

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preface

This is a summary of the Master Plan for the Town of Weymouth. The Master Plan contains an overview of the process used to develop the plan, a description of how the town developed goals and objectives for the town's future, and a matrix of actions to fulfill those goals and objectives. Because this summary is a concise description of the plan, it should be used in conjunction with the full report.

We all make plans, some fairly simple; others quite complicated. We make personal plans and business plans. We plan for a day or for years. We plan by setting goals, creating tasks to accomplish those goals, and evaluating our success. Communities use the same process to help shape where they live. Weymouth has prepared many plans in the past, including a Master Plan in the mid-sixties. This is the first comprehensive look at the community and its prospects for the future since that time.

The community is poised to transition into a mature suburban-suburban community. The Master Plan can be used as a blueprint to insure that we make the most of that transition. Changes in government form, service delivery, land use, and transportation can all be coordinated through the Master Plan to benefit current and future residents. Please take the time to read this summary, see how the town wants

to develop, and participate by helping the town reach its goals.

David M. Madden, Mayor

James F. Clarke, Jr., Director of Planning and Community Development

Town Hall



PLANNING PROCESS

Visioning



VISION STATEMENT
with
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
for the Town of Weymouth
A Report to the Master Plan Steering Committee
January, 2000



Vision Statement

Implementation

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
The actions, actions and schedule
for the Town of Weymouth
A Report to the Master Plan Steering Committee
February, 2000

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
The Final Report
for the Town of Weymouth
A Report to the Master Plan Steering Committee
April, 2000



The Master Plan Process

The Master Plan Update was developed through a work plan strategy created at the outset of the project. The work plan was developed in the initial strategy meetings with Town officials and staff to ensure that the process was formed to meet the particular conditions found within Weymouth. One of the most important aspects of these strategy discussions was how to ensure the greatest level of input from the public. This is because from the public comes the political will to complete the actions embraced by the resident population.

Public Participation Program

In the initial phase of this program, the strategy for public participation and interaction was blended with the fact finding and analyses of existing conditions. Interviews were conducted with key individuals from around the community, and meetings were held with the officials from Town agencies. A joint meeting of the Town department heads was also held to exchange information. This process was followed to ensure that those people most intimately involved with the workings of the Town could provide their perspective on the best approaches to understanding and managing the Town.

Actions Plans

All master plans require the input of the broadest range of residents through an organized process that allows the results to be fashioned into a vision for the town as a whole with a set of goals and objectives organized towards that vision. To accomplish this, the next action in the work plan strategy was to hold a town-wide charrette. The term charrette is used to denote an intensive and focused planning project, and this concept was well taken by the more than 100 people who attended. Taking over the Abigail Adams School auditorium and cafeteria for a Saturday morning, the results were able to be posted throughout the rooms suggesting the high level of interest the residents see for the future of their community.

The many ideas gathered at the charrette were then boiled down to the Vision Statement and reorganized into the Town-wide Goals and Objectives. However, to properly complete a master plan requires the oversight and additional input from the Town focused through a committee with broad representation. This was accomplished when the Mayor appointed the members of the Master Plan Steering Committee. This Committee met every other week during this process to accomplish its tasks.

To help them understand their own perspectives on the community, the Steering Committee took it upon themselves to start with a photographic essay. Each member was asked to take out a disposable camera and take pictures of what they saw as the key elements, good and bad, about the community.

Through this discovery process, the Committee members were then able to formulate their concepts of the community later into words that struck as a Vision Statement for Weymouth. Upon completing this process, the Committee struggled with the means they could use to address the unique conditions found within Weymouth. Those conditions were very strong village areas with separate business and neighborhood issues, which are all tied together by the public infrastructure and political boundaries of the Town. The results had to be focussed on the particular needs and aspirations of the Town as a whole but responsive to each neighborhood and village. The means the Steering Committee decided on to accomplish this task was to look at Weymouth as a grouping of distinct geographic areas, the villages, neighborhoods and other unique areas, that together created the community linked together by the social, economic and political framework. Linking these areas together with a series of overall goals and actions and also dealing with their unique set of localized issues allowed the Steering Committee to see the Master Plan as dealing with the needs of the community.

To complete this step the Steering Committee set up a new process of analysis and public input for each village and neighborhood area of the community. Business leaders and neighborhood groups from each location were brought in separately to discuss their particular issues. The results were then combined into the plan that is presented here.

The Draft Master Plan

The Master Plan is presented in four parts. The first part is the review of existing conditions, the second is the Vision Statement and Goals and Objectives, the third is the analysis and recommendations for the Town by each geographic area and the four part is the Implementation Plan which sets forth the actions and responsibilities to see the plan become a reality. Each section builds upon the results of the previous work.

