

# BELLINGHAM MASTER PLAN 2010



Adopted by the Bellingham Planning Board March 25, 2010



## **Bellingham Planning Board**

Patricia M. Buckley  
Glenn C. Wojcik  
Brian J. Sutherland  
Stephen W. Bartha  
David H. Brown  
John D. Sexton (Associate)

## **Planning Board Staff**

Amy Sault  
Janet Villandry  
Stacey Wetstein

## **Master Plan Task Force**

Louise Arnold	Peter Harty
David Brown	Roland Laprade
Linda Cartier	Roland Lavallee
Mary Chaves	Peter Morelli
Dawn Davies	Jeffrey Scornavacca
Cheryl Gray	Neal Standley
Ed Guzowski	William Roberts

## **Advisory Members**

Donald DiMartino  
Denis Fraine  
Stuart LeClaire

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Changes .....	1
The Town We Want.....	2
Land Use and Growth .....	3
Background.....	3
Achievements .....	4
Goals and Objectives.....	4
Implementing Actions: Land Use .....	5
Technical Notes .....	5
Town Centers.....	6
Background.....	6
Goals and Objectives.....	7
Implementing Actions: Town Center.....	8
Residential Strategy.....	9
Background.....	9
Achievements .....	10
Goals and Objectives.....	10
Implementing Actions: Residential.....	11
Referenced Materials.....	11
Economic Strategy.....	12
Background.....	12
Achievements .....	13
Goals and Objectives.....	13
Implementing Actions: Economic.....	14
Community Facilities .....	16
Background.....	16
Achievements .....	19
Goals and Objectives.....	19
Implementing Actions: Community Facilities.....	19
Circulation .....	21
Background.....	21
Achievements .....	23
Goals and Objectives.....	23
Implementing Actions: Circulation.....	23
Referenced Materials.....	24
Utilities .....	25
Background.....	25
Achievements .....	26
Goals and Objectives.....	26
Implementing Actions: Utilities .....	27
Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation.....	29
Background.....	29
Achievements .....	30
Goals and Objectives.....	30
Implementing Actions: Circulation.....	30
Referenced Materials.....	31
Cultural Resources.....	32
Background.....	32

Achievements .....	33
Goals and Objectives.....	33
Implementing Actions: Cultural Resources.....	33
Implementation .....	35

**TABLES**

Table 1. Conservative Build-out Analysis .....	3
Table 2. Partial Constraints .....	4
Table 3. Actual vs. Zoned Land Uses .....	5
Table 4. Capitol DPW Projects .....	28
Table 5. Comprehensive Master Plan Implementation.....	36

**MAP APPENDICES**

- Map 1. 1998 Projected Land Use vs. 2009 Actual Land Use
- Map 2. Partial Constraints
- Map 3. Absolute Constraints
- Map 4. Simplified Buildout Analysis
- Map 5. Affordable Housing and Accessory Apartments
- Map 6. Total Population
- Map 7. Zoning
- Map 8. Open Space and Recreation

**SEPARATE ATTACHMENTS**

(These are available at the Town Clerk’s Office, Planning Board Office and Library)

- Residential Survey Report
- Business Phone Report
- Focus Group Report
- Housing Production Plan
- Route 126 Corridor Transportation Improvement Study Power Point Presentation

## INTRODUCTION

According to Bellingham's Home Rule Charter, adopted on May 26, 2004, the Planning Board "shall provide for the review of the comprehensive master plan every ten years, setting forth in graphic and textual form policies governing the future growth and development of the town's economic, developmental and human service needs." Therefore in 2008, the Planning Board initiated the process of reviewing the Master Plan approved of in 1998.

With a model already in place, the Board formed a Master Plan Task Force consisting of representatives from most other Boards and departments: Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, School Committee, Housing Authority, Historical Commission, Finance Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, Disabilities Commission, and Parks Commission. The Task Force also included Citizen's at Large and the Town Administrator, Department of Public Works Director, Zoning Enforcement Agent and Town Planner as Advisory Members.

The Task Force was given the responsibility of reviewing and updating the 1998 Master Plan on behalf of the Planning Board. The Task Force organized into subcommittees based on the major chapter topics of the 1998 plan:

- Land Use and Growth / Economic Strategies;
- Residential;
- Circulation / Utilities;
- Natural and Cultural Resources;
- Community Facilities.

In order to gain input about the future of Bellingham from the local community, a residential survey was sent to every household with the 2009 census. Four small focus groups sessions convened to gain further insight from specific interest groups within the general population. These focus groups consisted of seniors, parents and representatives of school aged children, youth sports participants and members of the Bellingham business community. A random phone survey was conducted of small and medium businesses.

Other planning efforts also occurred concurrently with the review and update of the Master Plan. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) worked with the Town to prepare a Housing Production Plan. The intent of the Housing Production Plan is to provide the Town with a framework for future affordable housing development. Pieces of the Housing Production Plan are incorporated into the Master Plan. The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization conducted a Route 126 Corridor survey that included four study areas in Bellingham. The results are discussed in the Circulation chapter.

## CHANGES

Much has changed in Bellingham since 1998. Many new developments that either were only in the planning stages or not even conceived are now a reality. On the municipal side, the Town Common, new Municipal Center and renovated old Town Hall are the centerpieces of the Town Center. On the development side, several large industrial and retail complexes, two large single family subdivisions and a large 40B apartment complex were constructed.

Traffic continues to be a major issue. Due to the large retail complexes in the northern part of Bellingham at the Route 495 interchange, Bellingham has become a destination for people in the surrounding towns and nearby Rhode Island. The rapid growth along the Route 495 corridor and the Metro West suburb area of Boston has resulted in Bellingham becoming a transportation route for people commuting to work in communities north and east of Bellingham, such as Framingham. Peak traffic hours in North Bellingham are no longer just the morning and evening commuting hours, but also weekend mid-day shopping hours.

Positive infrastructure improvements have taken place. Intersection work at the Blackstone / South Main and Mechanic Streets were completed. Interim traffic improvements were completed at the intersection of South Main and Mechanic Streets. The Pulaski Boulevard reconstruction project that had been waiting in the TIP (Transportation Improvement Projects) line for over ten years will begin construction in 2010.

Through several large cluster housing projects and

separate municipal purchases, the Town now owns more open space parcels, the largest between Mendon and North Streets near the Mendon town line. The Town has resurrected the Bikeways Committee that is focusing on opening up the SNETT rail trail.

## **THE TOWN WE WANT**

The qualities that the citizens of Bellingham most want have not changed in ten years. The priorities continue to be:

- A “community that nurtures family life” through secure neighborhoods, good schools and public services and a safe and healthy environment ;
- Reasonable costs attached to creating that kind of community; and
- A community they can take pride in, whether they are residents or business owners.

Many of these qualities have been achieved in the past ten years, although many can continue to be improved upon. Challenges to bringing about any goals of the Master Plan still include the high cost of implementation, especially for infrastructure improvements and changes in social conditions. However, the past ten years has shown that many of these changes can be accomplished through creative funding with limited tax increases.

With the exception of traffic issues, most residents and business owners are extremely satisfied with Bellingham as a place to live and work. Many of the changes that have taken place in the past ten years are as a result of the 1998 Master Plan. This Master Plan hopes to continue to build upon that and grow to meet the future needs of the Town.

Conservative Future Estimation of the Number of Buildable Units for each Zoning District										
Zoning District	Total Acres	Buildable Acres	# of Single Family Homes	# of Multi-Family Homes	# of Retail Business Units	# of Office Units	# of Manufacturing Units	Wholesale and Industrial Units	Warehouse Units	
Agricultural	4158.61	1240.19	568	294	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
Business 1	426.02	69.92	62	33	24	31	-----	34	-----	
Business 2	292.88	34.61	31	16	16	21	-----	17	-----	
Industrial	2140.74	588.29	-----	-----	182	234	138	190	55	
Multi-Family	37.27	16.24	14	8	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
Residential	2069.09	274.56	243	128	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
Suburban	2680.63	624.34	554	291	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
Water	277.14	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
Wetlands	7.78	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
<b>Total</b>	<b>12090.16</b>	<b>2848.16</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>55</b>	

## LAND USE AND GROWTH

### BACKGROUND

Although Bellingham has grown both fiscally and residentially in the past ten years, land use patterns did not change to meet that growth. In 1998 five opportunity areas were identified in 1998 Master Plan, of which only one was not industrially zoned. Two industrial parcels at either end of Route 495—one west of Route 495 near Milford and one east of the highway near Franklin; an industrial parcel on Depot Street near Box Pond; an industrial parcel on the north side of Route 140 near Franklin; and a Business 1 zoned parcel in South Bellingham between South Main Street and Center Street.

The areas were designated as opportunities although no specific use was identified for the parcels. The 1998 Plan only states that these areas are open and may need zoning changes for future initiatives. In the following ten years, four of the five parcels were developed with no alterations to zoning. The parcels were developed, but perhaps not maximized to their potential. The industrial parcel east of Route 495 near Franklin was developed with a power plant. The parcel on Depot Street now has two large warehouses with one more possible. The Route 140 parcel also contains a large warehouse and the

on South Main Street was split between a cluster subdivision and a large strip mall. The only parcel to remain undeveloped is the parcel on the west side of Route 495. Development is limited because Milford will not allow industrial access through their town. The Residential chapter has identified this parcel as an opportunity to rezone to allow residential uses on this piece of land.

The 1998 Future Land Use map also indicated that Route 140 (Mechanic Street) was the main primary business route going toward the center of the Town. However, with the exception of some parcels near the Franklin Town line, most of this business development potential has not been utilized. Pulaski Boulevard, another business strip, has been similarly underdeveloped. A new supermarket near the Woonsocket line and Walgreens pharmacy at Crooks Corner anchor the ends, while not much new development has happened in between. Both of these business zoned areas are severely hampered by an indiscriminately placed zone line which often bisects parcels instead of around parcels. Split parcels have limited development potential.

An analysis of the current land use versus the actual zoning indicates that there is considerable overlap between allowed use and what is actually occurring. For instance, since residential uses are allowed in the

agricultural zone and the agricultural zone has the largest percentage of buildable acres, much of the newest residential development has occurred in the agricultural zone. About 1145 acres of the 4158 acres zoned agricultural have a residential use, with another 1240 acres open for development. A conservative future estimate of potential growth indicates that with current two-acre zoning in the agricultural zone, another 568 single family homes could be built. About 797 single family housing units could be built in the residential and suburban zones. Between the agricultural, residential and suburban zones there could be as much as 1472 single family units.

The crossover between other uses is similarly blurred. There are 50 acres of actual business uses in the industrial zone and 111 acres of industrial uses in the business zones. There is another 111 acres of business uses in residential zones. Projections for future development indicate that based on the current zoning, another 182 units of retail could be developed in the industrial zone, but only 40 units of retail could be developed in the more appropriate business zones.

Out of Bellingham’s approximately 12,000 acres, about 2,848 acres or 23.56% is open for development. The majority of this is in the agricultural (1240 acres) and industrial zones (588 acres). Selective zoning changes will need to be made to maximize development potential in all zones while still trying to maintain other quality of life issues such as wetlands and open space.

<b>Partial Constraints to Buildable Land</b>			
<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>Buildable Acres</b>	<b>% of Buildable Area</b>
<b>Agricultural</b>	4158.61	1240.19	29.82%
<b>Business 1</b>	426.02	69.92	16.41%
<b>Business 2</b>	292.88	34.61	11.82%
<b>Industrial</b>	2140.74	588.29	27.48%
<b>Multi-Family</b>	37.27	16.24	43.57%
<b>Residential</b>	2069.09	274.56	13.27%
<b>Suburban</b>	2680.63	624.34	23.29%
<b>Water</b>	277.14	-----	-----
<b>Wetlands</b>	7.78	-----	-----
<b>Total Area</b>	12000.16	2848.16	23.56%

## ACHEIVEMENTS FROM 1998 PLAN

- The regulatory decision criteria for Development Plan reviews have been strengthened so that both cultural and natural resource protection are explicit considerations in zoning and subdivision control.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Land use is the pivotal part of any plan and there is very little that is not touched upon in other chapters, especially Economic Strategies, Residential Strategies and Town Centers. The goals and objectives for land use today are the same as they were ten years ago.

### A. MANAGEABLE GROWTH

Bellingham has grown quickly and sometimes with negative consequences (traffic in particular). Growth continues to be a major presence with projects that are not yet constructed or waiting to be permitted. Focus should continue to be on managing that growth appropriately.

### B. BALANCED LAND USE

It is important to achieve a balance between residential, commercial and industrial development and open space and recreational land uses. The goal is to have enough suitable development to support the town and help maintain the character and vitality of the community.

### C. RESPECT FOR RESOURCES

Land use needs to be managed to avoid unnecessary damage to the Town's natural or cultural resources.

### D. INFRASTRUCTURE COMPATIBILITY

Reevaluate more suitable business districts with the infrastructure to support them, such as Pulaski Boulevard to the Franklin line and Hartford Ave.

### E. DIVERSITY OF ENVIRONMENTS

Bellingham is enriched by the wide range of living environments which it provides: village, suburban, almost rural. The homogenizing pressures of contemporary development should not be allowed to diminish that.

**F. STRONG TOWN CHARACTER**

Bellingham’s north / south orientation divides the Town into three distinct areas. Each area should have a design focus that creates a cohesive sense of place and Town character without isolating one area from the other.

**G. SMART GROWTH**

“Smart Growth” is an initiative at both the State and Federal levels that promotes sustainable land uses in a community. Communities that embrace Smart Growth tools are more competitive for funding and grants.

**IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

- Broaden zoning choices for development through such steps as creation of Village or mixed-use districts and more flexible zoning options, including, but not limited to Planned Unit Developments, overlay zoning districts, Traditional Neighborhood Developments and Form-based zoning.
- Revise the Zoning Map to reflect the strategies outlined in other sections of this Plan.

- Carry out the Town Centers strategies creating a focused initiative to change both facilities and land use that reflects current values and trends.
- Planning Board should work with the Town Counsel to review Zoning Bylaws to ensure the intention of the bylaw is clearly stated.
- Form mechanism to explore additional modes of improvement of the business district such as a BID or zoning overlay for Pulaski Boulevard.
- Restrict residential development in commercial zones. Investigate the elimination of suburban zoning and have one residential zone, or make suburban substantially different from residential zone.
- Zone Farm Street Business instead of Industrial to allow more viable option based on current infrastructure as well as a variety of commercial uses.

**TECHNICAL NOTES**

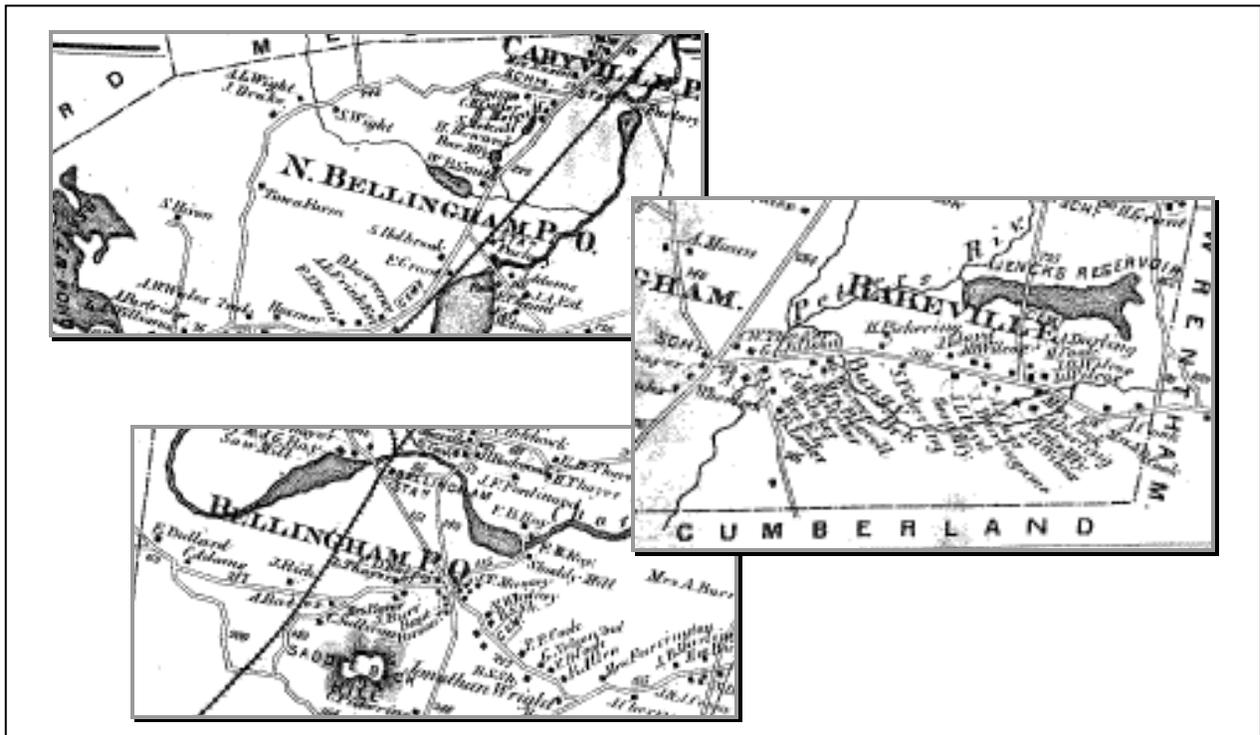
Partial Constraints chart developed by MainStreetGIS. Based on Simplified Buildout Map.

