



MEDFIELD, MA TOWNWIDE MASTER PLAN 2020

VOLUME II: INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

March 2020



Prepared by:



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Planning, Programming & Public Participation

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Roberta Lynch, Council on Aging
Kevin Ryder, Park & Recreation
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To those **businesses** that donated raffle prizes given out at the public forums.

- Medfield Yoga
- Medfield Starbucks
- An anonymous donor donated several gift certificates to area business establishments

...And the concerned **residents, business owners, Town officials and staff** who devoted time, energy and imagination to the making of this Plan.

Photographs for the Plan taken by the Consultant Team

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Additionally, two separate volumes were prepared to accompany this document, and reference has been made to them in Volume I:

VOLUME I: PLAN SUMMARY AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

VOLUME III: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PROCESS

All three volumes may be viewed on the Town of Medfield website:

<https://www.town.medfield.net/350/Townwide-Master-Planning-Committee>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is an inventory and assessment of the existing conditions of Medfield’s resources. These are presented in the chapters written for each of the Master Plan Elements listed below.

The Master Plan is presented in three (3) volumes. This document is Volume II of the Plan.

- **Volume I:** Presents the Plan, its foundations and recommendations
- **Volume II:** Represents an inventory and assessment of existing conditions
- **Volume III:** Includes a summary of public input.

This report, VOLUME II is a compilation of the **INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS** of Medfield’s resources. It is a “snapshot” in time and represents the conditions and plans for the future determined at the time of writing. This document is an accompanying document to the main Master Plan and contains:

- A series of Summary Sheets: a summary of the key points of each of the Master Plan Element chapters.
- The complete Inventory of the Town’s resources and an assessment of these existing conditions by master plan element

The inventory is based on a review of existing documents, relevant plans and data, as well as on a significant number of interviews. Please see a partial list of resources in the pages that follow.

Housing and Population
Economic Development
Historic and Cultural Resources
Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources
Transportation
Community Facilities and Services
Land Use and Zoning

PARTIAL LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED FOR THE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING RESOURCES

Department of Public Works; Highway, Water, Sewer

Moe Goulet, Director of DPW
Bobby Kennedy, Highway Supervisor
David O'Toole, Water/Sewer Supervisor & Deputy Fire Chief

Fire

Chief William Carrico, Fire Chief

Town Clerk

Carol Meyer, Town Clerk

Social Service

Chelsea Goldstein-Walsh, Youth & Family Social Worker

Older Adults

Roberta Lynch, CoA Director

Historian

Richard DeSorgher, Former Teacher & Selectman

Recreation

Kevin Ryder, Parks & Recreation Director
Mel Seibolt, P&R Commission Chair

Financial Services

Yvonne Remillard, Assessor
Georgia Colivas, Treasurer/Collector
Joy Ricciuto, Town Accountant

Town Planning

Sarah Raposa, Town Planner

Town Administration

Kristine Trierweiler, Town Administrator
Nick Milano, Assitant Town Administrator

Conservation

Leslee Willitts, Conservation Agent

Library

Pam Gardner, Library Director

Facilities

Amy Colleran, Facilities

Building Gary Pelletier, Building Commissioner

Schools

Jeff Marsden, Superintendent
Michael LaFrancesca, Director of Finance and Operations
Jessica Reilly, School Committee

Police

Michelle Guerrette, Police Chief
Lars Anderson, Deputy Police Chief

Sustainability

Nancy Irwin, chair of Transfer Station and Recycling Committee
Megan Sullivan, member of Transfer Station and Recycling Committee

Economic Development

Majorie Cappucci, President of Medfield Employers and Merchants Organizations

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What are your Department's priorities?
- What future opportunities or challenges do you foresee?
- What are your plans for the immediate and long-term future?
- How can we best integrate your needs and plans into the master plan?

PARTIAL LIST OF PREVIOUS DOCUMENTS REVIEWED FOR THE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING RESOURCES

- Draft Strategic Town Goals
- Zoning Bylaw
- Subdivision Rules and Regs
- 495 Compact Plan
- MSH Strategic Reuse Plan (2018)
- MSH Visioning Report (2014)
- Housing Production Plan (2016)
- AHT Action Plan (2017)
- Senior Housing Study Committee Report (2018)
- Senior Housing Survey (2019)
- Downtown Action Plan (2006)
- Downtown Summit (2016)
- Arts & Economic Prosperity Study (2017)
- Downtown Aesthetics Policy (2014)
- Historic Preservation Plan (1999)
- Cultural Arts Facility Feasibility Study (2016)
- Open Space & Recreation Plan (2002)
- Bay Colony Rail Trail Study Report (2016)
-
- Draft Municipal Vulnerability Plan (2019)
- Municipal Facilities Evaluation & Capital Plan (2017)
- Library Strategic Plan (2016)
- School Strategic Plan (2016)
- Sewer Master Plan Update (2012)
- MSBA Projections (2018)
- Parks & Recreation Feasibility Study (2017)
- Energy Reduction Plan (2016)
- Parking Study (2014 + 2018)
- Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis (2016)
- Low Cost Signal Improvements (2016)
- Master Plan (1997)
- MME0418 Community Dev Plan (2004)
- Medfield Municipal Needs Study (2002)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (2011)

REFERENCES

Materials, such as reports, plans and data sources referenced for this inventory are included at the end of each chapter as is relevant.

SUMMARY SHEETS

The pages immediately following represent an overview of the inventory; one two-page summary of each chapter is included as well as a summary of Sustainability relevant to each of the master planning elements.

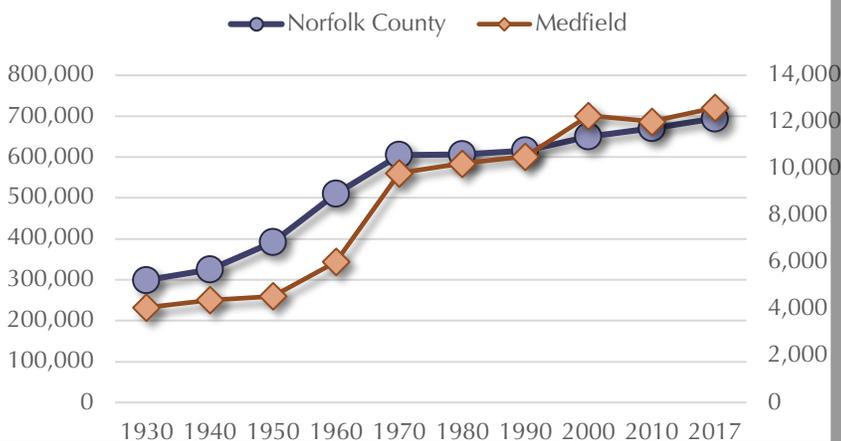
1. Housing and Population
2. Economic Development
3. Historic and Cultural Resources
4. Natural Resources & Open Space / Recreation
5. Transportation and Circulation
6. Community Facilities and Services
7. Land Use and Zoning
8. State Hospital
9. Sustainability, Energy Conservation and Future Resiliency Planning

Housing & Population - 1

WHO LIVES IN MEDFIELD?

- **12,600 people in 4,189 households**
 - Medfield has grown rapidly like most of Norfolk County
 - 84.1 percent of all households are families – nearly all **married-couple** families
 - 55 percent have no children under 18
 - Just under half of all households consist of 2 people or single people living alone

Population History
1930-2017



- **Medfield residents are overwhelmingly white, non-Hispanic (93 percent).**
 - The largest minority group is Asian, at 5 percent of the total population.
 - Black and Latino residents make up less than 1 percent.
- **Medfield's population is aging – yet also staying quite young.**
 - Medfield has the largest percentage of under-18 people of any town in the immediate region or Norfolk County as a whole: 30 percent.
 - Just 12 percent of the town's population is 65 and over – smaller than almost all the surrounding towns – but this is partially because the under-18 age group is large.
 - The 18-and-under population has gradually declined from 4,300 in 2000 to 4,009 in 2010 to about 3,900 in 2017 (estimated).
 - Today, the number of older adults (1,542) is almost twice that of 1990 (866).
- **Despite some recent diversification of Medfield's housing, the town remains one of the state's most expensive and affluent towns.**
 - Statewide, 37 percent of all households have incomes over \$100,000; in Medfield, **70 percent**.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- **People want to live in Medfield!**
Today, Medfield remains a town of families, just as its housing stock remains substantially comprised of detached single-family homes.
- **Medfield homes are expensive.** This makes it difficult for low- and middle-income people to choose Medfield.
- **Limited housing choices.** With so many large homes that sell at high prices, Medfield has few options for older adults and people with disabilities.
- Conventional **housing development and town demographics not aligned well.** Households gradually smaller; homes are large!
- **But, Medfield has taken an active role in managing the Chapter 40B process.** Medfield has a Housing Production Plan and by implementing it, the town qualified for a 2-year "safe harbor" period. In Medfield, 40Bs are an option, not a threat.

HOUSING IS EXPENSIVE!

- **From 2017-2019, 460 homes sold in Medfield.**

- Median price increase: 4.3 percent.
- Lowest in range: \$200,000
- Highest in range: \$4.5 million
- Higher-end homes move quickly and sell close to the original list price

- **Medfield homes are large!**

- 60 percent have 4+ bedrooms; 61 percent have 8+ rooms
- Large for typical households. 83 percent of Medfield housing units occupied by less than 0.5 people per unit.

- **High monthly housing costs for homeowners and renters.**

- Households paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing:
 - Homeowners: 22 percent
 - Renters: 59 percent

- **Limited rental stock.**

- About 550 renter households in Medfield today.
- Almost one-fifth live in single-family homes.
- Very limited inventory of units built and managed as rental housing.

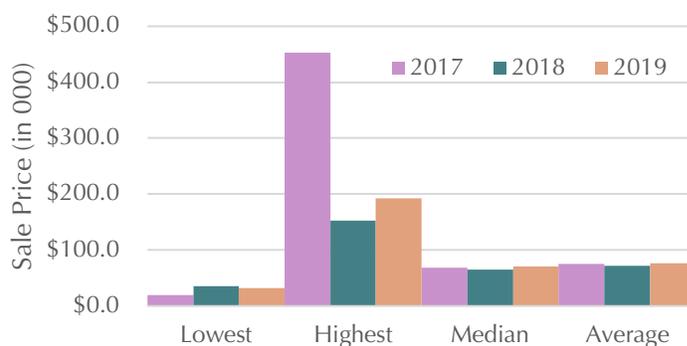
- **Housing production rate lags the region (slightly).**

- Medfield: 7.8 percent existing units built since 2000.
- Norfolk and Walpole: 15 percent
- Dover: 10 percent
- Countywide: 9.7 percent



Single-Family Sale Prices 2017-2019

(Source: MLS)



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

- **Past plans have identified many:**

- Density bonus for developments that provide for community need, Downtown or a senior housing district.
- Accessory dwelling units and two-family conversion.
- Concentrate housing in areas that can accommodate growth

- **Chapter 40B**

- Medfield earned a temporary right to deny comprehensive permits because the Town adopted a Housing Production Plan and implemented it
- As a "certified" town, Medfield can keep approving Chapter 40B applications or turn them down – until May 2020.
- Chapter 40B has introduced housing that could not have been built under Medfield's zoning.

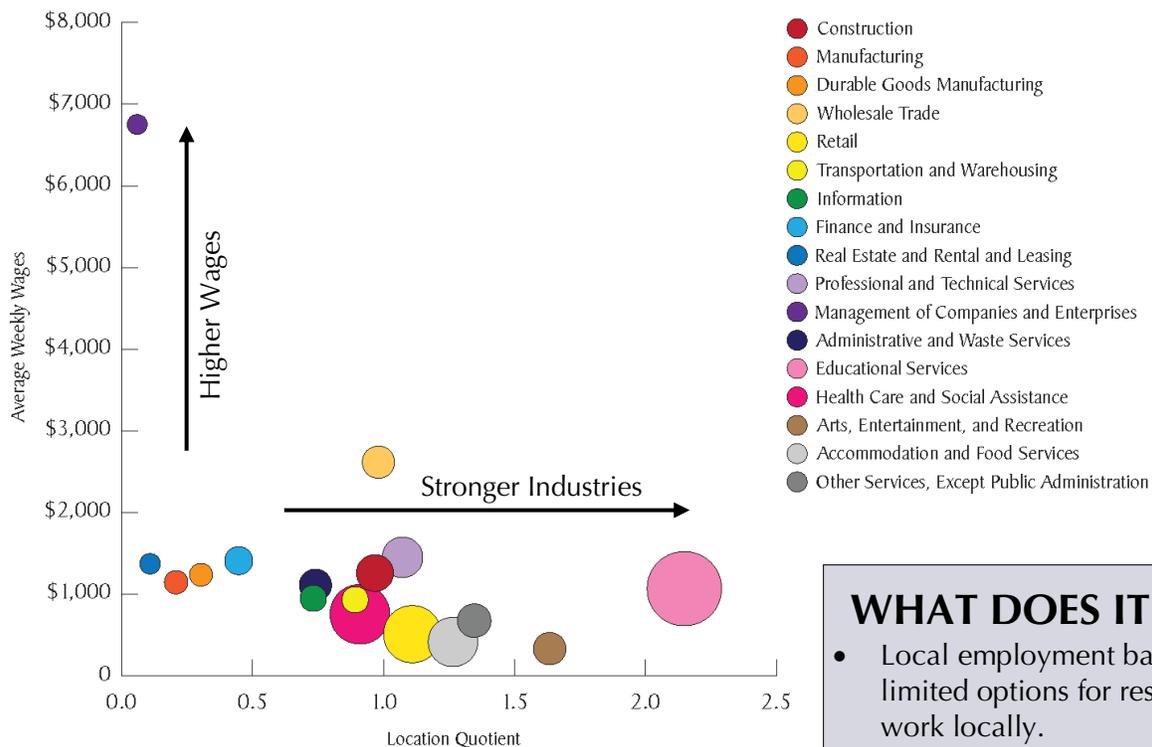
- **Medfield State Hospital**

Economic Development - 2

WORKING IN MEDFIELD

Jobs and Wages

- 388 establishments and 3,127 employees
- Medfield's strongest industries: retail, professional services, education, arts and culture, food services.
- The average weekly wage is low for the region: \$966
- Highest wages by industry: construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, finance, real estate, professional services.
- Not many jobs paying wages commensurate with the cost to live in Medfield



Daytime Population

- While Medfield establishments have about 3,127 employees, there are actually 3,795 people working in Medfield on a typical day.
- What's different? Employment counts exclude:
 - Self-employed people and in some cases, relatives working for them
 - People who work on a commission basis (e.g., real estate agents)
 - Some types of work for religious organizations
 - Internships
- Medfield's total daytime population is about 16,000 people
- Daytime population needs places to eat and things to do
- Relates directly to industry strengths in retail, food services, arts/culture/recreation

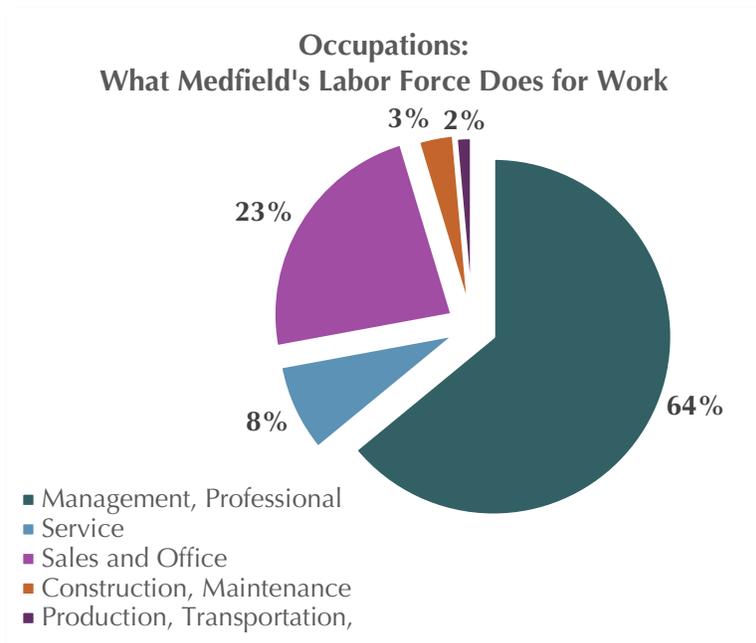
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Local employment base offers limited options for residents to work locally.
- Significant disparity in the **jobs-housing balance**, or the ratio of jobs to housing units. Medfield: 0.71. Healthy balance: 1.5 (1.5 jobs per housing unit).
- Medfield is predominantly residential by choice.
- Arts/culture/recreation industries play a significant role in Medfield's economy, sense of community, and vibrant downtown.

MEDFIELD'S LABOR FORCE

• Quick Facts

- Medfield's labor force includes 6,324 residents
- Labor force participation rate: **69 percent**
- Very low unemployment (2.7 percent)
- Highly educated: 72.5 percent hold a bachelor's degree or more
- Just under half of all households are two-earner families



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

The **labor force participation rate** is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older that is working or actively looking for work. It is an important labor market measure because it represents the relative amount of labor resources available for the production of goods and services.

-Bureau of Labor Statistics



Downtown, Medfield's economic, social, cultural, and civic hub.

• Where Medfield Residents Work

- Not in Medfield – in most cases!
- 23 percent of Medfield's employed residents report Medfield as their workplace – higher than surrounding towns, below the state average of 31 percent.
- About 10 percent – 571 people – work at home (a statistic that probably under-represents the work-at-home population). Most are between 45 and 64 years.
- Overall, high-earning residents are more likely to commute to work by public transportation than lower wage earners

IMPACT ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE

• Tax Base

- Commercial, industrial properties make up less than 6 percent of Medfield's tax base
- About 4 percent of Medfield's operating budget is attributable to the cost of serving commercial and industrial properties
- Positive fiscal impact, yet in total dollars, very limited surplus revenue because the nonresidential base is so small
- Medfield's average single-family tax bill: \$12,062 (FY 2020)

Medfield's Historic & Cultural Resources – 3

A CENTURIES-LONG HUMAN HISTORY BEGUN BY NEPONSETS AND CONTINUED BY EUROPEAN PIONEERS

- Humans have inhabited the Medfield area for at least 8,500 years**, beginning with Native peoples who fished in the Charles, hunted in the marshlands, and established trails running east and west across the river. Several area place names originating from these early inhabitants, such as “Metacomet,” are still in use today.
- The first Europeans to settle in Medfield migrated to the area from Dedham and Dorchester in 1649** and laid out a village center along Vine Brook. Medfield was set off from Dedham in 1650 and in 1651 became its own town. By 1657, forty families had settled and set up farms, but nearly all was lost in 1676 when King Philip (Metacomet) attacked and burned much of the village. Vine Lake Cemetery, established in 1651, and the Dwight-Derby House (built in ca. 1651) are some of the only remaining historic resources from this early settlement period.
- Farming and grazing dominated the early Medfield economy** and continued to do so into the early 1800s. Manufacturing began around 1800, first with small cottage industries producing strawbraided hats and bonnets, boots, shoes and brushes. As the 19th century wore on, larger industries emerged, producing pitchforks and carriages. Hat production continued, largely through the operations of the Excelsior Straw Works, and did not end until the 1950s. The Medfield State Hospital, opened in 1896 to provide mental health services, bolstered the local economy well into the 20th century. After World War II and the improvement of transportation routes into and around Boston, Medfield developed into a commuter suburb.
- Beginning in the 1700s, Medfield attracted and inspired artists, writers and musicians.** The first known published writer from Medfield was Hannah Adams, who wrote *A view of Religious Opinions* in 1784. Later the Town was home to painters George Inness and Dennis Miller Bunker, as well as musician James Carroll Bartlett and music educators William Tilden and Charles Martin Loeffler. This tradition continues today through the efforts of the Cultural Alliance of Medfield and others to transform the former Medfield State Hospital campus into a cultural center.
- The Town's extant historic resources**, including houses, barns, mills, civic and religious structures, **tell the story of Medfield's development** from a small rural farming community to modern 21st century suburb.



The Peak House, dating to 1711, is one of the oldest extant structures in Medfield.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- By updating the 1999 **Preservation Plan**, Medfield can align its future preservation goals with those of the 2020 Townwide Master Plan.
- By updating the **Inventory of Historic Resources** and making it publicly available through the Town website, Medfield will help make its preservation goals clearer to property owners.
- By creating a fifth Local Historic District, the **East Main Street Local Historic District**, Medfield will help protect the east end of Main Street from Downtown to the Westwood line, including the Clark Tavern and Peak House.
- By adopting the **Community Preservation Act**, Medfield will establish a source of financial support for future preservation efforts.
- By becoming a **Certified Local Government**, Medfield will become eligible for additional preservation-related funding.
- By redeveloping the **Medfield State Hospital** with a regional arts and cultural center, Medfield will help ensure that its centuries-long tradition of supporting and nurturing artists will continue.

A TRADITION OF RECOGNIZING, PRESERVING, AND INTERPRETING HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Through the efforts of Medfield’s Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission, **the Town has protected a significant number of its historic buildings** from demolition or alteration. This has been accomplished by maintaining the inventory of historic resources, establishing four Local Historic Districts, listing six individual properties on the National Register of Historic Places, and adopting of an 18-month Demolition Delay Bylaw. A fifth Local Historic District, extending eastward along Route 109 from Downtown, would protect 38 additional properties, including the George Inness studio, Peak House, and ca. 1740 Clark Tavern.
- **Medfield maintains several historic buildings as interpretive sites**, including the Kingsbury Pond Grist Mill, Dwight-Derby House, Peak House, and Lowell Mason House. Volunteers manage most of the programs and preservation efforts associated with these.
- **Medfield Historical Society**, established in 1891, is one of the oldest collecting organizations of its kind in Massachusetts, maintaining documents and artifacts dating to the time of the town’s settlement in 1649. Together with the adjacent **Medfield Public Library**, the society serves as a cultural and historical hub.
- **Medfield’s oldest known place of interment, Vine Lake Cemetery**, holds burials from the 1600s through the present day, documenting the full history of the town. The non-profit **Vine Lake Cemetery Preservation Trust** oversees stewardship of the cemetery and provides interpretive information for visitors.



The Kingsbury Grist Mill, located at the southern end of Kingsbury Pond, dates to 1702. Its stewardship is overseen by a volunteer committee.

AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO THE ARTS

- **The 2017 Arts and Economic Prosperity Study** determined that \$3.1 million is generated annually by non-profit arts organizations and event-related spending in Medfield.
- **The Cultural Alliance of Medfield and Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts** form the bedrock of arts activity in the Town. In addition to maintaining a comprehensive website listing all historic, cultural, recreation, and nature-related happenings in Medfield, CAM is spearheading the effort to an arts center at the former Medfield State Hospital.
- **The Medfield Foundation, Inc. and Medfield Cultural Council** both provide financial support for the arts in Medfield. The foundation supports an Art in Public Places program and along with funding approved at town meeting, financed the construction of Straw Hat Park. The Cultural Council has funded visual and performing artists to showcase their work and to bring art into the schools.



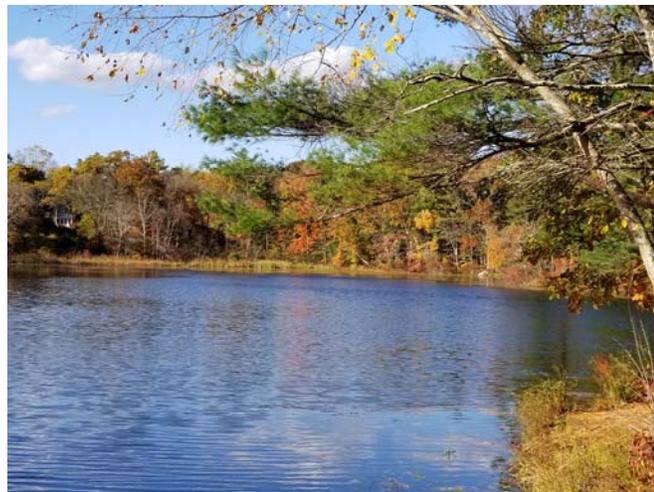
Straw Hat Park, located off North Street, provides an intimate place for pedestrians to pause, while traveling through Downtown.



Medfield's Natural, Open Space - 4 & Recreation Resources

DISTINCTIVE NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

- While much of the **topography** is gently sloping and low-lying, Medfield contains several high points located in the northeast (in and around the Rocky Hill Reservation) and southwest (in and around the Noon Hill Reservation) parts of town.
- Just under 40% of the town contains well-drained, sandy and gravelly **soils** that present few constraints to development.
- Medfield lies within the Charles River and Neponset River **watersheds**, and contains two major water courses, the Charles and Stop Rivers. Extensive wetlands area is associated with each river, as are Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes as defined by the State's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.
- Smaller **streams, brooks and small ponds** are scattered throughout the Town, and these provide habitat for wildlife and aquatic species.
- Medfield's **scenic resources** include rural roads, hill summits, river corridors and ponds.



Kingsbury Pond is one of Medfield's many natural resources of high scenic value that also provides habitat for wildlife and a spot for canoeing, kayaking and fishing.

SUCCESSFUL RESOURCE PROTECTION EFFORTS

- Medfield residents **place high value on the town's open space resources**, as evidenced by the results of open space purchased by the Town, recent surveys and public forums. Some of the most treasured open spaces are Noon Hill, Rocky Woods, the Charles River meadows, and Vine Lake.
- Medfield is the 258th in land area of the 365 municipalities in the Commonwealth but **ranks 65th in the amount of permanently protected land**. Of the Town's 9,337.60 acres, approximately 3,066.50 acres (33%), have been protected in perpetuity from development.
- The **largest owners and/or managers of conservation lands** in Medfield are The Trustees of Reservations and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A large portion of protected open space lies within the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Project area, managed by the ACOE for flood control.
- Recent purchase of **128 acres of the former Medfield State Hospital** endorses the Town's long-standing commitment to preserving and protecting open space.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

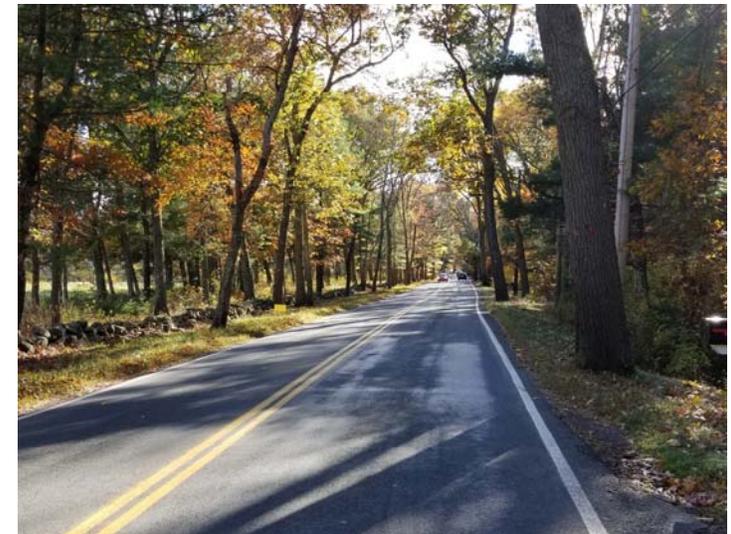
- Just under 40% of Medfield contains **soils that present few constraints to development** and these soils dominate most of the central area of town.
- The presence of **large wetland areas** associated with rivers, streams and ponds **limits development** of approximately 25% of the town.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers has assumed control of the natural basins along the Charles River **to control and minimize flooding throughout the watershed**.
- While Medfield has had success in protecting open space, many **parcels lack connections to one another**.
- As climate change continues, **the potential of many streams, brooks, and ponds to flood will continue to increase**.

RECREATION RESOURCES IN MANY FORMS

- Medfield's **over 3,000 acres of open space** offer infinite opportunities to explore the outdoors through recreation of many forms, including hiking, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching, and swimming. Ownership and maintenance of this land is shared between the federal, state and local government, as well as a private land trust (The Trustees of Reservations).
- The Town's **downtown passive recreation sites**, including Memorial (Gazebo) Park, Straw Hat Park, Meeting House (Baker's) Park, and Baxter Park also serve as venues for community gathering, including Medfield Day, held each September.
- **Management of town-owned outdoor public recreation facilities** is handled by the Park and Recreation Department and School Department. The Conservation Commission is responsible for managing Town-owned open space. McCarthy Park, located on the former site of the Medfield State Hospital farm, has yet to be fully developed into a recreation facility.
- **Medfield's trails** link to two regional systems, the Bay Circuit Trail and the Charles River Link Trail.



The Stop River flows westward through the Town and joins the Charles at the Medfield-Millis line.



Hartford Road, located at the eastern end of Medfield, has been designated a Scenic Road. It leads through woodlands and past farmland and divides the Rocky Woods Reservation from Fork Factory Brook.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- While Medfield owns and maintains **over 260 acres of athletic fields, most are overused**, with school fields booked seven days per week.
- The existing Park and Recreation Department building, the **Hannah Adams Pfaff Center**, is in a **state of decline**. A new facility is needed in order for the department to improve and broaden its services to Medfield residents of all ages.
- Currently, **Medfield does not have a designated "dog park"** and canine owners have routinely used the former Medfield State Hospital grounds and conservation land behind the Wheelock School for this purpose. **Lack of dog waste removal** at these sites is a public health concern.
- Medfield has **attempted to pass the Community Preservation Act** three times, without success. Funding through the CPA can support expansion of recreation facilities and lands, as well as open space acquisitions.



The Town maintains over 260 acres of athletic fields, located adjacent to schools, and at Metacomet and McCarthy Parks.

Medfield's Transportation and Circulation-5

MOVING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Travel Characteristics

- 20% (638) of people working in Medfield live in Medfield.
- 25% (1,567) of workers living in Medfield work in Boston.
- 32% of households have three or more vehicles.
- 69% of residents drive alone to work.
- 11% of residents use public transportation to commute to work.
- 27% of Medfield residents have a commute of an hour or more each way to and from work.

Operating Conditions

- There are approximately 80 miles of roadway in Medfield.
- Route 109 carries over 16,500 vehicles per day; Route 27 over 13,500.
- Heavy traffic congestion is experienced on Route 109 eastbound in the morning and westbound in the evening.
- A heavy volume of cement trucks utilizes Route 109, leading to longer traffic delays, an unpleasant pedestrian environment, and the need for a stronger pavement base.

Safety

- The number of reported vehicle crashes has fluctuated between 2007 and 2017, with a low of 140 in 2014 and a high of 205 in 2016.
- The intersection of Route 27 and West Street was identified by MassDOT as both a Top 200 Intersection and Highway Safety Improvement Program cluster for the years of 2014 to 2016.
- The following intersections experienced high numbers of crashes between 2015 and 2017:
 - Main Street (Route 109) at North Meadows Road/ Spring Street (Route 27)
 - North Meadows Road (Route 27) at West Street
 - Main Street (Route 109) at Hartford Street
 - North Meadows Road (Route 27) at Dale Street
 - Main Street (Route 109) at North Street



“Do Not Block Intersection” markings were recently installed on Route 109 in front of Town Hall in an effort to alleviate issues caused by queuing vehicles.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Heavy traffic congestion on Route 109 impacts commuters and residents throughout the day.
- There are opportunities to improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles in the downtown.
- Parking availability is an issue in the downtown area, especially in close proximity to the Town Hall. There is potential to explore parking management strategies and additional parking locations.
- When the Medfield State Hospital land is redeveloped, it will become necessary to estimate the impacts of the increased traffic on the local roadway network and identify

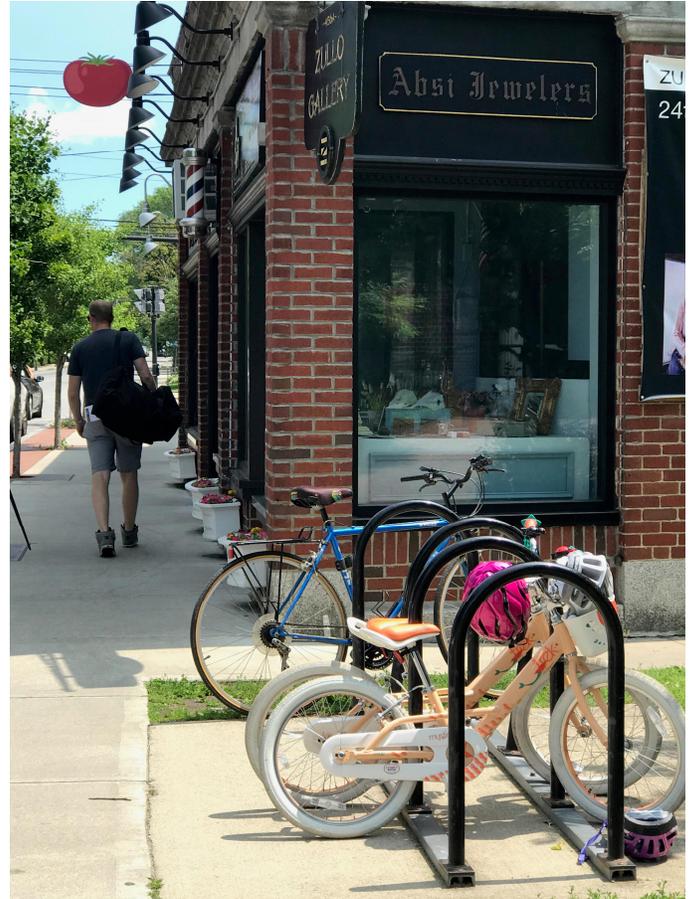
- The 0.85-mile segment of Route 109 from Causeway Street to Pound Street experienced a total of 123 crashes from 2015 to 2017, an average of 41 crashes per year.

Transit

- While Medfield does not have direct commuter rail access, approximately 11% of residents use public transit to commute to and from work.
- The Medfield Council on Aging owns three vans that are available to transport residents Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:15 PM.

Pedestrians and Bicycles

- High traffic volumes and large number of cement trucks utilizing Route 109 create an unpleasant walking experience.
- Pedestrians experience large delays when waiting to cross the street at signalized intersections in the downtown area.
- Residents have voiced a desire for better pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in town, as well as a revitalization of the downtown area to make it a desirable destination.
- There are currently no on-street bicycle accommodations in Medfield.



Pedestrian and bicycle facilities on Main Street

Parking

- Residents perceive that there is a shortage of parking supply in the downtown area, especially near Town Hall.
- A parking study was completed for the downtown area in May 2018, which showed that parking is underutilized overall.
- There is an opportunity to enhance signage to direct motorists to public parking lots.



Street furniture set alongside the sidewalk add to the pedestrian-friendly character of Main Street.



Concrete mixers and other heavy vehicles travel along Medfield's main streets throughout the day. The trucks create traffic delays and detract from the pedestrian experience.

Medfield's Public Facilities & Services - 6

PROACTIVE PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Town is responsible for 700,000 **square feet of facilities**. They are aging; in many cases the buildings are over 50 years old.. A recent evaluation determined that the condition of most of the facilities ranges from Good to Fair, with a few cases being in Poor condition (the facility in its entirety or certain components).

Medfield has becoming increasingly systematic and proactive in its **facilities management**. Some recent examples include:

- **A Building Stabilization Fund.** \$1 million is allocated annually in order to address repairs and replacements in an estimated \$44 million for deferred maintenance.
- **A 20-Year Plan** inventories the existing conditions of all municipal buildings
- **An ADA Compliance Committee** is conducting an evaluation of all Town buildings



The Gazebo, located adjacent to the Library, is a popular location for events.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Older Adults:** Only 11% of the population is over the age of 65 (compared to state average of 15.5%), however this percentage is expected to increase by 30% by the year 2030.
- **School Aged Children:** Medfield has a higher than state average population aged 6-17 (40% as compared to 27% statewide). In addition, school enrollment projections estimate an additional 800 students in the next 9 years.
- **Teenagers.** Medfield youth suffer from higher rates of substance abuse than the state, region and national levels (high levels of competition and a lack of "things to do" are partial explanations given). Teens have dubbed the Town "Deadfield." and express a desire for more activities.

FACILITY NEEDS

- The **Town Hall** building was renovated in 1998 and has a defective HVAC system, needs a new roof, and lacks adequate storage, among other needs.
- **Senior Center.** The current facility is inadequate in terms of size and less than ideal in terms of location. As the population increases, so will a need for additional programs.
- The **Recreation Department** facility (Pfaff Center) does not meet current needs and with projected increases in the population, there will be a demand for additional programming.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Medfield is undertaking to implement a **deferred maintenance** program to repair and replace building elements and systems (e.g. HVAC, ADA compliance, roofs, windows, etc.) in Town facilities that need it.
- **Town Hall.** The building is fairly adequate but will need ADA compliance and some repairs. Also parking is an issue.
- **Council on Aging.** There will be a need to support and meet the needs of an increasing older adult population (e.g. programming, recreation, socialization, housing and transportation). The Senior Center is too small for a growing population.
- **Recreation Department.** A new building could help provide space for programming for all ages.
- **Community Center.** There may be an opportunity to create a center for all ages.
- **Youth and Outreach & Substance Abuse** have recently received a grant to prevent substance abuse and support healthy life choices.

- The **Library** is keeping up with national trends to be a key community gathering space for all ages.
- **Schools.** Medfield public schools consistently rank among the top ten school systems in the State. Increasing enrollments projected for the future (especially in grades 3-5) will result in the need for a new school. Some of the other schools need new roofs and windows and are designed with traditional floor plans and lack the types of spaces to support new methods of pedagogy (e.g. STEM, etc.)
- **Public Safety.** The building more than adequately meets the needs of the Police and Fire Departments. Public Safety anticipates an increase in the number of medical calls for service due to the increase in the older adult population.

OTHER TOWN-OWNED FACILITIES

- **Medfield State Hospital**
 - The Town acquired 128 of the 241 acres of the campus, including an 88-acre “core campus” and 40 acres of open space
 - There are currently 39 buildings, most of them of historic significance on the core campus site (approximately 676,000 in total)
 - The Town recently voted to rezone the campus to support its redevelopment.
- **Dale Street School.** Once the new school is built, the existing school building will be available for reuse.

PROVISION OF UTILITIES AND SERVICES

- **Department of Public Works**
 - **Highway Division.** Improving the road infrastructure is a key priority. This includes an ADA Transition Plan for roadways, sidewalks and crosswalks.
 - **Transfer Station.** The SWAP area is extremely popular to the degree that it causes traffic congestion.
- **Water.** Approximately 99% of the Town is connected to the municipal waster supply. Water usage is close to capacity.
- **Wastewater.** Approximately 65% of the Town is connected to the municipal system; the remaining properties utilize individual septic systems. The wastewater system has significant inflow and infiltration problems, reducing its efficiency and capacity.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- The **Library** will need deferred maintenance and additional parking to keep up with the demand for increased programming.
- **Schools.** A new school will be needed to replace the Dale Street School and the other schools will need updating and deferred maintenance.
- Reuse of the **Medfield State Hospital** has the opportunity to fill a variety of the Town’s needs, however, the impacts of redevelopment on the town’s facilities and services will need to be assessed. Also, may be desirable to designate a **dog park** elsewhere in Town (many currently walk their dogs on the campus).
- When vacated the existing **Dale Street School** may be reused to fulfill a number of Town needs. A Reuse Plan is needed.
- **Infrastructure.** The Town’s roads, sidewalks & utility pipes are aging and will need to be repaired and replaced.
- **Transfer Station.** Reconfiguring the SWAP area could help to decrease congestion and streamline its operation.
- **Water** usage will need to be controlled or regulated in order to ensure supply is adequate. Additionally, a Water Treatment Plant may help to increase system efficiency and capacity.
- The inflow and infiltration problems in the **Wastewater System** are currently being identified so that repairs can be made in key locations.

Medfield State Hospital- 7

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Medfield State Hospital is located on Hospital Road 2 miles north of Medfield’s town center. The former psychiatric hospital was established in 1892 and is a unique representation of buildings of that era.

In December of 2014, the Town of Medfield acquired **128 of the 241 acres** of the campus, including an 88-acre “core campus” and 40 acres south of Hospital Road known as the “Sledding Hill.”

- There are currently **39 buildings** on the core campus (approximately **676,000 sq. ft.** in total).
- Most of the buildings and campus-style layout are on the **National Historical Register**. The site is also protected by the **Hospital Farm Historic District**.



The core campus buildings are being mothballed (protected from long-term deterioration while they are unoccupied).

MSH Costs 2014-2019	
\$3.1 Million	Purchase Price
\$741,673	Operations and Maintenance
\$514,515	Planning Costs
\$309,743	Revenue

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- MSH reuse represents an opportunity for the Town of Medfield to preserve and adaptively reuse the historic buildings and campus to manage future growth and meet town goals over time.
- Dog walkers and the school buses will need a new location as they will be displaced once the campus is redeveloped.
- The campus when occupied by the Department of Mental Health generated its own heat, light and power. Since these are no longer operational, the campus will have to be serviced by Town utilities and therefore, the impacts on public facilities and services will need to be determined once a specific proposal is finalized.



School buses are currently parked overnight in a parking area of the campus.

Loose dogs and waste are a significant problem on the campus as many people, including from surrounding towns and professional dog walkers, use the campus to walk their dogs.

The Charles River and the Charles River Overlook and trails

MEDFIELD STATE HOSPITAL MASTER PLAN

A **Master Plan** for reuse of the campus was completed in 2018. Priorities for reuse are identified as follows¹:

- Achieve acceptable **economic and financial impacts** on Medfield residents and Town services
- Address Town **housing needs** (including the need for affordable appropriate housing for older adults and housing that brings more diversity to the housing stock and aligns with Medfield’s Housing Production Plan).
- Maintain and enhance the **character** and value of the Town of Medfield and its residents, including the site’s scenic and natural features, spaces for active and passive recreation, and the site’s historic, agricultural and architectural significance.

The **Medfield State Hospital District**, which passed at Town Meeting in 2019 with 68.8% of the votes, rezones the Medfield State Hospital area. The Plan sets out a broad list of permitted uses for each of the six subzones on the main campus; zoning for the land south of Hospital Road was not changed.

The proposal includes a set of design guidelines that outline the footprint, frontage, height, and architectural style of buildings in each of the subzones. While these provide flexibility for what developers or other organizations can propose, they prevent uses that are against the wishes of the community as expressed in the Master Plan (e.g. high-rise apartment building, etc.)

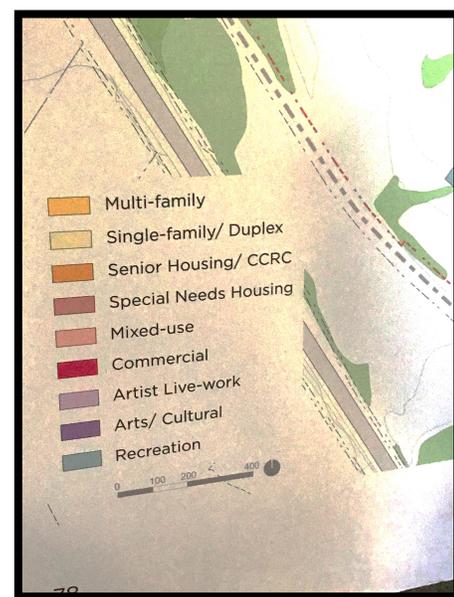


Proposed reuse of the chapel as an arts and cultural center (Cultural Alliance of Medfield)

A **Development Committee** has been formed to work with developers to test the feasibility of these ideas and initiate the solicitation of proposals from qualified developers.



Proposed Reuse Plan, State Hospital Master Plan



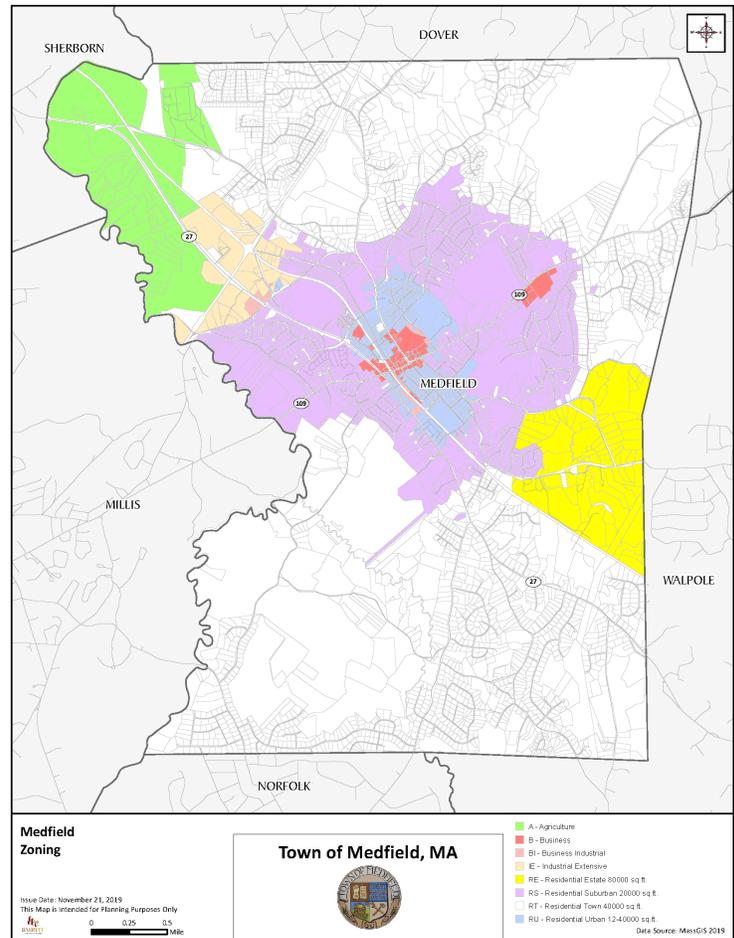
Proposed Uses, State Hospital Master Plan

¹ “Medfield State Hospital Strategic Reuse Plan”, Town of Medfield, 2018.

Land Use & Zoning - 8

LAND USE POLICIES & PRATICES IN MEDFIELD: TOOLS FOR MANAGING CHANGE

- **All about Zoning**
 - **Essential tool for implementing the Master Plan!**
 - A zoning bylaw regulates the use, pattern, and appearance of development through zoning **districts**, dimensional requirements, use requirements, and other regulations
 - Medfield adopted its first Zoning Bylaw in **1938**
 - Regulations must treat permitted uses uniformly within a district
 - And, districts must be mapped
- **Medfield's nine use districts**
 - Agricultural (A)
 - Residential Estate (RE)
 - Residential Town (RT) – applies to most of the Town
 - Residential Suburban (RS)
 - Residential Urban (RU)
 - Business (B)
 - Business-Industrial (BI)
 - Industrial-Extensive (IE)
 - Medfield State Hospital (MSH)
- **The rules ... what zoning dictates**
 - Density, form
 - Parking, signs
 - Treatment of “grandfathered” uses and structures
 - Open space residential design
 - Earth removal
 - Resource protection (floodplains, water)
 - Process! (how to get permits and approvals)
- **Other land use tools**
 - Subdivision Control
 - Wetlands Bylaw
 - Scenic Roads
 - Board of Health Regulations
 - Historic District Commission
 - Demolition Delay
 - State Building Code
 - Chapter 40B (Comprehensive Permit)



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Overall, Medfield has the regulatory tools and policies that are in use in most towns today
- Medfield has been innovative, notably with its efforts to take control of, plan for, and zone for development of the State Hospital property. Managing the development process may be challenging.
- Medfield has very little land zoned for nonresidential development. This can make it difficult to have a strong, stable tax base that helps to contain the growth of residential tax bills.

ISSUES & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

• Challenges

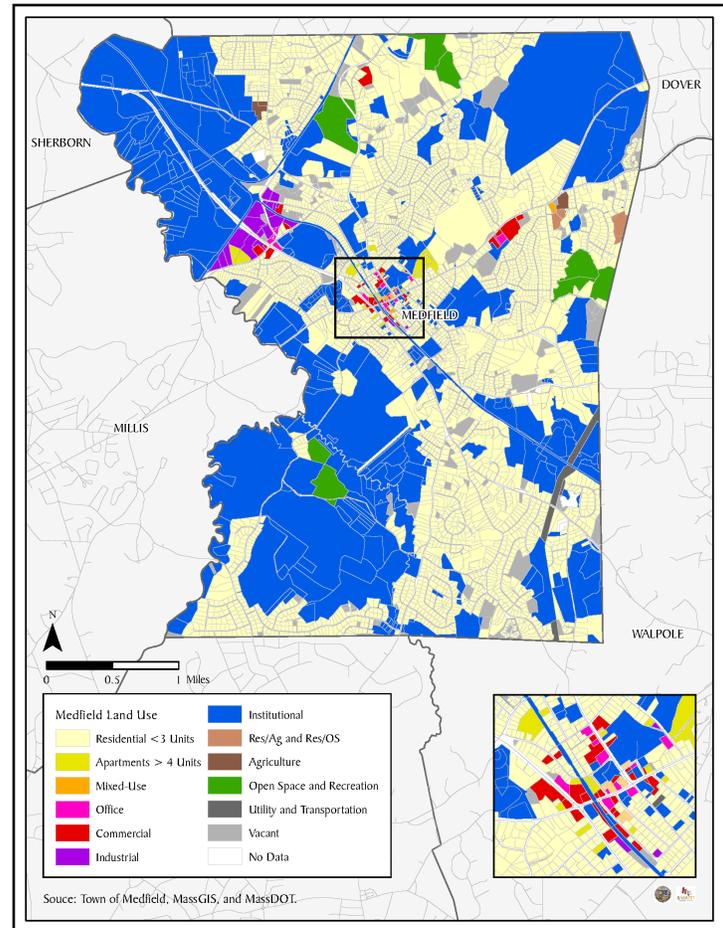
- Teardowns & mansionization
- Downtown
 - Zoning
 - Parking
 - Market
 - Community design
- Affordable housing
 - Chapter 40B v. inclusionary zoning
 - Opportunities for multifamily housing
- Disposition and development of Medfield State Hospital

• Land use-town finance

- Many residents say the town needs more commercial development, but where?
- Potential “disconnect” between what Medfield wants and what market looks for, and what Medfield will accept
- In the vision survey, residents consistently ranked tax base and business growth as high items of concern

• Community design

- Medfield’s zoning takes a traditional approach to regulating the amount of development that can occur on a site
- Existing focuses on **quantity** (how much development will be allowed), not **design** (how development will look and how it will fit in the neighborhood and community)
- How much of the Town is nonconforming? Lessons (both good and bad) can be gleaned from the way development occurred before zoning



Medfield land use map. This map shows how land is actually used, not how it is zoned.

Medfield's Sustainability Summary - 9

While there will not be a distinct chapter of Medfield's Master Plan on sustainability, the topic is a top priority for the Town and therefore, sustainability and resiliency will be integrated throughout the plan. When it comes to sustainability, Medfield is not starting from scratch. The Town has already been working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce waste, conserve water, and much more. Below is a summary of the actions and initiatives that the Town of Medfield has already taken. This summary should serve as a baseline from which to recommend further actions that help the Town mitigate and adapt to climate change and create a more sustainable community.

HOUSING & POPULATION

Preparing Medfield residents for the effects of climate change is a key component of sustainability and resilience. This section lists completed actions that help prepare residents, especially particularly vulnerable residents, for emergencies.

- **Emergency Preparedness**

- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan address hazard mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from a variety of natural and man-made emergencies
- Town evacuation plan as part of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
- Fire Department sends out emergency preparedness information on social media and is working to make this content available on the Town website
- Medfield High School is the town's designated community shelter



- **Vulnerable Populations**

- The town works with the Council on Aging to help provide shelter to seniors during extreme heat and cold weather

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An initial review of economic development activity in Medfield turned up several *proposed* actions from existing plans that focus on incorporation of sustainable practices in the Town's businesses and schools.

- **Business Preparedness**

- Encourage the business community, major institutions and non-profits to work with the Town to develop, review and implement the hazard mitigation plan.

- **Curriculum expansion**

- Strengthen and expand district offerings in STEAM
- Support varied curricular, co-curricular, athletic, and club programming for a continued sense of community and connectedness for students (could include sustainability-related activities)
- Explore an interdisciplinary and project-based approach to curriculum PreK-12 (very conducive to sustainability education)



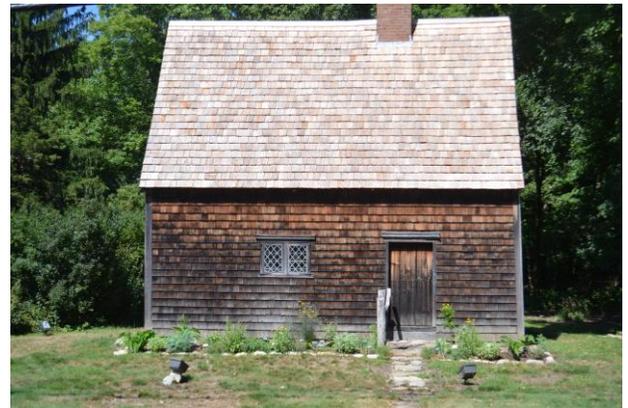
MEMO & Business Resilience

Medfield's Employer's and Merchants Organization (MEMO) works to initiate, sponsor, support and promote projects and activities that expand educational and marketing opportunities for its member businesses. MEMO represents 70 local businesses and supports the resilience of the Medfield economy by serving as a resource for businesses and organizing town-wide events, such as Medfield Day and singing at the annual tree lighting event.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Protecting Medfield's historic and cultural resources is critical to preserving the town's character. Approaching this goal with a lens of resilience will aid the success of the Master Plan.

- **Community Resilience**
 - Completed a combined Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plan (MVP) and Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in 2019 to assess the community's strengths and vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change
- **Community Leadership**
 - The First Parish UU of Medfield's anti-idling initiative won the Community Inspiration category as part of the Cool Congregation Challenge (2016-2017)
 - Residents have participated in the Charles River Watershed Association's river clean ups



NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE/RECREATION

Natural resources and open space provide ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration and air and water filtration. Medfield has already taken steps to protect the functioning of these services.

- **Water Resource Protection & Conservation**
 - Wetland bylaw to restrict activities that may negatively affect public or private water supply, groundwater, flood control, erosion control, storm damage prevention, water pollution control, wildlife habitat, recreation, or aesthetics
 - Aquifer Protection Overlay District to protect the drinking water supply
 - Water Management Act Permit that limits water use to 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD)
 - Medfield is home to part of the Charles River Natural Valley Storage area, a critical wetland
 - Water use restriction and ban bylaws
 - Rain barrels sold at a discounted rate, as of 2018
 - Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance's (DCAMM) Medfield Charles River Gateway project included comprehensive remediation of soil, sediment, and groundwater

MEASURING SUCCESS

- **Tree City USA**
Medfield has been a designated Tree City USA since 2014
- **Regional Collaboration**
Active member of Neponset Stormwater Partnership since 2014
- **Acres of Open Space**
Medfield has 3305.64 acres of open space
- **Floodplain area**
There are 491 acres of Medfield that falls in a floodplain
- **Water Conservation**
Medfield's Unaccounted-for Water (UAW), a measure of how efficiently municipal public water supply systems are using water, is down to 17%
- **Charles River Gateway Project at MSH**
Medfield's Charles River Gateway Project was the largest environmental restoration project along the Charles, improving on over 3 acres

- **Tree Resilience**

- The Highway Department has a tree trimming program to mitigate damage to trees and infrastructure during storms

- **Open Space**

- Medfield has 3305.64 acres of open space
 - 2594.73 acres of protected open space
 - 414.39 acres under private protection (i.e. Westwood Gun Club Wardner Farm Trust)
 - 284.72 acres of Parks and Recreation outdoor recreation lands



TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Transportation is a major contributor to a town's greenhouse gas emissions. Medfield is seeking to reduce emissions associated with the transportation section and create a transportation network that is accessible and well-maintained.