Part I: Review of Existing Conditions

The Findings section describes the community. The focus of the analysis is on the common threads that define the community created from a mixture of people and structures, private and public properties, that are dynamic and changing. Some of the important trends included:

In terms of political geography, Weymouth is absorbed and dominated by the Boston Metropolitan Area. As a long-range strategy, *Weymouth must decide whether it will allow a continuation of the urbanization into the Town, or will it attempt to maintain its residential and suburban qualities.*

There is a potential for 7.6 million square feet of new commercial space possible under the zoning. *Weymouth must consider its zoning as a road map for potential change and modify it according to the direction it wants to head.*

With low vacancy rates, new industrial space



Land Use in Columbian Square

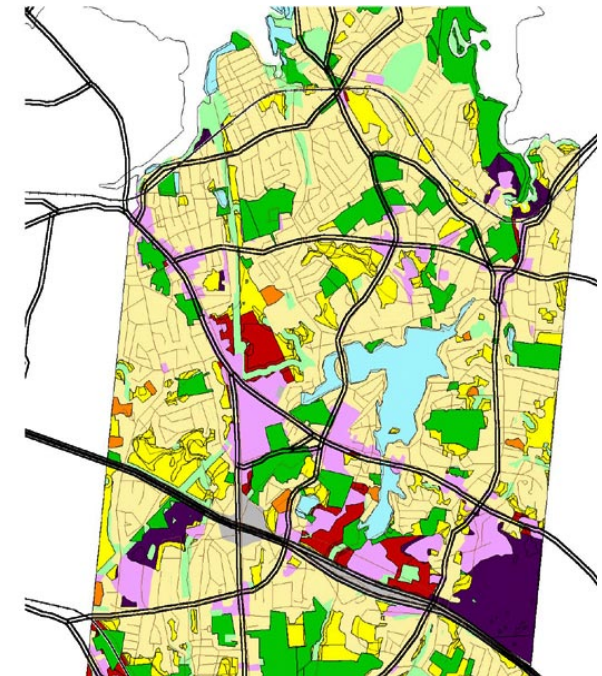
is under construction. New research space is proposed for the Naval Air Station that will provide significant new space appropriate for the cleaner types of industrial and start-up uses. Consequently, *land availability for Weymouth's industrial space needs appears to be adequate for the near-term future.*

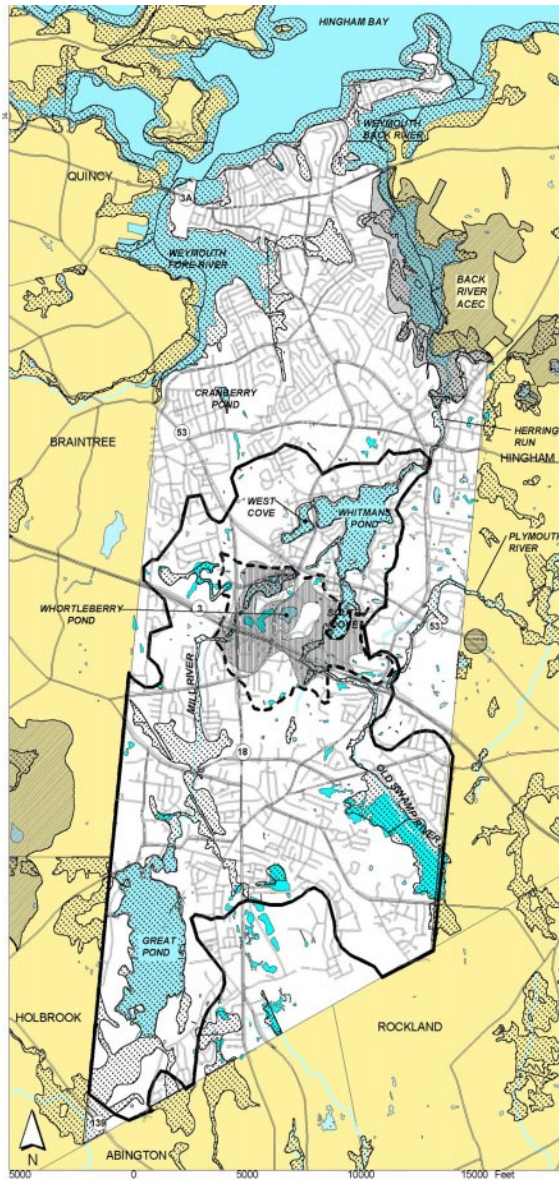
Following national and local retail trends, Weymouth's village centers have continued to support the smaller local markets. But future retail development will add pressure on the local centers. *Weymouth should prepare itself for changes in the village centers that may diminish their role as neighborhood commercial areas, or prepare programs for support of those centers to counteract the market trends.* In addition, *Weymouth must prepare for potential development proposals from box retail stores because they are part of a larger trend and will affect the current mix of community and neighborhood based business centers.*

With less than one-half million square feet of existing office space in Weymouth and rentable space expanding into a higher end market, Weymouth is poised for change. *Weymouth has a substantial potential in commercial office space that could ultimately change the profile of commercial use within the Town.* However, this change will not occur through market forces alone. Moreover, it is not assured that it will take place in the manner the Town desires. Positioning the Town for locations and types of particular development, such as high-end office space, will be necessary to achieve desirable expansion in commercial uses. *A coordinated planning process can help lead to successful expansion of commercial uses, by specifying project locations, establishing development controls, using zoning to tailor the desired land uses and designs to the character of Weymouth, combined with a program of infrastructure improvements.*

The Town of Weymouth is considered to be significantly built out. Projections from the previous master plan completed in 1965 actually projected that the residential areas would be completely constructed by now. However, there is still change possible as determined by the Buildout Study prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission. With the adjustments to that study completed in conjunction with this Master Plan Update, the estimate is that Weymouth could see 3,000-3,400 new residential units and 7.6 million square feet of commercial space, not counting what commercial development is ultimately completed in the Naval Air Station.