Tables prepared by Main Street GIS.

**MAP APPENDICES:** Map 1: 1998 vs. 2009 Land Use Map 2: Partial Constraints; Map 3: Absolute Constraints; Map 4: Simplified Buildout.

Chart from Actual vs. Zoned Land Use Map

Land Use Classification	Existing Land Use (acres)						
	Zoning Classification						
	Agricultural	Business (1 & 2)	Industrial	Multi - Family	Residential 1	Water & Wetlands	Total
Agricultural	263.83	16.99	79.55	-----	9.75	-----	370.12
Residential	1145.57	111.13	22.54	20.19	1745.87	-----	3045.3
Business	7.4	233.2	111.36	-----	16.69	-----	368.65
Industrial	123.08	50.1	330.46	-----	75.87	-----	579.51
Tax Exempt <sup>2</sup>	764.3	34.92	415.67	-----	318.37	5	1538.26
Undeveloped <sup>3</sup>	1928.07	211.85	843.49	17.1	1546.38	-----	4546.89
Water & Wetlands	517.47	60.75	336.93	-----	445.68	279.13	1639.96
<b>Total (acres)</b>	<b>4749.72</b>	<b>718.94</b>	<b>2140</b>	<b>37.29</b>	<b>4158.61</b>	<b>284.13</b>	<b>12088.7</b>



## TOWN CENTERS

### BACKGROUND

Bellingham has an interesting geography in that it is longer than it is wide. Instead of one centrally located “town center”, Bellingham has three unique “centers”: North Bellingham, the Town Center and South Bellingham. Historically, where one lived in Bellingham often dictated how one viewed the future development of Bellingham. Each “center” has developed differently over time and has different needs and capacity for growth.

North Bellingham has both population and commercial density. Several large housing subdivisions, including two of the oldest in the town - Wethersfield and Pilgrim Village, are located in North Bellingham. In addition, the largest retail growth in the Town in the past decade has been in North Bellingham along Hartford Avenue and the Route 495 corridor. While shopping conveniences have increased for residents of this area, so have the traffic hassles. Peak traffic now includes the weekends, which locals studiously avoid, especially during the holiday shopping season. North Bellingham has the majority of industrially zoned

land that follows Route 495 and the train tracks along Depot Street.

What most residents consider the “Town Center”, located centrally at the intersection of South Main Street, North Main Street and Route 140 (Mechanic Street), was the only area addressed separately in the 1998 Master Plan. In 1998, the Town Center was a rather large area, extending along North and South Main Streets (Route 126) from the Charles River bridge on the north to Blackstone Street on the south and along Mendon and Mechanic Streets (Route 140) from Rose Avenue on the west to Blackstone Street on the east.

Within this district are the majority of municipal buildings and facilities. The old Town Hall, new Municipal Center, Police Station and Police Administration are located along the eastern side of the intersection of North Main, South Main and Mechanic Streets. The Town Common, bounded by North Main and Mechanic Streets, anchors the western portion of the Town Center. The Library, Senior Center, DPW, Fire Station, High School and Middle School follow the southern boundary along Blackstone Street.

Both residential and commercial uses exist in the Town Center. The residential is less dense than in

other parts of the town. The commercial uses follow the Mechanic Street (Route 140) path from Mendon to Franklin. There is some industrially zoned land along William Way near Mendon and along North and South Maple Streets near the Franklin line.

There is no official start to what is considered South Bellingham, but can be thought of to start anywhere from Silver Lake and Center Street south toward Woonsocket to the start of Pulaski Boulevard. Regardless of where South Bellingham begins, it is primarily residential with mostly agricultural, suburban and residential zoning. The majority of the commercial zone is located along Pulaski Boulevard from Crooks Corner to Woonsocket with smaller pockets of business zones along South Main Street and at the intersection of Lake Street and Pulaski Boulevard. There is no industrially zoned land in South Bellingham.

While none of these areas operates as a traditional New England downtown with mixed residential and business uses in a pedestrian friendly environment located around a town common, the goal of the 1998 plan was to create that type of environment in the Town Center area of Bellingham. In 1998, the Master Plan hoped to build the center of Town into a “user-friendly environment” with congestion relief (partly because people would be walking in the area rather than driving) that had access to both cultural and recreation (along the Charles River) and a cohesive character.

One goal for the Town Center was to create Village Zoning to promote pedestrian and mixed use goals. However, a study done of the area showed that there was no sewer capacity, limiting mixed-use development opportunities to only those that could support septic systems.

In addition, several attempts were made to revitalize Crooks Corner and Pulaski Boulevard through the implementation of a mixed-use overlay district, which has excess sewer capacity through Woonsocket. This measure, which would have opened up development opportunities beyond basic commercial development along Pulaski Boulevard failed at Town Meeting.

## **ACHEIVEMENTS FROM THE 1998 PLAN**

- Blackstone Street between Mechanic Street and South Main Street was improved.
- Interim traffic improvements were made at the intersection of North Main, South Main and Mechanic Streets.
- Village District zoning was considered for the Town Center, but not implemented due to infrastructure limitations.
- The Town Common was created and is used regularly on both a daily basis and for special events such as the now annual Pumpkin Carving Festival and summertime concerts.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goals and objects for the three distinct areas of Bellingham are almost the same, although implementation strategies for each may be different.

### **Overall**

#### **A. CONGESTION RELIEF**

All three areas of Bellingham have congestion problems. Some of the problems at Crooks Corner in South Bellingham will be relieved by a large Mass Highway intersection improvement project slated to start in 2010. Traffic in the Town Center was somewhat relieved by interim traffic improvements, but have not relieved congestion during peak hours. North Bellingham traffic is at its peak during the morning and evening commuter hours and on Saturdays and Sundays during the mid-day shopping period. Opportunities for creating bus and shuttle service are available through GATRA and Federal stimulus money.

#### **B. CHARACTER**

All three surveys completed for the Master Plan update (residential survey, business phone survey and focus group survey) indicated that there was a sense from both residents and business owners that Bellingham lacked a definable character. With no traditional downtown, but instead three focal areas,

Bellingham needs to create a feeling of place for each—North Bellingham, the Town Center and South Bellingham. Design guidelines, including sign guidelines, and street amenities will help focus attention on the uniqueness of each area, while creating a cohesive Town-wide look.

#### C. "USER-FRIENDLY" ENVIRONMENT

With the increase of gas prices and traffic, and a focus on improving health, there is a movement toward increased walking. Sidewalk improvements and construction for all three areas are necessary, as well as increased pedestrian amenities and access to services.

#### **By Area**

##### D. TOWN CENTER

Although the Town Center was determined not to have the infrastructure capacity for massive mixed-use development, attention can be given to creating a more cohesive design style as well as a more pedestrian friendly environment. Not only should the Center be functional, it should also project a character in which citizens can take pride. A huge asset, the Charles River, lies almost ignored, and the Town owns valuable undeveloped lands.

##### E. NORTH BELLINGHAM

Zoning should be examined along Hartford Avenue to ensure that commercial and industrial uses are not conflicting with residential uses. Shuttle bus service should be considered to the commercial areas to reduce congestion.

##### F. SOUTH BELLINGHAM

Crooks Corner and Pulaski Boulevard is the southern gateway to Bellingham. Attention should be given to creating a sense of place and character through design enhancements and pedestrian amenities. Although mixed-use zoning failed at Town Meeting, other opportunities should be considered such as creating a Business Improvement District.

#### **IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

Some of these action items may overlap with implementing actions from other chapters. Unless

otherwise specified for a specific area, the action items should be considered to be beneficial to all three areas of the Town.

- Prepare design guidelines for development that should include, but is not limited to, architecture, signs, and site design. Explore the creation of a Design Review Committee to create and implement the guidelines. Guidelines can include styles unique to each place, but also create a comprehensive look for the Town as a whole.
- Improve pedestrian facilities including sidewalks protected with granite or concrete curbs, and linked with clearly marked crosswalks. Consider options for funding sidewalk improvements such as mitigation money for sidewalk waiver requests.
- Examine opportunities within the Zoning Bylaw, with regulations tailored to the circumstances of pedestrian-oriented business areas.
- Create shuttle bus routes for commuter and shopping populations through GATRA.
- Continue to pursue funding opportunities to continue improvements at the Routes 126/140 intersection in the Town Center.
- Integrate the redeveloped Town Hall complex, the Town Common, and nearby properties, using landscaping, pedestrian amenities, careful access control, and sensitive building design.
- Make improvements to Town-owned open space which lies behind Town Hall, and to the lands along the banks of the Charles River, potentially linking the Center with Town Conservation lands off High Street, providing walkways, canoe launches, and landings.
- Work with the Pulaski Boulevard business community to promote development in this area, focusing on making Pulaski Boulevard a gateway to Bellingham.
- Consider zoning options to improve the flow between commercial / industrial and residential in North Bellingham.

Picture page 6: c. 1876 map of Bellingham centers—North Bellingham, Bellingham and Rakeville.



## RESIDENTIAL STRATEGY

### BACKGROUND

Although the housing stock profile in Bellingham has not significantly changed since the 1998 Master Plan, the economic situation has altered dramatically. In 1998, the Master Plan stated that the then current housing stock served the Town's needs very well, focusing on the center of the market with moderately priced single family homes and condominiums for the starter family niche. The Plan identified the rental housing market suited to the elderly and the larger home as needs in the community.

A focus of the 1998 Master Plan was to target higher-priced housing with the thought that such housing would be more fiscally sound, would influence the value of all housing in the Town, attract a more "skilled" population and add diversity to the housing stock. Since the median single family home prices were close to the State-defined affordability levels at the time, lower-priced housing was not a focus of the plan.

Over the course of this Master Plan update, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has

been working with the Town to create a Housing Production Plan (HPP). The HPP considers the existing housing stock, population and income trends, community visioning and goals to identify the housing needs in the Town and ways to achieve those goals. Although the HPP focus on affordable housing, it also helps identify existing and future conditions.

Housing in Bellingham was and still is predominately single family homes (83.5% of all housing units in Bellingham are single family, 77.6% detached and 5.9% attached). An unpredicted housing construction boom between 2000 and 2007 had interesting consequences in the Town. The goal of higher-priced housing was achieved through several large housing developments, and successfully influenced the value of all housing in the Town. By the end of the decade, the moderately priced affordable home and condos that dominated the housing stock in a 1998 Bellingham were no longer affordable for the "starter family". The median single family home price jumped from \$153,000 in 1998 to a high median sale price of \$320,000 in 2005.

Between 1990 and 2000, the median home price in Bellingham increased only 4.2% per year (from \$100,000 in 1990 to \$169,900 in 2000), but between

2000 and 2005, the median home price jumped 85%. Although there has been a drop in median home prices from \$320,000 in 2005 to \$231,000 in 2009, that is still a 51.7% increase in median home prices since 2000.

In 1998, the issue of affordable housing was only briefly mentioned in the Master Plan as a goal to maintain and support the Bellingham Housing Authority. The Town felt that since the average home price was close to what the State deemed as affordable, there was no need to promote the State mandated “affordable housing” (considered to be subsidized housing for those earning less than 80% of median income). Unfortunately, the concept of what was affordable changed during the construction boom mentioned above. What was once affordable for many residents, both young and old, no longer is affordable. The cost of housing dropped after the recession began in 2007, but still are not close to the State’s affordable level. As a result, Bellingham has one of the highest foreclosure rates in the eastern part of the State.

In addition to increasing the higher value housing stock of single family homes and condominiums, the construction boom also brought several large, unwanted 40B Comprehensive Permit projects. A project proposed as a 40B allows a developer to bypass all zoning if a percentage of the housing meets the State’s criteria for affordable. One of these, a large rental housing project, added over 350 State qualified affordable units to the Town. While this did have the positive impact of bringing the Town closer to the State mandated 10% affordable housing, it also showed the Town the consequences of being under the 10% requirement and how an “unfriendly” 40B project works.

The Town now understands that being even one housing unit short of the 10% allows a developer to invoke the 40B Comprehensive Permit which allows zoning to be overruled. Although Bellingham is now quite close to the 10%, it is measured by housing units within the Town at the time of the last federal census. Since there were a number of housing units added, including the high priced housing and the 40B rental units, since 2000, 2010 will likely show a drop in the Town’s affordable housing percentage. This will leave the Town open to more “unfriendly” 40B’s as developers start to plan for the next construction

boom cycle.

Bellingham is characterized by a slow population growth rate. The population only grew 2.9% between 1990 and 2000. Even using the most conservative estimate from the 1998 Master Plan population projection model, the growth rate would only be 3.6% from 2000-2010, a less than 1% increase over ten years.

The MAPC Housing Production Plan indicates that while the population in general will have modest or even negative growth rates, the senior population will increase by 51% between 2010 and 2020. The MAPC also predicts that the average household size will decline and that the town may need additional smaller housing, attached or multi-family units as older residents often prefer smaller units with lower costs and maintenance responsibilities.

As a result of the aging population, housing construction boom and the subsequent economic recession, Bellingham’s housing stock no longer fully meets the needs of its residents. More variety is needed to meet the needs of older residents, smaller households and lower-income households.

#### **ACHEIVEMENTS FROM THE 1998 PLAN**

- The Subdivision Rules and Regulation standards were reviewed and upgraded in 2005 and 2006.
- A flexible zoning bylaw, called Major Residential Development, was added to the zoning in 2001 to allow cluster type developments in the Town.
- Shortly after the acceptance of the 1998 Master Plan, an Assisted Elderly Housing bylaw was added to the zoning.
- Higher valued single family homes were added to the housing stock.

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Housing goals and objectives have changed as the market and population have changed over the past ten years. Single family still homes dominate Bellingham for both the higher priced market and middle income groups, but no longer meet the needs

of an aging community. As an MAPC visioning session indicates, there is a greater concern for housing variety and affordable units for all income ranges.

#### A. MEET 10% AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENT.

Several “unfriendly” 40B projects in the past ten years have increased the affordable housing stock in Bellingham, but at a cost to traffic, utilities, schools and environmental impacts. The Town recognizes that meeting and then maintaining the State required 10% affordable housing will allow the Town greater control of where and what type of affordable housing the Town wants and prevent construction of unwanted housing developments.

#### B. DIVERSE HOUSING STYLES FOR A FULL RANGE OF INCOME LEVELS

Bellingham’s housing stock consists primarily of single family homes. Families that meet or exceed the median household income are well provided for within the Town. However, population trends indicate that the senior population will be increasing and the size of families will be decreasing. Seniors and single adults or single-parent households may not need or want the cost of maintaining a larger home. Different types of housing, such as smaller homes or apartments, can provide diverse housing for residents other than families.

#### C. MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES WITH EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

The preponderance of single family homes combined with the current economic recession has resulted in a high foreclosure rate in Bellingham. Using the existing housing stock to create new affordable units without new construction will help the Town meet and maintain the 10%, as well as provide housing for residents with lower incomes, including seniors.

#### D. ENCOURAGE TRANSIT-ORIENTED AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE PROJECTS.

Traffic is a major issue within Bellingham. New construction that encourages taking advantage of the nearby mass-transit systems will help with congestion. Preservation and conservation of open space and natural resources have become an

important priority for residents. New construction should focus on creating open space and be environmentally sensitive. Housing opportunities should include promoting healthy lifestyles that encourage walking, bicycling and other activities.

### IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

- Adopt Town-wide inclusionary zoning that would require developers to set aside a portion of housing units for low- or moderate-income households or provide incentives for the developer to do so voluntarily either off-site or through other mechanisms. Providing affordable housing with each project will help the Town maintain a steady 10% on a smaller scale without being subject to large unwanted 40B projects.
- Create an Affordable Housing Trust to administer the policy and programs regarding affordable housing in Bellingham.
- Adopt an Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw or revise the existing Family Apartment bylaw to allow accessory apartments to be developed in single family homes or detached accessory structures to provide housing diversity and rental income.
- Review zoning initiatives that would allow greater housing densities for elderly residents. Encourage affordable housing for the elderly through alternative residential programs such as lifecare, assisted or congregate living arrangements.
- Reexamine the residential, suburban and business zoning to reduce conflicts between housing and business districts and to promote opportunities for mixed-use or other flexible zoning alternatives. Examine the zoning map for areas that have long been zoned industrial or business, but with limited prospects, to be zoned for housing.

### REFERENCED MATERIALS

MAPC “Bellingham Housing Production Plan,” December 2009.

Picture page 9: Housing in the Pine Acres Subdivision.

### MAP APPENDICES

Map 5: Affordable Housing/Accessory Apartments.  
Map 6: Total Population Map.



## ECONOMIC STRATEGY

### BACKGROUND

In the past, the driving force behind strengthening Bellingham’s economic base was to maintain a low residential tax rate. Due to both retail and industrial development in North Bellingham and along the Route 140 corridor near Franklin, Bellingham has one of the lowest residential tax rates of the surrounding towns. Consequently the Town has, until the 2007 recession, managed to maintain a stable budget.

The relative economic health of the Town has been a result of both large and moderate sized development. The two power plants and a third large retail complex on Hartford Avenue, all of which were only in the permitting phase in 1998, are now completed. In addition, two large industrial complexes, the Dunkin’ Donuts Northeast Distribution Center and a Best Buy Warehouse, were constructed along Depot Street. A gas station/convenience store, large warehouse, bank with retail space, strip mall and daycare facility were constructed along Mechanic Street / South Maple Street to take advantage of the proximity to Route

495 and the recently completed interchange project.

Other projects, including a 550,000 square foot retail complex off of Hartford Avenue and a 600,000 soccer and recreational facility on Maple Street, are either permitted or being permitted, but have not yet been constructed. Most recently, the Town approved a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) project on Depot Street for a Franklin manufacturing business relocating to Bellingham.

While Bellingham has seen some growth and diversification in its businesses, these have mostly been in the retail and industrial sectors. Although there are some higher skilled, higher paying jobs in Bellingham, they do not make up a large percentage of jobs. In 2008, about 1,842 out of 5,472 employed in Bellingham had retail type jobs and earned an average weekly wage of \$415.00. The next largest group of employed workers was in the Accommodation and Food Services industry with 655 employed, earning about \$226.00 a week. Professional and Technical Services accounted for 27 business establishments that employed a total of 81 people with an average weekly wage rate of \$687.00<sup>1</sup>. Several years into the current recession, Bellingham’s unemployment rate has grown from 6.2% in 2008 to 10.4% in 2009<sup>2</sup>.

Even with the current recession, employment projections indicate a 6.3% growth in the Massachusetts economy by 2016. The health care and social assistance and professional, scientific and business services will account for the largest employment growth. Professional and technical services are projected to expand 25.8% and healthcare 16.7%. Retail jobs, the largest employment sector in Bellingham, are predicted to decrease by about 1.6%<sup>3</sup>.

According to the 1998 Master Plan, Bellingham's economic circumstances seemed uncertain. The 1998 Plan stated that should the two power plants be constructed and businesses expand along Hartford Avenue tradeoffs in priorities would occur. Previously, the Town was willing to accept some traffic congestion for the increased fiscal benefits that come with more business development. As fiscal concerns are reduced, services would increase and "quality of life" issues would take on greater weight.

These predictions have proven true. The 2008 residential survey indicates there is a strong concern about daily traffic, not just peak hour, but also weekends. In addition, residents felt that there is too much large retail development, and not enough focus on small local businesses. The residential survey also indicated people are interested in improving or increasing amenities such as open space and recreational facilities.

A survey of small businesses indicated that there was an overall satisfaction with Bellingham as a place to do business and that there was support from the local government for the business community. The survey also indicated that all of those small businesses surveyed believed that attractive buildings and streetscapes were an important component in supporting the local businesses. Finally, the survey reported that about 66% of the owners surveyed felt that large retail was not beneficial to their business.

In addition to the small business survey and the residential survey, the Master Plan Task Force held a small focus group session consisting of both large and small business owners and developers. The focus group felt that Bellingham's tax base and proximity to Route 495 were advantageous to

business, although they felt lowering the business tax rate would be beneficial. They also felt that having an incentive program that would encourage new businesses to Bellingham would be beneficial. In 1998, the Town had several organizations that focused on the economic development of Bellingham. These included an Industrial Development Commission, an Industrial Development Finance Authority, the Bellingham Business Association, and the United Chamber of Commerce. Both the Industrial Development Commission and Industrial Finance Authority are now defunct. The Milford Area Chamber of Commerce serves Bellingham instead of the United Chamber of Commerce. The Bellingham Business Association has monthly meetings with its members, generally small business owners.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 1998 PLAN**

- Roles, responsibilities and relationships between organizations that are involved with the Town's economic development were established. Some changes were implemented, including the establishment of a staffed part-time Planning Board office, with a Town Planner and Planning Coordinator, in 2001.
- Zoning regulations are more stringently adhered to, such as landscaping. Most developers either comply with or exceed the requirements of the bylaw.
- Although still heavily retail, the Town has achieved a measure of economic diversity with the development of the Dunkin Donuts Northeast Distribution Center and the Best Buy Warehouse, both on Depot Street.

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Bellingham has enjoyed some economic growth and diversity in the past ten years. The focus needs to be on maintaining the businesses that exists in the Town and increasing both the diversity of business type and scale (maintaining a balance of large and small businesses).

## A. ECONOMIC DIVERSITY.

In 1998, most of Bellingham's jobs were in retail. Although that still holds true, there is slightly more diversity. Bellingham should continue to focus on diversifying its businesses, looking toward creating incentives for the types of businesses that will be growing in the future, including those in the health care and professional, scientific and business service industries.

## B. SELECTIVITY.

This goal from the 1998 Plan is still important today. Bellingham should target businesses that according to the 1998 Plan:

- "would make reasonable demands upon the Town's limited infrastructure capacity in relation to the benefits which they bring";
- "those enterprises which, by their nature, location, design, and operations commitment will make small demands upon traffic capacity in relation to the jobs and taxes which they provide";
- "jobs which are well-suited to the population and labor force profile which the Town is seeking, which suggests that some number of the relatively low-skill jobs recently developed are appropriate, but that those jobs should be complemented with ones demanding higher skills and supporting higher wages";
- "businesses which do not deplete the Town's non-renewable resources, and which use renewable ones, such as water, only at a sustainable rate";
- "businesses whose purchases or services support existing local businesses, helping to strengthen them".

## IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

- Establish a mechanism to drive economic development to replace now defunct Industrial Development Commission. Opportunities exist to include economic development with Boards that

now have staffing such as the Planning Board. For instance, the Town of Medway reorganized their Planning Board into a Planning and Economic Development Board.

- Exclude retail development from Industrial districts through new zoning initiatives to encourage diversity in commercial development. Ideally, there should be a balance between warehousing, retail and other allowed commercial and industrial uses.
- Explore forming a Design Review Committee and design guidelines to create and maintain a cohesive visual framework for the Town. Consider overhauling the sign bylaws.
- Target efforts, including design and sign guidelines, to help local small businesses. These enterprises, typically locally-owned and managed, have been mainstays of the community for years, but are threatened by the commercial "success" of Hartford Avenue and similar developments, which chiefly benefit national chains and franchises.
- Pursue options for industrial land banking, including allowing citizens to vote on raising funds to purchase land for future use and investment for economic growth.
- Explore opportunities to use creative incentives such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to encourage new business development or relocation.
- Explore creation of a "Village District," for application in those parts of the present B-1 District where there is true pedestrian-scale potential, such as in Bellingham Center, Caryville, and part of Pulaski Boulevard. Although it was determined that Bellingham Center lacks sewer capacity, other initiatives and/or incentives should be considered to promote business.
- Consistent with that, target Pulaski Boulevard for a concentrated improvement program, aimed at making it a gateway to the Town which can instill

pride as well as providing entrepreneurial opportunities, jobs, services, and taxes.

- Review and selectively rezone areas to classifications more suitable to the contiguous areas. Reexamine the Zoning Map to remove from business or industrial zoning those areas for which those uses are clearly ill-suited, perhaps including Farm Street properties east of Route 495 and vacant lands zoned B-2 between South Main Street and Arnold's Brook.
- Bring business and industrial zoning up to date. The current dimensional regulations reflect another era, sign controls don't control, and some contemporary categories of use aren't recognized. At the same time, don't abandon those tools which have worked well, such as Major Commercial Complex rules, which have been central to making the Hartford Avenue growth feasible.

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Bellingham 2008 statistics.

<sup>2</sup>MetroWest Economic Research Center, Greater Franklin Region Unemployment Rates, October 2009.

<sup>3</sup>Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Employment Projections 2006-2016, published March 2009.

Picture page 12: Recent development in Bellingham—Best Buy Warehouse on Depot Street and Charles River Bank with retail space at the intersection of South Maple and Mechanic Streets.

## MAP APPENDICES

Map 7: Zoning Map



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### BACKGROUND

Bellingham grew rapidly during the prosperous years of the 1980s and 1990s. Power plants, retail plazas, and commercial growth provided a needed increase in tax revenue but created a new demand for public services. While moderate residential development during this period maintained only slight increases in population, explosive increase in commuter and retail traffic became a major outcry of local residents. Bellingham transformed from a sleepy rural community to a busy commuter suburb needing expanded municipal services and facilities that were only dreamed of in the past.

Expansion of town services and professionalism of town government from part-time volunteers to full-time staff resulted in a much needed investment in community facilities. Many of the town buildings had extended well beyond their useful life span and increased staffing left departments without adequate workspace, storage and modern outlets for the dawn of the computer age. The 1980s saw a new library, Central Fire Station and South Elementary School.

The 1990s saw the formation of a Capital Improvements Committee that prepares a five-year capital improvement plan. A first class high school, remodeled and modernized middle school, municipal office facility, historically renovated town hall and senior citizen's center were major achievements with little burden to taxpayers. Bellingham residents can point with pride to modern facilities built during the boom years of the last decades of the twentieth century.

The millennium brought on a new era of economic uncertainty. Tight budgets and reduced spending caused a deferral of maintenance and abandonment of capital building projects. Difficult financial decisions must be made to ensure the survival of the essential town services placing capital facilities improvement projects on a distant horizon. Future community facilities projects will be limited to a few in numbers to those departments in the most urgent need. Systematic priorities, creative financing and futuristic planning must be achieved during this period so that shovel ready community facilities projects can be implemented when stimulus funding or a favorable economy returns.

## **FACILITIES**

The following is a summary of current department needs for future community facilities:

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The current police station was built in 1965 as a joint police and fire facility. Although the Police Department has grown from 14 police officers in the 1960s to 27 officers by 2009, the police have remained in the same outdated building. To support expanding police needs, a substantial renovation was completed on the annex building to house police administration. However, even with police administration in the upgraded Annex, the current day-to-day operations and conditions of the police station alone are insufficient to serve public needs and meet accreditation requirements of a modern police force.

Cosmetic renovations give the perception of a newer police station; however, inadequate and outdated space, and disruptions in heating, cooling and electrical systems hamper appropriate levels of necessary public services. With facility failures compromising sensitive equipment such as an advanced 911-phone system, computers and police radio equipment, the department cannot maintain the standards necessary for national police accreditation and state compliance.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Central Fire Station, located on Blackstone Street, was built in 1989 for a staff of 11 personnel. Today the Department has grown to a total staff of 21. The South Bellingham Station #1, constructed in the 1930s, can no longer accommodate the larger sizes of contemporary fire equipment. The North Bellingham Station #3, built in 1958, has the same issues. Both stations have limited overhead door height, no vehicle exhaust systems, no cooking / kitchen facilities, showers, or dormitories.

### **SCHOOLS**

Based on population projections, the new high school and renovated middle school buildings should have adequate space to accommodate projected enrollment for many years.

High priority should be given to controlling development in the areas the schools are currently located. Any increase in vehicular traffic and congestion in those areas should be carefully considered in an effort to reduce the risk to students, parents and staff traveling to and from the schools.

Based on data compiled in a Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) by Flansberg Associates, completed for the school district in late 2008, the following is a priority list of capital improvements needed to maintain our current facilities and meet all mandated codes:

Year 1: Life Safety issues (fire alarm systems)

Year 2: Code issues (electrical systems)

Year 3: Accessibility issues

Year 4: Infrastructure

Year 5: Energy efficiency

Year 6 – 10: Maintenance and upkeep. Priorities for these years will be re-visited during Year 5.

The FCA has a more detailed outline of the schools' physical plant needs.

### **BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY**

In 1989, a new 18,000 square foot library was constructed on Blackstone Street. The library employs 17 people. There are seven full-time and 10 part-time staff members, and an expanded program of 11 volunteers who contribute to the smooth running of the library.

Over the past five years the library has significantly increased not only circulation, but internet users, meeting space used by community groups, and the number of programs offered to children and young adults. There has been an 18% increase in the number of visitors to the library since 2005 and internet use has increased 35% between 2006 and 2008

The library facility is 20 years old. In addition to wear and tear, there are facility needs that are not related to age, but to the changing face of the library's programs and services. As HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems age, assessment is needed to determine what needs updating out of necessity and what should be updated to save energy

costs. Fire and security systems were updated in 2005 and the roof was replaced in 2006.

There is currently a need to install security cameras to document activity both inside and outside of building for increased security. Other needs include soundproofing the young adult area, expanded storage, increased parking and improved landscaping.

The most important investment for the library will be in technology. Keeping up with new technology is one of the hallmarks of a contemporary library. Providing free Internet access to the public is a service that is increasing with over 1000 people every month using the library public access computers. As new technology is developed, it is essential that the library provide the public access to these technologies. A purchasing schedule to upgrade computers will be needed to keep technology current.

Library programs are always growing and changing to meet the needs of the community. The library building should meet the needs of Bellingham for many years. By addressing some of the facility and equipment challenges the library will continue to provide excellent educational and enlightening programs to its patrons.

#### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The current DPW building on Blackstone Street was built in 1972 as a garage for the Highway Department. When first constructed, the "Town Barn" was a 120'x80' heated metal clad garage. An office space wing added to the front in 1993. Additional men and equipment were moved to the Blackstone Street facility from the Water & Sewer Department in 1994 when combined with the Highway Department to form the DPW. The old Water & Sewer Department facility at 200 Wrentham Road currently houses the Parks Department. The metal clad Blackstone Street building has already exceeded its 30-year life expectancy and was never intended to house the current increase of staff, equipment and storage required by the modern day Department of Public Works.

Serious consideration must be given to constructing a new centralized DPW facility on Blackstone Street. The new combined facility would include the Parks

Department. The DPW would need a campus of at least 72,000 square feet in order to be sufficient for the long-term office, equipment and storage needs for the DPW. There is an abundance of Town-owned land on Blackstone Street to accommodate a facility of this size.

A "DPW Campus", to include the current metal clad building with additional new facilities to be added using adjacent land behind Fire Headquarters, would provide the most efficient use of town resources. Although funding for new construction is not available at the time of the writing of this Master Plan, the Board of Selectmen have made planning for this campus facility a priority in order to be able to move forward when funding is available.

There are several serious problems with the DPW garage that make the building obsolete: including Insufficient ventilation, storage, and work area and obsolete storm water management, fuel traps and wash.

#### SENIOR CENTER

Bellingham seniors patiently waited for a new, modern facility and finally received their new home in 2002. The 7,400 square foot Senior Center is in excellent condition and the bright, clean and up-to-date building is enjoyed by many residents. The Senior Center is presently adequate for current needs, but increased demand for senior services will place future enlargement of the building and parking lot on the horizon. The primary room is a combination dining-room / activity area which can be partitioned into two smaller spaces. A modest billiards / card room and the open lobby / lounge area are the other activity spaces. The facility also has a full non-commercial kitchen, storage closets, restrooms, two offices and a private conference room.

The Social-Day Program, one of the popular activities at the Senior Center, capped due to space limitations. The program presently has adequate space for 12 people, but requests are increasing and there is potential demand for 24 participants.

The senior citizens of Bellingham have a comfortable new facility that will serve the community for many years. Planning should be undertaken to obtain grants or other sources of funding to prepare for the

future expansion of services as our senior population increases in the years ahead.

#### COMMUNITY CENTERS

Bellingham has several community meeting centers. A hall at the North Community Building at Maple St and Hartford Avenue and the South Bellingham Fire Station are used by a variety of community groups. The community room in the Town Library also houses a variety of functions. The upper Town Hall is being remodeled and will once again host meetings and various community activities. The North Community Building is also in the midst of minor renovations.

