



CITY OF MELROSE

MASTER PLAN 2004

OFFICE OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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June 2004

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I AM YOUR CITY!

I REFLECT YOU AS THE LAKE MIRRORS THE SKY,
IF I AM FAIR SO THAT THE STRANGER PASSING THROUGH SAYS,
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YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE.

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IT IS YOUR NEGLIGENCE WHICH HAS BROUGHT THE RUIN.
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I AM WHAT YOU MAKE ME –
I AM YOUR CITY.

Eva G. Osgood
1930
Melrose Planning Board
1921-1935

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following three and a half years of work by the Melrose Master Plan Advisory Committee, the City has a blueprint for its future. Comprised of residents **that represent a cross-section of the community**, the Master Plan Advisory Committee met monthly to consider how the City can best meet the challenges it will face in the future -from housing affordability to the problems of aging infrastructure. Consideration of each issue involved a process of research, analysis, public input, debate, strategizing, drafting, editing, and revision. Eight public forums, presentations to various community groups, and several newspaper articles made the lengthy planning process transparent and invited broad input from community members.

The Master Plan provides a base from which to realize residents' wishes for the continued prosperity of their City and is intended to lend City officials, administrators, and community leaders support in their daily efforts to manage and shape Melrose's growth into the future. Its major themes include the need to adopt strong land use controls to better manage development and the need to promote a balanced approach that carefully weighs the benefits and costs of future development proposals.

As reflected in the Vision Statement, Melrose residents have a great deal of pride in their community, and their future vision for the City **sharply focuses on preserving the elements that make it a well-loved place**. By and large, Melrose residents like Melrose just as it is. There is recognition, however, that even as the overarching theme of the plan envisions the City remaining largely unchanged into the future, trends in demographics, land use, housing, municipal finance, and other areas require proactive efforts to prevent change from having a negative impact. Additionally, the planning process identified several areas for improvement that will enhance the City.

Like many other communities in the Northeast region, **Melrose's population is both declining and aging**. Forecasts predict the local population to decrease by 18% by 2025, and by that time, 20% of the people in Melrose will likely be senior citizens. This Plan seeks to accommodate future housing, transportation, and other needs of the changing population.

Stronger land use controls are needed to ensure that future development will complement Melrose's character, not detract from it. A comprehensive update of the City's zoning and subdivision regulations, looking at site plan review, smart growth, hillside protection, and other tools, ranks among the Plan's top priorities.

In as much as residents treasure Melrose's streetscapes, there is an ever stronger sentiment that **the people of Melrose** are at the core of what many seek to preserve. A family-oriented, multi-generational community, the City is home to a mix of home owners and renters. While the majority earns middle to upper incomes, about 35% of households are of low to moderate income. Melrose wants to remain a place that is affordable to a variety of people, young, middle-aged, and old. Amid a regional housing boom, the Master Plan contemplates a number of strategies to **preserve and expand affordable housing opportunities**.

Main Street, the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, lower Washington Street, and the neighborhood commercial centers provide the City with **a vibrant local economy**. About 16% of Melrose residents also work in Melrose, and public input revealed a strong appreciation for the variety of service, entertainment, shopping, and eating establishments that the City offers. The net revenue provided by business use is seen as an important means of moderating the tax burden on residents, although these revenues are likely to remain limited given that Melrose is primarily residential. The burden of maintaining the City will continue to rest

primarily on the residents; however, preserving and encouraging mixed uses and promoting redevelopment is a key to diversifying the city's tax base and ensuring the City's continued vitality.

Another aspect of Melrose's livability is related to its **convenient location and transportation options**. Just 8 miles north of Boston, Melrose is well-served by commuter rail service with 3 stops within the City limits. Two major through corridors, Main Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway, connect Melrose with adjacent communities. Improvements to Main Street, scheduled for construction this year, will add bicycle accommodations and improve traffic conditions. Enhancing pedestrian streetscapes, preserving public transit, slowing car speeds on neighborhood streets, and mitigating the traffic impact of projects that occur on Melrose's borders are strategies that the Master Plan promotes.

One of the City's greatest challenges is rooted in its aging infrastructure. While Melrose is certainly not alone among older New England cities that face this issue, substantial investment in the City's water and wastewater systems, as well as its roadways, sidewalks and buildings, is required to make necessary improvements. As the City faces increasingly limited budgets, it will need to aggressively confront the issue of how it implements infrastructure improvements. Such issues, while costly to address, will save money in the long run and improve the quality of life in the City.

The **high quality of life** enjoyed by Melrose residents is due in part to the **abundance of recreational opportunities, open spaces, and conservation land** that accounts for roughly 25% of the city's land area. Maintaining and improving park facilities, restoring tree scapes, and protecting natural resource areas will receive on-going attention from the City.

Known for its Victorian architecture, Melrose has **a rich heritage** that is reflected in the homes and commercial structures throughout the City. Notably, this legacy is underscored by a number of cultural institutions that attract the continued participation of community members, and indicate a long-standing commitment to the arts. Maintaining the City's historic buildings, preserving historic resources throughout its neighborhoods, and providing continued support for cultural organizations are integral to future planning efforts.

This Master Plan is a comprehensive document which addresses a wide range of issues. Its implementation plan, coupled with the support of the public, is the basis for it to be a "living document," rather than a plan that is placed on the shelf. Its completion marks the end of many hundreds of hours of work, and yet it likewise begins hundreds of additional hours that will be spent on its implementation. The Master Plan sets forth an ambitious agenda that will require the commitment, dedication, and best intentions of the City's residents as we work together toward the common goal of protecting Melrose's community character.

VISION STATEMENT



Characterized as a "City of Homes" and known for its Victorian architecture, Melrose has long been considered a desirable residential community. Melrose is uniquely situated, located in close proximity to Boston with all the opportunities provided by a large urban center, yet is buffered by a greenbelt that surrounds the city and helps define Melrose as an attractive place to live and raise a family. Melrose is proud of its rich cultural and historical heritage and its abundance of recreational and natural resources. These factors contribute to a high quality of life for its residents and foster a strong community spirit, which is characterized by extensive volunteerism and an active level of involvement in civic affairs.

The City of Melrose seeks to maintain its position as **a family oriented community with a high quality of life for its residents, a stable and diverse mix of commercial services, and numerous cultural and recreational opportunities**. The Master Plan creates a framework through which the community's unique character will be promoted and preserved. To fulfill this vision, the Master Plan guides in the development and implementation of policies that promote:

Equal access to resources and opportunities that contribute to the well being of all its citizens;

Balanced and responsible urban design, planning and development, with the protection and enhancement of the City's historical, cultural, recreational and natural resources;

A vital economic climate which attracts and supports a wide diversity of business opportunities and community services in the downtown area, in the neighborhood commercial nodes, and in other commercial districts;

A **transportation system** that provides for a **mix of modes** including automobiles, bus and rail transport, pedestrian accommodation, and bicycles;

A school system that strives to achieve **academic excellence for all students**;

Opportunities for housing and home ownership for all income levels;

Enhancement of job opportunities in Melrose, allowing people to live and work in their community thereby reducing commuting demands;

Continuing investment in the **maintenance and enhancement of the City's infrastructure**; and

An **active citizenry** that works in partnership with a responsive City government to implement the Master Plan and manage the City's destiny in a thoughtful manner.

POPULATION AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS



Photo Credit: The Melrose Mirror

Population

According to the Year 2000 Census, 27,134 residents live on Melrose's 4.7 sq. miles of land area, or 5,779.8 residents per square mile. This represents an approximate 4% decline in population since 1990 and the least number of residents recorded by the U.S. Census since 1950.

Melrose's population gradually rose 30% between 1930 and 1970, from 23,170 to 33,180. Since then, population has steadily declined as can be seen in Table 1. As a percentage, Melrose has 18% fewer residents now than it did 30 years ago. The population dropped to 30,055 in 1980, 28,150 in 1990, and 27,134 in the 2000 Census.

Table 1: Population in Melrose, 1930-2000

Melrose Decennial Census Count							
1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
23, 170	25,333	26,988	29,619	33,180	30,055	28,150	27,134

Source: MISER/State Data Center, Year 2000 Census

The Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) at Mass. State Data Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst develops low, middle and high-level population projections. Prior to receiving Year 2000 census data, MISER's high year 2000 projection proved to be very accurate at 27,253, over the actual 2000 Census figures by just 119 people. MISER's low projection placed Melrose's 2000 population at 25,409. MISER's most recent low, middle and high level projections, based on Census 2000 data, project that Melrose's population will continue to decline. High level projections put the population at 25,673 in 2010 and 23,849 in 2020. Low level projections have the population declining to 24,427 in 2010 and 21,457 in 2020. MISER does not project out to the year 2025.

Population projections in Table 2 below, prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for the years 2010 through 2025, are based on estimates of total regional growth. Regional population growth is distributed among towns in the region based upon MAPC knowledge of employment, development land, current zoning conditions, and estimates of migration. It is projected that Melrose's 2000 population will decline 18% by 2025.

Table 2: MAPC Population Projections

Year	2010	2020	2025
Population	24,016	22,160	22,245

Source: MAPC March 17, 2003

Age Distribution

Age is a key demographic characteristic. Table 3 shows historical figures and projections for major life cycle age categories. The table shows that Melrose, like the country as a whole, is aging. This is most easily seen by comparing School Age and Household Formation categories with Household Reduction and Retirement categories. In the 2000 Census, School Age and Household Formation categories comprised nearly three-fifths (59%) of the population. By 2025, they will make up less than half (48%) of the population while residents age 45 and over will comprise 52% of the population. City planning will need to take into account this remarkable demographic shift.

Table 3 shows that between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of School Age residents is expected to increase slightly (23.5 to 25.3%) though the actual numbers will decline slightly from 6,379 to 6,073. Thereafter, a precipitous drop in the number and percentage of School Age residents is predicted between 2010 to 2020, from 6,073 (25.3%) to 4,644 (21%). This statistic will be important in planning for the future needs of the school system.

The number and percentage of residents of Retirement age are expected to drop between 2000 and 2010, from 4,433 (16%) to 2,997 (13%) while those in Household Reduction will jump from 6,576 (24%) to 7,526 (31%). From 2010 until 2025, the Household Reduction category is expected to increase as a percentage only slightly while decreasing in actual numbers. Those in their Retirement years will grow significantly as a percentage of population.

In 1970, 13% of Melrosians were age 65 and over. According to the 2000 Census, 16% are 65 or over. This percentage is expected to climb to 19.5% in 2020, when nearly one-in-five people are expected to be 65 or over. Reasons for this demographic shift include smaller family size, people living longer, the baby-boom generation reaching these age groups, and fewer people leaving to retire in other parts of the country.

The City's senior citizen population is comparable to communities in the surrounding area (see Table 4).

Table 3: Population By Age Group, 1990-2025

Age range	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection
0-19 (school age)	6,511 23%	6,379 24%	6,073 25%	4,644 21%	4,650 21%
20-44 (Household formation)	11,374 40%	9,746 36%	7,567 31%	6,076 27%	6,081 27%
45-64 (Household reduction)	5,541 20%	6,576 24%	7,388 31%	7,118 32%	7,150 32%
65+ (retirement)	4,724 17%	4,433 16%	5,283 12%	4,324 20%	4,366 20%
Total	28,150	27,134	24,016	22,160	22,245

Source: MAPC Community Population Forecasts, 2010-2025 – March 17, 2003

Figure 1: Population by Age Group, 1990-2025

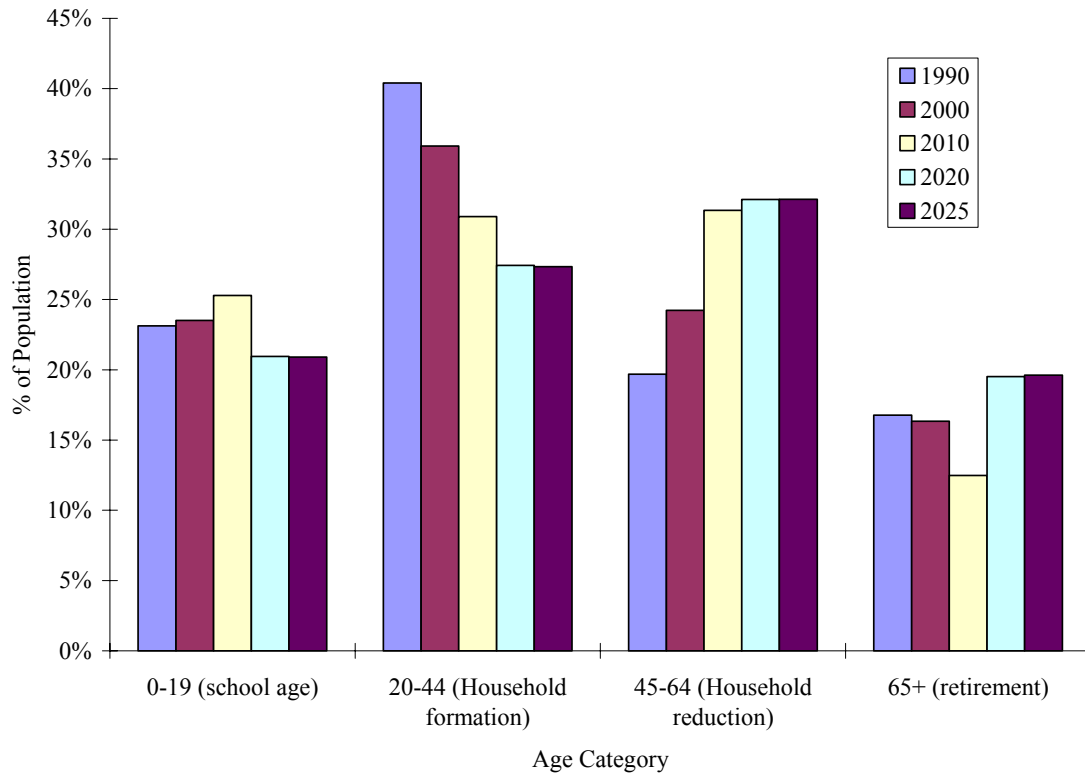


Table 4: Percent of Population over 65

Town/City	% of population over 65 year old
Stoneham	18.5
Saugus	17.6
Medford	17.3
Winchester	17.1
Melrose	16.3
Wakefield	15.1
Reading	14.2
Malden	13.9
Massachusetts	13.5

Source: 2000 Census

Race

Melrose residents are **predominantly (95%) white**. Since 1990, however, the City has seen a change in its racial composition – whites have declined 6.5% in the total population, while other groups have seen increases – Blacks and Asians, in particular. Asians are the largest non-white demographic group in Melrose, making up 2% of the overall population, with Hispanics and Blacks each comprising about 1%.

Educational Attainment

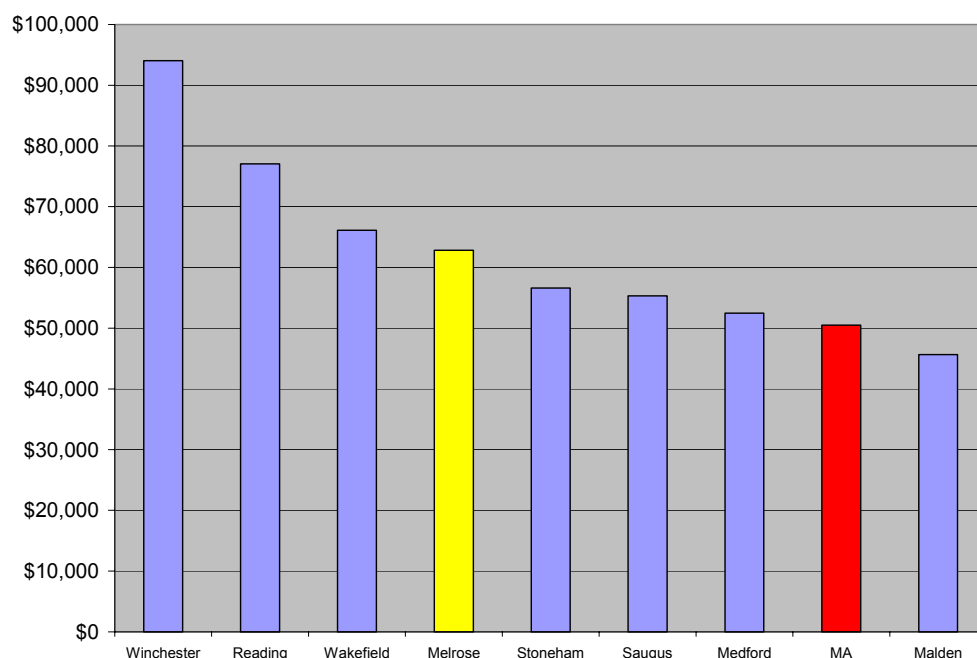
Just over 40% of Melrosians have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares favorably against the State (33.2%) as well as against adjacent communities. With regard to college completion and post-college level education, Melrose ranks third behind Winchester (64.9%) and Reading (47.8%) when compared with surrounding communities including Saugus (19.2%) , Stoneham (31.6%), Wakefield (39.7%), Malden (26.2%), and Medford (31.7%). Just over 91% of Melrosians over 25 have earned a high school diploma.

Educational attainment has risen since 1990. High school graduates have risen about 3% and those residents completing a B.A. or more have increased nearly 10%.

Income

Since 1989, median household income in Melrose has risen 42% from \$44,109 to \$62,811. This is slightly better than the incomes throughout the State, which rose 37% during the 1990s. Melrose's median income ranks 4th highest when compared to other area communities – Winchester (\$94,049) is much higher than its neighbors, and Reading and Wakefield are also somewhat higher than Melrose. Figure 2 shows these results.

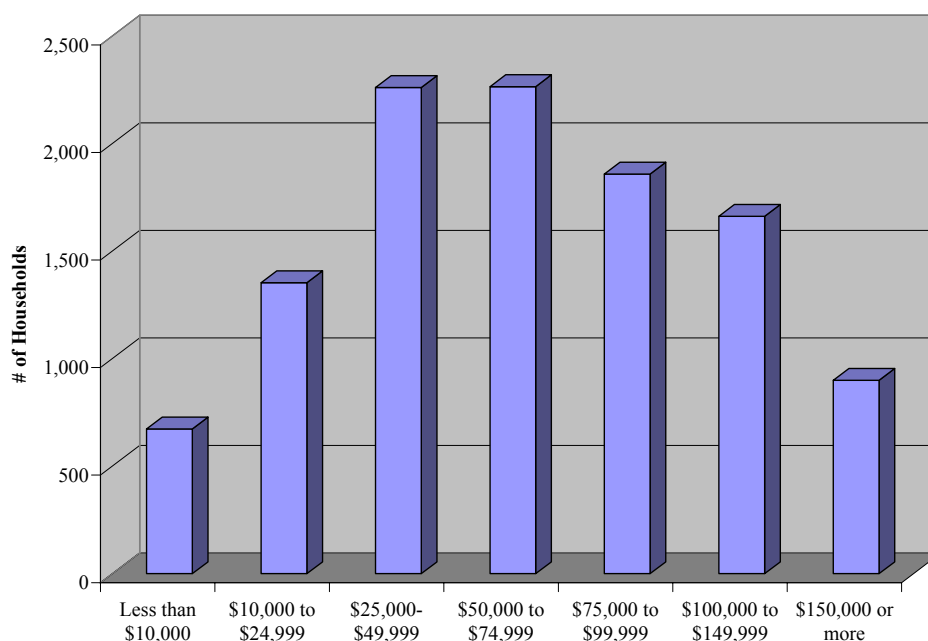
Figure 2: Area Median Incomes, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Income distribution is also important to consider when planning for public services. Many public grant programs use income definitions related to the area median as the prime criterion for eligibility. According to the 2000 Census, the Boston Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA) median household income in 1999 was \$55,254, while Melrose's was roughly 14% higher at \$62,811. Figure 3 demonstrates the household income distribution.

Figure 3: 1999 Household Income Distribution (Median = \$62,811)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

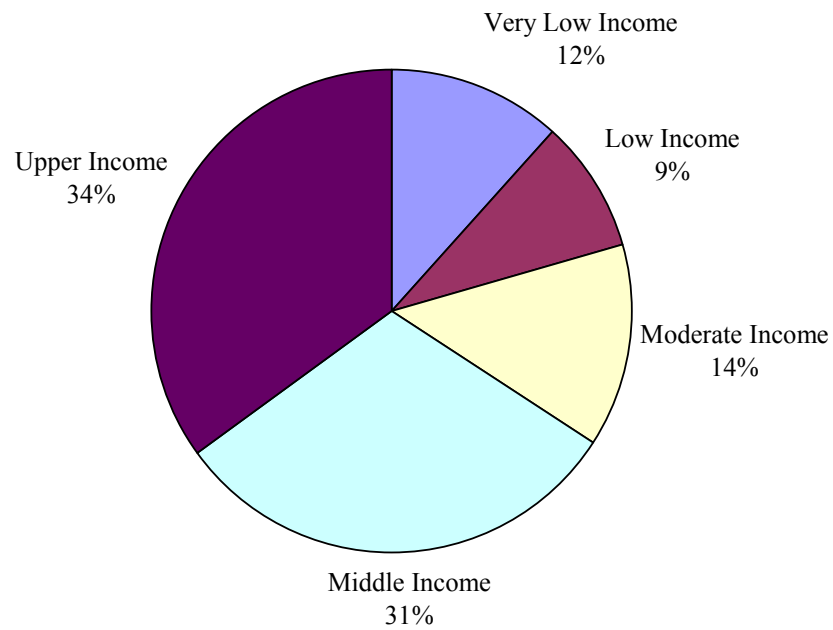
A variety of public programs use various percentages of the area's median income to characterize the degree to which individuals, households, and families are of low or moderate income. Low income households earn less than 50% of median, moderate are under 80% of median, and middle income earn under 150% of median. Using the Boston PMSA median as a guideline, the following table approximates the number of households in Melrose that may fall within these categories. These income categories will be further discussed in the Housing chapter.

Table 5: Approximate Melrose Households of Very Low, Low, Moderate, Middle, and Upper Incomes

Boston PMSA Median HH Income (\$55,183)	Income Limits	# HHs	% HHs
Very Low Income (30% of median)	\$16,555	1,279	12%
Low Income (31-50% of median)	\$27,592	973	9%
Moderate Income (61-80% of median)	\$44,146	1,493	14%
Middle Income (81-150% of median)	\$82,775	3,384	31%
Upper Income (over 150% of median)	\$82,776 and up	3,841	34%

Source: US 2000 Census.

Figure 4: Melrose Household Incomes, 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Home owner occupied households earn much greater incomes than renter households. A look at how population and income are distributed among Census tracts (see Figure 5) illustrates this – in areas where rental units are proportionally higher, incomes are lower.

Melrose Master Plan

City of Melrose Seal: CHARLESTOWN, FOUNDED 1630, MALDEN, NORTH END, 1845, INCORPORATED 1900

Population and Income Data by Census Tract:

Census Tract	Population	Median Income	# Owner HHs	# Renter HHs
336100 (Dark Red)	5,759	\$60,472	1,582	877
336200 (Yellow)	6,264	\$76,087	1,908	373
336300 (Olive Green)	4,575	\$54,441	971	1,060
336401 (Orange)	6,782	\$67,237	2,061	467
336402 (Light Yellow)	3,754	\$50,925	843	880

Source: MA GIS
City of Melrose, US Census
Prepared by: Taintor & Associates
Date: 7/29/03

Scale: 0 to 1 Miles

North Arrow

Population and Income

Census Tract

336100	336300	336402
336200	336401	

LAND USE



Introduction

The City of Melrose, located in eastern Massachusetts in the Metropolitan Boston area, is bordered by the Towns of Stoneham, Wakefield, and Saugus, and by the City of Malden. The city is approximately eight miles north of Boston with a geographical area of **4.76 square miles**, 2 percent of which is covered by water.

Since its settlement in the mid-18th century, Melrose has offered its residents a desirable compromise between the crowded metropolis of Boston, and the frontier of rural exurbia. Melrose has a long-standing tradition of being **a self-sufficient small city**--a tradition which highlights the importance of varied land uses to support residents' housing, education, employment, health, shopping, entertainment, recreation and leisure needs. Vital to this condition is the notion of the Garden City, which features a commercial/institutional core surrounded by housing of varying density, interspersed with schools, small parks, and most importantly, a wide "green belt" buffering it from surrounding communities and providing ample province for passive recreation. The Garden City has long been the model for the development of Melrose, and for the most part, this model remains intact. Melrose is presently surrounded on three sides by major parks and conservation lands, including the Middlesex Fells Reservation to the west.