Plan showing developable land in central areas of town.





Town Resources and Restrictions

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

The Goals and Objectives are considered in two layers. One, as the overall standards for the community as a whole, and second, as specific to each village and neighborhood within the community. The focus of these goals and objectives is to address key opportunities and constraints found in each area.

Natural Resources

The natural resources policies are focused on the preservation and enhancement of the wide variety of resources within the Town.

- The coastal river systems, the Fore and Back River to have an update Harbor Management Plan;
- The Great Pond, to be protected with a regional watershed management plan;
- Whitman's Pond, to be protected and improved with a program of water quality testing and point and non-point source management.
- The inland rivers, Mill River, Old Swamp River, and the Herring Run to have riverfront protections, and where possible, public access.

Capital Facilities and Services

The Town, currently underway with, and having just completed, substantial new capital projects, has planned for a wide variety of facilities. However, a few key improvements remain to be incorporated as part of the capital program.



- Improvements to the internet communication technologies to bring the community into the schools, libraries and town hall.
- Installation of infrastructure for the purpose of supporting industrial development.

Transportation and Circulation

Overall, the policy is to take back pavement where ever possible to create safe and aesthetically pleasing streets and to establish a fully bikeable and walkable Town. This includes maintaining traffic flow along the commuter routes and improving access to the village commercial centers while protecting pedestrian and bike access.

Policies leading to the implementation of traffic-calming techniques are meant to provide the safest and most efficient use of the Town's streets, particularly to protect the residential

neighborhoods. Policies for better parking management are meant to provide the most efficient use of the Town's parking resources, and not to allow parking to drive land use or aesthetic concerns.

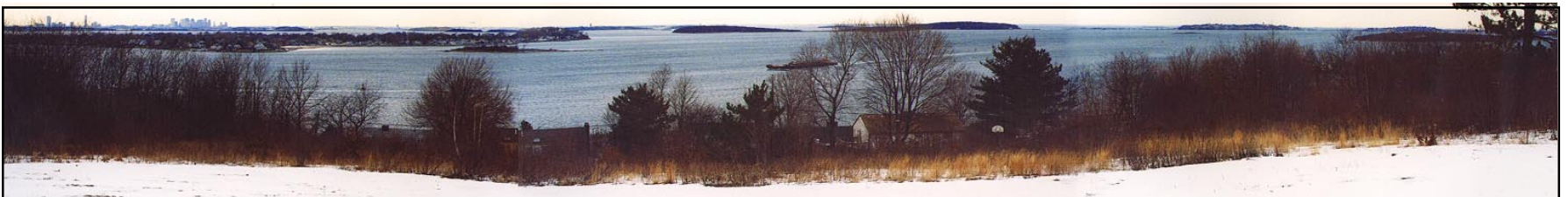
To create more aesthetically-pleasing streets, the Town should proceed within the overall



Main Street at rush hour

guidelines provided in the plan to establish the particular streetscape and landscape improvements that will identify the village centers and create a signature design motif for the Town.

View to the Harbor Islands



The comprehensive transportation plan includes:

- The recommended phasing of streetscape improvements, bikeway and pedestrian paths to allow alternative forms of travel;
- Controls on access along the major transportation corridors to encourage the continued flow of traffic;
- The improvement of specific access for commercial development to allow that development to occur without increasing impacts on the Town streets and neighborhoods; and,
- The initiation of a local bus service to better manage flow between the businesses, residents and transit stops.

Open Space and Recreation

The recent creation of the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, in accordance with the State requirements, sets out the strategies and actions required to meet the open space goals and objectives of the Town. The plan was consequently incorporated as part of this Master Plan update. Together the plans establish:

- Specific operational and capital improvement programs for all of the ex-

isting and proposed public recreational facilities within the Town.

- Recommendations for open space preservation and recreational opportunities, including any implementing regulations or facility improvements that may be required.
- Suggestions for coordinated open space linkages with the redevelopment of the Naval Air Station.

