

town of
wellesley
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2007-2017 UPDATE

Wellesley Planning Board

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Consultant Team:

Goody, Clancy & Associates
Bonnie Heudorfer
Byrne McKinney & Associates
Beta Group

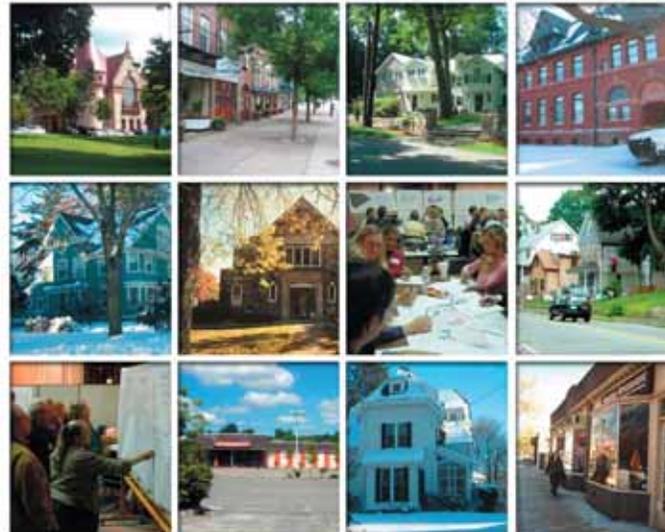
Report to the Board of Selectmen

September 25, 2006

Wellesley Comprehensive Plan

2007-2017 UPDATE

Goals and Priorities
Housing
Economic Development
Land Use
Natural and Cultural Resources
Open Space and Recreation
Transportation and Circulation
Public Facilities and Services
Stewardship and Implementation



Wellesley Planning Board
Wellesley Comprehensive Plan
Steering Committee

Goody Clancy
Bonnie Heudorfer, Housing Consultant
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BETA Group, Inc.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Planning Board Members

- Thomas Frisardi
- Rose Mary Donahue
- James C. Meade
- Sue Wright
- Edward Chazen
- Frank S. DeMasi
- Chris Chan

Town Meeting Precinct Representatives

- Gerald C. Hume, Precinct A
- Richard McGhee, Precinct B
- Jacqueline Hatch, Precinct C
- Joellen Toussaint, Precinct D
- Henry Lysaght, Precinct E
- Barbara McMahan, Precinct F
- Judith Hull, Precinct G

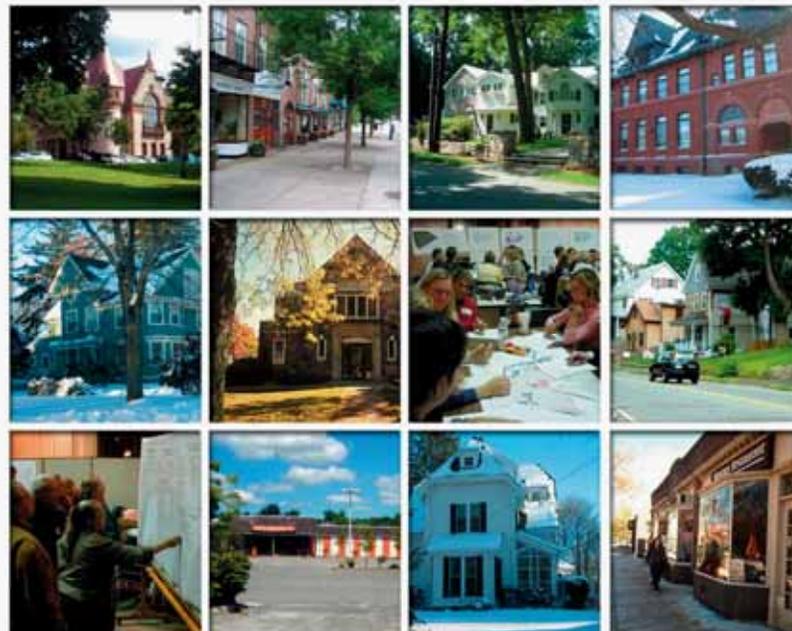
The plan is available for review:

- Town web site
- Library
- Planning Department

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Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan...

- Engages residents in *building consensus* on a desired future.
- Provides *policy and strategic guidance on physical development and redevelopment* of land.
- Guides a community to *actively seek positive change and deflect negative change*, rather than simply react after change has occurred.
- Provides *predictability for residents, businesses and developers*.
- Helps *communities save money because they plan for orderly investment* in services, facilities and infrastructure.
- Helps communities *preserve the sense of place and identity* that makes them unique.

Planning Works!