Geographically, Melrose is situated amidst the Middlesex Fells, a plateau high above the Boston Basin, whose surface is broken into numerous small hills, bowls, and vales. The Fells itself is comprised of two well-marked valleys, the result of glacial carving. The hills of the Fells have gradual slopes on their north sides and broken cliffs and debris on the south.

As noted, the topography generally consists of **a valley running north-south through the middle portion of the city with moderate to steep slopes on either side**. Elevations in the valley average approximately 50 feet, while the hilly areas to the east and west average 100 to 150 feet above sea level, with high points of rocky ledge reaching over 200 feet.

In the central portion of the city is Ell Pond, a large scenic pond surrounded in part by a park and playing fields. Several smaller (though still considerable) ponds, Swains Pond, Towners Pond, and Long Pond are located in the southeast. Centrally located in the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course are three lesser ponds that act as watershed collectors for irrigation.

Geographic conditions have influenced past developments in two significant ways. First, they have provided a definite **break in development between the central core and the higher elevations to the east and west**. Second, they have **discouraged development in the southeastern sections where topographic changes are very abrupt and are characterized by ledge and rock outcroppings**. Three of the major ponds are also in this area.

This chapter includes a discussion about recent development trends in Melrose, a profile of existing land uses, and a review of the tools the City currently uses to guide development. It concludes with an analysis of ways to update and enhance the City's planning tools to ensure the protection of Melrose's unique character and suggested strategies to encourage beneficial development proposals.

Land Use Trends

Melrose is a densely-built, compact community. **Very few areas exist for new development, and most of the City's construction activity is related to re-development of existing sites and uses.**

According to the Melrose Assessing database, only 1.8% (49 acres) of the City's land is categorized as "developable," or "potentially developable."¹

Residential

Alongside an overall drop in population, Melrose's total number of housing units has decreased 49 units since 1990. Despite this decrease, new units continue to be created on available land. According to Melrose Inspectional Services, 77 new units were built in the 10 years between 1990-2000. Below is permit information from 1996- 2002 taken from the U.S. Census:

Table 6: Residential Building Permits, 1996-2002

Residential Building Permits	Single Family	Two-Family	Multifamily (# of units)	Total Units
1996	13			13
1997	7		7	14
1998	11			11
1999	5	1		7
2000	4			4
2001	3			3
2002	8		5	13
Totals	51	2	12	65

Source: U.S. Census



New housing units are being built in small subdivisions, lot splits, and via condo conversions.

Table 7: Subdivisions, 1990-2000

Name	Date	# Units	Acreage	# Built
Indian Hill Lane	1994	10	2.9	9
Cedar Wood Lane	1994	5	2.5	5
Penny Way ("Nordic Way")	1995	7	2.9	0
Clover Circle	1995	6	1.5	6
Colucci Estates (Hillside Park)	1998	9	6.6	0
Totals		37	16.4	20

Source: EOEa Buildout Analysis, 2001

¹ Assessing classifications are pursuant to guidelines established by the Department of Revenue, and employ a different methodology than used by a build-out analysis. For this reason, estimates of the City's "build-able area" vary from 49 to 177 acres within this report. Developable area may also vary due to changes in technology and regulation; for master planning purposes, this number need not be exact. In all instances, it is a very small percent of the City's total land area.

In FY2002, renovation permits represented 31% of all building permits issued, with roofs, general repairs, fences, siding, decks, and additions being the next most popular permits. The vast majority of residential activity in Melrose is in renovation.

Most recently, however, Melrose has considered three residential developments that will likely surpass total new development of the past decade: the Pembroke Project (575 units – 400 in Melrose), 391 Pleasant Street (26 units), and the Station Crossing project (48 units).

**O A K G R O V E
V I L L A G E**

To be located on the Melrose-Malden line, **the Pembroke Project is a mixed-use residential development**

comprised of 13 buildings on a 15.5 acre site.

In addition to housing, 21,000 s.f. of retail space and one community center building are planned. The Planning Board reviewed this project over the course of 8 months, ultimately issuing the necessary special permits for the project to proceed. The Zoning Board of Approvals also conducted a regulatory review of the project, and has approved the developers' request for special permits/variance(s). Due to disagreements over the potential impact of this project, both boards' decisions are being appealed.

Figure 6: Oak Grove Village Proposal



Source: www.pembrokere.com

**3 9 1
P L E A S A N T
S T R E E T**

The development **at 391 Pleasant Street** proposes to demolish a two-family structure built in 1875 that sits on a .82 acre lot and construct

a 26 unit apartment building on the site. This project has received a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals; this permit, however, has been subject to on-going appeal.

Figure 7: 391 Pleasant Street



Source: Melrose Assessing

**S T A T I O N
C R O S S I N G**

The **Station Crossing condo complex project** has received 2 special permits from the Planning Board

following thorough review of its proposal submitted in July, 2003. Located at the Melrose Bowl site on the corner of West Foster and Willow Streets, the proposed project consists of **48 units contained in a 4-story, row house-type structure.** Five of the units are planned to be affordable to low and moderate income households. This project is currently under construction.

Figure 8: Station Crossing



Source: Melrose Free Press

Industrial & Commercial

Recent building activity related to industrial and commercial uses in Melrose have been primarily limited to redevelopment of existing structures and sites, including the following:



- Dunkin Donuts, 470 Lynn Fells Parkway, 2001;
- RMV office & Greenwood development, 40 Washington Street, 1996;
- Newburyport Turnpike – leased land – USA Waste Services, 1994; and
- East Boston Savings Bank, 108 Main Street, 2004.

**STONEHAM
EXECUTIVE
CENTER**

The proposed Stoneham Executive Center, located just over the city boundary in the Middlesex Fells, may be the largest commercial development to impact Melrose in over a decade. The project site is 40.7 acres, surrounded by the Fells Reservation land. Three new office buildings, totaling 540,000 s.f., are planned to be added to the current buildings on the site (110,000 s.f. medical office building and

Figure 9: Stoneham Executive Center



Source: SDEIR, July 2002

250,000 s.f. former hospital building), for a total development of 914,000 s.f. While regulatory approvals in Stoneham have been issued, a December 15, 2003 ruling pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA), issued by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs, determined that

“the project as currently designed has not adequately addressed my continued concerns with regard to the significant volume of traffic that this development will generate and the associated impacts to the historic parkways and open spaces of the Middlesex Fells Reservation.”

Over 3,000 letters protesting this project were submitted as part of the MEPA approval process.

In order for this proposal to receive MEPA approval, the developer is required to submit a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Report (SFEIR) which adequately addresses these issues. Given the controversy over the site, the scope of the project is likely to change.

New Growth

One way of measuring change in the community is through an analysis of new growth added to its tax base. New growth isn't limited to construction of subdivisions or office parks – it takes into consideration value added through reinvestment, redevelopment, renovation, and rehabilitation. Below is an excerpt from a Department of Revenue publication further explaining new growth.

“Proposition 2 ½ allows a community to increase its levy limit annually by an amount based on the increased value of new development and other growth in the tax base that is not the result of revaluation. The purpose of this provision is to recognize that new development results in additional municipal costs; for instance, the construction of a new housing development may result in increased school enrollment, public safety costs, and so on. New growth under this provision includes:

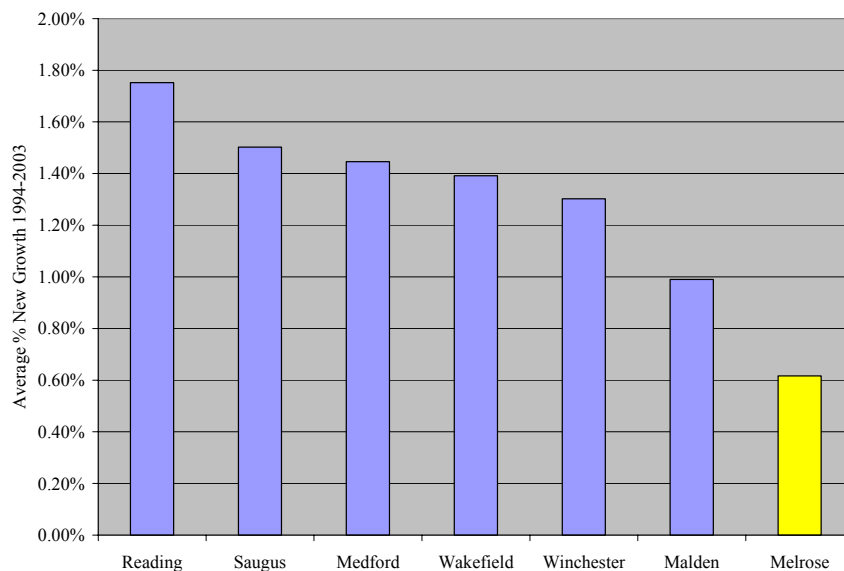
- Properties that have increased in assessed valuation since the prior year because of development or other changes.
- Exempt real property returned to the tax roll and new personal property.
- New subdivision parcels and condominium conversions.

New growth is calculated by multiplying the increase in the assessed valuation of qualifying property by the prior year's tax rate for the appropriate class of property. Any increase in property valuation due to revaluation is not included in the calculation.”

From Levy Limits: A Primer on Proposition 2 ½²

On average, communities throughout the State increased their tax base by 2.35% per year over the last 10 years through new growth. **Of its surrounding communities, Melrose's average new growth (0.62%) over the past decade ranks last. This likely reflects the fact that Melrose is virtually “built out,” but may also indicate a comparatively lower rate of redevelopment, renovation, and rehabilitation**

Figure 10: Average Percent New Growth, 1994-2003



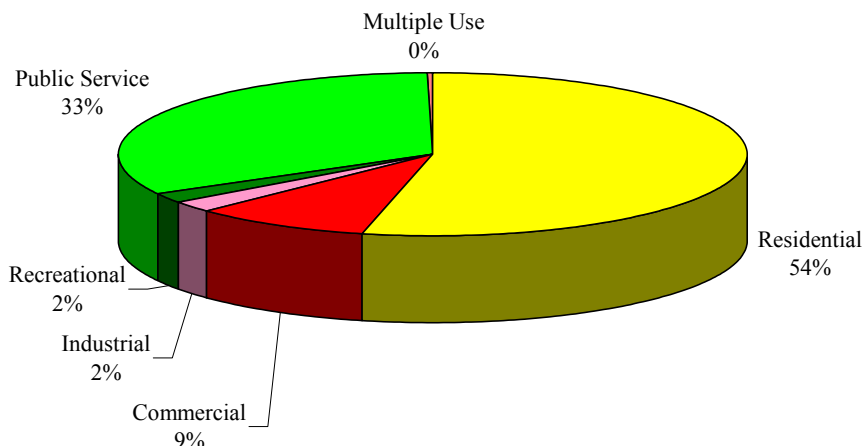
Source: MA Department of Revenue

² Published by the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. Available on-line at: <http://www.dls.state.ma.us/PUBL/MISC/levylimits.pdf>

Current Land Use Profile

As illustrated in the following chart, **Melrose is predominantly residential**, with commercial and industrial use combining to make up only 11% of the City's overall land area. **Public services use**, including municipal and state-owned land, public utilities, schools, non-profits, and the like is the 2nd largest use category behind residential, **occupying 33% of the City's land area.**

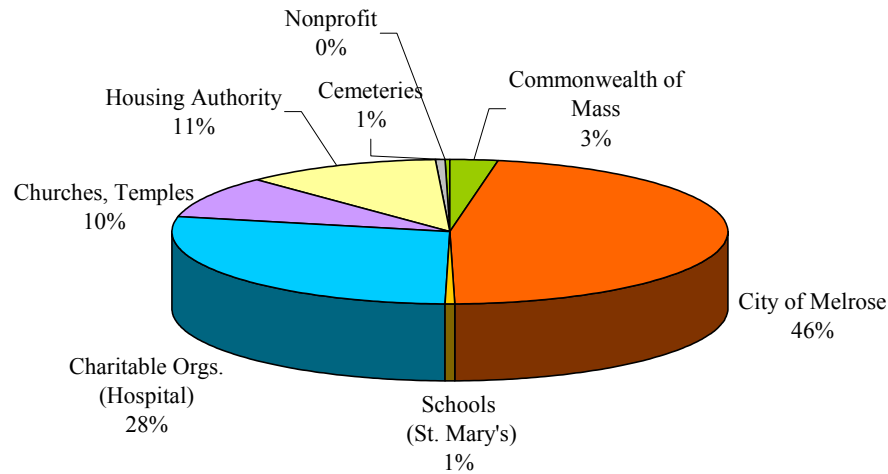
Figure 11: Land Use Profile, 2003



Source: Melrose Assessing Department

“Public Service” land, as defined by classification code guidelines developed by the Department of Revenue, includes “all property which is totally exempt from taxation under various provisions of the law...” By far, the 725 acres of City-owned land is the largest component of the 33% featured above. The Commonwealth owns about 151 acres in Melrose, the second largest exempt land owner. Together, City and State acreage accounts for 95% of exempt land. However, the impact of exempt property with regard to land use and municipal finance is primarily related to the location and value of the property. For example, the combined value of City and State-owned properties total less than half of the value of the exempt properties that comprise the remaining 5% of exempt land, as illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Tax-Exempt Properties in Melrose by Assessed Value



Source: Melrose Assessing Department

The **Melrose-Wakefield Hospital property has the highest assessed value in Melrose at over \$55 million**, representing nearly 2% of the City's total valuation. While historically the City has received an annual "gift" from the hospital which was intended to fund public health programs such as the school nurses, the hospital has decided to discontinue that practice in the face of its fiscal challenges.

Tax exempt properties comprise about 9% of Melrose's total valuation. By comparison, the City of Boston has 50% of its valuation dedicated to tax-exempt uses. While figures for adjacent communities are not readily available, a 1995 report by the Boston Globe examined tax exempt property in 27 cities and towns in its northwest distribution region (including Winchester, Stoneham, Reading, Belmont, and Arlington) and calculated that about 10% of the region was tax-exempt. Thus, it appears that the relative amount of tax exempt property in Melrose is not out of scale in comparison to many cities and towns. A remaining question would be to assess the percent of tax exempt valuation in relationship to the municipality's success in negotiating Payments In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) or other financial contributions from its tax exempt owners. PILOT payments are one of the many factors evaluated when Moody's Investors Service determines a municipality's bond rating. **This year, Section 112 of the Municipal Relief Package requires the Department of Revenue (DOR) to conduct "a study of the economic impact on each city and town of the tax exemption granted to non-profit, charitable, and educational institutions."** This report, when completed, will no doubt be of interest to Melrose.

Following is a detailed table of land uses by state class code that itemizes all of the 9,219 parcels contained in the City's Assessing database:

Table 8 : Summary of Melrose Assessing Data

CURRENT LAND USE PROFILE				DEVELOPMENT DATA				VALUATION DATA				
CURRENT LAND USE	LAND USE CODE	NO. OF PARCELS	AREA (ACRES)		FLOOR AREA		TOTAL VALUATION		AVERAGE VALUATION			
			TOTAL	AVERAGE	TOTAL	AVERAGE FAR	LAND	BUILDING	TOTAL (LAND+BLDG.)	LAND (PER PARCEL)	LAND (PER ACRE)	BUILDING
Residential Land Uses												
Single Family	101	6,261	1,159.22	0.19	20,381,580	0.40	\$1,035,169,100	\$797,912,325	\$1,848,800,525	\$165,336	\$892,986	\$127,442
Condominium	102	602	0.00	0.00	618,906		\$0	\$92,775,500	\$92,824,300	\$0		\$154,112
Two Family	104	909	157.78	0.17	4,135,651	0.60	\$136,697,500	\$134,156,800	\$273,466,800	\$150,382	\$866,400	\$147,587
Three Family	105	90	17.36	0.19	487,363	0.64	\$13,145,500	\$15,255,400	\$28,623,500	\$146,061	\$757,077	\$169,504
Accessory Land	106	32	4.85	0.15	3,197	0.02	\$1,324,600	\$105,500	\$1,659,500	\$41,394	\$272,855	\$3,297
Multiple Housing on One Parcel	109	5	0.87	0.17	30,134	0.80	\$775,800	\$1,014,500	\$1,794,900	\$155,160	\$891,929	\$202,900
Aparts-4-8 units	111	81	18.38	0.23	552,479	0.69	\$13,237,500	\$17,023,900	\$30,430,100	\$163,426	\$720,377	\$210,172
Apts-8 plus	112	47	37.70	0.80	1,388,284	0.85	\$35,548,400	\$45,203,300	\$81,023,300	\$756,349	\$942,963	\$961,772
Developable Residential Land	130	41	23.38	0.57	-	0.00	\$5,084,300	\$0	\$5,094,100	\$124,007	\$217,441	\$0
Potentially Devel. Residential Land	131	54	25.15	0.47	-	0.00	\$3,051,100	\$9,800	\$3,070,700	\$56,502	\$121,296	\$181
Undevelopable Residential Land	132	292	61.95	0.21	-	0.00	\$4,256,000	\$0	\$4,292,500	\$14,575	\$68,704	\$0
Total Residential Properties		8,414	1,506.64	0.18	27,597,594		\$1,248,289,800	\$1,103,457,025	\$2,371,080,225	\$148,359	\$828,523	\$0
Commercial Land Uses												
Motels	301	1	1.90	1.90	21,789	0.26	\$541,700	\$356,500	\$926,800	\$541,700	\$285,105	\$356,500
Nursing Home	304	6	2.58	0.43	101,517	0.90	\$2,669,500	\$6,189,700	\$8,889,500	\$444,917	\$1,036,297	\$1,031,617
Lumber Yard	313	6	2.27	0.38	30,682	0.31	\$634,800	\$522,900	\$1,163,200	\$105,800	\$280,215	\$87,150
Storage, Warehouses	316	9	7.57	0.84	129,916	0.39	\$3,053,200	\$5,014,700	\$8,237,100	\$339,244	\$403,084	\$557,189
Facilities providing building materials	321	1	1.26	1.26	26,435	0.48	\$560,200	\$10,000	\$1,093,100	\$560,200	\$445,664	\$510,000
Supermarkets (>10,000 sq ft)	324	2	1.02	0.51	48,169	1.09	\$421,700	\$1,936,900	\$2,358,600	\$210,850	\$413,796	\$968,450
Small Retail & Service (<10,000 sq ft)	325	41	6.89	0.17	307,355	1.02	\$6,919,100	\$9,816,900	\$16,830,300	\$168,759	\$1,003,961	\$239,437
Eating & Drinking Estab.	326	7	1.40	0.20	28,924	0.47	\$1,311,100	\$1,917,900	\$3,268,400	\$933,832	\$273,986	\$208,775
Auto Sales & Services	330	4	2.52	0.63	32,440	0.30	\$1,196,200	\$835,100	\$2,093,900	\$187,300	\$473,911	\$208,775
Auto Supplies & Service	331	1	0.40	0.40	10,560	0.60	\$214,500	\$263,800	\$486,600	\$214,500	\$530,941	\$263,800
Auto Repair	332	15	5.10	0.34	76,166	0.34	\$2,657,100	\$2,251,600	\$5,013,700	\$177,140	\$520,724	\$150,107
Fuel Service Areas	333	3	0.60	0.20	5,062	0.19	\$516,100	\$464,700	\$1,304,700	\$172,033	\$856,598	\$154,900
Gasoline Service Stations	334	4	0.78	0.19	4,503	0.13	\$769,900	\$258,200	\$1,222,000	\$192,475	\$987,811	\$64,550
Car Wash	335	1	0.63	0.63	7,290	0.26	\$273,500	\$164,200	\$456,300	\$273,500	\$431,933	\$164,200
Parking Garages	336	1	0.21	0.21	-	0.00	\$162,300	\$0	\$190,100	\$162,300	\$783,679	\$0
Parking Lots	337	30	5.23	0.17	-	0.00	\$2,610,000	\$0	\$2,791,500	\$87,000	\$498,853	\$0
General Office Bldg	340	28	4.42	0.16	149,260	0.77	\$4,200,900	\$6,082,900	\$10,345,000	\$150,032	\$949,979	\$217,246
Bank	341	8	1.26	0.16	66,098	1.21	\$1,113,300	\$4,872,600	\$6,026,400	\$139,163	\$886,456	\$609,075
Medical Office Bldg	342	18	2.82	0.16	72,429	0.59	\$2,965,200	\$3,408,900	\$6,405,800	\$164,733	\$1,053,020	\$189,383
	343	35	0.00	0.00	52,797		\$0	\$6,938,400	\$6,938,400	\$0	\$0	\$198,240
	344	20	0.00	0.00	31,458		\$0	\$2,224,200	\$2,224,200	\$0	\$0	\$111,210
Postal Service	350	1	0.23	0.23	11,902	1.21	\$168,600	\$268,600	\$437,200	\$168,600	\$745,688	\$268,600
Day Care Center	352	1	0.37	0.37	3,596	0.22	\$223,400	\$138,600	\$371,100	\$223,400	\$600,699	\$138,600
Fraternal Organizations	353	1	0.21	0.21	6,200	0.68	\$78,600	\$79,400	\$158,000	\$374,286	\$79,400	\$79,400
Bowling	370	1	0.87	0.87	9,580	0.25	\$334,900	\$107,000	\$453,600	\$334,900	\$384,236	\$107,000
Developable Commercial Land	390	4	0.53	0.13	-	0.00	\$424,700	\$0	\$430,800	\$106,175	\$805,118	\$0
Undevelopable Commercial Land	392	4	0.98	0.24	-	0.00	\$81,800	\$0	\$81,800	\$20,450	\$83,503	\$0
Total Commercial Property		253	52.05	0.21	1,234,128		\$34,102,300	\$54,623,700	\$90,197,500	\$134,792	\$655,139	\$0
Industrial Land Uses												
Buildings for Manufacturing	400	11	21.03	1.91	583,621	0.64	\$3,977,800	\$10,886,600	\$15,324,800	\$361,618	\$189,123	\$989,691
Warehouses to Store Manuf. Products	401	5	4.67	0.93	23,516	0.12	\$897,100	\$665,100	\$1,562,200	\$179,420	\$192,160	\$133,020
Sand and Gravel	410	3	10.92	3.64	-	0.00	\$1,414,500	\$0	\$1,632,500	\$471,500	\$129,480	\$0
Electric Power Plants	422	1	0.27	0.27	12,099	1.02	\$180,600	\$301,900	\$482,500	\$180,600	\$662,996	\$301,900
Electric Transmission Right of Way	423	9	25.13	2.79	1,362	0.00	\$1,419,300	\$43,400	\$1,492,600	\$157,700	\$56,478	\$4,822
Telephone Relay Tower	431	3	0.00	0.00	-		\$0	\$0	\$1,404,600	\$22,400	\$0	\$0
Undevelopable Industrial Land	442	3	1.62	0.54	-	0.00	\$67,200	\$0	\$121,200	\$0	\$41,497	\$0

