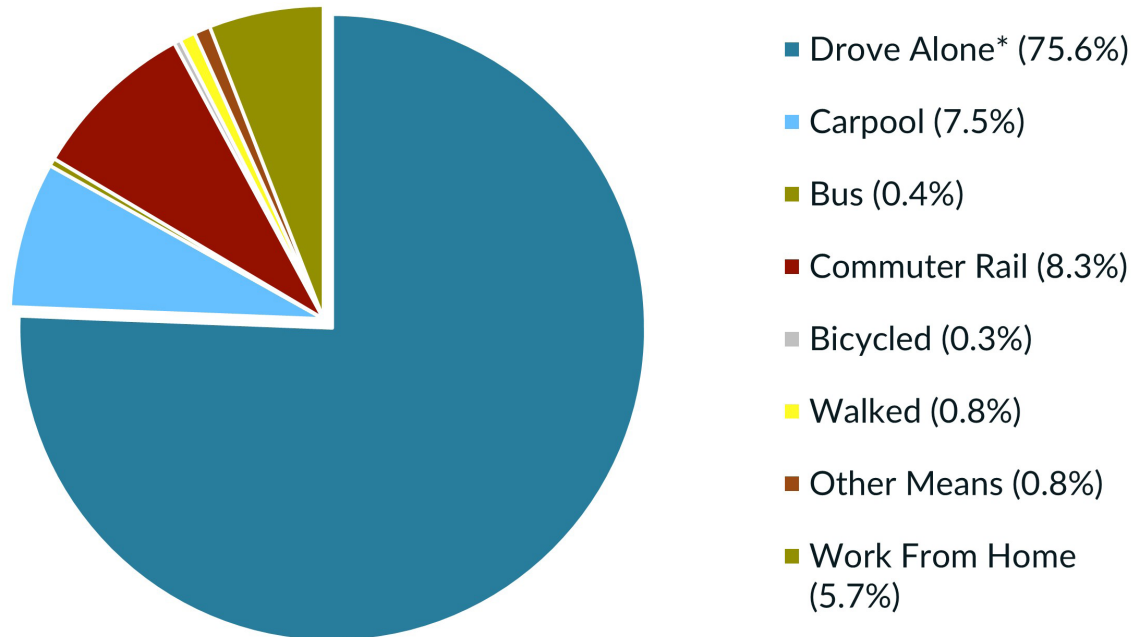
	Walpole	Norfolk County	Massachusetts
Mode	Median Earnings	Median Earnings	Median Earnings
Overall	\$66,704	\$57,614	\$48,323
Drive Alone	\$65,303	\$57,918	\$50,682
Carpool	\$42,846	\$42,618	\$35,503
Public Transit	\$104,236	\$69,943	\$51,800
Walked		\$9,772	\$25,199
Other*		\$52,215	\$38,195
Work from Home	\$51,518	\$68,864	\$52,301

Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimate, Table B08121. *"Other" includes taxis, motorcycles, bicycles, and other methods.

⁴ Walpole's second commuter rail station, Plimptonville, is no longer active as of 2021.

Figure 2.1.2. Means of Transportation to Work

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table B08301)



Boston is the largest job center in Eastern Massachusetts and the largest out-of-town workplace destination for Walpole residents. It attracts workers throughout the region because of the relatively high rates of pay (the average salary is \$91,000).⁵ Comparing the median earnings of workers who use different modes of transportation to commute indicates that workers who take public transit have a higher median income than commuters who use other transportation. In communities with more transit options and availability (such as throughout much of Norfolk County), this trend persists, but it is not as stark as the difference between median incomes of Walpole commuters.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the Massachusetts Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, Walpole's labor force in 2020 was composed of 13,022 residents, 12,000 of whom were employed. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in furloughs, layoffs, and business closures, and Walpole, like many other places, saw a spike in unemployment. Walpole's unemployment rate in 2020 was 7.8 percent, or slightly higher than that of most nearby towns yet lower than the statewide rate.

Walpole has rebounded, and its recovery is on pace with Norfolk County, Massachusetts, and Norwood, the largest of the surrounding comparison.

Employment and Wages

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

A diverse employment base includes a range of industries and professions, and this mix can strengthen a local economy by providing more and varied job options for workers with different strengths and skills. According to state labor data, Walpole residents work in many different fields, but the largest shares of the workforce are in manufacturing (13 percent), educational services (11.2 percent), retail trade (10.5 percent), and human services (10.2 percent).⁶ These professions are primarily found in the southern half of Walpole, which is home to the downtown commercial area and access to the major highways that either run through or abut it.

LOCATION QUOTIENTS

A location quotient (LQ) helps to gauge strengths and weaknesses in a local economy by comparing it to a county, state, or other larger regional economy (known as a "reference economy"). Typically, a ratio between 0.90 and 1.10 indicates that the proportion of jobs between the local and reference economies is balanced. Ratios above this range mean that the local industry is particularly strong, and conversely, ratios below this range indicate that the surrounding geography is stronger for that industry. **Table 2.1.3** shows Walpole's industrial strengths and weaknesses compared to the Metro South-West Workforce Development Area (WDA) and the Commonwealth

⁵ Staff Report, "Boston's average salary 4th-highest in the U.S., says study," Boston Business Journal, September 14, 2021, <https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2021/09/14/bostons-average-salary-4th-highest-in-the-us-s.html>

⁶ Massachusetts' Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 2020

of Massachusetts as a whole.⁷ The table shows that in 2020, Walpole's strongest industries relative to both larger surrounding areas is non-durable goods manufacturing and public administration.

WAGES

Wages across industries in a community indicate the local economy's impact on the lives of its residents and the nonresidents who commute to work there. According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), the average weekly wage for jobs in Walpole was \$1,289 in 2020. **Figure 2.1.3** illustrates weekly wages in Walpole by industry. Walpole's highest-paid industry was Finance and Insurance (\$2,694 weekly) with more than double the town-wide average weekly wage, and its lowest-paid industries were Accommodation and Food Services (\$460 weekly) and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (\$502 weekly) with less than half of the town-wide average weekly wage. In this regard, Walpole is similar to other communities.

This wide wage gap parallels trends that are present throughout the Commonwealth, where the highest-paid and lowest paid industries are the same as they are in Walpole, but the average wages are somewhat higher statewide (\$3,401 weekly for Finance and Insurance; \$527 for Accommodation and Food Services.).

EMPLOYMENT BASE TRENDS

Since 2010, both the overall number of establishments in Walpole and the size of its total labor force have grown steadily.⁸ There have been notable upticks in

⁷ The Metro South-West WDA consists of forty-three cities and towns west of Boston, spanning from northernmost Littleton to Plainville, on the Rhode Island border.

⁸ Massachusetts' Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 2020

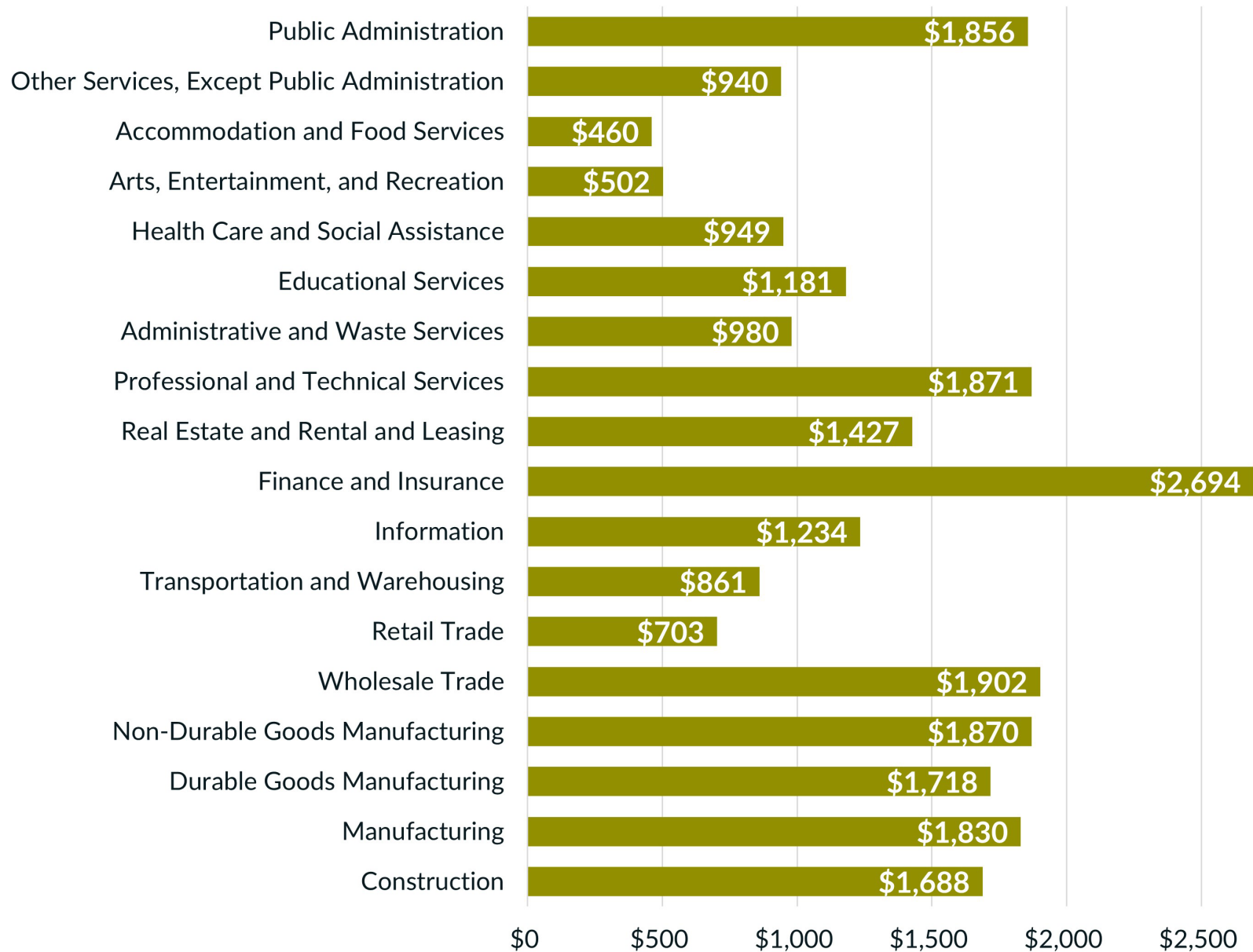
Table 2.1.3. Location Quotients for Select Industries

Location Quotients for Select Industries	Walpole to WDA			Walpole to Massachusetts		
	2010 LQ	2015 LQ	2020 LQ	2010 LQ	2015 LQ	2020 LQ
Construction	1.72	1.54	1.54	1.71	1.48	1.55
Manufacturing	1.10	1.24	1.61	1.29	1.47	1.88
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0.43	0.36	0.55	0.57	0.46	0.72
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	2.99	3.27	4.68	2.66	3.31	4.07
Utilities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wholesale Trade	1.16	1.27	1.32	1.55	1.58	1.46
Retail Trade	1.25	1.26	1.12	1.22	1.24	1.09
Transportation and Warehousing	2.26	1.96	1.47	1.31	1.14	0.84
Information	0.23	0.16	0.14	0.36	0.29	0.24
Finance and Insurance	0.97	0.98	0.68	0.70	0.72	0.52
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.56	0.60	0.84	0.57	0.63	0.92
Professional and Technical Services	0.31	0.36	0.35	0.46	0.53	0.46
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.19	0.25	-	0.45	0.54	-
Administrative and Waste Services	1.71	1.71	1.60	1.97	1.95	1.90
Educational Services	0.88	0.83	1.07	0.90	0.82	1.09
Health Care and Social Assistance	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.55	0.55	0.54
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.38	0.94	0.67	1.62	1.13	0.85
Accommodation and Food Services	1.20	1.39	1.49	1.00	1.10	1.21
Other Services, Except Public Administration	1.16	1.29	1.65	0.86	1.12	1.61
Public Administration	2.19	2.00	1.76	1.46	1.43	1.33

Sources: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), "Employment and Wages," (ES-202), Annual Reports (2010, 2015, 2020), and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

Figure 2.1.3 Average Weekly Wages by Industry in Walpole (2020)

(Source: ES202)



the field of construction from 130 in 2010 to 144 in 2020, a sign of Walpole's growth, while healthcare establishments have nearly doubled. Otherwise, most establishments in Walpole have seen their numbers hold steady, such as real estate and hospitality. However, the number of jobs these establishments have on offer have greatly grown and so too have their wages. There have been some losses, too. During the same period, "miscellaneous services" declined from 113 establishments in 2010 to 95 in 2020. Another key industry – retail – saw a similarly consistent decline across the decade, from 84 to 73. However, a loss of establishments does not necessarily mean a loss in jobs. Rather, Walpole had more total jobs in the employment base in 2020 than in 2010.⁹

JOBS TO WORKERS RATIO

The ratio of jobs to workers in a community demonstrates the availability of local jobs by industry. This metric indicates whether residents can choose to live and work in the same town or if they are more likely to commute. For many suburban communities, particularly towns in convenient and accessible locations, these ratios tend to demonstrate that there are few jobs relative to the size of the community's workforce. In other words: if the ratio for an industry is greater than 1.0, then that industry is a net importer, meaning more people are likely to come to Walpole to work in that industry and Walpole residents are more likely to work in Walpole in that industry as well. A ratio of less than 1.0 means the opposite: that the industry is a net exporter and that Walpole residents are more likely to have to find a job in that industry outside of Walpole than within it. **Table 2.1.4** shows that Walpole is a net importer of jobs in many industries, with several net exporter industries being just on the cusp of flipping their status.).

DAYTIME POPULATION

People come and go throughout a day: residents commute to work in another community, and workers spend their days in the community where their employers are located. The number of people who spend their weekdays in Walpole make up the town's "daytime population." Daytime population estimates how many people are working in or visiting the community during business hours. **Table 2.1.5** shows the daytime populations of Walpole and its comparison communities. Ratios above 1 indicate that during the day, the number of people served by businesses and services in the community

Table 2.1.4. Jobs to Resident Workers

Industries	# of Jobs	# of Workers	Difference	Ratio
Total	11,824	12,837	1013	.921
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-	28	-	-
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	-	23	-	-
Construction	848	915	67	0.927
Manufacturing	1,435	756	(679)	1.898
Utilities	76	-	-	-
Wholesale Trade	596	317	(279)	1.880
Retail Trade	1,266	1,305	39	0.970
Transportation and Warehousing	397	264	(133)	.970
Information	89	281	192	0.317
Finance and Insurance	287	1,323	1,036	0.217
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,266	155	(1,111)	8.168
Professional and Technical Services	575	1,591	1,016	0.361
Administrative and Waste Services	1,044	527	(517)	1.981
Educational Services	1,228	1,436	208	0.855
Health Care and Social Assistance	11,245	2,009	(9,236)	5.597
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	199	292	93	0.682
Accommodation and Food Services	1,104	584	(520)	1.890
Other Services, Except Public Administration	620	551	(69)	1.125
Public Administration	580	401	(179)	1.446

Sources: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), "Employment and Wages," (ES-202), Annual Reports, 2019, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table C24030 and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

Note: Cells without a figure indicate that no industry data are available for the Town.

⁹ ES202 data, 2010, 2015, 2020.

increases because the community attracts people through opportunities to live, work, shop, and play.

SNAPSHOT OF LOCAL EMPLOYERS

According to the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance's Labor Market Information, many of Walpole's largest employers are based in the service industry and are located along Providence Highway (Route 1). Twenty-seven of the Town's hundred largest employers are located in this area. These large employers include the Walmart Supercenter, 99 Restaurants, Big Y and Kohl's, all of which employ hundreds of people.¹⁰ The single largest employer in Walpole is Hollingsworth & Vose Co., a worldwide manufacturer of nonwoven materials and engineered papers with applications in filtration systems. The company has been based in Walpole since the eighteenth century, and it employs a workforce of thousands.¹¹

South Walpole's reputation for being the Town's economic engine is supported by Labor Market Information: eighteen of Walpole's hundred largest employers are located on Main Street (Route 1A). Many of these employers are based in retail and food service, and in interviews with members of the local business community, some participants had concerns about the limited business diversity in the Downtown, specifically the overabundance of point-of-purchase eateries (pizzerias and sub shops) and front-facing personal care services (nail salons). The 2015 Walpole Downtown Action Plan noted that table food service establishments and personal service businesses (which include nail and hair salons) made up over 50 percent of the downtown

Table 2.1.5. Ratio of Daytime Population to Total Population

Geography	Daytime Population	Total Population	Ratio
WALPOLE	32,264	25,129	1.324
Canton	40,839	23,369	1.748
Foxborough	29,831	17,727	1.683
Medfield	14,858	12,841	1.157
Norfolk	13,910	11,786	1.180
Norwood	47,914	29,306	1.635
Sharon	22,681	18,526	1.224
Westwood	27,475	16,136	1.703

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Tables B01003, B08604, and B08009, and Barrett Planning Group, LLC

businesses.

The Walpole Public Schools are the largest public employer in Walpole. Walpole's schools are highly regarded by residents, and Walpole High School was ranked in the top 50 percent of Boston Magazine's "The Best Public High Schools in Greater Boston" in 2021.¹² In 2021, Town Meeting approved a debt exclusion to fund a new combined middle school.

Tax Base and Trends

According to the Department of Revenue, 16.4 percent of the Walpole tax levy came from commercial, industrial, and personal (CIP) property in 2020.¹³ The majority of Walpole's tax base is residential, with roughly 70 percent of the Town's area zoned for residential uses. A significant amount of the town's area is tax exempt, including schools, houses of worship, protected open land, and the now-closed, state-owned MCI-Cedar Junction.

Walpole has a split tax rate, meaning that tax rates on residential and commercial properties are not the same. Over the past two decades, the difference between commercial and residential rates has ranged from less than three to more than five percent.¹⁴ After the Great Recession (2008), commercial taxes began to rise more than residential taxes, hitting a high point in 2014 with a gap of 5.28 percent. Since then, both tax rates have trended downward. As of 2022, the tax rates are at their lowest in a decade, with a residential tax rate of 14.46 percent and a commercial tax rate of 19.22 percent. However, this does not mean property taxes in Walpole have dropped. The declining tax rate has gone hand-in-hand with growth in property values.

Local property taxes fund municipal services, such as Walpole's schools, infrastructure, and open spaces. As property values rise, taxes increase as well. The Town tries to balance the burden on taxpayers with the community goods and services that their tax dollars can support.

¹⁰ Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Labor Market Information.

¹¹ Hollingsworth & Vose, <https://www.hollingsworth-vose.com/company/history/>

¹² Boston Magazine, The Best Public High Schools in Greater Boston, <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/education/best-public-high-schools-boston-2021-chart/>

¹³ Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section, Walpole Fiscal Year Tax Classification, 2020.

¹⁴ Walpole Board of Assessors.

Local Government Capacity

The Department of Community and Economic Development. The Department of Community and Economic Development implements state and local land use and environmental legislation, procedures, codes, and standards according to the principles and practices of planning and zoning. It does so with the goal of encouraging sustainable and equitable economic development in Walpole, including with partnerships with community groups, advocates, business leaders, and individual residents.

The Economic Development Commission. The Economic Development Commission (EDC) is composed of nine Select Board-appointed members and one non-voting member representing the Walpole Chamber of Commerce. The EDC meets to develop and consider economic strategies while making sure those strategies are consistent with other town goals and objectives. The Commission also consults with local businesses on their needs: in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EDC supported Walpole's food service businesses by advocating on their behalf. Many restaurants were able to expand their outdoor dining and take-away services as a result of changes to the Town's bylaws, many of which were advocated for by the EDC.

2.2

Open Space and Recreation



Key Findings

- Walpole residents have several passive and active recreational facilities at their doorstep, but many are unaware they exist, are available, or are accessible to the public. Gaps in resident knowledge may be partially attributable to lack of signage or identifiable public access points.
- Walpole has a competitive recreation program, supported by an active Recreation Department and Recreation Committee. Staff and volunteers say the demand for youth programs is high and is continuing to grow.
- The OSRP Action Plan stressed residents' desire to preserve, maintain, and expand available open space and recreation facilities where feasible. Partnering with the school district, local nonprofits, the private sector, and other organizations could advance these efforts.
- Findings from the 2020 OSRP point to the need for improving internal park layouts and pathway designs to serve seniors, people with mobility limitations, and people with disabilities.
- The 2019 Community Resilience Building Workshop (CRB) identified management needs when responding to flooding, snow and ice events, extreme temperatures, and other severe weather. The top recommendation was inventorying and assessing the Town's culverts and bridges to improve their resilience.
- The Superintendent of Parks, Forestry, and Cemetery is working on a Tree Wardens Policy and tree inventory in response to these concerns.
- The Town's athletic fields are heavily used and remain at risk of overuse. Several fields require improvements to help mitigate the overuse, with upkeep continuing to be a major need.
- Walpole residents value passive recreation and trail maintenance as much as active recreation. Seventy-three percent of OSRP Community Survey respondents identified improving and maintaining existing off-road trails as "important" or "very important" when asked to rate their open space priorities.

Introduction

Walpole is a hub for recreational activity. By preserving and maintaining its open space and indoor and outdoor recreational resources, the Town has shown a strong sense of pride and support for its growing residential and infrastructure needs. Maintaining open space and recreational resources benefits the community by protecting and providing access to scenic natural assets, promoting health and wellness, fostering an appreciation for the outdoors, contributing to long-term sustainability, and enhancing quality of life. Walpole's commitment to protecting its open space and recreation underscores a willingness to invest in the well-being of future generations.

Because of the willingness of residents to invest in environmental quality and community services, Walpole is home to a variety of open spaces, conservation lands, and recreation areas. Some of these features include deep-water ponds, three forests, Jarvis Farm, Adams Farm, Spring Brook Conservation Area, Francis William Bird Park, two country clubs, a Bay Circuit Trail connection, and numerous fields and playgrounds. According to a Community Survey conducted for the 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update, many residents said these treasured spaces offer great opportunities to explore, exercise, and relax. Several respondents indicated that they were unaware of these resources but expressed interest in visiting them. Walpole's OSRP update offers a detailed inventory of parks, conservation lands, and cemeteries and is the primary source of information for this chapter. Results from the plan's community engagement and survey efforts highlight the important challenges, needs, and gaps the Town confronts in the planning process. These critical takeaways helped inform the recommendations,



issues, and opportunities sections of this section of the Master Plan.

Open Space

According to the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), Walpole owns and manages approximately 2,266 acres of open space, recreation, conservation, and cemetery land (a total of forty separate areas). Nine other public or privately-owned open spaces covering 1,143 acres are dedicated to conservation, flood protection, or agriculture. An additional 762 acres of privately-owned land are restricted solely for agriculture or conservation purposes. Varying levels of protection exist for these open space resources. (See Map 2.3.1, next section, for the Town's current open space and recreation inventory.)

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED LANDS

Walpole's permanently protected lands are those protected in perpetuity and include properties owned in fee or controlled by deed restriction by the state, the Town, nonprofit organizations, or land trusts. Land in Walpole is considered permanently protected

“Walpole needs to proactively preserve what open space is left.”

95% of OSRP survey respondents agreed.

if managed by the Conservation Commission, Recreation Department, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), nonprofit land trusts, or if the Town received state or federal funding for its improvement/purchase. Land owned by other departments or the school system may not have



permanent protection; at best, they are partially protected. Permanently protected lands are subject to Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, which provides for the rights of Massachusetts residents to clean water and undeveloped open space that preserves drinking water quality through filtration and “natural infrastructure.” It also prohibits changing the use of protected lands without a formal approval process that involves Town Meeting and the state legislature. The overarching goal of Article 97 protection is to “ensure no net loss of [Article 97] lands under the ownership and control of the Commonwealth and its political subdivisions.”¹

Permanently Protected Town-Owned Lands

According to the OSRP inventory, the Town owns 106 acres of parks, 2,117.7 acres of conservation land, and 22.6 acres of cemeteries. These 2,246.3 acres are permanently protected via purchase, donation, conservation restriction, or other means. The Conservation Commission owns 1,293.8 acres of permanently protected land and is the listed management agency for 1,466.9 acres of protected land. Walpole’s Conservation Commission has been responsible for protecting and managing local conservation land and wetlands since the 1970s. Their main responsibilities are natural resource protection; acquiring important land and water areas; managing properties for conservation and recreation purposes; reviewing development proposals under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the

Walpole Wetlands Protection Bylaw, and the Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw; and implementing the OSRP. They work with the Conservation Agent, who also reviews applications and plan submissions.² The Recreation Department manages Walpole’s parks, other than the 13 acres at the Mylod Street Fields managed by Walpole Youth Soccer. The Department of Public Works Parks and Cemeteries Division manages all Town-owned cemeteries. Other committees assist with management responsibilities, including the Town Forest Committee, the Ponds Committee, and the Trails Committee.

Permanently Protected Lands Owned by Nonprofits and Land Trusts

Four nonprofit organizations permanently protect 510.5 acres of conservation land through acquisitions and conservation easements in Walpole: the Neponset River Land Holding Association, the Trustees of Reservations, the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF), and the Home for Little Wanderers.

- The **Neponset River Land Holding Association** owns Willett Pond (190.8 acres) and leases it to the Willett Pond Charitable and Protective Association (WPCPA), a group that includes most homeowners abutting the pond and the North Walpole Fish and Game Club.³
- **The Trustees of Reservations**, the nation’s first and Massachusetts’s largest

¹ Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, “EOEA Article 97 Land Disposition Policy,” February 19, 1998.

² Town of Walpole, “Conservation Commission,” 2021.

³ Friends of Willett Pond, “Home,” 2021.

preservation and conservation nonprofit, protects more than 47,000 acres.⁴ In Walpole, the Trustees own and manage East Walpole's 94.5-acre Francis William Bird Park, a very popular destination. John Nolen designed the Park in the early twentieth century following an endowment by Charles Sumner Bird, Sr. and his wife. The park offers trails, open water bodies, rolling fields, and recreational features such as two playgrounds, two tennis courts, two basketball courts, and an outdoor stage for events.

- **The New England Forestry Foundation** owns and manages 66.2 acres of the Patten Memorial Forest and Warren Forest. A fraction of Patten Forest is part of Adams Farm. Mrs. Winslow Warren donated three abutting portions of the Winslow Warren Memorial Forest to NEFF, giving the property access to Willett Pond. Adams Farm is an extremely popular destination that links to the forests via an extensive trail system. The Adams Farm Committee and the Friends of Adams Farm work with Town staff to steward the area but do not focus on the Forests. Both the Adams Farm Committee and the Friends of Adams Farm have also worked with the Norfolk County Agricultural School, which owns 353 acres of partially protected land nearby.^{5,6}
- Lastly, the Home for Little Wanderers (referred to as "The Home" going forward) owns 159 acres at Longview Farm, near Plains Cemetery and Glengreen Farm. The Home is a nonprofit

offering specialized, community-based programs for youth up to age 26.⁷

PARTIALLY OR TEMPORARILY PROTECTED LANDS

Lands having a degree of protection are classified as "partially," "temporarily," or "limited." Partially protected lands could be developed for other uses when their protection expires or their functional use is no longer necessary or viable. These lands may include lands under Chapter 61 or Chapter 61A agreements with the Town, ownership by private institutions, or drinking water regulations. G.L. c. 61 is a forest tax program that gives preferential tax treatment to landowners who maintain their property as open space for timber production, agriculture, or recreation. In turn, G.L. c. 61A is for agricultural land, and 61B is for recreational land.⁸

Partially Protected Public Lands

There are 447 acres of public, partially protected land in Walpole. Norfolk County Agricultural School, a public high school enrolling over 600 students from 70 different cities and towns, owns 353 acres (79 percent) of that land. Their property contains agricultural fields, a baseball field, and the school building. "The Aggie," offers a variety of specialized programs such as agricultural and diesel mechanics, environmental science, and horticultural science that make it a sought-after institution.⁹ The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) owns the remaining 94 acres of public,

partially protected land. The majority is forested. The MWRA's regional system of pipes and facilities serves 61 cities and towns.¹⁰ Walpole's sewer connects to the MWRA system, but the Town operates and maintains its own water system.

Privately Owned Conservation Land

Nine private landholders own Walpole's 222 acres of partially/temporarily protected, privately-owned conservation land. The mechanisms of protection include limited conservation restrictions granted to the Conservation Commission (140.4 acres), conservation easements (32.3 acres), and Chapter 61A (49.3 acres). The largest private landholder is the Estates at Walpole (70 acres). The other landowners are the Neponset Farm Homeowners Trust, Hilltop Land LLC, Ganawatte Farm Preserve Homeowners Association, Sterling Lane Family Trust, and Wisteria Ways II Homeowners Trust.

Privately Owned Restricted Land

Walpole has 53.4 acres of privately owned land that is partially protected under G.L. c. 61 agreements. Including all "chapter" land, the properties range from animal farms and pasture to recreation land owned by the Walpole County Club (28.2 acres), the Walpole Sportsman's Club (100.3 acres), and the Westwood Gun Club (36.3). The largest portions of private land in agricultural use are 12.1 acres of tillage and 18.3 acres of croplands in North Walpole.

4 The Trustees of Reservations, "About Us," 2021.

5 Friends of Adams Farm, "About Us," 2021.

6 New England Forestry Foundation, "Learn," 2021.

7 The Home for Little Wanderers, "Our History," 2021.

8 Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, "Forest Tax Program Chapter 61," 2021.

9 Norfolk County Agricultural School, "About Our School," 2021.

10 Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, "Links to MWRA Customer Community Websites," 2021.

UNPROTECTED LANDS

The Town has 157.3 acres of unprotected land. Eighty-four percent of that land belongs to the Massachusetts Correctional Institution - Cedar Junction (MCI-CJ). The MCI acreage is primarily forest land with wetlands necessary for groundwater recharge and preserving wildlife habitat. These areas are vulnerable due to their lack of protection by legal and functional means. Fortunately, there are currently no privately owned unprotected open space properties at high risk for development into other uses.

Other Public and Unprotected Lands State-Owned

The Commonwealth owns MCI-Cedar Junction (MCI-CJ), which is 104 acres by the Norfolk border. MCI-CJ was a maximum-security prison in South Walpole off Route 1A. The prison, also known as Cedar Junction Correctional Center and formerly known as MCI-Walpole, was one of two maximum-security prisons in the state. It is partially closed and will close permanently in 2024. The prison currently contains two units with a combined total of about 80 prisoners. The state also owns 27.5 acres of unprotected public land through the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). This land is in multiple locations around the commuter rail corridor and Route 1.

Other Public and Unprotected Lands: Federally-Owned

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management owns 25.8 acres of unprotected forest land at the westernmost

point of Town at the Walpole, Medfield, and Norfolk border. This area abuts parcels with varying protection classifications, including the Walpole Sportsman's Club.

Recreation Resources

Active recreation land supports competitive individual and team activities on developed facilities. Passive recreation is an activity typically performed outdoors with minimum disturbance to natural

Table 2.2.1. Town-Owned Parks and Playgrounds

Name	Acres	Condition	Current Use
Bird Middle School	7.6	Good	Multi-use fields – baseball, softball, and soccer
Boyden School*	9.6	Good	Multi-use field, playground, and an outdoor pool
Elm Street School	11.5	Fair	Multi-use fields and nature trails
Fisher School	0.9	Fair	Multi-use field, playground, nature trails, and pond
Jarvis Farm	24.7	Fair	Baseball field, basketball courts, tennis, and multipurpose fields
Johnson Middle School	5.5	Good	Multi-use fields
Memorial Park/ Joe Morgan Field	20	Good	Baseball field, playground, pool, pond, and trails
Mylod Street Fields	13	Good	Soccer fields
Old Fisher Field	1	Fair	Multi-use field
Old Post Road School	1.5	Fair	Multi-use field - baseball field, basketball court, and playground
Stone Field	2.1	Fair	Multi-use fields – baseball, Blackburn Hall
South Walpole Community Athletic Complex	64	Excellent	Multipurpose turf fields, soccer fields, and diamond fields
Walpole High School Fields			
Plimpton Fields	.6	Excellent	Softball fields, track and field facility with bleachers
Turco Lower Field	2.9	Excellent	Multi-use fields – baseball, softball, football, lacrosse, and soccer
Turco Main Field	4	Excellent	Multi-use turf field, track and field facility with bleachers
Turco Upper Field	1.7	Excellent	Multi-use field - field hockey and lacrosse
<i>*Boyden School also has 5.7 acres of trails owned by the Town and managed in partnership by the School District and the Trails Committee.</i>			
<i>Source: Town of Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan, September 2020 and the Town of Walpole 2008 Athletic Fields Master Plan</i>			

resources. Walpole's public and private open spaces serve the community's active and passive recreation needs. There are 106 acres of Town-owned active recreation land, or 4.6 percent of land owned and managed by the Town. The Recreation Department manages these sites, other than thirteen acres at Mylod Street Fields that is managed by Walpole Youth Soccer. There are 1,746.9 acres of Town-owned passive recreation, versus 510.5 acres owned by nonprofits and 185.4 acres owned privately.

TOWN-OWNED RECREATION LAND – WATERFRONT AND NATURAL AREAS

Natural open spaces serve several important roles - resource preservation, water body recharge, flood mitigation, preserving scenic views, and offering chances to experience nature. The importance Walpole residents place on passive and active recreational resources is clear in the OSRP Community Survey. Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated that “preserving Walpole’s open space and natural areas is important to them,” 94 percent agreed that “Walpole’s existing open space and recreational amenities contribute positively to overall quality of life,” and 92 percent agreed that “Walpole needs to proactively plan for the recreational needs of its residents.” Below is a description of the major recreational resources in Walpole. The list excludes the Bay Circuit Trail, which the Town does not own.

Town-Owned Athletic Fields and Playgrounds

The Recreation Department maintains 93 acres of fields/playgrounds across twelve sites. These sites have amenities ranging from baseball and softball diamonds to soccer fields, lacrosse fields, football fields, basketball courts, a pool, and playgrounds. The list includes 8.6 acres at Walpole High School that are properties of the Parks and Recreation Committee. These facilities are Turco Upper, Turco Main, Turco Lower, and Plimpton fields. Privately maintained fields are the Mylod Street Fields (Walpole Youth Soccer League) and the Norfolk County Agricultural School fields. The Town recently purchased 64 deed-restricted acres from the state for the South Walpole Community Athletic Complex, near the Norfolk border and across from MCI-CJ. The deed restriction allowed for the land acquisition to be relatively low cost. The complex, approved at 2019 Fall Town Meeting, is managed by the Recreation Department and has proven to be an

immense asset for the community. **Table 2.2.1** includes the complete list of facilities.

Indoor Recreation Facilities

There are two facilities for indoor recreation, not including those provided through the Walpole Public Schools. The first - Studio East on 5 Wolcott Avenue - is a small former library occasionally used for recreation classes. Blackburn Hall, located Downtown behind Town Hall, is a multipurpose facility managed and operated by the Recreation Department. The building has a large two-story open auditorium/activity room with a stage and balcony on opposite ends. The lower level consists of office space for the Recreation Department and an activity space that a daycare center uses.

Bird Middle School, Johnson Middle School, Elm Street School, and Old Post Road have full-court basketball courts equipped with wood parquet flooring. Boyden School’s full-court basketball court has rubber flooring. Fisher School has two regulation basketball courts with wood parquet flooring, with one also used for assemblies. The High School has one full-court gym and one gym with a workout room, cardio equipment, and dedicated wrestling space. More information about municipal facilities and services is in the Public Facilities, Services, and Energy chapter of this Master Plan.

OTHER PUBLICLY OWNED RECREATION LAND

Norfolk County Agricultural High School on Route 1A owns and manages 353 acres of land abutting Adams Farm. The land, containing agricultural fields, baseball facilities, and soccer fields is open for passive recreation. The Town wants to continue to offer this resource to the public, and partners closely with the school to do so. Two specific OSRP goals include:

- (1) partnering with associated stakeholders to protect Norfolk Agricultural School vacant parcels; and
- (2) partnering with the Norfolk Agricultural School and other private schools to share outdoor resources and strengthen connections to nearby open space assets.

Privately-Owned Recreation Land Open to the Public

The nonprofit organizations that own and protect roughly 511 acres of conservation land in Walpole provide some degree of public access both for passive and active recreational use.

- The Neponset River Land Holding, which allows public access to Willard Pond;
- The Trustees of Reservations, which provides both passive and some active recreational uses at Francis William Bird Park; and
- The New England Forestry Foundation’s Patten Memorial Forest and Warren Forest.

Planning for Open Space and Recreation Needs

Walpole Master Plan and EO 418 Community Development Plan, 2004-2024. Walpole’s previous Master Plan was a comprehensive document identifying open space and recreation needs, challenges, and opportunities for the next twenty years. Its goals and recommendations for open space included the following:

- Maintain eligibility for state open space and recreation funding;
- Create a “Green Network” of connected open

space for environmental protection and recreational use;

- Pursue open space preservation through conservation restrictions to assure public use by the Town should county/state uses change;
- Create a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle plan including trails and paths;
- Create new athletic fields at the capped Lincoln Road landfill;
- Create a new Town Green in the Downtown and Master Plan for Downtown open spaces as part of an overall revitalization plan;
- Enhance public access to ponds and the Neponset River; and
- Consider enacting the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

Most of these recommendations have been or continue to be implemented. For example, the Town has revived the Trails Committee, periodically updated its Open Space and Recreation Plan, and pursued improved public access to ponds and improved recreational access to the Neponset River. Town staff report that there has been dwindling interest in river-based programs and there are no plans to create a new athletic field at the capped Lincoln Road landfill.

Town of Walpole 2008 Athletic Fields Master Plan:

The Athletic Fields Master Plan utilized Fields User Surveys, observational information from public meetings, information from departments - Town Administrator, Department of Public Works, and the Recreation Department - existing data, and parks and recreation standards and requirements to formulate recommendations. Many respondents to

the Field User Survey wished for new playing field venues to reduce the burden on existing facilities. Sites mentioned included: Allen Dam Property, the West Street Landfill, the Old Post Road School woodland area, the front of Bird Middle School, the area of the High School surrounding Upper Turco, Adams Farm, the Lincoln Road Landfill, and the land across from Italian American Club. Other survey feedback discussed the limitations of poorly graded, uneven, and wet areas and the poor condition of ancillary equipment. The Plan identified small-scale, near-term capital improvements for each site, and considerations for a field use policy. The Plan ultimately made the following recommendations:

- Install Sports Field Lighting at Turco Main Field;
- Expand Field Limits and Install Synthetic Turf at Turco Upper Field;
- Renovate Stone Field and Install a Synthetic Turf System or Engineered Sand-based Athletic Fields;
- Soil Root Zone Mix and Natural Grass Field;
- Old Post Road School Field Expansion;
- Implement Johnson Middle School Fields Preferred Master Plan;
- Implement Bird Middle School Fields Preferred Master Plan; and
- Implement Recommended Improvements at Morgan Field.

Town of Walpole Municipal Facilities Master Planning Study Final Report, 2013. The 2013 Municipal Facilities Report was an all-inclusive study of municipal facilities and a blueprint for their development. Many of the recommended projects have

been completed, such as the new Police Station, Council on Aging, Central Fire Station, and the DPW facility.

The plan reviewed fields and athletic facility site specifications at school buildings. Findings called for sidewalk, parking, lighting, and field improvements at Walpole High School, Fisher School, and Old Post Road School, and an expansion of existing athletic fields at Elm Street School. In terms of indoor recreation, the study called for upgrading the wall finish, resurfacing the parquet flooring, and improving locker rooms and shower conditions at Bird Middle School, Johnson Middle School, and Fisher School. The report also called for window treatments at Fisher School and the replacement of discolored tectum panels in the Boyden School gym. However, most of the report's recommendations involved using underutilized fields or open space as locations for much-needed municipal facilities, i.e., Stone Field for a new fire station.

Town of Walpole Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) 2017 Update. The HMP identifies local actions to reduce danger to life and property from natural hazards. Recommendations from the HMP regarding open space include encouraging greater access to Town-owned open space, continuing approval of Open Space Residential Developments (OSRD), and pursuing open space protection and proactive land preservation.

Other top priorities in the plan were furthering land acquisition/purchase and drainage upgrades to ensure permanent protection and viability.

Community Resilience Building (CRB) Workshop Summary of Findings, 2019. The CRB Workshop found that Walpole's parks and fields are becoming less accessible due to flooding and drought. Both have led to closures in recent years. The Parks and Recreation Director commented that it takes the fields a long time to recover, and the recovery time adjusts the athletic schedules. There has also been a notable increase in ticks and mosquitoes at parks/fields. To ensure public health and safety, these areas have required additional chemical control measures. One Master Plan interviewee stated that this remains an ongoing issue, as the Conservation Commission has had to invest in bat houses and other natural mechanisms in recent years. The Workshop suggested expanding the Mosquito District's role, strategizing to reduce deer populations and their access to facilities, and identifying alternative med-flight take-off and landing areas. Currently, the Town Hall field serves this purpose, but it is prone to flooding.

Overall, CRB attendees agreed that the Town works hard to address areas with the worst drainage. Some lower-priority recreation recommendations were:

- Exploring options to make Town fields and parks more resilient to weather impacts;
- Considering preventative measures such as ensuring catch basins are cleared and installing field drainage systems;
- Developing a post-flood clean-up team to restore fields to playable condition faster; and
- Investigating green infrastructure designs to detain/infiltrate stormwater away from playing surfaces.

Town of Walpole Recreation Programming and Facilities Study, 2022. This 2022 report prepared by Weston and Sampson, Inc., was a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and a series of recommendations for improving five town-owned facilities: Blackburn Hall, the former East Walpole Library Building, Center Pool and the Splash Pad, Jarvis Farm, and South Pool. The consultant analyzed the site's architectural, structural, and mechanical components, finding evidence of insufficient maintenance but quality conditions overall had been achieved. Overarching takeaways included the continuing need to budget for renovations, pursuing funding that reduces financial burden on Walpole residents, adopting a facilities-wide user and scheduling policy, and increasing the maintenance and staffing to align with increasing needs. Site specific recommendations were as follows:

Blackburn Hall

- Renovate the building for continued and improved flexible use.
- Improve access to the building and site infrastructure.

East Walpole Library

- Improve parking and traffic flow.
- Renovate and update the building.¹¹

Central Pool

- Replace the existing pool, deck, and fencing.
- Renovate and update pool building.

Central Splash Pad

- Replace mechanical shed for splash pad equipment.

- Improve user amenities around the splash pad for splash pad equipment.

Jarvis Farm

- Develop an approved site master plan for future uses.
- Remove unnecessary structures.
- Install a parking lot for vehicle and runoff control.

South Pool

- Replace existing pool, deck, and fencing.
- Renovate and update pool buildings.

11 Under Article 18 of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, Walpole authorized the sale of the East Walpole Library property.

2.3.

Natural Resources



Key Findings

- According to MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), there are six rare and endangered species in Walpole and one Priority Habitat Area, Cedar Swamp.
- BioMap2 identifies 694 acres of protected Core Habitat out of 1,384 acres of total Core Habitat area (50 percent) in Walpole. There are 421 acres of protected Critical Natural Landscape out of 1,104 total acres (38 percent).
- Walpole has 16 major ponds, five of which are Town-owned and managed. Three are considered impaired under the Clean Water Act, including Memorial Pond and Cobb's Pond.
- There are 186 brownfields in Walpole, most of which are closed sites or closed "with use limitation" imposed by DEP. Ten are "open sites" that qualify for brownfield consideration. There are 298 NHESP-certified vernal pools in Walpole, and 75 potential vernal pools according to recent data.
- Two high-yield aquifers - School Meadow Brook Aquifer and Mine Brook Aquifer - supply fourteen wells to provide drinking water.
- The Town owns Allen Dam, Cobb's Pond Dam, Memorial Pond Dam, Neponset River Dam, and Turner Pond Dam. While the dams attest to Walpole's industrial history, they can obstruct aquatic wildlife migration, slow water flows, cause sedimentation build-up and nutrient load imbalance, and decrease oxygen in the water.
- The Neponset River Watershed Association (NRWA) and the Town worked together through the Neponset Stormwater Partnership (NSP) to complete the Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Bylaw. The Bylaw mitigates pollution and incorporates retrofits, as stormwater pollution is Massachusetts's leading cause of water quality impairment.
- Invasive plant species and pond sedimentation present challenges for pond management. Shallowing ponds, warming temperatures, and lack of maintenance have all resulted in an uptick of nuisance vegetation.

Introduction

Located in the Neponset Watershed, Walpole has beautiful natural spaces and open water resources. The Neponset River and its seven tributaries influence the landscape by supporting and recharging treasured water bodies, including Cedar Swamp, Willett Pond, and the Spring Brook Conservation area. Wetlands comprise approximately 15 percent of Walpole's 13,500-acre total area, providing habitats for diverse flora and fauna species. There is strong public support for protecting natural resources in Walpole, as evidenced in the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan and many of the comments made during the engagement process for this Master Plan.

The natural environment has been heavily influenced by land use changes throughout Walpole's development. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Neponset River was a driver of industry. It was permanently altered by infrastructure (notably dams) and contaminants leaked from industrial operations. The land and water resources have since recovered, but new development presents ongoing challenges.

Geology, Topography & Soils

Geology is the physical structure of the Earth and the substance, history, and processes that have shaped the natural systems of today. These processes go back billions of years, when a series of



ancient continents formed, collided, and reformed. Millions of years later, New England became covered with glaciers during the Ice Ages. As Earth's climate changed, glaciers melted and allowed humans to survive beginning about 12,000 years ago.

Central Walpole's bedrock geology combines conglomerate, lithic greywacke, and Wamsutta Formation sandstones and shales (gray, green, red, and purple). The bedrock of northern and southern Walpole is Dedham Granite. There are some areas consisting of Roxbury Conglomerate or "Roxbury puddingstone." Also found in Walpole or around its borders are outcrops of Sharon Syenite, diorite, and Westwood Granite. Glaciers changed the land's

surface as they moved southward, leaving formations such as kettle ponds, kames, kame terraces, and boulders, sand, and gravel.¹

Topography is related to the arrangement of physical features in an area. According to the OSRP, Walpole is within the New England Upland, predominantly a plateau with narrow valleys altered by glaciation.² The Neponset River and adjacent wetlands influence this section of New England Upland as it flows from its Foxborough headwaters northeast to Dorchester Bay. Its flow falls 170 feet when entering South Walpole, 180 feet at Cedar Swamp, 140 feet at West Street, and 100 feet at Bird Pond in East Walpole. As the river crosses Walpole's border into

¹ Present in Walpole or immediate vicinity is: Pondville Conglomerate - quartz conglomerate with an abundantly sandy matrix. Lower Pennsylvanian, around 300 million years old; Wamsutta Formation - greywacke, conglomerates, sandstones, and shales) Middle to Lower Pennsylvanian, around 300 million years old; Diorite - hornblende diorite - Proterozoic Z (approximately 900 to 540 million years ago); Dedham Granite - grayish-pink to greenish-gray granite - formed around 640 to 600 million years ago; Sharon Syenite - syenite mixed with ferro-gabbro. Proterozoic Z (approximately 900 to 540 million years ago); and Westwood Granite - Proterozoic Z (approximately 540 million years ago).

² U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Geomorphic Provinces and Sections, 2021.

Norwood, its elevation is 64 feet above sea level. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that rolling hills with low relief and breaks between landforms away from the river ultimately affect the river's falls and navigation. Map 2.3.1 shows Walpole's topography in relation to other natural and man-made features.

Soils. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) reports that most of Walpole's soils consist of sand and gravel, although the northern portion of Town is glacial till. The soil is predominantly the Hinckley-Merrimac-Urban type, consisting of very deep, excessively drained soils relating to streams that derive most or all their water from glacial melting. Merrimac soil consists of deep, somewhat excessively drained soils, whereas Urban soils consist of deep, well, and somewhat poorly drained soils on uplands.³ Urban soils form in sandy and loamy glacial outwash over stratified sand and gravel.⁴ These soils are typical in major stream valleys and coastal plains, and are well-suited for buildings, roads, and streets.⁵ Their drainage, absorption ability, and poor filtration can cause pollution hazards if used for septic. North Walpole has primarily Woodbridge-Paxton and Canton/Charlton soils, which are very deep and range from nearly level to steep, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soils Series. Due to smooth slopes and high productivity, they are moderately well-drained and suitable for crops, pastures, and woodlands. These soils are considered unsuitable for septic systems because they cannot readily absorb effluent.

Wetlands and Water Resources

WATERSHED

Watersheds provide local sources of drinking water, recharge groundwater for wells, and support regional ecology. These functions support long-term sustainability and resilience. They also offer passive recreation opportunities and scenic beauty. The majority of Walpole is in the Neponset River watershed, spanning 130 square miles and supplying over 120,000 people with drinking water. The watershed includes all or portions of Boston, Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Norwood, Quincy, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, and Westwood. Surface waters, tributaries, and wetlands occur throughout the watershed, but its principal waterway is the 30-mile Neponset River.⁶ The westernmost portion of Walpole, west of the Cedar Swamp, is in the adjacent Charles River watershed.

SURFACE WATERS

The Neponset watershed includes the river and its seven tributary brooks and streams, sixteen ponds, Cedar Swamp, and the bordering vegetated wetlands. The Stop River, part of Walpole's western boundary, lies within the Charles River watershed. Map 2.3.2 shows the water resources in Walpole.

Neponset River. The Neponset River flows southwest to northeast, starting in Foxborough (near Gillette Stadium) and ending at the Dorchester/Quincy border by Route 93, where it flows into

Dorchester Bay. Its path flows through the center of Town and into Norwood. The seven tributaries that feed it are Spring/Diamond Brook, School Meadow Brook, Bubbling Brook, Mine Brook, Cedar Swamp Brook, Cobbs Brook, and Traphole Brook. The brooks feed the Town's sixteen public and private ponds. The wealth and prosperity of Walpole's Industrial-Age giants relied on the river. Traces of that era can be seen in the presence of man-made modifications to streamflow.

In-stream flow is an indicator of the river's health. The USGS and the Neponset River Watershed Association monitor streamflow at five locations: the Norwood Gauge, the East Branch Gauge, the Fowl Meadow Gauge, the Mother Brook Gauge, and the Lower Mills Gauge.⁷ The USGS Norwood Gauge drains 34.7 square miles and includes virtually all of Walpole. Streamflow data determine the impact of groundwater withdrawals; currently, withdrawals are from three towns, several golf courses, and several industries. Other factors examined with streamflow include sewer system infiltration and inflow,⁸ areas of unmitigated impervious surface, and impoundments. This data specifies how the river dictates development patterns and sensitivities between the built and natural environment. The Town's 2021 Department of Environmental Protection's Public Water Supply Annual Statistical Report stated the average daily withdrawal for raw water is 2.14 million gallons per day (mgd). The authorized withdrawal volume is 2.78.

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, *U. S. Department of Agriculture Soils Series*, 2021 <https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

⁴ United States Department of Agriculture, *National Cooperative Soil Survey*, 2017.

⁵ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Approved 2021.

⁶ Neponset River Watershed Association, "Watershed," 2021.

⁷ Neponset River Watershed Association, "Streamflow Data," 2021.

⁸ Infiltration and inflow is sewer system leakage into local surface waters.

Table 2.3.1. Ponds in Walpole			
Name	Acreage	Ownership	Description
Allen Dam Pond	6	Public	For flood control off Washington Street, bordered by wetland and forest. An earthen dam creates the impoundment of Spring Diamond Brook.
Bird Pond	15	Private	A dammed pond along the Neponset River in East Walpole. Flows under Washington Street into the Hollingsworth and Vose Pond.
Clark's Pond	11	Public	A man-made pond off Stone Street and part of the Spring/ Diamond Brook. It has two basins connected by two culverts (3 and 8 acres, respectively). The Town maintains Stone Street dam that flows into Diamond Pond. Clark's Pond is treated to control aquatic vegetation and is bordered by public and private land.
Cobb's Pond	24	Public	Off of Main and Fisher Street. It is treated to control aquatic vegetation. A Management Plan was drafted in 2001.
Diamond Pond	9	Private	Has a main basin and a small basin. Part of the Spring Brook system: Clarks Pond flows to Diamond Pond, and Diamond Pond flows to Memorial Pond.
Ganawatte Pond	29	Private	Off of Pine Street, bordering Foxborough. School Brook Meadow flows north from the pond into Walpole.
Hollingsworth and Vose Pond	6	Private	A dammed pond on the Neponset River and managed by the Hollingsworth and Vose Company
Memorial Pond	4-5	Public	Off of School Street. A Management Plan was drafted in 1998 to enhance water quality and control aquatic vegetation. It is treated for aquatic vegetation. Town Meeting approved dredging in 2019.
Post Office Pond (Clark Pond)	8	Private	Drains to the Neponset River from Foxborough.
Plimpton Street Pond	5	Private	A dammed pond that is located on the Neponset River flowing into Bird Pond in East Walpole
Rainbow Pond	3	Private	Located on the Royal Crest Country Club property.
Rucaduc Pond	N/A	Private	A man-made pond associated with the Neponset River spillway system on the old Bird Machine site in South Walpole.
Stetson Pond	4	Private	A dammed stretch of the Neponset River located between Main Street and Robbins Road.
Turner's Pond	13.8	Public	Off of Elm Street, that flows to Stetson Pond. A Management Plan was drafted to treat aquatic vegetation when needed. Residential dwellings border the pond.
Walpole Country Club Allen Pond	16	Private	On the Walpole Country Club grounds fed by Spring Brook and draining into the Allen Pond.
Willet Pond/Pettes	200	Private	Mainly owned by the Neponset River Land Holdings Association along the Norwood and Westwood boundaries. It is created by an earthen dam and fed by Bubbling Brook.
Source: Town of Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan, September 2020			

Ponds and Pond Management. The majority of the ponds are man-made and created by dams. Town-owned dams are Allen Dam, Cobb's Pond Dam, Memorial Pond Dam, Neponset River Dam, and Turner Pond Dam. There is also Bird Dam - a privately-owned operation with an unknown owner at this time. Walpole's ponds as listed in **Table 2.3.1:**⁹

WETLANDS

Walpole's wetlands include deciduous and coniferous forested wetlands, scrub-shrub wetlands, meadow or fen wetlands, emergent marsh, and aquatic deep or shallow marsh associated with rivers, streams, and ponds.¹⁰ The forested wetlands contain vegetation at least 20 feet tall, including coniferous Hemlocks and White Pines. Woody vegetation under 20 feet dominates the scrub-shrub wetland. Herbaceous vegetation dominates the meadow or fen wetland.¹¹ There are also vegetative wetlands along the Neponset River and its tributaries, School Meadow Brook, Spring Brook, and Traphole Brook.