Selected Implementation of 1994 Plan Recommendations

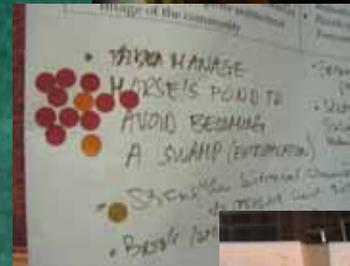
- Commercial district plans
- Housing Development Corporation
- Successful plan for MassHighway Route 9 depot site
- Sewering of small lots around Morses Pond to eliminate pollution
- New recreation center
- Trails Committee activities
- Route 9 improvements
- Route 16 streetscape improvements
- Traffic calming projects
- Senior bus service

Approach to the Plan

- Community participation and dialogue
- Visualization to help people understand choices
- Focus most effort on the hardest questions and trade-offs
- Think about implementation from the beginning

Wellesley Residents Participated in Creating the Plan

- Town-wide survey
- Seven public meetings – town-wide and by precinct
- One meeting with business and institutional stakeholders
- Interviews with additional stakeholders
- Steering Committee meetings open to the public
- Committee member visits to Town boards and commissions to review progress and gain additional input
- Review of draft plan



Plan Contents

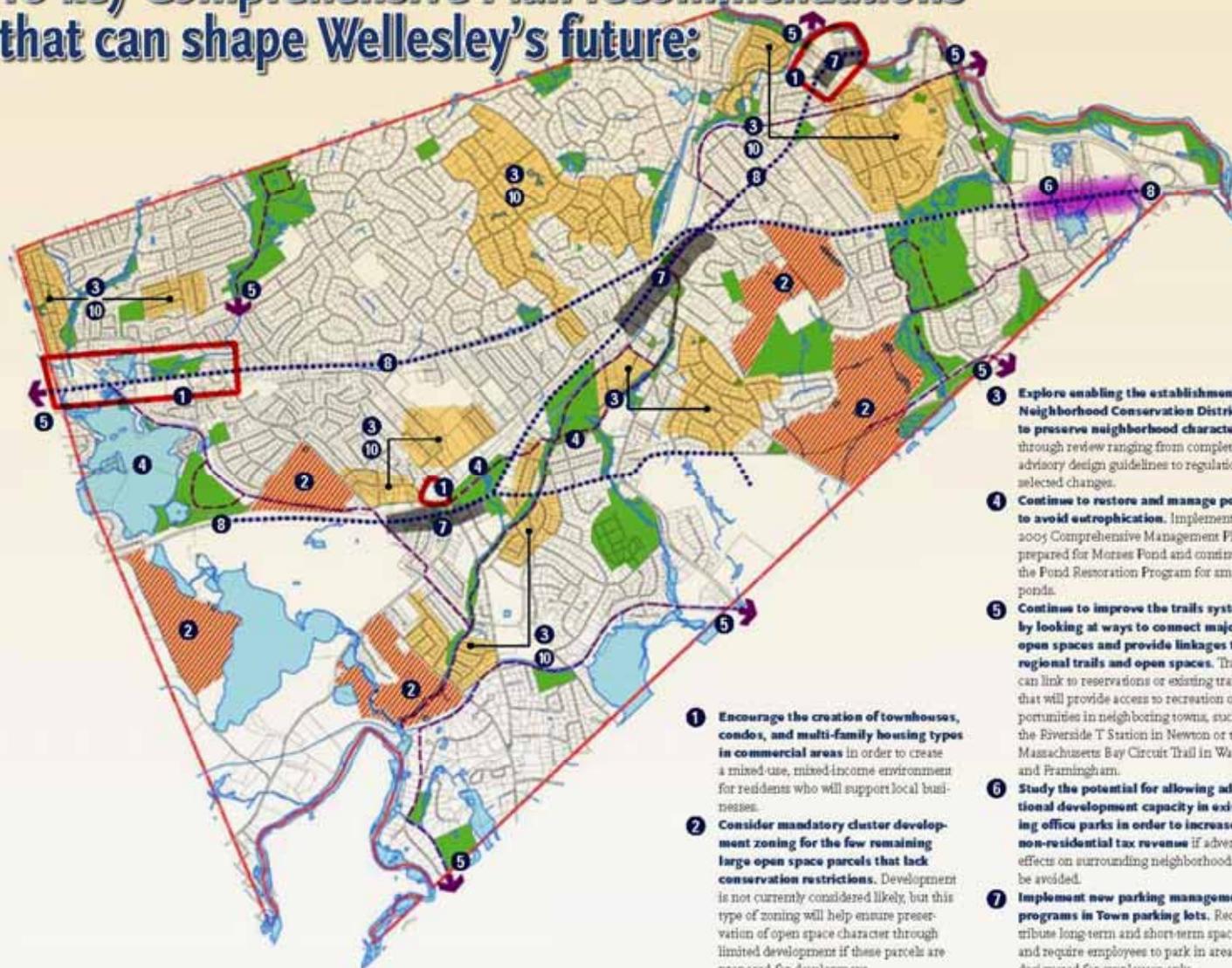
- Graphic executive summary
- Summary of key comprehensive plan recommendations
- Goals for the next ten years
- Population and land use trends
- Chapters with recommendations and actions:
 - Housing and Residential Character
 - Economic Development
 - Managing Land Use for the Future
 - Natural and Cultural Resources
 - Open Space and Recreation
 - Transportation and Circulation
 - Public Facilities and Services

