

10 Public Facilities and Services

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
Maintain school excellence.	Ensure that Wellesley’s students have access to needed classroom technology and adequate classroom space.	Upgrade facilities to include state-of-the-art technology and classroom amenities. Renovate or replace aging facilities to meet classroom space needs generated by projected enrollment increases.
Create additional community meeting space.	Investigate utilizing public schools for after-hours community activities and events.	Create a management system to monitor activities and secure restricted areas during after-hours community use.
Provide systematic oversight of Town facilities and infrastructure.	Develop a town asset management system to track infrastructure conditions.	Implement a computerized system to streamline maintenance records and track changes.
Improve public safety response times and operations.	Ensure the provision of adequate numbers of personnel and equipment.	Hire additional public safety staff and purchase new equipment as funds become available.
Enhance DPW and the Municipal Light Plant’s operations.	Provide adequate space and technology for operations.	Construct an expanded DPW operations building and a new MLP facility. Replace or refurbish DPW vehicles and equipment.
Clarify Town policies about the maintenance of private streets.	Implement a private street maintenance system.	Create a betterment system that will allow abutters to petition the Town for private road upgrades/maintenance.
Develop a uniform policy for street acceptance.	Create a street acceptance policy that covers private streets that are not part of new subdivisions.	Implement a process by which abutters can petition the Town for acceptance of private streets.

Findings

- The Wellesley School System is undergoing major improvements to address lack of space and antiquated facilities.
- Budget issues are making future improvements to the school system difficult to implement.
- Wellesley does a good job of maintaining existing Town facilities. Those that are old or inadequate are being studied or already have plans for improvement.
- Wellesley has an active recycling program and one of the highest municipal recycling rates in Massachusetts.
- When measured against national standards, Wellesley's police and fire departments are short-staffed.
- The Town lacks a cohesive asset management system to address aging infrastructure and road conditions.
- There is no formal street acceptance policy or system in place. Maintenance of unaccepted streets is done on a provisional basis.

Key Challenges

- Providing the school system with adequate funds to replace or renovate the antiquated high school and make other needed improvements.
- Finding new locations for community meeting space.
- Providing additional police and fire staff to address operational limitations.
- Creating an asset management program that is updated on an annual basis to aid in developing the Capital Improvement Program.

A. CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Town of Wellesley provides excellent facilities for the different departments and continues upgrades for those facilities in need. Relatively new construction or upgrades have been completed for many facilities, including the police headquarters, fire stations, the library system, Bates and Sprague Elementary Schools, and Wellesley Middle School (currently undergoing renovation). Other studies are underway to possibly construct a joint Public Works/ Municipal Light facility and renovate or replace the high school.

Wellesley Public School System

The Town of Wellesley Public School System maintains and improves the school system as required to meet enrollment demands. The schools include Wellesley High School, Wellesley Middle School, and seven elementary schools. The Bates and Sprague Elementary Schools underwent major renovations in 2004.

WELLESLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STATISTICS

- Grades: Pre-K–5
- 2005–2006 Enrollment: 2212
- Faculty & Staff: 252



PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (2005–2006)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT (K-5)
Bates	349
Fiske	319
Hardy	276
Hunnewell	305
Sprague	355
Upham	255
Schofield	353
TOTAL	2212

Source: Wellesley Public Schools

In addition to these schools, the Town operates a pre-school (PAWS – Pre-School at Wellesley) program for children to prepare them for kindergarten. The program is located at 63 Hastings Street, adjacent to the Fiske School. The PAWS program serves

typically developing children as well as children with special needs.

Wellesley Middle School is undergoing a major renovation that will be completed in January 2007. The \$27 million project will include increased space for students, administration,

WELLESLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL STATISTICS

- Grades: 6–8
- 2005–2006 Enrollment: 980
- Faculty & Staff: 90

and staff. The renovation will provide six additional classrooms and one new science laboratory. In addition, administra-

tion will be relocated to improved space and more support space will be provided for staff. A new roof will be placed on the main building, and hall lighting improvements will be provided throughout the school.



Wellesley High School was built in 1938 and basic improvements are needed, including a new roof and insulation, repairs to plumbing and electrical systems, new carpeting, replacing 30% of the windows, and providing third-floor air-conditioning. A planning study is underway to determine

whether the facility should be upgraded or replaced to provide

WELLESLEY HIGH SCHOOL STATISTICS

- Grades: 9–12
- 2005–2006 Enrollment: 1140
- Faculty & Staff: 138
- 2005 graduating class: 242

increased classroom space. Enrollment projections indicate that school population will increase, and the existing space is inadequate to meet future enrollment levels.