Cedar Swamp. Cedar Swamp in South Walpole is the Town's largest wetland. It is a forested wetland, dominated by Cedar trees and Red Maple Swamp. It is a Priority Habitat Area within the primary drinking water recharge area. Industrial uses along Main Street and within the industrial park overlook the northern end of the swamp. Residential uses border the southern end. A tributary flows to the Neponset River within the vicinity of the Bird Machine factory.

Mine Brook. Mine Brook is another Neponset River tributary. The area below it is the Mine Brook

Table 2.3.2. Percent Residential Land in Floodplain

Town	% Residential Land In 100yr Flood Plain	% Residential Land In 500yr Flood Plain	Total At-Risk Area
Dover	15.1%	16.5%	32.7%
Foxborough	24.4%	8.3%	30.7%
Medfield	10.1%	11.3%	16.2%
Norfolk	15.4%	15.3%	31.6%
Norwood	5.6%	10.8%	15.7%
Sharon	8.1%	8.1%	10.5%
Walpole	9.2%	1.3%	16.4%
Westwood	13.6%	2.1%	21.4%
Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Environmental Health Climate Change Vulnerability Map, 2021.			

aquifer, extending from the Medfield border to Robbins Road. This wetland consists of floodplains, open water, the Red Maple Swamp, and emergent swamp areas.

Vernal Pools. Vernal pools (also known as ephemeral pools, autumnal pools, and temporary woodland ponds) fill with water in the autumn or winter from rainfall and rising groundwater and remain ponded through the spring and into summer. They dry by the middle or end of summer, or at least every few years. Occasional drying prevents fish from establishing permanent populations, and this habitat free of fish predators assists breeding and certain amphibian and invertebrate species' reproduction.¹² Vernal pools are certified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations, Water Quality Certification regulations, Title 5, and the Forest Cutting Practices Act.

There are 298 NHESP certified vernal pools and 75 potential vernal pools in Walpole. The Conservation Commission protects vernal pools as authorized by the Wetlands Protection Act and Walpole's Wetlands Protection Bylaw. The Commission is responsible for issuing permits before removing, filling, dredging, building upon, or altering protected resource areas. MassGIS (Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information)'s website has more information and maps of certified and potential vernal pools.

FLOODPLAINS

Surface waters are prone to flooding during rain events. The low-lying areas that collect the overflow are called **floodplains**. Approximately 10.5 percent of Walpole's residential land is in a floodplain: 9.2 percent is in the 100-year floodplain, and an additional 1.3 percent is in the 500-year floodplain (Table 2.3.2). FEMA defines a 100-year floodplain as an area with a 1 percent annual chance of flooding. Areas

⁹ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Approved 2021.

¹⁰ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Approved 2021.

¹¹ Herbaceous plants are vascular plants with no persistent woody stems above ground, and these include most perennials, annuals, and biennials.

¹² MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, "Vernal Pools," 2021.

between the 100 and 500-year floodplain have a 0.2 percent (or 1 in 500) annual chance of flooding. It is common for a 100-year floodplain to be included within or abut a 500-year floodplain, though there are some exceptions.

Protecting floodplains is critical for erosion control, preventing flooding downstream, preserving habitats, and protecting public and private property. Walpole's foremost flood areas are along the Neponset River and its tributaries.¹³ The Town relies on the Zoning Bylaw and local Wetlands Protection Bylaw to protect these areas. As seen above, in most of Walpole's neighboring communities, at least 15 percent of the residential land is at risk of flooding.

WATER SUPPLY AND AQUIFERS

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) defines an aquifer as an underground layer of rock that holds groundwater. These resources are important to natural systems and for the health and well-being of communities because they supply drinking water. Aquifer reserves are finite, so communities must put protections in place through groundwater and watershed treatment and conservation measures.

Two high-yield groundwater aquifers provide Walpole's drinking water: School Meadow Brook Aquifer and Mine Brook Aquifer (Map 2.3.3). Walpole partially shares School Meadow Brook Aquifer in South Walpole with Sharon and the Mine Brook Aquifer in the northwest with Medfield. Walpole has ten operational wells in the School Meadow Brook

Aquifer and four operational wells in the Mine Brook Aquifer. According to the most recent Water Quality Annual Report, the aquifers are highly susceptible to potential contaminants. According to local sources,¹⁴ a company on Route 1 leached trichloroethylene (TCE) into the South Meadow Brook well field several years ago. As a result, the Town takes precautions to remove volatile organics from the water before the water enters the treatment plant. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) and Town staff offer resources and information for interested homeowners regarding Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAs), and how Walpole adheres to the Massachusetts Maximum Contaminant Limit (MMCL) per 310 CMR 22.00 (Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations). Walpole has water distribution connections with Foxborough and Norwood as alternative water sources in an emergency. These connections are on Washington Street, Water Street, and Union Street. While they have not been used recently, they are regularly maintained.

Walpole's Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) provides for Water Resource Protection Overlay Districts (WRPOD) to regulate land uses near aquifers, well-pumping areas, and aquifer recharge areas. The WRPOD's areas were designated to "protect, preserve and maintain the groundwater supply, protect present and potential water supply sources for public health and safety, and to conserve the natural resources of Walpole."¹⁵ The districts consist of:

- Zone 1 Wellhead Protection Area: 400 feet well radius;
- Area 1 – Area of Pumping Influence of municipal wells;
- Area 2 – Potential Water Supply;
- Area 3 – Primary Recharge Area; and
- Area 4 – Secondary Recharge Area.¹⁶

MA DEP regulates Zone I, Zone II Approved Wellhead Protection Areas, and Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (IWPA). Zone I is the 400-ft protective radius required around a public water supply well or well field with an approved yield of 100,000 gallons per day (GPD) or greater. Tubular well fields require a 250-foot protective radius. Zone II is an Approved Wellhead Protection Area of an aquifer that contributes water to a well under severe pumping and recharge conditions. Zone IIs are bounded by groundwater divides that result from continuously pumping the well and by the aquifer's contact with less permeable materials.

Public supply wells that lack a MA DEP-Approved Zone II are subject to IWPA as the primary, protected recharge area for PWS groundwater sources. IWPA can be one-half-mile in radius for sources with an approved pumping rate at least 100,000 GPD.¹⁷ For PWS sources that pump less than 100,000 GPD, the IWPA radius is proportional to the pumping rate in gallons per minute (GPM).¹⁸ IWPA are typically used when a community is working toward Zone

¹³ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, 2021.

¹⁴ Master Plan Interview.

¹⁵ Town of Walpole Zoning Bylaw, *Section 12: Water Resource Protection Overlay District*, Revised through May 6, 2019.

¹⁶ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Approved 2021.

¹⁷ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "Wellhead Protection Tips For Small Public Water Systems," 2021.

¹⁸ MassGIS Bureau of Geographic Information, "MassGIS Data: MassDEP Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II, Zone I, IWPA)," 2021.

II approval or there is a private water supply present. Area 1 on the WRPOD is an approved Zone II, in coordination with state zoning and regulatory requirements and FEMA maps.

Development may be allowed by special permit if it conforms to the WRPOD's requirements. Single-family development is allowed in Area 1 and 2 if connected to, or is to be connected to, public sewer at the time of construction. Single-family dwellings are also allowed on lots with at least eighty thousand (80,000) square feet in area if they are served by on-site wastewater disposal systems or where a special permit has been granted for Open Space Residential Development. The WRPOD bylaw imposes an impervious coverage limit of 15 percent (or 2,500 square feet) of the building lot, and a requirement of at least 20,000 square feet of lot area per 110 gallons per day per bedroom in a dwelling unit. All roof runoff from construction that adds more than 600 square feet of impervious cover to a building has to be recharged to the groundwater.

A factor to consider in evaluating risks to drinking water is the presence of underground storage tanks. The **Underground Storage Tank (UST)** program, overseen by the MA DEP, regulates the installation, maintenance, inspection, and closure of UST systems for petroleum and other hazardous waste.¹⁹ There are thirty-six underground storage tanks in Walpole, most of which are along the railroads, major vehicular routes, and Downtown. While most of these storage tanks are not within the vicinity of the groundwater recharge areas, there are several along the perimeter of the South Meadow Brook aquifer.

Table 2.3.3. Impaired Waters under the Clean Water Act		
Waterbody	Source of Impairment	Location Description
<i>Bubbling Brook</i>	Benthic Macroinvertebrates, Fish Bioassessments	Headwaters (perennial portion), near North Street, Walpole to mouth at inlet Pettee Pond, Walpole/ Westwood border.
<i>Cobbs Pond</i>	Non-Native Aquatic Plants,* Dissolved Oxygen, Nutrient/Eutrophication, Biological Indicators, Transparency/Clarity	Walpole
<i>Ganawatte Farm Pond</i>	Aquatic Plants (Macrophytes), Dissolved Oxygen, Transparency / Clarity	Walpole/Sharon/Foxborough
<i>Memorial Pond</i>	Aquatic Plants (Macrophytes), Turbidity	Walpole
<i>Mine Brook</i>	Dissolved Oxygen	Headwaters, outlet of Jewells Pond, Medfield, to the inlet of Turner Pond, Walpole.
<i>Unnamed Tributary</i>	(Debris*) Benthic Macroinvertebrates Trash	Headwaters, outlet Clark Pond, Walpole to confluence with Neponset River, Walpole (locally considered part of Spring Brook) (excluding the approximately 0.2 miles through Diamond Pond and the approximately 0.2 miles through Memorial Pond).
<i>Stop River</i>	Ambient Bioassays - Chronic Aquatic Toxicity	Headwaters south of Route 1A, Wrentham to Norfolk-Walpole MCI discharge, Norfolk.
*TMDL Not Required (Non-Pollutant)		
Source: Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters for the Clean Water Act 2018/2020, "The 303(D) List – 'Waters Requiring A TMDL,'" 2021.		

IMPAIRED WATERS

Under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, states must biannually update their lists of waters impaired or threatened by one or more pollutants. **Impaired waters** do not meet Water Quality Standards (WQS) despite installing pollution controls at identified point sources. **Point sources** of pollution include

direct, single sources of contamination such as a polluted discharge from an underground pipe, while **nonpoint sources** are more diffuse, difficult-to-pin-point causes such as stormwater runoff. State and regional officials work collaboratively to identify, control, and remediate point and non-point source pollution sources under the Clean Water Act. The

¹⁹ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "MassDEP Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program," 2021.

Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters for the Clean Water Act 2018/2020 Reporting Cycle reports on impaired waters and their Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The list of impaired waters in Walpole are listed in Table 2.3.3.

Agricultural Land, Fields, and Forest

Walpole's land is mainly forest, brushland, or urban land. Common trees are oak, including the Northern Red, Black, White, Scarlet, and Scrub Oak varieties, and Eastern White and Pitch Pine, Eastern Hemlock, Gray Birch, and Red Maple. Unimproved pasture and idle land support Hardhack, Little Bluestem, Bracken Fern, Sweet Fern, and Low Bush Blueberry.²⁰

Suburban development and subdivisions fragment Walpole's forestlands, but the Town Forest (365 acres), Patten Memorial Forest, and Warren Forest (a combined 66.2 acres) remain the most significant, contiguous forested areas. The Commonwealth also owns 104 acres of forestland surrounding MCI-Cedar Junction. The Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) owns 94 acres wedged between MCI-Cedar Junction and the Norfolk border. Lastly, the United States Bureau of Land Management owns 25.8 acres in the westernmost corner of Town bordering Medfield and Norfolk.

Walpole has very little prime agricultural land today. Most of it has been developed into residential subdivisions. According to MassGIS, the Commonwealth's Geographic Information System (GIS) library, there

are approximately 61.5 acres of prime farmland that is still undeveloped. Existing and active agricultural lands are in North and West Walpole, typically used as animal farms, cropland, tillage, pasture, and conservation land. The Open Space and Recreation Plan identifies 138.8 acres protected by Chapter 61A. This land is in addition to the 279 acres of permanently protected Town-owned land at Adams Farm and the abutting 353 acres of fields owned by Norfolk County Agricultural High School. The Norfolk County Agricultural School is a 97-acre property in North Walpole that includes a campus pond (located at Main Street and Fisher Street), pastures, and farmland.

VEGETATION

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife defines natural communities as groups of species found repeatedly in similar structures and proportions,²¹ usually in particular environmental conditions. A community occurrence tends to be in sites with similar chemistry, soils, moisture, slopes, temperature ranges, and other physical conditions. Walpole's five major plant communities are Upland Oak-Hickory, Upland Northern Hardwood, Mixed Hardwood-Softwood, Coniferous, and Bottom Land or Wetland Hardwood.

Cedar Swamp is a separate community description: Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, a forested wetland with a dense, primarily evergreen canopy, a deciduous layer, and a sparse herb layer dominated by mosses. It is mixed with Hemlock, Red Maple, and Yellow Birch, a shrub layer of Sweet Pepper Bush and

Winterberry, with Cinnamon Fern, Starflower, and Common Mayflower understory. Other vegetated areas are Wet meadows, shallow marsh, and deep marsh communities dominated by Pickerelweed, Northern Arrowhead, Cattails, Joe-Pye-Weed, Sweet Flag, Woolgrass, Sedges, and Varied Bulrush.²²

Wildlife and Habitat

Walpole contains corridors that animals use to navigate throughout the region. Walpole's open land, vegetation, and surface waters make the area a prime location for these corridors and habitat connections. Habitats include Willet Pond, the Norfolk County Agricultural School land, Adams Farm, and Cedar Swamp - the only Priority Habitat area in Walpole listed by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP).²³ Corridors include the Neponset River, railroad and electrical rights-of-way, Mine Brook (connecting to the Charles River watershed), and Traphole Brook (Core Habitat Area). Utility pipeline and transmission line corridors connect School Meadow Brook with the Neponset River and an old railroad bed. The railroad bed passes through Cedar Swamp to Wrentham. Another pipeline corridor links Cedar Swamp and the Cedar Hill area with sites in Medfield - north of Noon Hill and the Charles River Watershed. Willett Pond is linked to Core Habitat Areas in Dover and Westwood, south of Noanment Pond.²⁴

²⁰ United States Department of Agriculture, *National Cooperative Soil Survey*, 2017.

²¹ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, *Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts*, March 2020.

²² Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Approved 2021.

²³ There were no Estimated Habitat Areas in Walpole.

²⁴ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Approved 2021.

BIOMAP2 AREAS

The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, through the NHESP, developed BioMap2 in coordination with the Nature Conservancy. It is a comprehensive guide to rare species and habitats, natural community data, and ecosystem resilience designed to adapt to climate change. BioMap2 identifies two complementary areas: **Core Habitat** and **Critical Natural Landscape**. Core Habitat identifies “specific areas necessary to promote the long-term persistence of rare species, other species of conservation concern, exemplary natural communities, and intact ecosystems.” Core Habitat components are rare species, other species of conservation concern, priority natural communities, vernal pools, forests cores, wetland cores, and aquatic cores. Critical Natural Landscape identifies “intact landscapes that are better able to support ecological processes and disturbance regimes, and a wide array of species and habitats over long time frames.” Critical Natural Landscape components are landscape blocks, upland buffers of wetland and aquatic cores, upland habitat to support coastal adaptation. Walpole has 1,384 acres of Core Habitat, of which 694 acres are protected. There are 1,104 acres of Critical Natural Landscape, of which 421 acres are protected.²⁵

RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

As the agency responsible for tracking native species that are at risk or may become at risk of extinction, NHESP maintains a list of all documented Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA)-listed species in the state, listing them as either Endangered (E), Threatened (T), or of Special

Concern (SC).²⁶ Threatened species in Walpole are the Blue-spotted Salamander and Hessel’s Hairstreak. Species of Special Concern are Blanding’s Turtle, Green Adder’s Mouth, Adder’s-tongue Fern, and Great Laurel. Currently no endangered species are listed in Walpole.²⁷

Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Walpole’s scenic resource areas include the Town Forest, Memorial Park, Francis William Bird Park, the Norfolk County Agricultural School, Bird Pond, Rucaduc Pond, Clarks Pond, and the Neponset River and its tributaries and ponds. The Town Forest, Memorial Park, and Francis William Bird Park were each direct results of a community planning effort in 1914 by renowned planner and landscape architect John Nolen. Survey respondents also considered remnants of Walpole’s industrial past to be unique environments, including the Town’s old mills and dams.

Walpole has several designated Scenic Roads under the Massachusetts Scenic Road Act (G.L. c. 40, § 15C) that include North Street, High Street, Lincoln Road, Pine Street, Peach Street, Baker Street, and Lewis Avenue. The Scenic Roads Act applies to the cutting or removal of trees and stone walls within the public right-of-way during road repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving. Designation does not guarantee protection of scenic roads, but it does require a public hearing and Planning Board approval before any covered work can proceed.

Planning for Natural Resource Needs

The efforts listed are in addition to the OSRP, a five- to seven-year plan reviewed and approved by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. OSRPs guide communities in protecting, maintaining, and growing its open spaces, recreational facilities and assets, and natural resources. Walpole’s OSRP was approved in November 2021 and will inform decision-making and related planning efforts through 2026.

Walpole Master Plan and E.O. 418 Community Development Plan, 2004-2024. The 2004 Master Plan (MP) found the greatest natural resource challenges were protecting drinking water, improving surface water quality, keeping dams in good repair, preserving habitat, and cleaning up brownfields. Two major environmental issues that persist are the impact on aquifer recharge from the partial sewer tie-in to the MWRA system, and difficulty in remediating brownfields. Walpole has secured grant funding for brownfield remediation in the past, but the Town needs more resources and capacity to address untreated sites. Major recommendations from the 2004 MP include:

- Identifying parcels near wells and wellhead protection areas for purchase/management outreach;
- Completing the assessment and remediation of brownfield sites and inventorying smaller ones;

²⁵ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy, BioMap2: Walpole, 2012. More information and maps are in Walpole’s BioMap2 summary and on the MassWildlife’s NHESP website.

²⁶ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, “List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species,” 2021.

²⁷ A complete vegetation and wildlife inventory can be found in the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

- Working with necessary stakeholders on Best Management Practices (BMPs) around surface waters;
- Inventorying dams;
- Preserving forest and wetlands in subwatersheds;
- Inventorying wildlife habitat areas;
- Working with the state and county to put a conservation restriction on portions of MCI-Cedar Junction and Norfolk County Agricultural School to serve as wildlife habitats and corridors; and
- Pursuing education and outreach on sustainable management of natural areas to private property owners.²⁸

Neponset Water Management Act Planning Project, 2013. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the NRWA partnered to produce the Neponset Water Management Act Planning Project. The purpose was to evaluate how communities in the Neponset watershed will be affected by the new Water Management Act (WMA) regulatory requirements. The project found that the growth in water demand is likely to be gradual over the next 20 years. Communities can address the regulatory requirements and reduce impacts to waterways by implementing incremental changes in water conservation, wastewater management, stormwater management, and optimization of withdrawals.²⁹

Community Resilience Building (CRB) Workshop Summary of Findings, 2019. The CRB Workshop

had several pertinent findings regarding natural resources. The public identified the Town Forest, Neponset River, and its tributaries, Traphole Brook, Great Cedar Swamp, Cobbs Pond, and Clarks Pond, as ecosystems of concern in a natural disaster or climate emergency. Participants also cited drought and water shortages as concerns, especially for households relying on private wells. The Workshop analyzed infrastructural challenges for dams, culverts, public water facilities, stormwater basins, and sewer and septic systems. The most significant environmental challenges identified were vegetation and forest management, excess sediment, algal blooms, invasive plantings, threatened river wildlife, water contamination, and encroaching development. Some of the high-priority recommendations were: “developing a comprehensive tree, forests, and land management program; completing a dam inventory and assessment of all public and private dams; increasing catch basin, conveyance, and detention pond maintenance; and assessing drainage-driven road flooding and developing green infrastructure solutions.”³⁰

Town of Walpole Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Walpole’s Wetlands Protection Bylaw protects wetlands, water resources, flood-prone areas, and surrounding lands by controlling activities that are likely to “significantly or cumulatively affect wetland values.” These activities can include flood control, water pollution, erosion and sedimentation control, storm damage prevention, and preserving fishery values. The Bylaw gives the Conservation Commission authority to regulate activities involving removal,

fill, dredging, or altering any protected resource areas. Following a public hearing, the Conservation Commission must render a decision within 21 days and may issue or deny a permit.³¹

Town of Walpole Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Bylaw. Walpole’s Stormwater Bylaw was a product of a collaboration between the Conservation Commission and the Neponset River Watershed Association (NRWA) to address the impacts of stormwater on the Neponset watershed. The Bylaw’s purpose is to reduce the volume of contaminated stormwater and runoff from impervious surfaces while simultaneously preventing soil erosion and sedimentation.³² The Town updated its Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Bylaw through the Neponset Stormwater Partnership (NSP), which helps Neponset watershed communities with stormwater cleanup through regional cooperation and resource sharing.³³ The Stormwater Bylaw authorizes the Conservation Commission to develop a Fast-Track Permit for projects not requiring a Land Disturbance Permit, meeting applicability standards, and normally requiring a building permit.

28 Town of Walpole, 2004-2024 Walpole Master Plan and EO 418 Community Development Plan, June 2004.

29 Metropolitan Area Planning Council, “Neponset River Watershed Water Management Act Planning,” June 2013.

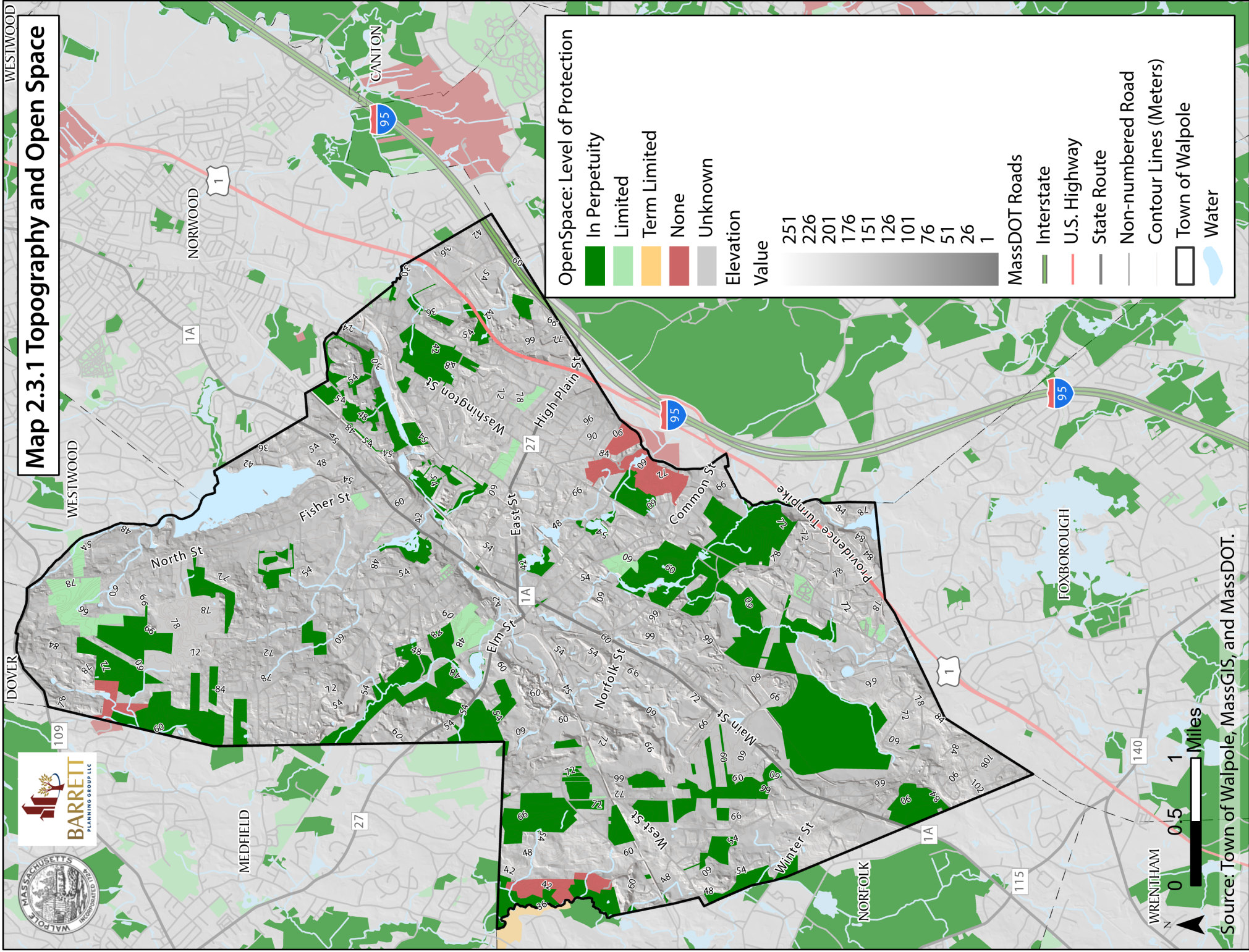
30 Fuss & O’Neill, Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings, February 2019.

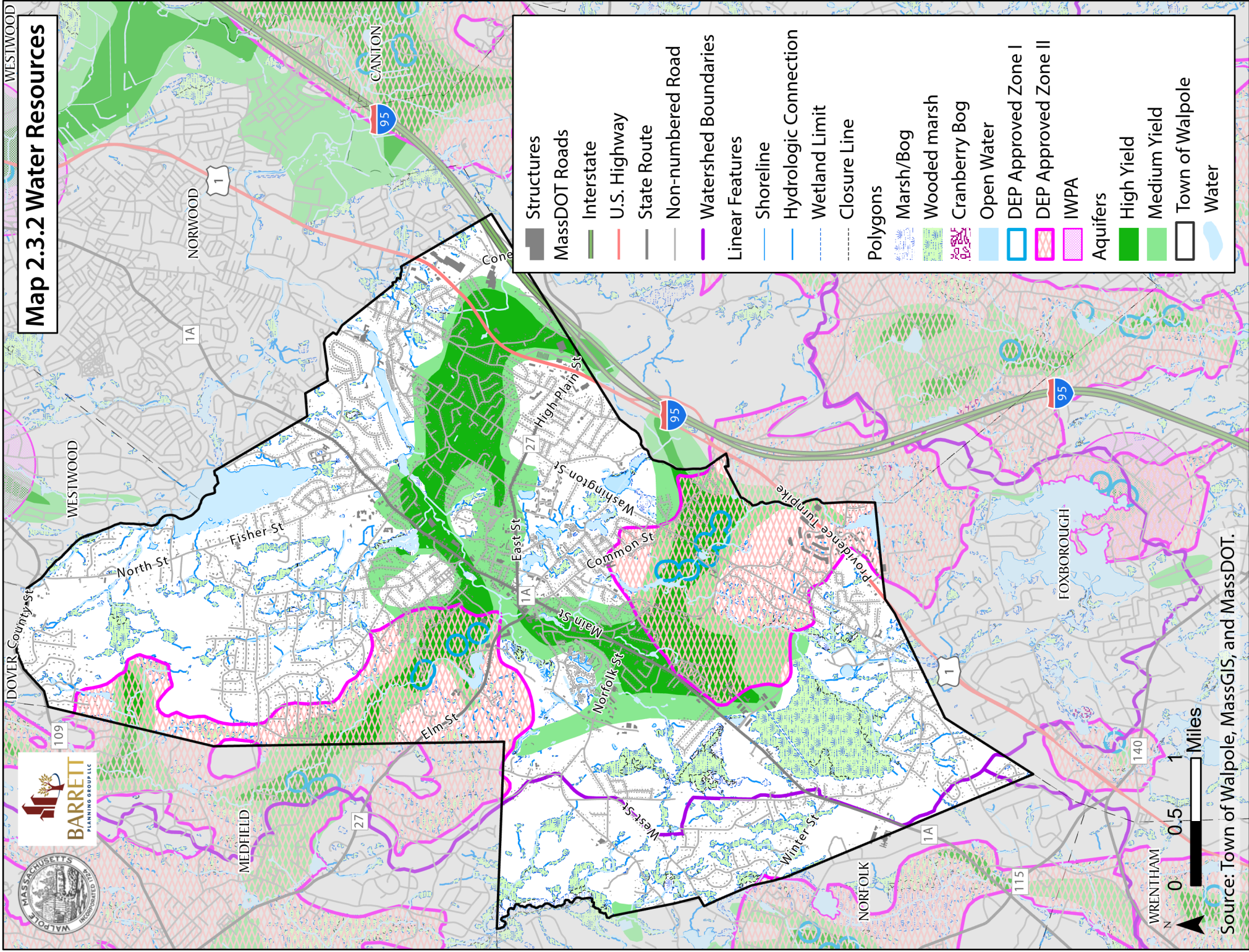
31 Town of Walpole, Town of Walpole Wetland Protection Bylaw Chapter 56I, Wetland Protection, Division 2 of the General Bylaw, Revised May 5, 2018.

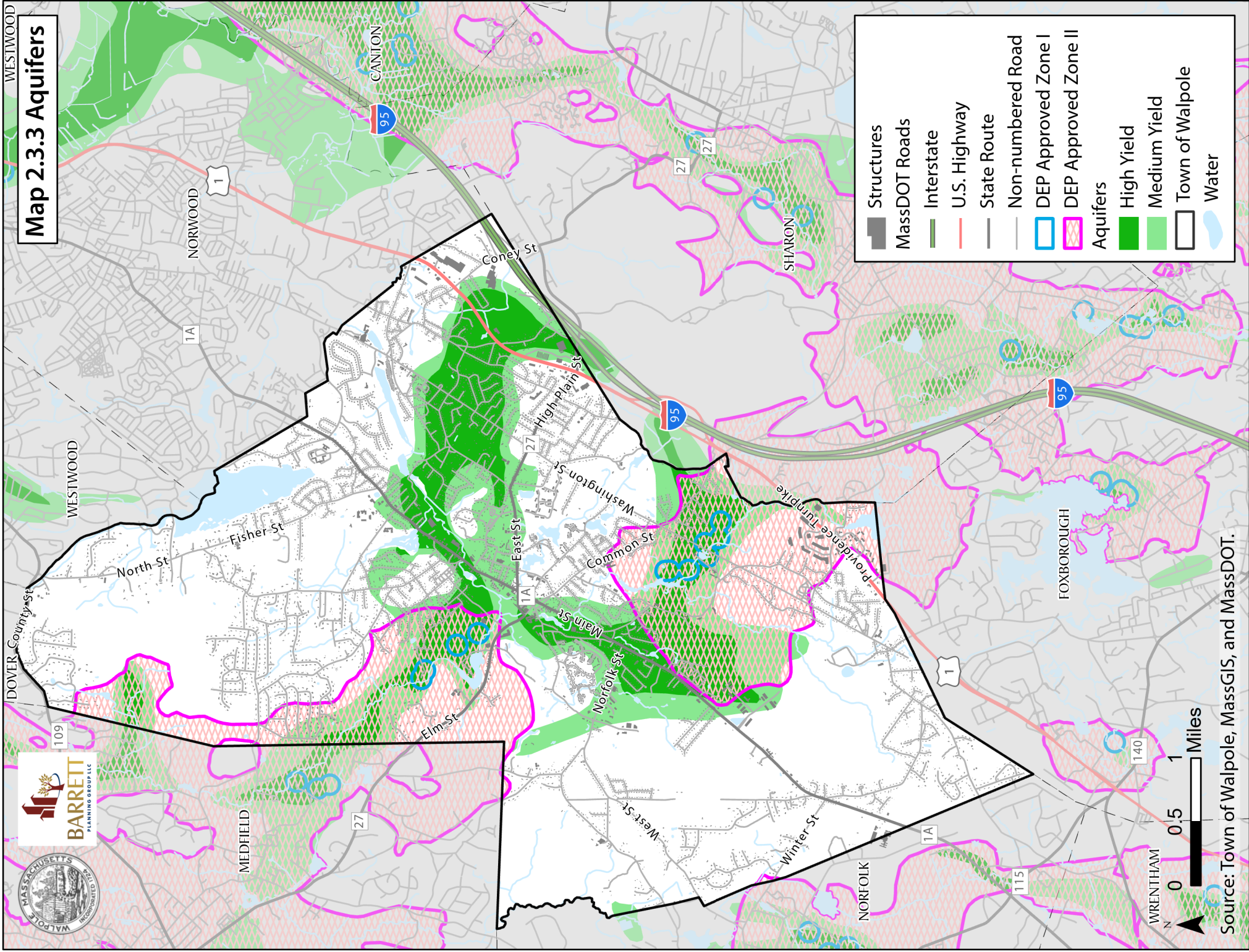
32 Town of Walpole, Walpole Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Bylaw, Approved Spring Town Meeting 2007.

33 Neponset River Watershed Association, “Neponset Stormwater Partnership,” 2021.

Map 2.3.1 Topography and Open Space







2.4.

Land Use

Introduction

Past development trends have created the look and feel of the Walpole we know today. Asking why certain types of buildings or uses are located where they are can lend insight into a community, its history, and its continued growth and evolution into the future. In most cases, the Walpole Zoning Bylaw determines the structures that can be built today, the kinds of activities that can take place in those structures, and where those structures are located. Land use planning and zoning affect almost every issue raised in other sections of a master plan, but with an emphasis on location and context. As a result, the Land Use element is often considered the centerpiece of community planning, and many of its recommendations will most likely affect Walpole's ability to address issues and seize opportunities discussed elsewhere in this Master Plan.

Inventory of Existing Conditions

Map 2.4.1 illustrates Walpole's existing land uses based on classifications used by the town assessor. It shows that single-family residences and open space are the dominant uses of land in Walpole today. Commercial, industrial, and various tax-exempt classes such as churches or schools can also be found throughout Walpole.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Walpole is a primarily residential community, with large tracts of land developed into subdivisions with single-family homes. Table 2.4.1 reports land uses in Walpole according to the assessor's maps. It shows that single-family residential development consumes more than one third of Walpole's total land area. Historically, most land in Walpole was either agricultural or undisturbed, with homes located on small lots in Downtown and East Walpole. After World War II, developers began subdividing Walpole's open land into single-family neighborhoods to meet the demand for homes from White, middle-class families, veterans, and others able to obtain mortgages to move to the suburbs. Banks and federal regulators viewed areas like these as low-risk places for mortgage loans, and many households benefited from new government policies that encouraged homeownership. From the 1950s on, Walpole saw consistently high rates of housing growth, with production of single-family units peaking in the 1970s-1990s (see Section 2.6, Housing and Residential Development).

Key Findings

- About 70 percent of Walpole is zoned for residential development, and the primary allowable form of housing is a detached single-family dwelling.
- A significant amount of land zoned for residential development is preserved as open space or is not developable due to wetland, aquifer, or floodplain protection areas. Relatively little buildable residential land remains undeveloped. Over 1,400 acres of land have been deeded to the Walpole Conservation Commission.
- Walpole's zoning bylaw has few provisions for the creation of affordable housing or any housing types beyond single-family. Housing with more than one unit per structure is only allowed in the General Residence District, and only with a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Most of Walpole's land area is undeveloped and will remain undeveloped because of protected lands and unbuildable areas. More land is zoned for industrial uses than is being utilized for industry purposes; many industrially zoned parcels are undeveloped or have commercial or residential uses.
- Commercial districts are relatively small, and the Business District is particularly parcel specific. As a result, the commercial districts are limited to the land already used for commercial purposes, and there is not much land for new commercial development. Existing commercial areas have high vacancy rates.

Table 2.4.1. Acres and Percentage of Town in Major Land Use Classes

Use	Area (Acres)	% Total	Use	Area (Acres)	% Total
Residential - single family	4,758.19	35.3%	Forest	104.13	0.8%
Open land	4,376.47	32.4%	Agriculture	61.50	0.5%
Right-of-way	987.11	7.3%	Water	31.83	0.2%
Tax exempt	905.37	6.7%	Mixed use, commercial	6.84	0.1%
Industrial	843.56	6.3%	Mixed use, residential	4.02	0.0%
Residential - multi-family	542.78	4.0%	Mixed use, other	2.42	0.0%
Commercial	513.56	3.8%	Water	31.83	0.2%
Recreation	229.85	1.7%	Total	13,492.44	100%
Unknown	113.36	0.8%			

Source: MassGIS. Note: mixed-use properties are classified as primarily commercial or residential based on the primary use of the building(s).

Recently, large multifamily developments have emerged to meet contemporary demands for different types of housing. The Residences at Moose Hill (affordable housing development), Pennington Crossing (age-restricted housing) and the Union & West and Liberty Station apartment developments (market rate apartments in Downtown Walpole), all built in just the last few years, exemplify this trend.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Walpole has two major commercial corridors. Route 1A roughly bisects the Town along a northeast-southwest axis and runs through the Downtown (zoned as the Central Business District) in the geographic center. The Route 1/Route 95 corridor runs along the Town's southeastern border with Sharon and Foxborough. Walpole's largest and most intensive commercial uses are along Route 1, including the Walpole Mall, a Walmart Supercenter, and several hotels and motels. Despite the presence of these major commercial uses, commercial space takes up less than 4 percent of Walpole's total land area

(calculated by land cover). The Central Business District has many local restaurants and small storefronts such as convenience stores and barber shops. Farther north along Route 1A are gas stations, chain restaurants, and commercial plazas anchored by major stores like Stop & Shop, Rocky's Ace Hardware, and Dollar General. Both of Walpole's major commercial corridors stand out on Map 2.4.1.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Walpole's first industry was its sawmill (first established in the mid-seventeenth century), and over time there came to be more mills in the relatively urbanized areas in the center and east side of town. Many of the mill buildings that remain are zoned for industrial use due to their historic role as sites of industry, such as in the Bird Pond area. Today, large tracts of land are zoned for industrial uses, especially along the Framingham Secondary Rail Line/Foxborough Line that runs north-south through the center of Town. The Framingham Secondary line intersects with the MBTA Commuter Rail's Franklin

Line in Downtown Walpole, and most industrial land in Walpole is adjacent to one of these two train lines. The Framingham Secondary has been primarily used for shipping cargo for decades, although the MBTA has recently acquired the line and is modifying it for increased commuter use. Still, largely due to the railroad, most industrial land is in the southern and central part of town. Smaller areas of industrial activity exist in East Walpole, identifiable on the Zoning Map (Map 2.4.2) by individual instances of the Light Manufacturing District. These include Siemens Healthineers, a medical technology company, and some small automotive industry sites. Heavier industrial uses in Town include a sand and gravel quarry west of Downtown, several solar fields, small manufacturing facilities, and a recycling center. Several hundred acres are used for energy and utilities infrastructure, including significant holdings by major companies Eversource and General Electric.

OPEN SPACE, INSTITUTIONAL, AND OTHER LAND USE TRENDS

Walpole's most significant land use trend in Town may be its abundance of open space, even though single-family residential development makes up a marginally greater proportion of the Town's land area. Master plan survey responses show that residents highly value Walpole's open space, and they have been willing to pay to protect a large portion of it over the years. In Table 2.4.1, the "open land" category is nearly as large as the single-family residential category, and there are uses that residents probably think of as open space regardless of whether the assessor uses a different land use code to describe a parcel. For example, the Francis William Bird Park in East Walpole is owned by the private conservation organization Trustees of Reservations, so that area is classified as tax-exempt institutionally held land.

Walpole's landscape has been shaped by a few large institutional landowners. The ¹Massachusetts Department of Corrections (DOC) operates MCI-Cedar Junction on Walpole's southwest border and owns much of the surrounding land. In 2020, the DOC announced that it will shut down MCI-Cedar Junction by 2024. The Norfolk County Agricultural High School, north of Downtown along Route 1A, owns over 300 acres and attracts students from across the county. The MBTA now owns both railroads that cross Walpole and controls the miles of track. Besides private conservation organizations like the Trustees, one final major tax-exempt landowner is the Home for Little Wanderers, a nonprofit that operates a residential treatment facility for adolescents on a 166-acre parcel in southwest Walpole. The land held by non-conservation organizations is not permanently protected and may not always remain open space.

Zoning in Walpole

Zoning shapes land use trends in three main ways: regulating the uses allowed in an area, setting dimensional standards that determine the scale and location of those uses, and establishing the procedures for allowing development to happen. Sometimes zoning districts are aspirational and reflect the type of development a town wishes to see in an undeveloped area; other times, zoning is adopted to match existing development patterns. Walpole's Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) has examples of both, but for the most part the Town's zoning districts follow established development patterns. (Map 2.4.2.) Zoning

¹ Susannah Sudborough, "Maximum-security prison in Walpole to close as incarceration rates drop," *Boston.com*, April 7, 2022, <https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2022/04/07/walpole-prison-mci-cedar-junction-closing/>

Table 2.4.2. Walpole Use Districts and Overlay Districts

District Name (Abbreviation)	Purpose Statement
Residential/Public Districts	
Rural Resident (R)	to provide an area for agriculture, open space, and lower density, single-family residential land use
Residence A (RA)	to provide an area for medium low density and single-family residential land use
Residence B (RB)	to provide an area for medium density and single-family residential land use.
General Residence (GR)	to provide an area for high density, single and multifamily residential land use, public, semi-public, institutional and recreational uses and professional offices compatible with low density, residential land uses, and to provide a transition area between single family residential and commercial or industrial land uses
Park, School, Recreation and Conservation (PSRC)	to provide for areas supporting low density municipal, educational, and recreational use
Commercial Districts	
Business (B)	to accommodate a wide range of retail, office, and service uses
Central Business (CBD)	to provide for a center of business activity accessible by pedestrian travel, to provide a center for municipal and cultural activities, and to act as a landmark and symbol of the Town
Highway Business (HBD)	to provide for retail, office, research and development, assembly, and manufacturing uses and all accessory uses related to said uses consistent with uses along a major regional highway, and all related accessory uses
Limited Manufacturing (LM)	to provide areas for low-density wholesale and unobtrusive manufacturing
Industrial (IND)	to provide an area for general manufacturing and wholesale uses
Overlay Districts	
Flood Plain Overlay Protection (FPPOD)	to prevent injury, loss of life and economic loss that may result from inland flooding, and to comply with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968
Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay (SPOD)	to promote the creation of new large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations by providing standards for the placement, design, construction, operation, monitoring, modification and removal of such installations that address public safety, minimize impacts on scenic, natural and historic resources and to provide adequate financial assurance for the eventual decommissioning of such installations
Water Resource Protection Overlay (WRPOD)	to protect the quantity and quality of the Town's groundwater resources
Source: Walpole Zoning Bylaw	

is not the only determining factor in land use decisions; factors like natural features, infrastructure, state-controlled land, and market forces can play significant roles. Still, zoning is essential for understanding what future development is possible in a community.

Walpole has ten underlying zoning districts: four residential, three commercial, two industrial, and one for conservation and other public spaces. The ZBL includes purpose statements for each district and the overlays, which helps to explain what each district is envisioned to be. **Table 2.4.2** summarizes basic characteristics of the zoning districts. This section will review each district by use category and refer to the purpose statements in Table 2.4.2.

Table 2.4.3 shows some of the major dimensional requirements for lots in each district. These dimensional requirements help to define districts and promote similar land uses. Residential districts, for example, are listed in Table 2.4.3 in order from lowest density (R) to highest density (GR). This matches up with the stated purpose for each district: R is for “lower density” development, RA for “medium low,” and so on.

Table 2.4.4 lists the Town’s districts sorted by size (number of acres). The Rural district includes almost one-third of Walpole’s total land area. Notably, the three smallest districts are the commercial districts.

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Most of Walpole’s land is zoned for residential uses (Table 2.4.4). Single-family homes are allowed by right in every residential zone and prohibited in non-residential zones. The Rural (R) District, situated in the more sparsely populated areas of northern

District	Required Area (Square Feet)	Required Frontage (Linear Feet)	Required Setbacks (Front, Side, Back) (Linear Feet)
PSRC	40,000	200	30,25,30
Rural (R)	40,000	200	30,25,30
Residence A (RA)	30,000	150	30,20,30
Residence B (RB)	20,000	125	30,15,30
General Residence (GR)*	15,000	100	30,10,30
Business (B)	15,000	100	15,6,20
Highway Business (HBD)	40,000	200	50,40,25
Central Business (CBD)	5,000	50	0,0,10
Limited Manufacturing (LM)	40,000	200	50,40,25
Industrial (IND)	40,000	200	25,10,10
*For a dwelling with more than three units different dimensional requirements apply: a minimum lot size of 30,000 s.f. plus 10,000 additional sq. ft. per unit in excess of three, and a 50-foot buffer adjacent to single-family dwellings. Source: Walpole Zoning Bylaw.			

and western Walpole, requires large lot sizes and setbacks. Residence A and B Districts (RA and RB) are found throughout Town and allow increasingly dense development as one moves from R to RA to RB. Walpole’s densest residential development is within the GR district, where the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) can grant special permits for multifamily housing. The GR district aligns closely with the traditional village settlement areas in East Walpole and Downtown.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Out of Walpole’s three commercial districts, two are tied to specific commercial areas. The Central Business District (CBD) covers Downtown Walpole and the Highway Business District (HBD) covers the commercial areas along Route 1. The Business (B) District covers the Town’s remaining scattered commercial sites. Development within the CBD mostly follows pre-zoning development patterns

District Type	Area (Acres)	% of Area
Residential	9,472.45	70.2%
PSRC	2,147.06	15.9%
Industrial	1,371.07	10.2%
Commercial	501.82	3.7%
Total	13,492.41	100%
Source: Town of Walpole Assessor Database		

(high density, small or nonexistent setbacks, etc.) and to allow for the continuation of the area’s existing character, the district regulations have few dimensional requirements. The commercial districts are the smallest group of districts by land area, and this reflects the site-specific drawing of commercial zoning boundaries, especially the B District, which is largely made up of small groups of non-contiguous parcels. Most low-impact commercial uses such as

restaurants, banks, and personal service establishments are allowed by right in all commercial and industrial districts.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Walpole has two industrial districts: Industrial (I) and Limited Manufacturing (LM). Both districts contain large parcels adjacent to the Framingham Secondary train line, but smaller parcels zoned LM are also found scattered throughout Central and East Walpole. Many of these LM areas do not contain industrial or manufacturing uses, however. Several of these areas have recently seen residential development (such as the age-restricted multifamily Pennington Crossing), while others are more commercial in nature. The I district includes a quarry on the north side of the Commuter Rail line and several industrial parks in South Walpole. Like LM, there are areas of the I district that have been developed for non-industrial uses, e.g., the Stop & Shop plaza on Route 1A, which is zoned Industrial. The I district allows more intensive uses by right than the LM District, such as the facilities for the repair of large vehicles and sawmills. Finally, most of Walpole's solar fields are in industrial districts.

Unlike Walpole's commercial districts, which are drawn tightly around existing business uses, Industrial districts along the railroad are large and cover swaths of undeveloped land in between industrial structures. The large I and LM districts bordering Cedar Swamp, for example, contain substantial wetland and forested areas.

OTHER DISTRICTS AND OVERLAYS

The **Park, School, Recreation, & Conservation (PSRC) District** serves to protect open spaces and provide amenities to the community. As the name

implies, the PSRC district is primarily for open space and low-density development for public services like schools. The PSRC district is the third-largest district in Walpole and contains some of the Town's most significant landmarks, including:

- Cedar Hill/Cedar Swamp (south)
- Walpole Town Forest (southeast)
- Spring Brook Conservation Area (southeast)
- Francis William Bird Park (east)
- Mine Brook/Jameson Lots/Eleanor N. Johnson Middle School (northwest)
- Norfolk Country Agricultural School (north/central)
- Adams Farm (north)
- Walpole Athletic Fields

As this district preserves the area's natural state to the fullest extent possible, it is not meant to facilitate development, and most land uses are prohibited (schools, churches, and other exempt uses are the exception).

Walpole's Flood Plain Protection (FPPOD) and **Water Resource Protection Overlay (WRPOD)** exist to protect environmentally sensitive water resources from the potential negative impacts of new development. The FPPOD applies to FEMA-designated flood hazard areas and the WRPOD is established over aquifer, well pumping, and aquifer recharge areas. Uses with the potential to disturb floodplains or contaminate groundwater are prohibited or subject to special permit requirements. The Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay (SPOD) exists solely to facilitate the development of solar

fields, of which Walpole has several. The SPOD is adopted on a project-by-project basis.

OTHER ZONING REGULATIONS

Parking requirements can have a significant impact on what uses are feasible in a community. Inappropriate parking requirements can render otherwise suitable development uneconomic or otherwise impossible and unintentionally limit the growth of a community and its tax base. Walpole uses a "parking code" system, where rather than develop specific parking requirements for each individual use or district, a set of six parking requirements is listed and then each use is assigned to one of the six categories (see Table 2.4.5). This is a simple and intuitive approach, but it may leave some specialized uses without an appropriate parking code.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs), called Accessory In-Law Suites in Walpole, are separate, subordinate units of housing that may be added to an existing single-family home. In Walpole, an ADU must be attached to the existing dwelling. Accessory dwellings can be an important component for addressing local housing needs because they provide additional dwelling units with no or minimal impact on surrounding properties. Walpole allows ADUs by special permit in the R, RA, and RB districts with some restrictions, notably that the occupant of the ADU must be related to the property owner and that the new unit must not exceed 1,000 square feet (sq. ft.) in size.

Walpole has three separate special zoning provisions for age-restricted developments: the Residential Care Continuum, Age Qualified Village (AQV), and Independent and Assisted Living. All three require

special permits from the Planning Board. The Residential Care Continuum and Independent and Assisted Living provisions are similar in that both facilitate the development of facilities for older adults who need skilled nursing or assisted living services. Independent and Assisted Living is allowed in more districts (LM, B, GR) and requires a much smaller minimum lot size (five acres v. 25 acres) than the Residential Care Continuum. AQVs are fully independent, age-restricted residential communities, and at least 10 percent of their units must be designated as affordable housing. All three types of age-restricted development offer flexible design guidelines and much higher density options than what is otherwise allowed in the district.

Finally, Walpole's ZBL contains provisions for Site Plan Review (SPR), a public hearing process allowing the Planning Board to review the design and site layout of proposed projects. In Walpole, all new multifamily,² commercial, and industrial construction requires SPR, as well as all uses requiring a special permit. An applicant may be entitled to a less intensive Limited Site Plan Review if the proposal creates less than 2,500 square feet of disturbance.

Land Use Management Capacity

Land use decisions are made by two boards, the five-member Planning Board and five-member Zoning Board of Appeals (with two associate members). The Planning Board conducts site plan review and the ZBA grants variances and comprehensive permits, and these boards split the duties of the special permit granting authority. Walpole does not currently have a town planner on staff. The Planning Board has an administrative assistant, and the

Table 2.4.5. Walpole Off-Street Parking Requirements		
Parking Code	Requirements	Example Uses
1	2 spaces for each unit accommodated on the premises	Single-family, two-family, three-family, multifamily dwellings*
2	1 space for each sleeping room for single or double occupancy; or, where not divided into such rooms (as with a dormitory or ward), one space for each 2 beds.	Hotel/motel, bed and breakfast
3	1 space for each 4 seats; or, where benches are used, 1 space for each eight 8 lineal feet of bench. Where no fixed seats are used, each 20 square feet of public floor area shall equal 1 seat.	Hospital, restaurant
4	a maximum of 1 space for each 200 sq. ft. of gross floor area on the ground floor plus 1 additional space for each 400 sq. ft. of gross floor area on all other floors; or, a minimum of one space for each 500 sq. ft. of gross floor area on the ground floor plus 1 additional space for each 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area on all other floors.	retail, business/offices, personal services
5	1 space for each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area on all floors.	Wholesale office/storeroom, most manufacturing plants
6	adequate parking spaces to accommodate, under all normal conditions, the cars of occupants, employees, members, customers, clients and visitors to the premises at the discretion of the Building Inspector or applicable Special Permit Granting Authority.	Churches, educational uses, libraries, theater bowling alley, veterinarian
Source: Walpole Zoning Bylaw		

Community and Economic Development Director provides support to the ZBA and the Planning Board at the Board's request.

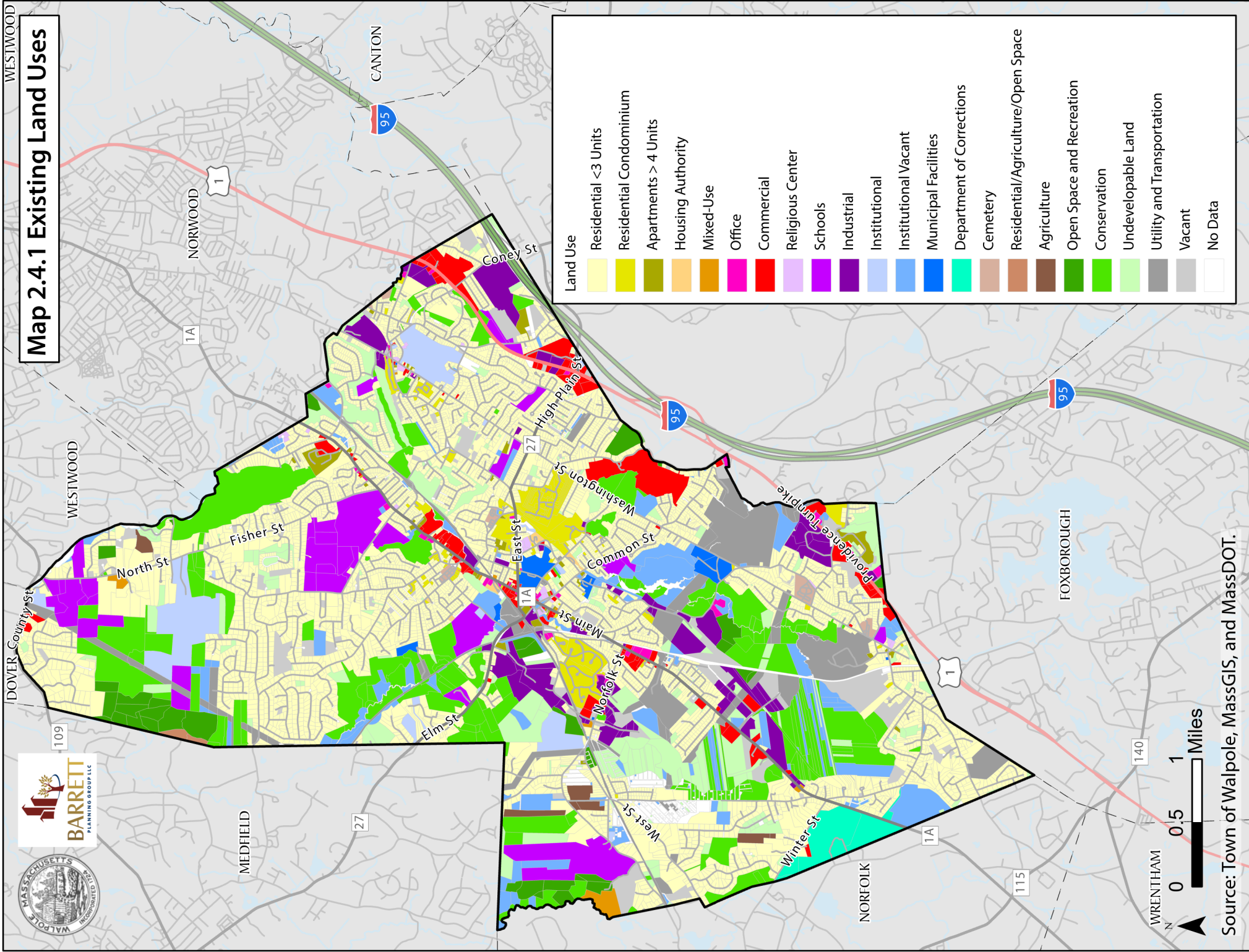
Limitations in the ZBL itself may constrain planning and land use management capacity. For example, the bylaw has few provisions to actively encourage the development of affordable housing, limiting how proactive the Town can be in planning for its housing needs and potentially increasing the likelihood of comprehensive permit developments that may be undesirable in the community. The limitations

placed on the creation of ADUs limits their efficacy as tools for housing choice. There is also little in the ZBL related to multifamily housing, which is in high demand in the region. Under the new "MBTA Communities" law (G.L. c. 40A, Section 3A) now in effect, Walpole is among the 175 cities and towns in the Greater Boston area that is required to provide for "by right" multifamily development.