Economic Development

The program for economic development is two-pronged. First the plan fully supports and concentrates efforts to preserve the Town's four main villages in the face of larger changes in the economy. This is done principally through the use of zoning district and map changes that protect the existing building and street elements, and through the use of certain traffic calming techniques that help preserve and create a classic village atmosphere. The villages so designated for program support are Bicknell Square, Weymouth Landing, Jackson Square, and Columbian Square. The second effort is to support the current potential within the Town's industrial parks by providing the key infrastructure support – access. Dedicated roadways that provide access to the major arterial, Route 3, will keep

traffic from impacting surrounding neighborhoods and permit the high-value commercial buildings that could provide new tax revenues.

Site of proposed Weymouth Woods project



Community Development and Affordable Housing

The Town is impacted by the regional demand for housing which has reduced affordability to only the highest incomes. The Town has a relatively unique mix of existing housing units. Forecasts of housing needs suggest the need for preservation, improvement and development of housing in a number of different forms. The preservation of existing affordable units, the construction of new units, and the accumulation of outside funds for additional public housing construction are all important pieces to address local housing needs. The elderly housing plans for the Naval Air Station will assist in meeting local needs, but more must be done or the Town's businesses and the Town itself will continue to suffer from lack of housing affordable to their employees.

The Town's Community Development plan developed with the assistance and funding of the Community Development Block Grant program is designed to ensure a balance of housing opportunities, but the program elements also go beyond this to other social program and infrastructure planning. This is why the plan should be used as a tool by the Town's managers to assist other programs to access additional grant funds.

Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources

There are a number of choices available to the Town to preserve its local heritage. Some of the proposed zoning and land use proposals are directed specifically towards preserving the heritage found in the village centers. However, the completion of the historic property survey for the Town has listed a much larger and a more dispersed and diverse number of properties of important historic significance. Together these properties create a history unique to Weymouth that should be preserved. Methods for preservation include the zoning protections, design guidelines and historic area designations.

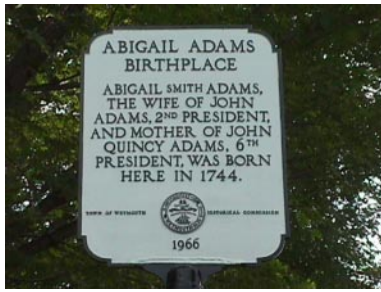


Land Use Plan Element: Growth Management and Redevelopment

Overall development concepts included in this Master Plan are focused on the concept that each area of Weymouth is unique, yet when brought together under common interests, provide a high quality of life for all residents. Recommendations for each area of Weymouth are provided in accordance with the distribution of businesses and residents as Village centers and the surrounding neighborhoods. The other areas land use areas in Weymouth are also described in the Master Plan.

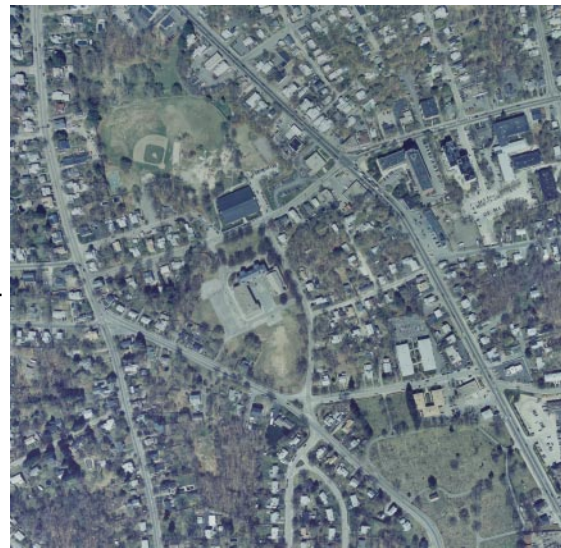
The Village Centers: Four village centers were identified. The recommendations for each were geared to the particular demands and opportunities that each village center faces today.

Bicknell Square, North Weymouth – Bicknell Square is significantly impacted by Route 3A, which effectively separates the village and northern residential areas. As with other neighborhood centers, Bicknell is also struggling with the change in retail towards larger markets and larger stores. The recommendations are to strengthen the zoning with village design standards, and to provide a series of public improvements for streetscape, parking and access. Starting on Bridge Street at Bicknell Square, the recommendation is for phased streetscape improvements that could continue the length of the street.



Sign in front of Abigail Adams house

Weymouth Landing– This village center must also deal with a bisecting major, regional roadway; Route 18/53, Washington Street. The opportunity in this village lies in the potential changes to be created by the MBTA station and its associated mitigation, and the key public land holding at the closed Fire Station. The creation of public gateways that frame the village, with the addition of streetscape improvements to improve the esthetics and allow easier pedestrian crossing of the road, will establish a defined village area with a strong image.