- **Roadways**

- Developed and implemented winter road maintenance procedures to minimize contamination of waterways
- Improved maintenance of 86 miles of roadway
 - Accepted roadways: 77.59 miles
 - Private: 5.03 miles
 - State: .64 miles
 - Unaccepted: 2.64 miles

- **Streetlights**

- Purchased all 347 streetlights from Eversource for \$1 in order to convert them to LEDs
- All streetlights switched to LEDs as of June 2019

- **Vehicles**

- Adopted an Energy Efficiency Vehicle policy (2015)
- Town website provides information about the State anti-idling law
- Added a science unit at the high school about anti-idling that was accompanied by outreach efforts

- **Trails**

- Moved a section of the Bay Circuit trail that was on a busy street into the woods
- Existing proposal for a Medfield Rail Trail that would make up a 1.3-mile section of the Bay Colony Rail Trail
- A map of the Medfield trails, including shared-use paths, bike lanes, and foot trails is available on the Town website



MEASURING SUCCESS

- **LED Streetlights**

The conversion to LED streetlights is expected to yield energy savings of 69,435 kWh/year (or 8.3 homes' energy use for one year). The estimated annual savings for the Medfield project is \$32,600.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Improving community facilities and services creates opportunities for energy and waste reduction—key sustainability metrics.

- **School Facilities**

- Two boilers replaced at Wheeler Elementary School, increasing efficiency from 80% to 92% (2017)
- Initiated a recommissioning project at Blake Middle School

- **Municipal Facilities**

- HVAC control commissioning at the Town Garage to ensure efficiency (2016)
- Lighting retrofits made at various Town facilities, including the wastewater treatment plant, the Council on Aging, Town Hall, and the library
- Boiler replaced at Town Hall (2017)

- **Critical Facilities**

- Police and Fire stations have backup generators

- **Waste Reduction**

- Plastic bag ban effective as of November 1, 2019
- Medfield Green Months in May and October for collection and proper discarding of specialty items (i.e. electronics, textiles)
- Volunteer-run swap area to exchange used items
- Food waste drop off area available to residents at the transfer station
- Backyard composting systems available at a discounted price, made possible by a MassDEP grant

- **Stormwater Management**

- Catch basins on public roads and property are properly cleaned according to MS4 requirements
- Proper maintenance and replacement of drainage infrastructure as needed
- Stormwater management annual reports since in 2003
- Attended stormwater workshops hosted by the EPA and DEP
- Established an informal Stormwater Management Committee

MEASURING SUCCESS

- **Energy Star Ratings**

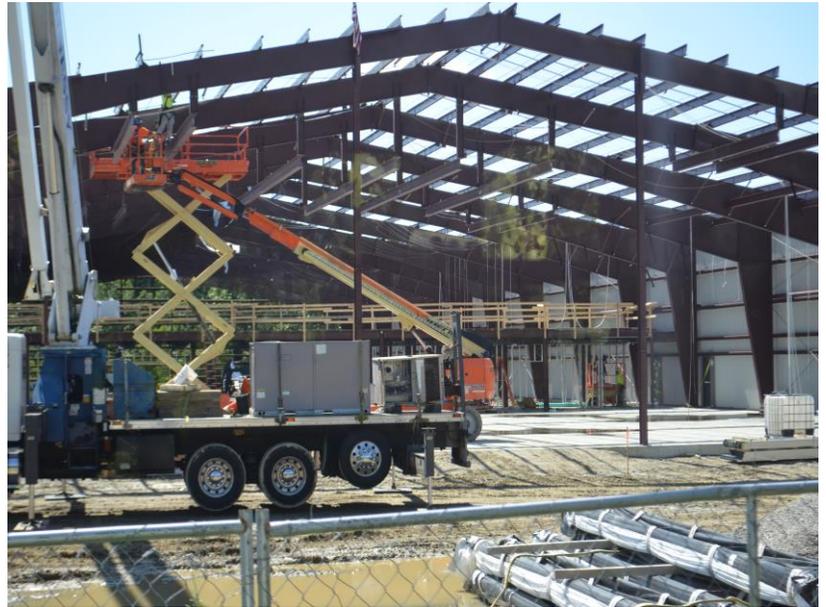
All five public schools have been eligible for Energy Star ratings for energy efficiency



LAND USE AND ZONING

Decisions about land use and zoning can have significant impacts on building efficiency and resiliency, sustainable development practices, and more.

- **Building Resilience**
 - Floodplain Conservation District that restricts development in areas along the Charles and Stop Rivers whose elevation is below 125 feet
- **Sustainable Development**
 - Set maximum for the percentage of any lot that can be covered by man-made impervious surfaces, such as buildings, structures, and nonporous paving
 - Earth Removal Bylaw that requires a permit for the removal of earth by a noncommercial property owner
 - Created written procedures for inspecting construction sites for proper sediment controls and conducting site plan reviews



ENERGY CONSERVATION AND FUTURE RESILIENCY PLANNING

Medfield is working to reduce energy use at both the municipal and community level, while also considering how to increase the resilience of its energy supply.

- **Goal Setting**
 - Appointed an Energy Committee in 2008
 - Established an energy use baseline (2008) and developed a plan to reduce use by 20% within five years
 - Received a grant from the Department of Energy Resources to pay for the first two years of an Energy/Facilities manager full-time position (2014). This position helped reduce energy costs by 30% through energy audits, lighting change outs, and other energy efficiency measures.
- **Building Energy Efficiency**
 - Adopted a Stretch Energy Code “for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy” (2014)



- **Renewable Energy**
 - Adopted a Solar bylaw that provides as-of-right siting in designated locations and an expedited permitting process for as-of-right energy facilities (2014)
 - Have a 281 kW PV solar array ground mount at the wastewater treatment plant
 - Have a 60 kW PV solar array roof mount at the Public Safety building, and an approved a 155 kW PV solar array in the works
 - Plan underway for PV solar array at the Department of Public Works
 - Reinvested Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SECs) in the Wastewater Treatment Plant Sewer Enterprise Fund which reduced the planned 4% rate increase to 2%
 - Participated in the Solarize Massachusetts Challenge Program in 2016, resulting in 29 private installations
 - Have two large solar applications (greater than 1 MW) in the queue at the Ice House
- **Green Communities**
 - Designated a Green Community in 2017¹



MEASURING SUCCESS

- **Energy Reduction Target**

Medfield had already met its goal of 20% energy reduction from 2008 by the time it was recognized as a Green Community in 2017
- **Solar Capacity**
 - Total: 1,600 kW AC
 - Residential: 634 kW AC (119 projects)
 - Commercial: 966 kW AC (10 projects)
- **WWTP Solar Generation**

In 2017, the solar array at the wastewater treatment plant generated 49% of the plant electricity
- **Public Safety Solar Generation**

In 2017, the solar array at the Public Safety Building generated 18.5% of the building's electricity
- **Solar Renewable Energy Credits**

In 2017, the Town received \$68,000 in Solar Renewable Energy Credits
- **Green Community Grant**

Medfield received an initial grant of \$146,738 from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER)
- **Solarize Massachusetts 2016**

Through the program, 29 residents signed contracts with New England Clean Energy, leading to an 82% increase in PV capacity from residential generation

¹ The [Green Communities Division \(GCD\)](#) 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.

Townwide Master Plan: Medfield, MA
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions

Chapter 1: Housing and Population

Townwide Master Plan: Medfield, MA
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions

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1. Housing & Population

INTRODUCTION

Medfield is a small town about 18 miles south of Boston, surrounded by Dover, Norfolk, Walpole, Millis, and Sherborn. Since 2010, Medfield's population has increased about 5 percent to the current estimate of 12,610 people.¹ Medfield takes great pride in the quality of its public schools, and there is little question that the school district draws homebuyers to the town. For the past two decades, Medfield has ranked at or close to the top of the state for average number of children per family and in the state's top 10 school districts.

The supply, types, and cost of housing play a major role in determining who can live in a town. Communities influence the make-up of their population by the steps they take to control housing growth, and Medfield is no exception. When zoning limits the types of housing that can be developed in a community, the result is a fairly homogeneous population. Medfield's large percentage of family households (84 percent) and families with children correlate with the long-standing pattern of single-family homes in traditional neighborhoods built for families. Residents value Medfield's small-town feel and the rural features it retains, and these qualities help to define what it means to live in the town. Like all towns that are trying to plan for their future, Medfield faces some challenging policy decisions that should be integrated with other elements of the master plan. This section provides both a snapshot and a trend

KEY FINDINGS

- Medfield has a significant opportunity to meet community housing needs through redevelopment of the Medfield State Hospital property.
- Medfield's expensive housing effectively excludes many people from being able to buy or rent in the town.
- Medfield attracts families in search of opportunities to "buy up" to a town with great schools and other amenities. It has one of the highest average number of children per family of any town in Massachusetts.
- Minorities are noticeably underrepresented in Medfield's population. The town is approximately 92 percent White.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions

analysis, together with a look at some opportunities to align Medfield’s policies with the vision and goals of the Master Plan.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Medfield’s population has grown at a moderate pace since 1970, when two successive decades of rapid growth began to ebb. By 2010, the population had reached 12,024, yet this actually represented a small ten-year drop in population. The historical growth and change in Medfield’s population is fairly consistent with trends in many suburbs along the outer edge of the Boston metropolitan region. Some of Medfield’s neighbors also experienced significant population growth between 1950 and 1970 with a considerable decline in growth rate approaching the millennium, as shown in Fig. 1.1.

Observations

- Medfield’s growth rate has slowed considerably since 1970, following the end of the “Baby Boom” years (1946-1964).

**Fig. 1.1. Population History:
Medfield and Surrounding Towns**
(Source: Mass. State Data Center)

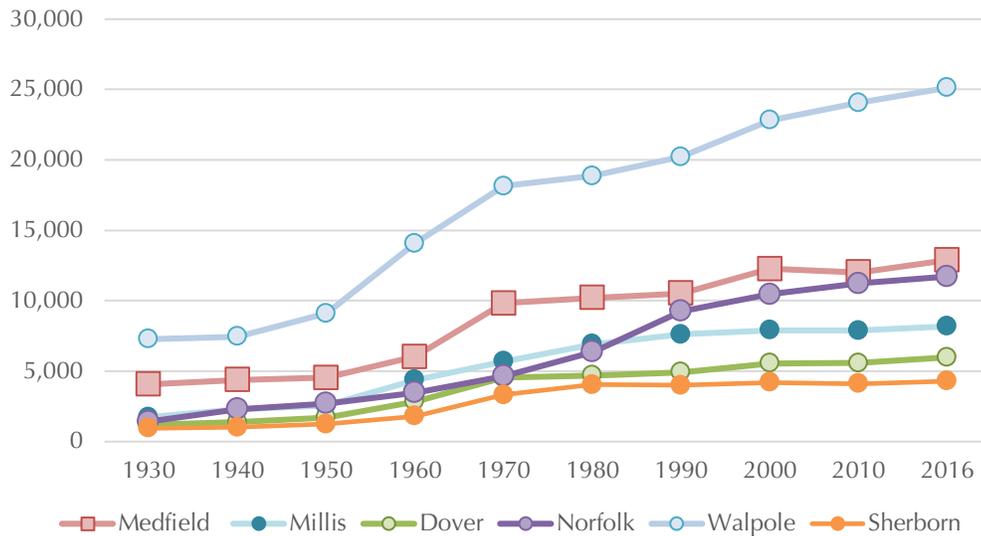


Table 1.1 presents the most recent population forecast for Medfield, prepared by the University of Massachusetts Donohue Institute (UMDI). The forecast calls for a rather dramatic drop in Medfield’s population in the next 15 years. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) also predicts population loss in Medfield, though not to the same

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions

degree.² Similar forecasts have been made for Dover, Sherborn, Millis. None of population projections for Medfield account for the possibility of development that could occur under the new zoning for Medfield State Hospital. Moreover, while the two main sources of population projections in Massachusetts foretell an absolute decrease in Medfield’s total population, the Medfield Public Schools anticipate an upswing in K-12 students over the next five years despite a several-year trend of declining enrollment.³

Table 1.1. Population Projections for Medfield and Surrounding Towns

Town	Census 2010	Estimates					Change 2010-35
		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	
Medfield	12,024	11,688	10,954	10,515	10,304	10,150	-15.6%
Millis	7,891	8,075	7,924	7,780	7,566	7,239	-8.3%
Dover	5,589	5,664	5,671	5,642	5,628	5,554	-0.6%
Norfolk	11,227	11,984	12,398	12,905	13,298	13,456	19.9%
Walpole	24,070	25,512	25,993	26,594	27,218	27,776	15.4%
Sherborn	4,119	4,115	3,985	3,876	3,814	3,724	-9.6%

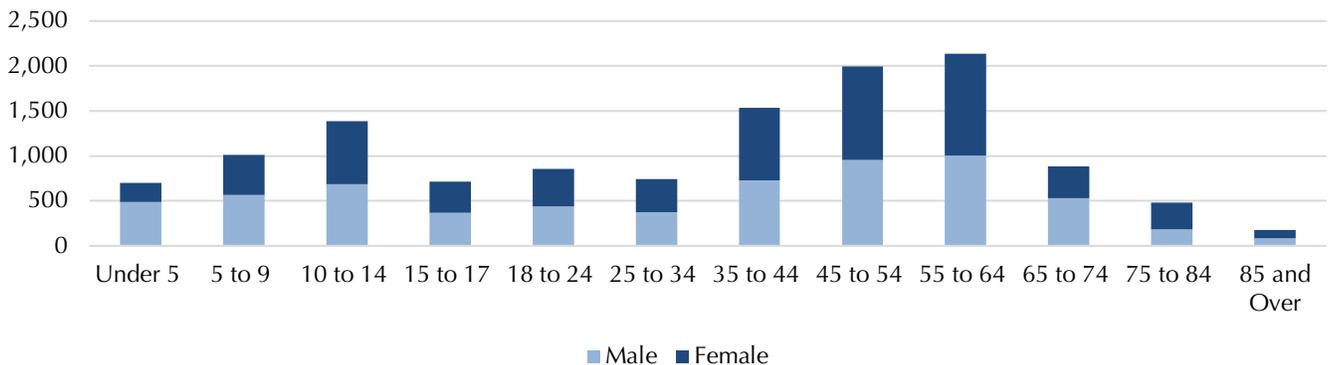
Source: UMDI, Population Projections.

POPULATION AGE

The most recent ACS estimates show that about 30 percent of Medfield’s population is under 18, which means that almost one-third of the population is either in school or approaching school age. The number of people in the child rearing age cohorts (25 to 54) just barely exceeds the number of dependent children in town. The 25-to-54 population

Fig. 1.2. Medfield Population by Age Cohort

(Social Explorer, ACS 2017)



² Metropolitan Area Planning Council, “Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections,” January 2014.

³ New England School Development Council (NESDC), “Medfield, MA Projected Enrollment” (November 4, 2019).

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions

segment includes people in their prime earning years. They contribute significantly to the local economy and tend to have the greatest degree of financial flexibility.

Older adults, defined as those 65 and over, account for just 12 percent of Medfield’s total population. UMDI estimates that older adults will comprise 29 percent by the year 2035. Doubling the senior population will likely have an impact on needs for and delivery of town services, especially public safety and emergency medical services. By contrast, the number of young adults 18 to 24 has fluctuated over the past 30 years and is currently about the same as in 1990 (850).

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Medfield has the second largest percentage of white residents of all the surrounding towns except Millis. The racial and ethnic composition of Medfield is approximately 92 percent white, and 8 percent non-white, with Asians as the dominant minority group, as shown in Fig. 1.3.

While the present population is not very diverse, Medfield has experienced minority population growth over since 2000, nearly tripling from 324 to 1,166 people. Fig 1.4 shows that Most of this growth is attributable to an increase in Medfield’s Asian population.

Fig. 1.3. Medfield Population by Race
(Social Explorer/ACS 2017)

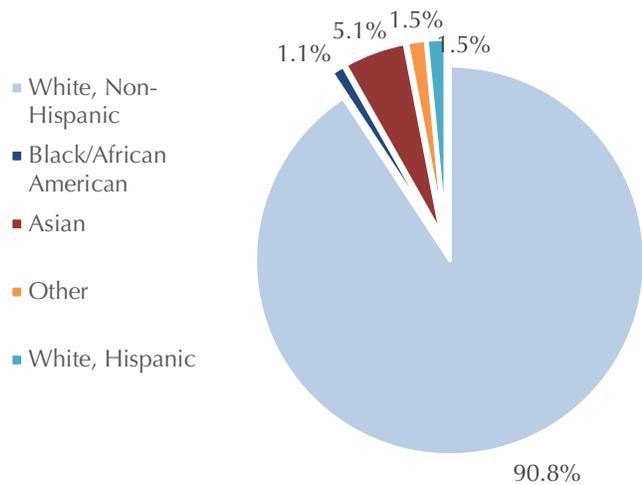
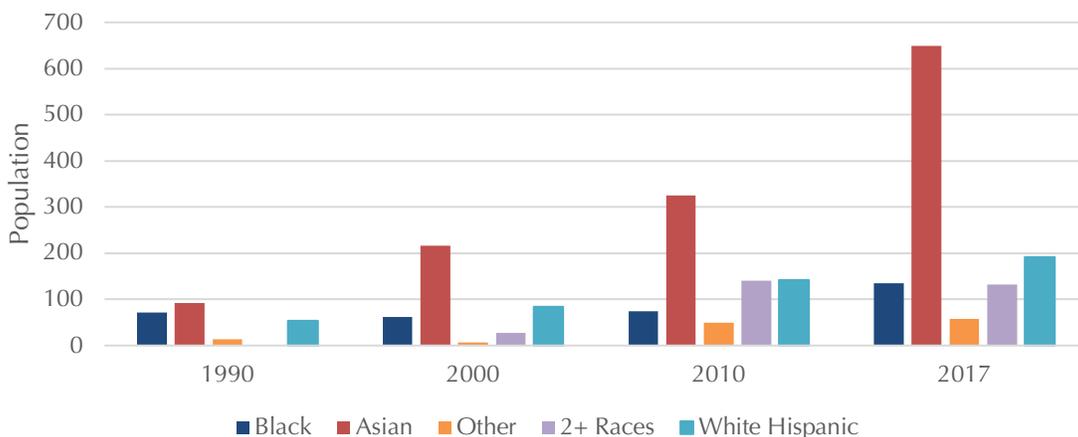


Fig. 1.4. Change in Size & Makeup of Medfield's Minority Population
(Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010 Census; ACS 2017)

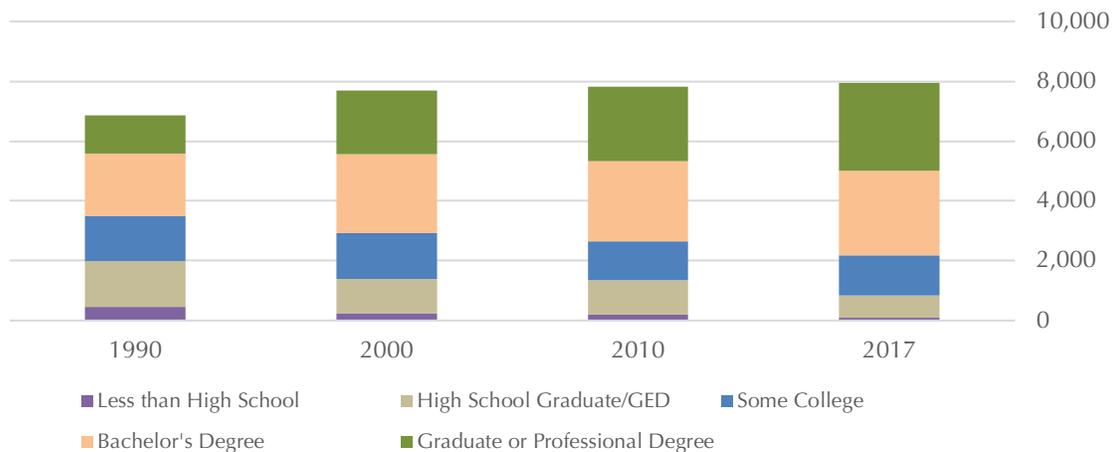


EDUCATION

Education plays an important role in Medfield and all of the surrounding communities. The educational attainment of residents is an indicator of the type of employment and wages available to them. Of the population 25 years and older in Medfield, 75 percent hold a bachelor’s degree or higher and only 11 percent have a high school degree or less. Though not quite as high as the percentages of highly educated residents in Sherborn and Dover (83 percent), Medfield far exceeds the state average of adults that have completed college or graduate school (42 percent). Medfield has always surpassed the state as a whole in terms of educational attainment, yet the change over the past 30 years is dramatic. In 1990, just under half of Medfield’s adult residents and 27 percent of the state’s residents had college or graduate degrees.⁴

Fig. 1.5. Changes in Educational Attainment, 1990-2017

(Census 1990, 2000; ACS)



HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

In every community, the number of **households** is always the same as the number of **occupied housing** units. Since 1990, Medfield has experienced continuous growth in total households even as its population has fluctuated. Medfield had 3,428 households in 1990 and 4,198 by 2017, i.e., a 22 percent increase. The communities around Medfield also experienced significant household growth in the same period as household

Households and Families

- **Household** is one person or two or more people living as a single housekeeping unit.
- **Family** – as defined by the Census Bureau – is a household of two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

⁴ 2017 ACS Five-Year Estimates, B12001, and 1990 Census, SE-T22, Social Explorer. Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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formation rates rose and more families looked to settle in Boston-area suburbs in the 1990s.

Medfield is expected to continue gaining households through 2030 by about 8 percent, or 322 households. Compared to the surrounding towns, Medfield has the third highest projected rate of household growth, yet it trails the projections for Norfolk (26 percent) and Walpole (20 percent). For the 12-town Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) subregion as a whole, the projected household increase for the same period is 9 percent.⁵

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

In demographic studies, the distinctions in household type that once seemed so clear have begun to vanish. Today, “family” encompasses more types of households than the Census Bureau measures and reports, yet census data and estimates are the only systematically gathered information available for planning today.⁶ What is clear from data reported by the Census Bureau is that Medfield, like Dover and Sherborn and to a lesser extent Norfolk, attracts and houses traditional married-couple families more than any other type of household. Table 1.2 compares household statistics for Medfield and the surrounding towns with the state as a whole.

Table 1.2. Household Types: Medfield, Neighboring Towns, and State

	Medfield	Millis	Dover	Norfolk	Walpole	Sherborn	State
Families							
Married couple	76.0%	64.8%	78.6%	74.1%	65.5%	77.7%	47.2%
Single parent, male	3.6%	2.5%	2.2%	3.0%	3.0%	1.5%	4.2%
Single parent, female	4.5%	6.1%	6.5%	6.3%	6.9%	6.8%	12.3%
Nonfamily households							
Male householder	5.5%	9.9%	6.7%	7.9%	6.4%	6.4%	16.0%
Female householder	10.4%	16.6%	6.0%	8.7%	18.2%	7.7%	20.2%

Source: 2017 ACS Five-Year Estimates and Barrett Planning Group.

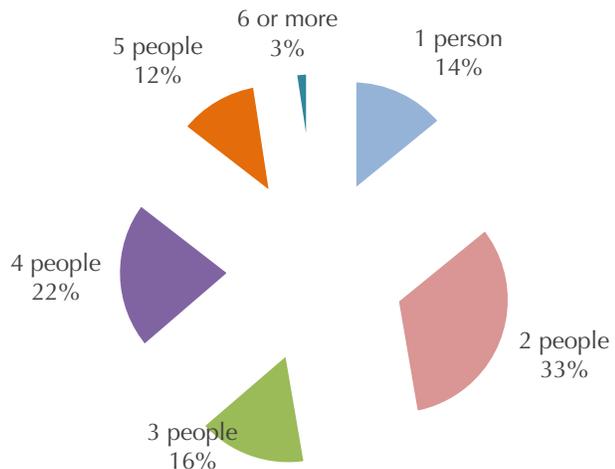
⁵ MAPC, “Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections by RPA Subregion,” January 2014.

⁶ It is anticipated that with Census 2020, legally married same-sex couples will be included in the reported number of “married couple families.” This has not been the case to date.

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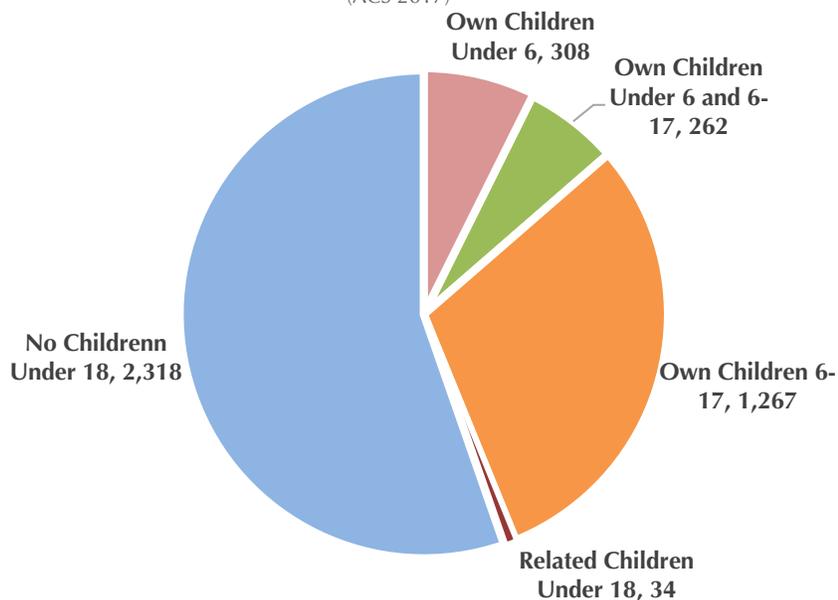
The two-person household is the most common household size in Medfield today, representing 33 percent of all households in the town. Almost all households of two or more people fall within the federal census definition of “family.” Approximately 14 percent of Medfield households consist of single people living alone, and 45 percent of Medfield’s one-person households live in rental housing.

Fig. 1.6. Snapshot: Medfield Households by Size
(ACS 2017 and Barrett Planning Group)



Medfield has very few nonfamily households, and this seems to reflect (at least in part) the town’s limited mix of housing. The overwhelming majority of non-family households in Medfield are single people living alone (88 percent), and almost half are older adults. Among families, 44 percent have children under 18 and they are mainly school-age children, i.e., between 6 and 17 years.⁷

Fig. 1.7. Households and Children and Age of Dependents
(ACS 2017)



⁷ 2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, Social Explorer, A10022. Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY INCOMES

High educational achievement, quality jobs, and the presence of families as the dominant household type all contribute to Medfield's high household incomes. As of 2018, the estimated median household income in Medfield is \$157,597, with nearly 40 percent of households having incomes greater than \$200,000. Comparatively, Medfield has the third highest median income among the surrounding towns. Its median household income is much higher than that of the Boston metropolitan region (\$83,833) and the state as a whole (\$75,975).⁸ Table 1.3 traces the change in median household and median family income in Medfield from 1990 to 2018. (The decrease in 2010 captures the effects of the Great Recession and slow economic recovery that marked the end of the last decade.) Overall, the economic position of Medfield households has been quite high for a long time.

Table 1.3. Medfield Household and Family Income, 1990-2017 (Adjusted for Inflation)

Income Measure	1990	2000	2010	2017
Median Household Income	\$129,575	\$147,781	\$136,489	\$153,847
Median Family Income	\$144,163	\$164,680	\$147,684	\$176,389

Source: 2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates on Social Explorer.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The quality of the housing stock, the availability of housing, and the price points for renter and owner-occupied housing all play a critical role in determining the make-up of a town's population and households. The variation in the type, physical characteristics, and layout of housing in Medfield depends on location. There is a limited mix of housing in Medfield, but the types of housing have diversified somewhat, mainly through the use of Chapter 40B comprehensive permits.

HOUSING STOCK

The increase in population and households that occurred in Medfield between 1950 and 1970 was inextricably tied to housing growth. In that 20-year period, Medfield gained approximately 1,500 housing units in that 40-year period. These new units consisted almost exclusively of single-family homes, many of which were constructed on fairly large lots. What happened in Medfield was hardly unique, though. All of the surrounding towns experienced considerable housing growth, too, especially Walpole. Table 1.4 traces housing growth in Medfield from 1990 to 2017.

⁸ 2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, Social Explorer, A14006. Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Table 1.4. Trends in Housing Growth in Medfield, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Total Units	3,501	4,048	4,237	4,440
Owner	2,832	3,431	3,618	3,641
Renter	596	571	499	548
Vacant	73	46	120	251
Year-Round	3,468	4,020	4,220	4,402

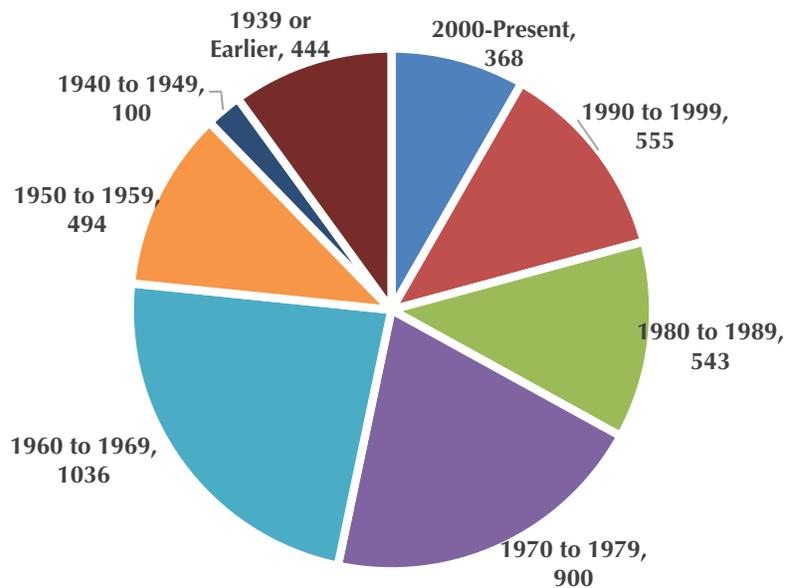
Source: 2017 ACS Five-Year Estimates, B25034.

In 2014, MAPC predicted that by 2020, Medfield’s Census 2010 housing inventory of 4,237 units would grow by another 155 to 228 units, but the projection is somewhat low. Currently, the town has about 4,440 housing units, which represents an increase of 203 since 2010.

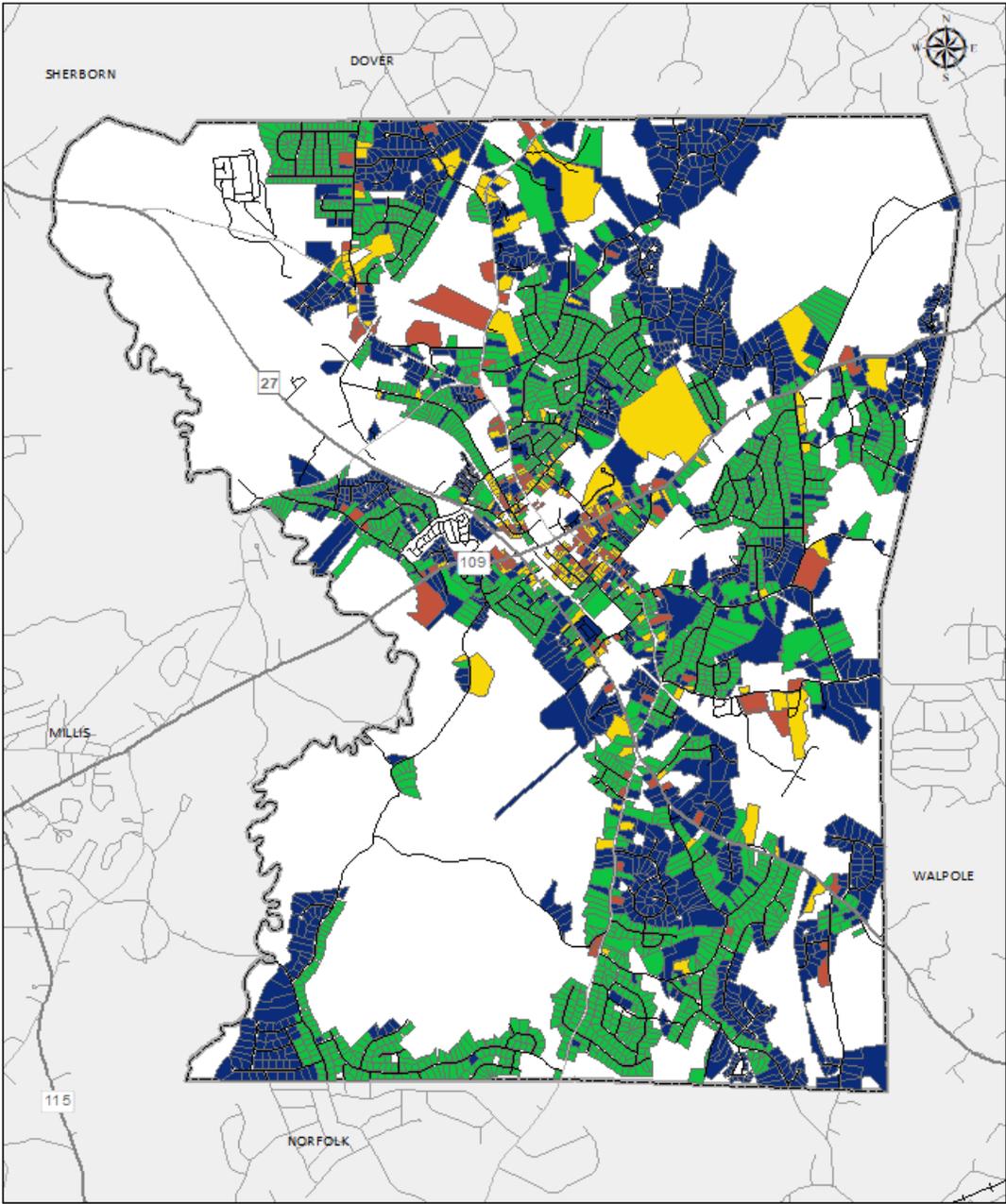
AGE OF HOUSING

About 25 percent of Medfield’s present housing units were built before 1959 and 9 percent since 2000. There is considerable variety in the age of housing by location in Medfield. Many of the older residences in Medfield were built along the main roads. As the town grew, many new homes began to populate the landscape, and some occurred as infill development. Map 1.1 illustrates the age of housing in Medfield, based on assessor’s parcel data.

Fig. 1.8. Age of Housing in Medfield

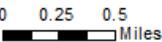


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Medfield
Age of Housing

Date of Issue: January 4, 2020



Age_of_Housing

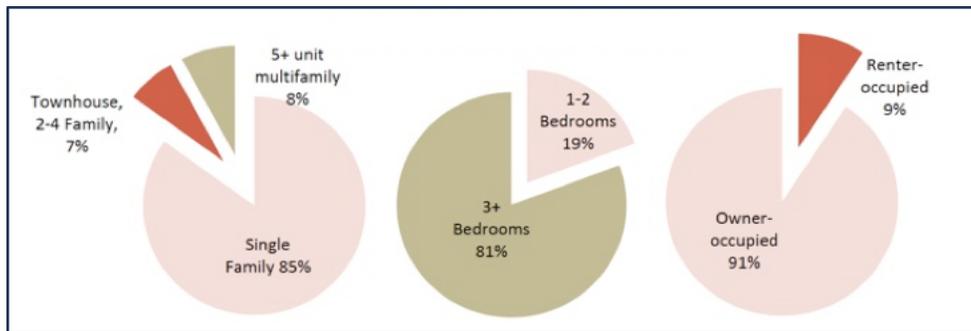
- To 1852
- 1853 - 1933
- 1934 - 1979
- 1980 - 2018

Map 1.1

UNITS IN STRUCTURE

The number of units in buildings is an important indicator of the diversity of the housing stock. In small towns like Medfield, the dominate housing type is the detached single-family home. Multi-family housing plays an important role, too, offering sale or rental options, smaller units, less maintenance, and sometimes a different level of affordability. Today, detached one-unit dwellings comprise 84 percent of the housing stock in Medfield and multi-family structures containing 10 or more units, 6 percent. There is a wider variety of housing around Medfield than within it. Notably, Millis and Walpole have a more diverse housing stock than Medfield and the other towns nearby.

Figure 1.9. Snapshot of Medfield Housing

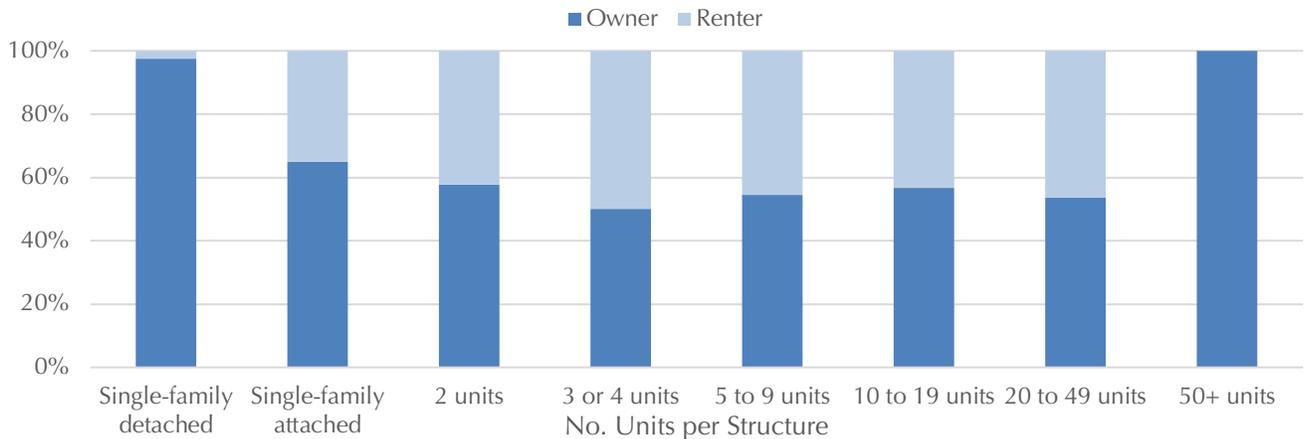


Source: Medfield Housing Production Plan

TENURE AND UNITS IN STRUCTURES

According to estimates from the Census Bureau, 86 percent of Medfield’s occupied housing units are owner-occupied and 13 percent, rental. Homeowners clearly prefer detached single-family dwellings, but many single-family dwellings in Medfield provide

Fig. 1.10 Medfield Housing Types and Tenure
(ACS 2017)



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rental options, too. Today, over percent of all owner-occupied units are single-family homes and another 6 percent are part of two-family or small multi-family buildings.

BUILDING PERMITS

Building permits are filed by owners or builders when they initiate any type of major construction or demolition on a piece of land in Medfield. Permits for activities such as new construction, renovations, and demolitions are good indicators of the housing. Based on available building permit data, over the past four years Medfield experienced an uptick in building permit activity. According to data reported annually by the Building Department, Medfield issued new construction permits for 143 single-family homes and five multifamily buildings (mainly for condominium units) between 2010 and 2018.⁹ Assessors data supplied by the Town indicate that since 2015, Medfield’s housing inventory has added 52 condominiums, 40 apartments (North Meadows Road, Hennerly Way), and 16 units in small multifamily dwellings.¹⁰

HOME VALUES AND RENTS

Medfield is clearly a desirable suburb. Its excellent schools, open spaces, recreation opportunities, and community character create a strong demand for housing, and that demand translates into high housing values. According to estimates from the 2017 ACS, the median occupied home value in Medfield was \$648,943 (adjusted for inflation), while the median gross rent price for the same period was \$1,245 per month

HOUSING SALES AND SALE PRICES

Homes for sale in Medfield cater to homebuyers with the means to “buy up” in Greater Boston and often, homebuyers with children under 18. Estimates published by the Census Bureau indicate that about 30 percent of Medfield households moved into their present residence after 2009. According to Multiple Listing Service (MLS) sales data, reported in Table 1.5, single-family homes for sale in Medfield from 2017 to 2019 were on the market for 50 to 65 days (on average) and sold for over 95 percent of the seller’s asking price. Condos sold at a faster pace and for 97 to 100 percent of the seller’s asking price.

⁹ Town of Medfield, Annual Town Reports 2010-2018, Building Department Reports.

¹⁰ Sara Raposa, Town Planner.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Table 1.5. Housing Sales Trends

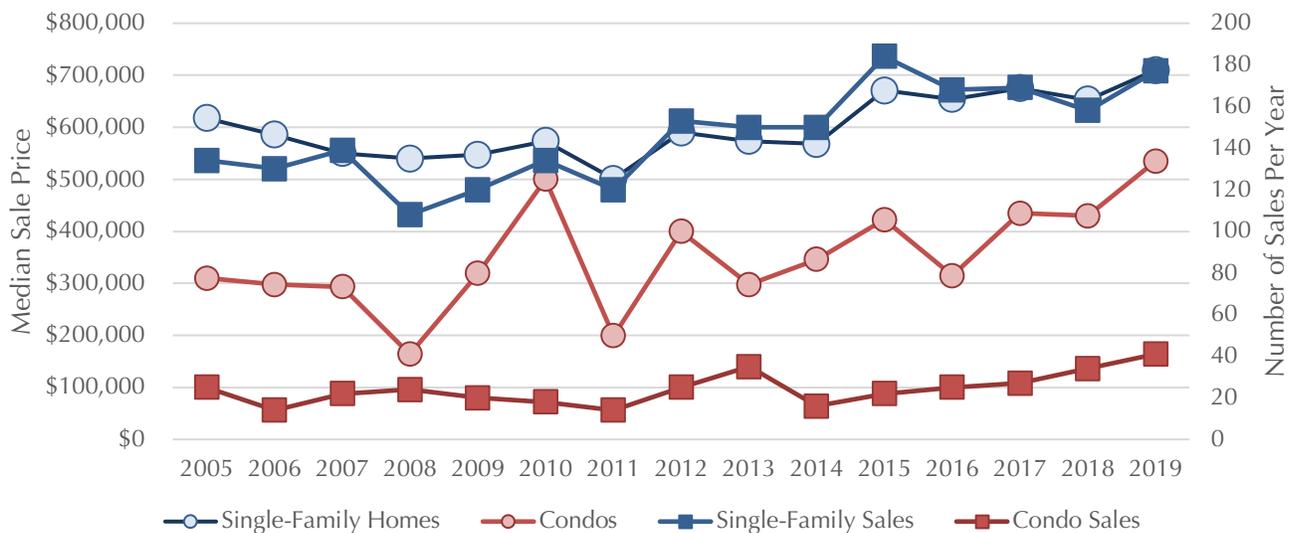
	2019	2018	2017	2019	2018	2017
Single-Family						
Total Sales	155	143	162	31	32	19
Average Price	\$759,892	\$732,197	\$749,644	\$675,500	\$517,113	\$455,300
Lowest Price	\$322,500	\$350,000	\$200,000	\$210,000	\$149,000	\$190,000
Highest Price	\$1,925,000	\$1,530,000	\$4,530,000	\$1,075,000	\$966,095	\$1,080,000
Avg. Days on Market	62	53	64	73	41	47
Sales Price Ratio	96%	97%	96%	100%	98%	97%

Source: MLS, courtesy of Mary McCarthy, Medfield Master Plan Committee.

Fig. 1-11 tracks median sale prices and total sales volume statistics for Medfield since 2005, covering the period of contraction and recovery in the region’s residential real estate market. Current real estate sales data from *Banker & Tradesman* show that Medfield’s housing market remains highly competitive and its home sellers can command top dollar for a single-family residence. In most cases, housing sales in Medfield do not involve first-time homebuyers. The average mortgage loan for homes recently purchased in Medfield is anywhere from 60 to 70 percent of the sale price.

Fig. 1.11. Median Sale Price and Sales Volume, 2005-2019

(Source: The Warren Group)



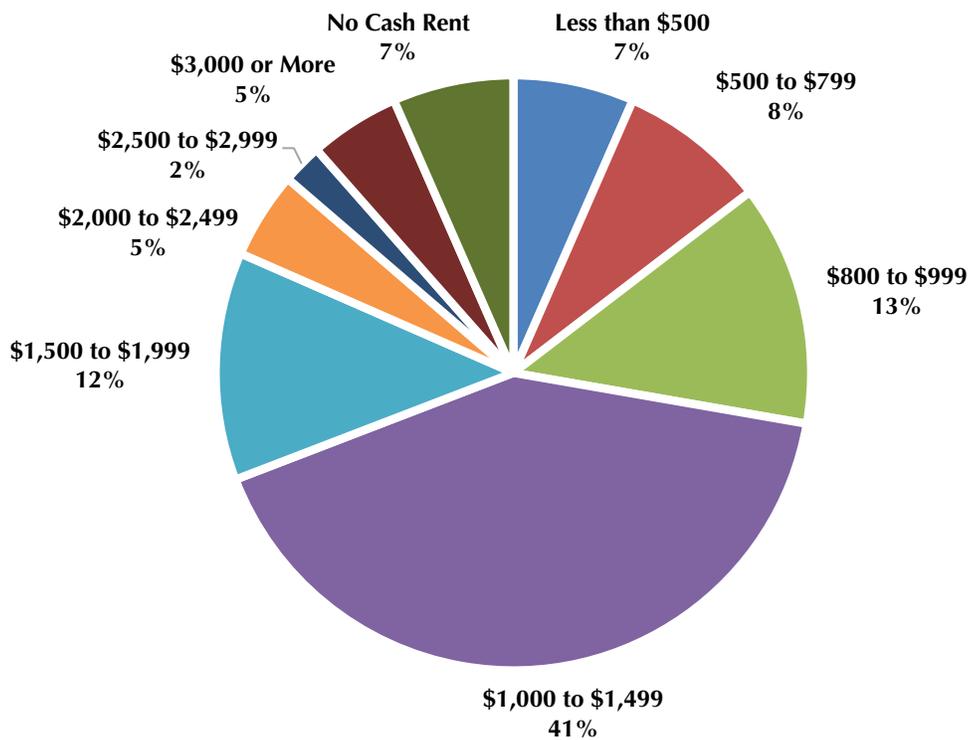
MARKET RENTS

Like home prices, market rents run high in Medfield and there are not many units available for rent at any given time. An informal survey conducted for this plan produced a limited list of available properties, many of which are not apartments. Medfield is like other single-family suburbs where a fairly large share of the rental supply consists of detached single-

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family homes and small attached or multi-unit buildings. In fact, 52 percent of Medfield’s renter-occupied housing units are one- to four-unit residences, some of which are condominiums not occupied by the owners. Excluding single-family homes, Medfield’s rental housing is dominated by small, older units. The multifamily apartment and condo-for-rent inventory consists almost entirely of 1- or 2-bedroom units designed for small households, yet the monthly rents clearly exceed what most single people can afford and, in many cases, they also exceed what a young employed couple could afford. Fig. 1.12

Fig. 1.12. Monthly Rents in Medfield



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Under a 1969 Massachusetts law, all communities are supposed to have housing that is affordable to low-income households and remains affordable to them even when home values appreciate under robust market conditions. Another type of affordable housing - generally older, moderately priced dwellings without deed restrictions, and which lack the features and amenities of new, high-end homes - can help to meet housing needs, too, but only if the market allows. There are other differences, too. For example, any household - regardless of income - may purchase or rent an unrestricted affordable unit, but only a low- or moderate-income household qualifies to purchase or rent a deed restricted unit. Both types of affordable housing meet a variety of housing needs and both are important. The difference is that the market determines the price of unrestricted affordable units while a legally enforceable deed restriction determines the price of restricted units. Today,

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Medfield has very few affordable units, unrestricted or deed restricted. Furthermore, unrestricted units that may have offered a pathway to owning a home in the past have been a key target of teardown/rebuild projects.

CHAPTER 40B SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY

When people refer to “Chapter 40B,” they usually mean the state law that provides for low- and moderate-income housing development by lifting local zoning restrictions. However, G.L. c. 40B – Chapter 40B proper – is actually the Commonwealth’s regional planning law and the parent legislation for agencies like MAPC. The four short sections that make up the affordable housing provision were added in 1969, and they are called “Chapter 40B” in this master plan to be consistent with affordable housing nomenclature in Massachusetts.

Nevertheless, remembering the regional planning umbrella for affordable housing helps to explain the premise of the law.

Chapter 40B’s purpose is to provide for a regionally fair distribution of affordable housing for people with **low or moderate income**. Affordable units created under Chapter 40B remain affordable over time because a deed restriction limits resale prices and rents for many years, if not in perpetuity. The law establishes a statewide goal that at least 10 percent of the housing units in every city and town will be deed restricted affordable housing. This 10 percent minimum represents each community’s “regional fair share” of low- or moderate-income housing. It is not a measure of housing needs.

Chapter 40B authorizes the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to grant a comprehensive permit to pre-qualified developers to build affordable housing. “Pre-qualified developer” means a developer that has a “Project Eligibility” letter from a state housing agency. A comprehensive permit covers all the approvals required under local bylaws and regulations. Under Chapter 40B, the ZBA can waive local requirements and approve, conditionally approve, or deny a comprehensive permit, but in communities that do not meet the 10 percent minimum, developers may appeal to the state Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). During its deliberations, the ZBA must balance the regional need for affordable housing against valid local concerns such as public health and safety, environmental resources, traffic, or design. In towns that fall below 10 percent, Chapter 40B tips the balance in favor of housing needs.

Chapter 40B and Medfield

- The 10 percent statutory minimum is based on the total number of year-round housing units in the most recent federal census. For Medfield, the 10 percent minimum is currently 422 units.
- At 8.29 percent, Medfield falls short of the 10 percent minimum by 72 units.
- This will change after Census 2020.

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Due to its prestige, high market prices, high land values, and restrictive zoning, Medfield became vulnerable to applications for comprehensive permits. However, Medfield took seriously a provision in the state Chapter 40B regulations that rewards communities for making progress toward the 10 percent minimum. By adopting a Chapter 40B Housing Production Plan (HPP) and implementing it, Medfield became eligible for “certification” of compliance with its HPP when the ZBA granted a comprehensive permit for 27 affordable units at Medfield Meadows. While the certification is in place (until May 9, 2020), the ZBA may deny other comprehensive permits without having its decision overturned by the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). Table 1.6 summarizes Medfield’s Subsidized Housing Inventory in 2020, including a new project known as “Aura,” with 56 units that will be added to the SHI soon.

Table 1.6. Medfield Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory

Development	Type	SHI Units	Subsidy
Tilden Village	Rental	60	DHCD
Allendale	Ownership	17	DHCD
The Village at Medfield	Ownership	6	DHCD
Wilkins Glen	Rental	103	MassHousing, DHCD
DDS Group Homes	Rental	5	DDS
The Parc at Medfield	Rental	92	DHCD
Country Estates	Ownership	8	MassHousing
Cushman House (Cushing House)	Rental	8	DHCD
71 North Street	Rental	8	DHCD
Hillside Village	Rental	16	DHCD
Medfield Meadows	Mix	27	DHCD
Aura	Rental	56	
	TOTAL	406	

Source: Dept. of Housing and Community Development, November 2018, and Sara Raposa, Town Planner, March 2020.

MEASURING HOUSING NEEDS

One measure of housing needs is the shortfall of Chapter 40B units. However, Chapter 40B developments usually respond to the strength of a regional housing market, so comprehensive permits do not always address the affordable housing needs of a community or region. Furthermore, low-and moderate-income households make up a significantly larger percentage of all households than 10 percent. This can be seen in Medfield, where 18 percent of the town’s households have incomes that would qualify for a Chapter 40B unit. Understanding housing needs requires a more nuanced approach than

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can be gleaned from a community's Chapter 40B "gap." It involves an assessment of needs and barriers that exist within individual communities and the region of which they are part.

HOUSING COST BURDEN

A disparity between growth in housing prices and household incomes contributes to a housing affordability problem known as **housing cost burden**. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines housing cost burden as the condition in which low- or moderate-income households spend more than 30 percent of their monthly gross income on housing. When they spend more than half their income on housing, they are said to have a **severe housing cost burden**. Housing cost burden – not Chapter 40B – is the key indicator of affordable housing need in cities and towns. According to Medfield's HPP, "an estimated 25 percent of Medfield households are cost-burdened by this metric, including 23 percent of homeowners and 45 percent of renters. The majority (65 percent) of households who earn less than \$50,000 are cost burdened, while 41 percent of those who earn up to \$75,000 pay more than they can afford for housing. Housing cost burden is experienced proportionally among most age groups."¹¹ Table 1.7 reports the cost burden challenges of Medfield's low- or moderate-income residents.

Table 1.7. Housing Cost Burdens of Low-Income Residents in Medfield

Income by Housing Problems	Housing Cost Burden	Not Measured	Total	Percent Cost Burdened
Extremely Low Income	225	25	300	81.8%
Very Low Income	170	0	215	79.1%
Low Income	140	0	200	70.0%
80 to 100% AMI	160	0	385	41.6%

Source: HUD, CHAS Data 2012-2016.

OTHER HOUSING NEEDS

Housing needs are not limited to low- or moderate-income people, but often, other needs overlap with economic need. Accessible homes for people with disabilities, small housing units for older people who do not want the maintenance responsibilities of a single-family home, and a base of modestly priced apartments for young citizens entering the workforce are common needs throughout Massachusetts. Medfield's HPP already identifies several needs and not all are tied to household income:

- Medfield's housing stock is relatively homogenous, and there is a need for more diverse housing options in town suitable for households of all ages, sizes, and incomes.

¹¹ Community Opportunities Group, *Medfield Housing Production Plan*, 9.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Increasing the diversity of housing options in Medfield will enable seniors, younger adults, and people who work in town to establish and maintain long-term residence in the community.

- There is a need for more rental housing for households of varying incomes and sizes.
- Medfield's homes are large, and there are few options for seniors and empty-nesters to downsize and remain in the community.
- Single family homes in Medfield are very expensive. There is a need for more modest homes.

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following are opportunities, challenges and other observations about housing in Medfield:

- Medfield's zoning is not as restrictive against new housing growth as the zoning in many Massachusetts towns, but it also does not create many opportunities to boost supply or create alternatives to larger-lot single-family development. The goal should be a variety of choices (in addition to a variety of price points).
- Though close to the 10 percent minimum under Chapter 40B, Medfield is currently short 16 units and Census 2020 is (as of this writing) just weeks away. The Town needs to consider whether the effort required to "control" Chapter 40B with year-after-year housing plan certifications is the most efficient or beneficial way to proceed. Medfield should be commended for taking steps to implement its Housing Production Plan.
- There is compelling evidence of unmet housing needs among Medfield seniors. Virtually all of the housing cost burdened homeowners in Medfield today are people 65 and over. The absence of subsidized senior apartments, subsidized and unsubsidized independent living units, and assisted living makes it very difficult for Medfield to care for its aging population. A simple, as-of-right accessory dwelling unit (ADU) bylaw could help, too.

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"Total Sold Market Statistics," 2017-2019, provided by Mary McCarthy, Medfield Townwide Master Plan Committee.