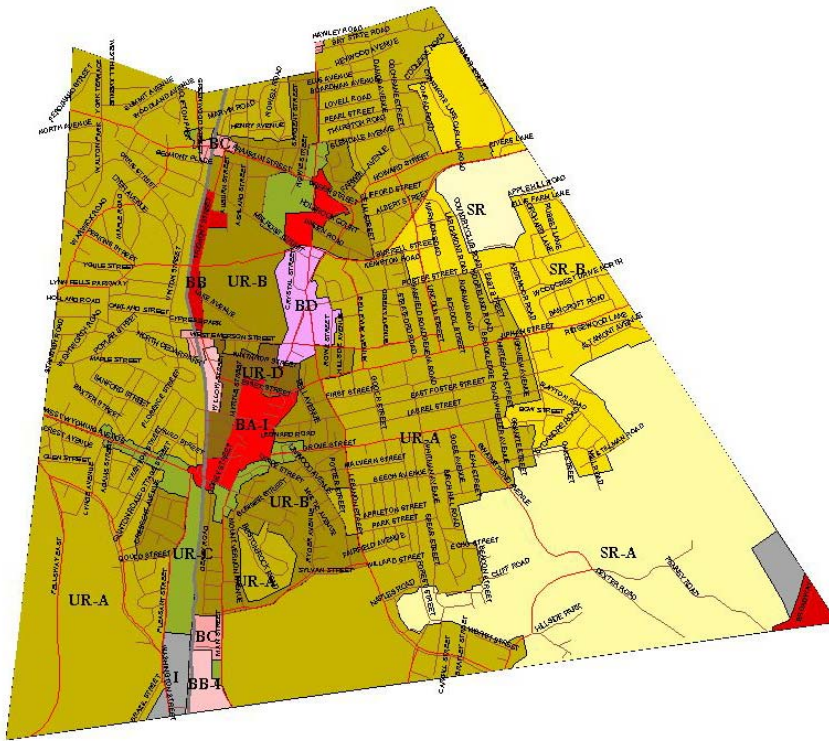
CURRENT LAND USE PROFILE				DEVELOPMENT DATA				VALUATION DATA			
CURRENT LAND USE	LAND USE CODE	NO. OF PARCELS	AREA (ACRES)		FLOOR AREA		TOTAL VALUATION		AVERAGE VALUATION		
			TOTAL	AVERAGE	TOTAL	AVERAGE FAR	LAND	BUILDING	LAND (PER PARCEL)	LAND (PER ACRE)	BUILDING
Total Industrial Property		35	63.65	1.82	620,598		\$7,956,500	\$11,897,000	\$227,329	\$125,008	
Golfing	805	1	54.00	54.00	15,788	0.01	\$1,238,914	\$535,000	\$1,238,914	\$22,943	\$535,000
Total Recreational Property		1	54.00	54.00	15,788		\$1,238,914	\$535,000	\$1,238,914	\$22,943	
Public Service Land Uses											
Commonwealth of Mass	901	14	150.73	10.77	25,190	0.00	\$6,041,900	\$1,151,700	\$431,564	\$40,083	\$82,264
Municipalities	903	344	725.77	2.11	846,756	0.03	\$68,416,800	\$47,641,700	\$198,886	\$94,268	\$138,493
Colleges, Schools	904	1	0.39	0.39	30,534	1.80	\$237,900	\$1,176,500	\$237,900	\$609,687	\$1,176,500
Charitable Organizations	905	38	14.00	0.37	636,358	1.04	\$10,082,400	\$57,698,200	\$265,326	\$720,341	\$1,518,374
Churches, Synagogues and Temples	906	29	18.08	0.62	348,007	0.44	\$8,579,000	\$15,445,400	\$295,828	\$474,376	\$532,600
Housing Authority	908	15	3.17	0.21	283,618	2.06	\$9,813,500	\$18,059,400	\$654,233	\$3,099,555	\$1,203,960
Cemeteries	911	7	6.16	0.88	1,020	0.00	\$1,852,100	\$72,700	\$264,586	\$300,524	\$10,386
Nonprofit	920	3	0.65	0.22	-	0.00	\$279,000	\$0	\$93,000	\$43,088	\$0
Total Public Properties		451	918.95	2.04	2,171,483		\$105,302,600	\$141,245,600	\$233,487	\$114,590	
Multiple-Use Property											
Primarily Residential w/ Commer.	013	45	7.21	0.16	297,485	0.95	\$7,932,700	\$9,420,260	\$176,282	\$1,100,892	\$209,339
Primarily Commercial w/ Residential	031	19	3.22	0.17	121,694	0.87	\$3,144,800	\$4,067,200	\$165,516	\$977,162	\$214,063
Primarily Industrial w/ Residential	041	1	1.05	1.05	10,239	0.22	\$372,300	\$213,900	\$372,300	\$353,729	\$213,900
Total Multiple-Use Properties		65	11.48	0.18	429,418		\$11,449,800	\$13,701,360	\$176,151	\$997,674	
Totals for Land Use Classes		9,219	2,606.78	0.28	32,069,009		\$1,408,339,914	\$1,325,459,685	\$152,765	\$540,261	
Grand Totals		9,219	2,606.78	0.28	32,069,009		\$1,408,339,914	\$1,325,459,685	\$152,765	\$540,261	

Current Land Use Plan

Zoning

Melrose is divided into 14 zoning districts, 7 of which are residential in nature (the “R” districts), 6 business zones (“B” districts), and one Industrial zone (the “I” district). These districts date to the City’s 1972 Zoning Ordinance, and have not undergone significant changes since then.³

Figure 13: Melrose Zoning Map



What is Zoning, Exactly?

Aside from developing property itself, zoning is the most powerful way a local government can shape land use within its boundaries. In Massachusetts, zoning is authorized through the Mass General Laws, Chapter 40A.

Zoning regulations are adopted through the government’s “police power,” which allows the enactment of laws to ensure the health, safety and well being of the public. In 1926, the Supreme Court held up the validity of zoning, ruling it appropriate to limit an individual’s property rights in the best interest of the general public.

Residential Zones

Single-Residence (SR) Districts (SR, SR-A, SR-B)

In general, the SR districts are primarily reserved for single-family use, and require greater lot areas (10-25,000 s.f.), setbacks, and open space (40-50%) than UR zones. According to the Zoning Map, the SR zones are strictly located on the east side of the City, in the Bellevue Country Club area, the Mt. Hood Golf Course neighborhood, and in the vicinity of Swains Pond.

Urban Residence (UR) Districts (UR-A, UR-B, UR-C, UR-D)

UR districts allow for two family and multifamily uses, and in a limited number of instances, retail service commercial and wholesale, transportation, and industrial uses. Minimum lot areas for new construction are 7,500 s.f. for single family use and upwards of 7,250 s.f. for two and multi-family uses. The majority of the City is in the UR-A district, with UR-B, UR-C, and UR-D districts tending to be concentrated

What is a Good Regulation?

Well, for one thing, knowing why it is in there and when it is no longer necessary. Knowing when a different regulation is necessary...

-Jane Jacobs

Like any good regulation, good zoning must balance providing proper protection for citizens while guarding against undue impact on those being regulated.

Zoning should be understandable, fair, and broadly supported by the public.

³ According to the recent codification of the City ordinances, including the Zoning code, dated April 2003.

between Lebanon/Main Street and Pleasant Street/the railroad. Mixed residential/business use is allowed by special permit in the UR-B, and UR-C/-D districts.

Business and Industrial Zones

General Business (BA, BA-1)

The general business district permits mixed residential and business use by right, and also allows for a wide variety of retail service commercial uses within its bounds. Special permit uses include developments such as hotels, auto sales and repair, medical offices, funeral establishments, research office, etc. Dimensional regulations for any use require a minimum of 5,000 s.f. lot area, and a 2.0 floor-to-area ratio and no side or rear setbacks, making this zone one that permits relatively dense development. The central business district of Main Street is in a BA-1 zone, as are Johnny's Foodmaster and the Franklin Square area.

Extensive Business (BB, BB-1)

Compared with the general business zone, extensive business permits uses that may be larger, and have greater impacts on their surroundings, including drive-in eating and drinking establishments (requires special permit), auto sales and repair, warehousing, etc. Less intensive business uses may require special permits in this zone (i.e. professional offices). Mixed residential and commercial uses are not permitted in the BB zone; however, they are allowed by special permit in the BB-1. This district is limited to 3 areas: near the Malden line roughly between Main Street and the railroad, between the railroad and Willow Street, and along Tremont Street (from near Emerson Street to Melrose Street, between the rail line and Tremont Street).

Local Business (BC)

Local business districts in Melrose allow mixed residential and business use by right and allow multifamily and planned unit developments by special permit. Most retail service commercial uses are allowed by special permit. Lot area, frontage, and setbacks are the same as in General Business, but building height is restricted to 30' and the floor to area ratio is limited to 0.75. BC districts cover just 4 small areas in Melrose: near the Armory/Hunt's Photo on Main Street, the Cedar Park train stop on West Emerson Street, the Highlands train stop on Franklin, and on Main Street at the Wakefield Line.

Medical Business (BD)

As its title suggests, this zone permits hospital, medical office, and nursing home uses by right. This district also allows for two and multifamily use, plus single family use via special permit. There is one BD district in Melrose that takes in both sides of Main Street from its intersection with Emerson Street (including the intersection) to the Fellsway, stretching up beyond Lebanon Street to Rowe Street, encompassing the hospital.

Zoning 101

Of the 65+ pages contained in Melrose's Zoning Ordinance, there are 2 Tables that together can give a good idea of how a property might be able to be developed. They are the **Table of Use and Parking Regulations**, and the **Table of Dimensional and Density Regulations**.

For each zone, the use table places possible land uses into one of 3 categories:

- Permitted (or "as of right")
- Not-Permitted, or
- Special Permit Required.

A special permit means the property owner needs to consult with the Zoning Board or the Planning Board in order to obtain approval for his/her proposal.

Dimensional regulations determine the intensity of the use, its size, height, and its relationship to other uses. It may use several terms that are zoning-specific:

Frontage: the length of the lot as it borders a public or private street.

Setback: the distance between a building/use and the lot line (front, side, rear).

Coverage: the ratio of the building footprint to the lot area, expressed as a percentage.

Floor to Area Ratio (FAR): the ratio of total building square footage compared with lot area.

Parking requirements vary by use; for housing, 2 spaces per unit are generally required; other uses typically relate the number of spaces to building floor area.

Industrial (I)

Melrose's Industrial district is generally dedicated to wholesale/transportation/industrial uses, and requires a minimum lot area of 20,000 s.f. along with the greatest frontage requirement in the ordinance (125'). Two small areas are zoned "I": one from the Malden line on the east side of Washington Street and west of the railroad to just beyond Stone Place, and another on Route 99/Newburyport Turnpike abutting the Mount Hood Golf Course. In the late 1980s, the land on Main Street south of Banks Place to the Malden line (location of the proposed Pembroke project) was rezoned from Industrial to BB-1.

Special Permits and Conditions

In addition to the above-described zones, the Melrose Zoning Ordinance guides particular types of development and/or uses in several ways that reach beyond the table of uses and dimensional regulations. Following is a list of items addressed in Sections XI-XVI of the Ordinance:

- Multifamily residential use in non-residentially zoned areas (BA-1, BB-1)
- Design review permits (UR-D, BA-1, BB-1)
- Cluster residential development (SR, SR-A, SR-B)
- Planned unit development (SR-A, UR-B, UR-C, UR-D, BA, BA-1, BB-1, BC, BD)
- Planned business development (BA, BA-1, BB, BB-1 BC, BD, UR-C, UR-D)
- Adult uses
- Wireless communication service facilities
- Home occupations
- Floodplain District

In addition to the above-listed uses, a special permit is required, without exception, for **all uses requiring parking in excess of 4 spaces**. This provision of the Melrose Zoning Ordinance has been implemented as a type of informal site plan review conducted by the Board of Appeals.

Local Historic District

Development in downtown Melrose is also regulated by a Local Historic District, established pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40C. **It includes Main Street properties, roughly bounded on the north by West Emerson Street, and on the south by West Foster Street.** Following is a map of the district taken from Mass GIS:

Figure 14: Melrose Historic District



Source: Mass GIS

Note: Boundaries are estimated, shown for illustrative purposes. For actual boundaries, consult the Historic District Commission. Of the two structures highlighted with a red dot, one is Memorial Hall, which has a preservation restriction recorded on the property, and the other is Larrabee's Brick Block, which is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Historic District Commission is comprised of 7 members and 3 alternates. The Commission reviews all proposed construction, additions, and alterations within the district, including review of signage. Their purview is limited to changes visible to the public. Proposed changes must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission prior to issuance of a building permit.

The Commission's work has been highly regarded, and they are credited with being a key contributor to the overall downtown revitalization effort.

Proposed Zoning Changes

In addition to minor adjustments to parking requirements, home occupation regulations, and some special permit uses, the Planning Board was involved in initiating one major zoning change in the past several years: a proposed Site Plan Review and Revitalization Incentive Overlay (RIO) District. The RIO district was intended to provide incentives to redevelop underutilized parcels adjacent to the railroad tracks, using site plan review as a design control. Several public hearings to discuss the merits of the RIO proposal were held. At its October 14, 2001 meeting, the Board of Aldermen failed to act on the proposal, indicating a lack of consensus.

Other Recent Planning Efforts

Outside of the Zoning Ordinance, there are several planning documents that serve to shape on-going development in the City. They include:

- Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2004
- Capital Improvement Plan (annual 1994-2002)
- The Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2000
- School Facilities Master Plan, 1997
- Public Safety Facilities Plan, 1996
- Memorial Hall Master Plan, 1995
- Ell Pond Master Plan, 1995
- Mount Hood Master Plan, 1995

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Buildout Analysis

Pursuant to its Community Preservation Initiative, EOEA completed build out analyses for all communities in Massachusetts. Using Melrose zoning, orthophotography, and available GIS information, EOEA mapped and calculated future potential development for the City as of 2001.

Since much of the City is developed, this analysis took 7 redevelopment zones (using then-proposed RIO districts listed above, plus the BB zone along the rail road between West Emerson and Melrose Streets) into consideration when calculating its data in order to develop a more accurate picture of how Melrose may develop into the future. Following is a partial summary of the buildout projection created for Melrose:

Additional Residents	3,349
Additional Students (K-12)	357
Additional Residential Units	1,419
Additional Developable Land Area (acres)	177
Additional Commercial/Industrial Buildable Floor Area (sq ft)	(545,952)*

* The analysis used the proposed RIO ordinance in its assumptions; as a result, some currently commercial/industrial uses were projected to be redeveloped as multifamily residential – thus the net loss of commercial/industrial floor area.

One obvious drawback to the buildout estimate can be seen when EOEA-determined “buildable” areas are compared to a topographic map. Many of these areas, particularly in the southern part of the City, feature extreme changes in elevation that make development, while perhaps not impossible, highly unlikely (see Figure 26:). Thus, one can better understand the discrepancy between the Assessor’s record of a mere 49 acres of developable residential land and the 177 acres that EOEA considered developable.

Zoning Analysis

As aforementioned, Melrose’s Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Rules and Regulations have not undergone substantial change in many years. To some degree, outdated provisions are maintained without consequence, as the City’s dense pattern of development generally inhibits large-scale land use changes.

That said, there are several aspects of the zoning code that would benefit from revision to enable the City to better manage growth in the future.

The City’s **approach to site plan and design review should be overhauled**. The current practice of Zoning Board review for projects involving over 4 parking spaces, while seemingly comprehensive, unnecessarily subjects minor projects to a special permit process, while notably exempting others of major impact such as the Hallmark Health parking lot on Essex Street and the self-storage facility on Washington

Street. The criteria for review should be related to the anticipated impact of the project, or to the area in which the project is proposed, and clear, objective standards should be developed for site layout and circulation, landscaping, drainage and utilities, and building design. In addition, the review process should be streamlined, to avoid repetitive review by both the Planning Board and Zoning Boards.

The **Zoning Map and the allowed uses in each zone**, particularly the urban residence, business and industrial zones, should be closely examined for their relevancy to land use goals and objectives. A look at Zoning Board records may reveal instances where use variances have been desirable, likely suggesting a need for a change in the ordinance. For example, the Station Crossing condo development at Willow Street is located in a BB-1 zone, which is not intended to allow residential use, but is clearly a desirable development at this convenient location. This development, in addition to the Pembroke project at Oak Grove, was able to receive a special permit for multifamily use in a non-residentially zoned area (Article XI, Section 235-61B). If **mixed use** is desirable in these areas (both BB-1), setting standards to permit this use by right would help achieve this goal. **All zones along the train line**, particularly the industrial zone along Washington Street, should be considered for **mixed use to better complement neighborhoods nearby, and to promote physical improvements**.

While Melrose has very little land available for subdivision, the few recent 5-10 lot projects have illustrated how the **rules for the subdivision of land could benefit from updating**. The minimum required pavement width, for example, is 32 feet, which appears incongruous when adjacent to narrower neighborhood streets that make up the fabric of much of the City. In addition, street trees, planting strips, and landscaping should be required in any new development and utilities should be placed underground. Finally, since in many instances, the remaining developable land in Melrose encompasses steep topography, **a hillside/slope protection ordinance** should be considered to better protect natural vegetation and prevent erosion. The recent proposal to develop six townhouses at 70 Sylvan Street, that would reportedly blast into ledge and create a 36-38 foot sheer cliff behind the structures, is an example of a development that would benefit from a hillside/slope protection ordinance.⁴

Further discussed in the Housing element of this Plan, **incentive zoning** should be adopted to encourage the creation of affordable housing.

Land Use Challenges & Opportunities – Smart Growth Initiative

Melrose is a mature community, with a land use pattern that is well established and essentially built out. Its residential neighborhoods offer few opportunities for new development, its neighborhood commercial centers are stable, and Main Street storefronts are rarely vacant. Nevertheless, **Melrose should take proactive steps to plan for several objectives: preservation of its historic architectural character and land use pattern, the optimal redevelopment of underutilized sites, expansion of its tax base in the face of anticipated increases in the cost of municipal services, and future service needs for its residents**. The City's desirable location and amenities, coupled with the region's housing shortage, make it likely that Melrose will continue to entertain residential development proposals similar to those of recent years. Although communities often express the desire to "stay the same," and Melrose's lack of developable land virtually ensures that its physical character will remain fundamentally intact, the City nevertheless has an obligation to advance policies that will promote the preservation of the community, since even the goal of "staying the same" is never achieved by doing nothing.

With its walkable neighborhoods, dense pattern of development, and variety of transportation options, **Melrose serves as a model for "smart growth" principles**. The concept of smart growth grew in response to the negative impacts associated with sprawling land use patterns that have dominated

⁴ "Sylvan Street Residents Worry About Development Plans to Remove Nearby Hillside," *Melrose Free Press*, 2/12/04, p1.

development since post World War II. According to the Smart Growth Network,

*Smart growth is development that serves the economy, community, and the environment. It provides a framework for communities to make informed decisions about how and where they grow. Smart growth makes it possible for communities to grow in ways that support economic development and jobs; create strong neighborhoods with a range of housing, commercial, and transportation options; and achieve healthy communities that provide families with a clean environment.*⁵

As the Boston region becomes increasingly concerned with the housing shortage and the impacts of sprawl, political leaders are beginning to realize the tremendous benefits of smart growth and are considering how to encourage communities to incorporate smart growth into their local regulations. In October 2003, the Commonwealth Housing Task Force published its recommendations to the State in a report entitled “Building on our Heritage: A Housing Strategy for Smart Growth and Economic Development.” It proposes offering **substantial financial incentives to municipalities that demonstrate a commitment to promoting redevelopment through the use of Overlay Districts.** These mixed-use districts are proposed for locations “near public transit stations, town centers and underutilized industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings and sites.” In fact, Melrose is cited as an example of how an overlay district could work to improve existing areas near train stops:

“The Wyoming Hills commuter rail station in Melrose is an example. On the northeast corner of the cross street is a vacant and unkempt lot full of weeds, an empty one story storefront, some derelict garages dating to the depression era that may or may not be still in use, and several three-decker buildings. There are also commercial buildings in modest condition. Against the tracks to the north is a line of parking that is not paved, with uneven gravel that a rainstorm turns into pools of muddy water....



An Overlay Zoning District would make sense here. There are several sites where **new housing could be built in ways that would complement the neighborhood...consider an additional component to the program that would generate broader based neighborhood improvement.** Such a component would provide both a source of funds for and the planning and coordination of upgrades to building exteriors and site improvements (such as the parking next to the tracks).



The model is the Main Street program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation... The concept is that within an Overlay Zoning District, buildings would be eligible for unique and attractive financing for exterior improvements that meet standards for design and materials as set for in the provisions of the Overlay Zoning District...an element of the Overlay Zoning Districts would give power to the Planning Board to set design standards, pursuant to the terms and conditions agreed upon locally.”

Most, if not all, of Melrose’s land use opportunities involve the principles of smart growth – a summary of the major issues confronting the City follow below:

⁵ Smart Growth Network, “Getting to Smart Growth,” page i.

Protection of historic architecture and neighborhood character, particularly outside of the Local Historic District.

While development on Main Street in the downtown area largely falls under the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission, the City has no authority to ensure the preservation of structures that lie outside of the district. Recent trends in Melrose and the greater Boston region witness smaller homes being torn down to make way for larger residences that can detract from the predominant neighborhood character and larger historic homes being converted into multi-family apartments and condos. Whether via additional Historic Districts, a demolition delay procedure, or perhaps using a design review process, the City can have some additional input into how properties that contribute to its character are altered. In addition, site plan review affords the City expanded review authority to ensure that the impact of new development is minimized and/or mitigated, and designed to fit into streetscapes and neighborhoods.



The Planning Board currently may issue a “design review permit,” on projects located in the UR-D, BA-1, and BB-1 zones that request an increase in density beyond what is permitted by right in the ordinance. Detailed in Section 235-66, the Planning Board requires applicants to provide benefits (open space, affordable housing and/or traffic and/or pedestrian improvements) in exchange for the required increase in density.



As aforementioned, the Board of Appeals also conducts a review similar to what might be seen as site plan review under a special permit proceeding required of all uses needing more than 4 parking spaces. The essential difference between a special permit and site plan review is that special permits may authorize or deny uses, while site plan review is used to regulate uses.

In concept, site plan review may also be administered as part of a special permit procedure, or it may be required prior to the issuance of a building permit. Many Massachusetts communities, including Malden, Medford, and Reading, perform site plan review as part of the development process.



Some fairly recent developments that would have benefited from site plan review include the Hallmark Health parking lot developed near Deering Lumber and the self-storage facility located on Washington Street just to the north of the mills.

Reinvestment in the established built environment, support for extended families to remain in Melrose, and assisting Melrose businesses in succeeding in place.

As Melrose continues its struggle to provide adequate services to its residents amid funding cutbacks and rising costs, the City needs to look at alternatives to raising property taxes if it seeks to remain a place open to residents of socio-economic diversity. However, it is unlikely that such opportunities could solve all of these issues. Even among other densely built communities, Melrose has a very low rate of new growth - this confirms the informal observation that the Melrose’s landscape has changed very little over the past decade, since the revitalization of downtown.

Melrose’s zoning ordinance, substantially unchanged for many years, can be an obstacle to change for very small-scale proposals. While this can benefit the City by requiring Zoning Board review for most building projects, it can also inhibit or prevent desirable proposals from ever emerging and/or cause

certain developments to look beyond Melrose's borders for opportunity. In looking toward the future, the City should evaluate whether its zoning ordinance accurately reflects its desired vision, whether it inadvertently prevents that vision from being realized or allows undesirable development to occur, and, as necessary, identify possible amendments to the ordinance.

Examples of types of development that have had difficulty locating in Melrose include:

- Assisted living facilities and/or continuing care retirement communities;
- Main Street businesses expansion due to parking or variance issues;
- Medical offices anywhere outside of the BD zone;
- Day care centers (only allowed by special permit);
- Housing downtown (due to parking requirements); and
- Veterinary hospitals/clinics (only allowed in the SR district).

Future planning for the industrial mill sites along lower Washington Street.

These parcels have long been considered by city planners to offer significant opportunities for redevelopment. The structures located at 99 Washington Street were built in 1900 to support manufacturing and would need to be adapted for any new use (a number of businesses currently lease portions of the facility). Located in the industrial zone, uses are presently limited to those focused on manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation, and the like – residential and commercial/retail uses are generally prohibited. According to a local realtor, the building is, at present, fully occupied with some incubator type uses. Clearly, any redevelopment scenario must take into account these small businesses, and carefully balance the need for incubator space with a desire to increase tax revenues via redevelopment.

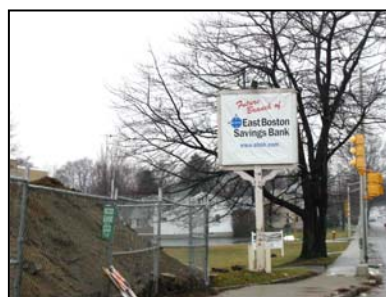


If the Pembroke development progresses to construction and occupancy, these sites will become increasingly attractive for redevelopment. As one of the City's largest opportunities for redevelopment with approximately 18 acres of land (all property located in the I zone on Washington Street), the City could benefit from a change in use that would encourage higher value redevelopment in this area. In addition, redevelopment offers a significant possibility for expansion of Melrose's tax base. A future should be envisioned for this area in advance of impending development, so that the City will have the maximum ability to shape projects to meet its desired vision.