Plan Contents

- 9 mixed-use development scenarios for 3 sites:
 - Grossman's
 - St. James's Church
 - Wellesley Motor Inn/Natick Line
- 19 foldout maps
- Implementation chapter and matrix
- Appendices: affordable housing production, open space inventory, trails, transit and traffic calming



10 key Comprehensive Plan recommendations that can shape Wellesley's future:



- Potential mixed-use development area
- Potential mandatory cluster zoning overlay
- Parking management areas
- Major existing trails
- Existing open space
- Potential shuttle route
- Area with potential historic resources
- Office park area with potential for increasing development capacity
- Potential trail linkages

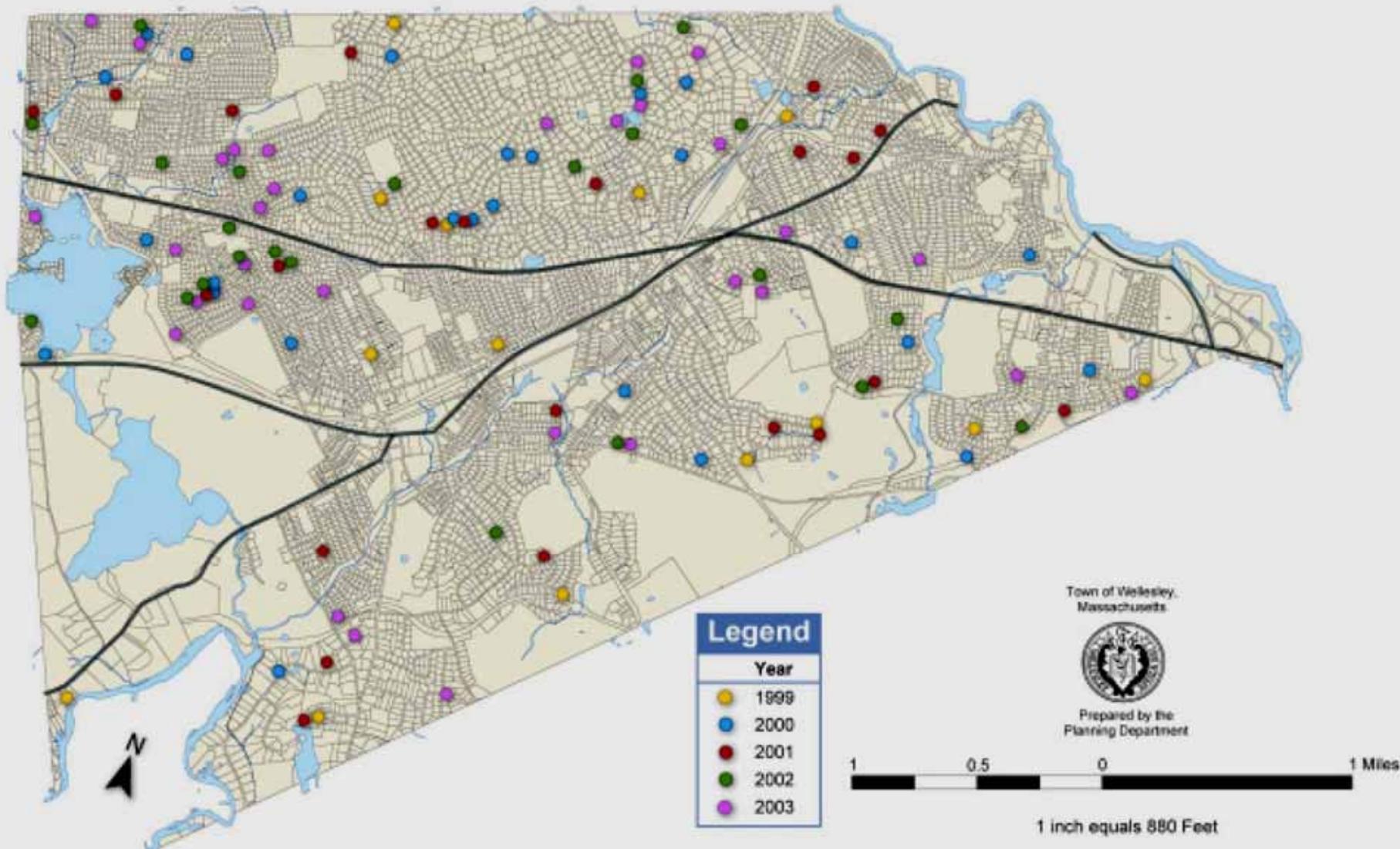
- 1** Encourage the creation of townhouses, condos, and multi-family housing types in commercial areas in order to create a mixed-use, mixed-income environment for residents who will support local businesses.
- 2** Consider mandatory cluster development zoning for the few remaining large open space parcels that lack conservation restrictions. Development is not currently considered likely, but this type of zoning will help ensure preservation of open space character through limited development if these parcels are proposed for development.