INTERVIEWS

Fire

Chief William Carrico, Fire Chief

Town Clerk

Carol Meyer, Town Clerk

Historian

Richard DeSorgher, Former Teacher & Selectman

Financial Services

Yvonne Remillard, Assessor

Georgia Colivas, Treasurer/Collector

Joy Ricciuto, Town Accountant

Town Planning

Sarah Raposa, Town Planner

Town Administration

Kristine Trierweiler, Town Administrator

Nick Milano, Asstn. Town Administrator

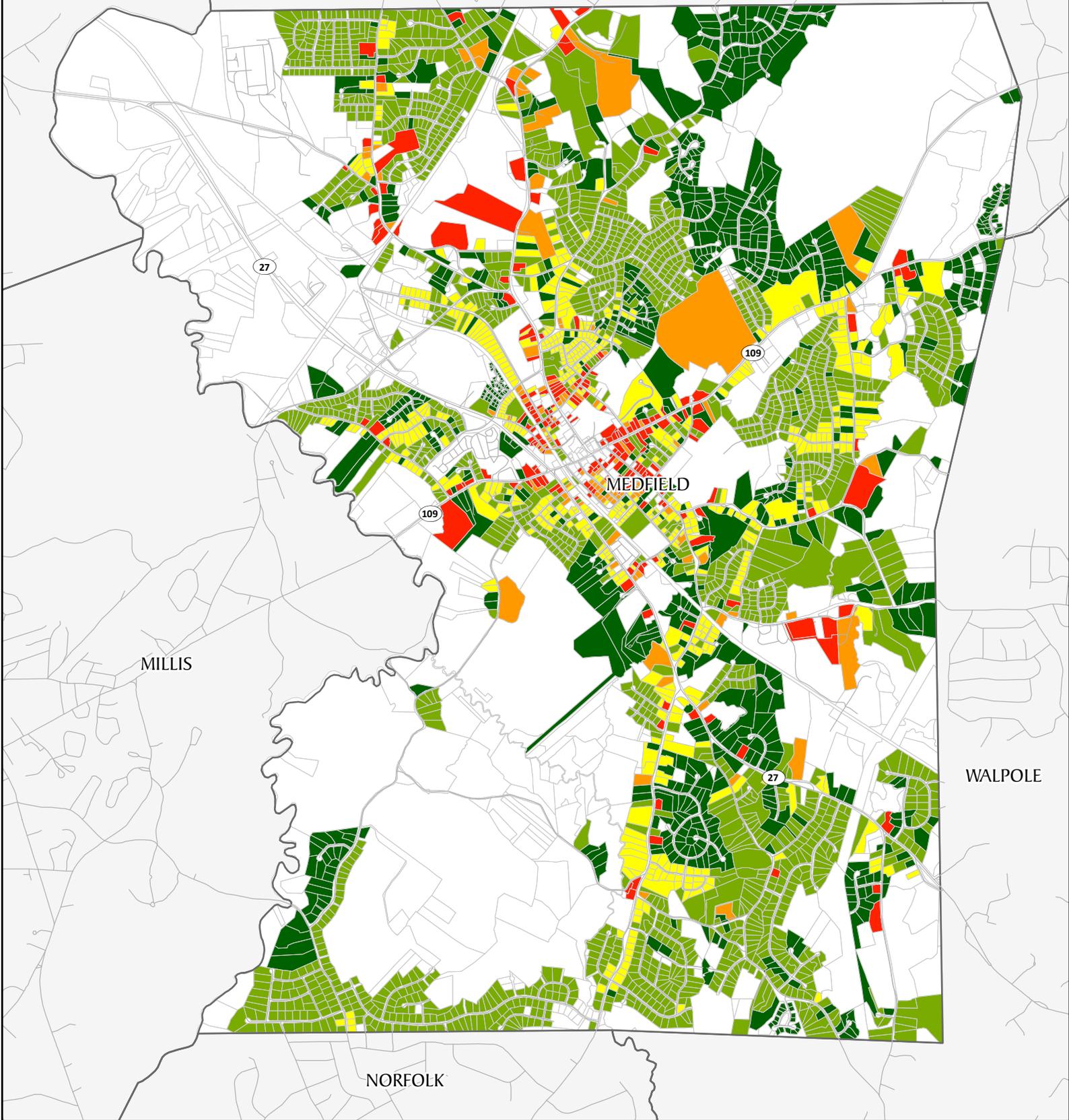
Police

Michelle Guerrette, Police Chief

Lars Anderson, Deputy Police Chief

SHERBORN

DOVER



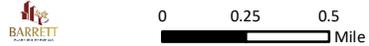
**Medfield
Housing by Year Built**

Town of Medfield, MA



- 1900 and before
- 1930 -1929
- 1930 -1959
- 1960 -1989
- 1990 and after

Issue Date: November 21, 2019
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only



Data Source: MassGIS 2019



Chapter 2: Economic Development

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2. Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

A community's economy is largely defined by the wealth of its households, the makeup and strength of its commercial and industrial base, and the uses allowed its land. The economy of each community contributes to a larger regional marketplace, where cities and towns are connected by employment, interrelated industries, transportation systems, labor and trade, and water.

Since local governments depend on property taxes for operating revenue, most of them pay close attention to the size and structure of their tax base. This can result in deliberate actions to zone large areas of the community for business and commercial use, with possible support of tax incentives, infrastructure, and various public/private partnerships. Medfield seems to have resisted the tendency that has led so many towns to "over zone" for nonresidential development, only to invite a host of unintended, unwanted consequences. While the limited amount of land available for commercial or industrial uses helps to keep Medfield's home values high, it also means residents pay very high taxes, for the town's state rank for average single-family tax bill is 15 out of 351 cities and towns.¹

As this Master Plan process progressed, meetings were held with Town officials and many stakeholders. These meetings produced some consistent themes that

KEY FINDINGS

- Medfield has a highly educated labor force. Over 70 percent of its adult population has a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Medfield has many self-employed residents and residents who work at home all or part of the work week.
- Seventy-eight percent of Medfield's employed population leaves town every day to commute to a non-local job. The major commute destinations are Boston, Needham, Newton, Framingham, and Norwood.
- Many Medfield residents work in industries that have only a limited presence in Medfield, which helps to explain why so many people commute to out-of-town jobs.
- Medfield's employment base is small, with just 3,100 workers employed by local establishments.
- The Town's strongest industries are Educational Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; Other Services; Accommodation and Food Services; and Retail Trade.
- According to assessor's data, Medfield currently has 984,576 sq. ft. of commercial and industrial development.

¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Municipal Data Bank.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

could affect Medfield in the years to come. Residents have expressed needs to enhance Medfield’s appealing downtown and make it even more attractive than it is today, to maximize the economic and fiscal benefits of redeveloping the Medfield State Hospital (MSH) property, to capitalize on Medfield’s arts community as a vital component of the local economy, and generally to make Medfield a “friendlier” place for business. This chapter of the Master Plan supports those noble objectives.

LABOR FORCE

A community’s **labor force** includes all of its residents 16 and over who are either currently employed or are actively looking for work. In Medfield, the labor force consists of 5,835 people, and this gives the town a very high **labor force participation rate** of 80.4 percent. Medfield has a remarkably low unemployment rate of 3.9 percent, or about two percentage points lower than the unemployment rate for Massachusetts.² The labor force in Medfield is extremely well-educated, with 72.5 percent of the adult population having a bachelor’s degree or higher. Most of the towns around Medfield also have a well-educated population and share other characteristics with Medfield residents, too.

Table 5.1. Comparison Labor Force Characteristics

	Labor Force (2017)	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
MEDFIELD	6,342	6,093	249	3.9%
Dover	2,869	2,788	81	2.8%
Millis	4,276	4,098	178	4.2%
Norfolk	5,000	4,869	131	2.6%
Sherborn	2,153	2,103	50	2.3%
Walpole	13,670	12,993	677	5.0%

Source: Social Explorer, citing the American Community Survey, November 2019.

Almost half of Medfield residents work in two **industries**: Education and Health Care, and Professional Services and Management. Many also work in the Finance and Real Estate sector. Together, these three industries account for 63 percent of Medfield’s employed residents. (See Fig. 5-1.) Estimates from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS), show that approximately 14 percent of Medfield residents work as self-employed people, over half of whom work at home all or part of the work week.³

² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, 2013-2017, and Social Explorer. Note: The Census Bureau measures unemployment over a different period than that of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). As a result, unemployment figures that Medfield may be familiar with from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will not be the same as the estimates cited here.

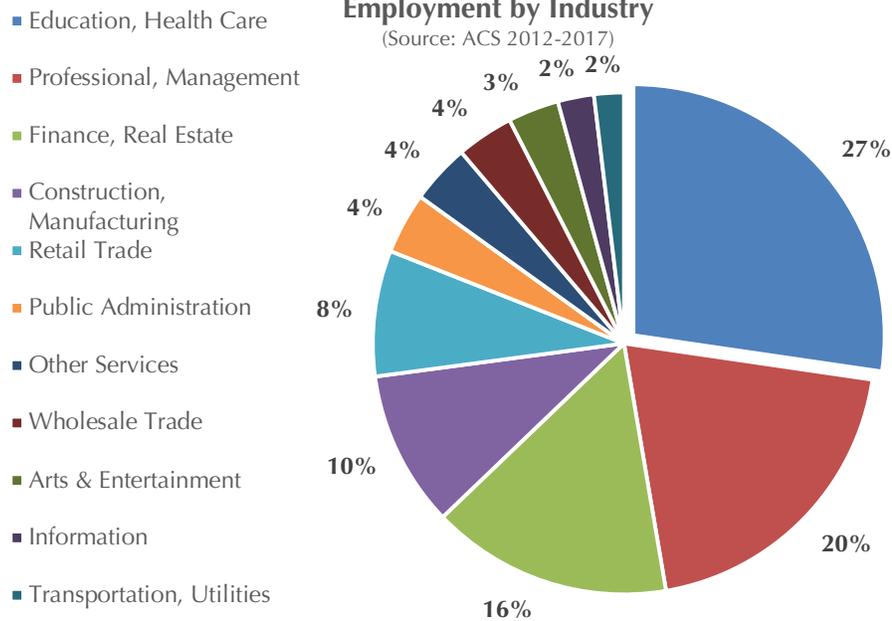
³ Social Explorer, A09005, A17009.

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About 22 percent of Medfield’s labor force works locally, and while that may seem small, Medfield keeps more of its own residents in town every day than all of the surrounding towns. Still, the highest earners overall are residents commuting to the Greater Boston area by public transportation – especially young workers between 25 and 44 years.⁴ While working locally brings many benefits, it is not necessarily the most lucrative option. Boston is the second most common destination for Medfield commuters (second to Medfield itself), and other common commutes include Needham, Newton, Framingham, and Norwood.⁵

**Fig. 5-1. Medfield Labor Force:
Employment by Industry**

(Source: ACS 2012-2017)



EMPLOYMENT BASE

The **employment base** includes all wage and salary jobs reported by most of the public and private employers located in the town, regardless of where the employees live.⁶ Medfield’s small employment base includes 3,127 jobs, mainly in the retail, education, health care, and food service industries. Since 2010, the employment base in Medfield has grown by about 12 percent. The employment base has changed somewhat with growth, as either the

⁴ ACS Five-Year Estimates 2012-2017, B08101: Means of Transportation to Work by Age, and B08119. Means of Transportation to Work by Workers' Earnings in the Past 12 Months.

⁵ Census Bureau, 2011-2015 Commuting Flows, Tables 3-4.

⁶ Employment counts exclude self-employment, unpaid family members, and employment not covered unemployment compensation insurance, e.g., services performed for certain religious organizations, work-training experience administered by a non-profit or public institution, or real estate brokers or insurance agents who work on a commission basis *only*.

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number of establishments or number of jobs has dropped while employment in other industries has increased significantly. For example, the number of employers in construction, manufacturing, and trade has declined, yet construction and wholesale trade jobs are up in Medfield. In sectors that tend to offer higher-wage employment, such as wholesale trade and professional services, Medfield has absorbed modest gains both in number of employers and jobs, but the largest gains overall have occurred in health care.⁷

Table 5.2. Employers and Employment in Medfield: 2010-2018

Industry	Establishments	Change Since 2010	Employment	Change Since 2010
Accommodation and Food Services	25	6	327	97
Administrative and Waste Services	29	-7	136	-124
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9	9	138	N/R
Construction	43	-7	189	19
Educational Services	6	6	603	N/R
Finance and Insurance	18	3	91	-46
Health Care and Social Assistance	46	19	441	109
Information	10	4	71	25
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4	4	5	N/R
Manufacturing	5	-3	38	-83
Other Services	53	8	152	28
Professional and Technical Services	68	2	229	57
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	7	1	6	-12
Retail Trade	22	-11	415	20
Transportation and Warehousing	6	1	72	30
Wholesale Trade	31	-7	136	35
Total	388	19	3,127	388

Sources: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202, and Barrett Planning Group. Note: (1) N/R means “not reported.” Employment statistics for a given industry are sometimes suppressed for confidentiality reasons. (2) 2018 is the most recent year for which annual (12-month) employment data are available at the city or town level. (3) Numbers may not total due to rounding or the suppression of some employment counts.

Medfield has an industrial area on West Street that houses many of the town’s manufacturing and construction businesses and related trades. In a small town like Medfield, “manufacturing” encompasses businesses that may not be obvious to people, such as bakeries and custom woodworking shops in addition to traditional small machine shops and printing and graphics operations. Medfield has just 13 manufacturing employers today, some of which are so small that state government suppresses their payroll employment statistics in published economic data reports. The 42 construction industry employers in Medfield include obvious types of businesses such as residential builders, plumbers, electricians, and so forth, but it also includes property management companies.

⁷ Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

An industry with an odd name, “Administrative and Waste Services,” includes Medfield’s numerous landscaping companies and services such as pest control and sometimes, employment search and placement services. And, while “health care” often brings to mind hospitals and assisted living residences, Medfield has 52 health care providers ranging from private practice dentists, doctors, and mental health professionals to social service agencies and programs.

LOCATION QUOTIENTS

A location quotient compares employment by industry in two or more geographic areas. The location quotient is a ratio of the percentage of an industry’s employment in one economy (Medfield) to that of a larger reference economy (Massachusetts). If the ratio falls between 0.90 and 1.10, the proportion of jobs is very similar in both economies. If the ratio is less than 0.90, the identified industry sector may be underrepresented in the local economy. By contrast, a ratio greater than 1.10 may show a specialization within the local economy, or it could signal excessive dependence on a single industry or employer. Location quotients illustrate that a local economy cannot be understood simply by focusing on total number of jobs in a given industry or even the absolute change in a given industry’s number of jobs over time.

How a location quotient is calculated:

The Construction industry provides 6% of local jobs in Medfield and 6.2% in Massachusetts.

Formula: $6\% / 6.2\% = 0.969$.

Medfield’s location quotient for Construction jobs is 0.969.

For purposes of a city or town master plan, the location quotient often points to opportunities for some industries to grow and provide more jobs in the community. It may also be used to identify gaps between the local employment base and the industries that tend to employ a community’s own residents. Table 5.3 shows that Medfield has employment concentrations in five industries: Educational Services, Arts and Entertainment, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and “Other Services,” a catch-all for services that do not fall specifically into some other named industry. It also has a fairly high location quotient for Professional and Technical Services, though at barely above 1.00, this industry in Medfield is essentially on par with its proportion of jobs in Massachusetts as a whole.

Since 2010, the structure of Medfield’s economy seems to have changed somewhat, and not always in ways that match trends across the Commonwealth. However, it can be difficult to trace economic change at the “micro” level of a town like Medfield because when the number of employers or employment counts are small, state agencies often suppress the information, and this has happened with Medfield’s economic data. The Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

location quotients in Table 5.3, which rely on published industry data, indicate that some industries play a larger role in Medfield’s economy now than at the beginning of the decade. For example, employment in Accommodation and Food Services has grown faster in Medfield than in Massachusetts overall, and similar trends can be seen in Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional and Technical Services, and Transportation and Warehousing. For other industries, employment has decreased faster in Medfield, notably in Retail, the Construction Trades, Finance and Insurance, and Manufacturing. Note that in 2010, the employment reports for Medfield suppress the number of people working in Education and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. Most likely, the location quotients for both industries were high at the time, but the data needed to compute them have not been published.

Table 5.3. Change in Industry Location Quotients: Medfield, 2010 and 2018

Industry	Location Quotients by Year	
	2018	2010
Educational Services	2.146	N/R
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.634	N/R
Other Services	1.351	1.045
Accommodation and Food Services	1.265	1.008
Retail Trade	1.109	1.316
Professional and Technical Services	1.080	0.771
Wholesale Trade	0.981	0.931
Construction	0.969	1.633
Health Care and Social Assistance	0.912	0.721
Transportation and Warehousing	0.893	0.496
Administrative and Waste Services	0.744	1.868
Information	0.734	0.574
Finance and Insurance	0.448	0.919
Manufacturing	0.209	0.540
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.108	0.513
Mgmt. of Companies and Enterprises	0.057	N/R

Sources: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202, and Barrett Planning Group. (1) N/R means “not reported.” Employment statistics for a given industry are sometimes suppressed for confidentiality reasons. (2) 2018 is the most recent year for which annual (12-month) employment data are available at the city or town level.

LOCAL WAGES

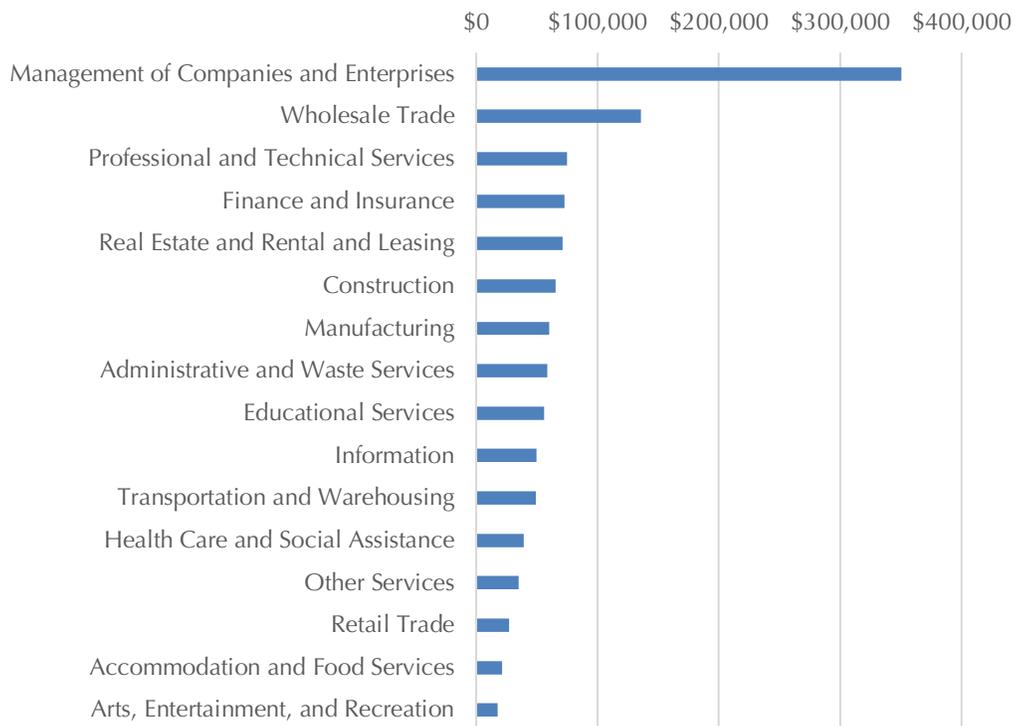
Differences exist between what Medfield’s residents in the labor force do for work and the jobs that Medfield employers have to offer. For example, Medfield residents tend to be concentrated in Professional and Technical Services, Public Administration, Transportation, Wholesale Trade, and Other Services, and this suggests some misalignment between the employment needs of the labor force and the types of industries Medfield attracts. In addition, Medfield does not have a large base of high-paying jobs. According to the American Community Survey, the median annual income of a Medfield resident with

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full-time employment is \$150,230 (for men) and \$87,356 (for women). The only local industries with an annual wage close to these figures are Wholesale Trade and Management of Companies and Enterprises – industries with a combined employment of about 140 jobs in Medfield. Many of Medfield’s employers provide both full- and part-time employment, and part-time employment is especially common in Arts and Entertainment, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail.

**Fig. 5-2. Local Employment Wages:
Average Annual Wage by Industry (2018)**

(Source: ES-202)



TOWN EMPLOYMENT

People often ask where town government employment statistics can be found in published employment-by-industry data. There is no simple answer. Employment and wage information is reported by industry, not by employer, and when employers report jobs, they report by job type or category. Most of the Town of Medfield’s employment falls within a suppressed category, Public Administration, but town jobs are also reported in industries such as Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, Other Services, Health Care and Social Assistance and Utilities (also suppressed). And, while most jobs with the Medfield Public Schools are reported under Educational Services, they are combined with other Education employers in Medfield: yoga and dance studios, tutoring and academic support services, and childcare centers.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Just as the employment base in Medfield is small, so is the amount of nonresidential development. According to assessor’s data, Medfield has just 164 land parcels with commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development, some vacant parcels zoned for those uses, and land used for farming and productive forestry. Table 5.4 provides a snapshot of Medfield’s nonresidential property today. It shows that Medfield has very little vacant land left for new commercial or industrial use. This will change, however, as the MSH property redevelops under new zoning approved by Town Meeting in November 2019.

Table 5.4. Land Used for Commercial, Industrial, and Productive Farming & Forestry

Land Use	No. Parcels	Land Area	Building Sq. Ft.	Assessed Value
Mixed Use	10	32.48	64,173	\$7,615,892
Group Quarters	1	0.28	17,064	\$1,372,000
Storage & Distribution	3	11.17	8,805	\$2,230,663
Retail, Restaurant	32	34.72	301,340	\$43,958,700
Office, Financial	71	9.14	144,364	\$20,874,400
Public Service Properties	4	12.89	26,883	\$5,013,700
Recreation	2	12.08	66,860	\$4,206,800
Manufacturing	19	65.07	355,087	\$23,585,600
Mining, Utilities	10	38.48	0	\$3,157,100
Farm, Forestry	19	282.49	0	\$1,571,489
Vacant Land	12	15.3	0	\$1,426,200
Total	183	514.1	984,576	\$115,012,544

Sources: Medfield GIS, Assessor’s Database, and Barrett Planning Group.

Notes: (1) No. of parcels for Office, Financial uses includes commercial condominiums, where each unit is classified as a separate parcel for assessment purposes but multiple units occupy a single land parcel; (2) Mixed-Use parcels include residential space; (3) Table 5.4 does not include Medfield State Hospital.

Some of the properties included in Table 5.4 are used for purposes that do not conform to Medfield’s current zoning. They appear to pre-date the adoption of zoning in Medfield, and in such cases, the nonresidential use may continue to operate.

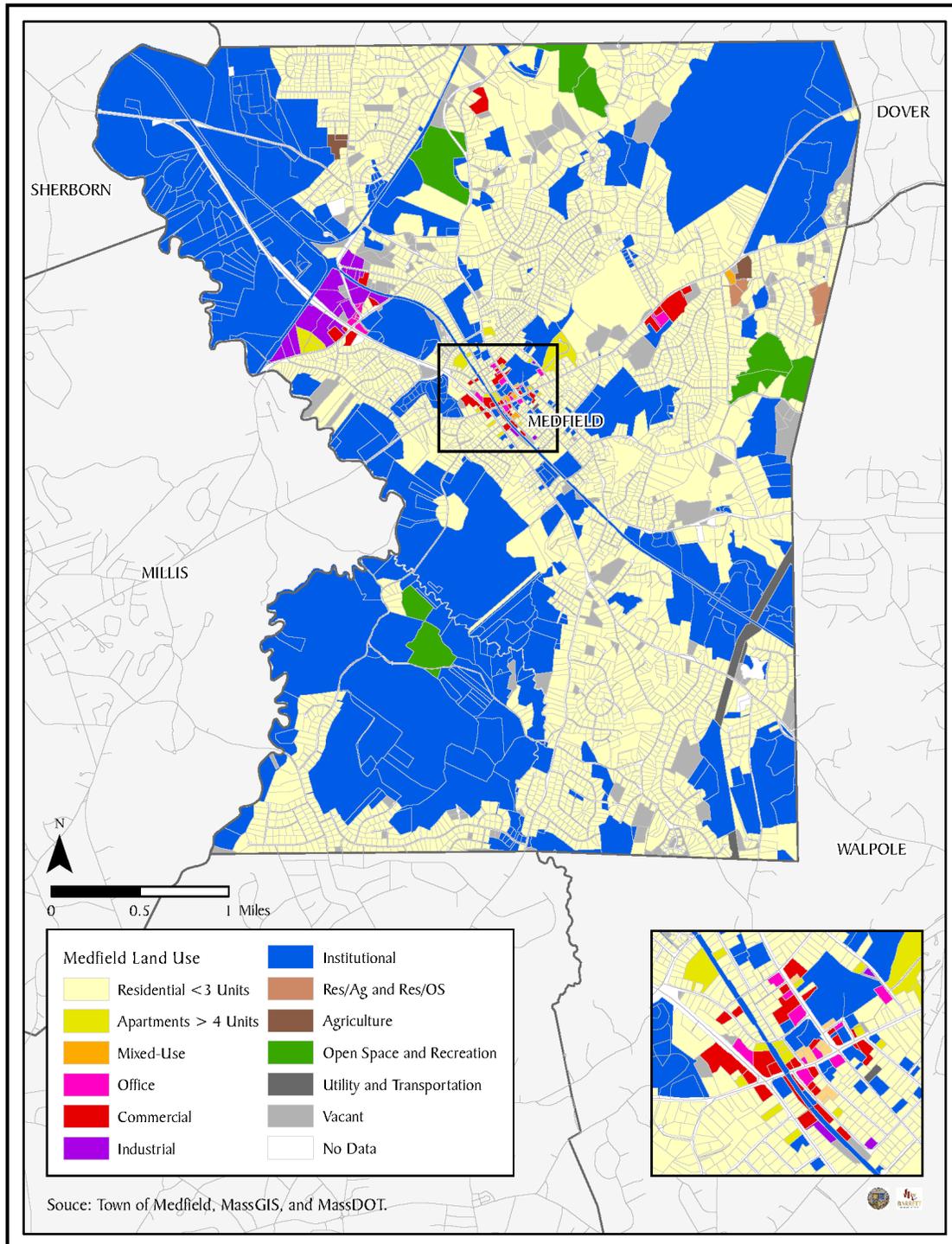
DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Medfield has three primary areas of commercial or industrial activity: Downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods, the east end of Main Street, and the mixed business and industrial area off West Street, as shown in Map 5-1. They are, for the most part, consistent with the town’s three nonresidential zoning districts (described in the next section):

- The Main Street shopping center opposite Hatters Hill Road is a conventional shopping center anchored by a supermarket (Shaw’s) and Marshall’s, a chain department store.

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Map 5-1. Existing Land Uses



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This business area also includes a donut shop and café, gas station, and miscellaneous professional offices and financial services.

- Downtown Medfield, a very pretty town center with a Brothers Marketplace at the corner of Main and South Streets, specialty shops, food services (e.g., a Starbucks café restaurants such as Noon Hill Grill and Nosh & Grog), a pharmacy, banks, professional offices, the Town Hall and Public Library, and several churches. Mixed-use buildings can be found in this part of town, too. Downtown is Medfield’s civic, social, cultural, and governmental hub and a source of pride for many Medfield residents.
- The West Street/Route 27 industrial area, which supports a diverse mix of businesses such as industrial/warehouse, office, auto repair shops, fitness centers, and so forth. A recently built Chapter 40B housing development, the Parc at Medfield, is located in this area.

FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN

There is little question that Medfield residents care about the downtown area. In the online survey conducted for this master plan, 46 percent of respondents identified needs for downtown improvements ranging from parking to more restaurants. Residents want a “vibrant” downtown, too. In 2016, the Town asked MAPC to conduct a downtown strengths and weaknesses inventory in order to develop a vision for the downtown and identify priorities for improvements. According to MAPC’s *Downtown Summit* report, the 90-odd participants identified these concerns about the downtown area:

- Traffic congestion
- Dangerous driving behavior
- Lack of parking
- Lack of pedestrian safety

A vibrant downtown:

- Contributes to the quality of life of visitors, merchants, and residents;
- Provides jobs;
- Increases other economic opportunities;
- Helps develop a sense of community ~ pride;
- Contributes to the town’s tax-base;
- Helps foster social connections between people;
- Is convenient and helps save energy; and
- Takes advantage of existing infrastructure.

-Medfield Downtown Vision and Action Plan, 2006

People also voiced concerns about the appearance of storefronts, the need for effective wayfinding, and the desire for public art. They also saw many opportunities to make downtown an even better town center, such as:

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- More events downtown, e.g., art shows
- More restaurants to make downtown an evening destination, and restaurants with outdoor seating
- Broader mix of businesses (too many banks)
- Sidewalk improvements
- Removal of overhead utility wires
- Parking solutions: a garage, a municipal parking lot
- Public realm improvements
- Improved building appearances and signs

In many ways, the 2016 *Downtown Summit* reinforced findings and conclusions of an earlier study, the *Medfield Downtown Vision and Action Plan*, completed in 2006. That plan, funded by the Town and the Medford Employers and Merchants Association (MEMO), included a detailed baseline of downtown's physical, social, and economic characteristics. It identified concerns and opportunities very similar to those contained in the MAPC report, and it also provided a detailed vision statement based on public input. The 2006 study culminated in several recommendations:



“Be charmed,” a recently opened business in Downtown Medfield. (Source: becharmedgifts.com)

- Streetscape improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting and other public amenities such as benches)
- Signage
- Parking
- Landscaping
- Creating and enhancing gathering spots and paths between them
- Zoning enforcement on one hand, and rewarding (through public accolades) property owners who improve their buildings
- Coordinated downtown revitalization actions with MEMO and other local organizations
- Targeted business recruitment
- Emphasize and promote downtown's historic and cultural resources
- Rerouting heavy truck traffic

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Though it has been difficult for Medfield to address some of the larger or “big ticket” items in these reports – such as removing overhead wires – there have been some key property improvements and new businesses in the past few years, notably Brothers Marketplace, Starbucks, Be Charmed (a gift shop), and Capsule (a women’s clothing store that unfortunately plans to close on April 1, 2020).

The most recent downtown-focused planning is the 2018 Downtown Parking Study. This effort involved preparing an inventory of existing parking, studying existing utilization patterns, modeling demand by different land uses, and providing the following recommendations:

- Explore Smarter Parking Management
 - Clarify existing supply by striping on-street spaces
 - Encourage shared parking between businesses
 - Coordinate with local churches and Montrose school during event parking management
 - Simplify drop-offs during peak periods
 - Incentivize long-term employee parking
 - Reconfigure Montrose School Lot
- Enhance Downtown Multimodal Experience
 - Provide better parking information and signage
 - Improve overall walking and bicycling environment
- Encourage Redevelopment in Downtown. Amend parking requirements for commercial and residential development under a certain amount of square footage; monitor spare parking capacity and re-evaluate periodically.

ZONING

Medfield has three zoning districts that provide for commercial and industrial development and, not surprisingly, they are very similar to the development areas described above. The Business (B) District includes most of Downtown Medfield and an area on Route 109 east (the Main Street shopping center). The Business Industrial (BI) land abuts a portion of the downtown B District and also applies in the vicinity of MSH. In addition, Medfield has a fairly large area in the Industrial Extensive (IE) district along West Street and Route 27.

The Town’s approach to zoning in these districts is somewhat unusual, for Medfield imposes different dimensional requirements within each district depending on the actual land use. For example, Medfield requires a minimum lot of 40,000 square feet with at least 400 linear feet of lot frontage for an auto sales or repair facility, but for other permitted uses (except residential), the width of the proposed building determines the amount of frontage required, plus 24 feet for access, and there is no minimum lot area for other permitted uses such as shops and personal service establishments. Building height is

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capped at 35 feet in the B and IE districts and 30 in the BI district, but the number of stories per building is three in the B district and two in the BI and IE districts.

Most nonresidential uses in Medfield require a special permit, though many are available as of right with an approved site plan. Despite some noteworthy differences, most of the use regulations that apply in one nonresidential district extend to the other two districts as well. In all three districts, retail stores, personal services, business or professional offices, funeral homes, and printing/publishing shops can be developed with an approved site plan, but the Town limits hotels, medical marijuana facilities, contractor yards to the IE district (by special permit) and limits bed-and-breakfast establishments to a special permit and only in the B district and residential zones. The Town prohibits multifamily dwellings in the nonresidential districts.

Use and dimensional regulations never provide a complete picture of what a property owner can do. Off-street parking regulations can have a significant impact on the amount of development that can occur as well. Medfield provides generous relief to off-street parking requirements in the downtown area, but nonresidential development elsewhere has to meet some hefty standards. Medfield appears to discourage hotels by requiring a very high parking ratio (1.5 spaces per unit plus one space per 20 sq. ft. of function space and one per two employees), and professional office space parking requirements are very unusual: two spaces per person working in the office. Retail stores require one space per 120 sq. ft. of floor area. For any use not specifically listed, the Town requires one space per 50 sq. ft. of floor area. The Board of Appeals has broad discretion to grant waivers, yet waivers by special permit cannot be counted on at the site planning stage.

PROPERTY TAXES

Medfield has a uniform tax rate for residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property. This makes sense because its nonresidential tax base is so small and not designed to be a significant revenue generator. In Fiscal Year 2020 (the current fiscal year), the Medfield Board of Selectmen set the tax rate at \$17.83 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Less than 6 percent of the total tax levy comes from nonresidential property, which is consistent with the limited amount of commercial and industrial development that exists in Medfield. Table 5.5 reports tax rate and levy trends for the past five fiscal years.

Table 5.5. Tax Levy Trends in Medfield, 2016-2020

Fiscal Year	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	Total	Res %	CIP %	Tax Rate
2020	46,806,645	1,644,925	521,747	625,273	49,598,590	94.37	5.63	\$17.83
2019	45,307,425	1,504,158	491,580	625,699	47,928,863	94.53	5.47	\$17.87
2018	41,494,577	1,422,718	469,035	596,153	43,982,483	94.34	5.66	\$17.03
2017	40,384,348	1,352,208	438,442	548,596	42,723,595	94.52	5.48	\$16.89
2016	39,339,904	1,317,029	451,342	519,069	41,627,344	94.50	5.50	\$16.75
Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue.								

Medfield’s homeowners pay one of the state’s highest single-family tax bills, with a state rank of 15 out of 351 cities and towns.

Table 5.6. Average Single-Family Tax Bill (2020)

Town	Total Value, Single-Family Homes	No. Single-Family Parcels	Average Value, Single-Family Home	Average Single-Family Tax Bill
Dover	2,239,528,200	1,834	1,221,117	15,679
MEDFIELD	2,385,437,500	3,526	676,528	12,062
Millis	917,370,200	2,218	413,602	8,330
Norfolk	1,536,782,650	3,121	492,401	9,178
Sherborn	1,107,888,400	1,326	835,512	16,259
Walpole	3,505,876,200	6,591	531,919	7,973

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY & ASSETS

Medfield’s economy is designed and intended to provide goods and services for local residents. The Town does not have a regulatory framework conducive to business growth, and it does not have direct access to a major regional highway. Nevertheless, Medfield has local organizations that promote local businesses and advocate for the success of all types of businesses, from relatively large employers like Kingsbury Club or Shaw’s Market to Medfield’s abundance of microbusinesses – one-person operations and very small businesses with a few employees.

- **Town of Medfield Economic Development Committee.** Medfield has an Economic Development Committee comprised of six members and an associate member. The Committee’s mission is (in part) “to promote and encourage the development of Medfield’s business and industrial tax base and to give the Town’s residents more opportunities to live, work and thrive in an economically forward-looking and financially strong community.”
- **Medfield Employers and Merchants Association (MEMO),** with about 70 member businesses, carries out or sponsors programs that promote local businesses, advocates for a “friendly” business environment in Medfield, and supports local public and non-profit institutions that benefit the community as a whole. MEMO sponsors major annual events such as Medfield Day and a Holiday Parade.
- **Cultural Alliance of Medfield (CAM),** a private organization that supports local artists and advocates for building Medfield’s creative economy. Formed in 2015, CAM has undertaken a variety of activities to support cultural appreciation and cultural production, such as placemaking activities in Downtown Medfield, organizing a Holiday Stroll, and working to create a cultural center at MSH.

It makes sense that Medfield has a strong advocacy voice for the arts. As the location quotients in Table 5.3 show, the Arts and Recreation industry is one of Medfield's strongest. People cherish the Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts. And, while Arts and Recreation is not a top source of employment for Medfield residents, the town's labor force includes arts professionals, the overwhelming majority of whom are self-employed and working in Medfield. According to a study completed in 2017:

... the nonprofit arts and culture sector is a significant industry in the Town of Medfield ... that generates \$3.1 million in total economic activity. This spending—\$2.7 million by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$382,700 in event-related spending by their audiences—supports 125 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$2.1 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$224,000 in local and state government revenue.⁸

In addition to active non-profit partners, the Town itself has established basic economic development capacity in the planning department and the town administrator's office. Through these departments, Medfield has access to economic development research, planning, and policymaking led by larger regional organizations like the I-495/MetroWest Partnership and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Medfield is a member of MAPC's Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) subregion.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND THE WORK-AT-HOME POPULATION

Many towns focus their economic development efforts on attracting businesses in order to increase the tax base. The same goal is on Medfield's mind, too, yet a significant shift in the division of residential and nonresidential taxes seems unlikely under the Town's current zoning. Especially in small towns like Medfield, it is important not to overlook the role of self-employment and home-based employment in the local economy.

The Census Bureau estimates that 709 people work at home in Medfield, or 11.9 percent of the employed labor force.⁹ About 40 percent are self-employed, which suggests that many of Medfield's work-at-home population are people who divide their time between a home office and their employer's place of business. Whether working on their own or employed by someone else, the work-at-home population is likely to increase in Medfield as it has in many towns. First, many employers are allowing or encouraging employees to work at home at least part of the week in order to reduce the impact of long commutes on productivity. Second, the industries that employ most Medfield residents are industries ideally suited to a "mobile" workplace.

⁸ Americans for the Arts, *Arts and Economic Prosperity 5: The Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts and Culture Industry in the Town of Medfield* (2017), 3.

⁹ ACS Five-Year Estimates 2012-2018, B08128. Means of Transportation to Work by Class of Worker.

- The **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** sector, which employs 20 percent of Medfield’s labor force, includes a wide variety of professions, many of which will be recognized as plausible home occupations and also important elements of the creative economy: attorneys; accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll services; architectural, engineering, and specialized design services; computer services; consulting services; research services; advertising services; photographic services; and translation and interpretation services.
- **Education Services and Health Care and Social Assistance** includes some types of employment that are well suited to working at home: mental health providers, childcare providers, or speech therapists, academic tutors, or developers of online/web-based training programs.
- **Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate Rental and Leasing**, the third largest source of employment for Medfield residents, also encompasses types of work that can easily be performed in a home office or studio: insurance agents, financial planners, investment advisors, independent real estate agents, or appraisers.

In short, Medfield has the right foundation for growth in home-based employment, so planning for ways to support home industries will be an important consideration in Medfield’s economic development planning.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following are opportunities, challenges, and observations about economic development in Medfield.

- **Downtown.** Medfield has devoted quite a bit of attention to the downtown area over the years, and rightly so. Downtown Medfield is appealing, and it has lots of potential. In terms of the town’s overall physical form, Downtown is truly the hub. Both the 2006 Downtown Vision Plan and 2016 Downtown Summit generated similar ideas about what works and does not work in Downtown Medfield, yet it seems that Medfield has found it difficult to follow through on these plans – perhaps because of the higher-priority needs regarding the future of MSH. To prepare a downtown action plan, one consideration Medfield needs to weigh is the potential economic benefit of providing more housing in Downtown Medfield.
- **Tax Base.** One of Medfield’s stated hopes for economic development is to expand the tax base and reduce dependence on residential taxes. In the Board of Selectmen’s charge to the Master Plan Committee, they said, in part: “As part of the Town-wide Master Plan, the committee should look to enhance our ability to attract commercial development that is consistent with the town’s character. The committee should review whether our current zoning plan fits with the current and projected demands of the Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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marketplace and recommend any zoning changes that would make Medfield more attractive to commercial development, along with any improvements to current commercially zoned town-owned property that could increase the attractiveness of that property to developers.” The existing zoning in Medfield is **not** designed to facilitate a major expansion of Medfield’s tax base. Even with the new zoning for MSH, it is not clear today what the demand will be for commercial space or what the absorption rate will be. It will be important to bear in mind that under existing conditions, Medfield’s 985,000 (rounded) sq. ft. of nonresidential space generates 5.6 percent of the total tax levy. Townspeople need to consider how much more commercial and industrial development they want or can accept in order to “move the needle” in terms of nonresidential taxes.

- **Co-workspace.** Opportunities to create shared workspace may exist in Medfield, but shared work facilities or co-work centers are not always successful. There are management issues to address, and even though Medfield has many self-employed people, there is not enough information today to determine what the demand will be for co-workspace. A feasibility study will need to be done, ideally in conjunction with neighboring towns.

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS

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Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Medfield Downtown Summit*, 2016.

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U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2012-2018 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

INTERVIEWS

Fire

Chief William Carrico, Fire Chief

Town Clerk

Carol Meyer, Town Clerk

Historian

Richard DeSorgher, Former Teacher & Selectman

Financial Services

Yvonne Remillard, Assessor

Georgia Colivas, Treasurer/Collector

Joy Ricciuto, Town Accountant

Town Planning

Sarah Raposa, Town Planner

Town Administration

Kristine Trierweilier, Town Administrator

Nick Milano, Asstn. Town Administrator

Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Police

Michelle Guerrette, Police Chief

Lars Anderson, Deputy Police Chief

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Chapter 3: Historic and Cultural Resources

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3 - Historic and Cultural Resources



"Medfield in 1877." Renowned Hudson River School painter George Inness lived and worked in Medfield from 1859 until 1864 and completed a collection of works inspired by the local landscape, known as the "Medfield Period." (Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts website) The Inness studio, located at 406 Main Street, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

INTRODUCTION

This section of the inventory identifies and describes Medfield's many historic and cultural resources and efforts to preserve, promote and enhance them. Historic and cultural resources include both physical resources [architecture, landscapes, and archaeological sites (both historic and pre-historic)] as well as non-physical resources (organizations, clubs, programs, events, and traditions), both of which contribute to the quality of life in the Town. The section includes:

- A brief history of Medfield and an overview of the Town's extant historic resources;
- A synopsis of past and current efforts to preserve historic, arts, and cultural resources;

- A description of the many historic and cultural organizations based in Medfield; and
- A list of challenges, opportunities, and other observations related to historic and cultural resources to be considered in the 2020 Townwide Master Plan.

MEDFIELD'S HISTORY AND EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCES¹

CONTACT PERIOD (BEFORE 1620)

The portion of the Charles River basin that would become known as Medfield has drawn humans for at least 8,500 years. The earliest known inhabitants were Native peoples who likely occupied the well-drained terraces and knolls overlooking the river and meadow, as well as areas adjacent to upland ponds and plains. These Native Americans likely fished in the Charles and hunted in the marshlands, and established trails running east to west over the river. From 1500 to 1620 the Neponset tribe occupied the area, specifically the level plain south of the present Town center.

While little visible evidence of Native American settlement remains, several place-names in use today serve as reminders of the First Peoples. Metacomet Park, located at the intersection of Pleasant and Curve

KEY FINDINGS

Medfield has completed a comprehensive inventory of cultural resources containing over 450 entries, including areas, buildings, landscapes and other features. This database has provided a vital tool for decision-making around future historic district designations and demolition applications and should be made available as an on-line resource to property owners.

Medfield has safeguarded its history through the establishment of four Local Historic Districts that include 155 buildings and landscapes. A new district, proposed for East Main Street, would include 38 more resources, including the historic Peak House and Clark Tavern.

The 1999 Medfield Preservation Plan spelled out clear recommendations for protecting the Town's historic character and resources. Many of these recommendations have not been implemented, and at this point, the plan should be updated.

Medfield has a long history of supporting and nurturing artists, including painters George Inness and Dennis Miller Bunker, printmaker John Austin Sands Monks, violinist and composer Charles Martin Loeffler and music education pioneer Lowell Mason. The tradition continues today through the work of the Medfield Cultural Council, Cultural Alliance of Medfield, Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts and several other arts organizations, and can be furthered with arts-centered redevelopment at the former state hospital site.

The Town's most threatened historic resources are located at the former state hospital campus, and concern exists within the Town about the long-term protection of these. While plans to redevelop the campus include preservation of some buildings, the costs may outweigh the benefits.

¹ Resources for the historical narrative include the Massachusetts Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey for Medfield, the Medfield Preservation Plan, and several books on local history. Refer to the "Resources" listed at the end of this section for specific titles.

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Streets, recalls the Wampanoag sachem, also known as King Philip, who warred against European settlers in the 1670s. A granite bluff, known as King Philip's Overlook, lies on the north bank of the Charles River in Sherborn, opposite the former Medfield State Hospital property.

FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD
(1620-1675)

Thirteen European pioneers, led by Ralph Wheelock, came to the Medfield area from Dedham and Dorchester in 1649, laid out a village center in 1650 along Vine Brook, and established the burying ground the following year. Medfield was set off from Dedham in 1650, and in 1651 was recognized by the General Court of Massachusetts as a town. Settlers maintained the existing trails as transportation routes, extending them with branches, including North, South and Main Streets and Noon Hill Road (est. 1650), and built a log meetinghouse (1653-1656) and town pound (1654), and set up a school (1666). By 1657, 40 families had settled and set up farms and had established at least one milling operation.

In February of 1676, Metacomet (King Philip) would attack the village, burning 32 houses, several barns, and two mills. Few architectural structures from this First Settlement Period still exist. The burying ground, known today as Vine Lake Cemetery and the Timothy Dwight/John B. Derby House, located at 7 Friary Street (ca. 1651) are among the few remaining resources.²



The clear water of the Charles River, as well as the adjacent marshy meadows, provided habitat for food sources, gathered and consumed by the area's first human inhabitants, Native Americans.



Medfield's First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, located at the southeastern edge of Baker Pond, was established in 1651 making it one of the Town's oldest institutions. The current structure was built in 1789.

² For a listing and description of additional extant First Settlement Period structures, see the Endnotes of this inventory chapter.

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COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

Medfield's population declined following King Philip's War (1675-1676), but then gradually grew as settlers returned. They rebuilt homes and reconstructed the meetinghouse, and by 1760 had built three schools. While, farming and grazing continued to dominate the local economy, Medfield evolved from a frontier community to a rural town. By 1765, 639 people lived in the Town, occupying 113 houses.



The oldest section of Vine Lake Cemetery dates to 1651, making it one of the only remaining historic resources from the First Settlement Period.

Despite their age, many structures remain from the Colonial Period.³ One of these is the Peak House, located on Main Street, built in 1711. The small cottage-style dwelling, with its steeply pitched roof and small windows, typifies the design of homes constructed during this period. Other examples are the Metcalf House (589 Main Street, ca. 1680), Isaac Chenery House (86 Phillip Street, 1680), Joseph Allen House (ca. 1686, 260 North Street), Joshua Boyden House (ca. 1685, 58 Pound Street), and Samuel Sheppard House (ca. 1700, 679 Main Street). The Kingsbury Grist Mill, located at the southern end of Kingsbury Pond, dates to ca. 1702, as does the Kingsbury Dam. Several of Medfield's roads were established during the Colonial Period, including Causeway Street (1675), Foundry Street (1720), and Pine Street (1720). Two farms, the South Plain Farm (Hannah Adams House, ca. 1750, 49 Elm Street) and Station Farm (Elisha Bullen House, ca. 1750, 23 Farm Street), also date to this period, as well as a commercial structure, the Clark Tavern (1677, 353-355 Main



The Peak House, built in 1711, is one of the oldest extant structures in Medfield. (Digital Commonwealth image)

³ For a listing and description of additional extant Colonial Period structures, see the Endnotes of this inventory chapter.

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Street). Medfield's Baptist Meetinghouse (584 Main Street) was constructed in ca. 1772, and in 1724, the Town created Meetinghouse Pond.

FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

Medfield remained a small, rural community in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, with its population ranging from 700 to 800. Most of the settlement stood along Main and North Streets, with houses constructed in a vernacular Federal style. Manufacturing took the form of cottage industries that produced strawbraid hats and bonnets plaited from rye growing in the Charles River meadows, as well as boots and shoes, and brushes.



The W. M. Richards House, located at 139 Harding Street, was built in circa 1820 in the Federal style. (MACRIS image)

Many buildings constructed during this 55-year period remain.⁴

Residences include the Amos Clark-Kingsbury House (ca. 1774, 145 Spring Street), Noah Daniels/Robert Roberts House (ca. 1792, 396 Main Street) Samuel Johnson House (1794, 66 Harding Street), David Smith/George S. Mason House (ca. 1808, 44 High Street), David Fairbanks House (also known as the Town Mansion, ca. 1816, 441-443 Main Street), and W. M. Richards House (ca. 1820, 139 Harding Street). Homes with intact barns include the Adam Peters House (1798, 663-668 Main Street), and Jonathan Wight House (1820, 200 North Street). The home of artist George Inness (ca. 1830, 406 Main Street) is also accompanied by a barn that Inness used as his studio. One of Medfield's most prominent historic structures, the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church (30 North Street) was built in 1789.

One of the first American women to make literature a profession, Hannah Adams, was born in Medfield and in 1784 produced *A View of Religions Opinions*. Adams resided at 49 Elm Street, and was one of the earliest known writers, artists, musicians and performers that would make Medfield their home in the centuries that followed her.

EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

Industry that had begun in Medfield during the early 1800s expanded in the mid-century. A large carriage factory was built by 1835, and in 1845, William Chenery constructed the first straw shop. In 1838, a pitchfork factory was established in the northeast corner of Town, and in 1858, Walter Janes and D. D. Curtis partnered to manufacture straw goods and would later form the Excelsior Straw Works. The arrival of the Charles River Railroad

⁴ Additional extant buildings dating to the Federal Period and beyond are listed in the Endnotes of this inventory chapter.

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in 1861 (part of the Boston and New York Railroad) provided a means for transport of these goods to larger markets. Medfield's population grew gradually, partly with the 1840s arrival of primarily Irish foreign-born immigrants.

Construction of new homes, institutions, industrial and commercial buildings took place mostly along Main, South, North and Pleasant Streets, the main transportation routes, and over 40 of these remain today. Residences reflected the Italianate and Second Empire styles as respectively seen in the William Chenery House (ca. 1870, 55 North Street) and Oliver Clifford Building (ca. 1870, 14 Green Street). The Baptist Church, added in 1838, was built in the Greek Revival Style. A railroad depot, no longer extant, stood at Medfield Junction from 1861 until 1967.

Beginning in the Early Industrial Period Medfield attracted and cultivated artists and musicians, and fostered a cultural community that endures and thrives to this day. William Smith Tilden, born in Medfield in 1830, taught music and directed music education in several Massachusetts public schools from 1854 to 1868. Hudson River School member George Inness worked in Medfield from 1859 to 1864 where the local landscape became the subject of several paintings. His studio, located 406 Main Street, is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



The First Baptist Church of Medfield, located on Main Street, was built in 1838 in the Greek Revival style, and altered in 1874 to exhibit Victorian Gothic details. (MACRIS

LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD
(1870-1915)

Medfield's population doubled in the 1890s, with the construction of the Medfield State Hospital (1896) in the northwest area of town. This 1.4 square mile facility, designed by William Pitt Wentworth in the "campus plan," included 58 buildings and employed hundreds of workers,

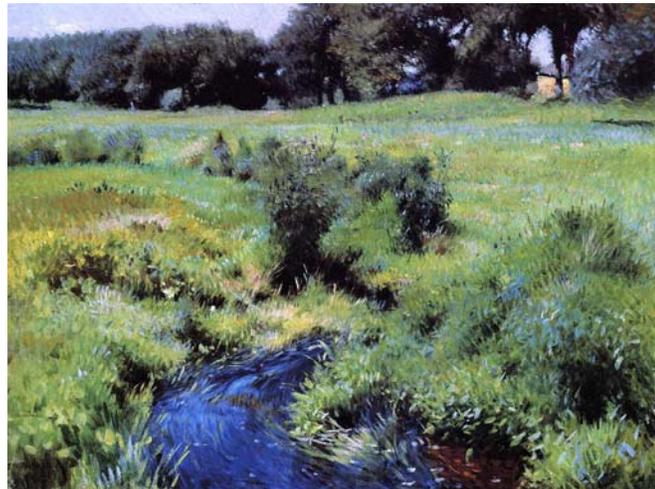


The Medfield State Hospital campus contains dozens of brick institutional buildings, built largely in the Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic, and Craftsman (Bungalow) styles.

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housing many in on the grounds. Transportation improved in conjunction with the hospital's opening, including streetcar service on Main Street (1899), and expansion of the roadway network outward from the center, including the construction of Hospital Road (originally named "Asylum Road"). The straw hat industry expanded; by 1875 two companies produced over five times the product value of all other Medfield industries recorded in the state census that year. Another new factory, built in 1873, manufactured bonnet and telegraph wire.

Architecture of the Late Industrial Period, including Queen Anne, Craftsman and Victorian Gothic styles, appeared throughout town, including dozens at the Medfield State Hospital campus. The Elijah Thayer (or Monks) Block (ca. 1888, 481 Main Street) exemplifies the Queen Anne style, and the Victorian Gothic is reflected in the details of the First Baptist Church (remodeled in 1874) and Medfield Town House (1872).



The Pool, Medfield, was painted by Dennis Miller Bunker in 1889 during his stay in the Town that summer. The work is now part of the collection of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.

Artists continued to make Medfield their home, either temporarily or permanently. In the summer of 1889, American Impressionist painter Dennis Miller Bunker resided at a Medfield boarding house and during his stay, produced many important works. Among these was *The Pool, Medfield*, now part of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts Collection. In the last 1880s, composer and concert master Charles Martin Loeffler came to Medfield, first renting and later purchasing properties on South Street for a home and music studio. Loeffler is known as the father of music education in America. In 1896, tenor, composer, voice teacher and organist James Carroll Bartlett made Medfield his home, residing in the Town until his death in 1933.

EARLY AND MODERN PERIODS (1915-TODAY)

The Medfield State Hospital remained the Town's largest employer well into the 20th century, and Excelsior Straw Works and iterations thereof operated until 1956.⁵ Farming had played a significant role in the local economy for centuries, but by the 1950s, only a tiny percentage of Medfield was farmland or pasture. The trolley disbanded in 1924, and improvements were made to the major east-west (109) and north-south (27) routes to accommodate the growing number of cars and trucks. Up until the 1950s, a limited

⁵ Many of the factory workers were absorbed into other hat manufacturing operations in Framingham, Boston, Upton and Milford, but the closing of Medfield's factory signaled the ending of hat production in the Town.

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amount of new building took place, mostly in the center of town and around the hospital. After World War II, Medfield developed into a modern suburb within reasonable commuting distance to Boston and added many new roads, parks, schools, and residential subdivisions on the site of former farms, to meet community needs.

Architecture of the Early Modern and Modern Periods reflected Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles, and later Ranch and Post-Modern styles. The Medfield Public Library (1917) and Dale Street School (1940), both exhibit the Colonial Revival, and the shingled Blanche Kingsbury House (1927, 283 North Street) exhibits the Craftsman style. Ranch and Post-Modern styles fill the many cul-de-sac developments.



The Medfield Memorial Public Library, built in 1917, exhibits the Colonial Revival architectural style. (Digital Commonwealth image)

Medfield sustained its artists' community throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. Among the many musicians and performers associated with the Town are Amos Clark Kingsbury, founder of the Medfield Art School (born and resided in Medfield); Matthew Aucoin, a MacArthur Award winner and artist-in-residence at the Los Angeles Opera and co-artistic director of the American Modern Opera Company (born in Medfield); award-winning actress Uzo Aduba (graduate of Medfield High School); and Jerry Bergonzi, world-renowned jazz composer and educator (resident of Medfield).

PAST AND CURRENT EFFORTS TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE EFFORTS

Medfield Zoning Bylaw (1938). In 1938, the Town adopted its first Zoning Bylaw after several unsuccessful previous attempts to do so. The bylaw created four districts, regulating one-family, semi-detached one-family, and detached two-family residential uses, as well as business and industrial uses. This effort was the first of many to come that would help preserve the historic character of Medfield.

Town of Medfield Master Plan (1964). Medfield's first comprehensive plan was completed in 1964 by a team of professional planning consultants and was intended to cover a fifteen-year period. The document noted several critical issues that needed attention – particularly the fast growing “suburban sprawl” -- and pointed out the need for more restrictive zoning and land subdivision requirements. In keeping with sentiment of

the time, the plan also recommended reconstructing much of the Downtown, including the removal of the town house, and creating an Old Sturbridge Village type of living museum focused on the Clark-Kingsbury House (145 Spring Street) and Pond, and a relocated Peak House. Fortunately, these measures were not taken and much of the Downtown's historic fabric was retained, and by the late 1970s (and Medfield's 325th anniversary), focus had turned to preserving the Downtown. This shift resulted from an evaluation of the 1964 Master Plan completed by its implementation committee in 1978, concluding that residents valued local history for its role in shaping Medfield's character.

Demolition Delay Bylaw/Archaeological Protection District (1993/1994). Medfield enacted a Demolition Delay Bylaw in 1993 that allowed the Historical Commission to stall removal of an historically significant structure for up to 18 months. "Significant" is defined as 50 or more years old. In 1994, the Town created the Archaeological Protection District, four archaeologically sensitive areas designated for protection under the Demolition Delay Bylaw. Since its adoption, only 20% of the demolition requests have been denied.