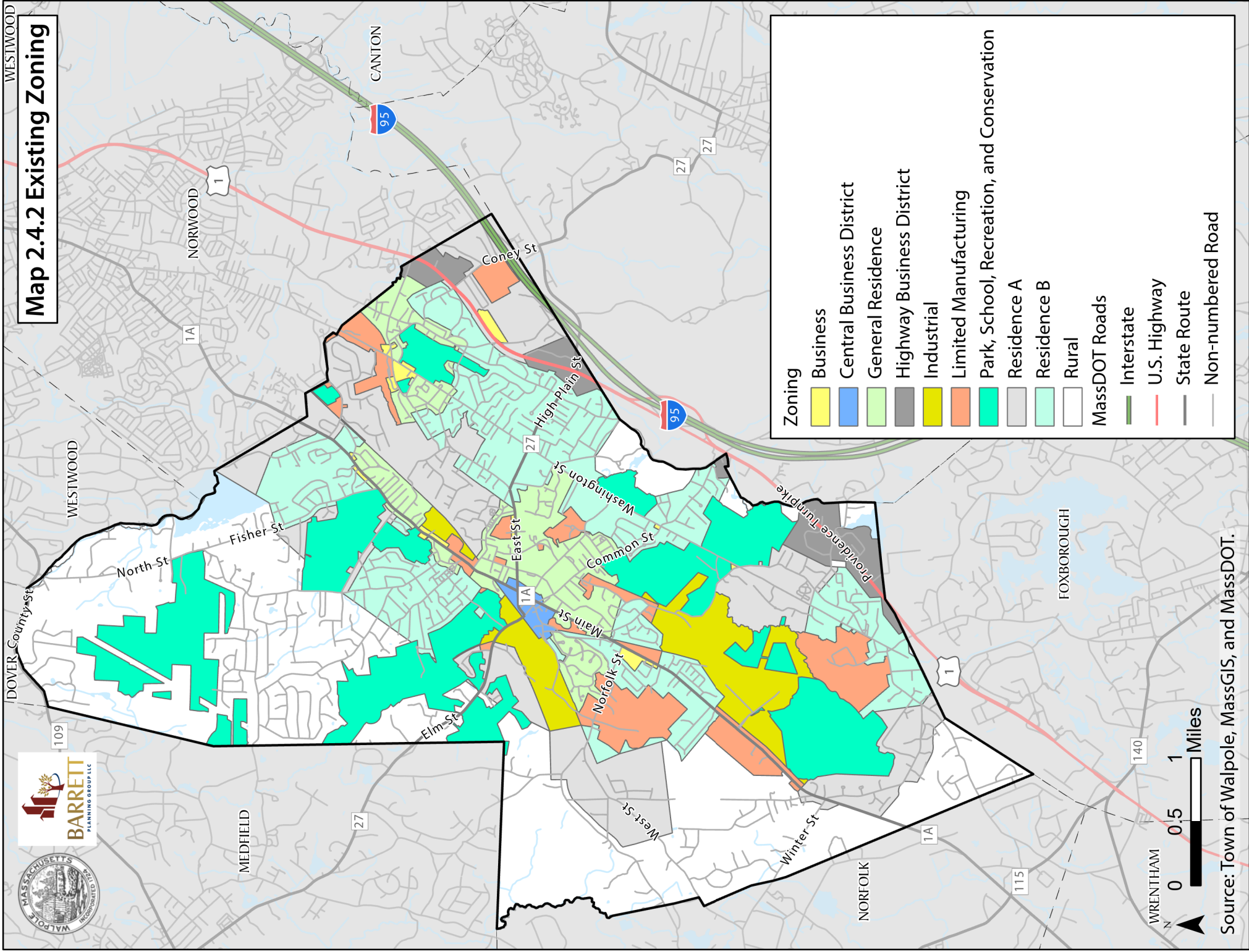
² Note: with the exception of one- to three-family residences.

WESTWOOD

Map 2.4.1 Existing Land Uses



Source: Town of Walpole, MassGIS, and MassDOT.



2.5.

Climate Change



Key Findings

- Walpole has a history of citizen advocacy and actions to address climate change, including a LEED-certified library, a plastic bag ban, and becoming a Green Community. Town Meeting passed a non-binding resolution (Article 22) in 2019 to reduce municipal energy use to 100 percent clean, renewable energy by 2050. The Town's zoning contains a Large-Scale Ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District.
- Walpole has three areas that meet Environmental Justice (EJ) criteria based on the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) EJ neighborhoods qualify when at least 25 percent of the residents are minorities, not fluent in English, or low income.
- Walpole has 102 Critical Facilities necessary for disaster response and evacuation, where additional assistance may be needed during an emergency.
- There have been 393 FEMA-declared disasters in Massachusetts, including 36 in Norfolk County, 32 of which were related to natural disasters.
- Walpole is at risk of potential failure of manufactured structures. Several bridge crossings could be at risk in a flooding event, as would clusters of critical infrastructure near floodplains.
- Most of Walpole's FEMA flood zones are near existing water bodies, but they do not include localized drainage problems that are exacerbated by increasing development. Walpole community members identified 21 streets/areas prone to drainage-related flooding that require attention.
- Walpole and Norfolk County are positioned to bear

the brunt of intensifying natural hazards in upcoming years, particularly droughts. NOAA reports thirty-two droughts in the County over the past decade, and the Northeast Climate Adaptation Center estimates an increase of +77 consecutive dry days in the 2030s and +1.98 in the 2070s. Long-term droughts could have devastating impacts on water supplies and result in very expensive damages.

- Average temperatures may climb by as much as 14 percent by 2097, causing the region to face four times as many days over 90°F, which would increase the likelihood of heatwaves as well as the amount of money and energy put toward cooling in the summer.
- Average Northeast precipitation has increased by 10 percent in the last 50 years, and heavy rain events have increased by 70 percent. Over the next 75 years, annual precipitation will rise by an additional 8 percent, with the winter season seeing a 14.8 percent increase alone. This will affect local operations, facilities, and quality of life.
- Walpole's population is expected to grow by 5 percent by 2030. Households and number of housing units may also grow by 10 percent each and diversify significantly. Walpole has identified its most vulnerable populations as seniors, school-age children, and households at McDonald Circle, Oak Street, Norfolk Street, Wolcott Avenue, Burns Avenue, Union Street, Apple Tree Lane, and the Preserve Apartments. The top identified infrastructure/facility vulnerabilities are the Elm Street, West Street, and Coney Street bridges, the Wolcott Avenue and Union Street culverts, the Bird Pond, Willet Pond, Allen Reservoir, and Blackburn dams, the Washington Street Water Station, the former Texaco Pump Station, and the Eldor Drive Ganawatte Pump Stations.

Introduction

Climate change's effects intensify as carbon emissions rise and our planet warms. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2018 report *Global Warming of 1.5 °C*, "Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate. Climate-related risks for natural and human systems are higher for global warming of 1.5°C than at present, and these risks depend on the magnitude and rate of warming, geographic location, levels of development and vulnerability, and on the choices and implementation of adaptation and mitigation options."

As communities adapt to the impacts of changing weather patterns, stronger storm surges, and more frequent natural hazards, they need data and tools to protect their vulnerable populations and infrastructure. **Climate resiliency** is the ability to assess risk and vulnerability, prepare interventions, and support long-term recovery. Resiliency is critical for hazard mitigation planning and the general prevention of the loss of life and property. The *Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan* identified four natural hazards considered to be top risks and vulnerabilities: precipitation, sea-level rise, rising temperatures, and extreme weather.¹

Walpole has the opportunity to use this Master Plan as a blueprint to prepare for increasing climate impacts. There are existing conditions that could jeopardize the community in an emergency, such as older housing stock, a high percentage of renters, a growing population with limited English proficiency, an aging population, and the number of man-made



structures at risk of failure. The comprehensive planning process can point the way to policy changes, programs, and projects to protect Walpole for future generations. Toward that end, this section of the Walpole Master Plan draws from the research, findings, and recommendations of many resources prepared for Walpole in the past few years: the 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), the 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (MVP), the 2019 Community Resilience Building Workshop (CRB), the Metro Boston Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, and the 2018 Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan:

Hazard Mitigation Planning

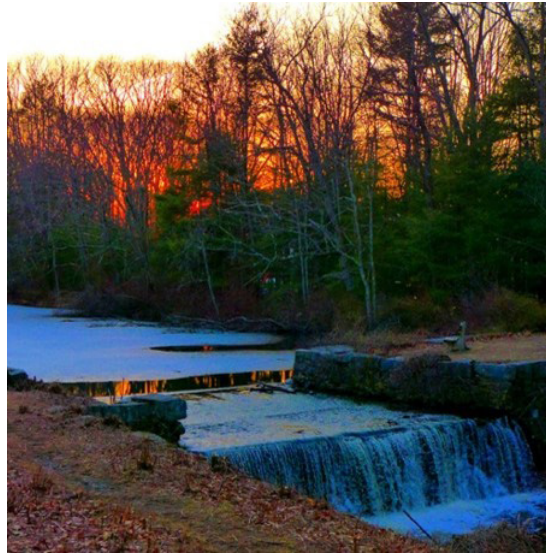
Walpole's 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) used a Local Multiple Hazard Community Planning Team to review existing mitigation measures,

develop strategies, and set goals according to the assessment's findings. The HMP employed a six-step planning process based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidance which requires multi-tiered public input. Walpole's HMP outreach included at least two public meetings, stakeholder outreach to surrounding communities and organizations, and meetings of the Local Hazard Mitigation Planning Team between May 2015 and May 2017. The plan identified the following goals for the Town:

- Prevent and reduce the loss of life, injury, public health impacts, and property damages resulting from major natural hazards;
- Identify and seek funding for measures to mitigate or eliminate each known significant flood hazard area;

¹ The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan*, September 2018.

- Integrate hazard mitigation planning as an integral factor in all relevant municipal departments, committees, and boards;
- Prevent and reduce the damage to public infrastructure resulting from all hazards;
- Encourage the business community, major institutions, and non-profits to work with the Town to develop, review, and implement the hazard mitigation plan;
- Work with surrounding communities, state, regional, and federal agencies to ensure regional cooperation and solutions for hazards affecting multiple communities;
- Ensure that future development meets federal, state, and local standards for preventing and reducing the impacts of natural hazards; and
- Take maximum advantage of resources from FEMA and MEMA to educate Town staff and the public about hazard mitigation.



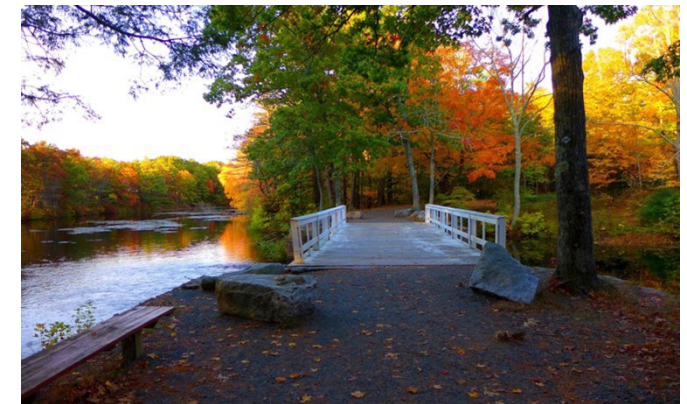
in 2014 contributing \$16,000 to its completion.

The plan was an update to the 2009 HMP and was approved by FEMA in 2017. It reports that Walpole received FEMA funding for drainage improvements on Norfolk Street via the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for \$211,135 - a direct result of their proactive planning efforts. Routinely updating the HMP is vital as Walpole is considered high-risk in terms of frequency and severity for flooding, thunderstorms, Nor'easters, and winter-blizzard/snow when compared to the remainder of the state. Hurricanes, tropical storms, winter-ice storms, and extreme temperatures pose a medium risk in Walpole.

INLAND FLOOD HAZARDS

Flooding is the accumulation of water within a waterbody and the overflow of excess water onto adjacent floodplain lands.³ Local officials identified

flooding as the most prevalent natural hazard, and flooding poses imminent risk of undermining infrastructure, carrying dangerous debris, eroding river and stream banks, uprooting plants and trees, severely damaging property, and endangering lives in extreme instances. Hurricanes, nor'easters, severe rainstorms, and thunderstorms can pose additional risk of "flash-flooding." Flash-flooding is flooding that begins within six hours (often within 3 hours) of heavy rainfall (or other cause) and is unnaturally high and fast-moving.⁴ Between 2010 and 2020, there have been sixty-three floods in Norfolk County, and two of them began in Walpole. The reported damages totaled more than \$25 million. There have been fifteen regional flash floods in the same time frame, generating \$30 million in damages and no deaths/injuries.⁵ The strength and severity of these events can be attributed to effects of climate change.



Several water bodies influence Walpole's hazard preparedness strategies. FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) determine areas most at-risk for flooding. Locations with annual flood risks of one percent or higher are considered high-risk; FEMA

Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Since 1991, Walpole has experienced twenty natural hazards that have triggered federal or state disaster declarations.² The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has reported 393 total disasters in Massachusetts since reporting began in 1953, with thirty-six in Norfolk County. Of the County's thirty-six disasters, extreme weather caused thirty-two. FEMA's OpenFEMA Dataset reports assisted with Walpole's Local Multihazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)

² Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Town of Walpole Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017 Update*, May 23, 2017.

³ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *Multi Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment*, 1997

⁴ The National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), "What Is Flash Flooding?" 2021.

⁵ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), "Storm Events Database," December 2021.

frames these risks in the long term, stating these “areas have at least a one-in-four chance of flooding during a 30-year mortgage.”⁶ From implementing floodplain management to assessing risk for insurance rates, flood risks have numerous and important implications.

Flood events are categorized as 10-, 50-, 100-, and 500-year floods, and in a given year, they have likelihoods of 10-, 2-, 1-, and 0.2-percent, respectively.⁷ Most of the Town’s 100-year and 500-year flood zones are near water bodies; many of those zones’ flooding frequency exceeding that of the 100-year flood event. The major floodplains are along the Neponset River and its tributaries. Members of the public and Town staff also identified other sites prone to flooding because of inadequate drainage systems, which is not a factor in FEMA’s mapping. Localized drainage problems are exacerbated by urbanization, increasing areas of impervious surface, poorly drained soils, and steep topography.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

A heavy or severe rain event can overwhelm natural flood storage areas and drainage structures, which results in street flooding and flooding of other impervious surfaces. Because the Neponset Watershed accumulates large volumes of water in short time periods during heavy rains, severe storms, and throughout the spring, it is important to evaluate the relationship between flood-prone areas and infrastructure. According to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), there are eighteen dams in Walpole. Three dams are classified “high hazard” (Bird Pond Dam, Cobbs

Pond Dam, and Allen Reservoir Dam), and five are “significant hazards” (Turner Pond Dam, Memorial Pond Dam, Diamond Pond Dam, Hollingsworth and Vose, and Kendall Mill Dam). Should these dams fail, stored water would be released and cause damage downstream. To date, there have been no recorded dam breaches in Walpole. However, several volunteers recall flooding in the Downtown from a dam in the 1960s. Dam safety remains an important topic among Town departments, as the public cannot see where many of them are located, and the consequences of their failure are detrimental. In addition, many are old wood machine industrial dams that are difficult and expensive to upgrade/remove, making them an added threat if action is prolonged.

ZONING FOR FLOODING

The Walpole Conservation Commission is responsible for protecting and managing local floodplains by administering and enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Walpole Wetlands Protection Bylaw. State and local wetlands regulations work in tandem by setting standards on a statewide scale and building upon those standards to tailor additional requirements to Walpole’s landscape. The Zoning Bylaw defines much of Walpole’s land use, and it includes provisions for Flood Hazard Areas, Ground Water Protection Districts, Site Plan Approval, and Open Space Requirements. The Flood Plain Protection Overlay District (FPOLD) exists to “protect public health and safety from periodic flooding, protect life and property, preserve natural flood control and the floodplain’s storage capacity, and maintain the groundwater table and

water recharge areas.”⁸ Development is allowed within FPOLD only by special permit to ensure safety and compliance with floodplain restrictions. Development is not allowed to take up needed flood storage, endanger downstream uses, block flow, or cause upstream flooding. The Town’s Subdivisions Rules and Regulations, administered by the Planning Board, have requirements to address flood hazard mitigation within subdivisions.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

When precipitation soaks into the ground, it replenishes the groundwater table, is absorbed by plants, evaporates, or flows to the nearest surface water. This cycle is disrupted when the natural landscape is developed and impervious surface replaces natural soil and ground cover. Instead of filtering into the ground, water runs off of these impervious surfaces. When runoff increases in both volume and intensity, it is more likely to cause flooding and impair water quality. Runoff picks up contaminants (e.g., salt, petroleum products, fertilizers, chemicals) as it travels, and it carries these pollutants to nearby water bodies. Stormwater runoff is the leading contributor to water quality impairment across the Commonwealth.

Regulations governing development aim to minimize stormwater runoff and flooding by discouraging development in floodplains and encouraging Best Management Practices (BMPs) set by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). To protect floodplains, promote Low Impact Development (LID), and comply with federal and state requirements, Walpole

⁶ Federal Emergency Management Agency, “Flood Maps,” 2021.

⁷ Fuss and O’Neill, *Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Integrated Water Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Resiliency Plan*, October 2020.

⁸ Town of Walpole Zoning Bylaw, Section 11: *Flood Plain Protection Overlay District*, Revised through May 6, 2019.

has upgraded its rules and regulations governing stormwater discharges to waterways.⁹ Increased maintenance of stormwater management systems will be necessary as precipitation and flooding increase as a result of climate change.

Wind Hazards

Differences in atmospheric pressure cause wind, and geography (particularly bodies of water) affects the severity of wind systems. Wind-related hazards include hurricanes, tropical storms, tornadoes, and high winds during Nor'easters and thunderstorms. Wind can create challenges by interrupting power even in non-emergency situations, and during emergencies it can even destroy communications utilities. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) provides a power outage map outlining major power companies and municipal providers in the Commonwealth in the event of emergency. Eversource is Walpole's primary electricity provider, and works with the Town on an as-needed basis.

HURRICANES AND TROPICAL STORMS

A 2017 U.S. Climate Science Special Report noted that there has been an upward trend in North Atlantic hurricane activity since 1970.¹⁰ Walpole is vulnerable to hurricanes and tropical storms due to its relative proximity to the coast. Hurricanes occur between June and November and have wind speeds between 74 and 200 miles per hour. According to the 2017 HMP, Walpole's 100-year wind speed is 110 miles per hour (similar to a 100-year storm

event measuring metric). Tropical storms are similar to hurricanes but have lower wind speeds (and as a result, tend to occur more frequently). While there have been no hurricanes tracked in Walpole, the Town experiences the residual impacts of hurricanes that have hit the New England coast. NOAA reports fourteen tropical storms between 2010 and 2021, totaling \$10,594,500 in damages.¹¹

Tornadoes. Tornado frequency is low in Eastern Massachusetts: each year, there are an average of six tornadoes in the Northeast. Although there have been no recorded tornadoes in Walpole since 1956, there have been eleven in Norfolk County that caused damages of \$1,606,000. Tornadoes are extremely dangerous to life and property, and they become more hazardous as their size and severity increase. At this time, tornadoes are classified as a medium-frequency event in Walpole (unlike Eastern Massachusetts), occurring from once in 5 years to once in 50 years.

Nor'easters. A Nor'easter (or a Northeast coastal storm) is a large wind system moving counterclockwise at high speeds (10 to 40 miles per hour with 70 miles per hour gusts) around a low-pressure center, accompanied by heavy rains or snow. Because of their strong northeasterly winds from the ocean and high volumes of precipitation, Nor'easters affect New England communities by overwhelming drainage systems, damaging structures and property, bringing down trees and power lines, and flooding rivers and streams. Heavy snow accumulation,

intense rainfall, and potential for rapid freezing from these storm systems impede transportation and can block emergency vehicles. Nor'easters are classified as high-frequency events because they occur more frequently than once in 5 years (greater than 20 percent chance per year).¹²

Winter Storm Hazards. Winter storms include heavy snow, blizzards, and ice storms and are one the most common regional hazards due to Walpole's location along storm paths. The Northeast Snowfall Impact Scale (NESIS) developed by Paul Kocin of The Weather Channel and Louis Uccellini of the National Weather Service ranks high impact northeast snowstorms and is typically used as the benchmark. Severe winter storm events in recent years have triggered large-scale emergency responses because of the storms' detrimental impacts to the local economy, public infrastructure, personal property, natural resources, and to public safety response. These events can have tragic consequences: since 2010, two people died as a result of dangerous winter weather events. While most of these events have less dire outcomes, winter storms are particularly treacherous because they combine wind, ice, and heavy snowfall ("heavy snowfall" generates at least 4 inches of snowfall within 12 hours). A blizzard has sustained/frequent wind gusts of at least 35 mph combined with snowfall that reduces visibility to one-quarter mile or less within three hours. There have been more than five blizzards in Massachusetts since 2011, including two in 2015 that brought over two feet of snow in twenty-four hours. The 2015

⁹ These requirements are specified in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems General Permit, better known as MS4 Permit, which is granted to Walpole by the US EPA and administered by the Massachusetts DEP. See also, Town of Walpole, Stormwater Management & Erosion Control Bylaw FAQ, March 21, 2007.

¹⁰ Climate Science Special Report, Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4), Volume prepared by the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP).

¹¹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), "Storm Events Database," December 2021.

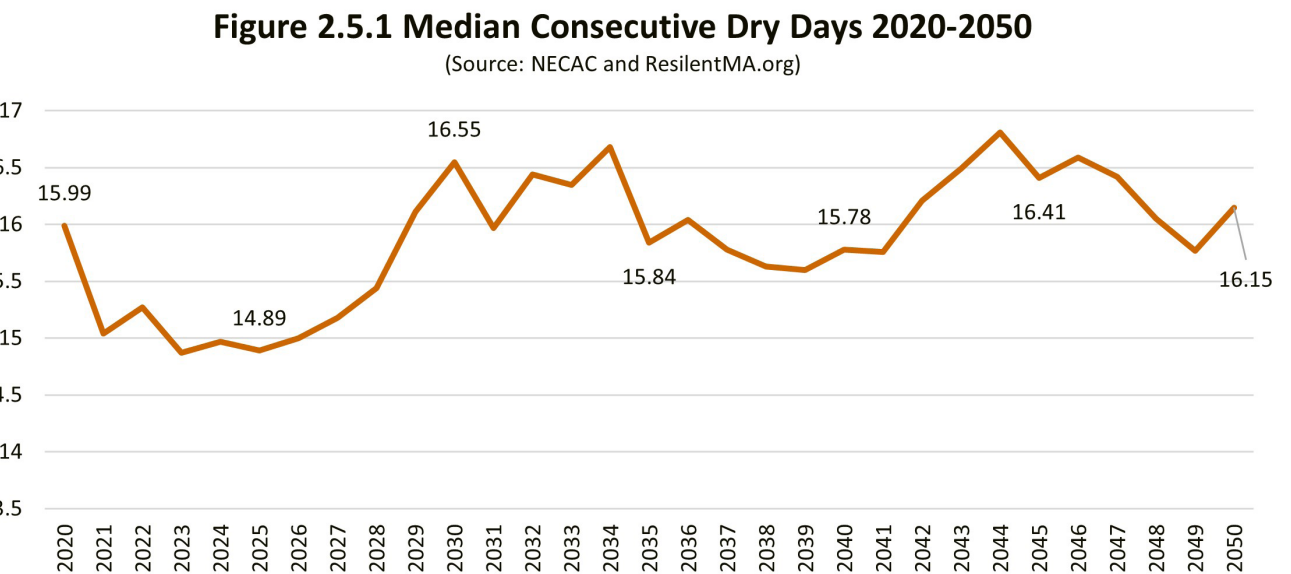
¹² Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Town of Walpole Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017 Update*, May 23, 2017.

storms cost local and state governments more than \$35 million.¹³ According to Resilient MA, a full shutdown of the Massachusetts economy from winter storms costs approximately \$265 million per day.

The frequency of blizzards and heavy snow is difficult to project, but they result when warmer air, moving north and holding moisture, collides with colder air systems. Walpole does not keep records of winter storms like some communities in Massachusetts. NOAA's Storm Events Database reports that in Norfolk County since 2010, thirty-eight winter storms caused a total of \$2,262,000 in damages, thirteen blizzards caused \$488,000 in damages, and sixty-nine heavy snow events caused \$221,800 in damages.

Average annual snowfall varies throughout Walpole: North Walpole sees an average of 36-48 inches of snow annually, and central and southern Walpole average 48-72 inches of snow annually. The HMP reports that winter storms are considered high-frequency events, which informs resiliency planning. The Town has standard procedures for snow removal, including banning on-street parking and in more severe circumstances, halting transit operations in coordination with the MBTA. The Town's greatest assessed vulnerability is unpredictable disruption to operations because of power outages during snow events.

Ice Storms. Ice storms range between different weather phenomena that involve rain or snow freezing solid and causing potentially hazardous ground conditions. Freezing rain (when rain freezes



on hard surfaces and creates a layer of ice) is among the most threatening of these conditions. Icing can cause branches to fall, roofs to collapse, and electric lines to be damaged. Ice sheets further threaten pedestrians with injury or death from falls, and vehicular traffic is vulnerable to these perilous conditions as well. Ice storms are medium-frequency events in Walpole.

Fire and Drought Hazards

There are three classes of wildfires: (1) surface fires; (2) ground fires; and (3) crown fires. It is uncommon in the Northeast for a brush fire (categorized as an uncontrolled fire in a forest or grassland) to become a wildfire. Wildfires differ from other fires because of their size, speed, potential to change direction, and ability to jump gaps in the landscape.¹⁴ Wildfires can ravage structures, devastate inhabited areas, and drain public safety resources if not mitigated. Heavy

rains following a wildfire can trigger landslides, mudflows, and floods; if ground cover is destroyed, erosion also becomes a serious problem. There are typically fewer than twenty brush fires in Walpole per year, and none on record have resulted in death. NOAA reported one wildfire in Norfolk County since 2010, and there were no recorded damages from this April 2012 event. Walpole's areas most vulnerable to brush fires are the Town Forest and Adams Farm. Past patterns indicate that brush fires are a medium-frequency event, occurring from once in 5 years to once in 50 years.

Drought is characterized by long periods of below-normal precipitation for the region. Without mitigation measures, droughts affect agriculture, water supplies, flora, and fauna. The amount of time a drought lasts and its severity depend on several factors, including the existing water supply, the number of people in a community, and the adequacy of local

¹³ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Resilient MA Climate Change Clearinghouse for the Commonwealth*, "Extreme Weather," 2021.

¹⁴ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Town of Walpole Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017 Update, May 23, 2017.

infrastructure. *Resilient MA* states that the length and severity of the Northeast’s seasonal drought period could increase during summer and fall as higher temperatures cause greater evaporation, earlier snowmelt, and variable precipitation. Drought and high temperatures also result in dry and brittle plant material and foliage that is increasingly susceptible to brush and wildfires. The Northeast Climate Adaptation Center (NECAC) plots observed dry days dating back to 1951, producing model projections for minimum, average, and maximum consecutive dry days through 2097. Figure 2.5.1 depicts median consecutive dry days from 2020 to 2050.¹⁵ In a high Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) scenario,¹⁶ the NECAC estimates an upsurge of +77 in consecutive dry days throughout the 2030s, +97 in the 2050s, and +1.98 in the 2070s, accounting for fluctuations in variability.

NOAA reports thirty-two droughts in Norfolk County since 2010, with no recorded damages. Five drought warnings and five state-declared emergencies have occurred in Massachusetts between 1850 and 2012, according to the 2017 HMP and the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI). Emergency drought conditions can range from failure of local or regional drinking water supplies, to impairment or loss of supply for firefighting, major agricultural and business losses, and impairment or loss of critical natural resources. This frequency is within the range of “Drought Watch” to “Emergency” 11 percent of

the time each month during that 162-year span, equating to a one percent chance of being in a drought emergency in 162 years. Emergency drought conditions are currently classified as low-frequency, occurring from once in 50 years to once in 100 years (one to two percent chance per year). Although this threat presents itself relatively infrequently, a severe, long-term drought could seriously restrict water supply and availability for Walpole’s homes and businesses. Like many of the other climate-related threats discussed in this chapter, the probability of severe drought increases with rising temperatures. Damages to property, health, and quality of life have the potential to reach tens of millions of dollars.

Climate Change and Resiliency

Climate change can be a divisive issue, particularly in communities like Walpole that are neither low-lying nor coastal. While direct effects of climate change are not as evident in Walpole as they are in nearby communities whose shorelines encroach further inland with every full moon’s high tides, Walpole is vulnerable to climate and weather effects throughout the area. The region’s natural environment, development and infrastructure, economy, and public health are all facing an increasing threat with potential for far-reaching financial and societal implications. Many Walpole citizens have been actively educating residents and

recommending actions to address the climate crisis for several years. Advocacy groups include Walpole Green, No Walpole Gas Pipeline, Walpole Peace and Justice Group, and Action Together Walpole. Walpole Green assisted with the Green Communities application. Town Meeting passed Article 22 in 2019 to get to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, and to move as quickly as possible to achieve that goal.¹⁷

The state has already begun taking action to advance resiliency across the Commonwealth. In 2016, Governor Baker signed Executive Order 569, which established Massachusetts’s Integrated Climate Change Strategy and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program under the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The MVP Program funds vulnerability assessments and action-oriented resiliency planning for participating communities. The Planning Grant uses the Community Resilience Building (CRB) framework to identify and plan for current and future issues. Communities that complete that program attain MVP certification and become eligible for MVP Action Grant funding to implement resiliency plans, among other opportunities. Action Grants have assisted with projects ranging from resilient infrastructure e.g., nature-based solutions, to equity e.g., environmental justice, and public health.¹⁸ Walpole became an MVP community in 2018 and completed the planning process in 2019, when the EEA awarded Walpole an MVP Action Grant

¹⁵ Climate change projections for Massachusetts are based on simulations from the latest generation of climate models included in the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5 (CMIP5). These same CMIP5 models formed the basis of projections summarized in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (2013). Statewide projections comprising county- and watershed-level information are derived by statistically downscaling CMIP5 model results using the Local Constructed Analogs (LOCA) method (Pierce et al., 2014). The LOCA dataset provides values for daily precipitation, and maximum and minimum temperature on a ~6 km grid (available here: <http://loca.ucsd.edu/>). The LOCA method corrects for systematic biases present in climate models simulations, and has been shown to produce better depiction of climate extremes compared to previous statistical downscaling methods.

¹⁶ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) introduced Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) scenarios. RCPs are prescribed concentration for greenhouse gas and aerosol concentrations, together with land use change, that are consistent with a set of broad climate outcomes used by the climate modelling community.

¹⁷ Town of Walpole, 2019 Walpole Town Report, “Spring Town Meeting, Article 22,” Pg. 144, 2019. https://www.walpole-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1381/f/uploads/2019_town_report.pdf

¹⁸ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), “Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program,” 2021.

for \$166,496 for a Culvert Assessment and Green Infrastructure Survey.¹⁹

The EEA created the *Resilient MA* Climate Clearinghouse website, which offers the most current climate data for municipalities and expansive resources and information on resiliency, sustainability, grants, and technical assistance. The clearinghouse provides projections for temperature, precipitation, sea level rise, and extreme weather. The CRB workshop, *Integrated Water Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Resiliency Plan*, and *Resilient MA* largely inform the upcoming sections.

Temperature Rises and Extreme Heat. The *Massachusetts Climate Change Projections Guidebook* reports that annual Northeast air temperatures have been warming at an average of 0.5°F (0.26°C) per decade since 1970. Winter temperatures specifically have risen at an average rate of 1.3°F (0.7°C) per decade. The eight warmest years on record were within the last twenty-five years (2016, 2015, 2014, 2010, 2013, 2005, 2009, and 1998), and global temperatures and greenhouse gas emissions are reaching record-breaking levels. NOAA reports eight instances of excessive heat and eight extreme cold/wind chill instances in Norfolk County since 2010, none resulting in death or injury. The 2017 HMP classifies extreme temperature events as a town-wide hazard of medium frequency, occurring between once in five years to once in 50 years (a two to twenty percent chance per year). Figures 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 below indicate observed and projected days below 0°F and above 100°F in the Boston Harbor Basin.

Table 2.5.1. Summary of Temperature Changes for the Boston Harbor Basin

Climate Indicator	Baseline	2020-2049	2040-2069	2060-2089	2080-2097
Average Annual Temperature (°F)	50.13°F	3.69°F	5.02°F	6.11°F	6.77°F
Maximum Annual Temperature (°F)	59.55°F	3.61°F	4.79°F	5.83°F	6.58°F
Minimum Annual Temperature (°F)	40.70 °F	3.57°F	5.03°F	6.19°F	6.83°F
Annual Days With Max Temp Above 90°F	7.85	12.11 days	19.46 days	26.39 days	32.10 days
Annual Days With Min Temp Below 32°F	119.21	-19.40 days	-29.83 days	-36.06 days	-41.53 days
Annual Heating Degree-Days (Base 65°F)*	6,078.60 HDD	- 913.76 HDD	-1246.28 HDD	-1475.15 HDD	-1628.70 HDD
Annual Cooling Degree-Days (Base 65°F)*	636.02 CDD	367.68 CDD	523.01 CDD	677.49 CDD	801.63 CDD
Annual Growing Degree-Days (Base 50°F)**	2733.34 GDD	713.57 GDD	973.20 GDD	1194.51 GDD	1347.31 GDD

*This examines changing temperatures from the perspective of heating and cooling needs for buildings.

** This indicator shows changes in growing degree days, which can signal changes in the timing and length of pollen seasons.

Source: Northeast Climate Science Center and MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Massachusetts Climate Change Projections*, University of MA Amherst, 2018, Available at: <http://www.massclimatechange.org/resources/>

Even incremental temperature increases can cause major disruptions to regional and local climates, particularly regarding rain, snowfall, and evaporation patterns. Tracking temperature is also important for monitoring vector-borne diseases, allergens, and health impacts on vulnerable populations including young children, ill and immunocompromised individuals, and the elderly. Other adverse impacts of rising temperatures include:

- Oxygen depletion and harmful algal blooms in aquatic habitats;
- Reduced viability of crops and greater exposure to weeds and pests;
- Rising heat-related health impacts on livestock and reduced yields;
- Elimination of habitats and species migration;
- Rising energy costs from greater demand in the winter and summer;
- Stress on utilities and infrastructure; and
- More instances of drought, brushfires, and

¹⁹ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs beta Climate Grant Viewer*, "Walpole," 2021.

Figure 2.5.2 Observed Temperatures 1960s-2000s

(Source: NECAC and ResilientMA.org)

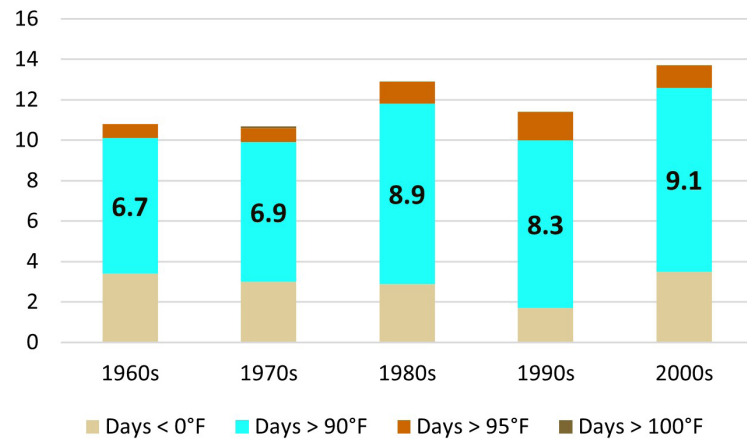
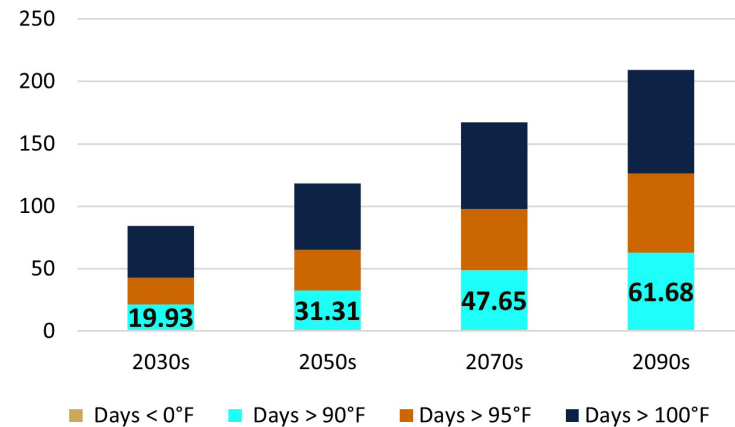


Figure 2.5.3 Projected Temperature 2030s-2090s - High Emissions Scenario

(Source: NECAC and ResilientMA.org)



wildfires.²⁰

Precipitation and Flooding

Massachusetts usually receives an average of forty-eight inches of rain, with monthly rainfall between three and four inches. Average annual precipitation in the Northeast has increased by 10 percent in the last fifty years, which represents the most dramatic increase among United States regions.²¹ Several other studies confirm intensity and frequency of rainfall have been rising throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. The *U.S. National Climate Assessment* found that between 1958 and 2010, the Northeast saw a 70 percent

increase in volume of precipitation in “very heavy” rain events (defined as the heaviest one percent of all daily events).²² An analysis by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) found that the most recent 30-year precipitation was the highest since record collection began in every region across the Commonwealth except Cape Cod. The *Fourth National Climate Assessment* found that “moderate flooding events are expected to become more frequent in most of the Northeast during the 21st century because of more intense precipitation related to climate change.”²³

Precipitation record-keeping verifies that the greatest number of extreme events have been in the last decade. *Resilient MA* warns that Massachusetts

residents can expect intense spring downpours, drier summers, more intermittent droughts, greater inland and coastal flooding, diminishing snowfall, and increased winter and spring precipitation. The state has seen twenty-two flood-related disaster declarations between 1954 to 2017 alone. By mid-century, rainfall could increase by 6.2 inches, and by 9.0 inches end of the century.

According to the Local Hazard Mitigation Team, Walpole’s watershed and those of its northern and western neighbors accumulate precipitation quickly.²⁴ Walpole’s continuing development and increasing areas of impervious surface can worsen flooding, overwhelm soil’s ability to absorb water, create a greater burden on existing stormwater

20 Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Resilient MA Climate Change Clearinghouse for the Commonwealth*, “Rising Temperatures,” 2021.

21 Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Resilient MA Climate Change Clearinghouse for the Commonwealth*, “Changes in Precipitation,” 2021.

22 Horton, R., G. Yohe, W. Easterling, R. Kates, M. Ruth, E. Sussman, A. Whelchel, D. Wolfe, and F. Lipschultz, 2014: Ch. 16: Northeast. *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, J. M. Melillo, Terese (T.C.) Richmond, and G. W. Yohe, Eds., U.S. Global Change Research Program, 16-1-nn.

23 Fuss and O’Neill, Town of Walpole, *Massachusetts Integrated Water Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Resiliency Plan*, October 2020.

24 Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Town of Walpole Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017 Update*, May 23, 2017.

systems, and flood waterbodies, particularly if new development lacks proper stormwater controls or encroaches on floodplains. Increasing precipitation and unmitigated stormwater can also:

- Damage bridges, roads/streets, dams, and other infrastructure;
- Reduce aquifer replenishment through spring snowmelt and lower spring river flows for aquatic ecosystems;
- Increase and intensify episodic droughts that reduce surface water storage and groundwater recharge, damage vegetation, and weaken tree roots;
- Stress local habitats and species; and
- Damaged or delay certain crops.

Table 2.5.2 summarizes expected precipitation changes in the Boston Harbor Basin between 2020 and 2097 based on patterns from 1970 through 2000. Total precipitation could increase by 5 percent by 2069 and 8 percent by 2097. Projected precipitation represents a 14.8 percent increase in the winter and a 14.2 percent increase in the spring. Summer precipitation will level off over the next 75 years, while fall levels will decrease by .06 inches between 2040 and 2097; fall precipitation will experience a 4 percent increase from the baseline overall by 2097. After an initial decline, annual days with perception over 1 inch will grow by almost 10 percent.

Table 2.5.2. Summary of Precipitation Changes for the Boston Harbor Basin

Climate Indicator	Baseline	2020-2049	2040-2069	2060-2089	2080-2097
Total Annual Precipitation (Inches)	46.07	1.14"	2.33"	2.90"	3.69"
Winter (Inches)	11.82	0.35"	0.60"	1.26"	1.75"
Spring (Inches):	11.59	0.83"	1.06"	1.25"	1.64"
Summer (Inches)	10.51	0.03"	0.20"	0.19"	0.03"
Fall (Inches)	12.18	0.64"	0.97"	0.83"	0.58"
Annual Days With Precipitation Over 1 Inch	9.06	-0.46 days	0.17 days	0.63 days	0.90 days
Annual Days With Precipitation Over 2 Inches	1.27	0.13 days	0.26 days	0.31 days	0.38 days
Annual Days With Precipitation Over 4 Inches	0.08	0.08 days	0.10 days	0.10 days	0.11 days
Annual Consecutive Dry Days	17.46	-0.73 days	-0.34 days	-0.23 days	-0.32 days

Source: Northeast Climate Science Center and MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Climate Change Projections, University of MA Amherst, 2018, Available at: <http://www.massclimatechange.org/resources/>

Regional and Local Vulnerabilities

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) predicts that Walpole will grow by 1,302 residents (5 percent) between 2020 and 2030 based on a “stronger region” scenario.²⁵ The number of households and housing units are also expected to grow by 10 percent each in the next decade. MAPC’s subregional averages for multifamily growth and rental growth are 44 percent and 22 percent, respectively; MAPC divides its large service area into eight subregions when conducting data analysis and planning. This growth can be attributed to several factors, including the Town’s growing

popularity among families, commuting accessibility, and availability of resources and institutions. In order to continue to thrive through this growth and development, it will be necessary for Walpole’s Town staff and officials to review existing conditions and reassess climate risks and vulnerabilities based on this data.

Demographic data develops more feasible and realistic action plans, targeting vulnerable people, areas, facilities, and infrastructure. The MVP Planning Process and Community Resilience Building (CRB) Workshop assembled the MVP Core Team and other stakeholders to identify concerns, challenges, and priorities to assist with planning for growth

²⁵ According to MAPC, the “Stronger Region” scenario explores how changing trends could result in higher population growth, greater housing demand, and a substantially larger workforce.

and climate change simultaneously. The Core Team also evaluated how those with different abilities and in different locations could and should respond to hazard events/extreme weather. A better understanding of burgeoning needs will prepare the entire population and allow the Town to fortify areas of weakness, preventing unnecessary deaths, injuries, and property damage over the next century.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The CRB Workshop identified flooding, snow/ice, extreme temperatures, and severe weather as the top hazards to Walpole's neighborhoods, ecosystems, infrastructure, and facilities. Communities of concern were recognized as seniors, school-aged children, and residents of McDonald Circle, Oak Street, Norfolk Street, Wolcott Avenue, Burns Avenue, Union Street, Apple Tree Lane, and the Preserve Apartments. Attendees elaborated on how extreme temperatures affect Walpole and its vulnerable residents. Forced school closings have necessitated school attendance into the summer and could pose significant health risks as many of the school buildings are not equipped with air conditioning. There was a notable correlation in children with heat-related health conditions and years schools have remained open in the summer. Extreme temperatures have also lead to greater use of heating and cooling shelters, such as the Senior Center.

During the Workshop, the public expressed interest in expanding access to available shelters and creating options for residents with pets during emergencies. The Town understands the importance of communicating and educating about emergencies

including road closures, driving bans, emergency shelter access, and maintaining detention basins and septic systems. Walpole continues to face challenges in identifying and reaching vulnerable individuals, especially those who do not self-identify as vulnerable or have access to a land-line telephone. These populations are higher risk because of potential barriers to obtaining food and medical supplies or leaving their homes in case of emergency. Several neighborhoods are at risk of flooding: McDonald Circle, Oak Street, Norfolk Street, Wolcott Avenue, Burns Avenue, and Union Street. Residents of North and Southeast Walpole additionally faces greater distances to the emergency services located in Downtown Walpole; emergency services must also cross Route 1 into Southeast Walpole to access the Preserve Apartments. Going forward, the Town will work to increase the affordable housing supply in locations that are not vulnerable to hazards and closer to services.

Environmental Justice Neighborhoods: Inequitable policies that have raised the likelihood of low-income and minority communities living near hazardous environmental uses has resulted in governmental monitoring and action to address issues within Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MPH) and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) define EJ neighborhoods as census block groups where at least one of the following is true: (1) median annual household income is at or below 65 percent of the statewide median income; (2) twenty-five percent or more of residents are of racial or ethnic minority groups; or (3) twenty-five percent or more of the residents are not fluent in the English language. EJ neighborhoods that meet

more than one criterion face the highest risk of environmental health hazards. According to the Census Bureau, at least twenty-five percent of residents belong to racial or ethnic minority groups in three Walpole block groups. Each of these block groups is on the eastern side of Town.²⁶

VULNERABLE FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Based on the top localized hazards, CRB Workshop participants identified infrastructure-related vulnerabilities at the Elm Street Bridge, West Street Bridge, Coney Street Bridge, Wolcott Avenue Culvert, Union Street Culvert, Bird Pond Dam, Willet Pond Dam, Allen Reservoir Dam, Blackburn Dam, as well as undersized culverts and stormwater infrastructure. Intense storms put pressure on dams, culverts, and drainage infrastructure designed for smaller storms. Additionally, flooding from clogged or undersized stormwater systems and culverts will spill onto roads and bridges, particularly Elm Street Bridge, West Street Bridge, and areas surrounding McDonald Circle, Summer Street, and Wolcott Avenue. CRB attendees recalled one event in March of 2010 that caused flooding, culvert failures, and closed roads for days. Participants went on to identify the following facilities as vulnerable: Washington Street Drinking Water Booster Station, Texaco Drinking Water Pump Station, Eldor Drive, and the Ganawatte Sewer Pump Stations. Storms have affected attendees in the past in the form of power outages, downed trees, and slippery roads. Police mentioned icy roads and parking lots represent a threat, and it is further exacerbated by residents pumping water from flooded basements into the road.

²⁶ Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Environmental Health, *Massachusetts Environmental Public Health Tracking Community Profile For: Walpole*, November 4, 2021.

Dams are high priority for assessment and safety improvements, especially Willet Pond Dam and Bird Pond Dam. The feasibility of the removal of these dams has not been explored in-depth due to concerns over impacts to residents' property, backyards, pond access, and recreation. Stormwater basins and conveyances were another identified priority because they are old, undersized, and unsuitable for changing weather patterns. The area between Stone Street and Spring Brook was noted as especially prone to flooding. Officials shared concerns regarding drinking water, particularly water supply resiliency during droughts and flooding threats to low-lying water pump stations and wells. Some of these structures have below-grade infrastructure. Other priority concerns included inflow and infiltration (I/I) and septic system leakage resulting from intensifying precipitation, as well as stressors to electrical and communications networks from ice storms or extreme heat.

Critical Facilities: Critical facilities are important for disaster response and evacuation (such as emergency operations centers, fire stations, water pump stations, etc.), and facilities where additional assistance might be needed during an emergency (such as nursing homes, elderly housing, daycare centers, etc.). There are 102 critical facilities in Walpole; the complete list can be found in the 2017 HMP.

For addressing mitigation needs, cost remains a barrier to some activities, such as placing utilities underground, for example. Walpole has become a Green Community since the CRB Workshop. The Green Communities Division (GCD) under the

Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources provides grants, technical assistance, and local support from Regional Coordinators to help municipalities reduce energy use and costs by implementing clean energy projects in municipal buildings, facilities, and schools.²⁷ Walpole works with a Regional Energy Manager, shared with Norwood and Sharon, to help manage the program and related projects. Through the Green Communities program, Walpole voted to adopt a new Stretch Energy Code Bylaw, approved a new fuel efficient vehicle policy, and completed a comprehensive Energy Reduction Plan. "High priority" infrastructure and facility recommendations that have yet to be addressed include:²⁸

²⁷ Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, "Green Communities Division," 2021.

²⁸ Fuss & O'Neill, *Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings*, February 2019.

2.6.

Housing and Residential Development



Key Issues

- Walpole's housing stock is primarily made up of detached single-family homes, but the Town has seen an influx of major apartment developments in recent years. Most existing homes are still single-family dwellings, but new development has expanded the range of housing choices.
- The rate of growth of Walpole's housing stock exceeds that of many comparable communities. Walpole seems to be a center of regional population growth and residential construction.
- Walpole is close to achieving the 10 percent affordable housing minimum under G.L. c. 40B ("Chapter 40B"), the Commonwealth's affordable housing law. This is an important step in providing affordable housing for Walpole residents.
- Since World War II, residential growth in Walpole has spread from historical development patterns in Downtown and East Walpole into subdivisions that span formerly rural areas. Most of Walpole's land area is either preserved as open space or developed for residential use.
- Housing affordability is a concern both in Walpole and neighboring communities. Over the last decade, trends consistently show that more homes are selling, and homes are selling for more money.
- In many Downtown and East Walpole neighborhoods, single-family homes are worth less than the land they are situated on. This is an indicator that easy-to-develop land is becoming scarce. It may also point to an increased likelihood that in the future, the existing homes will be candidates demolition and replacement with larger homes, as has happened in so many communities closer to Boston. A prospective homebuyer could increase the value of the entire property by building a more valuable structure.
- In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a rise in vacancies and a drop in rents in Walpole. In 2021, data suggests that the market has rebounded: rents have grown past pre-pandemic levels and vacancies are low in Walpole and across the Commonwealth.

Introduction

Housing gives Walpole residents shelter and a place to call home and allows new people and families to live here. The type, location, age, and affordability of Walpole's housing affects who can live in the community and what kinds of lives they can lead. Housing is a central component in determining the look and feel of a place, especially a town like Walpole made up of primarily residential space, and the housing landscape in Town is shifting. There are dense traditional village centers, subdivision neighborhoods with big yards in formerly rural areas, and now multifamily apartment complexes. This section discusses what makes Walpole's housing unique, what regional and national trends are affecting the local housing market, and the housing challenges Walpole faces. Participants in the community outreach exercises for this Master Plan were concerned about rising housing costs and seniors having affordable places to downsize, as well as about the effect of new housing on community character.

Housing Analysis

Walpole is growing. Notably, Walpole's 2020 Census population (26,383) has already exceeded the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)'s "status quo" projection for 2030 (25,653). Walpole's population is also getting older, as there are more older adults (over 65) and fewer younger residents (under 25) compared to a decade ago. In addition, Walpole has also become more racially diverse. Population growth and increased diversity show that Walpole is an attractive place for new residents to call home.

Walpole's median household income (MHI) is moderate compared with that of many nearby communities, but it is higher than the median household

income of Norfolk County or Massachusetts overall, as shown in **Table 2.6.1**. In a largely wealthy region, Walpole is becoming an increasingly affluent community, although its incomes are more moderate relative to some of Walpole's comparison communities.

Walpole is located within the Boston Metropolitan Area, an economic statistical area used by the federal government to track and report a variety of demographic, social, and economic data. **Table 2.6.2** reports the proportion of Walpole households that fall into income cohorts set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Boston Metro Area. Most Walpole households have higher incomes than the median for the Boston Metro Area, but there are significant income differences between Walpole's homeowners and renters. Most of Walpole's renter households have incomes

Table 2.6.1. Median Household Income by Household Type

Place	MHI, All Households	MHI, Owner Households	MHI, Renter Households
Dover	\$250,001	\$250,001	\$100,795
Medfield	\$160,963	\$185,845	\$36,324
Westwood	\$160,132	\$175,441	\$48,125
Norfolk	\$151,279	\$157,118	N/A
Sharon	\$141,423	\$156,339	\$49,861
Franklin	\$122,607	\$139,365	\$60,234
WALPOLE	\$119,846	\$134,214	\$42,183
Canton	\$105,919	\$118,750	\$62,500
Norfolk County	\$103,291	\$126,878	\$57,923
Foxborough	\$96,062	\$124,300	\$58,997
Norwood	\$90,133	\$113,202	\$64,043
Massachusetts	\$81,215	\$107,223	\$45,195

Source: American Community Survey 2019 Estimates

below the Boston Metro AMI, and a significant proportion of Walpole's rental units are income-restricted to house lower-income renters (see "Housing Affordability" section for further discussion of the relationship between income and housing costs).