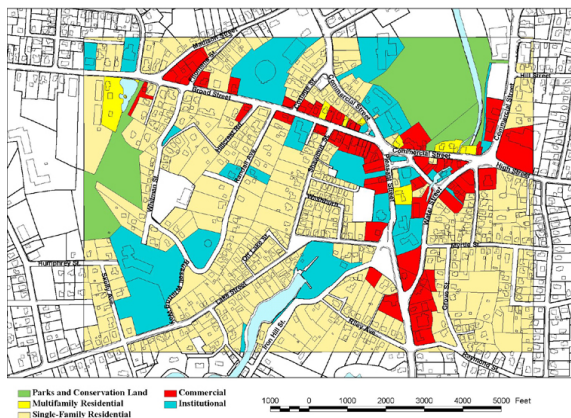


Aerial Photo of Weymouth Landing

Jackson Square, East Weymouth – Jackson Square is a busy confluence of businesses and roads that soon may become busier with the construction of the Greenbush MBTA line. However, the business owners in this village are sensitive to their needs to remain competitive. Ensuring a smooth flow to the T-station, and possibly improving the connecting street will provide an opportunity to create a better orientation to this new public transit option and ensure that others may gain access to the station with minimal conflicts.

The other benefit is that the connection to the Town Herring Run can be integrated with the village center, and can be part of a broader connected pedestrian and bicycle system throughout the center of Town.

Land Use in Jackson Square



Columbian Square, South Weymouth – Columbian Square boasts a great mix of historic buildings and culture together with a thriving business center. However, the village has several issues, the most important of which is the ability of vehicular and pedestrian traffic to navigate the central road crossing. A recommendation is to explore a 'round-about', a miniature rotary designed to funnel and organize the traffic to make it safer for the vehicles and easier for the pedestrians to cross. Another issue is the reuse of the soon to be vacated Fire Station. The new use should be closely allied and complementary with the commercial activities that are found in the Square now. Lastly, the growth potential of the South Shore Hospital and related users in the Medical Services District must always be considered as part of the planning for Columbian Square.



Fogg Library, Columbian Square

Commercial Corridors

The commercial corridors are those major highways in Town that are lined with auto-oriented businesses. Washington Street and significant parts of Main Street and Bridge Street were the focus of the concepts brought forward in this section. The recommended concepts suggest the standards for access, site design, signage and architectural design that will improve the look of these corridors and make them more pedestrian friendly.

Public Facilities

The Town has recently made significant new capital investments in public facilities. However, there are a few key areas where additional action can be taken. The first is in maintenance of existing public lands, the second is in new acquisitions of selected key parcels that bring a multitude of public benefits, and the last is in improving the internet technology within the town's government, schools and libraries as a way to foster better information exchange.

The Waterfront

The waterfront of Weymouth falls under State and federal management plans and regulations which over ride most other land use regulations in the areas of their jurisdiction. However, the Town holds a key management control option in the Harbor Management Plan program. This program under Chapter 91 of the state regulations allows the Town to define its intended use of the waterfront, and with the adoption of the plan the Town gains significant leverage in all future coastal permitting by the state and federal agencies. The Town's current plans should be updated to meet current regulations.

The recommended plan includes new coastal access facilities on both the Fore and Back Rivers, new access to the coast by way of existing public properties and ways, a scenic road designation for the coastline streets, and protection of water quality to maintain the public swimming areas.

Map of Weymouth's Coastal Resources:



Town Police Station

The Naval Air Station

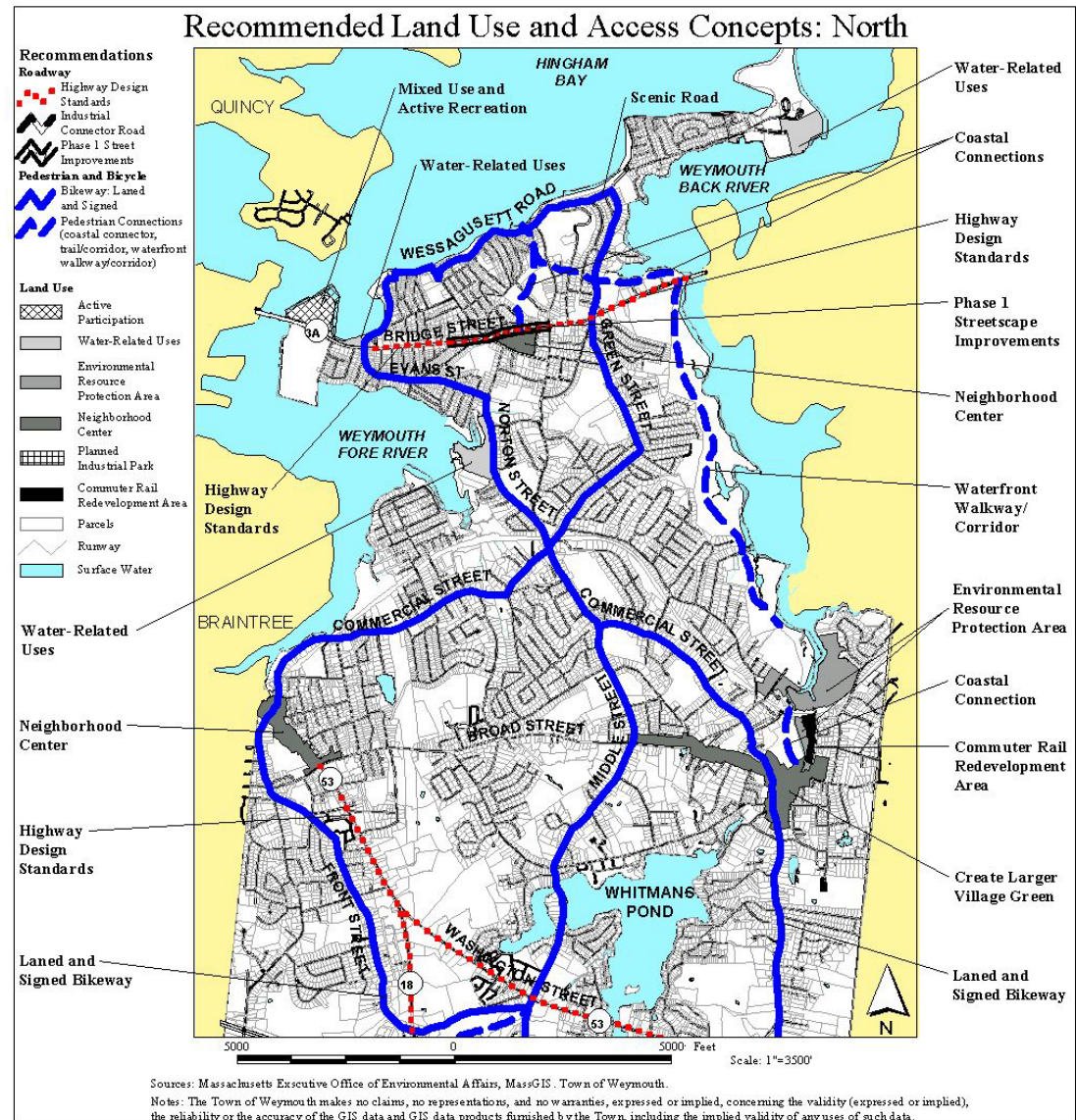
The NAS will create a new neighborhood community with the construction of the proposed project. Development here should provide the options for connections from the neighborhood to its associated open space areas so that it can be as much a part of the Town as any other neighborhood. For this purpose, the recommendation is to seek those pedestrian and bicycle connections between the open space areas and access ways within and outside the NAS as part of the town-wide system of connections with paths, walkways and bikeways.



Land Use and Zoning

The plan recommends a series of zoning amendments, additions and changes with a central theme; the improvement and protection of the character and traits that have defined Weymouth. Those traits have been a village-centric focus with diverse neighborhoods surrounding them, preservation of key site and architectural features and the allowance for new construction where it fits in with those same design features. Lastly the amendments seek to create a defined character for all the commercial areas to ensure they match the goals of the community and do not contribute to sprawling development. The zoning proposals include:

- Village Center zoning that will be based on the character of each village as defined by the Town and implemented through design standards specific to the look and feel of a pedestrian-oriented business area.
- Highway Commercial zoning to reclaim the connection between those areas and the community through higher design standards and better streetscape management.
- Cluster/Open Space zoning to preserve those features that the Town finds most important while seeing continued residential development in the remaining open lands.
- Affordable Housing zoning to ensure a diversity of housing options.
- Water Resource Protection because