Medfield Master Plan (1997). In 1996, the professional planning firm of Whitman & Taintor worked with Medfield's Long-Range Planning Committee to update the 1964 plan. In addressing historic resources, the plan included the following goal:

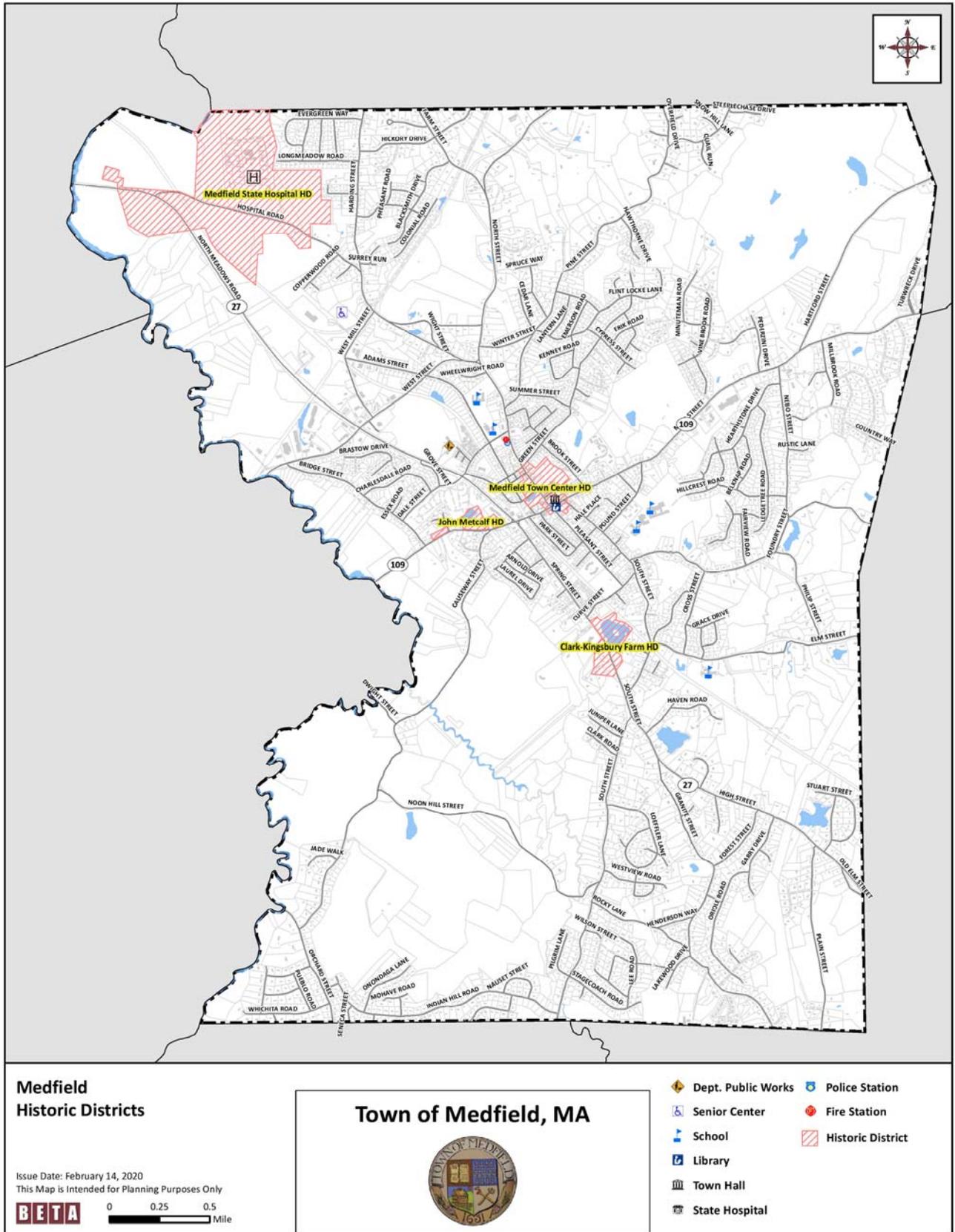
The Town will preserve and enhance its historic buildings, districts, and landscapes as well as unique cultural resources and significant views.

Objectives supporting this goal included (1) promoting development policies which are sensitive to preservation goals and concerns, (2) improving public awareness of natural and cultural resources, (3) continuing to identify important natural and cultural resources in need of protection. Action steps included maintaining and updating the inventory, creating a Town Center Historic District, developing a strategy to preserve resources and the Medfield State Hospital, and protecting farmland around the hospital.

Observations

- Medfield has a long tradition of planning for preservation of its historic character, beginning with the 1938 Zoning Bylaw, and continuing through to the present with the expansion of Local Historic Districts.
- As early as the 1970s, Medfield residents publicly expressed concern over the fate of the Town's historic resources, partially in response to the proposed reconstruction of Downtown.
- Medfield's four Local Historic Districts have safeguarded 155 resources, and the recently published Guidelines for Changes within the districts will help property owners within the districts make historically sensitive decisions when modifying their homes/businesses.
- Medfield's largest contiguous set of historic resources, and currently the most threatened, are at the former state hospital site. Plans to redevelop the property have taken this into consideration, however the cost of preservation may outweigh the benefits.

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Medfield Historic Preservation Plan (1999). Completed in 1999, this document provided the Town’s residents and public officials with a roadmap for historic and cultural resource protection. It spelled out four recommendation categories, identification, evaluation, protection, and advocacy, and provided action steps for each. In the late 1990s, only a portion of the Town’s historic resources had been inventoried, and the plan recommended that 150 more buildings, cultural landscapes, and bridges be added to the inventory, as well as the Medfield State Hospital campus. The plan recommended six potential districts for future listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as amendments to the Town’s Zoning Bylaw and Land Subdivision Rules & Regulations, a design review mechanism, a Demolition Delay Bylaw, and upgrades to the Town’s GIS system. Finally, it recommended the Town adopt the Community Preservation Act, as well as the formation of a collective of the several historic entities in Town that could serve as the “voice” for preservation in Medfield.

The document has proven to be a useful tool for the Medfield Historical Commission, Planning Board, and other entities concerned with protecting the Town’s historic character. However, while some of the recommendations, including expansion of the inventory, have been implemented, many others have not. The historical commission attempted to establish two additional Local Historic Districts, both of which failed, and the recommendation to establish a design review board and adopt the Community Preservation Act, have not been realized.

Inventory of Historic Resources. To date, largely through the efforts of its Historical Commission, Medfield has inventoried over 450 areas and properties, each of which appears on the State’s listing of cultural resources (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System/MACRIS). For many of these resources, the associated written inventory forms have been scanned and uploaded into the MACRIS, making the forms available for download by anyone with access to the Internet. The forms detail the history of the properties, architects/builders, and profile of the original owners, to the extent known. A significant portion of this inventory work was completed in the late 1960s to fulfill one of the Town’s primary mandates under M. G. L. Chapter 40, Section 8d, and again in 1998 per the recommendations of the 1997 Medfield Master Plan.

Local Historic Districts. Medfield has established four Local Historic Districts (LHDs) in accordance with MGL Chapter 40C:

- Hospital Farm Historic District, established in 1994 (86 properties)
- John Metcalf Historic District, established in 1996/expanded in 2004 (29 properties)
- Clark-Kingsbury Farm Historic District, established in 1997 (10 properties)
- Medfield Town Center Historic District, established in 2000 (30 properties)

In addition to these, a fifth district was under consideration as of the writing of this inventory section. The *East Main Street Historic District* would extend eastward along Route 109 from the Downtown, and preserve and protect 38 properties, including the Peak House (1677), Joshua Fisher House (ca. 1750), Eliakim Morse Homestead (ca. 1750), the

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former studio (ca. 1830) of artist George Inness, as well as the Clark Tavern (ca. 1743-1744).

The Medfield Historic District Commission (discussed below) administers the LHD program for the Town. As part of an effort to clarify the LHD Bylaw, the commission wrote and adopted a set of ***Guidelines for Changes with Medfield Local Historic Districts*** in 2019. This eighteen-page document explains the bylaw and process for review and advises property owners about the most effect ways of meeting the bylaw requirements, when making changes to their buildings.

National and State Registers of Historic Places. Medfield has nominated and successfully obtained listing of six individual historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places:

- First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church (1974), 30 North Street
- Peak House (1975), 347 Main Street
- Dwight-Derby House (2002), 7 Friary Street
- First Baptist Church of Medfield (2003), 438 Main Street
- George Inness Art Studio (2002), 406 Main Street
- Vine Lake Cemetery (2005), Main Street



The Dwight-Derby House, located at 7 Friary Street, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. It is just one of five individually-listed buildings in Medfield.

In addition to these, the Medfield State Hospital became part of a National Register Multiple Property Submission along with the other Massachusetts state hospitals in 1994.

Many of Medfield’s resources have also been listed on the State Register of Historic Places, a comprehensive listing of the buildings, structures, objects and sites that have received local, state or national designations based on their historical or archaeological significance. Listings for Medfield include 27 properties on Main Street, 16 on North Street, 5 resources associated with the Kingsbury farm and mill, and several others.⁶

Cultural Arts Facility Feasibility Study and Lee Chapel/Infirmary Existing Conditions Assessment Report (2017). The feasibility study and assessment report evaluated the concept of retrofitting the former Medfield State Hospital chapel and infirmary buildings into an arts center for performances, classes, youth programs, rehearsal spaces, and

⁶ Information extracted in 2019 from the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS).

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recreation space. It encouraged the inclusion of artist live-work spaces to help meet the Town's affordable housing goals. The cost of infrastructure was cited as one of the major obstacles to realizing this rehabilitation goal. The existing conditions assessment report determined that the most suitable buildings for a new cultural arts center would be Lee Chapel and the Infirmary.

Arts and Economic Prosperity Study (2017). In 2017, the not-for-profit Americans for the Arts launched its fifth nation-wide study to measure the economic impact of arts and cultural organizations/activities on local communities. In its study of Medfield, Americans for the Arts determined that \$3.1 million is generated annually by non-profit arts organizations and event-related spending. Other findings showed that arts and culture:

- support 125 full-time equivalent jobs
- generate a total of \$2.1 million in household income
- result in \$224,000 in state and local taxes

Medfield State Hospital Strategic Reuse Master Plan (2018). The Medfield State Hospital Reuse Plan is the result of a multi-year effort to articulate a future for the historic campus, one that incorporates the needs of the Medfield community for housing and economic growth while at the same time reflecting the Town's character and the values of its residents. Historic preservation lies at the core of the plan. Included in the recommendations are:

- Preservation of 76 acres (out of 128) for open space and agriculture
- Reuse of the chapel as a cultural center
- Rehabilitation of 28 historic buildings

In November 2019, voters in Medfield endorsed a re-zoning of the former state hospital area, opening the door for these and other plan recommendations to move forward.

EXISTING HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS

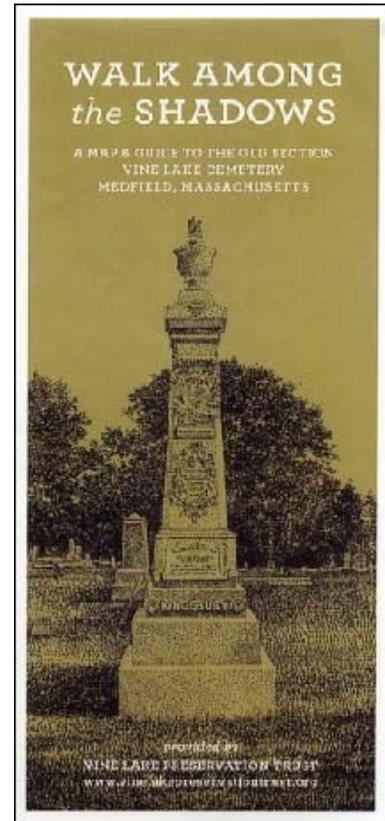
Medfield Historical Commission (public). In keeping with residents' interest in preserving the historic character, the Town Meeting voted to establish a Historical Commission in 1972. Initially, the commission inventoried buildings, conserved historic municipal records, and advocated for improved records storage. In later years, it accomplished many of important preservation-related efforts discussed above.

Medfield Archaeology Advisory Committee (public). This Town committee was established to monitor the impact of excavation proposed within the Archaeological Protection District (discussed above). No such excavation has taken place within the past ten years.

Medfield Historical Society (private non-profit). The Medfield Historical Society is a private, all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving, promoting and sharing Medfield’s history. Established in 1891, it is one of the oldest collecting organizations of its kind in Massachusetts. The society maintains a library and archive housed in a former bank building on Pleasant Street, and hosts many public programs each year. The collections document the Town’s history from the time of its founding in 1649.

Kingsbury Pond Grist Mill Committee (private non-profit). This group of volunteers and history enthusiasts is responsible for overseeing the restoration of the Kingsbury Grist Mill, and Kingsbury Pond. The committee and its efforts are an initiative of the Medfield Foundation, Inc. (discussed below).

Vine Lake Cemetery Preservation Trust (private). This non-profit organization oversees stewardship and interpretation of Town-owned Vine Lake Cemetery, Medfield’s oldest known place of interment, located on Main Street just west of the Downtown. Its non-profit status allows the trust to raise funds to care for the property, recruit volunteers, and advocate for the cemetery’s long-term protection. In addition to maintaining three-season plantings and the “Hillside Garden,” the trust organizes volunteers to reset, clean and repair gravestones according to AIC standards⁷, hosts walking tours, and maintains an on-line list of burials within the cemetery. Its “Walk Among the Shadows” brochure ushers visitors through the gravesites in the oldest sections of the cemetery, and the trust’s mobile phone application provides a guide and interpretive information.



Friends of the Dwight-Derby House (public and private). Founded in 1997, this non-profit organization supports the preservation and active use of the Timothy Dwight-John Derby House, located at 7 Friary Street. Built in ca. 1651, this First Period structure is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Medfield. The Town purchased the house from its owners in 1996 and the Friends group formed to support the Town in its efforts to preserve the property, achieving listing on the National Register in 2002. In addition to fund-raising for physical preservation, the Friends showcase the work of local artists, host lectures and other programs, and maintain a collection of artifacts associated with the property and its previous owners.

Peak House Heritage Center (private non-profit). The Peak House, located on Main Street, is one of the earliest surviving examples of post-medieval English (Elizabethan) architecture and is the only free-standing structure of its kind in the United States. Through a legal agreement with the Medfield Historical Society, the heritage center manages the

⁷ American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC).

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property and associated projects and programs, while the society retains the deed. Projects have included preserving photographs, placing an interpretive marker, and restoring the house's steep pitched roof, the highest on record in Massachusetts. Preservation and interpretation of the Peak House is an initiative of the Medfield Foundation, Inc. (discussed below).

Lowell Mason House Foundation (private non-profit). The Lowell Mason House Foundation was founded in October of 2010 when a group of concerned Medfield citizens and music educators from around the country came together with the desire to preserve the legacy of Lowell Mason, the Father of Music Education in America and first director of the Handel and Hayden Society. Lowell Mason's birthplace was in jeopardy of being demolished by a developer, and within months the Foundation generated enough support both locally and nationally to secure a new location for the home and move it before a Town demolition delay ran out. The new Town-owned site is next to Hinkley Pond.

ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Medfield Cultural Council (public). The Medfield Cultural Council is part of a network of locally-based re-granting entities funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Medfield's council promotes and supports cultural activities within Medfield with full or partial grant awards, with the goal of supporting visual and performing arts disciplines, and educational activities within each annual grant cycle. The council gives priority to organizations or individuals residing in Medfield, or to those providing activities within the Town. Grants range from \$300 to \$1,200 for both arts and humanities-based programs.

Medfield Public Library (public). Established in 1872, the Medfield Public Library first opened in a room in Town Hall. In 1917, local businessman Granville Dailey gifted \$50,000 to build a permanent library building in memory of his wife and daughter. The library remains in this 1917 Colonial Revival style brick building and its 1998 18,000 SF addition located on Main Street in the center of Downtown. The library provides reference and circulation services, and also serves, with the Medfield Historical Society and Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts, as an historical and cultural hub. Programs serve children, teens, adults and seniors, and include a STEAM room/makerspace, author talks, craft classes, summer reading groups, study nights, and creative writing awards. These programs and the technologies and materials associated with them, are supported by the ***Friends of the Medfield Public Library***, a volunteer, non-profit organization that raises money for and awareness of the library. For more information about the library facilities, refer to the Public Facilities and Services section of this inventory.

Medfield Foundation, Inc. (private non-profit). This volunteer-run non-profit charitable corporation raises funds for public needs in the Town. It collaborates with the Cultural Alliance of Medfield (discussed below) to sponsor an Art in Public Places program, through which "Art Boxes," electrical boxes illustrated with images and text about Medfield's historical figures, are created and placed throughout Town. The foundation financed the construction of Straw Hat Park, the pocket park adjacent to Starbucks on North Street in the Downtown. It has supported restoration of the Peak House and Kingsbury Grist Mill,

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and has fueled the Veterans' Recognition Fund, an effort to recognize Medfield's servicemen and women through the placement of bronze plaques. It serves as the fiscal agent for the ***Friends of Medfield Theatre Society***, an effort that supports theatre programming in the schools.

Cultural Alliance of Medfield (CAM) (private non-profit). This non-profit organization formed in 2015 to support artists, expand cultural opportunities and nurture the creative community. Efforts have included Downtown enhancement activities through the art boxes and creation of Straw Hat Park, and the organization continues to publish a monthly activities newsletter, maintain robust website, and spearhead the annual Medfield Holiday Stroll. CAM is the lead organization working to develop a cultural center at the former Medfield State Hospital and through a joint effort with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), has launched the Medfield Creating Placemaking Project, an attempt to ensure that art and cultural programming remain at the center of redevelopment of the campus.



One of the Art Boxes sponsored by the Art in Public Places programs features the work of Medfield-based painter George Inness. (Stock photo)

Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts (private non-profit). The Medfield Council on the Arts created the nonprofit, volunteer-run Zullo Gallery in 1988 to support and promote the arts through the exhibition of a wide range of fine artwork. Activities have included exhibitions, art education programs and live music performances. Zullo's headquarters, a brick 19th century building on Main Street, provides gallery, classroom and performance space, and when renovations (in progress) are complete, will house a cafe. The gallery operates as a charitable trust, administered by a Board of Trustees and managed by an Executive Director.

Gazebo Players (private non-profit). Established in 2002, this non-profit performing arts organization draws members of the local community to participate in theatre productions, staged each summer in Medfield (Rocky Woods), Dover (Powisset Farm) and Walpole (Bird Park).

Medfield Music Association (MMA) (private non-profit). Established in 1972, this non-profit organization supports the award-winning K-12 Medfield Public School music program with fundraising, volunteer support and advocacy. Through the generous support of the community and local businesses, the MMA has funded guest artists, music trips,

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commissioned works, student scholarships, teacher professional development, general music curriculum and other needs.



Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts stands along the south side of Main Street in the heart of the downtown. The Medfield Public library lies adjacent to the west, and the Medfield Town House is across the street. Expansion of the Zullo Gallery, shown in the photo above, is part of the center's long-term plans. (Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts website)

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following are opportunities, challenges and other observations regarding Medfield's historic and cultural resources:

- **Inventory of Cultural Resources.** Medfield has completed a comprehensive inventory of cultural resources containing over 450 entries, including areas, buildings, landscapes and other features. This database has provided a vital tool for decision-making around future historic district designations and demolition applications. Opportunity exists to continually update this inventory, adding resources as they reach 50 years of age. Opportunity also exists to make this inventory available on the Town website to provide an educational tool to future homeowners and commercial developers.
- **Local Historic Districts.** Medfield has safeguarded its history through the establishment of four Local Historic Districts that include 155 buildings and landscapes, and the recently completed *Guidelines for Changes* will help property owners within the district make historically-sensitive preservation decisions. A new

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district, proposed for East Main Street, will include 38 more resources, including the historic Peak House and Clark Tavern, if created.

- **Certified Local Government Program.** Opportunity exists for Medfield to become a Certified Local Government. Administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the CLG program assists local governments in becoming more directly involved in identifying, evaluating, protecting, promoting and enhancing the educational and economic value of local properties of historic, architectural and archeological significance. The program requires that the Massachusetts Historical Commission designate at least 10 percent of its annual Historic Preservation Fund allocation from the U. S. Department of the Interior to municipalities that have become Certified Local Governments.
- **Medfield State Hospital.** Several entities in Medfield, including the Cultural Alliance and Historical Commission, harbor concern about the fragility of the Medfield State Hospital's buildings, and believe that if preservation efforts do not advance in the near future, many will be unsalvageable. Public concern about the campus has extended to issues of access, clean-up, and infrastructure capacity. Opportunity exists to educate Town residents about the architectural value of the buildings, their arrangement on the grounds, and the campus landscape as a whole.
- **A Regional Arts and Culture Center.** Medfield has a long history of supporting and nurturing artists, including painters George Inness and Dennis Miller Bunker, printmaker J. A. S. Monks, violinist and composer Charles Martin Loeffler, and composer Lowell Mason. The tradition continues today through the work of the Medfield Cultural Council, Cultural Alliance of Medfield, Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts and several other arts organizations. Plans for redevelopment of the Medfield State Hospital campus into live/work/exhibition/performance spaces for artists will further this tradition, and provide an opportunity for Medfield to develop into a regional arts and cultural hub.
- **Medfield Preservation Plan.** Many recommendations of the 1999 plan, including creation of National Register Districts, institution of a Design Review Board, expansion of the number of Local Historic Districts have not been implemented. Opportunity exists to update the plan new recommendations that align with the goals of the 2020 Townwide Master Plan.
- **Community Preservation Act.** To date, Medfield has not been successful in its attempts to pass the Community Preservation Act (CPA), a program that allows Massachusetts municipalities to place an up-to-3% surcharge on local property taxes to be reserved for housing, open space, recreation and preservation activities within the Town. CPA must be adopted by residents through a majority vote of Town Meeting, and annually the State provides a variable percentage rate match.

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Opportunity exists to develop momentum for passing this act, as a means for financing future historic and cultural resource preservation efforts.

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INTERVIEWS

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Kristine Treirweiler, Town Administrator

ENDNOTES

The following profiles of extant historic structures not previously discussed in this inventory chapter have been provided by Medfield Town Historian Richard DeSorgher.

FIRST SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1620-1675)

John Fisher House, ca. 1651/1750—435 Main Street. The present 2-story, five-bay house with center chimney and center entry was built in 1750 by John Fisher. John Fisher was related to Joshua Fisher, one of Medfield's thirteen original settlers. The ell of the present house may include a portion of the original 1651 structure of Joshua Fisher. The house was

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purchased in 1811 by Alex Peters, who in turn sold it to Dr. James Hewins in 1814. Hewins, a graduate of Harvard, was Medfield's only physician for about 40 years until his death in 1846. In the late 19th century, Colonial Revival-style updates were added to the house including the full-width front porch with Doric columns and the east ell. The house remained in the Hewins family into the 20th century. Recent changes have included its conversion into the present condominium complex.

Francis Hamant House, ca. 1652/1810—7 Philip Street. The one-story, gable-roof ell is said to have been built circa 1652, while the 2 ½ -story Federal-style house dates to 1810. The property can be traced back to Francis Hamant, one of the original settlers of Medfield. He secured a lot near the brook and his house was erected probably during the summer of 1652. Successive generations of Hamants owned the house and property right up unto recent times. The Bickley family, current owners, has undertaken a great deal of restoration.

Rev. Wilson House/James Clark Tavern, ca. 1652—18 Green Street. Medfield's first Minister, Rev. John Wilson, had his house lot where the Town hall stands today. After Rev. Wilson's death, the property was sold to Eleazar Wheelock, who turned the house into a tavern. David Fairbanks purchased the tavern in 1809. In 1822 Samuel Johnson purchased the tavern, keeping it almost to his death. In 1835 James Clark became the next tavern keeper until 1842. Walter Janes rented out the hall in the old tavern where he employed 30 girls in sewing braid into hats and bonnets. In 1866 George Chenery left a sum of money to the Town of Medfield for the building of a town hall. In 1869 the trustees of the town hall purchased the tavern and property. The tavern was dismembered with one section moved to Brook Street, where it was a double tenement until it was recently torn down; one section moved to the corner of Oak and South Street where it was later destroyed by fire; and one section went to 18 Green Street where it is part of the house on that site. In 1872 Medfield's first Town Hall was built on the Rev. Wilson / tavern site.

Bachelors' Row House, ca. 1653—7 Oak Street. It is believed that this house was originally located on North Street, in an area known as Bachelors' Row (along North Street between Dale Street and Harding Street). This is where early town settlers, William Partridge, Thomas Ellis, Thomas Mason and Joseph Ellis, all unmarried men had settled side by side. All four men were granted house lots here in 1653. At some point before 1876 it was recorded that one of the houses was moved and became #7 Oak Street. The 1876 map shows the house already moved to the Oak Street location. The house recently underwent renovations and enlargement.

John Turner House, ca.1668—100 South Street. In 1668, John Turner, one of the original settlers of Medfield was permitted to have "the spot where his siller stands to set his house on." The architecture of the original house must have resembled the Peak House; a visible roofline in one north bedroom seems to indicate this. Wainscoting in the northwest room of the first floor is fashioned of boards up to 28 inches wide. A well exists under the southeast corner of the living room. Another well remains just beyond the high stone retaining wall on the south side. This is perhaps the well John Turner was permitted to dig in 1665. The house remained in the Turner family until 1708 when it was sold to Isaac

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Wheeler. During the 1800s it passed through ownership of the Clark, Hamant and Adams families.

Castle Hill Farm, 1673—260 North Street. The earliest portions of the house were built in 1673 by Joseph Allen, a cooper and son of James Allen, one of the original settlers of the Town. This house, unlike its neighbors was not destroyed during the King Philip War in 1676 when half of Medfield was burned. Early sections of the house still survive. The property later passed to Ellis Allen who was a farmer and very involved in the anti-slavery movement during the mid-19th century. The house was a stop on the Underground Railroad. By 1968 the house passed out of the Allen family. Recent restoration and renovations have taken place under the current owners, Dr. and Carla Moore.

COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

Red Gate Farm, ca. 1676—86 Philip Street. John Adams, son of Henry, built the initial section of this house in 1676. It was a two-story and basement structure, one room on each measuring 16 X 18 feet. This first floor room contained a side chimney with open hearth and beehive oven. This fireplace was incorporated into the present massive center chimney of the main house, which was built or added by 1680. In 1728 the ownership went from the Adams to Chenery families. By 1830 the present house was a plain wood-colored house, having simply an ell part, or shed, extending from the backside. After over 100 years of ownership in the Chenery family the house and property were sold to Dr. Thomas Stevens in 1872. In 1876 he sold to Peter Nelson, who made many changes to the house. . The kitchen was removed from its original location in the main house to a new one-story ell off the rear. This involved the building of a second chimney to handle a new coal-fired cast iron cooking stove. In 1895 after the house had again been sold, this time to Louise Jewell as a vacation summer farm, the house was totally restored and enlarged. In 1913 major interior changes took place to the old house. By 1965 Red Gate Farm passed from the Jewell family after 72 years to Charles and Billie Kenny. It consisted of 70.72 acres. The Kenny family also undertook extensive renovations.

Eliakim Morse House, ca. 1750/1823—339 Main Street. Eliakim Morse built the 2-story 1750 Georgian-style house with four-room layout. It is the third Morse house built in the immediate area. The original Samuel Morse house, located across the street was the first house torched by the Native-Americans the morning of February 21, 1676, when half the Town was burned during the King Philip War. In 1823 an addition was added which extended the house three more bays (including another door) to the east. It was here that the manufacturing of straw bonnets took place. Morse purchased locally braided straw and had it sewn into ladies' straw hats. It is believed that both the two-bay ell at the easternmost end of the house, and the smaller ell at the western end of the house, were constructed shortly after the 1823 wing was built.

Moses Harthshorn House, 1744/1853—10 Pound Street. A house and blacksmith shop were located here and later purchased by Moses Harthshorn in 1750. The Harthshorns continued the blacksmith business until the end of the 19th century. In 1853 the house was "raised up and thoroughly remodeled." It is a Federal clapboard house with twin chimneys. The front entrance has a simple cornice treatment with sidelights.

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Daniel Sanders House, 1770/1860—402 Main Street. The southern ell of the house, which was completely rebuilt in the 1990's, dates to 1770. The main 1817 Federal-style house was built by Daniel Sanders, and remodeled into the then-fashionable French Second Empire style in 1860. Daniel Sanders was the first president of the University of Vermont, fled the campus back to Medfield during the War of 1820 when the British were shelling the school. A cupola crowns the concave mansard roof, which has segmental dormers with scalloped shingles and a heavy cornice with paired brackets. The 1860-era gazebo was recently moved to the rear of the house. Under the ownership the Krawec family, the house and attached barn were carefully restored with great pride and saved at a time when both had deteriorated badly.

Metcalf House ca. 1680—589 Main Street. The straightforward colonial with center chimney evokes the 17th century and the 1680 date chiseled into a hand hewn oak beam in the house attests to that fact. A portion of the house may be even older, as John Metcalf (1622-1690) is known to have had a house here in 1652. Though the house has been considerably restored, there are exposed gunstock posts, summer beams and a section of wall paneling that measures 25" in width. A movable panel over the dining room fireplace reveals the old riven laths and early plaster. Another room panel conceals a secret hiding area along the chimney, used presumably as a defense against Native-Americans. The Metcalf house is located in the John Metcalf Historic District.

Plimpton-Woodard House ca. 1725—505 Main Street. This 2-story Georgian-style house is an important survival of Colonial-period development in Medfield Center. On the exterior, the building retains much of its original residential appearance in spite of the conversion to commercial use. The house was built about 1725 as a simple clapboard and shingled gambrel roof colonial by William Plimpton. It was enlarged and changed considerably by local carpenter, Gershom Adams in 1865 for its new owner, John J. Adams. Town physician Dr. Arthur Mitchell purchased the house in 1892. A commercial jelly-making business was located in a stable on the property from 1941-1954. The stable burned in 1972.

Plimpton-Hamant-Bartlett House, ca. 1690—3 Causeway Street. This house was built over a period of 150 years. About 1690, Joseph Plimpton built what is now the 1-story west ell, which retains gunstock corner posts, peg construction, and a battered door. The main block of the house, constructed ca.1853 for Charles Hamant, is an example of a large farmhouse in the Greek Revival style. The property remained a working farm into the 20th century, when James Carroll Bartlett, then the owner, sold milk from his cows to his neighbors. Bartlett was a famous music instructor and composer and a soloist at the Arlington Street Church in Boston. He lived here when he authored the popular song, *A Dream*, in 1923. This property is part of the John Metcalf Historic District.

John Cutler House, ca. 1727—338 North Street. John Cutler purchased a farm at this location in 1728, but it is not clear whether the property included a residence or not; it is assumed it did or Cutler constructed one shortly after the purchase. The house is a 2 ½ - story, Colonial-style building. A large brick chimney is located at the center of the roof ridge. Cutler lived at the house until his first wife, Hannah Plimpton, died in 1766, at which time he sold the property. In 1772, Cutler's son, Simeon, purchased the property

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back into the family. It stayed in the Cutler family until 1923 when it was bought by Dr. Henry Lee Morse, who used the 14-acre property for tillage. The house continues to be used as a private residence today.

Elijah Allen House, ca. 1750—348 North Street. Elijah Allen, a housewright, constructed this house about 1750. Allen married and had five children, none of whom inherited the house, as the property was later sold to Josiah Partridge. Partridge subsequently sold it to Moses Harding. In 1808 the property passed from the Harding family to that of Obed Allen. Obed, who married Caroline Harding, had two children with Caroline. Obed remained in the house until his death in 1869, at which point the house passed to Caroline who later married John Newell. They remained in ownership of the property until 1910, at which time the entire 135-acre estate, located in both Medfield and Dover, was purchased by Charles Pierce of Boston. The house is a large 2-story, Colonial-style house. A brick chimney is located near the roof ridge on the north slope of the main house, and a brick chimney rises from the center ridge of the rear ell. The property was later subdivided. The house continues to be used as a private residence today.

Elijah Bullen House, ca. 1750—23 Farm Street. The house was built close to the time of the marriage of Elisha Bullen to Mary Boyden in 1750. By 1876 the property had been sold to Eleazar Allen Newell. Eleazar had married Mary Thayer in 1852. Eleazar died in 1880, and the property passed to his son, Edward, who maintained a slaughter house on the property to supply his meat and provisions store located in Medfield Center. It is possible that the large stone foundations to the rear of the main house are the remains of Newell's barn and butchering area. The property was sold to Martin Cheney in 1893, who remained at the property until he sold it in 1914 to his son, George Cheney. The interior of the house was modernized and an enclosed porch was added in 1928. The railroad was laid through the northern section of Medfield in 1861, and ran alongside the southern edge of the property. There were two station stops on this line: Medfield Junction and Farm Street Station. As the house stood across the tracks from the Farm Street Station, it was sometimes referred to as Station Farm in the first part of the 20th century.

Jonathan Wight house, ca. 1760—19 Wight Street. This large 2-story house is an unusually well preserved example of a Colonial-style house with Federal and Colonial Revival-style updates. It is believed that Nathaniel Partridge built the earliest parts of the house. Partridge was a farmer, weaver, teacher, selectmen and town treasurer, who married Lydia Wight (1669-1741). In 1746 the property was sold to neighbor and cousin Jonathan and John Wight. Jonathan married Sarah Plimpton. Jonathan's son, Jonathan, renovated the house in the Georgian style in the 1760's after his marriage to Lois Clark. The house remained in the Wight family until 1913. The property was next owned by Mrs. Evelyn Byng. She owned the farm until 1981 when it was sold to the current owners Michael and Barbara Cronin.

Ebenezer Mason House, ca. 1680—190 North Street. This is a large 2-story Federal-style house, which may include earlier sections. The land was owned by Thomas Mason, one of the original settlers of Medfield. The first house built here was burnt by the Native-Americans in 1676 during the attack on Medfield, in which Mason and his two sons were killed. Mason's only surviving son rebuilt a house on the site shortly after the attack. It is

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believed that portions of this original house exist inside the present building. Most likely it was Amos Mason (1787-1865) who was responsible for the late 18th-century Federal-style additions to the house. In 1916 the house was sold to William Perry, architect responsible for the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. Perry made several changes, including the addition to the north and the insertion of a new stairway brought from Exeter, New Hampshire. In 1985 the property was subdivided for development.

Clark-Allen House, ca. 1686—230 North Street. Captain Joseph Clark purchased this property in 1686, the same year he married Mary Wight. The 2-story house is an unusual example in Medfield of a Colonial-style house, which has evolved over time. The property was purchased by John Wight in 1732. John was probably responsible for updating the house and giving it its current form and style. The property was later purchased by the Plimpton family. It was here that James Plimpton lived, who invented the roller skates, from which he realized a large fortune. About 1838 Leonard Plimpton sold the property to Noah Allen. The property remained in the Allen family until 1954.

Samuel Wight House, ca. 1753—243 North Street. In 1673 Samuel Wight built a house in the northern part of town, which was burnt in the Native-American attack during the King Philip War. His son, Samuel, then built a house opposite his father's home. The present house may have been built by Jonathan Allen upon his purchase of the property. The house is a well-preserved example of a Colonial-style house with Federal-style updates also notable for its large early 20th century barn to the northeast. The house stayed in the Allen family until recent times. By 1968 the house was owned by Robert Colman.

John Ord House, ca. 1775—70 North Street. This wood-framed, 3-by-4 bay, 1-story side-gable house was constructed between 1775-1780. During the 1800s the house was owned by John Ord. In 1909 the property was owned by Edwin V. Mitchell, owner of the hat factory. The building was probably used as workers' housing. In the early 1800s there is no mention of a house on this location and there is also no doubt that it is a 18th century house. Therefore, as a 1700s house, it must have been moved to the location by the time of John Ord's ownership in 1852.

Joshua Boyden House, ca. 1654/1673/1735—58 Pound Street. This is a 2-story Colonial-style house, which may have been built prior to 1735. The 1654 Joseph Morse house was on this homestead and it is conjectural that Joshua Boyden, housewright, incorporated or used parts of the 1654 Morse house in the construction of the present house in 1735. It is also possible that the house was built by Jonathan Boyden upon his marriage to Mary Clark in 1673. At Jonathan's death in 1735, the house property passed to his son, Joshua. If the house was not built earlier then it was built by Joshua in 1735. In any event, the house next passed to Joshua's son Asa, and then to his daughter Hannah. In the early 1900s a second floor was added to the earlier ell. In 1914 the property was sold to Joseph Marcionette, who undertook renovations to the house, including turning the house to face Pound Street, so that the front became the back and the back the front. In 1923 the property encompassed nearly 16 acres. Recent owners have completed a great deal of updating to the house.

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Cheney-Ellis House, ca. 1740—101 Main Street. This is a large 2-story single family home constructed circa 1740 and substantially updated in the mid-19th century. It is an excellent example of a Colonial-style house with Greek Revival-style updates. The property was originally owned by Joseph Cheney, who married Hannah Thurston in 1668 and settled on land in the eastern part of Medfield granted to him by his father-in-law, John Thurston. Upon his death in 1704, the property passed to his son, Josiah, who may have been responsible for the construction of the present house. In the 1800s the house was sold to Seth Ellis. In 1920 it was purchased by Dr. Joel Goldthwait. By 1930, he owned a great deal of the property surrounding 101 Main Street. Dr. Goldthwait later turned much of his land holdings over to the Trustees of Reservation, which became today's Rocky Woods. His son, Joel deeded 63 additional acres to the Trustees in 1973.

Francis Cole House, ca. 1750—27 Plain Street. This large 2-story Colonial-style house is a typical, unaltered example of its type. It has a long association with the Cole family. Francis Cole (1724-1788) married Abigail Clark in 1748. Cole had been a blacksmith and sold his business in 1749 to Moses Hartshorn, and turned to farming. The house and property passed through the family, first to Asa Cole, then Richard Cole, then to Richard's son, Richard, then to his daughter Idella.

Abijah Baker House, ca. 1717—44 High Street. This house is believed to have been built by Abijah Baker, shortly after his marriage with Hannah Jones. Baker was born in 1691 in Dorchester and settled on this site when he came to Medfield. His son, Micah, inherited the house where he lived until about 1766. Around 1808 the house was owned by David Smith who had married Hannah Draper of Dedham. The 1852 map shows the house owned by G.S. Mason. The 1876 map lists a "Mrs. Guild" as owner and the 1888 map shows the property owned by "Mr. Ashley." The property was recently subdivided.

Samuel Hamant House, ca. 1741—22 High Street. This 2-story house is an excellent example of a Colonial-style house with later side and rear additions that leave the main house mostly intact. The land on which 22 High Street now stands was part of land originally owned by John Hamant (1653-1708) and Samuel Smith (1674-1694) In 1741 Samuel Hamant sold out his rights to the Philip Street Hamant Homestead and purchased the property from the heirs of Samuel Smith, now 22 High Street. Samuel Hamant, who married Hannah Partridge in 1728, was probably responsible for building the earliest parts of the current house. It remained in the Hamant family into the 1800s. In 1804 Asa Hamant married Polly Draper and may have been responsible for constructing much of the present-day house. The property passed out of the Hamant family in 1901, when it was purchased by John Seavers. The Danielsons then owned the property until 1935. The Ritchie family owned the property into the late 20th century and may have been responsible for the garage addition to the barn and the conversion of the barn in to apartments. In 1993, Mrs. Ritchie donated 7.9 acres, which included the pond, to the Town of Medfield.

Asa Clark House, ca.1760—154 Harding Street. The Asa Clark House is a medium-sized 2-story Colonial first constructed in 1760 and modified over time with Colonial Revival-style elements. Asa Clark established his farmstead at the northernmost end of Harding

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Street. The property remained in the Clark family until at least 1888. Up until 1923 the property comprised a 79-acre farm.

John Harding House, ca. 1725/1826—74 Harding Street. The current rear ell of the house is the house constructed by John Harding in 1725. It is believed to contain the remains of the garrison used by the Town during the Native-American attack in 1676 and located on that site. The property remained in the Harding family for many generations, and it was brothers Simon and Charles who are credited with constructing the Federal-style house which stands today.

Robert Hinsdale House, ca. 1750—87 Harding Street. This house was built in 1750 by Robert Hinsdale at the time of his marriage to Thankful Penniman. The property passed to their daughter, Catherine, who married Obed Fisher. Their son, Hinsdale Fisher, inherited the property upon his father's death. Hinsdale left no heirs, so at the time of his death in 1869, the property was bequeathed to tenant John Hutson. During the 20th century the property was owned by Hutson's son, who operated the 34-acre farm on the property.

Gershom Adams House, ca. 1732—39 Bridge Street. This 2-story Federal Greek Revival-style house is a rare example of a one-bay deep structure. The ell dates to 1732 with the main building built about 1778. The ell was constructed by Jonathan Adams with the main house constructed about 1778 upon the marriage of Gershom to Prudence Bullen. Upon Gershom's death in 1834, the property passed to his son, also named Gershom, who was probably responsible for the Greek Revival-style modifications and the barn. The property passed to Joseph Allen about the turn of the century and he established a dairy farm here, known as Riverview Farm. In 1903-04 he remodeled and improved the house; the oldest part, the ell, was changed, the huge chimney taken out, the windows made larger and the porch widened. In 1922 the farm was changed to a fruit orchard and the name changed to Apple Ridge Farm.

Henry Adams House, ca. 1680—72 Elm Street. This is a 2-story, Georgian-style house with Federal, Greek Revival, and Colonial Revival-style updates and numerous additions. The original house and near-by mill were built in 1652 by Henry Adams, one of the earliest settlers in Medfield. The house and mill were burnt during the King Philip War. Henry's son, Henry (1657-1773) is most likely responsible for the rebuilding of the house sometime in the late 17th century. It stayed in the Adams family until the turn of the 20th-century. In 1905 the property was sold to Dr. Charles Inches of Boston. They named the home "Glen Adams." Dr. Inches was responsible for the construction of several additions, the garage and the swimming pool. The barn was relocated to its present site early in the 20th-century. The current owners, Daniel and Deborah Phillips have recently completed renovations and restoration to the house.

Hannah Adams House, ca. 1750/1821—49 Elm Street. The house at 49 Elm Street is the second house to stand on this site. The first house was built ca. 1714 by Thomas Adams. In 1750, a 2-story addition was built, and it is in this section of the house that Hannah Adams was born in 1755. The house was removed and the present house was built in 1821. The 1750 addition was retained and incorporated as a side ell to the "new" house. In 1838 John Wickliffe Adams, mechanic and farmer, opened a brush making shop in the side ell of

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the house. In 1908 the property was sold to Davenport Brown of Boston for use as a summer house.

Mary Sadey House, ca. 1710—127 North Street. There is much uncertainty concerning the Mason Homestead. We do know that in 1875 the Mason Homestead was cut in half and the two sections were moved to make way for the construction of the Pfaff Mansion on the site (later demolished when the current apartment building was built). It appears that the oldest section of the house was moved slightly northward to become 127 North Street and the other section was moved to 25 Adams Street. There remains a question what happened to the 1653 Wight House that Barachias Mason moved from Green Street onto his property. Are parts of it now the house on 25 Adams Street, 127 North Street or even perhaps part of the house on 12—North Street. Or was it totally demolished when the house was broken into the two sections and moved in 1875? It seems most likely that the original Return Johnson House, ca. 1690, located on that site was demolished and the current house on 127 North Street was built in 1710. It was at this time that Mary Sadey of Chelmsford bought all of the interests of the other heirs of Dr. Return Johnson's estate, where she afterwards resided with her husband, Captain Samuel Sadey. In this home Lowell Mason was later born in 1792. Lowell Mason, doctor of music, is considered to be the Father of Music Instruction in America. He is the founder of the Boston Academy of Music and composer of hundreds of hymns.

Quinobequin, ca.1749—49 Bridge Street. This is the third house on the site. In 1653 Abraham Harding of Braintree moved to Medfield and settled on Bridge Street. His son John lived in the house built there until it was destroyed by Native-Americans during the King Philip War in 1676. His son, Henry, rebuilt the house. In April of 1749 the second house burnt. Henry's daughter, Thankful, who married James Penniman, rebuilt the present house in 1749-1750. In 1992 the McCrossan family bought the house, now named "Quinobequin," which is the Native-American meaning for "winding river" (Charles River). Recently the house was again hit by fire, this time badly destroying much of the house. The McCrossans rebuilt and restored the house.

FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

Cheney-Curtis House, ca.1780—419 Main Street. In 1994, a Curtis relative who grew up in the house reported that he had been told by his father that the house was built in 1780 and was at first located in Walpole. He said it was moved from Walpole to its current Main and Brook Street location. The Federal-style house has been altered only minimally since then. The twin brick chimneys, narrow doorways and saltbox roof are important architectural features. Around 1812, the house was lived in by Timothy Cheney, a blacksmith, who maintained his shop in the easterly corner of the front yard. In 1832, Bradford Curtis came to Medfield, purchased the house and ran his butchering business here. His second son, Joseph continued the business as a butcher and meat dealer. The property remained in the Curtis family through the early 20th century. Recently purchased by the Whitla family, the house and barn have been meticulously restored.

Oliver Wheelock House ca.1795—13 and 17 South Street. Originally the two houses at 13 and 17 South Street constituted a single commercial store and were located where the

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Mobil Gas station is today. About 1819, David Fairbanks, who was building a new store at the same location, cut the original store in half and removed the two pieces to their current sites on South Street.

Clark Family Homestead, 1793—215 South Street. This large 2-story, Federal-style house is an excellent example of its type and period and is notable for its almost 300-year association with the Clark family. The original house built in 1663 by Joseph Clark, one of the original settlers of the Town, burnt in 1792. David Clark, a cooper rebuilt the present house the following year. The north ell of the house is said to be the cooper shop owned by David which he moved and added to the rebuilt house in 1793. The property remained in the Clark family until it was sold in 1963.

Joseph Perry House, ca. 1781—112 Harding Street. In 1781 Joseph Perry married Keturah Turner and moved into the house built by his father Daniel Perry. The house changed hands several times until 1852 when the property was purchased by Isaac Lane (1806-1880). It then passed to Isaac's daughter Lucy who married John Lincoln in 1864. Town Meeting in 2004 voted to purchase deed restrictions on the property to prevent it from being subdivided and developed

Oliver Adams House, ca. 1794—66 Harding Street. Samuel Hinsdale (1722-1787) inherited his father's tannery along the banks of the North Brook. After Samuel went into bankruptcy, Oliver Adams purchased the tanyard and buildings. It is believed that Adams built, or made improvements to the house that now stands at 66 Harding Street. Adams sold the property and business in 1798 to Jonathan Fiske, by whose name the house continues to be known.

Johnson Mason House, ca. 1791—59 Green Street. There is much uncertainty concerning the Mason Homestead. We do know that in 1875 the Mason Homestead was cut in half and the two sections were moved to make way for the construction of the Pfaff Mansion on the site (later demolished when the current apartment building was built). It appears that the oldest section of the house was moved slightly northward to become 127 North Street and the other section was moved to 25 Adams Street. There remains a question what happened to the 1653 Wight House that Barachias Mason moved from Green Street onto his property. Are parts of it now the house on 25 Adams Street, 127 North Street or even perhaps part of the house on 12—North Street. Or was it totally demolished when the house was broken into the two sections and moved in 1875? It is believed that the section moved to 25 Adams Street is the 1791 section built by Johnson Mason, son of Barachias, when he married in 1791. In this home Lowell Mason was born in 1792. Lowell Mason, doctor of music, is considered to be the Father of Music Instruction in America. He is the founder of the Boston Academy of Music and composer of hundreds of hymns.

Facing demolition by developers who purchased the property, after a town uproar, the house was donated to the newly former Lowell Mason Foundation and on Tuesday, April 19, 2011 the Lowell Mason House was moved from 25 Adams Street to 59 Green Street.

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Chapter 4: Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources

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4 - Natural, Open Space & Recreation Resources

"A period recourse into the wilds is not a retreat into secret silent sanctums to escape a wicked world, it is to take breath amid effort to forge a better world."

- Benton MacKaye

INTRODUCTION

The low-lying meadows, rolling forested uplands, freshwater ponds, and meandering Charles River have drawn humans to the Medfield area for thousands of years. Native Americans depended on these resources for food, hunting in the woodlands, fishing in the river and ponds, and farming in the meadows. Today, these sites add to the overall high quality of life in Medfield, providing places to explore, play, relax and recharge. The Town's commitment to protecting these resources has safeguarded them for the benefit of generations to come.



Kingsbury Pond is one of Medfield's many natural features of high scenic value that provides habitat for wildlife and a spot for canoeing and kayaking. It is also one of Medfield's significant historic sites.

This chapter identifies and describes Medfield's natural resources, open space, and recreation resources, and summarizes past efforts to protect, promote and expand them. It also identifies issues, opportunities and challenges surrounding them to be addressed in the Townwide Master Plan.¹

¹ Inventory information for this chapter was sourced from the 2017 Town of Medfield Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan. The introduction to the 2017 plan notes that no changes in Medfield's natural features had occurred since the compilation of the previous Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002), and therefore the inventory from the 2002 plan was reproduced in the 2017 plan.

KEY FINDINGS

- Just under 40% of Medfield contains soils that present few constraints to development. These suitable soils dominate most of the central area of town.
- The presence of large wetland areas associated with rivers, streams, and ponds limits development of approximately 25% of the Town. Ledge, outcroppings, and shallow hard pan underlie approximately 45% of the Town, placing additional constraints on development.
- The Army Corps of Engineers, through fee or easement, has assumed control of the natural basins along the Charles River. Efforts to manage these areas has significantly minimized flooding throughout the watershed.
- Farming once dominated Medfield's economy, however today very little agricultural land exists. The Town has protected 31.39 acres of private farmland through Chapter 61A programs, and 132.33 acres of private forest land through Chapter 61.
- While Medfield has had success in protecting open space in all parts of town, many of the parcels lack connections to one another.
- The Town's list of unprotected properties that could be conserved in the future for open space consists of seven parcels of private land totaling 186.54 acres.
- Acquisition of the acreage linked to the former Medfield State Hospital will provide many options for use, including agriculture and recreation.
- As climate change continues, the flooding potential for Medfield's many streams, brooks and ponds will continue to increase, threatening to cause greater and greater property damage.
- While Medfield owns and maintains over 260 acres of athletic fields, most are overused, with school fields booked for use seven days per week.
- The existing Parks and Recreation Department building, the Hannah Adams Pfaff Center, is in a state of decline, and a new facility is needed.
- Currently Medfield does not have a designated "dog park" and canine owners have routinely used the former Medfield State Hospital grounds as well as conservation land behind the Wheelock School. At both sites, the lack of waste clean has created an ongoing public health problem.
- Medfield has attempted to pass the Community Preservation Act three times, without success. Funding through the CPA can support expansion of recreation facilities and lands, as well as open space acquisitions.

NATURAL RESOURCES

GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

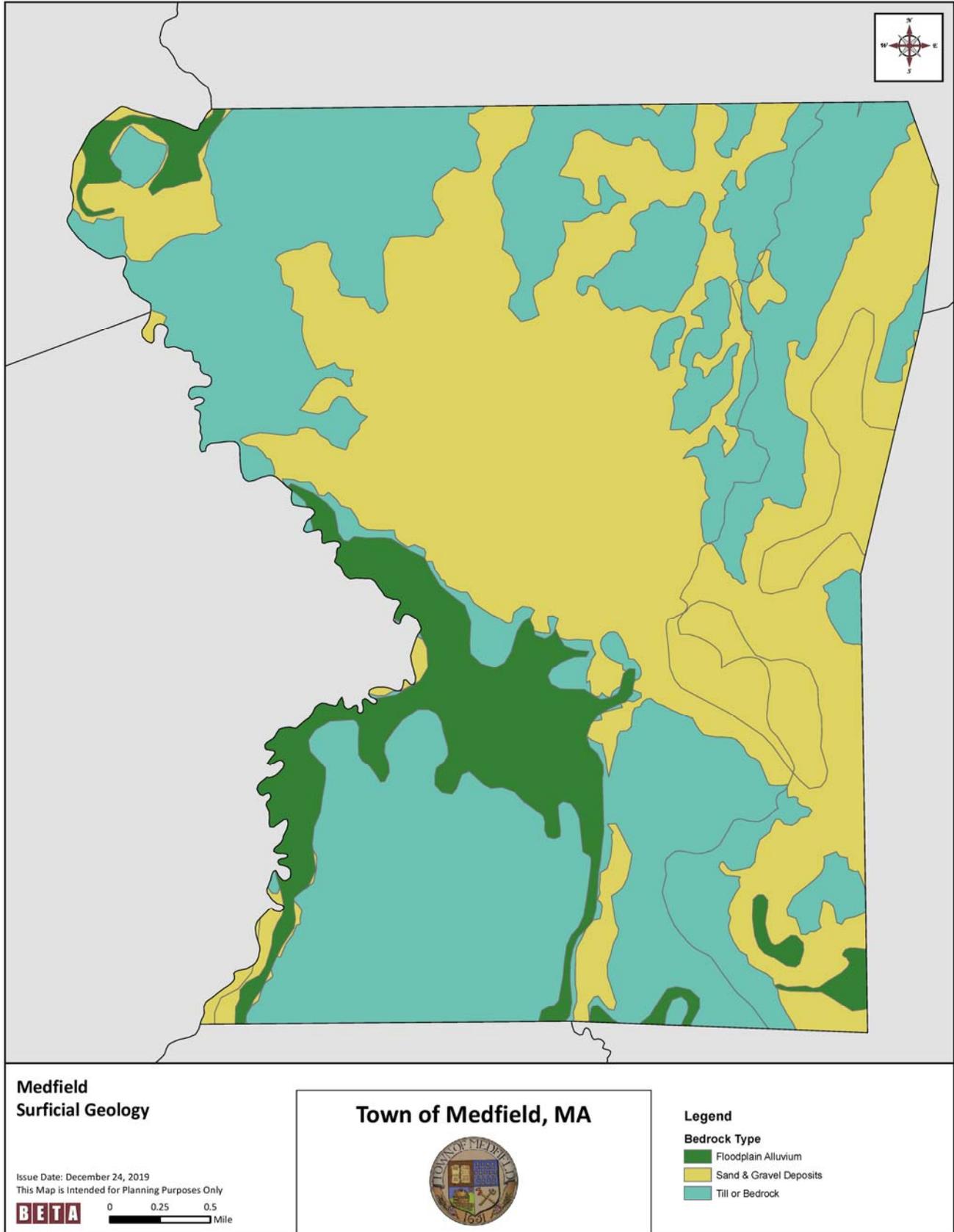
Geology. Medfield's geology represents the aftermath of the glacial formation that once covered the region known as the Wisconsin Glacier. As this ice mass retreated, it left Lake Medfield at its southern edge, a large deposit of sand, gravel and open water. After the retreat, Lake Medfield catastrophically drained, resulting in the formation of the Neponset Valley. Glacial drift blew over the area, creating a layer that could support plant life. Today, granites and metamorphosed volcanic rocks underlie Medfield, while surficial geology consists largely of glacial till, sand and gravel, with clay mixed in around the streams and ponds.

Topography. A long diagonal line extending from the northwest corner of Medfield to the southeast corner divides the Town's topography roughly in half. In general, the melting glacier left a large area of sloping uplands and relatively flat and wet lowlands across the southwest half of the diagonal. These bottomlands are well-suited to tilling and agriculture. In contrast, the northeast half contains upland areas reaching up to 370 +/- feet above sea level. Cedar, Noon and Mine Hills and Mt. Nebo are the highest points in Medfield and each offers long views from its summit. Upland areas lend themselves to forest growth, or to clearing for pasturing.

Observations

- While much of Medfield's topography is gently sloping and low-lying, the Town contains several high points, including Cedar, Noon and Mine Hills and Mt. Nebo, that offer opportunity for scenic views.
- Just under 40% of Medfield contains soils that present few constraints to development. These suitable soils dominate most of the central area of town.
- Medfield contains two major water courses, the Charles and Stop Rivers, with extensive wetland areas associated with each. Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes, defined by the state Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, are associated with these river environments.
- Smaller perennial streams (such as Vine Brook), brooks and small ponds scattered across the Town provide habitat for wildlife and aquatic species.
- Medfield's many scenic resources include rural roads, hill summits, river corridors and ponds.
- The Town recognized the value of its natural resources in the high quality of life of residents as early as 1964 with the development of the first master plan. Medfield has continued to preserve these resources through its wetlands and aquifer protection bylaws, and scenic roads designations.