About two-thirds of households in Walpole are

Table 2.6.2. Income Distribution of Walpole Households

Income Group	Owner		Renter		All Households	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Extremely Low Income (30% AMI)	310	4.2%	405	26.3%	715	8.0%
Very Low Income (>30% to 50% AMI)	430	5.8%	450	29.2%	880	9.9%
Low Income (>50% to 80% AMI)	740	10.0%	170	11.0%	910	10.2%
Moderate-to-Middle (>80% to 100% AMI)	595	8.1%	140	9.1%	735	8.2%
Middle Income and Above > 100% AMI	5,300	71.8%	375	24.4%	5,675	63.7%
Total	7,380	100.0%	1,540	100.0%	8,915	100.0%

HUD CHAS Data 2014-2018

Table 2.6.3. Households by Type

	Married-Couple Families		Other Families		Nonfamily Households		Total Households	
Town	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Walpole	5,780	66.1%	853	9.8%	2,113	24.2%	8,746	100%
Canton	5,046	55.7%	902	10.0%	3,116	34.4%	9,064	100%
Dover	1,608	79.2%	166	8.2%	257	12.7%	2,031	100%
Foxborough	3,622	53.2%	896	13.2%	2,287	33.6%	6,805	100%
Franklin	7,511	62.9%	1,159	9.7%	3,271	27.4%	11,941	100%
Medfield	3,294	77.6%	304	7.2%	647	15.2%	4,245	100%
Norfolk	2,354	73.9%	281	8.8%	551	17.3%	3,186	100%
Norwood	5,738	47.9%	1,877	15.7%	4,356	36.4%	11,971	100%
Sharon	4,607	72.6%	621	9.8%	1,116	17.6%	6,344	100%
Westwood	3,809	68.9%	455	8.2%	1,268	22.9%	5,532	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2019 Estimates

married couple families, which is common among comparison communities. Just under one-quarter are nonfamily households, meaning that they are made up of a single individual or a group of unrelated people. Nonfamily households are on average smaller and have lower incomes than family households and are therefore more likely to rent their homes.

PROFILE OF HOUSING STOCK

The growth of Walpole's housing supply is demonstrated in **Table 2.6.4**, as it has more housing units built since 2000 than all but one of its comparison communities. This number does include homes renovated within the twenty-first century, but Walpole has been adding units to its housing supply faster than nearly all comparison communities in the last twenty years. A majority of Walpole's residential structures have been built since 1960. Homes built in the 1980s and 90s are the largest group, but they make up only one quarter of the total housing stock. Table 2.6.4 shows that housing production in Walpole remained consistently high post-World War

Table 2.6.4. Residential Structure by Year Built

	1939 or earlier		1940-1959		1960-1979		1980-1999		2000 or later		Total
Town	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Walpole	1,382	15.3%	1,862	20.6%	2,223	24.6%	2,290	25.3%	1,292	14.3%	9,049
Canton	1,521	16.1%	2,017	21.4%	2,153	22.9%	2,607	27.7%	1,124	11.9%	9,422
Dover	264	12.4%	406	19.1%	738	34.7%	451	21.2%	269	12.6%	2,128
Foxborough	1,134	16.5%	1,338	19.5%	1,606	23.4%	1,863	27.1%	934	13.6%	6,875
Franklin	1,559	12.8%	834	6.8%	2,650	21.7%	5,115	42.0%	2,034	16.7%	12,192
Medfield	448	10.3%	480	11.0%	1,800	41.3%	1,251	28.7%	375	8.6%	4,354
Norfolk	190	5.7%	427	12.8%	884	26.5%	1,361	40.8%	475	14.2%	3,337
Norwood	3,158	25.1%	3,347	26.6%	3,532	28.0%	1,724	13.7%	841	6.7%	12,602
Sharon	1,038	15.6%	1,427	21.4%	1,795	26.9%	1,845	27.7%	561	8.4%	6,666
Westwood	875	14.6%	1,465	24.5%	1,593	26.7%	1,337	22.4%	707	11.8%	5,977

Source: American Community Survey 2019 Estimates

Table 2.6.4. Number of Units in Residential Buildings

Town	1 unit, detached		1 unit, attached		2 units		3-4 units		5 to 19 units		20 or more units		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Walpole	6,617	73.1%	685	7.6%	387	4.3%	305	3.4%	768	8.5%	287	3.2%	9,049
Canton	5,894	62.7%	547	5.8%	374	4.0%	231	2.5%	1,657	17.6%	697	7.4%	9,400
Dover	1,989	97.9%	30	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	0.6%	0	0.0%	2,031
Foxborough	3,985	58.0%	437	6.4%	238	3.5%	384	5.6%	1,242	18.1%	589	8.6%	6,875
Franklin	8,118	66.6%	1,200	9.8%	585	4.8%	526	4.3%	842	6.9%	921	7.6%	12,192
Medfield	3,601	82.7%	157	3.6%	82	1.9%	73	1.7%	311	7.1%	130	3.0%	4,354
Norfolk	2,980	89.3%	229	6.9%	52	1.6%	11	0.3%	65	1.9%	0	0.0%	3,337
Norwood	5,965	47.4%	914	7.3%	1,206	9.6%	1,363	10.8%	2,180	17.3%	953	7.6%	12,581
Sharon	5,484	82.3%	182	2.7%	174	2.6%	227	3.4%	388	5.8%	211	3.2%	6,666
Westwood	4,646	77.7%	23	0.4%	100	1.7%	34	0.6%	161	2.7%	1,003	16.8%	5,977

*Does not include mobile units such as RVs or mobile homes.
Source: American Community Survey 2019 Estimates

II, only slowing down in the twentieth century. These trends correspond with the national suburban post-WWII boom, as discussed in the “Historic Housing Trends” section.

Table 2.6.5 shows that over 70 percent of Walpole’s housing units are detached single-family homes. The second column, “1-unit attached,” refers to one-family dwellings that are also part of a larger structure, such as rowhouses or townhouses. Walpole has the second-highest proportion of single-unit attached dwellings behind Franklin. Finally, over 10 percent of Walpole housing units are located in multi-unit buildings of five or more.

OCCUPANCY & TENURE

In Walpole and its surrounding communities, there are relatively few vacant units. More than 90 percent of housing units are occupied in all comparison communities, although Walpole’s vacancy rate is highest among these communities at 6.6 percent, followed by Westwood with a 4.9 percent vacancy rate.¹ The large amount of new development in Walpole, some of which may not be fully leased up, probably contributes to its high residential vacancy rate. For example, in December 2021, the 192-unit Union & West apartments had a vacancy rate of about 8 percent.²

Table 2.6.6 reports households by **tenure**, i.e., whether households rent or own their home. Every comparison community has a majority of

Table 2.6.6. Occupied Units by Tenure

Town	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
Walpole	7,166	81.9%	1,580	18.1%	8,746
Canton	6,928	76.4%	2,136	23.6%	9,064
Dover	1,898	93.5%	133	6.5%	2,031
Foxborough	4,326	63.6%	2,479	36.4%	6,805
Franklin	9,631	80.7%	2,310	19.3%	11,941
Medfield	3,689	86.9%	556	13.1%	4,245
Norfolk	3,047	95.6%	139	4.4%	3,186
Norwood	6,881	57.5%	5,090	42.5%	11,971
Sharon	5,608	88.4%	736	11.6%	6,344
Westwood	4,708	85.1%	824	14.9%	5,532

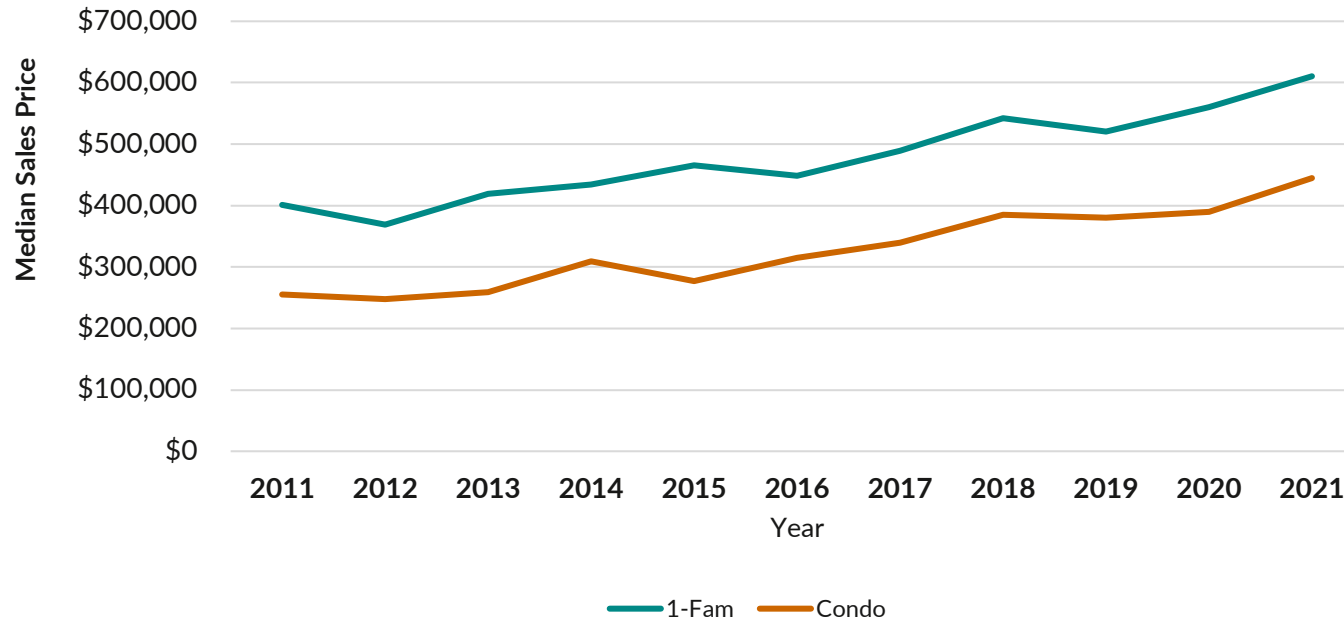
Source: American Community Survey 2019 Estimates

¹ Vacancy data is from the 2020 Census.

² CoStar, December 23, 2021

Figure 2.6.1: Median Homes Sales Price (2011-2021)

(Source: The Warren Group)



owner-occupied households, ranging from Norwood with 57.5 percent to Norfolk with 95.6 percent. More than 80 percent of Walpole's households own their homes, but its proportion of renters is higher than that of more than half its comparison communities. The increasing strength of Walpole's housing rental market is relatively new, and largely attributable to recent large-scale multifamily development.

HOUSING MARKET SUMMARY

Walpole's housing market, like that of the entire Greater Boston area, is strong. The COVID-19 pandemic, despite initially depressing rents and causing vacancies to rise, has strengthened the real estate market overall, consistent with what has happened with housing demand in most Boston-area suburbs. **Figure 2.6.1** shows consistent growth in the yearly median home sales price in Walpole over the last

decade. The median sale price for a single-family home rose from about \$400,000 in 2011 to over \$600,000 as of November 2021. Steadily increasing home values may mean that existing and prospective residents would not be able to buy the home they live in if they were looking for a house to buy today. Still, home prices in Walpole remain moderate compared with prices in some of its neighbors. Between 2010 and 2021, Walpole's median sales price for single-family homes rose by about 77 percent, the third-fastest growth rate behind Westwood and Canton.

The volume of home sales has been trending upward regardless of housing type since 2011, with about 300 single-family sales in 2020. The dip in single-family home sales in 2021 is at least partially due to the year's data being incomplete at time of writing, but

the data point was included to show that even with only year-to-date figures available 2021 had a significant increase in condo sales.

Affordable Housing

Massachusetts has a housing supply problem and a housing affordability problem. Housing is becoming less affordable across the United States, but prices in the Boston area are rising particularly fast. Under G.L. c. 40B, §§ 20-23 (usually known as Chapter 40B), the state has set a goal that at least 10 percent of the housing units in every city and town (except Boston) will be affordable to low-income households. The income limits used to determine maximum affordable sale prices and rents are set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In general, a household with income that

does not exceed 80 percent of the region's area median income (AMI) is eligible to live in a deed-restricted affordable housing.

The Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) is the state-administered list of all housing units recognized as “affordable” according to criteria set forth by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Housing included on the SHI must be safe and suitable for the size of the household living in it, protected by a long-term, enforceable deed restriction, and made available to income-eligible people in a non-discriminatory manner. Walpole has a total of eleven developments on the SHI, which means Walpole's affordable housing stock is made up of a small number of developments with a relatively large numbers of units rather than more numerous but smaller projects. The two largest developments, The Preserve and Cedar Crossing, account for more than half the units on Walpole's SHI.

In 2022, the SHI in Walpole includes 9.82 percent of the Town's Census 2010 year-round housing inventory. Once all the data from Census 2020 have been released, DHCD will update the SHI by adjusting the number of year-round units, i.e., the denominator. **Table 2.6.7** summarizes Walpole's SHI. Most affordable developments are in central or southern Walpole, with the 157-unit Moose Hill project located in East Walpole.

Housing affordability problems do not exclusively affect people with low incomes, although low-income households often feel housing cost burdens most acutely. According to HUD, a household is burdened by its housing costs when those costs exceed 30 percent of the household's total income.

Table 2.6.7. Walpole's Subsidized Housing Inventory

Development Name	SHI Units	Tenure	Expires	Comp. Permit Used	Subsidizing Agency
Walpole Way	8	Rental	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
Neponset View Terrace	64	Rental	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
Diamond Pond Terrace	54	Rental	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Ellis Street	12	Rental	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
The Preserve	300	Rental	Perpetuity	Yes	MassHousing, DHCD
DDS Group Homes	34	Rental	N/A	No	DDS
DMH Group Homes	21	Rental	N/A	No	DMH
Sterling Lane Condominiums	4	Ownership	Perpetuity	Yes	MassHousing
The Residences At Moose Hill	157	Rental	Perpetuity	Yes	MassHousing
Cedar Crossing/Cedar Edge	226	Mix	Perpetuity	Yes	MassHousing
Moose Hill Condominiums	2	Ownership	Perpetuity	Yes	MassHousing
Total	882	Subsidized units as a % of year-round units: 9.82%			
Source: DHCD					

Almost half (48.1 percent) of Walpole's renters across all income levels are housing cost burdened. Two-thirds (66.7 percent) of households earning 80 percent AMI or less are burdened by housing costs. Over 90 percent of homeowners earning 30 percent AMI or less are burdened by housing costs. Despite Walpole's progress toward the 10 percent threshold for SHI-eligible housing, there are still significant housing needs unaddressed by Chapter 40B.

Historic Trends

Map 2.6.1 identifies residential structures by the year each structure was built, based on Walpole's tax assessment data. The oldest housing is located

on smaller lots in and around Downtown Walpole and East Walpole. Before the twentieth century, housing was built in traditional New England village patterns around the town center and industrial areas. Like many communities in Greater Boston, Walpole experienced a post-World War II suburban housing boom due to favorable mortgage lending programs for White, middle-class families and veterans, and the convenient access to employment centers offered by the emerging interstate highway system. In response to growth in housing demand, new single-family subdivisions were built in the former agricultural areas in the north and south of Walpole. This has remained the dominant housing production trend in Walpole into the twenty-first century, but today, there remains little unprotected,

Table 2.6.8. Single-Family Housing Characteristics (by Year Built and by Zoning District)

Year Built	Era	# homes	Avg. Floor Area (sq. ft.)	Avg. Rooms	Avg. Height (stories)	Avg. Lot Area (Acres)	Average FAR	Avg. Building to Land Value
To 1870	Colonial through Early Industrial Periods	83	4,217	8	1.76	1.74	0.149	1.16
1871-1920	Later Industrial	597	3,290	7	1.77	0.61	0.222	0.95
1921-1945	Inter-War Period	571	3,184	7	1.61	0.48	0.221	0.91
1946-1970	Postwar Baby Boom	2,476	3,151	7	1.36	0.53	0.168	0.91
1971-1990	Late Cold War	1,360	4,440	8	1.71	0.89	0.146	1.26
1991-2010	Millennial	1,212	5,901	9	1.94	1.01	0.205	1.63
Since 2010	Post-Millennial	315	6,557	9	1.91	0.86	0.246	1.79
Zoning District	Median Year Built	# homes	Avg. Floor Area (sq. ft.)	Avg. Rooms	Avg. Height (stories)	Avg. Lot Area (Acres)	Average FAR	Avg. Building to Land Value
GR	1937	990	3,225	7	1.62	0.34	0.262	0.97
R	1986	1,395	5,776	8	1.81	1.44	0.125	1.45
RA	1976	1,242	4,249	8	1.65	0.71	0.182	1.25
RB	1960	2,919	3,593	7	1.54	0.52	0.184	1.05
B, CBD, HBD	1920	22	2,763	6	1.59	0.44	0.242	0.89
I, LM	1905	46	2,772	6	1.58	0.64	0.190	1.02
TOTAL SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES:		6,614						
Source: Walpole Assessor's Database								

easy-to-develop land on which to construct single-family homes. Much of Walpole's recent housing growth has been through multifamily apartment complexes in and around commercial areas, notably two large apartment complexes in the Central Business District.

SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING

Single-family homes make up a large majority of Walpole's housing stock. There is considerable mix of housing sizes and architectural styles, depending

on when and where they were built. The Walpole tax assessment data indicate that there are about 6,600 lots with a single-family dwelling (see [Table 2.6.8](#)). Newer homes built since the 1990s tend to be larger and taller, although there are not many homes in Walpole over two or two-and-a-half stories tall.

About 44 percent of single-family homes are in the Residence B (RB) District, which is more than twice the number of homes in the next-most common district. The bottom half of [Table 2.6.8](#) shows selected

characteristics for the single-family residences in each residential zoning district as well as those in commercial and industrial zones. The relatively early median year built for the homes in business and industrial zones indicate that most of them were built pre-zoning, following natural development patterns. The "building to land value" in Table 2.6.8 is a simple ratio of the assessed value of the structure on a parcel to the parcel's land value. A ratio above 1.00 means that the building is worth more than the land it is situated on, and a ratio below 1.00 means that

the land is more valuable than the building. The further a ratio is from 1.00, the greater the difference between building and land value. Using this metric, Table 2.6.8 shows that single-family homes built between 1871 and 1970 are now, on average, worth less than the land they were built on. The same is true on average for homes in the GR District and Walpole's various business districts. Lots with low building to land value ratios are also common in parts of the RB district, especially near Downtown. A low building to land value ratio may indicate an increased likelihood that the existing home will be torn down and rebuilt, as an investor could increase the value of the entire property by building a new dwelling.

Like the building to land value, the floor area ratio (FAR) is a simple ratio that compares the total floor area of a building to the area of the lot on which it is located. A high FAR means that a building (in Table 2.6.8, a single-family home) is larger for its lot size. FAR is a way to quantify density and - indirectly - some aspects of neighborhood character. A high FAR indicates a large amount of built area in a smaller space. This can manifest in taller buildings, lots with less empty space like yards, or smaller lots. An example of a low-FAR lot might be a single farmhouse with large open fields.

Homes built since 1990 have the highest FARs, although those built on smaller lots between 1871 and 1945 also had relatively high FARs. Post-WWII, FARs decreased, corresponding with a shift towards larger lots. Older, more densely populated areas of Walpole like the GR District have a higher average single-family lot FAR, as well as some of the Town's newer subdivisions in the RA District.

Table 2.6.9. CoStar Large (5+ Units) Rental Market Summary

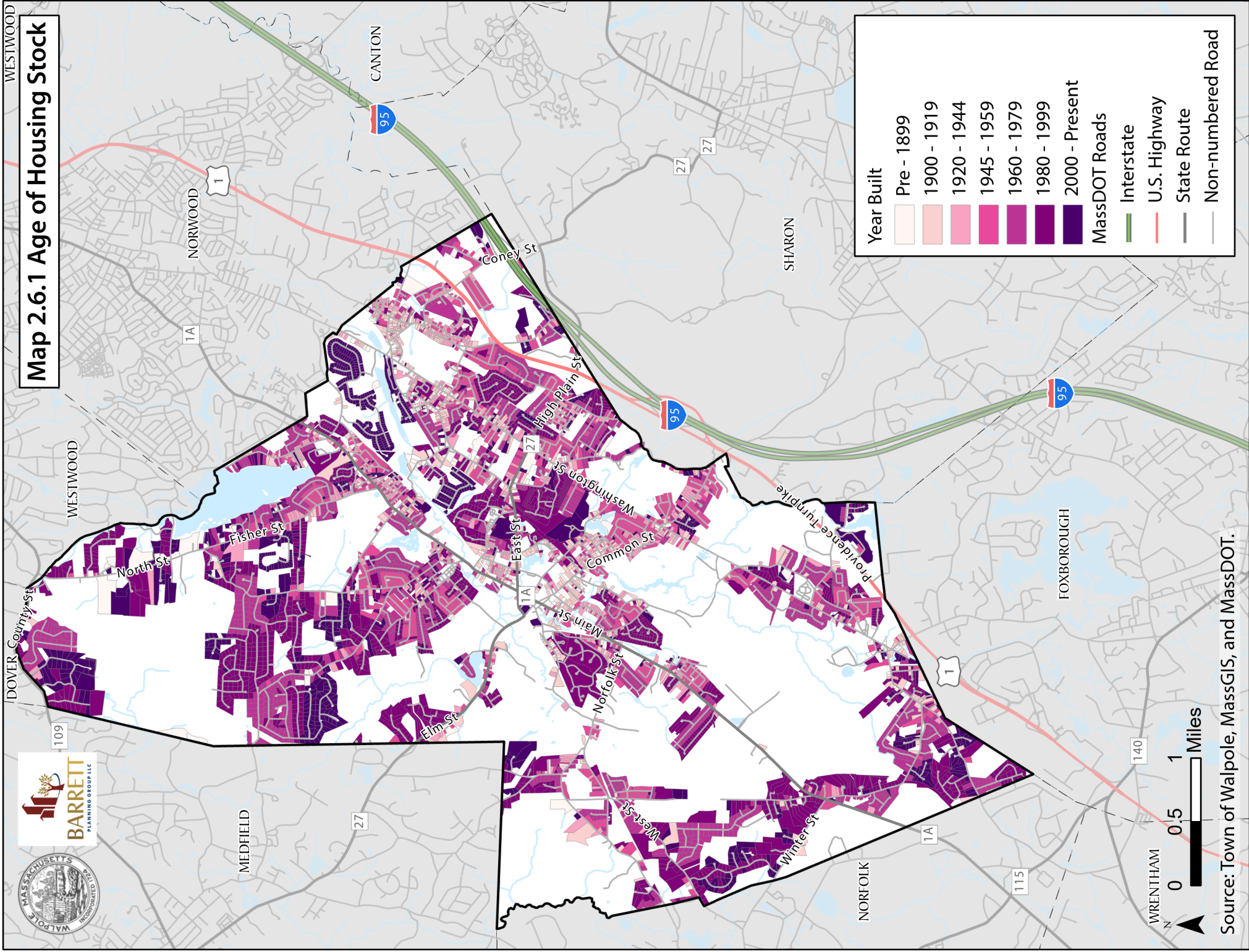
	Vacancy Rate	Market Asking Rent	Annual Rent Growth	Inventory Units	Under Construction
2021 YTD	3.1%	\$2,254	10.3%	8,914	0
2020	7.4%	\$2,041	-3.1%	8,866	48
2019	5.5%	\$2,105	3.5%	7,975	939
2018	5.3%	\$2,033	1.4%	7,905	921
2017	6.6%	\$2,004	2.5%	7,568	337
2016	5.6%	\$1,956	1.7%	7,246	502
2015	6.6%	\$1,923	5.6%	6,948	312
2014	3.8%	\$1,821	3.7%	6,569	656
2013	3.8%	\$1,755	2.2%	6,569	0
2012	4.4%	\$1,718	2.5%	6,569	0
2011	4.5%	\$1,676	1.6%	6,329	240

Source: CoStar, December 23, 2021

MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

Walpole has seen an influx in large-scale multifamily developments. Walpole has five apartment buildings three stories or taller, almost all built since 2004. Out of the seventeen properties classified as apartments with more than eight units, seven are in commercial districts and ten are in residential districts, indicating a break with traditional residential development patterns. Proximity to Walpole's MBTA Commuter Rail station and the ability to walk to downtown businesses have made the Central Business District an attractive location for market-rate apartments. Two of these developments, Union & West and Liberty Station Apartments, both completed in 2020, have added hundreds of apartments to the Town's housing stock. There have also been several affordable multifamily developments created through the comprehensive permit system under Chapter 40B.

Table 2.6.9. summarizes trends for large (over 5 units) rental properties in Walpole's market area. CoStar, a major source of real estate market data, places Walpole in the context of its regional market, which includes other towns along the Route 1 corridor. From 2011 through 2020, there was steady growth in the market asking rent and increase in the number of rental units. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused rents to drop and vacancies to increase, as they did nationally. However, as of December 2021, rents had not only returned to pre-pandemic levels but reached a new high, and vacancy rates are at their lowest in the ten-year period. Vacancy rates may rise due to many new units coming on to the market, but few vacancies and rising rents indicate a growing market that may be more difficult for renters to navigate.



2.7.

Transportation

Introduction

A community's transportation system should provide safe and efficient mobility for all transportation modes and connections to regional facilities. Residents, businesses, students, visitors, and emergency services rely on an available and quality transportation network. Maintaining and enhancing transportation infrastructure and services can attract and respond to new development and facilitate expansion of a community's tax base. The transportation system also affects town resources, community character, and quality of life of new and existing residents. The following components and features of the transportation system are described in this section of the Master Plan:

- Travel Characteristics
- Public Transportation
- Roadways
- Traffic Volumes
- Roadway Safety
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations
- Parking
- Maintenance of Infrastructure

Travel Characteristics

Walpole's population reached 26,383 in 2020, an increase of almost 9.6 percent since 2010 (24,070 population), and an increase of 15.6 percent since 2000. Since 2010, Norfolk County has experienced an increase of around 8.2 percent, and Massachusetts has experienced an increase of 7.4 percent. The local population increase has resulted in more people walking, more vehicles, and more traffic than before.

JOURNEY TO WORK

Figure 2.7.1 shows the most popular work destinations for Walpole residents based on the most recent data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2011-2015 Five Year Estimate.¹ Where residents work reflects the availability of jobs and transportation options. As shown in the figure, an estimated 2,690 Walpole residents (approximately 22 percent of workers) work in Walpole. An estimated total of 2,359 residents (19 percent of workers) are employed in Boston. Many Walpole residents also work within nearby communities such as Norwood (903) and Westwood (387). The high number of people working in Boston indicates some residents may live in Walpole due to its close proximity to the city and the relative ease of accessing Boston jobs. Those commuting to Boston benefit from the presence of a train station, bus line, and highway access in Walpole.



Figure 2.7.2 shows the major residence locations for people working in Walpole based on the most recent data from the American Community Survey 2011-2015 Five-Year Estimate. Approximately 2,690 of people who work in Walpole also live in Walpole (26 percent). An estimated total of 561 Boston residents (6 percent) work in Walpole. People who work

¹ Note to Master Plan Committee: the data set used for Figure 2.7.1 is the most current information available from the Census Bureau for commuter origins and destinations. Other tables and charts in the Master Plan are based on more recent data.

in Walpole also come from nearby towns including North Attleborough, Attleboro, and Norwood. Overall, more people commute from Walpole than commute to Walpole shown by the high number of residents commuting to Boston. The relatively high

number of Boston residents working in Walpole represents a reverse commute pattern.

Figure 2.7.1 Workplace Locations of Walpole Residents

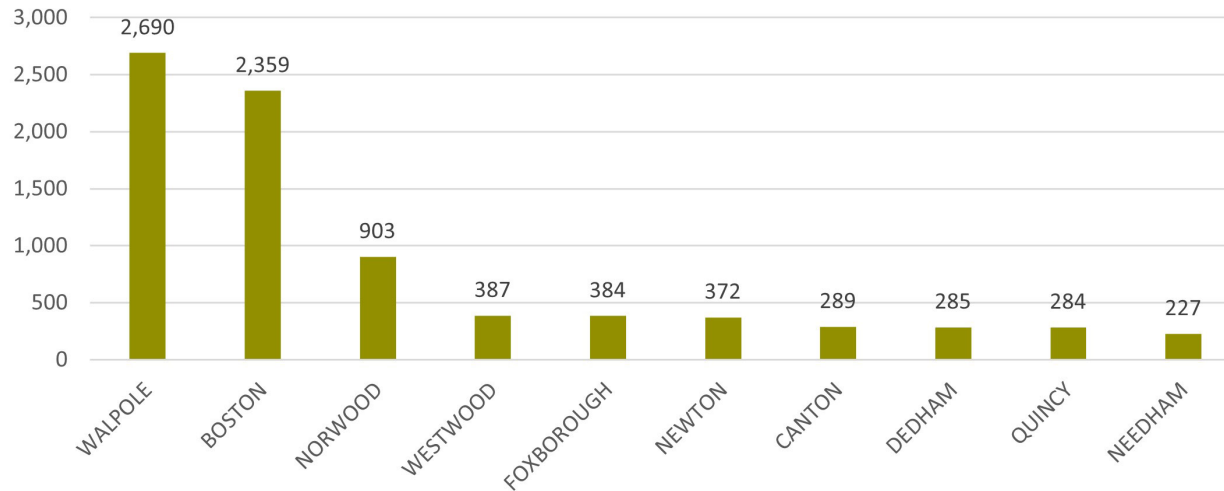
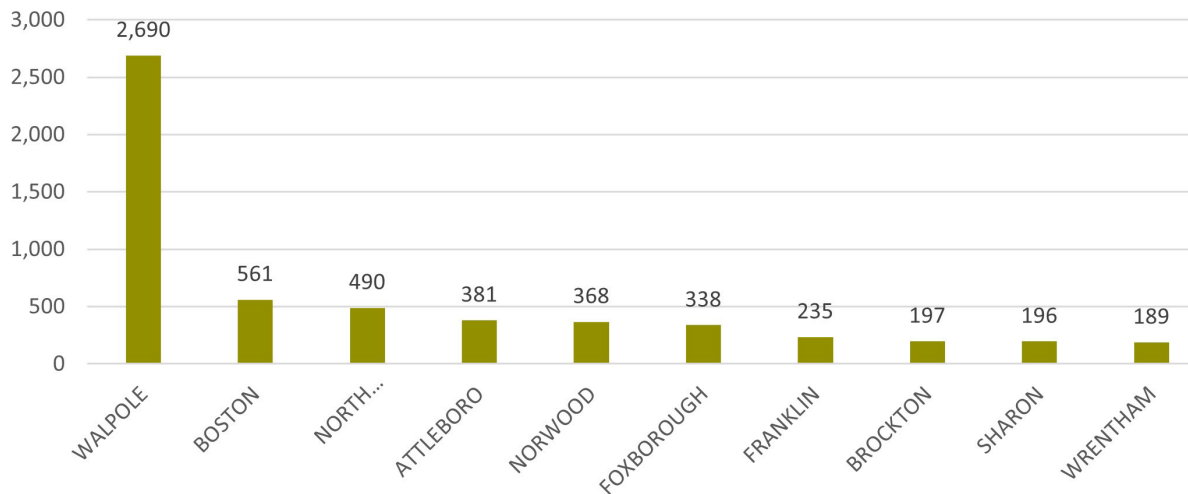


Figure 2.7.2 Residence Locations People Working in Walpole



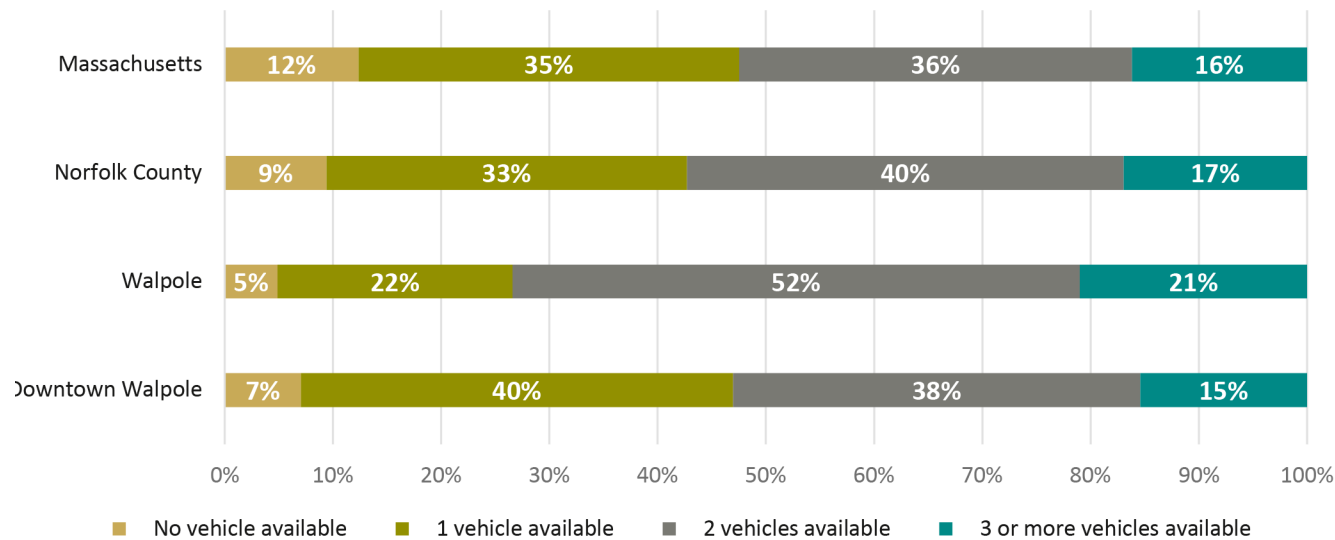
VEHICLES AVAILABLE

Figure 2.7.3 shows the estimated number of vehicles available per household for Downtown Walpole, the Town of Walpole as a whole, Norfolk County, and the State of Massachusetts based on the U.S. Census American Community Survey. The percentage of households in Walpole with access to two or more vehicles is 73 percent, which is greater than the percentage of households in the state (53 percent) and Norfolk County (57 percent). When looking at just Downtown Walpole, the percentage of households with two or more vehicles is 53 percent, comparable to the State and Norfolk County. Approximately 5 percent of Walpole households do not have access to a vehicle (transit dependent). This is less than the state average of over 12 percent and the county average of over 9 percent. The generally higher vehicle ownership of households in Walpole reflects the degree to which residents town-wide depend on an automobile, while the lower vehicle ownership in the downtown area indicates a lower reliance on vehicles closer to the train station, bus, and downtown commercial district.

COMMUTE MODES AND TRAVEL TIMES

In 2019 (the most recent year for which the data have been reported), an estimated 73.3 percent of residents drove alone, 11.6 percent used public transportation, and 5.7 percent carpoolled. Just 0.8 percent walked, and 1.3 percent took a taxi, motorcycle, bicycle or other means, and 5.7 percent worked from home. The estimated percentage of Walpole residents commuting to work via public transit was slightly higher than the statewide average of 10.4 percent, but lower than the Norfolk County average of 14.6 percent (See also, Section 2.1, Economic Development). Walpole's commuter rail station and bus access offer residents the option

Figure 2.7.3 Vehicles Available per Household



to take transit to Boston. The estimated percentage (73.3 percent) of residents driving alone to work was higher than both Norfolk County (67.5 percent) and the state as a whole (69.9 percent). The number of residents walking to work (0.8 percent) was lower than both Norfolk County (3.7 percent) and the state (4.9 percent). This indicates that there are fewer mixed residential, office, and commercial developments in Walpole than in other areas. It is important to note, during the pandemic, the work from home share was significantly higher than before COVID-19.

Approximately 40 percent of Walpole residents have an average commute of less than 30 minutes; 34 percent, 30-60 minutes; and 26 percent, an hour or more. The mean travel time to work for Walpole residents is 38 minutes, longer than the Norfolk County average of 35 minutes and the Massachusetts average of 30 minutes. The longer mean travel time to work in Walpole likely reflects the commutes of

Walpole residents commuting to Boston, a journey that can take up to an hour each way regardless of transportation mode. With the rise of remote working options during the COVID-19 pandemic, Walpole workers who previously had commutes longer than the Massachusetts average have benefited from working from home and may desire increased hybrid work options in the future.

The future of commuting patterns in Walpole and the region is still uncertain. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, many employers and workers have made unprecedented, rapid changes to commuting routines and requirements. Today, many employees still work from home. Both commuting patterns prior to March 2020 and the recent increase in remote working behavior offer indicators of the future commute of Walpole residents. Walpole residents with long commutes before the pandemic may want more options including work

from home and flexible work schedules. Based on travel patterns before and during the pandemic, residents will continue to drive and take transit to commute to work, as well as work from home.

Public Transportation

Walpole is fortunate to have one active commuter rail station, and bus service within its limits. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) operates both the bus and rail service in Walpole, offering connections to MBTA routes serving destinations across the eastern side of Massachusetts, and Amtrak routes with frequent service along the Northeast United States. When the planning team asked residents “What are your favorite things about Walpole?”, residents noted the convenient location and ease of using the MBTA as one of the top benefits of living in Walpole. **Map 2.7.1** shows the

locations of public transportation infrastructure in Walpole.

COMMUTER RAIL

Walpole has one active MBTA commuter rail station, Walpole Station located on West Street. The second MBTA station in Walpole, Plimptonville Station on Plimpton Street, closed in March 2021 as a result of COVID-19 service cuts. Both stations are on the Franklin line, which runs from Franklin to Boston's South Station. The average daily inbound boardings for Walpole station and Plimptonville station reported by the MBTA in 2012 and 2018. Walpole Station grew in ridership from 2012 to 2018 from 635 to 740 inbound weekday boardings. Plimptonville station had only twelve inbound weekday boardings in 2018, and was serviced by just one train per day, likely explaining the station's pandemic closure. Commuter rail ridership has recovered slowest across MBTA modes during the COVID-19 pandemic, and fewer commuters ride the service compared to before the pandemic.

The 2022 daily weekday fare for Walpole Station (MBTA Commuter Rail Zone 4) is \$8.75 one-way to or from Boston and \$281 for a monthly pass. Additionally, weekend riders on the MBTA commuter rail to and from Walpole can use the \$10 weekend pass with unlimited rides for one weekend. According to winter 2022 MBTA schedules, commuter rail trains to Boston depart from Walpole Station 19 times per weekday, roughly every hour, between 5:30 AM and 11:30 PM. On weekends, commuter rail trains to Boston depart from Walpole Station nine times, or roughly every two hours between 5:50 AM and 10:30 PM. The surface parking lot at Walpole Station has 345 parking spaces, including

Table 2.7.1. Classification of Roads in Walpole

Roadway Class	Miles of Roadway	% Roadway Miles
Interstate	1.67	1%
Arterial	29.05	17%
Collector	24.04	15%
Local	112.06	67%
Total	166.82	100%
Source: MassDOT Road Inventory 2018		

four accessible spaces. According to the MBTA, the Walpole Station commuter rail parking lot has spaces available throughout the weekday. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MBTA parking lot filled up to capacity most days.²

BUS

Walpole is serviced by one MBTA bus route. Route 34E provides service between Walpole Center and Forest Hills Station, with stops in Norwood, Westwood, Dedham, and Roslindale. In 2019, 3,171 people boarded Route 34E on an average weekday, 2,356 people boarded Route 34E on the average Saturday, and 1,693 people boarded Route 34E on the average Sunday. Between 2016 and 2019, Route 34E experienced the highest daily boardings in 2017 and the fewest in 2016. The higher ridership in 2017 reflected higher ridership across the MBTA bus system that year. Buses along the route depart roughly every twenty to thirty minutes on weekdays and weekends.

SHUTTLE SERVICE FOR SENIORS AND RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Town operates a free shuttle service through the Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator. This includes service to and from medical appointments,

local shopping, and the Senior Center. Walpole residents aged 60 and over, as well as residents with a disability, are eligible for the service.

Roadways

Roadway classifications can be broken down into a hierarchy which ranges from interstates, providing high levels of vehicle mobility and low levels of vehicle access, to local roadways, providing low levels of vehicle mobility and high levels of access. Table 2.7.2 shows the total length of each classification of roadway in Walpole and **Map 2.7.2** illustrates the roadway classification system in Walpole.

INTERSTATES

Interstate roadways provide the highest level of vehicle mobility and the lowest level of access to abutting properties. Interstate 95 (I-95) serves Walpole running along the east side of town. Access to I-95 in Walpole is provided from Old Post Road. Access from Route 1 is provided in Sharon. I-95 provides regional access to many major cities along the East Coast, including Providence, Boston, and New York. Less than two miles of I-95 runs through Walpole.

² McCabe Enterprises and Pare Corporation, "Downtown Walpole Parking & Economic Development Strategy," *Town of Walpole*, 2018.

ARTERIALS

Arterial roadways provide the second highest level of vehicle mobility and are not primarily intended to provide access to abutting properties. Walpole contains approximately 29 miles of arterials making up 17 percent of its transportation network. Route 1 (Boston-Providence Highway) and Route 27 (East Street) are major arterials, while West Street west of the Norfolk Street and West Street Intersection, Norfolk Street, Route 1A (Main Street), North Street north of Fisher Street, Fisher Street, Common Street, Washington Street, Winter Street west of Main Street, and Water Street are minor arterials. The primary purpose of major arterials is to move heavy traffic efficiently and safely, while minor arterials typically move traffic between major arterials and provide moderate access to abutting properties.

- **Route 1** (also known as Boston-Providence Highway) is a north-south divided major arterial that, for much of its route, closely follows Interstate I-95 extending from Rhode Island to New Hampshire. Route 1 passes through the eastern side of Walpole and is accessed at the signalized intersections of Route 27 (High Plain Road) and Coney Street. Access is also provided at the signalized intersection at Union Street in Norwood, just northeast of the Walpole Town Line. Multiple right-in/right-out driveways serving commercial and retail businesses are provided along Route 1. Route 1 provides two lanes in each direction with additional turn lanes at signalized intersections.
- **Route 27** (also known as High Plain Street, East Street, Elm Street, and High Street) runs east-west through the center of Walpole. Route 27 continues southwest to Kingston, Massachusetts, and north to Chelmsford, Massachusetts. The

route provides access to Route 1, Interstate I-95, Downtown Walpole, and neighboring communities of Medfield, and Sharon. Route 27 generally provides one lane in each direction.

COLLECTOR ROADS

Collector roads move traffic from local streets to arterials. They provide moderate amounts of vehicle mobility and vehicle access to adjacent properties. Walpole contains approximately 24 miles of collector roadways, making up 15 percent of its roadway network. In Walpole, major collector roadways include North Street southeast of Fisher Street, East Street continuing north of the East Street and Route 27 (High Plain Street) intersection, Gould Street, High Street, Old Post Road, Kendall Street, Pine Street, Pleasant Street, Plimpton Street, Robbins Road, School Street, South Street, Stone Street, Summer Street, Union Street, a portion of West Street, and a portion of Winter Street.

LOCAL ROADWAYS

Local roadways provide the highest level of vehicle access to adjacent properties with the lowest level of vehicle mobility. Approximately 67 percent of all roadways in Walpole fall under this classification. It is typical for communities such as Walpole to have most local roadways under Town jurisdiction.

Traffic Volumes

Table 2.7.2 reports average daily traffic volumes on Walpole roadways from 2012-2021.

The data show that traffic volumes are heaviest on Interstate 95, Route 1, Route 1A (Main Street), and Route 27 (High Plain Street). Traffic volumes on High Plain Street, the only road for which data exists

over time, grew eight percent from an average daily traffic volume (ADT) of 16,227 in 2015 to 17,496 in 2018. Volumes decreased significantly in 2021, down to 15,287, reflecting a decrease in travel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ROADWAY SAFETY

Crash data available from MassDOT indicate that 4,150 crashes, or an average of approximately 415 crashes per year, have occurred in Walpole from 2012 to 2021. The total number of crashes each year has fluctuated since 2012, with a low of 289 in 2020 and a high of 493 in 2007. From 2017 to 2020, the total number of crashes trended downward, with a record low in 2020 (due to fewer vehicle trips during the COVID-19 pandemic). While more crashes occurred in 2021 than 2020, the number of crashes still declined compared to 2019. Of the 4,150 crashes from 2012 to 2021, 43 crashes involved pedestrians and 18 crashes involved bicyclists. During the same period, 3,125 crashes resulted in no injuries, 548 resulted in possible injury, 353 resulted in minor injury, 53 resulted in serious injury, and six crashes resulted in fatalities. Out of the six fatal crashes, one crash involved a pedestrian and occurred at the intersection of Diamond Street and East Street. Of the 59 crashes resulting in a serious injury or death, 14 involved an older driver, 14 involved a younger driver, 6 involved a pedestrian, 3 involved a bicyclist, and 7 involved a motorcyclist.

MassDOT maintains a database of top crash locations in the state. This database includes locations identified under the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) in addition to a list of the top 200 crash locations in the state.

For the years of 2017-2019, the following intersections in Walpole were identified as HSIP clusters:

- Route 1 (Providence Boston Highway) at Route 27 (High Plain Street)
- Washington Street at Short Street and Polley Lane
- Route 1A (Main Street) at Willett Street
- Route 1 (Providence Boston Highway) at Coney Street
- East Street at School Street
- West Street at Norfolk Street

Table 2.7.3 shows the total number of crashes at intersections experiencing high numbers of crashes for the three most recent years available through the MassDOT Crash database (2017-2019). It is noted the Department of Public Works receives frequent requests for speed humps on Norfolk Street to slow traffic speeds. **Map 2.7.3** shows these high crash locations.

The following transportation-related projects are currently planned in Walpole:

- Washington Street at Short Street Signal Construction: Department of Public Works staff are seeking \$650,000 in funding for a new signal at this high crash intersection.
- Route 1A North Reconstruction: The state is investing \$20 million in reconstructing the entire roadway from Walpole town center to the Norwood town line. The reconstruction includes roads, sidewalks, ADA improvements, intersection redesign at Fisher, Gould, Mylod and North Streets, a bridge replacement over the Neponset River, the installation of new traffic signals at three intersections, and traffic signal upgrades. Upon completion of the project, the state will transfer

Table 2.7.2. Average Daily Traffic Volumes in Walpole

Location	2012	2015	2016	2017	2018	2021
High Plain Street west of Route 1	15,915	16,227			17,496	15,287
Route 27 at I-95 Northbound On-Ramp			5,019			
I-95 Southbound Ramp to Route 27			6,351			
Main Street south of North Street				20,688		
North Street west of Route 1A				5,532		
Main Street north of North Street				18,995		
Main Street north of Stop and Shop Driveway				18,855		
Main Street north of Gould Street				20,391		
Gould Street west of Route 1A				2,423		
Main Street north of Burrill Street				15,917		
Fisher Street west of Route 1A				7,299		
Main Street south of Bullard Street				13,286		
Willett Street east of Route 1A				5,962		
Bullard Street west of Route 1A				6,219		
Plimpton Street east of Route 1A					3,463	
Interstate I-95 (Estimate)			109,790			
Route 1 (Estimate)			31,135			

Source: MassDOT Transportation Data Management System, MassDOT Road Inventory File 2018

Table 2.7.3. High Crash Locations 2017-2019

Intersection	Total Crashes 2017-2019
Route 1 (Providence Boston Highway) at Route 27 (High Plain Street)	47
Washington Street at Short Street / Polley Lane	36
Route 1A (Main Street) at Willett Street	36
Route 1 (Providence Boston Highway) at Coney Street	23
East Street at School Street	22
West Street at Norfolk Street	14
Source: MassDOT Interactive Mapping for HSIP Clusters 2017-2019	

jurisdiction of the road to the Town of Walpole. The state expects the project to take about five years to complete.

- **MBTA Bus Stop Improvements:** The MBTA is planning improvements to pedestrian accommodations and accessibility at several locations along Washington Street and High Plain Street, along with stop elimination on East Street. The Town Select Board approved the recommended changes at an April 20, 2021 Board meeting. Work is expected to begin within the next 1-2 years.
- **Sidewalk on Union Street:** The Town received a \$215,000 MassWorks grant to construct a new sidewalk on Union Street between Brook Lane and Route 1. The project is expected to improve pedestrian safety, enhance connectivity, and strengthen the connection to Walpole's local businesses.
- **Signal Upgrades in Downtown Walpole:** The

Town recently appropriated \$90,000 for signal upgrades recommended by the Downtown Traffic Study completed in 2018.

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

The following transportation-related projects were recently completed in Walpole:

- **Sidewalk on Norfolk Street:** The Town constructed a one-mile sidewalk extension on Norfolk Street.
- **Old Post School parking lot:** The Town recently reconstructed the parking lot. The lot has around seventy total spaces and two accessible spaces.
- **East Street, School Street, and High Plain Street Intersection Improvements:** The Town recently realigned the intersection to reduce pedestrian crossing distances and to slow traffic. East Street and School Street received a rectangular rapid flashing beacon.
- **Spring Brook Park Trail:** Completed in Spring of 2015, the Spring Brook Park Trail offers a short stretch of trail and a park for people in the downtown area from Route 27 to the Town Hall and the public library. The park also hosts the Walpole Farmer's Market.
- **Jarvis Farm Boardwalk:** Completed in 2018, the Town constructed a boardwalk connecting the east parcel of the Town Forest with Jarvis Farm along the School Meadow Brook wetland. The project was funded by a Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) trails grant applied for by the Walpole Trails Committee and funding from the Town.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations

Walpole has approximately seventy-four miles of sidewalks. Sidewalks extend along arterial roads, collector roads, and local neighborhood roads in Walpole, with more sidewalks closer to the downtown area. The Town and the Select Board have prioritized walkability and bikeability for the past five years, and the Town takes pride in residents' ability to walk to the library, playgrounds, train station, and public restrooms from Downtown Walpole. However, despite the presence of sidewalks in the downtown area, the lack of curb ramps compliant under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in Downtown Walpole present challenges to residents with disabilities, and residents at a public meeting have stressed that the downtown area could be more pedestrian friendly. Residents and Town staff have noted a desire to reroute through-traffic in the downtown area, particularly truck traffic, to create a more walkable area. This is especially true during town-wide celebrations in the center of town. Based on leadership interviews, there is also some interest in widening sidewalks and repurposing some on-street parking to accommodate outdoor dining in the downtown area.

Along with the downtown area, the Town has discussed adding sidewalks and a bike route along Route 1A to the downtown area. While the Department of Public Works (DPW) frequently receives requests for additional sidewalk, the DPW realizes they need to consider the challenges of keeping up with existing sidewalk maintenance. Residents and DPW both note the poor condition of some sidewalks across town. Many residents see walkability as a priority for the Town.

Walpole has one on-street bike lane along Fisher Street. The Town also has provided racks for bike parking at locations including the public library, the police station, and the train station.

Residents in Walpole love biking, hiking, walking dogs, and enjoying nature on Walpole's trails. The Town has an active trails committee, and several off-road trails exist for both biking and walking within the following recreational areas:

- The Town Forest
- Adams Farm
- The Pinnacle
- Mine Brook Area
- Birds Park
- Endean Road
- Jarvis Farm

The Bay Circuit Trail, an on- and off-road trail system from Newburyport to Kingston, uses Walpole's trails to offer connections through Walpole. The trail system offers wayfinding signage in the town.

A missing link in Walpole's trail system is the narrow Plimpton Street Bridge. A member of the Walpole Trails Committee notes the Town has hosted walking events along this trail that required a police escort due to unsafe conditions on the bridge. A connection across the bridge would offer further access for people walking and biking along this trail system.

The Metacomet Greenway trail is a proposed biking and walking facility. The trail, spanning seventeen miles from Walpole's southern border to the Rhode Island border and utilizing parts of the abandoned Old Colony rail line, is in early stages of development. The Town of Wrentham and the Town of Norfolk are currently assessing the trail's feasibility. The trail would offer opportunity for recreation for Walpole residents and could eventually serve as a bike route to destinations including the Walpole Outlets, Gillette Stadium, King Philip Regional High School, Fore Kicks Sports Complex and Golf Course, the Target, and Stop & Shop Complex by the I-495 and Route 1 interchange, the Wrentham State Forest, Plainville's town center, North Attleborough's town center, and South Attleboro's town center. At the Walpole town line, the trail could connect to the South Walpole Community Athletic Field and Winter Street. The Walpole Trails Committee has a liaison to this project.

Along with the Metacomet Greenway, the abandoned Old Colony rail line also left a 1/3 mile stretch of underused land by the Walpole Housing Authority that the Town is considering repurposing into a walking and biking trail. The Walpole Trails Committee are the main advocates for the project and have proposed a wood chip trail with a split rail fence limiting access from the trail to the Walpole Housing Authority. The project would offer improved walking and biking connectivity for both seniors going to the senior center and residents of the Walpole Housing Authority.

COMPLETE STREETS PROJECTS

The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding program provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities who adopt a Complete Streets Policy and develop a Prioritization Plan. The program funds projects making the public right of way accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and modes of travel, including walking, biking, driving, and using public transportation. The Town of Walpole adopted a Complete Streets Policy in 2018 and developed a Prioritization Plan. Walpole's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan includes thirty projects mainly in the downtown area, but also along Robbins Road, Pleasant Street, Washington Street, Common Street, and Lincoln Road.³ Seven projects have received funding, including bicycle parking in downtown and pedestrian accommodations on Robbins Road.⁴

Parking

Downtown Walpole has ten streets that allow on-street parking. Off-street parking is provided in nine public lots, as well as several private lots with parking restricted to customers, employees, or those with permits. The Town limits on-street parking in Downtown Walpole, as well as parking at the public lot on Glenwood Avenue, to two hours between 9:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Downtown Walpole also has parking lots at the playground, town hall, library, fire station, on Route 27, and on West Street. A survey conducted as part of the parking utilization study in 2018 found 97% of survey respondents (151 total respondents) reported they arrive in Downtown Walpole by car, demonstrating the need for parking.

5

³ Massachusetts Department of Transportation, "Walpole: Complete Streets Funding Program Project Prioritization Plan," March 8, 2019.

⁴ Massachusetts Department of Transportation, "Complete Streets Funding Program Tier 3 Project Application FY20 Round 2," May 11, 2020.

⁵ McCabe Enterprises and Pare Corporation, "Downtown Walpole Parking & Economic Development Strategy," *Town of Walpole*, 2018.

The surface parking lot at the MBTA Walpole Station has 354 spaces, with four accessible spaces. Plimptonville Station does not have parking.

The parking utilization study in 2018 found adequate parking in the downtown commercial areas with a few of the parking lots and on-street parking areas reaching capacity. At the time, the study found Walpole Station reached 90-100 percent capacity, but more recent information from the MBTA indicates parking is more freely available since the Covid-19 pandemic. Besides the train station parking, the parking areas in Downtown Walpole with at least 85 percent occupancy during at least one time period observed include Front Street on-street parking (nine spaces to the east and nine spaces to the west), West Street on-street parking (16 spaces to the north and three to the south), East Street on-street parking (nine spaces), and the West Street parking lot (34 spaces). The study indicates that certain parking areas in Downtown Walpole are consistently full, while others are underutilized. Some residents would prefer conversion of parking to outdoor dining or sidewalk, while others would like to see additional on-street parking. Generally, residents agree they would like to see a walkable, “parkable” downtown area.

for Walpole was 77, and in 2022 is estimated in the mid-70s. Map 2.7.4 shows the condition of roadways in Walpole.