#### ACHEIVEMENTS FROM 1998 PLAN

- Construction and completion of a new high school.
- Improved level of community services.
- Renovation and construction of the municipal complex at the Town Center. This includes demolition of the old Center School and house at 5 Common Street (Planning Board offices) and the construction of the new Municipal Center. The Annex Building was renovated to house the Police Administration and the Town Hall was completely renovated for part time offices, including the Planning Board and Historical Commission.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

##### A. GOOD LEVEL OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

For many years Bellingham residents saw their level of community services being less adequate than those in many other communities, necessitated by limited Town finances, and the imperatives of accommodating growth. The Town now can and should provide more adequate programs and facilities.

The residential survey indicated that in general, residents are pleased with the level of community services, including the Fire and Police Departments and Library. Snow removal also received positive

feedback.

##### B. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

There is a strong desire to keep tax rate down. Disciplined financial management has helped the town to consistently improve services. In the last ten years a new high school and Municipal Center were constructed. The middle school, Town Hall and Annex were renovated. All this was accomplished without tax override or debt exclusion. Additional consideration should be given to regionalization or privatization of services for cost savings and increased efficiency.

##### C. STRONG TOWN IMAGE

According to the residential survey, the residents of Bellingham wish to preserve the small town look and feel. Improvement in the Town Center is a great source of pride for area residents. The Town should continue to focus on maintaining and improving the feel and image of Bellingham.

##### D. REGIONALIZATION

As costs associated with municipal services continue to increase, many communities are looking toward regionalization as a means to share costs, while still providing the same or improved service. Currently Bellingham shares Animal Control services with Franklin and Inspectional service with Blackstone. The DPW participates in regional salt procurement and the Fire Department has a mutual aid service. Opportunities to connect and share with other towns continue to expand.

##### E. FOCUS ON ENERGY EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT

Energy costs increase substantially each year. With emphasis now placed on sustainable energy, energy efficiency should be included as a high priority for all new capitol improvement projects. The Town has formed an Energy Conservation Commission which has applied for an energy grant to replace several boilers in municipal buildings. The Town has also issued a request for proposals for firms interested in performing an energy audit for municipal buildings.

## **IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

Bellingham has done much to improve its community facilities over the past 20 years. Most of the major projects recommended by the 1998 Master Plan were completed and have produced several new facilities residents of Bellingham can be proud of. Future community facilities projects will be limited to few in number and to those departments in the most urgent need. There is an overwhelming desire of residents to keep the cost of living in Bellingham affordable without hefty property tax increases and costly proposition 2 ½ tax overrides.

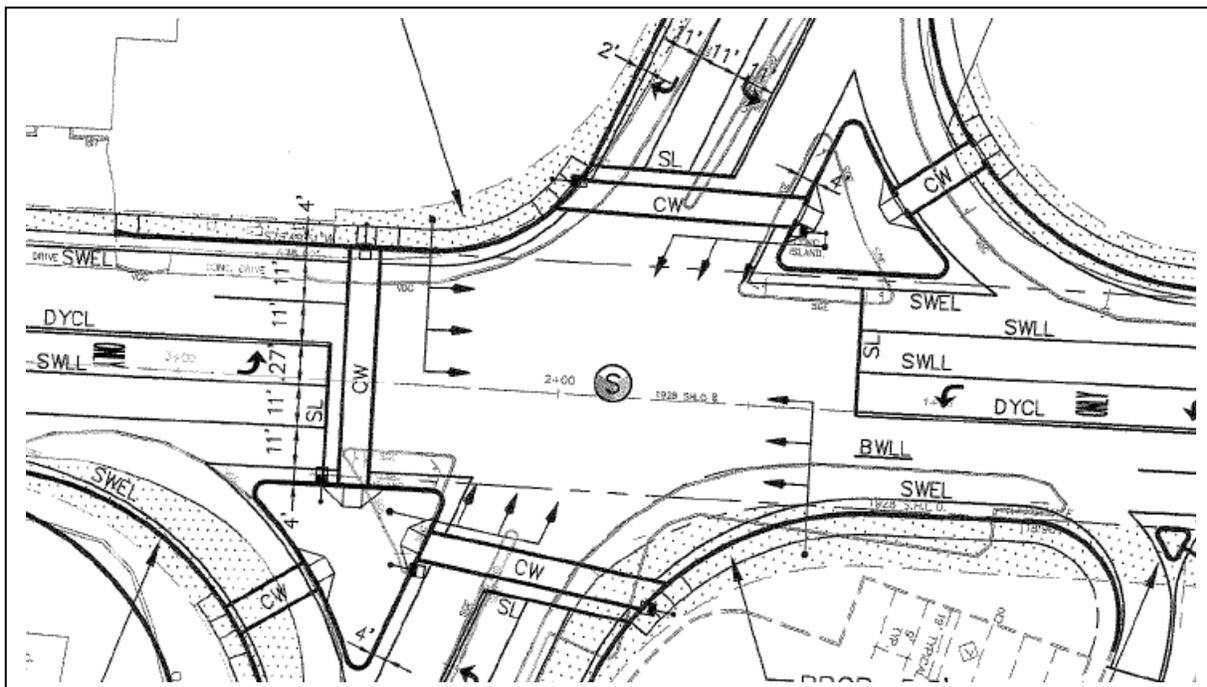
The following priorities should be implemented:

- The Police Department and DPW display the greatest need for new facilities to maintain public services. Funding an assessment and feasibility study for a joint Police-DPW Campus for possible location behind the existing DPW on Blackstone Street is a top priority.
  - Fund a feasibility study to determine future police facility needs.
  - Hire an outside consultant to review Fire Department staffing, station locations and develop a staffing and equipment planning for the future.
  - The Senior Center will receive increased demand for future service as the population matures. Planning should be undertaken to obtain block grants or other sources of funding to prepare for future expansion of senior services.
  - Library usage has increased dramatically in the past five years. In order to maintain the 20 year old facility for the next decade, a proactive approach should be taken to maintain both the physical building and services. A systems assessment should be done to prioritize maintenance needs and funding considered keeping the library apace of the current technologies.
  - Keep the school systems on track with the priorities outlined in the 2008 Facilities Condition Assessment.
- Creative financing is needed before future new community facilities can be constructed. Construction funding through federal stimulus programs, grants, and funds available when long-term debt is retired must be secured before any project can be started.
  - Consider opportunities to regionalize services and procurement to increase cost-sharing potential and decrease financial drains on the Town.

## **REFERENCED MATERIALS**

MAPC “Bellingham Housing Production Plan,” December 2009.

Picture page 16: New Municipal Center in the Town Center.



## CIRCULATION

### BACKGROUND

Increased Town-wide traffic continues to illustrate how destructive congestion is to the quality of life of those living near and using our roadways. We have continued to see development and, with the exception of some minor reductions during economic down turns, continue to see an increasing amount of traffic passing through Bellingham.

Only minor improvements have been made to circulation since the 1998 Plan. Most of these were constructed using mitigation funds from developers. No other significant strides have been made to improve poor overall circulation. Projects constructed since 1998 include intersection improvements and signalization at Mechanic Street at Maple/South Maple Streets, on Blackstone Street at both South Main and Mechanic Streets, at South Main and Elm Streets, and at Routes 140 and 126 (the center of town). A significant project to widen and upgrade and add traffic control signals on Pulaski Boulevard (Orchard Street to the Franklin line and including Paine Street at Wrentham Street) was approved for State and Federal Funding in September 2009 (\$13.0 Million) and was begun in

2010 with federal stimulus money.

The character of the traffic has changed somewhat. In the past, our traffic was worst mostly during the morning evening rush hour commuters. This is now worsened by the large retail complexes. The creation of in town destination traffic for these retail centers has turned weekends and evenings into an equal un-enjoyable time to be on Bellingham roads.

Circulation and roadway repair has been ignored as other town facilities have been given a higher priority. Circulation was the biggest public works problem in 1998 and remains so ten years later. Due to years of insufficient funding, all town roads are reaching a state of decay that is undesirable.

As was noted in the 1970 Circulation plan and restated in the 1998 Master Plan “Virtually every conceivable system deficiency is found in Bellingham – inadequate capacity, inadequate safety, inadequate condition, and lack of convenient access between certain areas.”

The 2009 estimate of funding needed to bring all roads into a maintainable condition exceeds \$40 million. The cost of roadway improvements has been steadily increasing. The roadway system continues to age without sufficient financial commitment to maintain the roads. Roads, whose life span could be

extended by lower cost preventative maintenance methods, have been allowed to decay to the point where costly reconstruction is the only available repair option. Reconstruction typically cost five to ten times more than preventative maintenance. In addition, many older streets need storm drain improvement. If puddles are not eliminated, resurfacing repairs will be short lived.

It is unrealistic to believe that the goals set forward in the 1998 and 2010 Master Plans can be achieved with out increasing the amount of tax dollars being spent on the roads. The Town will need to commit more funding to circulation to make a real effort at meeting goals. New construction projects with impacts to the circulation patterns may be able to contribute mitigation funds towards implementing some or part of, but not all of the goals outlined in this chapter.

Although deferred maintenance has become a problem in the past ten years, some future planning toward traffic improvements and alternative transportation has occurred. With mitigation funds collected from projects along the Route 140 and Depot Street corridors, the Planning Board and DPW were able to initiate traffic master plans for the Route 140/South Maple/Maple Streets intersection and the Hartford Avenue/Depot Street/Grove Street intersection. The Route 140 plan was reviewed and conditionally approved of by Mass Highway. As there are no funds to implement the plans, they will be constructed incrementally as mitigation from projects with impacts to those intersections are constructed.

The Boston Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Organization and the Central Transportation and Planning Staff (CTPS) studied Route 126 from Woonsocket to Framingham to develop a long-term vision for this corridor. They examined key intersections not previously studied. These intersections are: Pulaski Boulevard from Woonsocket to Crooks Corner, Route 126 (South Main Street) from Pulaski Boulevard to Mendon Street, Route 126 (Hartford Avenue) from North Main Street to Stall Brook Marketplace, and Route 126 (Hartford Avenue) from Plymouth Road to Summer Street in Medway. Although not currently designed or funded, some of the identified improvements include the following:

- Reconstruct Pulaski Boulevard from Blackstone Town line to Moody Street for approximately 0.75 miles.
- Construct new sidewalk, wheelchair ramps, granite curbing and crosswalks on South Main Street from Elm Street to Scott Hill Boulevard for approximately 2.0 miles.
- Conduct an origin-destination study to evaluate the potential of North Street, Lake Street and Maple Street in reducing congestion on Route 126.
- Upgrade traffic signal equipment and retime signals and make geometric improvements to improve safety and traffic operations at the Routes 126 and 140 intersections.
- Reconstruct South Main Street from Blackstone Street to Mechanic Street for approximately 0.9 miles.
- Reconstruct Hartford Avenue from Plymouth to Summer Streets for approximately 1.0 miles, including new pavement and markings, sidewalk replacement and removal of utility poles etc.

In addition to road and intersections studies, the SNETT (Southern New England Trunk Trail) regional bicycle proposal, potentially linking Bellingham with towns both east and west is now underway with towns along the SNETT working towards making it a reality. A bikeway committee, organized by the Conservation Commission, has been working with Representative Jennifer Callahan on the trail. (see the Open Space and Recreation chapter for more information.)

The Residential Survey indicated that there is a great interest in shuttle service to the shopping areas in town and the Franklin Forge Park train station. Towns in the greater Boston region are now able to use their MBTA assessments toward more local transit systems. Bellingham, which is in the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA), has used some of its assessment to implement a very successful senior shuttle service. Currently the Town is also researching other opportunities to offer shuttle services beyond senior

uses. Adjacent towns, such as Medway and Franklin, have expressed interest in creating inter-town transit routes.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE 1998 PLAN**

- The “Traffic Impact Guidelines” included in the Planning Board Subdivision Rules and Regulations was extensively updated in 2005.
- Traffic and safety concerns are a high priority for new development and use changes. Projects are required to provide mitigation to offset any large traffic impacts.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **A. FUNDING AND PLANNING**

Without a realistic local funding plan and local commitment there is no likelihood that circulation issues will improve.

#### **B. MANAGE LAND WITH TRAFFIC IN MIND**

Accommodate through travel with safety and minimal congestion, and with the lowest feasible conflict with the environs. Provide adequate access to all parts of the Town for the convenience of residents. Minimize traffic intrusion into residential environs.

#### **C. ALTERNATIVE ROUTES**

Provide effective alternative routes as an important congestion reducing tool.

#### **D. ALTERNATIVE MODES**

Bellingham is very auto-dependent as it sits on the edge of being suburban and rural. In 1990 fully 94% of resident workers commuted by car. Only school children and some of the elderly have public transportation. There are no bikes paths, minimal bike racks and sidewalks. Make public transportation accessible and affordable. Construct sidewalks along the full length of every major road to

enhance pedestrian use for access and recreational use.

Establish off road pedestrian and bicycle trails for recreational use.

#### **E. REACTIVE CAPACITY.**

Build a local capacity to react to traffic-impacting proposals, evaluating their impacts, and assuring that they appropriately contribute to solutions. The Town has done well at this to date, but is handicapped by the lack of any systematized data collection and analysis capacity. A traffic modeling system has been advocated: should the opportunity to implement one materialize, that could help enormously

### **IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

- Establish a local funding mechanism to halt the downward spiral of road condition deterioration.
- Research opportunities to increase or implement cost-sharing opportunities between adjacent or nearby towns. Regional consortiums and collective procurement programs for things such as highway maintenance services (including paving and traffic markings) are being implemented throughout the State.
- Consider drafting and funding a comprehensive Traffic Master Plan. The plan should include a detailed capital plan with a list of projects intended to reduce congestion at intersections and safety. Basic conceptual plans and order of magnitude cost estimates should be part of this plan which should seek public input to prioritize a list of projects.
- Continue to review all proposals for rezoning, special permits, development plan approvals, comprehensive permits, and other discretionary actions for avoiding congestion and protecting the quality of life through care for safety and comfort, tempering of noise, and minimizing environmental and other impacts of facility development.
- Reexamine zoning to assure that high trip-generation uses are not inappropriately allowed to proliferate across the Town, shopping centers in

industrial districts being a prominent example.