Redevelopment of lower Main Street, near Pine Banks Park

The street block presently occupied by Hunt's Photo, the YMCA Day Care, the newly cleared-site for East Boston Savings Bank, and the National Guard Armory is one of Melrose's larger underdeveloped areas, where the pedestrian-oriented character of Main Street transitions into a more auto-focused environment. The configuration of parking lots bordering the street and the structures set back on the lot, without a landscaped buffer, is one



of the few areas where Main Street's character dramatically departs from the pattern seen closer to downtown. In order to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment here, redevelopment should bring new structures to the street frontage, with parking to the rear of the site, and ample landscaping should be installed throughout, particularly at the edges of the property.

Redevelopment of the Route 99 frontage in Melrose.



At the southeast corner of the City, below the slope of the Mount Hood Golf Course, is approximately 22 acres of land occupied by a mix of uses, including Bardon Trimount, an asphalt manufacturer, a City-owned parcel at the foot of the Mount Hood property (leased to USA Waste Services), a car sales retailer (Melrose Dodge), a Jewish cemetery, and Sabatino's restaurant. Physically separate from the rest of Melrose, this location at the edge of Route 1 could attract intensive use. In the past, the City has sought to take advantage of the potential commercial tax benefit this property could provide, but has yet to successfully entice more valuable uses to the land.

Both the Industrial and the BB zones apply here – a close analysis of preferred versus allowed uses should lead the City to a strategy to encourage profitable redevelopment of this area.

Goals, Objectives and Action Items for Land Use

GOAL LU-1: MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF MELROSE

Objective A: Perform a thorough review and update of the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to ensure all new development is consistent with the character of Melrose.

- Develop a **Site Plan Review** Process (including design review).
- Review and **amend the Subdivision Regulations** to ensure that new developments complement existing neighborhoods: reduce minimum pavement width required (currently 32'), require street trees and planting strips, require underground utilities, set standards for lighting, etc. Consider shared driveways, courts & lanes, and alternatives to the cul de sac.
- In order to minimize erosion and the removal of natural vegetation, enact a **slope/hillside protection ordinance** in the zoning code which prevents the development of areas with a naturally steep slope of over an established percentage to be counted as developable area.
- Make fundamental changes to/or re-zone the Industrial (I) zones to ensure that new uses and redevelopment in these locations reinforce considered and appropriate planning objectives.

- **Address the issue of “mansionization”** through evaluation of a variety of zoning tools (lot coverage ratios, floor-to-area ratios, maximum height reductions, site plan review for homes over a certain size, bulk control plans, and setbacks).

Objective B: Promote policies that permit a variety of residential types, ensuring Melrose residents of all ages and incomes can remain in Melrose.

- **Adopt incentive zoning** for affordable housing.
- Consider flexibility in parking requirements within walking distance to public transportation.
- Define and allow for **assisted living facilities and continuing care retirement communities** of appropriate scale in select locations in the Zoning Ordinance.
- Consider increased flexibility in allowing **in-law apartments** in certain areas of the City.

Objective C: Prevent the incremental loss of historic structures.

- Adopt a **demolition delay** procedure for all historically significant structures.
- Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places to promote the preservation of historic architectural features.

Objective D: Support the continued success of neighborhood commercial areas at Cedar Park/West Emerson, the Highlands, Franklin Square, and Wyoming.

- Review and revise the zoning ordinance for allowed uses and dimensional regulations to ensure that desired growth is allowed as of right and that variances are not typically required for development.

GOAL LU-2: ENCOURAGE SMART GROWTH TO ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOODS, PROVIDE NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, AND ADD TO THE TAX BASE

Objective A: Encourage additional mixed-use and redevelopment along the commuter rail corridor, near the Wyoming, Cedar Park, and Highlands stops, as well as near the Armory/Hunts site.

- Use creative zoning techniques, such as overlays, to attract redevelopment of long-underutilized sites and to enhance their reuse potential.
- Consider incorporating the recommendations of the Commonwealth Housing Task Force.
- Work with the MBTA to identify areas in public ownership that could be subject to reuse.
- Make the signage and façade improvement grant program widely publicized and available in these areas.

Objective B: Determine a future vision for the lower Washington Street corridor near the historic mills.

- Conduct a public process to determine a future vision for this area.
 - Meet with the neighbors to identify needs and concerns.
 - Work with property owners to understand constraints to redevelopment.
 - Explore alternative development scenarios with neighborhood input; employ consulting assistance where necessary to evaluate future impacts.
 - Develop a consensus-based future vision; communicate results to the Planning Board and the Board of Aldermen.
 - Draft and adopt zoning changes to implement the vision, if necessary.

Objective C: Identify optimal land uses for the Route 99 frontage and adjust zoning to encourage preferred redevelopment.

- Assign a Planning Board subcommittee to focus on this issue.

HOUSING



Introduction

Melrose has long been considered a desirable residential community with a diverse housing stock, rich in historic architectural detail. Maintaining the historic housing stock and ensuring that new development complements the existing mix of housing types is a priority for the City. In addition, Melrose is committed to exploring ways to address the continual decrease in affordable housing options, and thus provide options for those employed in Melrose to live and work in the same community. The lack of affordable housing is a state-wide issues which is of particular concern to Melrose, which has prided itself on the diversity of income levels in the City.

This chapter explores the City's housing challenges by discussing the composition of the housing stock, the cost of housing, the mismatch between what Melrose residents can afford for housing versus the cost of housing, the current tax base, and the availability of developable land. Methods for addressing the housing challenges are described throughout the chapter.

Housing Units

A comparison of housing statistics from 1990 to 2000 indicates little change in most areas with the notable exceptions of a small decrease in household size and a remarkably low rental vacancy rate (down from 5.4% in 1990 to 1.6% in 2000). As indicated by the 2000 Census, the rental market in Massachusetts is much tighter than the rest of the nation with a vacancy rate of 3.5% compared to the nation's 6.8%. Melrose's 1.6% vacancy rate in 2000 indicates an extremely limited supply of available rental units.

According to the Melrose Inspection Services Department, a total of 77 building permits for new housing units (including condominiums and conversions into multifamily structures) were issued from 1990-2000, down significantly from previous decades. This decrease is due largely to zoning restrictions and the unavailability of buildable lots. **Even with the 77 new units, there was an overall loss of 49 housing units between 1990 and 2000**, as indicated in Table 9. This decrease reflects stricter zoning enforcement that reduce the number of illegal units and, to a lesser extent, conversions of two-family homes back to their original single family design.

Table 9: Comparison of Housing Statistics, 1990-2000

	Home-owner vacancy rate	Rental vacancy rate	Aver. Household Size- Renter Occupied	Ave. Household size Owner occupied	Ave. Household Size Combined	Renter occupied housing units	Owner occupied housing units	Occupied housing units	Vacant housing units	Total Housing Units
2000	0.4	1.6	1.75	2.78	2.44	3,623	7,359	10,982	266	11,248
1990	0.5	5.4	1.85	2.91	2.54	3,786	7,155	10,941	356	11,297

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 & 2000

As the population of Melrose ages, it is anticipated that average household size will continue to decrease and there will be increased demand for the senior center and services such as housekeeping, medical attention, transportation, and meal preparation. Other implications are that the demand for large houses may be reduced because average household size will decrease. Conversely, demand will likely increase for townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and elderly housing units that are more convenient and affordable for seniors. Melrose is well positioned for increased demand for subsidized elderly housing with 736 subsidized rental units in three elderly and three elderly/disabled housing buildings. It is less well prepared to meet the increased demand for townhouses, condominiums, and market rate rental apartments.

Households⁶

Table 10 shows that total housing units declined from 1990-2000, while occupied housing units rose slightly. Census 2000 reports that 10,982 of Melrose's 11,248 housing units are occupied. This is not markedly changed from Census 1990 when 10,941 of Melrose's 11,297 housing units were occupied. Average household size has slightly decreased from 2.54 in 1990 to 2.44 in 2000.

Table 10: Total Households and Housing Units in Melrose

	Census 1990	Census 2000	Buildout
Total Housing Units	11,297	11,248	11,456
Occupied Housing units	10,941	10,982	*
Population	28,150	27,134	27,650
Person/Household	2.54	2.44	2.41

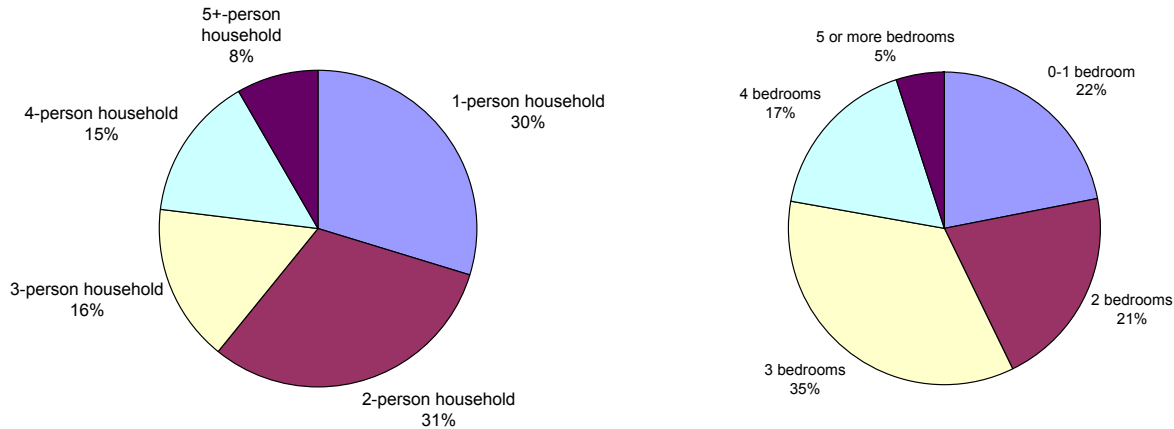
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990/2000, MAPC Buildout analysis

** The figure for occupied housing units under full build-out conditions is unknown*

Over 60% of Melrose households are comprised of two or fewer persons. As seen below, about 43% of Melrose units have 0-2 bedrooms, and nearly 60% of Melrose's housing units have 3 or more bedrooms.

⁶ Households are defined in the U.S. Census as all persons living in a housing unit; "families" are a subset of all households, defined as two or more related people living in a housing unit. Households would include single people living alone, whereas families would not.

Figure 15: Household Size & Number of Bedrooms, 2000

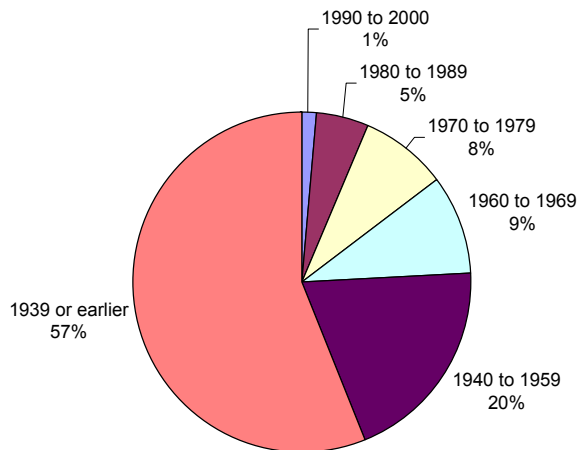


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Age of Housing Stock

There were 11,248 housing units in Melrose in the year 2000. As shown in Figure 16, over half (56%) of the structures were built in 1939 or earlier. Though homes are generally well maintained and in good condition, the fact that so many were built over 60 years ago suggests that **the city should make housing rehabilitation funds available to income eligible residents.**

Figure 16: Housing Structures, Year Built



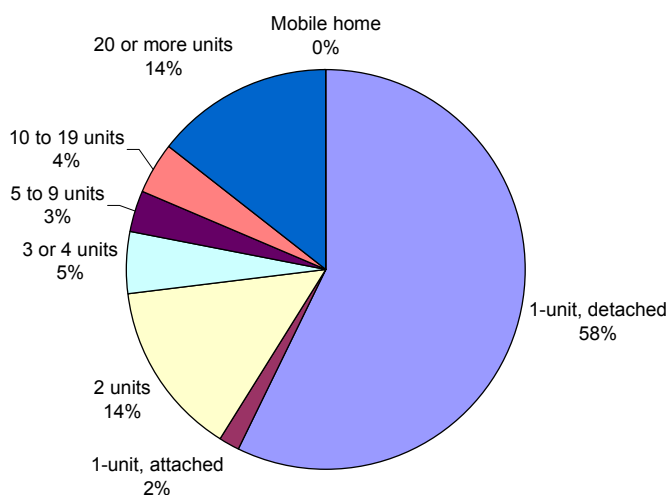
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Housing Types

Figure 17 shows that **the majority (58%) of housing units in Melrose are single-family homes**. Most of these homes were built to house families, and generally have three or more bedrooms as illustrated in Figure 15 above.

Included in these figures are two of Melrose's largest residential developments. Melrose Towers is a three building, 164-unit condominium development. The first building was built in 1961; the second two were added in 1972. Town Estates is a 266, one and two bedroom, rental development built in the early 1970s.

Figure 17: Housing Types in Melrose, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

According to the 2000 Census, there were 10,982 occupied housing units in Melrose. Of these units, **7,359, or 67%, were owner-occupied and 3,623 or 33% were renter-occupied**.

Table 11: Housing Tenure/Residents per Housing Unit, 2000

Subject	Number	Percent
Owner-occupied units	7,359	67.0
Renter-occupied housing units	3,623	33.0
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.78	
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	1.75	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

This data indicates that, not surprisingly, rental housing units in Melrose tend to be occupied by households that are smaller on average than those that are owner-occupied. Rental units generally attract smaller households (including seniors), which are less likely to have children.

Cost of Housing

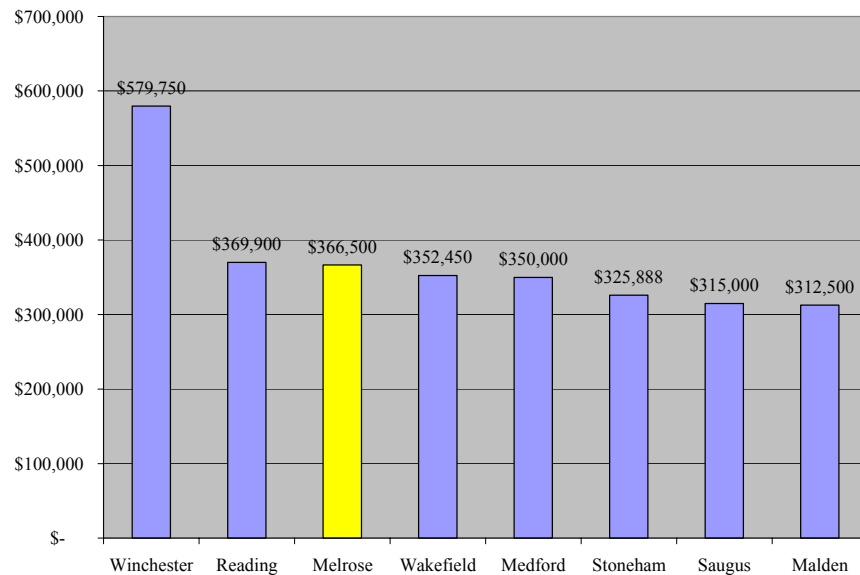
Over the past five years there have been an average of about 420 annual home sales in Melrose, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Median Housing Price and Number of Sales, 1990-2003

Year	All Sales	% Change	All Sales	% Change
2003	\$366,500	10%	426	-6%
2002	\$334,000	8%	455	23%
2001	\$309,000	17%	369	-5%
2000	\$263,250	15%	388	-16%
1999	\$229,100	11%	461	-3%
1998	\$205,750	9%	477	14%
1997	\$188,000	11%	418	-12%
1996	\$170,000	3%	476	30%
1995	\$164,500	4%	365	-8%
1994	\$158,000	-2%	395	15%
1993	\$160,500	2%	343	-1%
1992	\$157,250	-2%	346	33%
1991	\$160,000	-6%	261	0%
1990	\$170,000		262	

Source: Banker & Tradesman

Melrose home prices are quite comparable to its neighbors with the exception of Winchester; even though Melrose ranks third highest in the group of eight, an average of just over \$9,500 separates the seven outside of Winchester.

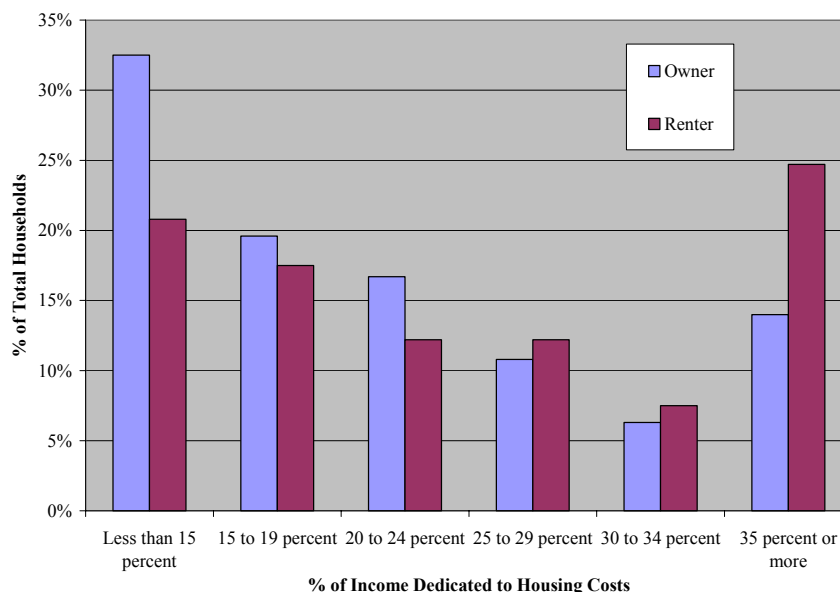
Figure 18: Median Sales Price, All Sales, 2003

Source: The Warren Group

Home affordability is a significant concern among many Melrose residents. Participants at the Future Search Conference of 1998⁷ expressed concerns that many town employees and children of Melrose residents are unable to live in Melrose due to high property values. The desirability of Melrose has caused both home values and rental prices to rise dramatically.

Figure 19 is taken from Census 2000 data concerning housing cost burden. **In general, Melrose renters experience a greater burden than homeowners.** Approximately 20% of owners pay more than 30% of their gross income toward housing, while over 33% of renters experience the same burden. This burden, however, has not substantially increased since 1990 – instead, Melrose incomes have adjusted upward alongside housing prices.⁸

Figure 19: Monthly Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income, Owner vs. Renter, 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Housing Gap Analysis

As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, the price of housing in Melrose is dramatically increasing. As the availability of affordable housing options declines, the economic diversity in the community will decrease and thus the community's character will change. A housing gap analysis of Melrose illustrates this point. A housing gap analysis compares the available housing stock, both ownership and rental units, to what the population can afford, by various income categories that are based upon the area's median income. This analysis shows that the average value of housing units today would require a higher income than the average Melrose household can afford. This means that a large percentage of Melrose residents would not be able to buy or rent housing in Melrose if they were buying or renting for the first time now. In other words, households of similar make up of those that live here now would not be able to move into the community.

⁷ The Future Search Conference of 1998 was a visioning process for Melrose residents to help them set goals for the future of their community.

⁸ According to the Census, about 24% of Melrose's population lived in a different city in 1995; thus, the increase in Melrose incomes may partially reflect a more affluent population moving into Melrose.

Housing Units and Vacancy

Alongside a slight decline in the overall number of housing units, vacancy rates in Melrose for both owners and renters have declined since 1990, and combined to just 2% of the City's total housing stock in 2000. This change is generally reflected throughout the area, as the lack of available housing has driven up prices. Table 13 is a look at the area's total stock and vacancy rates:

Table 13: Area Comparison of Occupied Housing Stock and Vacancy Rates, 2000

Municipality	Occupied Housing 2000				Vacancy Rate 2000	
	Owner	Renter	Total	% Renters	Owner	Renter
Malden	9,962	13,047	23,009	57%	.4%	2.1%
Medford	12,933	9,134	22,067	41%	.5%	2.5%
Melrose	7,359	3,623	10,982	33%	.4%	1.6%
Reading	7,165	1,523	8,688	18%	.3%	3.1%
Saugus	7,979	1,996	9,975	20%	.3%	1.6%
Stoneham	6,187	2,863	9,050	32%	.3%	2.1%
Wakefield	7,019	2,728	9,747	28%	.4%	1.8%
Winchester	6,212	1,503	7,715	19%	.6%	2.5%
Massachusetts	1,508,052	935,528	2,443,580	38%	.7%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Household and Family Income

WHAT ARE AREA FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS EARNING?

Melrose's median homeowner income in 2000 was \$77,206 and the median renter household earned \$39,401. The median income of both owners and renters overall was \$62,811, a 42% increase from 1990. The city's median household income (MHI) was 14% higher than the Boston region and over 24% higher than the State. As Figure 21 illustrates, over half of home owners in Melrose earn over \$75,000 per year, while just 17% of renters earn similar incomes. More than 50% of the 45-54 age group earns at least \$75,000.

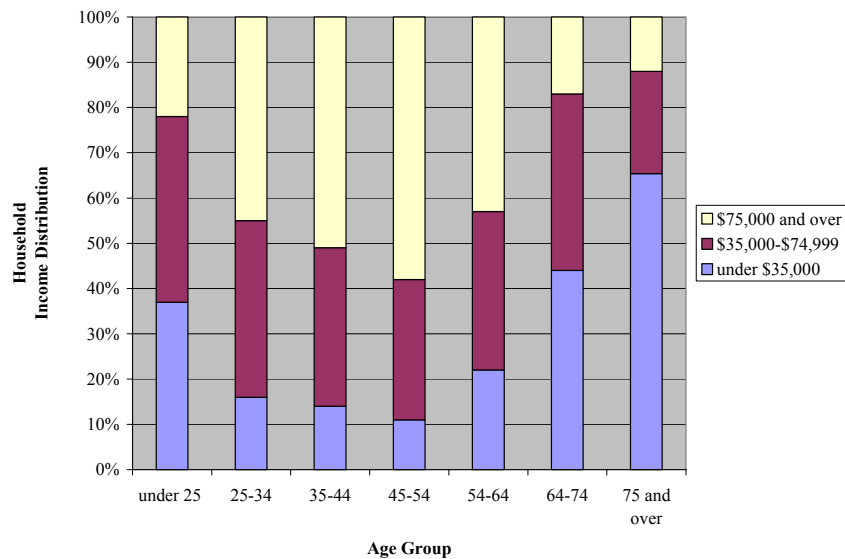
Housing demand and need has been calculated for four income groups using Census 2000 data: very low level (30% MHI or less), low (31%-50% of MHI), moderate (51% to 80% of MHI), and middle (81% to 150% of MHI). Table 14 lists median household income for the city, the PMSA, and the State.

Table 14: Median Income & Income Groups

Median Household Income (MHI)	1990*	2000*	\$ Change	% Change
Melrose	\$44,109	\$62,811	\$18,702	42%
Owner-Occupied		\$77,206		
Renter-Occupied		\$39,401		
Boston PMSA	\$40,491	\$55,183	\$14,692	36%
Massachusetts	\$36,952	\$50,502	\$13,550	37%
Household Income Groups*		Annual Income	Cumulative # of HH's in Melrose	% of HHs in Melrose
Very Low Income (30% MHI)		\$16,555	1,279	12%
Low Income (50% MHI)		\$27,592	2,252	21%
Moderate Income (80% MHI)		\$44,146	3,746	35%
Middle Income (150% of MHI)		\$82,775	7,130	66%

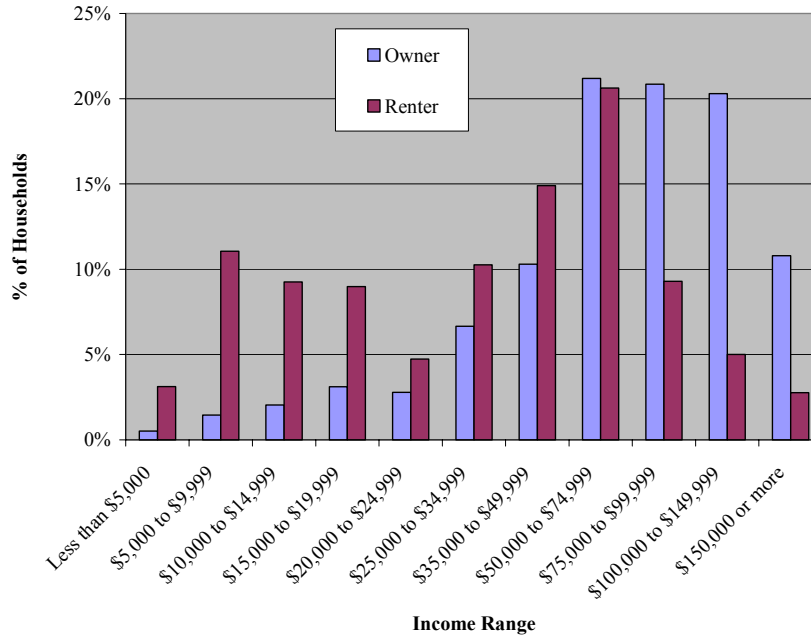
* Income groups are derived based on Boston PMSA median income. Census reports on income are for 1989 and 1999.
Source: U.S. Census 2000

Figure 20: Household Income by Age Group, U.S. Census 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Figure 21: Melrose Households by Income Range, 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Housing Costs and Value

HOW MUCH DO HOMES IN MELROSE COST?