BRIDGES

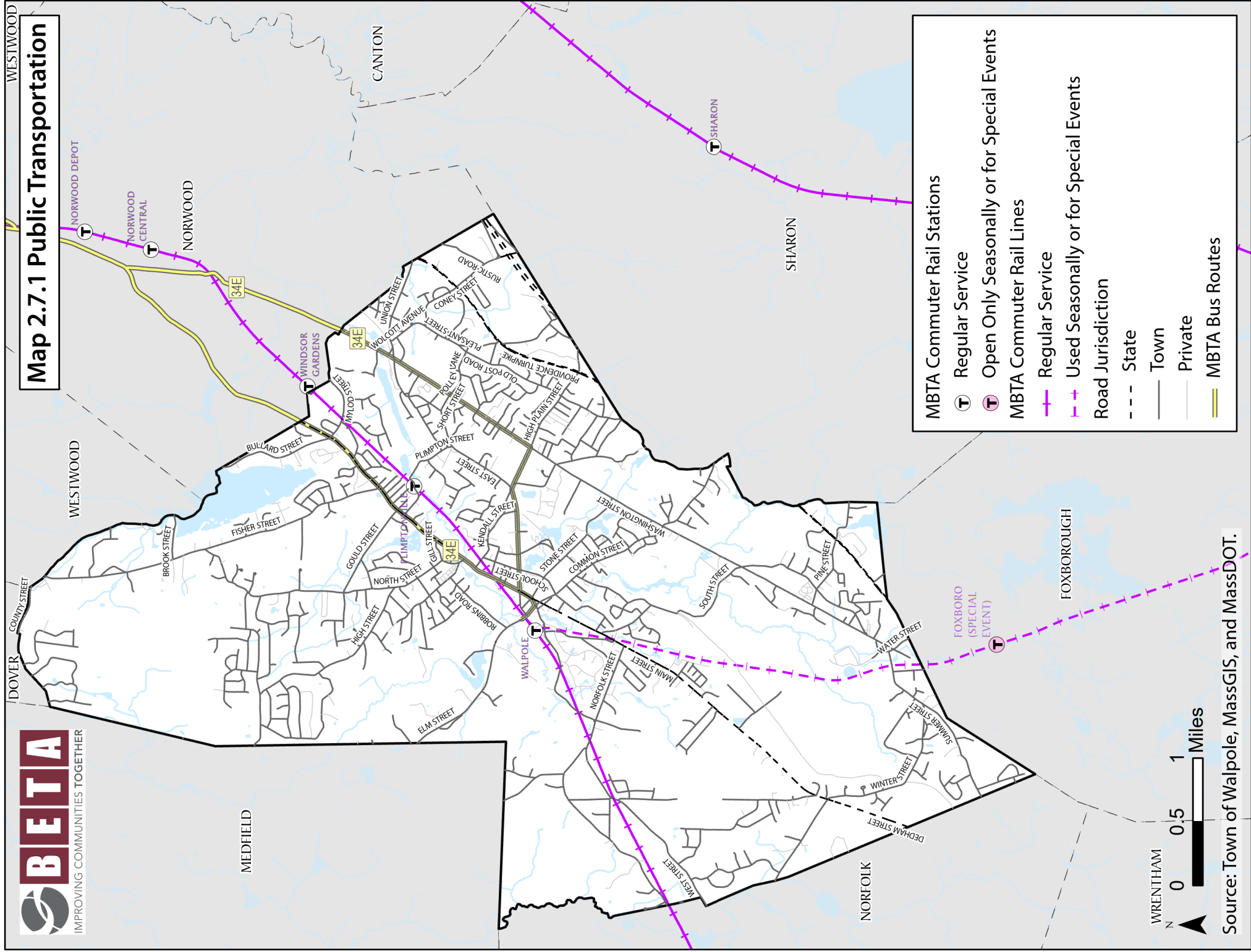
According to the most recently available data in MassDOT’s database, 31 bridges are in Walpole. Of the 31 bridges, MassDOT found one bridge was structurally deficient (Elm Street over the Neponset River) and one bridge was in an unknown condition (Summer Street over Ruckaduck Pond). Map 2.7.4 also shows the bridges in Walpole.

Maintenance of Infrastructure

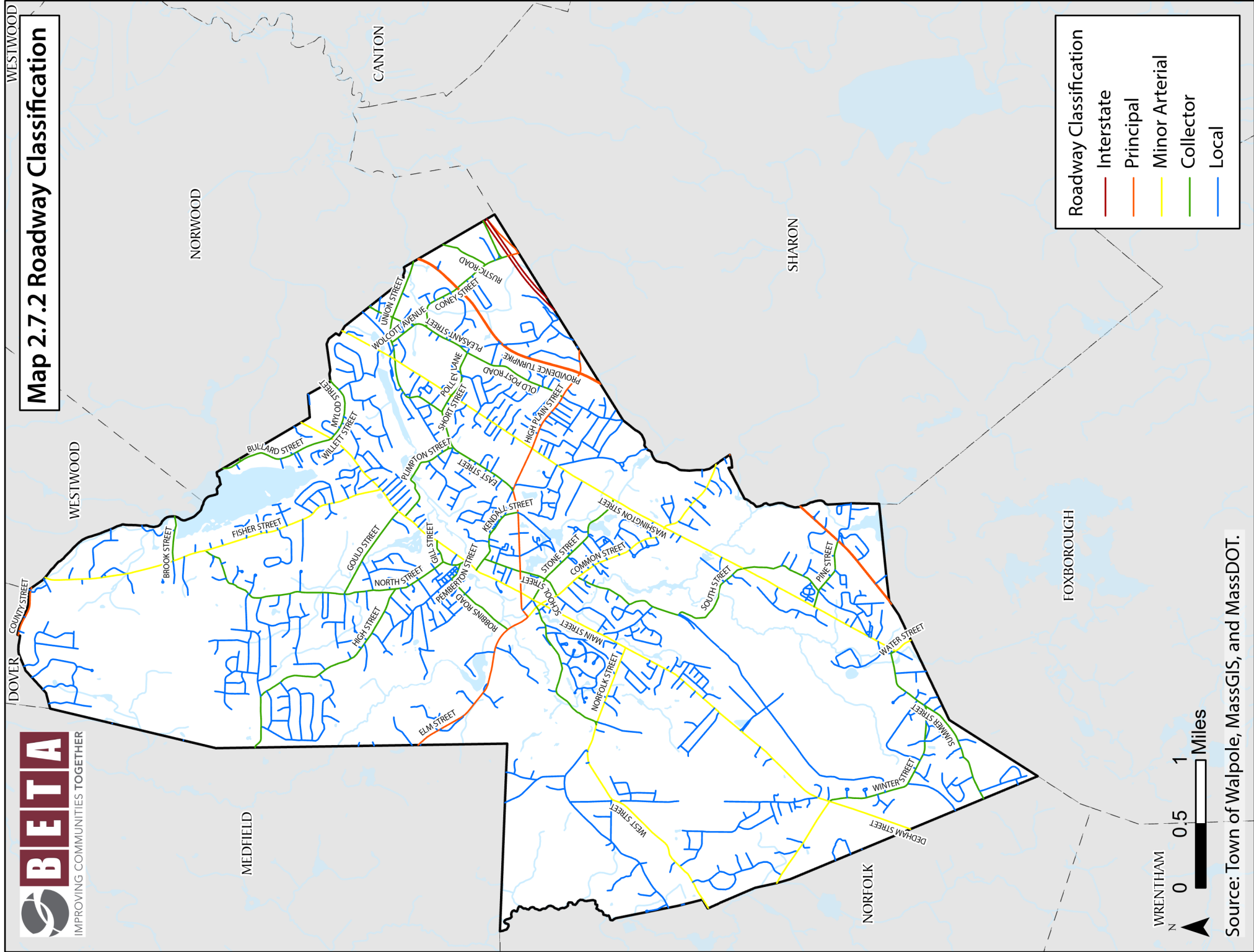
PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Town of Walpole implements a pavement management program to monitor the conditions of roadways and prioritize their repair. The GIS-based program collects and evaluates data about the condition of roadways in order to determine a Road Surface Rating (RSR) and schedule of maintenance. The RSR is a town-wide score between 0-100 indicating the overall pavement quality. In 2015, the RSR

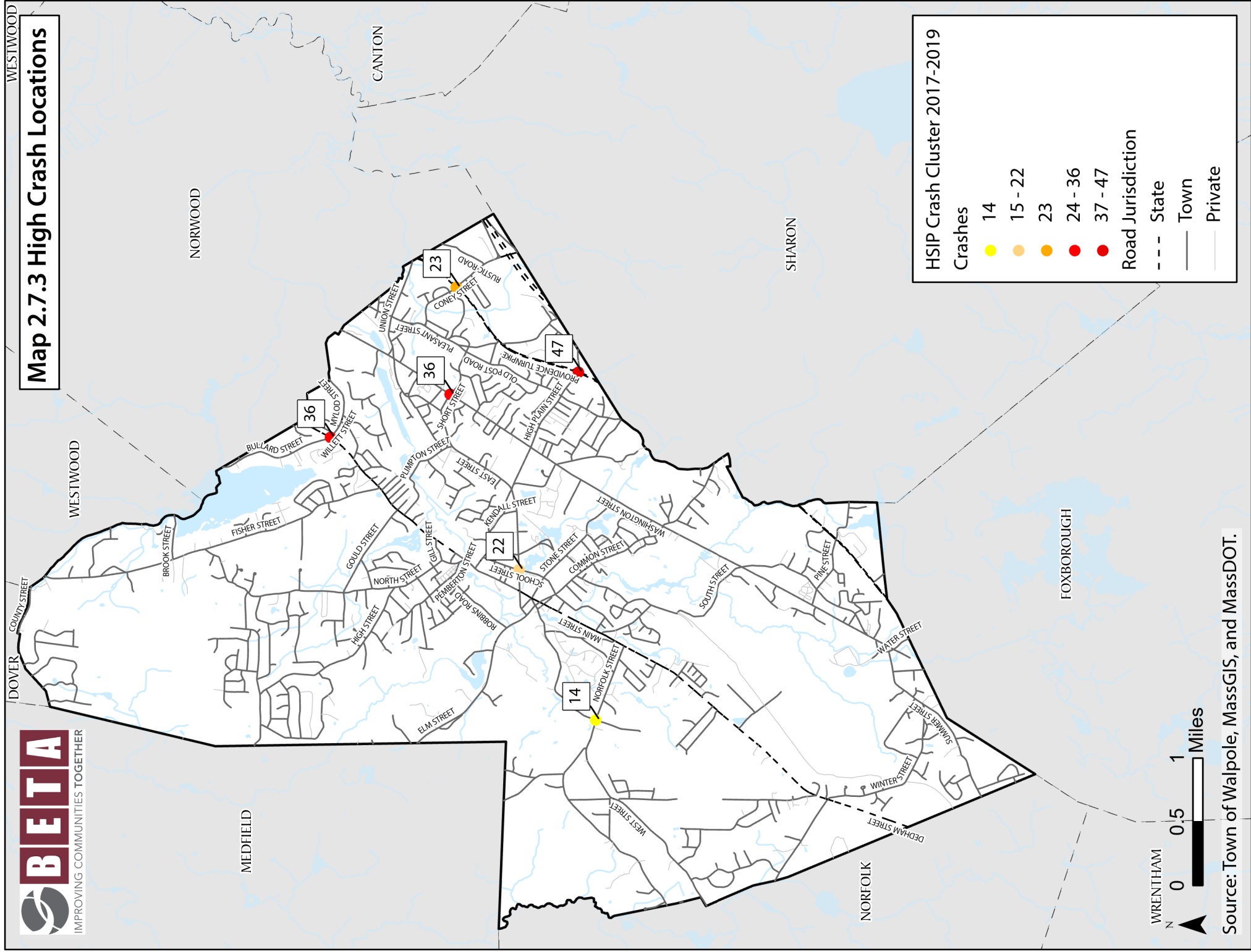
Map 2.7.1 Public Transportation



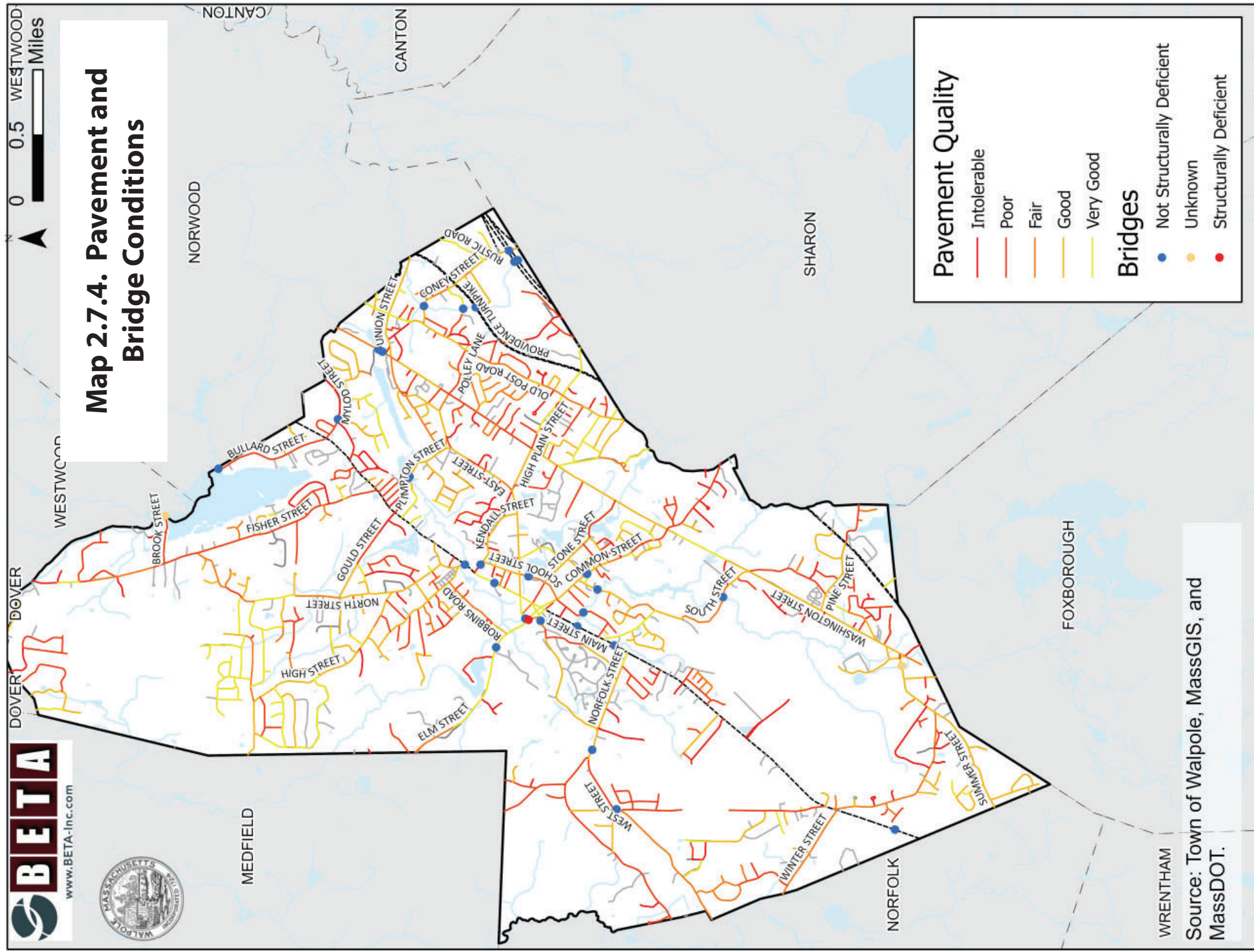
Map 2.7.2 Roadway Classification



Map 2.7.3 High Crash Locations



Map 2.7.4. Pavement and Bridge Conditions



2.8.

Community Facilities and Services



Key Findings

- Walpole has a dedicated staff and volunteer base to manage the variety of services and municipal facilities.
- Walpole has an excellent AA+ credit rating from S&P Global Ratings. This suggests the Town is well run, manages debt, and maintains healthy reserves.
- Most of the Town's facilities are recently constructed or renovated, including the Central Fire Station, Police Station, Library, Council on Aging, and DPW Garage. However, Old Town Hall requires attention. It needs a plan to preserve the space's historical integrity while ensuring it serves the Town in a meaningful way. Some proposed avenues include utilizing private investment, or a public-private partnership to encourage a combination of available uses.
- Walpole's population, particularly seniors, is growing. The Area Agency on Aging anticipates a 14 percent increase in people over 60 by 2025. Growth in the older adult population will place demand on particular services, including but not limited to the Council on Aging, Library, emergency medical, health services, and others.
- Walpole Public Schools will require attention to address energy efficiency and meet the Town's Energy Reduction Plan goals. Currently, schools comprise 52 percent of energy usage by department. Walpole High School uses the most energy of any building, at 19 percent.
- Each of the DPW's Divisions works hard to apply for grants, keep up with compounding work orders, and administer paperwork-intensive capital projects while contending with staff shortages, budget constraints, population growth, and changing state and federal regulatory requirements.
- Walpole's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes over \$43 million in department requests between 2019 and 2024. Over half involve water and sewer utility improvements.

Introduction

Public facilities and services reflect a town's operations, capacity, and priorities. Places where the community gathers, such as Town Hall, the Library, the Senior Center, and recreational facilities all contribute to the way the Town provides resident services, but these are not the only municipal institutions Walpole provides. The public schools are well regarded and loved by the community, and many families take pride in what the schools have to offer. The condition and quality of buildings and services indicate the investment and care that a community commits to public well-being.

Energy and utilities play a critical role in Town operations and quality of life. Access to sustainable, affordable energy in an emergency supports taxpayers and helps the Town achieve its economic and environmental goals. As a state-designated Green Community, Walpole has also developed an Energy Reduction Plan to reduce usage in municipal facilities by at least 20 percent by 2024. The Town also partners with Eversource to provide "Walpole Power Choice" under the Municipal Aggregation Plan.

Investment in facilities, services, and energy is costly but essential. Proper planning, management, and investment result in long-term savings and significantly extend the usefulness of property and equipment. The Town Administrator publishes the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to coordinate financing capital projects and acquiring assets. As departments continue to face space needs, the Town

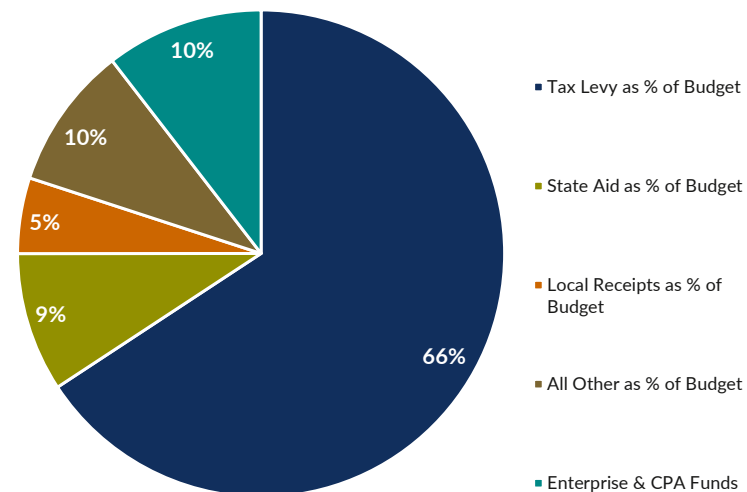
is always considering options and the expenditures involved.

Town Government

Public facilities provide the physical space for government services, while service delivery relies on workers and volunteers. Walpole is a \$109 million organization that meets well over half of the community's demands for service with locally generated revenue – mainly property tax revenue (Figure 2.8.1.)¹ The Town benefits from having strong management, sound financial policies and practices, tax base growth, and budgetary flexibility.²

Walpole's government is partially decentralized. A five-member elected Select Board oversees town government and directs municipal policy. The Town Administrator is the Chief Administrative Officer and serves under the Select Board's direction. The Town Administrator and department heads make the day-to-day decisions about most government functions. In addition to electing members of the Select Board, residents vote for Town Meeting Members for three-year terms to represent residents from each precinct. Representative Town Meeting is every Spring and Fall, and Town Election is every June.³ There are 35 elected officials on the Town's eight elected governing bodies: the Select Board, the Planning Board, the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners, the

Figure 2.8.1 Revenue by Source
(MA Municipal Data Bank)



Board of Library Trustees, the School Committee, the Walpole Housing Authority Board, the Board of Assessors, and the Town Moderator. In addition, there are 31 appointed Town boards, commissions, and committees. Municipal employees support volunteer bodies and carry out daily operations under the guidance of Town Administration. The Town employs 699 people: 193 full-time, 47 part-time, 202 Election Workers, and 257 seasonal/temporary employees.⁴

Although most services are local, Walpole partners with regional and state entities, including the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), MassDOT, and MCI-Cedar Junction. Major planning

¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services Data Analytics and Research Bureau, *Schedule A Reports (Revenues, Expenditures and More)*, "Revenue and Expenditures Report: Walpole, MA, February 12, 2021.

² S & P Global Ratings, *Summary: Walpole, Massachusetts; General Obligation*, February 12, 2021.

³ Town of Walpole, *A Resident's Guide to Walpole, MA*, Updated June 2021.

⁴ Town of Walpole, *Town of Walpole 2020 Annual Town Report*, December 31, 2020.

and transportation require collaboration with MAPC and the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Walpole is in MAPC's Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) subregion with 13 other communities. TRIC meets monthly to review issues of inter-municipal significance. Participants include local representatives, planners, Select Board and Planning Board members, and interested citizens.⁵

Public Buildings and Departments

Walpole recently made significant investments in municipal buildings. The Police Station, Center Fire Station, Senior Center, and Public Works garage each completed construction in the last five years. The Town recently approved a schematic design for a combined middle school in 2021, accommodating student of Bird and Johnson Middle Schools. The Johnson Middle School will be available upon the completion of the new combined middle school, and the Town is actively discussing to reuse that space to better serve the community, as that location is the site of two important pumping wells. Below is a list describing Walpole's primary facilities, including public schools. The Historic House is separately leased and managed and is therefore not on this list.⁶

Town Hall is on 135 School Street close to other Downtown Walpole facilities. The building was the former Stone School, built in 1952. It was home to the Council on Aging (COA) until 2019. Today, the 60,000 sq. ft. building contains two stories of administrative

offices and meeting spaces, and the former COA area is now Inspectional Services.⁷ Town Hall is home to several departments: Accounting, Assessing, the Collector/Treasurer, Community and Economic Development, Emergency Preparedness, Engineering, Human Resources Information Technology (IT), Purchasing, Sewer and Water, Solid Waste and Recycling, the Town Administrator, and the Town Clerk, along with the offices of elected boards such as the Planning Board.

There are reportedly no major upgrades needed at Town Hall at this time. The Building Maintenance Division remodeled several offices and the Main Meeting Room to improve function and appearance in 2019.⁸ The most pressing concerns are inadequate drainage along School Street and a lack of space to accommodate staff increases. The Assistant Town Administrator reports that developing a comprehensive staff plan, or a plan to determine the number of positions in the Town and to recruit workers with the skill to fill the positions, has been challenging due to the level of rapid growth Walpole is experiencing. Staff increases also come with additional storage needs.

Information Technology. The Information Technology (IT) Department in Town Hall serves every department, overseeing all hardware (fiber network, computers, etc.) and software infrastructure, including telecommunication and audio-visual (AV) systems, in Town facilities. IT staff include the



Director and a PC Support Technician. During COVID-19, IT launched the Town into a new era of remote operations. Investments made during that period facilitated the shift to videoconferencing as the principal form of communication. New installations and other changes allowed the department to revise the MUNIS accounting system, expand storage capacity, secure higher performance hardware, extend Wi-Fi access, bring new facilities into the network, and support Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff. IT will continue to implement equipment audits and replacements, updating technology to keep pace with data processing and new applications while combating cybersecurity threats.

Facility requirements include energy-efficient, compatible infrastructure with efficient backup systems that meet the Green Communities Energy Efficiency

⁵ The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, "Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC)," February 1, 2022. <https://www.mapc.org/get-involved/subregions/tric/#meetings>

⁶ The Metropolitan area Planning Council, *Town of Walpole Energy Reduction Plan 2020*, December 2020.

⁷ CDR Maguire, *Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Municipal Facilities Master Planning Study Final Report*, June 21, 2013.

⁸ Town of Walpole, *Town of Walpole 2019 Annual Town Report*, January 1, 2020.



Identification Measures. The IT Department must also work with Walpole Public School's Technology and Digital Learning Department on technological equipment and network upgrades and data sharing. There is an increasing need to digitize archived permits and plans in partnership with the Building Division and the Community and Economic Development Department. There will need to be an evaluation of the Town's data storage to meet archiving requirements.

Old Town Hall. Walpole's historic Old Town Hall sits on a 9,500 sq. ft. site at 980 Main Street (corner of Main and Stone Streets). The three-story building was constructed in 1881, renovated in 1983, and repointed in 1997. Once serving as a Town Hall and Court

Room, it became the Walpole Police Department (WPD) headquarters in the 1980s. Today, the 11,676 sq. ft. building is vacant. The Old Town Hall Reuse Committee made recommendations to the Select Board in 2019, but COVID-19 delayed moving forward with the project. Since then, the Select Board has asked the Reuse Committee to devise a definitive plan for the space.

The Old Town Hall is listed on the National Register for Historic Places. Its clock tower has remained relatively unchanged since initial construction. Over time, most renovations or alterations have been confined to the building's interior. There have been renovations to the basement to accommodate the Police Department's detention facility, and ceiling modifications allowed the second-floor hall space to become offices. The building as it exists today is not accessible to people with disabilities. Improvements in 1983 addressed some access issues such as elevator and bathroom upgrades and modifications

to door hardware. Nevertheless, the entire facility needs to be evaluated in light of current codes.

Walpole Public Schools. Walpole currently has five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The Town is in the process of building a new middle school with assistance from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The new facility will replace Bird Middle School and create a combined middle school for the Bird and Johnson Middle School student populations. MSBA approved the schematic design in April 2021, and the Town is now selecting a Construction Manager.⁹ Data on the existing school facilities are in **Table 2.8.1.**

Recent renovations include updates to Old Post Road School's reception area and Administration Office for better security and functionality. A new counter, glass wall, and HVAC equipment were also installed, as well as new floors, ceilings, and lighting. A section

Table 2.8.1. Walpole Public School District School Facilities

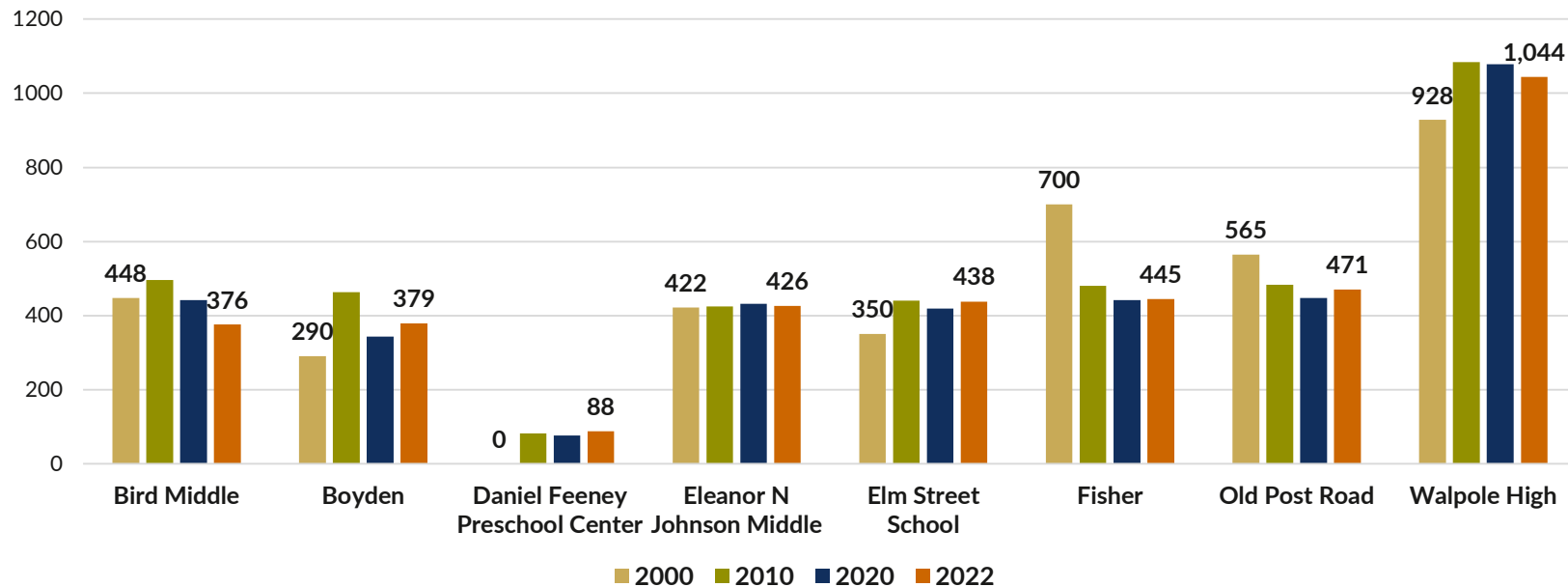
Name	Grades	Opened	Last Renovated	Floor Area	Enrollment
Bird Middle School	6-8	1961	1994	88,500	376
Boyden School	K-5	1932	2004	58,620	379
Daniel Feeney Preschool Center	PK	1998	2004	81,186	88
Eleanor N. Johnson Middle School	6-8	1970	2000	50,432	426
Elm Street School	PK-5	2004	2004	81,186	438
Fisher School	K-5	1955	1998	46,727	445
Old Post Road School	K-5	1964	1997	31,084	471
Walpole High School	9-12	1909	2001	182,382	1,044

Source: The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), "Walpole Public School District," 2022.

⁹ Walpole Public School District Middle School Project, "MS School Building Project: Project Information," February 12, 2022. <https://sites.google.com/walpole.k12.ma.us/school-building-project/home?authuser=0>

Figure 2.8.2 Student Enrollment in Walpole by School

(Source: MA DESE)



of Elm Street School's original roof was replaced with a rubber roof and siding on vertical surfaces; several areas of another section had patches installed to extend the roof's life until a replacement plan was finalized. The Town used Green Communities funding to pursue Energy Conservation Measures (ECM) in Boyden School, Fisher School, Johnson Middle School, and Old Post Road School throughout 2021.

Over the next five years, Walpole will focus on ECMs in other school buildings, implementing additional projects where feasible.¹⁰ MSBA reimbursed the Town \$567,256 for an accelerated repair project at Fisher School in 2013.¹¹ Each building struggles with outdated infrastructure and space shortages,

including classrooms, labs, testing spaces, guidance areas, and meeting rooms. According to the Walpole Public Schools 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan, the most pressing capital goals include improving security technology within school offices and buildings; design development, construction, and completing the combined middle school; and revisiting the high school feasibility study once funding is available.¹² DPW's Building Maintenance Division is responsible for upkeep and improvements at the schools, while the Parks Division manages the grounds at school properties.

Most of Walpole's schools can accommodate enrollment growth but they require spaces for special

education and computer labs. Common areas such as cafeterias, libraries, bathrooms, and nurses offices in the older schools would require renovations to accommodate growth, e.g., Boyden School. The new middle school project is one such action taken to accommodate changing needs and requirements. K-12 enrollment in Walpole has fluctuated over time, including a significant (7 percent) increase between 2000 and 2010 (from 3,703 to 3,954) and decline since 2010 to 3,679 in 2020, consistent with trends throughout Eastern Massachusetts.¹³ Figure 2.8.2 tracks enrollments by school building in 2000, 2010, 2020, and 2022.

¹⁰ The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Town of Walpole Energy Reduction Plan*, December 2020.

¹¹ Massachusetts School Building Authority, "Walpole Public School District," February 1, 2022.

¹² Walpole Public Schools, *Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024*, February 24, 2021.

¹³ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *School and District Profiles*, "Walpole (03070000)," February 1, 2022. Note that Walpole children may also attend the Blessed Sacrament Elementary School, Norfolk County Agricultural High School, or TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School.

Walpole has been a partner district with the METCO program since 1968. The METCO program gives Boston students of color access to predominantly White suburban school districts. This voluntary integration program, established by the legislature in 1965, creates opportunities for students in White suburban school districts to experience the advantages of learning and working in a racially and ethnically diverse setting. Today, Walpole's program consists of 27 students in grades 1-12. Annual program funding, available seating, and completion of the intake process is the basis for enrollment.¹⁴

Council on Aging/Senior Center. The Senior Center/COA at 60 South Street is a new, fully accessible complex offering outreach, exercise, health and safety, and social programs for Walpole's seniors. Completed in 2019, the facility is 13,000 sq. ft. and includes a multipurpose room, administrative offices, information areas, fitness areas, social gathering spaces, and activity/classroom spaces.¹⁵ Since the opening, there has been a 150 percent increase in membership. According to the 2020 Annual Report, 1,046 members participated in 12,192 activities (events, programs, or services). There were 155 new members in 2020, and the average daily attendance was 184, increasing 64 percent since 2019. COVID-19 shifted operations, closing in-person events and forcing programs to become fully remote or outdoor (when feasible).

The Senior Center has seven staff: a full-time Director, Assistant Director, and Outreach Coordinator, two part-time drivers, a part-time Principal Clerk, and a part-time Program Coordinator, and many volunteers. Walpole also has a Council on Aging, a nine-member board appointed by the Select Board. It serves in an advisory capacity to the COA Director, who report to the Town Administrator.¹⁶ HESSCO Elder Services coordinates with the Council to meet needs identified in the 2022-2025 Area Plan on Aging. Transportation, information resources for families and caregivers, and transitions in care are among the Plan's top goals.¹⁷ At this time, the COA has three passenger vans and a car (shared with the Recreation Department) to bring seniors to appointments, the grocery store, the pharmacy, the Senior Center, the Library, and other major destinations.¹⁸ The 34E MBTA bus offers limited pickup and drop-off options. The RIDE is available for those with a disability, but The RIDE Eligibility Center must approve users first, and times remain infrequent.

Services include scheduled transportation from a passenger's home or the COA, health and wellness clinics, nutrition programs, fitness classes, volunteer opportunities, advocacy, cultural programs, Medicare planning, networking, and other opportunities for learning and socializing. The COA partners with Health and Social Services Consortium, Inc. (HESSCO) Elder Services (the Aging Services Access Point), the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and other agencies to provide programming such as a Grab and

Go Lunch every weekday, wellness clinics with visiting nurses, SHINE counseling, and fuel assistance.¹⁹

Twenty-one percent of Walpole's population is 60 and over and is expected to grow over the next decade.²⁰ HESSCO's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Area Plan estimates a 14.3 percent increase in residents aged 60+ by 2025. As older adults continue to "age in place," the Town experiences a greater need for services. COVID-19 deterred many from joining, causing a 70 percent drop in new members between 2019 and 2020. This drop may also be attributed to aging "Baby Boomers" not identifying with the term "senior," preferring intergenerational experiences, and having different preferences than previous generations. In 2018, the Baker-Polito Administration recognized "age-friendly" best practices in the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative. The state considers "age-friendly communities" as places that are accessible, equitable, inclusive, safe, and supportive to seniors, consistent with long-standing Age-Friendly Communities planning promoted by AARP and the American Planning Association (APA). Walpole is not currently designated as an Age-Friendly or Dementia-Friendly community.

Walpole Public Library. The Walpole Public Library opened in 2012 following an extensive renovation and expansion. The two-story building has a total of 32,000 sq. ft., holding over 90,000 volumes. The Library has digital and physical holdings that include books, magazines, DVDs, compact discs, eBooks,

¹⁴ Walpole Public Schools, "Walpole METCO Program," February 1, 2022. <https://sites.google.com/walpole.k12.ma.us/wps-metco/who-we-are?authuser=0>

¹⁵ Compass Project Management, "Walpole Council On Aging," February 1, 2022. <https://compass.vertexeng.com/projects/walpole-council-on-aging/>

¹⁶ Town of Walpole, *Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Council On Aging Policy and Procedures*, April 7, 2021.

¹⁷ Health and Social Services Consortium, *HESSCO 2022-2025 Area Agency on Aging Area Plan*, 2022.

¹⁸ Town of Walpole, *Vehicle Inventory*, January 8, 2018.

¹⁹ Walpole Council on Aging, *New(s) Horizon: March 2022 Newsletter*, February 2022.

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019*, Table B01001, Sex by Age.

print and electronic reference resources, and some of the Town's historical collections. Several conference and meeting rooms are available for public use and equipped with AV technology, monitors, and hardware connections. Town staff often use the rooms if there is a shortage of spaces in other facilities.²¹ The building is LEED Gold certified. It is also fully accessible and close to other services, located across from Town Hall, Blackburn Hall, the Center Fire Station, and several recreation facilities.

The Library does not require serious capital upgrades at this time, but the Library staff mentioned that flooding does affect their property, School Street, Joe Morgan field, and Carolyn Woodward Memorial Playground in heavy rain events.

Walpole Public Library serves as a popular materials center, an independent learning center, and a community space. Programs include job skills training, consumer health, financial services, academic assistance, community engagement, art shows, museum passes, and much more. Four full-time and eleven part-time employees serve roughly 43,805 visitors per year.

The Library belongs to the Old Colony Library Network (OCLN).^{22,23} Data from the most recent Town Report show that patrons borrowed, downloaded, or streamed 136,532 books, videos, magazines, and audio items in 2020. Patrons also borrowed 8,105 items through Interlibrary Loan. There are 10,414 active cardholders, equaling 41 percent of residents. Over 2,000 children, teens, and adults attended 106 library programs. Visitors used internet workstations

2,500 times, used meeting rooms 323 times, and used study rooms 1,266 times. Due to COVID-19, the Library held 106 in-person and Zoom programs with an attendance of 2,073 participants.

Total 2020 holdings were:

- 82,705 Books;
- 9,096 DVDs;
- 4,046 Audiobooks and Music;
- 41,550 E-books and downloadable audio;
- 112 Newspaper and Magazine subscriptions
- 21 Museum passes.

The Board of Trustees is the elected five-member governing body for Walpole's Public Library.

Recreation Facilities.²⁴ Blackburn Hall is the Recreation Department's headquarters. The 12,000 sq. ft. multipurpose facility was constructed in 1931 and renovated in 1996. It is a two-story neoclassic structure with an open auditorium/activity room, stage, and a balcony on opposite ends. The lower level consists of office and activity space used by a daycare center. There are roughly 30 parking spaces to the side and rear of the building. Although ideally located and a cherished part of Walpole's identity, Blackburn Hall needs substantial upgrades. The 2013 Municipal Facilities Plan identified visual indications



of hazardous material (asbestos, mold, lead paint, and older insulation). The study also found the acoustic ceiling tile needed replacing, the balcony's interior finishes and first-floor entry spaces required upgrades, and the lower-level office ceilings, carpets, and paint required a complete renovation. The egress stairs are noncompliant, and the windows need replacing.

The Town recently allocated \$48,000 for Blackburn Hall improvements and \$13,000 for the elevator. Despite challenges, the building is structurally sound and serves the department well. The Recreation Department also operates some indoor programs out of the former East Library, now the East Community Center, a one-story, 4,000 sq. ft. building constructed in 1936. It has two recently renovated main rooms and a bathroom. The second floor is empty other than a small kitchenette. The basement

21 CDR Maguire, *Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Municipal Facilities Master Planning Study Final Report*, June 21, 2013.

22 Town of Walpole, *Town of Walpole 2020 Annual Town Report*, December 31, 2020.

23 Walpole Public Library, *Walpole Public Library Long Range Plan FY 2018 – FY 2021*, November 29, 2016.

24 See the Open Space and Recreation Chapter for more information about the Recreation Department's programs, services, and facilities.

functions as a mechanical room and storage space. There is a small parking lot that needs more accessible spaces. Other than minor aesthetic updates, the facility is in good condition.²⁵ The Department is open five days a week. Staff includes a full-time Director, Assistant Director, Recreation Coordinator, and Program Coordinator.

In addition to overseeing programs and improvements at Blackburn Hall and the East Community Center, the Department manages several facilities and equipment around Town: the Memorial Park Bath House; Joe Morgan field Carolyn Woodward Memorial Playground; the South Pool Bath House; the Skating Club Building (Elm Street); Walpole High School's lighting, fencing, concession stand, press box, bleachers, and storage shed; the Barn/Pavilion at Adam's Farm; and the recreational fields at each public school.²⁶ The Department also manages the scheduling and maintenance of the new 64.5-acre synthetic turf fields at the South Walpole Community Athletic Complex (completed in 2021).

The Recreation Department is open five days a week. Staff includes a full-time Director, Assistant Director, Recreation Coordinator, and Program Coordinator. The Recreation Committee is a five-member body appointed by the Select Board for three-year overlapping terms.²⁷ The Department hopes to adapt to changing interests to offer a better variety of programs, including e-sports. Enrollment declines affect funding, stretching already limited resources for passive and active facility maintenance. Recurring

issues also include overcrowding and overuse of fields. The South Walpole Community Athletic Complex has helped, but the Town still faces shortages that inhibit sports programs from growing.

Fire Department. Walpole has three fire stations: Central Station (20 Stone Street), the East Walpole Fire Station (183 Washington Street), and the South Walpole Fire Station (Summer Street). Once a combined public safety complex, the award-winning Central Station is a new facility (2018). The 22,000 sq. ft. facility includes six double-depth apparatus bays, firematic support spaces, eleven firefighter bunk rooms, a firefighter kitchen and day room, headquarters administration and fire prevention offices, and a training and exercise mezzanine.²⁸

East Station is a two-story masonry building constructed in 1925 and renovated in 2005. The building is 6,480 sq. ft. and has a full basement. The second floor was renovated and expanded in 2005 to include a training/conference room. The apparatus bay was also updated, and a new watch room and bathroom built. East Station served the Town for several years before falling into disrepair. It was deactivated and used as a storage area for reserve vehicles. Recent repairs include a sealant replacement and masonry repair project to prevent



leakage, and masonry pointing, window replacements, and a roofing replacement.²⁹ The station was reopened during COVID-19 to create separation and reduce the risk of losing an entire group to exposure. The Town is working with the Fire Department on staffing East Station (Station 2), increasing response in the most populated part of Town and providing enhanced public safety. Service calls are increasing due to new housing growth and the Town's aging population.³⁰

South Fire Station is a 5,000 sq. ft., two-story masonry building constructed in 1923 with a full walkout basement. As with the East Station, technology, budget and staffing constraints, and size restrictions of bays and doors forced the Town to deactivate the facility. It is also currently a reserve vehicle storage

25 CDR Maguire, *Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Municipal Facilities Master Planning Study Final Report*, June 21, 2013.

26 MIIA Property and Casualty Group, Inc. *Town of Walpole Schedule of Locations*, July 1, 2021.

27 Town of Walpole, *Division 2: General Bylaws*, Part I: Administrative Bylaws Chapter 182-1 – 182-3: "Recreation Committee," February 10, 2022.

28 Schwartz Silver, "Walpole Fire Rescue," February 10, 2022.

29 CBI Consulting LLC, "East Walpole Fire Station, East Walpole," February 10, 2022.

30 Town of Walpole, *Town of Walpole 2020 Annual Town Report*, December 31, 2020.

area. At times, Gillette Stadium will use the station for emergency response. Following construction, the first floor was used for apparatus and the second floor was for living quarters. The second floor was somewhat recently renovated and converted into a fitness room. The remainder of the facility has been unchanged from its 1923 construction. The interior is in various stages of disrepair, and access between floors is through a non-compliant, non-enclosed wood staircase. The Municipal Facilities Plan identifies several needed upgrades.

The inadequacies of the East and South Stations hinder the Fire Department from meeting industry standards for response times to major industrial, commercial, and residential complexes across Town. Plans for additional improvements at East Station may necessitate the station fully reopening or re-locating if growth continues at the current rate. Concurrently, the Department struggles with staffing shortages amid rising service calls. This pattern interferes with expanding programs with Walpole Public Schools, the COA, and other departments. The Fire Department (WFD) has forty-four full and part-time personnel working out of the two stations, including the Chief, Deputy Chief, the Fire Prevention Lieutenant, and the Administrative Assistant. Six Firefighter/EMTs were hired between 2020 and 2021. The Department's apparatus include two brush fire vehicles, one squad truck, three ambulances, one fire alarm vehicle, four cars, five engines, and one ladder.³¹

Of the 8,030 calls the Fire Department responded to in 2021, 53 percent were incidents, and 47 percent involved inspections and permits. Thirty-one percent (2,460) were EMS calls (excluding vehicle accident with injury). The Department has nine certified members at the EMT-Basic level and 28 certified members at the Paramedic level.³² The closure of Norwood Hospital forced ambulances to transport patients farther away to Brockton. Added travel times and COVID-19 resulted in a 28 percent increase in call times and a 126 percent increase in transport times.

Police Department. The Walpole Police Department (WPD) recently moved into a new, state-of-the-art facility in 2018. WPD's new headquarters is on a former industrial site next to the Council on Aging. Compass Project Management Inc. oversaw construction of the Headquarters Building project. The single-story building is 15,000 sq. ft. and houses all operations from administration and investigation to detention and dispatch. A 2,400 sq. ft. metal out-building on-site provides flexible staging and storage space, and a new parking lot was developed.³³ The facility boasts high usage and streamlined operations that better serve Walpole; according to Town staff, the new station facilitated the unprecedented shifts caused by the COVID-19 state of emergency declaration. The new station also facilitated adopting a community policing strategy,



which allows the WPD to respond to emergency orders and collaborate on health and safety measures in a more trusted manner.

The Police Department employs forty-four sworn officers, ten dispatchers, three civilian assistants (one full-time and two part-time), and eight part-time school crossing guards working out of the central station. WPD's vehicle and equipment inventory includes ten marked patrol units, ten unmarked vehicles, ten motorcycles, three ATVs, two signboards, a speed trailer, six bicycles, and a drone. There were 20,655 incidents, 136 arrests/PC's, 2,708 citations, and 447 accidents in 2021, according to the WPD's 2021 Annual Report. The number of reported incidents/calls decreased 6 percent since 2020, and arrests or protective custody cases decreased by 11

³¹ Town of Walpole, *Vehicle Inventory*, January 8, 2018.

³² Walpole Fire Rescue, *2021 Walpole Fire Rescue Annual Report*, February 16, 2022.

³³ Compass Project Management, "Walpole Police Headquarters," February 10, 2022. https://compass.vertexeng.com/projects/walpole-police-headquarters/?_gl=1*lrzrf*_ga*NjM4MTAxMDUxLjE2NDQ5MTO3NDU.*_ga_9XN9XKH2EF*MTY0NDk2MDkzNS4xLjAuMTY0NDk2MDkzNS42MA..

Table 2.8.2. General Activity Reported to the Walpole Police Department, 2020-2021.

Activity Type	2020	2021	+/-
Alarms	740	718	-22
Alcohol-Related:	28	28	0
Overdose	0	0	0
OUI Alc.	28	26	-2
Arrests/PCs	153	136	-17
Drug-Related:	29	20	-9
Overdose	16	16	0
OUI Drug	5	1	-4
Calls	21,997	20,655	-1,342
Citations Issued	4,151	2,708	-1,443
Disturbance Calls	1,371	1,242	-129
Domestic Violence/ Dist.	160	161	+1
Mental Health Calls	258	348	+90
Protective Custody	7	6	-1
Vandalism	61	64	+3

Source: Walpole Police Department (WPD), 2021 Annual Report, 2022.

percent. Criminal complaints, citations, non-fatal overdoses, and property crimes also decreased.³⁴ In **Table 2.8.2** below is a summary of general activity between 2020 and 2021 in Walpole.

There were eight new hires in 2021, including a new Police Chief. The department anticipates needing more officers to meet demand, especially for policing large events and community activities such as Walpole's 300th Anniversary (2024) and road construction projects. Many service calls have also become more complex (e.g., mental health, drugs,

technology, fraud), requiring more time per call. More staff may be required to meet needs of the Town's aging population, to respond to growth in calls from multifamily and commercial developments such as Cedar Edge (Summer Street), Union and West (Downtown), and the Walpole Mall redevelopment (along Route 1), and for traffic enforcement. (See also, Section 2.7, Transportation.)

The Annual Town Report outlined capital budget balances as: \$8,000 for portable equipment, \$411 for a marked police cruiser, \$935 for an unmarked cruiser, and \$40,400 for station improvements. In the Five-Year Capital Plan, almost \$600,000 (\$588,750) was allocated to the Police Department.

Animal Control. Walpole employs a regional Animal Control Officer (ACO) responsible for public safety, enforcing local bylaws/rules concerning all animals, and licensing dogs. The Select Board appoints the ACO, who has an office in Norwood. Animals under the purview of the ACO include all those that are sick, injured, or deceased. There were 2,440 licensed dogs in Walpole in 2020.³⁵ The ACO has one truck and one kennel to conduct operations. As with most Animal Control Department's, Walpole's ACO keeps files of animal bites, kennel and barn inspections, and other related reports. Storage could potentially be an issue as more households move to Town and conduct business with the ACO. Adequate holding facilities for stray animals are also a concern.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works (DPW) manages the Town's sewer and water, septage, vehicle maintenance, highway, drainage, engineering, building

maintenance, cemeteries, parks, trees, and recreation functions. DPW contains six subdepartments with a combined total of 60 employees: Highways, Building Maintenance, Water and Sewer, Vehicle Maintenance, Engineering, and Parks and Cemeteries. Administrative functions include operations, capital planning, and administration of grants and reimbursements from FEMA, MassDOT, and the state's Chapter 90 program. DPW maintains 2,266 acres of open and recreational space, including the Town's eleven parks and six cemeteries. They oversee over 400 roadways, 46 miles of sidewalks, stormwater systems, and snow and ice control.

DPW recently received \$413,000 from the Town for equipment replacement and infrastructure improvements, \$1,514,000 for street and drainage improvements, and \$1,100,000 in sewer/water projects and equipment, including rehabilitation of the Edward J. Delaney Water Treatment Plant and Sewer Pump Station. The Capital Improvement Plan contains requests of \$1.3 million from the Engineering Department, \$375,000 from the Highway Department, \$133,800 from the Cemetery Department, \$8.5 million from the Parks Department, \$3.7 million from the Building Maintenance Department, \$1.6 million from the Vehicle Maintenance Department, and \$24 million from the Water and Sewer Department. Discussions with staff mentioned the need to increase funding to at least \$3 million based on unmet needs.

The Town constructed a new DPW garage at the 26.14-acre 1385 Washington Street site, which contains the original DPW garage and the old and new salt sheds. The Vehicle Maintenance Building - now

³⁴ Walpole Police Department, 2021 Annual Report, 2021.

³⁵ Town of Walpole, Town of Walpole 2020 Annual Town Report, December 31, 2020.

the new garage - was once a single-story, 40,000 sq. ft. building with repair bays, lifts, monorail, storage, and office space. The bays were 18 ft wide and accessible from the front. Rear additions consisted of carpentry and sign shops. The building was constructed in 1966, expanded to twelve bays in 1968, added the woodshop in 1972, and added the sign shop in 2007. The original garage (once called the Highway Maintenance Building) is 30,000 ft² and parallel to the new facility. It upholds a similar configuration - offices and crew quarters on one side, and the remainder of the building is vehicle storage. That building was constructed in 1999 and expanded to four bays in 2007.

The Old Salt Shed is a wood-framed, gable-roofed building with sliding wood doors for parts, equipment, and vehicle storage. The New Salt Shed is a large, prefabricated wood structure for salt and sand storage. The DPW site has several trailers for miscellaneous storage. The entrance is a gradual incline to a generally flat facility. The pavement surface is in poor condition, and parking/circulation is limited. Recommendations from the Municipal Facilities Plan include repaving with marked parking stalls and a one-way drive aisle and developing a comprehensive plan to organize material storage.³⁶

Highway Division: The Highway Division has seven full-time employees responsible for roadway, sidewalk, storm drain systems, traffic control signals, traffic signage, line painting, guardrails, and fencing maintenance along all town roadways. The Division has twenty-seven pieces of snow-fighting equipment (backhoes, loaders, trucks, etc.) and five sidewalk plows to plow public roads. They also rely on the help of local snow plowing contractors

(700+ in 2020). Throughout 2020, the Division supported major paving and sidewalk projects on Pine Street, Common Street, Mylod Street Granite Street, Hemlock Street, Spring Valley Drive, Park Lane, and along Fisher Street. Bike lanes and handicap ramps were installed/improved, including at Robbins Road, via a Complete Streets Grant. The Division oversaw three capital projects approved at Town Meeting: 5,000 gallons of hot fiber reinforced crack sealing distribution; long line painting on all marked roads (over 1 million linear ft.); and painting of crosswalks Downtown and on West Street. There were 1,700 catch basins cleaned, 31 catch basin and manhole repairs (full depth and partial), several miles of roads and parking lots swept, and new solar-powered crosswalk and warning signs installed on Coney Street.

Cemetery Division: The Cemetery Division has two full-time employees and is responsible for Walpole's six cemeteries through turf maintenance, shrub pruning, planting, monument/headstone maintenance and repair, trash control, internment openings, and foundation installations. Three cemeteries are active - Rural Maple Grove and Terrace Hill - and three are historic - Old Burial Place, Guild and Plains, and Kingsbury. There were thirty-three internments in Town-owned cemeteries in 2020, nine of which were cremations and twenty-four were vaulted burials. Staff excavated and poured thirty foundations and installed new headstone monuments. They continue to execute the Town's fertilization program, eliminate invasive weeds, mow lawns, remove hazardous trees, and ground stumps.

Parks Division. The Parks Division has eight full-time employees responsible for turf maintenance

of town-owned buildings, common areas, and athletic fields. The turf management program consists of core aerations, topdressing, fertilizing, and over-seeding fields twice a year. The Division periodically grooms, deep cleans, and adds fresh infill at the High School's synthetic turf field. The Division oversees roadside brush cutting, public shade tree pruning, trash and litter clean-up, shrub and mulch bed maintenance, watering, fertilization, and plant health care. Hazardous tree removals, stump grinding, new plantings, field and diamond preparations, and playground maintenance are ongoing priorities. In 2020, the Tree Crew performed 88 pruning requests and 57 removal requests.

Building Maintenance Division. The Building Maintenance and Repair Division is responsible for improving Walpole's public schools over fifteen other Town buildings. Eight FTE employees handle exterior and interior structures and all associated mechanicals. They coordinate with the state on the elevator, fire alarm, sprinkler systems, emergency lights, and exit sign maintenance and inspections. Maintenance also constitutes minor repairs, including plumbing, carpentry, electricity, and HVAC. The Division is the point of contact for heating and electricity upgrades and instituting the Green Communities Grant. There are hundreds of work orders placed each year varying in urgency; staff continues to fix issues as promptly as possible while considering cost-savings.

