

Town of Wellesley Profile

The Town of Wellesley was incorporated in 1881 and is located in Norfolk County. Wellesley is a primarily residential community located approximately 15 miles west of Boston and is bordered by Natick on the west, Weston and Newton on the north, Needham on the east and southeast, and Dover on the south. It is approximately 10.51 square miles in area and, according to the 2010 U.S. Census records, has a population of 27,982 persons.

The main highways serving the Town are State Routes 9, 16, 135, 128 and the Massachusetts Turnpike. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provides railroad services to Boston and Framingham.

The Town operates under the Representative Town Meeting form of government with public officers serving as ex-officio members of the Town Meeting. The legislative body consists of 240 members elected by precincts. Administrative affairs of general government are managed by a five-member Board of Selectmen and an Executive Director.

Local school affairs are administered by a five-member School Committee; public works are administered by a three-member Board of Public Works; the Municipal Light Plant is administered by a five-member Municipal Light Board that is comprised of the three-member Board of Public Works and two members appointed by the Board of Selectmen; and library affairs are administered by a six-member Board of Library Trustees.

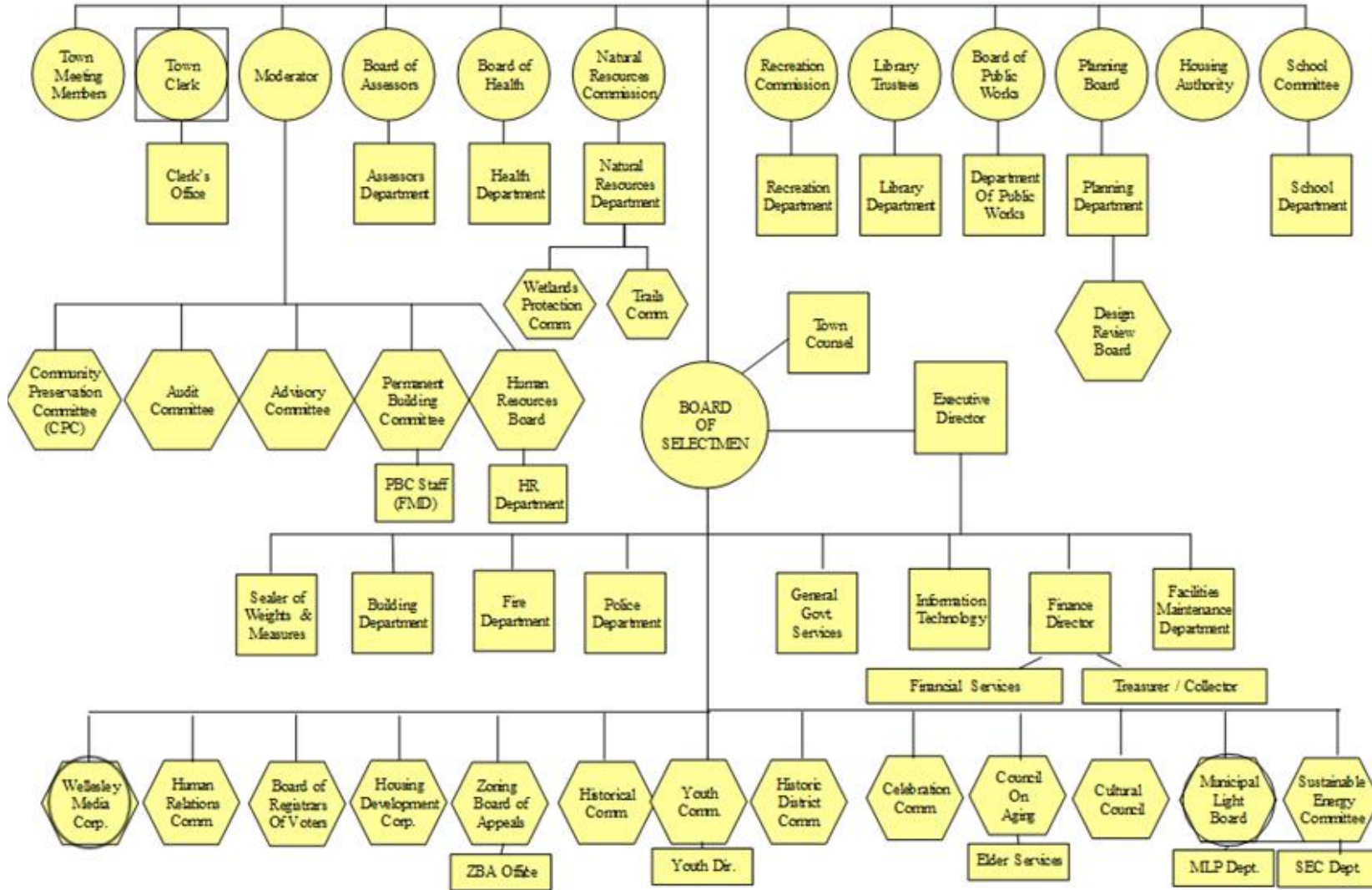
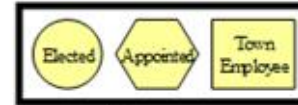
General governmental services are provided within the town's boundaries, including public education in grades kindergarten through twelve, police and fire protection, collection and treatment of sewage, water distribution, electric services, public works, streets, parks and recreation, veteran's services, health and sanitation, and libraries. The water and sewer enterprise funds are self-supporting. The Town maintains a solid waste recycling and disposal facility.

