

TOWN OF WEYMOUTH

MASTER PLAN REPORT

PREFACE

The Town of Weymouth is poised to begin the 21st century with new opportunities for its citizens. Valued as a place to live, the Town can be steadily enhanced through improvements to its villages and neighborhoods. Well positioned within a healthy regional economy, the Town can take action to expand its economic base. As a densely populated community, the Town can take new steps to protect its open space and provide recreational opportunities. Dependent upon the public utility and transportation infrastructure, the Town can correct past problems and support future needs.

This Master Plan seeks to knit these opportunities together within a clear vision of a future Weymouth with stronger connections among its diverse neighborhoods and villages. By finding the best balance between economic needs and its residential character, Weymouth can become more unified as a community. This Master Plan charts the route for achieving its vision to “Make Connections and Grow in Unity”, and promotes new policies and specific actions that will lead to its fulfillment.

This document was constructed through community participation and the focused involvement of the Town’s leadership. Its adoption and implementation will require similar and consistent support in the years ahead.

The themes of the Master Plan are underlined in the research and recommendations enclosed within these pages.

The land use planning recognizes that Weymouth has evolved incrementally, and retains a village scale and neighborhood structure. It has become densely populated, and open space is a particularly precious environmental and recreational resource. The approach to land use regulation, zoning and preservation of open space has been tailored to meet the needs within each portion of the community, and reinforce common resources that will serve all residents.

The individual neighborhoods are each confronted with unique issues ranging from natural resource management to the changes caused by new railroad access. These issues can not all be addressed by land use policies alone, but also require pro-active programs and resources to ensure their completion.

As a residential community, Weymouth is conveniently located within the region and is accessible to the diversity of opportunity that it provides. Its scale and amenities provide an excellent place to live. The Plan focuses on methods to protect and enhance the residential character of the Town as a “bedroom community”. At the same time, commercial land use is vital to Weymouth. Commercial land use creates the employment and tax base that must sustain the future economic health of the community. The Plan strikes a balance among these uses that will benefit everyone.

The community character of Weymouth is defined, in part, through the cultural resources and architectural connections to the historic past. Any redevelopment should form part of a network of buildings that distinguish the Town and its individual villages, and show

imaginative approaches to design. Special attention to the design of the public realm and guidance for private improvements can reinforce this character. The village centers need continued revitalization directed by design guidelines that celebrate the Town's heritage. A more unified and coherent image of the community can then emerge.

The transportation and utility infrastructure serve all uses in the Town, and must be improved and managed according to town-wide priorities. The Plan articulates these choices.

The Plan is pragmatic. It links visions to goals, goals to objectives, objectives to actions. It concludes with an implementation section that assigns responsibilities, sets priorities, and lists resources that will be required to achieve its recommendations.

If successful, this report will serve as a lasting tool for everyone in the community, not only as a reference, but as a guide to create an increasingly unified, pleasant and economically successful Weymouth in the years to come.

INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared to create a new comprehensive framework for Town policies and actions that will shape the quality of life in Weymouth for the coming decade and influence the long-term character of the entire Town. Weymouth has been without a clear guidance document for many years; the last Master Plan for the Town having been completed in 1965. The utility of that Plan is now very limited, except as an historical document. The thirty-five years since the last Plan's preparation have witnessed profound changes in the economic and cultural life of the community and of the region in which it is located. Without benefit of a comprehensive plan as a guide, the Town finds itself without a clear consensus on many common issues that it faces today. During this most recent year, the Town decided to devote the time and resources to prepare an updated Master Plan, with broad participation and leadership representing the Town's citizens, constituencies, agencies and boards. The results are included in this Report.

The Report recounts the key findings, analyses and insights that are the basis of the Plan. Recommendations are listed and discussed in the context of a town-wide vision that was formed during the community-based planning process. Finally, this Report establishes an implementation strategy that translates the recommendations into a series of assigned actions and responsibilities.

The Master Plan was prepared under the direction of the Department of Planning and Community Development. A Master Plan Steering Committee was assembled to provide an advisory role during its preparation, representing a broad range of community interests. Community participation was a principal goal of the planning process, and was achieved through a broad array of meetings, workshops, and distribution of information. Assistance in preparing the Master Plan was provided by a planning consulting team led by The Cecil Group, Inc., with specialized support by Bonz/REA, Inc. (economics), Howard/Stein Hudson, Inc. (transportation planning) and McGregor & Associates (regulations and zoning).

A. Purpose of a Master Plan

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts encourages the creation of community Master Plan and has established a structure for their preparation. This Master Plan has been prepared to meet the needs of the Town of Weymouth within this structure. In accordance with State law, (Chapter 41 section 81D) a Master Plan is "...a statement, through text, maps, illustrations or other forms of communication, that is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality." The State recognizes that a properly planned community can obtain significant cost savings in government infrastructure and efficiency, and reduce the impacts to the public welfare. By creating a Master Plan that meets State regulations, Weymouth may reinforce its eligibility for special grant or funding programs.

While it meets the Commonwealth's standards for planning, The Master Plan is fundamentally designed as a tool for the Town of Weymouth.

This Master Plan establishes a common Vision for the future of the Town, and the Goals and Objectives that it wishes to fulfill. In this way, it creates a policy framework to which future decision-making can refer. The Master Plan associates a program of regulatory measures, programs and actions that must be undertaken in order to meet the Town's Goals and Objectives, emphasizing the role that the Town can play in determining its own future. In part, the specific recommendations can subsequently be implemented through capital and operational budgeting, administration of programs, and pursuit of appropriate grant or funding resources. In part, the recommendations can also be implemented through changes in the Town's regulations and their application.

The Plan can also establish a basis for guiding policies relative to other jurisdictions as they may affect the Town, including Federal and State agencies and special authorities such as the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

B. Structure of the Master Plan Draft Report

This Master Plan Draft Report is divided into four distinct sections. This outline describes the content of each chapter.

Chapter I. Findings. The first chapter establishes the foundation for the Plan. It presents a base of information concerning the Town's past, present and foreseeable future trends. Some of the information was gathered from interviews with representatives from Town agencies and individuals who participate in the Town government. Much of the information was gathered from available sources of data for land use, natural resources, infrastructure, demographic and economic conditions that will influence the future. The information is summarized through observations on the key factors that are relevant to the Plan's Goals and Objectives. The chapter is broken up into three parts:

- Part 1. A History of the Town of Weymouth
- Part 2. Present Conditions: What is Weymouth Today?
- Part 3. Trends and Demands: Where is Weymouth Headed?

Chapter II. The Program: The Vision, Goals and Objectives. This chapter expresses a common aspiration for the Town's future, which was developed through the interactive participation of citizens, representatives of constituent interest groups, and participants from Town government. An initial source of ideas was generated in a town-wide workshop (called a "charrette"), with additional contributions during subsequent public meetings and through the Master Plan Steering Committee that helped guide the planning effort. This chapter records inspirations, ideas, and needs for the community as a whole and for the individual districts of which Weymouth is composed. The Vision establishes the most general framework. It articulates a focus on the residential and village-like attributes that will create a high quality of life for the residents of Weymouth. The Goals and Objectives expand that Vision by creating specific directions that must be taken if the Vision is to be fulfilled.

Chapter III. Evaluation and Recommendations. This chapter evaluates the factors that will influence the Town's future from a geographic and focus area perspective. In Part 1, the Town is considered in terms of separate geographic districts. Each district is reviewed and discussed in terms of associated planning issues, opportunities for improvements, and constraints on positive change. The components of Weymouth include the four village centers and the neighborhoods surrounding those centers. Part 2 includes the evaluation and recommendations for the special overlay areas. These are the commercial corridors that serve as the Town's regional highway connectors, the public lands, the waterfront, and the Naval Air Station. This chapter includes input from residents from various neighborhoods and business organizations who participated in district meetings to establish an initial list of key issues. Part 3 looks specifically at the connection between land use and transportation issues, with recommendations for transportation improvements related to traffic calming and economic development. Part 4 deals with the zoning issues, the Town's principle means of controlling land use. The investigations are summarized that evaluate the special conditions that will influence practical strategies to address the key issues. The Town's options for resolving district-based issues are explored and presented for consideration and action. The chapter sections are:

- Part 1. The Village Centers and Neighborhoods
- Part 2. Special Areas
- Part 3. Public Buildings and Facilities
- Part 4. Transportation Infrastructure
- Part 5. Land Use and Zoning
- Part 6. Illustrating the Potential: Focus Area Studies

Chapter IV. Implementation: The Actions and Actors. This last chapter lists the actions necessary to accomplish those goals and objectives included in the previous chapter. Responsibilities are assigned for implementing the Plan within the structure of departments, boards, commissions and the administration that serves Weymouth. The second part of this chapter includes illustrative studies of four areas within the Town to indicate how implementation of the Plan's objectives might be achieved at specific sites.

C. The Next Steps

This Report has been prepared in Draft form for review and comment. Comments will be assembled and reviewed by representatives from the Department of Planning and Community Development and the consultant team that is assisting them. The Draft Plan will then be finalized for public presentation. The Master Plan will subsequently be submitted for endorsement by the Mayor, adoption by the Planning Board, and endorsement by the Town Council.

CHAPTER I: FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In the first section of this Master Plan, the reader is offered background information regarding the Town. The chapter starts with a discussion of the Town's past, proceeds through a database of information regarding the present, and then projects future conditions from the trends visible today. These include broad trends of growth and change in the Town's population, economic status and patterns of land use as that may shift over time. This chapter is divided into three parts that can be distinguished by the label in the top corner of the pages:

Part I. A History of Weymouth

Part II. Present Conditions: Who Lives in Weymouth Today?

Part III. Trends and Demands: Where is Weymouth Headed?

From this information emerge observations on key issues, needs, ideas that will be further discussed in the later chapters. These observations are highlighted in the text to allow the reader to distinguish them from findings of fact. The observations are related to recurrent themes in discussions about the future of Weymouth, and are similarly linked to the Goals and Objectives that are articulated in later chapters.

PART 1. A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WEYMOUTH

Weymouth is a genuinely historic community, emerging as a village during the earliest colonial era of New England. It has been an active participant in every major economic and cultural trend that has affected the region and the nation, with remnants of each era evident in the shape of the community, from its roads and monuments to its land use patterns, buildings and open spaces. This cumulative history has led to both some of Weymouth's strengths and weaknesses. By understanding the evolution of the community, selective choices can be made regarding the best qualities that should be preserved and enhanced.

The history of Weymouth can be presented in many different forms, each from a particular viewpoint. There is a cultural history that focuses on the heritage of the residents of Weymouth. An architectural history focuses on the changing approach to creating the built environment. An economic history notices the shifts in methods through which the townspeople have earned their livelihood, and the resulting patterns of land use and transportation that resulted. There are many other viewpoints that can be assembled, as well. Looking at these historical reports as snapshots from the past can provide a useful perspective on the current planning effort. They tend to reinforce the impression that Weymouth, although historic, has not been static. It has changed substantially to adapt to the shifting social and economic circumstances of a dynamic New England, and this adaptation is likely to continue.

The following summary identifies some highlights of the Town's history that may provide some insight for the future.

A SHORT HISTORY LESSON

The Town of Weymouth is the second oldest town in the Commonwealth, dating from 1622 when it was founded as “Wessagusset”. Renamed Weymouth in 1635, the Town was boosted in that year by the arrival of 100 settlers from its namesake in England. The early settlement was incorporated into the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and slowly grew as a fishing and agricultural community. By the time of the American Revolution, the colonial settlement had a population of 1,470 people. The Town was graced by the simple houses and churches that were wooden replicas of the brick and stone architecture of European origin, some of which have survived as reminders of this past. Although it maintained with an important connection to the sea, the Town was connected to nearby communities by a simple network of paths and roads that found the most convenient routes through the varied upland terrain. The skeletal remains of this early roadway network can be traced in some of the Town’s streets and ways today. As an example, Commercial Street has been identified as an original Native American trail in the Town’s latest cultural resource survey. This meandering pattern of main roads is directly linked to the charm of the Town, and to its current traffic problems.

The American Revolution was shortly followed by the industrial revolution, and Weymouth was an active participant. The impact on the Town was clear when enough natural bog iron was discovered to support a local factory in 1837, the Weymouth Iron Works. The remnants of this era can be seen in the industrial buildings scattered through Town, many of which have been converted to other businesses and residential uses. The maritime and agricultural society had become a culture of merchants, manufacturing and trade. New labor was required to support the growth of manufacturing, and new businesses blossomed to supply the goods and services that the growing population required. A new type of commercial building tradition emerged, with simple, box-like buildings providing a pleasant façade to the street but containing the serious business of storage and trade in simple interiors. Again, the remnants of this era can be seen in several locations, particular in the village centers. Together with expansion of the local financial institutions and railroads in the mid-1800’s, the Town enjoyed a period of economic stability and the Town population blossomed to 6,173 in 1870.

As wealth expanded, so did the trend towards stylish homes. New ideas about building design were imported from Europe, and distinctive new houses were added to the collection of buildings that remain in the collection of historic Weymouth homes.

Later, after competition from Pennsylvania closed the iron works, the shoe industry came to the economic forefront, employing three-quarters of the local residents and, with some other manufacturing ventures, supporting those residents up until World War II. Immigration helped supply the work force for

Useful Facts: Geographic Descriptors of Weymouth

- It is located in Norfolk County, South Shore region of the Boston metropolitan area (Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area).
- It is twelve miles southeast of Boston and 42 miles northeast of Providence, Rhode Island.
- It is bordered by Braintree and Holbrook on the west, Abington and Rockland on the south, Hingham on the east, and the Fore River, Back River, and Hingham Bay on the north.
- It covers an area of 21.61 square miles.

Part 1. History

these businesses, and arriving cultures helped populate Weymouth, like the rest of the Boston region. While the Town was linked by streetcars and railroads to the region, most of the local retail and service businesses were in close proximity to one another, and in walking distance of many homes. It was an era in which small local businesses and stores thrived.

After World War II, several significant changes in local demographics and regional economies profoundly affected the Town. Rising incomes led to the explosion in automobile ownership, and the Federal and State governments responded with aggressive highway improvement programs. With the large population growth and movement to the suburbs from out of the urban centers, the Town quickly expanded its population. Weymouth proved to be ideally located as a bedroom community within the greater Boston region. The Town added some 21,000 new residents in the fifteen years between 1945 and 1960. Bisecting the Town in 1956, Route 3's opening, combined with the elimination of commuter rail service, was a major impact on Weymouth and the South Shore. With the advent of the expressway and other new road construction, the majority of residents commuted to other locations for their jobs. The shoe factories closed and the local economy became largely based on smaller service, retail and some wholesale operations to support the new neighborhoods. Weymouth was increasingly serving as a suburb in the Boston region, where better paying jobs in the city and a good road system to get there allowed a segment of the population to achieve their desire to live in relative comfort.

The trend towards suburban decentralization and reliance on the automobile has continued, and has been matched by shifts in retailing patterns. Large concentrations of retail goods replaced the tradition of the small, locally-oriented business. This trend has culminated in the dominance of large, national companies in retail trade which rely on location near the highways and arterials of our roadway system. The local retail trade has weakened, and now requires active support if it is to retain its role in the life of the community.

The trends not only affected Weymouth, but all of its South Shore neighbors, as well. However the logical limit of this trend is being reached. The concentration of commuter communities and reliance on the automobile has resulted in overcrowding of the highway system, overloading of local arterials, and a gradual loss of accessibility within the community. Recognizing the limits of the current transportation infrastructure, the regional rail and roadway network is being expanded through long-term strategies.

PAST MASTER PLANNING EFFORTS

The last Town Master Plan was completed 35 years ago. At that time, the Town of Weymouth had over 48,000 people, and was an established residential community, marked by larger sized families than the regional average. It was a Town under almost daily change. With 100 new houses being built per year, and almost four people per household, the population was expected to reach its maximum of 62,000 by the year 1980.

Part 1. History

Some of the recommendations of the Plan reflect the limited perspective of its time. The percentage of commercial and open space areas was not proposed to change - *as long as the Naval Air Station became public open space*. Significant increases were proposed in the percentage of residential and industrial land use, including very significant increases in high density, multi-family residential projects – *an ideal that would come close to fruition*. A new highway; the Shawmut Trail, was proposed as a major north-south arterial link to accommodate another connection from the Southeast Expressway through to points south – *moving across Weymouth Landing and East Weymouth neighborhoods and potentially displacing the railroad*.

The 1964 plan also proposed urban renewal projects for East Weymouth, which although once considered a successful tool for community improvement, would eventually become a high-risk method for change because of the damage that it caused to the cultural fabric of the community. However, the plan also encouraged compaction of the business zoning that allowed strip commercial development on local roads and highways. *Strip commercial development is presently considered an indicator of urban sprawl and may not contribute to the quality of life or value of a community as well as other development patterns*.

Some of the ideas may seem out of place today. However, back in April 1964, when that last master plan was finalized, the economic and social conditions were distinctly different. Following years of explosive growth in local and regional populations, the expansion seemed unstoppable. The question was only - how fast would the growth continue? The authors also believed economic expansion would support a significant growth of municipal services and allow enormous investments in the proposed road systems and other infrastructure.

The idea of environmental commissions to protect natural resources was expressed in the Plan, and was a first sign of the subsequent movement to protect our resources. As a result, many of the proposed infrastructure improvements would be later significantly modified to reflect the new understanding. As an example, a solid waste incinerator for the Town was installed in 1963. It was a seemingly beneficial project that would run headlong into the Federal Clean Air Act that was enacted just the year before. This Federal legislation would later be made evermore restrictive eventually resulting in an Environmental Protection Agency order to close the facility a few years later. *All other development and infrastructure projects were also slated to be subject to more critical environmental review*.

Of course, other significant political and social upheaval was snapping at the heels of that 1964 Master Plan, and many of the beliefs upon which the projections were made would have to be later considered insufficient to reflect the impact of the national and regional, socio-economic and environmental changes.

Part 1. History

THE LAST THIRTY YEARS

Weymouth is a ‘mature’ community. This means that compared to other municipalities, Weymouth has been almost completely developed in terms of land area. But, that has not, and will not, prevent the redevelopment of sites with new uses or infill development on the few sites that remain. Some examples of this are the redevelopment of Mammoth Mart into Lechmere’s, which itself is in the process of being redeveloped as Wal-Mart; Stetson Shoe being redeveloped into non-industrial use as Stetson Place, an office complex; and the transformation of the former Nike Missile Base into Webb State Park. The most obvious example of this trend continuing is in the redevelopment of the Naval Air Station.

This leads to the question that must be answered within the Master Plan and in future land use decision: what were the results of the history of the Town as we see it today? What should be retained of this heritage, and what is detrimental to the community’s vision for its future?

A note on the following section:

One benefit of the environmental movement came from the need to develop more detailed land use and resource information. Along with the improvement of the Federal and State census methodology, these data sources provided a plethora of information, including some of the data that was made available for this Master Plan. In the next sections are summaries of data gathered from a wide variety of such sources.

PART 2. PRESENT CONDITIONS: WHO LIVES IN WEYMOUTH TODAY?

The Town of Weymouth has experienced substantial economic and social change over the last few decades, linked to swings in the national and global economies to which the Town is tied. But the regional socio-economic conditions have also greatly influenced the Town and its present status. The following section assesses some of the information associated with the nation, region and Town to provide a context for planning.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationwide, the population is aging, and Weymouth shows a similar pattern, distinguished by the average household increasing in age (and simultaneously decreasing in household size). There has been a modest increase of population through growth. To accommodate this growth and with the increase in the total number of households associated with smaller household size, housing supply has expanded. However, the trends have slowed, and significant change is not expected in the near term. Because of the population trends and the “built out” status of Weymouth, stability in the general demographic profile of the community is anticipated. Change could occur unexpectedly, however. A new and unexpected birth rate may provide a future population of larger and younger families, for example. Such an altered demographic pattern would not quickly result in increased housing units or more development; but it would shift household size and school attendance. However, the increasing age of the population and the location advantages of Weymouth can be linked to a demand for multi-family housing and the potential to absorb new populations within the Town. *The trends leading to demand for multi-family housing units are a focus of discussion in the Housing section of this Report.*

For Your Information: The Region

The description of the “South Shore Region” typically includes the towns of Abington, Braintree, Cohasset, Duxbury, Hanover, Hingham, Hull, Marshfield, Milton, Norwell, Quincy, Randolph, Rockland, Scituate and Weymouth.

Useful Facts: Demographic Statistics

- Town population increased from 54,063 in 1990 to 54,379 in 1999; 316 new residents or 0.6 % for the decade.
- Population growth within Weymouth is consistent with State trends but both are lower than national averages.
- Based on past trends, the population could increase to 55,360 in 2004 and 56,545 in 2009—about 1,200 more people.
- The estimated buildout for Weymouth will mean almost 60,000 people (source: MAPC) which could occur within 25 to 30 years.
- The average household has shrunk from 2.92 people in 1980 to 2.52 in 1999, while the median age has increased from 31.2 to 36

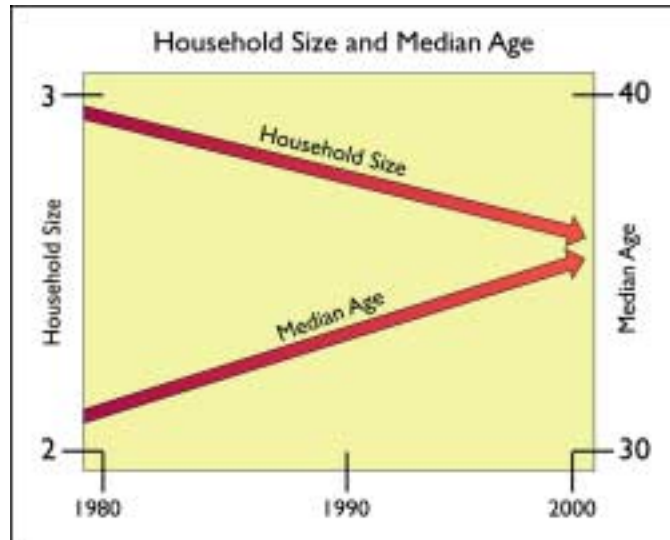
A. Household Size

Between 1980 and 1990, the national average household size decreased from 2.7 per household to 2.63. On a local level, Weymouth’s average dropped from 2.86 to 2.60. Weymouth’s current average household size reflects national trends of smaller households, as the number of households without children increases. In contrast to Weymouth, the South Shore and Norfolk County tend to have slightly larger average household sizes of 2.61 and 2.67, respectively. The fact that Weymouth has a larger

Part 2. Weymouth Today

percentage of rental units, which tend to attract smaller households, explains some of the subtle differences between Weymouth, the South Shore and Norfolk County.

Figure 1. Age and Household Size; Last Twenty Years



B. Age Profiles

Personal and household profiles for existing residents and expectations for change, help define the demand for housing and commercial goods and services. Such profiles also influence local development. Smaller household sizes may be a reflection of the type of housing available in Weymouth and the large number of rental units, or it may reflect the attractiveness of Weymouth as a “starter home” community for first-time homebuyers and new families without children. In addition to household size, other relevant household characteristics including age of the head of the household, age distribution of the population, and average household incomes all affect future housing demand.

Weymouth contains a larger concentration of households headed by individuals between the ages of 25 and 35 years old than either the balance of the South Shore region or the rest of Norfolk County. South Shore and Norfolk County, in turn, have a higher proportion of households headed by individuals in the 45-to-54 age range and the 75-and-over range. One reason for the higher proportion of young households could be that Weymouth has a larger proportion of renters than other suburban residential communities

This data further supports the attractiveness of Weymouth as a “starter home” community for younger households. However, while the data is limited to estimate how many of these young households stay in Weymouth, the lack of newer, larger houses suggests that some portion of young households leave Weymouth as they grow out of their existing homes and are seeking larger and more expensive homes.

Table I-1. Age Distribution of Household Heads

Age of Householder	Weymouth	South Shore	Norfolk
< 25	3%	3%	3%
25-34	18%	15%	16%
35-44	22%	22%	25%
45-54	19%	20%	21%
55-64	15%	15%	14%
65-74	13%	13%	11%
75+	10%	12%	11%

Source: AGS (1999)

In general, however, the age distribution statistics are similar to the rest of the South Shore region and Norfolk County. The median age in Weymouth has increased to 36 years, and is just slightly less than the median age for the balance of the South Shore region and Norfolk County. The increase in the median age reflects the current population 'aging in place' as opposed to an in-migration of older residents. Based on current trends in the distribution of population by age, it is estimated that the median age will increase to 37.6 years by 2004.

The slightly higher concentration of younger households (age 25 to 35) has not resulted in a higher concentration of pre-school children relative to other communities. Six percent of the population in Weymouth is less than five years old. This might suggest that a proportion of growing families leave Weymouth, and that the rental market is providing housing to childless young adults.

Nevertheless, the total school age population is growing. Data collected by the Weymouth School Department provides more detailed information on the number of older public school students in the Weymouth Public Schools. This is significant because approximately 90% of the school age children in Weymouth attend the public school system. **Projections for 2009 show an increase in the total school population of 4.6%, or 314 students.**

The population statistics have two significant implications. First, they may help guide public policies on elderly assistance programs and elderly housing. Secondly, they suggest attentiveness to the needs and changes occurring in the youngest adult age group.