- 3** Explore enabling the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts to preserve neighborhood character through review ranging from completely advisory design guidelines to regulation of selected changes.
- 4** Continue to restore and manage ponds to avoid eutrophication. Implement the 2005 Comprehensive Management Plan prepared for Moses Pond and continue the Pond Restoration Program for smaller ponds.
- 5** Continue to improve the trails system by looking at ways to connect major open spaces and provide linkages to regional trails and open spaces. Trails can link to reservations or existing trails that will provide access to recreation opportunities in neighboring towns, such as the Riverside T Station in Newton or the Massachusetts Bay Circuit Trail in Wayland and Framingham.
- 6** Study the potential for allowing additional development capacity in existing office parks in order to increase non-residential tax revenue if adverse effects on surrounding neighborhoods can be avoided.
- 7** Implement new parking management programs in Town parking lots. Redistribute long-term and short-term spaces and require employees to park in areas designated for employees only.

- 8** Explore creating a new shuttle service between preferred destinations in order to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips in Wellesley. This service could connect the downtown business district, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, commuter rail stations, colleges, office park areas, and new mixed-use areas.
- 9** Establish site plan review for large replacement houses to provide an opportunity to discuss design impacts on a street or neighborhood. Site plan review will not prevent large homes that meet certain criteria from being constructed, but the process will allow impacts to be understood and mitigated.
- 10** Protect historic properties by enacting a Landmark Bylaw and designating individual properties as local landmarks. Designation would be done only with the permission of the property owner, and regulation would be of exteriors only.

Key Housing Concerns: Teardowns and "Mansionization"

FIGURE 4-1, RESIDENTIAL DEMOLITIONS 1999-2003



Housing Recommendations

- Enact site plan review for large replacement houses.
- Encourage voluntary neighborhood design guidelines for builders and property owners and potential Neighborhood Conservation Districts to preserve neighborhood character.
- Provide new kinds of housing for empty nesters and to meet affordable housing goals in commercial districts.



Economic Development Recommendations

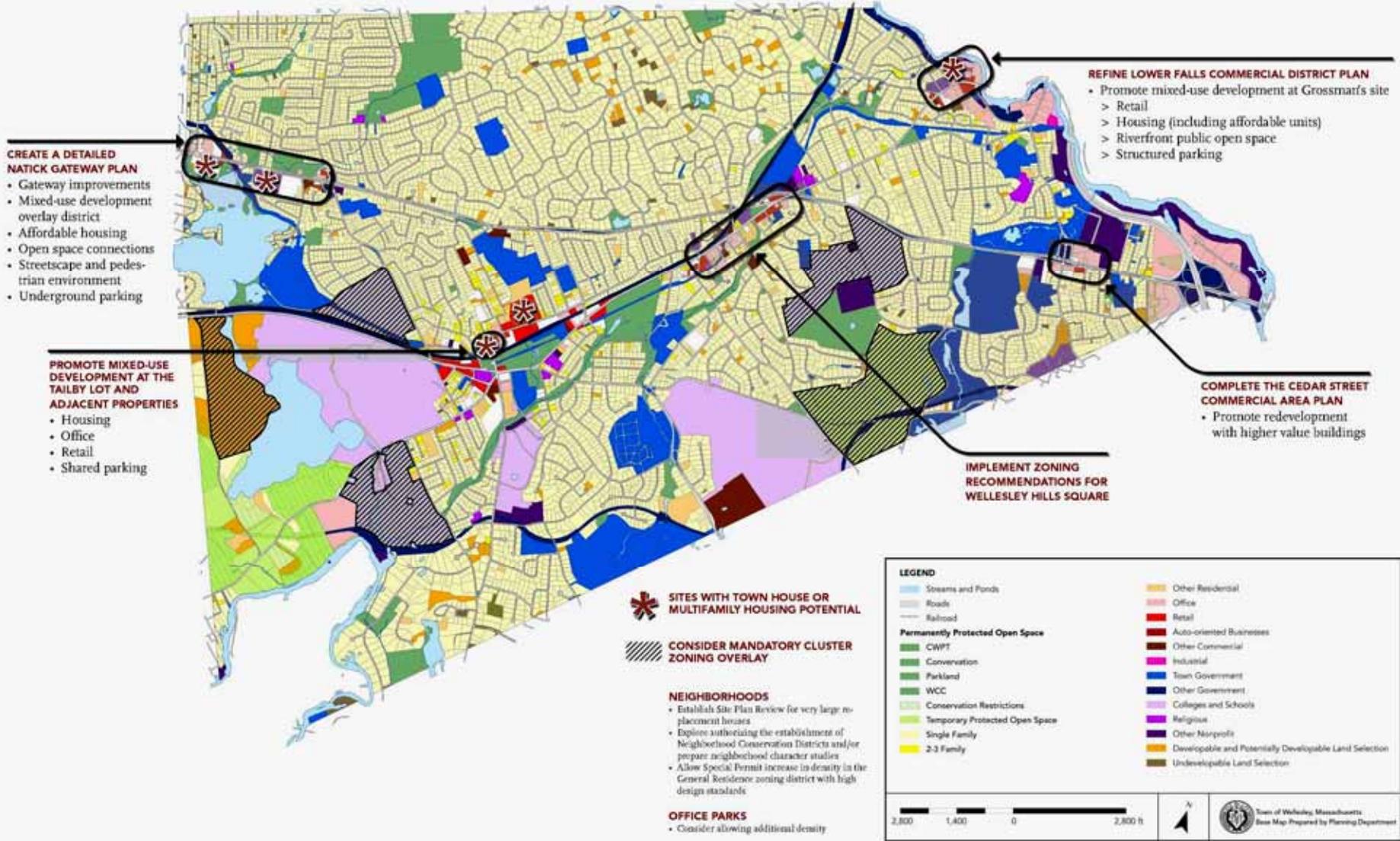
- Encourage housing development as part of a mixed-use strategy for commercial districts.
- Preserve and enhance the character of village commercial districts.
- Create a plan for the Natick Line commercial area and gateway.
- Provide Town funding to support staff time for economic development activities.
- Create a system of regular communication among economic development stakeholders.
- Study the potential tax revenue benefits and adverse impacts of allowing additional development capacity in office parks or establishing a split tax rate.