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Soils. The United States Soil Conservation Service has established the dominant soil series in Medfield to be Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor association, covering 3,554 acres or 38% of the Town. These soils are well-drained, consist principally of sand and gravel and lie on 0 – 15% slopes. They present few limitations for residential, commercial, industrial and recreational purposes and will support farming, and dominate most of the central area of the Town. Approximately 25% of Medfield contains Muck-Whitman soils, very poorly drained organic and mineral-rich soils of 0-3% slope. Fresh water marshes (2,135 acres) and open water (226 acres) dominate this association, and development in these areas is largely prohibited. Another 25% of the Town (2,255 acres) contains Hollis and Canton-Hollis associations, stony, rocky, shallow in depth to bedrock, and interspersed with ledge outcroppings. These soils have moderate to severe limitations to development. The several other soil associations that comprise approximately 20% of the Town are underlain with hardpan, complicating the construction of septic and water systems, and thereby placing moderate to severe limitations on development.

WATERSHED & SURFACE WATERS

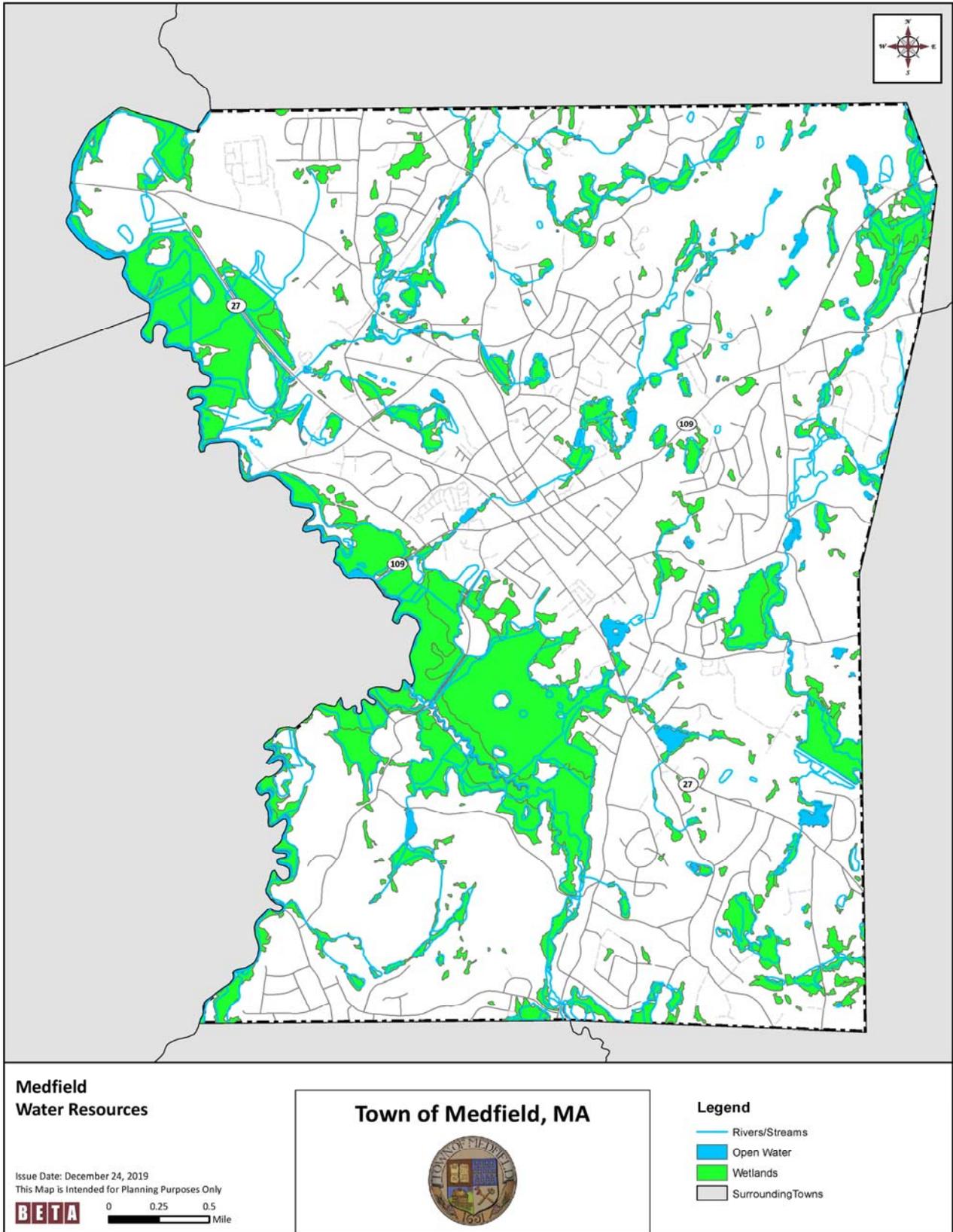
Much of Medfield lies within the **Charles River Watershed**, an area of land covering 308 square miles and encompassing parts of 23 municipalities. Its main waterway, the 80-mile long Charles River, is fed by 80 brooks and streams, and the watershed itself contains 33 lakes and ponds. A portion of the eastern end of Medfield lies within the **Neponset River Watershed**, part of the 293 square mile Boston Harbor Watershed. Medfield's rivers, brooks and streams further supply the two watersheds. These tributaries flow into one another and connect small lakes and ponds. The principal water bodies and their networks are described below:

Charles River. The Charles lies along the western edge of Medfield, forming the boundary with Millis (to the west) and Sherborn (to the northwest). Several of Medfield's smaller waterways, including North Brook, Vine Brook, and the Stop River, flow westward through Medfield into the Charles. Throughout history, the waterway has provided habitat for fish and wildlife and has been a popular recreation spot. Its floodplain supported the cultivation of straw used in the 19th and early 20th centuries for hat production. Approximately 1,000 acres of the Charles River floodplain is owned in fee or easement by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and reserved as storage for flood control. Over the course of its 80-mile length, the river descends just 350 feet, making its course gentle, but often muddy. It is a popular destination for kayakers, canoeists, birdwatchers and other nature enthusiasts.

Stop River/Holt Pond/Danielson Pond. As noted above, this stream flows northerly into Medfield from Norfolk at South Street, curves around Noon Hill, and continues onward northwesterly through the large floodplain near Causeway Street. Several smaller brooks feed the Stop, including Sewell Brook, Nantasket Brook, and the outflows of Holt and Danielson Ponds.

Nantasket Brook/Kingsbury Pond. Nantasket Brook begins near the center of Town and meanders westward, flowing into Kingsbury Pond near Spring Street, and the flowing into

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the Stop River at the Medfield Rhododendrons. Kingsbury Pond is a popular fishing and boating spot and is also the site of the historic Kingsbury Dam and Grist Mill.

Vine Brook/Hinkley Pond/Baker's (Meeting House) Pond/Vine Lake. Vine Lake takes its name from the meandering quality of the path it follows from its source in the eastern side of the Town, winding its way westward, flowing through several smaller impoundments, including Baker's (Meeting House) Pond and Vine Brook. It eventually meets the Charles River south of Main Street (Route 109) near the Millis line. Hinkley Pond features a beach and swimming area maintained by the Medfield Park and Recreation Department. Baker's Pond and Vine Lake, both located in the town center, function as outdoor gathering spaces and venues for social events including fishing derbies (Vine Lake) and Medfield Day (Baker's Pond). Vine Lake, also known as Cemetery Pond, is also the central and most prominent scenic feature of the Town's oldest place of interment, Vine Lake Cemetery.

Mill and Mine Brooks/Chickering Lake/Jewell's Pond. Mill Brook is the principal stream in the Neponset River Watershed. It is fed by Chickering Lake, flows into Jewell's Pond, and out as Mine Brook eastward, toward the Neponset. These scenic water bodies also possess historical significance. Both brooks powered the Fork Factory, located near the east entrance to Medfield (on Route 109), as well as the mill race and gristmill at Jewell's Pond.

WATER SUPPLY & AQUIFERS

The Mine Brook aquifer, located in the eastern part of Medfield, supplies more than half of the Town's drinking water via three of the Town's five wells. The Charles River aquifer, located in the western part of town, provides additional water supply, and both aquifers fall within Medfield's Aquifer Protection District (Chapter 300-16.1-300-16.8 of the Town zoning bylaw), which addresses wells, primary aquifers and secondary aquifers. Additional information about Medfield's water supply and aquifers can be found in the Public Facilities and Services chapter of this inventory.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

Medfield's flood hazard areas lie along or sloping to the Stop and Charles Rivers at a mean sea level elevation below 125 feet. These areas were mapped on the Department of Homeland Security Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Norfolk County in July 2012. The Town has established a Floodplain District (chapter 300-10.1-300-10.7) to regulate building of structures, dumping, filling, excavating, creating ponds and/or altering watercourses within flood hazard areas.

WETLANDS

Wetlands in Medfield consist of the wet meadows along the Charles and Stop Rivers as well as smaller wetland areas associated with ponds and brooks scattered throughout the Town. Protection of these sites is overseen by the Conservation Commission through enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40 and its associated Rules and Regulations (310 C.M.R. 10.00) and Medfield's Wetlands

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Protection Bylaw (Chapter 290.1 – 290.13). The bylaw requires that a permit must be issued by the commission before filling, removing, dredging or building upon wetlands and buffer zones can occur.

AGRICULTURAL LAND AND FOREST

Within its zoning bylaw, Medfield maintains an agricultural district located along the Charles River in the northwest corner of town. Currently, no active farming takes place in Medfield, however the Town has conserved 132.33 acres of forested land (Chapter 61) and 31.39 acres of agricultural land (Chapter 61A). Recent farm and forest land protection and/or conservation efforts include:

- *Harding Road* farmland (8.5 acres) - purchase by the Town of development rights and placement of a conservation restriction
- *Red Gate Farm*, Philip Street - purchase by the Town of 30 acres designated at Chapter 61 forestland
- *Medfield State Hospital* - purchase by the Town of 134 acres with an agreement that state-owned land along the Charles River must remain in conservation or agriculture. This land may be used for recreational purposes.

VEGETATION

Medfield's vegetation divides between upland hardwood forests and lowland wetland forest/shrub/scrub areas. Because Medfield was extensively cleared for settlement and farming, little or no original or "old growth" forest remains, and existing forest is largely immature or transitional. Upland forest trees include white pine, hemlock, oak, maple, birch and beech. Understory includes mountain laurel, euonymus, bayberry. Wetland areas feature birches, alders, dogwood, red maples and other hydrophylic species.

WILDLIFE

The Charles and Stop Rivers provide habitat for many species. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife holds a lease on 1,000 acres of the Natural Valley Storage Area along the Charles for the purposes of fish and wildlife habitat. Among the MDFW's many activities is an anadromous fish restoration effort in the Charles, which has resulted in increased populations of rainbow smelt, alewife and blueback herring. The Storage Area also supports migratory and nesting waterfowl and songbirds, muskrat, mink, otter and



The American Bittern is one of eight species of conservation concern in Medfield, as identified by the NHESP.

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beaver. Medfield lies within the Atlantic Flyway, the major migratory route along the East Coast. When the Charles River meadows are flooded, black, wood and mallard ducks, among other species, nest along the edges.

RARE, THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife’s Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has identified eight species of conservation concern, listed in Table X-1. The locations of these species are purposely not described in order to protect their continued existence.

TABLE X-1. Massachusetts Endangered Species Act Rare Species in Medfield

Common Name	Scientific Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	Bird	Endangered	Historic
Britton’s Violet	<i>Viola brittoniana</i>	Vascular Plant	Threatened	1886
Eastern Pondmussel	<i>Ligumia nasuta</i>	Mussel	Special Concern	2007
Great Laurel	<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	Vascular Plant	Threatened	2018
Lion's Foot	<i>Nabalus serpentarius</i>	Vascular Plant	Endangered	1921
Long's Bulrush	<i>Scirpus longii</i>	Vascular Plant	Threatened	2001
Purple Milkweed	<i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>	Vascular Plant	Endangered	1945
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	Bird	Endangered	1884

BIOMAP2 AREAS

Created by the NHESP and The Nature Conservancy, BioMap2 combines documentation of rare species and natural communities with spatial data (mapping), to create a visual chart of species diversity in the wake of climate change.² The map contains two layers:

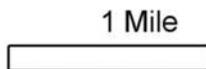
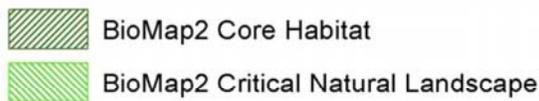
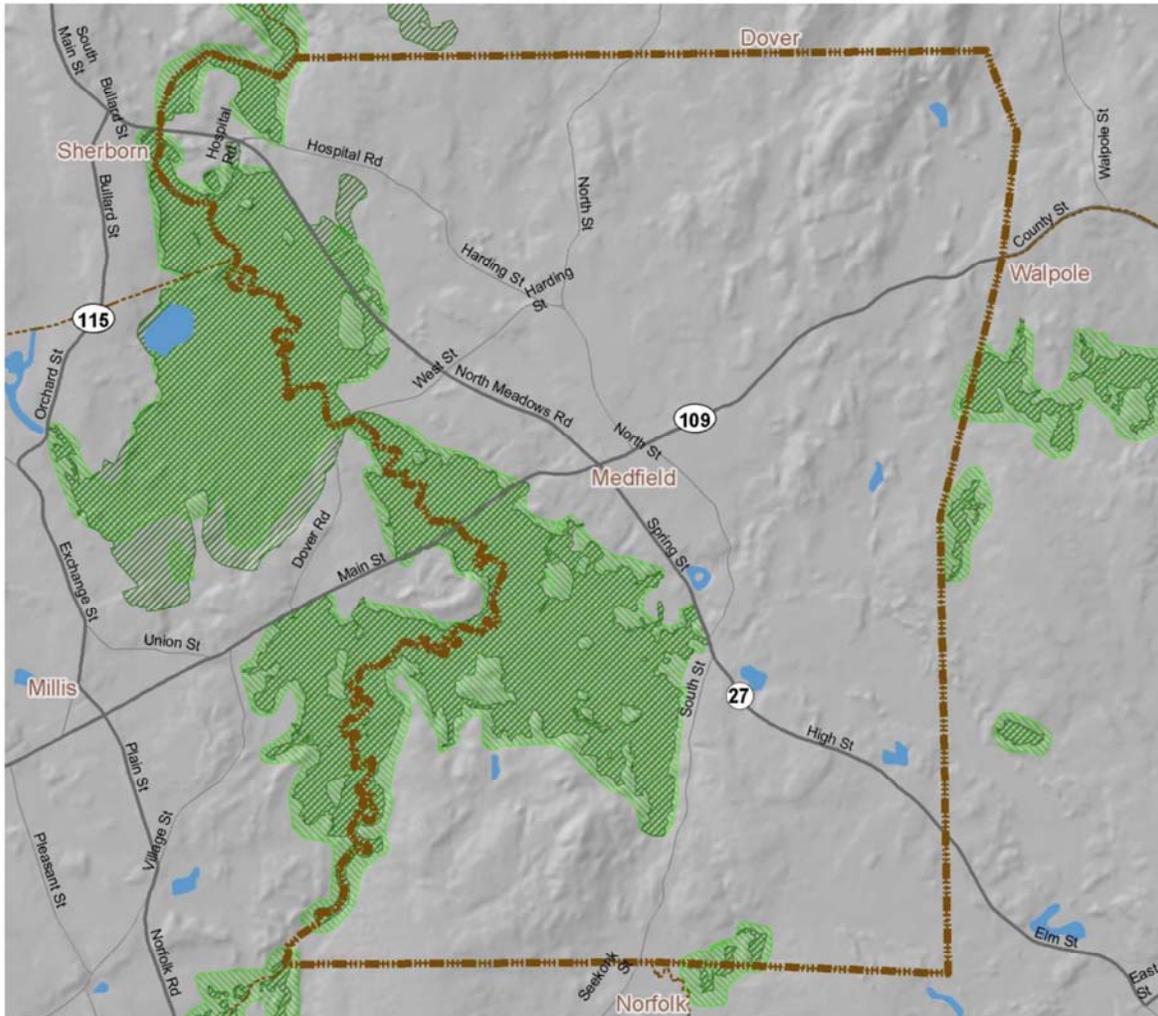
- Core Habitat – specific areas necessary to promote the long-term persistence of rare species, other species of conservation concern, exemplary natural communities and intact ecosystems.

² For more information about the make-up of these habitats and landscapes, refer to the NHESP website, http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town_core/Medfield.pdf

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- Critical Natural Landscape – 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.

BioMap2 Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape in Medfield



According to the statewide biodiversity analysis developed by NHESP, Medfield has 21 Core Habitats and 8 Critical Natural Landscapes consisting of the following acreage located along the edges of the Charles and Stop Rivers:

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- 1,265 acres of Core Habitat, 83.1% of which is protected (1,052 acres)
- 1,660 acres of Critical Natural Landscape, 77.6% of which is protected (1,288 acres)

SCENIC RESOURCES

The *2017–2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan* identified scenic resources that merit protection. They include:

Scenic Landscapes. These include the vast areas along the Charles River and the Stop River tributary, as well as views along scenic roads, and natural areas of Noon Hill and the Rocky Woods Reservations. Scenic views within the Medfield State Hospital and on Town property (Causeway Street, Charles River crossings) were also identified as meriting protection.



Long views of the Stop and Charles Rivers and bordering wetlands are possible from many points in Medfield, especially at bridge crossings.

Scenic Roads. These include ten roads, or portions thereof, designated as “Scenic Roads” under MGL Chapter 40A Section 16C because of their rural character, mature trees, stone walls, and status as secondary, rather than primary connector streets. They are Causeway Street, Foundry Street, Hartford Street, Noon Hill Road, North Street (Harding Street to the Dover line), Orchard Street, Philip Street, Pine Street (from Maplewood Road to the Dover Line), School Street, and Wight Street.

PAST AND CURRENT NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION EFFORTS

Town of Medfield Master Plan (1964). Medfield’s first comprehensive plan was completed in 1964 by a team of professional planning consultants and was intended to cover a fifteen-year period. The document noted several critical issues that needed attention – particularly the fast growing “suburban sprawl” -- and pointed out the need for more restrictive zoning and land subdivision requirements. Limits on sprawl would help assure protection of the Town’s natural resources and scenic beauty

Rocky Woods and Fork Factory Brook Reservations Management Plan (1996). Completed by The Trustees of Reservations, this plan outlined a process for managing the 630-acre Rocky Woods and Fork Factory Brook Reservations, located mostly in Medfield’s northeast

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corner.³ Natural resource management objectives included (1) providing and maintaining large, undisturbed forested areas, (2) maintaining and managing fields for both wildlife and crops; and (2) addressing natural resource issues at Chickering Pond, including stabilization of pond edges.

Medfield Master Plan (1997). In 1996, the professional planning firm of Whitman & Taintor worked with Medfield's Long-Range Planning Committee to update the Town's first master plan, completed in 1964. The 1997 plan noted that Medfield had retained much of its rural character and was rich in natural resources, and included in its recommendations the following goal:

Medfield's natural resources will be protected and enhanced.

Objectives supporting this goal included (1) protecting the Town's groundwater, wetlands, streams and ponds; (2) directing growth away from environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, steep slopes and important wildlife habitats; and (3) maintaining and protecting significant tracts of environmentally sensitive land and unique natural resources. Action steps included revising the wetlands bylaw to reflect the state's Rivers Act; adopting an erosion and sedimentation bylaw; developing a strategy to preserve the natural features of the Medfield State Hospital site; and allowing of the permanent protection of the farmland surrounding the Medfield State Hospital by encouraging the transfer of the farmland from the Massachusetts Department of Corrections to the Department of Food and Agriculture.

Medfield Historic Preservation Plan (1999). Completed in 1999, this document provided the Town's residents and public officials with a roadmap for historic and cultural resource protection. It spelled out four recommendation categories, identification, evaluation, protection, and advocacy, and provided action steps for each. Recommendations pertaining to protection of natural resources included protecting seven scenic roads and four scenic road corridors.

Medfield Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017-2022). Conditionally approved in 2017 by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, this plan will, in part, guide the Town in protection of its natural resources through 2022. Residents took part in the planning process by participating in a public forum and completing an on-line survey, and through these means, showed a deep appreciation for the Town's natural beauty and a strong desire to preserve this quality. The plan's goal pertaining to natural resources focuses on protecting water resources by controlling development, protecting scenic views, agricultural uses and wildlife habitat, and acquiring more open space.

Charles River Valley Natural Storage Area Management Plan (Draft, 2017). In 1983, the Army Corps of Engineers assumed control (through fee and protective easement) of large wetlands area along the Charles River to manage water along the upper and middle parts of the watershed, to retain flood water and slow flooding in the lower watershed. Medfield is part of this multi-community natural storage area. The management plan contained several natural resource protection objectives:

³ Approximately 613 of the 630 total acres of these two sites lie within the Town of Medfield.

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
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- Safeguarding habitat of wildlife and aquatic resources
- Retaining the four dominant plant communities: red maple swamps, deep emergent marshes, white pine-white oak forests, and shrub swamps
- Protecting threatened and endangered species
- Controlling the infiltration of invasive species
- Identifying and evaluating wetlands

Medfield State Hospital Strategic Reuse Master Plan (2018). The Medfield State Hospital Reuse Plan is the result of a multi-year effort to articulate a future for the historic campus, one that incorporates the needs of the Medfield community for housing and economic growth while at the same time reflecting the Town's character and the values of its residents. Natural resource protection is a major theme of the plan, which calls for preservation of 76 acres (out of 128) for open space and agriculture. In November 2019, voters in Medfield endorsed a re-zoning of the former state hospital area, opening the door for this and other plan recommendations to move forward.

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following are opportunities, challenges and other observations regarding Medfield's natural resources:

- Medfield's topography, including gently rolling hills and lower lying stream and pond edges, lends appeal to the natural landscape.
- The presence of large wetland areas associated with rivers, streams, and ponds, places limits on development of approximately 25% of the Town. Ledge, outcroppings, and shallow hard pan underlie approximately 45% of the Town, placing additional constraints on development.
- The Army Corps of Engineers, through fee or easement, has assumed control of the natural basins along the Charles River. Efforts to manage these areas has significantly minimized flooding throughout the watershed.
- Farming once dominated Medfield's economy. Today, very little agricultural land exists. The Town has protected 31.39 acres of private farmland through Chapter 61A programs, and 132.33 acres of private forest land through Chapter 61. Opportunity exists to expand protection of agricultural land through the redevelopment of the former Medfield State Hospital.

OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

As noted in the introduction to this inventory chapter, Medfield's open space resources contribute significantly to the Town's physical character and natural beauty. Recent planning efforts have confirmed that residents treasure open spaces and value their protection. Results of a survey conducted in association with the 2017 update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, showed that large percentages of residents viewed protection of open spaces for meeting water and recreational needs, preserving natural habitats, maintaining property values, and preserving aesthetics, as either important or very important. Observations made at the October 2019 Townwide Master Plan visioning session confirmed these findings. Participants identified open spaces, including Noon Hill, Rocky Woods, the Charles River meadows and Vine Lake as some of their favorite places; saw open space as contributing to Medfield's uniqueness; regarded open space as defining town character.

Of Medfield's 9,337.60 acres (14.59 square miles), approximately 33% of the Town's land area (3,066.50 acres) has been protected in perpetuity from development through one of the following means:

- Ownership and conservation restrictions maintained by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Land owned and managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Land owned and conservation easements held by the Town of Medfield
- Ownership by a not-for-profit conservation organization or land trust

Observations

- Medfield is the 258th in size out of the 365 municipalities in the Commonwealth but ranks 65th in the amount of permanently protected land.
- Medfield residents highly value the Town's open space resources, as evidenced by the results of recent surveys and public forums. These lands are viewed as essential for meeting the Town's water needs, as well as preserving habitats, maintaining property values, and meeting recreational needs.
- Some of the most treasured open spaces are Noon Hill, Rocky Woods, the Charles River meadows, and Vine Lake.
- The largest owners and/or managers of conservation lands in Medfield are the Town, The Trustees of Reservations, and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).
- A large portion of protected open space lies within the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Project area and is managed by the ACOE for flood control purposes.
- The recent purchase of 128 acres of former Medfield State Hospital lands aligns with the Town's history of preserving and protecting open space.

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Medfield is 258th in size but ranks 65th in the amount of permanently protected land in all 365 Massachusetts municipalities. For a detailed listing of conservation open space in the Town of Medfield, refer to the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan (available through the Town's website).⁴

FEDERALLY-OWNED LANDS AND CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. As part of the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Project (described under Natural Resources, above), the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers owns and/or manages nearly 900 acres of land located along the Charles and Stop Rivers.⁵ This includes 130.31 acres south of Route 109 (Main Street), 323.48 acres north of Route 109, 140.8 acres in the Noon Hill Reservation, and 299.17 acres along the Stop River. The ACOE has protected these wetlands, wet meadows, and other river edge lands as part of a larger flood mitigation project involving the entire Charles River watershed.

STATE-OWNED CONSERVATION LANDS

Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (formerly Department of Environmental Management/DEM) owns and manages the 229.09-acre Medfield Charles River State Reservation to the north of Route 109, reserved for model airplanes and agricultural uses. DEM also owns and manages the abutting 188-acre Medfield State Forest.

Department of Mental Health.

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health retains 21.81 acres in North Medfield, site of the Medfield State Hospital well.

TOWN-OWNED
CONSERVATION LANDS &
EASEMENTS

Town of Medfield. Medfield has preserved over 700 acres of land through both purchases and easements held by the Conservation Commission. The Town's inventory of protected open space lists lands in East Medfield, Medfield Center, Noon Hill, North Medfield, Southeast



Holt Pond is part of the Noon Hill Reservation, a 500+-acre area owned and/or managed jointly by the Town of Medfield, The Trustees of Reservations, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

⁴ <https://www.town.medfield.net/DocumentCenter/View/3718/Open-Space-and-Recreation-Plan---Conditionally-Approved-2017-through-2022-pdf?bidId=>

⁵ On lands that the Army Corps of Engineers manage but do not own, the agency holds conservation restrictions.

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
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Medfield, and along the Charles and Stop Rivers as under ownership of the Town and managed by the commission. Significant among these are the Noon Hill Reservation (287.32 acres), the Holmquist Land and Morse Wallingford Lands (101 acres), and former Medfield State Hospital (128 acres). Forests protected through Chapter 61 total 132.22 acres, including 65.42 acres on Foundry Street, 30.8 acres on Philip Street, 19.11 acres on Main Street, and 17.0 acres on Hartford Street. Through Chapter 61A, the Town has protected 31.39 acres of agricultural lands on Linden Court (2.4 acres), Nebo Street (4.71 acres), and Main Street (7.88 acres). Chapter 61B-protected recreation lands total 193.29 acres, located on School, Wight, Rear Causeway, North, Pine and Main Streets, and Noon Hill Road. The Medfield Conservation Commission holds twelve conservation easements on lands ranging in size from 15.4 acres to 0.19 acre.

PRIVATELY-OWNED CONSERVATION LANDS & LAND TRUSTS

The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR). This non-profit organization is the oldest private land trust in the United States, established in 1891. TTOR manages conserved lands throughout Massachusetts, including over 1,000 acres in Medfield⁶, as follows:

- 8.83 acres north of Route 109 along the Charles River (part of the Natural Valley Storage Project)
- 209 acres south of Route 109 along the Charles River (including 198.28 acres of the Henry L. Shattuck Reservation⁷ and a portion of Noon Hill)
- 488.0 acres comprising the Rocky Woods Reservation, with ponds, trails, and picnic facilities
- 124.90 acres comprising the Fork Factory Brook, with trails
- 191.41 acres along the Stop River (part of the Natural Valley Storage Project and including the Medfield Rhododendron Reservation⁸)

As discussed earlier in this chapter under Natural Resources, TTOR completed the *Rocky Woods and Fork Factory Brook Reservations Management Plan* in 1996 to guide preservation efforts pertaining to forests, surface waters, agricultural land, and visitor amenities associated with this large open space.

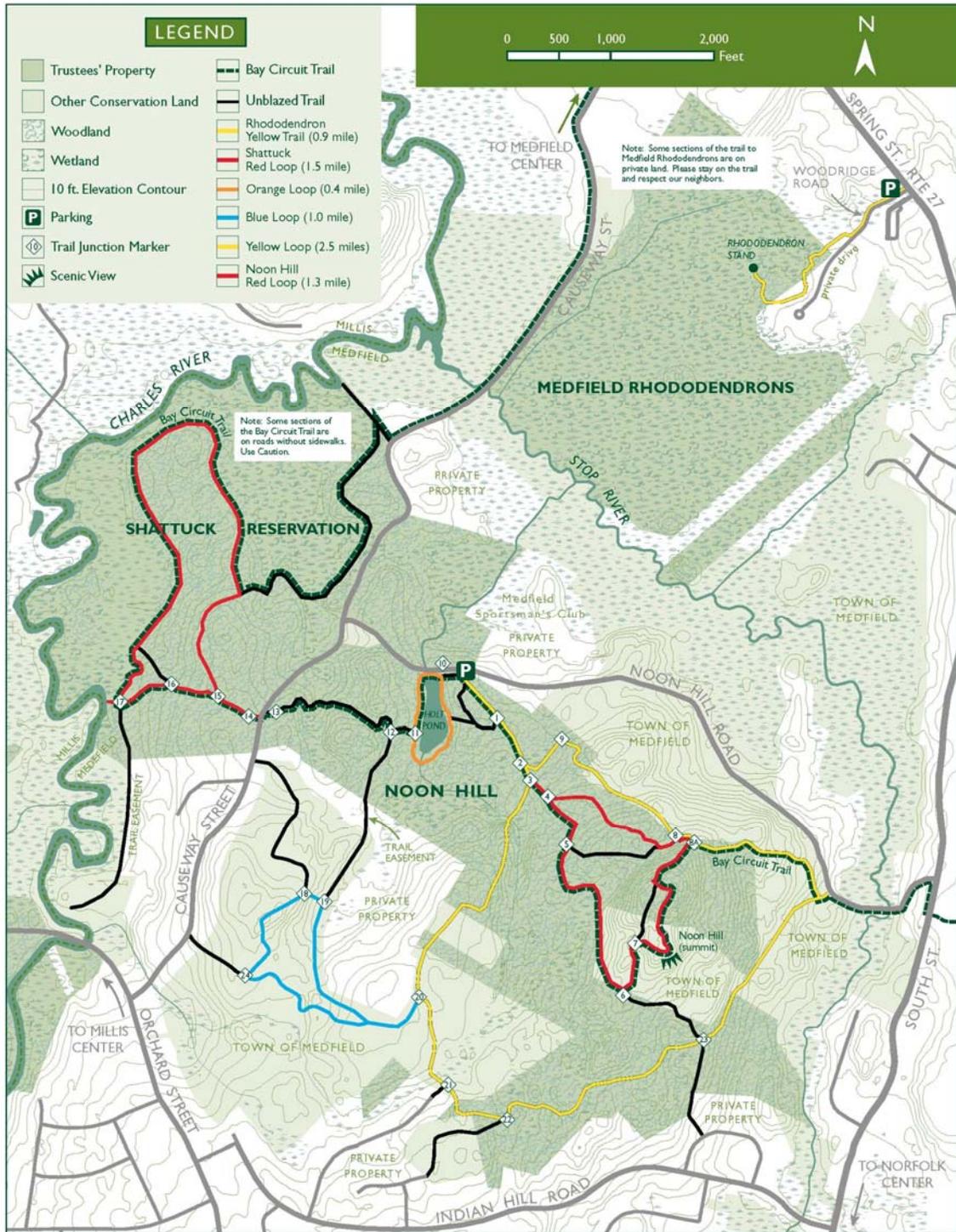
Upper Charles Conservation Land Trust, Inc. This regional not-for-profit land trust is dedicated to preserving open spaces in the Upper Charles River Valley (Dover, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medfield, Medway, Milford, Millis, Natick, and Sherborn). UCCT owns and manages 4.0 acres in the north part of Medfield.

⁶ Acreage provided by the Inventory of Open Space Lands, included in the Medfield Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2017. Acreage totals are inconsistent with those listed in other sources, including the website of the Trustees of Reservations.

⁷ The Trustees of Reservations list the Henry Shattuck Reservation as covering 245 acres.

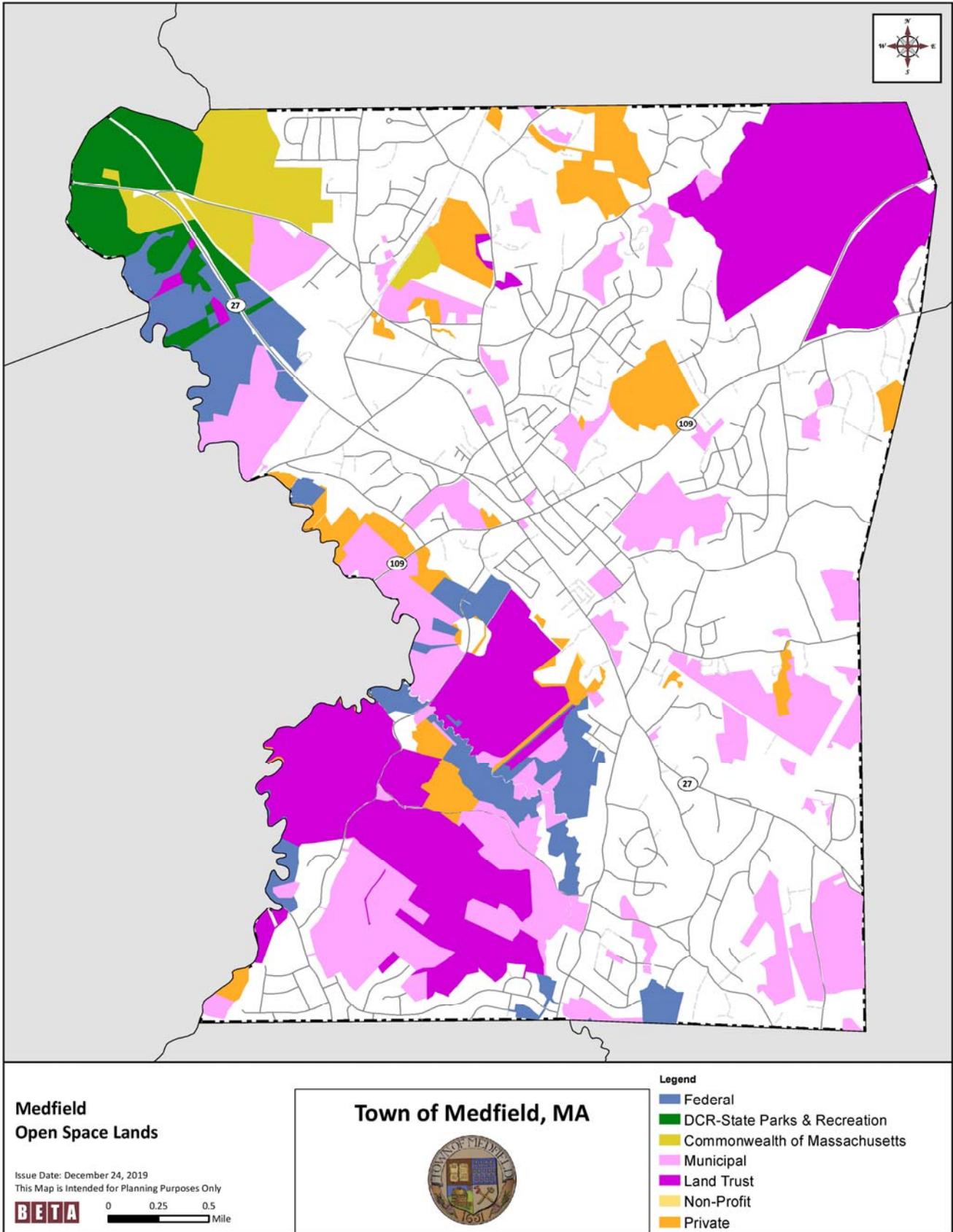
⁸The Trustees of Reservations list the Rhododendron Reservation property as covering 196 acres.

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions

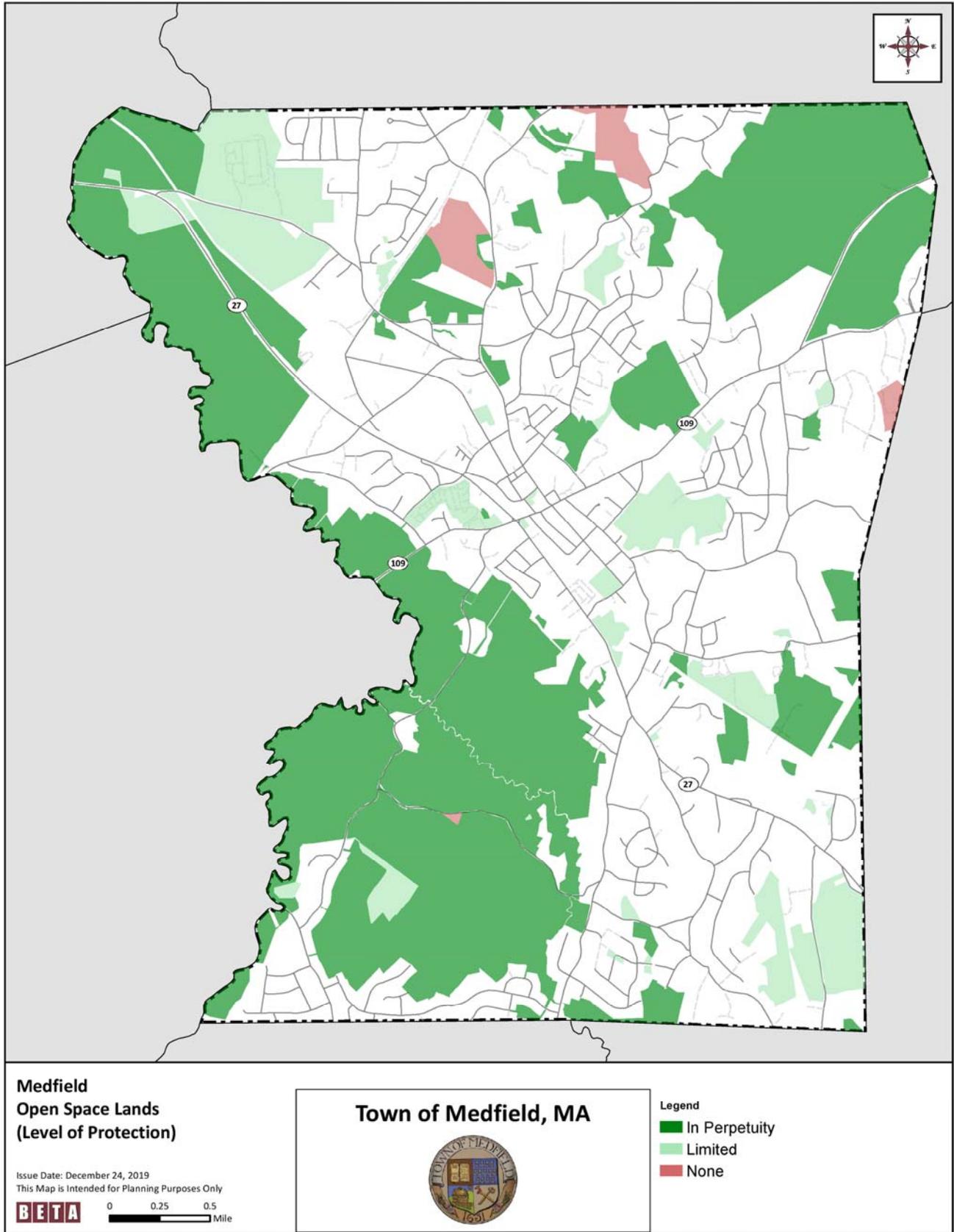


A trail map provided by The Trustees of Reservations shows three of the larger conservation areas in Medfield – Noon Hill, the Shattuck Reservation, and Medfield Rhododendrons.

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions



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OTHER EFFORTS TO PROTECT OPEN SPACE

Medfield Conservation Commission. The Town's Conservation Commission is a seven-member reviewing entity, with members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. One of the commission's primary purposes is to uphold and assure compliance with the State's Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40 and its associated Rules and Regulations (310 C.M.R. 10.00) and Medfield's Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Chapter 290.1 – 290.13). The bylaw requires that a permit must be issued by the commission before filling, removing, dredging or building upon wetlands and buffer zones can occur. The commission also reviews applications for special permits on properties within the Aquifer Protection and Floodplain (overlay) Districts. In addition to reviewing permit applications and issuing permits, the commission holds conservation easements on twelve parcels of land and manages several hundred acres of permanently preserved open space, including forests and agricultural lands.

Medfield Master Plan (1997). The 1997 Master Plan noted that open space was associated with the quality of life within a community, and that adequate preservation and maintenance strategies were needed to protect what exists today and to provide for the future. It included in its recommendations, the following goal:

The Town will provide a system of open land...that allows for the preservation of the natural environment and character of the community.

Policies associated with the goal included (1) acquiring and maintaining land for conservation, public recreation and the preservation of the water supply, wildlife habitat, and cultural and natural resources; (2) linking open space, trails and recreation sites to one another, to residential areas, and to other communities; and (3) developing incentives for private land owners and developers to contribute to the open space needs of the community. Actions included (1) continuing to monitor and duplicate the list of potential acquisition parcels; (2) communicating and cooperating with the open space committees of adjacent communities; (3) determining an appropriate use for the landfill site; and (4) revising the Open Space Residential Bylaw to provide a higher quality of open space within cluster subdivisions.

Medfield Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017-2022). The plan's goals pertaining to open space were as follows:

- *Acquiring additional lands for conservation* – budgeting funds annually; incorporating the Open Space and Recreation Plan into the Townwide Master Plan; working with the planning board on changes to bylaws that further preserve and protect open spaces; passing the Community Preservation Act; identifying privately owned parcels as candidates for acquisition.
- *Expanding links between open spaces and recreation sites* – expanding the existing town trail system; improving access to trails, implementing trail development standards; developing a digital map; instituting a trail management program; supporting the Bay Colony Rail Trail extension into Medfield.

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
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- *Improving the Town's open space areas and residents' knowledge of them* – assigning responsibility for each Town-owned open space to a department or commission; publicizing the open spaces (through the Town website); organizing volunteer clean up efforts and group hikes.

The plan also identified several open space properties with little protection:

- Westwood Gun Club, Trailside Road (12.74 acres)
- Wardner Farm/Norfolk Hunt Club, North Street (101 acres)
- Medfield Sportsmen's Club, Noon Hill Road (44.3 acres)

Two other privately-owned parcels totaling 25.40 acres, were also included on this list.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council Metro Future (Regional Plan 2008). Developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, this plan established goals and objectives to be achieved by the cities and towns in the Metropolitan Boston region, through cooperative efforts between 2008 and 2030. Medfield is one of those communities. The plan noted that if current trends continued, the region would lose the opportunity to create a comprehensive network of greenways, wildlife routes, and trails, as almost 45% of the land along these corridors is developed. To combat the trend, the plan proposed:

- 139,000 acres of developable land be identified as a high priority by the State Land Conservation Plan to be permanently protected from development.
- No more than 5,000 acres of prime and important farmland soils will be lost to development.

Medfield is also part of the MAPC's effort to link thirteen communities southwest of Boston associated with the Charles, Neponset and Canoe River, known as the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC). Representatives from the towns gather on a regular basis to discuss regional issues and engage in cooperative planning, including for the protection of open lands. The town planner serves as Medfield's TRIC representative.

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following are opportunities, challenges and other observations regarding Medfield's open space resources:

- While Medfield has had success in protecting open space in all parts of Town, many of the parcels are disconnected from one another. Many also lack equitable access, including sidewalks, walking paths, benches and seating, to improve their appeal to older adults and persons with disabilities. Opportunities exist to create routes between areas, utilizing bike lanes and sidewalks, as well as off-road trails.

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- The Town's list of unprotected properties that could be conserved in the future for open space consists of seven parcels of private land totaling 186.54 acres. Opportunity exists to prepare a map, locating these parcels to target for future purchase or negotiated easement.
- Acquisition of the acreage linked to the former Medfield State Hospital will provide many options for use, including agriculture and recreation. Opportunity exists to take a balanced approach to the reuse of this land, so that several functions are accommodated.
- As climate change continues, the flooding of Medfield's many streams, brooks and ponds will continue to increase, threatening to cause greater and greater property damage. Opportunity exists for the Town to strengthen its development-related bylaws to protect against this threat.
- Medfield has not adopted the Community Preservation Act, and as a result, has missed an opportunity to support additional purchases of open space through the funding derived from the act. Opportunity exists to advocate for and pass the CPA through an aggressive public education effort.

RECREATION RESOURCES

Medfield's many passive and active recreation sites contribute further to residents' quality of life. The Town is fortunate to have several large public and privately owned and managed recreation sites, the Henry Shattuck Reservation, Noon Hill, the Medfield Rhododendrons, the Medfield State Forest, Rocky Woods, and Fork Factory Brook. Two navigable rivers, the Charles and Stop, as well as several ponds provide additional water-based recreational opportunities. The recent purchase of lands associated with the former Medfield State Hospital, if so designated, has the potential to help fill in some of the gaps in the Town's overall recreation needs.

STATE-OWNED RECREATION LAND

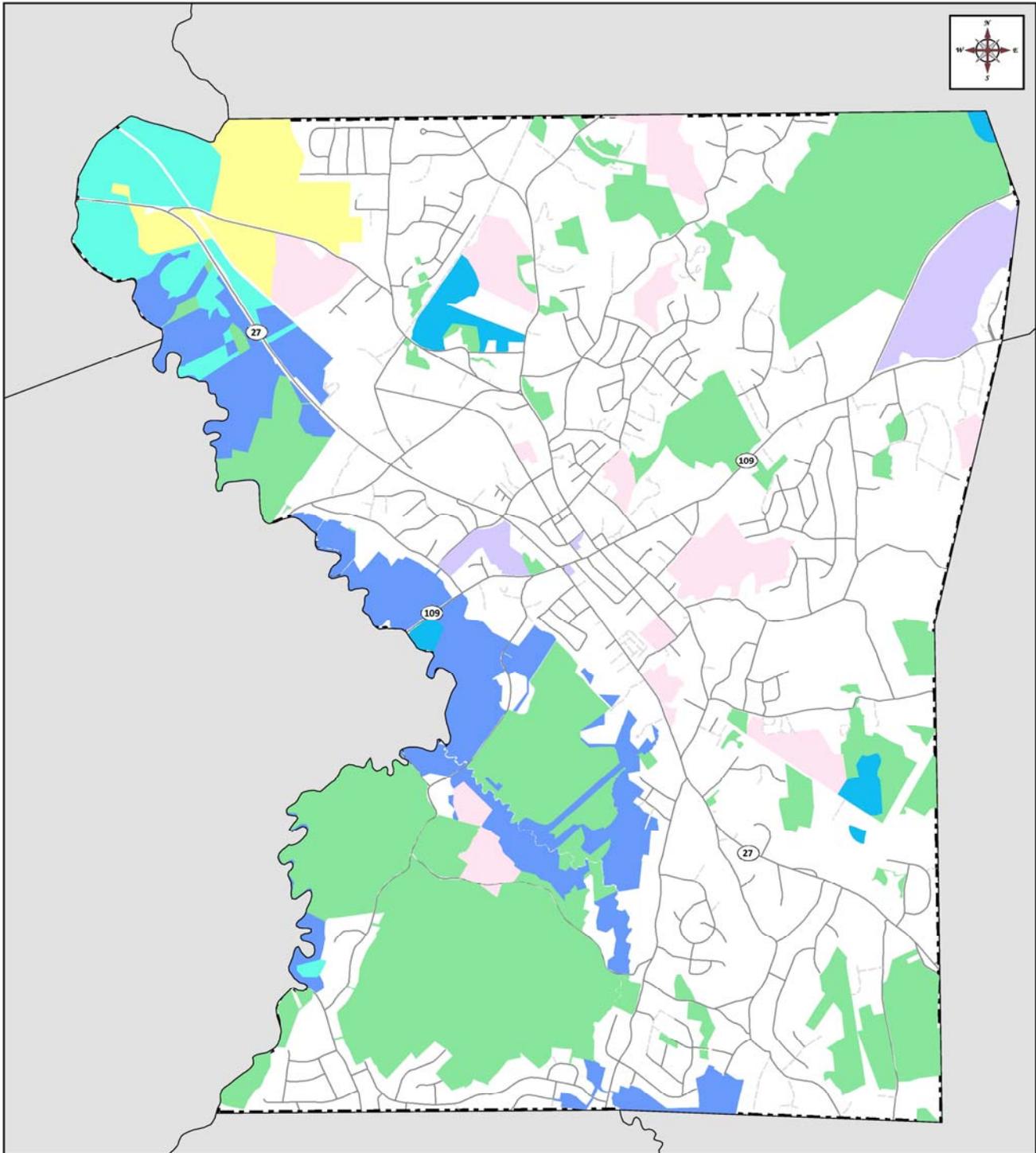
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting through the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), owns and manages the following lands:

Medfield State Forest, a 188-acre wooded area located along the Charles River in the northwest corner of Medfield. The property contains wetlands, woods and open fields, and the north part of the property contains a "flying field" for model airplanes (accessible from Hospital Road), as well as the Medfield State Hospital cemetery (accessible from Route 27). Visitors can access the property off Hospital Road. The Bay Circuit Trail (discussed later in this section) traverses part of the property.

Observations

- Medfield's over 3,000 acres of open space offer infinite opportunity to explore the outdoors through recreation of many forms, including hiking, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching, swimming and ice skating.
- Ownership and maintenance of this land is shared between the federal, state and local government, as well as a private land trust, The Trustees of Reservations.
- The Town's downtown passive recreation sites, including Memorial (Gazebo) Park, Straw Hat Park, Meeting House (Baker's) Park, and Baxter Park also serve as venues for community gathering, including Medfield Day, held each September.
- Management of outdoor public recreation facilities is handled by the Park and Recreation Department and School Department. The Conservation Commission is responsible for managing Town-owned open space.
- McCarthy Park, located on the former site of the Medfield State Hospital farm, has yet to be fully developed into a recreation facility.
- Medfield's trails link to two regional systems, the Bay Circuit Trail and the Charles River Link Trail.

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**Medfield
Protected & Recreational
Open Space**

Issue Date: December 24, 2019
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only



Town of Medfield, MA



Legend

- Conservation
- Recreation
- Recreation and Conservation
- Historical/Cultural
- Water Supply
- Flood Control
- Underwater
- Other
- Unknown

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Medfield Charles River State Reservation, adjacent to the Medfield State Forest, contains a series of moderately graded trails suitable for hiking and birdwatching, including a portion of the Charles River Link Trail (discussed below).

TOWN-OWNED RECREATION LANDS AND FACILITIES

Town-owned recreation lands and facilities in the Town of Medfield are managed by the Park and Recreation Department (MPRD), School Department, Conservation Commission, or Department of Public Works. MPRD maintains seven properties, including over 280 acres of outdoor recreation area: Baxter Memorial Park, Hinkley Park, Swim Pond, McCarthy Park, Meeting House Park, Metacomet Park, and the Pfaff Community Center, as well as the grounds of Town Hall, Medfield Public Library, Medfield Historical Society, Straw Hat Park, and Dwight-Derby House. The School Department manages approximately 200 acres of athletic fields at the Wheelock, Dale Street, Middle and High Schools. The Medfield Conservation Commission oversees over 500 acres of open space, forests, and agricultural lands, as well as several small ponds. Vine Lake Cemetery is managed by the Department of Public Works, Cemetery Commission.



Metacomet Park, owned by the Town of Medfield and managed by the Park and Recreation Department, provides space for athletic teams to practice and play.

NATURAL AREAS

Noon Hill (515.99 acres). This substantial natural area located in the southwest part of Medfield is jointly owned by the Town of Medfield (285.02 acres) and The Trustees of Reservations (230.97 acres).⁹ The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers manages a portion of the land. The area contains 4.5 miles of trails through woods and fields, and also is the site of Holt Pond. Visitors hike, fish, and enjoy scenic views of Walpole, Norfolk and Foxboro's Gillette Stadium from the highest point. Other activities permitted at Noon Hill include bird watching, cross-country skiing, dog walking, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, mountain biking, picnicking and hiking.

⁹ Acreage totals vary depending on the source of data. The figures listed were obtained from the Town of Medfield's Inventory of Protected Open Space.

Holmquist and Morse Wallingford Conservation Lands (101 acres). This area consists of two adjacent pieces of property along Plain Street. Both contain hiking trails, and the Holmquist land is home to the Medfield Community Gardens.

Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area (66 acres). Located on School Street and abutting the Norfolk Hunt Club near Medfield Center, this conservation land features wooded wetlands, fields and a network of trails. The land also provides protection for one of the Town's drinking water wells. Users may hike, cross-country ski and engage in dog walking and horseback riding.

Charles River Gateway. The newly created Charles River Gateway, located off Hospital Road on the northwest side of the former Medfield State Hospital campus, provides a canoe and kayak launch that allows visitors to reach large stretches of the river. It was established through a joint effort of the Town of Medfield, Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance in conjunction with a clean-up of the former Medfield State Hospital landfill, once located on the site. Many trails, including the Charles River Link Trail, cross through the gateway, allowing hikers to access, including the Rocky Narrows Reservation (with King Philip's Overlook) and Sherborn Town Forest directly across the river in Sherborn. Permitted activities are boating, fishing, hiking and bird watching.

PARKS, PONDS AND RIVER ACCESS

Baxter Park (1 acre). Located at the corner of Main and Spring Streets, this one-acre pocket park serves as a veterans' memorial with commemorative monuments, a flagpole, benches and shade trees. Holiday tree-lighting takes place annually in the park.

Metacomet Park (8.70 acres). Located on Pleasant Street, Metacomet Park is used by many Medfield teams to practice and play games, and it also is a gathering spot for teens. The park contains four tennis courts, a Little League baseball diamond, and a multi-use field. Adjacent to the park is a small playground with climbing equipment and picnic areas.

Meeting House (Baker's) Pond (1 acre). This small pond sits in the center of Medfield to the west of the First Parish Church and opposite the Dwight-Derby House on Upham Roads and Frairy Street. In addition to providing benches for sitting and grassy spots for picnics, it is a centerpiece during Medfield Day, staging food vendors and musical entertainments set up along Frairy Street and Upham Road.

Selectmen's Green/Gazebo Park (0.35 acres). Located on Main Street adjacent to the Medfield Public Library and across the street from the Medfield Town Hall, this small pocket park contains a gazebo, pathways, and plantings. It hosts concerts, plays and other summer events, and is the anchor point of the Medfield Cultural District.

Straw Hat Park (pocket park). Located on North Street, this narrow, fully ADA-compliant urban open space opened in 2016. It includes a seasonal fountain, benches, two game tables for chess and checkers, and a large Jenga game.

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Vine Lake Cemetery (31.90 acres). While not formally considered a recreation area, this historic site in the center of Medfield is used by residents for walking, bird watching, fishing, and in the past for skating on the pond. Vine Lake, located in the heart of the cemetery, is the property's focal point.

Hinkley Memorial Park/ Swim Pond (19.20 acres). Located on Green Street, this man-made waterbody is open to the public in summer for swimming with summer or day passes, issued by the Medfield Park and Recreation Department. The pond is roped and staffed with lifeguards, and users have access to a concession stand. The pond must be dredged each year to maintain water quality.

Danielson Pond. Located near Route 27 and Homestead Drive, this waterbody was manmade through the construction of a dam on the north side. Users boat and fish on the pond. The area has no public facilities.

Kingsbury Pond. Part of the Clark-Kingsbury Grist Mill Historic Site located on Route 27 (Spring Street), the pond area offers two short trails on each side of the pond. The water wheel of the grist mill has been newly restored, and the adjacent lawn contains a small picnic area. In addition to hiking the trail, users can boat and fish at the pond. The area has no public facilities.