C. Employment and Income Statistics

The opportunities for jobs and business development in Town have not changed substantially over the last thirty years. Most local jobs are in small businesses

Useful Facts: Employment

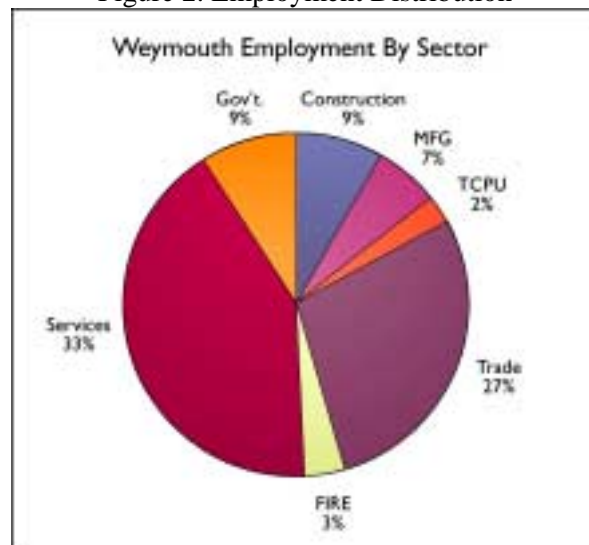
- Seventy percent of Weymouth's employment is in the service and retail trade sectors.
- Between 1990 and 1998, employment grew by 12 percent; just over 1 percent/year.
- Median household incomes have increased through the 1990's to \$63,482. This is seven percent lower than the Norfolk County's \$68,154 median, but not to worry; this is still higher than the whole Boston MSA.
- Largest recent job growth for County (6500 new jobs; 1996-1997) has been in banking and investment firms.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

in the service and retail trades which cater to the local markets. Weymouth's industrial space needs appear to meet current demand for the near-term future. These statistics indicate a relatively stagnant pattern for business growth, which may indicate scarce land opportunities or location characteristics not conducive to commercial development.

The average resident of Weymouth is one of the highest paid in the Boston region. This indicator becomes important as more local and regional opportunities are provided for jobs and business growth. *To the extent that Weymouth is a high income bedroom community, the statistics suggest an available disposable income that might support local retail and services expenditures. To the extent that employment opportunities are to be provided within Weymouth, the need to match local and regional employee profiles must take into account the employment characteristics of Weymouth residents.*

Figure 2. Employment Distribution



MFG = Manufacturing

TCPU = Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities

FIRE = Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

The relative affluence witnessed in the Boston MSA and the balance of New England can be seen in a variety of household income statistics. The next table displays 1999 levels of median household income, average household income, disposable median household income, and per capita household income. Local income levels are consistently higher than those seen in other areas. Income levels seen at the State and broader regional level are less than those evident in the metropolitan area. However, **for every indicator reviewed, income levels in the New England area dramatically exceed national rates.**

Table I-2. Comparison of Household Incomes

Market Area Size	Median	Average	Disposable	Per Capita
Weymouth	\$63,482	\$68,092	\$51,968	\$27,121
Boston – MSA	\$56,263	\$68,125	\$46,693	\$26,168
Massachusetts	\$53,584	\$66,083	\$44,477	\$25,558
New England	\$52,730	\$65,508	\$44,210	\$25,410
United States	\$40,985	\$53,325	\$35,479	\$20,324

Source: AGS (1999)

There has been an important change in the distribution of households by median household income. **Between 1990 and 1999, the number of households earning more than \$100,000 increased from 6% to 20% in Weymouth. In contrast, the number of households earning less than \$25,000 decreased from 26% to 16%.**

While specific income brackets have changed since 1990, Weymouth still has a smaller proportion of households in the more-than-\$150,000-income bracket than the surrounding area. The largest segment of the population in Weymouth is for households in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 household income bracket. The comparison between the South Shore region and Norfolk County further supports the notion that Weymouth's housing stock reflects income patterns and will continue to influence the demographic mix.

Table I-3. Weymouth Market Area Household Income Distribution

Income Bracket	Weymouth	South Shore	Norfolk County
Less than \$15,000	8%	9%	8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	8%	8%	7%
\$25,000-\$34,999	7%	7%	6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13%	13%	12%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	27%	25%	23%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	17%	17%	17%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	15%	15%	18%
More than \$150,000	5%	6%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: AGS (1999)

Part 2. Weymouth Today

LAND USE

Land use is largely regulated at the local level, and consideration of desirable land use patterns is a key element of a master planning effort. Land use is partly determined by existing uses and evolving economic demand, but can be substantially influenced through public measures, particularly over time. The following discussion classifies land uses by categories. In the next chapter, an analysis and evaluation of the different land areas within Weymouth is presented to allow an understanding of land use conditions on a geographic basis within the constituent districts of the Town

A. General Land Use

Land use within Weymouth conforms fairly closely to the overlying zoning; as a consequence, the present zoning map generally describes predominant current land use patterns, with a few exceptions. The Town is dominated by residential uses with well-dispersed open space parcels. The Town is well settled within four areas of concentration that are considered the separate villages of Weymouth: South Weymouth centered around Columbian Square, East Weymouth centered around Jackson Square, Weymouth Landing on the western border of the Town, and North Weymouth with the village center of Bicknell Square. *There has never been a dominant town center in Weymouth, which is unusual for an historic New England community and which detracts from the coherent civic identity of the Town.*

The historic development has left the northern end almost completely and compactly developed. The mid-town/ Route 3 corridor area is notable for its commercial development potential in the industrial zones, and the southern end has a pattern of recently developed land uses, but with a substantial potential for change within the Naval Air Station.

The historic changes in land use within Weymouth are illustrated and summarized here to demonstrate that the geographic focus of change has been along the major transportation corridors. In other words, access has directly encouraged development. Availability of public water and sewer has also dramatically influenced land use patterns. Decisions in the 1950's to completely sewer the Town made smaller lots buildable and the completion of the sewer program in South Weymouth in the late 1970's opened all land for development in the 1980's. An evaluation of zoning policy indicates that it has not consistently guided development. It has, instead, been modified incrementally to promote market trends through boundary changes and accommodation of uses with positive economic value to the Town.

Useful facts: **Land Use**

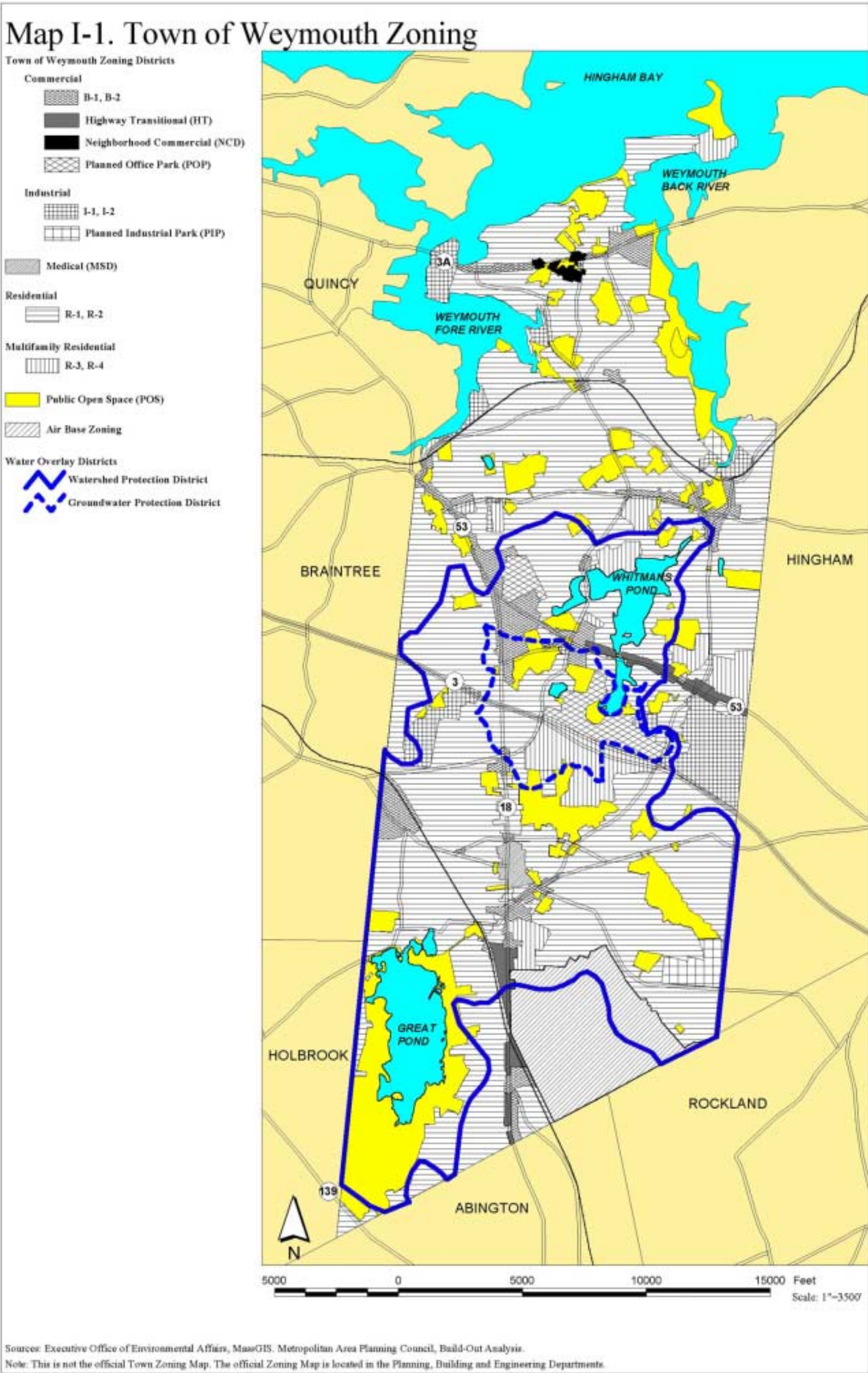
- The total area of Weymouth is about 11,300 acres.
 - 5074 acres are in residential use; 45%
 - 590 acres are commercial uses
 - 200 acres are industrial uses
 - Several hundred acres are included in the Air Station
- In 1991, 4900 acres were open areas and wetlands compared to 5500 acres in 1971; a loss of 15% or 35 acres per year.
- This loss was translated into:
 - a 50% increase (235 acres) in commercial and industrial land uses.
 - an almost three-fold increase - to 338 acres – in multi-family buildings.
 - 325 acres incorporated into single-family residential developments.

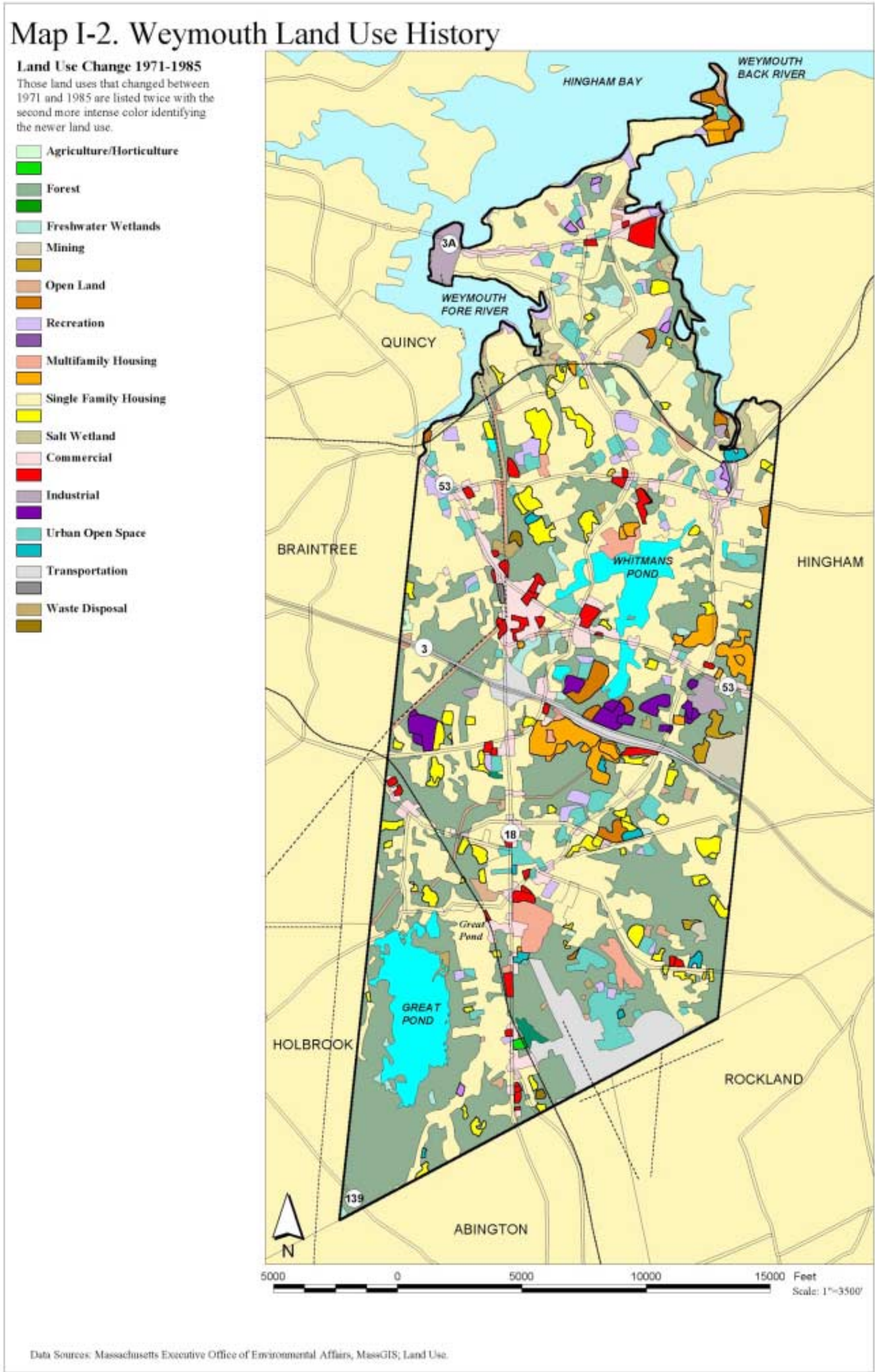
Part 2. Weymouth Today

Table I-4. Land Use Change in Weymouth 1971 to 1991

Land Use	Code #	1971 Acres	1985 Acres	Land Use Change 1971 to 1985			1991 Acres	Land Use Change 1985 to 1991			Land Use Change 1971 to 1991	
				Total Acres	Percent Change	Rate Acres/Year		Total Acres	Percent Change	Rate Acres/Year	Total Acres	Percent Change
Cropland	1	19.0	15.9	-3.1	-19.3	-0.2	8.4	-7.6	-47.5	-1.3	-10.6	-56.0
Pasture	2	14.6	8.5	-6.1	-72.3	-0.4	8.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	-6.1	-42.0
Forest	3	3828.0	3479.4	-348.5	-10.0	-24.9	3202.2	-277.3	-8.0	-46.2	-625.8	-16.3
Wetland	4	86.5	86.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mining	5	181.8	162.5	-19.3	-11.8	-1.4	120.7	-41.8	-25.7	-7.0	-61.1	-33.6
Open Land	6	266.5	291.2	24.7	8.5	1.8	330.1	38.9	13.4	6.5	63.6	23.8
Recreation: participation	7	151.8	169.4	17.6	10.4	1.3	169.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.6	11.6
Recreation: spectator	8	53.3	29.7	-23.5	-79.0	-1.7	0.0	-29.7	-100.0	-5.0	-53.3	-100.0
Recreation: water based	9	29.4	29.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Residential: MF	10	135.7	276.6	141.0	51.0	10.1	338.7	62.1	22.4	10.3	203.0	149.7
Residential: SF < 1/4 ac. Lots	11	888.8	870.9	-17.9	-2.1	-1.3	866.4	-4.5	-0.5	-0.7	-22.4	-2.5
Residential: SF 1/4 to 1/2 ac.	12	3434.6	3558.2	123.6	3.5	8.8	3743.3	185.1	5.2	30.9	308.7	9.0
Residential: SF > 1/2 ac. Lots	13	109.6	111.0	1.3	1.2	0.1	126.0	15.0	13.6	2.5	16.4	14.9
Salt wetland	14	123.3	123.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	123.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Commercial	15	436.8	555.3	118.6	21.4	8.5	590.4	35.1	6.3	5.8	153.6	35.2
Industrial	16	117.5	157.3	39.7	25.3	2.8	199.6	42.3	26.9	7.1	82.1	69.8
Urban Open	17	475.5	414.0	-61.5	-14.9	-4.4	396.4	-17.6	-4.3	-2.9	-79.1	-16.6
Transportation	18	379.0	381.5	2.5	0.7	0.2	381.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.7
Waste Disposal	19	26.8	34.8	8.0	22.9	0.6	34.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	29.7
Water	20	535.3	535.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	535.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Woody Perennial	21	3.2	6.1	2.9	47.6	0.2	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	90.7
Total Area		11296.8	11296.8				11296.8					

Data source: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, MassGIS, land use coverage.





B. Recent Building Permits

The changes indicated above have resulted from development activities regulated by the Town through the zoning which controls land uses permitted under the issuance of local building permits. The figure below shows building permits and the value of construction over the last decade. It indicates how alterations to existing properties has significantly increased in number over the last few years. However, the largest increase in value comes from new construction. The listing of permits is shown in the Table 1-5.

Over all, the current investment in land and buildings is very high. Because of the high level of “build out” within the Town, each increment of new development has a noticeable and direct impact on its surroundings. *The remaining parcels and future redevelopment projects could impact the image of the Town for many years to come.*

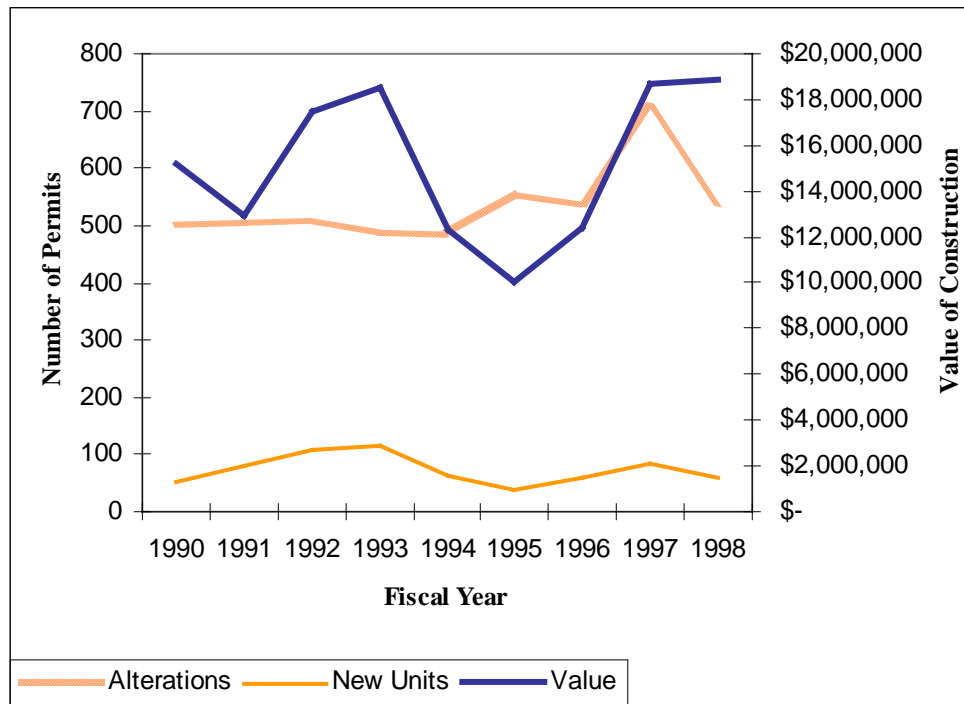


Figure 3. Building Permit Activity and Value of Construction

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Table I-5 Building Permits Issued

Type of Permit		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Single-family	New	54	79	109	116	63
	Alter	454	492	458	463	450
	Value \$	9,989,377	12,371,238	15,705,980	16,654,683	11,172,128
One and two family	New	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	1
	Alter	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	7
	Value \$	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,768,570	684,572
Multi-family	New	0	1	1	0	0
	Alter	48	6	15	10	18
	# units	n/a	n/a	9	n/a	n/a
	Value \$	5,208,850	50,160	526,350	40,600	405,200
Hotel	New	n/a	n/a	0	0	0
	Alter	n/a	n/a	6	1	4
	Value \$	n/a	n/a	1,026,500	1,000	54,000
Other residential	New	n/a	0	0	0	0
	Alter	n/a	9	30	12	5
	Value \$	n/a	540,300	193,762	22,700	25,000
Assembly	New	1	0	0	1	0
	Alter	18	9	12	15	11
	Value \$	1,585,000	83,040	379,888	284,250	985,600
Mercantile	New	0	1	0	2	0
	Alter	38	27	40	23	31
	Value \$	953,480	1,031,788	926,640	648,228	647,824
Office	New	1	1	2	1	2
	Alter	43	38	31	46	28
	Value \$	1,702,335	1,242,150	722,771	1,262,860	5,367,700
Misc.	New	148	126	153	135	145
	Alter	407	333	414	363	461
	Value \$	2,763,724	2,567,093	2,148,110	7,321,454	2,397,642
Industrial	New	2	1	0	0	0
	Alter	12	10	2	2	1
	Value \$	2,422,500	553,600	70,000	117,000	10,600
Institutional	New	2	0	1	0	0
	Alter	10	8	13	13	21
	Value \$	12,456,000	340,000	12,637,500	5,325,000	1,676,544
Demolition	New	1	1	0	n/a	n/a
	Alter	22	3	1	n/a	n/a
	Value \$	121,200	16,500	5,000	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	New	209	210	266	256	211
	Alter	1053	936	1022	960	1045
	Value \$	37,342,866	19,303,869	34,342,501	34,488,965	23,653,650

Part 2. Weymouth Today

<i>Table I-5 pg.2</i>		1995	1996	1997	1998
Single-family	New	38	59	82	59
	Alter	506	504	646	519
	Value\$	9,274,962	12,136,278	16,176,436	15,195,801
One and two family	New	0	0	0	0
	Alter	14	5	21	9
	Value\$	171,859	19,030	269,149	430,888
Multi-family	New	0	0	1	2
	Alter	27	11	26	3
	# units	n/a	n/a	5	70
	Value\$	529,139	96,622	2,176,750	3,186,800
Hotel	New	0	0	0	0
	Alter	3	0	8	3
	Value\$	7,700	-	23,450	7,400
Other residential	New	0	0	0	0
	Alter	6	18	3	3
	Value\$	77,100	117,300	18,500	18,500
Assembly	New	0	2	1	0
	Alter	21	15	21	21
	Value\$	755,850	1,549,700	1,978,986	1,350,060
Mercantile	New	0	2	1	0
	Alter	32	24	35	31
	Value\$	1,543,785	1,010,175	1,338,057	928,700
Office	New	4	4	3	1
	Alter	41	52	57	45
	Value\$	3,342,305	3,071,735	2,075,281	2,237,309
Misc.	New	155	168	168	142
	Alter	291	348	185	408
	Value\$	2,746,700	2,506,340	1,581,124	3,072,119
Industrial	New	0	0	0	0
	Alter	3	2	1	2
	Value\$	33,000	12,000	1,717,000	610,000
Institutional	New	0	0	0	0
	Alter	4	3	3	7
	Value\$	4,152,000	33,000	1,420,533	1,210,700
Demolition	New	0	0	0	0
	Alter	2	1	14	0
	Value\$	10,250	4,500	103,250	
TOTAL	New	199	238	260	212
	Alter	945	992	1033	1062
	Value\$	23,411,060	21,741,830	30,495,091	32,232,602

Source: Town of Weymouth, Annual Reports, Building Inspection Department

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Note: The next sections examine each of the major land use types used in planning: Housing, Commercial, Retail and Industrial, and summarize some of the key information regarding activity in these sectors. Each of these has ramifications for the Town's economic development. However, the first section, Housing, is also linked to the demographic patterns discussed earlier.

C. Housing

Housing has a multifaceted impact on the vitality and conditions found within the community. As a land use and development issue, housing is strongly linked to the economy of the Town. As a commodity impacting the choices made for living arrangements, housing is also closely tied to the demographics previously discussed. Here, housing is reviewed according to its impact on growth and development.

Growth in Housing

There is a clear connection between the characteristics of the people occupying Weymouth's homes and the characteristics of the housing. Weymouth had strong growth in rental and multi-family housing during the 1980's, and, for an otherwise suburban area, has a high percentage of renter-occupied housing.

Useful Facts: Housing

- Single-family dwelling permits:
1990 - 1998 average of 73 / year
1979 - 1989 average of 63 / year
- 68% owner-occupied, single-family homes
- 32% rentals (mostly condominiums)
- Since 1990, single-family prices increased 42% to \$175,000
- Condominium sales averaged \$99,000 in 1999
- The vacancy rate for single-family homes is less than 5%, which indicates a need for more housing product.

Regardless of the relative scarcity of land available for new development, Weymouth has averaged an increase of about 80 new households or units per year over the last two decades. With the total number of households in Weymouth at almost 22,000, this increase is not significant (about 0.5%), but continues to slowly advance change in many of the neighborhoods.

Between 1990 and 1998, Weymouth issued a total of 659 single-family housing permits for an average of 73 permits per year. This represents an increase of housing permits from the previous decade, which were issued at 63 permits per year. It is interesting to point out that Weymouth experienced the largest number of single-family housing permits in 1992 and 1993 at the beginning of the economic expansion, but it has not surpassed more than 100 single-family housing permits per year since that time.

Between 1971 and 1991, the land zoned for multi-family housing increased by almost 203 acres, an increase of over 150 percent. This translated into the construction of nearly 2,000 multi-family units from 1976 to 1991, with the majority of construction occurring in the 1980's. The growth of multi-family units that occurred in Weymouth in the 1980's, both in terms of condominium growth and rental growth, was similar to the growth that was occurring within the Greater Boston area and at the national level. This was a period

Part 2. Weymouth Today

when average household size declined dramatically, while the total number of households increased.

In contrast to the 1980's, Weymouth experienced little growth in multi-family units during the 1990's - 91 new multi-family units were added in this decade, compared to 1,599 units during the 1980's. The only major multi-family development approved this decade was the 70-unit Allerton House assisted living facility, which is open and occupied.

The 1980's were important for multi-family development. During that time, **condominiums grew from just over 1% to more than 10% of the total number of housing units in Town.** Due in part to the high volume construction of new condominium units, there have not been many conversions of existing rental stock into condominiums. Rather, the trend has been the other way, with approximately one-third of the units occupied by renters. Although the Town has not conducted a new survey, 1990 census data and 1999 homeownership rates suggested that renter-occupied condominiums range from between 30% and 40% of all condominiums.