Vehicle Maintenance Division. The Vehicle Maintenance Division conducts repairs and implements the preventive maintenance program on municipal vehicles and equipment, other than fire trucks. Seventy-eight pieces of DPW equipment, twenty Police vehicles, three ambulances,

36 CDR Maguire, *Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Municipal Facilities Master Planning Study Final Report*, June 21, 2013.

one Animal Control vehicle, three COA buses, two Emergency Management vehicles, two WFD vehicles, nineteen trailers, eighteen other miscellaneous vehicles, and twenty auxiliary generators at pump stations, sewer stations, and treatment plants undergo regularly scheduled preventative maintenance. The Division also oversees portable generators and pumps, seven sander units, and snowplows/snow equipment. The Town purchased four new vehicles in 2020, growing its arsenal to meet the community's demand for services.

Engineering Division. The Engineering Division handles all utilities and public works construction, providing technical assistance for Town-sponsored projects. The Division assists Boards, Committees, and Commissions by reviewing plans, documents, and designs submitted by applicants. A staff of four reviews subdivisions and prepares cost estimates for the Planning Board, ensuring money is available if developers default on their obligations. Staff then deliver inspectional services for sewer, water, and drain installations in bonded subdivisions and larger site developments, under the Planning Board's jurisdiction. Engineering updates all Town maps in coordination with other departments, including the Zoning Map, street maps, utility maps, and Assessor's Maps. They administer street opening permits, the Town's Curb Cut Policy, and Trench Permits. In-house projects with other divisions include restoring failing retaining walls and sidewalk retaining walls.

The Engineering Division is involved in the EPA's Storm Water Phase II Rule to regulate stormwater

discharge into waterways. They work with the Conservation Commission, Community and Economic Development Department, and other groups to enforce the Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Bylaw and the NPDES Phase II Stormwater requirements, making necessary modifications to remediate poor drainage. A related component of this is river infrastructure maintenance, i.e., dams, culverts, and bridges. The Division inspects Town dams and submits reports to DCR. They annually update the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for each dam.

Solid Waste and Recycling. DPW's Engineering Division inspects the former Lincoln Road Landfill biennially. The Robbins Road Compost Site is open to residents with a Compost Sticker. Residents can purchase stickers at the Collector's Office for a \$10 annual fee (for the first vehicle). The Compost Site only accepts leaves, grass clippings, Christmas trees, brush, and limbs. Commercial, agricultural, and industrial disposal is prohibited.³⁷ The Compost Facility Operator enforces regulations and answers any questions from residents. The amount of all materials processed at the site has seen gradual increases as the Town grows.

The Town provides curbside trash collection through a private contract with Russell Disposal. Trash is collected weekly from one, two, and three-family homes, and recycling is collected bi-weekly.³⁸ Large items and hazardous materials require additional disposal precautions, excluding them from regular pick-up. Each residence is allowed to put out six bags or six barrels (35 gallons) of trash and one large item

per week, as bagged trash is expensive to process.³⁹ Some items, such as mattresses, are prohibited. As seen across the Commonwealth, the cost of recycling is rising. The Town pays for all recycling except cardboard and paper. The Health Department received 115 trash and recycling-related calls in 2020.

Water and Sewer Division. Walpole has over 160 miles of pipe network, two treatment plants, and several large water storage tanks and producing wells. The Town operates two drinking water plants (1303 Washington Street and 3 Leonard Street) and pump stations (throughout Town that distribute water across five pressure zones: the Central Pressure Zone, the South High-Pressure Zone, the Old Post Rd. High-Pressure Zone, the North High-Pressure Zone, and the Texaco Pressure Zone).⁴⁰ Town Meeting recently authorized the rehabilitation of the Eleanor Road and Morningside Drive sewer stations, the Delaney Treatment Plant filter rehabilitations, and the Washington Well generator replacement. Other recent feats include an update to the sludge removal system, work on H.E. Willis Treatment plant lagoons, and the relining of several sewer mains. The Town's complete inventory of Water and Sewer infrastructure is below.⁴¹

- Five Well Pumps
- Four Mine Brook Well Pumps
- One Booster Station

³⁷ Town of Walpole, *Fiscal Year 2021 Compost Facility Regulations*, 2021.

³⁸ Town of Walpole, *A Resident's Guide to Walpole, MA*, Updated June 2021.

³⁹ Town of Walpole, *Trash/Recycle Collection Rules and Regulations*, 2021.

⁴⁰ Town of Walpole, "Walpole Water System Information," February 12, 2022.

⁴¹ MIIA Property and Casualty Group, Inc. *Town of Walpole Schedule of Locations*, July 1, 2021.

- One Neponset Well Pump
- One Satellite Well
- One Water Pump Station
- Six Water Tanks (two with at least 1.5 million gallons of capacity)
- Two Booster Pumps
- Two Water Treatment Plants
- Four Sewer Pumps
- One Septage Treatment Facility
- Two Sewer Pump Stations
- Two Sewer Stations

Seventy percent of the Town's population is connected to the public sewer system, including most businesses and industrial uses. Most unsewered areas are in North Walpole and near wells in protected districts. The system of sewer mains is municipally owned, but grey water and sewage flows into the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) regional system for treatment and disposal.⁴² Potential membership into the MWRA's water system would allow the Town to purchase additional gallons per year, if necessary. Walpole has interconnections with Norfolk, Sharon, Medfield, and Dover to supply water should an emergency occur. The Town tracks usage of interconnections from these towns via a transmitter at Town Hall.⁴³

Previous sewer plans recommended expanding through central Walpole, but not to more rural areas

to uphold conservation, increase recharge, and avoid pumping water out of the watershed. The Health Department handles problems related to septic systems. The Sewer and Water Division routinely inspects sewer equipment and monthly maintenance with a jet vac truck to prevent piping obstructions. The Division also supervises operations at the Septage Receiving Facility (Robbins Road), which accepted 3.074 million gallons of septage in 2020.

The Sewer and Water Division's six-person staff handles utility administration, distribution, operation, and maintenance, including meter cross-connections, and major capital improvements. Administration involves implementing policies and regulations to comply with drinking and wastewater mandates, processing utility bills, maintaining accounts, and administering the toilet and washer rebate program. Staff process licenses and permits for contractors and submit reports. Distribution involves maintaining and repairing pipes, valves, hydrants, and other appurtenances. Staff focus on leak detection, flow testing, water main installation, hydrant inspection and testing, hydraulic analysis, and miscellaneous projects.

Meters and cross-connections account for all residential, commercial, municipal, and industrial accounts; each is charged a retail rate for their water and sewer services. There are 8,265 service connections accounting for 575.85 million gallons of metered water; 95 percent of connections being residential (575.8 mgy). Walpole's residential water use in gallons per capita per day is 58.53. Thirty-five million gallons were classified as confidently

estimated municipal use (CEMU) in 2021. The Water Management Act's Annual Statistical Report stated that 152 million gallons were classified as unaccounted for water (UAW) in the same year (11.37 percent of total water available for distribution).

Production and treatment staff oversee treatment facilities, wells, water storage tanks, and pumping equipment. Staff are vigilant in addressing issues as they arise, including detecting and repairing leaks (16 leaks found and repaired in 2021). Certified technicians supervise chemical applications, data analysis, and sample collections to ensure proper treatment techniques are employed.

The Water Superintendent stated that Walpole is not experiencing issues in meeting future water demands and is not concerned about exceeding withdrawal limits, as there are options with existing infrastructure and the Town has seen a decline in water use due to conservative measures enacted over the last decade. The Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) also contains several upcoming projects to meet demand, including connecting to the MWRA's water system, reactivating the Mine Book #4 pump, and replacing some existing wells with satellite wells. Future satellite well candidates are established to replace in-service wells that may not meet design capacity; oftentimes, this is due to deposit build-up but takes several years before maintenance is needed. By setting up satellites, the Town does not have to permit a new well, bypassing additional municipal and bureaucratic processes.⁴⁴

⁴² The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Town of Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan*, November 2021.

⁴³ Patrick Fasanello, Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners, Town of Walpole, interviewed by Fiona Coughlan, Barrett Planning Group, November 22, 2021.

⁴⁴ Scott Gustafson, Water and Sewer Superintendent, Town of Walpole, interviewed by Fiona Coughlan, Barrett Planning Group, October 5, 2022.

Roughly 780 mg of raw water is pumped and treated in a year, with maximum day demand of 3.8 mg in 2021 (down from 4.4 mg in 2020). There was 762 mg of finished water pumped and treated, with a maximum daily consumption of 3.7 mg (down from 4.3 mg in 2020).⁴⁵ The watershed's average daily withdrawal for raw water is 2.14 mgd, and the Water Management Act's authorized withdrawal volume is 2.78 mgd - a difference of .64 mgd.

The Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners is a five-member body elected for three-year terms. The Board has exclusive control of the Water Department and water systems, including purchasing power, land-holding rights, installing and maintaining the sewers, sewage treatment plants, and appurtenances. They work with DPW on various initiatives, enforce rules and regulations, partner with the Department of Environmental Protection on reporting and permitting, and set water and sewer rates.⁴⁶

Other issues faced by DPW include increasing pressures on sidewalks that trigger seemingly unending requests for maintenance and new segments. Equipment and infrastructure need regular updating, conflicting with budgetary constraints. Deficiencies include flooding at the water and sewer pump stations, the repair of the Washington Street culvert, and other localized flooding. The Town ultimately needs to implement a comprehensive culvert replacement program. Aging utilities and changing regulations present challenges to staff assigned with operations and maintenance. The Commissioners work tirelessly with other departments to reduce

infiltration and inflow (unwanted water flowing or pumped into the sewer system).

Energy Use and Green Communities

DPW Building Maintenance staff oversees energy use. Eversource is the primary electricity provider, and Columbia Gas is the primary gas provider for residents. Through a public-private partnership with Eversource, the Town offers Walpole Power Choice to residents as part of their Municipal Aggregation Plan. Eversource delivers the electricity, but Direct Energy appears on the Eversource bill as the supplier; Eversource uses Walpole Power Choice's price to calculate the supply charges instead of their Basic Service price. With Basic Service, Eversource supplies and delivers the electricity. With Walpole Power Choice, Eversource delivers, and Walpole chooses its supplier. The program provides an alternative to Basic Service pricing and other supply offers in the marketplace.⁴⁷

Walpole became a Green Community in 2020 to reduce its energy footprint. Part of that process involved adopting specific energy conservation measures (ECMs) following a Vehicle Inventory, Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy, and Energy Reduction Plan. The program's goals include instituting fuel-efficient vehicles, increasing efficiency in municipal facilities, and minimizing life-cycle costs that result in savings. As part of the Energy Reduction Plan, Walpole commits to reducing energy use in facilities by at least 20 percent by 2024. In the baseline year, Walpole used

92,167 MMBTUs of energy. The 20 percent reduction goal will be measured against the non-weather normalized baseline, reducing usage by at least 18,433 MMBTUs.⁴⁸

Walpole intends to work with staff, the Town Administrator, the Green Communities Regional Coordinator, and the Energy Committee to apply for competitive grants to implement ECMs. In addition to grant funding, Walpole's Energy Committee will identify ECM strategies. In April 2021, the Town completed a large LED retrofit project, changing interior lights in twelve buildings. The state awarded \$166,203 in Green Communities grants to the project. Walpole then worked with Guardian Energy to audit their buildings and identify conservation/saving measures. Between 2022 and 2024, staff will focus on ECMs in school buildings, particularly additional projects at the High School, Boyden School, Old Post Road School, and the new middle school.

Walpole was also approved to participate in the 2022-2024 Community First Partnership through the Sponsors of MassSAVE. The Community First Partnership grants up to \$60,000 to municipalities and community organizations that meet the Partnership's goals: (1) implementing energy efficiency outreach in their residential and small business communities; and (2) achieving energy savings by completing assessments and installations/upgrades. MassSAVE invited all municipalities and organizations with Environmental Justice (EJ) Census Blocks to apply. Participation will increase energy-saving efforts by reaching more renters,

⁴⁵ Town of Walpole and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Water Resources Drinking Water Program, *MA Department of Environmental Protection's Public Water Supply Annual Statistical Report*, 2021.

⁴⁶ Town of Walpole, *Board of Sewer and Water Commissioners Rules and Regulations*, Updated July 15, 2021.

⁴⁷ Walpole Power Choice, "Frequently Asked Questions," February 14, 2022.

⁴⁸ The Metropolitan area Planning Council, *Town of Walpole Energy Reduction Plan 2020*, December 2020.

non-English speaking/Limited English Proficiency residents, and small businesses.⁴⁹

Walpole has become a popular destination for solar. There are currently three solar farms, none of which the Town owns. Norfolk County recently constructed a solar farm on the Norfolk Agricultural High School campus in North Walpole. The Town has a Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District (SPOD), adopted in 2012 to regulate usage and dimensions. There is potential for the new middle school to have solar panels on the roof; staff is evaluating the feasibility of incorporating this into more municipal projects. During the public engagement process, many mentioned the suitability of industrial sites for solar. Most preferred to see such projects in those areas over cutting down trees.

⁴⁹ MassSAVE, “The Sponsors of Mass Save® Announce 30+ Municipal and Community-Based Organizations to Participate in 2022-2024 Community First Partnership,” February 14, 2022. <https://www.masssave.com/en/about/news-and-events/News/mass-save-announce-30-municipal-and-community-based-organizations-to-participate-in-2022-2024-community-first-partnership>

2.9.

Historic and Cultural Resource Areas



Key Findings

- Walpole's history extends across many centuries, providing homes for Native Neponset peoples, earliest European settlers, eighteenth-century mill operators, nineteenth-century industrialists, and twentieth- and twenty-first century suburbanites.
- Woven throughout this history is Walpole's relationship with the Neponset River, which fed the Native population, provided water for the first sawmills, powered the many factories, and today supports recreation and provides an important corridor for wildlife. The river continues to serve as a central spine of the Walpole community.
- Walpole has successfully nominated three historic buildings to the National Register of Historic Places.
- The official inventory of historic and cultural resources includes 431 areas, buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes, but it has not been updated in many years. Some of the resources have been demolished or substantially altered.
- Walpole was one of the early adopters of a Demolition Delay Bylaw, allowing the Historical Commission to impose a six-month delay on the removal of structures 100 years old or more. In 2018, Town Meeting amended the bylaw by increasing the maximum delay period to twelve months.
- The Walpole Historical Commission consists of five volunteer members. It has no staff liaison to assist with actions, including recording minutes of meetings, so its capacity to advance major preservation efforts is limited.
- The 2004 Master Plan and 2009 Master Plan Update outlined several strategies for identifying and protecting historic resources. While some of the strategies have been implemented (either partially or in full), others have not been addressed.
- The 2008 Communitywide Historic Properties Survey provided a detailed guide for moving ahead with preservation efforts, especially helping the town understand what resources exist, and identifying those that are vulnerable. Few recommendations of the survey have been implemented, but the Historical Commission has applied to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for funding to expand the survey.
- The Walpole Cultural Council contributes to the cultural richness of the town by funding local arts and humanities organizations, including the Friends of the Walpole Public Library, the Walpole Footlighters, and the Walpole Children's Theatre.

Introduction

This chapter of the inventory identifies and describes Walpole's historic and cultural resources and past efforts to preserve, promote, and enhance them. Historic and cultural resources include both physical resources (landscape features, landscapes, and archaeological sites (both historic and pre-historic) as well as non-physical resources (organizations, programs, and events) both of which contribute to the quality of life in the town.

Walpole's History & Extant Historic Resources¹

PRE-HISTORICAL, CONTACT & PLANTATION PERIODS (BEFORE 1675)

The well-drained upland terraces and knolls, and fertile edges of the Neponset River and adjacent ponds have drawn humans for centuries. The earliest known inhabitants were members of the Neponset tribe (later Ponkapoag) who likely settled near ponds and fished and hunted around the river's headwaters. Tribe members also established regional trails connecting the Massachusetts and Narragansett Bays, including the Neponset-Wollomonopoag Trail leading from Dedham to Sharon through East Walpole and Walpole Heights forming the route of today's Old Post Road. Having retained fishing and hunting rights to the area, the Neponsets continued seasonal occupation into the seventeenth century, until they were gradually forced to migrate northward to



The Neponsets migrated northward in the mid-1600s to the praying town of Ponkapoag in the Blue Hills.

Ponkapoag.² While little physical evidence of these early periods in the town's history remains today, several "place names," including Neponset or "there, where there is the crossing," connect modern day Walpole with its earliest inhabitants.

The first Europeans migrated to what was then part of the 1636 Dedham Grant, in the mid-1600s.³ Initially, iron ore deposits were discovered, but shortly thereafter lumber – particularly cedar -- became

the focus. The first sawmill was established in 1659 by Joshua Fisher and Eleazer Lusher near School Meadow Brook and the Neponset River.

COLONIAL PERIOD (1675 – 1775)

By the 1720s, several dozen people resided in what is today's Walpole center. The town incorporated in 1724, and within forty years, the population had reached nearly 800, with 100 houses and a meetinghouse, constructed in 1725. Walpole contained several taverns along the major transportation routes and farmsteads, sited along Neponset, North, and South Streets. Milling of lumber continued to dominate the economy, seconded by iron forging and smelting. Walpole played an active role in the Revolution, enlisting patriots to fight in the Battle of Lexington and Concord, and to serve in Washington's army.

Vernacular two-story center-chimney houses and Cape Cod style cottages likely dominated the architectural style during the Colonial Period. Extant examples include the Joseph Carroll House (ca. 1720, 131 Summer Street), Solomon Bullard House (ca. 1725, 841 Main Street), Robert Allen House (ca. 1740, 2 High Plain Street), and D. Turner House (1749, 519 Elm Road). Several significant historic landscapes also date to this period. The Old Burial Place, located on Main Street and established in 1718, contains the graves of Walpole's earliest inhabitants of European descent.⁴ Two other cemeteries, Plains (1741) and Terrace Hill (1775) also date to this

¹ Historical information for this narrative was obtained from several sources, including the 1980 *Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Town Report for Walpole*; the 2008 *Communitywide Historic Properties Survey Final Report for Walpole*; and the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS). For a full list of resources, refer the bibliography appearing at the end of this inventory chapter.

² <http://massachusettstribe.org/the-history-of-the-neponset>. Ponkapoag was a praying town, established by Puritan and evangelist John Eliot in 1657 in the Blue Hills area of eastern Massachusetts.

³ In 1636, a group of twelve men successfully petitioned the General Court to acquire an inland tract of land. The "Dedham Grant" included parts of fifteen towns, including Walpole, which stood along the southeast edge of Grant.

⁴ Walpole maintains a total of ten burying grounds and cemeteries. Six are owned and maintained by the town, three remain active. The Old Burial Place is the oldest known place of interment.

period. The eastern slice of the three-part Walpole Common, located at the intersection of Main, West, and Elm Streets, was established in 1739, and John Lewis Park, a triangular parcel formed by the intersection of East and Plimpton Streets, dates to ca. 1720.⁵

FEDERAL PERIOD (1775 – 1830)

Beginning in the 1770s, Walpole took shape as series of small villages, centered on mills, with a new, major settlement emerging at South Walpole, and an expansion of Walpole Center. While milling of lumber declined, new manufacturing operations produced agricultural implements (beginning in 1796 at Stetson Pond), cotton and woolen textiles (beginning in 1810), and paper, and straw-hat production emerged as a major cottage industry. By 1810, the population had grown to approximately 1,000 and twenty years later it had reached over 1,400.

Federal style architecture dominated this period and Walpole retains many fine examples of residential, commercial, and religious structures, including a cluster of elaborately detailed houses at South Walpole. Extant buildings include the Jason Lewis House (and farm) (ca. 1815, 401 East Street), the Colonel Timothy Mann House (ca. 1770, 40 Neponset Street), the First Parish Church (1783, 30 Common Street), the Walpole Manufacturing Company Worker Housing (ca. 1814, 61-67 Neponset Street), and Deacon Willard Lewis House (1827, 33 West Street, Walpole Historical Society). The town established two additional cemeteries during the Federal Period, Guild (1793) and Maple Grove (1817).

EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830–1870)

Walpole Center continued to expand during the

mid-nineteenth century, as did the villages at East Walpole, South Walpole, and West Walpole, fueled in part by the introduction of the Norfolk County Railroad (1849) connecting Dedham to Blackstone. In the Center, a workers' district formed along High Street, and many high-style residences were built along Common Street. In the outer villages, growth of manufacturing spurred development. F. Bird built a manufacturing operation at East Walpole in 1838, producing both cotton and paper. Other businesses turned out goods ranging from cord clothing to hoes. In 1852, Walpole housed seven cotton mills, two woolen mills, four paper mills, three grist and three sawmills, one twine mill, two foundries, two machine, two axletree, and one hoe shop, one bleachery, one bonnet shop, four carriage shops, one hat, one boot, one card manufactory, and six variety stores. An influx of foreign-born (mostly Irish) people, many of whom worked in the many mills and manufacturing businesses, upped the population to approximately 1,900.

Extant historic resources dating to the Early Industrial Period include both buildings and landscapes. Buildings exemplify mid-nineteenth century styles of American architecture, including Greek Revival, Italianate, and Second Empire. The O. Boyden House at 1 Willow Street (ca. 1840) reflects the Greek Revival style, and the Calvin G. Plimpton House (1862, 79 Plimpton Street) and Edmund Clapp House (ca. 1870, 79 Common Street) both represent the Second Empire style. Italianate detailing is present in the John Mann House (ca. 1870, 1871 Washington Street) and Leland House (ca. 1860, 1876 Washington Street). In 1843, the town established the Rural Cemetery on Pemberton Street.



Deacon Willard House (1827).

LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870–1915)

Development patterns from the early-mid 1800s continued into the Late Industrial Period, with additional growth in the Center as well as East Walpole, spurred by a new secondary railroad line. In addition, a street railway was introduced in the early 1900s, providing connections from Foxborough through the Center, extending to East Walpole, and spurring suburban development along its path. Industries shifted from textile production to textile support, dealing in cotton waste and shoddy, as well as textile dyeing. The population increased to over 2,300 by 1915; Irish, Nova Scotians, and Italians made up half of the newcomers.

The turn of the century brought construction of several significant buildings, many of which remain landmarks today. In 1881, architect J. William Beale designed the Gothic style town hall. Union Station, located on the former Norfolk County Railroad line, was constructed in 1893. In 1903, J. Lawrence Berry

⁵ The Walpole Common grew in size between 1739 and 1828, beginning with one initial gift in 1739, and expanding through one purchase in 1789, and two gifts in 1828.



Walpole's Old Town Hall (1881), is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

designed the Beaux Arts style Walpole Public Library, a donation from Andrew Carnegie. Commercial structures of note include Walpole Center's Beaux Arts and Colonial Revival-style blocks along Main Street, and storefront development in East Walpole. Residences, particularly those along Common and High Plain Streets, reflected the high Victorian style, including the Colonel William Moore House (1785, 45 Common Street), Porter Boyden House (ca. 1880, 119 Common Street), and the George Craig House (1882, 40 Front Street). Local citizens made several contributions to the public landscape during the Late Industrial Period, including the gifts of the Bird Memorial and Clock Tower in East Walpole and

Mary Bird Memorial Fountain (ca 1894 and 1895, respectively), located on the Walpole Common.

EARLY MODERN & MODERN PERIODS (1915–PRESENT)

While the street railway ceased operations in 1919, the rail system remained, and today, it provides commuter service from Walpole to Boston. Early twentieth-century improvements to the roadway system in and surrounding Walpole had significant impacts on the visual character of the town. In the 1930s, U. S. Route 1 was widened to four lanes and soon afterward, commercial development, emerged along the corridor, affecting South Walpole, Walpole Heights, and East Walpole. Upgrades to Main Street (Route 1A) and Elm/East/Plain Streets (Route 27) led to similar styles of commercial development along these routes. By the mid-twentieth century, Walpole had begun to evolve from a small town of several small villages, into a suburb. While manufacturing of paper and building materials continued, many of the local industries either closed or moved elsewhere. The population grew steadily between 1920 and 1970 and then leveled off.

In the 1920s, the Town invested in its public landscape by constructing two parks, both designed by landscape architect John Nolen.⁶ Memorial Park, located on 35 acres in the town center and planned in 1923-1924, commemorated the town's two-hundredth anniversary. The 89-acre Francis William Bird Park, developed in 1926-1927, was the gift of Charles Sumner Bird, Sr., and his wife, Anna. In addition to providing three miles of walking paths through woodlands, across meadows,

and alongside water features, the property allows residents a place to retreat and enjoy the "spiritual uplift of nature." The property is owned and maintained by The Trustees of Reservations and is open to the public.

Extant buildings from the early twentieth century display the Colonial Revival style, as seen in the Dr. Connally House and Office (ca. 1925, 74 Common Street) and the United States Post Office building (1937, 10 Common Street). The designs of most other buildings largely reflect contemporary trends, including ranch and split-level styles in the mid-1900s, followed by larger "McMansion" style homes in the 2000s.

Past Efforts to Preserve Historic & Cultural Resource Areas

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY (1970S; 1990S; 2008)

According to the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), Walpole has completed a total of 413 inventory forms, including areas, buildings, structures, and objects. The Walpole Historical Commission initiated the inventory in the 1970s. Later survey forms were completed by preservation consultants hired by the town. MACRIS maintains scanned (PDF) copies of forms for approximately one-half of the resources.⁷

⁶ Landscape architect John Nolen also contributed plans and/or designs for Walpole's town forest, the East Walpole Playground, grounds of the Walpole High School, and the grounds of Endean, the private estate of Charles Sumner Bird.

⁷ Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS): <https://mhc-macris.net/>

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, this program recognizes the country's historic and cultural resources of local, regional, and national significance. Walpole has listed three properties on the register: the Deacon Willard Lewis House (33 West Street, listed in 1975) the Old Town Hall (listed in 1981), and Union Station (listed in 2009). In rare instances, this designation has the potential to protect these resources, if federally funded projects pose a threat to the properties' historical integrity. Otherwise, National Register status is honorary.

COMMUNITYWIDE HISTORIC PROPERTIES SURVEY (2008).

In 2008, Walpole received a Survey & Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to complete a survey of historic and cultural resources in the town and to make recommendations for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. Overseen jointly by Walpole's Planning Board and Historical Commission and conducted by architectural historian Kathleen Kelly Broomer, the effort produced eight MHC Area inventory forms and four MHC Building inventory forms (Form B), documenting approximately 185 properties, and recommended twenty individual properties and seven districts for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Since the survey's completion, just one of the individual properties (Union Station) has been successfully nominated; none of the seven districts has been nominated. Other recommendations of the survey which have yet to be implemented include:

- Further study of Walpole's late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century estates, or private residences of industrialists, located in the vicinity of the factory complexes with which they were associated, and along Elm Street between Walpole Center and the Medfield town line;
- Survey of the town's post-World War II resources – up to ca. 1960, including veterans' housing and school buildings;
- Updating the town's inventory of historic and cultural resources to note any buildings that have been demolished;
- Completing nine additional Area Forms (MHC Form A); and
- Completing nineteen additional Building Forms (MHC Form B).

PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS

Preservation restrictions have been placed on two of Walpole's historic resources: the Old Town Hall (2000) and the Bird Pond 1 Site (2005). The terms of these restrictions were not known at the time of the inventory's completion.

DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW (ADOPTED IN 1973; UPDATED IN 2018).

Walpole first adopted its Demolition Delay Bylaw nearly fifty years ago, permitting the Walpole Historical Commission to review demolition applications for structures more than 100 years old or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If the commission finds the structure to be historically or architecturally significant, it may impose a delay on the demolition. Originally the bylaw limited the

delay to six months, but in 2018 the Town voted to amend the period to twelve months. Walpole retains over 1,000 structures, including outbuildings, garages, and houses that fall under the bylaw's jurisdiction. Over the last five years, five demolition delays have been imposed. No structures have been saved, and all five were ultimately demolished once the delay period ended, as provided for in the bylaw.

2004 WALPOLE MASTER PLAN

The previous master plan, completed in 2004 and updated in 2009, identified one goal pertaining to historic and cultural resources, "Identify and protect cultural resources." Under the goal, three policies (or objectives) were identified, (1) preserve the historic significance of Old Town Hall; (2) inventory and protect significant cultural and historic sites and landscapes; and (3) enhance awareness of local history and historic sites. The following strategies associated with these objectives have been either fully or partially implemented (*implementation measures appear in italics*).

- Pursue historic rehabilitation of Old Town Hall through public or private resources. *The extent and cost of rehabilitation is under investigation; both demolition of modern additions and updates to achieve ADA compliance are needed.*
- Pursue a detailed inventory and mapping of historic sites, coordinating the Historic Commission and the Walpole Historical Society and working with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). *In 2022, The Walpole Historical Commission applied to MHC for funding to update the 2008 inventory, with 2022 as the project start date, but funding was denied. The*

commission intends to re-apply in a future application round.

- Incorporate cultural resource data into the town's GIS system and involve local historians in keeping the data updated. *The Walpole Assessor's and Building Inspector's Offices have been instructed to flag demolition applications for structures 100 years or older.*

These strategies have yet to be implemented:

- Explore a historic landmarks bylaw or encourage preservation easements with nonprofit organizations to create official protection of historic buildings and structures.
- Explore official recognition for historic landscapes like Bird Park, possibly under the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape program.
- Encourage the Historical Commission and Historical Society to work with the schools to incorporate local historical research in class curricula.
- Encourage the Historical Society to publish updated maps and guidebooks and to consider a fee-based program to provide historic plaques and house histories to other property owners. Note: the Historical Commission plans to host an historic plaque program as part of the town's 300th Anniversary Celebration.
- Create annual art gallery display areas in the library and at other public venues.
- (From the 2009 update) Protect natural and cultural resources in a Green Network and a Heritage Network.

Walpole's Historical Organizations

WALPOLE HISTORICAL COMMISSION (PUBLIC)

Established in 1970, the Historical Commission consists of five volunteer members appointed by the Select Board, and serves as the official advocate for the preservation, protection, and development of the Town's historical and archaeological assets. The Commission oversees the execution of the Demolition Delay Bylaw (Chapter 349, Town of Walpole Bylaws), described earlier in this section, and has launched an effort to collect oral and visual histories of town residents through a "Stories of Historic Walpole" program, in collaboration with the Council on Aging, Walpole Media, and other town entities. The Town does not provide professional staff support for the Historical Commission. This makes planning and implementation difficult.

WALPOLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Local History Room. The Town's public library houses a room devoted to collecting, maintaining, and making available to the public information about Walpole's architectural, social, cultural, and landscape history. Included in the collection are birth, marriage, and death records, microfilmed copies of the Walpole Times, historic town annual reports, town histories, historic maps and photographs, cemetery inscriptions, and more. The library shares information in the Local History Room via its website with that of the Walpole Historical Society, described below.

WALPOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This private, non-profit member-based organization

serves as town's primary repository for local history. Founded in 1898, its official mission is to "collect, hold, and preserve documents, books, memoirs, curiosities and all matters related to its history ... and to secure and maintain a memorial building in which its collections may be preserved."⁸ The building is the 1827 Deacon Willard Lewis House, the first property in Walpole to be listed on *the National Register of Historic Places*. In 2017, the society released the 500 plus page book/publication, *Civil War Soldiers – Walpole, Massachusetts, documenting the men from Walpole who fought in the war*.

Cultural Organizations & Events

WALPOLE CULTURAL COUNCIL

This five-person Town board, appointed by the Walpole Select Board, provides grants each to local artists, performers and cultural organizations. Funding for the council is provided by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. The 2022 allocation to Walpole was \$10,300. The WCC surveyed the community online and in person as a way of establishing funding priorities. Results indicated a strong preference in the areas of music; nature and science; and cultural diversity. Past grant recipients have included the Friends of the Walpole Public Library, The Walpole Footlighters (discussed below), and others.

FRIENDS OF THE WALPOLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

This private non-profit support and advocacy member-based organization hosts dozens of programs at the library each year, ranging from storytelling and musical performances, to juggling and children's programming. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization continued to hold programming

8 <https://www.walpolehistoricalsociety.org/>

virtually, and may continue to do so in the future as a way increasing the audience capacity.

WALPOLE PUBLIC LIBRARY, WALPOLE DISTRICT ART SHOW

The District Art Show takes place throughout the year, with artwork selected from each grade (K-12) in the Walpole Public Schools, including drawings, paintings, collage, prints, weavings, digital art, design, and sculpture. The show illustrates the breadth of studio experience, depth of learning, and range of visual expression.

ADDITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Walpole Footlighters (private, non-profit). Located at 2 Scout Road in East Walpole, this non-profit organization stages live theater and musical theater productions in its 231-seat playhouse.

Walpole Children's Theatre (private, non-profit). Established in 1969, the Walpole Children's Theatre educates, enlightens, and entertains youths in the local community, performing at the Walpole Footlighters' playhouse and several of the Walpole Public School auditoriums. Past performances have included James and the Giant Peach, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Cinderella, The Beauty and the Beast, and Pinocchio.

Concerts on the Common. For many years, the Town of Walpole, acting through its Recreation Department, has hosted musical events on the

Common during the summer months. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic prohibited live gatherings and all performances were canceled. The series was revived in 2021.

Other Arts & Cultural Organizations. In addition to the arts and cultural organizations listed above, Walpole is home to several for-profit businesses that provide art and performance instruction, aimed primarily at youth.

2.10

Community Health

Key Findings

- In addition to providing a K-12 public education, the Walpole Public Schools play a key role in supporting the physical, mental, and nutritional needs of the community's children and youth, especially the most vulnerable. It further expanded this role during the COVID-19 pandemic by operating as a distribution point for the Walpole Community Food Pantry.
- Like so many communities across Massachusetts, Walpole's mental health services were put under pressure by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the strain was increased with the flood-induced closure of Norwood Hospital and its psychiatric services in June 2020.
- Increased demand at the Walpole Community Food Pantry resulting from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic caused the Food Pantry to expand its service offerings and relocate to a larger headquarters.

Introduction

Walpole residents appreciate their sense of community. The quality of its schools, the protected open space, and the overall sense of civic responsibility are points of pride for residents and indicators of what the community values. For Walpole, with its active civic associations and local traditions, the community and its well-being are central to the accomplishments of the Town's past and the aspirations residents have for its future. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted Walpole's community strength and ingenuity, and the Town has worked to protect the health of its most important resource: the community itself.

The health of a community is rooted in the exposure of all its members to elements both healthy and unhealthy across all settings. This can be work, home or school; indoors or outdoors; in both natural and built environments. These conditions have unique impacts on local health care systems and the reliability of a resident's access to them. This element of the Master Plan examines the state of Walpole's community health system, the availability and accessibility of nutritious food, the mental health of Walpole's vulnerable populations, and the ways in which the Town's public services, housing, transportation options, and other components help or hinder the health of the community.

Walpole invests in maintaining a healthy community. It has public parks, vibrant school athletic programs, and a trail system in Downtown Walpole between Main Street and School Street. Its southern half is flanked by Massachusetts Audubon Society lands along the border with Sharon and Norfolk.

Within the Downtown area, there is no shortage of membership gyms. These measures help Walpole combat the health risks that come with the pace and challenges of modern life.

As of mid-January 2022, there had been more than 4,000 COVID-19 cases in Walpole, and more than 2,000 probable and confirmed deaths from the virus in Norfolk County.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a strain on the healthcare resources and providers upon which communities depend. Another strain brought about by COVID-19 was the now-abating economic downturn that saw many families in Walpole having to do more with less income. Faced with this challenge, the Walpole Community Food Pantry, in alliance with other food distribution programs and local offices such as the School Nutrition Department of the Walpole Public Schools, stepped up its outreach and distribution efforts, ensuring that Walpole families would be able to get by.

But as Walpole is recovering from these challenges, it faces new ones, with the climate crisis being perhaps the greatest. Climate change presents risks to physical and mental health, particularly to its older and younger populations. Fortunately, Walpole has a strong community health outreach network in place and because of the challenges of the last two years, it has been further strengthened.

Local Health Care Options

AREA HOSPITALS

In addition to the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic, Walpole has suffered additional losses to its network of healthcare resources. Norwood

¹ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>

Hospital, owned by Dallas-based Steward Health, was the nearest hospital to Walpole and represented a critical resource to the community. Three months after Governor Baker declared a state of emergency because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Norwood Hospital closed following a series of flash floods in the summer of 2020. The closure of Norwood Hospital is not expected to be permanent. As the hospital works to rebuild, it still provides resources to its community. Its website remains active, and by November 2020, COVID outpatient treatments were being booked at a site adjacent to the hospital. The hospital's website also facilitates scheduling for COVID-19 vaccinations, and these services are administered at a satellite location in Westwood. Today, Walpole's options are limited to Brockton's Good Samaritan Medical Center, which is a considerably longer distance from the most densely populated part of Walpole than Norwood.

South Shore Health serves thirty-four municipalities in southeastern Massachusetts, though its facilities are still some distance away from Walpole (Quincy, Abington, Weymouth, South Weymouth, etc.). Further afield, Boston's world-class medical facilities are also available to serve the more medically complex needs of patients from Walpole.

OUTPATIENT SERVICES AND PHARMACIES

Within Walpole, residents have access to many point-of-care healthcare services within its town limits, mostly within Downtown Walpole. Along Route 1A, there are a variety of outpatient services specializing in physical therapy, eldercare, family medicine, and mental health. There are also two standalone pharmacies in Walpole (CVS and Walpole Pharmacy,

both on Main Street) and pharmaceutical services offered within the Walmart Supercenter and the Big Y (both on Providence Highway).²

HEALTH COSTS AND HEALTH BURDENS IN WALPOLE

High stress and largely sedentary lifestyles present major health challenges throughout the Commonwealth, and to some degree these challenges can be found in public health data for Walpole. Norwood Hospital's 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) found that in 2015, the proportion of Walpole residents who were overweight or obese was less than the Massachusetts average. Health complications and chronic illness can result from a variety of genetic, lifestyle, and other factors, so this indicator serves as an imperfect proxy for general health. In 2015, Walpole experienced a higher diabetes mortality rate (4.8 percent) than its neighboring towns and the eleven-community study region (The second highest rate in the study Dedham's, at 3.8 percent). Walpole also experienced mortality from other serious chronic conditions, such as cancer and heart disease, at rates that exceed the statewide average, as did Sharon. In the CHNA process, Norwood Hospital surveyed key informants to learn about the primary concerns of cancer patients, and 59 of 74 respondents ranked financial concerns or lack of insurance as the foremost issue.³

The American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates from 2015-2019 indicate that 98.6 percent of Walpole residents have one or more form of health insurance coverage. Whether these plans are through employers, direct purchase, or public

plans, the costs associated with health insurance coverage are high across Massachusetts. According to the September 2021 Cost Trends Report from the Massachusetts Health Policy System, "the average commercial healthcare insurance premium for Massachusetts families now exceeds \$21,000 annually, almost triple what it was in the year 2000 and higher than the average price of a new compact car in the U.S." Specific data on the costs of the healthcare and health insurance coverage for Walpole residents are not available, but across the Commonwealth, these costs can be burdensome and prohibitive. These financial factors can mean that patients and their families must make choices and set priorities in ways that are detrimental overall to community health.

These financial burdens are growing, and so is the population of older adults and people with disabilities. These groups often have incomes well below state and national averages. Increasing usage of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), shown in [Table 2.10.1](#), provides additional evidence of the unmet financial needs of vulnerable populations, in Walpole and across the Commonwealth.

Even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts was experiencing a public health crisis. The opioid epidemic was and continues to be a major policy issue across the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS) licenses addiction recovery programs, and in 2014, 5.8 percent of admissions into these programs were related to opioids. In Walpole, this figure was even higher, at more than 7 percent of

² "100 Biggest Employers in Walpole," Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Labor Market Information

³ Norwood Hospital Community Health Assessment, 2018

2014 BSAS admissions related to the opioid epidemic. The CHNA notes that the opioid crisis affects nearly every community in the Commonwealth and claimed the lives of 1,637 Massachusetts residents in 2015: four of whom were from Walpole. In 2020, more than 2,000 Massachusetts residents died of opioid overdose.

Table 2.10.1. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in the Past 12 Months for Households

Percentage of Households Receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in the Past 12 Months	Walpole		Norfolk County		Massachusetts	
	2005-2009	2015-2019	2005-2009	2015-2019	2005-2009	2015-2019
With Supplemental Security Income	2.1%	3.1%	2.6%	3.6%	4.4%	6.0%
No Supplemental Security Income	97.9%	96.9%	97.4%	96.4%	95.6%	94.0%

Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2005-2009 and 2015-2019, Table B19056, and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

Food Access and Food Security

GROCERY PURCHASING OPTIONS

Walpole residents have access to a variety of sources for nutritious food. Most of Walpole's supermarkets, convenience stores, and box stores are located in southern Walpole on Main Street (Route 1A) or Providence Highway (Route 1). Residents of northern Walpole may choose to shop in neighboring Medfield or Westwood: Medfield's Main Street is home to chain supermarkets such as Shaw's and Roche Brothers, and Wegman's in Westwood is easily accessible from US-1 and I-95.

Seasonally, Downtown Walpole's Spring Brook Park hosts a farmers market that provides local access to fresh, nutritious food. There is also a berry farm in neighboring Sharon on its Main Street. Participants in interviews for this planning process frequently raised concerns about the lack of a grocery store within the walkable Downtown economic zone. Some participants additionally said the Town needs a "healthy" option be brought to the area.

TRAVELING FOR FOOD ACCESS: DISTANCES AND METHODS

In 2016, Tufts University and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) launched the Massachusetts Food Access Index, a pilot program to measure food access throughout the Commonwealth. Using data from MassGIS and ReferencesUSA, the Tufts/MAPC team plotted distances to and accessibility of food retailers within ranges of one quarter mile and one half mile, which are considered within "walking networks," and ranges of one mile and five miles are "driving networks." With the exception of the Downtown, Walpole's score indicates a "guaranteed lack of access to a grocery store of any scale" within walking distance. In the Downtown area, there is "likely access to a smaller-scale grocery store, farmers market, or fruit and vegetable market" within walking distance. All of Walpole enjoys "access to a large-scale grocery store or super center" within driving networks.⁴

Outside the driving networks, however, options are limited. The only supermarket within Downtown, and therefore the one that is most accessible to foot and bicycle traffic, is the Stop & Shop on Main Street.

NUTRITIONAL ASSISTANCE IN WALPOLE

Walpole residents have access to many food retailers within reasonable distances. MAPC's interactive Food Systems Data Map from 2018 indicated that Walpole was unlikely to suffer from food insecurity.⁵ The availability of food and accessibility of food retailers does not alleviate the financial pressures that Walpole households may experience, however. Federal food assistance programs support the health and wellbeing of households both above and below the poverty level, and need has increased significantly in Walpole, across Norfolk County, and across the Commonwealth. **Table 2.10.2** indicates that while the overall percentage of Walpole households receiving the nutritional assistance remains low, need has trended upwards. Most startlingly, the percentage of Walpole households at or above the poverty line that require assistance quadrupled, and that was before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE WALPOLE COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

The Walpole Community Food Pantry was founded in 1993. The Pantry and its utilization evolved dramatically throughout its history, and the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in further changes and expansion. Originally located at the Plimpton School,

⁴ Tufts/MAPC, Massachusetts Food Access Index, http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Food-Access-Index_MAPC-TUFTS_FINAL.pdf

⁵ MAPC, Massachusetts Food Systems Data Map, <https://www.mapc.org/our-work/expertise/public-health/healthy-food-access/>, 2018

Table 2.10.2. Food Assistance Program Usage						
Households' Receipt of Food Stamps/SNAP by Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months	Walpole		Norfolk County		Massachusetts	
	2005-2009	2015-2019	2005-2009	2015-2019	2005-2009	2015-2019
Non-recipient households	98.2%	96.4%	96.6%	93.4%	93.0%	88.3%
Income Below Poverty Level	3.0%	3.0%	5.1%	5.0%	6.7%	5.6%
Income At or Above Poverty Level	95.2%	93.4%	91.5%	88.4%	86.3%	82.8%
Food Stamps/SNAP Recipient Households	1.8%	3.6%	3.4%	6.6%	7.0%	11.7%
Income Below Poverty Level	1.2%	1.1%	1.8%	2.4%	4.0%	5.3%
Income At or Above Poverty Level	0.6%	2.5%	1.6%	4.3%	3.1%	6.4%
<i>Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2005-2009 and 2015-2019, Table B2003, and Barrett Planning Group LLC.</i>						

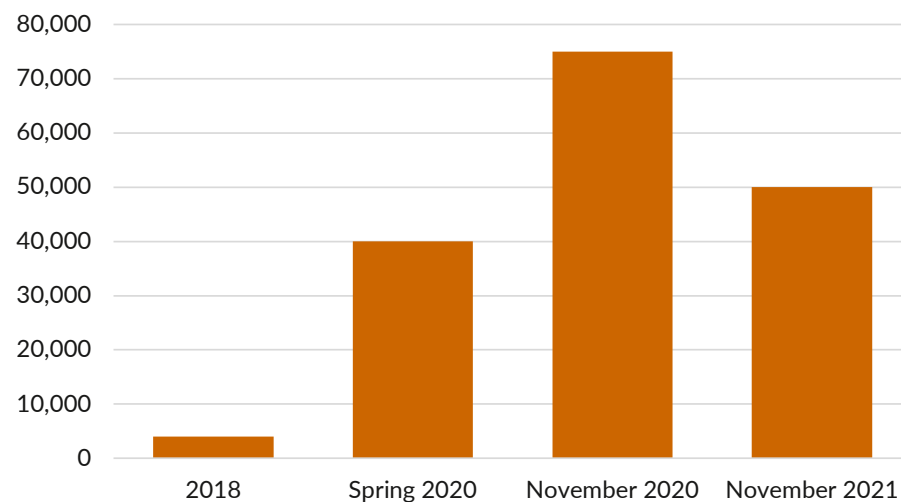
the Pantry moved to 1303 Washington Street, where recipients would shop the shelves for food and other essentials. By 2018, the Pantry distributed roughly 4,500 pounds of food to an estimated 45 families per month. In 2019, the Pantry partnered with the Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) and expanded its offerings through a new program called Feeding Walpole. Feeding Walpole engaged Costco in Dedham, Wegman's in Westwood, and Garelick Farms in Franklin for food rescue (waste prevention) to provide nutritious food options of all kinds to Walpole families facing food insecurity. In early 2020, the Pantry and Feeding Walpole were also distributing food through the Council on Aging, the Walpole Public Schools, the Walpole Housing Authority, the Walpole Department of Mental Health, and several other entities throughout the region for a total of more than 40,000 pounds of food and essentials per month.

When the Washington Street Pantry location had to close in March 2020 because of COVID-19, the Pantry's partners in the Walpole schools and Council on Aging provided temporary use of their refrigeration and storage facilities. In fall 2020,

the Pantry relocated to a much larger space at 24 Walpole Park South. The five thousand-square foot location supports increased demand, resolves accessibility concerns associated with the former location, and allows for physical distancing through a pick-up and delivery model. By mid- to late-2020, the Pantry supported local families with more than 70,000 pounds of food and supplies distributed

Figure 2.10.1 Pounds of Food Distributed per Month

Source: Walpole Community Food Pantry



monthly (**Figure 2.10.1**).

Through the continuing generosity of Walpole's residents and local businesses, the Pantry now distributes 50,000 pounds of food and other essentials each month to 535 families. As of May 2021, the Pantry is a "shared delivery site" of the GBFB. In 2022, the Pantry is in talks with Aldi's

Walpole location regarding an exclusive food rescue partnership.

THE ROLE OF WALPOLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

The Walpole Public Schools are an active participant in promoting food access for its students. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 14 percent of students at Walpole's elementary schools received free breakfast and lunch. During the pandemic, need reached 24 percent. On July 20, 2020, faced with rising vulnerabilities, the Baker-Polito Administration awarded the Walpole Public Schools a \$327,964 food security grant.⁶ This would allow Walpole Public Schools to "purchase mobile food stations and accompanying signage. The mobile food stations will allow their school nutrition department to safely and efficiently serve students."

This was not the first outreach effort by the nutrition department of the Walpole Public School system. In 2015, the Walpole Public Schools entered into a two-year "Agreement for the Joint Use of Facilities" with Let's Move Walpole and the Walpole Wellness Committee with the goal of "helping young people and their families learn and develop skills that will enable them to develop healthier lifestyles." Prior to this, the district had won a bronze medal in 2013 from the Healthier U.S. School Challenge (HUSC) in recognition for serving a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains throughout the school week, in addition to offering at least forty-five minutes of physical activity.

These accomplishments and accolades result from sustained efforts by the School Nutrition Department

since 2009 to put greater emphasis on healthy meal options in Walpole Public Schools, as well as physical and nutritional education. In pursuit of these goals, the School Nutrition Department had collaborated with the Walpole Community Food Pantry on outreach efforts before the pandemic. Kicking off in January of 2020, a "backpack" program identified students that did not qualify for programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental program and sent them home with enough fresh food for the weekend. This meant that by the time the schools closed their doors in March 2020, a system was already in place to identify vulnerable households. When physical distancing protocols made distribution at the Walpole Community Food Pantry's small headquarters on Washington Street too difficult, Walpole High School was quickly identified as the logical choice as operations center. Before long, cars were lining up around the high school for volunteers to load their trunks with healthy food.

Mental Health

Walpole's mental health resources include mental health service centers and private practices. Since 2018, Walpole has partnered with William James College's INTERFACE Mental Health Referral Helpline as a free, confidential outpatient service for Walpole residents of all ages.⁷ Still, the closure of Norwood Hospital and its psychiatric services did have an impact by limiting resources for those in crisis and at risk of crisis. Professionals interviewed for this plan spoke highly of those psychiatric services and saw

the availability of resources stretched all the thinner. This section focuses on Walpole's mental health resources for its youth and older adults.

MENTAL HEALTH IN OLDER WALPOLE RESIDENTS

Like many Massachusetts communities, Walpole has an aging population with 16.3 percent of its residents over age sixty-five.⁸ Older residents have access to many resources to ensure a strong standard of social care and self-empowerment, most notably the Walpole Council on Aging (COA).

The 2020 Walpole Town Report summarized the COA mission, reporting "the focus of the Council is to help elders and their families understand and cope with the complex issues associated with the aging process." Those complexities combined with the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Walpole's COA adapted to continue to serve its vulnerable seniors. As nursing homes implemented tighter health protocols, and elders living in their own homes started taking their own precautions, Walpole's older residents found themselves physically isolated. COA social events such as senior luncheons with the Police and Fire Departments were soon replaced with Zoom conversations over coffee, something that had been a goal of the COA that predates the pandemic.

Physical and social isolation represent stressors to mental health, so the COA's response to the pandemic was immediate and thorough. The COA quickly established a system for outreach to provide well-being checks for its most vulnerable members. Between March and December 2020, the COA

⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-awards-3-million-in-food-security-grants>

⁷ Walpole Public Schools, "INTERFACE Mental Health Referral Helpline," https://www.walpole.k12.ma.us/news/what_s_new/interface_mental_health_referral_helpline

⁸ American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates 2015-2019, Table

Table 2.10.3. Behavioral Health Aging Indicators

	Walpole	Norfolk County	Massachusetts
% 60+ with 15+ days poor mental health per month	7.1%	6.4%	7.0%
% 65+ with depression	27.5%	29.1%	31.5%
% 65+ with anxiety disorders	24.3%	24.5%	25.4%
% 65+ with bipolar disorders	3.4%	4.2%	4.5%
% 65+ with post-traumatic stress disorder	1.0%	1.4%	1.8%
% 65+ with schizophrenia & other psychotic disorders	5.2%	5.8%	5.9%
% 65+ with personality disorders	0.7%	1.2%	1.4%
% 65+ with substance use disorders	6.7%	6.0%	6.6%
% 65+ with tobacco use disorders	7.6%	8.2%	10.2%
Source: the 2018 Massachusetts Healthy Aging Data Report. “The Technical Report describes all of the data sources for the report, but three to note are: (1) the American Community Survey (2012-2016); (2) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Master Beneficiary Summary File (2014-2015); and (3) The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2010-2015).”			

performed outreach (6,171 outreach activities) to reach 1,061 Walpole individuals and provided well-being checks to 320 unique individuals.⁹ These numbers represent an exponential increase in need for services over previous years, but the COA seeks to increase and innovate outreach and social activities for so long as circumstances dictate.

The most recent Health Aging Data Report from Tufts University and the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston provides insight into pre-pandemic conditions. Table 2.10.3 reports mental health concerns on the local, county, and state levels in 2018. These estimates indicate that Walpole seniors experience depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress, schizophrenia, personality disorders, and tobacco use disorders at rates slightly below county and state rates. Rates of persistent poor mental health

and substance abuse disorders in Walpole slightly exceed county and state estimates.

MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUNGER WALPOLE RESIDENTS

Childhood and adolescence are formative years of social, physical, and emotional growth. Walpole protects its young population through resources within the school system. Walpole High School employs a School Psychologist, three social workers, and several School Counselors, the two middle schools have six counselors in total. Each elementary school has two full-time school counselors and other staff in their guidance offices. In addition to the INTERFACE helpline mentioned earlier in this chapter, Walpole Public Schools operates a Safe Schools Initiative to facilitate early intervention in response to destructive behaviors. These include but are not limited to bullying, dating/domestic

violence, self-harm, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Given that drug usage can sometimes be tied to issues of stress, social anxiety, and a desire for relief, this awareness is good. However, those who work in school counseling in Walpole have noticed a growing tendency for these underlying issues among students who feel a strong pressure to succeed, especially among female students. Lack of coping skills, shifting expectations, the omnipresence of social media, and the associated rise in screen time were identified as major factors, all exacerbated by the massive shifts in social behavior and school attendance procedures that were brought about by COVID-19. Past Walpole Youth Risk Assessment Surveys have demonstrated that Walpole students are familiar with the risks and negative health effects of drug abuse, especially heroin.

According to a Fall 2021 COVID-19 data brief by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, suicide attempts and suicidal ideations dropped by four percentage points overall across Massachusetts, although they increased in several of the counties of southeastern Massachusetts, including in Norfolk County by six points.

Community Health in Built and Natural Environments

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Like COVID-19, the climate crisis has exposed and exacerbated weak points in health systems from the municipal to the federal level. Walpole’s location within the watersheds of the Neponset and Charles Rivers and the Boston Harbor basin (Massachusetts Climate Change Projections, March 2018) will make

it prone to increased flooding, in addition to other impacts of global warming.