Housing costs are listed in Table 15 based on Census data as well as market data from the Warren Group⁹. The Warren Group home sales price data represent the actual sale prices of homes, whereas the Census data are based on respondents' opinions of the value of their home and are likely to lag behind actual market conditions. Although median gross rent and condo prices grew at slower rates than median incomes, **the median sales price of a home has increased about 20% more than the median household incomes.** While the average home in 2000 cost approximately \$263,250, **as of 2003, the median home cost \$366,500.**

Table 15: Median Housing Costs, 1990-2000

Housing Costs	1990	2000	\$ Change	% Change
Median Value Owner-Occupied Home (Census)	\$196,100	\$254,400	\$58,300	30%
Median Home Sales Price (Warren Group)	\$170,000	\$263,250	\$93,250	55%
single-family	\$175,000	\$280,000	\$105,000	60%
condo	\$108,563	\$140,500	\$31,937	29%
Median Gross Rent (Census)	\$588	\$760	\$172	29%

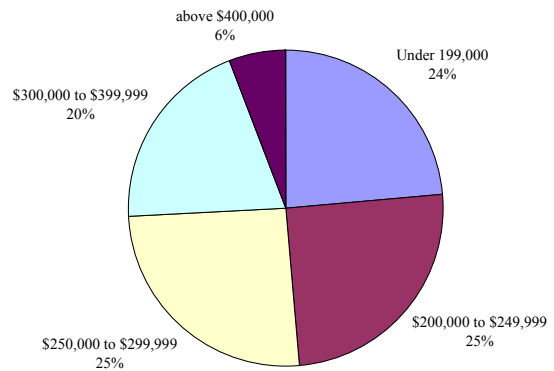
Source: US Census 2000, Warren Group Town Stats

⁹ Town Statistics from the Warren Group at <http://www.thewarrengroup.com>.

Table 16: Reported Housing Values, Owner-Occupied Units

Total:	7,365
under \$100,000	85
\$100,000 to \$124,999	109
\$125,000 to \$149,999	278
\$150,000 to \$174,999	537
\$175,000 to \$199,999	727
\$200,000 to \$249,999	1,853
\$250,000 to \$299,999	1,868
\$300,000 to \$399,999	1,470
\$400,000 to \$499,999	272
\$500,000 to \$749,999	153
\$750,000 to \$999,999	13
\$1,000,000 or more	0

Source: U.S. Census 2000, SF-3, Table H-84



Homeownership Affordability

WHO CAN AFFORD TO BUY A HOME IN MELROSE?

Assuming that people can afford to pay 30% of their gross income towards housing costs, that a 10% down payment is made, and interest rates are at 6%, **a salary of about \$79,000 is needed to afford the current¹⁰ median home (\$366,500) in Melrose. In 2000, only 38% of households earned this salary.¹¹**

Developing an up to date profile of affordability requires current income and housing price figures. Although current national and statewide data are readily available, municipal-specific data are not, and must rely upon the 2000 Census. For housing values, assessing information can be used, but this information closely resembles Census reporting, since the majority of owners likely derive their estimates of value from their tax bills. The main drawback with using Census data is the dated timeframe, which reflects the housing situation of nearly five years ago. Even so, it can provide an accurate baseline from which to begin to characterize current trends, especially when put into context with more recent data.

Table 17: 2000 Income Groups and Maximum Home Purchase Prices

Boston PMSA Median HH Income (\$55,183)	Maximum Income	# HHs	% HHs	Maximum Home Price @ 30% of income
Very Low Income (30% AMI)	\$16,555	1,279	12%	\$77,000
Low Income (50% AMI)	\$27,592	973	9%	\$128,000
Moderate Income (80% AMI)	\$44,146	1,494	14%	\$205,000
Middle Income (150% AMI)	\$82,775	3,384	31%	\$384,000

Source: Census 2000

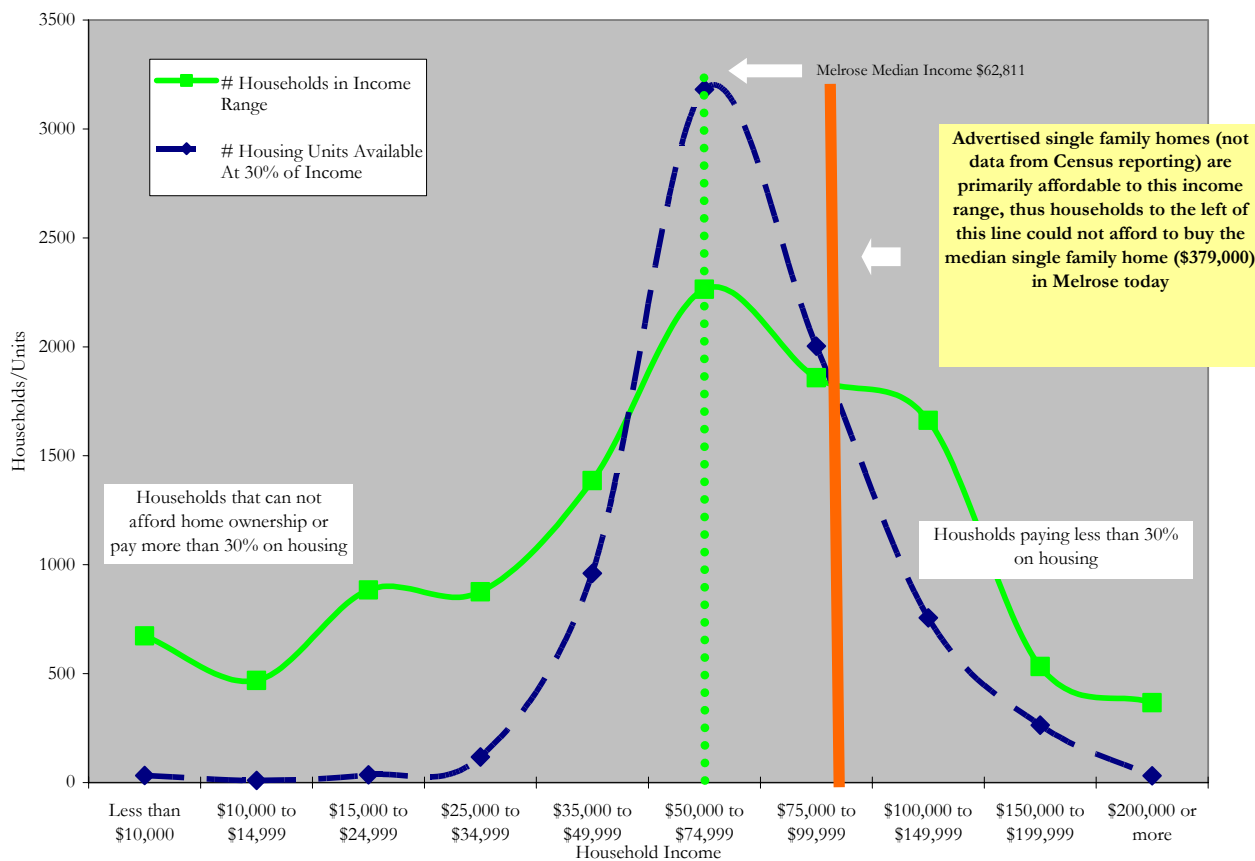
At the local level, the Census records both homeowner incomes and the estimated value of all home-ownership units. By comparing the distribution of incomes to the range of home values, one can get a sense of how housing prices match up with residents' ability to afford home ownership. For the purpose of this gap analysis, all renter households are assumed to be prospective homeowners.

¹⁰ The Warren Group Town Stats, Calendar Year Sales, 2003.

¹¹ N.B. 2003 local incomes are unavailable. Since 2000, the median State income has increased by a negligible amount. Although one assumes the local income levels have risen in relation to the recent influx in population.

A look at Figure 22 depicts the gap of affordable homes for Melrose households earning less than \$50,000 a year. According to Census data featured in Table 16, 70% of Melrose homes are affordable to households with incomes in the \$75-\$100,000 range and only 40% of household earn these incomes. The chart also highlights the fact that many households either pay more than 30% of their incomes on housing or are in the advantageous position of paying less than 30%.

Figure 22: Home Ownership Affordability Gap for Melrose Households
(includes all renters as prospective home owners)



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Although the numerical gap exists only where housing units (in blue) are below incomes (in green) to the left of the median, **the actual gap may be much greater as housing values have increased disproportionately to incomes since 2000. Figure 22 also illustrates the range of incomes to whom the current median home is affordable, and in so doing, is able to represent where the actual gap may lie.**

In 2001, the average Melrose teacher earned \$30,515¹², and a new police officer might have started with a base daytime salary near \$35,000. In regard to these professions, a household would need more than one income to afford home ownership; as indicated earlier, approximately 20% of owner households in Melrose pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs.

¹² <http://www.massretirees.com/investment/citypensions0501.html>

Rental Housing Affordability

ARE APARTMENTS AFFORDABLE IN MELROSE? According to an informal survey of rental listings featured in the Boston Globe and the Melrose Free Press during December 2003, the **average rents** for available apartments are **\$950 for 1 bedroom, \$1200 for 2 bedrooms, and \$1,500 for 3 or more bedrooms**. Assuming one's housing cost is 30% of his/her gross income, **households earning \$38,000 to \$60,000 could afford these rents**. As referenced above, the median renter household income in 2000 was just over \$39,000, making these rents unaffordable to many.

The U.S. Census tabulates housing payments for renter occupied housing units by household income range, providing an estimate of the number of households with excessive cost burdens. About **32% of the renter households in Melrose pay 30% or more of their income on rent**.

Figure 23: Rental Unit Affordability Gap for Melrose Renter Households

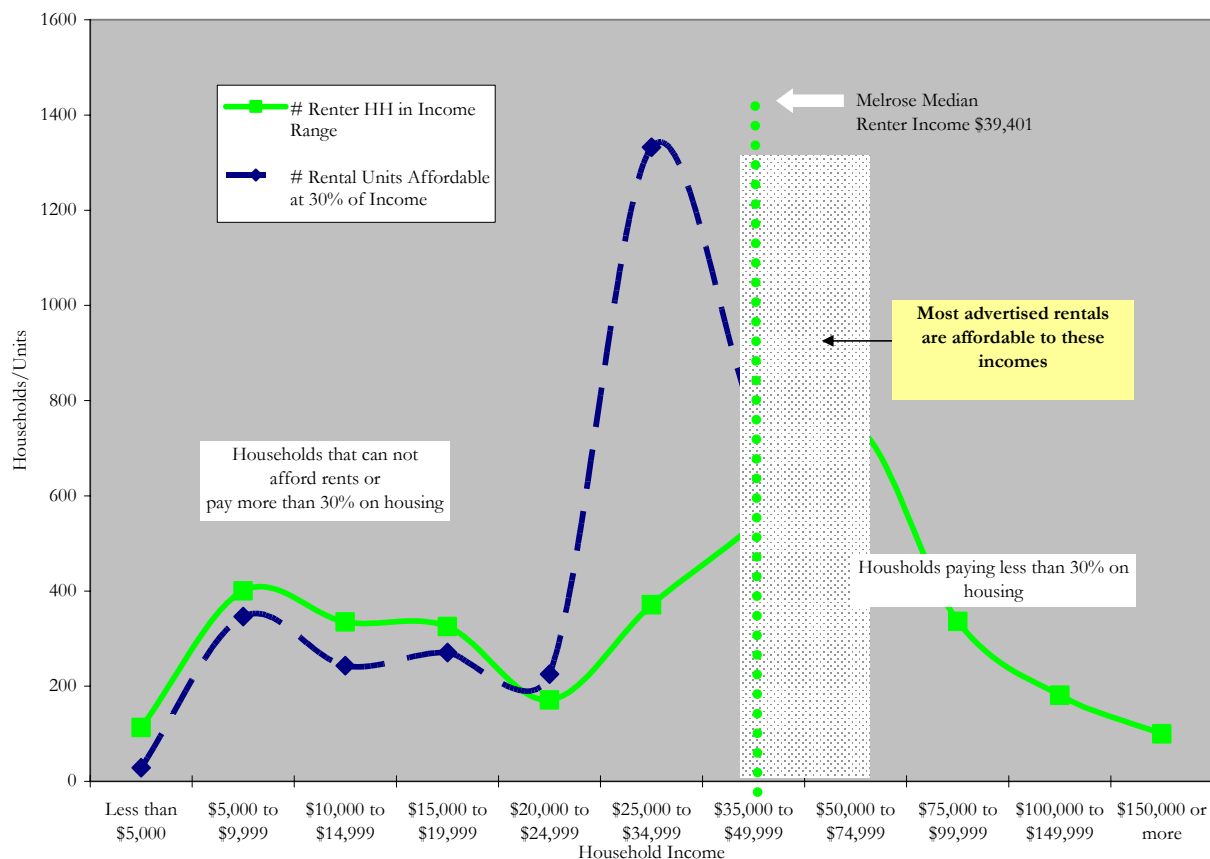


Figure 23 illustrates the affordability gap for Melrose's rental units. It summarizes the number of renter households in each income range, the gross rent affordable for that income bracket, the number of rental units within these rent ranges, and the deficit or surplus of units available to meet the estimated rental housing demand. Income ranges are based on Melrose renter household incomes, as reported in the Census.

A comparison of the supply of Census-reported rents against renter household incomes shows an insufficient supply of affordable apartments for households of low income. As seen in Figure 23, the majority of Melrose

rents, in 2000, were affordable to households earning around \$35,000 and above (monthly rent approximately \$875).

However in light of the fact that **close to one-third of rental households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs**, this data also suggests that while affordable units exist, they are not necessarily occupied by people earning incomes that can afford them. **Of those spending more than 30% of their income on rent, 67% earn very low income, and 40% are over 65 years old.** As with the home ownership affordability analysis, current advertised rents in Melrose are depicted here to illustrate what might be the actual affordability gap that exists. Using this information, it appears likely that **as many as 50% of Melrose renters who are looking to newspaper listings to find apartments are not able to afford them.**

Since 2000, the greater Boston rental market has softened, with vacancy rates increasing and rents lowering. According to the Boston Globe, landlords have estimated vacancy near 8% in 2002, up from 2% in 2000.¹³ While Melrose-specific statistics are not available, the sense is that this softening has affected the local market as well, and that renters may be better off than the analysis herein indicates.

Housing Affordability Gap Summary

Although 2000 Census data theoretically illustrate that Melrose's diverse housing stock is generally affordable to a range of incomes, recent trends upward in both home prices and rents have likely changed this picture substantially. Melrose's situation is reflective of the region's overall housing shortage – according to the Boston Globe, median home prices in the Boston metropolitan area “rose nearly 101 percent from 1997 through September 2002.”¹⁴

Melrose risks a fundamental change in its character if housing continues to remain out of reach for families that earn low to moderate incomes who have historically been a part of the community. A close look at current home prices and rents reveals a few startling facts:

- Up to 65% of Melrose households may not be able to afford the median-priced home if they were purchasing a home today
- Close to 50% of renters cannot afford currently-advertised rents
- In 2000, over 30% of renters spent over 30% of their incomes on housing costs, with elderly households comprising 40% of these.

Subsidized Housing and Chapter 40B

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has set a goal of 10% affordable housing units within each municipality. Eligible units are defined as affordable units generally subsidized by the federal or state government, with a deed restriction to ensure long-term affordability. Deed restrictions must preserve the affordability of units for at least 30 years for new construction and 15 years for units that were substantially rehabilitated with the assistance of public grants.

In 1969 the State Legislature passed a law, Chapter 40B, commonly known as the “Anti-Snob Zoning Act.” This law facilitates the development of affordable housing by allowing subsidized developments to be approved without being subject to local statutory limitations. Approval of such “comprehensive permit” projects requires only a



¹³ “As Landlords Scramble to Find Tenants, They’re Allowing the Four-Legged Variety More and More,” Boston Globe, Wendy Davis, 11/16/03.

¹⁴ As cited in “Building on our Heritage: A Housing Strategy for Smart Growth and Economic Development,” Commonwealth Housing Task Force, October 30, 2003.

determination by the Zoning Board of Appeals that low and moderate income housing needs outweigh any valid planning objections such as design or open space. Low and moderate housing needs are determined to exist if less than 10% of the year-round housing stock in a community is deed-restricted and affordable to households at or below 80% of median income. While the ZBA can request modifications to a proposed comprehensive permit development, conditions that render the project uneconomical may result in an appeal to the State Housing Appeals Committee, which in nearly all cases supports such appeals.

Melrose offers a significant amount of subsidized housing compared to its neighbors. Table 18 shows that Melrose ranks third, only behind Malden and Medford, in both its number and percentage of Chapter 40B units.

Table 18: Chapter 40B Housing Inventory

City/Town	Chapter 40B Units	Total Units	% subsidized units
Malden	2,875	23,561	12.20%
Medford	1,589	22,631	7.02%
Melrose	777	11,200	6.94%
Saugus	626	10,111	6.19%
Stoneham	494	9,231	5.35%
Reading	404	8,811	4.59%
Wakefield	440	9,914	4.44%
Winchester	141	7,860	1.79%

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development

The April 2002 Subsidized Housing Inventory, issued by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, indicates that there were 777 “eligible” subsidized housing units in Melrose that year, roughly 6.94% of the city’s 11,200 units. Thus, the City needs to add approximately 381 affordable units to this inventory to reach the 10% goal.¹⁵

¹⁵ If rental housing is developed with 25% or more units being affordable, all units may “count” towards meeting the State’s goal, thus only 96 affordable rental units of a larger, 381 unit project could also enable Melrose to fulfill its 10% goal.

Table 19: Subsidized Housing In Melrose

	Project	Address	Funding Agency	Program	Total Units	40B Units	Year Ending	Housing Type
1	Chapter 667-1	1 Nason Drive	DHCD	667	155	155	perpetuity	Elderly/disabled
2	Chapter 667-2	910 Main Street	DHCD	667	150	150	perpetuity	Elderly/disabled
3	Chapter 689-1	165 Trenton Street	DHCD	689	8	8	perpetuity	Special Needs
4	Chapter 689-2	499 Lebanon Street	DHCD	689	8	8	perpetuity	Special Needs
5	Chapter 689-3	919 Main Street	DHCD	689	8	8	perpetuity	Special Needs
6	Chapter 705-1	42-44 Otis St/37 Lebanon	DHCD	705	3	3	perpetuity	Unrestricted
7	Chapter 705-2	scattered sites	DHCD	705	8	8	perpetuity	Unrestricted
8	Chapter 705-3	scattered sites	DHCD	705	6	6	perpetuity	Unrestricted
9	Cefalo Memorial Complex	235-245 West Wyoming	MHFA	SEC8	107	107	2013	Elderly/disabled
10	Congregational Retirement Homes I	200 West Foster Street (Levi Gould)	HUD	202	109	109	2016	Elderly
11	Congregational Retirement Homes II	80 Grove Street (Cochrane House)	HUD	202	101	101	2019	Elderly
12	Retirement Homes III	101 Cottage Street (Fuller House)	HUD	236/202	114	114	2014	Elderly
Total					777	777		

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development

“Eligible” housing units are the official means of tracking affordable housing in Melrose, but this number does not necessarily include all the units that may be affordable to low and moderate income residents. For example, it does not include small rental houses, accessory apartments, or other low-cost housing options available at rates comparable to formally affordable units. These types of housing are neither subsidized nor deed-restricted, and are therefore statistically “invisible.” Yet, they are an important component of Melrose’s housing supply.

Despite its limitations, the number of official, “eligible” units of affordable housing is nonetheless critical. It allows the city to track the number of long-term dedicated affordable housing units. Additionally, it will hopefully encourage the city to seek more units for affordable housing, to avoid use of comprehensive permits in new developments.

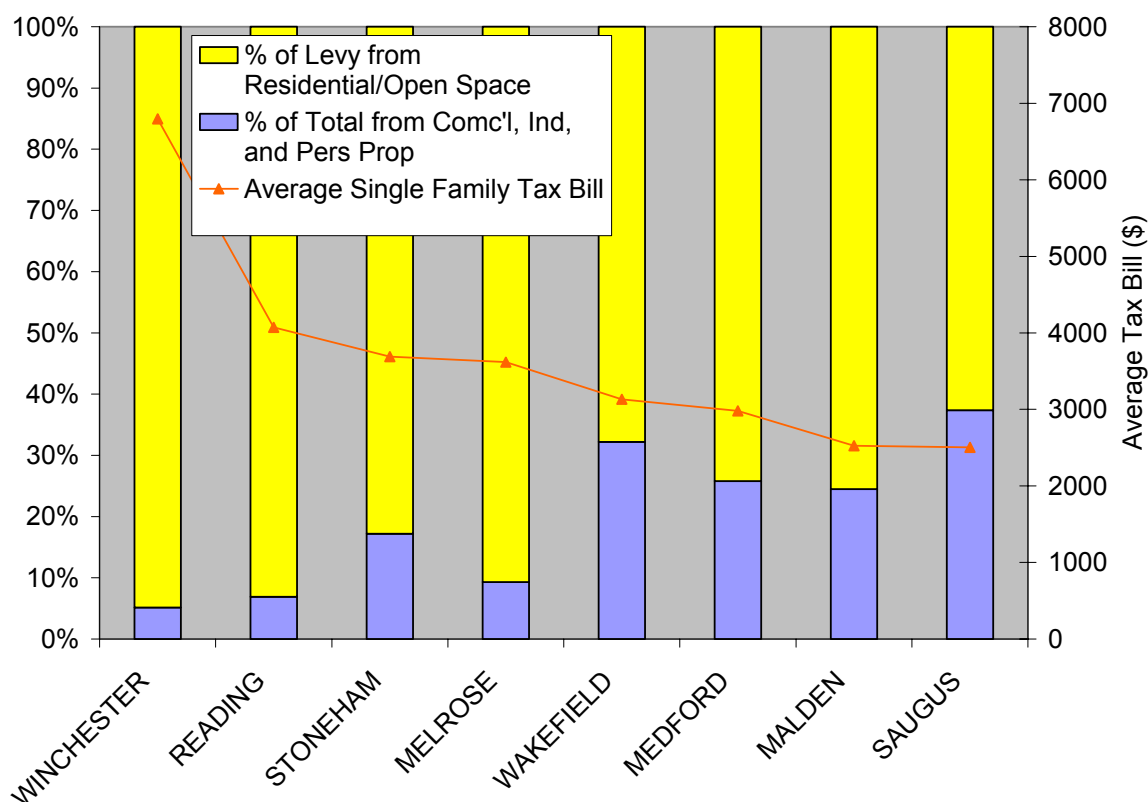
The Melrose Housing Authority operates two buildings with a combined total of 305 Elderly/Disabled housing units. Two hundred-and-sixty-three of the units are designated for elderly residents and the remaining forty-two for the disabled (under age 60). There is less than a six-month waiting list for residents seeking elderly units. In addition, the Housing Authority administers three community residences with a total of 24 residents and 17 scattered site family units. Congregational Retirement Homes manages three buildings with a combined total of 324 units for elderly tenants. Cefalo Memorial Complex has 107 apartments for elderly and the disabled. The aforementioned properties house all 777 eligible subsidized housing units in Melrose, which illustrates that the majority of subsidized housing is dedicated to elderly tenants.