- Zoning proposals which would increase trip generation within the Town, such as rezoning from residential to business, or increasing allowable densities, should be obliged to be accompanied by an offsetting proposal to reduce trip generation from other sources to result in no net increase overall.
- Advance plans to reconstruct Maple Street and South Maple Street, and Lake Street for their full length, providing a key north and south alternative to passing through the center of Town. That proposal has merit regardless of the land use future of abutting properties.
- Continue to support transit extension through Bellingham to Milford. The option which the MBTA train service can provide will make the Town a more attractive one, serves those who cannot drive or cannot afford to drive, and should reduce traffic on Route 140 what it would otherwise have been.
- Expand pedestrian facilities with a target of constructing and enhancing maintenance of sidewalks along the full length of all major streets.
- Review amending the Zoning Bylaw and Planning Board Subdivision Rules and Regulations where by commercial projects with no adjacent sidewalks or residential projects that opt for sidewalk waivers contribute to a fund to be used to expand the town wide pedestrian and bicycle system. Also review a potential subdivision regulation change that could provide incentives for development of bike paths to eventually join a real network.
- Recommend that the School Committee implement EOT and Mass Rides “Safe Routes to School Program” As many the towns’ schools are within dense housing developments and provide an opportunity to promote the health of our kids, reduce morning traffic congestion and bus costs to the town.
- A local economic commitment should be made to expend alternatives to the automobile, such as

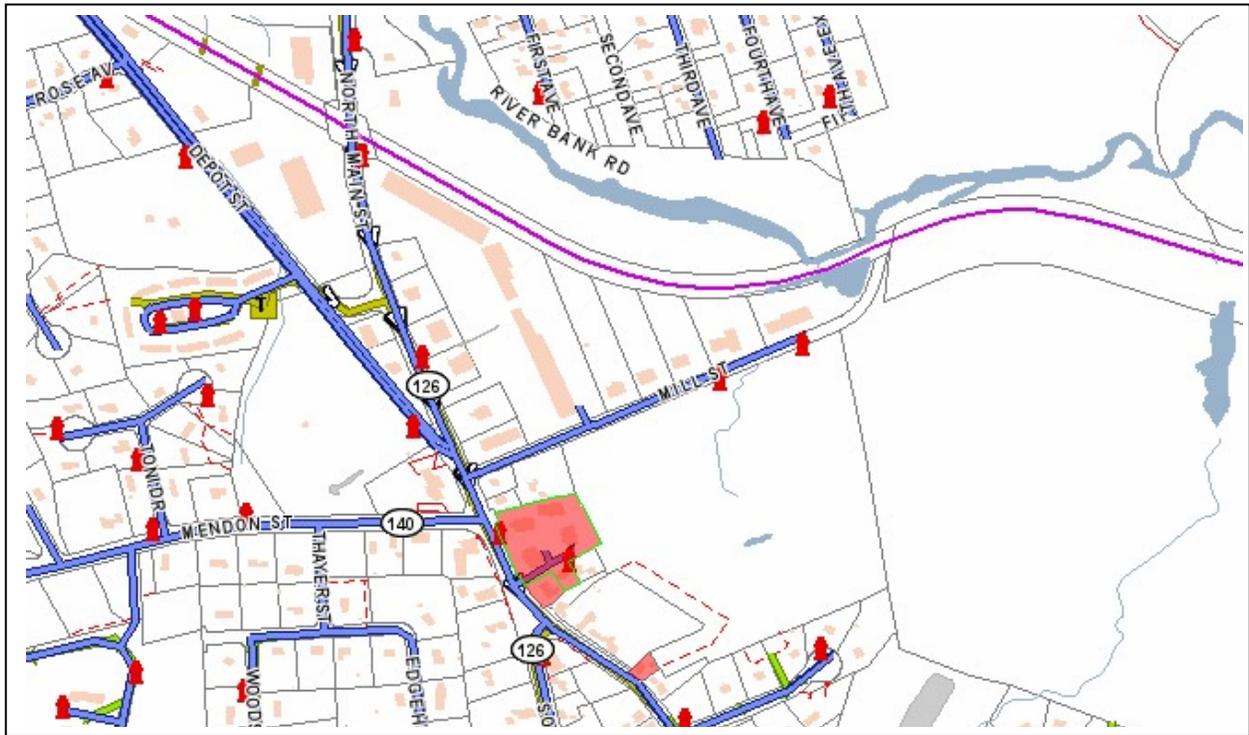
pedestrian or bicycle improvements. When funding becomes available a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle facilities plan should be considered with a detailed capital plan and list of projects. The bike paths should link destinations that are frequented often to reduce traffic. Consider a zoning amendment in requiring bike racks in all large parking lots.

- Continue the effort to create viable bike and pedestrian ways. Support programs like the Rails and Trails and other local and regional initiatives to utilize any available options to reduce vehicle traffic and to provide addition physical fitness options.
- In addition, a significant economic commitment should be made towards an existing sidewalk system maintenance and improvement. Basic rehabilitation of sidewalks along with construction of handicap access ramps is vital to get the most out of the existing sidewalk system. Consideration should also be given to enhancing the DPW’s ability to maintain the pedestrian system. Investments in equipment specifically designed to clear snow and sweep debris from sidewalks and paths and staffing to operate the equipment is needed if a commitment to pedestrian travel is seriously undertaken.
- Seek funding for Town-sponsored transportation expanding the GATRA system, implementing a van-pools connecting business areas with the Forge Park T station, or mini-buses supporting after-school programs. Regardless of how modestly they relieve congestion, such efforts are valuable in providing mobility to the third of the population which can’t drive.
- Press for private industry Traffic Management Associations (“TMAs”). Such groups in similar towns have had some success in organizing car pools, van pools, and other alternatives to the single-occupant auto.

## REFERENCED MATERIALS

PGC Associates, *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2008, Bellingham, Massachusetts.*

Picture page 21: Section of conceptual traffic master plan design for Mechanic / Maple / South Maple Streets intersection. Prepared by MDM Consultants, 2008.



## UTILITIES

### BACKGROUND

#### PUBLIC WATER

Bellingham serves all but about 5% of its population with public water. The Town of Bellingham's drinking water supply system includes seventeen groundwater wells, nine pumping stations, three storage tanks, and approximately eighty-five miles of water main.

Water quality is good with only the typical New England issue of iron and manganese creating an aesthetic but not harmful water quality issue. A strong system of regulations is in place providing reasonable assurance that development is unlikely to damage water quality.

Water pressures in most areas of the Town are good, with the exception of the very highest areas near the South Main Street water standpipe and other locations above ground elevation 340.

In past years there was a larger than acceptable

disparity between water measured at the pumps and water measured at customer meters. Strides have been made to reduce this disparity, known as "unaccounted for water." Leak detection and repair, customer meter replacement, non-metered use tracking, and pumping station meter calibration have helped to reduce the unaccounted for water but it continues to be a challenge.

In recent years only minimal and short term water use restrictions have been put in place to keep demand within manageable limits. A water use restriction bylaw has been in place since 1997 enabling the Town to enforce use restrictions in emergency periods. Situated in the stressed Charles River basin, future water use restrictions will be required each summer by the recent modifications to the Massachusetts Water Management Act. Water use restriction of no more than two-day-a-week watering will soon become standard.

The Water Master Plan was revised in 2001. The Water Master Plan identified several water main improvement projects that should be considered to improve fire fighting and system redundancy. A \$1.1 million per year capital funding schedule was suggested for ten years to construct all recommended improvements.

In 2004 the water operations of the DPW were placed into an enterprise fund. The intent of an enterprise fund is to have the water utility operate separately from the general fund and charge users for all the costs of providing drinking water. Rate increase must be approved by the Selectmen. The Selectmen have made an effort to keep cost down for customers and therefore have resisted rate increases needed to fund a major capital plan. Therefore, the list of projects noted in the 2001 plan remains unfunded.

In addition, a Water Supply Optimization Plan was prepared in 2003. This plan reviewed existing sources and identified modifications and improvement project to maximize well yield. Several of the source improvement projects have been undertaken.

#### PUBLIC SEWERAGE.

In contrast with its water service, which is almost Town-wide and used by almost everyone, Bellingham's sewerage system serves less than 27% of its population, and an even smaller percentage of its land area. The other 73% of the population relies upon individual on-site disposal systems. About 400,000 gallons per day of sewage is collected for treatment.

Because of the Town's shape and topography, Bellingham's gravity sewerage systems are generally divided just as the Town is divided between the Blackstone River basin into which the southern half of the Town drains, and the Charles River basin, into which the northern half drains. The study<sup>1</sup> initiated by the 1998 Master Plan explored the development impacts on the Town of reversing the flow of the system in a major portion of the Charles River basin. Although that alternative would sound like a simply solution to better match demand and capacity, the State's Interbasin Transfer Act prohibit such a reversal of sewerage flow.

The conclusion of the study was that impacts upon residential development as a result of capacity gained would be relatively minor. An increase of capacity would have important benefits for business development.

Utilities

In 1998 an extensive engineering study was undertaken to review the possibility of sewer system expansion. The Phase 3 Sewer planning study was also known as the Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan (CWRMP). The CWRMP took four years to complete and is the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act approved Phase 3 Sewer Expansion Final Environmental Impact Report. The CWRMP established a plan for sewer expansion by answering the question "What areas of town need sewer and what areas can and should remain forever on private septic systems?" The CWRMP was required as the Massachusetts Department of Environmental has changed its view towards sewers. Sewers once desired as the goal for all properties were now discouraged unless truly needed; as well designed and operated private septic system do a better job of spreading out recharge and keeping water local.

The Phase 3 sewer project carried an estimated \$47 Million price tag (approximately \$15,000 per building that would get a sewer connection) and failed to pass at 2001 and 2002 town meetings. A few small portions of the Phase 3 plan have been constructed but no town wide initiative exists to dust off the CWRMP or Phase 3 sewer construction.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 1998 PLAN

- 2,300 water meters were replaced in 2004 and about 300 are replaced each year.
- The Water Master Plan was updated in 2001 and the Well System well optimization analysis in 2003.
- A water conservation education program was initiated with mitigation funds and is now included in the annual water and highway budgets.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

##### A. CONTINUED MAINTENANCE OF RESOURCES AND SYSTEMS

Continue to assure long-term sustainability in the

balancing of the Town's relationship between development and water resource utilities, within the guidelines established by the State Water Management Act.

Continue to assure that residents and local businesses are adequately served and systems protected against unforeseen events or incidents, so as to protect public health and the environment, and to avoid excessive costs of individual systems.

Continue to manage utility system development so that it supports desired land use patterns, and in turn manage land development so that it does not needlessly obligate major utility costs to the community.

Continue to avoid excessive public costs for utility systems, and allocate those costs with equity for fee-payers.

Support the sewerage strategy established in the Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan – Final Environmental Impact Form, and give due consideration to servicing areas likely to be supportive of the kinds of business development which the Town wishes to encourage, and to avoiding gratuitous service to areas whose development is not being sought, as well as to the basic concern of servicing existing areas where on-site disposal systems are failing, where public service avoids heavy cost burdens on owners and protects public health.

#### B. IMPROVE REGULATORY PROTECTIONS

Strengthen Planning Board regulations to encourage the use of “Green” technologies by developers to obtain optimum conservation, reuse, and water resources protection.

Support the enhancement of storm run off water quality and recharge quantity established within the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Program and promulgated by other State and Federal environmental authority’s initiatives and programs.

### IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

- Eliminating dead end water mains as suggested in the 2001 Water Master Plan.
- Implement the suggested water supply system improvements proposed in the 2003 Well Optimization Study and commit to on going efforts of drinking water supply optimization of water supply maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Continue to address unaccounted water with a goal of less than 10% by:
  - Continue meter replacement program with a goal of transitioning to a vehicle mount radio read system by 2012 to enhance usage versus pumping volume comparison capabilities and possible peak demand based billing.
  - Continue annual funding of system wide leak detection surveys.
  - Develop an aggressive water main replacement program.
  - Promote water conservation and sustainable demand through annual funding for community education, providing at-cost conservation devices, and other means, and comply with new regulatory requirement of the State Water Management Act.
  - Explore regulatory options, such as Low Impact Development, to encourage optimum conservation, reuse, and water resources protection in new development.
- Continue to review proposed development water supply demands by use of the distribution system hydraulic model, water supply projections, and water withdrawal permits, to “Right Size” pipes and require mitigation of any new development that impacts the water supply system. Looking at not only project by project, but also all proposed water system demands.
- Utilize the Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan – Final Environmental Impact Form (CWRMP-FEIR) as a master plan for wastewater system.
- Carefully scrutinize any developer proposed sewer expansion that would extend sewer to areas

where on site septic system may be an effective long term wastewater solution and enhance local recharge of the aquifer.

- Consider expanding the sewer system to areas of open water to enhance their water quality, utilizing the CWRMP-FEIR guidelines to eliminate septic systems in the following neighborhood that are in close proximity to open water resources:
  - Box Pond Road and Drive
  - Silver Lake
  - Lake Hiawatha
  - The Grove (Avenues)
  
- Consider expanding the sewer system when lot size or other conditions create excessively high on site septic system repair costs, in neighborhoods such as:
  - South ends of South Main Street and Pulaski Boulevard (southwest corner of town)
  - Wethersfield
  
- Consider measures to encourage the existing buildings with sewer stub towards connecting and thereby broadening the customer base to keep sewer rates down.

- Enhance recharge of clean storm water run off, through continued compliance with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Program under the Town's Multi-Section Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit and any other State or Federal regulations or initiatives associated with storm water management and stream flow volume and quality enhancement.

**END NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>SEA Consultants, *Town of Bellingham Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan*, Phase I, August 1999 and Phase II, March 2000.

**Capital DPW 01162009 MP**

**Water**

1/16/2009

Type	Project	2009 \$	YEAR	Notes
Fac	WATER FACILITIES UPGRADES (HARTFORD AVE WTP > CROSS ST WTP>SP	175,000	2010	Plan to use MTBE Settlement Proceeds
Sup	STANTEC WELL 12 YIELD INCREASE	45,000	2010	Plan to use MTBE Settlement Proceeds
Fac	VFD'S AT #11 (25HP, 10 HP, 7.5 HP X2)	25,000	2011	Important improvement to operations
Road	BEECH STREET WATER MAIN (2" to 8")	75,000	2011	Water Main Upgrade - Coordinante with Drain & Road Imp
Fac	GROUNWATER MONITORING	80,000	2012	CWRMP Suggested
Eq	REPLACE VEH BW 5 - PANEL/UTILITY TRUCK (1997) W/ PLOW (153,542 Mi 08)	45,000	2012	Vehicle Upgrade
Ops	SO MAIN ST - NEW MAIN VALVE CUT IN HILLTOP TO BLACKSTONE STREET	120,000	2013	Improve ability to isolate and flush mains
Eq	REPLACE VEH BW 6 - PANEL/UTILITY TRUCK (1997) W/ PLOW (102,251 Mi 08)	45,000	2014	Vehicle Upgrade
Fac	AUXILIARY POWER WELLS 3&4	50,000	2015	Last site to install emergency power
X-C	LOCUST ST TO WRENTHAM ROAD X COUNTRY WATER MAIN (1,400 FT)	210,000	2016	Water Master Plan - Eliminate Dead End Mains

## NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE, & RECREATION

### BACKGROUND

The 1998 Master Plan stated that “Capable and sensitive management of Bellingham’s land and water resources, including but not limited to providing for open space and for recreation, is critical to the soundness of the Town’s development.” That is still true today.

Bellingham straddles the boundary between the Blackstone and Charles River basins, occupying a sensitive location in each. In 1998, less than 10% of Bellingham’s 12,000 acres were publicly protected as open space or recreation land. Due to changes in the zoning bylaw that allow for new subdivision construction to be developed with open space areas and municipally purchased parcels, this amount has increased slight to 1445.40 acres or 11.9%.

The residents of Bellingham have a strong desire for improved recreational opportunities and increased open space. The 2009 residential survey conducted for the Master Plan showed that over 70% of respondents to the survey wanted more walking paths, access to public open space and bike paths in the Town. Over 60% of respondents wanted more land acquired for organized recreation, conservation land, and farmland protection.

The Bellingham Bikeway Committee organized in 2009 to work on connecting the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) from Bellingham to Franklin. The SNETT is a 22 mile stretch of the former New York-New Haven – Hartford Railroad line, which ceased operation in 1964. The trail passes through six communities: Douglas, Uxbridge, Millville, Blackstone, Bellingham and Franklin, but many sections, including that in Bellingham have remain undeveloped for a variety of reasons, including funding, ownership and connection issues.

The goals and implementation actions for this chapter are summarized from the Open Space and Recreation Plan, prepared for the Town in 2008-9 and approved by the State in December 2009.



### PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS

#### SUMMARY AND TOTAL

OWNER	USE	ACREAGE
Town of Bellingham	Conservation	841.54
	Water Supply	154.94
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Future Trail	137.73
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Flood Storage	334.69 (Fee)
		72.00 (Easement)
<b>TOTAL ACREAGE</b>		<b>1540.9</b>



## ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 1998 PLAN

- The DPW used mitigation money to initiate an education program that is now funded through the water and highway budgets. The program includes a website for parents and kids to learn more about local water resource issues, as well as informational pamphlets on stormwater and conservation tips available on the Department of Public Works website [http://www.bellinghamma.org/Pages/Bellingham\\_MA\\_DPW/index](http://www.bellinghamma.org/Pages/Bellingham_MA_DPW/index).
- The DPW installed underground cell systems for detention/retention of stormwater on Plymouth Road, although further installation was prevented due to both the cost of installation and land acquisition. State and Federal regulations are now the driving force behind improved stormwater retention, detention and regulation.
- A long-term program for drainage facility maintenance was established. The stormwater regulations were updated and improved in 2007-2008 and include a comprehensive maintenance procedure for both public and privately owned systems.
- Although it has not been a priority due to the requirements of new EPA and NPDES regulations, some catch basins were stenciled with lettering: "Drains into Charles (or Blackstone) River" to alert residents.
- Bellingham Bikeway Committee was organized as a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission and formally endorsed by the Board of Selectmen in March 2009. The Committee is pursuing trail/bike path linkages, connecting existing Town properties where possible, working with developers and utilities to gain rights-of-way.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### A. OPEN SPACE

Focus on the acquisition or protection of additional

open space. Substantial development has occurred in Bellingham in the past ten years. Although this development has resulted in the acquiring of more than 300 additional acres of open space, there is a desire for more. By increasing open space, opportunities to link park and recreational spaces increase (a benefit to both wildlife and residents). A prominent example is the SNETT trail, which would link various public properties in Bellingham as well as linking Bellingham with Franklin, Blackstone, and beyond.

### B. RECREATION

The demand for recreation opportunities for all ages has increased. In addition to needed recreational facilities and organized activities, residents have indicated a desire for more trails and bike paths. Existing recreational facilities need to be upgraded and assessed for handicap accessibility.