The Town owns and operates a self-supporting municipal light plant. The Municipal Light Board carries out the responsibilities of the Municipal Electric Commissioners as outlined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 164.



Wellesley Town Government Organization

VOTERS



Local Economy

During fiscal 2020 the Town continued to reflect stronger economic conditions than other communities within the Commonwealth, but Massachusetts' overall unemployment levels grew significantly with the sudden onset of COVID-19, in late February 2020. The Commonwealth experienced some of the earliest impacts in the nation from the pandemic, which hit the service industry particularly hard. Wellesley's population is more educated and enjoys higher income levels than many communities within the Commonwealth, but was impacted, nevertheless.

Because of its proximity to Boston and the quality of services provided, Wellesley remains attractive to urban professionals whose wealth levels are among the highest in the Commonwealth. While the per capita household income in Massachusetts is higher than national level, Wellesley's (\$182,353) is third highest in the Commonwealth and more than four times the State average. The relative wealth is also seen in the owner-occupied median housing value, which, at \$1,171,000 is more than twice that of the state and four times that of the nation. The Town is densely populated, and land is increasingly valuable. Tear downs and residential improvements, though slowed for several months, continue to contribute to steady permit fee revenue and taxable new growth. The Town benefitted from being 87% residential and able to rely upon collecting real estate and motor vehicle tax revenues and to generate more investment income, compared with other municipalities.

The Town continues to manage its financial affairs in a prudent manner. It has maintained its "excellent" bond rating of Aaa by incorporating long range planning tools such as a Town-wide Financial Plan; maintaining reserve levels; investing in technology; maintaining facilities to avoid costly emergency repairs; continuing an aggressive pay-as-you-go financing strategy for capital improvements and utilizing the dedicated revenue streams from debt that is exempt from the constraints of Proposition 2 ½ to finance some of its larger projects.

The Town has also enhanced its revenue flexibility by establishing enterprise funds. This has allowed the Town to shift one hundred percent of the operating cost and capital improvements to the users of electric, water, and sewer services so that no tax support goes towards providing these services. All related debt is funded through user fees. By doing so the Town is able to provide the maximum tax dollars available to all other services.

Unified Plan

The Town of Wellesley strives to provide excellent and innovative services to its citizens through its numerous elected and volunteer Boards and its professional department managers. Within individual long-term strategic plans, each board/department has a mission statement and work plan which forms the basis for its annual operating and five-year capital requests. In addition, the Town's Unified Plan (UP), the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategic Plan, provides the framework for Town and departmental goals, policies, and actions. The FY21 budget guidelines were the first-year reference to meeting UP objectives, goals, and policies were incorporated into budget submittals. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, many approved FY21 initiatives were delayed as departments pivoted towards a COVID-19 response. As Town departments began to understand the changing operations and adapt to COVID-19 protocols, more project and policy work resumed along with attention to longer-term capital planning. Through the FY22 budget process, COVID-19 continues to impact revenue assumptions and limited budget guidelines to a 2.5% operational increase. Departments continue to work to meet













UP goals, policies, and objectives; however, far greater attention has been placed on seeking grants and alternative funding opportunities as capital projects are required to be deferred while revenues rebound from COVID-19.

The ***Vision and Values*** of the UP serves as the “constitution” of the Wellesley Unified Plan, intended to guide the Town as it makes decisions about activities, operations, programs, and capital investments in the future. Specific ways to achieve the Vision and implement the Values appear in the goals and strategies of the Unified Plan and those that are identified for implementation in FY22 are outlined in the departmental narratives detailing budget requests.