It is only recently that the rents have increased and vacancy levels decreased sufficiently to justify new construction, and substantial new construction has been proposed. If all of the multi-family housing projects in the local permitting process get built in the next five years, Weymouth's average annual household growth rate will double. *The Town must make a decision whether to repeat the results of the last twenty year's worth of boom, bust and equalization of multi-family development, or suggest a more moderate and balanced approach that supports a different demographic mix.*

Three new housing projects allow comparison of some of the options that are now being presented to the Town. A high quality product in non-traditional, single-family housing has recently been made created at the Weathervane, an approved 126-unit development with a 9-hole golf course. Rental units are being developed at Avalon Bay with over 300 luxury and affordable apartment units. The affordable units are being permitted under Chapter 40B, a State regulatory policy that can require the community to accept certain projects that provide a mix of market-rate and affordable housing. Lastly, the Arbor Hill apartment project proposal would add 275 rental units over the next five years, and is more in keeping with the previous market direction of the last two decades. Each of these projects represents a different impact to the Town and the quality of life for its residents. *The Town should consider zoning that restores the balance of housing types and creates the types of amenities and open space provided by the Weathervane project.*

Housing Tenure

Weymouth's housing stock is dominated by owner occupied single-family homes. However, for a suburban bedroom residential community, Weymouth holds a large percentage of renter-occupied units. The following exhibit compares the distribution of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing in Weymouth relative to surrounding communities. Weymouth's homeownership rates of 68% are slightly less than the South Shore region, where 69% of the housing units are owner-occupied, and Norfolk County, where 71% of the housing units are owner-occupied. On an individual community level,

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Weymouth's homeownership rates are lower than the surrounding communities of Braintree, Rockland, Hingham, and Holbrook. They are however, higher than Quincy, which, as a larger employment center, has a higher percentage of rental units.

<i>Useful Facts: Housing Tenure, 1999</i>				
	<i>Owner-Occupied</i>		<i>Renter-Occupied</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Pct.</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Weymouth	13,764	66%	7,065	33%
South Shore	86,939	68%	40,083	32%
Norfolk County	170,759	70%	74,828	30%
Source: AGS (1999)				

Age of the Homes

As a mature community, Weymouth's housing stock consists of many older homes. Over a quarter of Weymouth's housing stock was built prior to the 1940s, a percentage on par with the balance of the State and the surrounding communities as illustrated in the following exhibit. Weymouth however, also contains a large number of housing built in the post war era. Weymouth has more than double the amount of housing stock built in the 1980s, than it's neighbor, the Town of Braintree, but it trails the more recently developed communities in the county.

Table I-6. Age of Housing

Age	Braintree	Holbrook	Hingham	Norfolk County	Weymouth
1939 And Older	33.2%	22.1%	23.1%	33.1%	28.0%
1940-49	13.7%	9.5%	23.9%	9.8%	11.9%
1950-59	20.0%	32.6%	13.9%	16.3%	17.5%
1960-69	12.6%	14.9%	11.4%	14.4%	15.2%
1970-79	14.9%	8.3%	16.0%	14.5%	15.7%
1980 to 1990	<u>5.7%</u>	<u>12.7%</u>	<u>11.7%</u>	<u>12.0%</u>	<u>11.7%</u>
Median Year Built	1952	1956	1939	1954	1956

Source: U.S. Census. Information is limited to housing units as of 1990

Housing Prices

The age of housing and the fact that Weymouth contains a large percentage of housing that can be characterized as small starter homes, influences the average selling price. The communities that have lower median home prices, on average, tend to have smaller homes based upon a review of square footage and home sales on the Multiple Listing Service of New England.

For Your Information: **Home Sizes**

<u>Town</u>	<u>Size in sq.ft.</u>
Weymouth	1,416
Braintree	1,832
Hingham	2,096
Holbrook	1,417
Randolph	1,563

Income discrepancies also partially contribute to regional differences in housing costs. The analysis takes into account the common fact that renters have been younger than the average age within the region, while the incomes

Part 2. Weymouth Today

have been high. The next table lists gross median rents and the median value of homes for each geographic area reviewed. The data shown is taken from the 1990 census. Based on recent trends and other data reviewed, it appears that the current housing cost differential is greater than the difference indicated in the census.

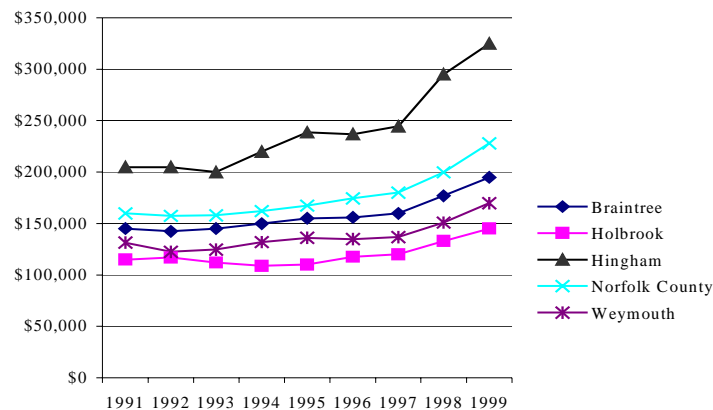
Table I-7. Housing Indicators (1990): Housing Rents and Costs

Market Area Size	Gross Median Rent	Median Home Value
Boston MSA	\$534	\$165,766
Massachusetts	\$513	\$162,759
New England	\$488	\$150,486
United States	\$384	\$79,097

Source: AGS (1999)

In 1990, local rents were more than 25% higher than the national median rental rate. Home values in the Boston region, at \$165,766, were more than twice the national median home value. Rental rates and housing prices in the Boston region are currently at historically high levels and a number of industry publications note that local housing price increases in the Boston area are among the highest in the country.

Figure 4. Median Home Sales



Lagging median home sales prices in Weymouth suggest that new single family housing permits will probably continue at the average rate of growth that has occurred in the last couple of years. New construction is influenced by the current stock of housing as well as the current trends in housing sales and other neighborhood demographics.

Useful Facts: Housing Prices

year	Braintree	Hingham	Holbrook	Weymouth	Norfolk County
1991	145	205	115	131.5	160
1999	195	325	145	170	228
Change	34%	59%	26%	29%	43%

Prices in thousands of dollars

Source: *Banker and Tradesman*, Jan-Nov 1991-1999

Part 2. Weymouth Today

According to the Multiple Listing Service of New England, which tracks housing sales in the Greater Boston area, the average home price for new homes in Weymouth in 1999 was \$250,000, or almost 50 percent higher than the average sale of all of the homes sold in Weymouth in 1991. While these prices are comparatively high, and suggest a market for more higher end homes, these prices are still lower than Braintree, Hingham, and overall averages for Norfolk County and suggest that the luxury market for single family homes in Weymouth is limited.

Condominiums

Condominium sales in Weymouth have increased since 1991; however, their increase is far less dramatic than increases in single-family housing. In addition, current condominium sales prices are still less than prices seen in the late 1980's, when for a small period of time, construction of new condominiums, particularly along the Route 3 corridor, out-paced the construction of single-family homes. Since that time, new construction has slowed and there have been a limited number of permits for condominiums issued this decade.

Useful Facts: Condo Prices					
year	Braintree	Hingham	Holbrook	Weymouth	Norfolk County
1991	134	134	134	75.5	115
1999	175	90	156	101	153
Change	30%	-40%	16%	34%*	33%
*Over half of increase in last two years					
Prices in thousands of dollars					
Source: Banker and Tradesman, Jan-Nov 1991-1999					

One reason for this lack of response is that *Weymouth's condominium market took longer to recover from the recession than other areas*. Weymouth's condominium prices did not increase until recently, as compared with Braintree and Norfolk County. The sales activity for 1999 numbered 351 sales, which represents the strongest sales activity since 1987.

Multi-Family Rental Housing

Multifamily and rental construction peaked in 1985 and has left the Weymouth market with a large number of now older rental units. Rental units include single-family rental units, condominiums and apartment buildings. Approximately 30% of the rental units are in large apartment complexes that have more than 100 units in the complex.

Following a metropolitan-area wide trend, rental vacancy rates in Weymouth on average are less than 5% and range from 1 to 3% in many of the large apartment complexes.

Decreases in apartment availability and overall shortages in the immediate and surrounding areas have led to rent increases throughout the Weymouth area.

Useful Facts: Monthly Rental Rates in Weymouth				
	Studios	1-BR	2-BR	3-BR
Braintree	\$750	\$1,018	\$1,225	\$1,500
Holbrook	na	\$860	\$1,080	\$1,450
Weymouth	\$709	\$890	\$1,096	\$1,475
Source: Individual apartment management companies.				

Many apartment managers in the Weymouth area are citing rent increases of \$30 from last year, an annual increase of 2%. Typical rents in Weymouth for one-bedroom units average \$890 a month. The above *Useful Facts* displays the average rent levels for approximately 2,100 apartment units, or 29% of the local rental stock, and compares it to the apartment markets in Braintree and Holbrook. **The announcement of several multi-family developments suggests that the Weymouth market is finally achieving acceptable rent levels to justify new construction. This also implies that the affordability of the units is decreasing.**

Subsidized Housing

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (MDHC) defines affordable housing as units that are affordable to people making 80% of the median income. While Weymouth may be considered an affordable area to live, according to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Weymouth has a total of 1,720 subsidized units. This represents 7.8% of the 21,890 housing units in Weymouth as of 1999. New affordable units have also been approved for construction; i.e., the Avalon residential project.

In order to promote and increase the supply of low and moderate income housing, the State of Massachusetts created Chapter 40B. Under Chapter 40B, if less than 10% of a city or town's housing stock is considered low or moderate income housing as defined by State standards, then a community is substantially constrained in its ability to deny any application for the development of housing in which at least 25% of the units are subsidized under some government program to make them affordable. If a community denies such an application, the State Housing Appeals Committee may reverse the action and order a permit independently of the city or town. In order for housing to be considered affordable and eligible to apply to a community's 10% quota, the housing must meet all of the criteria necessary for receiving a Federal or State subsidy.

For Your Information: **Subsidized vs. Affordable Housing**

Subsidized Housing: These are units that use public monies to keep their price down to levels affordable for purchase or rental.

Affordable Housing: Affordable is defined by the program or goals specified. Exec. Order 418 defines the range as including homes affordable for people with up to 150% of the median income for the area.

Affordable Housing

Executive Order 418 was recently issued by the Governor to address the expanding problem of affordable housing in Massachusetts. The recognition that even middle income families are finding it increasingly difficult to afford housing raised a debate of what is needed to solve the housing problem. In this area, the median family income is \$65,500 according to the State. In turn, this means that a home costing \$297,000 is affordable to the median income range and units costing even this much are becoming scarce. The availability of homes in this price range does not, however, impact the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development calculation of subsidized units for the purpose of Chapter 40B.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

General Housing Affordability

Housing in the Weymouth area still remains affordable for a number of households. Nevertheless, it should be noted that substantial numbers of people have been priced out of the housing market due to the cost of new development, the lack of existing units, and the limited resale of more affordable units. In fact, very few units meet the Federal and State affordable maximum acquisition costs. The following table examines the annual income required to finance the purchase of a median priced family home in 1990 and 1999 and the percentage of Weymouth households that would have qualified to purchase the homes in both years.

Table I-8. Affordability Index

	1989	1999	% Chg.
Median Home Sale Prices	\$122,500	\$169,900	42.4%
Median Household Income	\$41,813	\$63,482	51.8%
Monthly Payment on Median Home*	\$976	\$1,353	38.7%
Annual Income assuming 33% of Income to Housing	\$35,480	\$49,209	38.7%
Percentage of Households with sufficient Income	59%	64%	8.5%

Household incomes have grown, but very recent increases in housing prices have begun to exceed the average increase in income. This is not a localized problem. It is affecting the State as a whole and has led the current State administration to search for new opportunities to increase the supply of both low income and moderate income housing units.

Under the new Executive Order 418 (E.O. 418), Housing Certification is necessary to continue to receive funding under some of the State's discretionary grant programs. E.O. 418 seeks to create ownership or rental units that are valued under limits that have been established for median income families. In the Boston area, the median income affordable rent is \$1,638 and the purchase price is \$297,000. The intent of E.O. 418 is to ensure that the current crisis in housing can be addressed. It could impact the future economic development of the State and Weymouth.

D. Town Responses: Actions and Programs

The Town has not been idle in its needs to address many of the problems and issues identified in the previous sections. The Town has made a significant commitment and has been able to attract very large sums of grant funds to promote programs and specific actions. One of the most important programs has been the Community Development Block Grant program. This Federal funding program has been providing a significant source of ear-marked funds directed towards the needs of Weymouth's residents and businesses.

Note: The following information has been culled from the Five-Year Consolidated Planning Strategy, the One-Year Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Review. The Consolidated Annual Performance Review is intended to be one part of the Weymouth Master Plan. This section provides a summary of the collected information.

Town CDBG Program

Since 1975, the Town of Weymouth has integrated an extensive and intensive effort directed towards housing and community development into its government actions. The year 1975 was the first year of Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Since that time, Weymouth has received a total of almost \$16.9 million from the CDBG program. The two programs developed under these funds have been CDBG projects and Housing Assistance Loan Program (HOME) projects. The HOME program funding was initiated in 1990. Funding for the CDBG has averaged over \$830,000 and in 1998 HOME funding was \$186,000. Currently, the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Office and Planning and Community Development distribute the funds.

In a response to the growing public interest for these priorities, the Town's commitments under these programs are to:

- The preservation of suitable living space. Specifically, the provision of safe and affordable housing to all homeless people and families.; and
- Expansion of economic opportunities as a way to transition those homeless or in shelters into permanent housing.

The programs have been arranged in a Continuum of Care (COC) that sets the goals of moving homeless people into permanent housing, expanding service linkages to accelerate people in shelters to permanent housing, expanding the rental subsidy and homeownership programs to assist in that transition, and pulling in additional resources to create new low and moderate income housing.

The funds for these programs are granted to a consortium that includes the City of Quincy in partnership with Weymouth. Given the available resources and the new government structure, staff in Weymouth's Department of Planning and Community Development is tasked to monitor and coordinate the programs under this funding.

Indication of Program Need

The importance of these programs is indicated by the U.S. Census data, which lists 2,201 Weymouth residents living below the poverty level. The same data shows that 2,786 people in Weymouth also had some social, physical, mental or psychological challenge. The data further shows the following.

Of Weymouth residents in rentals:

- 1,266 households were extremely low income (30% of median income)
- 983 were very low income (31-50% of the median)
- 1,114 were low income (51-80% of the median)
- 631 were moderate income

For home owning residents of Weymouth:

- 918 households were extremely low income
- 1,121 were very low income
- 1,104 were low income
- 1,131 were moderate income

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Demand for Subsidized Housing Units

The Department of Housing and Community Development identified 516 public housing units in Weymouth for 1999. The total number of subsidized housing units is 1,737, or 7.93% of the housing stock. The Weymouth Housing Authority manages approximately 327 units. However, with the rehabilitation of the Cadman Towers, some of those units will be lost for lack of funding. In addition, rental assistance in the form of vouchers or certificates now includes 110 State vouchers and 159 Federal (section 8) vouchers, administered through the Weymouth Housing Authority. The latest information from the Housing Authority is that there are approximately 400 people on the waiting list for vouchers. Total numbers on the waiting lists for public housing include 582 families and 282 elderly.

Town Housing Programs

Because affordable housing has been identified as a serious problem, the Town has pursued initiatives to address housing rehabilitation, first time home-buyers, homeless, and the development of rental projects, using CDBG funds and the resources and services of others. The Town, through its Community Development and Planning Office is able to develop a number of homeowner and rental programs. They will include:

- CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program with \$280,000 to be directed to 12 homes over the next five years.
- HOME 1st Time Homebuyer program with annual funding estimated in the range of \$80-100,000 per year to assist with the down payments for twenty first time buyers.
- HOME Affordable Housing and State funding are allowing the nine-room Veteran's House in East Weymouth to be completed. Additional funds will go to more rental housing.
- Lead Abatement at approximately eight homes per year and \$12,000 per home, for an approximate total of \$96,000 per year.
- Funds will be received by the Housing Authority to improve conditions in their developments.
- A staff position will be funded at the Housing Authority to work with families and individuals.

Town Community Development Programs

The funds for community development programs will be assigned to help special needs and housed residents, for contingency funds to support public improvement projects that will encourage businesses in blighted areas, and improve public services to individuals, elders and families. Working with the Parks Department, the funds will provide improvements to recreational areas, including the Middle Street Park adjacent to Whitman's Pond. Working with the Public Works Department and the Weymouth Sidewalk Committee, funds will be used to improve sidewalks. Lastly, day care services will be provided under the Before and After School Kids Enrichment Time (BASKET) program. This last program will also be tied to recreational programs of the Parks Department. Educational programs are also to be provided through a direct mailing to residents.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Redevelopment Projects

Two redevelopment projects were developed by the Weymouth Redevelopment Authority as Urban Renewal programs under Chapter 121B of the State laws. They are the Pine Grove and the Woodside Path Urban Renewal projects. The CDBG program starting in 1991 funded Pine Grove. New streets were accepted as public ways in 1999. Some funds from the land dispositions were used for Woodside Path, which was initiated in 1994. This area is just north of the Libbey Industrial Park.

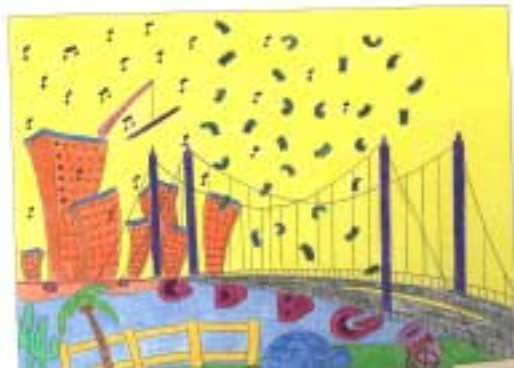
Other Non-housing Programs

To provide a new and clear direction in the development and operation of public facilities in Weymouth, the Planning and Community Development Office has consolidated the proposed funding and priorities of the Town's public agencies into a single source document. The intent is to promote adequate investment of resources necessary to reach the goals of the Town by presenting the funding and program priorities during the five year period laid out in the Consolidated Planning Strategy. In summary, the needs of the community are listed with the number of actions necessary, the priority of the need, and the necessary funding as estimated by the individual agency. The Priority Needs Summary Table is included in the appendices. This program has been able to potentially coordinate and structure over \$10 million of public funds towards the Town's needs and goals.

Expansion of the Program Concepts

The Planning and Community Development office over the last 25 years has developed a program of handling significant outside funding sources directed to the needs of the community. There has also been a significant level of funding for these programs. The program has operated with a significant amount of public scrutiny as well, with input to ensure the actions are in keeping with the community needs.

This Master Plan notes the value of the programs that employ outside funds, and recognizes the opportunity to transfer the experience gained to other initiatives within the Town. The coordination of Federal and State grants, the oversight and management of reporting, and the completion of the projects in a satisfactory manner could all be incorporated into an expanded role of the Planning and Community Development office.



Submittal for CDBG Poster Contest One student's vision of a community reaping the benefits of the Federal funds.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Note: The following sections review specific land use types of particular importance to the economic health and vitality of the Town, and which by consequence have some of the most significant impacts on infrastructure and the local tax base.

E. Commercial Land Use

The following discussion of commercial spaces focuses on the commercial office market as it impacts land use and property values in Weymouth. The information suggests that the local trends are greatly influenced by the larger regional market.

The Regional Market

The Boston suburban office market has increased substantially since 1991. Between 1991 and 1999, the entire suburban office market absorbed an average of 2.4 million square feet of office space. However, while the South district absorbed almost 300,000 square feet per year on average, this represented only about 12% of the overall total absorption, and resulted in the South Market area losing its share position in the overall suburban office market. In 1991, the South Market contained approximately 24% of all of the office space in the suburban market. This share dropped to 19% in 1999.

For Your Information:

The South (Suburban) Market

The market area listed in the table below and used in the text consists of 16 towns and cities located along Route 3 and 24 in the south shore region; Braintree, Brockton, Canton, Dedham, Hingham, Milton, Norwell, Norwood, Quincy, Randolph, Rockland, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole and Weymouth.

The slow growth of the South Market relative to other suburban office markets has been fueled by the strong demand for office space by communications and software industries. These businesses accounted for over 50% of all space leased during the first two quarters of 1999, most of which was concentrated in the North and Northwest Markets. The rapid pace of development however, is putting pressure on many suburban areas, with office development occurring in new suburban market areas that are close to Boston.

Table I-9. Rentable Office Space

Market Area	1991		1999		1991-1999	1991-1999
	Total Supply	Occupied	Total Supply	Occupied	Absorption	Avg. Annual Absorption
Weymouth	100,000	75,000	100,000	100,000	25,000	3,125
Braintree	1,599,766	1,323,280	1,684,873	1,525,618	202,338	25,292
South Market	10,192,319	8,010,274	10,909,187	10,292,090	2,281,816	285,227
Entire Suburban Market	41,688,084	31,617,097	56,349,964	50,880,063	19,262,966	2,407,871

Source: The Spaulding & Slye Report. 1st Quarter Reports. Does not include 100% owner occupied buildings.

Weymouth's Commercial Space

Other than some specialized professional and medical offices, there are no sizeable, rentable office developments in Weymouth. Currently, Weymouth's office market is characterized by smaller office buildings concentrated along the major arterial streets. The largest office users are medical and professional services. Since 1990, only one office building within Weymouth has been listed in the Spaulding & Slye Office Market Report. However, Weymouth's limited office market is beginning to show signs of evolving. The recently completed South Weymouth Naval Air Station Reuse Plan calls for up to 1,400,000 square feet of office/research space in the next 20-30 years.

Useful Facts: Commercial Space

- Weymouth has a total of 493,441 gross square feet of office space. But, only about 100,000 sq ft is available for rent with rates \$4 to \$30 lower than Boston and Braintree.
- Weymouth Woods will double the available space – but in a new market niche.
- Weymouth can accommodate an additional 3.3 million square feet of commercial space. That translates into 11,200 new employees (source: MAPC).
- The Naval Air Station that could add another 3.5 million square feet of commercial and retail space to the 3.3 million above.

In the meantime, a new 100,000 square foot office development with Route 3 visibility is seeking tenants after recently complete the permit process. Called “Weymouth Woods Corporate Center”, it is being promoted as Class A office space, with the latest in telecommunications and internet services, and with rents in the \$20-\$25 per square foot range. It is positioning Weymouth as an attractive and affordable alternative to Quincy and Braintree. The Weymouth Woods Corporate Center will double the existing Class A rentable office space in Weymouth to a total of 200,000 square feet. **This new development, the types of tenants it is able to attract, and the absorption time will provide a good test of the potential Weymouth has as an office market location.**

While the Spaulding & Slye report discussed above provides a good analysis of how Weymouth compares to other communities within the overall suburban market, it does not track the smaller buildings that characterize overall office development within Weymouth. The Town Assessor's data provides a more complete picture of the number of buildings in Weymouth.

According to the Assessor's records, Weymouth has a total of 116 general office buildings that total 493,441 gross square feet of office space. The table below shows the distribution of office buildings within Weymouth. Of the 116 general office buildings listed in the Assessor's database, 86% of them are less than 5,000 square feet. With regards to overall space however, buildings less than 5,000 square feet only account for 39% of overall general office space within Weymouth. The Stetson Place Building, which is the only building listed in the Spaulding & Slye report, is more than 100,000 square feet and accounts for 24% of overall general office space.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Table I-9. Distribution of General Office Buildings

Building Size	No. of Buildings	% of Buildings	Gross Building Area	% of Gross Buildings	Building Value	Avg. Value Building /Sq. Ft.
< 2,000 sq.ft.	64	55.2%	82,365	17%	\$5,625,000	\$70.62
2,000-5,000 sq.ft.	36	31.0%	109,786	22%	\$6,891,200	\$64.89
5,000-10,000 sq.ft.	10	8.6%	76,785	16%	\$4,388,500	\$57.26
10,000-99,999 sq.ft.	5	4.3%	100,813	20%	\$4,225,800	\$43.90
> 100,000 sq.ft.	1	0.9%	123,692	25%	\$3,886,600	\$31.42
Total	116	100.0%	493,441	100%	\$25,017,100	\$65.94

Source: Assessors Data, 10/99. Includes general office buildings, use code 340. Does not include other types, such as medical office buildings.

The average assessed values in the above table, reflect the smaller, older office building spaces that now rent for between \$13-\$17. *In contrast to the above average assessed value of \$65.94 per square foot, a new office building in Weymouth, with rents in the \$25 range, would have a value of \$150 per square foot.*

Because of data limitations, it is difficult to track vacancy and rental rates within the Weymouth commercial market. However, based on informal discussions with brokers in the area, and trends within the suburban market area, **Weymouth is experiencing low office vacancy rates**, with average rental rates for office space ranging from \$12-\$17 per square foot. In comparison, Braintree and Quincy have average rental rates that are \$4-\$7 higher and Boston's rates are at least \$15-\$30 higher, some rates currently exceeding the upper range. *Current trends in the metropolitan area and the current level of office rents are combining to bring pressure on areas within the South Shore to develop additional office space.* In turn, similar trends within the more established locations around the South Shore add further to bring pressure on areas such as Weymouth. The new Weymouth Woods development illustrates that Weymouth could develop into an attractive office location alternative.

F. Retail Land Use

Weymouth's retail market can be characterized by a mix of retail types. The first sector is more neighborhood-based and serves the immediate surrounding neighborhood area. This retail space is characterized by community and neighborhood centers many of them anchored by grocery stores with low vacancy levels. The second sector is more community based, serving not just the surrounding neighborhoods, but the greater Weymouth population. A large portion of this retail sector is concentrated in the Route 18, Route 53 and Winter Street area, which serves as the retail hub for Weymouth.

Market Area

The market area for Weymouth is illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 5. South Shore Retail Market Area Map



Weymouth's Retail Space

According to Finard & Company, Weymouth has approximately 1,728,000 square feet of retail space on over 240 retail properties selling merchandise or providing quasi-retail services to the public. The properties tracked range from 200 square feet of space in neighborhood retail shops to larger space such as the Harborlight Mall and the vacant Lechmere space.