### C. RESOURCE PROTECTION

Although the Town has greatly strengthened its protections for water resources, aquifer and groundwater recharge areas will always be a concern. Development should be guided onto properties other than those having high resource value in a natural state (e.g. Chapter 61A lands). Zoning should be examined to allow for more compact development, which results in the more efficient use of land and protection of natural resources.

### D. REGIONALIZATION

Through regionalization of services, towns are often able to provide more to their residents while spending less. In terms of open space, natural resources and recreation, regionalization would mean the protection and linkage of bordering resources as well as the enhancement of those resources. For instance, the SNETT trail could provide a bike and pedestrian corridor that could potentially link the Franklin State Forest with Silver Lake, the Blackstone State Forest and to the Providence-Worcester Bikeway.

## **IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

### **A. NATURAL RESOURCES**

- Provide citizens with pamphlets from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on use of fertilizers and pesticides in lawn care.
- Strengthen Town regulations to assure that trees and other vegetation are retained in appropriate buffer areas as part of subdivisions or other development in appropriate cases.
- Require replacement of topsoil which is removed in development, restoring it to depths sufficient to support vegetation.
- Explore support for the Community Preservation Act or alternative means of authorizing a Bellingham Land Bank, with dedicated real estate transfer fees earmarked for uses including preservation of open space.
- Include professional environmentalist support for community decision-making and administration in the considerations of how best to organize for staffing community development and land management.

### **B. OPEN SPACE**

- Extend protection of Beaver Pond. More than 24 acres of land abutting this important resource are now under Conservation Commission protection. More could be protected through flexible zoning, purchase, or other means.
- Protect Jenks Reservoir, Peter's Brook, and Bungay Brook. These make up an important sub-system in the Blackstone River watershed, and are linked with both existing and potential future Town water supplies. Further acquisition and use of flexible zoning are possible options.
- Focus on acquiring parcels that would protect the Peters River aquifer and the Priority Habitat Area that is outside the Army Corps of Engineers Natural Valley Storage Area.
- Continue to work toward improving stormwater and wastewater recharge through zoning changes.

### **C. RECREATION**

- Continue to work to connect both Silver Lake and the SNETT trail in Bellingham to the Franklin State Forest and the Franklin SNETT connection. At the time this Master Plan is being written, the Town has applied for a grant to design a link between the SNETT trail and Silver Lake, and for parking at the South School, to enhance access and value of the SNETT trail.
- Enhance recreation opportunities within the Town by creating additional access points to the Charles River and SNETT.
- Undertake a comprehensive inventory of existing facilities and develop a capital improvement program for retrofitting existing facilities for handicapped accessibility.
- Pursue trail/bike path linkages, where possible connecting existing Town properties, working with developers and utilities to gain rights-of-way.
- Strengthen enforcement of Town bylaws governing use of motorized ATVs on public lands.

## **REFERENCED MATERIALS**

PGC Associates, *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2008, Bellingham, Massachusetts.*

Picture page 29: Top- New bicycle rack at softball fields; Middle- Open Space statistics; Bottom- Signage for Town Common in the Town Center.

## **MAP APPENDICES**

Map 8: Open Space and Recreation.



## CULTURAL RESOURCES, TOWN CHARACTER

### BACKGROUND

Although there was a brief surge of energy toward preserving historic resources in the Town during the 1998 Master Plan process, much of that energy has faded with current economic downturn. In 2003-2004, the Planning Board created a sub-committee to work on an Historic Preservation Plan. The plan reached draft form, but was not approved due to conflicting opinions on the sub-committee. The Center School was demolished as part of the Municipal Center Complex plan.

However, historic resources have not been forgotten in total. The old Town Hall has been rehabilitated and is now a significant visual presence in the Town Center. Although it probably can never be individually listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places due to the significant loss of original material, its rehab matches a 1910 plan for the building. The building conveys a stronger sense of history now than it did during the 1998 Master Plan process.

There still are no buildings, structures or sites in Bellingham listed in the State or National Registers of Historic Places. The Town's inventory of historic resources was last updated in 1999, when the Historical Commission received a Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. At that time, about 42 building and two areas were surveyed. No archaeological resources were added to the inventory, although presumably Bellingham would be rich in pre-historic archaeological materials as the Town sits between to major waterways, the Charles River basin and the Blackstone Valley basin.

The Bellingham Historical Commission, although active in the collection of Bellingham artifacts and history, has little involvement with the municipal aspect of preservation. There have been no updates to the inventory since the 1999 additions and no action taken toward getting buildings or areas listed in the State and National Registers. The Historical Commission functions, with great success, as a Historical Society rather than a municipal agency.

The 1998 Master Plan stated that "cultural concerns in Bellingham go beyond building and landscape preservation. The nondescript quality of signage in the Town is a concern. Achieving some degree of

recognizable design coherence in new development is a concern, as is the too-frequent blight of vacant buildings, both private and Town-owned (some of great antiquity); street litter; and the absence of pedestrian amenities, such as cross-walks, in the Town's historic village centers.”

The 2008 residential survey showed that about 71% of respondents want more preservation of historic buildings and sites. The focus group sessions conducted by the 2008 Master Plan committee and survey indicated that there is a general feeling that Bellingham is lacking character and could use specific visions for different areas of Town. There was also a sense that more guided design and design review was needed throughout the Town.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 1998 PLAN:**

- The Town Hall, the symbol of government in Bellingham has been given an interior and exterior facelift. The exterior of the building has been restored to the appearance of an unrealized 1910 plan and much of the remaining historical material on the interior of the building has been saved.
- Although the North School on Hartford Avenue has been converted to a private two-family dwelling, but the exterior of the building has been restored to maintain the historic appearance.

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

##### **A. IMPROVE TOWN CHARACTER AND IMAGE**

The Town of Bellingham is lacking a specific character or image of many other New England towns. Creating a centralized design vision for the Town with specific areas highlighted would help create a greater sense of place and community.

##### **B. STRENGTHEN HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Historic buildings and sites are routinely lost through new construction in the Town. Preserving historic resources provides a strong foundation for providing a sense of place for residents.

##### **C. INCREASE COMMITMENT AND PUBLIC AWARENESS**

The Town needs to commit to preserving its historic buildings and sites. The residential survey and focus groups indicate that the public is open preservation, which will increase the sense of character in the Town. Public awareness about the value of historic preservation will support opportunities for preservation.

#### **IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

- Review and update the 2006 draft Historic Preservation Master Plan to include as part of the current Master Plan.
- Establish a committee to review the creation of separate Historical Commission and Historical Society. The Historical Commission is the municipal agency that is responsible for ensuring that preservation concerns are considered in the framework of community planning and development. The Board of Selectmen appoints members of the Historical Commission, whereas a Historical Society is generally a non-profit organization that focuses on the gathering and maintenance of the Town's historic artifacts and history.
- Establish a Design Review Committee that has the authority to review new construction designs and building rehabs and to create design guidelines for buildings, signs and spaces for cohesive design style for the Town.
- Continue to inventory historic resources as outlined in the Preservation Master Plan, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and meeting MHC standards for such surveys. Explore opportunities to inventory archaeological resources.
- Pursue the listing of at least a small number of the Town's more prominent historical buildings, bridges, or other resources on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Adopt a demolition delay bylaw, which would give the Town time to seek alternatives to the destruction of designated historic structures.

- Develop a strong sign control system, perhaps taking it outside of the Zoning Bylaw, with an improved system for achieving compliance.
- Explore means of controlling litter, whether through simple provision of facilities and services, public education, adoption of new regulations, or through better administration of present rules.
- Initiate a program for pedestrian enhancements in historic village areas, including sidewalks and crosswalks at all major intersections.
- Explore strengthening the Town's Scenic Roads program, including designation of additional roads, Town provision of plantings and other enhancements, and strengthening of the Scenic Road bylaw.

Picture page 32: Left- Old Town Hall before renovation; Right- Old Town Hall after 2008 renovation. Renovation based on c. 1910 plans.



## IMPLEMENTATION

In 1998 there was a list of approximately eighty action items to be implemented over ten years. About 25% of the goals were achieved, some with more success than others.

The 1998 Master Plan made a recommendation to create a “Master Plan Implementation Committee”, made up of members from the Planning Board, Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, and other organizations plus the Town Administrator and a few other Town staff.” However, the responsibility for creating this group was never clearly spelled out and consequently the group was never formed.

The responsibility of implementing the goals of the 2008 Master Plan will be left with the Planning Board. However, the Board may choose to create a committee to pursue the goals of the plan if, in the future, the Planning Board determines that there is interest and/or need. The Planning Board or committee will be responsible for making an annual

report at the end of the calendar year on the status of the yearly achievements. In addition, the Planning Board or committee should provide a five year “mid-term” report that assesses the achievements from the previous five years and the goals for the next five years. It is understood that not every goal will be achieved, but it is the hope that with focus, many will be successful.

The Planning Board will not be able to achieve goals of the Master Plan without the help of the other Town Departments, Commissions and staff. It would be useful for department to appoint a Master Plan liaison who can work with the Planning Board or committee to implement the action items of the Plan.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**SORTED BY ACTION TYPE**

Action	Plan Element	Lead Agency	T i m i n g						
			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Later	
<b>FACILITIES &amp; SPENDING PROPOSALS</b>									
F	1 Commit funding for walks, non-auto circulation.	Circulation	Selectm en	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	2 Seek funds for Town-sponsored transportation.	Circ/Centers	Selectm en	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	3 Establish local funding for road maintenance	Circulation	Selectm en	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	4 Seek funds for sidewalk maintenance and upgrade	Circ/Centers	Select/DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	5 Make pedestrian improvements in centers.	Culture/Centers	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	6 Work to connect SNETT, Silver Lake to Franklin	NR, R & OS	Cons Comm	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	7 Improve North-South road options.	Circulation	Select/DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	8 Hire consultant to review Fire Department	Comm. Facil	Selectm en		X	X	X		
F	9 Consider creative funding for facilities projects	Comm. Facil	Selectm en	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	10 Improve hnd back of Town Hall.	Centers	Selectm en				X	X	X
F	11 Explore support for a Bellingham Land Bank.	NR, R & OS	Cons Comm			X	X		
F	12 Acquire parcels to protect Peter's River aquifer	NR, R & OS	Select/Cons		X	X	X	X	X
F	13 Explore recreational access to Charles River.	NR, R & OS	Selectm en			X	X	X	X
F	14 Pursue trail/bike path linkages of Town props	NR, R & OS	Selectm en			X	X	X	X
F	15 Inventory of existing facilities for handicap	NR, R & OS	Park Comm	X	X	X			
F	16 Study joint Police-DPW campus	Comm. Facil	Selectm en	X	X	X			
F	17 Replace water meters, rem ove system leaks.	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	18 Implement water supply system improvements	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	19 Consider expanding sewer to high septic cost areas	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	21 Encourage existing sewer stubs connections	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	22 Consider expanding sewer to open water areas	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	23 Eliminate dead end water mains	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	24 Seek funds to continue Rte 140/126 intersection improvements.	Centers	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL INITIATIVES</b>									
O	1 Explore industrial "hnd banking"	Economic	PLBd.Select	X	X	X			
O	2 Establish Design Review Comm.	Econ/Culture	PLBd.Select	X	X	X			
O	3 Create an Affordable Housing Trust	Residential	PLBd.Select		X	X			
O	4 Explore TIF and BID opportunities	Econ/Land Use	PLBd.Select	X	X	X	X	X	X
O	5 Press for creation of TMAs.	Circulation	Selectm en	X	X	X	X	X	X
O	6 Explore separate Historical Comm. & Society	Culture	Selectm en		X	X	X		
O	7 Staffing for community dev and hnd manag.	NR,R&OS	Selectm en					X	X
O	8 Replace defunct Industrial Development Comm	Economic	Selectm en	X	X	X			
O	9 Work with Pulaski Blvd businesses for gateway	Centers	PLBd.Select	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>STUDIES AND PLANS</b>									
S	1 Build traffic analysis capacity.	Circulation	DPW		X	X	X	X	X
S	2 Draft comprehensive Traffic Master Plan	Circulation	PLBd/DPW				X	X	X
S	3 Complete a systems assessment of Library.	Comm. Facil	Selectm en					X	X
S	4 Plan for increase demand at Senior Center	Comm. Facil	Selectm en					X	X
S	5 Support rail extension to Milford.	Circulation	Selectm en	X	X	X	X	X	X
S	6 Consider cost-sharing with adjacent towns	Circulation	Select/DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
S	7 Keep school system on track with 2008 FCA	Comm. Facil	Selectm en	X	X	X	X	X	X
S	8 Extend protection of Beaver Pond.	NR, R & OS	Cons Comm	X	X	X	X	X	X
S	9 Protect Jenks Reservoir, Peter's & Bungay Brooks.	NR, R & OS	Cons Comm	X	X	X	X	X	X

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**SORTED BY ACTION TYPE**

Action	Plan Element	Lead Agency	T i m i n g						
			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Later	
S 10	Update 2006 Historic Preservation Plan	Culture	PLBd./HC	X	X				
S 11	Pursue survey as per Historic Preservation Plan	Culture	Hist Comm			X	X	X	X
S 12	Pursue National Register nominations	Culture	Hist Comm				X	X	X
S 13	Create comprehensive design style for areas	Centers	PLBd.			X	X	X	

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (continued)**

**SORTED BY ACTION TYPE**

Action	Plan Element	Lead Agency	T i m i n g					
			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Later

**ZONING & OTHER REGULATION**

Z 1	Selectively rezone from business to housing.	Residential	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 2	Selectively rezone from housing to business.	Residential	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 3	Review Suburban and Residential zoning	Land Use	PLBd.		X	X			
Z 4	Re-consider zoning for more contiguous areas, including North Bellingham area	Economic	PLBd.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Z 5	Create "Village Districts" & pedestrian-oriented business areas.	Econ/Centers	PLBd.		X	X	X	X	
Z 6	Adopt Town-wide inclusionary zoning	Residential	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 7	Revise/Adopt Accessory Dwelling bylaw	Residential	PLBd./Select		X	X	X		
Z 8	Review zoning increase elderly housing density	Residential	PLBd.				X	X	
Z 9	Update business and industrial zoning	Economic	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 10	Separate retailing from industrial districts.	Economic	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 11	Re-examine zoning for high trip-producing uses.	Circulation	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 12	Require offsetting "trip-balance" from proposals.	Circulation	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 13	Review Subdivision Regs for sidewalk fund	Circulation	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 14	Recomm end Safe Routes to School Program	Circulation	Selectmen	X	X	X			
Z 15	Explore zoning to preclude costly sewerage.	Utilities	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 16	Require or encourage bike racks & bike paths.	Circulation	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 17	Strengthen regs to protect tree buffers.	NR, R & OS	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 18	Require topsoil replacement.	NR, R & OS	PLBd.			X	X	X	
Z 19	Explore means of litter control	Culture	Selectmen	X	X				
Z 20	Adopt a demolition delay bylaw.	Culture	PLBd./HC			X	X		
Z 21	Develop design and sign guidelines	Econ/Culture/Ctrs	PLBd./Select	X	X	X			
Z 22	Explore strengthening Scenic Roads program.	Culture	PLBd.	X	X	X			
Z 23	Rezone Farns St from Industrial to Business	Land Use	PLBd.			X	X	X	
Z 24	Broaden Zoning Choices	Res/Land Use	PLBd.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Z 25	Explore Low Impact Development options	Utilities	PLBd.		X	X	X		
Z 26	Continue to strengthen stormwater regs	NR, R & OS	PLBd.			X	X	X	X

**CONTINUING EFFORTS**

C 1	Target Pulaski Boulevard for improvements.	Economic	PLBd./Select		X	X	X	X	X
C 2	Explore support for CPA	NR, R & OS	PLBd./Cons				X	X	X
C 3	Provide citizens with DEP lawn care publications.	NR, R & OS	Cons Comm	X	X	X	X	X	X
C 4	Consider opportunities to regionalize	Comm. Facil	Selectmen	X	X	X	X	X	X
C 5	Seek funding for water conservation educational materials.	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
C 6	Strengthen ATV bylaw enforcement.	NR, R & OS	Selectmen	X	X	X	X	X	X

**C O M P R E H E N S I V E P L A N I M P L E M E N T A T I O N**

**S O R T E D B Y A C T I O N T Y P E**

Action	Plan Element	Lead Agency	T i m i n g						
			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Later	
C 7	Continue to review projects for congestion relief	Circulation	Pl. Bd.	X	X	X	X	X	X
C 8	Utilize Comprehensive Water Resource Plan	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
C 9	Carefully review requests for sewer expansion	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
C 10	Continue compliance with NPDES	Utilities	DPW	X	X	X	X	X	X
C 11	Continue to review water supply demands	Utilities	Pl. Bd.	X	X	X	X	X	X

**ABBREVIATIONS**

- Afford FHC - Affordable/Fair Housing Committee
- ATV - All-terrain vehicle.
- Centers or Ctrs - Town Centers chapter
- Circ - Circulation chapter
- CIP - Capital Improvements Program
- Comm. Facil - Community Facilities chapter
- Cons Comm or Cons - Conservation Commission
- Culture - Culture Resources chapter
- DEP - Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.
- DPW - Bellingham Department of Public Works
- Econ - Economic Strategies chapter
- Fin Comm - Finance Committee
- Hist Comm or HC - Historical Commission
- IDC - Industrial Development Commission
- MHD - Massachusetts Highway Department
- NR, R & OS - Natural Resources, Recreation & Open Space chapter
- Pl. Bd. - Planning Board
- Select - Selectmen
- TMA - Transportation Management Association

# TOWN OF BELLINGHAM

## Massachusetts



### Comparison Map: Projected 1998 Land Use versus 2009 Land Use

This map displays the results of comparing Bellingham's Future Land Use Map, created in 1998, to the Town's current land use. The areas represented in dark orange are locations in which the 1998 land use projection does not match the current land use. Details about the discrepancies between the 1998 and 2009 uses are explained in the green boxes.