Residential Tax Rate & Equalized Valuation Per Capita

Figure 24 compares residential and commercial taxes paid in the surrounding communities. Melrose prides itself on being a residential community without a lot of industry. Its 2003 residential tax rate was \$12.25 per \$1,000 assessed value. Melrose’s average residential tax bill of \$3,618 compares closely with the \$3,247 average bill for the surrounding 7 cities and towns. However, the percentage of value that commercial, industrial, and personal

property contributes to Melrose's total tax levy (9%) is the third lowest of the adjacent cities and towns. Low commercial tax revenues generally require higher residential property taxes to meet city and town needs. This dependence on residential taxes and the limits imposed by Proposition 2½ make it difficult for Melrose to generate the money it needs for city services, schools and its aging infrastructure. The chart below does not take into consideration varying tax rates of the communities.

Figure 24: Residential and Non-Residential Percent of Total Valuation and Average Single-Family Tax Bill, Melrose and Surrounding Communities, 2003



Source: MA Department of Revenue

Another illustration of **how Melrose's tax base compares to surrounding communities can be seen by looking at equalized value (EQV) per capita figures.** According to the Department of Revenue¹⁶:

"EQVs present an estimate of fair cash value of all taxable property in each city and town as of January 1 of each year (MGL Ch. 58, Sections 9 & 10C). The EQV is a measure of the relative property wealth in each municipality. Its purpose is to allow for comparisons of municipal property values at one point in time, adjusting for differences in local assessing practices and revaluation schedules.

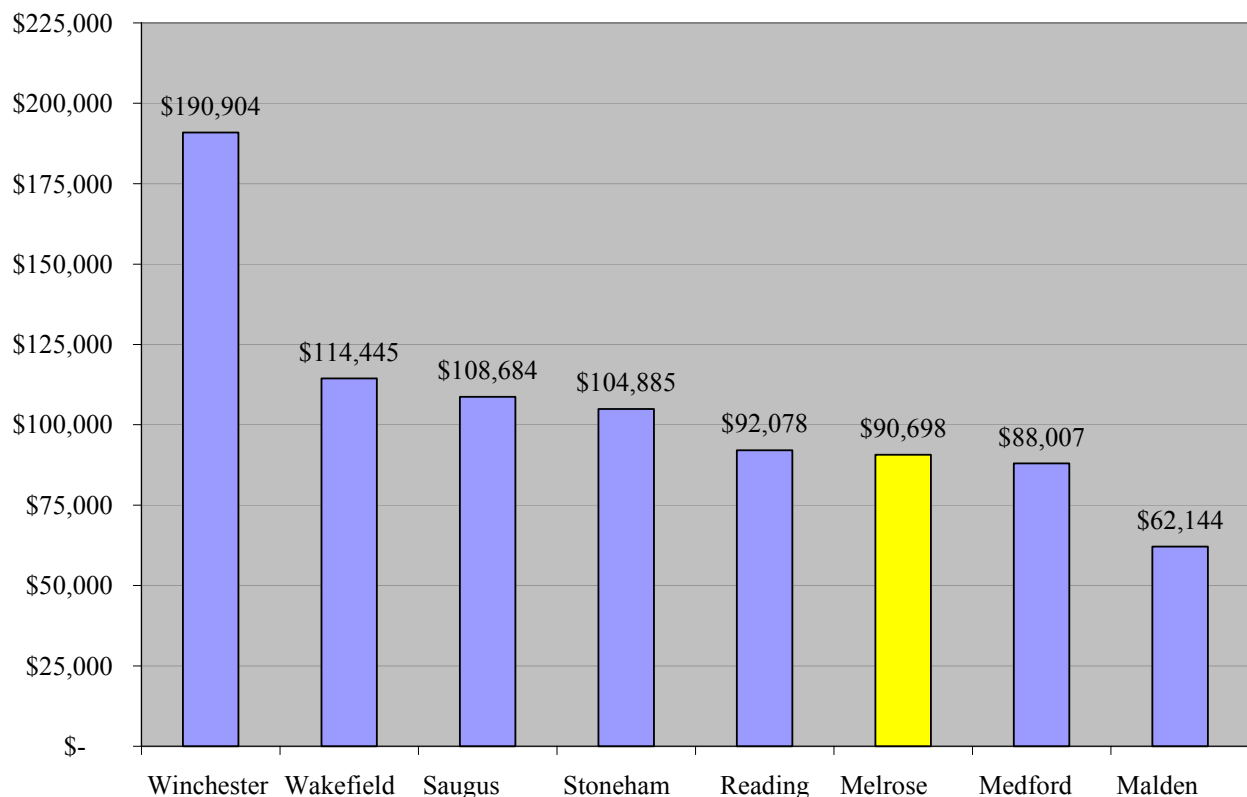
EQVs have historically been used as a variable in the allocation of certain state aid distributions, the calculation of various state and county assessments to municipalities, and the determination of municipal debt limits. EQVs are used in some distribution formulas so that communities with lower property values receive proportionately more aid than those with higher property values. In some assessment formulas they are used so that those with lower property values assume proportionately

¹⁶ www.state.ma.us/dor

less of the cost than communities with higher property values. The local aid receipt programs using EQV are: Lottery, Public Libraries, Chapter 70, and School Construction Aid. The assessments using EQV are: Boston's Metropolitan Transit Districts, the County Tax, Mosquito Control Projects, and Air Pollution Control Districts.”

Comparing EQV's on a per capita basis measures the community's ability to provide services for its population. Interestingly, while Melrose ranks near the top in items such as median house price and median household income, **its equalized valuation per capita among surrounding communities illustrates its relatively weak tax base.**

Figure 25: Equalized Valuation Per Capita, 2003



Source: MA Department of Revenue

Taxes may be a burden for fixed-income residents, such as seniors. The desire to reduce their tax burden is one motivation for seniors to sell their homes and move into a smaller dwelling. However, with the exception of adequate elderly housing, seniors who wish to remain in Melrose have limited options for moving into local apartments or condominiums. Melrose does not have a licensed assisted living facility. As a result, many residents either remain in their homes or move out of the city.

Developable Residential Land

MAPC recently calculated the amount of developable residential land in Melrose as part of a buildout analysis of the city. The MAPC analysis concluded that there are approximately 5,603,498 square feet (excluding the RIO districts) of undeveloped, potentially developable residential land remaining in Melrose. The 100' buffer zone of

the Rivers Protection Act and wetland areas were considered to be “absolute constraints” and are excluded from the total. Floodplains were considered to be partial constraints and buildable lots were reduced by 25% in these areas. The results by residential zoning district are shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Residential Building Lots and Future Population

Zone	Square Feet	Lots	Future Residents
SR	1,849,695	38	94
SR-A	2,155,718	76	189
SR-B	949,536	50	124
UR-A	517,474	35	86
UR-B	131,075	9	23
TOTAL	5,603,498	208	516

Source: MAPC, 2000

The build-out analysis illustrates the fact that there is little undeveloped land available for residential development. However, the implications are limited somewhat by the methodology used and the assumptions made in the analysis. For example, all future residential units were assumed to be single-family households. Also, consideration was not made for special permit applications for residential developments in commercially zoned areas. At the same time, the build-out analysis allows for development of Bellevue Country Club because it is not protected land and this accounts for approximately 38 of the 208 buildable lots projected.

Population and Housing Observations

A review of housing patterns in Melrose suggests that **the city needs a greater diversity of housing types to prepare for the demographic changes associated with an aging population and declining household size.** The housing stock is 58% single-family homes, which are becoming less affordable to many young Melrose residents. There are also few options for Melrose seniors. The careful addition of townhouses, duplexes, and condominiums could improve the housing situation in Melrose. Properly managed, an increase in housing diversity will not have undue negative impacts on the city.

A Growing Housing Mismatch

Melrosians take great pride in living in a “City of Homes,” many of which are large, single family, old Victorians. A strong desire exists to maintain these homes and the associated character of the city. Until recent years, demographics supported this housing use. However, over the past decade and into the future, decreasing family size and the dramatic aging of residents will create a housing mismatch and challenge planners to find ways to house residents affordably without diminishing the livability and character of the city.

Melrose has been a community populated primarily by families in single-family homes or apartments. In recent years and into the future, senior citizens and “empty-nesters” will become a larger segment of the population. By 2020, fully half of the population will be over the age of 45 and living in households of just one or two persons. Moreover, many young people are forming smaller households as well, living alone, in couples, or with just one child.

In contrast, much of the housing stock in Melrose was constructed for families with children. Due to the preponderance of large single-family homes in Melrose, small families and empty nesters have limited options for housing. As a result, many empty nesters are remaining in houses that are bigger than they need. This trend limits the availability of single-family homes for growing families. While the conversion of large, single-family homes to two-families has occurred to a limited extent in the past in response to demographic fluctuations, this

option is increasingly less desirable due to parking constraints related to the trend towards increasing automobile ownership, as discussed in more detail in the Transportation chapter.

The strong housing market and the diminishing number of buildable lots has caused housing prices to more than double in the past ten years from \$160,500 in 1993 to \$366,500 in 2003. Concerns regarding affordability stem from the fact that many residents of moderate incomes, including city employees and children of city residents, are unable to purchase a home in Melrose. Affordable units include more than just subsidized apartments, although this is the official measure of affordability. For practical purposes, small rental houses, accessory apartments, duplexes, and elderly housing are forms of more affordable housing.

Future Trends & Recommendations

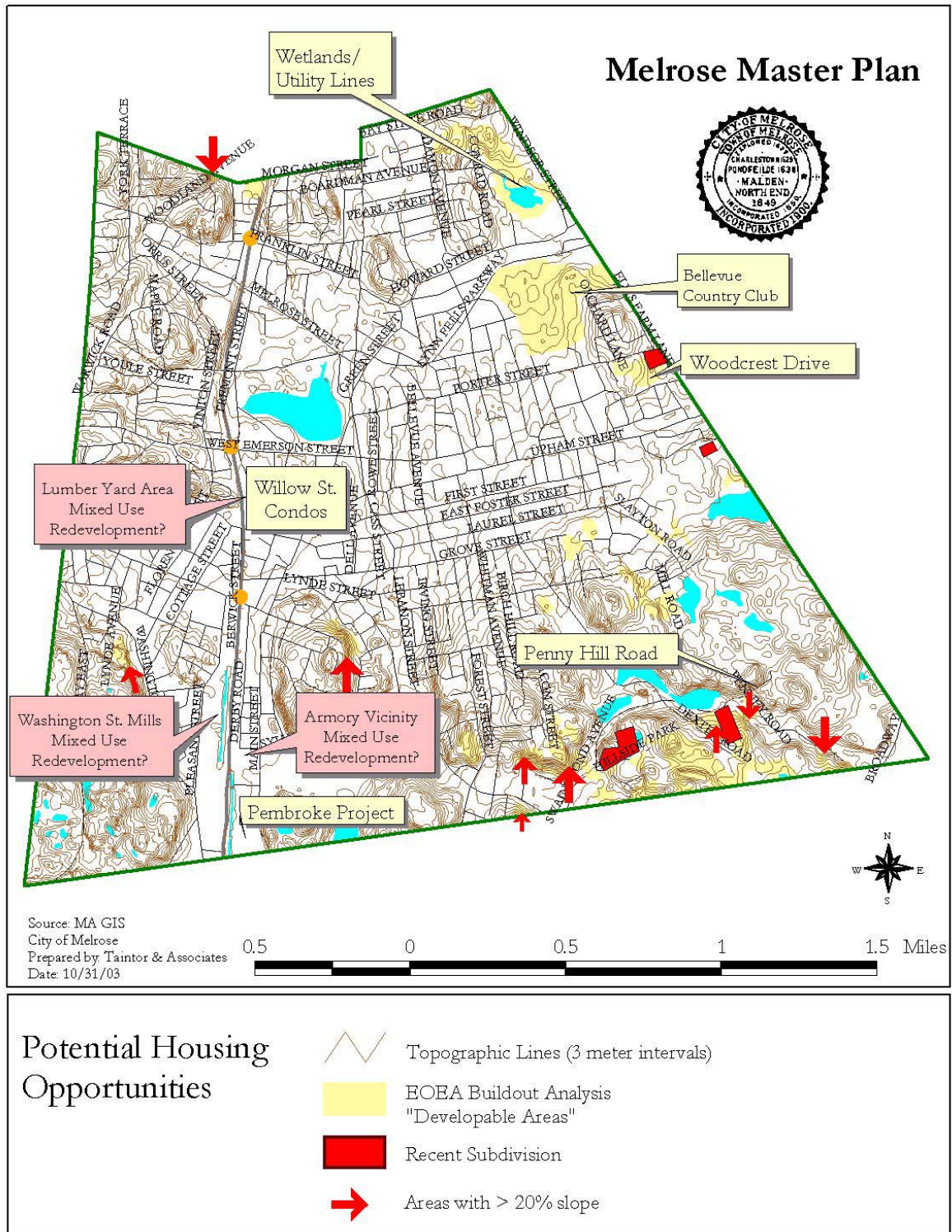
Development pressures are anticipated to continue over the next 20 years. Melrose remains a desirable place to live as a result of location, open space, and a strong local job market. If current trends continue, the demand for housing and shortage of buildable lots will force housing and rental costs ever higher.

Figure 26 illustrates the shortage of buildable areas in Melrose. As noted above, the buildout analysis by MAPC identified opportunities for an additional 208 housing units. Highlighted in yellow, these areas are primarily located east of Main Street. While some of these areas continue to be potential development sites, steep topography will likely remain challenging in several locations. In addition, two of the larger areas may have other obstacles – one is occupied by the Bellevue Country Club, and the other, near Windsor Street, appears to have substantial wetlands.

The demographic and economic issues cited above suggest that the city must explore new approaches to meeting its housing needs. Diversity in housing stock must be a major component of any comprehensive strategy. **A variety of options is needed to meet the different needs of young families, newcomers, and long-time residents.** Maintaining the supply of single family homes, and increasing the supply of rental apartments and condominiums would free up some of the single family housing stock in the city, relieving pressure on the existing supply. In this way, increased diversity of housing stock can enhance overall affordability while more effectively meeting the needs of residents. Furthermore, smaller units for seniors and empty nesters generate fewer school-age children, resulting in a more positive cost to tax revenue ratio.

Apartment and condominium developments promote many of the aforementioned objectives. Such developments should offer easy access to commuter rail and provide a local market that would encourage new retail businesses or offices to locate there. This activity would, in turn, foster the village atmosphere that many residents feel is important. This confluence of positive factors (transit access, village character, walkability, proximity to work) can increase the value of residential developments so much that the city may have greater leverage regarding design, affordability, and linkage fees. Two recent projects before the Planning Board (Pembroke, Station Crossing) may indicate that the most significant opportunities for housing development exist in underutilized sites poised for redevelopment. These locations, near the downtown core and close to public transportation, are especially attractive locations for housing.

Figure 26: Potential Housing Opportunities



Goals, Objectives and Action Items for Housing

GOAL H-1: MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF MELROSE

Objective A: Ensure all new housing is consistent with the character of Melrose.

- Develop a Site Plan Review Process.
- Review and amend subdivision to ensure that new developments complement existing neighborhoods.
- In order to minimize erosion and removal of natural vegetation, enact a slope/hillside protection ordinance in the zoning code which prevents the development of areas with a naturally steep slope of over an established percentage to be counted as developable area.
- Address the issue of “mansionization” through evaluation of a variety of zoning tools (lot coverage ratios, floor-to-area ratios, maximum height reductions, site plan review for homes over a certain size, bulk control plans, and setbacks).

Objective B: Maintain the historic character of single family homes in Melrose.

- Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places to promote the preservation of historic architectural features.
- Encourage neighborhoods with older homes to apply for either Local Historic District designation or National Register District designation.

Objective C: Ensure that the housing stock meets public health and safety standards.

- Reinstate a housing rehabilitation program for income eligible residents.

GOAL H-2: COMPLY WITH THE GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE ORDER #418, WHICH ENCOURAGES THE CREATION OF HOUSING UNITS THAT ARE AFFORDABLE TO A BROAD RANGE OF INCOMES

Objective A: Identify opportunities where the City will encourage new housing affordable to a broad range of incomes.

- Develop an Incentive or Inclusionary Zoning provision in the Zoning Ordinance to provide incentives, such as increased density, in exchange for the development of a percentage of affordable housing units.
- Apply for housing certification each year.
- Identify any publicly owned parcels that may be available for affordable housing development.

Objective B: Support the efforts of community groups and non-profit organizations, such as the newly formed Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation to pursue funding for affordable housing.

- Continue to participate pro-actively as a member of the North Suburban Consortium to obtain funding for affordable housing initiatives.

- Pursue grant funds and assistance through the North Suburban Consortium to fund a Housing Planner position to coordinate affordable housing activities.
- Identify whether the scope of the Melrose Redevelopment Authority should be expanded to include affordable housing activities.

Objective C: Promote programs that lower the cost of housing.

- Provide subsidies for first time home buyers through the First Time Homebuyers Assistance Program.
- Expand the existing First Time Home Homebuyers Program by trying to increase the qualifying limits.
- Develop relationships with area banks to offer financing for first time home buyers and attractive credit lines for non-profit developers.
- Promote discussion within the city of the Community Preservation Act.
- Develop a process to make tax lien properties available for purchase by non-profit developers and/or the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation.

GOAL H-3: ENCOURAGE THE CREATION AND RETENTION OF HOUSING THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND EQUAL ACCESS

Objective A: Provide a range of housing for the entire life cycle.

- Define and allow for assisted living facilities and continuing care retirement communities of appropriate scale in select locations in the Zoning Ordinance.
- Maintain elderly apartments beyond HUD funding.
- Increase the supply of apartments and condominiums for elders who are downsizing, empty nesters and young couples, and seek creative solutions to parking constraints.
- Promote the Property Tax Work-Off Program for senior citizens and the disabled.

Objective B: Provide a range of housing that promotes economic and cultural diversity.

- Continue to support the Melrose Housing Authority in its efforts to develop and maintain low-income housing.
- Continue strict adherence to Massachusetts Fair Housing laws.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Introduction

Economic development activities in Melrose are primarily focused around the central downtown business area, the three neighborhood commercial areas clustered around the commuter rail stations (Wyoming Hill, Cedar Park, and the Highlands), and the commercial areas in Franklin Square. In addition, there are three industrial and service commercial areas in Melrose, one adjacent to the railroad tracks along the Malden border on the Main Street side, a second on lower Washington Street on the western side of the railroad tracks, and the third on Tremont Street. **Commercial and industrial areas of Melrose make up 11 percent of developed land.**

In the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's, the downtown commercial area was revitalized with a combination of Victorian streetlights, street and sidewalk improvements, and grants to replace nonconforming signage and improve building facades. In addition, loans were made available for major commercial renovations to restore properties to their historic origins. Other efforts critical to the revitalization of the downtown included changing zoning laws governing signage and the establishment of a Historic District Commission. These improvements set a new standard for the downtown that continues to this day.

An important element to these improvements involved increasing and enhancing parking downtown. The City Hall parking lot was reconstructed and enhanced and parking spots were added behind the Shaw's grocery store. Behind store parking has always been emphasized and is a critical feature to the attractive and pleasant nature of the downtown. The continued prosperity of the downtown commercial area has created a possible problem of inadequate parking.

By the late 1980's the revitalization of the downtown had taken hold and the focus of attention shifted to the small neighborhood commercial areas. Extensive renovations were performed at the Wyoming Hill area and funds were made available to property owners and tenants, resulting in improvements to a majority of buildings in the Wyoming commercial area. Similar improvements were made at the other train station areas as well as at the commercial areas in Franklin Square and Tremont Street. At this time, further improvements to the neighborhood commercial areas are needed, as discussed in the Land Use chapter.

An important element of the downtown and neighborhood commercial areas is the **mix of uses and how the commercial areas have adapted to serve the needs of the community**. Whereas in earlier times, the local economy needed to serve most of the needs of the residents, today, with transit and vehicle access to many places, the local economy is tailored more toward specific consumer services and basic needs. The merchant mix of downtown and the neighborhood commercial areas reflects this, providing outlets for food shopping, hardware, restaurants and the like, as well as basic service needs such as the post office, banks, lawyers, accountants and hairdressers. With this service orientation, **the vacancy rate and turnover rate for businesses in the downtown is low, resulting in a vibrant downtown.**

This chapter describes the existing economic conditions in Melrose, including the employment statistics, major employers, and commercial and industrial tax revenue, and discusses future economic development opportunities, including potential job growth and land available for economic development.

Employment

Total Employment

In 2002, the last year for which data is available, total employment of Melrose residents was 15,195 compared to a labor force of 15,918 (i.e., individuals either currently employed full-time or part-time, or individuals currently collecting unemployment payments). It is important to note that this represents the total number of Melrose residents employed both inside and outside of Melrose (see Table 21: Melrose Resident Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1992-2002). Total employment has fluctuated somewhat, and the number of establishments has not seen growth since 1994. Average annual wages for people employed in Melrose have shown steady growth from \$17,195 in 1985 to \$33,117 in 2000 (in current, not constant dollars), although these figures are a hybrid of both part-time and full-time employees.

Figure 27 classifies the employment positions in the City of Melrose. According to the 2000 US Census, approximately 84% of Melrose workers commute outside of the City to their employment. Of those employed within Melrose, **27% also live in the city**, with commuters from Boston comprising the next highest group (7%). See Table 25 in the Transportation chapter.

Table 21: Melrose Resident Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1992-2002

Year	Total Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Melrose Resident Unemployment Rate (%)	MA Unemployment Rate (%)
2002	15,918	15,195	723	4.5	5.3
2001	15,580	15,146	434	2.8	3.7
2000	15,276	14,988	288	1.9	2.6
1999	15,071	14,712	359	2.4	3.2
1998	15,120	14,764	356	2.4	3.3
1997	15,176	14,704	472	3.1	4.0
1996	14,807	14,311	496	3.3	4.3
1995	14,725	14,145	580	3.9	5.4
1994	14,618	13,990	628	4.3	6.0
1993	14,626	13,891	735	5.0	6.9
1992	14,839	13,825	1,014	6.8	8.6

Source: MA Division of Unemployment Assistance

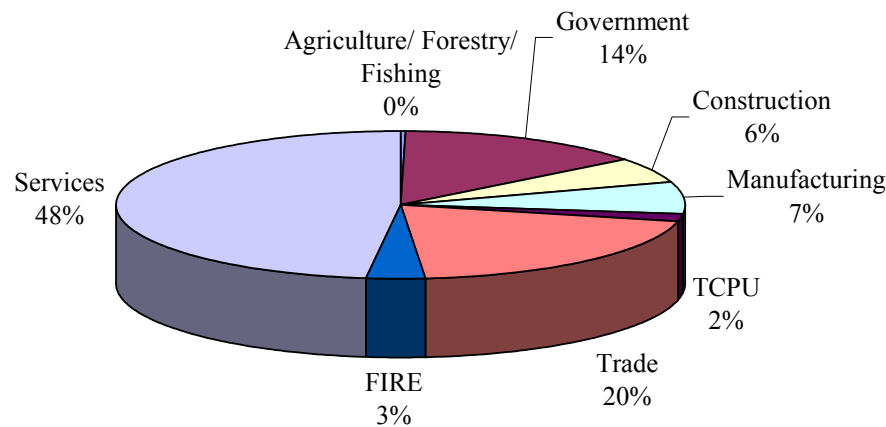
Note: Employment within this data series is measured by place of residence, rather than by place of employment as in the ES-202 Series.