Weymouth has the highest vacancy rate compared to Quincy, Braintree, and Hingham and Norfolk County. This number is a little distorted by a small number of large vacancies, such as Lechmere's vacant space. This should change soon because Wal-Mart is currently slated to take over the Lechmere space and the Harborlight Mall is ready for redevelopment. Overall, with the exception of Harborlight Mall and Lechmere's, vacancy is relatively low in many of the neighborhood centers and suggests an adjusted vacancy rate of between 5-8%.

Rental rates range from \$12-\$15 per square foot for smaller sizes in the neighborhood shopping centers. Rents in the Harborlight Mall previously ranged from \$7-\$15 per square foot. National chains, and larger users typically have rents in the \$19-\$21 range. It is anticipated that the rents for Harborlight Mall will be raised after the new construction.

Useful Facts: Supply of Retail Space

	<u>Total Supply</u>	<u>Vacancy</u>	<u>Vacancy Rate</u>
Quincy	2,162,000	148,000	6.8%
Braintree	3,155,000	319,000	10.1%
Weymouth	1,728,000	214,000	12.4%
Hingham	591,000	18,000	3.0%
Norfolk County	19,324,000	1,437,000	7.4%

Source: Finard & Company, 1999.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

The potential for future retail space within Weymouth is tied to overall trends of the retail market. Trends in the retail market in the last two decades have seen consumers focus more and more on larger power center retail areas that can serve a variety of shopping needs in one location. This means an increased demand for big-box retail stores, specialty stores and super stores, such as the Stop and Shop Superstores and Wal-Mart.

Consumer-spending patterns are showing a trend away from shopping at traditional neighborhood centers. While at a regional level, vacancy rates at the large regional malls are healthy, the smaller ones continue to struggle. **It is expected that smaller malls will struggle in the foreseeable future, and many of them may not survive in their current format.**

On the local level, Weymouth is already experiencing some of the pressures of the ever-evolving retail market. Harborlight Mall is an example of the changing forces occurring on the retail front because it will be repositioning itself into a retail 'power-center' with a mix of big-box retail stores and food service. Still, the other neighborhood shopping centers, while impacted by changing retail trends, have maintained low vacancy rates in the main Route 18-Route 53 retail area. The retail centers, not categorized as destination stops and located outside of the main retail triangle and village centers, are experiencing slightly higher vacancy rates. **Overall retail trends and the lack of small merchants who want to run their own retail businesses are the main reasons for such vacancies.**

G. Industrial Land Use

After its steady decline during the middle of the 20th century, the industrial use of land has gradually revived. This began in the early 1970's, when the Libbey Industrial Parkway opened it's first building, continued in the mid- 1980's, when the Weymouth Industrial Park opened, and persists today, where over 100,000 square feet of industrial space is being planned or under construction.

The industrial market in Weymouth is now concentrated in those two industrial areas, the Libbey and Weymouth Industrial Parks. According to the Spaulding & Slye Market Report, at present, Weymouth has a total inventory of 366,020 square feet of rentable industrial space.

Useful Facts: **Industrial Space**

- There are about 1.1 million gross square feet of industrial space in Weymouth of which 366,020 is available for rent.
- About 31 percent of the industrial buildings are located in industrial parks.
- The industrial rental market (not owner-occupied buildings like Electroswitch) has absorbed 168,020 square feet of space since 1991.
- The industrial rental market is experiencing vacancy rates of less than 5 percent.
- There are 100,000 square feet of industrial space under construction.
- The Naval Air Station will provide significant new space appropriate for the cleaner types of industrial uses.
- Space is renting lower than the 128/Mass Pike space but higher than the rest of the South Market area.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Market Share

While Weymouth has a small percentage of the South Market industrial space, the recent growth in industrial space in Weymouth has allowed it to maintain its market share. In 1991, with 198,500 square feet of rentable space, Weymouth's industrial space accounted for just over 1% of the South Market area, which had a total supply of 16.6 million square feet of rentable space. Today, Weymouth accounts for a little more than 2%. The table below also illustrates that although growth in Weymouth has been modest, more industrial space has been absorbed here since 1991 than in neighboring Braintree.

Table I-10. Industrial Space Absorption Rates

Market Area	1991		1999		1991-1999	1991-1999
	Total Supply	Occupied	Total Supply	Occupied	Absorption	Avg. Annual Absorption
Weymouth	198,500	186,000	366,020	354,020	168,020	18,669
Braintree	2,146,750	1,896,754	2,237,338	2,055,629	158,875	17,653
South Subdistrict	16,636,762	11,475,956	17,126,103	15,741,741	5,265,785	473,976
Entire Suburban Mkt.	41,475,963	29,056,952	47,396,622	42,287,410	13,230,458	1,470,051

Source: The Spaulding & Slye Report. 1st quarter reports. Does not include 100% owner occupied buildings.

Rents and Space Availability

The rentable industrial market in Weymouth is almost at full occupancy. The only rental vacancy listed in the Spaulding & Slye report was for 12,000 square feet of recently completed industrial space. The fact that the space is new construction and that Weymouth has a slightly lower vacancy rate than other south suburban areas accounts for the higher prices in Weymouth. *But, while asking rents in Weymouth are above the standard range, they are still significantly lower than the 128/Mass Pike and North Market areas.*

Useful Facts: Industrial Rental Rates

- Weymouth \$7.00/sq.ft.
- Braintree \$5.15/sq.ft.
- South Suburban \$5.25/sq.ft.
- North Suburban \$7.15/sq.ft.
- 128/Mass Pike \$9.78/sq.ft.

Source: Spaulding & Slye

Assessed Value

Overall, industrial zoned land accounts for approximately 5% of the total land area in Weymouth. According to the assessor's office there is approximately 1,188,145 gross square feet of industrial building area. The Assessors catalog industrial building area into three main categories- manufacturing buildings, warehouse buildings, and office buildings used as part of manufacturing operation.

Table I-11. Weymouth's Industrial Space

Type	# of properties	Gross Building Area (Sq. Ft.)	Total Assessed Building Value	Avg. Assessed Value per Sq. Ft.
Manufacturing	28	824,755	\$19,240,400	\$25.56
Warehouse	22	290,526	\$9,226,100	\$39.76
MFG Office	7	72,864	\$3,260,500	\$52.07
Total	57	1,188,145	\$31,727,000	\$34.39

Source: Assessors Data. Does not include properties where building area is missing.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

While the rentable industrial market in Weymouth is small, a review of building data from the Assessor's office provides some more insight into the overall supply of industrial space in Weymouth. Weymouth has a strong industrial base, considering it is largely a bedroom community. **Unlike some other communities, Weymouth has not experienced a decline in the supply of industrial space or land use over the last thirty years.** Because of the types of industrial building space in Weymouth, **it has not experienced the pressure to convert industrial spaces into office space, either.**

INFRASTRUCTURE

The next sections turn to a discussion of the Town facilities that support the people and land uses which were summarized above. This is the Town's infrastructure. Infrastructure in Weymouth is a multi-faceted and very important public issue. There are five aspects of public infrastructure considered in this plan: sewer, water utilities, storm drainage, transportation and public buildings. This section covers the first four infrastructure issues – basic utilities and the public buildings as important public investments. Transportation is given its own section because of its importance and the breadth of issues regarding traffic and roadways.

The commitment that Weymouth has made to its infrastructure can be seen in its total debt service. Over the last two fiscal years, the Town has increased its capital fund from \$2.5 million to over \$5 million to these purposes.

A. Water System

The Town provides drinking water to virtually all of Weymouth. This includes over three hundred commercial accounts where usage averages over 100 cubic feet per day. The commercial accounts include the South Shore Hospital, the larger apartment complexes within the community, and industrial users such as Electroswitch. The Town's system also services a few residential customers in Hingham.

The Town has tried to remain self-sufficient in terms of its water supply, so as not rely on the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) for this service. This can be a significant cost saving to the community. Development of local supplies is actually encouraged by the State legislation governing the MWRA because of the savings to the State as well.

The Town has been subject to drought shortages and threatened by contamination sources. However, the Town's water system has also been subject to specific improvements that were agreed to by the Town and State regulatory agencies.

Useful Facts: Town Water Supply

- Great Pond became the Town's first public water supply in 1885.
- The system provides drinking water to over 15,000 customers.
- The system draws supplies from two surface water reservoirs and five wells, and provides treatment at two separate facilities.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

The requirements for maintaining an adequate water supply for a town are specified by State Department of Environmental Protection regulations. All towns are subject to the same standards. Typical problems associated with an older town are the questions regarding the ability to supply the growing population, and the condition of the aging infrastructure. This applies to the sewer lines as well as water lines.

The typical response is a capital program, which provides for long-term costs for management, upgrades and expansion of the systems. The Town has taken that action with the establishment of the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds. This special line item in the Town budget accounts for the funds received from water and sewer use, and permits the Town to transfer those funds into the necessary capital improvements. The proposed improvements have been planned according to Woodward & Curran, the Town's engineering consultant that recommended the following alternatives for long-term and short-term (emergency) measures to increase the available potable water supply.

Table I-12. Possible Water Supply Improvements

Short-term Options	Long-term Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Demand Management</u>; controls for the users• <u>Conservation Water Restrictions</u>; a set of regulations to control use and demand• <u>Water Audit/Leak Detection</u> critical for older systems with aging pipes.• <u>Short-term Water Supply</u> (Emergency); usually more risky supplies• <u>MWRA</u>; usually considered to be a more expensive option• <u>Connections with surrounding towns</u> sharing resources can be cost effective if the capacity is available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Bedrock Wells</u>; some locations look promising• <u>Sand and Gravel Wells</u>; new locations including the Naval Air Station• <u>Dredging and lowering of Great Pond Intake</u>; increases capacity• <u>Desalinization</u>; exotic but becoming a cost competitive option

Improvements to the Town's water system, currently underway, include \$1 million for water treatment improvements at Great Pond and at the Arthur J. Bilodeau plant off Winter Street. The Bilodeau plant will provide treatment for the restored well within the adjacent water supply reserve which is currently being reviewed under the State permitting process. The potential growth in population is not significant and does not greatly impact water demands. However, the growth in commercial development as noted by the MAPC Buildout study projected very significant new space.

B. Sewer System

The local sewer system consists of a number of system facilities such as lines, pumps, meters, and valves, and is managed by the Town. However, all sewage is discharged to the MWRA system which includes meters that are used to determine the Town's cost share.

Not unusual for an older system, the Town's sewer system has been plagued with Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) problems. These problems result from groundwater and storm water entering the sewer lines and adding to the total flow. This adds significant costs by

Part 2. Weymouth Today

increasing the amount of flow entering into the MWRA system. Old and faulty sewer lines may also leak sewage which infiltrates into soils, wetlands and water bodies and can cause significant damage to natural resources through increased nutrients and organic matter. This causes eutrophication, the process where elevated levels of nutrients result in explosions in algae growth which in turn consume high levels of oxygen rendering water bodies unable to support aquatic life. High bacterial counts are also indicative of this problem.

In 1992 the Town adopted regulations to require hook-ups to the sewer system for all properties within Weymouth. Combined with the other I/I controls, these actions will ensure that the high levels of nutrients, bacteria, and potential pollutants associated with sewage flows will be controlled and the Town's water supply and sensitive resources will be not only protected but improved in quality.

A model and flow test study was recently completed with a resulting program for improvements partially funded by the MWRA. The total sewer improvement program costs were estimated at approximately \$15 million. The five-year I/I removal program is estimated to cost just below \$5 million.

C. Storm Drainage

In a coastal community, chronic flooding is an expected problem and Weymouth is no exception. The Town has several areas that are subject to chronic flooding principally associated with ocean flooding from storms or stream bank overflow. Major ocean flooding occurs at Saltwater Creek, George Lane Beach, Wessagussett Beach, Wituwamat Road, and King Cove Beach Road. The coastal flooding events reportedly lead to regular beach closures.

Many inland streams flood during heavy rains and spring snowmelt, particularly Old Swamp River and Plymouth River. Drainage problems that are due to stormwater runoff in inadequate structural systems are also prevalent. The most visible example is the flooding during storm events in Legion Memorial Field. To address these problems, the Town has scheduled a number of drainage projects, utilizing grant funds, to make improvements to the drainage systems.

For Your Information: Current Grant Applications for Drainage Projects

- Housing and Community Development; \$96,000 for storm drain improvements Lake Street, Prince Street, Westminster and Alpine Road. Near Whitman's Pond, the drainage systems here will help control flooding problems and may also improve the quality of runoff into Whitman's Pond.
- The Coastal Pollutant Remediation Program, Stormwater Pollution Remediation "In Support of Shellfish Bed Restoration in the Weymouth Back River" A non-point stormwater control and abatement project for Puritan Road drainage basin which discharges into the Back River ACEC. It is a suspected source of pollutants to the river, which has prevented shellfish harvesting there.
- Hazard Mitigation Project Application (FEMA Disaster #1142) Drainage system improvements to control street flooding and icing. Also within the watershed of Whitman's Pond. Includes town funds of \$28,456.
- Department of Conservation Management - Lake and Pond Grant \$10,000
- ISTEIA Enhancement Fund Application; Enhancement of water quality in the Back River in order to open closed shellfish beds.

D. Public Buildings

Public buildings are a significant investment for a community. They are used for several purposes, including the need to:

- Support visitors, workers, residents and property owners with responsive emergency services;
- Support neighborhoods with services and accessible schools for children;
- Support businesses and business centers by creating activity areas; and
- Establish an architectural standard for design and historic preservation in the ways the buildings are constructed and maintained.

The key properties and larger land holdings are discussed below.

School Property

Weymouth Schools with their properties have established some of the most significant land holdings in the Town. Although certain historic and modern school properties have been converted to other uses, the fifteen active schools are significant in size and are equally spread throughout the Town. The Town also has many parochial and private schools that suggest a strong commitment to the education of the Town's children.

Table I-12. Listing of Public School Properties

- Weymouth High School/Vocational Technical High School at 1051 Commercial Street
- Alternative High School Program at 89 Middle Street
- Weymouth High School at 360 Pleasant Street
- Adams Intermediate School at 89 Middle Street
- South Intermediate School at 280 Pleasant Street
- Academy Avenue Primary School at 94 Academy Avenue
- Alice B. Fulton Primary School at 245 Pond Street
- Elden H. Johnson Early Childhood Center at 70 Pearl Street
- Frederick C. Murphy Primary School at 417 Front Street
- Thomas V. Nash Primary School at 1003 Front Street
- Lawrence W. Pingree Primary School at 1250 Commercial Street
- Williams Seach Primary School at 770 Middle Street
- Ralph Talbot Primary School at 277 Ralph Talbot Street
- Union Street Primary School at 400 Union street
- Wessagussett Primary School at 75 Pilgrim Road

The School Department is involved in the upgrading of the Junior High School off Pleasant Street to create a four-year high school. The School Department also recognizes there is a demand for additional play fields, not only for school age children but also adults who schedule times on the school properties.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Libraries

The Library Trustees currently manage the main facility in the Tufts Library in Weymouth Landing, and three branch libraries: the Fogg Library in Columbian Square, the Pratt Library in Jackson Square, and the North Weymouth Library off of Bicknell Square. The Trustees have engaged a building consultant to determine and address current needs, which include:

- Updating the technology based on recent donations.
- Addressing the age of the facilities and the need for interior reorganization for user spaces.
- Addressing lack of parking and accessibility issues, some of which will require cooperative agreements with the Parks Department; i.e., Weston Park and Tufts Library in Weymouth Landing.

Because demand has been growing, the Trustees are also considering restoration of the longer hours of operation at the three branch libraries.

Other Key Public Buildings and Properties

The Town is in process of significant new building and improvement projects that are generally improving the facilities and the ability to deliver services to the community. The public buildings and projects to highlight are as follows.

- The Town Hall, which is undergoing a \$250,000 upgrade of the cupola. However, more significant aesthetic improvements are being made to the Memorial wall and park adjacent to Town Hall.
- The complex of buildings on Winter Street that includes the existing DPW garage and offices, the new Police Station, with the new fire department substation under construction as the latest addition.
- New fire substations are also under design or construction on Park Avenue and Ralph Talbot Street. The other satellite fire stations help serve each of the village areas with a significant municipal component, in combination with the libraries.
- The Wharf Street landfill is to be capped for an estimated cost of \$950,000. This will provide an area for passive recreation after the capping is complete.

In addition, the early stages of planning are currently underway for comprehensive improvements to the Town's park system.

TRANSPORTATION

The following section discusses the many access and safety issues associated with the Town's transportation systems: roads, trails, trains and buses. The transportation network is fundamental to the quality of life for residents and the vitality of business. Weymouth has a regional advantage relative to the range of transportation modes, but each has its own set of issues and opportunities. The goal for most towns is to maintain a local system that provides easy access for residences and work places, provides high traffic options for local businesses, but eliminates conflicts between pass-through and local traffic. It should also encourage transit use and pedestrians. This section articulates the conditions and trends that must be taken into account in the subsequent planning recommendations.

A. The Existing Road Network: Key Highways

Weymouth has an extensive road network composed of arterials, with many collectors and local streets that connect to these arterials to serve local neighborhoods. (See Maps I-3 –Regional Transportation network and I- 4 –Weymouth Major Road and Rail Lines.) The arterials are fairly well distributed over the Town and this arterial network adds to the traffic growth by attracting adjacent traffic to use the good connections to neighboring communities.

For Your Information: Classifications of roads

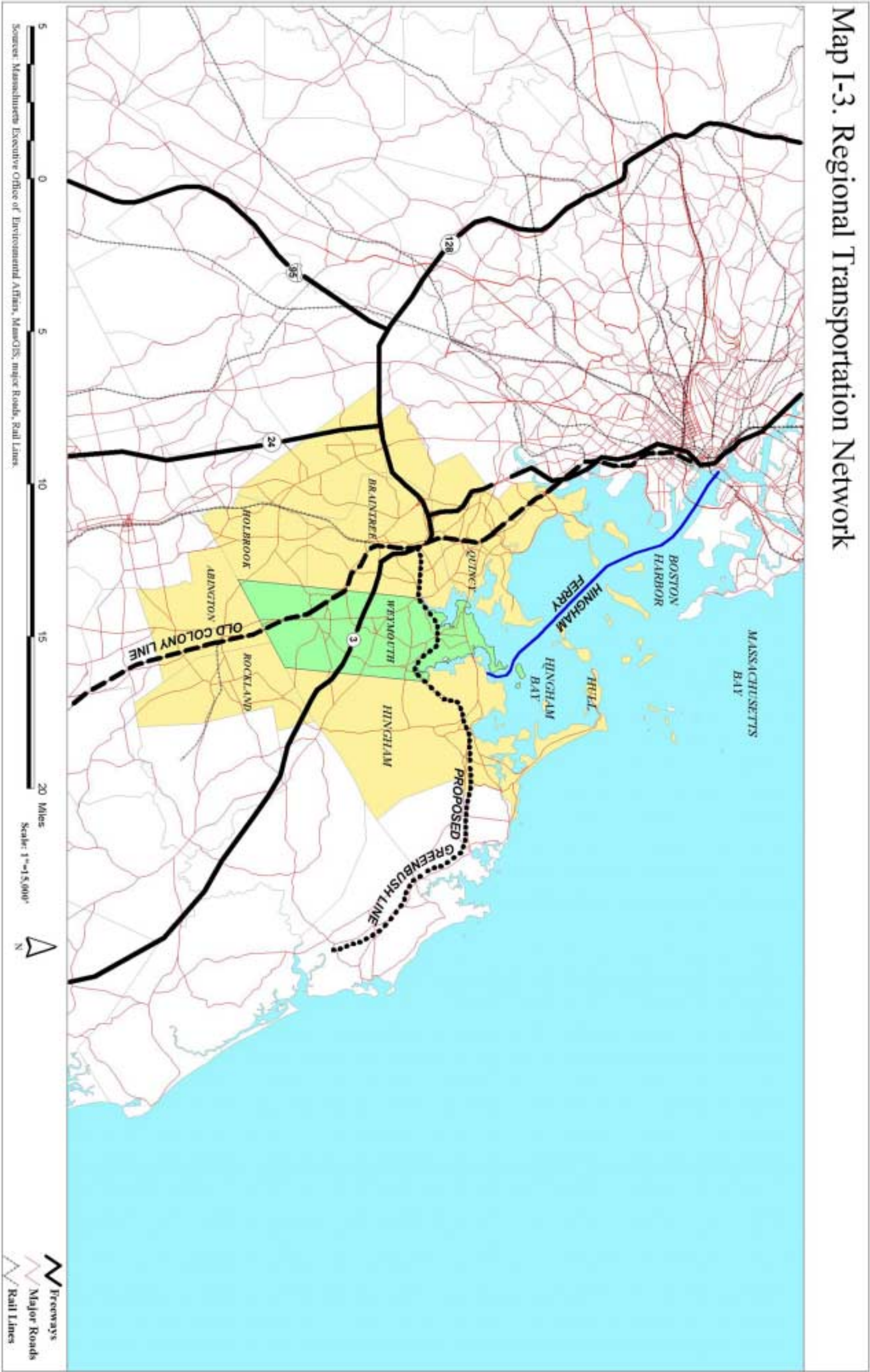
- Arterial = Intra-community movement
- Collector = Collects and distributes traffic between arterials and local streets
- Local = Primary function for land access

Source: ITE

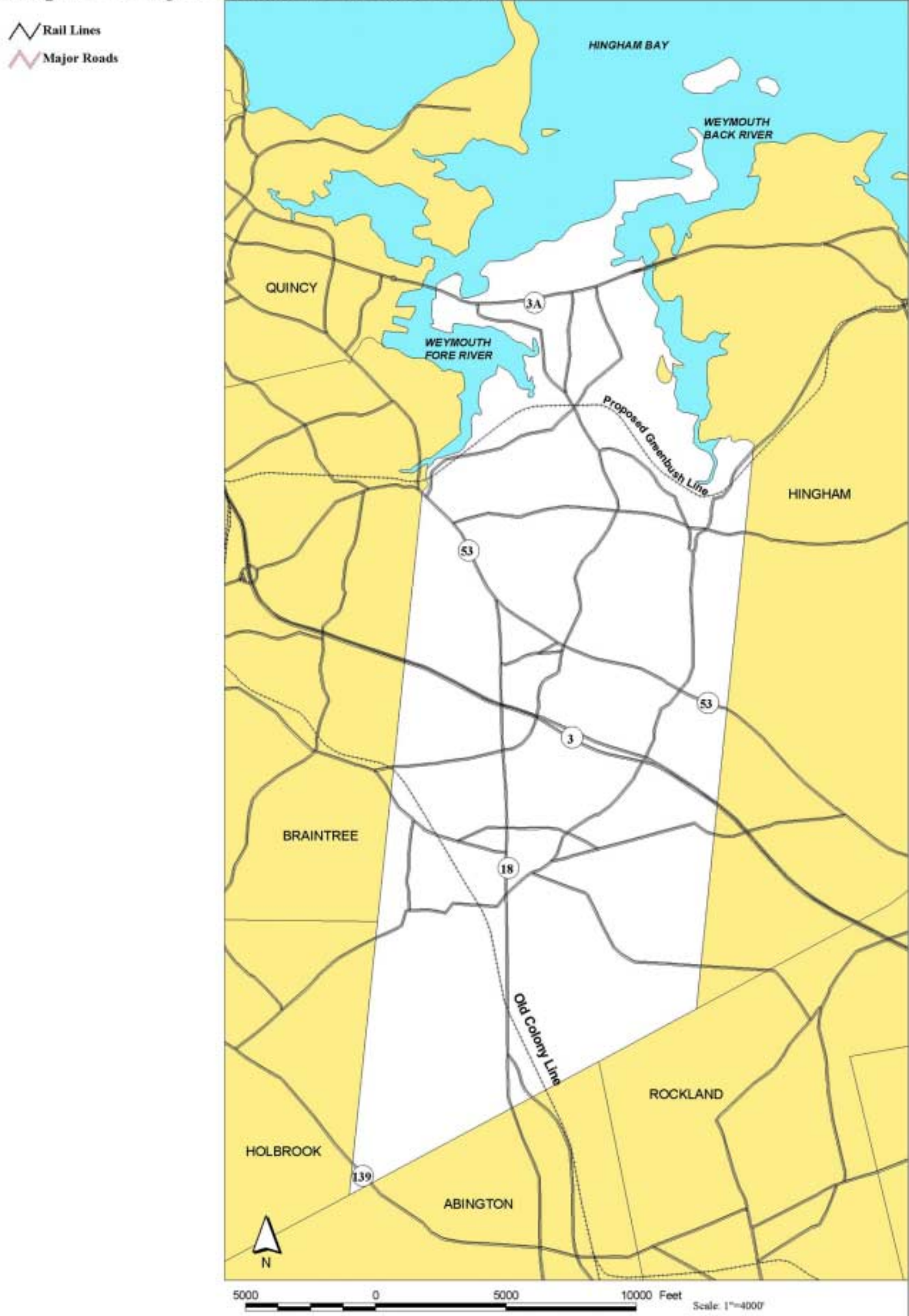
The extensive arterial road network throughout Town increases business opportunities and provides convenient commuter routes. However, the useful arterial network also attracts traffic concentrations that strains the entire Town roadway network and serves such unwanted results as residential “cut through” traffic, with more trucks, congestion, and safety problems. It must be understood that increasing development will require coinciding transportation improvements to handle the added traffic and avoid the unwanted consequences of change in this congested traffic environment. (See Map I-5 – Weymouth Town Roads.)