#### Map Legend

-  Discrepancy between 1998 projected and use and current land use.
-  Town Center - all town center areas are now considered to be not viable due to infrastructure constraints.

#### 1998 Future Land Use Classification

-  Chiefly Residential
-  Critical Area
-  Opportunity Area
-  Major Industrial
-  Major Retail
-  Linear Business

- A** 1998 - Opportunity Area  
2009 - Not Accessible

---

- B** 1998 - Chiefly Residential  
2009 - Pearl Street Mill Rehab:  
Potential Affordable Elderly Housing

---

- C** 1998 - Major Industrial  
2009 - Not Accessible

---

- D** 1998 - Opportunity Area  
2009 - Developed: Dunkin Donuts NE  
Distribution Center, Best Buy Warehouse,  
1 open lot

---

- E** 1998 - Major Retail  
2009 - Potential Large Retail  
(Shoppes at Bellingham)

---

- F** 1998 - Opportunity Area  
2009 - Power Plant

---

- G** 1998 - Major Industrial  
2009 - Soccer Fields Project (not built)

---

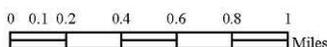
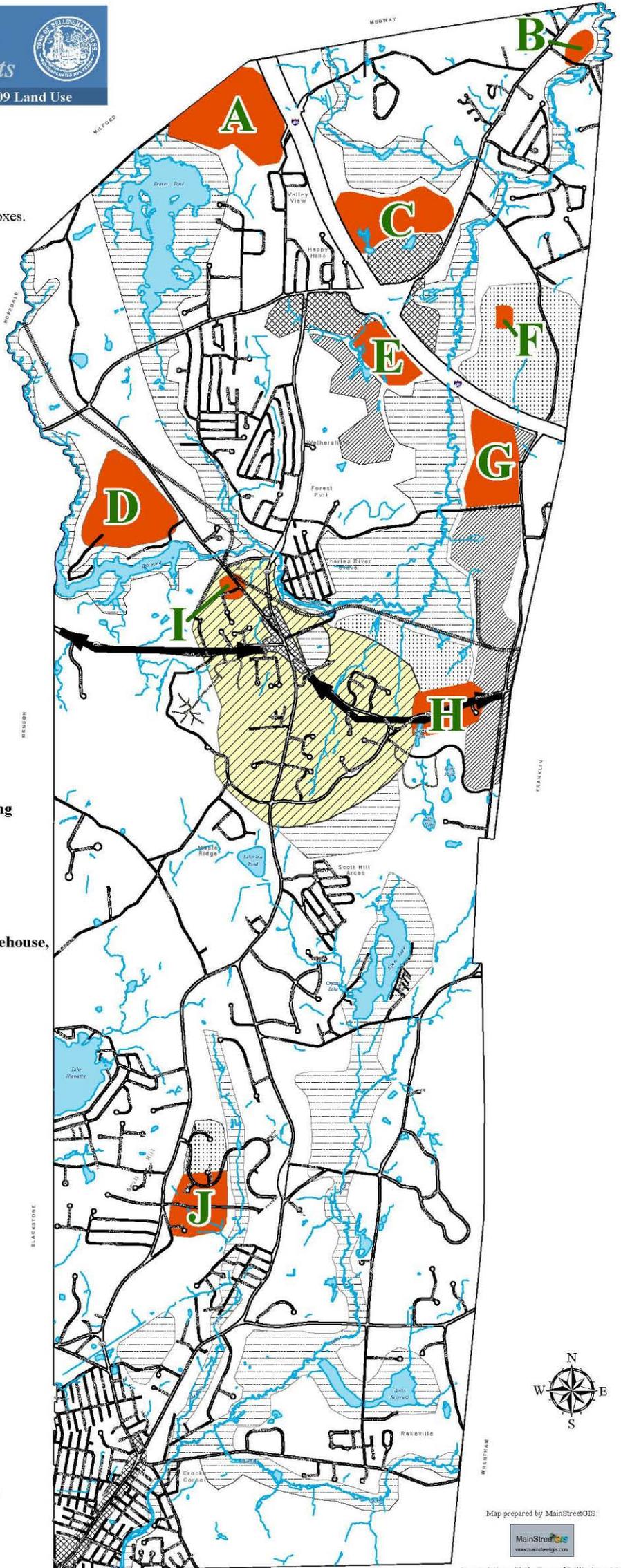
- H** 1998 - Opportunity Area, Town Center  
and Major Industrial  
2009 - Retail/Industrial Mix  
(Gas Station, Strip Mall,  
Warehouse, Bank)

---

- I** 1998 - Town Center  
2009 - Power Plant

---

- J** 1998 - Opportunity Area  
2009 - Residential



Data Sources:  
Town of Bellingham, MA  
MassGIS (<http://www.massgis.gov>)  
MainStreetGIS (<http://www.mainstreetgis.com>)

Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, State Plane, Massachusetts  
Datum: GCS NAD 1983



Map prepared by MainStreetGIS



In association with the Town of Bellingham, MA



## Developed Land & Partial Constraints Map

Partial constraints to development are pieces of land that are considered 'developable' on the Absolute Constraints map but, they are land units that have constraints to development that could change over time or be waived.

For example, a 100-foot buffer around wetlands is considered to be partial constraint for Bellingham. Also, if more detailed soils mapping were available for Bellingham, soil type would be another type of partial constraint to development.

### Buildable Land by Zoning Class

-  **Agricultural**
-  **Business 1**
-  **Business 2**
-  **Industrial**
-  **Multi-Use**
-  **Residential**
-  **Suburban**

### Constraints to Development

-  **Stream**
-  **Water Body**
-  **DEP - Wetlands**
-  **FEMA 100-yr Floodplain**
-  **100 ft Wetlands Buffer**

For buildout analysis statistics see larger map.



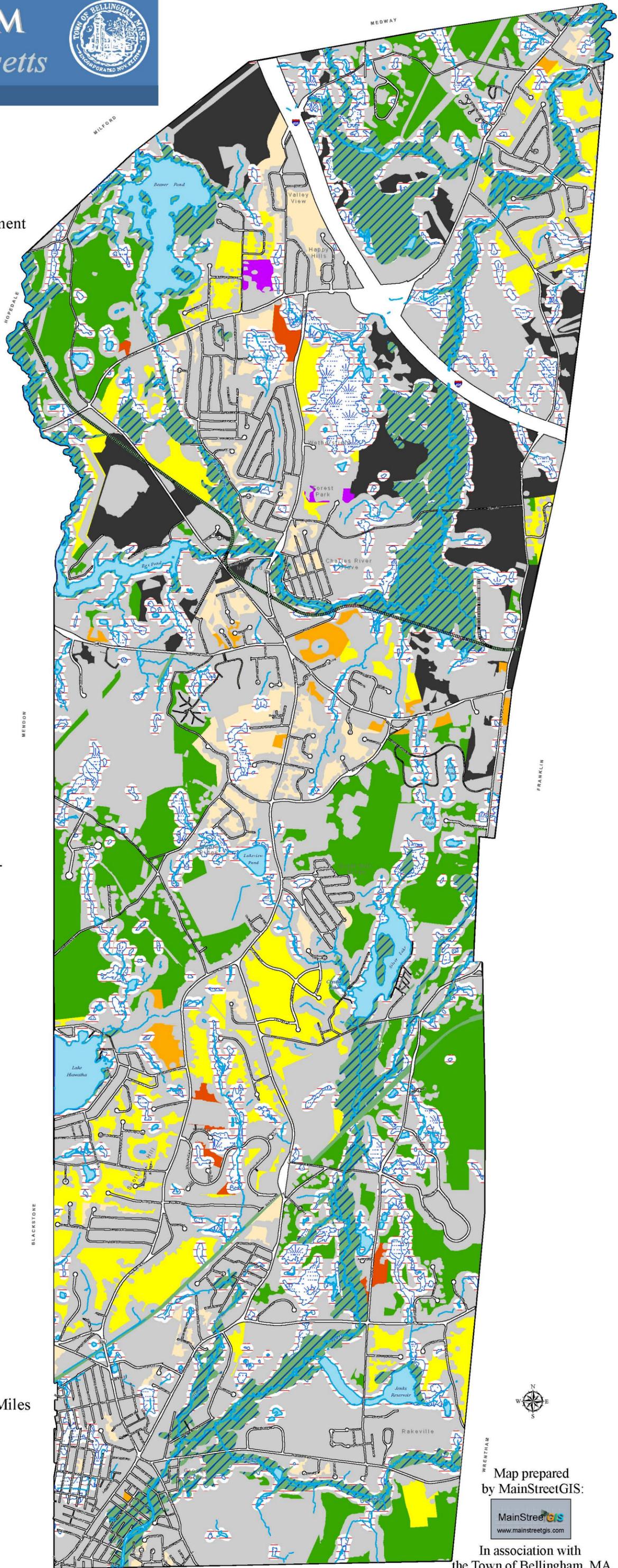
1 in = 0.50 miles

Map updated February, 2010

Data Sources:

2000 Census, Town of Bellingham, MA, MassGIS, MainStreetGIS

Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, State Plane, Massachusetts  
Datum: GCS NAD 1983



Map prepared by MainStreetGIS:



In association with the Town of Bellingham, MA



## Developed Land & Absolute Constraints Map

The purpose of this map is to identify what land in Bellingham is already developed, constrained or protected. Different colors on the map indicate the source of development restriction. Land that is represented by the color white is available for growth and development subject to community zoning, conservation and Board of Health regulations.

 **Buildable Land**

### Constraints to Development

 **Stream**

 **Water Body**

 **DEP - Wetlands**

 **Steep Slopes - Greater than 25%**

 **Utility Corridors**

### Town of Bellingham Open Space

 **Cemetery**

 **Conservation**

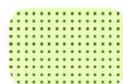
 **Conservation Restriction**

 **Conservation/Recreation**

 **DPW - Water Supply Protection**

 **Town Common**

### Federal Open Space

 **Flood Storage**

### Commonwealth of Massachusetts Open Space

 **Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR)**

 **Future Trail**

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

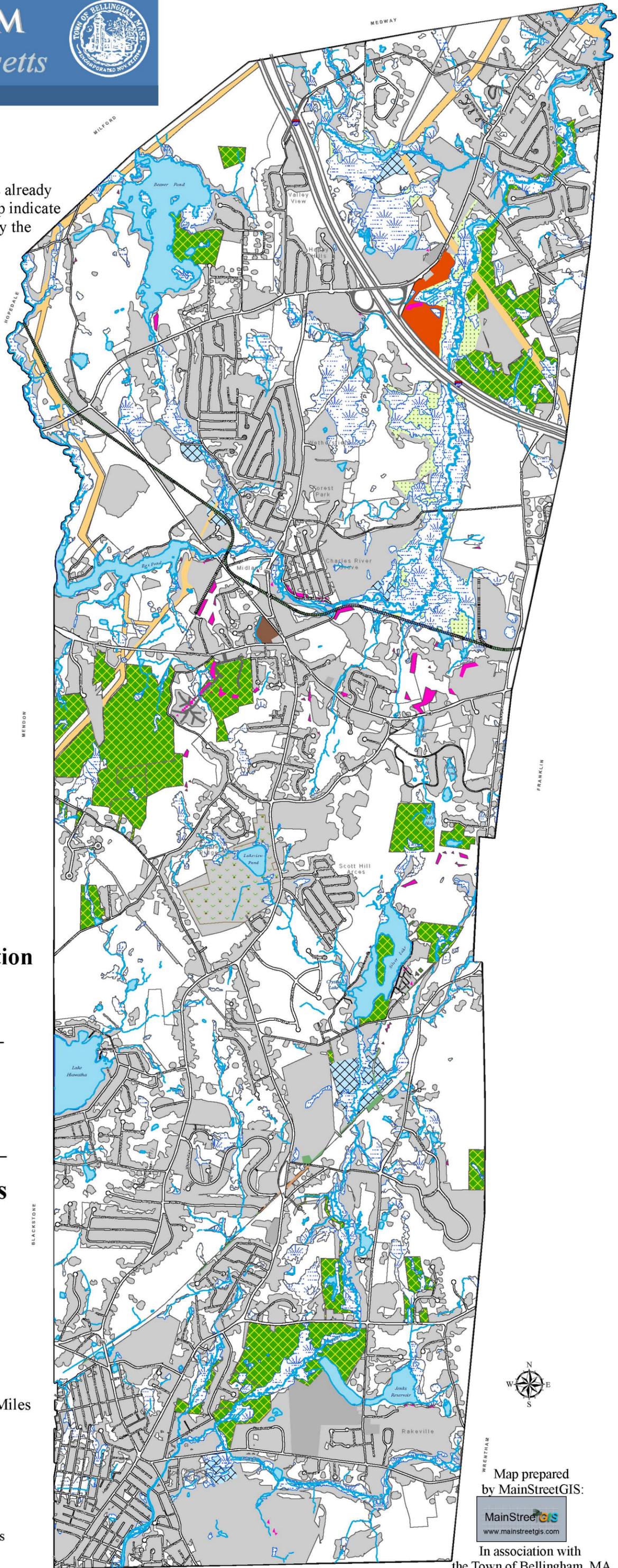
1 in = 0.50 miles

Map updated February, 2010

Data Sources:

2000 Census, Town of Bellingham, MA, MassGIS, MainStreetGIS

Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, State Plane, Massachusetts  
Datum: GCS NAD 1983



Map prepared by MainStreetGIS:



In association with the Town of Bellingham, MA



## Simplified Buildout Analysis Map

This purpose of this map is to identify locations of undeveloped pockets within developed areas that may be targets for new open space or new infill development. Also, this map may be used as a tool to identify if the Town is developing in sensible manner (i.e. adjacent to existing development or where infrastructure is available).