ATHLETIC FIELDS

Medfield's athletic fields are managed and maintained by the Medfield School Department with the exception of McCarthy Field and Metacomet Park, which are managed by the Park and Recreation Department.

William E. McCarthy Memorial Park (56.36 acres). Originally part of the Medfield State Hospital farm, this large recreation area located on the south side of Hospital Road holds several playing fields. It is also a popular sledding spot, and is covered, in part, by open fields.

Ralph Wheelock Fields (102.92 acres). Located off Elm Street, this large recreation area contains one softball/Little league field, twelve soccer fields, three basketball backboards on a paved surface, play equipment and a parking area. Activities at this site include softball, baseball, soccer, football, basketball, and children's play, as well as the annual "3 v 3" tournament for young children. Town-owned conservation lands about the fields and provide an area for hiking and dog walking.



The fields at Medfield's Junior and Senior High School complex accommodate many sports including football, baseball, field hockey, softball and a track.

Townwide Master Plan, Medfield, MA
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions

Dale Street Fields (20.90 acres). Adjacent to the Dale Street School, this area contains play equipment, a paved area with two basketball backboards, three playgrounds, a multi-purpose grass field with two softball/Little League fields, and a parking area. Activities include baseball, softball, flag football, and children’s play. The Town maintains a basketball court across Dale Street behind the public safety building.

Medfield Middle and High School Fields (73.29 acres). This large area provides the outdoor athletic facilities for both the Middle and High Schools. Facilities include a football field, two baseball fields, one field hockey field, two practice football fields, one softball field, one track, two paved shared tennis/basketball courts, two dedicated basketball courts and a large parking area.

POLICE GUN RANGE

For the past 25 years, the Medfield Police Department has maintained a “law enforcement only” gun range for restricted use. Located off Route 27 on land owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this site serves as a firearms training ground for the Medfield Police, as well as numerous other local, state and federal agencies.

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

Medfield’s indoor recreation facilities include three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. Each of these buildings is maintained by the Medfield School Department. The Park and Recreation Department maintains one indoor facility, the ***Hannah Adams Pfaff Community Center***, located on North Street, that serves as the offices for the department. The former high school provides meeting space, and an outdoor play area and picnic spot. The school buildings and Pfaff Center are discussed in detail in the Public Facilities and Services chapter of this inventory.

PRIVATELY-OWNED RECREATION LAND

Rocky Woods (The Trustees of Reservations). This 488-acre parcel located off Hartford Street near the northeast corner of Medfield was a gift of Dr. Joel Goldthwait, a local surgeon who had a keen interest in physical fitness. Medfield residents frequented the site year-round, but particularly in winter when they could enjoy both skiing and skating on Chickering Pond. Goldthwait donated the property, along with an endowment, to The Trustees of Reservations in 1940. Originally reserved for care of Rocky Woods only, the endowment funds were eventually rolled into one large fund that supports management of all TTOR sites. The property contains 6.5 miles of trails that meander through woods and wetlands, around the property’s five ponds, and to the top of 435-foot Cedar Hill. Permitted uses include bird watching, cross-country skiing, dog walking, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, mountain biking, picnicking, hiking, and private functions.

Fork Factory Brook (The Trustees of Reservations). Located off Hartford Street in the northeast corner of Medfield adjacent to Rocky Woods, this 124.90-acre property is site of a former pitchfork mill. It contains a network of trails through wetland, hayfields, and

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wooded upland providing views of the surrounding area. Permitted uses include hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, dog walking, bird watching and mountain biking.

Noon Hill (The Trustees of Reservations). This large conservation area is jointly owned by the Trustees of Reservations and Town of Medfield. Refer to the description under Town-Owned Recreation Land, above.

Henry L. Shattuck Reservation (The Trustees of Reservations). This 198.28-acre former pastureland located adjacent to Noon Hill contains forested upland of oak and pine overlooking a wet meadow and red maple swamp.¹⁰ Visitors may use the property for bird watching, cross-country skiing, dog walking, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, mountain biking, picnicking, and hiking.

Medfield Rhododendron Reservation (The Trustees of Reservations). This 196-acre property located off Woodbridge Road contains a rare stand of *Rhododendron maximum*, the great laurel or rosebay rhododendron, one of only three species of evergreen rhododendrons native to eastern North America. Gardens are free and open to the public, and visitors may engage in hiking, bird watching, picnicking, hunting, sightseeing, and garden exploration.

Norfolk Hunt Club (Wardner Farm Trust). Established in 1895, The Norfolk Hunt Club is one of the oldest registered fox hunts in the United States. The facility is located on North Street, and maintains 50-acre steeplechase course comprised of flat surfaces, rolling hills, trails, open fields and wooded areas, many of which feature traditional foxhunting obstacles, including stonewalls, banks, brush jumps, coops, hogbacks, cordwood, and more. Horseback riders can participate in the hunts, and spectators are welcome.¹¹

Gun and Sportsmen's Clubs. Medfield is home to two private clubs that provide rifle, pistol, skeet, and/or archery ranges. The **Medfield Sportsmen's Club**, founded in 1941, owns 44.30 acres on Noon Hill Road in the southeast part of Medfield and has, in the past, hosted Boy Scouts for troop outings. Established in 1942, the **Westwood Gun Club** offers year-round access to covered rifle ranges, as well as outdoor pistol and archery ranges. Located on 12.74 acres at the end of Trailside Road, the club is open to members only.

Kingsbury Club. This private health and fitness club is a members-only recreation facility located on Ice House Road. It maintains a 25-meter by 25-yard pool and five indoor tennis courts, as well as an array of fitness equipment, and serves individuals of all ages. Its proximity to the Medfield Senior Center makes it a popular spot for the Town's elders.

TRAILS AND TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS

Bay Circuit Trail. First proposed in 1929 as a version of Boston's Emerald Necklace, this 200-mile recreational trail connects towns in the outlying suburbs of Boston, from Plum

¹⁰ Acreage totals vary depending on the source of data. The figures listed were obtained from the Town of Medfield's Inventory of Protected Open Space.

¹¹ Wardner Farm Trust which owns 101 acres open space, divided between the Norfolk Hunt Club land on Centre Street, and the Wardner Farm lands, located on Centre Street near the Dover line.

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Island in Newburyport to Kingston Bay in Duxbury. It crosses through fifty municipalities and four counties in the shape of a “C.” In Medfield, the trail touches or crosses the Noon Hill Reservation, Medfield Rhododendron Reservation, Rocky Woods Reservation, Fork Factory Brook and the Charles River, and intersects smaller networks of trails along the way. Recreation enthusiasts may use the trail for hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, dog walking, bird watching, picnicking, mountain biking, snow shoeing and jogging.

Charles River Link Trail. Completed in 2009, this 16-mile trail connects open spaces in the towns of Newton, Wellesley, Needham, Natick, Dover and Medfield via an established route along the most scenic parts of the Charles River. In Medfield, it starts along the Bay Circuit Trail where Hospital Road intersects with the Medfield State Hospital’s Power Plant Road and extends north towards Newton, passing through the State Hospital lands and the Medfield Charles River State Reservation. The trail may be used for hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, dog walking, bird watching, picnicking, mountain biking, snow shoeing and jogging.

Bay Colony Trail and Friends of the Medfield Rail Trail. This volunteer organization is devoted to implementing the 1.3-mile section of the Bay Colony Rail Trail that routes through Medfield. It follows the corridor of the inactive former Bay Colony Railroad, running from Harding Street near Medfield Junction to the Dover line (between Farm Street and Hunt Drive) with the ultimate goal of connecting to the Needham Junction commuter rail station. The Friends undertake research and documentation, engage in outreach efforts, host public hearings and raise funds to support trail construction.



The 200-mile Bay Circuit Trail passes through Medfield’s Noon Hill Reservation, Rhododendrons, Rocky Woods Reservation, and Fork Factory Brook.

EFFORTS TO PLAN FOR RECREATION NEEDS

Medfield Master Plan (1997). The 1997 Master Plan noted that along with open space, recreation was associated with the quality of life in Medfield, and that adequate preservation and maintenance strategies were needed to protect existing recreation land and provide for future needs. It included in its recommendations, the following goal:

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The Town will provide a system of ...public recreation facilities that allows for the preservation of the natural environment, character of the community, and recreational opportunities.

Policies associated with this goal were (1) acquiring and maintaining land for public recreation, (2) linking open space, trails and recreation sites within the Town to each other, to residential areas, and to other communities; and (3) developing incentives for private land owners and developers to contribute to the recreational needs of the community. Action steps, as enumerated under Open Space Resources above, included (1) continuing to monitor and duplicate the list of potential acquisition parcels; (2) communicating and cooperating with the open space committees of adjacent communities; (3) determining an appropriate use for the landfill site; and (4) revising the Open Space Residential Bylaw to provide a higher quality of open space within cluster subdivisions.

Medfield Community Recreation Facility Market and Financial Feasibility Analysis (2017).

The Medfield Park and Recreation Commission hired Hunden Strategic Partners to study the market and financial feasibility of a community recreation center. Driving this study was the limited size and aging condition of the current Park and Recreation Department building, the Pfaff Center. The study concluded that the Pfaff Center was inadequate and that a new facility was warranted, and that such a building would greatly benefit the community through expanded indoor and outdoor recreation programs, as well as social gathering opportunities. With expanded space and programming, revenue from the department was project to increase by 350% within three years of opening.

Medfield Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017-2022). Goals pertaining to recreation were as follows:

- *Developing recreation facilities to address the diverse needs of the community – providing ADA compliance and accessibility to public facilities and spaces; expanding the trails system to link recreation areas; improving the quality and safety of Town properties maintained by MPRD.*
- *Providing recreation opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all ages, cultures, and abilities – structuring the Parks and Recreation Commission to meet the demands of the changing population; expanding programs for youth, adults and seniors; modifying programs to meet the needs of persons with all levels of physical ability; providing consistent maintenance at recreation areas; developing a “Friends of Parks and Recreation” to assist in fundraising; enhancing relationships between recreation-oriented departments and organizations; distributing trail information about walking, hiking and horseback riding.*
- *Improving communication and coordination between MPRD, the schools, youth sports organizations, and neighboring towns – exploring ways to share facilities.*

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following are opportunities, challenges and other observations regarding Medfield's recreation resources:

- While Medfield owns and maintains over 260 acres of athletic fields, most are overused, with school fields booked for use seven days per week. Opportunity exists to develop more of the land associated with McCarthy Park to expand the number of fields.
- The Parks and Recreation Department budget has not increased in several years, and demands for services, including grounds maintenance and programs, continues to rise.
- The existing Parks and Recreation Department building, the Hannah Adams Pfaff Center, is in a state of decline, and a new facility is needed. Opportunity exists to create a Medfield Community Center in conjunction with development of this new facility – a place that serves residents of all ages through an array of programming. If located near the downtown the facility will be accessible to users with and without vehicular transportation, thus helping to ensure its long-term viability.
- Currently Medfield does not have a designated “dog park” and dog owners have routinely used the former Medfield State Hospital grounds and conservation lands behind the Wheelock School for this purpose. Redevelopment of the former state hospital site may prohibit use by dogs. Opportunity exists to create a dog park to provide a special place just for canines and their owners.
- Medfield has attempted to pass the Community Preservation Act three times without success. Opportunity exists to try again, executing an aggressive education campaign to prepare Town Meeting voters. Funding through the CPA can support expansion of recreation facilities and lands.

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS

- Bay Colony Rail Trail Study Committee, Bay Colony Rail Trail Study Report, 2016
- Hunden Strategic Partners, Medfield Community Recreation Facility Market and Financial Feasibility Analysis, 2017
- Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, BioMap2, Medfield, 2012.
- Medfield Conservation Commission, Open Space & Recreation Plan Update, 2017
- Medfield Historic Preservation Plan, 2008
- Medfield State Hospital Reuse Master Plan, 2018
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Metro Future Regional Plan, 2008
- The Trustees of Reservations, Rocky Woods and Fork Factory Brook Reservations Management Plan, 1996
- United States Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Charles River Valley Natural Storage Area Management Plan, 2017
- Whiteman and Taintor, Town of Medfield Master Plan, May 1997

WEBSITES

- Bay Circuit Trail: <https://www.baycircuit.org/>
- Bay Colony Trail: <http://medfield.baycolonyrailtrail.org/>
- Charles River Link Trail: <http://charlesriverlink.org/>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: <https://msc.fema.gov/>
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation:
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation>
- Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife:
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masswildlifes-natural-heritage-endangered-species-program>
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council: <http://www.mapc.org/>
- The Trustees of Reservations: <http://www.thetrustees.org/>
- Upper Charles Conservation Land Trust: <http://www.uppercharles.org/>

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INTERVIEWS

Richard DeSorgher, Medfield Town Historian

Moe Goulet, Department of Public Works

Mel Siebolt, Chair, Medfield Park & Recreation Commission

Leslee Willitts, Conservation Agent

Chapter 5: Transportation and Circulation

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5-TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Chapter identifies and describes the existing transportation system in the Town of Medfield and how it connects with the regional transportation network. This Chapter also identifies transportation-related issues, opportunities, and challenges raised by Town officials and residents that will be addressed in the recommendations of the Master Plan. This Chapter begins with an introduction and background, followed by an inventory of the existing transportation conditions. The following elements are summarized in this Chapter.

- Travel Characteristics
- Public Transportation
- Roadways
- Traffic Volumes
- Traffic Operations
- Roadway Safety
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations
- Parking
- Maintenance of Infrastructure
- Medfield State Hospital Reuse
- Planned Improvements
- Issues and Opportunities

The local transportation system should provide safe and efficient mobility for all transportation modes and connections to regional facilities. The availability and quality of the transportation system are important to residents, businesses, students, visitors, and emergency services. The maintenance and enhancement of the transportation system can be used to attract development and expand the tax base. In addition, the transportation system has impacts on resources, community character, and the quality of life.

KEY FINDINGS

- 20% of people who work in Medfield also live in Medfield
- 69% of Medfield residents drive alone to work
- 11% of Medfield residents use public transit to commute to work
- Route 109 is highly congested through downtown Medfield
- Residents desire a more walkable downtown area
- The reuse of Medfield State Hospital land will necessitate an examination of potential mitigation for additional traffic
- Route 27 at West Street has been identified as a high crash location by MassDOT

TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics and travel characteristics such as Journey-to-Work data, vehicles available per household, commute time, and mode share trends are discussed in this section.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 5.1 summarizes total population estimates based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau for the years 2000, 2010, and 2017 on local, county, and state levels.

Table 5.1: Demographic Data

	Total Estimated Population						
	2000	2010	2017	Net change 2000-2017		Net change 2010-2017	
				Total	Yearly	Total	Yearly
Medfield, Massachusetts	12,273	12,024	12,610	2.7%	0.2%	4.9%	0.7%
Norfolk County, Massachusetts	650,308	670,850	694,389	6.8%	0.4%	3.5%	0.5%
Massachusetts Statewide	6,349,097	6,477,096	6,789,319	6.9%	0.4%	4.8%	0.7%

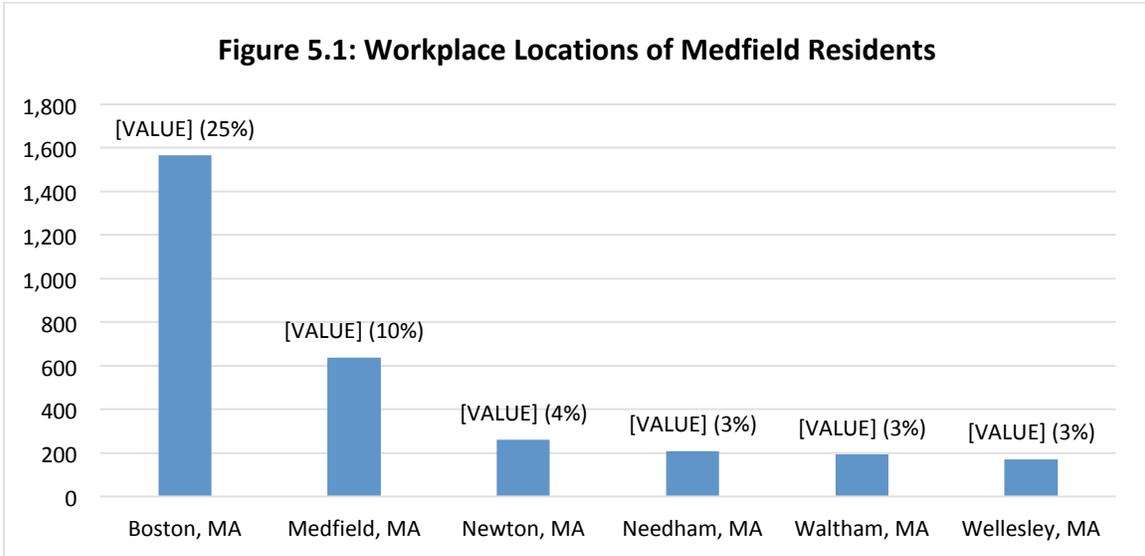
Source: U.S. Census American Community Five Year Estimates 2013-2017

The Town of Medfield’s population reached an estimated 12,610 persons in 2017, an increase of +4.9% since 2010 (12,024 estimated population). Norfolk County has experienced a slightly lower increase, +3.5% from 2010 to 2017, and Massachusetts has experienced a similar increase, +4.8% in the same time frame.

JOURNEY-TO-WORK DATA

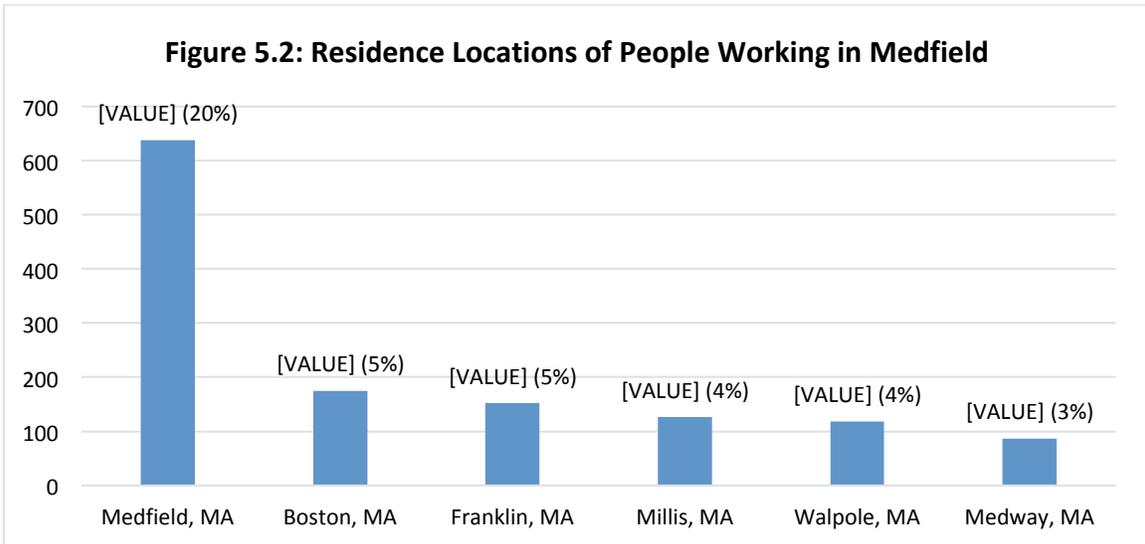
Figure 5.1 shows the most popular work destinations for Medfield residents based on U.S. Census OnTheMap data from 2017. As shown in the figure, 638 Medfield residents (approximately 10% of workers) work in Medfield. Statewide, approximately 26% of residents work in their town of residence. In Norfolk county, approximately 20% of residents work in their town of residence. A total of 1,567 residents (25% of workers) are employed in Boston. Many Medfield residents also work within nearby communities such as Newton (262), Needham (208), and Waltham (192).

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2017

Figure 5.2 shows the major residence locations for people working in Medfield based on U.S. Census OnTheMap data from 2017. Approximately 638 of the 3,232 people who work in Medfield also live in Medfield (20%).



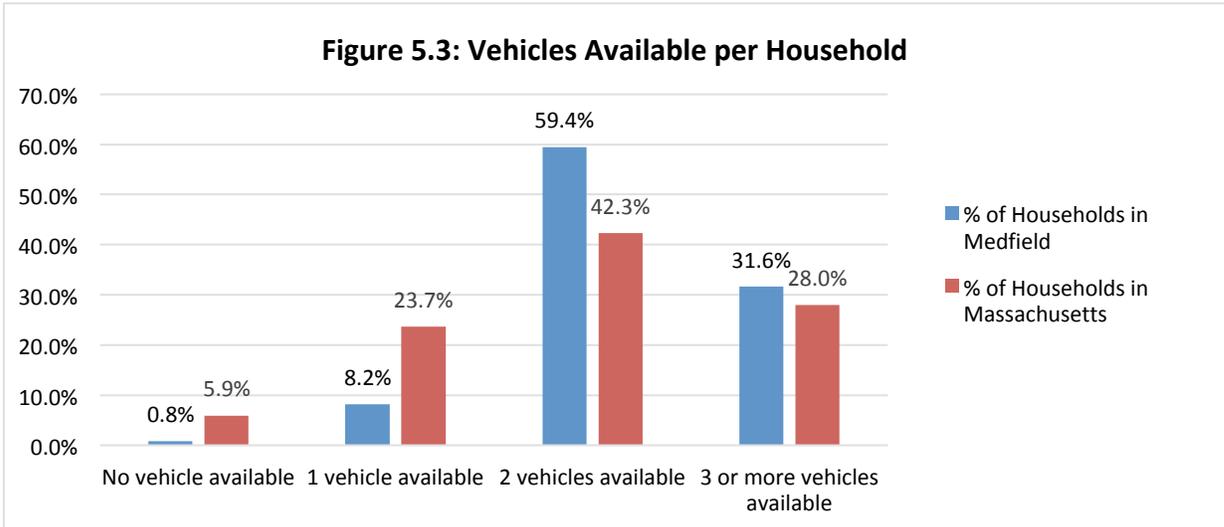
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2017

VEHICLES AVAILABLE

Figure 5.3 shows the number of vehicles available per household for both the Town of Medfield and the State of Massachusetts based on the 2017 U.S. Census American Community Survey. As shown, 68% of households in Medfield have one or two vehicles. The percentage of households in Medfield with two or more vehicles is 91%, which is

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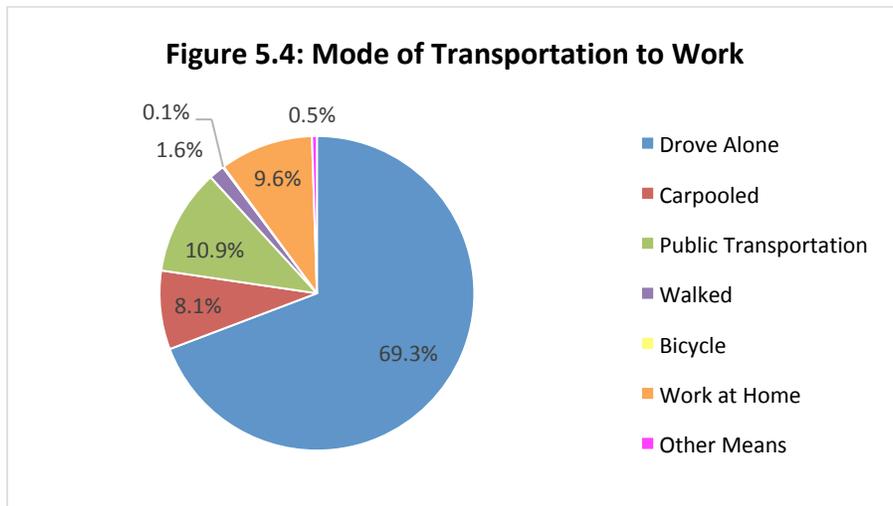
greater than the percentage of households in the state with two or more vehicles (70%). Less than 1% of Medfield households have no vehicles.



Source: U.S. Census American Community Five Year Estimates 2013-2017

MODE SHARE AND COMMUTE TIME

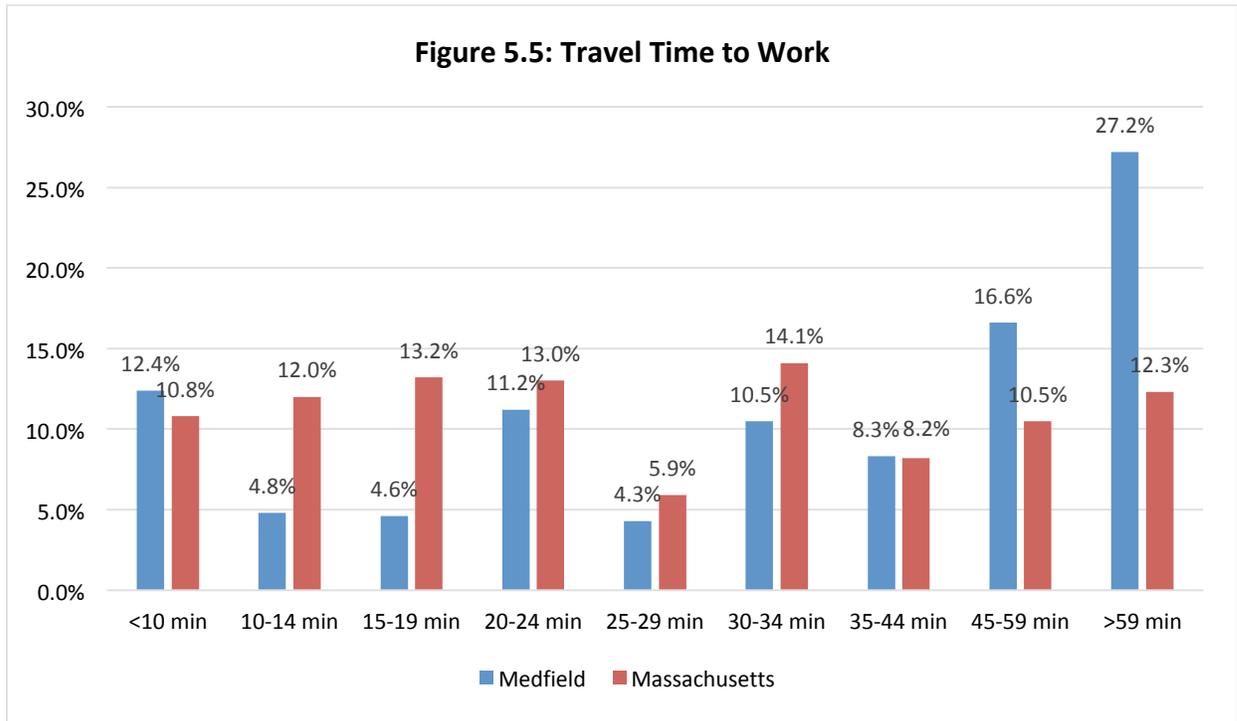
Figure 5.4 shows the modes of transportation to work of Medfield residents. As shown, 69% of residents drive alone, 11% use public transportation, and 8% carpool. Just 2% walk or bike to work, and 10% work from home. The percentage of Medfield residents commuting to work via public transit is higher than the statewide average of 10% and lower than the Norfolk County average of 14%.



Source: U.S. Census American Community Five Year Estimates 2013-2017

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Figure 5.5 shows the reported travel times to work for Medfield residents. As shown, approximately 37% of Medfield residents have an average commute of less than 30 minutes, 35% have a commute of 30-60 minutes, and 27% have a commute of an hour or more. The mean travel time to work for Medfield residents is 38.7 minutes. The mean travel time to work for Norfolk county residents is 33.9 minutes and the mean travel time to work for Massachusetts residents is 29.3 minutes.



Source: U.S. Census American Community Five Year Estimates 2013-2017

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Commuter Rail

While Medfield does not have direct commuter rail access within the town limits, approximately 11% of residents use public transit to commute to and from work. Many residents utilize the MBTA commuter rail to travel to work in Boston. Depending on where in town they are located, Medfield residents access Boston via the MBTA Walpole Station on the Franklin line, Needham Junction Station on the Needham line, or Route 128 Station on the Providence/ Stoughton line. Many residents have expressed a desire for public transportation options within Medfield. An active CSX freight rail line runs through Medfield, connecting to the adjacent communities of Millis, Walpole, and Dover.

MBTA “The RIDE”

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MBTA operates a door-to-door, shared-ride paratransit service called “The RIDE.” This service is available to those with disabilities that prevent them from utilizing the bus, subway, or trolley within Boston and surrounding communities, including Medfield. The one-way fares are \$3.35 for local ADA and \$5.60 for premium non-ADA. Premium fares are charged for trips beyond ¾ of a mile from MBTA bus or subway stops. Trips can be scheduled online or over the phone.

Shuttle Vans

The Medfield Council on Aging (COA) owns three vans that are available to transport residents Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:15 PM. Transportation is provided for free to Medfield residents. A \$2.00 donation is requested for trips within town and to grocery stores. Additionally, the COA provides Medical Essential Transportation, a door-to-door service for medical appointments which utilizes the COA vans and volunteer vehicles.

ROADWAYS

Roadway classifications can be broken down into a hierarchy which ranges from interstates, providing high levels of mobility and low levels of access, to local roadways, providing low levels of mobility and high levels of access. **Figure 5.6** illustrates the roadway classification system in Medfield and **Table 5.2** shows the total length of each classification of roadway in Medfield.

Table 5.2: Classification of Roadways in Medfield

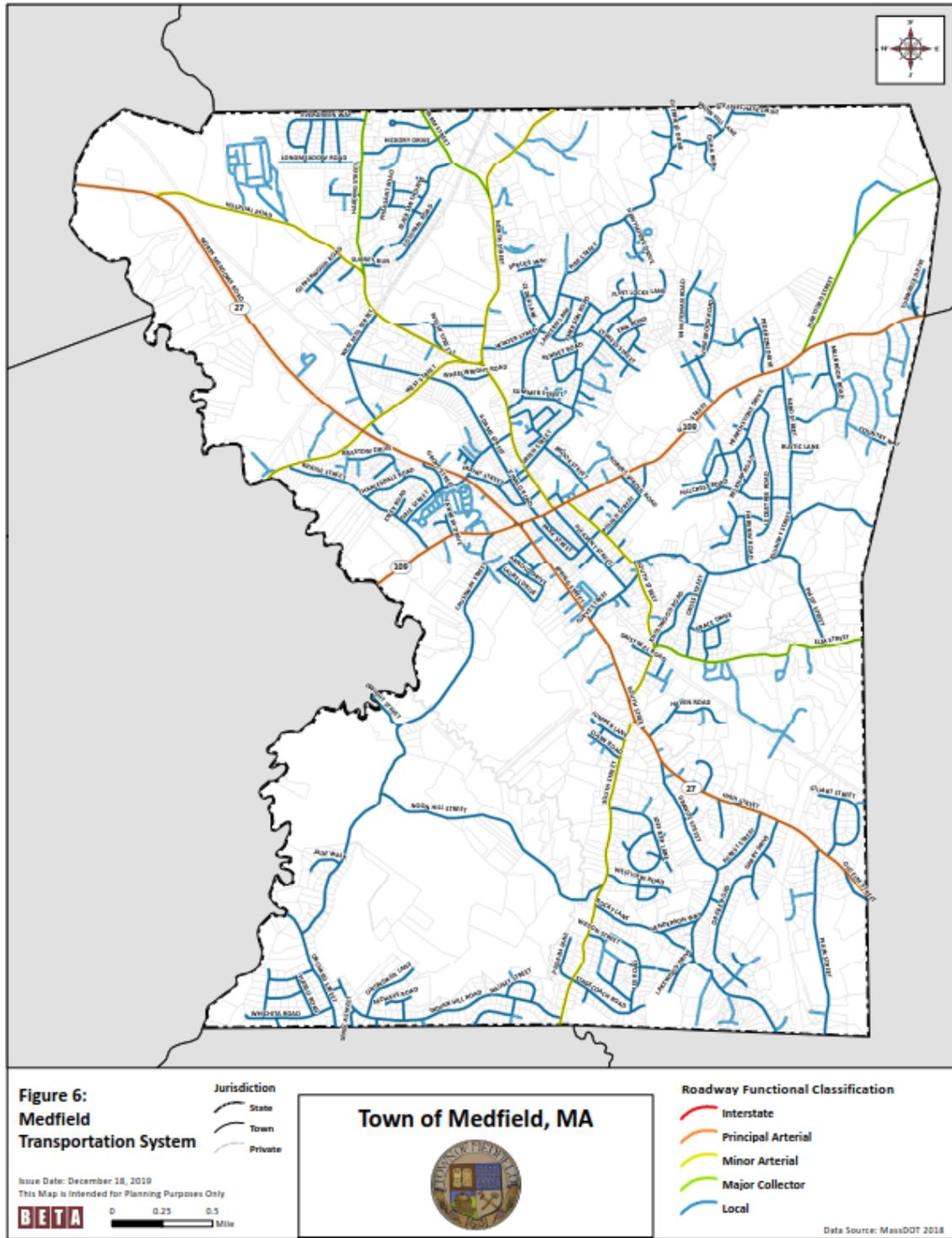
Roadway Class	Centerline Miles	Lane Miles
Interstate	0.00	0.00
Arterial	16.82	33.64
Collector	3.65	7.29
Local	59.86	116.92
Total	80.32	157.85

Source: MassDOT Road Inventory 2018

INTERSTATES

Interstates are controlled-access highways that provide the highest level of mobility with the highest travel speeds. Interstate highways in Massachusetts are owned and maintained by MassDOT. Medfield does not contain any segments of interstates.

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ARTERIALS

Arterial roadways provide the second highest level of mobility and are not primarily intended to provide access to abutting properties. Medfield contains approximately 17 centerline miles and 34 lane miles of arterials. Route 27 and Route 109 are principal arterials, while West Street, Harding Street, North Street and South Street are minor arterials.

- **Route 27** (also known as High Street, Spring Street, and North Meadows Road) is the primary north-south route through Medfield. It is functionally classified as an urban major arterial and is under Town of Medfield jurisdiction. Route 27 provides access to Medfield State Hospital, downtown Medfield, and the neighboring towns of Sherborn and Walpole.
- **Route 109** (also known as Main Street) is the primary east-west route through Medfield. It is functionally classified as an urban major arterial and is under Town of Medfield jurisdiction. Route 109 provides access to downtown Medfield as well as the neighboring towns of Millis and Westwood.

COLLECTOR ROADS

Collector roads move traffic from local streets to arterials. They provide moderate amounts of mobility and access to adjacent properties. In Medfield, major collector roadways include Harding Street, Farm Street, Hartford Street, and Elm Street. Approximately 5% of the roadways in Medfield are classified as collector roadways.

LOCAL ROADWAYS

Local roadways provide the highest level of access to adjacent properties with the lowest level of mobility. Approximately 75% of all roadways in Medfield fall under this classification. It is typical for communities such as Medfield to have most local roadways under town jurisdiction.

SCENIC ROADS

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 15C allows municipalities to designate any road other than a numbered route or state highway as a Scenic Road. The designation prevents the removal of trees or other historic features without written approval from the planning board to preserve their character. The following streets in Medfield have been accepted by Town Meeting as Scenic Roads:

- Causeway Street (1974)
- Foundry Street (1974)
- Hartford Street (2004)
- Noon Hill Street (1974)

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- North Street from Harding Street to Dover line (2004)
- Orchard Street (1980)
- Philip Street (2004)
- Pine Street from Cedar Lane to Dover line (1980)
- School Street (2004)
- Wight Street (1975)

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Traffic congestion is one of the main concerns of Medfield residents. Route 109 in particular is heavily utilized throughout the day, especially during morning and evening peak commuting hours. **Table 5.3** shows average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Medfield roadways.

Table 5.3: Traffic Volume Data

Location	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
North Meadows Road (Route 27) west of Dale Street					10,825	13,503	
Dale Street north of North Meadows Road					3,485		
Dale Street south of North Meadows Road					2,690		
West Street east of West Mills Street							5,810
High Street east of Turner Hill Road						13,055	
Main Street near Pound Street				16,180			
Hospital Road					2,118		
West Street west of Route 27	7,600						
Route 109 east of Brook Street				17,727			16,570
Spring Street (Route 27) south of Main Street		13,187			13,885		

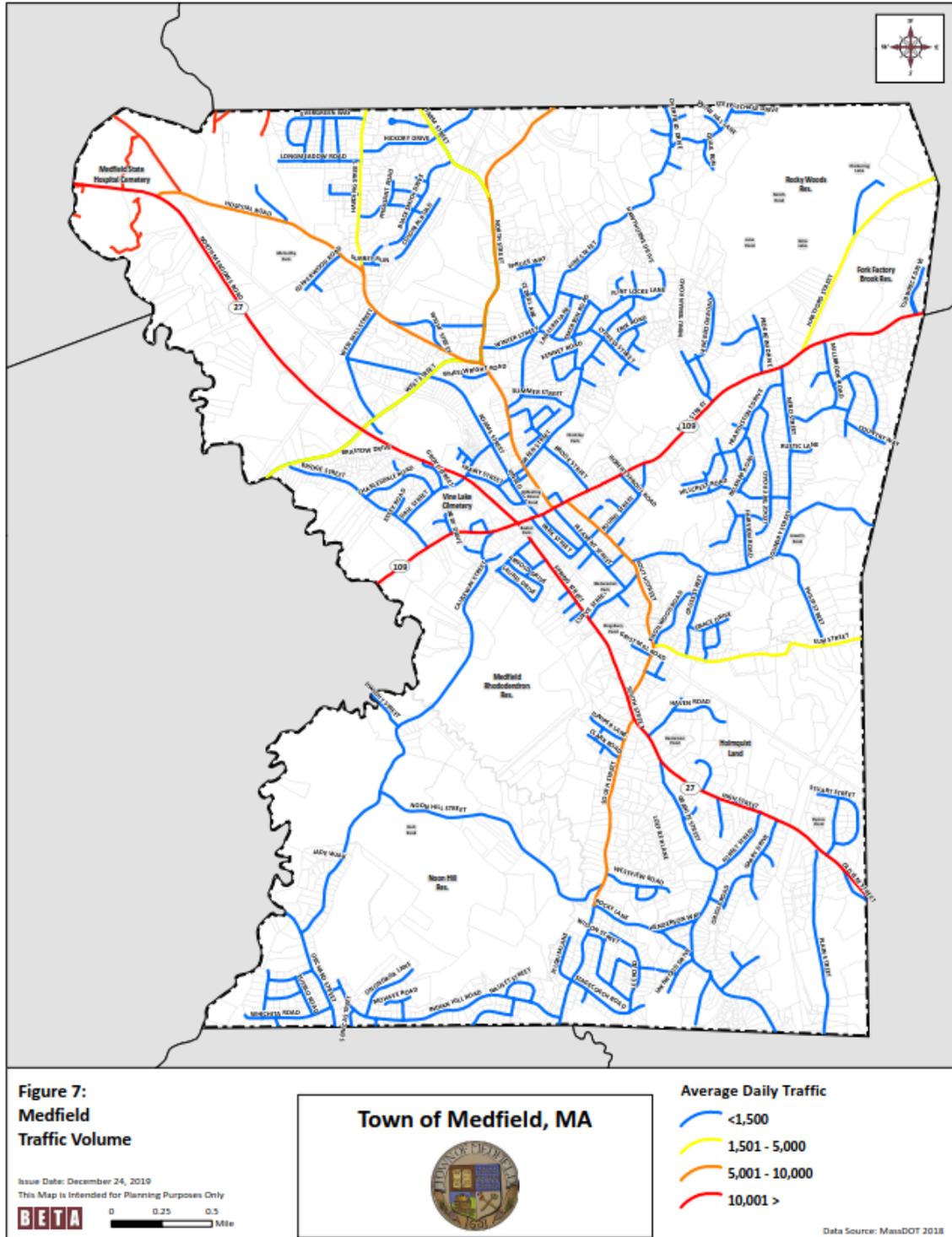
Source: Various Traffic Studies Conducted from 2012-2018

The data show that traffic volumes are heaviest on Route 109 and Route 27, the primary commuter routes through Medfield. The ADT volume on Route 109 east of Brook Street in 2003 was 17,900 vehicles¹. The ADT in 2015 was 17,727 vehicles and 16,570 vehicles in 2018. This indicates that the traffic volume on Route 109 in Medfield has been stable over the last 15 years.

Traffic counts on Route 109 in the adjacent community of Westwood revealed an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 18,400 vehicles per day in 2008 and an ADT of 25,000 vehicles per day in 2018, indicating a compound annual growth rate of approximately 3% per year on this roadway. Traffic volumes on Route 27 south of Main Street grew from an ADT of 13,187 in 2013 to 13,885 in 2016, indicating a compound annual growth rate of approximately 2% per year. **Figure 5.7** shows average daily traffic volumes.

¹ Route 109 Corridor Planning Study, Central Transportation Planning Staff, March 2003.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

Severe delays are caused by multiple traffic signals in the downtown area and the large number of concrete trucks utilizing Main Street (Route 109). Delays are especially long during the morning and evening peak commuting periods. The Town recently installed “Do Not Block Intersection” markings at the intersection of Janes Avenue and Main Street (Route 109) to discourage drivers queuing at the North Street traffic signal from blocking Janes Avenue.



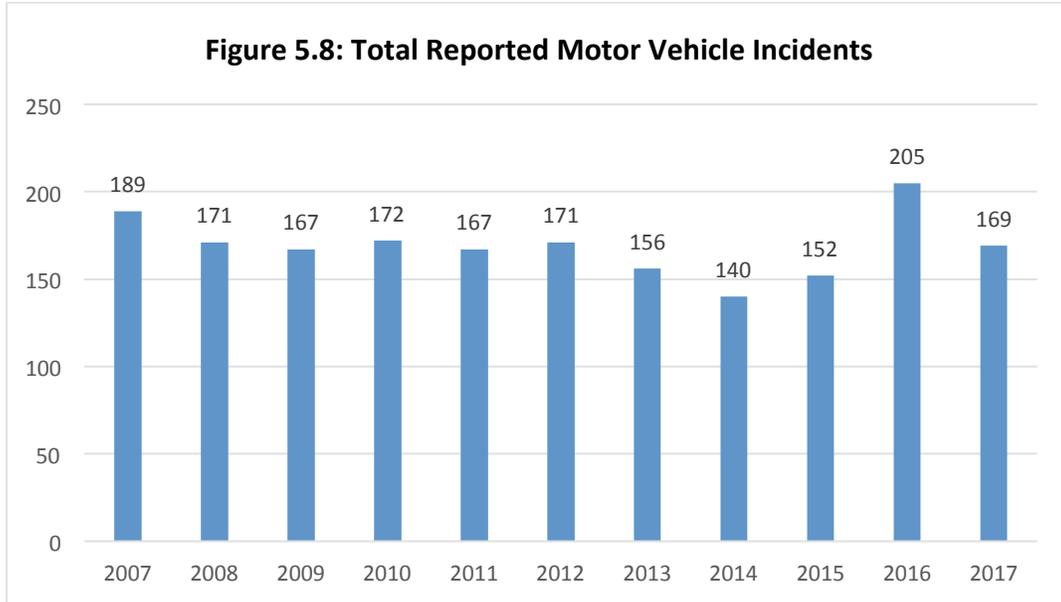
“Do Not Block Intersection” Markings
Source: Nearmap

Traffic congestion on Route 109 is further exacerbated by the presence of a train crossing between Route 27 and Oak Street. When trains pass through, crossing gates descend across the roadway and all traffic on Route 109 must stop until the train has cleared and the gates go up.

ROADWAY SAFETY

Crash data available from MassDOT indicate that 526 crashes, or an average of 175 per year, occurred within Medfield between 2015 and 2017. As shown in **Figure 5.8**, the total number of crashes each year has fluctuated since 2007, with a low of 140 in 2014 and a high of 205 in 2016. From 2016 to 2017, the total number of crashes decreased from 205 to 169. Of the 526 crashes reported between 2015 and 2017, 18% (96 crashes), resulted in at least one person sustaining a non-fatal injury. During this three-year time period, two crashes resulted in fatalities. Both fatal crashes occurred on Route 109 (Main Street) between Pound Street and Nebo Street. Between the years of 2015 and 2017, one crash included a bicyclist and two crashes included pedestrians. There may be opportunities to evaluate critical locations to improve safety.

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Source: MassDOT Interactive Mapping Portal for Analysis and Crash Testing (2007-2017)

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. The intersection of Route 27 (North Meadows Road) and West Street was identified as both an HSIP cluster and a Top 200 Crash Location (Rank #121 in the state) for the years of 2014 to 2016. A Road Safety Audit was conducted at this intersection in June 2019. Many safety concerns were noted, including speeding, red light running, and turning vehicles. Potential short-term, mid-term, and long-term safety enhancements were identified to address these concerns. Suggested enhancements include signing, striping, and traffic signal equipment upgrades.

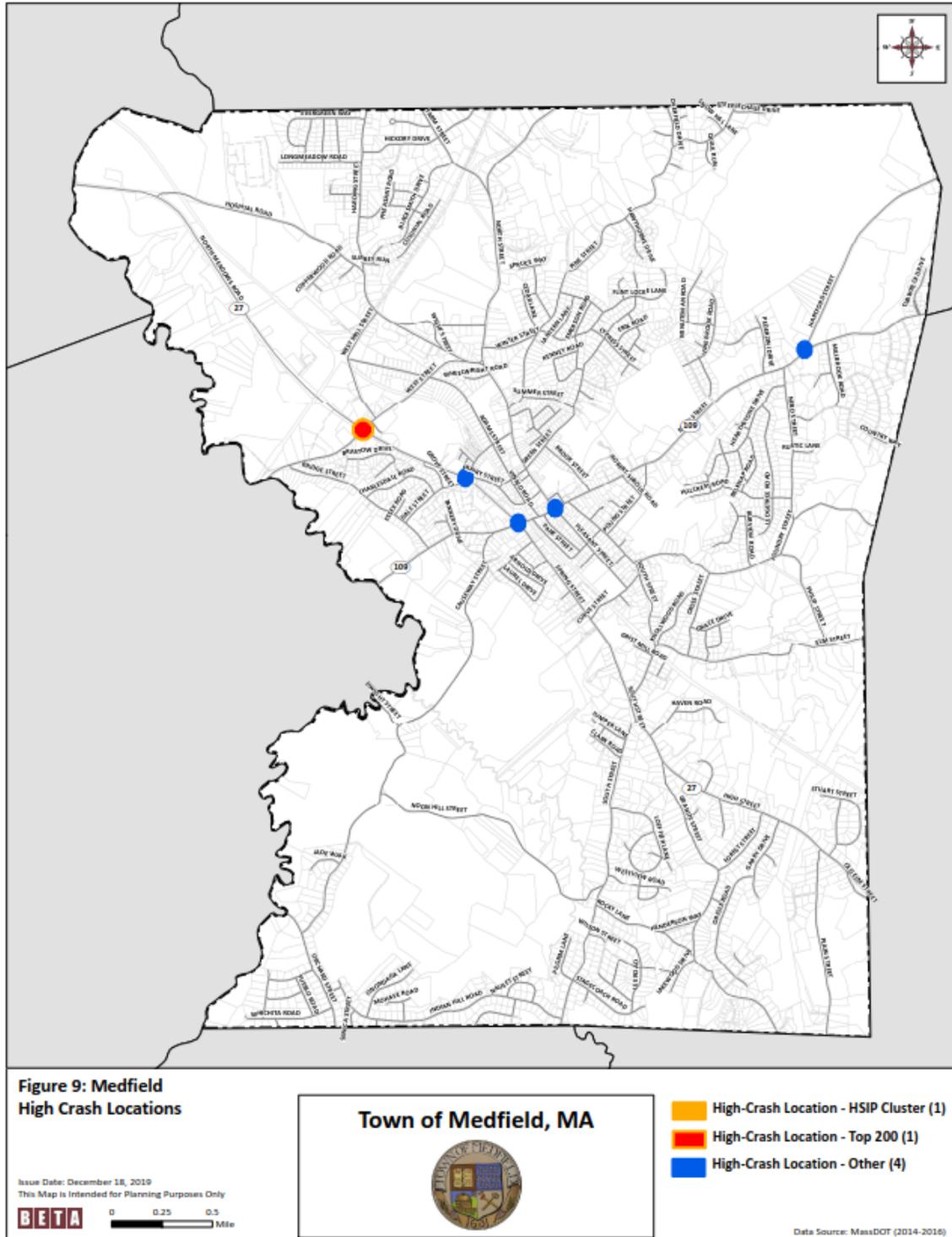
Notably, the 0.85-mile segment of Route 109 from Causeway Street to Pound Street experienced a total of 123 crashes from 2015 to 2017, an average of 41 crashes per year. **Table 5.4** shows the total number of crashes at the five intersections experiencing the highest number of crashes for the three most recent years available through the MassDOT Crash database (2015-2017). **Figure 5.9** shows these high crash locations.

Table 5.4: High Crash Locations 2015-2017

Intersection	2015	2016	2017	Total
Main Street (Route 109) at North Meadows Road/ Spring Street (Route 27)	10	14	15	39
North Meadows Road (Route 27) at West Street	5	11	8	24
Main Street (Route 109) at Hartford Street	6	6	3	15
North Meadows Road (Route 27) at Dale Street	5	5	3	13
Main Street (Route 109) at North Street	2	4	2	8

Source: MassDOT Interactive Mapping Portal for Analysis and Crash Testing (2015-2017)

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PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCOMMODATIONS

A comprehensive sidewalk network exists in downtown Medfield; however, residents have expressed concerns regarding the pedestrian accommodations in the downtown area. Route 109, a major arterial, runs through Medfield's downtown. The high traffic volumes and large number of concrete trucks utilizing this roadway create an unpleasant walking experience. Additionally, pedestrians experience large delays when waiting to cross the street at signalized intersections, which results in a safety issue by encouraging jaywalking. Many students walk to the downtown area from the middle school and high school, especially on early release days. This further emphasizes the importance of a safe walking environment. Residents have voiced a desire for better pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in town, as well as a revitalization of the downtown area to make it a desirable destination. **Figure 5.10** shows the sidewalks in Medfield.

There are currently no on-street bicycle accommodations in Medfield. Several off-road trails exist for both biking and walking within the following recreational areas:

- Noon Hill Reservation
- Medfield Rhododendron Reservation
- Shattuck Reservation
- Rocky Woods Reservation
- Fork Factory Brook Reservation
- Medfield Charles River State Reservation
- Medfield State Hospital

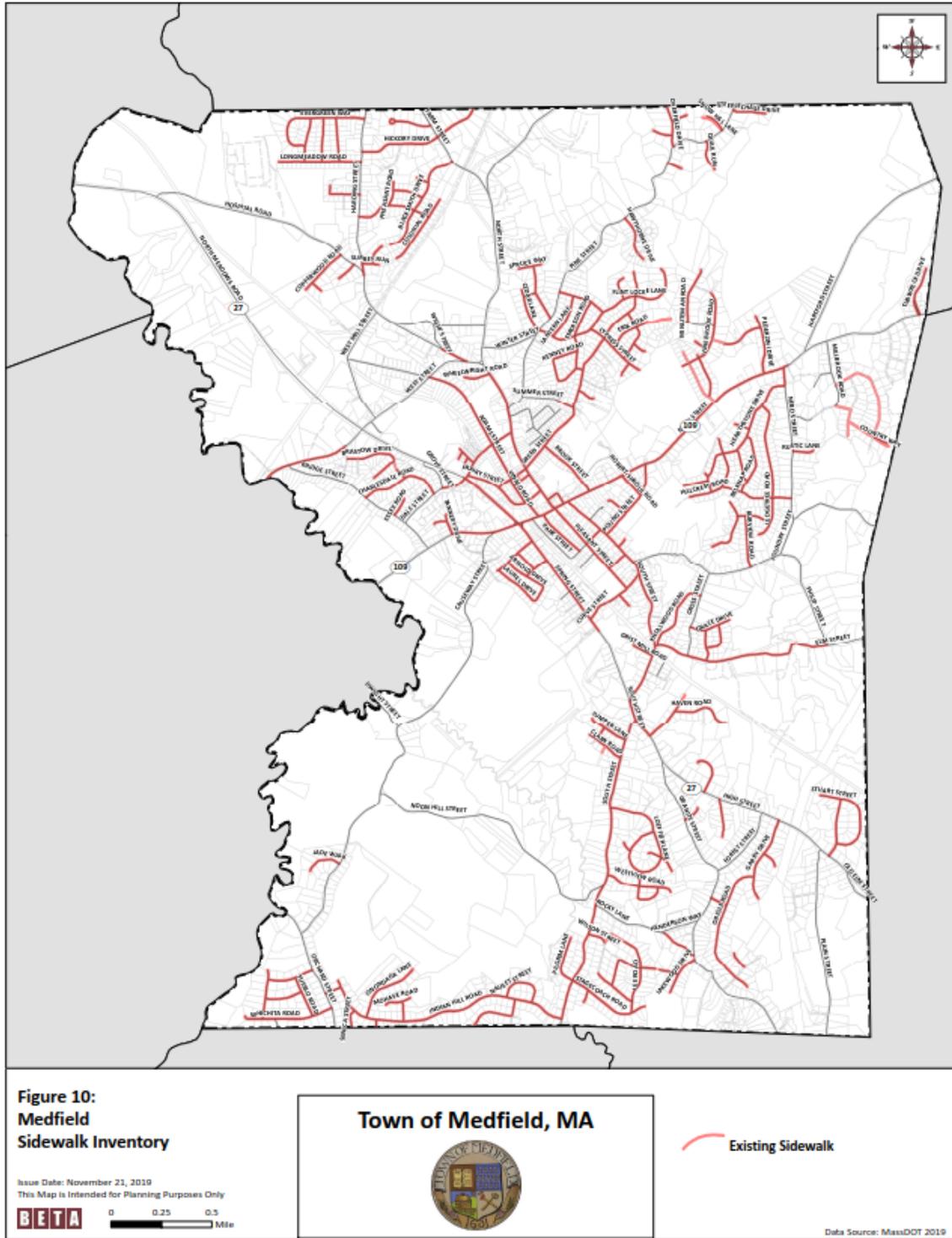
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program aims to increase the safety of walking and bicycling infrastructure along travel paths to schools. Dale Street School and Memorial School participate in the program and are therefore eligible for infrastructure improvement funding from the state.

COMPLETE STREETS

The Town is in the process of registering for the MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program. The first Tier of the program is designed to assist municipalities in developing a comprehensive Complete Streets policy and incorporating Complete Streets principles into current and future infrastructure development practices. To advance to the Tier 2 – Prioritization Plan, the Town will need to submit a Letter of Intent to MassDOT and develop a local Complete Streets Policy. Once approved by MassDOT, the Town will be eligible for a Tier 2 planning assistance grant and Tier 3 project construction funding.

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PARKING

Unrestricted on-street parking in addition to surface parking lots are provided in downtown Medfield. The two public surface lots are located on Janes Avenue behind Town Hall. The Town purchased parcels in 2004 to develop the Janes Avenue parking lots. In 2016, the Town granted a license to the developer of the Ords Building on the corner of Main Street and Janes Avenue to construct 13 off-street parking spaces on a portion of the Town's abutting land. The parking spaces are used by the general public and employees and customers of Ords Building businesses. The developer is responsible for maintaining and snow removal for the parking spaces.

In 2014, a Parking License Agreement was developed between Roche Brothers Supermarkets Company (Brothers) and the Town to provide a shared public-private parking arrangement in the downtown. The Agreement allows users of the Town Library to park in the Licensed Parking Spaces in the Rear parking Lot, and not in the Main Parking Lot.

A Downtown Parking District (300-8.4) was established in 1998 in the Zoning Bylaw. Under Article 8 – Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations, the Board of Appeals can issue a special permit for a change of use without changing the parking requirements, if the proposed use will not significantly increase demand for parking compared to prior uses.