Land Use Recommendations

- Recodify the Zoning Bylaw in the next ten years.
- Review the General Residence district to allow a special permit option for projects with higher densities that meet Town design standards and other requirements.
- Clarify zoning language on mixed-use buildings in commercial districts.
- Create a Route 9 overlay district with design standards from Natick Line to Russell Road.
- Raise public awareness about and understanding of land use issues in Wellesley.

FIGURE 8-1, PHASE ONE—LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS



Fitting New Development into Commercial Areas

Scenarios for new, well-designed mixed-use projects in Wellesley's commercial areas show the potential for higher density, different housing types, public open space and amenities, and a better pedestrian environment.



Natural Resources Recommendations

- Promote awareness of the environmental damage caused by stormwater runoff and increased impervious surfaces.
- Continue to restore and manage ponds to avoid eutrophication.
- Promote the use of Best Management Practices to preserve natural resources.
- Continue to enhance the Shade Tree Program.



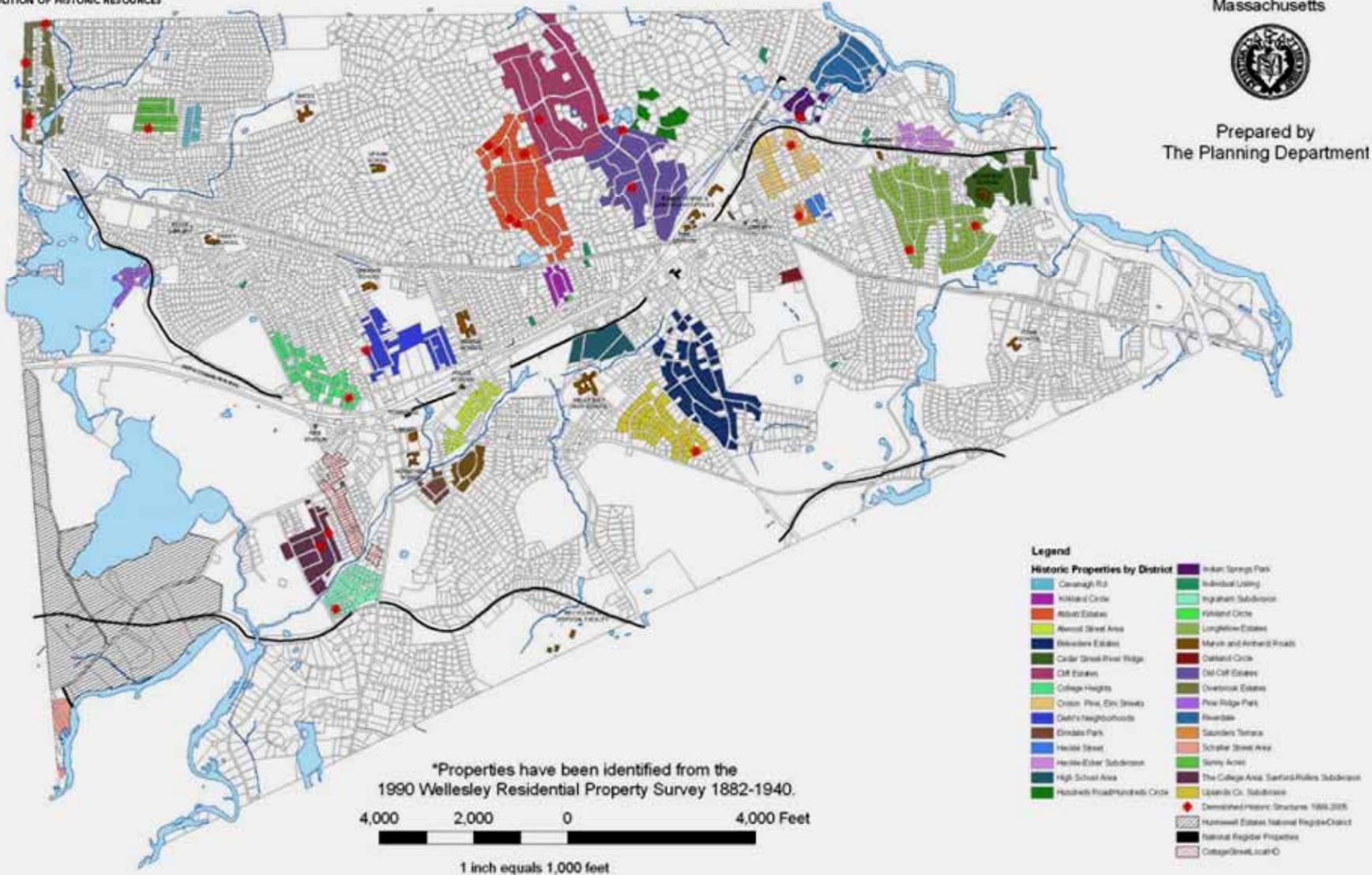
Cultural Resources Recommendations

- Promote public awareness of the benefits of historic preservation.
- Maintain the historic integrity of neighborhoods and landscapes through initiatives such as landmark designation or Neighborhood Conservation Districts.
- Seek non-local partnerships and private funding sources for preservation projects.



Demolition of Houses In Areas of Historic Interest

FIGURE 7-7, DEMOLITION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES



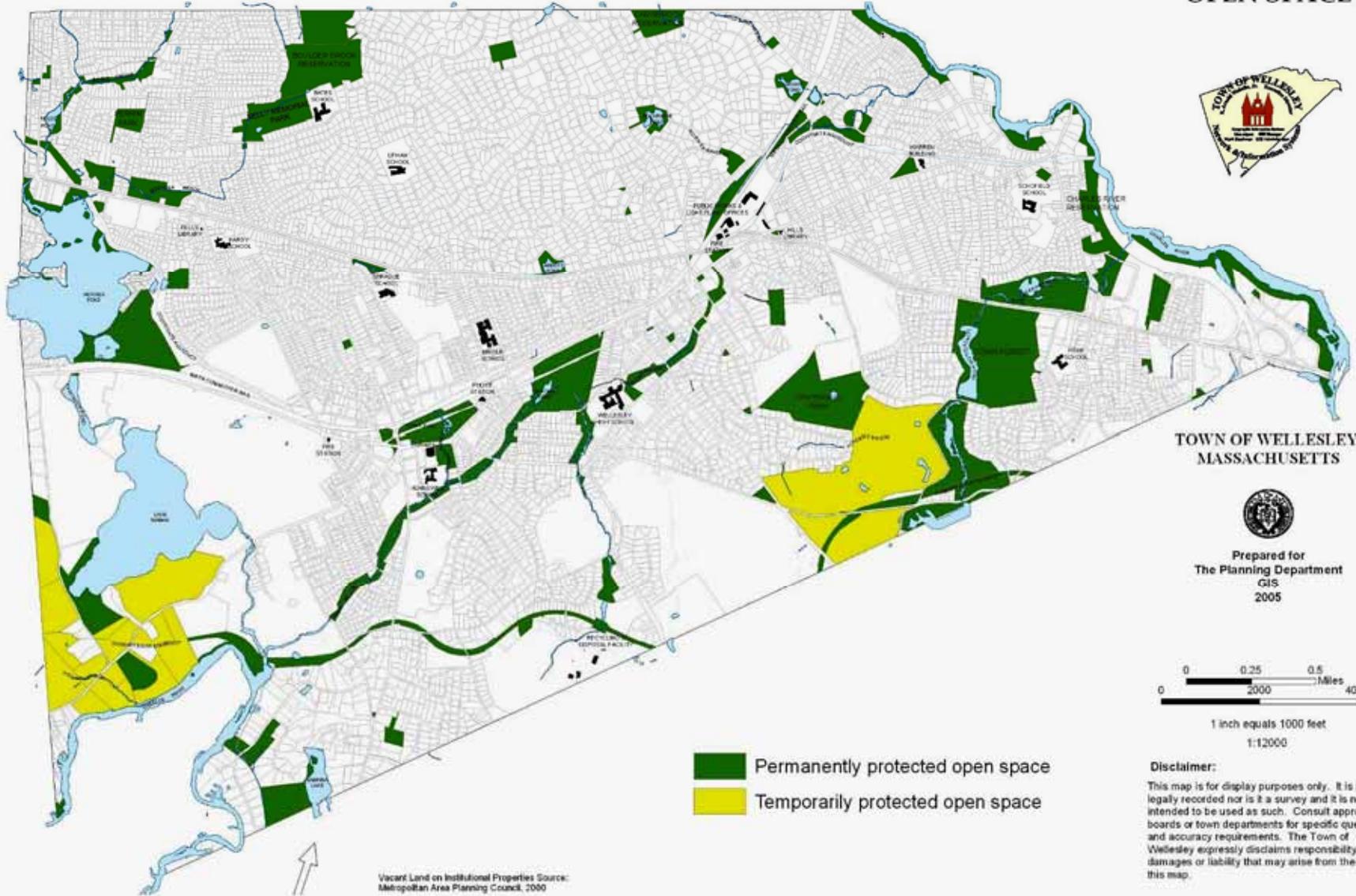
Open Space and Recreation Recommendations

