



WELLESLEY COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting #3

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

The third of three community meetings for the Wellesley Housing Production Plan took place on Tuesday, June 12. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting, including Planning Board members. The consultant group held the meeting in the cafeteria of Wellesley High School from 7:00 to 9:30 pm.

The meeting's purpose was to solicit opinions from community members on transformation areas in Wellesley and what types of development would be suitable for the town. Consultants presented information about housing needs in Wellesley, participants gave comments and suggestions in an open house exercise, and a final group exercise allowed participants to discuss with one another and choose what types of housing would be suitable in which areas of town.

Main Conclusions

- Participants are open to increased density as long as it is done wisely and tastefully.
- A main priority of housing development is to meet the 10 percent goal for affordable housing, and community members want this to be the focus for any new development.
- Key transformation areas that participants were generally in favor of were Wellesley Square, North 40, and the sites in the east part of town.

Summary of Community Feedback

Heart of the Matter

When asked what was at the heart of the matter for them when it comes to planning for housing in Wellesley, the several participants that answered this question at this workshop acknowledged the need to create new housing, but emphasized that it should be done in areas where housing or commercial properties already exist. Density done in a smart way, with access to public transportation and shared open space was one idea.

Open House Stations

Where are Wellesley's key transformation areas? Where is change most likely to occur in Wellesley? Where could change accommodate multifamily housing? Mixed-use developments?

The first station presented a map of Wellesley showing potential development sites and asked participants to leave comments answering the question above and responding to the suggested sites on the map. Participants left check marks by each development site, shown in the image below. The most popular sites were North 40, with ten check marks and two X marks, Office Park with 12 check marks, and Wellesley Square & Neighborhoods, with 14 check marks and one X mark. The area in the east part of town on the Newton line, which includes the office park, the National Guard Site, and WHA Barton Rd, received a good deal of support on the map, though one commenter noted that there are already many projects there that are impacting traffic, and suggested more projects in areas where there is less density.

Some key transformation areas that participants noted were Barton Road, Wellesley Square, North 40, and areas that had access to public transportation. These areas would be suitable for mixed-use or multifamily development. However, there were participants that disagreed that any of those would be good options, citing congestion and 40B projects that are already in the area. One area that a couple commenters did not think was a good location for development was the Linden Street neighborhood, as there is already bad traffic in the area and it is not ideal for access to public transportation.

What is the ONE most important step Wellesley should take to work toward or reach the 10 percent affordable housing goal under Chapter 40B?

Some ideas participants had to answer this question included the following:

- Zoning for multifamily
- Make a dent in the SHI gap by approving development that will count completely towards the affordable housing goal

- Repurpose currently developed areas for more housing
- Pursue affordable elderly and disabled housing
- Create mixed-income housing areas
- Public housing in areas that are central to public transportation, have access to shopping areas, and encourage walkability
- Ensure that housing units complement rather than overwhelm the existing neighborhood (in terms of density and design)

Group Exercise

Following the open house, participants returned to their tables to partake in a group exercise. Each group had sets of Legos in different sizes, where each size pertained to a different housing type: single-family, duplex, three- or four-unit building, larger multi-family, etc. The consultant group asked the participants to use all of the Legos on a large map of Wellesley, placing them in areas where they believe development of that type of housing would be suitable.



Group B



Group B

As shown above on the left, Group A concentrated some larger developments (black and orange Legos) in the Barton Road area and the Office Park. There is also high density in the Wellesley Square area. They chose to scatter some smaller units (blue and yellow) across town. Group B (above right) chose similar areas for their large developments, but added a large building near the Needham town line and another just north of Route 9, near the Hardy School.

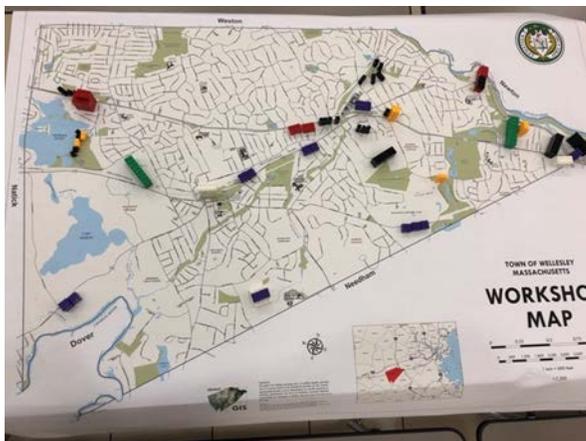


Group C

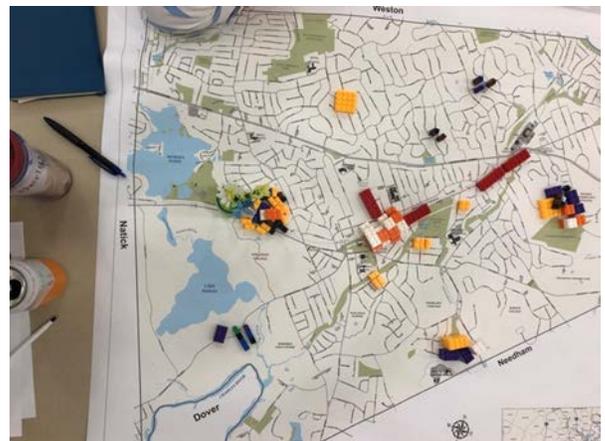


Group D

Group C (above left) concentrated density (red, black, and orange blocks) in a few areas: on the Needham line near Babson College, in Wellesley Square, in the Lower Falls vicinity of Walnut Street, and in the east part of town where Barton Road and the office park are. They combined some of the smaller two- to four-family units to create multi-family, and they scattered single-family houses evenly across town. Group D (above right), while keeping density in Wellesley Square and the eastern part of town, scattered their two- to four-family units (red and orange blocks) along the main streets of town. One unique choice this group made was to add some single-family units on the western side of Lake Waban.



Group E



Group F

Group E (above left) stacked some of their larger development blocks (green, red, and black blocks) and clustered some of their smaller development blocks to create high density in less space. Many of their proposed developments are along main roads in Wellesley and include

the Fells Road area, the Wellesley Hills T station area, and the eastern part of town. Lastly, Group F (above right) clustered their developments more so than any other group. They chose to stack multi-family blocks in the Wellesley Square area and added more units in the MassBay Community College/Sisters of Charity area than the other groups. The group clustered some smaller units in the North 40 area as well.

*Prepared by JM Goldson
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