Table 22: Employment and Wages in Melrose

Year	Total Annual Payroll	Avg Annual Wage	# of Establishments
2001	221,709,882	\$33,823	542
2000	216,753,053	\$33,117	539
1999	196,658,755	\$30,190	536
1998	191,103,009	\$29,799	535
1997	183,056,437	\$29,261	506
1996	173,161,513	\$28,313	542
1995	165,762,500	\$26,984	542
1994	156,729,616	\$25,962	549
1993	144,715,436	\$24,742	533
1992	146,551,212	\$24,718	520

Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Unemployment Assistance (ES-202 Series)

Figure 27: Employment Positions in Melrose, 2001



Source: MA Division of Unemployment Assistance
TCPU = Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities
FIRE = Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

Number of Establishments and Major Employers

According to the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance, there were approximately **542 business establishments in Melrose in 2001**. However, this information indicates neither the size nor specific businesses and only counts establishments subject to unemployment laws. The growing trend toward people working out of their homes may create additional difficulties identifying business establishments and indicates a potential need for updated zoning controls. In addition, it should be noted that currently there is no reliable database with information about companies doing business in Melrose. Such a database would include the name of the company, its location and type of business, key personnel, number of employees, and key financial figures. It is important to maintain such a database so that both the city and the Chamber of Commerce can stay informed of current business issues and needs. In addition, the database can be used by the city to ensure businesses are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

There also does not appear to be a well-documented registration process for either new start-up or existing businesses within the city. There are clear advantages to having such a process streamlined and centralized. First, the barriers to doing business in Melrose will become less burdensome, and thus more attractive. Second, it will once again give the city the opportunity to better track the types of companies in the city.

The two largest employers in Melrose are the City of Melrose and the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. The hospital has also fostered a significant medical office complex surrounding the hospital neighborhood. There are two major grocery stores and a few manufacturers within the city limits. All the large anchor employers attract and support small businesses such as coffee shops and office services in the surrounding areas. There are numerous small retail stores in the city and several eating establishments.



Commercial and Industrial Tax Rate and Revenue

The fiscal year 2003 tax rate for commercial and industrial land in Melrose was \$19.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Residential land is taxed at a lower rate. The commercial and industrial rate is consistent with neighboring communities. Stoneham's commercial and industrial tax rate is slightly lower, but Saugus, Wakefield and Malden all have higher commercial and industrial rates. Land zoned for commercial and industrial use comprises approximately 6.2% of the total property in Melrose. This is small compared to the percentage of commercial and industrial property in our neighboring communities. Approximately 93% of the land in Melrose is zoned for residential use.¹⁷ Even noting the existence of some existing non-conforming commercial and industrial uses in the residential zones, Melrose is overwhelmingly residential in character. Non-conforming uses may be maintained, but as they are discontinued the property reverts to code. Total valuation in 2003 of personal, industrial and commercial property in Melrose is \$157,695,515. In fiscal year 2003, the tax revenues raised from residential property was \$29,260,900 and from commercial/industrial/ personal property was \$2,996,214 (

Figure 24 in the Housing chapter).

Listed below are the top fifteen commercial and industrial valuations in the City. About 66% of the owners of these properties have addresses in Melrose or its immediate vicinity – e.g. Wakefield. Three of these properties are nursing homes, and one is associated with the hospital.



¹⁷ 6.2% industrial use and 93% residential use refers to the amount of land zoned for these uses, the actual use varies from the zoned use slightly.

Table 23: Commercial and Industrial Valuations > \$1,000,000

Location	Land Use Code	Acres	Floor Area	Exterior Type	Total Value
2 Main St. (Fidelity)	400	9.47	198,563	Industrial-Lt	\$7,961,000
880 Main St.	316	4.38	53,218	Shop Center	\$4,935,000
40 Martin St.	304	0.96	25,372	Nursing Home	\$3,348,200
15 Green St.	304	0.52	25,350	Nursing Home	\$2,263,900
34 Essex St.	324	0.90	38,697	Super Market	\$2,082,300
743 Main St.	304	0.38	21,765	Nursing Home	\$1,743,200
439 Main St.	341	0.17	17,194	Bank	\$1,674,200
484 Main St.	325	0.19	22,506	Store	\$1,533,600
101 Washington St.	400	1.72	107,925	Mill	\$1,492,200
99 Washington St.	400	3.18	101,936	Mill/Office	\$1,470,200
100 Main St.	325	1.07	30,086	Store	\$1,374,700
Newburyport Turnpike/Route 99	410	5.89	-	Sand And Gravel	\$1,154,900
494 Main St	341	0.09	11,610	Bank	\$1,096,800
106 Main St	321	1.26	26,435	Store	\$1,093,100
585 Lebanon St	431	n/a	n/a	Taxable Hospital Equipment	\$1,018,600
Totals		30.18	680,657		\$33,223,300

Source: Melrose Assessing Department

Existing Conditions Summary/Discussion

When the employment and valuation statistics are looked at together, they paint a compelling picture of Melrose's current economic situation. First, it is clear that the primary source of revenue to the city is from residential property taxes and not from business property taxes. Based on the discussion in the next section, it will be clear that there are a limited number of sites available in the city for additional development. Additional commercial development may provide increased revenue for the City, but the burden of maintaining the City will continue to rest on the residents.

Second, employment among Melrose residents has been fairly steady over the last ten years. The total number of employed individuals in 2002 represents a 5.7% increase in jobs from the low point of 13,825 jobs in 1992. As indicated in Table 24, over 80% of Melrose residents commute to places outside the City for employment. New development, while creating the potential for additional local spending, would most likely not have a significant impact on the employment status and commuting patterns of current Melrose residents.

Future Economic Development

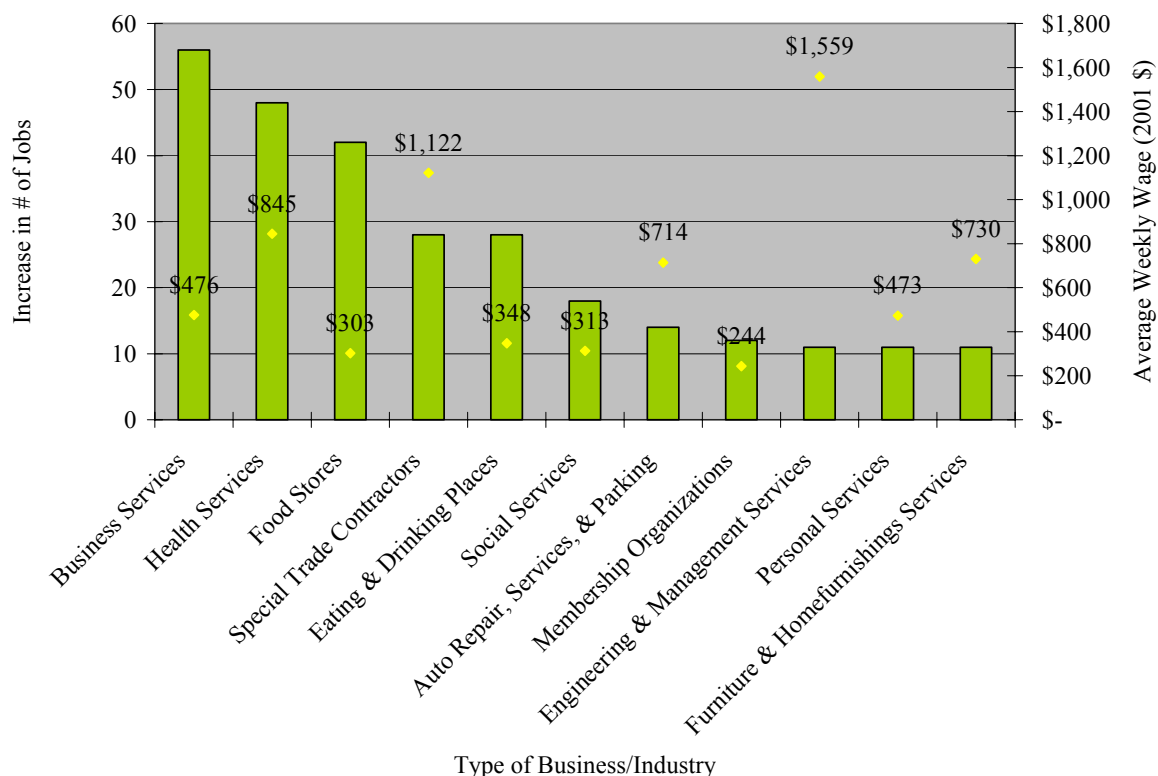
Future Employment and Job Growth

Job growth in Melrose is projected to increase by approximately 9% in the service-oriented industries, and 2% in goods-producing industries, over the next seven years. The Division of Unemployment Assistance has projected employment growth for all industries throughout the Commonwealth, and has total employment figures specific to Melrose. Using 2001 employment as a baseline and applying the annual projected growth rate, Figure 28 illustrates that Melrose can expect the highest increase in jobs to be in the business services

field (56 additional positions) followed by jobs in the fields of health services (48), food stores (42), specialty trade contractors (28) and eating and drinking places (28).

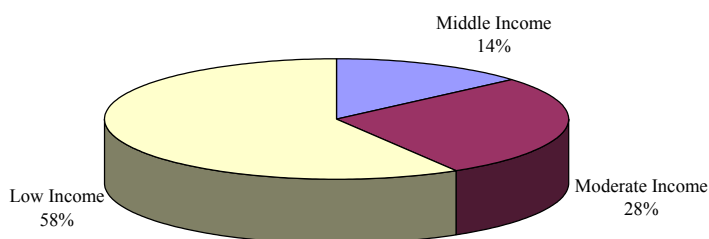
As shown in Figure 29, of the total number of jobs projected to be created, the majority are in the low income category, with 28% offering moderate income wages and just 14% categorized as middle income. Of the highest paying positions, only 11 in the engineering and management services will pay more than the median salary for the Boston metropolitan area.

Figure 28: Top Ten Growing Industries by Projected Job Growth in Melrose, 2001-2008, and Average Weekly Wage (2001)



Source: Division of Unemployment Assistance

Figure 29: Annual Income Categories of Projected Jobs, 2001-2008



Source: Division of Unemployment Assistance

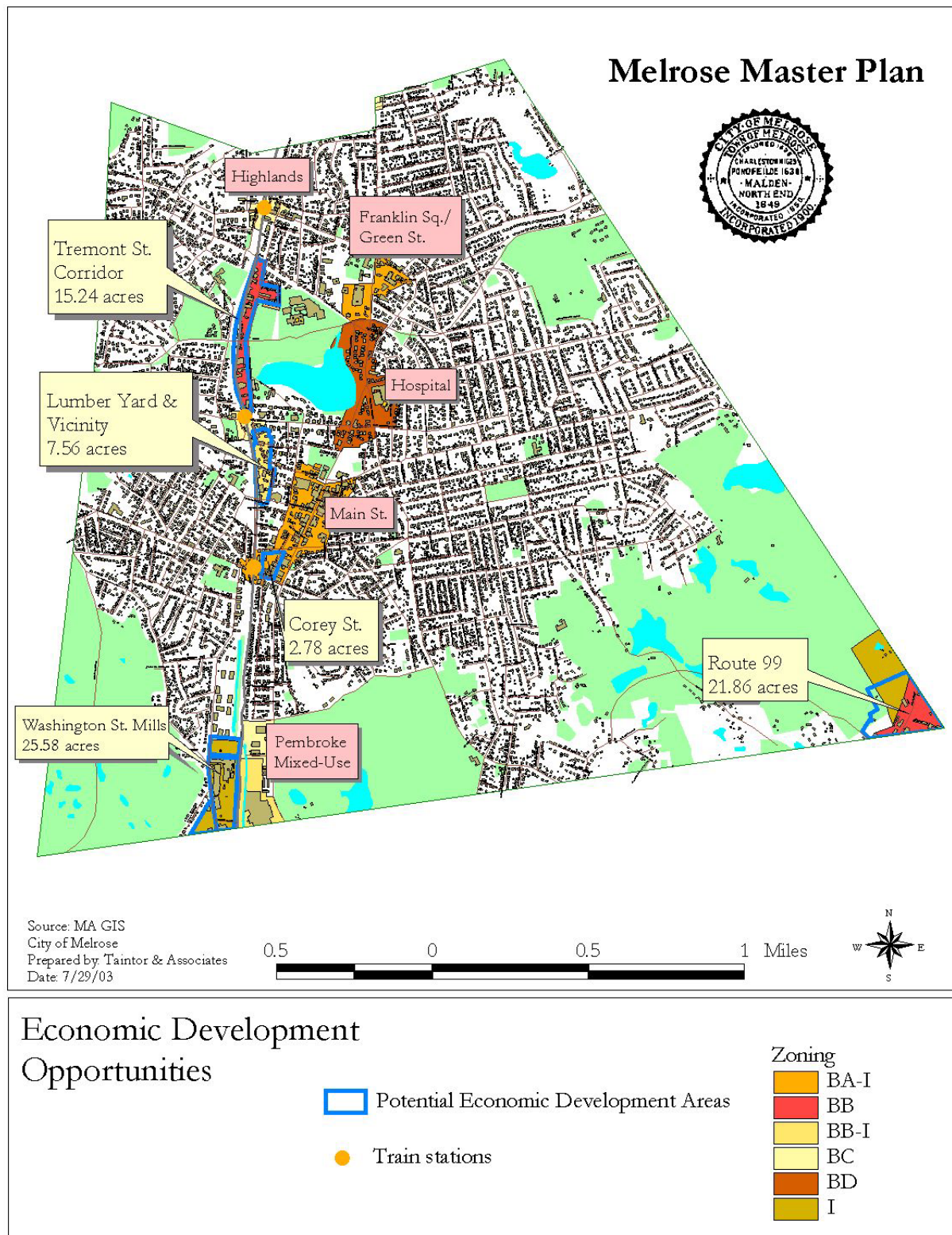
Note: Low-income is below 50% of Median Area Income, Moderate is 50-80% MAI, and Middle is above 80% of Median.

Land Available for Economic Development

There is relatively little land available for commercial and industrial development in Melrose and the city is not generally perceived as a desirable location for such development. Although Melrose has direct mass transit and rail connections, it does not have access to a major roadway. Furthermore, the present zoning ordinance is somewhat outdated and unclear in parts as discussed in the Land Use chapter; many commercial and industrial uses need multiple permits and variances, a factor which may contribute to the limited number of commercial development proposals.

While there is no undeveloped land in the business and industrial zones in Melrose, there are underdeveloped and underutilized sites where a change in use could benefit the neighborhood and increase the City's revenue. This land consists of approximately 51 acres of business and commercial land located primarily along the north/south corridor of land abutting the railroad right of way and a 22 acre parcel of underdeveloped land in the southeastern corner of the city at the Saugus/Malden border. Figure 30 illustrates these areas. The City should incorporate smart growth principles to plan for the redevelopment of these underutilized sites as mixed-use developments, as discussed in detail in the Land Use chapter.

Figure 30: Potential Economic Development Opportunities



General Observations Concerning Future Economic Development

Promoting economic development is a fundamental means of ensuring the health and vitality of places by creating jobs, providing needed goods and services, contributing to municipal tax revenue, and generally supporting quality of life through prosperity. In addition, Melrose businesses are at the core of the community's social environment, and play a large role in forming the City's identity. Consequently, the City should be pro-active in recruiting businesses that would enhance the community.

Some participants of the public hearings felt that the City should find a way to be proactive in increasing the City's tax base. What limited future economic development can occur will be some relief from the tax burden on the residents in a City with so little commercial and industrial tax base. Such relief, however, will not be forthcoming in the immediate time horizon. For example, it has been over one year since the Pembroke project received its permits from the Melrose Planning Board and it is anticipated that additional time will elapse before all issues associated with the development are resolved, and construction can begin. Based on this, it is not unreasonable to assume that any future proposed development of comparable size will have a time frame of three to five years before it is completed after its inception.

At the same time, many residents are also very concerned about the impacts of commercial development on City character and the City's aging infrastructure. A potential development's impact on the City's infrastructure must be understood and mitigated before approval. The strain between the desire of the residents to maintain the present character of the City, and the revenue needs of the City to accomplish that desire will create constant friction. Without relief from other revenue sources, property owners will have to support the increasing costs of maintaining City services or cut City services. It will be important for economic development to help to bridge the gap in ways that do not promote excessive growth, consume excessive amounts of water, or alter the character of the City in an undesirable fashion.

Any future economic development or redevelopment represents an opportunity to assist in stabilizing the municipal finances of the City. The Pembroke project, for example, could have a significantly positive impact on the net revenues coming into the City provided the assumptions about infrastructure impacts and school children projections are valid. Given the extremely limited opportunities to expand the tax base and the statutory constraints of Proposition 2 ½, the City will always need exceptional management in order to continue to provide and maintain City services at increasing costs. Any development proposal projecting significant additional revenues to the City must be analyzed and considered carefully and weighed against the other needs of the City, and the effects of the development on the quality of life in the City.

There should be thoughtful planning for the redevelopment of the roughly 73 acres of underutilized land along the railroad tracks and in the southeast corner of the City. With the right development, these areas could generate much-needed revenues for the City or satisfy various community needs such as assisted living, affordable housing, public safety facilities, etc. Care and planning, including zoning controls need to be in place to encourage appropriate uses with minimal negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods or City services.

Finally, any new development should be evaluated in light of the community character and quality of life in the City. Public hearings held throughout the Master Plan drafting process have made it clear that there is a strong sense of community character in Melrose and a desire to preserve it. At the same time, there are groups with widespread support that are promoting greater diversity, human rights and affordable housing. The City is primarily residential, densely populated, with significant architecturally attractive buildings and approximately 25% open space. It has a vibrant, busy and attractive downtown area. New development can change the population, traffic patterns and character of the neighborhoods. That change should be consistent with the long term vision of the City.

Goals, Objectives and Action Items for Economic Development

GOAL ED-1: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE DOWNTOWN MELROSE AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS

Objective A: Maintain a visually attractive downtown area.

- Continue to promote the sign and façade incentive program.
- Consider expansion of the Downtown Historic District.

Objective B: Improve the attractiveness of the neighborhood shopping centers.

- Encourage and promote façade improvements in the neighborhood shopping areas.
- Explore the possibility of federal funds to improve these areas.
- Explore the possibility of Local Historic District designation for the Highlands area and possibly other neighborhood commercial areas.
- Encourage business groups in the neighborhood commercial centers to become more active in sprucing up their areas.



Objective C: Stay informed of local business needs.

- Work with the Chamber of Commerce to determine the feasibility of developing a comprehensive database of businesses in Melrose.
- Encourage communication between City leaders and the Chamber of Commerce to recruit and retain desirable businesses.

GOAL ED-2: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INCREASE THE TAX BASE BY ENCOURAGING NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Objective A: Determine a future vision to explore mixed use redevelopment of underutilized properties to encourage new business development (see Land Use Goals).

Objective B: Encourage new business development citywide.

- Create a streamlined process for new businesses to facilitate new business development.
- Update the zoning ordinance with regard to Home Occupation to encourage the growth in appropriate home-based businesses.
- Reinstate a small business loan program.

TRANSPORTATION



Melrose is located in between two major regional transportation corridors (Interstate 93 and Route 1/Interstate 95) and is close to one of the State's major east-west thoroughfares (Route 128/Interstate 95). The City is well-served by public transit, particularly the MBTA commuter rail system. Melrose also enjoys a great degree of protection from the impacts major roadways can generate, since it does not have any state numbered routes within its boundaries.¹⁸ Its sole state-owned roadway, the Lynn Fells Parkway, is residential in character and was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁹

Commuting Patterns

According to the 2000 Census, 78.6% of Melrose workers drove (70.7%) or carpooled (7.9%) to work, and on average took approximately 28 minutes to arrive at their place of employment. This is fairly similar to Massachusetts commuters on the whole, about 83% of whom drove/carpooled to work in an average of 27 minutes. Of remaining Melrosians, close to **15% took public transportation** (compared to 13.9% for the Boston area), with 3.9% walking or taking other means, and 2.8% working at home.

Using sample data as a base, the U.S. Census is able to compile employee work destinations according to responses received on the long form questionnaire. A relatively large percentage Melrose residents work in Boston and in Melrose (42%), and many work in adjacent communities, as shown in Table 24. Of the employees that work in Melrose, 27% also live in the City, as shown in Table 25.

¹⁸ Except for approximately 250' of Route 99, a.k.a. Broadway, that cuts through the extreme southeast corner of the City.

¹⁹ As reported by the National Park Service: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/listings/20030530.htm>

Table 24: Place of Work for Melrose Residents, 2000

Workplace State-County-MCD Name	Count	% of Total
Boston city Suffolk Co. MA	3,769	26%
Melrose city Middlesex Co. MA	2,276	16%
Cambridge city Middlesex Co. MA	755	5%
Malden city Middlesex Co. MA	548	4%
Woburn city Middlesex Co. MA	474	3%
Medford city Middlesex Co. MA	472	3%
Wakefield town Middlesex Co. MA	417	3%
Saugus town Essex Co. MA	397	3%
Burlington town Middlesex Co. MA	299	2%
Waltham city Middlesex Co. MA	291	2%
Somerville city Middlesex Co. MA	265	2%
Wilmington town Middlesex Co. MA	247	2%
Stoneham town Middlesex Co. MA	239	2%
All other locations (104 places)	4,075	28%

*Source: US Census 2000***Table 25: Place of Residence for Those Employed in Melrose, 2000**

Residence State-County-MCD Name	Count	% of Total
Melrose city Middlesex Co. MA	2,276	27%
Boston city Suffolk Co. MA	584	7%
Malden city Middlesex Co. MA	545	6%
Wakefield town Middlesex Co. MA	430	5%
Saugus town Essex Co. MA	240	3%
Medford city Middlesex Co. MA	185	2%
Somerville city Middlesex Co. MA	165	2%
Everett city Middlesex Co. MA	164	2%
Woburn city Middlesex Co. MA	162	2%
Waltham city Middlesex Co. MA	143	2%
Stoneham town Middlesex Co. MA	134	2%
Cambridge city Middlesex Co. MA	133	2%
Lynn city Essex Co. MA	129	2%
All Other Places (150 count)	3,283	38%

Source: US Census 2000

Street Network, Roadway Classification, and Existing Traffic Volumes & Trends

Melrose is well-served by a traditional grid street pattern, which has been modified as dictated by topography and recent development. Main east-west routes include Washington, Grove, Upham, Emerson, Wyoming, and Franklin Streets and the Lynn Fells Parkway. Major north-south corridors are Lebanon, Main, Pleasant, the Fellsway East, and Tremont.

Only 3 roads in Melrose have a functional classification of “4,” or “major roadway – collector.” These are Main Street, Franklin Street, and a portion of the Lynn Fells Parkway from the Saugus town line to Main Street. All other streets are classified as minor arterials/local roads by MA Highway.²⁰

Traffic volume data is available from MA Highway and from traffic studies performed on behalf of projects proposed for development. Anecdotal opinion at several Traffic Commission public hearings reflects the idea that traffic has worsened over the past several years, a situation which likely extends beyond Melrose’s borders as well. As indicated in Table 26, traffic has increased 44% on the Lynn Fells Parkway near Saugus from 1992 to 2001.

The Massachusetts Highway Department performs traffic counts on non-State-owned roadways at the request of communities, planning agencies, or other public entities. Table 26 displays available counts for Melrose. Although comparative numbers are not available in all instances, it is useful to note the locations where counts were taken as an indication of roadways, for whatever reason, that have received attention in the past, as well as to get a general idea of the amount of traffic these streets experience.