- Continue to protect and enhance open space, including through agreements with institutional partners.
- Consider mandatory cluster zoning for areas currently with temporary open space protection.
- Pursue connectivity of open spaces on a local and regional level.
- Conduct a recreational needs assessment and seek management options that will allow more productive use of Town-owned and private active recreational space rather than converting passive into active open space.
- Continue to develop recreation programs that will fit the needs of Wellesley's changing population.



FIGURE 8-1, PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

OPEN SPACE



Transportation and Circulation Recommendations

- Actively participate in regional transportation planning.
- Implement stronger Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that will reduce overall traffic demand on the Wellesley road system.
- Continue implementation of new technologies to address traffic growth.
- Improve traffic safety and correct high-hazard locations.
- Explore the possibility of an intra-town transit system.
- Implement new parking management strategies in Town-owned lots.
- Consider developing a Sidewalk Plan.
- Create a Townwide Bicycle Plan.



Public Facilities and Services Recommendations

- Continue improving school facilities.
- Consider using schools for community meeting space after school hours.
- Develop a systematic approach to asset management.
- Consider increasing fire and police staff to address shortfalls.
- Develop a uniform policy for street acceptance and a system for the maintenance of private streets.
- Construct an expanded DPW operations building and a new Municipal Light Plant facility.



Stewardship and Implementation

- Effective implementation requires a group of leaders to monitor progress and facilitate actions
- Broad community participation will be needed
- Actions should be coordinated with the capital plan

Recommendations:

- Create a system to review the goals, strategies, and actions of the comprehensive plan at the five-year mark.