Useful Facts: Weymouth's Arterials

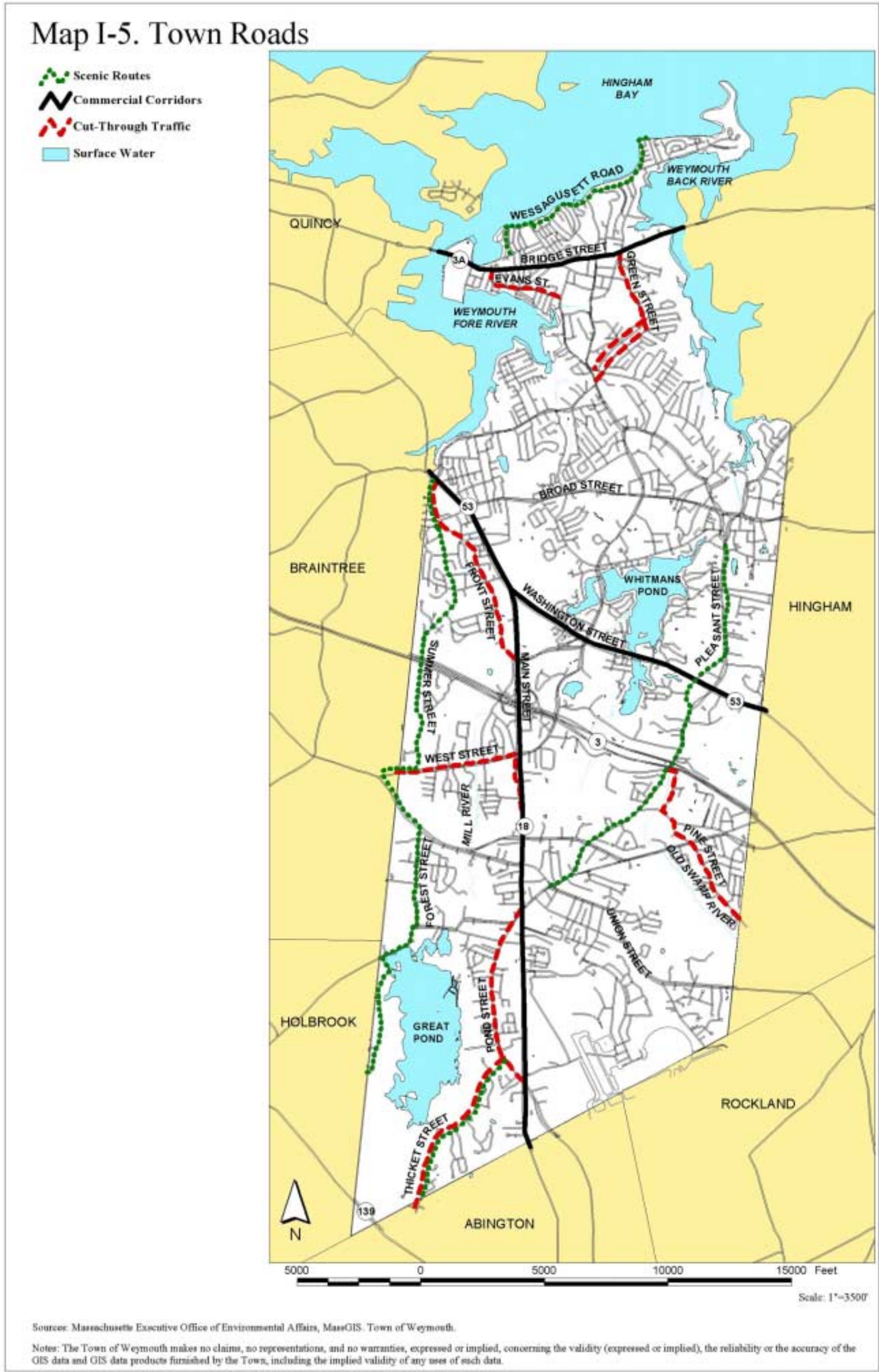
- Route 3 a limited-access arterial highway that serves traffic between the South Shore and the Boston Metropolitan area.
- Route 3A is an arterial road following the coast and serving some commuter travel, but to a much lesser degree than Route 3.
- Routes 53 and 18 are major arterial roads that serve regional and local traffic needs. Each road is accessed by significant commercial development.
- Route 139 runs east west from Abington and through a corner of Weymouth onto Randolph and Stoughton. There is one lane in each direction.



Map I-4. Major Roads and Rail Lines



Sources: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, MassGIS; major Roads, Rail Lines.



Route 3

This highway acts as a “super arterial” road because it is one of the principal means of providing access between Boston and the South Shore. The State is proposing a 50% increase in the capacity of the highway by adding a third lane.

Until recently, Weymouth’s ‘face’ on this road has been limited. However, the new access road to the Naval Air Station and the new Weymouth Woods project will identify Weymouth to thousands of travelers. A passerby in a vehicle typically has about six seconds to identify a location. **As one of the heaviest traveled regional arterial roadways, the facades of projects along Route 3 will continue to identify Weymouth’s image to a majority of the region passing by.**

Route 18

This highway acts as one “backbone” of the Town circulation network, providing the local north-south connections. It has also attracted the greatest accumulation of local businesses and commercial properties within the Town, strung along most of its frontage. This location, with its high local traffic, can support many types of service and retail businesses. However, this type of development can be the typical cause of spillover affects in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Because the commercial properties along Route 18 have not reached their build-out potential under zoning, the Town has the opportunity to encourage the redevelopment of commercial properties on Route 18. *But this must be done in a manner that will also control the expanding traffic volumes.* Improvements to Route 18 include recent construction at the intersections at Winter Street and Main Street with upgraded geometry and traffic signals.

Route 53

This is also a major arterial road that serves both regional and local traffic needs. It is the second “backbone” of the Town’s circulation network, paralleling Route 3. It contains significant commercial land uses that are oriented to vehicle access. *This road has been designed to favor vehicular traffic over pedestrian circulation, which affects both the image and the operation of the roadway and intersections.*

Again, just as on Route 18, the status of the commercial properties here could allow new development. But the Town must be aware of the need for traffic management to make the improvements successful. *Design guidelines specifically framed for Highway-Commercial use, could be used to allow commercial development and redevelopment while minimizing the unwanted impacts and spillover affects.*

In February of 1989, an eighteen-month building moratorium was established by the Town along Washington and Main Streets. It was specific for businesses in the B-1 and B-2 zoning districts for properties fronting on the two highways. At that time, zoning was reconsidered in the area because of its potential impact on traffic. In the spring of 1990, three new zoning districts were presented to Town Meeting, Residential R-2, Highway

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Transition and Medical Service districts. The result was estimated to reduce vehicle trips on these roads by 10,000 cars a day at the build out.

Route 3A

Also known as Bridge Street, this is a four-lane highway carrying north-south traffic as a minor arterial. Because of the number of intersections, traffic lights and commercial development along the route, the highway is frequently clogged at peak hours. *Again, Highway-Commercial use and development guidelines are needed to prevent the traffic congestion along Route 3A from splitting the northern neighborhoods from the rest of the Town.*

Route 139

This route has a minor position in Weymouth's southwest corner, but could be important to the Town as a means for directing pass through traffic from the southern regions, rather than proceeding along routes that would access the other highways. The Town should monitor improvements (or non-action) to Route 139 improvements as a key part of the balance for local traffic management, particularly in South Weymouth.

B. Volume and Capacity Issues

Recent traffic data and plans from The Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provide useful information on the local movement systems. This information is summarized and presented in the three following sections, Traffic Volumes, Roadway Capacity, and Intersection Capacity.

Traffic Volumes

The MHD keeps records of traffic volumes all over the State. This data helps identify historic trends on area roadways and identify traffic growth rates on important arterial corridors. The following major arterials have traffic count information available.

Useful Facts: Traffic Volumes

- Route 3 is one of the highest volume roads in the State - about 117,000 vehicles per day (vpd).
- Only I-93, I-95, and Route 128 approach this volume.
- The highest is I-93 in Braintree with 204,557 vpd.

Table I-13. Average Daily Traffic for Selected Roads

Street	Location	Volume (ADT for Historic Year)
Route 3	North of Route 18	116,700 (1998)
Route 53	Hingham Town Line	11,040 (1998)
Route 139	Abington Town Line	14,031 (1989)
Route 3A	South of Sea St.	29,390 (1991)
Route 18	North of Columbian St.	33,280 (1990)
Route 58	Pond St. to Abington	9,958 (1990)

Note: ADT= Average Daily Traffic

Source: Mass. Highway Department

Roadway Capacity

Overall, regional traffic growth can impact local traffic growth. However, there may not be a consistent relationship. As noted before, Route 3 carried approximately 117,000 vehicles per day in 1998. However, traffic counts completed in 1995 had traffic at 120,000 per day. This indicates traffic growth on Route 3 may be leveling off or increasing at a slower rate than in the early nineties.

Locally, Route 18 is the busiest arterial road in Weymouth. Because of several key projects, Route 18 may soon experience significant traffic growth. Land use patterns along Route 18 and its north/south alignment encourage traffic growth. Some major trip generators lie along Route 18 - and more generators are proposed or under construction that will have major impacts on the Town:

For Your Information: Road Capacity

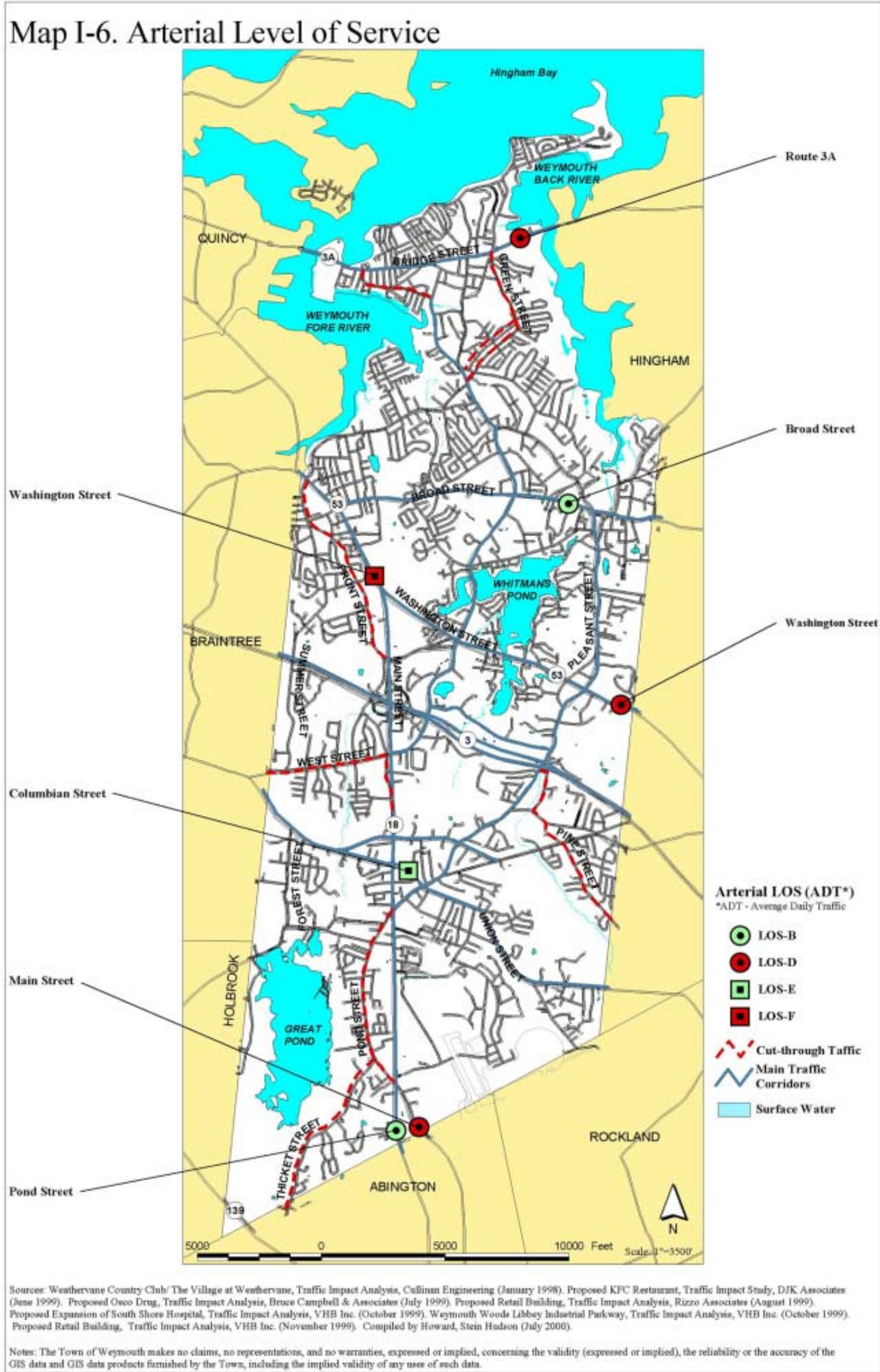
Road capacity is measured to identify how a road or intersection is operating in regards to vehicle delay and congestion. Each road has a different capacity depending on its lane configuration. Commuters on Route 3 experience delays during rush hour but so do travelers on Pleasant and Middle Street when school lets out.

- South Shore Hospital is currently constructing a 124,000 sq. ft addition. The added employee parking for this project is being located outside of Weymouth and the direct traffic impacts were found to be minimal. However, associated medical office space may be developed elsewhere within the Medical zoning district.
- A regional waste transfer station in Abington has been proposed that would add to truck traffic on Route 18 near the Naval Air Station.
- The South Weymouth Naval Air Station Redevelopment has been approved and is proceeding toward future development. The proposed Route 3 connector will provide an important aspect of traffic mitigation for this project.

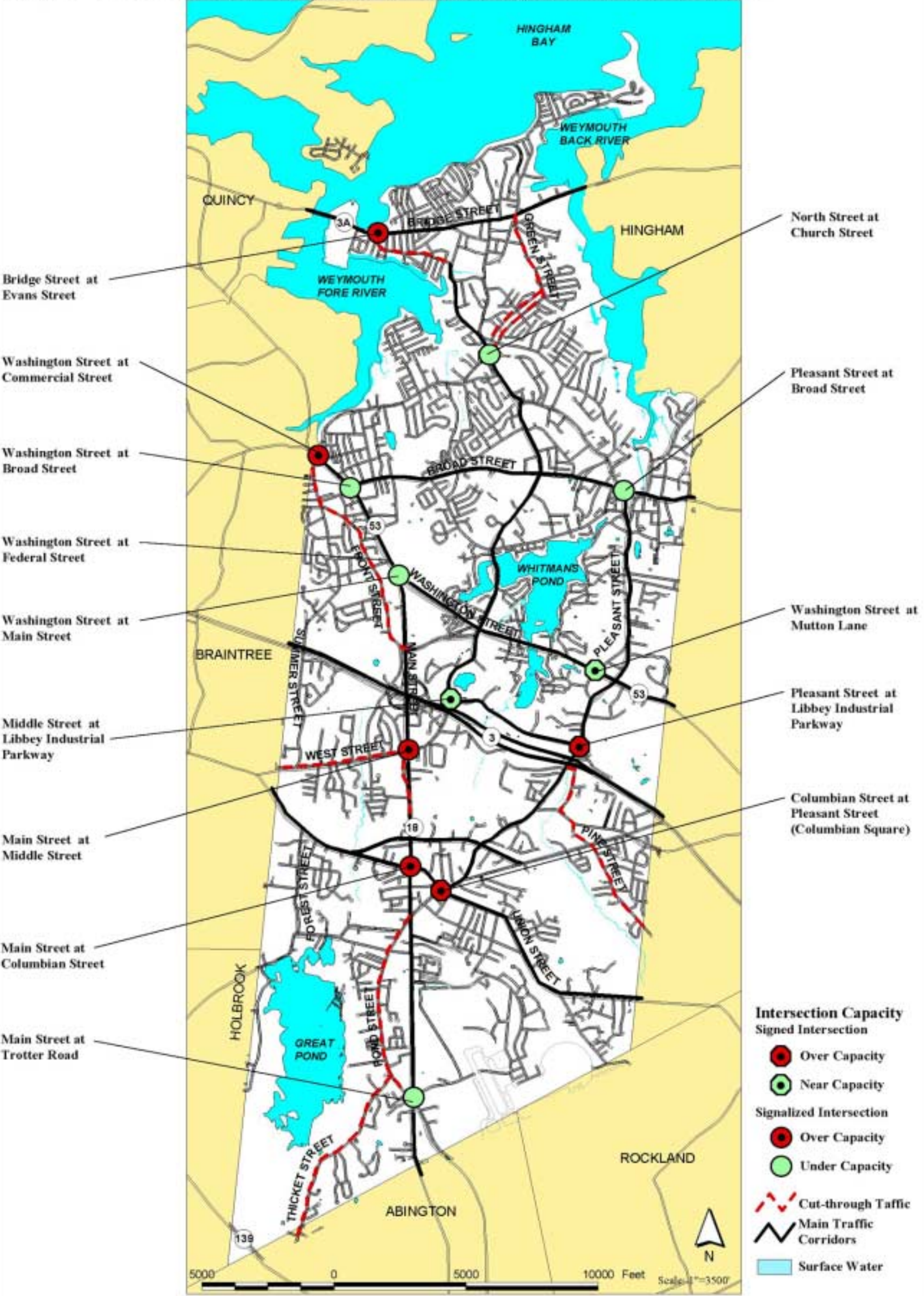
Intersection Capacity

In Weymouth, the three primary traffic arteries are severely impacted by traffic. The road most severely impacted is Main Street/Route 18, particularly where it intersects Washington Street (Route 53) and with Route 3. Intersection capacity is measured through a defined Level of Service on an hourly basis, rated from "A" to "F". Level of Service A provides the best intersection operations, while Level of Service F denotes extreme congestion. Route 18 has a Level of Service (LOS) of F, which means that this road fails to carry sufficient volumes of traffic in the peak hours. Long delays, slow movement, and difficulty in turning onto or off the road are all the results of this condition.

The other two arterials most severely impacted are Washington Street, which has a LOS of D by Hingham and, as previously mentioned, a LOS of F where Washington Street meets Main Street. The third heavily impacted artery is Route 3A with a LOS of D by the Hingham Town Line. This traffic is a mix of through traffic along Route 3A with volumes of east/west traffic heavy enough to create cut-through traffic concerns. (See Map I-6 - Arterial Level of Service.) Related to LOS problems are intersection capacity limits due to signalization and design. The intersections identified are a mix of signalized

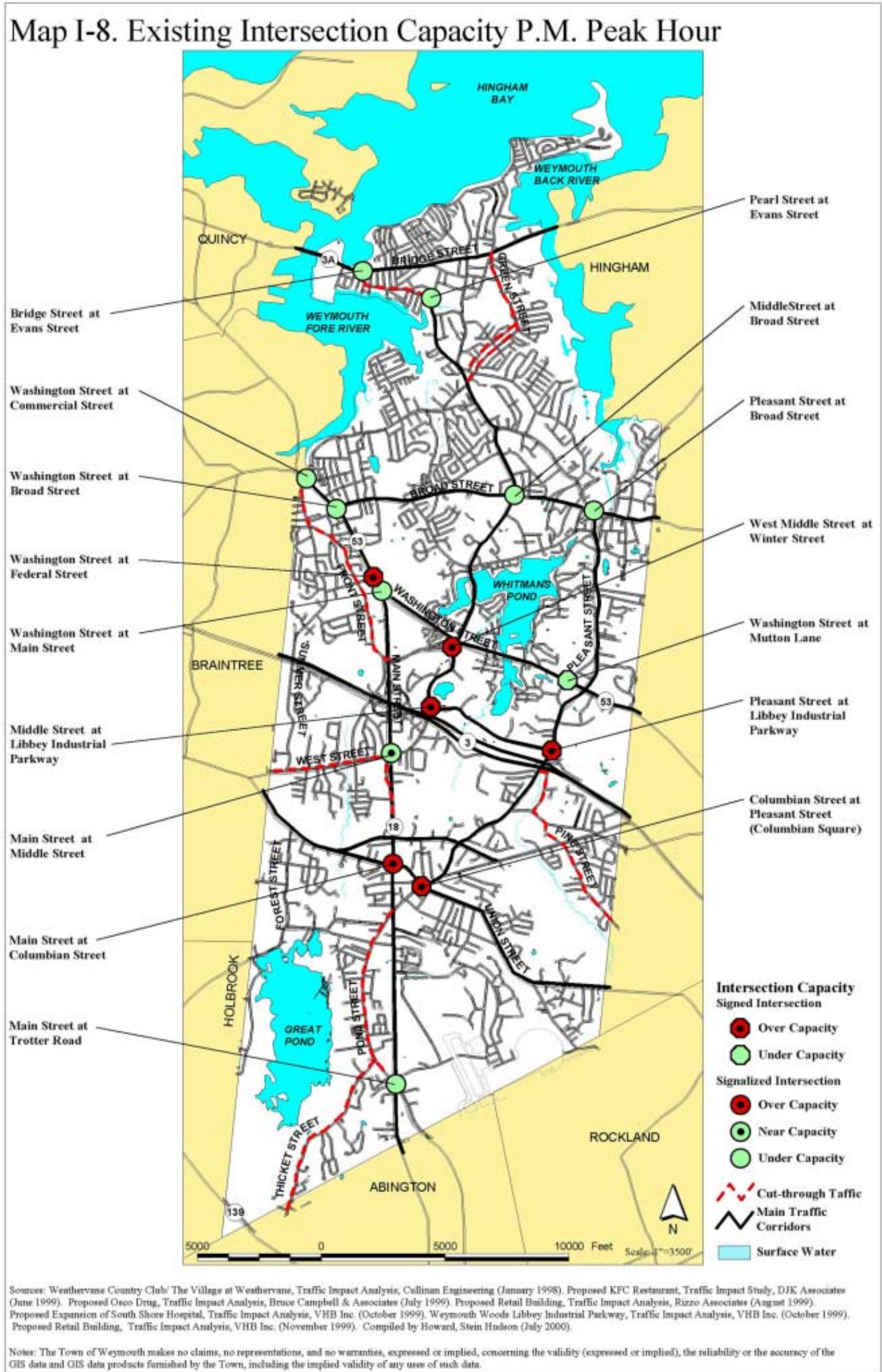


Map I-7. Existing Intersection Capacity A.M. Peak Hour



Sources: Weathervane Country Club/ The Village at Weathervane, Traffic Impact Analysis, Cullinan Engineering (January 1998). Proposed KFC Restaurant, Traffic Impact Study, DJK Associates (June 1999). Proposed Osoo Drug, Traffic Impact Analysis, Bruce Campbell & Associates (July 1999). Proposed Retail Building, Traffic Impact Analysis, Rizzo Associates (August 1999). Proposed Expansion of South Shore Hospital, Traffic Impact Analysis, VHB Inc. (October 1999). Weymouth Woods Libbey Industrial Parkway, Traffic Impact Analysis, VHB Inc. (October 1999). Proposed Retail Building, Traffic Impact Analysis, VHB Inc. (November 1999). Compiled by Howard, Stein Hudson (July 2000).

Notes: The Town of Weymouth makes no claims, no representations, and no warranties, expressed or implied, concerning the validity (expressed or implied), the reliability or the accuracy of the GIS data and GIS data products furnished by the Town, including the implied validity of any uses of such data.



Part 2. Weymouth Today

and signed and are identified on the previous figures (See Map I-7 - Intersection Capacity A.M. Peak Hour and I-8 - Intersection Capacity P.M. Peak Hour.)

Table I-14 Intersections with Capacity Problems

Signalized Intersections	Intersections with Signs
A.M. PEAK HOUR	
<u>Over Capacity</u> Bridge Street at Evans Street Washington, Commercial and Front Streets Main Street at Middle Street Main Street at Columbian Street	Columbian Square at Pleasant Street. Pleasant Street at Libbey Industrial Parkway
<u>Near Capacity</u> Washington Street at Mutton Lane	Middle Street at Libbey Industrial Parkway
P.M. PEAK HOUR	
<u>Over Capacity</u> Main Street at Columbian Street	Washington Street at Federal Street, Middle Street at Libbey Industrial Parkway, West Middle Street at Winter Street, Columbian Street at Pleasant Street Pleasant Street at Libbey Industrial Parkway.
<u>Near Capacity</u> Main Street at Middle Street	

C. Traffic Safety

In order to find traffic safety problems in Town, locations with high accident rates were compiled. Seven locations had fifty or more accidents over the last five years, averaging better than ten accidents per year and resulting in the highest accident rates in Town:

Table I-14. High Accident Locations; 1995-1999

<i>Location</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Avg.</i>
<i>Main Street (18) at Winter Street*</i>	21	14	14	10	24	83	17
<i>Main Street (18) at Route 3 X-Way</i>	8	18	20	13	17	76	15
<i>Main Street (18) at Columbian Street</i>	15	12	12	18	8	65	13
<i>Washington Street (53) at Pleasant Street</i>	12	11	7	11	17	58	12
<i>Washington Street (53) at Middle Street</i>	17	8	7	5	20	57	11
<i>Main Street (18) at Park Avenue</i>	27	6	5	6	13	57	11
<i>Main Street (18) at Middle Street</i>	16	6	9	12	11	54	11

As shown, the Route 18 corridor contains five of the top seven spots on the high accident list. Of these locations, only Main Street at Winter Street, where construction has already started, was

Special Thanks to former Sergeant Bill Newell and Weymouth Police Department who compiled the data to help locate high accident spots.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

listed as a State improvement project for fiscal year 1999 (see discussion of the Transportation Improvement Program, below). Route 53 holds the remaining two spots on the list.

- **Main Street at Winter Street** is the highest accident producer in Town, averaging 17 accidents per year for the last five years, with a significant jump from 10 accidents in 1998 to 24 accidents in 1999. The State Highway Department project will address some of the problems.
- **Main Street at Park Avenue** had one very high accident year, 1995. This high year puts the intersection onto the high accident list. The accident rate dropped for both here and at **Route 53 at Middle Street** but both are now back on the list with 13 accidents and 20 accidents respectively.

These records are not good and improvements are necessary. As noted, the MHD has already begun improvements on Main Street at Winter Street and at Washington and Middle Streets. However, the Town should add the other locations to a priority safety list for improvements. Detailed safety studies are needed to identify the cause and solution to each intersection's safety problem.

For Your Information: **High Accident Rates**

Accident numbers and fluctuations in the numbers from year to year could be caused by new land use changes, construction detours, poor geometric design, bad signal timing, changes in volume, or changes in people's habits and patterns. But high rates suggest a consistent problem, regardless of reason.