The Vision of the Unified Plan:

In 2040... Wellesley is a town recognized for its welcoming community culture and exemplary town services; commitment to education and life-long learning; a quality of life that enhances the health and social well-being of its residents; respect for the environment and support for sustainability, conservation, and protection of physical and historical assets; and for its dynamic and thriving business community. Wellesley is recognized for its fiscally sound, well-managed, innovative, and accessible town government that has strong citizen participation and a highly motivated, collaborative, and talented professional staff.

The Values of the Unified Plan:

 <p>Diversity: Establish, implement and support ongoing initiatives to maintain Wellesley as a community that welcomes a diversity of people and households.</p>	 <p>Conservation and Sustainability: Make resource-efficient choices to conserve energy, water, and materials; improve water and air quality and reduce carbon emissions; develop and implement sustainable practices to adjust to changing environmental conditions.</p>
 <p>Sense of Community: Foster a sense of community and community-building through support for inclusive services and facilities, town-wide events, multi-generational activities, and community gathering places.</p>	 <p>Town Asset Management: Maintain, protect, preserve, and enhance the Town’s physical assets including facilities, infrastructure, parks, open space, and natural resources.</p>
 <p>Town Character: Establish policies, practices and criteria for the preservation of the character of the town’s residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and open spaces.</p>	 <p>Business-Friendly: Support existing and new businesses in commercial areas that complement and enhance our community, while protecting quality of life and environmental resources.</p>
 <p>Excellence in Service Delivery: Provide a broad array of services to residents and other users of town services; maintain a strong customer service orientation that strives for excellence in every aspect of service delivery.</p>	 <p>Collaboration: Leverage resources and expertise of local private businesses and institutions, as well as neighboring towns and regional agencies, to achieve mutual goals.</p>
 <p>Education: Support best-in-class public education, library, recreational and senior services.</p>	 <p>Best-Practice Implementation: Establish best practices and priority-based resource allocation systems to support town services, infrastructure and capital investments in a fiscally-prudent manner; conduct long-range fiscal/financial planning that includes appropriate metrics for evaluating progress and adjustment to changing financial conditions.</p>
 <p>Healthy Lifestyles: Enhance the health and wellness of residents through public health initiatives, educational, social and recreational opportunities; create the conditions for healthy lifestyles through easy access to healthful food, medical and psychological care, support systems, non-motorized transportation options, and town facilities.</p>	 <p>Democratic Government and Citizen Participation: Promote participation and engagement in town governance and decision-making.</p>
 <p>Connectivity of People and Places: Provide safe, accessible, and efficient transportation choices including public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, to connect people to town destinations and the region.</p>	 <p>Transparency: Facilitate public access to information, making it easy to understand how town government works, how decisions are made and how to get involved; encourage input from and effectively communicate with residents and other stakeholders.</p>

(THE SEQUENCE IN WHICH THE VALUES APPEAR DOES NOT REFLECT A RANKING OF THEIR IMPORTANCE)

Unified Plan Action Items accomplished or underway between FY20-FY21:

- Conceptual Study to upgrade Moses Pond bathhouse and amenities
- Pedestrian Study to link Cochituate Aqueduct across Route 9
- Completed Feasibility for Hunnewell and the Hardy/Upham Sites
- Town Hall Interior Revised Feasibility Study Completed
- Main Library Interior Renovation Funded (construction commencing 5/2021)
- Continue Integrated Pest Management on all Town Properties
- Town Meeting approved a Climate Action Resolution to require capital requests (if applicable) to identify measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Great Plain Avenue, which received \$380,000 in Complete Streets Funding, is nearing completion
- Climate Action Plan (RFP Currently Open)
- Sustainable Mobility Study (Currently under way)
- Lee Softball Field/Hunnewell Field Completed
- North 40 Remediation Completed
- Modifications to Drainage Bylaw to incorporate Best Practices and comply with MS4 Permit Approved
- Established a new Single Building Historic District at 323 Washington Street
- Approved the Middle School Systems Project as a debt exclusion (construction commencing 4/2021)

Proposed FY22 Unified Plan funding requests:

- Funding for Town Hall Interior Schematic Design through bidding (\$1.8M)
- Funding for Moses Pond Bathhouse and Beachfront Feasibility Study (\$175,000 CPC)
- Funding for a Weed Harvester to continue maintenance of Moses Pond (\$315,000 - CPC)
- Construction Funds at fall STM 2021 for Hardy and Hunnewell Schools (\$138M)
- Funding for reconstruction of Grove Street to Complete Streets Standards (\$3.25M)