The school operating budget has been in deficit situations in recent years. All schools were asked to make cuts to reduce the projected FY 2007 shortfall; however, the need for additional classroom space, the rising cost of educational programs, high energy prices, and increased costs of health insurance and benefits for school employees led to a budget override referendum. In May 2006, voters approved a \$3.16 million budget override that will provide funding for educational programs and facility improvements.

Wellesley Private Schools

The Town of Wellesley contains four private schools that supplement the public school system: Dana Hall School, Tenacre Country Day School, St. Paul School, and St. John the Evangelist School.

Dana Hall is a boarding and day school for girls in grades 6-12. In 2004–2005, 453 students were enrolled at Dana Hall School. Ten-Acre Country Day School is a Pre-K through Grade 6 elementary school for boys and girls.

Roman Catholic-affiliated schools include two elementary schools: St. John the Evangelist School, which had a 2004–2005 enrollment of 210 students for Grades Pre-K through 6, and St. Paul School, which had a 2004–2005 enrollment of 220 students in Grades Pre-K through 6.

Department of Public Works

The Board of Public Works directs the Department of Public Works (DPW), which oversees engineering, parks and recreation services, highways, recycling & disposal, management services, water and sewer, and street lighting maintenance. All of these programs are funded from general tax revenues, except for the Water Program and the Sewer Program, which are funded exclusively by residential user fees.

Current DPW operations are located in a constrained facility at 455 Worcester Street. Additional space is needed and plans are underway to expand the DPW building by approximately 34,900 square feet at the existing site. This will also allow the Municipal Light Plant (MLP) to construct a new MLP building on the DPW site.

The Engineering Division of DPW provides the Town with engineering, architectural, and technical services required to construct, operate, and maintain Town facilities and infrastructure. This includes water and sewer planning and stormwater management. The Engineering Division has three responsibilities:

- Planning and Design – Develops and reviews studies and plans;
- Survey and Inspection – Performs town land surveys and ensures compliance with Massachusetts General Laws;
- Town Plans and Records – Maintains maps, drawings, and construction and street acceptance plans.

Water and Sewer

The Water and Sewer Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Town's water and sanitary sewer systems. It is organized into two programs, which are funded entirely by water and sewer ratepayers.

- Water system storage capacity is 6.3 million gallons in two facilities.
- Wellesley maintains 149 miles of water distribution main.
- 85% of water is from 7 local wells and 15% is from the MWRA system.
- Three treatment facilities in town treat water for iron and manganese and also chlorinate and aerate.
- The sewer system includes 134 miles of collection lines and 22 pump stations.
- Sewage is treated at the MWRA system on Deer Island.

Municipal Light Plant

Wellesley has its own electric company that provides and manages power to the town. The Wellesley Municipal Light Plant was established to provide reliable and efficient electric power at fair, reasonable, and competitive rates to its ratepayers and to provide benefits to its owner, the Town of Wellesley.

The Municipal Light Plant operations are currently operated out of a facility shared with DPW. This facility is not ideal, due to space limitations that constrain operations. Plans are underway to construct a new MLP building on the DPW site off Route 9. The new building will be a separate 24,700 square foot building that will serve as the main office for the MLP.

Recycling and Disposal

The Town seeks to operate and maintain recycling, disposal, and refuse collection systems in an effective and efficient manner in order to protect the public health, prevent pollution, and to conserve energy and natural resources.



Completed in 1997, the Recycling and Disposal Facility (RDF) is located at 169 Great Plain Avenue (Route 135) across from the Wellesley Center. The 88-acre facility is open six days a week for use by Wellesley residents.

Wellesley has one of the highest municipal recycling rates in the state. Since 1998, the Town has consistently had recycling rates above 55%. Most Massachusetts municipalities have recycling rates of 30–35%.

- Recycling and disposal system benefits include cost savings, revenue increases, and elimination of long traffic lines.
- A Town survey indicates residents are pleased with the RDF (92%) and visit the site frequently (47% at least once a week).
- 3R system in place to "reduce, reuse, or recycle" material otherwise shipped to state transfer stations.