### Buildable Land by Zoning Class

-  Undevelopable Land
-  Partially Constrained Lands
-  Developable Land

### Hydrographic Features

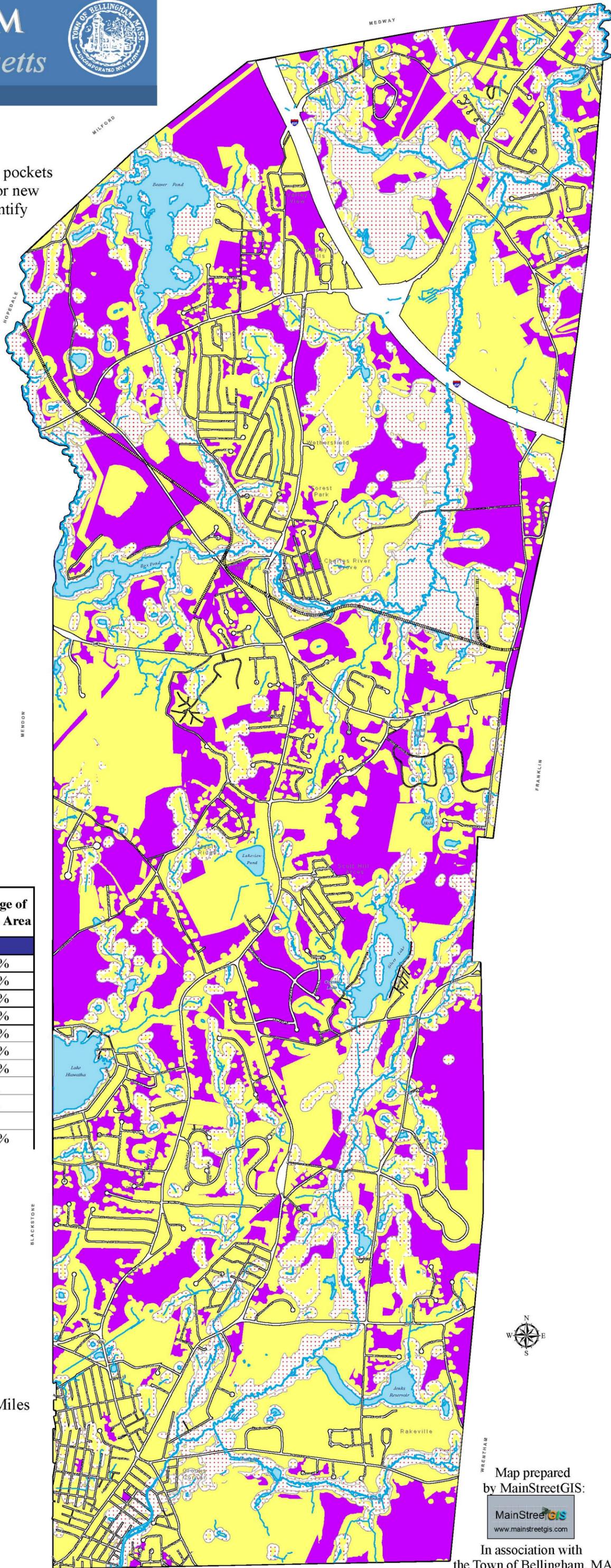
-  Stream
-  Water Body

### Infrastructure

-  Railroad
-  Roads
-  Parcel
-  Private Roads

### Buildout Analysis Statistics

Zoning District	Total Acres	Buildable Acres	Percentage of Buildable Area
<b>Agricultural</b>	4158.61	1240.19	29.82%
<b>Business 1</b>	426.02	69.92	16.41%
<b>Business 2</b>	292.88	34.61	11.82%
<b>Industrial</b>	2140.74	588.29	27.48%
<b>Multi-Family</b>	37.27	16.24	43.57%
<b>Residential</b>	2069.09	274.56	13.27%
<b>Suburban</b>	2680.63	624.34	23.29%
<b>Water</b>	277.14	N/A	N/A
<b>Wetlands</b>	7.78	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Area in Acres</b>	12090.16	2848.16	23.56%



1 in = 0.50 miles

Map updated February, 2010

Data Sources:

2000 Census, Town of Bellingham, MA, MassGIS, MainStreetGIS

Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, State Plane, Massachusetts  
Datum: GCS NAD 1983



Map prepared by MainStreetGIS:



In association with the Town of Bellingham, MA



# Affordable Housing & Accessory Apartment Map

- Parcels with Accessory Apartments
- Affordable Housing

### Infrastructure

- Railroad
- Parcel
- Roads
- Private Roads

### Hydrographic Features

- Stream
- Water Body

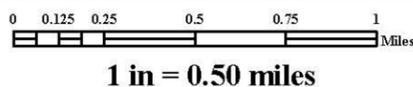
### Affordable Housing Information

Department of Housing and Community Development:  
Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory

Name	Address	Type	Total # of Units	Subsidizing Agency	
N/A	8 Depot Court	Rental	64	DHCD	
Wrentham Manor	10 Wrentham Manor	Rental	56	DHCD	
N/A	Arthur/Center Streets	Rental	3	DHCD	
Advocates	Maple Street	Rental	4	EOHHS	
Caryville Crossing	Hartford Ave.	Ownership	10	DHCD	
Oak Woods	North Main St.	Rental	90	MassHousing	
Silver Heights	N/A	Ownership	11	DHCD	
DMR Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	9	DMR	Not Mapped
JPI Apartments	151 North Main Street	Rental	285	FHLBB	
<b>Bellingham Totals</b>			<b>532</b>		
<b>Census 2000 Year Round Housing Units</b>			<b>5,632</b>		
<b>Percent Subsidized</b>			<b>9.45%</b>		

### Addresses of Legal Accessory Apartments: List provided by the Town of Bellingham's Board of Health

4 Charlotte Road	228 Blackstone Street
77 Lake Street	90 Winter Street
91 Muron Avenue	75 Chestnut Street
45 Deer Run Road	6 Brittany Road
820 Pulaski Blvd.	23-25 Park Street
46 Susan Lane	24 Chamberlain Road
117 Plymouth Road	41 Rakeville Circle
32 Irene Court	51 Mechanic Street
35 Briar Road	25 Susan Lane
4 Thayer Road	46-50 Elbow Street
5 Rolling Hills Drive	



Data Sources:

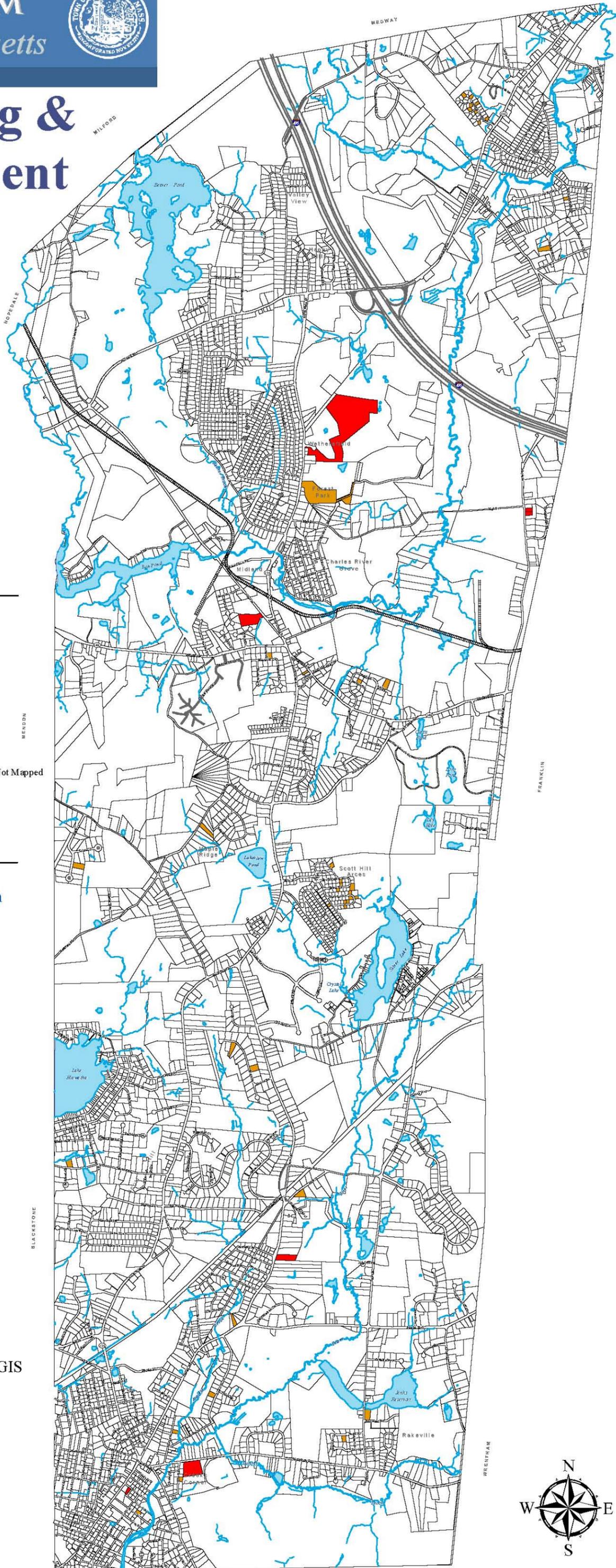
2000 Census, Town of Bellingham, MA, MassGIS, MainStreetGIS

Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, State Plane, Massachusetts  
Datum: GCS NAD 1983

Map prepared by MainStreetGIS:



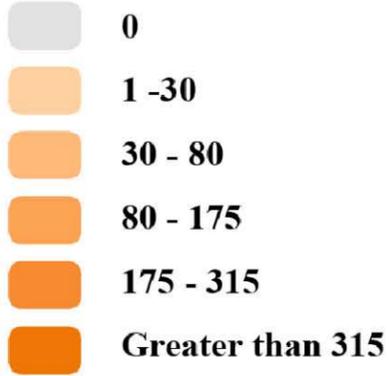
In association with the Town of Bellingham, MA



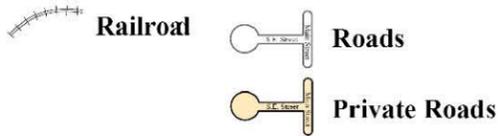


## Total Population Map

### Persons per Census Tract



### Infrastructure



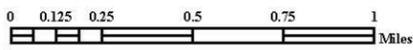
### Hydrographic Features



### Population Statistics

Year	Total Population	Percent Change from Previous	Source
2000	15314	N/A	2000 Census
2001	15482	1.09%	Census Bureau Estimate
2002	15536	0.35%	Census Bureau Estimate
2003	15651	0.73%	Census Bureau Estimate
2004	15723	0.46%	Census Bureau Estimate
2005	15724	0.01%	Census Bureau Estimate
2006	15837	0.71%	Census Bureau Estimate
2007	15903	0.42%	Census Bureau Estimate
<b>Average Growth</b>		<b>0.54%</b>	

Map updated: February, 2010



1 in = 0.50 miles

#### Data Sources:

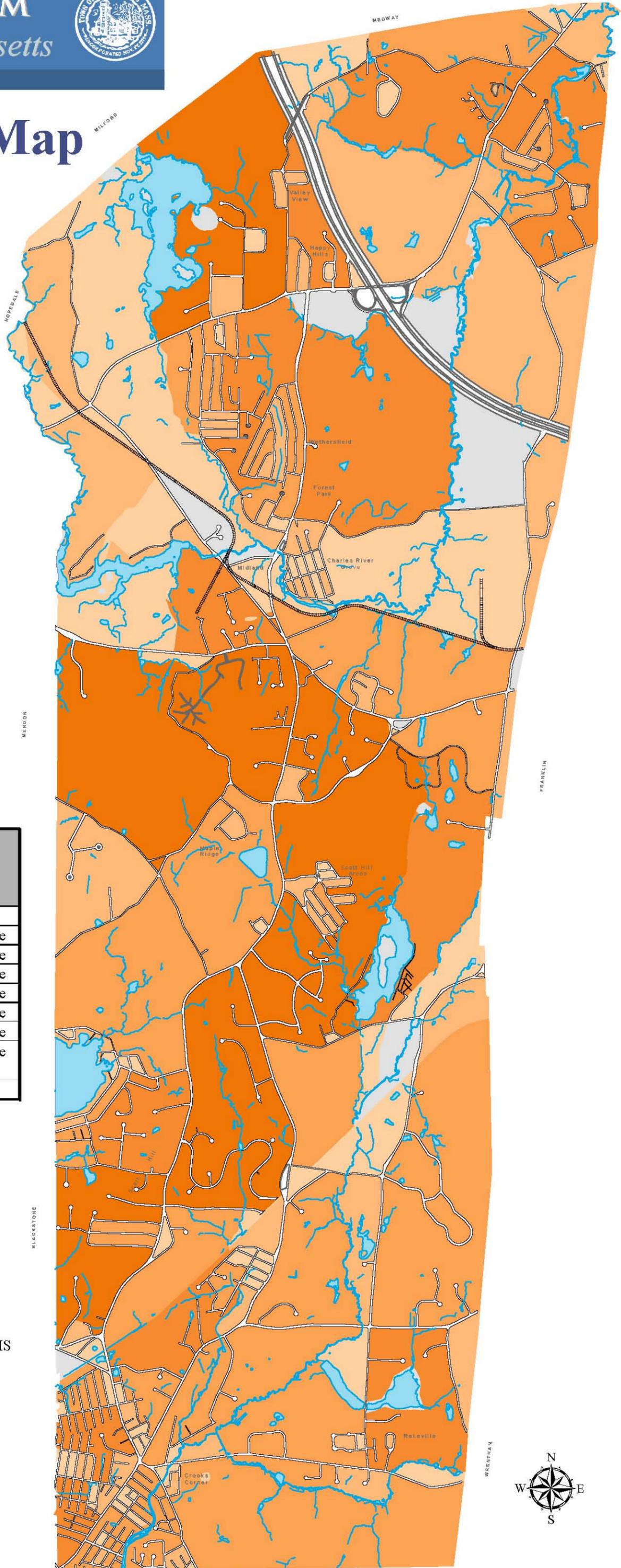
2000 Census, Town of Bellingham, MA, MassGIS, MainStreetGIS

Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, State Plane, Massachusetts  
Datum: GCS NAD 1983

Map prepared by MainStreetGIS:



In association with the Town of Bellingham, MA







## Open Space & Recreation Map

### Town of Bellingham Open Space

- Cemetary
- Conservation
- Conservation Restriction
- Conservation/Recreation
- DPW - Water Supply Protection
- Town Common

### Federal Open Space

- Flood Storage

### Commonwealth of Massachusetts Open Space

- Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Future Trail

### Recreation Facilities

#### Private

- Campground
- Golf Course
- Sportsmen's Club

#### Public

- Park/Playground
- School

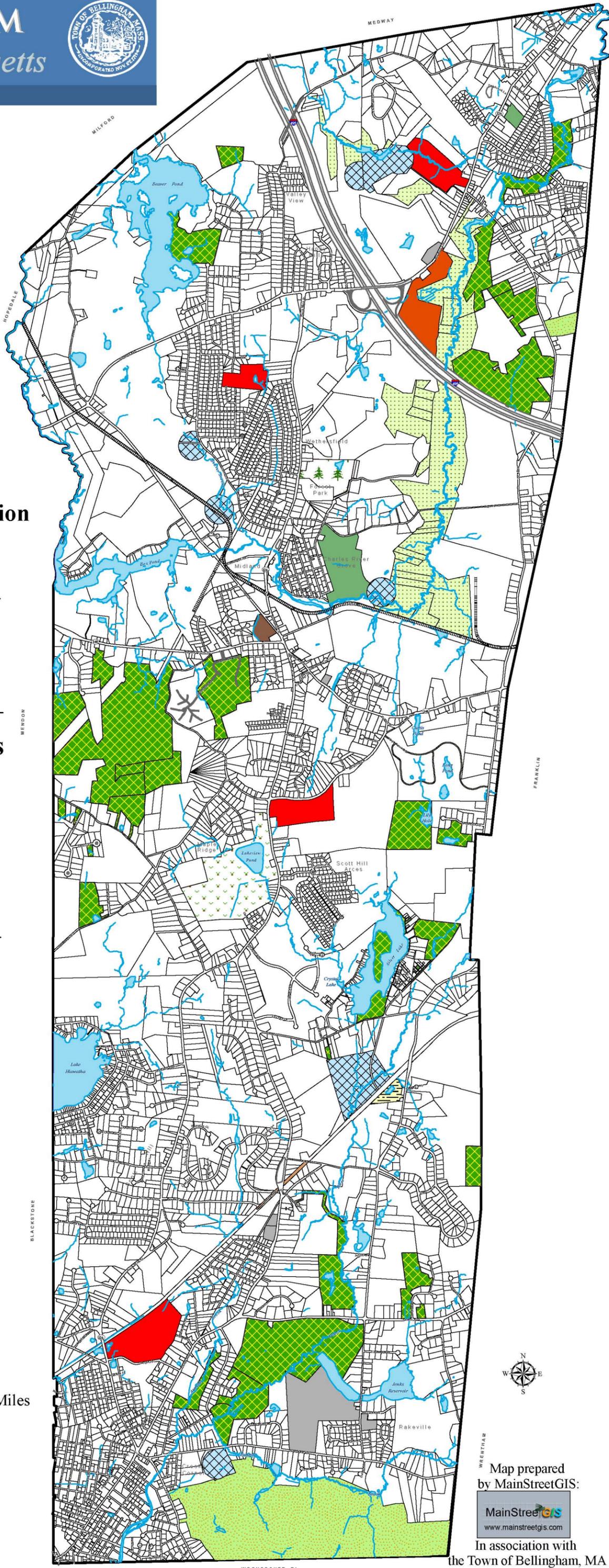
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

1 in = 0.50 miles

Map updated February, 2010

Data Sources:

2000 Census, Town of Bellingham, MA, MassGIS, MainStreetGIS  
 Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic, State Plane, Massachusetts  
 Datum: GCS NAD 1983



Map prepared by MainStreetGIS:



In association with the Town of Bellingham, MA