D. Alternate Forms of Transportation

With the main streets and intersections near or over capacity, with the expanding need for commuting to work places, and with concerns for the environmental effects occurring from automobiles, alternate forms of transportation are considered very important to the future of all communities. The following sections discuss the different modes of travel available at this time within Weymouth, with a focus on public transit.

Public Transit

Public transportation is another way to improve movements and remove traffic from the street. This has the added benefit of also improving air quality. Enhancing the public transportation system and overall reducing peak vehicle travel by implementing Traffic Management strategies reduces the demand on the Town's road network and improves overall traffic flow. Below are descriptions of the existing public transit systems.

Commuter Rail and the 'T'

Weymouth has an active train station located on the Kingston/Plymouth commuter rail line in South Weymouth. The station is located on Trotter Road, off Route 18. The station has 476 parking spaces available. The weekday train schedule varies with more

Part 2. Weymouth Today

trains during rush hour in the morning and evening peak hour. Weekend service is available at less frequent intervals.



Photo: Weymouth MBTA station

The Greenbush commuter rail line from Braintree to Scituate is under continuing review of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report that was completed in 1995. Two new train stations are planned for Weymouth when the new Greenbush commuter rail is activated. These two stations will be located in East Weymouth and Weymouth Landing along the existing rail lines. These stations will complement the station already open on the Plymouth line in South Weymouth. **These stations are needed because based on the 1990 census Journey-To-Work data, Weymouth had the largest proportion of workers commuting to Boston along the Greenbush line, twenty-two percent of Weymouth's entire workforce, or 6,604 workers commute to Boston.** These stations will provide commuters an option and thereby remove traffic from the congested highway corridors of Route 3 and the Southeast Expressway.

MBTA Bus Service

Four MBTA bus routes pass through the Town of Weymouth. The routes all pass through Town with stops in Weymouth and destinations beyond. Three of the routes use Route 3A, which strengthens the northern area connections (220, 221, 222).

Route 220 passes through Weymouth to serve Old Hingham Center via Route 3A, Lincoln Street, and Main Street in Hingham. Route 220 has no Hingham Center service on Sunday. Route 221 serves Fort Point in North Weymouth via Neck Street and River Street. Route 221 has no weekend service. Route 222 serves Weymouth via Sea Street and North Street and Commercial Street to Jackson Square.

Route 225 is the only route not accessing Route 3A. It serves the Town via Route 53 from Braintree. From Route 53, the route diverts to Front Street, Summer Street, and Federal Street and heads back north on Route 53 through Lincoln Square and Weymouth Landing. Route 225 is the busiest route with 2,275 riders per day. Below are headway times and weekday ridership by bus route.

For Your Information: Definitions
Ridership = number of bus fares
Headway = wait time between buses

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Table I-15. Bus Route Ridership Numbers

Bus Route	Headway (min.)	Weekday Ridership
220 – Quincy Center – Hingham	10	1,674
221 – Fort Point – Quincy Center	[limited service]	153
222 – Quincy Center – East Weymouth	15	1,617
225 – Quincy Center – Weymouth Landing via Quincy Avenue	10	2,275

Source: MBTA

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Safe and comfortable accessways for people on foot or on bicycles can entice people from using their cars and reduce traffic flow on the local roads. These modes can often be jointly served, as many of the pedestrian facilities are also acceptable for bicycles. However, the safest and most comfortable facilities are those that separate pedestrians and bicycles from vehicles.

There are no bike paths within Weymouth. However, the fact that many of the Town streets are much wider than necessary for two-way vehicle traffic provides a low-cost option to create bicycle lanes with painted lane-control lines along the curb lines. Additional action items are included in the next chapters.

The quality of sidewalks varies within the community. On certain roads such as Libbey Parkway and Main Street, sidewalks have not been constructed or are only found on one side of the roadway. The construction of the sidewalks and associated curbs (if present) also varies. ADA compliance appears to be reasonably complete for most areas where sidewalks exist.

Pedestrian trails are only found within park and open space areas. This limits them to the size of the open space area and limits their utility to the park experience. In parks such as Great Esker, a substantially long walk along the Back River is possible. However, links to other residential and commercial areas would add some ability to make the walking experience functional as well.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Next, the Report reviews the natural conditions and historic resources that define the Town as something quite distinct from an urbanized area, with natural beauty and a rich history. The Town and others have also taken steps to preserve certain special areas and the values they represent. These open space lands are discussed in the subsequent section.

Weymouth is blessed with beautiful open space and natural resource areas in the interior portions of the Town. With waterfront on both Quincy and Hingham Bays, and Grape, Slate and Sheep Islands, the Town also has spectacular waterfront resources that can serve the Town with water-based recreation (See Map I-9 – Weymouth Waterfront Saltwater Resources and Map I-10 – Water, Wetland Resources and Buffers).

A. Waterbodies

Weymouth is rich in water resources, one reason that it has been able to support itself with public water supplies. However, the water resources are not all protected to the same degree, and do not all enjoy the same level of quality.

Weymouth's Great Pond and its surrounding area make up 522 acres of open space. However, this area is not open for public recreation because it is one of the Town's water supplies and part of its watershed.



Photo: Whitman's Pond at Middle Street

Whitman's Pond is the largest fresh water body in the center of Town and provides recreational opportunities. However, it has experienced water quality problems from

Useful Facts: Water Resources

Waterbodies:

- Great Pond
- Whitman's Pond
- Cranberry Pond
- Elias's Pond
- Whortleberry Pond

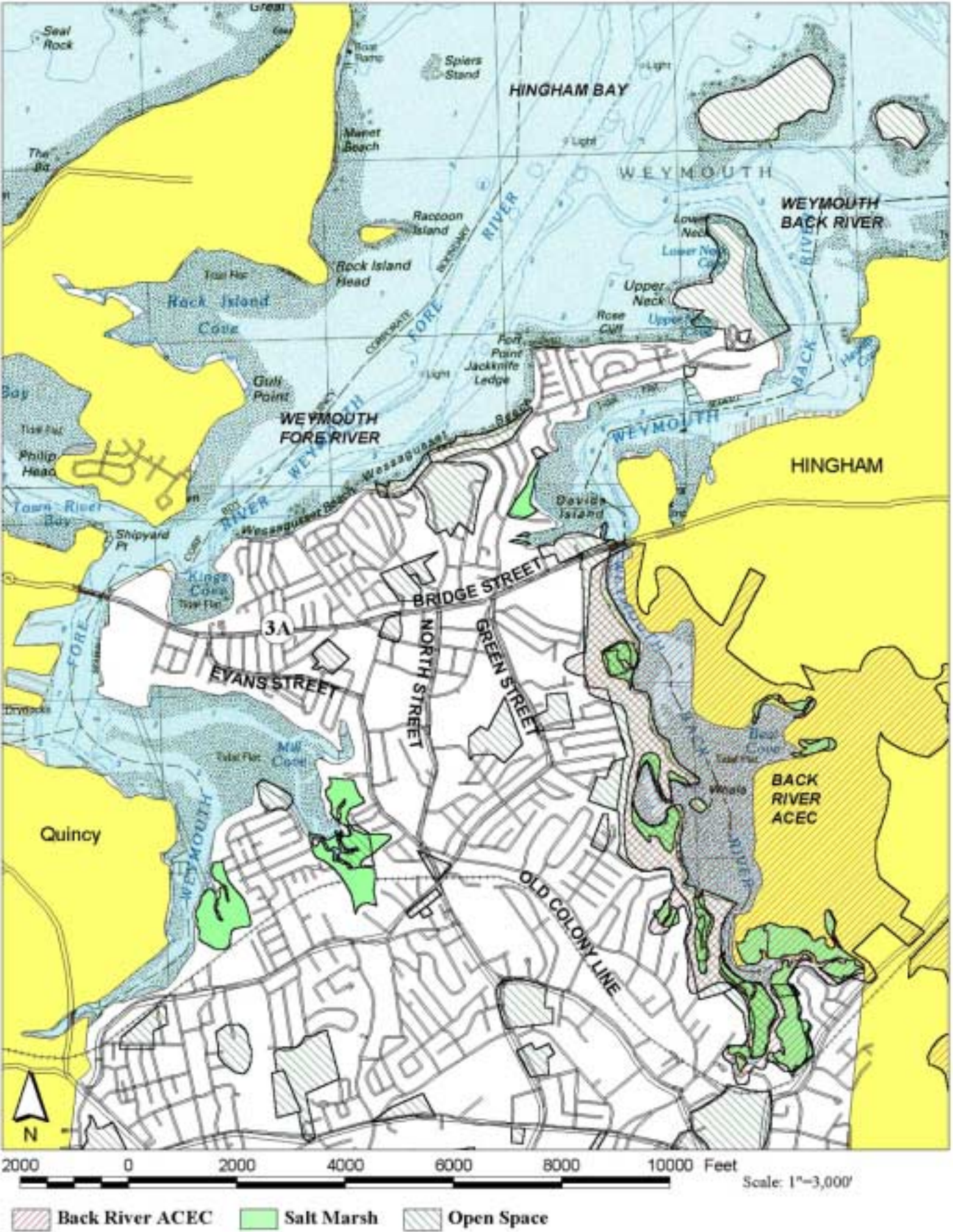
Waterways:

- Fore and Back Rivers
- Smelt Brook, which also meets Fore River
- Mill River
- Old Swamp River
- French Stream
- Herring River
- Plymouth River

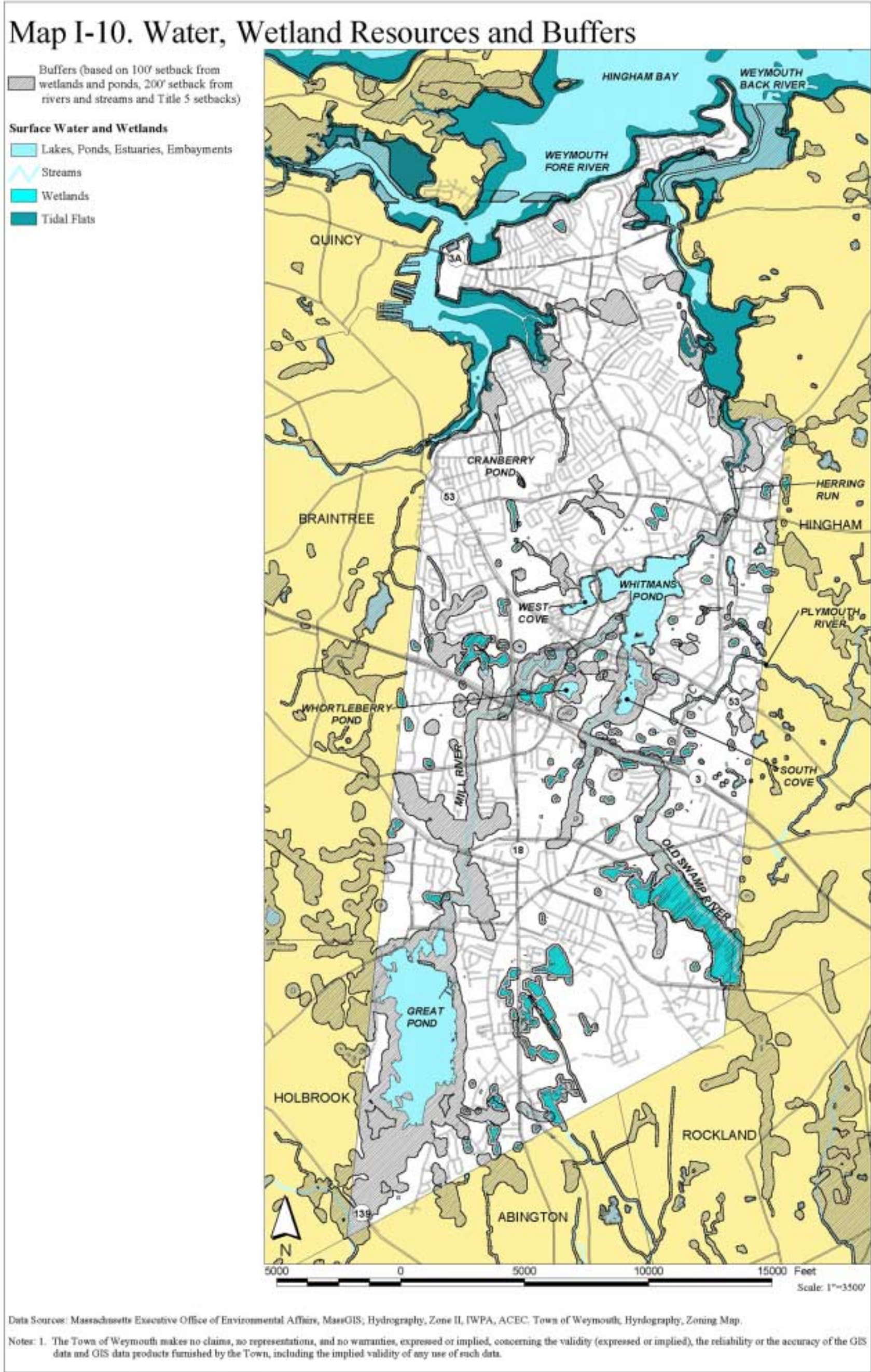
Key Wetlands:

- Salt water wetlands on Fore and Back Rivers
- Old Swamp River corridor

Map I-9. Waterfront Resources



Sources: Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, MassGIS; Registered Open Space, ACEC's. "Weymouth Waterfront Plan", prepared by Henderson Group, August, 1988.



Part 2. Weymouth Today

nutrient loading from stormwater runoff and lawn fertilizers that causes an overgrowth of pond weeds, and coliform counts which cause closure of the swimming area. The coliform counts probably come from the large bird population, because the counts are highest when there are no storm events.

Five other fresh waterbodies and numerous small ponds add to the landscape character of the community. Surrounding Whitman's Pond are three of the largest water bodies, West Cove, South Cove and Whortleberry Pond. These ponds are connected hydrologically to each other, and ecologically to the health of the water resources of central Weymouth.

B. Wetlands

A large proportion of the Naval Air Station is classified as inland wetlands. The reuse plan for that area calls for over half of the total acreage to remain unbuilt as wetlands and open space.

The nearby, Old Swamp River wetland area also provides a substantial acreage of bordering wetland that contributes to the health of the Town's water resources. There is however, no hydrologic connection between these wetland resources. Other major wetlands are located near the Great Pond Reservoir extending westward into Holbrook and south to Abington.



Photo: Mill River wetlands

In addition, important bordering vegetated wetlands are found adjacent to the major rivers and smaller streams. Various other wetland areas are scattered throughout Weymouth, primarily in the southeastern corner.

C. Waterways

Waterways consist of streams and rivers and are a subset of resources under the State definition of regulated wetlands. Weymouth has several important waterways that could be an important part of the Town's quality of life, if these resources are integrated into the land use planning goals and highlighted in development and land acquisition plans.

Old Swamp River

This river runs from Rockland, through Hingham and north into Weymouth between Pine and Liberty streets. The river runs along the median of Route 3 and through the Libbey Industrial Park before eventually discharging into South Cove. Consequently, it is an important part of Whitman's Pond water quality. A very large wetland complex borders the river south of Ralph Talbot Street. Most of this wetland area is under Conservation Commission jurisdiction. Further north, the Mount Hope Cemetery lines the eastern bank

of the river. Still further north and just before South Cove, the river runs through Town property held for water supply wells.

Mill River

The Mill River runs from Hollis Street and Great Pond up to Whitman's Pond. The Mill River also passes under Route 3. Two public properties are located along the river. The first is a large piece of Town conservation land between the west bank of the river and the railroad line, just above Columbian Street. The second piece of land is the Town water supply reservation just south of Winter Street. The Town well within this water supply reservation is to be reopened. As a consequence, this river is also within a watershed of the Town's water supply.

The Plymouth River is a relatively minor stream, which drains into Hingham. The Herring Run is fed from Whitman's Pond and drains into the Back River. Consequently, this latter waterway is influenced by the coastal tidal cycle.

D. Area of Critical Environmental Concern

The Back River has been designated as both a Scenic River by the State and has been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC was established in 1982 and spans 950 acres between Weymouth and Hingham.

The Secretary of Environmental Affairs designates areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's) with assistance from the local municipalities. The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) administers the ACEC Program. The objectives of the ACEC Program are: to identify and designate the critical resource areas; to ensure conformance of State agency actions to preserve, restore and enhance the areas; and support local activities necessary for long-term management. The DEM has described the Back River ACEC as follows:

“ It is an unusual natural area in the midst of an urban/suburban environment, uniquely preserved considering its proximity to Boston. Approximately 180 acres are tidal waters flushing into Hingham Bay. There are productive clam flats and nursery and feeding areas for a wide variety of finfish. Herring Brook in Weymouth provides annual passage to Whitman's Pond for thousands of alewives, locally referred to as herring. The lower portion of Herring Brook, Hingham's Fresh River, and several unnamed tributaries provide spawning sites for an annual smelt run. The 100+ acres of salt marsh and several salt ponds are vital links to the marine food web. Also included in the ACEC are ponds and swamps that form the headwaters of various tributaries to the Weymouth Back River.

“Most of the uplands within the ACEC are parks managed by the two towns: Great Esker Park in Weymouth and Hingham's Bare Cove and Brewer-More Parks. Within these areas are several outstanding examples of glacial eskers - the size and scope of the eskers are unique in Massachusetts. There are also numerous historical sites, including evidence of prehistoric habitation as long ago as 500 to 7500 B.C.

Part 2. Weymouth Today

Breeding or feeding habitat for some 150 species of birds combines with the scenic quality of the parks. These conservation areas provide buffers for the waters of the river and space for passive recreation.” Source: DEM web site

E. Coastal Resources

As a coastal community, Weymouth has a valuable mix of shorefront resources. The resource areas are indicated on the U.S. Geological Survey maps and are reproduced in Map I-9, Waterfront Resources. As can be seen from the inset figure, Weymouth’s coast is protected by other land forms and has good access to the complex of Boston Harbor islands. Weymouth is also accessible from the water through federally protected channels. Weymouth also has an important resource in the Town beaches.

The mudflats, saltwater wetlands and coastal waters are all recognized under Federal and State law for protection. Unfortunately, water quality at the Town beaches, as determined by coliform counts, has been high enough to close the beach for swimming. In fact, closures are reportedly quite regular after storm events. The problem is believed to be a result of a combination of flows from the Nutt Island MWRA pump station, and flows from the storm drainage systems in the local streets. Regular street and drainage system cleaning is an effective way to control the impact of storm water from the local streets.

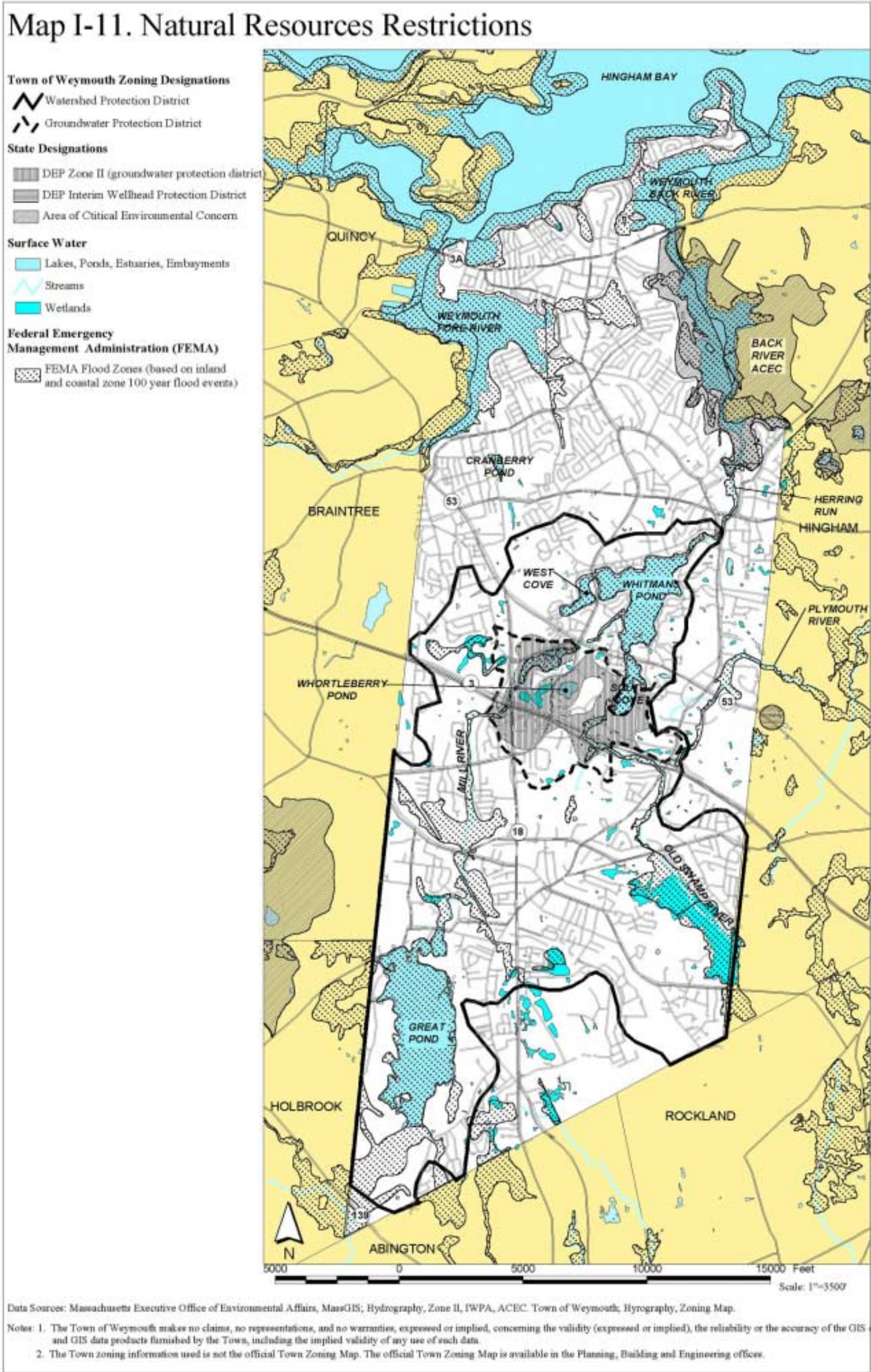


Map of Boston Harbor Islands

Weymouth’s major coastal waterways are the Fore and Back Rivers, tidal estuaries, which connect the Town to the harbors. Limited but valuable coastal wetland areas add to the environmental quality of the shorefront along both of the rivers. More discussion on these resources is included in the Chapter II: Evaluation and Recommendations.

F. Aquifers and Water Supply

The Weymouth water supply watershed includes 12.87 square miles that extend into the towns of Abington, Braintree, Hingham, Holbrook, and Rockland. Braintree considers their portion of the watershed an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Hingham also protects their portion of Weymouth’s watershed. There has been a heightened awareness by all of these towns on the need to protect the Weymouth watershed. However, *more work needs to be done to increase cooperation in the protection of the Town’s water supply.* (See Map I-11 – Weymouth’s Natural Resource Regulatory Restrictions.)



Part 2. Weymouth Today

The Old Swamp River and the newly-identified aquifers on the site of the South Weymouth Naval Air Station are additional sites of potential water supply development. Because the watershed and groundwater recharge boundaries of these areas extend beyond the Weymouth municipal line, the complete protection of these new areas will necessitate discussions with the neighboring towns. The Town would be serving its long term interests in the protection of the groundwater supplies by establishing the land use restrictions that will protect those water resources now, and thereby potentially reducing costs for future treatment.

G. Environmental Sites

Approximately 167 sites within Weymouth have been identified by the State Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup as potential, or on-going, hazardous material clean-up sites. In distribution, 25 of the sites are found in the Naval Air Station, 25 are off of Main Street, 19 are found off of Bridge Street, and 18 are off of Washington Street. The other 80 sites are scattered throughout the community. The sites range from the typical gas stations to the older industrial sites, including Sithe Energy (former Boston Edison). However, the sites also include Webb State Park, which is a 'Superfund' site, and small fuel tank spills at everything from small businesses to churches.