Park and Tree Maintenance

The Park and Highway Division is responsible for the care and upkeep of all of the Town's parkland, conservation land and other open spaces. It maintains all of the Town's athletic fields and active and passive recreation areas. It also maintains all Town-owned trees.

- The Park and Highway Division maintains storm drains, catch basins, and streams.
- DPW maintains 255 acres of active recreation land, including school fields, the Morses Pond area, and tennis courts.
- The town preserves and maintains 3,150 trees. These trees are trimmed to preserve sight distance and safety on town roads.

Street Acceptance and Private Road Maintenance

Wellesley currently accepts streets constructed as part of a subdivision under its subdivision regulations. Approval must be obtained from

the Planning Board and Town Meeting. Street acceptance means that the Town assumes responsibility for maintenance of the road and also accepts liability associated with it. The Town, however, does not have a system in place for other street acceptance cases.

Under its bylaws, the Town is authorized to perform temporary road repairs on private roads that have been accessible to the public for at least two years. These repairs, however, are confined only to filling in potholes. This bylaw has led to situations in which the Town has performed maintenance on private roads under provisional agreements with property owners. The Town lacks a private road maintenance system that outlines a uniform procedure and identifies who will assume the cost of all improvements.

Fire Department

The Wellesley Fire Department operates out of two fire stations. Headquarters (Station No. 2), located at 457 Worcester Street, houses Engines 2 and 3, which are both 1,250-gallon pumper trucks. The other station (Station No. 1) is located at 100 Central Street and houses Engine 1, a 1,250-gallon pumper truck, and a spare 100' ladder truck. One engine responds to medical emergencies with the ambulance. The engines are normally manned by four firefighters and the tower/ladder truck is usually manned by three. Equipment upgrades are needed, such as a new pumper truck to replace Engine #1.

The fire department manages a fire prevention program and performs inspections of all schools and businesses; issues permits for



FIRE DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

- Responded to 4,200 calls in 2003-2004
- Personnel: 36 firefighters

VEHICLES

- Four 1,250 gallon pumper trucks
- 100-foot ladder truck
- Haz-Mat response vehicle

blasting and permits for petroleum and other hazardous material storage; investigates fires; and develops student safety programs. The department also provides support for automobile accidents, medical emergencies, water problems, lockouts, downed wires, emergency lighting during severe weather, and drowning accidents.

With only 36 fire fighters, the Wellesley Fire Department is currently understaffed based on the national standard of 15 firefighters per shift.

Police Department

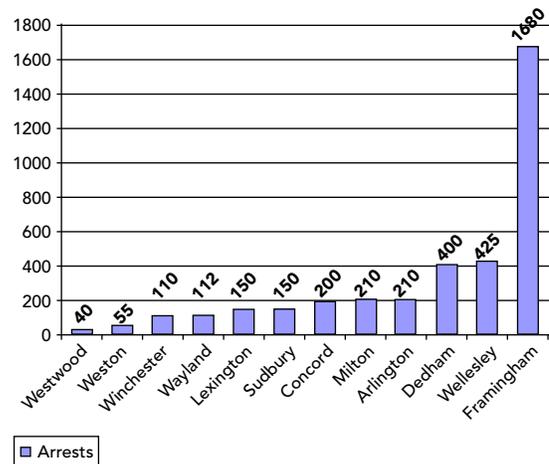
Wellesley's Police Department's headquarters are located in a newer facility at 485 Washington Street. The police force includes 42 officers and a chief. The department provides a bike patrol for the downtown that works both day and night. Police dispatch service also dispatches for fire and EMS service.

A recent study completed by the Wellesley police and surveys completed by area police departments show that Wellesley's police department is somewhat understaffed relative to other area police departments. Wellesley has 1.62 officers per 1,000 residents, whereas other area departments average 1.88 officers per thousand residents. The study also indicated that the Wellesley Police Department responds to more incidents annually than other nearby communities. Wellesley, however, has fewer personnel available than these communities on a shift-by-shift basis.



As indicated in the figure below, in 2004 Wellesley had more arrests than other area communities with the exception of Framingham. The number of officers responding to these incidents may take away from patrols in other areas of town. Additional staff could meet this shortfall. A police force of 50 officers – up from 43 officers – would provide 1.9 officers per thousand residents and bring the Wellesley Police Department up to a standard closer to that of similar-sized communities.