The floods that forced the closure of Norwood Hospital were described by National Weather Service (NWS) Boston as “the worst in 10 years.” These flood events were so severe that NWS Boston issued a Flash Flood Emergency – the third ever issued and the first outside of a tropical storm system. In addition to the threat to built structures that serve Walpole’s community, the increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as these also threaten physical and mental health. Citing a recent study from the United Kingdom, NPR reported in 2021 that 60 percent of young people surveyed felt either “very” or “extremely” worried about changes to the climate: 77 percent said they considered the future to be frightening, and 56 percent feel humanity is doomed.¹⁰

These fears are not confined to young people far away. Young people in Walpole can access news just as easily as any of their contemporaries around the world. Just as how having so many social media networks in the palm of one’s hand can make a young person especially susceptible to anxious and depressive behaviors and outlooks (see previous section), so too can having all the news and images of exponentially increasing climate disasters in the palm of one’s hand also pose a serious mental health risk.

TRANSPORTATION DIVERSITY AS A COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUE

Walpole sits nearly equidistant from Boston and

Providence, and its proximity to Route 95 helps account for Walpole’s dependence on single-occupancy vehicles. Over 80 percent of Walpole commuters use automobiles to go to work (see Economic Development chapter). This means a self-perpetuating cycle of using those vehicles to conduct one’s daily life and the expulsion of carbon dioxide and smog into the air, thereby posing a risk to the pulmonary, cardiovascular, and cerebral systems of every single Walpole resident.

By contrast, the commuters who walk or bike to work amount only to .8 percent and .3 respectively. This is despite Walpole is home to several hiking and bike trails, including in Adams Farm near the Norwood town line. There is also a walking path adjacent to the Downtown. Downtown Walpole does not have marked bike lanes, however, and Walpole has minimal cycling infrastructure. These challenges do little to encourage walking and biking, which benefit the health of walkers and bicyclists as well as the rest of the community because of their neutral carbon impact.

Such an observation is not new. In 2019, McCabe Enterprises and the Pare Corporation released a document for the Town of Walpole entitled, “Downtown Walpole Parking & Economic Development Strategy.” The report contains many home truths: that by ceding more downtown street space to bicycle and foot traffic, air pollution levels drop and local business profits stand to increase due to pedestrians spending more time in the area; that the downtown area as it is now is full of barriers that discourage healthier modes of transportation;

that adding more greenery to the downtown in the form of street trees would clean the air, cool the pavement, and mitigate storm water runoff from the Neponset River¹¹ (See Environment Chapter).

Turning to other transportation alternatives, MBTA service is minimal in Walpole: the only bus line that runs to Walpole is the 34e, whose terminus is the Forest Hills station in the Boston neighborhood of Jamaica Plain, which is also where the Orange Line ends. Commuter Rail access is limited to Walpole Station after the Plimptonville Station closed due to low ridership.

HOUSING AS A COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUE

Housing security plays an important role of the health of individuals and the community. High housing costs mean that residents may be forced to choose between their financial priorities, which is inherently stressful. These stressors can have negative mental and physical consequences, including anxiety, depression, fatigue, exhaustion, hypertension, high blood pressure, and suicidal ideation.¹² Additionally, if residents choose to forego other necessities (such as medicine, medical care, food, or transportation costs) to pay their mortgage or rent because of financial hardship, there can be far-reaching health implications. This stressful, destructive situation is one that more and more Walpole residents have faced over the past two years, evidenced by the Walpole Community Food Pantry’s sizable uptick in food distribution and delivery to neighbors who may never have imagined they would face food insecurity.

¹⁰ NPR, “Young people are anxious about climate change and say governments are failing them.” Sharon Pruitt-Young. September 14, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/14/1037023551/climate-change-children-young-adults-anxious-worried-study>

¹¹ McCabe Enterprises and Pare Corporation. “Downtown Walpole Parking & Economic Development Strategy.” 2019. https://www.walpole-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyh1fl1381/f/ pages/mccabepare_downtownwalpolepkgecddevstrategy_may2019.pdf.

¹² Paula Braveman, Mercedes Dekker, Susan Egarter, Tabashir Sadegh-Nobari, Craig Pollack, “How Does Housing Affect Health?,” Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, May 1, 2011, https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70451.



Section 3

Key Planning Issues



Natural Resources

WATER QUALITY

Walpole has a host of environmental challenges: impaired waters, inadequate river infrastructure, pond shallowing, sedimentation and nutrient build-up, decreased oxygen in water, invasive plant species, sewer system infiltration, unmitigated impervious surfaces, and upstream impoundments.

SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS

The Town needs management plans for critical surface waters at risk of impairment and a framework for updating existing plans. There needs to be a heightened focus on pond restoration and health, invasive species management, increasing water flows, remediating eutrophication, and securing alternative funding streams to continue periodic planning efforts.

DAMS AND RIVER INFRASTRUCTURE

A trained specialist could help Walpole complete a comprehensive inventory and assessment of dams and river infrastructure to assess drainage-driven flooding, structural shortcomings, and adverse environmental impacts. The status of certain dams, dam safety and security, ownership, and discourse over upkeep versus removal is inconsistent at the town level.

WETLANDS PROTECTION

Town staff report that it has been difficult to preserve and protect wetlands in Walpole. They cite funding as a challenge, and also that some residents worry about “losing” land to conservation status, thereby losing tax revenue and putting more of the Town’s tax burden on

homeowners. It is also hard to rely on local regulations and permitting procedures to protect wetlands and water sources. Developers have an understandable interest in maximizing profits, so getting as much use as they can out of available land sometimes collides with the work of staff and volunteers whose job is to protect the Town’s land and water resources.

MAKING USE OF AVAILABLE REGIONAL RESOURCES

Making the best possible use of regional resources can help Walpole stretch tax dollars. For example, strategies in the Metropolitan Area Planning Council’s (MAPC) Low Impact Development Toolkit and the state’s Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit can help the Town strengthen the Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw, move beyond conventional controls, and address overflows and runoff.

Sustainability and Climate Change

CLIMATE SCIENCE

Walpole residents, volunteers, and staff are divided about prioritizing climate change. Skepticism stems from not seeing or directly experiencing impacts, data appearing too minimal to matter, implementation costs, and an already limited staff capacity. However, even incremental increases in precipitation and drought have serious consequences. Prolonging progress toward climate action and resiliency planning will result in expensive remediation in the future, severe effects on vulnerable populations, and unnecessary loss of life and property. The Town needs to work on a Climate Vulnerability Assessment

and Action Plan and other clean energy programs in coordination with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, evaluating options to overcome impacts of extreme heat and precipitation.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Having a Sustainability Commission matters! Walpole has a history of strong citizen engagement and advocacy, supporting ways the Town can address climate change and build on efforts going forward. Institutionalizing leadership within Town Government would go a long way toward establishing consistent policies and coordinating the work of related boards, commissions, staff, and community groups. Among the Sustainability Commission's duties in Walpole would be to work with staff to apply for grants, prepare climate action plans, assist with Green Communities Grant duties, educate the public, and work with other committees such as the Emergency Planning Committee and the Permanent Building Committee on shared goals.

NEW ENERGY POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The Town needs to continue to explore policies, programs, resources, and technologies that go beyond the Energy Reduction Plan's goals to further sustainability, resiliency, and equity. This includes implementing clean energy, pursuing rebates, forming new partnerships, and leveraging existing relationships with state and federal entities.

FLOODING

Flooding and increases in precipitation are an ongoing concern in Walpole, partly due to the inadequacy of stormwater infrastructure. Major arteries including Elm, Washington, and School Street require overdue attention. As Walpole attracts new development, a greater burden will be on the existing,

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIONS



SAVE ENERGY
AT HOME



WALK, CYCLE OR TAKE
PUBLIC TRANSPORT



EAT MORE
VEGETABLES



CONSIDER YOUR
TRAVEL



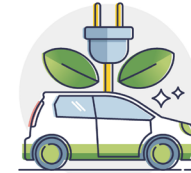
THROW AWAY
LESS FOOD



REDUCE, REUSE, REPAIR
AND RECYCLE



CHANGE YOUR HOME'S
SOURCE OF ENERGY



SWITCH TO AN ELECTRIC
VEHICLE

outdated stormwater system. Much of the new development is also bordering wetlands, flooding waterbodies, and poses health risks of water-borne diseases.

HEALTH IMPACTS OF EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat is especially difficult for seniors and students in public schools. School facilities are outdated and have led to health issues among students and cancellations when it is too hot. The Senior Center is the only designated cooling center in Town, challenging vulnerable populations without a car. Residents with pets also have no options in an extreme heat event. As annual temperatures climb, these problems will become more prevalent.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Walpole has historically rejected solar and the need for its installation, particularly solar fields that

require tree clearing. The Master Plan's engagement process reflected these concerns. However, there are opportunities to integrate solar panels on Town buildings, including the new middle school. Other measures should include electric charging stations, zoning updates and implementation of the new stretch code, and other recommendations in the Energy Reduction Plan.

INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT

The Town could adopt Integrated Water Management (IWM) regarding wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater to balance social, economic, and environmental needs. This would involve working with the Neponset River Watershed Association (NRWA) to evaluate water conservation practices, increase groundwater recharge town-wide, and fortify the stormwater bylaw and associated regulations for incoming development.

MAKING GOOD USE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Collaborating closely with regional partners to construct, operate, and maintain stormwater and drainage infrastructure such as pump stations, dams, bridges, and culverts will be important. Regional collaboration can overcome staffing and funding limitations at the town level. A partnership is particularly critical for emergency recovery and to address potential upstream dam failures as flooding becomes more frequent and pronounced.

The Local Economy

PERMITS AND APPROVALS FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

Walpole business owners have concerns about planning and zoning administration, with the common critique that the site review process is difficult to navigate and not “user friendly.” It could be helpful to local businesses and Town boards to simplify the permitting process as one part of a larger strategy to encourage business growth and greater diversity of business types in Walpole’s commercial areas.

BUSINESS MIX

Downtown Walpole lacks business diversity. There is an over-reliance on point-of-purchase eateries (pizzerias and sub shops) and front-facing personal care services (nail salons). The lack of variety does not meet the range of needs for goods and services in the community, resulting in sales “leaked” to other communities. It also increases risk for the Town’s economy when a downturn puts a burden on businesses that provide consumer goods and services. Implementing recommendations from the Rapid Recovery Plan (2021) and the Downtown Action Plan (2015) could help to improve the mix of businesses and business vitality in the downtown area.



GETTING AROUND

Downtown Walpole is not easily navigable for people without automobiles (namely cyclists), depriving the area of consumer dollars who are more likely to linger and spend money than those who are merely “passing through.” The Town needs to implement bicycle lanes and traffic-calming measures to make the downtown a more attractive destination for everyone.

Open Space and Recreation

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Walpole residents seem to be unaware of the publicly accessible open spaces and recreation facilities available to them. Volunteer committees and staff need to conduct public education campaigns to

generate local support, recruit more volunteers, and protect open space parcels for public enjoyment. More education could also boost enrollment in passive recreation programs offered by the Recreation Department.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMPLIANCE

Many of Walpole’s park and recreation facilities do not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), rendering them unsuitable for seniors and people with disabilities. Benches, signage, paved pathways, universal play features in playgrounds and fields, and other items in the ADA Accessibility Self-Evaluation need to be addressed.

GETTING ACCESS TO GRANTS

Grants exist to help Walpole meet some of its open



space and recreation needs, but the Town does not have enough staff to work on many large or complicated grant applications. The Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (P.A.R.C.) Grant, or MassTrails, which includes grants from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and Commonwealth Trails, along with other state and federal resources are good examples of resources that could make a difference in Walpole. Resources exist; the challenge for Walpole is designating staff to pursue these opportunities or engage a contractual grant writer to help.

ATHLETIC FIELDS

Walpole's athletic fields are overused and at high risk without a field "rest" schedule coordinated with the Town's fertilizer program. Overuse by multiple groups has taken a toll on the older fields. The recommended rest time is one year, which seems unrealistic in Walpole today considering the popularity of programs and weather limitations.

OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION

Walpole has a limited amount of vacant, contiguous, and unconstrained land left to acquire for open space and recreation purposes. Providing open space helps to support wildlife and habitat preservation, reduce runoff, enhance groundwater recharge and water conservation, and benefit human health.

Land Use

FROM NEW DEVELOPMENT TO REDEVELOPMENT

There is not much vacant, developable land left in Walpole today. Most parts of Town are already developed, preserved in perpetuity, or subject to

environmental constraints. However, Walpole will continue to change as investment begins to focus more on redevelopment of existing built areas. The Town will need to be thinking about creative design options to continue growing its economy and housing stock while protecting many of the qualities Walpole residents say they appreciate.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ZONING

Walpole's Zoning Bylaw limits development opportunities in a variety of ways, but a noticeable one is that many of the Town's commercial areas are zoned on a parcel-by-parcel basis. In addition, many uses require Full Site Plan Review. The Town would benefit from a zoning audit, including an audit of the zoning map, to study the existing land use policies and identify ways to make permitting more efficient without sacrificing quality.

TRANSPORTATION NODE

Having an MBTA Commuter Rail stop makes Downtown Walpole attractive for new and expanded commercial and residential uses, especially since the MBTA is expanding commuter traffic on the Framingham Secondary line.

TOWN PLANNER

The lack of a full-time Town Planner limits Walpole's capacity to carry out planning projects and help the Town implement comprehensive land use policy.

ZONING BYLAW UPDATE

The Town has several opportunities to improve and expand its Zoning Bylaw. Including more provisions to create affordable housing, for example, would help meet a clearly demonstrated local and regional need. Walpole should review whether

current special permit requirements are appropriate, where perhaps standards for certain uses and an updated site plan review bylaw may be more helpful in the long run.

Historic Preservation

LOCAL CAPACITY

Efforts to preserve Walpole's historic and cultural resources have been hindered by a lack of capacity on the part of Town staff and volunteers to take on major preservation initiatives, including obtaining grant funding and working with private owners of historic homes.

DEMOLITION

Walpole is losing historically significant structures – particularly homes – to demolition and replacement, often with much larger structures. The Demolition Delay Bylaw, while recently strengthened to allow for a twelve-month delay, has not proven to be an effective tool for preventing these losses.

COMMUNITY-WIDE PRESERVATION PLAN

Walpole would benefit from developing a community-wide preservation plan that sets priorities for protecting historic resources, identifies tools for preserving them, and provides a roadmap for implementing these tools, which might include:

- Applying to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) to expand fundraising options;
- Exploring Historic Reinvestment Tax Credits as part of economic development;
- Pursuing National Register of Historic Places Districts; and
- Considering Local Historic Districts.

A community-wide preservation plan has helped many other Massachusetts communities by outlining preservation priorities and focusing the work of local historical commissions and their community partners. Adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) could provide a way for Walpole to finance historic preservation efforts, protect open space and recreation sites, and expand affordable housing.

Transportation

MANAGING TRAFFIC

Residents at one of the public meetings for this Master Plan said traffic is one of the most important issues the Town is facing in the future. Growth in population and number of vehicles per household – both in Walpole and the surrounding communities – has resulted in rising traffic volumes and safety and operations issues. A traffic calming policy to prioritize where to install traffic calming devices would help Walpole address speeding in town.

DOWNTOWN

Downtown has a number of transportation-related problems, but two will be important focus areas for Walpole both in the immediate future and longer-term. First, there is a lack of pedestrian curb ramps to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. This presents a challenge for people with disabilities who want to visit and



navigate through Downtown Walpole. A second issue is the presence of both underutilized and highly utilized parking areas in lots and on the street. There may be an opportunity to repurpose parking spaces and encourage redistribution of parking in the downtown area, and this should be studied by the Town.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE SAFETY

Walpole residents value pedestrian, bicycle and transit safety, and mobility. The Town has many needs in these areas, notably more visible crosswalks, maintenance of poor-quality sidewalks, improved off-street bike accommodation, non-driving alternatives to get to the train station, ways to encourage more people to take the train and the bus to mitigate traffic congestion from new developments, and improvements to encourage walking

in the downtown area. Additional funding for DPW staffing and the pavement management program would help make roadway, sidewalk, and bicycle facility improvements.

Walpole residents have stressed that open space and parks are great places to spend time, run and hike. They would like to see more biking trails and better connectivity between the trail systems. The Town has an active Trails Committee and a variety of recreational trails. Several trail projects have been proposed in Walpole, including the Metacomet Greenway running from the southern border of Walpole to the Rhode Island border, a trail by the senior center, and a pedestrian and bike connection across the Plimpton Street bridge. Resources need to be committed toward implementing these projects.

SIDEWALK INFRASTRUCTURE

Finding the balance between building new sidewalk infrastructure and maintaining existing infrastructure is a challenge for Town staff. One way to bring focus and a sense of priority to addressing sidewalk infrastructure would be to participate in MassDOT's Safe Routes to Schools program. This program can provide funding to improve walking and biking facilities around elementary and middle schools and help Walpole address public safety needs in critical traffic areas.

Housing & Residential Development

MOVING BEYOND CHAPTER 40B

Walpole is close to meeting the affordable housing requirements of Chapter 40B. The Town has opportunities to take an activist approach to reaching the 10 percent minimum for affordable housing and

maintain production of affordable units to remain above 10 percent in the long term. Zoning to encourage or require affordable housing in new multifamily developments will help Walpole obtain affordability benefits from new development and also focus on housing needs outside the Chapter 40B definition of affordable housing.

MBTA COMMUNITIES LAW

Walpole is one of the 175 towns and cities that have to comply with the new MBTA Communities Law. The law requires communities in the MBTA region to create zoning for multifamily housing that can be developed as of right (without a special permit) at 15 units per acre. Many Walpole residents have said they dislike the apartment developments around the commuter rail station, and this could make it challenging for Walpole to find a path toward compliance.

Community Health

LOCAL HEALTH CARE RESOURCES

With the closure of Norwood Hospital in 2020 due to flooding, Walpole has lost a key local health provider. While hospitals in Brockton, Stoughton, Medfield, and the Greater Boston area remain open to treat people facing health emergencies, the distance to these facilities adds to the twin burdens of health care and health cost that Walpole residents face.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE

The closing of Norwood Hospital has considerably altered emergency response operations and delayed commutes for the Emergency Medical Services team. During the pandemic, the hospital's closure was especially devastating. Norwood Hospital has been closed and condemned since 2020, not scheduled to reopen until 2024. The Walpole Fire Department

maintains an agreement with Steward Norwood Hospital in the interim, and responsibilities have been transferred to the Good Samaritan Medical Center in Brockton. Doctors in the Emergency Department have been providing direction via radio and recorded telephone. The added patient load has affected hospital staff, who were already struggling to keep up with the volume of COVID-19 patients.

FOOD INSECURITY

Due in part to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, more Walpole residents have experienced food scarcity, with many turning to the Walpole Community Food Pantry (WCFP) for support. While the amount of food distributed by the WCFP declined as the pandemic's intensity decreased and the economy has begun to recover, reliable food access remains a concern, especially for people without automobiles. Given the expanded efforts of the WCFP and the Council on Aging to respectively reach out to those suffering from food scarcity and isolation during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the development of a community health outreach system should be considered.

Community Facilities

DEMANDS ON TOWN STAFF

Growth will continue to come to Walpole. Some Town departments, including Police, Fire, Public Works, and the Health Department, report being extremely busy and increasing needs town-wide. The Health Department is affected by growth in various ways: transportation, accessing services, wastewater system inspections, affordable housing, and other kinds of demands.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Walpole has school building improvement needs. The School Business Administrator reports that there is always funding for dire needs, and staff submits long-term needs for approval. However, many schools were constructed in the mid-twentieth century and have not been renovated since the 1990s or early 2000s. The combined middle school project and Green Communities are the first steps toward much-needed improvements to Walpole's educational institutions.

REUSE OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

The former Johnson Middle School building will soon to be available upon the completion of the new combined middle school. There is an ongoing, Town-wide discussion about sensible alternative uses for the space, knowing there are two important pumping wells for Town drinking water on the site. Ideas include expansion of the Daniel Feeney Preschool, space for the Walpole Food Pantry,

space for the Recreation Department, and open space behind the school.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

Walpole no longer has a local newspaper, which many used to stay updated. Departments would benefit from having someone to manage communications and social media to ensure clear and consistent internal/external communication, avoid (mis)disinformation, and increase engagement. The functions of a Social Media Director could be merged with department staffing requirements. There have also been issues with remote communication post-COVID-19. The Town should investigate preparing facilities and networks with faster and stronger 5G technology.





Section 4

Implementation Plan

Recommendations and Action Plan

GOAL 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Increase economic activity and diversify the tax base, provide more jobs, and more shops and restaurants for residents to enjoy.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 1-A: Provide funding and technical assistance to promote new economic development and support existing businesses.							
1-A.1. Implement the recommendations of the Rapid Recovery Plan (2021) and update and implement the Downtown Action Plan (2015).			Community & Economic Development Department Economic Development Committee	Moderate	Near-term and ongoing	Funding, Staff and Volunteer Capacity	8-0-0 09/27/22
1-A.2. Sponsor and organize Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) trainings for all regulatory boards to improve volunteers' ability to lead effective planning efforts.	Yes	Municipal Facilities and Services	Planning Board	Easier	Ongoing	Volunteer Capacity and Cooperation	8-0-0 09/27/22
1-A.3. Seek assistance from UMass Amherst Donohue Institute to conduct an Economic Development Analysis for the Town.			Community & Economic Development Department Town Administrator	Moderate	Near-term	Staff and Volunteer Capacity; Funding (possibly) Business community leadership	8-0-0 09/27/22

Note: all Land Use recommendations are shown in the Implementation Plan as actions associated with the Master Plan's content goals.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 1-B: Adjust local regulations to incentivize desired types of commercial development.							
1-B.1. Engage a consultant or the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to evaluate the Central Business District zoning requirements, permitting procedures, and development standards, and update the Zoning Bylaw accordingly.	Yes		Planning Board Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate	Medium-term	Volunteer leadership Partnership with Destination Downtown Funding (possibly); or MAPC DLTA support.	8-0-0 09/27/22
1-B.2. Update the Town's home occupation regulations to bring them in line with current practice (also see section 6D).	Yes		Planning Board Economic Development Committee		Medium-term	Funding for consultants, staff capacity Collaboration with Walpole Chamber	8-0-0 09/27/22
1-B.3. Audit and update the Walpole zoning bylaw.	Yes	Natural Resources Cultural & Historic Resources Housing Climate Change Economic Development Transportation	Planning Board	Easier	Near-term	Funding for consultants	8-0-0 09/27/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 1-C: Plan for beneficial commercial development in key areas of town.							
1-C.1. Analyze the physical, economic, market, and infrastructure opportunities and constraints of Walpole's industrial and commercial districts, and identify options both for encouraging development and increasing the value of development.	Yes		Community & Economic Development Department		Medium-term	Funding for Economic Development Consultant; Staff and Volunteer Capacity Steering Committee including property owners	8-0-0 09/27/22
1-C.2. Work with the state on longer-term planning and disposition of the Cedar Junction Correctional Facility and develop a local vision for the site.	Yes	Housing Natural Resources	Community & Economic Development Department Select Board		Medium-term and ongoing	Collaboration with state agencies, staff capacity	8-0-0 09/27/22
Policy 1-D: Foster a supportive environment for artists and arts organizations.¹							
1-D.1. Create art gallery display areas within the local library and at other public venues	Yes	Historic and Cultural Resources Municipal Services and Facilities	Walpole Public Library Walpole Cultural Council	Moderate	Medium-term		7-0-0 10/25/22
1-D.2. Provide incentives to/partner with developers to create live/work and studio space for artists		Historic and Cultural Resources Housing Economic Development Land Use	Community & Economic Development Department	Difficult	Longer-term		7-0-0 10/25/22

¹ This has been relocated from Goal 9. Supporting arts and culture is an economic development issue and it is typically addressed as part of economic development.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
1-D.3. Consider designation for downtown as a Cultural District	Yes	Historic and Cultural Resources Economic Development	Community & Economic Development Department Walpole Cultural Council Massachusetts Cultural Council	Moderate	Longer-term		7-0-0 10/25/22

GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION: Provide a network of connected and well-maintained open space and recreational facilities, ensuring equitable access for all residents.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 2-A: Improve access by people with mobility and physical disabilities to Walpole's recreation areas and open spaces.							
2-A.1. Implement actions from the ADA Accessibility Self-evaluation including upgrades to benches, paved pathways, universal play features in playgrounds and fields on town-owned outdoor recreational facilities		Open Space and Recreation Transportation Municipal Facilities and Services Community Health	Recreation Department Department of Public Works	Easier	Near-term	Chapter 90 Funding MA Office on Disability	7-0-0 10/25/22
2-A.2. Upgrade the existing signage and parking area amenities at town-owned outdoor recreational areas and open spaces to serve the needs of seniors and people with disabilities more adequately.		Open Space and Recreation Transportation Municipal Facilities and Services Community Health	Recreation Department Department of Public Works	Easier	Near-term	Chapter 90 Funding DHCD Downtown Funding Grants	7-0-0 10/25/22
Policy 2-B: Enhance public access and promote use of Walpole's existing recreation areas and open spaces, particularly those currently underutilized.							
2-B.1. Prioritize ongoing maintenance of older active recreation facilities, including trash pick-up, flower and bush bed grooming, trail clearing, and repairs to fences and benches at parks around town to maintain their attractiveness and usefulness for Walpole residents.		Municipal Facilities and Services	Recreation Department Department of Public Works Conservation Commission	Moderate	Ongoing	Mass Trails Grant program Community grants from private companies and foundations Local Land Trusts	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
2-B.2. Enhance sidewalk connections, wayfinding, parking facilities, and lighting at existing facilities, especially near schools and parks, to increase access by all modes of transportation	Yes	Open Space and Recreation Transportation	Recreation Department Department of Public Works	Moderate	Medium Term	MassTrails Grant Program PARC Grant MassDOT Complete Street Grant MassDOT Safe Routes to School Grant	7-0-0 10/25/22
2-B.3. Partner with Norfolk County Agricultural High School to promote use and maintenance of Adams Farm, and work with Norfolk County to preserve land in Walpole.		Open Space and Recreation	Recreation Department Department of Public Works	Easier	Near-term	Staff Capacity	7-0-0 10/25/22
2-B.4. Provide streetscape amenities such as street trees, seating areas and pocket parks, benches, lighting, and areas for activities and games.		Transportation Economic Development Open Space and Recreation	Community & Economic Development Department Select Board Department of Public Works Economic Development Commission	Moderate	Medium-term	MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces funding program DHCD Downtown Funding Grants	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 2-C: Promote resiliency and long-term sustainability of open space and outdoor recreational facilities.							
2-C.1. Develop a municipal nursery to grow trees and other plants for public spaces in town to secure the health of Walpole's tree canopy without having to rely on commercial providers. The municipal nursery could provide trees to private property owners here as long as the tree is planted within 20 feet of the public right of way. (Town Forest, compost facility, South Walpole Community Athletic Complex)	Yes	Open Space and Recreation Natural Resources	Recreation Department Conservation Commission Department of Public Works Volunteers	Moderate	Medium and Longer Term	Half-acre of land for a nursery of 600 trees Local and State Funding Staff Capacity	7-0-0 10/25/22
2-C.2. Acquire new passive recreational spaces with long-term sustainability in mind, including staff capacity for maintenance, prevention of harmful development near sensitive aquifer zones, and preservation of valuable natural resources.	Yes	Open Space and Recreation Natural Resources	Recreation Department Town Administrator	Moderate	Medium Term	Chapter 61 and 61A Capital Budget	7-0-0 10/25/22
2-C.3. Implement the recommendations in the 2022 Recreation Programming and Facilities Study.		Open Space and Recreation Natural Resources Municipal Facilities and Services	Recreation Department Town Administrator Department of Public Works Community & Economic Development Department	Easier	Short term	Staff Capacity and Collaboration Public and Private Funding for Construction and Engineering	7-0-0 10/25/22

GOAL 3: NATURAL RESOURCES: Conserve and protect the town's natural environment and biodiversity through land and water management, regulation, and public education.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 3-A: Protect the Town's two high-yield aquifers, wells, and recharge zones to preserve drinking water quality and supply.							
3-A.1. Collaborate with state and regional officials on a Water Conservation Program that discourage excessive water use and waste, increases recharge, and increases the amount of water flow in periods of drought.	Yes	Natural Resources	Community & Economic Development Department Conservation Commission Sewer & Water Commissioners	Moderate	Near-term	Equipment Funding Staff and Volunteer Capacity	10-0-0 09/14/22
3-A.2. Work with federal, state, local, and private parties to clean up identified brownfields and other existing contaminated lands and reduce the risk of future contamination.	Yes	Natural Resources Open Space and Recreation Economic Development Housing Land Use Historic and Cultural Resources Municipal Facilities and Services	Planning Board Select Board	Difficult	Medium-term and ongoing	State and local collaboration Remediation Funding Staff Capacity	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
3-A.3. Increase regulatory enforcement of stormwater controls regulated under the NPDES construction general permit and the Town's Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Bylaw by increasing staff time allocated for construction inspections to verify permit conditions are being met. Also to review local regulations for compliance with state code and economic efficiency and practicality.	Yes	Natural Resources Municipal Facilities and Services	Conservation Commission Planning Board Community & Economic Development Department DPW	Difficult	Longer-term	Staff Capacity 53G funding for construction monitoring (would be conditioned during the permitting process)	9-0-1 09/14/22
Policy 3-B: Establish educational campaigns to build appreciation and understanding about the importance of Walpole's natural resources.							
3-B.1. Form conservation partnerships between non-profits and public agencies, and collaborate to educate the community about natural resource preservation.		Natural Resources Open Space and Recreation	Community & Economic Development Department Conservation Commission	Easier	Medium-term and ongoing	Technology Staff and Volunteer Capacity	9-0-1 09/14/22
3-B.2. Partner with Walpole Public Schools on youth programming, field trips, community gardens, and nature classes.		Natural Resources	Walpole Public Schools Conservation Commission	Moderate	Longer-term	Staff Capacity and Collaboration	9-0-1 09/14/22
3-B.3. Commission the Neponset River Watershed Association to conduct an education session for staff about the importance of groundwater, surface water, wetlands protection, and problems associated with pond sedimentation, invasive plants, and runoff.		Natural Resources	Conservation Commission Community & Economic Development Department Neponset River Watershed Association	Easier	Near-term	Staff Capacity Non-Profit Collaboration	9-0-1 09/14/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 3-C: Protect the Town's surface waters and wetlands and preserve the beneficial natural services they provide.							
3-C.1. Evaluate funding sources to implement recommendations in the Town Forest's Forest Management Plan, focusing on insect infestations, nonnative invasive species, and "all-ages" conservation practices ² to meet goals while protecting the health of the forest.		Natural Resources Open Space and Recreation	Town Forest Committee Superintendent of Parks & Cemeteries	Easier	Near-term and ongoing	State and local funding Staff and Volunteer Capacity	9-0-1 09/14/22
3-C.2. Develop pond management plans for Clarks, Cobbs, Memorial, Turner, and any other municipally managed pond to enhance water quality and control aquatic vegetation.		Natural Resources Open Space and Recreation	Pond Management Committee	Moderate	Medium-term	Funding for Consultants and Construction Staff and Volunteer Capacity	10-0-0 09/14/22 7-0-0 10/25/22
3-C.3. Pursue MVP Action grants, FEMA flood hazard mitigation assistance funding, DER Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grants, MassDOT Small Bridge Program grants and local private-public funding to resolve culvert, dam, and bridge upgrades, and floodproofing issues including drainage-driven flooding, structural shortcomings, and adverse environmental impacts.		Natural Resources Municipal Facilities and Services Open Space and Recreation Climate Change	Department of Public Works Community & Economic Development Department Town Administrator	Moderate	Near-term and continuous	Funding for Consultants and Construction (including local funding) Staff and Volunteer Capacity Collaboration with non-profits and state entities Public and Private Grants Integrated Water Infrastructure Vulnerability and Climate Resiliency Plan	7-0-0 10/25/22

² The all-ages management approach encourages development of three distinct age classes. By establishing the development of seedlings and saplings in the understory, the forest will have a class of tree species that will continue to develop into the next forest component while ready to fill the void in the case of catastrophic disturbance.

GOAL 5: CLIMATE CHANGE: Build Walpole’s human, financial, and infrastructure resources to advance sustainability in climate change resilience priorities.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 5-A: Pursue partnerships, grants, and agency collaboration to secure funding and technical support for implementing priority sustainability and climate resiliency projects.							
5-A.1. Explore additional opportunities through state grant programs, Green Communities, and MVP Action Grants, including converting heating systems of Town-owned buildings to electric heat pumps and installing solar panels.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services	Community & Economic Development Department Green Communities Regional Coordinator	Easier	Near-term	Staff Capacity Sustainability Commission State Collaboration Sustainability Commission	7-1-0 09/27/22
5-A.2. Work with private service providers to increase options for waste reduction, including residential and commercial composting and weekly recycling.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services Historic and Cultural Resources	Select Board Town Administrator Board of Health	Moderate	Mid-term	Private Collaboration Educational Resources Community Buy-In Private Funding	7-1-0 09/27/22
5-A.3. To overcome staffing and funding limitations, collaborate with the state, private engineers, and landowners to construct and maintain stormwater and drainage infrastructure, such as pump stations, dams, bridges, and culverts.	Yes	Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services Natural Resources	Department of Public Works Conservation Commission	Difficult	Longer-term	State and Private Collaboration Educational Resources Private and Public Funding Staff Capacity	7-1-0 09/27/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
5-A.4. Implement resilience recommendations from the CRB Workshop including a land management program assessing mosquito/tick/pest control options.	Yes	Open Space and Recreation Natural Resources	Recreation Department Department of Public Works	Moderate	Medium Term	State Collaboration Educational Resources Private and Public Funding Staff Capacity	7-1-0 09/27/22
5-A.5. Implement the adaptation, partnership, and funding recommendations in the <i>Integrated Water Infrastructure Vulnerability and Climate Resiliency Plan</i> to mitigate effects of climate change, including future flooding.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services Natural Resources	Department of Public Works Conservation Commission Community & Economic Development Department Select Board	Moderate	Near-term	Infrastructure Private and Public Funding State and Private Collaboration Staff Capacity	7-1-0 09/27/22
Policy 5-B: Develop a net-zero municipal policy aligning with the <i>Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap Report</i>.							
5-B.1. Work closely with the Green Communities Regional Coordinator to meet energy reduction benchmarks, including those in the CR3 Energy Reduction Plan, such as purchasing electric vehicles and installing charging stations.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services Historic and Cultural Resources	Department of Public Works Community & Economic Development Department Building Inspector Green Communities Regional Coordinator	Easier	Mid-term and ongoing	State Collaboration Local and State Funding Staff Capacity	7-1-0 09/27/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
5-B.2. Work with applicable parties and the Green Communities (GC) grant to address energy efficiency gaps in Walpole's facilities and public schools to meet the Town's Energy Reduction Plan goals.		Municipal Facilities and Services Open Space and Recreation Natural Resources Climate Change	Community & Economic Development Department Recreation Department Department of Public Works	Moderate	Near-term	Green Communities Grant Program	7-1-0 09/27/22
5-B.3. Collaborate with MAPC's Clean Energy Department to implement technical assistance and collective procurement actions to reach energy reduction goals.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services	Community & Economic Development Department Select Board Building Inspector Green Communities Regional Coordinator Sustainability Commission Department of Public Works	Moderate	Near-term and ongoing	State and RPA Collaboration	7-1-0 09/27/22
5-B.4. Establish a town-wide net-zero emission goal.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services Transportation	All Town Departments and Boards	Moderate	Near-term	Local Collaboration Community Buy-In Legislation Amendments	7-1-0 09/27/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
5-B.5. Study and recommend areas in Walpole that would be suitable for ground mounted solar panels and add them to the Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District.	Yes	Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services Economic Development Land Use	Select Board Green Communities Regional Coordinator Sustainability Commission Department of Public Works	Difficult	Longer-term	Local Collaboration Community Buy-In Educational Resources Public and Private Funding Staff Capacity Legislation Amendments	6-1-0 10/25/22
5-B.6. Identify and recommend suitable locations for charging stations at public buildings, such as Town Hall and schools, and at Town Facilities like DPW.		Municipal Services & Facilities	Select Board Department of Public Works	Moderate	Mid-term	Leadership Funding	6-1-0 10/25/22
Policy 5-C: Create a leadership presence inside town hall to spearhead Climate Action in Walpole.							
5-C.1. Keep current with trends and technologies, and consider becoming a member of a Clean Energy Center or DOER Working Group.		Climate Change	Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate	Near-term and ongoing	Staff Capacity	7-1-0 09/27/22
5-C.2. Establish a Sustainability Commission and recruit qualified volunteers to work with staff, prepare plans, track implementation progress, educate the public, and collaborate with other groups on climate goals.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services	Community & Economic Development Department Conservation Commission Department of Public Works Select Board	Easier	Near-term	Staff and Volunteer Capacity Legislation Amendments	7-1-0 09/27/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
5-C.3. Increase property owners' awareness of opportunities to invest in "green" improvements using local, state, and federal resources.		Climate Change Economic Development Housing	Community & Economic Development Department	Difficult	Long-term	Staff and Volunteer Capacity Educational Resources Private and State Collaboration	7-1-0 09/27/22
5-C.4. Study and consider the new Stretch Building Energy Code and the Municipal Opt-in Specialized Stretch Energy Code when finalized by MA Department of Energy Resources.		Climate Change Municipal Facilities and Services	Town Administrator Select Board Green Communities Regional Coordinator Sustainability Commission Department of Public Works Building Inspector	Moderate	Mid-term	Staff Capacity State Collaboration Educational Resources Town Meeting Vote	6-1-0 10/25/22

GOAL 6: HOUSING: Increase the range of housing types and the affordable housing supply to meet needs of people throughout various stages of the life cycle.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 6-A. Provide public information and education resources about housing in Walpole.							
6-A.1. Develop a comprehensive municipal engagement program to build knowledgeable, effective advocacy for affordable housing.		Economic Development Community Health	Housing Partnership Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate	Near-term, ongoing	Partnerships with Walpole Housing Authority, Three-Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), NeighborWorks Housing Funding, website support	8-0-0 09/27/22
6-A.2. Collaborate with neighboring towns to establish a Regional Housing Services Office.			Community & Economic Development Department Town Administrator	Moderate	Mid-term	Staff Capacity Funding	8-0-0 09/27/22
6-A.3. Sponsor regular presentations about local and regional housing issues that affect Walpole. Maintain recordings on Walpole Media.			Housing Partnership	Moderate	Near-term, ongoing	Partnerships with NeighborWorks, Greater Boston Real Estate Board, Builders & Remodelers Ass'n, Mass. Housing Partnership	8-0-0 09/27/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 6-B: Identify appropriate sites to encourage the production of new housing, both affordable and mixed-income.							
6-B.1. Promote Public Transit Oriented housing, ideally in conjunction with planning to work toward compliance with the MBTA Communities legislation (see Policy 6-B, Goal 3).	Yes	Transportation Economic Development Community Health	Planning Board Community & Economic Development Department Select Board	Difficult	Near-term, ongoing	Staff, Volunteer Leadership Technical assistance from Mass. Housing Partnership, MAPC, DHCD	8-0-0 09/27/22
6-B.2. Identify sites on which to encourage “friendly 40B” local initiative program (LIP) partnerships with the Housing Authority or other trusted developer partners.	Yes	Economic Development Transportation	Housing Partnership Select Board Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate	Mid-term	Staff, Volunteer Leadership	8-0-0 09/27/22
Policy 6-C: Improve local regulations to better encourage affordable housing production that meets local needs.							
6-C.1. Zone for and promote open space by design in new residential development.	Yes	Open Space and Recreation	Planning Board Housing Partnership	Moderate	Mid-term	Town staff Funding for consultant	7-0-0 10/25/22
6-C.2. Adopt zoning for affordable housing.	Yes	Community Health	Planning Board Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate	Near-term	Technical assistance from Mass. Housing Partnership Funding for consultant	7-0-0 10/25/22
6-C.3. Evaluate the effectiveness and revise if necessary the zoning for older adult housing developments.	Yes	Community Health Transportation	Planning Board	Moderate	Mid-term	Project Steering Committee in partnership with Council on Aging, Over-55 Housing Developers and Service Providers, Walpole Housing Authority	8-0-0 09/27/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
6-C.4. Adopt zoning that complies with the state's MBTA Communities guidelines (G.L. c. 40A, Sec. 3A).	Yes	Transportation Economic Development Community Health	Planning Board Select Board Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate to Difficult	Near-term	Staff, Leadership Capacity Technical assistance from Mass. Housing Partnership, MAPC, DHCD	8-0-0 09/27/22
Policy 6-D. Ease restrictions on residential development.							
6-D.1. Consider allowing two-family dwellings by right in the General Residence district.	Yes	Community Health	Planning Board	Moderate	Mid- to longer-term	Funding for consultant (EOEA Planning Grants)	8-0-0 09/27/22
6-D.2. Update and revise the Town's regulations for home occupations in order to permit them as of right, subject to conditions which if not met would require the homeowner to obtain a special permit (also see section 1B).	Yes	Economic Development	Planning Board Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate	Mid-term	Funding for consultant (EOEA Planning Grants) MAPC	8-0-0 09/27/22
6-D.3. Update and revise the Town's accessory dwelling unit bylaw to permit them as of right, subject to plan review, design standards, in single-family dwellings, and adequate provisions for wastewater disposal	Yes	Community Health	Planning Board	Moderate	Mid- to longer-term	Partnership with Council on Aging Funding for consultant (EOEA Planning Grants) or technical assistance from MAPC	7-1-0 09/27/22

GOAL 7: TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION: Address traffic congestion and improve alternative modes of travel including walking, biking and connections to, and parking for public transit.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 7-A: Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities for people of all ages and abilities.							
7-A.1. Maintain and upgrade sidewalks and pedestrian ramps so they are ADA-compliant.	Yes	Transportation Open Space and Recreation	Department of Public Works	Moderate	Near-term and ongoing	Chapter 90 Funding MA Office on Disability Grant	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-A.2. Develop a Town Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian implementation projects in town as part of a thoughtfully visioned town-wide network.	Yes	Transportation	Community & Economic Development Department Trails Committee	Easier	Near-term	Town Funding	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-A.3. Fill gaps in the existing sidewalk and bicycle network through construction of new sidewalks, bicycle lanes and shared-use pedestrian and bicycle facilities with connections to the Downtown area, between adjacent neighborhoods, to schools, parks, the Commuter Rail Station, town buildings and services, and MBTA bus stops..	Yes	Transportation Open Space and Recreation Community Health	Community & Economic Development Department Select Board Department of Public Works Trails Committee	Moderate	Medium-term	Chapter 90 funding MassDOT Complete Streets Tier 3 Funding MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces funding program MassDOT Safe Routes to School Funding	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
7-A.4. Pursue Safe Routes to Schools infrastructure funding. ³		Transportation	Community & Economic Development Department School Committee	Easier	Near-term	Town Staff MassDOT Safe Routes to School Funding	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-A.5. Upgrade crosswalks town wide to improve safety and protection for pedestrians and be more visible to motorists at all times, particularly near school facilities.		Transportation	Department of Public Works	Easier	Near-term	Chapter 90 Funding MassDOT Complete Streets Funding MassDOT Safe Routes to School Signs and Lines Grant	7-0-0 10/25/22
Policy 7-B: Improve mobility, safety, accessibility, and connectivity for all modes in the downtown area and develop a sense of place.							
7-B.1. Study the possibility of making roadways in the CBD one way or pedestrian-only to be pedestrian friendly and promote downtown businesses.		Economic Development Transportation	Select Board Economic ' Development Committee Dept. of Public Works	Difficult	Longer term	Funding	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-B.2. Make transportation infrastructure friendly to an aging population such as wide sidewalks, raised on-street parking spaces, ADA-compliant sidewalks, and pedestrian ramps.	Yes	Transportation	Department of Public Works Council on Aging	Moderate	On-going	Chapter 90 funding MassDOT Complete Streets Funding MA Office on Disability Grant	7-0-0 10/25/22

³ Pat will advise if additional specific recommendations need to be made to address school needs.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
7-B.3. Develop and implement a pilot study to create a pedestrian and bike only area within the Downtown to connect the town common green. A vehicle impact study would be required to make assess potential impacts to vehicle traffic.	Yes	Transportation Open Space and Recreation	Department of Public Works	Moderate	Near-term	Town Funding MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-B.4. Repurpose some on-street and off-street parking spaces for seasonal outdoor dining, as well as some potential seasonal street closures within the Downtown	Yes	Transportation Economic Development Open Space and Recreation	Community & Economic Development Department Select Board Department of Public Works Economic Development Commission	Moderate	Near-term	MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces program DHCD Downtown Funding Grants	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-B.5. Develop Wayfinding Signage Plan.		Transportation Economic Development	Community & Economic Development Department Economic Development Commission	Easier	Near-term	Town Funding	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-B.6. Develop a policy requiring new residential developments in the Downtown area to develop and implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan to encourage use of transit, walking, and biking.	Yes	Transportation	Community & Economic Development Department Select Board	Easier	Near-term	MAPC Guidelines	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
7-B.7. Enhance public familiarity with the Bay Circuit Trail through the expansion of branded signage in and near Downtown Walpole.		Transportation Open Space and Recreation	Trails Committee Department of Public Works	Easier	Near-term	Bay Circuit Alliance	7-0-0 10/25/22
Policy 7-C: Improve safety for all modes and maintain roadways.							
7-C.1. Continue to maintain roadways under current pavement management program, intersections, and sidewalks and seek to increase funding.	Yes	Transportation	Department of Public Works	Moderate	Near-term and on-going	Chapter 90	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-C.2. Develop a town wide Traffic Calming Program, Policy and Guidelines that can be used as a process to evaluate the applicability and potential for implementing traffic calming devices to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety on roadways.		Transportation Community Health	Community & Economic Development Department Department of Public Works	Moderate	Near-term	MAPC Best Practices	7-0-0 10/25/22
7-C.3. Make safety improvements at high crash and congested intersections.		Transportation Community Health	Department of Public Works Select Board	Difficult	Medium-term	Chapter 90 Funding Federal Safe Streets for All and MassDOT Funding	7-0-0 10/25/22

GOAL 8: MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES: Maintain and update municipal facilities and ensure that municipal services meet the needs of residents and protect public health.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 8-A: Manage town assets and preventatively plan maintenance to existing facilities.							
8-A.1. Develop a town wide Asset Inventory and institute a Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) program to be updated on a regular schedule and when upgrades or improvements occur for all sidewalks, stormwater infrastructure, municipal buildings and grounds. The Inventory and PPM should be comparable to the DPW Vehicle Maintenance Division's successful fleet maintenance program, and should include asset information from other recent infrastructure reports. This action will prepare the town to operate an efficient Infrastructure Asset Management program.		Municipal Facilities and Services Transportation Open Space and Recreation Climate Change	Department of Public Works	Difficult	Near-Term	Town Funding Asset Management Planning Grant Program for Water Infrastructure	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
8-A.2. Continue to implement water, sewer, roadway, and stormwater infrastructure improvements while improving flood prevention and mitigation through maintenance of catch basins and conveyances, clearing stormwater drains, and upgrading undersized/outdated culverts.	Yes	Municipal Facilities and Services Open Space and Recreation Transportation Natural Resources Climate Change	Department of Public Works	Moderate	Ongoing	Chapter 90 Funding National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration (NCRRR) Grant Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Road Surface Transportation Grant Integrated Water Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Resilience Plan.	7-0-0 10/25/22
8-A.3. Develop a strategic program with alternative funding sources for historical building utilization and revitalization that includes at least Blackburn Hall and the Old Town House. The program should preserve historical integrity while providing facilities that include a combination of uses.		Municipal Facilities and Services Historic and Cultural Resources	Community & Economic Development Department Town Administrator	Moderate	Mid-Term	Private Investment or a Public-Private Partnership	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
8-A.4. Conduct ongoing needs assessments of Walpole Public School buildings to plan for-needed improvements and future capacity needs at the PreK-5 and high school levels, based on the findings of the current facility evaluation and conditions assessment.		Municipal Facilities and Services	Community & Economic Development Department Town Administrator	Moderate	Mid-Term	Town Funding Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Grants Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants from DOE	7-0-0 10/25/22
Policy 8-B: Maintain sound fiscal management and capital planning policies.							
8-B.1. Continue to maintain and prioritize consistent budgeting policies to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive infrastructure asset management program through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).		Municipal Facilities and Services	Department of Public Works Town Administrator	Moderate	Mid-Term	State and Federal Grants Revolving Loans	7-0-0 10/25/22
8-B.2. Budget for the study of future needs of town services and facilities to ensure their viability and proactively plan for growth where needed, e.g., East Walpole Fire Station.		Municipal Facilities and Services	Department of Public Works Town Administrator Assistant Town Administrator	Moderate	Mid-Term	Staff Capacity	7-0-0 10/25/22

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 8-C: Planning for future needs and growth.							
8-C.1. Work with applicable parties and the Green Communities (GC) grant to address energy efficiency gaps in Walpole's facilities and public schools to meet the Town's Energy Reduction Plan goals.		Municipal Facilities and Services Open Space and Recreation Natural Resources Climate Change	Community & Economic Development Department Recreation Department Department of Public Works	Moderate	Near-term	Green Communities Grant Program	7-0-0 10/25/22
8-C.2. Re-establish and fund the position of Town Planner or Planning Director, with the primary purpose of supporting plan review and long-range planning work of the Planning Board, while providing for day-to-day reporting to the Town Administrator.		All Master Plan Elements	Town Administrator	Moderate	Mid-term	Town Funding Community Buy-In	7-0-0 10/25/22
8-C.3. Revisit the MSPU to address areas of local concern, incorporate any new parameters (such as new designated growth areas or population projections), and work towards a final MSPU that is adopted by the town and can serve as a roadmap for future investments in Walpole's wastewater management program.	Yes	Municipal Facilities and Services Land Use Housing Economic Development	Sewer & Water Commission Water and Sewer Superintendent Community & Economic Development Department	Moderate	Mid-term	Staff Capacity Local and State Funding	7-0-0 10/25/22

GOAL 9: HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES: Celebrate Walpole's history, protect historic resources, and increase the presence of art and culture in Town.

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 9-A: Plan for, adopt, and implement an array of preservation tools aimed at protecting Walpole's historic structures and landscapes.							
9-A.1. Appropriate funds or secure grants to engage a preservation planner to develop a 20-year town-wide preservation plan.		Historic and Cultural Resources Open Space and Recreation	Community & Economic Development Department Walpole Historical Commission Planning Board	Easier	Near-term	Funding for preservation consultant *MHC Strategic Planning Grant is an annual planning grant program	7-0-0 4/4/23
9-A.2. Continue to update the inventory of historic and cultural resources to include all buildings, landscapes, monuments, and structures 50 years or older; continually update this inventory as resources age; provide regular inventory updates to the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS, on-line state-wide database, managed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission)		Historic and Cultural Resources Open Space and Recreation	Walpole Historical Commission Walpole Historical Society	Moderate	Near-term and ongoing		7-0-0 4/4/23
9-A.3. Develop a map of surveyed properties, linked to the assessor's database, and update this map in conjunction with updates to the survey		Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission Board of Assessors/ IT Department (GIS)	Moderate	Medium-term and ongoing		7-0-0 4/4/23
9-A.4. Recognize historic landscapes through State and National Register of Historic Places programs		Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission Massachusetts Historical Commission (National Park Service)	Moderate	Longer-term		7-0-0 4/4/23

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
9-A.5. Considering establishing Local Historic Districts (LHD)	Yes	Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission and LHD Study Committee Property-owners within proposed district(s)	Difficult	Longer-term		7-0-0 4/4/23
9-A.6. Continue to review the Scenic Roads Bylaw and expand as appropriate.	Yes	Historic and Cultural Resources Open Space and Recreation	Select Board Town Meeting Walpole Historical Commission	Moderate	Medium-term		7-0-0 4/4/23
9-A.7. Encourage preservation easements on historically significant buildings		Historic and Cultural Resources	Owners of historically significant properties Walpole Historical Commission Massachusetts Historical Commission Town-Hall Re-Use Committee	Difficult	Medium-term and on-going		7-0-0 4/4/23
9-A.8. Apply to become a Certificated Local Government to expand fundraising options		Historic and Cultural Resources	Community & Economic Development Department Select Board	Easier	Near-term		7-0-0 4/4/23

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
9-A.9. Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) as a way of financing historic preservation efforts		Historic and Cultural Resources Housing Natural Resources	Community & Economic Development Department CPA Study Committee Walpole Historical Commission Walpole Housing Partnership Housing Authority Walpole Conservation Commission Walpole Recreation Committee Recreation Department Town Meeting	Difficult	Near-term		7-0-0 4/4/23
Policy 9-B: Explore alternatives to demolishing and/significantly altering the town's historic buildings and landscapes, including historic public buildings.							
9-B.1. Monitor the effectiveness of the existing Demolition Delay Bylaw; update as necessary to achieve the community's preservation goals.	Yes	Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission Community & Economic Development Department Building Inspector	Moderate	Near-term		7-0-0 4/4/23

ACTION	LAND USE	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
9-B.2. Explore providing incentives for homeowners/ developers and the town to preserve, rather than demolish historic buildings, e.g., through preservation restrictions		Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission Community & Economic Development Department Town Hall Re-use Committee	Moderate	Near-term		7-0-0 4/4/23
Policy 9-C: Broaden historic homeowners' knowledge about and appreciation for the significance of their properties.							
9-C.1. Develop and distribute preservation guidelines for owners of historic properties		Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission Walpole Historical Society	Moderate	Medium-term		7-0-0 4/4/23
Policy 9-D: Communicate Walpole's history to residents of all ages and especially to youth.							
9-D.1. Work with Walpole's schools to incorporate local historical research into class curricula.		Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission Walpole Historical Society Walpole Public Schools	Moderate	Medium-term		7-0-0 4/4/23
9-D.2. Support the Walpole Historical Society in the publishing of updated maps and guidebooks		Historic and Cultural Resources	Walpole Historical Commission Walpole Historical Society	Moderate	Medium-term		7-0-0 4/4/23

GOAL 10: COMMUNITY HEALTH: Invest in resources and services to protect the health and well-being of Walpole residents, especially the town's most vulnerable people.