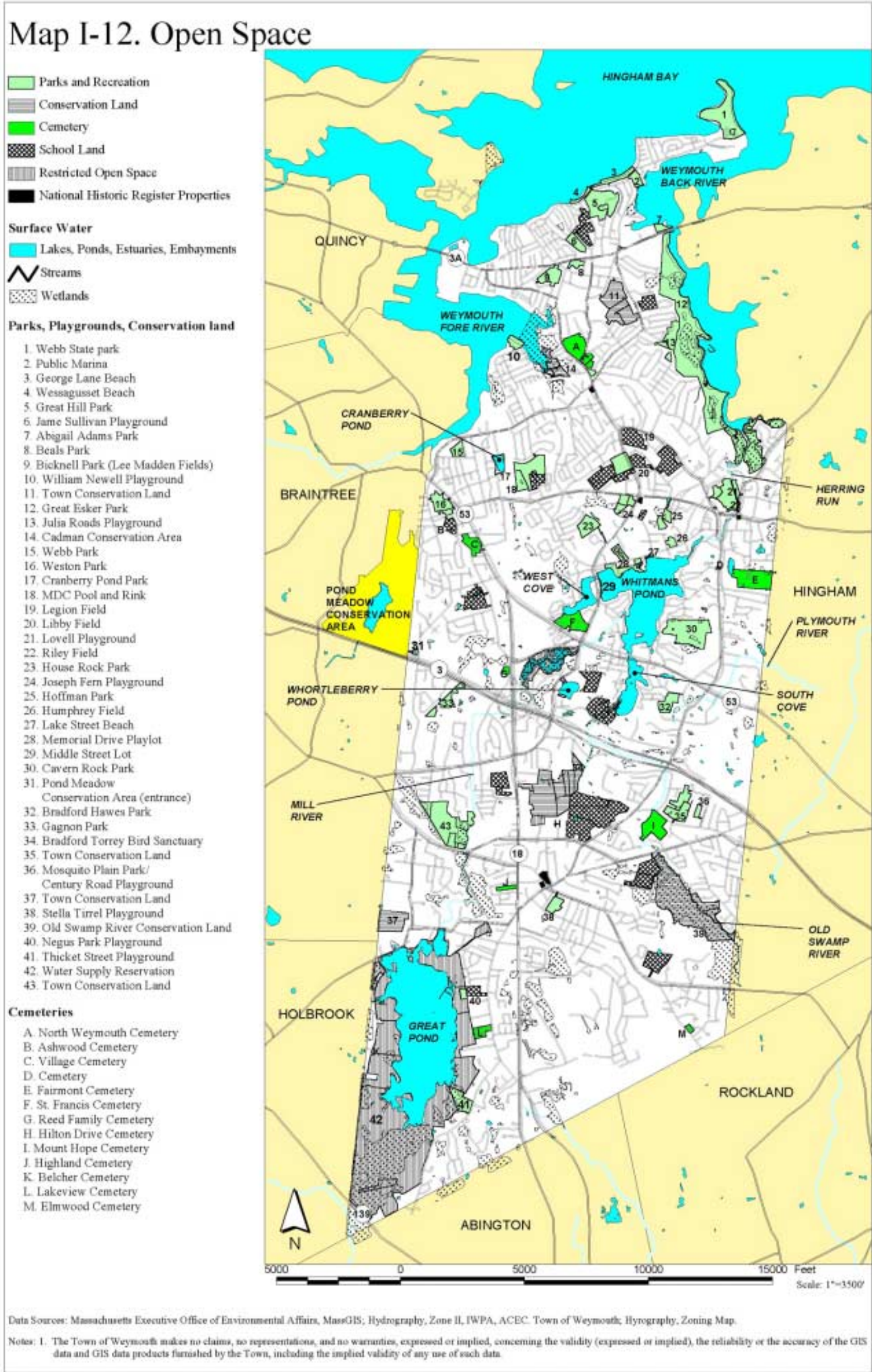
Over half of the sites are in the advanced stages of analysis and remediation. Encouraging redevelopment of the sites under the State 'Brownfields Act' program would speed the clean up of the sites. The Town would do well to learn the opportunities available in the State program and find ways to encourage participation. The program provided \$57 million in new State funding for promoting improvements to properties or providing protections for land owners who complete the clean ups. The overall health of the community would be upgraded when these sites are remediated. Consequently, this program promotes the overall environmental health of the community.

OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Managed open spaces help create the ambience and aesthetics that help define the community as a desirable place to live and work. Preserving cultural resources also helps define the character and brings people a sense of the depth of history in their community. Consequently, both of these aspects of the Town provide important qualities to the community as a whole.

A. Open Space Resources

Weymouth has over 346 acres of parkland and about 430 acres of additional land in 48 parcels under conservation easement. Another 522 acres are incorporated into the Great Pond watershed. In total, this represents about 1300 acres of Town land or 12.5 % of the Town land area (See Map I-12 – Weymouth's Open Space and Recreational Areas). The following table lists the parks and open space areas.



Part 2. Weymouth Today

Table I-16: List of Parks and Open Space

Park	Location	Acreage	Town Facilities
Abigail Adams State Park	Bridge Street		DEM PARK
Beals Park	Bridge and Athens Street	3.4	Courts and swings with walkway
E. Leo Madden Park (Bicknell Fields)	Delorey Avenue	3.4	
Birches Playground	Westminster Rd., Birchcliff , Cross St.	0.6	
Bradford Hawes Park	Lakehurst Avenue	10.5	Tot lot, court, baseball field and inline skating
Sarah Brassill Park, Century,	Mosquito Plain off Century Road	1.15	Court, swings, volleyball and climbing apparatus
Cavern Rock Park	Westminster Road	36.5	N/A
Cranberry Pond	Cranberry Road	7.9	N/A
Joseph A. Fern Playground		0.9	
Gagnon Park	Belmont Street	9.8	Tot lot and court
Gifford Park (Thicket St. Playground)	Thicket Street	2.9	Tot lot, swings, baseball field
Great Esker Park	End of Elva Road	137.7	DEM park
Great Hill	At the top of Bradley Road	26.5	Court, swings, 'the rock'
Hoffman Park		6.7	
House Rock Park	House Rock Road	10.3	
Humphrey Field	Lake Street	3.1	Baseball field, tot lot
Julia Road Playground	End of Julia Road	9.9	Court, swings, tot lot, baseball field
Lake Street Beach	Lake Street	0.4	Whitman's Pond
Libbey Park	Middle Street		
Lovell Park	Commercial Street (behind Pingree)	5.1	Tot lot, baseball fields, basketball court, inline skate rink, herring run
Memorial Drive Playlot	Lake Street	3.47	Court, swings
Mitchell Field	School Administration Bldg		
Negus Park	Pond Street	2.3	Basketball court, baseball fields
William Newell Park	Idlewell Boulevard	4.9	Baseball, basketball court, tot lot
James T. O'Sullivan Playground	Pilgrim Road	3.4	Basketball court, inline skate rink, baseball playground, tot lot
Pond Meadow Rec./Conservation Area	Neck Street		Trails
William P. Riley Field	Off Broad St. – behind former Central Jr.	27.8	Baseball fields, tennis court
Stella Tirrell Playground	Union Street and Central Street	5.9	Tennis courts, tot lot, wading pool, baseball field
William Webb Memorial State Park	Broad Reach		DEM park
Webb Park	Summit and Gibbens Street	5.8	Basketball and tennis courts, baseball field, tot lot
Wessagussett Beach (Lane Beach)	Sea Street	8.6	Boat and bath houses, beach
Weston Park	Broad Street – behind Tuft's Library	10.2	Tot lot

Source of above Table: Weymouth Open Space and Recreation Plan

Part 2. Weymouth Today

B. Cultural Resources

Weymouth has the distinction of being the second oldest town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. With its extensive history, Weymouth has accumulated a mix of valuable historic features and buildings that have been spared the ravages of time and redevelopment.

A full survey documenting the Town's cultural resources has recently been completed. This study, called the Comprehensive Community-wide Survey Project, Survey Phase IV, and is the last phase of an analysis and study of the Town's historic resources. It includes drafts of inventory forms for structures within the community that have some historical significance. The accumulated database is now on file with the State and local Historical Commissions. The study is referenced here as a more complete source list of historical properties. It is also important to the Town's Demolition Delay ordinance, which was adopted in 1997, and which uses the list produced in that study to apply the restrictions of that ordinance.



Photo: Fogg Library

Of key concern is the fact that in a town with such a long history as found in Weymouth, there are many threats to the historic resources and properties. The resources are typically found in the most active areas of Town. As an example, Commercial Street was located upon the historical Native American trail system that ran along the coast. The Survey Phase IV study also notes that Summer, Randolph, Pond, Neck and Sea streets were also part of the original Native American paths.



Photo: Memorial Cross from Open Space Plan

As a result, any of the remaining archeological features and some of the historic structures are subject to potential redevelopment. A threat to the Central Square district

Part 2. Weymouth Today

was the recent proposal for replacement of houses with a commercial use. However, the permit was not issued and the zoning of the area was changed to prevent further attempts to change the character of the area.

The Town has seven historic properties and three districts. The Boston Harbor Islands, Central Square and Weymouth Civic districts have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, twenty-three archeological sites in Weymouth have been recorded.

The Survey Phase IV has recommended an additional 34 buildings be nominated for the National Register of Historical Places.

The Weymouth Civic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a complex of two buildings and two monuments situated near the center of Town. Within this district is the Weymouth Town Hall, Weymouth Industrial School (presently houses the Alternative School), the Cross of Grey, and the Memorial Wall/Open Air Theater.

The Central Square Historic District is in the east central part of Town and includes properties along Broad and Middle Street. It is an area of about 35 acres that contains a total of 55 principal buildings and 28 outbuildings. The dominant building type is nineteenth century residences. A range of architectural styles represents these residences, including Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne. There are also institutional buildings, including a fire station, a Masonic Temple, a school, and a boys club.

Useful Facts: Burial Grounds

	Earliest Marker
Village Cemetery	1843
Ashwood Cemetery	1819
Old North Burial Ground	1678
Mt. Hope Cemetery	1800
Reed Family Burial Ground	1784
Waterman Cemetery	1795
St. Francis Xavier	1862
Martin and Vinson's Burial Ground	1790
Old Cemetery	1730
Elmwood Cemetery	1756
Belcher Cemetery	1811
Lakeview Cemetery	1732

PART 3. TRENDS AND DEMANDS: WHERE IS WEYMOUTH HEADED?

Forecasting is a technique used in all master plans as a way of determining the needs and required responses of the future. The following information is intended to initiate thought on implications for future public policy and program development. Regional and national trends have a clear and distinct impact on the Town of Weymouth. Consequently, the first part of this section includes overviews of regional and State economic and demographic trends and the market forces influencing Weymouth, and how they compare to the adjacent towns, the South Shore region and Norfolk County. Some of the national indicators are then reviewed for comparative purposes. Lastly, the demographic and economic indicators specific for Weymouth are summarized.

For Your Information: Information Sources

Economic and demographic trends are based on a variety of sources, including the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), The Institute of Social and Economic Research at U Mass-Amherst (MISER), the U.S. Census, the Federal Reserve Bank, Applied Geographic Systems, Inc (AGS) and certain industry reports such as the Spaulding and Slye Real Estate Report. Local information was also gathered from the Weymouth Building Department, Weymouth Public Schools and interviews with town employees, business owners and managers, property owners and residents.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

A. Population Trends

Weymouth has the second largest population in the South Shore region. It is primarily a bedroom community and a residential suburb of Boston. As a result, recent growth trends within Weymouth as they compare with regional conditions for suburban communities provide a basis for making future projections. Under the current economic climate, Weymouth is likely to see some increases in jobs and business development, but these changes are not likely to effect population numbers. These projections, however, will be strongly influenced by the way Weymouth allocates the limited land remaining for development.

Recent trends indicate the strength of the economy and a growing market for potential new development. However, demand for development derives from both economic and demographic forces. In order to understand relevant demographic indicators and the impact on development, this section examines various population and income trends at the national, regional and metropolitan level.

Population trends tend to reflect economic changes in an area. In general, economic expansion results in an in-migration, while job losses and recessionary patterns cause out-migration. Changing age patterns, household formation, and other factors contribute to the net population change in an area.

Part 3. Trends and Demands

During the recession of the late 1980's and early 1990s, job losses within the entire region, contributed to out-migration, and a loss in population in Weymouth of 1,538 residents. Between 1990 and 1999, the population grew slightly and recovered from the previous loss. Based on estimates compiled by a variety of sources, the projections of future population suggest a continuation of this stability and suggest even a slight increase in growth this decade compared to the 1990s. However, this is dependent on the amount and type of new housing permitted in Weymouth (discussed in the Housing section), and does not compare with the national growth rates.

Review of the data shows the population growth rate in each of the local areas: the Metropolitan Statistical Area, Massachusetts, and New England, lags behind the national rate of growth. In fact, *the nation as a whole has and will, increase its population three to five times faster than the region.*

Projections: Population Growth Rates

	1990-1999	To 2004
National	1.1% per year	0.9%
State	0.2%	0.4%
County	0.7%	0.6%
South Shore	0.5%;	0.3%
Weymouth	0.1%	0.4%

Source: AGS, 1999

Weymouth's growth has lagged behind the nation and the region. The Town is expected to increase annually by approximately 0.4% through 2009. In total, if Weymouth continues at its current rate of growth, it is expected to increase by 2,166 residents by 2009 or an average annual increase of 197 residents per year through 2009. However, suggested trends from other agencies predict a decrease in population.

The lack of any significant increases in the population in response to the changes in the economy has led to a labor shortage throughout the New England region. Local population trends have helped to keep unemployment rates low. However, analysts with the Federal Reserve expect the slower growth rates in the New England region to serve as a limiting factor in the area's ability to continue to expand economically. As illustrated by income trends, the area's labor shortages, in combination with local economic expansion have also contributed to the relatively higher household income levels seen in the area, as seen in the next section.

Projections: Population Numbers

	1999	2004	2009
Market Area	647,008	661,702	680,360
County	317,147	326,488	337,863
South Shore	275,482	279,854	285,952
Weymouth	54,379	55,360	56,545

Source: AGS, 1999

B. Income Trends

Weymouth's economic potential is influenced by trends in income patterns. As noted previously, the limited growth seen in the aggregate population and the number of households in the region contribute to the area's labor shortage and may restrain economic expansion.

Labor shortages also contribute to wage pressures. The impact of the labor shortage coupled with economic expansion

has impacted household income levels. Unlike the previous growth trends, the nation's income is growing slower than in New England, Massachusetts, and Boston. Local and regional median household income levels are some \$12,000 to \$16,000 higher than the national median household income level. *Income levels are expected to rise faster and stay higher than the National median over the next five years.*

Projections: Household Income			
	1999	2004	% increase
National	\$40,985	\$47,986	17%
New England	\$52,730	\$62,688	18.9%
State	\$53,584	\$63,964	19.4%
MSA Region	\$56,263	\$66,333	17.9%

Source: AGS, 1999

Median income levels in Weymouth exceed levels for the entire Boston MSA, but have lagged behind levels in South Shore region and Norfolk County. *In this decade, median household income in Weymouth has grown 52%.* By 2004, Weymouth's median household income is projected to surpass the median household income for the South Shore region. However, it will continue to lag behind Norfolk County. This is because the County includes a number of affluent suburbs, which skew the average higher. While Weymouth's median income is increasing, it still lags behind its neighbors, Hingham and Braintree, which have 1999 median household incomes of \$77,747 and \$66,518 respectively.

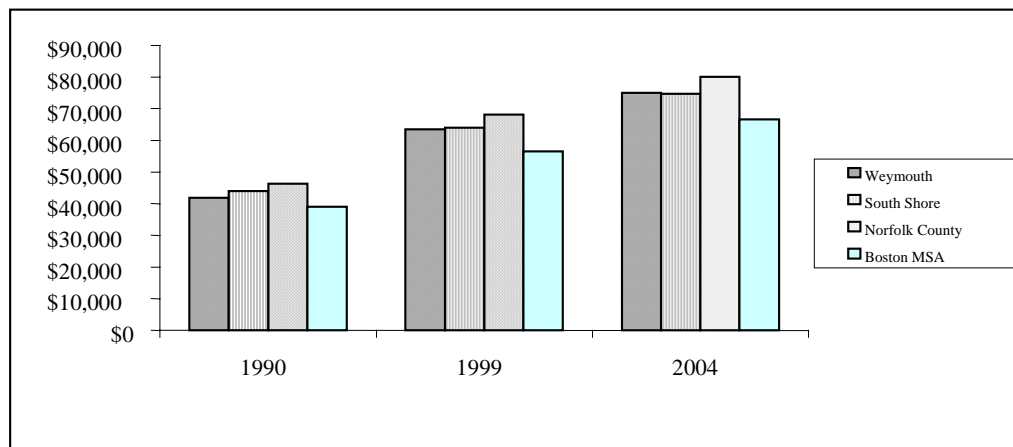


Figure 5. Median Household Income Trends, 1990-2004

Part 3. Trends and Demands

Table I-17. Median Household Income Trends, 1990-2004

	1990	1999	2004	Change 1990-1999	Change 1999-2004
Weymouth	\$41,813	\$63,482	\$75,084	52%	18%
South Shore	\$43,985	\$64,100	\$74,784	46%	17%
Norfolk County	\$46,290	\$68,154	\$80,046	47%	17%
Boston MSA	\$39,087	\$56,543	\$66,612	45%	18%

Source: AGS (1999)

Median household income in Weymouth is significantly influenced by the existing housing stock. *It is expected that future income will be a result of existing households earning a higher income - as opposed to Weymouth's ability to attract new, higher-income households.*

Still, trends suggest that Weymouth's median income will surpass the rest of the South Shore area. This suggests that while there may not be an in-migration of upper income households to Weymouth, there will not be an out-migration of upper income Weymouth residents to other areas in the South Shore region, either.

HOUSING TRENDS

Trends in the number of households reflect the patterns associated with population growth. But, as noted previously, household sizes have decreased since 1980. Consequently, the rate of growth in the number of households often exceeds the growth rates for the aggregate population.

<i>Projections: Household Growth Rates per Year</i>			
	1990-1999	To 2004	To 2009
National	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%
New England	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
State	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%
MSA Region	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%

Source: AGS, 1999

Changes in the number of households in an area are one of the key variables in demand analysis. Households are the primary unit of measurement for a number of products including housing itself and a variety of retail goods. Retail demand analyses often review average household expenditures and extrapolate future retail expenditures based on the number of households in an area. The expected increases in the number of households in the areas examined also indicate the potential for new development.

A. Growth Rates

While growth rates for the number of households in each area exceed the comparative growth rates for the aggregate population, national trends continue to out-perform

Part 3. Trends and Demands

regional, State, and local trends. The State and the MSA are expected to gain approximately 64,000 and 73,000 households, respectively, by 2004.

Most of the potential increase in residents is based on Weymouth's ability to increase housing units and households. Between 1999 and 2004, numbers of households should increase compared to the growth in the 1990's and be comparable with growth occurring in the South Shore region. However, *this growth will be slower than averages for Norfolk County, where communities are less constrained by development barriers, such as the real limits in Weymouth on available land.*

The most dominant influences on Weymouth's population projections are the ability to add additional housing stock in response to housing demand and the characteristics of the existing housing stock. The number of households, not total population, is the basic unit of measurement. New housing units and trends in household sizes effect overall population growth.

<i>Projections: Numbers of Households</i>			
	1999	2004	2009
Market Area	245,587	254,923	266,026
County	118,565	123,555	129,432
South Shore	105,443	109,244	113,885
Weymouth	21,579	22,144	22,709
<i>Source: AGS, 1999</i>			

Over the next ten years, the number of households in Weymouth is projected grow by 9.0 % (1,130 new households). In contrast, population will grow by only 4.6 % (2,166 people).

The number of people per household in Weymouth is smaller compared to the rest of the county. For this planning effort, the estimate for the number of persons per household in Weymouth is that it will stabilize at about 2.49 persons per household.

B. Housing Product Trends

While the population trends and projections provide a basis from which future demand for new housing can be measured, as a nearly fully developed community land use trends that have occurred in the housing market in many ways limit housing projections. Importantly, multi-family development, much of which was initiated prior to the last decade with more now proposed will play a very important role in the mix of residents in Weymouth's future.

Any significant increase in multi-family housing will affect household and population trends within Weymouth. Between 1990 and 1998, Weymouth issued a total of 659 single-family housing permits and 91 multi-family housing permits. These figures were used to project the growth in households and population from 1990 to 1999. If all proposed multi-family units are put in, there will be a net increase of 531 units in the Town of Weymouth. This includes the 304 units approved for Avalon Ledges and 227 units proposed for Arbor Hill. An estimate of 22,144 households by 2004 is based on Weymouth continuing to permit on average 73 housing permits a year and 579 units of multi-family housing over the next five years. This means the number of households will increase by 0.5% annually (see Table I-18).

Part 3. Trends and Demands

However, if all of the current multi-family housing projects go forward, the average annual rate of household growth will double to 1.0%, slightly higher than the County average. *New housing development has an impact on municipal costs and revenues as well as future demographic trends.* But this may be positive or negative. For example, if the increase in multi-family housing units is for the young adult renter, this could lower the increase of school age children in Weymouth and the resulting tax benefits would be positive to the Town.

Figure 5. Potential Impact of Proposed Multi-family Development

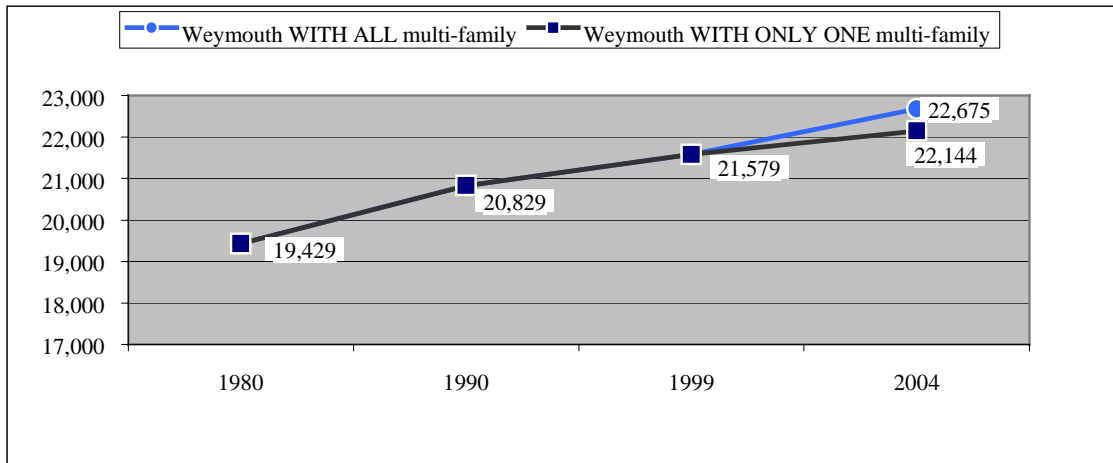


Table I-18. Potential Impact of Proposed Multi-family Development

	Aggregate Households				Average Annual Change		
	1980	1990	1999	2004	1980-1990	1990-1999	1999-2004
Weymouth WITH ONLY ONE multi-family proposal	19,429	20,829	21,579	22,144	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%
Weymouth WITH ALL multi-family proposals	19,429	20,829	21,579	22,675	0.7%	0.4%	1.0%

Source: AGS (1999) and Local Permit Data and projections

MAPC BUILDOUT ANALYSIS

The purpose of a buildout analysis is to determine the maximum level of development possible under current zoning regulations. Although not an actual trend line, it is an indication of the Town's potential given the forces at work in the other trends.

In November 1999, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) conducted a buildout analysis for Weymouth (see Map I-13 – MAPC Buildout Analysis). The buildout focused on vacant parcels zoned for residential and business development. The analysis did not consider:

- Underutilized parcels;
- The redevelopment process that occurs as properties continue to evolve;
- Chapter 40B, which allows more dense development in otherwise restricted areas if the housing has an affordable component; and,
- The expected dates of when complete buildout would occur. Rather, the report focused on amount of undevelopable land that could be developed using current zoning regulations.

Based on current economic and demographic trends, in 2004, the number of households is estimated to reach 22,709, and based on an average household size of 2.49, the population is estimated to reach 56,545. According to the MAPC Build-out Analysis if Weymouth issues housing permits at the present rate under current zoning requirements the Town will reach residential build-out in 20 to 30 years.

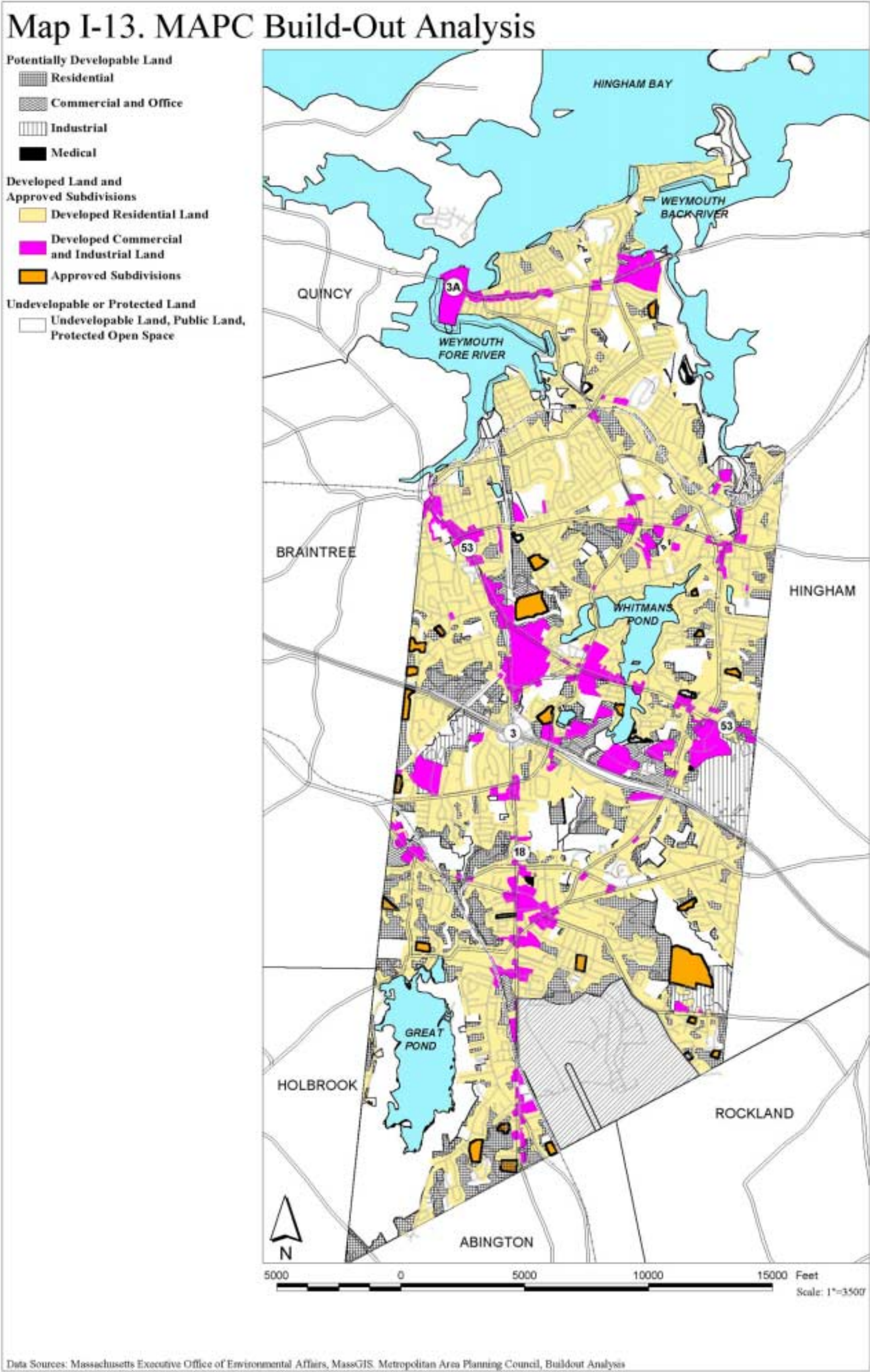
The MAPC report estimates that the final buildout for Weymouth is 1,535 additional residential lots and 2,293 additional dwelling units. However, because of the approval of the Avalon Ledges project of 304 units, the total number of additional units in the future build out is now approximately 2600.