Implementation: What—How—When—How Much

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

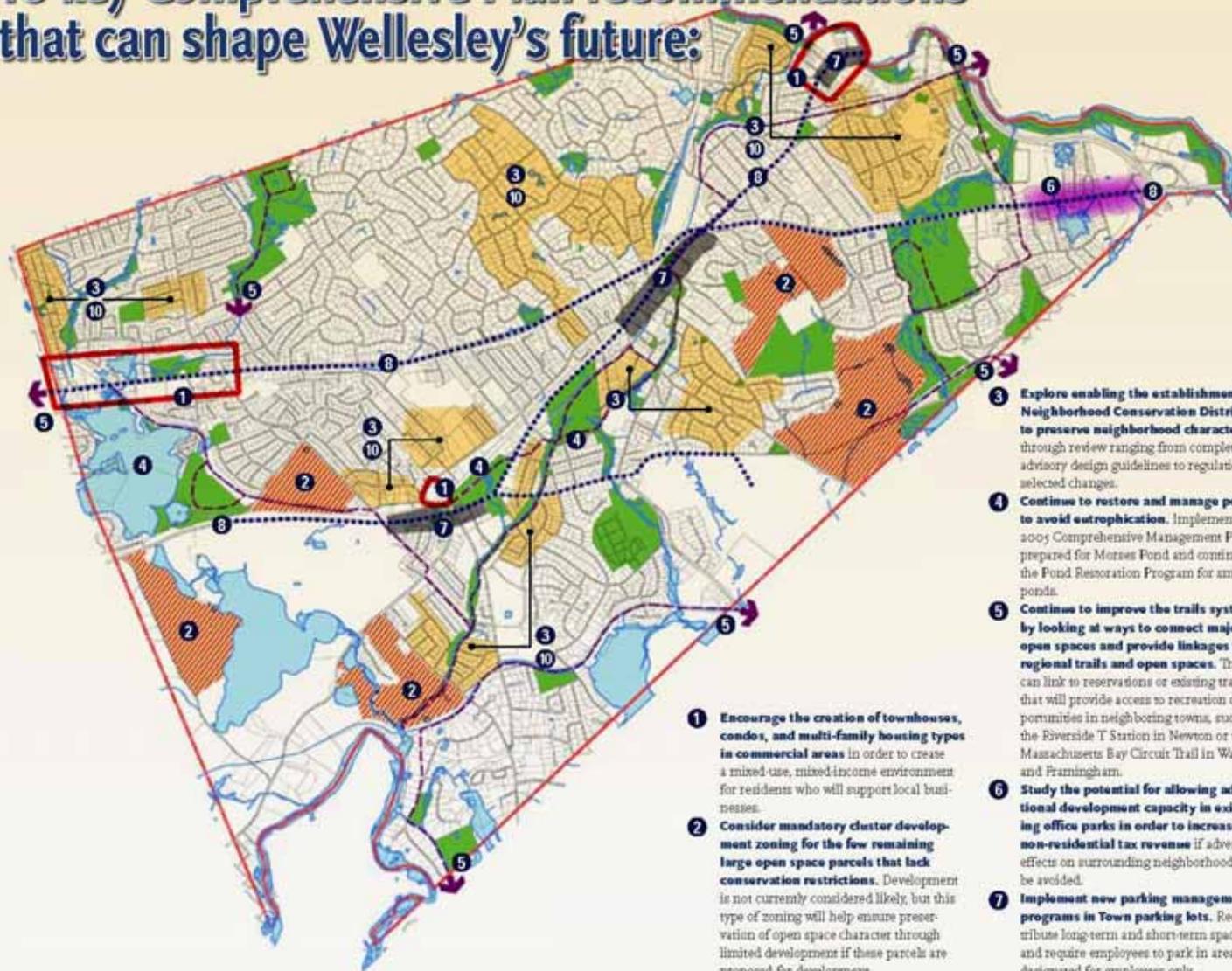
GOAL	RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME: S=2 YEARS; M=2-5 YEARS; L=5-10 YEARS	HIGH PRIORITY?	ESTIMATED COST
Preserve and enhance the Town's open space system.	Continue to protect and enhance open space in Wellesley.	Continue to seek to expand the trails system through conservation restrictions granted by property owners.	NRC	ongoing		

HOUSING

GOAL	RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME: S=2 YEARS; M=2-5 YEARS; L=5-10 YEARS	HIGH PRIORITY?	ESTIMATED COST
Maintain the primarily single-family character of Wellesley's housing stock.	Focus additional multi-family housing in commercial areas or on arterial roads.	Explore the potential for multi-family housing in locations such as the Route 9/Natick Line area and the Grossman's site in Lower Falls.	Wellesley Housing Development Corp (WHDC)	S	yes	
Maintain the physical form of Wellesley's residential neighborhoods by balancing community standards with individual interests.	Consider Site Plan Review for large houses.	Define "demolition" or "replacement house" to cover substantial additions.	Planning Board; Town Meeting	S	yes	
		Define "Residential Gross Floor Area" or a similar concept to include garages.	Planning Board; Town Meeting	S	yes	
		Establish Large House Site Plan Review for replacement houses three or more times the size of the houses they replace.	Planning Board; Town Meeting	S	yes	
	Define, promote, and/or protect neighborhood identity and character.	Explore the potential for additional local historic districts, a Historic Landmarks Bylaw, and historic easements.	Historical Commission	S		
		Commission a series of neighborhood studies to analyze and define neighborhood character and create voluntary guidelines for additions and new construction.	Planning Board	M		\$20K per study with public meetings
		Explore authorizing the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts.	Planning Board; Historical Commission	M		
		Explore elements of form-based zoning to conserve neighborhood character.	Planning Board	L		

	NRC	ongoing		
	NRC	ongoing		
on	NRC	M-L		
to on f	Planning Board	M	yes	
p -	NRC; Planning Board	S	yes	
irk	NRC	S-M (FY07-FY10)	yes	\$500,000
ing nts	DPW and NRC	S-M (FY06-FY10)	yes	\$579,500
ds	DPW and NRC	S-M (FY06-FY10)		\$550,000
h	DPW and NRC	M (FY09-FY10)		\$412,500

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10 Key Steps to Implementation

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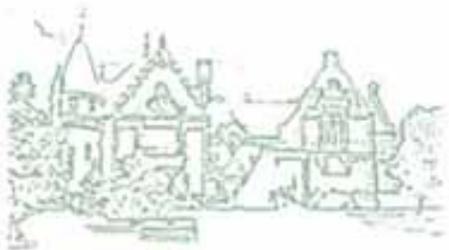
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