ACTION	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
Policy 10-A. Design Walpole as a healthy community.						
10-A.1. Through zoning, infrastructure policies and investments, and public realm enhancements, support downtown as a compact commercial center and a complete, walkable neighborhood.	Economic Development Housing Transportation	Select Board Planning Board Community & Economic Development Department	Easier	Near-term, ongoing	Leadership Infrastructure funding	6-1-0 10/25/22
10-A.2. Enhance existing and develop new trail systems and other publicly accessible community amenities in downtown, suburban, and rural areas of Walpole that enable residents to participate in healthy exercise.	Open Space and Recreation Transportation	Select Board Recreation Commission Conservation Commission	Moderate	Ongoing	Infrastructure funding Programming and public education	6-1-0 10/25/22
10-A.3. Ensure that "Complete Streets" and other transportation improvements are designed to accommodate universal access, including wheelchairs and adaptive bicycles.	Transportation	Select Board Planning Board Dept. of Public Works	Moderate, difficult	Near-term, ongoing	Complete Streets Program participation, funding Town staff	6-1-0 10/25/22
Policy 10-B. Support policies, programs, and initiatives that make Walpole an inclusive community for all residents.						
10-B.1. Work with regional health organizations to assess social determinants of health and community inclusion in Walpole, focusing on vulnerable populations, e.g., aging, Limited English Proficient (LEP), disability, racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income households.		Board of Health Walpole Public Schools Council on Aging	Moderate	Mid-term	Partnership with regional health provider/agency MAPC Public Health Services	6-1-0 10/25/22

ACTION	ELEMENT(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	LEVEL OF COM- PLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	MPC VOTE
10-B.2. Adopt community-led racial equity trainings for all staff, boards and commissions.		Select Board	Easier	Near-term	Leadership Funding for equity training consultant	6-1-0 10/25/22
10-B.3. Strengthen public education and public awareness of Walpole's increasing population diversity, and promote cultural competence.		Board of Health Walpole Public Schools Council on Aging	Moderate	Longer-term	Leadership Town staff MAPC Public Health Services	6-1-0 10/25/22
Policy 10-C. Support policies, programs, and initiatives that make Walpole an inclusive community for all residents.						
10-C.1. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a Community Health Outreach system to increase knowledge of and access to health services for vulnerable residents in Walpole and nearby communities.		Board of Health Walpole Public Schools Council on Aging	Moderate	Longer-term	Leadership Town staff Healthy Communities funding (grant) Partnerships with local clergy, cultural centers, civic groups, etc.	6-1-0 10/25/22
10-C.2. Language and communication access, such as translation services		Board of Health Walpole Public Schools Council on Aging Town Clerk Library Walpole Media	Moderate	Longer-Term	Leadership Town staff Local or grant funding	6-1-0 10/25/22

Bibliography

BOOKS

Alex F. Schwarz, *Housing Policy in the United States*. (New York & London: Routledge, 2015).

Grumet, Robert S., *Historic Contact, Indian People and Colonists in Today's Northeastern United States in the Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).

Horton, R., G. Yohe, W. Easterling, R. Kates, M. Ruth, E. Sussman, A. Whelchel, D. Wolfe, and F. Lipschultz: *Ch. 16: Northeast. Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, J. M. Melillo, Terese (T.C.) Richmond, and G. W. Yohe, Eds., (U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2014).

Lambert, David Allen, *A Guide to Massachusetts Cemeteries*. (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002).

Philbrick, Nathaniel, *Mayflower, A Story of Courage, Community and War*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

DOCUMENTS

Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by Fuss & O'Neill, 2019.

Communitywide Historic Properties Survey (Survey & Planning Grant) Final Report, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by Kathleen Kelly Broomer, 2008.

Commuter Rail Passenger Counts, Prepared for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation by Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization/Central Transportation Planning Staff, 2012 and 2018.

Downtown Walpole Parking & Economic Development Strategy Final Report, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by McCabe Enterprises & Pare Corporation, 2019.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *Multi Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment*, 1997.

Health and Social Services Consortium, *HESSCO 2022-2025 Area Agency on Aging Area Plan*, 2022.

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Forest Tax Program Chapter 61*, 2021.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *School and District Profiles*, "Walpole (03070000)," 2022.

Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, "Green Communities Division," 2021.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, “MassDEP Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program,” 2021.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, “Wellhead Protection Tips For Small Public Water Systems,” 2021.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Environmental Health, *Massachusetts Environmental Public Health Tracking Community Profile For: Walpole*, 2021.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, *Bureau of Environmental Health Climate Change Vulnerability Map*, 2021.

Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services Data Analytics and Research Bureau, *Schedule A Reports (Revenues, Expenditures and More)*, “Revenue and Expenditures Report: Walpole, MA, 2021.

Massachusetts Department of Transportation, “Complete Streets Funding Program Tier 3 Project Application FY20 Round 2,” 2020.

Massachusetts Department of Transportation, “Walpole: Complete Streets Funding Program Project Prioritization Plan,” 2019.

Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance Labor Market Information, “100 Biggest Employers in Walpole,” 2022.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy, *BioMap2: Walpole*, 2012.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, “List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species,” 2021.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, *Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts*, March 2020.

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan*, September 2018.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Department of Energy Resources, and the Department of Environmental Protection, *Guideline Regarding the Definition of “Brownfield,”* 2021.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *EOEA Article 97 Land Disposition Policy*, 1998.

Massachusetts Food Access Index, Tufts University Department of Urban & Environmental Policy & Planning in partnership with Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 2016

Massachusetts Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, Walpole, 1980.

Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters for the Clean Water Act 2018/2020, “The 303(D) List – ‘Waters Requiring A TMDL,’” 2021.

Massachusetts School Building Authority, “Walpole Public School District,” 2022.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, “Neponset River Watershed Water Management Act Planning,” 2013.

Norwood Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment, Prepared for Steward Health Care by H&HS Consulting Group LLC, 2018.

Rapid Recovery Plan, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, 2021.

S & P Global Ratings, *Summary: Walpole, Massachusetts; General Obligation*, February 12, 2021.

Town of Walpole Capital Budget Committee, *Fall 2019 Town Meeting 5 Year Capital Plan Requests CY 19-24*, 2019.

Town of Walpole Energy Reduction Plan 2020, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 2020.

Town of Walpole Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017 Update, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 2017.

Town of Walpole Master Plan, 2004 and *Master Plan Update*, 2009.

Town of Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, November 2021.

Town of Walpole Public Works Department, “Route 1A Project Information,” January 28, 2022.

Town of Walpole Schedule of Locations, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by MIIA Property and Casualty Group, Inc., 2021.

Town of Walpole Zoning Bylaw:

Section 4: Establishment of Districts, Revised 2019.

Section 11: Flood Plain Protection Overlay District, Revised 2019.

Section 12: Water Resource Protection Overlay District, Revised 2019.

Town of Walpole, *2004-2024 Walpole Master Plan and EO 418 Community Development Plan*, 2004.

Town of Walpole, *A Resident’s Guide to Walpole, MA*, Updated 2021.

Town of Walpole, *Board of Sewer and Water Commissioners Rules and Regulations*, Updated 2021.

Town of Walpole, *Division 2: General Bylaws, Part I: Administrative Bylaws Chapter 182-1 – 182-3: “Recreation Committee,”* 2022.

Town of Walpole, *Fiscal Year 2021 Compost Facility Regulations*, 2021.

- Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Integrated Water Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Resiliency Plan*, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by Fuss and O'Neill, 2020.
- Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Municipal Facilities Master Planning Study Final Report*, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by CDR Maguire, 2013.
- Town of Walpole, Stormwater Management & Erosion Control Bylaw FAQ*, 2007.
- Town of Walpole, Town of Walpole 2019 Annual Town Report*, 2020.
- Town of Walpole, Town of Walpole 2020 Annual Town Report*, 2020.
- Town of Walpole, Town of Walpole Wetland Protection ByLaw Chapter 561, Wetland Protection, Division 2 of the General Bylaw*, Revised 2018.
- Town of Walpole, Town of Walpole, Massachusetts Council On Aging Policy and Procedures*, 2021.
- Town of Walpole, Trash/Recycle Collection Rules and Regulations*, 2021.
- Town of Walpole, Vehicle Inventory*, 2018.
- Town of Walpole, Walpole Public Library Board of Trustees Bylaws*, 2014.
- Town of Walpole, Walpole Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Bylaw*, 2007.
- Tufts University Department of Urban & Environmental Policy & Planning and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Massachusetts Food Access Index*, 2016.
- U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.
- U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates 2011-2015, *Commuting Flows*.
- U.S. Census Decennial Counts 2020, 2010, 2000.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Geomorphic Provinces and Sections*, 2021, as cited in *Town of Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, November 2021.
- U.S. Global Change Research Program, *Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I* [Wuebbles, D.J., D.W. Fahey, K.A. Hibbard, D.J. Dokken, B.C. Stewart, and T.K. Maycock (eds.)]. Washington, DC, 2017.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, *National Cooperative Soil Survey*, 2017.
- Walpole Downtown Action Plan*, Prepared for the Town of Walpole by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 2015.

Walpole Fire Rescue, *2021 Walpole Fire Rescue Annual Report*, 2022.

Walpole Police Department, *2021 Annual Report*, 2022.

Walpole Public Library, *Walpole Public Library Long Range Plan FY 2018 – FY 2021*, 2016.

Walpole Public Schools, *Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024*, 2021.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Banker and Tradesman: <https://www.bankerandtradesman.com>

Compass Project Management, “Walpole Council On Aging,” February 1, 2022: <https://compass.vertexeng.com/projects/walpole-council-on-aging/>

Compass Project Management, “Walpole Police Headquarters,” February 10, 2022: <https://compass.vertexeng.com/projects/walpole-police-head-quarters/>

CoStar: <https://www.costar.com>

Federal Emergency Management Agency, “Flood Maps,” 2021: <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps>

Friends of Adams Farm, “About Us,” 2021: <https://adams-farm.com/about-us/>

Friends of Willett Pond, 2021: <https://willettpond.org/>

Historical Marker Database: <https://www.hmdb.org>

Hollingsworth & Vose: <https://www.hollingsworth-vose.com/company/history/>

The Home for Little Wanderers: <https://www.thehome.org>

“Our History,” 2021: <https://www.thehome.org/our-history>

HUD CHAS Database: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>

Jasnoff, B., The Best Public High Schools in Greater Boston, Boston Magazine, September 22, 2021: <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/education/best-public-high-schools-boston-2021-chart/>

Massachusetts COVID-19 Interactive Data Dashboard: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>

Massachusetts Cultural Council: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/local-council/walpole/>

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS): <https://mhc-macris.net/>

Massachusetts Data Analytics & Research Bureau: <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-databank-data-analytics-including-cherry-sheets>

Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Labor Market Information: <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi/>

Economic Research Department: <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi/employmentandwages>

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs beta Climate Grant Viewer*, “Walpole,” 2021: <https://mass-eoeea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=ec4964fe203d41219b-2e74170c0dc96c>

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, “Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program,” 2021: <https://resilient-ma.org/mvp/>

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Resilient MA Climate Change Clearinghouse for the Commonwealth*: <https://resilientma.org/home.html>

“Changes in Precipitation,” 2021: <https://resilientma.org/changes/changes-in-precipitation>

“Extreme Weather,” 2021: <https://resilientma.org/changes/extreme-weather>

“Rising Temperatures,” 2021: <https://resilientma.org/changes/rising-temperatures>

Massachusetts Historical Commission: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcidx.htm>

Massachusetts Local Area Unemployment Statistics: <https://www.mass.gov/find-unemployment-rates>

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, “Links to MWRA Customer Community Websites,” 2021: <https://www.mwra.com/02org/html/locallist.htm>

MassDOT Blog, “MassDOT today announced acquisition is complete of the Framingham Secondary Rail Line, a 21-mile segment of rail that connects Framingham and Mansfield. The line was purchased from CSX Corporation for \$23 million,” June 17, 2015: <https://blog.mass.gov/transportation/massdot-rail-transit/massdot-completes-framingham-secondary-rail-line-acquisition/>

MassDOT Interactive Mapping for HSIP Clusters 2017-2019: <https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/topcrashlocations/>

MassDOT Interactive Mapping Portal for Analysis and Crash Testing: <https://apps.impact.dot.state.ma.us/cdp/>

MassDOT Transportation Data Management System, Road Inventory 2018: <https://geo-massdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/MassDOT::road-inventory-2018/>

MassGIS Bureau of Geographic Information, “MassGIS Data: MassDEP Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II, Zone I, IWPA),” 2021: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-massdep-wellhead-protection-areas-zone-ii-zone-i-iwpa>

MassGIS Data Layers: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-layers>

MassSAVE, “The Sponsors of Mass Save® Announce 30+ Municipal and Community-Based Organizations to Participate in 2022-2024 Community First Partnership,” February 14, 2022. <https://www.masssave.com/en/about/news-and-events/News/mass-save-announce-30-municipal-and-community-based-organizations-to-participate-in-2022-2024-community-first-partnership>

MassWildlife Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, “Vernal Pools,” 2021: <https://www.mass.gov/vernal-pools>

MBTA Open Data Portal, Average Daily Fall Boardings 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019: <https://mbta-massdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/mbta-bus-ridership-by-trip-season-route-line-and-stop/>

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC)*, February 1, 2022. <https://www.mapc.org/get-involved/subregions/tric/#meetings>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), *Storm Events Database*, December 2021: <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/>

National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), “What Is Flash Flooding?” 2021: <https://www.weather.gov/phi/FlashFloodingDefinition>

Neponset River Watershed Association: <https://www.neponset.org/>

“Neponset Stormwater Partnership,” 2021: <https://www.neponset.org/projects/neponset-stormwater-partnership/>

“Watershed,” 2021: <https://www.neponset.org/your-watershed/>

“Willett Pond,” 2021: <https://www.neponset.org/archived-pages/willett-pond/>

“Streamflow Data,” 2021: <https://www.neponset.org/your-watershed/streamflow-data/>

Neponset Tribe History: <http://massachusettstribe.org/the-history-of-the-neponset>

New England Forestry Foundation: <https://newenglandforestry.org/>

“Explore Our Forests,” 2021: <https://newenglandforestry.org/explore/explore-our-forests/>

“Forest Stories,” 2021: <https://newenglandforestry.org/explore/forest-stories/>

“Learn,” 2021: <https://newenglandforestry.org/learn/>

Norfolk County Agricultural School, "About Our School," 2021: <https://www.norfolkaggie.org/about-us/about-our-school>

Northeast Climate Science Center and MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Climate Change Projections, University of MA Amherst, 2018, Available at: <http://www.massclimatechange.org/resources/>

NPR, "Young people are anxious about climate change and say governments are failing them." Sharon Pruitt-Young. September 14, 2021: <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/14/1037023551/climate-change-children-young-adults-anxious-worried-study>

Paula Braveman, Mercedes Dekker, Susan Egerter, Tabashir Sadegh-Nobari, Craig Pollack, "How Does Housing Affect Health?," Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, May 1, 2011, https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70451

Schwartz Silver, "Walpole Fire Rescue," February 10, 2022: <https://www.schwartzsilver.com/projects/walpole-fire-rescue>

Susan Sheng, Bike Lanes and Local Business: The Economic Impact. Cambridge Bicycle Safety, February 6, 2022, <https://www.cambridgebikesafety.org/2021/09/22/bike-lanes-and-local-business-the-economic-impact/>

Town of Walpole Assessor's Database: <https://gis.vgsi.com/walpolema/>

Town of Walpole: www.walpole-ma.gov

"Conservation Commission," 2021: <https://www.walpole-ma.gov/conservation-commission>

Council on Aging, "New(s) Horizon: March 2022 Newsletter," February 2022: <https://www.walpole-ma.gov/council-on-aging/files/coa-newsletter-march-2022>

Public Works Department, "Route 1A Project Information," January 28, 2022: <https://www.walpole-ma.gov/1AProject>

"Walpole Water System Information," February 12, 2022: <https://www.walpole-ma.gov/sewer-water-commission/pages/walpole-water-system-information>

"Walpole Board of Assessors," 2021: <https://www.walpole-ma.gov/board-of-assessors>

Trustees of Reservations: <https://thetrustees.org/>

"About Us," 2021: <https://thetrustees.org/about-us/>

"Francis William Bird Park Walpole - Plan Your Visit," 2021: <https://thetrustees.org/place/francis-william-bird-park/>

United States Department of Agriculture, *U. S. Department of Agriculture Soils Series*, 2021 <https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

United States Environmental Protection Agency, “Blackburn & Union Privileges Walpole, MA,” 2021: <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0101713>

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

Walpole Children’s Theatre: <https://www.walpolechildrenstheatre.org/>

Walpole Community Food Pantry: <https://www.wcfp.org/>

Walpole Footlighters: <https://www.footlighters.com/>

Walpole Historical Society: www.walpolehistoricalsociety.org

Walpole Power Choice, “Frequently Asked Questions,” February 14, 2022: <https://masspowerchoice.com/walpole/faq>

Walpole Public Library: www.walpolelibrary.org

Walpole Public Schools: <https://www.walpole.k12.ma.us/>

District Middle School Project, “MS School Building Project: Project Information,” February 12, 2022: <https://sites.google.com/walpole.k12.ma.us/school-building-project/>

“Walpole METCO Program,” February 1, 2022: <https://sites.google.com/walpole.k12.ma.us/wps-metco/who-we-are>

Walpole School Nutrition Department: <https://walpoleschoolnutrition.com/index.php?sid=1493397118111&page=staff>

MAPS (ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY)

1794. *Plan of Walpole* (maker unknown) (Mass Archives 1226)

1831. *A Plan of the Town of Walpole in the County of Norfolk*, J. G. Hales (Mass Archives 2073)

1832. *Plan of Walpole*, Elijah Hewins (Mass Archives 2072)

1852. *Map of the Town of Walpole*, Norfolk County, Mass., Walling (Leventhal Map Collection, Boston Public Library)

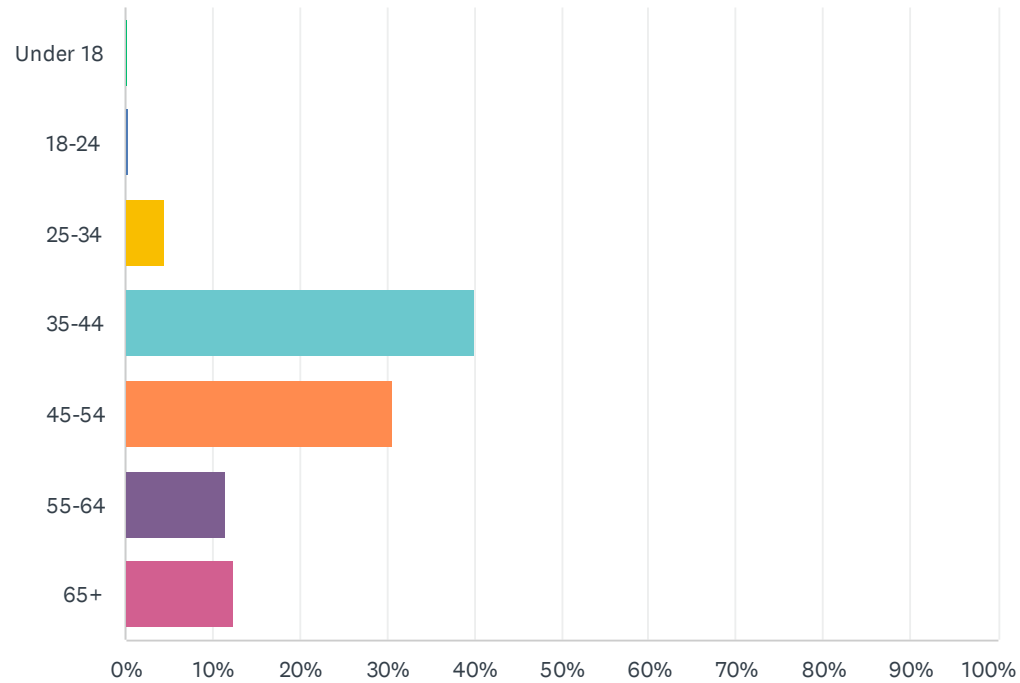
1876. Norfolk County, Massachusetts Atlas, W. A. Sherman

1882. *Walpole, Massachusetts: 1882*, O. H. Bailey (Lithograph, Bird’s Eye View) (Leventhal Map Collection, Boston Public Library)

Appendix: Master Plan Survey Summary (2022)

Q1 What is your age?

Answered: 418 Skipped: 1

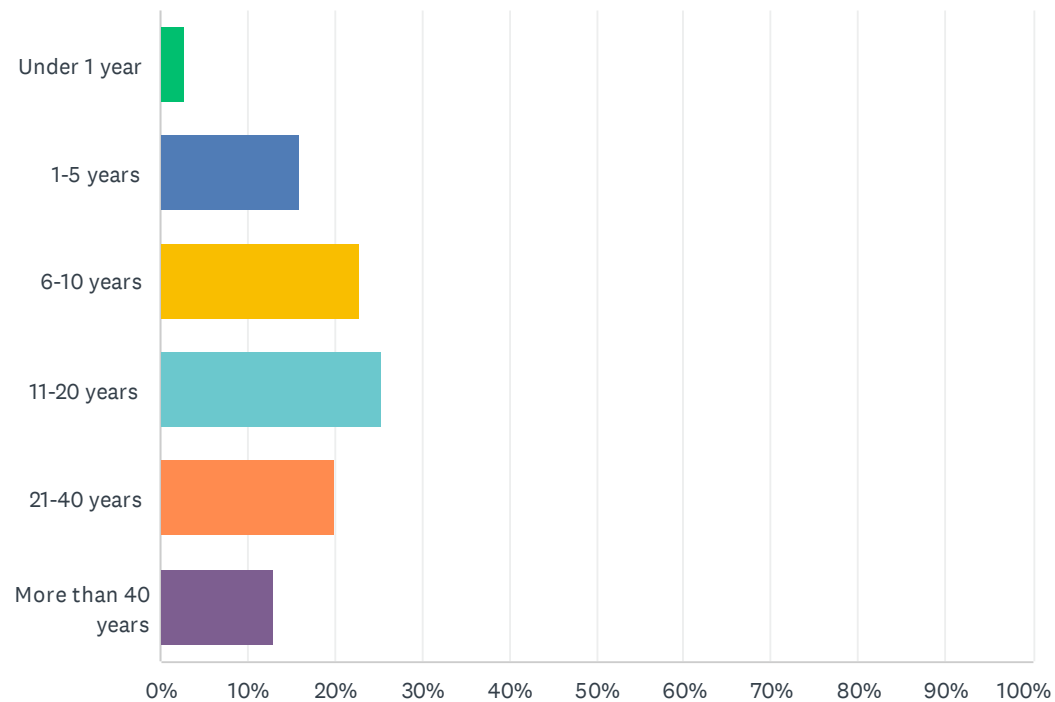


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.24%	1
18-24	0.48%	2
25-34	4.55%	19
35-44	40.19%	168
45-54	30.62%	128
55-64	11.48%	48
65+	12.44%	52
TOTAL		418

Q2 How long have you lived in Walpole?

Answered: 418 Skipped: 1

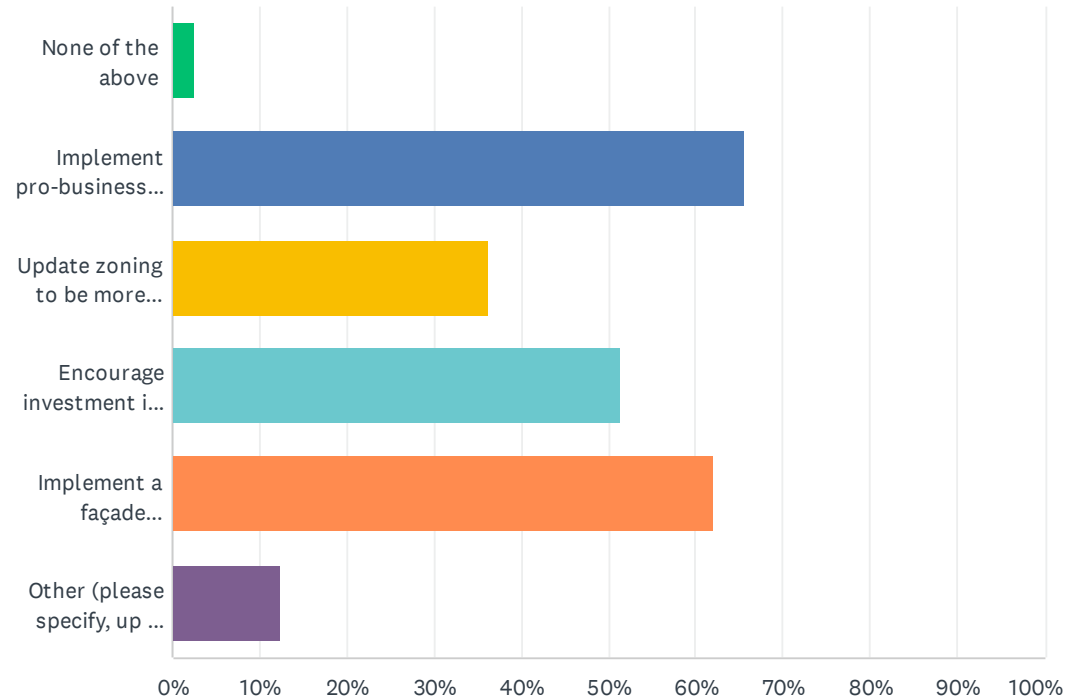


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 1 year	2.87%	12
1-5 years	16.03%	67
6-10 years	22.73%	95
11-20 years	25.36%	106
21-40 years	20.10%	84
More than 40 years	12.92%	54
TOTAL		418

Q3 GOAL 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Increase economic activity and diversify the tax base, provide more jobs, and more shops and restaurants for residents to enjoy. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this economic development goal?

Answered: 306 Skipped: 113

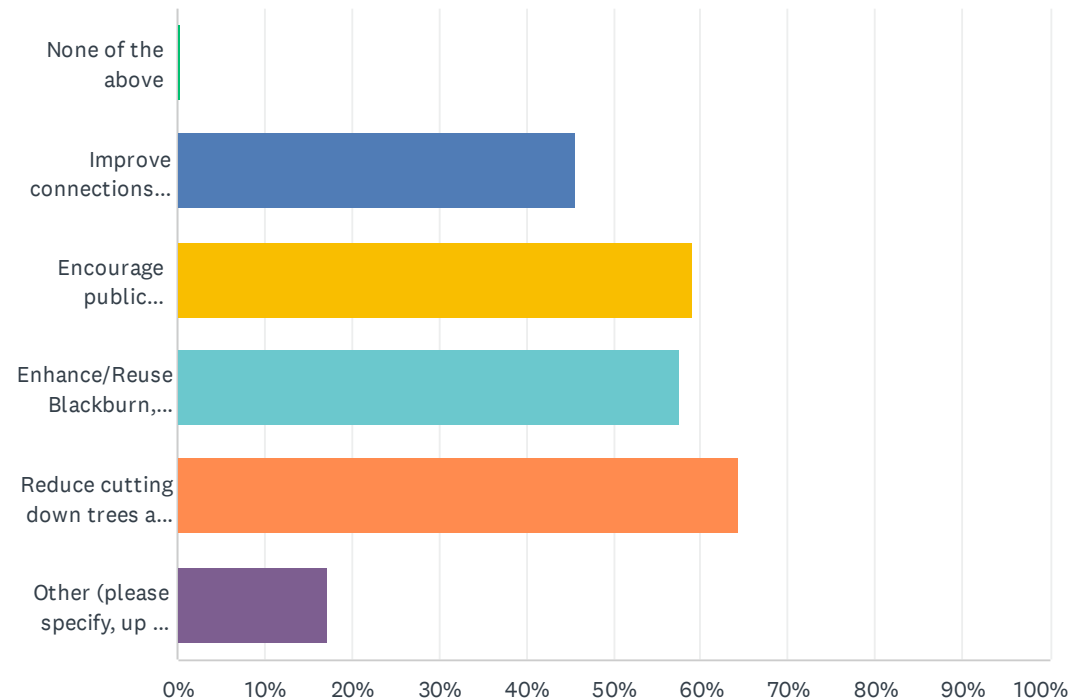


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	2.61%	8
Implement pro-business policies to attract new business and encourage investment in Downtown	65.69%	201
Update zoning to be more favorable to business and mixed-use development, especially in Downtown	36.27%	111
Encourage investment in and development of diverse industries to generate more tax revenue and offset residential tax burden, for example life sciences	51.31%	157
Implement a façade improvement program to beautify Downtown Walpole and attract more businesses and investment	62.09%	190
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	12.42%	38
Total Respondents: 306		

Q4 GOAL 2: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION. Preserve and connect open spaces and maintain and update existing and create new recreational facilities, ensuring equitable access to these for all residents. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this open space and recreation goal?

Answered: 307 Skipped: 112

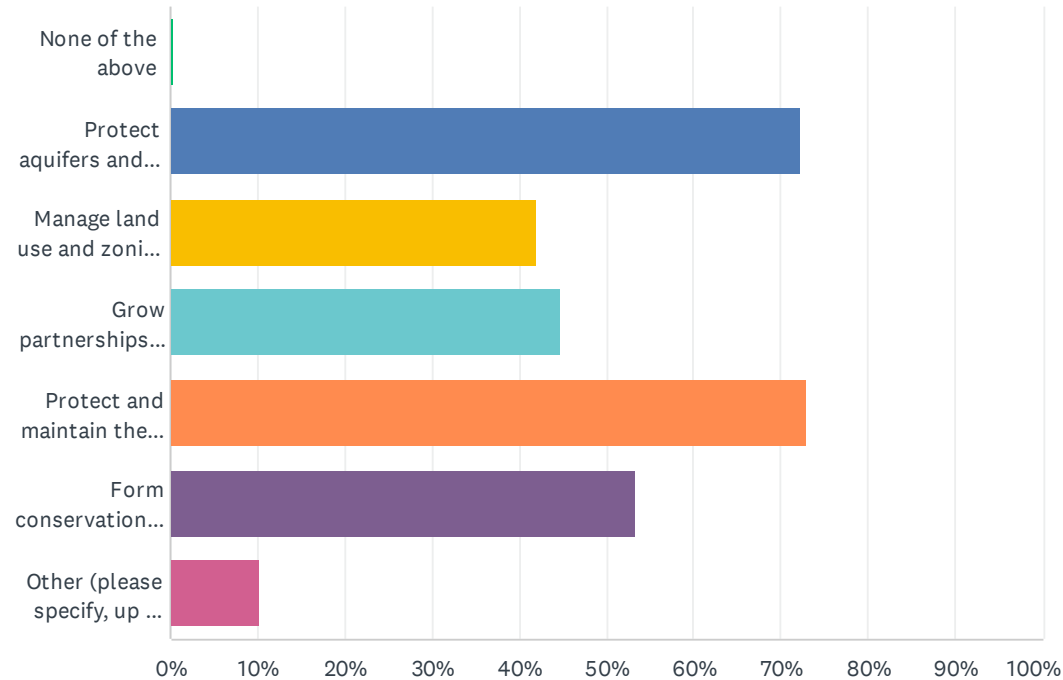


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	0.33%	1
Improve connections between open spaces to encourage public use, such as Adam's Farm	45.60%	140
Encourage public appreciation and use of existing passive recreation areas (e.g., walking paths, boating, hiking, wildlife observation) before building more active recreation facilities	58.96%	181
Enhance/Reuse Blackburn, Stone, Morgan, and the pool to be an integrated recreation facility near Downtown to increase foot traffic	57.65%	177
Reduce cutting down trees as much as possible, and plant trees to replace those that are cut	64.50%	198
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	17.26%	53
Total Respondents: 307		

Q5 GOAL 3: NATURAL RESOURCES. Conserve and protect the town's natural environment and biodiversity through land and water management, regulation, and public education. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this natural resources goal?

Answered: 304 Skipped: 115

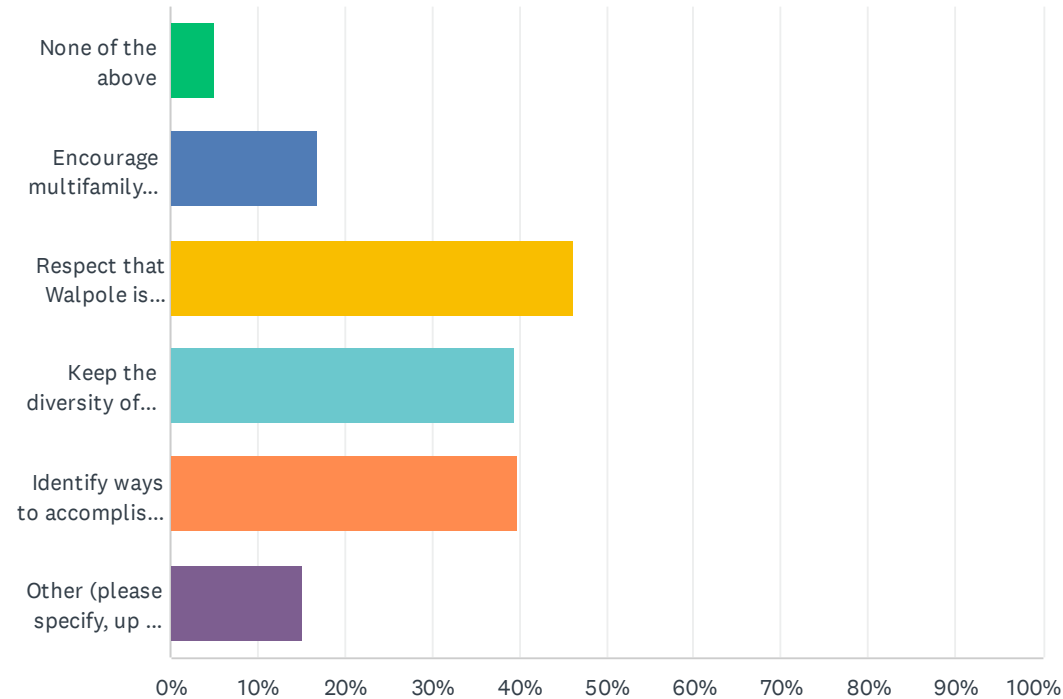


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	0.33%	1
Protect aquifers and recharge zones to preserve drinking water quality	72.37%	220
Manage land use and zoning to allow development where feasible while protecting existing open spaces	42.11%	128
Grow partnerships with local, regional, and state agencies to understand the most effective ways to protect natural resources	44.74%	136
Protect and maintain the Town Forest	73.03%	222
Form conservation partnerships between schools, non-profits, public agencies, etc. to educate the community about natural resources	53.29%	162
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	10.20%	31
Total Respondents: 304		

Q6 GOAL 4: LAND USE. Ensure that new development is in keeping with the scale, uses, and characteristics of the specific neighborhoods, including the Downtown. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this land use goal?

Answered: 296 Skipped: 123

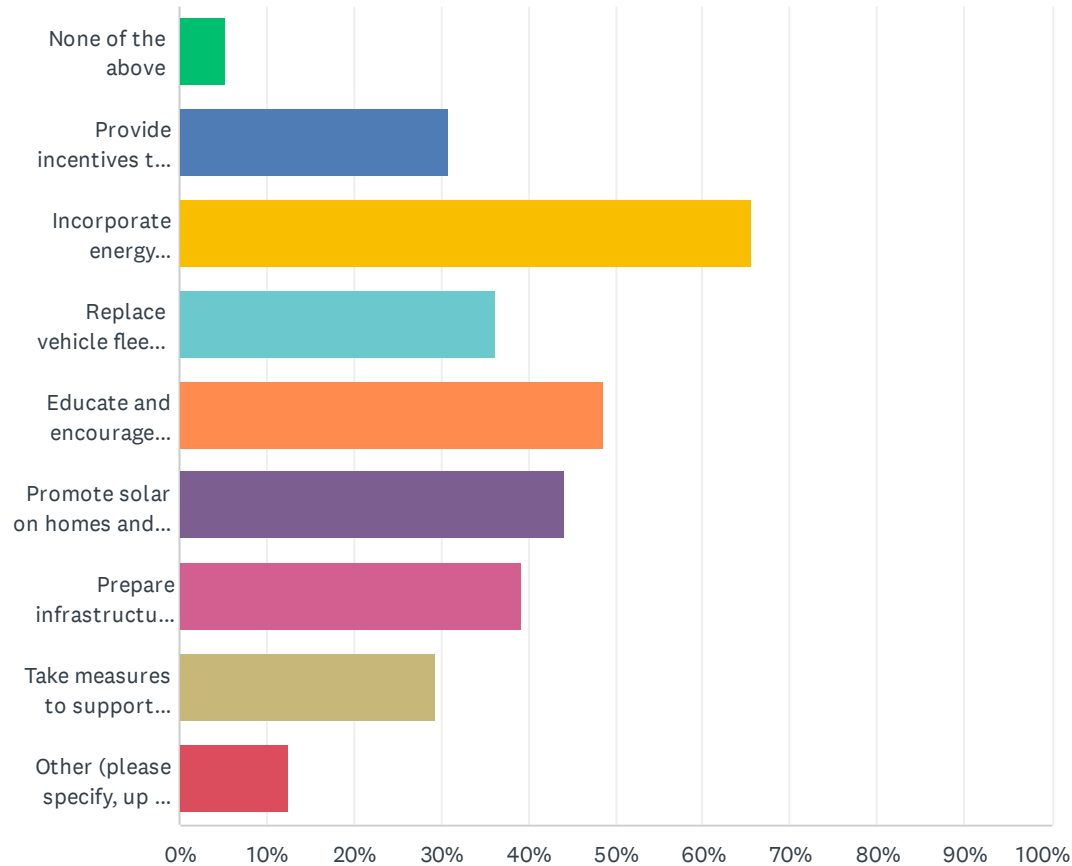


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	5.07%	15
Encourage multifamily housing in appropriate locations by updating the Town's zoning	16.89%	50
Respect that Walpole is primarily residential and takes pride in its character by targeting zoning for higher density in designated locations	46.28%	137
Keep the diversity of housing that exists in Walpole neighborhoods to provide options for homebuyers	39.53%	117
Identify ways to accomplish parallel objectives between business, commercial, and industrial development and preservation	39.86%	118
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	15.20%	45
Total Respondents: 296		

Q7 GOAL 5: CLIMATE CHANGE. Build local government's capacity in order to provide leadership for sustainability and climate change resilience, and engage community members to do their part.
Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this climate change goal?

Answered: 303 Skipped: 116

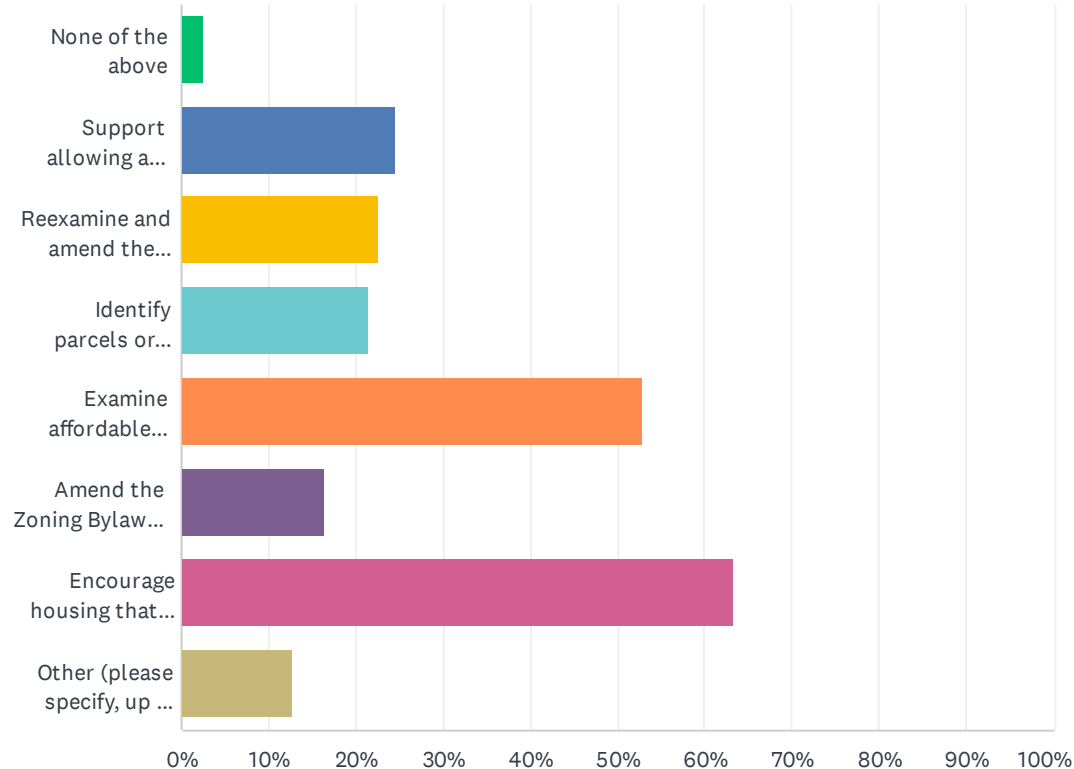


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	5.28%	16
Provide incentives to use of public transportation where possible	31.02%	94
Incorporate energy efficiency in public buildings and upgrade municipal energy policies and practices	65.68%	199
Replace vehicle fleets and increase green infrastructure to be fully electric, particularly charging stations	36.30%	110
Educate and encourage business and residential property owners to invest in “green” improvements	48.51%	147
Promote solar on homes and businesses	44.22%	134
Prepare infrastructure and facilities to handle extreme weather events	39.27%	119
Take measures to support vulnerable populations at-risk from climate change, including offering more cooling/warming shelters	29.37%	89
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	12.54%	38
Total Respondents: 303		

Q8 GOAL 6: HOUSING. Increase the range of housing types and the affordable housing supply to meet needs of people throughout various stages of the life cycle. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this housing goal?

Answered: 306 Skipped: 113

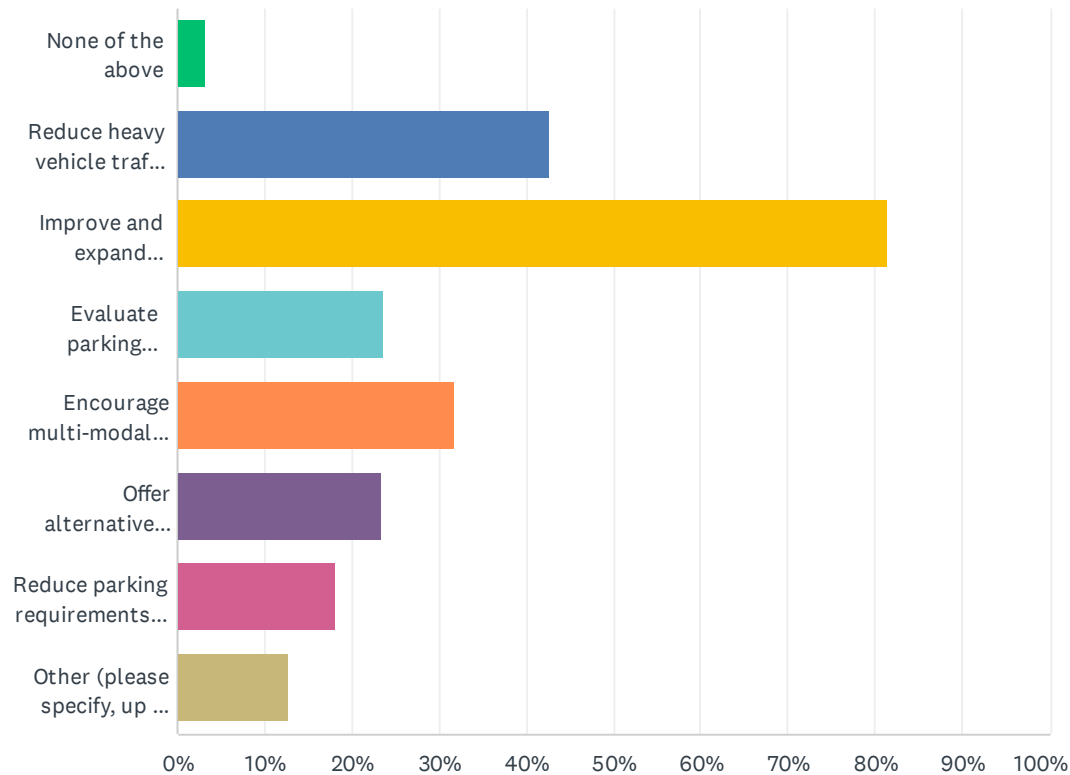


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	2.61%	8
Support allowing a wider variety of housing types in addition to single-family homes	24.51%	75
Reexamine and amend the Zoning Bylaw to increase the Town's supply of affordable housing	22.55%	69
Identify parcels or sites for future affordable housing development	21.57%	66
Examine affordable options for seniors, first-time homebuyers, and others	52.94%	162
Amend the Zoning Bylaw to support Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	16.34%	50
Encourage housing that helps to preserve Walpole's "small town" feel	63.40%	194
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	12.75%	39
Total Respondents: 306		

Q9 GOAL 7: TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION. Address traffic congestion and improve alternative modes of travel including walking, biking and connections to, and parking for public transit. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this transportation and circulation goal?

Answered: 303 Skipped: 116

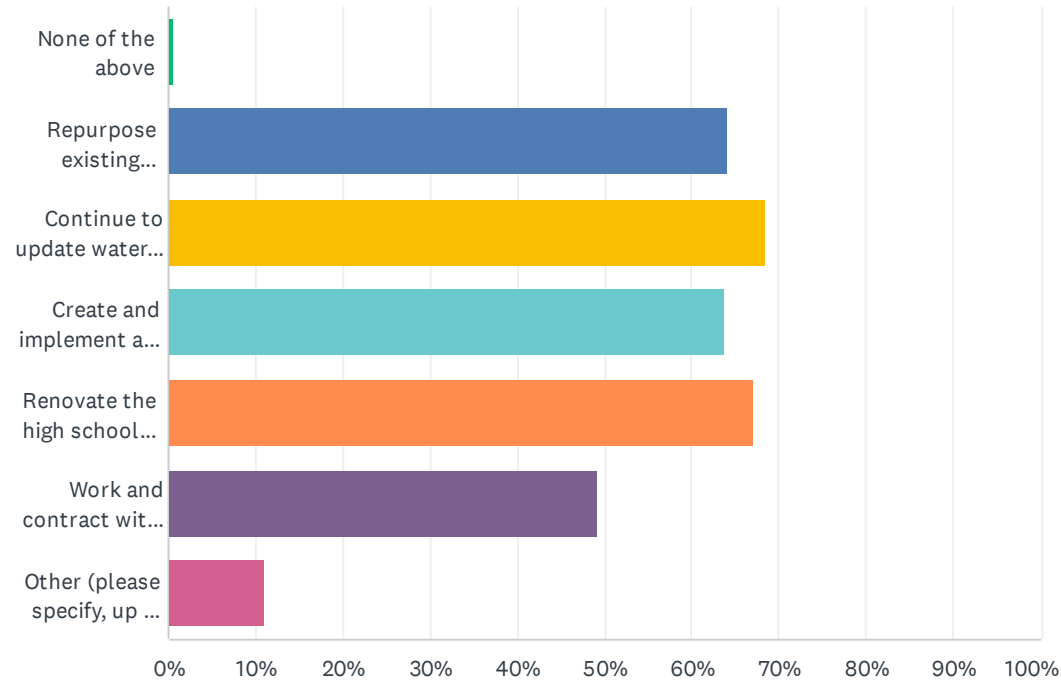


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	3.30%	10
Reduce heavy vehicle traffic Downtown by updating traffic infrastructure and rerouting where possible	42.57%	129
Improve and expand sidewalks and connections around Town, especially to and from schools	81.52%	247
Evaluate parking requirements in favor of reducing or staggering, but have options for those using the train	23.76%	72
Encourage multi-modal transportation for walkers, bikers, electric vehicle drivers, etc.	31.68%	96
Offer alternative transportation options including a Downtown shuttle and bike lanes while offering more housing and narrowing roads to calm traffic and improve public safety	23.43%	71
Reduce parking requirements for residential uses within the central business district to alleviate traffic issues and encourage foot traffic	18.15%	55
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	12.87%	39
Total Respondents: 303		

Q10 GOAL 8: MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES. Maintain and update municipal facilities and ensure that municipal services meet the needs of residents and protect public health. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this facilities and services goal?

Answered: 304 Skipped: 115

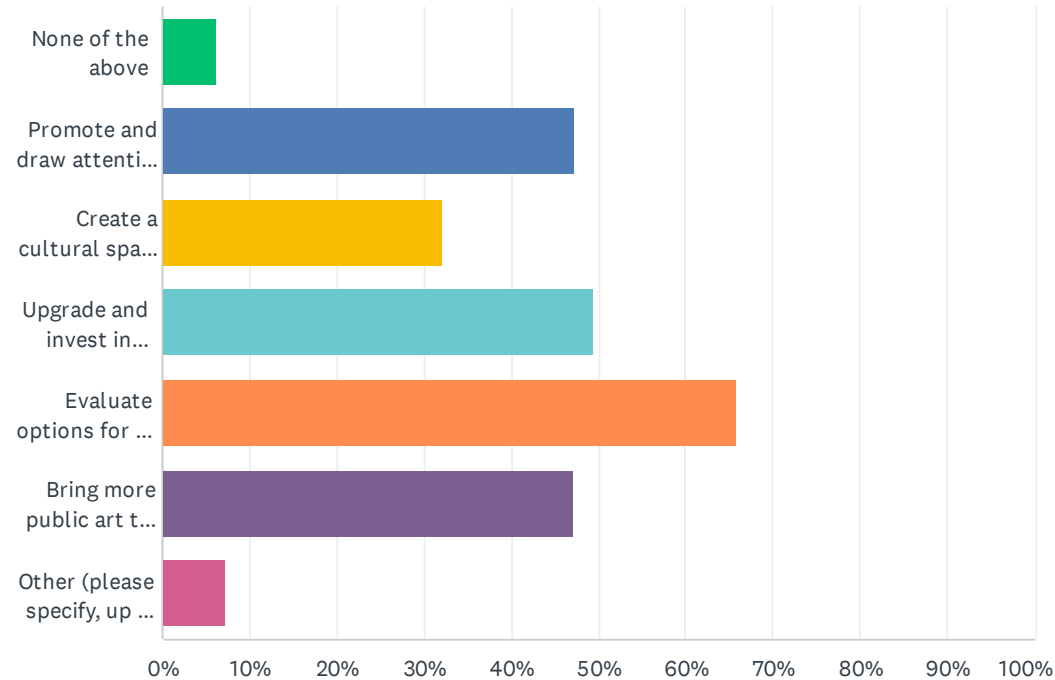


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	0.66%	2
Repurpose existing facilities for other uses rather than tearing them down	64.14%	195
Continue to update water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure	68.42%	208
Create and implement a preventive maintenance schedule for existing public facilities	63.82%	194
Renovate the high school where needed	67.11%	204
Work and contract with the MWRA to overcome water quality and distribution issues	49.34%	150
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	11.18%	34
Total Respondents: 304		

Q11 GOAL 9: HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES. Celebrate Walpole's history, protect historic resources, and increase the presence of art and culture in Town. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this historic and cultural resources goal?

Answered: 291 Skipped: 128

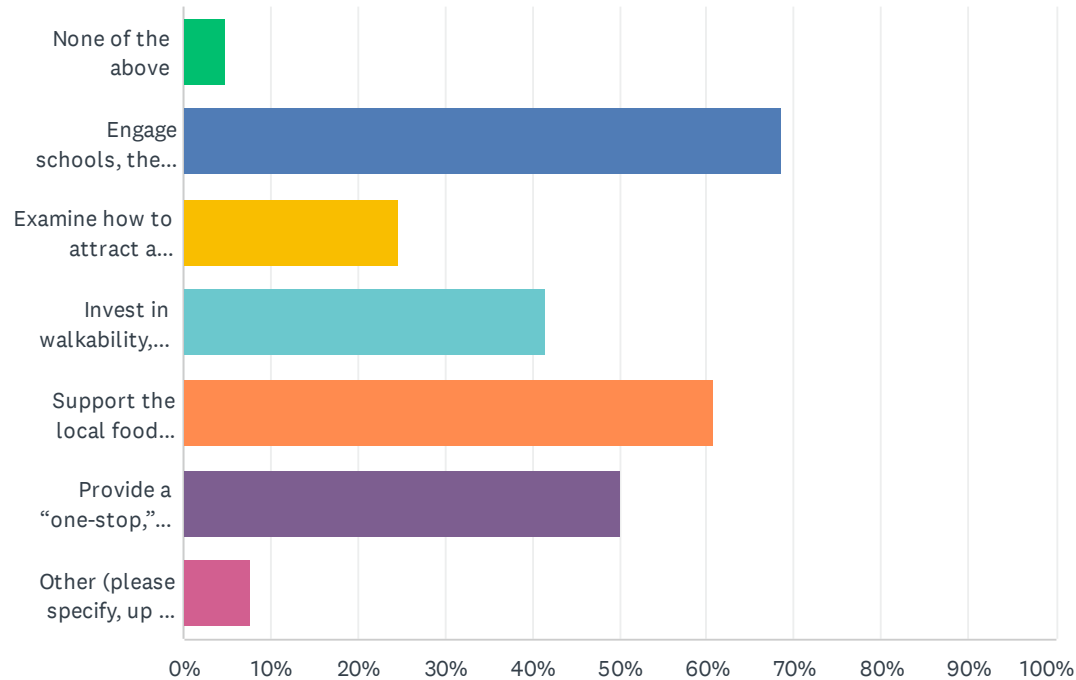


Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	6.19%	18
Promote and draw attention to existing groups, assets, and facilities in Town, such as the Historical Society	47.42%	138
Create a cultural space Downtown either in the form of a cultural center or cultural district or zone	32.30%	94
Upgrade and invest in existing historic sites that are open to the public	49.48%	144
Evaluate options for the Old Town Hall that supports arts and culture	65.98%	192
Bring more public art to Downtown	47.08%	137
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	7.22%	21
Total Respondents: 291		

Q12 GOAL 10: COMMUNITY HEALTH. Invest in resources and services to protect the health and well-being of Walpole residents, especially the town's most vulnerable people. Over the next 10 years, what do you think the Town could do to meet this community health goal?

Answered: 300 Skipped: 119



Walpole Master Plan Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	5.00%	15
Engage schools, the senior center, churches, etc. in identifying people who need help and connecting them with appropriate resources	68.67%	206
Examine how to attract a multi-service Downtown walk-in clinic, i.e., a Minute Clinic or Convenient MD	24.67%	74
Invest in walkability, connectivity, and resiliency strategies	41.67%	125
Support the local food pantry and other services that provide help to people with temporary or longer-term needs	60.67%	182
Provide a “one-stop,” free information resource of how to access mental and physical health services, such as a town-wide campaign or website	50.00%	150
Other (please specify, up to 160 characters)	7.67%	23
Total Respondents: 300		