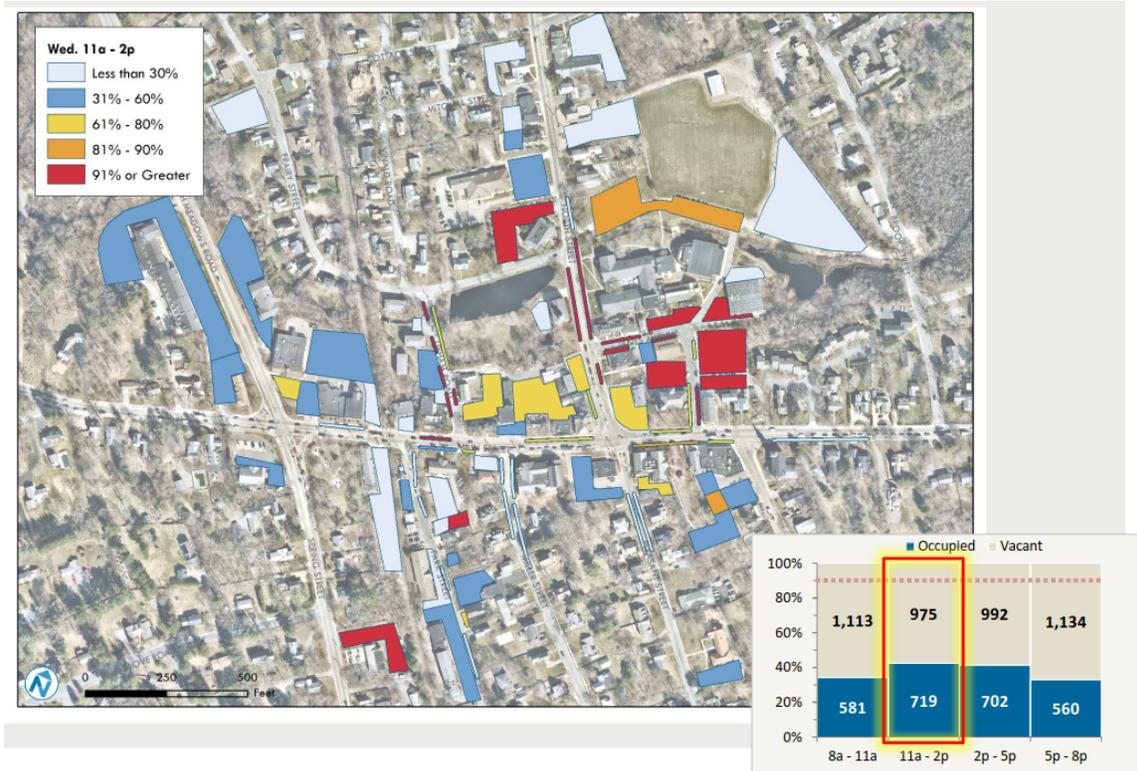
A parking study was completed in the downtown area in May 2018. The findings of the study were as follows:

- The occupancy of the two public parking lots was 91% or greater from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM on a weekday and 31%-60% during the same time period on a Saturday.
- On-street parking in the downtown area was 50% occupied from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM on a weekday. Most of the on-street spaces inventoried that were in desirable locations near businesses were 61% occupied or greater.

Although the parking study showed that parking in the downtown area is never fully occupied, many residents and town employees identify a lack of parking downtown, especially near Town Hall, as an issue. There is an opportunity to enhance signing to direct motorists to public parking lots.

Figure 5.11 shows parking occupancy in the downtown area for a weekday period between 11 AM and 2 PM. This was found to be the peak period between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM.

Figure 5.11: Weekday Parking Occupancy from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM



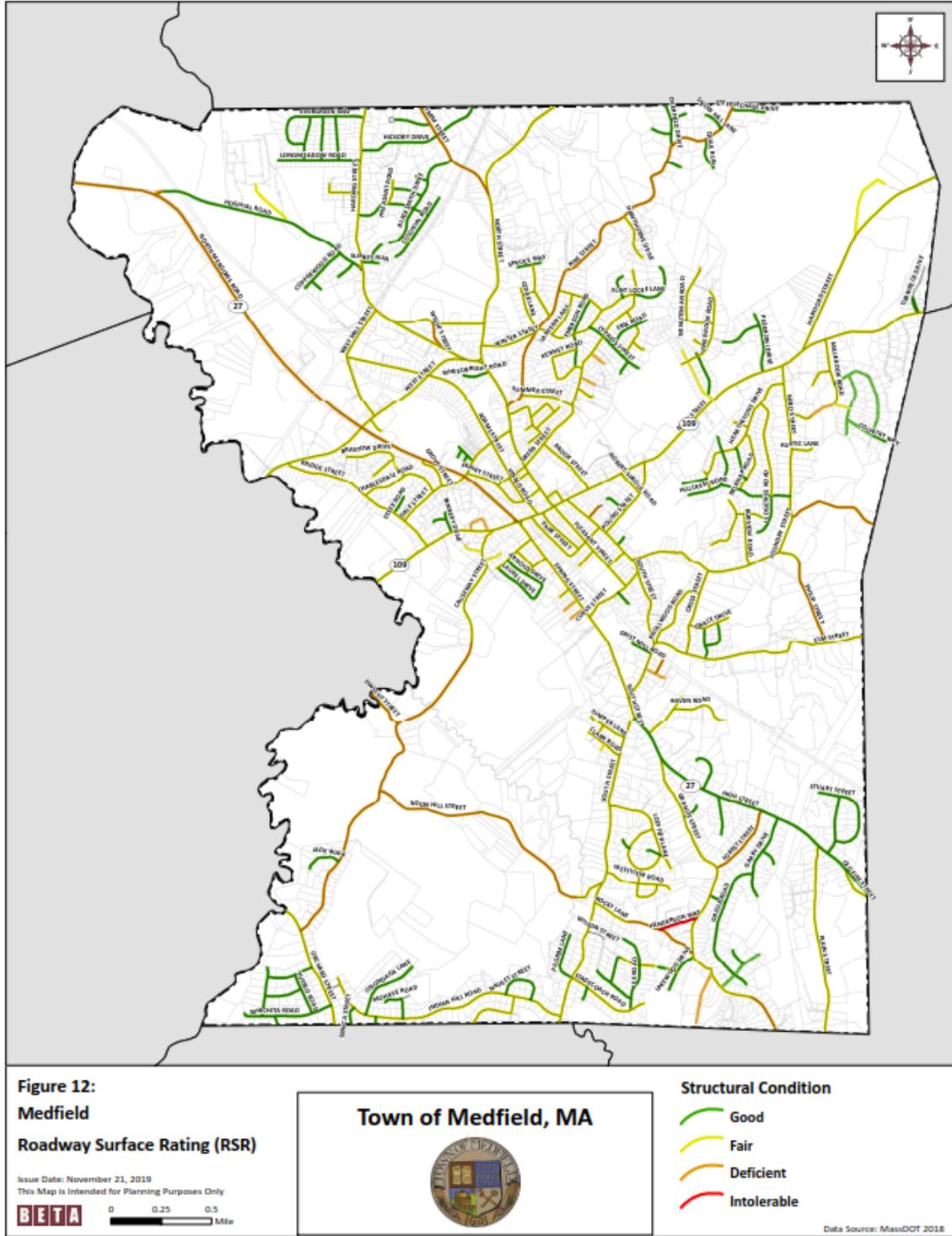
Source: Downtown Medfield Parking Study, Nelson\Nygaard, May 2018

MAINTENANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Town of Medfield 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 Roadway Surface Rating (RSR) and schedule of maintenance. The RSR is a numerical index between 0 and 100 which is used to indicate the general condition of pavement for a community’s roadways. The higher the RSR score, the better overall pavement condition. The latest RSR for the town was 78 in 2019, which represents a satisfactory overall pavement condition. Due to the large volume of cement trucks utilizing the Route 109 corridor, this roadway was built with a stronger base to accommodate the larger loads. The Town has expressed interest in starting a sidewalk management plan to prioritize and track sidewalk maintenance. **Figure 5.12** shows the RSRs for roadways in Medfield.

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BRIDGES

According to the most recently available data provided by MassDOT, 11 bridges are located in Medfield. Eight of the bridges have been inspected since 2015 and been determined not to be structurally deficient and three are in unknown condition. The Medfield Department of Public Works has plans to rehabilitate the following bridges:

- Main Street (Route 109) over the Charles River
- Dover Road over the Charles River

MEDFIELD STATE HOSPITAL REUSE

A separate Strategic Reuse Master Plan was prepared in 2018 for the Medfield State Hospital, which examines different redevelopment alternatives, including a mixed-use scenario. When the land is redeveloped, it will become necessary to estimate the impacts of the increased traffic on the local roadway network and identify mitigation that can minimize its impact. Currently, a portion of the land adjacent to Hospital Road is used for parking school buses when they are not in use. Upon redevelopment of the land, it will be necessary to find an alternative parking location for the buses.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to the two previously mentioned bridge rehabilitations, the Town of Medfield has various infrastructure improvement projects planned for the future. A major project the town hopes to have added to the state's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the reconstruction of Route 109 from Hartford Street to the Millis town line, including streetscape improvements and traffic signal upgrades. The Town also plans to make safety improvements to the intersection of Route 27 (North Meadows Road) and West Street, the high crash location that was previously discussed. The DPW is also currently working on an Americans with Disabilities Act transition plan. This plan would identify necessary updates to infrastructure and buildings in the public right of way to ensure that they are accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following transportation-related issues and opportunities were identified:

- The mean travel time to work for Medfield residents is 38.7 minutes, longer than the mean travel time for Norfolk county residents (33.9 minutes) and Massachusetts residents (29.3 minutes).
- Medfield does not have direct access to public transit.
- Route 109 and Route 27 experience high traffic volumes.
- Severe delays on Route 109 are caused by multiple traffic signals in the downtown area and the large number of concrete trucks.
- The intersection of Route 27 (North Meadows Road) and West Street was identified as both an HSIP cluster and a Top 200 Crash Location (Rank #121 in the state) for the years of 2014 to 2016.
- The 0.85-mile segment of Route 109 from Causeway Street to Pound Street experienced a total of 123 crashes from 2015 to 2017, an average of 41 crashes per year.
- Pedestrians in the downtown area experience long delays when waiting to cross the street at signalized intersections, which results in a safety issue by encouraging jaywalking.
- Many residents and town employees identify a lack of parking downtown, especially near Town Hall, as an issue. There may be opportunities for more public-private partnerships in the future.
- When the Medfield State Hospital land is redeveloped, it will become necessary to estimate the impacts of the increased traffic on the local roadway network and identify mitigation that can minimize its impact.

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REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS

Downtown Medfield Parking Study, Nelson\Nygaard, May 2018

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Website – Accessibility on the MBTA

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 15C

MassDOT Complete Streets Program 2020

MassDOT GIS Layers 2014-2019

MassDOT Interactive Mapping Portal for Analysis and Crash Testing (2007-2017)

MassDOT Open Data Portal (Bridges)

MassDOT Road Inventory 2018

MassDOT Safe Routes to School Program 2020

McCabe Enterprises Team and Medfield State Hospital Master Plan Committee. “Medfield State Hospital Strategic Reuse Plan”, Town of Medfield 2018

Medfield Pavement Management Plan 2019

Town of Medfield Website – Council on Aging

U.S. Census American Community Five Year Estimates 2013-2017

U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2017

Various Traffic Studies Conducted from 2012-2018

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INTERVIEWS

Department of Public Works; Highway, Water, Sewer

Moe Goulet, Director of DPW

Bobby Kennedy, Highway Supervisor

David O'Toole, Water/Sewer Supervisor & Deputy Fire Chief

Fire

Chief William Carrico, Fire Chief

Town Clerk

Carol Meyer, Town Clerk

Town Planning

Sarah Raposa, Town Planner

Town Administration

Kristine Trierweiler, Town Administrator

Nick Milano, Assistant Town Administrator

Library

Pam Gardner, Library Director

Facilities

Amy Colleran, Facilities

Building

Gary Pelletier, Building Commissioner

Schools

Jeff Marsden, Superintendent

Michael LaFrancesca, Director of Finance and Operations

Jessica Reilly, School Committee

Police

Michelle Guerrette, Police Chief

Lars Anderson, Deputy Police Chief

Chapter 6: Community Facilities and Services

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6 - Public Facilities and Services

INTRODUCTION

A town is in many ways characterized by its public facilities and the way in which it provides services. In a relatively small town such as Medfield, many of its public buildings, such as the Town House, the Pfaff Center, and the schools, also serve as gathering places where residents meet one another. The condition of a municipality's public facilities send a message to newcomers by how much townspeople take care of their public buildings. The types of public services a municipality provides and the locations to which it provides these also send a message regarding what a municipality prioritizes (e.g. families with children, taking care of elderly, etc.) and where it would like development to occur (e.g. by providing water and sewage).

Maintaining acceptable levels of municipal services at a reasonable cost is an important planning and fiscal objective. Facilities planning and management can help meet this objective. To a large degree, the need for public facilities is directly related to the size of a community, that is, in general, the larger the population, the more children there will be in the school system and the more demand there will be for libraries, recreation, and public safety services. The

KEY FINDINGS

- Medfield has nearly 700,000 square feet of facilities it is responsible for.
- The Town's facilities are aging and in many cases the buildings are over 50 years old; many need repairs and/or upgrades of building elements or systems (e.g. HVAC, ADA compliance, roofs, etc.).
- Priority capital expenditures:
 - New Dale School
 - Old Dale School Reuse
 - Parks & Rec building
 - Water Treatment Plant construction
 - State Hospital Re-use
- The impacts of the redevelopment of the State Hospital on municipal facilities and services will need to be determined
- The Town's infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, and pipes) is aging and will need to be repaired and replaced.
- The wastewater system has significant I&I problems, reducing its efficiency and capacity.
- Water usage is close to the system's capacity if not controlled or regulated
- A need to support and better meet the needs of an increasing older adult population (programming, recreation, socialization, housing, transportation)
- A need to support teens who suffer from high rates of substance abuse and mental illness.

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availability and capacity limits of some services, such as water and sewer can affect the degree and even the actual location of growth. Shifts in demographics may also indicate a need to shift resources. For example, an increase in the number of seniors may mean a need for additional services for the elderly.

- Facilities management is a way to proactively identify facility needs and to balance the demands of growth and use with the financial resources of the community.
- All municipalities must invest in preventive maintenance, repair and updating of their facilities.
- As municipalities experience changes, for example, in population, investment in public facilities and services must be balanced with changing needs and financial resources.
- Climate adaptation and emergency preparedness have become increasingly important for a municipality to plan for and invest in mitigation.

94% of Medfield’s taxes come from residential property taxes and approximately 75% of these go to the schools.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Public Facilities and services needed are in large part determined by demographics. At 39.8%, Medfield has a higher than state average population aged 6-17 (compared to 26.8% for the State). Only 11.4% of the population is over the age of 65 (as compared to the state average of 15.5%). The percent of older adults is expected to increase in the future, however, the lack of necessary supports (including affordable and appropriate housing), may mean that this group continues to move out of Town.

During the 1980s the Town was described as being primarily blue collar. Since then it has become much wealthier and more educated with a focus on educating children. Most recently, there have been slight changes reported in the population including a few lower- and moderate-income families moving in, as well as people with more diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Some lament that it used to be that everyone who worked in Town also lived in Town. This is reportedly no longer the case that results in losing institutional memory, which in turn impacts the sense of community.

Additional recent population changes observed by some include families, (many with 3-5 children), moving to Medfield from out-of-state, while empty nesters move out of town to nearby communities that have affordable and appropriate housing for older adults. The community reportedly rallies around the schools, but this reportedly leads to an “educate and evacuate” mentality. The high cost of living, especially housing and a lack of affordable and appropriately located and designed housing for older adults wanting to

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downsize as well as affordable units for younger people to move in to Town are cited as explanations as to why the majority of residents are families with school-aged children.

NEED FOR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

Medfield Town Staff was interviewed as part of this process and many report a cooperative spirit among Town Departments and a feeling of being supported by the Town's Administration.

Some have suggested that it used to be a "badge of honor" to do things inexpensively, resulting in not addressing maintenance needs until they were acute. An evaluation conducted of Medfield's municipal facilities in 2017¹ determined that "users and occupants (of Medfield's public facilities) generally agreed that the Town's capital outlays for facilities tended to be reactionary based... Unfortunately, that management practice (perhaps due to adapting to Prop 2 ½ legislation of 1982), generally only addressed the facilities' failures issues and then only those of the highest priority." Such piece meal approaches can lead to larger facility concerns and costs in the long term than if deferred maintenance measures had been implemented. For example, many of the public facilities were renovated, but the roofs were not updated and in many cases are leaking. As a result the Town Hall, the Library and all the schools now need new roofs. The schools and the library all reportedly need new windows.

This facility evaluation also² states that:

- The Town is responsible for nearly 700,000 square feet of facilities
- The age of the buildings exceeds 50 years, in two cases, the buildings are more than 100 years old
- The overall condition of the Town's municipal facilities ranges from Good to Fair; in a few cases the facility was found to be in Poor condition or certain component systems were Poor.

¹ Town of Medfield, Municipal Facilities: Evaluation and Capital Plan, October 6, 2017.

² Town of Medfield, Municipal Facilities: Evaluation and Capital Plan, October 6, 2017.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS TO FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Facilities management practices have been improving and are becoming more systematic. Some examples are listed below.

A **building stabilization fund** has been established in which \$1 million is allocated yearly to start repairing/replacing the estimated \$44 million in **deferred maintenance**.

Continuing to implement **deferred maintenance measures** (including replacing roofs and updating HVAC systems in all municipal buildings) will be important to keeping municipal assets in good condition. The **20-Year Plan** has an inventory of all existing conditions of all municipal buildings.

An **ADA Compliance Committee** is conducting a self-evaluation of all Town buildings. The results will lead to important needed and required improvements to public facilities, making them accessible to all.

In an additional effort to be more proactive, the Town has adopted a set of **Financial Policies** that include the following goals³:

- To adopt an approach to financial planning, spending and taxation that is consistent with the Town's long-term goals and plans.
- To minimize variations in the tax, water and sewer rates and to spread the cost of providing needed services fairly across residents and businesses over time.
- To maintain adequate reserves that can be used in times of emergency to avoid cuts to necessary services and increased tax burdens in times of economic stress.
- Recognizing the need to invest and preserve the significant investment the Town has made in its capital facilities over the past fifteen years and will make over the next five years, the Town must adequately fund capital budgets necessary to maintain capital assets that support the provision of municipal services.
- To maintain a high bond rating and an affordable level of debt over time.
- In pursuit of the above objectives, to take a long-term approach to budgeting.

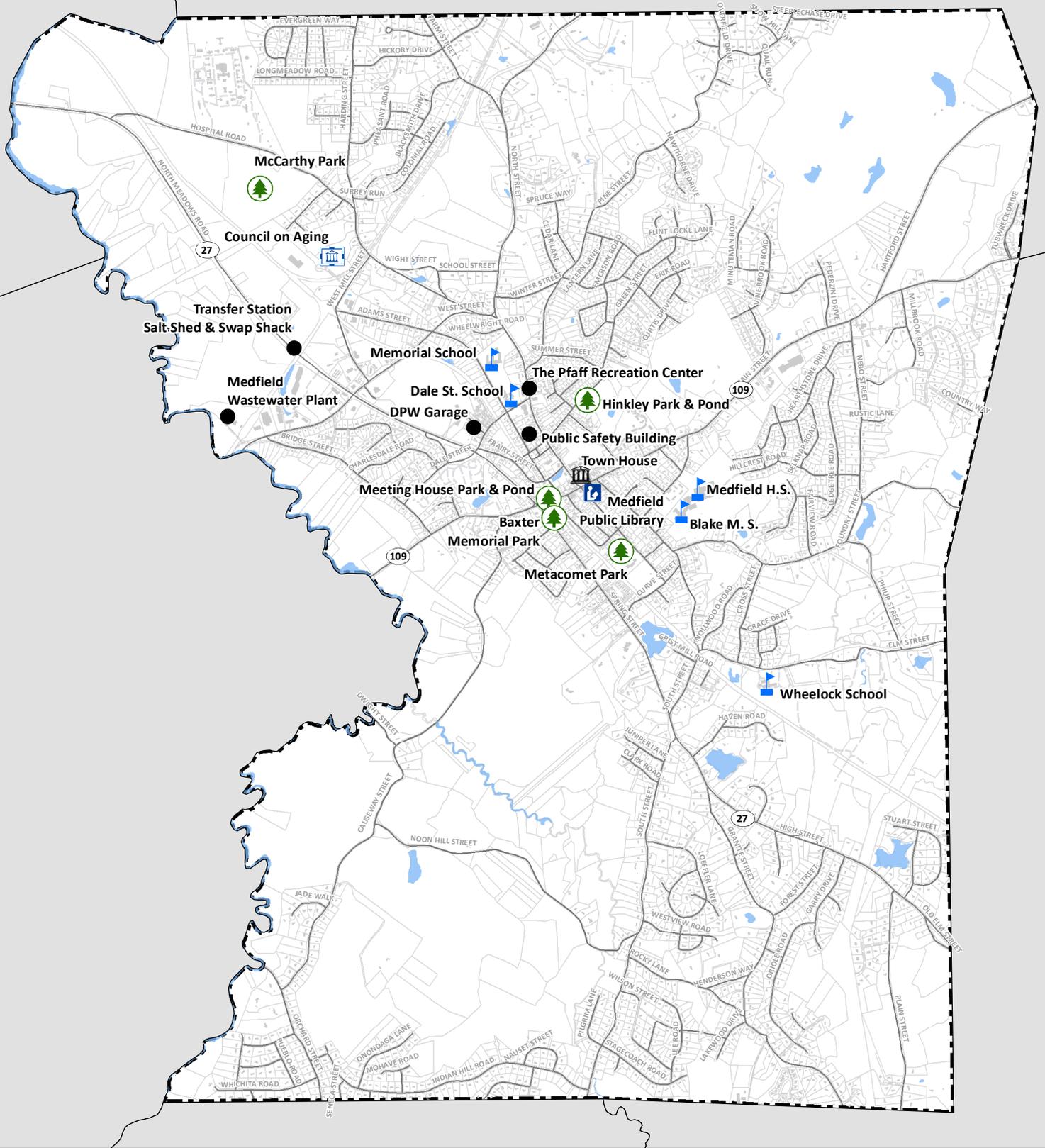
³ Town of Medfield Financial Goals, 2018.

Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Town-owned Facilities

Facility	Department	Location	Square Feet	Year Built (Last Renovated)	Additional Comments
Town House	Town	459 Main St.	17,356	1872 (1998)	
The Center	Council on Aging	1 Icehouse Rd.	7,810	2007	
Pfaff Recreation Center	Parks & Recreation	124 North St	12,033	1930	
Medfield Public Library	Library	468 Main St.	22,192	1917 (1996)	
Transfer Station, Salt Shed, & Swap Shack	Public Works	123 North Meadows Rd	5,456	1985	
Public Safety Building	Police and Fire	112 North St.	40,000	2016	
Public Works Garage	Public Works	55 North Meadows Rd.	45,000	2014	
Medfield Waste Water Plant	Public Works	99 Bridge St.	16,500	1972 (2004)	
Medfield High School	Medfield Public Schools	88 South St.	186,487	1960 (2004)	
Blake Middle School	Medfield Public Schools	24 Pound St.	121,564	1960 (2004)	
Dale St. School	Medfield Public Schools	45 Adams St.	67,249	1941 (1996)	
Wheelock School	Medfield Public Schools	17 Elm St.	65,190	1969	
Memorial School	Medfield Public Schools	59 Adams St.	54,387	1951 (1997)	
Baxter Memorial Park	Parks & Recreation	Intersection of Rts. 109 & 27			
Hinkley Park & Pond	Parks & Recreation	51 Green St.	Playground & swim pond		
Metacomet Park	Parks & Recreation	91 Pleasant St.	Tennis courts, playground, baseball diamond, multi-purpose field		
McCarthy Park	Parks & Recreation	44 Hospital Road	2 softball diamonds, 4 baseball diamonds, large multi-use field, 2 small multi-purpose fields		
Medfield State Hospital	Town	Hospital Road	Public access to grounds only, no access into any buildings		
Meeting House Park & Pond	Town	Upham Rd.			
Dwight Derby House	Town	7 Frairy St.	National Register of Historic Places		



Medfield Municipal Facilities

Town of Medfield, MA



-  Senior Center
-  School
-  Library
-  Town House
-  Parks
-  Town Facilities

Issue Date: February 14, 2020
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only



TOWN HOUSE AKA TOWN HALL

The Town Hall is a handsome building located in the heart of the downtown. The building was originally built in 1872, rebuilt after a fire in 1874, rebuilt again after a fire in 1923 and renovated in 1998. The building is fairly adequate but is not fully ADA compliant, lacks adequate storage and has a defective HVAC system. Additionally, it needs a new roof.

The administrative offices are reportedly crowded and need more storage space. The School Department is located on the 3rd floor. It is possible that they could benefit from being relocated to the new elementary school replacing the



Medfield Town House

Some Town Staff reported that there is a need to improve communication with town residents. The new Town Administrator has been promoting the use of social media and is considering hiring a Public Information Officer. Additionally, there are reportedly a large number of committees, but they are comprised of mostly older residents. The current administration is currently making an effort to broaden the demographic of those volunteering for town governance.

Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

Observations

- The Town Hall building is somewhat tight for some, short on storage space and in need of ADA improvements.
- Need to recruit younger volunteers.
- Need to increase and improve communication with residents.

Dale Street School to create more space in the Town Hall. The Facilities Department is currently located at the DPW and may benefit from being relocated to the Town Hall for proximity to other town departments.

Several Town Staff members mentioned having a difficult time parking at Town Hall. They would like the walking experience from the parking to the Town Hall's main entrance to be improved through better lighting. Signage regarding the rules around parking and improved vehicular circulation would be beneficial. Additionally there is no designated staff or employee parking and there is a need for additional handicapped spaces near the Town Hall.

Town Meeting is held in the High School.
Residents vote at The Center (COA).

SCHOOLS

Medfield Public Schools consistently rank among the top ten school systems in the State (ranking by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)⁴). As recently as 2017, Medfield was listed by the U.S. News & World Report as the number 5 ranked school system in Massachusetts. Almost all of Medfield’s students (97.6%) graduate, the majority attending college (92.1%)⁵. Many people report moving to Medfield for the schools. Only 10% of Medfield’s student-aged populations attend private and parochial schools.

Observations

- School enrollment projections estimate an additional 800 students in the next 9 years.
- A new school will be needed to replace the Dale Street School.

Approximately 75% of the Town’s budget is allocated to the School Department (which is located in Town Hall). The Town has an unusual grade configuration in that each school accommodates a number of grades for the entire Town. When residents were recently surveyed regarding this arrangement 86% of parents reported wanting to maintain a town-wide grade cohort as opposed to the neighborhood school model.

TABLE 6.1. Grade Configuration and Total Enrollment: October 1, 2019

(Medfield School Department)

School	Address	Grades	Enrollment
Memorial School	59 Adams Street	grades PK-1	436
Ralph Wheelock School	17 Elm Street	grades 2-3	388
Dale Street School	45 Adams Street	grades 4-5	398
Thomas A. Blake School	24 Pound Street	grades 6-8	575
Medfield High School	88R South Street	grades 9-12	804
TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT			2601

In 2005, Medfield High School and T.A. Blake Middle School switched buildings as a result of a construction project updating the current Medfield High School (formerly T.A. Blake Middle School).

Medfield has offered tuition-based full day Kindergarten for the past five years and has just about reached capacity, with 89.7% of students enrolled in the program. The District is currently planning to lease two modular classrooms as a short-term solution for the

⁴ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html>

⁵ In the year 2018

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increasing elementary school student population. A Pre-Kindergarten program is offered at the Memorial Elementary School.

The Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical School was established in 1977 to provide technical and academic programs to the region. Every year approximately 15 Medfield residents attend this school.

Private schools:

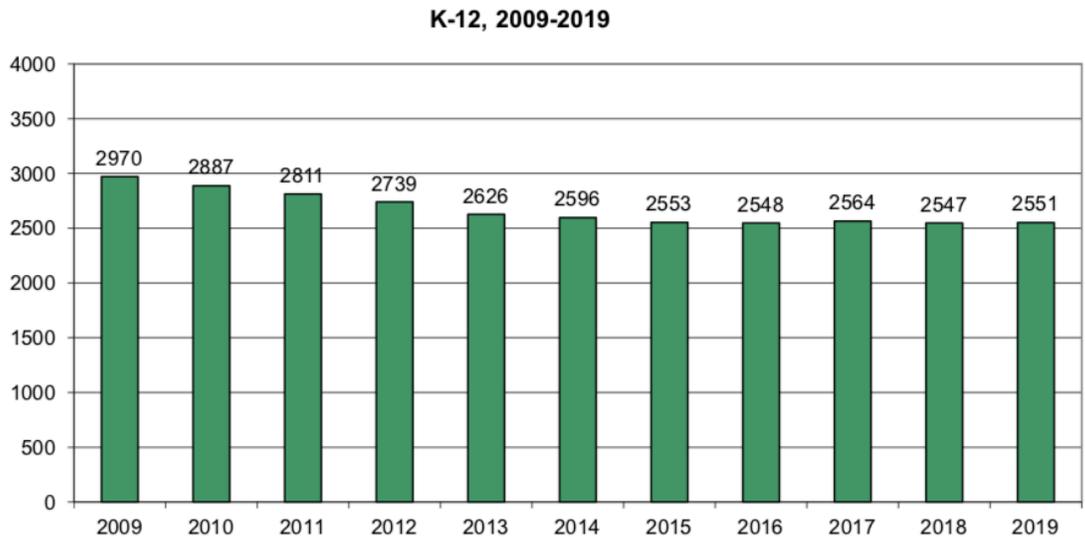
The Montrose School, in moved from Natick to Medfield’s downtown in 2007 and is located at 26 North Street. It is a Catholic girl’s preparatory school with 194 students in grades 6-12 (in the year 2020).

ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Historical Enrollment Trends. Medfield has one of the lowest correlations between birth rate and kindergarten enrollment in the state, and most families move into town after their first child is born. This phenomenon can make Kindergarten class size difficult to estimate. The district makes significant early outreach efforts to accurately estimate class size.

As illustrated in Table 6.2, student enrollment has fluctuated over the last 10 years, first steadily decreasing from 2009-2016, and then starting to pick up again in 2017. Note: Enrollments do not include Pre-K population in the student counts.

TABLE 6.2. Historical School Enrollments, Medfield, MA.⁶



Future Enrollment Projections. While historically student enrollments have not experienced dramatic changes, this is expected to change in the near future. The

⁶ Medfield School Department
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) projections estimate approximately 800 students will be added to the school system over the next 9 years (this does not include any potential development at the State Hospital campus).

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) determined that the Medfield School District will experience sustained enrollment growth in each grade group significantly beyond the ten-year projection period studied (2028-2029)⁷. Additionally, the MSBA studied the current district-wide grade 4-5 configuration at the Dale Street Elementary School. As a result the MSBA recommends the following enrollment projections be used for planning purposes⁸:

- District-wide grades 4-5: 575 students
- District-wide grades 3-5: 860 students

TABLE 6.3. School Enrollment Projections⁹

Year	K-12	Difference	% Change
2019-20	2551	0	0.0%
2020-21	2601	50	2.0%
2021-22	2667	66	2.5%
2022-23	2684	17	0.6%
2023-24	2753	69	2.6%
2024-25	2817	64	2.3%
2025-26	2894	77	2.7%
2026-27	2961	67	2.3%
2027-28	3018	57	1.9%
2028-29	3066	48	1.6%
2029-30	3107	41	1.3%
CHANGE	556	21.8%	

The School Department has the following plan to accommodate the additional enrollments.

Possible Future Grade Configuration

- Memorial School – Early Childhood Center (Pre-K and Kindergarten)
- Wheelock School – 1st and 2nd grades
- Dale Street School Project - 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders
- Middle School – 6th- 8thgrades
- High School – 9th – 12th grades

⁷ Massachusetts School Building Authority Memo to Medfield Board of Selectmen, October 16, 2018.

⁸ Massachusetts School Building Authority Memo to Medfield Board of Selectmen, October 16, 2018.

⁹ Medfield School Department: https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/519043/NESDEC_Projected_Enrollment.pdf

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The Dale Street Project Feasibility Study, including the educational plan, site determination, design, scope of project and budget will be submitted to the MSBA for final approval in July 2020. Assuming no delays to the current timeline, a Special Town Meeting and subsequent ballot vote for funding will be held in early 2021. On this timeline, the Dale Street the Dale Street Project is slated to open its doors to students in the fall of 2023.

Facility needs. In addition to a major building project to accommodate the increase in student enrollment, all current school buildings have deferred maintenance needs, including 2 full roof replacements for the Middle School and High School, which were not replaced at the time of their major renovations in 2000-2002. There are additional needs for updates to accommodate current and new methods of pedagogy, climate change and changing technology standards. Improvements are needed throughout the district for technology upgrades including Wi-Fi access and capacity, and replacement of aging equipment. In addition, the district would like to install air conditioning on the second floors of multistory buildings The Wheelock School has had some recent facility improvements, but at 50 years old will begin to require significant maintenance as it ages.

Community use of school facilities. The schools are used by the community at large for a number of activities including by Parks and Recreation, afterschool programs, summer programs; residents also frequently use the playgrounds and the high school track and field.

“Perceptions of Diversity: Of the District’s 2601 students, 12.7%, or 330 identify as members of a non-majority culture, almost evenly distributed between the federal reporting categories of Asian, Hispanic and multiracial non-Hispanic. A much smaller proportion identifies as African-American and Native American. Paired in contrast with this data is a consistent theme in the visioning sessions with students, staff and other citizens of the town that there is no diversity of cultural experience and that the population is homogenously White. This perception of total homogeneity was frequently cited as a



negative for students by staff and town residents because they would be unprepared for the world outside of Medfield. The proportion of families that report non-majority racial or ethnic background is slowly increasing over time as well. Medfield, because of building capacity and low funding rates has not chosen to participate in School Choice. It is not a member of the METCO program¹⁰, which is no longer accepting new communities.

¹⁰ The METCO Program is a grant program funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is a voluntary program intended to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation, by permitting students in certain cities to

School buses. Currently the district’s bus fleet is staged on the site of the former State Hospital while a permanent parking solution is found. All children from Kindergarten through 5th grade are bussed to school due to the district’s multi-school grade structure and inconsistent safe pedestrian routes. In grades 7-12 the decision to bus students is evaluated not only on distance, but instead on the accessibility of safe walking routes to school. Due to the timing and routing of the elementary bus system students are able to take advantage of about 20 minutes of before school outdoor recess. Many children at Wheelock and Dale bike to school as well. Many parents mention sidewalks to make more areas of town safely accessible to the schools and a late bus system would increase their child’s ability to take part in school sponsored afterhours activities; the District is exploring a partnership with Parks and Recreation to manage some of these after school transportation needs at little cost.

YOUTH SERVICES AND FAMILY SOCIAL WORK

Located at the High School, Medfield Youth Outreach (MYO) has provided free, confidential mental health resource to Medfield residents since 1978. Two mental health clinicians staff the Department: a full-time Director and a full-time Youth Outreach Worker. Medfield Youth Outreach provides counseling to youth and families, information, referrals, substance abuse prevention and suicide prevention.

Mental Health, Life Crisis, and Substance Abuse Counseling and Referrals. In 2018, Medfield Youth Outreach provided 676 unique referrals to Medfield residents helping families access mental health care, substance abuse services and programs that help residents with other life difficulties. MYO provided 677 clinical hours to youth and families in 2018 (these dealt with providing support for those suffering from grief and loss, divorce, disability,

Observations

- Medfield youth have higher rates of substance use than the region, the state of MA, and the nation (this includes vaping, marijuana and alcohol use and binge drinking)
- The recently-received Drug Free Communities grant will support a full-time Prevention Coordinator. This is expected to help reduce the incidence of substance abuse among Medfield’s youth.
- There has been an increase in the number of families seeking financial assistance as the demographics of the Town have evolved.

attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate. From: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/metco/>

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depression, anxiety, etc.). MYO also provides a variety of preventive services connecting residents to resources that promote mental health.

In addition, MYO helps families who, due to a life crisis such as divorce, job loss, traumatic illness, etc., need rental assistance, food resources, and transportation support, among other assistance. In 2018, MYO helped over 128 families who faced financial hardship.¹¹

Youth Outreach reports an increase in suicidal ideation, anxiety and depression amongst the school-aged population who may cope with stress by self-medicating with substances and risky behaviors. Substance abuse rates are on the rise. Explanations include the high levels of competition and associated stress experienced by youth who feel that they “must excel at everything.” Additionally, teens report feeling “bored” by the lack of things to do after school; they have dubbed the Town “Deadfield.” They report wanting a space that is not overly supervised by adults and available to them after 8:00 P.M.

The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey indicated that Medfield youth have higher rates of substance use than the state rate. The rate of teen binge drinking is reportedly higher than the state, region and national levels. There is also a reported rise in adult suicide rates; explanations include economic pressures.

The Medfield Coalition for Suicide Prevention (comprised of the schools, public safety, Town employees, members of the business community, the Board of Selectmen, healthcare providers and residents) works to promote positive mental health by raising awareness and connecting to community resources.

MYO collaborates and receives supports from a number of local institutions including Medfield Food Cupboard, Medfield Angels, Medfield Helping Hands, Medfield Lions, Medfield Foundation, Medfield Christmas Angels, Medfield Public Library, Fitness Together, Jaie 3 Salon, the Medfield Employers and Merchants Organization (MEMO), and various local businesses.

Key Areas of Recommended Community Focus
(from the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, January 9, 2020 (based on survey at Medfield Middle and High school):

- **Vaping** has risen dramatically between 2016 and 2018
- **Marijuana use** has increased a great deal and surpassed that of the region, state and nation
- **Alcohol use** continues to be much higher than that of the MetroWest region, the state of MA, and the nation
- **Binge drinking** has increased and continues to be much higher than the MetroWest region, the state of MA, and the nation

¹¹ Medfield Youth Outreach Current and Past Program Review, 2019.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Youth Services is involved with the “Medfield Cares About Prevention” Substance Misuse Coalition. This coalition has received for a Drug Free Communities grant in the amount of \$625,000 over five years. The grant that has the potential to be extended to a 10-year grant and will focus on the prevention of youth substance use and the promotion of health and wellness. The grant will provide a full time Prevention Coordinator for the Medfield Cares About Prevention (MCAP) coalition.¹² The coalition will specifically target alcohol and vapor products, will promote positive alternatives to substance abuse, and will seek to implement strategies that focus on prevention including¹³:

- Providing information and support
- Enhancing skills
- Providing incentives and disincentives for youth substance abuse
- Changing the physical environment
- Modifying policies

Helping those with financial need. A number of community events are organized with the purpose of fundraising to help those in need of financial support. These include the annual Angel Run, organized and sponsored by the Medfield Foundation, which supports those in need due to illness or other calamity. The Medfield Helping Hands provide rides and meals to individuals that need support.

- While the population of Medfield is mostly homogeneous and most residents are relatively affluent, there have been some recent changes. New housing developments accept Section 8 vouchers and there has been an increase in the number of eligible students eligible for free and reduced lunch and families eligible for fuel assistance. Additionally, there has been an influx of a small number of residents of more diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds including Latino and Southeast Asian. Some of these newcomers report a hard time “fitting in and feeling as though they belong.”
- Changing demographics have reportedly led to more families utilizing the financial support services of the office than ever before. Also, some newcomers with no family support in the immediate area are helped to build connections in the community.
- According to the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey¹⁴ students in grades 6-12 who describe themselves as “non-white” were more likely to be victims of bullying,

¹² From by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy in cooperation with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration.

¹³ “Medfield Cares About Prevention Awarded \$625,000,” Medfield Patch, November 21, 2019

¹⁴ Metrowest Adolescent Health Survey, *Medfield’s Key Results*, Snapshot Presentation to School Committee January 9, 2020.

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engage in physical fighting, were less likely to feel connected to school. Non-white middle school students were also more likely to report “concerning mental health symptoms.” This indicates a need for additional support for these students (perhaps including cultural and linguistic sensitivity training of students and staff).

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Pfaff Center, located at 124 North Street adjacent to Dale Street School and the Public Safety Building, is less than 5,000 sq. ft. The Department has 3 full time staff persons and 20-30 part-time staff during the school year and close to 100 seasonal staff during the summer months.

Observations

- The Parks and Recreation Department will need a new building.

Parks and Recreation operates on a \$344,000 budget (FY20 and haven’t had an increase in their budget in 4 years). There were 8,000 users in FY2018 and the Department accrued \$733,000 in gross revenue in that same year.

Current programs include a wide range of options such as skating, field hockey, first aid certification, dance, drama, basketball, ski trip, summer camp, volleyball, swimming at Hinkley Pond, fitness classes to name just a few. Programs are geared to a range of age groups including pre-schoolers to adults.

The Department manages 13 acres of landscaping and 19 acres of athletic fields, including the Pfaff Community Center, Metacomet Park, McCarthy Park, Baxter Memorial Park, Meeting House Pond, Dale Street Court and Hinkley Park and Swim Pond. They also perform grounds keeping and landscaping for the Town Hall, Library and Public Safety Building. Several historical buildings also receive landscaping services from the Parks and Recreation Department including the Dwight Derby House, Lowell-Mason House and the Historical Society at the Medfield Library Annex. Additionally, Parks and Recreation empties over 50 trash bins around Town.

Need for Additional Programming. Population projections estimate a significant increase in the number of school children. In addition, a common refrain is that there is not much for teenagers to do in Medfield. The Recreation Department provides some options, including non-sports options such as art, music, coding, yoga, etc. The Department would like to provide programs into the evening for teens (including game tables, computers and open gym) when they move into a new facility. The Department would also like to co-program with the CoA to provide more programming for the increasing population of older adults. They would also like to be able to expand their middle school age programming.

Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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An indication of the Town's interest in additional recreational opportunities, as part of the Medfield State Hospital State Hospital Master Plan a survey was sent to all households. Of the 3,000 respondents 85% responded that they wanted the campus to be used for recreation and open space.

The existing Pfaff Center is in poor condition and does not meet current needs, let alone the future projected increase in needs. The Parks and Recreation Department has undertaken a feasibility study for a new building. The current location at the Pfaff Center is very desirable because children can walk there after school. The Department would like more space including a gymnasium and multi-purpose rooms for expanding programming for all ages.

Athletic Fields. There is a reported need for additional athletic fields. The main fields, located at McCarthy and Metacomet Parks, are heavily used. The Recreation Department has expressed interest in a 12-acre parcel located adjacent to the former State Hospital property. Additionally, while there are basketball courts in a number of locations (at the schools), there are a number of youth players that play home games in other nearby towns, indicating a need for additional basketball courts in Medfield.

PARKS AND RECREATION STUDY

Hunden Strategic Partners was engaged by the Medfield Parks and Recreation Commission to study the market and financial feasibility of a community recreation center to meet the current and future demands of the local community. As a result of the analysis, HSP made the following points¹⁵

A Community Recreation Center should be developed. Considering the market supply and demand for a recreation facility in Medfield, a new facility will accommodate recreation and fitness demands of Medfield that are currently not accommodated. This includes Parks and Recreation programs that are currently hindered by the size of the Pfaff Center, as well as sports and other activities that are currently leaving Medfield or not offered due to the lack of a facility in the market.

The Pfaff Center is inadequate. Both the size and quality of the Pfaff Center are not up to par with the expectations of the local community and the demand for recreation. In addition to physical deterioration, the building presents a variety of safety and functionality issues. The lack of a gymnasium limits the available indoor sports programming possibilities, and many programs, including music and drama classes, are limited by the size and availability of the multipurpose

¹⁵ Hunden Strategic Partners, "Medfield Community Recreation Facility Market and Financial Feasibility Analysis", Fall 2017.

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rooms.

A new project will benefit the Medfield community. Interviews and surveys within the community reveal a great deal of support for projects that will enhance the community, including indoor recreation facilities. There is frustration with the current supply of recreational facilities, and there is significant opportunity for additional sports and non-sports activities in Medfield with a new building. A new Medfield recreation center will allow for new and expanded programming for all Medfield residents, as well as athletes and teams throughout the surrounding communities that are in need of flexible space for training and practice. This includes local middle school and high school students, two groups that cannot be accommodated by existing facilities. A new community recreation center in Medfield that features indoor courts, expanded multipurpose rooms/space, will be able to accommodate the following:

- New and expanded enrichment programs (music, art, drama, science, cooking)
- New and expanded adult fitness classes (yoga, aerobics, spin, Zumba)
- Indoor sports programs (basketball, volleyball, floor hockey)
- Practices and training for local and regional sports clubs
- Sports tournaments (basketball, volleyball,)
- New and expanded summer camps
- Banquets, social events, and meetings for the local community

The recommended recreation facility will have a major impact on participation and revenue. In 2016, Medfield Parks and Recreation attracted 6,599 total participants throughout its leagues, events, camps, programs and activities. Programs occurring in the Pfaff Center (not including summer camps) generated approximately 2,127 registrations in 2016. HSP projects that the recommended recreation center will attract 3,516 program, league, and class participants by Year 3, a 65 percent increase. This does not include registrations for sports camps, summer, camps, special events, or teams that are renting the facility for training or practice.

HSP projects that the recommended Medfield recreation complex will generate \$1.58 million in gross revenue by Year 3, nearly a 350 percent increase compared to the Pfaff Center in 2017. This increases to nearly \$1.9 million in Year 10 of operations.

Transportation; The Department has two vans and is in the process of replacing one of these. Each van accommodates 13 children and two adults.

The Department's main priority for the future is a new facility. Additional future needs include: more athletic fields, and basketball courts.

As the Parks and Recreation Department expands, it may be desirable to consider dividing the Department into the Parks Division and the Recreation Division.

Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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The Pfaff building and surrounding land may only be used for Town or municipal purposes in accordance with the property's deed.

See **Chapter 4: Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation** for more detailed documentation and assessment.

LIBRARY

The library has recently completed a Strategic Plan (2020-2025). A recent survey with 200 respondents found that the two things that people wanted most were “more or different programming” and additional parking.

As part of the strategic planning process, the library invited Medfield's residents to participate in visioning and goal setting. The library's vision statement as included in the plan is the following:

“The library will strengthen our community by¹⁶:

- Inspiring lifelong learning, reading and literacy
- Encouraging creativity, innovation, and community education
- Facilitating social interactions and the exchange of information
- Providing cultural enrichment

National trends indicate that libraries are changing their focus, as their role becomes increasingly one that is more akin to a Community Center with opportunities for lifelong learning, socializing and participating in a range of programming.

In keeping with these trends, the library has expanded its programming, developed a maker space, created a dedicated space for teens, and offers more programming for all ages.

The library is run by six full-time employees and 16 part-time employees (including 6 high school students). The Friends of the Library supplement the municipal budget by fundraising, including running the bookstore in the library, soliciting donations through an annual mailing, and planning events (e.g. mini-golf in the library)

Circulation and Materials. As is evident in Table 6.4. there has been a relatively steady rate of borrowing of traditional materials, and a decrease in the number of videos and audio materials being borrowed (10% of the library's collection are DVDs).

Observations

- Medfield Public Library is keeping up with national trends to be a key community gathering space with a variety of programs for all ages.
- The building will need deferred maintenance and additional parking.

¹⁶ Medfield Public Library, Strategic Plan: 2020-2025.

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TABLE 6.4. MATERIALS

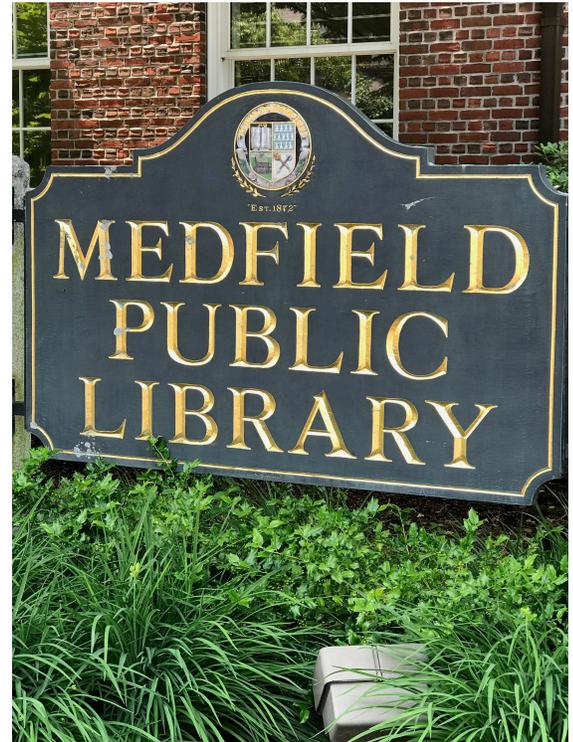
Type of Material	Percent Change from FY2014 to FY2019
Total Books	5%
Total Periodicals	-56%
Total Audio	-42%
Total Video	-51%
Total eBooks	219%
Total e-audio	247%
Miscellaneous (e.g. museum passes, etc.)	101%
TOTAL	-10%



Increase in Programming. The library has been steadily increasing its programming including 3 staff run book clubs and 977 total programs in FY19. Additionally, the library is very busy with middle school students on “half days” at the school. “More or different programs” was what 35% of survey respondents said would “encourage them to use the library more.” This was the number one response to this question.

TABLE 6.5. Programming and Attendance¹⁷

Program	Percent Change from FY2014-FY2019	Gazebo Park
Adult Programs	448%	
Adult Attendance	488%	
Young Adult Programs	-6%	
Young Adult Attendance	-27%	
Children’s Programs	64%	
Children’s Attendance	56%	
Total Programs	56%	
Total Attendance	69%	



The Town’s tool library has been relocated from the Transfer Station to the Library. Additionally, other items such as a sewing machine, soil meter, and seed drawers may be borrowed from the library.

¹⁷ Data provided by Library Director.

Meeting Rooms

The Library has 3 study rooms (for 1-2 people), 1 conference room (for 6-8 people) and 1 large meeting room (for 45 people). Meeting room usage has been steadily increasing.

TABLE 6.6. Meeting Room Usage¹⁸

YEAR	# of Uses
FY2015	974
FY2016	990
FY2017	1,067
FY2018	1,282
FY2019	1,460

Parking

The library director reports that the library needs more parking. Thirty-two percent (32%) respondents to a survey administered by the library as part of its strategic planning process identified better parking as what would encourage them to visit the library more. This was the number two (second to “more or different programs offered”) response given.

The library had an informal agreement with the Bank of America located on an adjacent site, but people started parking there that were not related to the library so the agreement fell apart.

As per a formal agreement between the Brothers Market and the Library/Town of Medfield, the library may use some of the spaces owned by the market. “The Parking Areas include parking for approximately 30 vehicles in the portion of the Parking Areas closest to the supermarket (the “Main Parking Lot”) and additional parking for approximately 25 vehicles in the rear portion of the Parking Areas (the “Rear Parking Lot”) located adjacent to the Main Parking Lot.” Employees currently park in five spaces in the back of the building and elsewhere downtown.

Gazebo Park. The Gazebo Park, located on a parcel adjacent to the Library, is used by Zullo Gallery as well as the library and is reportedly very versatile.

Future Plans. In addition to providing more and different programming, the library director plans on collaborating with the CoA to do co-programming for older adults, and the library would like to do off-site programming. Additionally, more outreach to teens is planned for the future, including through school visits. Outreach is also conducted via Facebook (just passed 1,000 members) and the Teen Librarian posts on Snap Chat. Any increases in programming will lead to a need for additional staff.

¹⁸ Data provided by Director of Library
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

COUNCIL ON AGING

The number of older adults is projected to increase in Medfield (see Table 6.7.), as it is regionally. However, Town staff report that many older adults move out of Town or move in with their adult children due to a number of factors including the lack of affordable, appropriately designed and located housing units and the lack of Assisted Living units in town. Reportedly the market rate condominiums that are available are primarily being bought by seniors from other communities. For those residents that qualify for “affordable” units there is a waiting list (Wilkins Glen (Section 8 and market rate): 5 year wait; Tilden Village (subsidized state units to include age restricted affordable): 3 year wait). Many residents do not qualify for “affordable” units; they need moderately priced one-level, ADA accessible small (1200 sq. ft. – 1500 sq. ft.) units. Some have proposed developing the town-owned parcel adjacent to The CoA Center into a “senior village.”

Observations

- The 60+ population is expected to increase by 50% by 2030
- The Council on Aging facility (The Center) is too small for the growing population and the demand for additional programming.
- It is also relatively isolated from other destinations in Town such as the downtown, the Library, and Town Hall.

TABLE 6.7. 60+ Population¹⁹

Year	Number of residents over 60 years old
2011	2060
2014	2212
2015	2493
2016	2509
2017	2619
2018	2735
2019	2733



The 60+ population is expected to increase by 30% by 2030. No decrease is expected in this demographic until the year 2050. *The Center* Reportedly many older adults move away from Medfield after their children graduate from high school. This may at least partially explain that as residents grow older, the number living in Medfield decreases. (see Table 6.8.). Reportedly many older adults move to a development in Norfolk of ranch-style homes that are relatively small and relatively affordable; a housing typology not readily available in Medfield. So many have moved there that it has been nicknamed “Medfield West.”

¹⁹ Population numbers provided by Town Clerk
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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TABLE 6.8. Older Adults: 2019

Age	Number of residents
Over 55 years old	3,872
50-60 years old	2307
Over 60 years old	2733
Over 65 years old	1800
Over 75 years old	724

The Center. The Council on Aging manages what is essentially a “senior center,” called “The Center,” and located at 1 Ice House Road. The building was constructed in 2008. The Center has a volunteer base of 130 with 6 of those participating in the Tax Work-Off Program, a program that provides a tax reduction in exchange for service.

The Center’s average daily participation is 90 people while Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays reach well over 110 persons per day. Reportedly many older adults visit on a daily basis. The Center provides a wide range of services including supportive adult day care, 14 fitness classes per week, educational and pre-retirement presentations, regularly scheduled activities, congregate lunches and home delivered meals for the home-bound elders, health insurance counseling, legal clinics and transportation. Many adults who used to live in Medfield continue to visit the Center for the programs offered and to preserve their social connections and ties to the Town.

According to the CoA, there has been a significant growth in the number of older adults visiting The Center and utilizing CoA services in general²⁰. In 2019, over 1,000 older adults attended programs at The Center. Table 6.9 provides a detailed breakdown of users by age range. The building is at capacity and with an expected increase in the aging population, may need additional space. For example, a supportive day program for people with early dementia is at capacity and The Center continues to receive more requests for participation in this program. Additionally, as a way of attracting “younger” adults, newer centers have gyms with fitness equipment; an expansion to the current building could accommodate this feature.

TABLE 6.9. People Active at The Center between 07/01/2018

Age Range	Count	Percent
Ages below 55	22	2.1%
Ages 55-59	23	2.2%
Ages 60-64	64	6.0%
Ages 65-69	115	10.8%
Ages 70-74	195	18.4%
Ages 75-79	237	22.4%
Ages 80-84	161	15.2%
Ages over 85	242	22.8%

²⁰ Medfield Council on Aging, Growth in Center Participation: 2007 – 2014.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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Currently the programming is geared to older adults with 14 exercise programs per week. The CoA provides off-site Outreach programming to Tilden Village and provides transportation to all requesting, either through our COA vehicles or through our volunteer medical ride program. The Center is easily accessible with plenty of parking and no step entry allowing all of our programs to be offered at the building. Medfield Cable TV offers a technology class on the use of the iPhone and Ipad. Collaboration with the Medfield Public Library and Youth Outreach departments occur on an as needed basis. The COA and the adjacent Kingsbury Club have an arrangement with a “senior swim” available to COA participants on Mondays and Fridays.

The Center is located on a site that is relatively isolated from the Town Center and other public facilities such as the Library. The CoA started a Walking Club, however without sidewalks on connecting streets it is challenging and difficult to maintain a safe route. The COA Director says she would like there to be more equitable access to nature, open space and walking paths so that older adults can enjoy and participate in more outdoor activities.

Transportation. The COA has three vans and one full-time driver to take participants grocery shopping, run errands, provide mini-trips to museums, restaurants, and transport for local medical appointments. Participants can also call for on-demand rides if the schedule allows. Volunteer medical drivers will transport individuals to non-urgent medical appointments. The COA has been considering constructing a 3-bay garage for its vans through COA funds and those of FOSI (Friends of Medfield Seniors, Inc.). The proposed garage would protect the vehicles from the harsh New England weather and extend their usability.