In addition, the MAPC buildout study noted that the Naval Air Station was developable land but did not include the final building program, which includes:

- 1,400,000 sq.ft. research and development business space
- 2,100,00 sq.ft. retail commercial space
- 500-700 units of senior housing
- Recreational amenities

When this total is added to the MAPC buildout projections, the total development possible under the existing zoning is equivalent to:

- 6.5 – 7 million sq.ft. of commercial space
- 3100-3300 units of housing



Part 3. Trends and Demands

Although the number of new housing units is not significant – it adds about 13% to the current total number of units in Weymouth – the implications of commercial development are significant. Although the time frame for construction of this build out is relatively long, several considerations are to be made from this as an indicator.

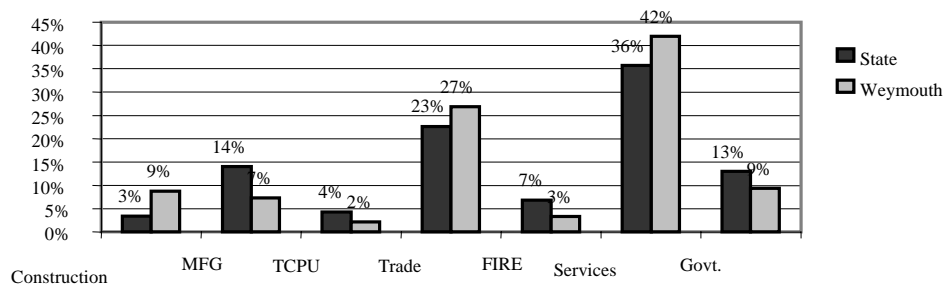
Weymouth could become an urban commercial expansion area, according to the build out analysis. This, in turn, could mean significant changes in the composition of existing businesses as well as new development. *The suggested focus for planning is to consider commercial development from both a quality of life and tax base vantage point, so that clear choices can be made about land use and development regulations.*

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Weymouth's economy is a subset of the greater Boston economy. As a primarily residential suburban community, Weymouth is a net labor exporter and the majority of residents commute to jobs in other cities and towns. While Weymouth is primarily a residential community, it accounts for 11 percent of the jobs within the South Shore area. Quincy, the largest employer in the South Shore region accounts for approximately 31% of the South Shore jobs, and Braintree accounts for approximately 20%. Together, these three communities account for almost two-thirds of all South Shore jobs.

As with many suburban, non-employment center communities, Weymouth is characterized by high concentrations of employment in the services and trade sectors. The service sector accounts for 42% of Weymouth's economy, compared to 36% for the State as illustrated in the next exhibit.

Figure 8. Weymouth vs. Massachusetts Employment By Sector, 1998



Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training, 1998
MFG- Manufacturing, TCPU- Transportation, communications and public utilities,
FIRE- finance, insurance and real estate.

The service sector is dominated by health service jobs such as the South Shore Hospital, the largest employer in Weymouth, which alone accounts for 20% of the jobs within the service sector. The remaining service jobs include business, personal, entertainment and recreation services. The trade sector is the second largest employer in Weymouth, and combined, services and trade account for 7 out of 10 jobs held in Weymouth. Construction also holds a larger percentage of total employment in

Part 3. Trends and Demands

Weymouth as compared to the State. The remain sectors, Manufacturing, TCPU, FIRE and Government all hold smaller percentages of total employment in Weymouth as compared to the State.

Weymouth is dominated by small businesses. With the exception of South Shore Hospital, with approximately 1,500 employees, and Weymouth government, with approximately 1,000 employees, and a few manufacturing businesses, most of the businesses in Weymouth are small employers. According to the Weymouth Economic Development Database, of the businesses completing the economic development database survey, 95% of the businesses employed less than 30 employees. **Only 12 businesses had more than 50 employees and just 4 businesses had more than 100 employees.**

Between 1990 and 1998, employment in Weymouth grew by 12%, an annual rate of growth of just over 1%. Growth was not even across all sectors. The service, construction and government sectors were the only sectors to experience positive growth. Weymouth actually lost jobs in all other sectors. The exhibit below compares growth in industry sectors in Weymouth to the neighboring areas of Braintree and Hingham and to the State of Massachusetts.

Table I-19. Comparison of Annual Job Growth

	Weymouth			Braintree			Hingham			Massachusetts (1,000's)		
	1990	1998	% Chg.	1990	1998	% Chg.	1990	1998	% Chg.	1990	1998	% Chg.
Total	14,653	16,345	1%	29,610	30,022	0.2%	9,730	11,045	2%	2,984.8	3,177.2	1%
Construction	883	1,429	7%	1,302	1,052	-2%	461	809	8%	101.1	107.9	1%
Manufacturing	1,249	1,189	-1%	2,573	2,209	-2%	1,410	923	-4%	521.3	448	-2%
TCPU	427	347	-2%	1,509	1,541	0.2%	204	125	-4%	129.9	136	1%
Trade	5,039	4,399	-1%	10,522	10,748	0.2%	4,030	4,582	2%	700.1	720.5	0.3%
FIRE	698	542	-2%	2,777	2,556	-1%	573	692	2%	213.3	216.8	0.2%
Services	4,873	6,745	4%	8,783	10,235	2%	2,096	2,714	3%	915.7	1,134.5	3%
Government	1,314	1,526	2%	2,110	1,654	-2%	882	1,088	3%	402.2	412.1	0.3%

Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training (ES-202 Series)

TCPU = Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities

FIRE = Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

Numbers to not add up due to rounding. Does not include agriculture or mining.

As illustrated in the above chart, **Weymouth's economy grew by 1% annually between 1990 and 1998, similar with overall growth trends in the State of Massachusetts.** Employment growth in Weymouth however, outpaced Braintree, the second largest employer in the South Shore region. The faster rate of growth is attributed to construction, which experienced an annual rate of growth in Weymouth of 7% compared to a negative rate of growth in Braintree of -2%. Compared with other communities and the State, employment expansions within Weymouth varied significantly among the various sectors. Consistent with national trends, Weymouth lost jobs in manufacturing

and added jobs in the service sector. Unlike most areas however, Weymouth lost jobs in trade and finance sector. These trends will likely change as Weymouth positions itself to attract more retail and office development through the developments of the Naval Air Station and new office developments.

NATIONAL TRENDS

The following discussion is on the national trends that will probably affect conditions in Weymouth. Reflective of national patterns, the New England region, the State of Massachusetts and the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) have exhibited similar robust economic expansion over the last seven years. For many analysts, the key question regarding the national economy concerns predictions for the end of the current expansion. Economists forecasted

first 1997, then 1998 and then 1999 as the end of the current expansion. Whenever it occurs, and however strongly it hits, the question is how it will impact on Weymouth's future plans for managing land use and development and providing services for its citizens.

For Your Information: National Indicators
According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the U.S. economic expansion that began in March 1991 is now the longest peacetime expansion in American history. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP), one basic measure of economic activity, has grown by at least 2.3% a year since 1993 and exhibited a growth rate of 3.9% in 1998. The rate of unemployment has consistently decreased since 1993, total employment has continued to expand; and the inflation rate, on average, has been low during the last seven years.

Analysts at the Federal Reserve now believe that the nation's economic slowdown will begin by the end of this year, prompted by a hike in interest rates (by the Federal reserve) and a correction in the stock market (by stockholders). In addition, continued wage increases are expected to contribute to inflation, raising it from 2.0% nationally, to about 2.5%. In the New England region, analysts forecast that the area's expected continued labor shortage will constrain economic expansion. *However, while many analysts and economists are predicting a slowing economy, they do not expect the economy to slip into a recession. This suggests that current development issues will continue to be important for the Town even after the economic expansion slows or stops.*

The national economy gained nearly 15.5 million jobs from 1990 to 1998, an increase of 1.94 million jobs or 1.75% per year, and always exceeding 1% annually since 1992. **These job growth trends are expected to continue for the next five years.** Regional trends reflect the national pattern and are expected to continue to reflect national changes for the next five years.

A. National Employment Trends

Employment in this region reflects the national trends. However, employment expansion in the Boston metropolitan area (MSA) is expected to exceed the regional and national arenas over the next five years. Growth rates in Massachusetts and the MSA have exceeded 1.0% since 1995 and analysts at the Federal Reserve project them to remain above 1.0% for the next five years. *The Boston MSA is expected to out-perform the other*

Part 3. Trends and Demands

areas reviewed over the next five years. **Growth rates for the Boston MSA are expected to range from 1.0% to 2.0% in each of the next five years.**

Trends in unemployment rates provide another indication of the economy's strength. Conventional economic theory characterizes an unemployment rate of approximately 4.0% as full employment. But, **unemployment rates in New England, Massachusetts and the Boston metropolitan area have been less than 4% since 1998, and rates in the MSA have been less than 4% since 1996.** The national rate has remained less than 5% since 1997, although analysts at NEEP predict that the national rate of unemployment will increase to 5.2% by 2002. Rates in the New England region are expected to remain below 5% for the next five years.

National Rates of Unemployment

The economy exhibits a strong profile in terms of employment expansion and the relatively low rate of unemployment. Recent and predicted trends in the Gross Domestic Product are also strong. A variety of other indicators such as trends in new business incorporation, trends in aggregate dollars spend on construction, housing and building permits all provide further confirmation of the economic strength of the nation, the New England region, Massachusetts and the Boston metropolitan area.

National Employment Outlook

While aggregate employment increased during the decade, employment expansion varied significantly among the various sectors of the economy. **The four largest sectors** of the economy in 1998 were **Services** (37.5 million jobs), **Trade** (29.3 million jobs), **Government** (19.8 million jobs), and **Manufacturing** (18.7 million jobs).

Sector Trends in the National Economy

The services sector has become the dominant sector at the regional and State level. The services sector outperformed all other sectors in terms of average annual growth during each of the five year periods at each level reviewed. The services sector comprises a relatively larger percentage of total jobs here than in the United States. In contrast, the manufacturing sector, which is expected to exhibit negative growth from 1998 through 2003, constitutes a smaller percentage of total employment in Massachusetts relative to the balance of the region and the entire United States.

The Massachusetts economy appears well positioned to continue its recent patterns of employment expansion. The services, transportation and finance sectors are proportionally larger in the State than New England and the United States. Analysts for the New England Economic Project expect these sectors to contain the largest annual growth rates for the next five years.

B. Expectations for the National and Regional Economy

According to the analysts at the Federal Reserve, all districts in the country continue to exhibit overall strength. Retail sales increased over the last 12 months; home sales and construction remain high across the country, with housing prices significantly higher in the New England region than the balance of the country. Wages rates are also increasing. In the New England region, modest capital expenditures are expected in the next several years.

The New England economy continues to generate jobs and income growth without accelerating inflation. Recent employment growth slowed in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, but accelerated in Connecticut and Maine. Regional employment growth will slow to an annual average rate of 1.2% over the forecast period ending in 2003. Even though manufacturing employment will weaken, the labor market should remain tight, with unemployment rates below the nation's, and growth in wages per worker advancing at a slightly higher pace than nationally.

Economists for the Federal Reserve conclude that New England's economy is at risk partly as a result of the longevity of the current expansion. **None-the-less, expectations for the next five years primarily range from forecasts for a continuing robust economy to predictions for a positive, but reduced level of expansion.**

SUMMARY OF WEYMOUTH'S TRENDS

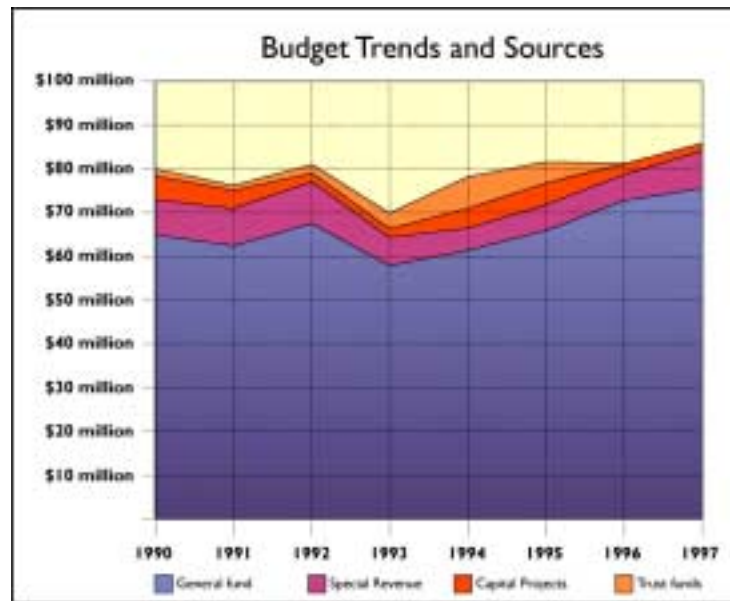
This section briefly reviews the issues raised earlier in this report in an effort to convey the impact these issues may have on Weymouth's citizens – both in terms of how they see their Town today, and what expectations they hold for Weymouth's future.

A. Fiscal Health

Over the last decade, the Town has maintained itself and restored fiscal health with a well-planned and stabilized municipal budget plan. Dips in the Town budget during the early 1990's recession have been restored, and funding sources have moved back to the more traditional sources, relying on General funds and eliminating or reducing sources such as the Trust funds.

Part 3. Trends and Demands

Figure 4. Budget Trends



The current Tax Increment Finance plan approved for the Sithe Energy project (the re-use of the former Boston Edison property) will also add a considerable funding stream that the Town can take advantage of in several important ways. The key aspect of this financial situation is that it allows consideration for public, capital investments to support the Town's broader goals.

As a predominantly suburban community, the Town is confronted with growth in demand for municipal services that could exceed the total revenues very quickly without a proper balance of economic development. There is however, one other aspect of Weymouth's residential growth that is providing revenues without an undue burden on local services.

As previously noted, the largest change in new units has been in condominium and apartment units. Because the demographics suggest that the majority of these units will be single people, without children, an important municipal cost; i.e., schools is not added to the demands from these new residents. As a cumulative impact with the additional commercial development occurring at Harborlight and Weymouth Woods, the Town's fiscal outlook appears strong.

One significant change has been in the Town's recent investment in public facilities. The Town's debt service has doubled from \$2.5 million to about \$5 million in the last fiscal year, FY2000. The programmed funds have been applied to a number of construction projects for Town buildings and infrastructure such as the new fire substations, pump stations, and utility and building improvements

Part 3. Trends and Demands

Table I-16. Weymouth Municipal Expenditures

Excerpts from Statement of Revenues and Expenditures										
		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
General Government			\$ 1,935,138	\$ 2,526,362	\$ 2,113,946	\$ 2,183,811	\$ 2,488,150	\$ 3,739,460	\$ 3,031,741	\$ 3,163,273
Human Services	\$ 958,851	\$ 932,299	\$ 1,009,635	\$ 959,590	\$ 1,124,123	\$ 1,211,999	\$ 799,237	\$ 1,073,703	\$ 866,493	
Culture/Recreation	\$ 1,389,903	\$ 835,356	\$ 835,041	\$ 827,195	\$ 853,536	\$ 1,002,568	\$ 451,467	\$ 1,477,090	\$ 1,648,442	
Debt Service	\$ 2,229,717	\$ 2,947,089	\$ 3,000,985	\$ 3,368,857	\$ 1,970,152	\$ 1,497,466	\$ 1,819,322	\$ 1,803,108	\$ 2,500,102	
Public Works	\$ 5,866,395	\$ 7,567,396	\$ 4,767,902	\$ 5,151,025	\$ 4,605,620	\$ 4,633,285	\$ 5,321,717	\$ 5,706,211	\$ 5,519,795	
Public Safety	\$ 9,524,593	\$ 8,992,536	\$ 9,133,415	\$ 8,938,180	\$ 9,888,626	\$ 9,951,254	\$ 10,644,312	\$ 11,576,728	\$ 12,030,533	
Education	\$ 29,113,373	\$ 26,896,148	\$ 27,363,359	\$ 28,004,658	\$ 29,155,987	\$ 31,674,449	\$ 33,701,054	\$ 35,288,286	\$ 36,726,685	
Combined Statement										
General fund		\$ 66,089,286	\$ 63,245,550	\$ 67,078,995	\$ 58,143,218	\$ 60,839,945	\$ 65,794,183	\$ 72,342,877	\$ 76,630,961	
Special Revenue		\$ 7,386,734	\$ 7,760,075	\$ 9,486,639	\$ 5,170,893	\$ 5,433,813	\$ 6,067,050	\$ 6,144,086	\$ 7,665,663	
Capital Projects		\$ 4,415,059	\$ 3,722,051	\$ 2,794,675	\$ 1,243,554	\$ 4,771,876	\$ 4,954,197	\$ 2,292,614	\$ 1,897,653	
Trust funds		\$ 2,104,623	\$ 1,720,500	\$ 1,868,647	\$ 5,830,477	\$ 6,829,229	\$ 5,170,249	\$ 49,983	\$ 55,227	
Total	\$ 65,683,376	\$ 79,995,702	\$ 76,448,176	\$ 81,228,956	\$ 70,388,142	\$ 77,874,863	\$ 81,985,679	\$ 80,829,560	\$ 84,837,756	
Difference from Revenue		\$ (1,325,192)	\$ (1,411,636)	\$ 950,910	\$ 1,385,826	\$ 1,704,739	\$ 1,107,585	\$ 2,571,573	\$ 2,519,651	

Notes: 1990 audit not available

Combined Statement lists sources for funds spent

Difference from Revenue = Revenues minus Expenditures (from Statement of Revenues and Expenditures)

B. Demographic Trends

Analysts expect the New England region, the State and the MSA to exhibit relatively low population increases with relatively high increase in income. These in turn will continue to contribute to the higher housing costs evident in the local, State, and regional community. Economic and demographic indicators suggest an increasing market for new development. The market potential will be constrained, to a degree, by limited population growth, but this limiting factor will be off-set, in many areas, by the expected increases in household income.

In addition, Weymouth is aging just as the rest of the country. *The Town must now consider the programs and policies that will support the increasing number of elderly.* At the same time, the Town is attracting but not necessarily keeping, a younger homeowner, because of the housing market and product available. *The Town must consider the needs of that age group in the housing types it creates.*

C. Regional vs. Local Issues

Boston will continue to have a very large influence on the Town's residents and economic development potential. Boston currently has 1.5 jobs available for every worker inside the city. This is one of the highest ratios for any metropolitan area in the country.

However, the greatest increase in commuting activity may be from one suburb to another. As the population mass builds within the suburbs, and Towns build on their commercial properties, the options for attracting a trained work force allow the creation of significant businesses outside the urban centers – one reason the development of offices along Routes 128 and 495 has been successful in one aspect.

As an indicator of this trend, it is useful to compare population growth against job growth. In one year, Norfolk County saw an estimated 4,127 people in total population growth. However economic growth saw over 9,000 new jobs at some 270 businesses (source: US Census from 1996 to 1997). The local result is that Braintree and Quincy share over half of the South Shore region jobs. *The Town can take advantage of larger economic and demographic changes affecting its region.*

*Indicators of change: Demographic/Economic
1996-1997 Comparison*

<i>County</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Pop growth</i>	<i>New jobs</i>
Norfolk	639,705	4,127	9,131
Essex	692,064	8,341	6,486
Plymouth	461,569	7,418	6,262

To do this however requires a concentrated effort to reach a goal to expand the economic base. Private developers are needed to obtain this goal; the Town's responsibilities are to support the change in a manner that protects the Town's interests.

Part 3. Trends and Demands

D. New Home Purchases

As discussed before, Weymouth was booming and well developed in the 40's and 50's leaving behind a significant base of smaller style houses that were popular at that time. However, as incomes have grown and production has moderated costs and prices, **a new and larger housing product is being requested by modern homebuyers.**

There are a few key factors related to Weymouth's housing stock that also characterize the population inhabiting them and the potential for change. First is the age of the housing stock, which means a high percentage of smaller-sized, outdated homes, based on the product of the 1940's.

Locally, median income levels have increased by over 50 percent over the last decade, which translates into an increased level of relative affordability in the Town. It also translates into the ability of Weymouth to attract a more expensive housing product.

Housing: Indicators of Change

- Within the last five years the number of new building permits has slowed but alterations have increased almost 20% to over 500 per year.
- Although new construction has decreased for most housing types, the value of demolition, renovation and alteration permits has increased the total value of investment within the town's residential areas.
- National Association of Home Builders says that in 1998 the average size home was 2,190 sq.ft. – one-third larger than the average in 1975.
- NAHB says multi-family units have increased 10-20% in size over the last ten

Capped off with a low vacancy rate for single-family homes, the Town appears in a position for reinvestment in its neighborhoods where new families are moving into existing housing and making improvements to increase the value of their investment. *Weymouth is attractive for redevelopment and infill construction that creates larger homes within established, smaller-home neighborhoods.*

This pressure may be indicated by the regional demand for new housing that continues to place the Boston area within the most active markets in the country. The new homeowners may be in the younger age brackets of well-paid professionals. New homes mean new people, but their particular demographics will result in specific needs for both the housing types they ask for and services that they require.

E. Affordable Housing

The price issue also directs attention to the question of affordability. Boston is one of the most expensive markets in the country. Prices just within the last two years have risen much faster than increases in wages. This impacts the ability of Weymouth to keep the service employees necessary to run local businesses. **There is a waiting list at the Town Housing Authority of 400 for housing vouchers.** In addition, the cost increases are now impacting almost all median income levels. However, since 1995, government subsidized housing production has stopped. *Inclusionary requirements for lower-than-market-rate housing units are needed in the Town development regulations to address this local and regional issue.*

F. Commuting and Transportation

The most prevalent form of transit use nationally is travel by bus. However, the mode share for buses is three times as great in a city as it is outside, meaning travelers typically use the bus when inside the city, but not to enter it. *If bus service is developed within Weymouth for the purpose of local economic development, it should focus on local stops and access.*

However, note that the number of bus riders decreased in the 1980's and as a mode of transport buses only account for, at most, 15 percent of commutes. The greatest transit increase is in light rail. This is indicative of a socio-economic gap. The more wealthy use rail for work commutes, the less wealthy use bus transit. This is perhaps in large part due to the fact that rail transit serves higher income suburban locations while bus transportation is more adaptable to urban locations which tend to have lower average incomes. The MBTA's Greenbush rail line service proposal is generally well-suited to Weymouth's suburban location.

Current statistics show commutes are getting longer as the population increases. But, **the highest percentage of commutes (58%), are from one suburban area to another.** The proportion of intra-suburb commutes is rising, with potential implications for Weymouth. As commutes get longer and more commuters move to suburban areas, *Weymouth has a realistic opportunity to capture some of the commuters from other suburbs for the local economy— if the jobs are made available.*

G. Land Use and Economic Development

While the ability to provide expanded job opportunities and new tax base may be desirable, it is important to consider the realistic potential and desirability for Weymouth to expand its commercial uses within the regional context. In terms of political geography, Weymouth is absorbed and dominated by the Boston Metropolitan Area. Boston acts as the Central City, with adjacent communities including nearby Braintree and Quincy acting as the Urbanizing Ring, and Weymouth still positioned as a Metro Area Suburb. 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.*

One indication of the potential for change is in the amount of development that could result from a full build-out under present zoning. From the analysis prepared by the MAPC, there is a potential for substantial change in commercial land use that could significantly impact the Town. The study found 7.6 million square feet of commercial space possible within the Town's business zoning and the Naval Air Station reuse project. *Weymouth must consider its zoning as a road map for potential change and modify it according to the direction it wants to head.*

Regarding industrial uses, the rental market is experiencing vacancy rates of less than 5 percent, suggesting that the market can accommodate additional space in the near future. However, new industrial space is under construction and the research space proposed

Part 3. Trends and Demands

with in the Naval Air Station will provide significant new space appropriate for the cleaner types of industrial and start-up uses.

Future development of industrial space will continue as existing firms expand and also because the industrial zoned land in Weymouth is conducive to warehousing and industrial uses. Future office development and other types of uses that can command higher rental rates, however, will put pressure on future industrial development. Also, the general declines in the manufacturing industry will likely limit future industrial development. *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 community centers have continued to support the smaller local markets. But future retail development in Weymouth, such as the development of a Wal-Mart and retail development at the Naval Air Station will be added pressure on the local centers. The local neighborhood centers will be subject to change created by broader economic trends. *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.*

While household growth in Weymouth is modest, the high concentration of employment at the hospital and the concentration of retailers in the Route 18-Route 53 Winter Street retail triangle make Weymouth an attractive location for retailers. This can be seen by the interest shown from Wal-Mart and the low vacancy rates in the area. National retail trends point to increased demand for box retail stores and super stores. *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 centers.*

Weymouth has the potential for almost 7 million square feet of commercial space outside the Naval Air Station. 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 because of 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 both achieve desirable expansion in commercial uses. The position of the Town must be favorable relative to competition from other markets, it must take steps to maintain the quality of life, and take best advantage of the development potential within the zoning framework. The implications of success must also be considered, as new development will result in increased traffic and congestion, further suggesting that the Town should be attentive to the scale, type, and location of new 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, and undertaking a combined with a program of infrastructure improvements.*

Part 3. Trends and Demands

Future development of industrial space will continue as existing firms expand and because a significant amount of the industrial zoned land in Weymouth is more conducive to warehouse and industrial type products. Future office development, and other types of uses that can command higher rental rates, however, will put pressure on future industrial development. *The general declines in the manufacturing industry will likely limit future industrial development. The Town should be prepared for the job and income shifts affecting certain sectors of its residents.* New training or acceptance of different jobs, some with lower wage structures, may be the resultant need from this change.



CDBG Poster Contest Submittal: The successful community.