AREA POLICE DEPARTMENT ARRESTS (2004)



Wellesley Public Library System

Wellesley has three libraries: the Wellesley Free Library, the Fells Branch Library, and the Hills Branch Library. The Wellesley Library System has been an integral part of the community since its inception. Throughout their history, the libraries served as meeting places where social events took place, and continue to attract visitors today. The Wellesley Free Library opened in 2003 and is considered the main town library. The library is located at 530 Washington Street, across the street from Town Hall. The library has ample parking that is located to its rear and also in an underground garage.

Built in 1858 as a one-room schoolhouse, the Fells Branch Library is the oldest building in the

LIBRARY STATISTICS

- Holdings:
 - 205,000 books
 - 8,375 tapes/CDs
 - 5,635 VHS/DVD
- 18,988 people have library cards
- Nearly 1/2 million items were borrowed in 2005

system. The library underwent a full renovation between 1997 and 1999.

The Hills Branch Library was constructed in 1927-1928 as a fieldstone library that was voted as one of the five most beautiful build-

ings located around Boston. Hills Branch renovations were completed in 1999. The Wellesley Historical Commission has recommended the nomination of the Hills Branch Library to the National Register of Historic Places.

Recent financial constraints left the Town unable to afford to maintain the two branch libraries with its FY 2007 operating budget. In the 2006 Annual Town Meeting, the Library Trustees presented a plan in which Town funding for the branch libraries would decrease across five years. At the same time, the Library Trustees would work to develop an endowment that would allow the two branches to operate after 2011 without the expenditure of Town funds. In May 2006, this issue was included as part of a budget override referendum. The question failed to pass, and the two branch libraries closed on June 30, 2006. The branches still

remain in the Wellesley Free Library system and are owned by the Town. Library Trustees are considering soliciting private funds in order to re-open the branches in the future.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide the school system with additional classroom space via modular classrooms and by replacement of antiquated facilities with new or expanded facilities.

ACTIONS

- Upgrade facilities to include state-of-the-art technology and classroom amenities. This includes replacing modular classrooms with other conventional space as funding becomes available.
- Continue with renovations at Wellesley Middle School and choose an alternative to renovate or replace the high school from the recent study completed by SMMA. This study includes options for renovations and replacement at the existing site or a new site.
- Consider a school budget override to address funding shortfalls in the school system. This may include additional fees assessed to residents to maintain and enhance school facilities.

Investigate the possibility of using schools as “community centers” to supplement other meeting places and recreation facilities.

ACTION

- Converting the schools to meeting places after hours requires that a management system be created to monitor after-hours school activities. Security issues at facilities must be resolved to prevent unwanted access to restricted areas in the schools during after-school community use.



Develop a systematic approach to asset management.

ACTION

- System management of townwide infrastructure is needed to address the increasing age of infrastructure and reduce costs by maintaining existing equipment and roadways. Computerization should be used to track infrastructure conditions and to prolong the life of the Town's assets.

Consider increasing fire and police staff to address shortfalls and maintain current operations and services to the community.

ACTION

- Review the public safety budget for opportunities to phase in the hiring of additional staff to address shortfalls. Increasing staff for public safety requires additional funding mechanisms, as budgets are currently limited.

Develop a uniform policy for street acceptance.

ACTION

- Create a street acceptance policy that covers private streets that are not part of new subdivisions. This should include a process by which a majority of abutters on a private road can petition the Planning Board for acceptance. If Planning Board members, the Board of Selectmen, and Town Meeting determine that the road merits public maintenance and enough funds are available to bring it up to Town standards, it can be accepted into the Town's street system.

Implement a system for the maintenance of private streets.

ACTION

- A betterment system would allow abutters and developers to petition the Town to make upgrades to private roads. Betterments ensure that those who receive the benefits of private road improvements must pay some or all of the costs of these improvements. The Town could establish a formula for private funding of costs. Possible methods include establishing a fixed rate based on the average cost of the work and the length of road frontage; a rate based on the area of abutting land a fixed depth from the road; or a rate based on recent tax valuations of abutting properties. Approval for maintenance petitions would have to be obtained from the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen.

Construct an expanded DPW operations building and a new Municipal Light Plant facility.

ACTION

- Continue planning and design for upgraded facilities. A recent traffic study was completed for the project to check for impacts. Minimal issues are projected due to low new trip generation and the relocation of 15 employees from Town Hall.