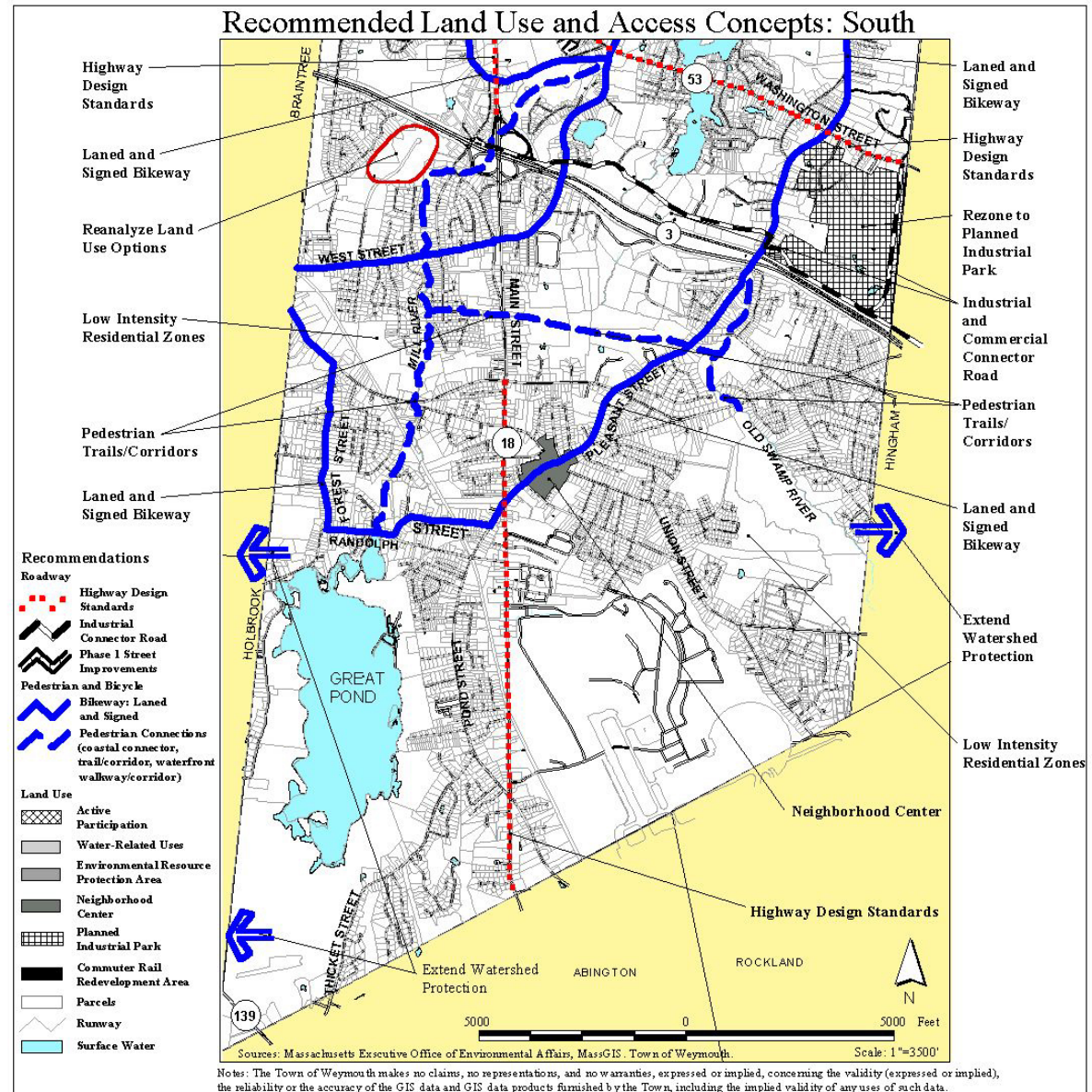
if the water suffers, then the Town as a whole must pay.

- Additional Site Plan Review standards; for such items as, parking, signs, and landscaping to ensure all projects meet the same high standards.
- Changing the ordinance format with the new and existing regulations and ensuring the enforcement of the standards.

Implementation Strategies

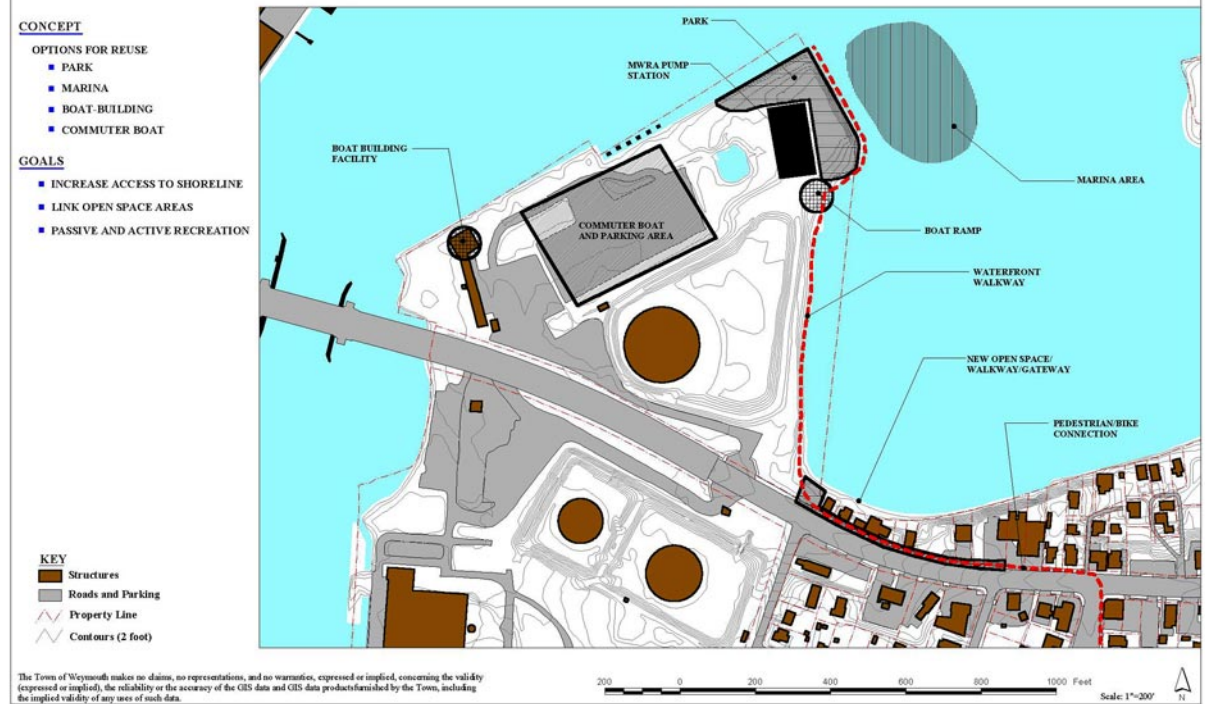
The recommendations for each of the elements included in the Master Plan were included in the set of implementation strategies. These implementation strategies include:

- The action recommendations taken from the preceding discussions, and listed with other related actions that can be used to carry out the plan. These action recommendations encompass a wide number of options:
 - The range of directives, restrictions, and opportunities, which the regulatory environment can provide, *and*
 - Capital improvements, particularly focused on streetscape improvements which may be eligible for funds from the larger grant programs; the State's Public Works Economic Development grant program, and the federal TEA-21 infrastructure improvements, *and*
 - Organizational strategies that can affect the completion of the goals and objectives.



- Identification of the responsible party or agency that must be involved in the progress of the action recommendations, and those parties who may assist in the successful completion. By the nature of a community master plan, the majority of the action recommendations are typically taken up by the Planning Board as the chief land use and zoning agency. However, a number of other policy makers and controlling agencies must also be involved to complete the program of actions.
- Relative cost factors based on certain general estimates of construction and acquisition costs. Costs for normal operation of government are not considered a large expense because they may be limited to the staff time but capital projects are given a relatively high weight because of their additive impact on the Town budget.
- Scheduling based on Short term; one to two years, Medium term; five-ten years, and Long term; greater than ten years, program actions. Typically, the longer projects are the major

Map III-16. Master Plan Focus Area: Sithe North Concepts and Goals



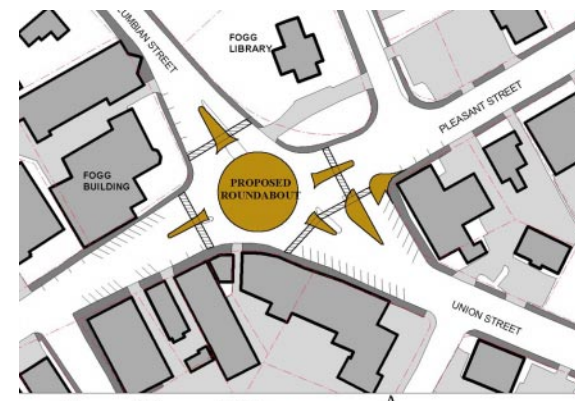
Proposed options to consider for land use and opportunities within the Sithe property. Although the Town does not own the property, these options are presented as starting points to discuss the future of the property with Sithe.



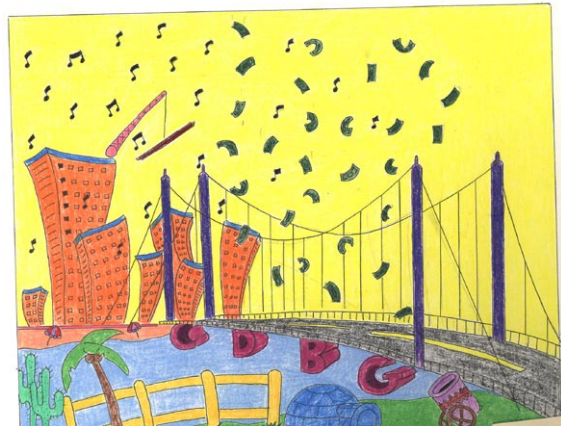
Structure remaining on Sithe property. Considered as a potential for reuse to support commercial and recreational activities.

construction activities which require years of planning, design and construction to come to fruition.

Lastly, the recommendations include a process for updating the Master Plan. The updates include data collection and analysis as included within the findings, reconsideration of the goals and objectives to ensure they meet the Town's long-term interests and a review and update of the implementation plan. This will be an ongoing, regularly scheduled activity to allow the Town to redirect efforts to the best effect as the Town proceeds toward its highest aspirations.



Collected images from a study of Columbian Square. Upper left is existing conditions, upper right is a sketch plan for a 'round-about' to control traffic without loss of safety or parking. Lower right is a perspective sketch of the round-about after construction. More on this can be found in the full Master Plan report on file at the Planning and Community Development office.



Drawing by a local high school student regarding the benefits of the federal Community Development Block Grant program

Useful Facts:

Total area of Weymouth is about 11,300 acres
5,074 acres are in residential use; 45%
590 acres are commercial uses; 5%
200 acres are industrial uses; 2%
1450 acres are in the Air Station

In the last decade:

73 single family home building permits were issued each year.
Single family home prices increased 42% to \$175,000.
The federal census showed the local population grew by 325 people.



Completed in April, 2001

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Mayor David M. Madden

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And thanks to all the department heads, boards,
committees and citizens whose involvement was
critical to the creation of a quality product.

The report is also available as Microsoft Word and HTML files, on CD-R.

The cover photos are of the Memorial Cross, Town Hall, Fogg Library, and Whitman's Pond.

The background is a wall made of Weymouth Granite from a local quarry.