Challenges. The biggest challenge as reported by the COA Director, and one that The Center has been confronting for years, is one of the perception that The Center is for “old people.” It is a problem common to many “senior centers” especially more recently as baby boomers have different expectations as compared to previous generations regarding aging and often prefer intergenerational activities and locales. Additional outreach and co-programming with other Town Departments may help with re-branding efforts.

PUBLIC SAFETY (POLICE, FIRE AND EMS SERVICE)

The Public Safety facility, constructed in 2017, is located at 112 North St. The building is in very good condition.

Public Safety has a shared dispatch, police and fire.

Observations

- The Public Safety Building more than adequately meets the needs of the Police and Fire Departments.
- There is only one fire station In Town and it is able to meet the 5-8 minutes industry standard response time.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department occupies the Public Safety Facility. It is reportedly excellent in terms of meeting the Department's space needs. The Department is planning to add a padded cell for individuals who are exhibiting safety concerns, altered mental state due to substance use or mental illness. This will complete the facility needs. The Department's fleet management is in need of 4 cruisers to maintain efficient delivery of services to the community.

The most significant complaints from residents to the Police Department involve traffic enforcement. The complaints are broken down into two areas: speed and congestion. The majority of citations are issued to non-residents who utilize the Town roadways for commuting to alternate locations. Data suggests that some of the speed infractions are a direct result of the changing of speed limits along the same roadway. In an effort to increase awareness, several speed feedback signs have been installed.



Public Safety Building

The second area of concern is focused on heavy congestion through the center of Town. The number of lights and volume of traffic contributes to natural back-ups, particularly during peak hours. The timing of the lights was studied and the current setting is the recommendation that resulted from the study. An additional study is underway of areas that have been deemed high accident locations as determined by the state guidelines. Signage and re-alignment of roads are being considered to increase safety. While Medfield has not avoided the opioid crisis, it seems that fewer Medfield residents have suffered from overdoses than in some of the surrounding towns. Nevertheless all first responders provide life saving first aid including administering Narcan. There is a strong educational program

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in the school. The Fire Department and EMS monitor overdoses and follow up with those individuals who overdose.

The Department anticipates an increase in the number of Driving Under the Influence incidents once a marijuana facility opens in the nearby Town of Millis.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

As is evident in Table 6.10, the number of calls for service has been increasing. The Police Chief reports a 30% increase in calls from last year, 50% increase from 5 years ago. She attributes this to an active community-policing program that has led to a reduction in the number of crimes. As part of this, the Department has instituted foot patrol from Memorial Day to Labor Day, from Thanksgiving to New Year’s Eve, and from 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM on Friday and Saturday nights.

TABLE 6.10. Police Calls for Service and Number of Accidents²¹

Year	Calls for Service	Accidents
2015	9504	177
2016	10,373	223
2017	11,551	198
2018	12,880	168
2019	13,400 (as of 10/17/2019)	153 (as of 10/17/2019)

The number of calls is greater in higher density areas of Town. As the State Hospital undergoes redevelopment, which will result in an increase in the population as well as related traffic, there may be a need for additional officers.

The Department currently has 19-20 officers. The national average is 2 officers /1,000 capita. Twenty-one (21) officers would be ideal in Medfield. The Police have a full-time School Resource Officer.

Medfield has a higher than the national average percentage of older adults (at 15.1%) and this is expected to increase. The Department anticipates an increase in the number of medical calls. In preparation for this, the Department is coordinating with the Council on Aging to explore programs and funding to develop an Alzheimer’s program.

The Department is also exploring programs for other vulnerable populations such as autism and dementia so as to be able to support these individuals.

²¹ Medfield Police Department, Crime Status Report 1/1/2015-10/17/2019
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department, which operates out of one station, is also located in the Public Safety Building. While the Department's space needs are reportedly met, the Chief reports that truck fleet is aging. Technology may also need updating, specifically the radio system may need to be replaced. Most traffic signals and all the fire trucks are fitted with Opticom to facilitate emergency trips.

The Fire Department has 12 full time and 14 part-time firefighters. The station has a gender-neutral locker room and gym. There are 8 bunk beds for 16 people. This is reportedly more than adequate.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

The Department receives approximately 1,300 calls for service for approximately 12,000 residents, and this has remained stable over the last five years. The number and type of calls for service have been steady at approximately 45% medical calls and 55% fire (see Table 6.11 below for a more detailed breakdown of the 6226 calls for service responded to during the 5 years between Jan. 2014 and Jan. 2019). While other communities are experiencing an increase in medical calls, the Fire Chief hypothesizes that the reason Medfield is not, is due to the fact that many older adults move out of Town. Most calls can be responded to within the 5-8 minute industry standard response time. Mutual aid agreements with adjacent towns help meet the response times and with emergencies.

TABLE 6.11. Incident Analysis: Type Category Breakdown. Medfield Fire Department. From 01/01/2014 through 01/01/2019²²

Incident Type Category	Percentage of Total # of Calls for Service
Fire Explosion	2.4
Overpressure Rupture	0.1
Rescue Call	51.2
Hazardous Condition	16.8
Service Call	16.8
Good Intent Call	4.3
False Call	13.7
Severe Weather/ Natural Disaster	0.4
Special Type/Complaint	0.5

As previously mentioned, dispatch is shared with Police.

²² Medfield Fire Department, Incident Analysis. Incident Type Category Breakdown
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Administrative Offices for Highway & Water/Sewer are located at Town Hall. Additional locations include the Wastewater Treatment Facility (with an office), the Transfer Station and the former capped Landfill.

A quarterly electronic newsletter updates residents regarding DPW projects, events, and news.

The Department would like to update technology to make the Department's operations more effective and efficient.

Observations

- The Town's infrastructure – roads, sidewalks, and pipes – are aging and will need repair and replacement.
- Municipal vehicles will need to be replaced.
- Consider reconfiguring the SWAP at the Transfer Station to decrease congestion and streamline its operation.

HIGHWAY

Improving the infrastructure of the roads is a key priority for the Department. Rt. 109 pavement surface was built stronger in order to support the Tresca trucks travel. The Department is advocating for the reconstruction of Rt. 109 on an upcoming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The Department, along with the ADA Committee, is working on an ADA transition plan for roadways, sidewalks, and crosswalks.

The Department has a Pavement Management Program, but not a Sidewalk Improvement Plan. The Town's infrastructure, mainly the sidewalks, roads and pipes, are aging and will need repair and replacing. The Department is apportioned approximately \$400,000 each year from the State's Chapter 90 Program on such projects Town-wide.

TRANSFER STATION

There is no curbside pick-up. A private company runs curbside trash pick-up.

Residents pay \$100 for a 2-year pass to the Transfer Station.

The Swap Area at the Transfer Station is extremely popular, to the degree that it reportedly causes traffic congestion on certain days and times. Volunteers staff the Swap Area and visits are limited to 30 minutes at a time. The Swap area is increasing in size as more items

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are dropped off for reuse. A new larger location is desirable to Transfer Station and Recycling Committee (TSARC) members as well as regular users of the SWAP Area. .

The Old Landfill, located on Route 27, is capped but not closed. There is some interest on the part of a honeybee farmer to install a solar farm here.

CEMETERY DIVISION

The Town has one cemetery maintained by 2 full time employees. The cemetery has expanded in the past, but there are no adjacent parcels available for future expansion. As the number of cremations increase (currently they are 50% of all burials), the need for expansion decreases. There will be a need for additional columbarium.²³

EQUIPMENT REPAIRS

The municipal fleet needs to be replaced. DPW is starting a maintenance program for all Town-owned vehicle and is in the process of comparing maintenance and replacement costs in order to determine the most effective maintenance and replacement schedule.

GROUNDWATER

The Town has a Stormwater Management Plan and is part of the Neponset River Stormwater Partnership's regional effort (10 towns are involved). Medfield is moving towards using GIS for Stormwater and service requests.

WATER

The Water Department is located at DPW.

Approximately 92% of the Town is connected to the municipal water system.

Water capacity is an issue. There is no well redundancy. Capacity exists in the ground, but it needs to be extracted. Some residents dig their own wells. One of the issues is that water conservation reduces revenues. Residents are allowed to water their properties all year around. Medfield is one of a few towns that don't implement water conservation measures on the public until it is needed. While water conservation would help preserve

Observations

- Water usage is close to capacity if not controlled or regulated and there is no well redundancy.

²³ A columbarium is a place for the respectful and usually public storage of cinerary urns (those holding a deceased's cremated remains).

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capacity, the Department is concerned that lower usage would result in lower revenues and this may in turn lead to an increase in rates.

The Department has developed preliminary designs for a Water Treatment Plant.

The main issues facing the Water Department are:

- Water usage at 1.51 million gallons per day (MGD) is close to capacity if not controlled or regulated
- Well #3 has high iron and manganese levels.
- Some have noted that since chlorine has been added to the water, there has been a change in taste and smell (some report experiencing this negatively).

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The Wastewater Treatment Plant was constructed in 1972, for an average daily design capacity of 1.52 MGD, a maximum day of 3.12 MGD and a Peak-Hour of 5.27 MGD. Sewer effluent discharges to the Charles River in accordance with State approved water quality requirements (NPDES Permit).²⁴

Observations

- The Wastewater system has infiltration and inflow problems, but the Department is currently in the process of identifying locations where repairs are needed.

Improvements and upgrades were made to the treatment plant in 2001 to improve treatment levels, in 2008 to include monitoring and control, and in 2011 to upgrade and rehabilitate aging treatment facilities.

Approximately 73% of the Town is connected to the municipal system; the remaining properties utilize individual septic systems.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant is located near the industrial zone and next to the Animal Shelter. The Plant processes only Medfield waste and currently hauls the sludge out of the site. The Department had considered purchasing a digester²⁵ to increase efficiency, however, it may not prove to be the appropriate solution.

During periods of heavy rain and elevated groundwater conditions, there are reportedly significant Infiltration and Inflow problems (I & I) in the sewer collection system. The Department is currently conducting I & I studies to identify locations where repairs are

²⁴ Polaris Consultants, LLC. Town Of Medfield, Water and Sewer Commission. Sewer System Master Plan Update. June 2012.

²⁵ The process produces digester gas from the decomposition of sewage sludge from primary or secondary clarifiers. Wastewater digester gas is a methane-rich byproduct that can be an energy source

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needed in order to reduce the impacts of I & I on the system and to increase the capacity. A consultant has been hired to develop a plan for nine new flow meters to be installed and monitored as data is collected.

OTHER TOWN OWNED PARCELS

MEDFIELD STATE HOSPITAL

The Medfield State Hospital (MSH) property is located on Hospital Road two miles north of the Medfield town center. Established in 1892, the central green quadrangle and its surrounding handsome buildings represent an example of late 19th century design for psychiatric hospitals. MSH was the first psychiatric hospital in Massachusetts to be built on the “cottage plan” with smaller and single use buildings to allow for better light and ventilation and other concepts considered to be innovative for the time. Over the last century, the facility grew in size and many buildings were added to the campus. The hospital farmed the land surrounding the core campus, and generated its own heat, light and power distributed through a steam tunnel network to all buildings. These are no longer operational.

Observations

- Recent zoning changes support the redevelopment of the MSH campus.
- Dog walkers and the school buses will need a new location due to displacement that will occur as a result of redevelopment
- An assessment of the impacts on public facilities and services will need to be made once a specific proposal is made.

In December of 2014, the Town of Medfield acquired 128 of the hospital property’s remaining 241 acres from the Commonwealth including the 88-acre “core campus” north of Hospital Road and 40 acres of open space south of Hospital Road. There are presently 39 buildings on the core campus site, totaling approximately 676,000 square feet.

A master plan for the State Hospital, completed in 2018, analyzes and proposes how the campus can be reused in ways that meet the Town’s needs. In order for the master plan to be implemented, the zoning for the site needed to be changed in order to encourage desired uses. The zoning change passed at a Special Town Meeting on November 18, 2019. The priorities for reuse are identified as follows²⁶:

²⁶ McCabe Enterprises Team and Medfield State Hospital Master Plan Committee, “Medfield State Hospital Strategic Reuse Plan”, Town of Medfield, 2018. Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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- Achieve acceptable economic and financial impacts on Medfield residents and Town services
- Address Town housing needs (including the need for affordable appropriate housing for older adults and housing that brings more diversity to the housing stock and aligns with Medfield’s Housing Production Plan).
- Maintain and enhance the character and value of the Town of Medfield and its residents, including the site’s scenic and natural features, spaces for active and passive recreation, and the site’s historic, agricultural and architectural significance.

The redevelopment scenario described in the Master Plan recommends the “rehabilitation of 28 historic buildings and construction of 16 new buildings encompassing 661,000 SF, provides for development of 191,000 SF of new commercial space and a 26,000 SF cultural center, and preserves 76 acres of open space for trails, walking paths, and agriculture while reserving up to 12 acres for a public parks and a recreation facility and other appropriate commercial/agricultural use south of Hospital Road. The housing plan envisions up to 334 units including market-rate, affordable, senior, and other uses with some for-sale units as well as rental housing, assisted living, live-work, and special needs housing.”



Currently it costs the Town \$150,000 - \$200,000 annually for maintenance of the campus.

*Medfield State Hospital:
Proposed Redevelopment Plan*

Loose dogs and dog waste are a problem on the campus as many people, including from other towns and professional dog walkers, use the campus to walk their dogs. Many may lament the loss of the space for dogs so it may be important to consider designating a dog park somewhere in Town.

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There is a relatively developed proposal to renovate and add onto Lee Chapel so as to convert it into a cultural center. This seems to enjoy significant support among Medfield residents.

The State Hospital campus reportedly floods annually, impacting a neighborhood located to the eastern side of the property and located at a lower grade. Mitigation is expected to occur as part of the redevelopment process.

HINKLEY PROPERTY

The Hinkley property, purchased by the Town in 20001, is a 10-acre parcel immediately northwest of the CoA property and southeast of a residential subdivision along Copperwood Road and Bishop Lane. There is a 10' of frontage on Harding Street with an additional 10' access easement on the adjacent private property. More practical access is from Ice House Road that requires an access easement over Lot 3.

Observations

- Planning for the Hinkley Property and Lot 3 are currently managed by Medfield's BOS

The site has no buildings and is fully vegetated with wetlands and some outcroppings of ledge. It is located in the Residential Town (RT) zoning district, which has a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet under the existing zoning.

Planning for the Hinkley property is currently being directed by the Board of Selectmen per a 2019 ATM vote authorizing disposition of the property for the private development of senior ownership housing in one- and two-family style buildings under the Local Initiative Program (LIP) process. In the fall of 2019, the Town issued an RFP for the sale of 5.48 acres with access over Lot 3 (known as Hinkley South) for the development of age-restricted ownership units with 25% of the units reserved for individuals 62 years and older earning less than 80% of the area median income²⁷. The Town did not receive any proposals.

A triangular portion of this property belongs to the Council on Aging and the Board voted to include this land from their care and custody for inclusion in the RFP.

LOT 3

Lot 3, originally purchased by the Town as part of the "30 Acres" in 1995 to promote commercial and industrial development, is an 11-acre parcel, which abuts the Ice House Road cul-de-sac and the parking area for the Kingsbury Club (a privately-owned

²⁷ Town of Medfield Request for Proposals for the Sale of "Hinkley South" 2019. Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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recreational and fitness facility on land leased by the Town).

At present, there are no buildings or structures on Lot 3. The lot is somewhat vegetated. Access is via an unimproved dirt roadway. Lot 3 is currently being used by the Medfield Department of Public Works for storage.

The land is serviced by town water and sewer. Electrical and gas lines are in public ways proximate to the site. The Framingham secondary rail line, a freight service line acquired by MassDOT from CSX in 2015, runs along the southwestern edge of Lot 3.

The Board of Selectman is currently directing planning regarding the Lot 3 parcel. Some consideration has been given to selling Lot 3 for commercial uses in order to help increase the tax base.

DALE STREET SCHOOL REUSE

The current Dale Street School will be vacated, given back to the Town, and available for reuse. The building is within walking distance from Memorial, Middle and High Schools as well as the Library. It has classrooms and a gym, and athletic fields are located adjacent to the building.

Some thoughts under consideration include housing for older adults, use by Parks and Recreation Department, or a Community Center.

According to the deed, the land surrounding Dale Street School can only be used for municipal purposes.

Observations

- Reuse of the Dale Street School has the potential to meet a number of municipal needs.



MUNICIPAL SUSTAINABLE MEASURES

The Energy Committee along with the Facilities Director oversee the implementation of the Energy Reduction Plan. Doing so is reportedly challenging due to a lack of staff. Currently all trades are contracted to outside vendors (HVAC, plumber, electrician, etc.).

The Town has implemented and/or is involved in the following measures to protect the environment:

- The Town Departments' energy usage declined 26% from the year 2008 through 2016.²⁸
- A Solar by-Law was passed in 2014
- An Energy Efficient Vehicle Policy was adopted in 2015
- The Stretch Energy Code was adopted in 2016
- Developed a 5-year Energy Reduction Plan in 2016
- Public Safety Building and Wastewater Treatment plant have solar arrays (the solar energy generated at the Treatment Plant generates an estimated 40% of the plant's yearly power consumption)
- DPW has additional funding in place to install a limited number of solar panels on the DPW facility
- A plastic bag ban went into effect November 1, 2019
- Medfield has received "Green Community" designation and has established the goal of reducing energy consumption by 20%
- The Town has an established Energy Committee

Summary of Municipal Energy Uses (from the 5-Year Energy Reduction Plan)

14 municipal buildings (which utilize approximately 75% of the total municipal energy usage; and school buildings make up almost 80% of the municipal building energy consumption. Of these the High School is the school with the highest energy use)

114 municipal vehicles (which use 12% of the Town's baseline municipal energy usage)

347 streetlights and **6 traffic lights**

Water and Sewer – owned and operated by the Town (utilizing 11% of the total municipal energy consumption).

1 Wastewater Treatment Plant

1 Water Pumping Station; 8 Sewer Pumping Stations and **6 Sewer Flow**

²⁸ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, The Town of Medfield Energy Reduction Plan, November 2016.

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- All the streetlights in Town (350 lights) have been retrofitted. It might be helpful if the Town could use an App for residents to alert Facilities when bulbs need replacing.
- All the lighting in all the schools (over \$100,000) were retrofitted with LED bulbs

FUTURE PLANS INCLUDE:

- Encouraging Brothers and Shaws to install electrical car charging stations
- Retrofitting lighting in all municipal buildings (now only the schools have LED bulbs)
- Installing solar canopies at the High School parking lots to provide energy to the High School and Middle School.
- Installing solar canopy for new bays for police vehicle storage
- Considering converting municipal vehicles to an electrical fleet
- Planning on installing electrical charging stations at Town Hall (could also encourage Brothers and Shaws to do the same).

According to the Hazard Mitigation Plan completed in 2019, Medfield does not have any specific vulnerability above that experienced by other municipalities in the State. The Hazard Mitigation Plan and Municipal Vulnerability Plan, both completed in 2019 have identified an increased risk due to changing climactic conditions, particularly in regards to extreme temperatures, drought mitigation, and flood mitigation.

Critical infrastructure includes those facilities that perform an important function during a natural disaster, either through disaster response or additional assistance. Many of the 53 identified critical facilities in Medfield are clustered near the center of Town and are not located in floodplain areas, although in some cases, they are located near the floodplain.

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TABLE 6.12. Frequency and Severity of Natural Hazards²⁹

Hazard	Frequency		Severity	
	Massachusetts	Medfield	Massachusetts	Medfield
Inland Flooding	Every 3 years	Every 3 years	Substantial	Substantial
Drought	8% any given month	8% any given month	Watch	Watch
Landslides	Every other Year	Low	Minor	Minor
Coastal Flooding	6 events per year	N/A	3 feet or greater	N/A
Coastal Erosion	8.7 feet/year	N/A	Severe	N/A
Tsunami	1 in every 39 years	N/A	Significant	N/A
Extreme Temperatures	1.5-2.0 extreme temp events/year	1.5-2.0 extreme temp events/year	Minor	Minor
Brush Fires	One each year	One each year	Minor	Minor
Hurricane/Tropical Storm	One every two years	One every two years	Minor	Minor
Severe Winter Storms/Nor'easters	One every year	One every year	Medium	Medium
Tornadoes	1.7 per year	1.7 per year	Serious	Serious
Other Severe Weather (Thunderstorms/High Winds)	30-30 thunderstorms annually; 43.5 high wind events annually	30-30 thunderstorms annually; 43.5 high wind events annually	Medium	Medium
Earthquake	10% chance of Mag 5 in 10 year period	10% chance of Mag 5 in 10 year period	Medium	Medium

²⁹ From MAPC, Town of Medfield, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Sept. 14, 2019.
Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following are opportunities, challenges and other observations regarding Medfield's community facilities and services.

Medfield was run like a small town for many years, relying on informal systems, volunteer efforts, and low cost options. As the Town continues to grow and change, it is in the process of transitioning to more professional means of management and systematic approaches to planning such as the creation of a Facilities Department, completion of a Facilities Master Plan, and undertaking the completion of this Master Plan.

Conducting a yearly inventory to assess and document the condition of the Town's buildings will help Medfield develop a long-term asset management strategy that will result in effective resource allocation and an efficient deferred maintenance program.

There will be a need to prioritize capital expenditures, using a systematic process and selection criteria.

Additionally, the following more specific observations, opportunities and challenges were identified:

- **Recreation.** The current facility does not meet current needs and there is demand for additional programming. A new facility will be needed.
- **Town Hall.** Is there an opportunity to move the School Department out of Town Hall (currently on the third floor) to the new Dale Street School building and then move the Facilities Department to the Town Hall?
- **Water.** Water supply is nearing capacity. It may be useful to research how other Towns balance water conservation and rates (including considering establishing user fees?). Increasing awareness among residents may also help.
- **Infrastructure improvements.** Roads, sidewalks and utility pipes are aging and will need repair and replacement. A Sidewalk Plan may be helpful to prioritize repairs and locations for extending walking paths.
- **School buses.** The new Dale Street School site may be an appropriate location for the school buses that will need to move from their current location at the State Hospital once the campus is redeveloped.
- **ADA compliance.** The ADA Compliance Committee is working on an ADA transition plan for all town buildings to ensure all municipal facilities are fully accessible.
- **Swap Area at the Transfer Station** is extremely popular and is adding to traffic congestion at the Transfer Station.
- **Community Preservation Act.** There has been opposition to passing this additional source of revenue in the past. Perhaps with more education and awareness regarding

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the potential benefits, it could pass Town Meeting in the future. The most recent try was in 2017.

- **Dog Park.** Many residents, professional dog walkers and people from adjacent communities walk their dogs at the former State Hospital. If and when it is redeveloped it will no longer be available to all these dogs. There may be a need and desire for a Town dog park. The park would need vehicular access, parking and a certain amount of acreage. Some have suggested an 11-acre lot on Philips Street.
- **Increasing older adult population and need for services.** The current CoA center is inadequate in terms of size and less than ideal in terms of location. Also, it may need a re-branding effort to attract aging baby boomers. Additionally, there is a need for affordable and appropriately designed and located housing for older adults to downsize locally.
- **Opportunity for a new Community Center.** There may be an opportunity to combine the need for a larger CoA center and the desire for additional opportunities for community gathering by selling the existing CoA Center to the Kingsbury Club. Then combine Parks and Recreation with a new CoA Center at the Dale Street School.
- **Town-wide Shuttle.** It may be feasible to institute a town-wide shuttle to be used by teens, families, older adults and others who would prefer not to drive. This would help to reduce traffic congestion and provide a service to those unable or unwilling to drive. The Town could also explore developing a pilot regional commuter van to Walpole to test ridership potential.
- **Dale Street School Re-use.** When the new school is built and the existing Dale Street School is vacated, a reuse study to determine feasibility of potential uses will be needed. The building should be kept for municipal use, as there seem to be multiple Town needs that could be met by re-using the building.
- **Re-use of State Hospital campus.** Now that the zoning change to the campus has passed Town Meeting, the Town needs to start preparing for the redevelopment of the site and to try to understand the impacts on the schools, sewer, water and other facilities and infrastructure.
- **Teen activities.** Teen substance abuse and rates of teens suffering from suicide ideation as well as depression and anxiety are relatively high. There seems to be a need for more wholesome activities for teens. The Parks and Recreation Commission would like more space to help provide additional activities. Additionally, the Medfield Youth Outreach and Substance Misuse Coalition have recently received a grant will be used to institute measures both preventive as well as to support healthy life choices.
- **Develop a Town-wide Roof Replacement Plan.** Replacing the roofs and windows on the Town's buildings will also result in reducing energy consumption that is consistent with the Town's energy reduction goals (as stated in the 5-Year Energy Reduction Plan, 2016).

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Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

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INTERVIEWS

Department of Public Works; Highway, Water, Sewer

Moe Goulet, Director of DPW

Bobby Kennedy, Highway Supervisor

David O'Toole, Water/Sewer Supervisor & Deputy Fire Chief

Fire

Chief William Carrico, Fire Chief

Town Clerk

Carol Meyer, Town Clerk

Social Service

Chelsea Goldstein-Walsh, Youth & Family Social Worker

Older Adults

Roberta Lynch, CoA Director

Historian

Richard DeSorgher, Former Teacher & Selectman

Recreation

Kevin Ryder, Parks & Recreation Director

Mel Seibolt, P&R Commission Chair

Financial Services

Yvonne Remillard, Assessor

Georgia Colivas, Treasurer/Collector

Joy Ricciuto, Town Accountant

Town Planning

Sarah Raposa, Town Planner

Town Administration

Kristine Trierweiler, Town Administrator

Nick Milano, Assistant Town Administrator

Conservation

Leslee Willitts, Conservation Agent

Library

Pam Gardner, Library Director

Facilities

Amy Colleran, Facilities

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Building Gary Pelletier, Building Commissioner

Schools

Jeff Marsden, Superintendent

Michael LaFrancesca, Director of Finance and Operations

Jessica Reilly, School Committee

Police

Michelle Guerrette, Police Chief

Lars Anderson, Deputy Police Chief



Gazebo Park at the Medfield Public Library

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Chapter 7: Land Use and Zoning

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7. Land Use

INTRODUCTION

Land use refers to the arrangement of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and other human activities on the land, as well as the natural landscape of ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, forests and grasslands that supports them. Of Medfield's total area of 9,379 acres, about 52 percent has been developed for roads, homes, stores, office buildings, small manufacturing companies, and their associated driveways and parking lots. About 48 percent remains undeveloped or in a relatively natural state, or serves some type of open space use.

The patterns of these varied land uses, as well as their interrelationships, are the record of centuries of human social and economic activity, laid over the continued workings of the natural ecosystem. Medfield is no longer a rural town, but it still feels like a *small* town. About 33 percent of its landscape has been permanently protected through actions of the town, individuals, or non-profit organizations. For the land that remains unprotected and potentially developable, the ultimate pattern of land use can be predicted by the town's zoning – though the actual outcome will depend on the decisions and choices of people who actually own the land. By understanding both current conditions and likely trends for the future, Medfield can work to preserve the town's special qualities while enhancing opportunities for residents and businesses.

KEY FINDINGS

- Well over 90 percent of Medfield is in some type of residential district.
- Most of the land in Medfield is in one residential zone, the Residential Town district, which requires a minimum lot of 40,000 sq. ft. A large-lot zoning framework may help to reduce the town's total development potential, but it also fragments open space and wildlife corridors and contributes to sprawl.
- Medfield has established professional planning capacity in the Planning Department, which helps to ensure that town boards have timely access to "best practices" and qualified personnel to advise them during the permitting process.
- Medfield is open to innovative approaches to land use. The town's recent adoption of the Medfield State Hospital District is a good example of the town's progress toward more flexible permitting techniques.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an inventory of existing land use patterns, together with an overview of Medfield’s zoning, as the primary tool the town has to regulate development.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE CHANGE

Medfield is located at the convergence of Routes 109 and 27, the two key corridors that link it to the Greater Boston region. Since 1950, suburban expansion around Boston has brought about social, economic and environmental changes in Medfield and the surrounding towns. Today, it is largely a bedroom community for commuters to Metro Boston employment centers. Despite the large amount of land that remains in forest or open space uses, the visual character of the town has gradually changed as many roadsides have been lined with single-family house lots, new uses emerged, and older uses evolved into some other marketable use. Even though large areas of undeveloped land remain intact, they are increasingly hidden behind a wall of homes and businesses.

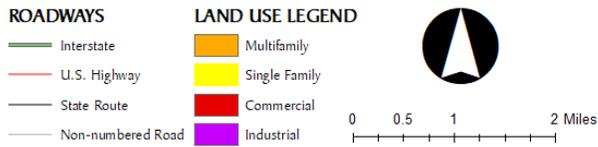
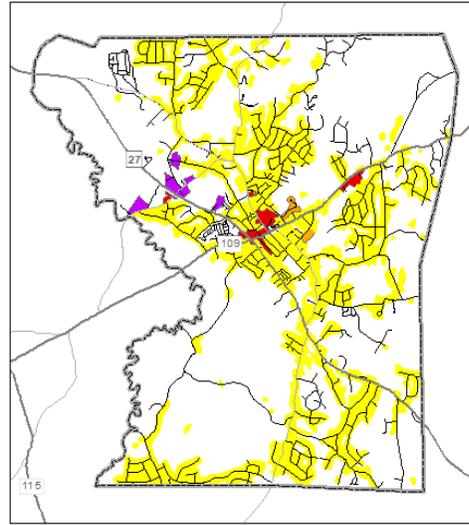
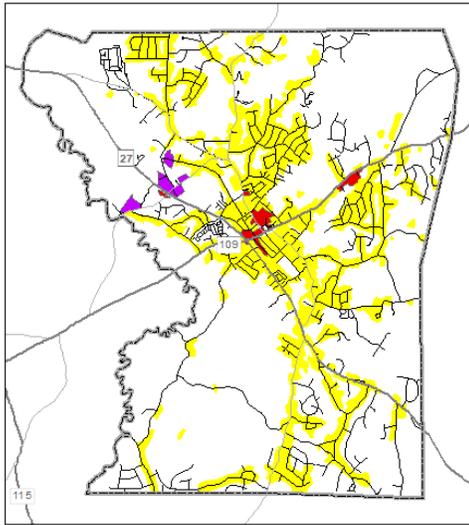
The Massachusetts Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS) has periodically gathered, analyzed, and mapped digital land use data for the entire state since 1971 and recently updated the land use database in 2016. Developed from aerial photographs, the maps identify the areas *covered by* particular uses, and they can be used to calculate the total acres for each land use type. Unlike assessor’s parcel maps, which assign a single land use code to an entire parcel even if only a small portion of the parcel is used for that purpose, land cover maps measure land use by what is actually on the ground. For example, if a large residential lot has been developed as a single-family residence, the assessor would classify the lot as a single-family use, but a land cover analysis would parse the large lot into the uses found on it, such as single-family, forest or agriculture, wetlands, and so forth. Table 7.1 summarizes the land use data reported by MassGIS, and Figure 7.1 illustrates how the town has changed in the past 40 years.

Comparing the land use maps from 1971 with a map of current land use, it is clear that land use change has included both a shift in overall acreage and a change in distribution. In 1971, for example, Medfield had approximately 5,600 acres of forest and 650 acres in agricultural use. By 1999, forest cover had dropped to 4,800 acres and agricultural uses, to 445 acres. The most recent data from 2016 indicate that forest cover in Medfield had fallen to 4,440 acres and agriculture, 213 acres. These changes have occurred largely in response to residential development, mainly large-lot single-family development. And, as suburban residential growth increased, Medfield’s essential rural land use pattern – with relatively compact development around the center of town and large expanses of open space – began to splinter.

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1971

1985



1

1999

2016

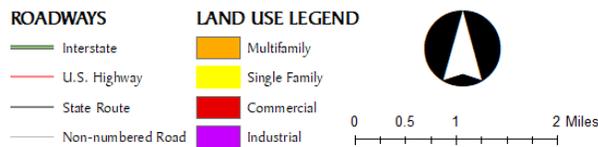
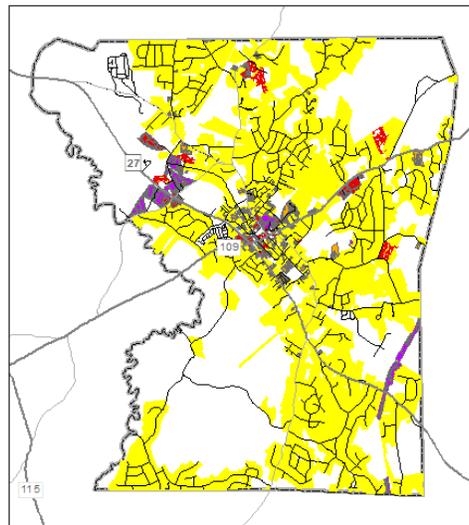
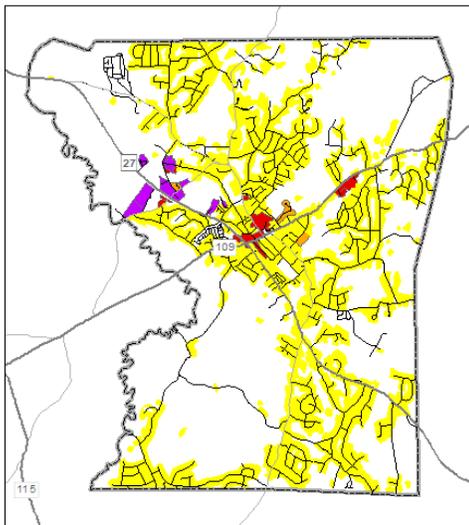


Table 7.1. Land Use Change in Medfield, 1971-2016

Land Use	1971	1985	1999	2005	2016
Agriculture	654.19	538.36	445.04	357.63	212.89
Commercial	53.09	57.99	63.84	66.78	82.69
Forest	5,598.64	5,219.92	4,800.92	4,440.75	3,948.33
Industrial	41.16	47.57	73.39	81.84	111.87
Open land	303.92	283.80	283.76	321.45	249.43
Recreation	65.93	71.19	87.98	82.56	89.12
Residential Multifamily*	0.00	18.39	22.88	111.99	131.94
Residential Single Family	2,132.05	2,611.93	3,050.96	3,350.30	3,858.93
Water	52.24	52.24	52.85	53.16	53.16
Right of way	450.20	450.02	469.12	491.83	619.93
Unknown/not classified	22.45	22.45	23.12	21.38	21.38
Total (acres)	9,373.86	9,373.86	9,373.86	9,379.67	9,379.67

Source: MassGIS and Barrett Planning Group. Note: (a) the slight increase in area shown as the total for 2005 and 2016 is simply due to improved, more precise GIS boundary data; (b) “open land” is not open space. It refers to land under power lines and barren or successional lands; (c) Medfield had 12 multifamily units in 1971, but the associated land area was so small that it was not identified on aerial flyovers.

By 2005, more than 45 percent of Medfield’s 1971 agricultural land base was gone, mainly due to residential growth or transition to woodlands. The loss of forested land means not only an overall decrease of 20 percent, but also fragmentation of the land that remains. This is because new subdivisions and new homes on “approval-not-required” (ANR) lots along existing streets have incrementally broken up forested areas, altering the view from the road and diminishing the remaining land’s value as wildlife habitat.

Since 2000, construction of new homes in Medfield has paralleled the ups and downs of the general economy. The Census Bureau reports that 392 new housing units were created during this period, indicating a relatively modest change, but the impact of extended large-lot development and the continued absorption of forested land creates an impact larger than indicated by the percentage change.¹ It is important to recognize, however, that in the

¹ Census 2000, Census 2010, and 2018 ACS Five-Year Estimates, Table H-1. Census data and estimates do not always align well with housing unit counts reported by cities and towns. Community Circle, Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture LLC, Barrett Planning Group LLC, BETA, and KLA

same period, Medfield began to gain some new types of housing options. Prior to 1975, there was essentially no multifamily housing in Medfield.

CURRENT LAND USE INVENTORY

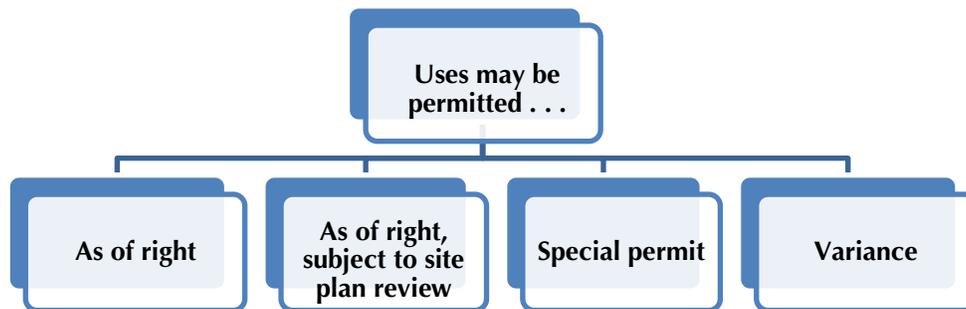
The current land use inventory can be explained in much greater detail than the summary level data shown in Table 7.1, which has been simplified to allow for a consistent basis of comparison across some 45 years of aerial data collection.

- **Mixed Uses.** Medfield has approximately 48 acres in mixed uses, i.e., a mix of residential and commercial uses, or residential-agricultural, commercial-recreational, and so forth. There are three basic types of mixed uses reported by MassGIS: predominantly commercial mix, such as a building with ground floor retail and top-of-the-shop apartments; predominantly residential, such as a single-family home used as both a residence and a professional office; and mixed use “other,” which can include uses such as a small farm and a commercial farm stand or farm store.
- **Single-Family Development.** Approximately 3,693 acres are currently occupied by traditional detached single-family dwellings and accessory structures.
- **Multifamily Uses.** This class includes two-family (35 acres), three-family (4 acres), and larger multifamily buildings (40 acres) and townhouse-style condominiums (about 43 acres), as well as two or more separate dwellings on the same lot (18 acres). Accessory land is incorporated within this category, too.
- **Commercial Uses.** The 83 acres (rounded) of land in commercial uses includes retail, restaurants and other food services, offices and banks, personal services, nursing homes and long-term care centers, commercial storage, and various auto uses (gas stations, repair shops).
- **Industrial Uses.** Medfield has 112 acres (rounded) of land used for manufacturing and warehouse and distribution facilities, offices, and research and development. Utility rights-of-way are included in this class of use as well.
- **Open Land.** The state has redefined this class of use in ways that make it difficult to compare with historic land use inventories. Under the current classification system, “open land” includes privately owned land with residential, commercial, or industrial development potential, and unrestricted municipal property. Some privately owned vacant land is also classified as forested in Table 7.1 because of the way it is reported by the state, but if all the privately owned, unrestricted land were grouped in one place, the total would be almost 400 acres.
- **Recreation.** The land in recreational use reported in Table 7.1 includes equestrian facilities (e.g., trails), the Westwood Rod and Gun Club.

EXISTING ZONING

OVERVIEW

Zoning is the primary tool for regulating land use. A zoning bylaw regulates the use, pattern, and appearance of development through zoning districts, dimensional requirements, use requirements, and other regulations. Medfield has several zoning districts for this purpose, all shown on Map 7.1. Within each district, certain uses are permitted and others require special approval from the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).



RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Medfield has three traditional single-family residential districts with almost identical (and limited) use regulations and a fourth single-family district that is somewhat more permissive. The main differences between these districts have to do with the total amount of development (density) allowed under the Zoning Bylaw.

- The **Residential Estate (RE)** district, located on the eastern side of Medfield, bordering Walpole. Abutting zones are the Residential Suburban (RS) district to the west and the Residential Town (RT) district to the north and south. Area: 507.95 acres.
- The **Residential Town (RT)** district, which almost entirely surrounds all of the other zoning districts, other than the Agricultural (A) district. In area, it is the largest district in Medfield. Area: 5,997.78 acres.
- The **Residential Suburban (RS)** district is centrally located in Medfield. It surrounds several business districts, as well as the Residential Urban (RU) District. Area: 1,492 acres.
- The **Residential Urban (RU)** district is situated at the center of Medfield, extending from the intersection of North and Pine Streets at the north to Curve Street at the south. It abuts multiple business districts and the Upper Spring Street Overlay District. While

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also primarily single-family zone, RU is the only residential district where the town allows the Planning Board to grant special permits for multifamily housing and residential conversions, i.e., changing a single-family home to a two-family property. However, the dimensional requirements would make it difficult to construct viable multifamily buildings. Area: 276.87 acres.

Total Area in Residential Districts: 8,274.60 acres.

	Minimum Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Minimum Frontage (ft)	Perfect Square	Maximum Height	Maximum FAR
RE	80,000	180'	180' x 180'	35'	0.20
RT	40,000	142'	142' x 142'	35'	0.25
RS	20,000	96'	96' x 96'	35'	0.35
RU	12,000	80'	80' x 80'	35'	0.30

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

Medfield is remarkable for the limited amount of land the town has zoned for nonresidential development. There are two districts principally devoted to businesses uses.

- The **Business (B)** District exists in four places in Medfield, three of which are in Downtown Medfield. The fourth area is along Route 109 east. All of the B-zoned areas are surrounded by the RU and RS districts. Area: 54.54 acres.
- The **Business-Industrial (BI)** District includes land in Downtown Medfield, at the intersection of Route 27 and West Street, and in the northwest corner of the town. Each of these locations offers fairly easy access to the regional roadway network. Area: 67.88 acres.
- The **Industrial-Extensive (IE)** District is located along the northwest side of Medfield by the Millis town line. Route 27 runs through the district and into the center of town. It is the only area in Medfield specifically designated for industrial use. Area: 255.37

Total Area in Nonresidential Districts: 377.79 acres

OTHER DISTRICTS

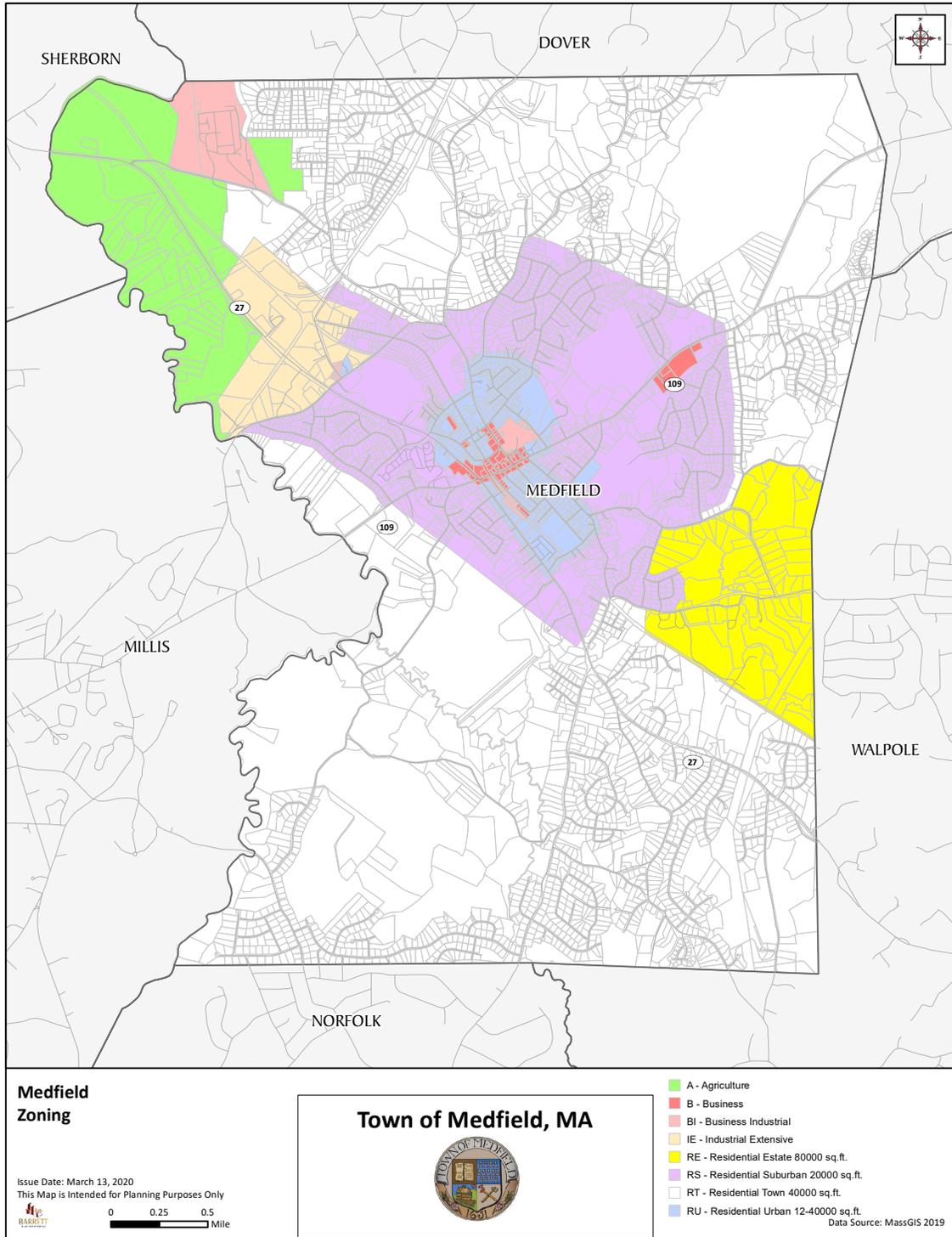
- The **Agricultural (A)** district is in the northwestern section of town, following North Meadows Road to the intersection with Hospital Road. The district borders the BI, RT, and IE zones. Almost the entirety of A district's western border is shared with Millis, other than a small portion that borders Sherborn. This district's main purpose is to preserve agricultural land by supporting active farming and discouraging other uses. Any permitted structure or use allowed in the A district can occur on a parcel of 10 or more acres. However, the maximum area devoted to a residence is capped at 30,000

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sq. ft. All dimensional requirements for a residential use are based on the Residential-Suburban (RS) district. Area: 628.90 acres.

- The **Medfield State Hospital District (MSHD)**, Medfield's newest district, applies to land formerly occupied by Medfield State Hospital and acquired by the town. This district is quite different from Medfield's other zoning districts, first because it consists of multiple subdistricts and second, the use regulations provide for a more diverse range of housing units and nonresidential purposes than the rules that apply elsewhere in town. For example, the MSHD recognizes a variety of residential uses, from cottages to artist live/work space, and senior residential development. Nonresidential purposes include uses such as breweries, hotels, research and development, and amphitheater. Many uses are permitted as of right in the MSHD, subject to site plan review. The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals each have some special permit granting authority in the MSHD. Area: 95.22 acres.
- The **Floodplain (FD)** district is an overlay district that Medfield established to protect areas subject to periodic/seasonal flooding of the Charles and Stop Rivers. As an overlay, the FD is superimposed over all districts and includes land along the rivers where the elevation falls below 125 ft. MSL. New construction requires a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and an order of conditions or determination of nonapplicability from the Medfield Conservation Commission (MCC).. Building permits cannot be issued until the Board of Health approves the proposed sanitary and storm drainage system or has allowed 45 days to elapse after application receipt.
- The **Watershed Protection District (WPD)**, also an overlay district, serves to protect watercourses throughout Medfield, protect against flooding, maintain the groundwater table, and conserve water for the general welfare of the public. The district is superimposed over any other district and is defined as all land along streams/brooks at a horizontal distance of at least 25 ft. from the normal high-water line and from adjacent low, marshy areas. Prohibited and allowed uses and the procedures for approval are identical to those of the Floodplain District.
- The purpose of the **Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD)** is to maintain the quality and quantity of the drinking water supply by protecting groundwater and recharge areas from harmful land use practices. The APOD is superimposed over all other districts in Medfield. The protected resource areas in this district include Well Protection Districts, Primary Aquifer Zone, and Secondary Aquifer Zone. There are six wells in Medfield, and the primary and secondary zones of the APOD cover the majority of the town's area. A property owner within 2,000 ft. of a public well may apply to the Board of Appeals for a determination that the land is not located within the area of influence of the well, or a Well Protection District. Certain underlying uses are permitted within the overlay districts according to protected area type.

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- The **Upper Spring Street Overlay District (USSOD)** is a small portion of downtown Medfield which permits multi-family dwellings, including elderly public housing. It lies over a portion of the RU district and next to a BI district.

OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE ZONING BYLAW

- **Article 5.6: Historic Properties** are highly valued in Medfield. The ZBA has authority to grant a special permit to the owner of a historic property for any use/combination of uses at their discretion, upon receipt of an application. Appropriate documentation and plans must be submitted with the application, and notice requirements must be followed. The proposed use must prove to be a reasonable adaptive reuse of the property and preserve its historic nature and character. The ZBA can impose conditions/limitations it considers necessary to preserve the historic nature of the property. However, the bylaw does not authorize the ZBA to approve any changes to the dimensional requirements in the district where the property is located. As a result, there has been limited use of this provision in Medfield.
- **Article 7: Open Space Residential Zoning** allows a landowner to seek certain dimensional waivers from the ZBA in exchange for setting aside at least 25 percent of the land as open space. This provision of the bylaw is limited to sites that are at least 10 times larger than the minimum lot required in the district where the site is located. Proposed lots abutting those lots with existing single-family dwellings must conform to the area requirements of the adjacent zone. Since the Town adopted Article 7, there have been four OSRZ developments: Castle Hill Estates, 4 units, (1986), The Meadows, 22 units (1988/89), Hawthorne Village, 30 units (1992), and Bridlefield Lane, 17 units (2002).

Table 7.3. OSRZ Minimum Requirements

Density/Dimensional Control	Limitation
Minimum Lot Size	12,000 ft. ²
Perfect Square	80 ft. x 80 ft.
Frontage	80 ft.
Width	100 ft.
Depth	100 ft.
Front Yards	20 ft.
Side Yards	12 ft.
Rear Yards	30 ft.

- **Article 14.12: Site Plan Approval by the Planning Board** is needed to ensure that development plans align with Medfield’s Zoning Bylaw. Site Plan Review is a project review process that gives applicants and the Planning Board an opportunity to review

the layout, appearance, safety, and environmental impacts of commercial, industrial and multifamily residential projects, as well as public or private non-profit projects such as schools and municipal buildings. Site Plan Review focuses on parking, traffic, circulation, drainage, roadway construction, signage, utilities, screening, lighting, and other aspects of a project to create the best possible design. The Planning Board conducts the site plan review process before the Building Department issues a building permit. Medfield requires a public hearing for each site plan application. Approval is granted if the project conforms with the bylaws, does not present a public hazard in terms of traffic, does not cause excess noise, light, or odor, and it meets standards of approval listed in the bylaw.

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES & OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The following are opportunities, challenges and other observations about land use in Medfield:

- The new Medfield State Hospital District is an opportunity for Medfield to guide development with a relatively transparent, predictable permitting system – more predictable than the use regulations that govern development in the other zoning districts.
- Through the master plan process, the Town has numerous opportunities to embrace new ideas about zoning and land use policy. For example, Medfield currently has an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) provision that is fairly archaic and requires a special permit. There is a statewide conversation underway about moving ADUs toward an as-of-right approval process. This is an example of a relatively benign way to diversity the housing choices that exist in Medfield without fundamentally altering the character of established neighborhoods.
- Medfield’s Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations would benefit from reorganization and updating even if the Town is not ready to modernize its approach to regulating land use and development. The bylaw is somewhat old and often uses relatively archaic wording, e.g., “Community residences for rehabilitation of mentally and physically handicapped.” Attention should also be paid to bringing the town’s use regulations in line with current state law.

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS

Medfield Zoning Bylaw (updated 2019).

Medfield GIS, Zoning Map, Planimetrics.

INTERVIEWS

Fire

Chief William Carrico, Fire Chief

Town Clerk

Carol Meyer, Town Clerk

Historian

Richard DeSorgher, Former Teacher & Selectman

Financial Services

Yvonne Remillard, Assessor

Georgia Colivas, Treasurer/Collector

Joy Ricciuto, Town Accountant

Town Planner

Sarah Raposa, Town Planner

Town Administration

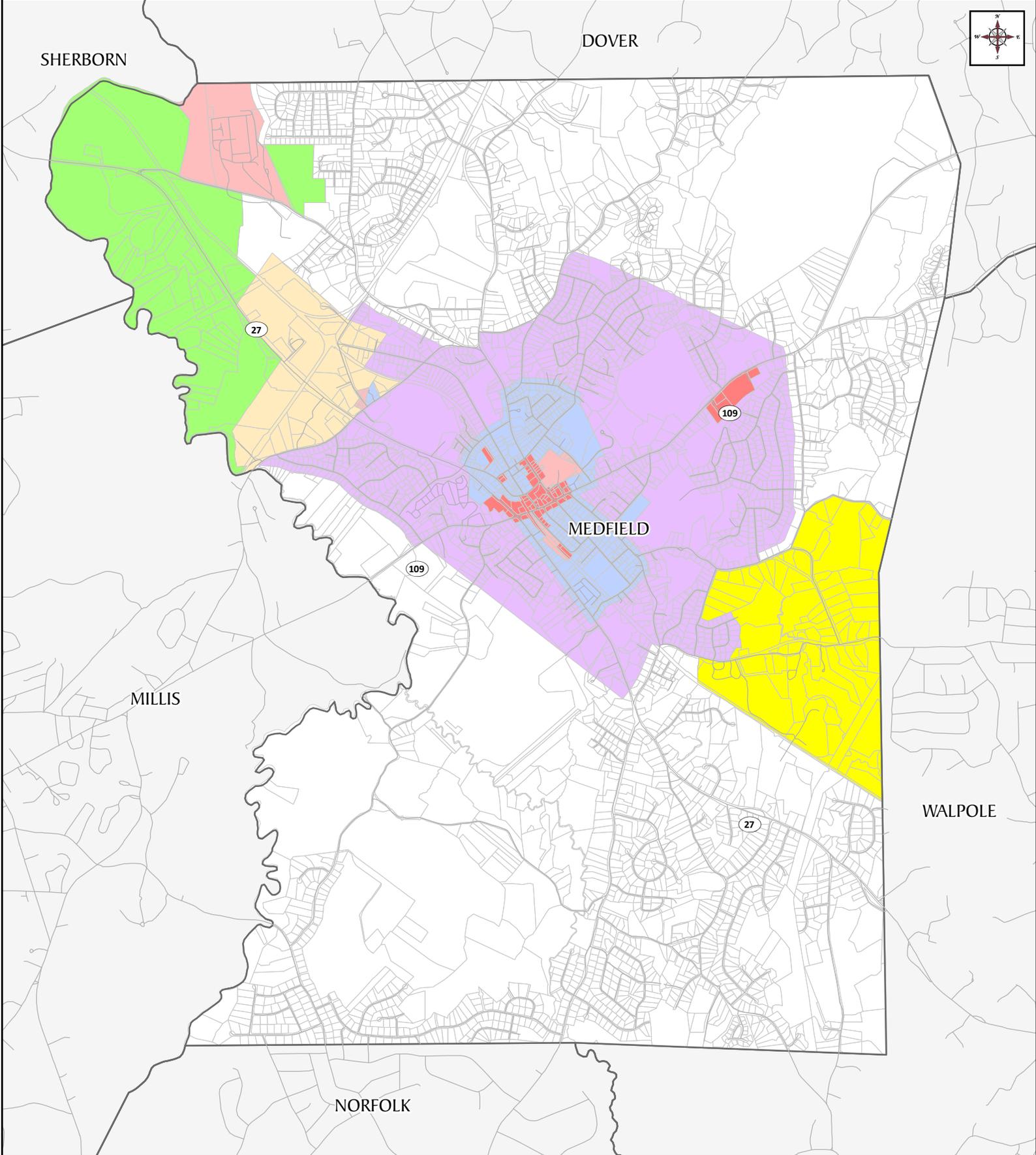
Kristine Trierweilier, Town Administrator

Nick Milano, Asstn. Town Administrator

Police

Michelle Guerrette, Police Chief

Lars Anderson, Deputy Police Chief



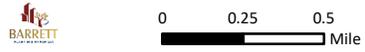
**Medfield
Zoning**

Town of Medfield, MA



- A - Agriculture
- B - Business
- BI - Business Industrial
- IE - Industrial Extensive
- RE - Residential Estate 80000 sq. ft.
- RS - Residential Suburban 20000 sq. ft.
- RT - Residential Town 40000 sq. ft.
- RU - Residential Urban 12-40000 sq. ft.

Issue Date: March 13, 2020
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only



Data Source: MassGIS 2019