Table 26: Melrose Traffic Counts by Mass Highway, 1992-2001

Route/Street	Location	1992	2001
Emerson St.	North Of Essex St.		6,100
Fellsway East	Between Washington St. & Stoneham Town Line	8,900	
Franklin St.	North Of Tremont St.		15,500
Lebanon St.	Between Sylvan & Forest Sts.	13,900	
Lynn Fells Pkwy.	At Saugus Town Line	14,000	20,100
Main St.	Between Sylvan St. & Malden city line	11,300	
Washington St.	Between Pleasant St & Malden city line	11,200	
West Foster St.	South Of Cottage St.		8,500
West Wyoming Ave.	North Of Pleasant St.		25,500

Source: Mass Highway Department

Other traffic counts have been prepared for various proposed projects. The following information is compiled from traffic studies prepared for these projects, including:

Station Crossing Condominiums (Willow Street)	2003
Stoneham Executive Center	2002
Reconstruction of Main, Lebanon, Green and Essex Streets, Bruce Campbell & Associates, Inc.	2001
Traffic and Transportation Evaluation Study, Melrose-Malden A Mixed-Use Residential Community, Earth Tech	2001
391 Pleasant Street Transportation Impact Study, Howard/Stein Hudson Associates, Inc.	2001
Dunkin Donuts – Lynn Fells Parkway	1999

²⁰ per MA GIS

Table 27: Existing Traffic Volumes, Various Locations, Various Sources

Street/Route	Location	Source	Daily Volume (vehicles/day)
Main Street	North of Banks Place	Pembroke	13,239
Washington Street	North of MBTA Station	Pembroke	8,644
Main Street	North of Green Street	Reconstruction	16,000 (1997)
Green Street	At Main Street	Reconstruction	10,200 (1997)
Lynn Fells Parkway	East of Main Street	Dunkin Donuts	14,486 (1998)
Pleasant Street	near #391	391 Pleasant	5,106 (2001)
			Volume (peak am hour)
Fellsway East	N of Washington Street	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	545
Wyoming Avenue	W of Pleasant Street	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	580
Wyoming Avenue	E of Fellsway East	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	320
Main Street	N of Wyoming Ave.	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	460
Lynn Fells Parkway	W of Tremont Street	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	780
Tremont Street	N of Lynn Fells Pkwy	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	250
Lynn Fells Parkway	W of Main	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	835
Lynn Fells Parkway	E of Main	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	265
Pond Street (Stoneham)	W of Lynn Fells Pkwy	Stoneham Exec. Ctr.	1,135
Pleasant Street	Near #391	391 Pleasant	433
West Foster Street	West of Willow	Station Crossing	528

The variety of traffic studies featured above look at projected traffic volumes and all indicate that Melrose can expect moderate growth in traffic volumes, based upon historical trends and the fact that Melrose is a highly developed area with limited growth potential. The Main Street Reconstruction project assumed traffic would increase a total of 16% over a 20 year time period from 1997-2017. Even moderate growth is a cause for concern, and proposed developments should include analysis of any potential traffic impacts.

Vehicle Accident Locations

According to the Melrose Police Department, the City averaged 737 accidents per year over the past 5 years. As can be expected, the streets with the highest accident counts coincide with those that carry the highest volumes through the city. Main Street, however, far outstrips all other locations in the total number of accidents that occur there, accounting for 20% of all accidents. The following is a map and a list of streets that have averaged over 10 accidents per year for the last 5 years:

Figure 31: Top Accident Locations, 1998-2003



Table 28: Traffic Accidents, January 1998-July 2003

Location	# of Accidents	% of Total	Avg./Year
Main Street	731	20%	146
Lebanon Street	188	5%	38
Upham Street	173	5%	35
Franklin Street	148	4%	30
Essex Street	124	3%	25
West Wyoming Avenue	110	3%	22
Melrose Street	94	3%	19
Green Street	93	3%	19
Grove Street	85	2%	17
Lynn Fells Parkway	78	2%	16
West Foster Street	68	2%	14
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1,892</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>378</i>
All Accidents	3,683		737

Source: Melrose Police Department

Intersection Level of Service

In order to evaluate the amount of congestion experienced at street intersections, transportation planners use “level of service (LOS)” measurements. With ratings from A-F, each category represents a range of time during which a vehicle trying to travel through the intersection is delayed. An A means that traffic is free flowing; an F means there are long delays. In general, **ratings of A-D are considered acceptable, while Es and Fs are not and require improvements.** Level E represents a volume to capacity ratio of between 90-100%, and under urban conditions, is often considered acceptable for peak hour conditions. Level F indicates failure.



This ranking system is taken from the Highway Capacity Manual published by the Transportation Research Board – since the traffic studies referenced herein may use different versions of this document (1994 vs. 2000), it is important to note that the delay criteria used in 2000 incorporates substantially longer delays in its evaluation of service, as shown in Table 29. The evaluations shown in Table 30 employ both the 1994 and 2000 manuals.

Table 29: Signalized Intersections Level of Service, Highway Capacity Manual, 1994 & 2000

Level of Service	Vehicle Delay 1994 (seconds)	Vehicle Delay 2000 (seconds)
A	≤ 5	≤ 10
B	5.1-15	> 10-20
C	15.1-25	> 20-35
D	35.1-40	> 35-55
E	40.1-60	> 55-80
F	≥ 60.0	> 80

The following information is also taken from traffic studies performed on behalf of proposed projects:

Table 30: Level of Service – Various Intersections – Existing Conditions

Intersection*	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		Source (project)	Year
	Delay (seconds)	LOS	Delay (seconds)	LOS		
Main @ Lebanon & Porter	6.4	B	12.1	B	Main St.	1997
Main @ Green	8.2	B	8.2	B	Main St.	1997
Main @ W Wyoming	59.6	E	28.0	C	SEC	2001
Main St./Wyoming	43	D	22	C	Pembroke	2001
Main St./Sylvan	18	B	17	B	Pembroke	2001
Fellsway East @ Washington SB left onto Washington WB right onto Fellsway (Stoneham)	8.4 12.2	A B	10.3 20.3	B C	SEC	2001
Fellsway East @ Pond/W Wyoming (Stoneham)	1.36 volume-to- capacity ratio	F	1.88 volume-to- capacity ratio	F	SEC	2001
Lynn Fells Pkway @ Tremont	19.9	B	26.7	C	SEC	2001
Lynn Fells Pkway @ Main	16.1	B	28.8	C	SEC	2001
Lynn Fells Pkway @ Main	28.8	D	**	F	Dunkin Donuts	1998
Lynn Fells Pkwy @ Main	27.5	D	20.2	C	Main St.	1997
Washington/Pleasant	9/16	A/C	9/12	A/B	Pembroke	2001
Wyoming Ave./Pleasant St.	9/15	A/C	9/23	A/C	Pembroke	2001
W Wyoming @ Pleasant St. WB – left onto Pleasant NB Pleasant onto Wyoming	8.2 18.9	A C	8.8 28.8	A D	SEC	2001

* Un-signalized intersections present data for worst major and minor street approach or movement.

** Delays can not be accurately calculated for F-rated intersections if volume/capacity is > 1.2

Projected levels of service have been produced by all of the above project-related analyses. In general, no single project is anticipated to cause major shifts in levels of service. However, coupled with background traffic growth, there is one notable instance of a future failing condition; that is, the Fellsway intersection with West Wyoming in Stoneham. The City should carefully review projects that may have an impact on this intersection, as it serves as a main gateway into and out of Melrose.

Melrose Traffic Commission/On-going Traffic Concerns

Melrose has a 10-member traffic commission that meets monthly to discuss and respond to traffic-related issues throughout the City. Chaired by the Director of Public Works, the Commission is comprised of representatives of the Police Department, the Board of Aldermen, and residents. Members of the community that have a particular concern relating to traffic can petition the Commission for consideration of their problem. Recurring requests include sidewalk repairs, handicapped accessible curb cuts, complaints of speeding on neighborhood streets, and installation of stop signs.

There is no formal program to slow or calm traffic in Melrose. Cost, on-going maintenance, and potential conflicts with snow plowing are among the reasons the City has yet to implement a traffic calming program. Nevertheless, there are several streets that are typically used by “cut through” traffic that seek to avoid congestion, particularly on Main Street, and, to a lesser degree, Lebanon, Wyoming, and others. Some of the places that have been part of the Traffic Commission’s discussion include: Lincoln Street, Warwick Avenue,

Trenton Street, Cottage Street, and Linden Street. At a minimum, the City should establish a process by which traffic calming measures would be considered and judged for cost-effectiveness, and funding might be sought from sources outside of the public works budget (e.g. grants, resident contributions, developer contributions, etc.). One method the City has recommended is the addition of street trees to narrow the visual corridor, slow traffic, and improve the appearance of the streetscape. In addition, the Traffic Commission has implemented traffic calming measures on Upham Street and Howard Street, including striping vehicular travel lanes; this has reduced speeding on these roads somewhat. Likewise, the Police Department has placed yellow pedestrian crossing cones at key locations throughout the City. The following describes more involved traffic calming measures.

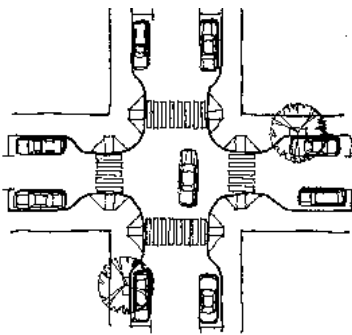
Traffic Calming

The idea of slowing down cars as they drive through neighborhood streets has a fairly recent history in the United States, where policies have largely been directed toward the opposite goal of removing obstacles to the smooth and efficient (and fast) movement of auto traffic.

Type of methods used to calm traffic fall into three main categories: speed calming measures (vertical and horizontal deflection and horizontal narrowing), volume-reducing measures (divertive or restrictive measures), and a combination of both speed calming and volume reducing methods. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funded a comprehensive look at traffic calming in 1998 – authored by Reid Ewing, *Traffic Calming: State of the Practice* describes and evaluates traffic calming efforts in the United States. The following descriptions of some of the more popular methods used in the northeast is taken from this publication (also available at www.trafficcalming.org, www.walkinginfo.org, and the Cambridge Traffic Calming Program.)

Speeding traffic interferes with our ability to enjoy our neighborhoods – creating noise and making it hard to walk, bike, or drive safely. Traffic calming is a way of redesigning streets to slow down traffic – returning our streets to the neighborhood. The goal of traffic calming is to make our streets safer and more comfortable for all users and residents.

Cambridge, MA Traffic Calming Program



Curb Extensions:

Curb extensions reduce the roadway width from curb to curb. They "pedestrianize" intersections by shortening crossing distances for pedestrians and drawing attention to pedestrians via raised peninsulas. They also tighten the curb radii at the corners, which reduces the speeds of turning vehicles at intersections.

Advantages:

- Reduce pedestrian crossing distance
- Improve visibility for pedestrians and drivers
- Prevent illegal parking at corners
- Slow the speed of turning vehicles

Disadvantages:

- May require bicycles to briefly merge with traffic
- May inspire illegal parking behind extension
- \$40-80,000 for four corners



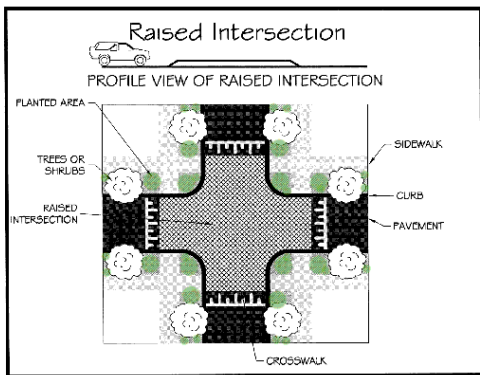
Raised Crosswalks: Raised crosswalks are Speed Tables outfitted with crosswalk markings and signage to channel pedestrian crossings, providing pedestrians with a level street crossing. Also, by raising the level of the crossing, pedestrians are more visible to approaching motorists.

Advantages:

- Improve pedestrian safety
- Effective at slowing vehicle speeds
- If designed well, can add positive aesthetic value

Disadvantages:

- Impact on drainage must be considered
- Can increase noise and air pollution
- Textured materials, if used, can be expensive
- Cost estimate: \$40,000+



Source: City of Eugene, OR

Raised Intersections: Raised intersections are flat raised areas covering an entire intersection with ramps on all approaches and often with brick or other textured materials on the flat section. They usually raise to the level of the sidewalk, or slightly below to provide a "lip" that is detectable by the visually impaired. By modifying the level of the intersection, the crosswalks are more readily perceived by motorists to be pedestrian territory.

Advantages:

- Improve pedestrian safety
- If designed well, can add positive aesthetic value
- They can calm two streets at once

Disadvantages:

- Tend to be expensive
- Less effective than speed humps or raised crosswalk
- Slows emergency vehicles
- Impact on drainage must be considered
- Cost estimate: \$25-75,000

These represent just a few of the types of traffic calming measures available. Some of these approaches may not be feasible in Melrose but might be considered as part of any roadway reconstruction project.

Parking

The City offers two general public parking areas that are supplemented by a series of smaller lots behind Main Street businesses. The lot behind City Hall provides all day free parking and 2-hour limited parking, with approximately 215 spaces. The central lot behind the Shaw's Supermarket has close to 150 spaces with a 2-hour time limit during the day. Smaller lots behind Main Street businesses contribute upwards of another 250 spaces with 1-3 hour time limits, and spaces right on Main Street are intended for quick turnover, ranging from 15-minutes to one-hour. The overall parking system **is a model for historic downtown areas** – parking spaces are located behind buildings and thus have no negative impact on the character of the business district, are well distributed along the length of downtown, and accommodate both short and long term parkers. Business owners have long complained about the lack of available parking, particularly for employees, and the Police Department also lacks adequate parking in the immediate vicinity of its building. Since the City Hall lot was first improved there has been occasional discussion of the possibility of increasing

parking downtown via construction of a parking deck at this location, but no feasibility study exists for this idea. This is an issue that should be explored further.

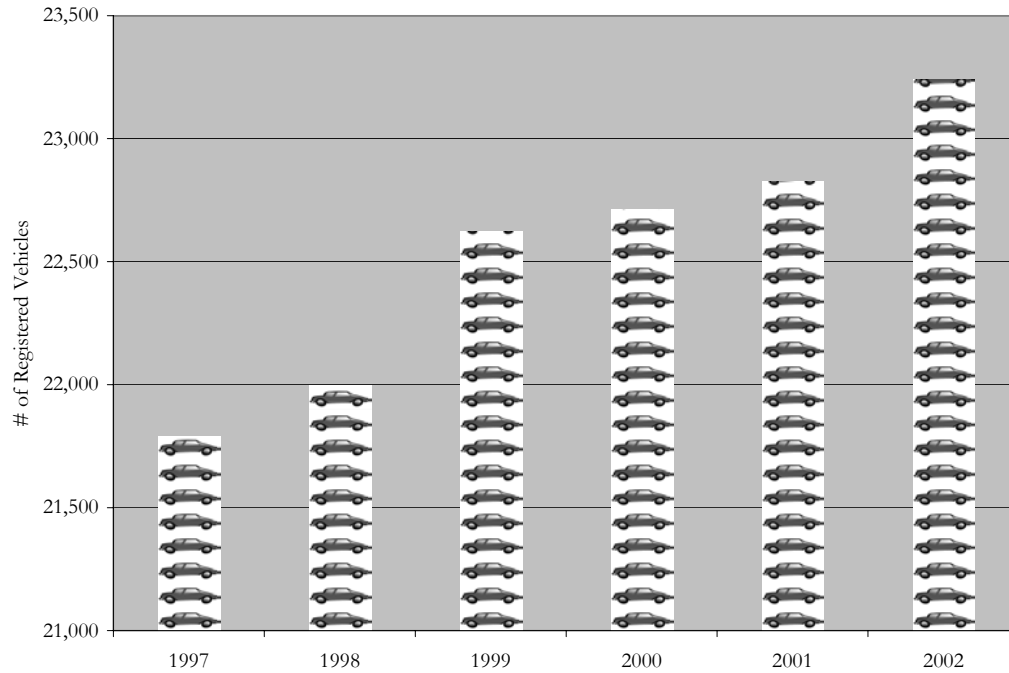
Figure 32: Downtown Parking Supply



Demand for additional residential parking has been increasing alongside a trend upward in the number of registered vehicles. According to the Department of Motor Vehicles, the overall number of registrations (including autos, heavy & light trucks, motorcycles, etc.) in Melrose increased 7% from 1997-2002. Although the number of automobiles slightly decreased during this period, a 17% increase in luxury vehicles and a 51% increase in the number of “light trucks,” including sport utility vehicles (SUVs), contributes to the overall increase seen in Figure 33.

Overnight on-street parking is prohibited throughout the city and most people find this desirable for aesthetic and safety reasons. Residential parking, however, is becoming an increasing problem as the population of vehicles increases and many homeowners now need parking for two or more vehicles on lots that were created with little or no parking space. This problem should be explored in depth in order to determine if there is need to revise the on-street parking rules in any way. As desirable residential uses are denied permits due to inadequate parking spaces, creative solutions should be sought to address this growing issue. Discussed further in the Land Use chapter of this plan, strategies such as shared and off-site parking and site plan review of parking lots, may help Melrose better manage this resource.

Figure 33: Total Number of Registered Vehicles, 1997-2002 (including luxury cars)

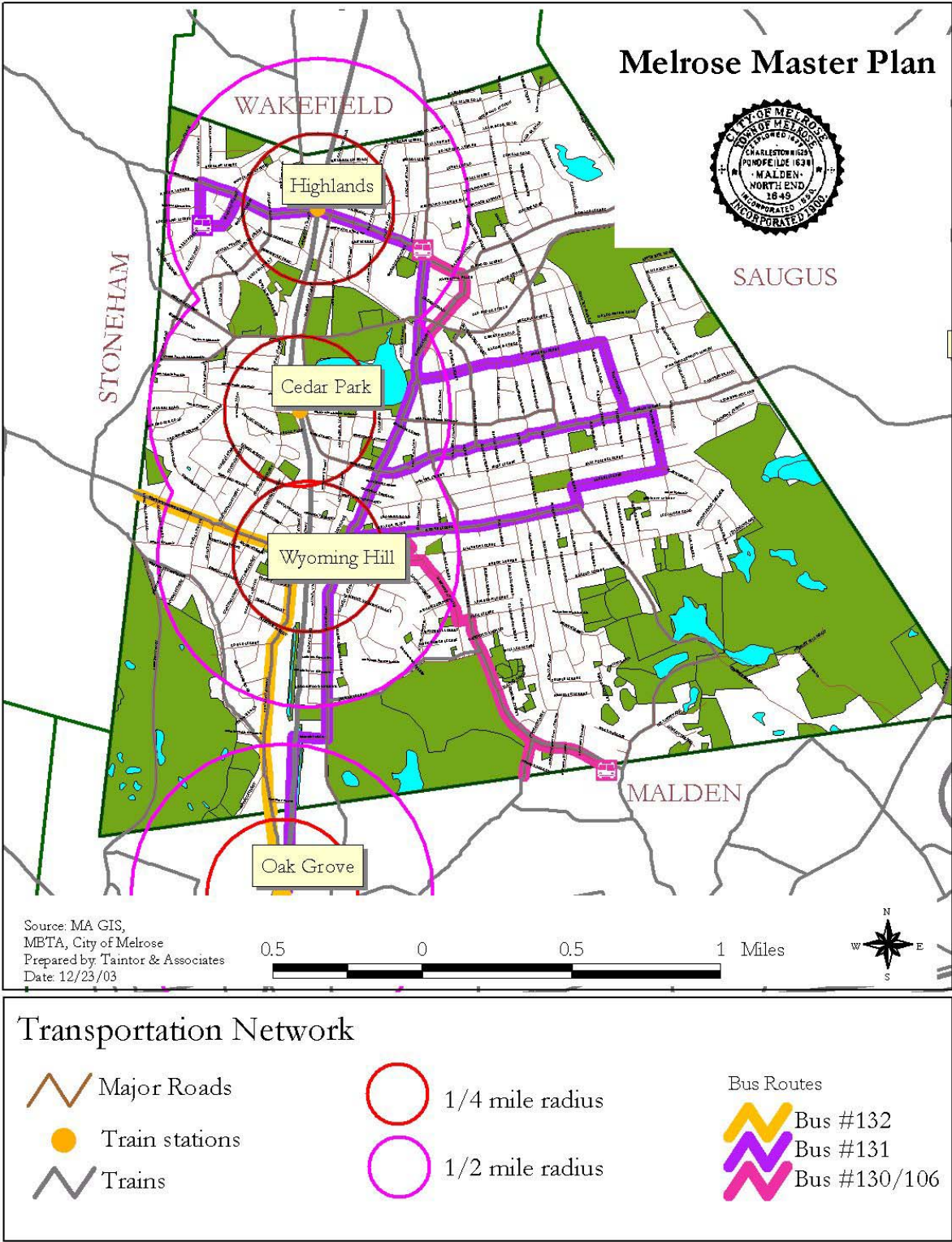


Source: Department of Motor Vehicles

Public Transportation

Melrose is well served by a multi-modal transportation system. Following is a map illustrating this network, and a brief description of its assets:

Figure 34: Melrose Transportation Network



MBTA Orange Line – Oak Grove Station

Located in Malden about a ¼ mile from the Melrose city boundary, the Oak Grove station serves Melrose commuters. Trains run every 5 minutes during peak periods, and according to 1997 MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics, there are **4,817 individuals boarding at Oak Grove each weekday**. There are **770 parking spaces at the Oak Grove** station, which fill daily before 7:30 am, available at a rate of \$3/day. According to an MBTA Parking Garage Feasibility Study conducted in 1997, the **estimated parking demand at Oak Grove exceeds 100% of its capacity**; in other words, another 790 spaces could be added to adequately



meet demand. In a preliminary assessment of the site's potential to support additional parking, the study observed that an efficient, five-level garage (1,174 spaces) could be supported at this location, that would augment 543 surface spaces for a total capacity of 1,717 spaces. Analysis of traffic impacts and gathering of geotechnical information were recommended as next steps in the feasibility assessment process.

Commuter Rail

Melrose is fortunate to have three commuter rail stops (Wyoming Hill, Cedar Park, Melrose Highlands) along the Haverhill/Lawrence line. In FY 2001, 9,900 daily boardings for the Haverhill line were recorded by the MBTA.²¹ Each stop in Melrose is accompanied by very limited public parking, for a fee of \$2/day:

Table 31: MBTA Ridership and Train Stop Parking in Melrose

<i>Train Stop</i>	<i>Daily Boardings</i> ²²	<i># of parking spaces</i>	<i>Management</i>
Wyoming Hill	444	28	MBTA
Cedar Park	642	87	City of Melrose
Highlands	704	77	City of Melrose
Total	1,790	192	

Source: MBTA

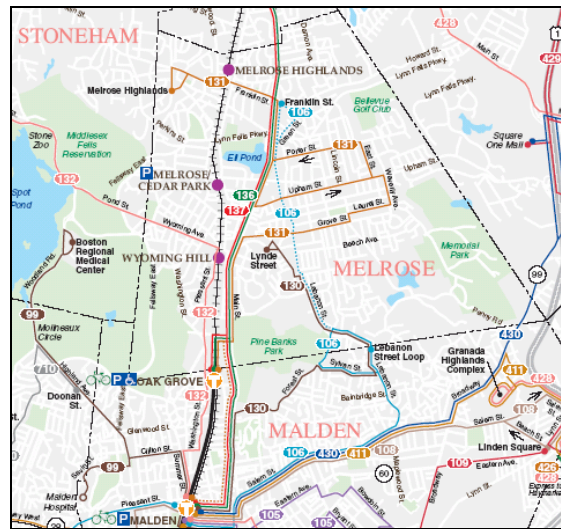
Buses

On weekdays there are five MBTA bus routes that travel through Melrose to destinations in Malden, Wakefield, and Reading.

²¹ http://www.mbta.com/insidethetaag_ridership.asp

²² MBTA Commuter Train Audit, 6/8/00, as cited in the Stoneham Executive Center Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report, p 2-59.

Figure 35: MBTA Bus Routes



Source: MBTA

- 106: Lebanon St., Malden - Wellington Sta. Via Main St.
- 130: Lebanon St. - Malden Station
- 131: Melrose Highlands - Malden Center Station Via Oak Grove Station
- 132: Redstone Shopping Center - Malden Station
- 136/137: Reading Depot - Malden Station Via Wakefield, Melrose & Oak Grove Station

Service for all routes generally runs from early morning to midnight, with limited weekend service. Routes 106 and 130 offer services on both weekend days, Routes 132 and 136/137 run on Saturday but not Sunday, and Route 131 does not offer any weekend service.

The Council on Aging operates a wheelchair accessible minibus from Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm. Transportation within the City is provided to over 5,000 residents aged 60 and older. The 9-passenger, 3-year old minibus is owned by the City with driver salaries paid for by grants.

Taxi Service

Melrose is well-served by taxis – five taxi operations have addresses in the City.

Pedestrian Amenities/Walkability

As a densely-built community, Melrose's development pattern lends itself to being a walkable place, with destinations in proximity to each other and buildings that line the streetscape. Other factors that are used to determine the relative "walkability" of a place include presence/absence of sidewalks, sidewalk condition and width, presence/absence of curb cuts, the location and safety of marked street crossings, and the separation of the walking path from vehicle travel.

Although Melrose operates from a strong position of being a walkable place, proper maintenance of pedestrian facilities is an on-going challenge. Repairing sidewalks, repainting crosswalks, and caring for street trees challenges increasingly restricted City budgets. This issue is further discussed in the Public Infrastructure chapter of the Master Plan.

Sidewalks

The City dedicates an annual budget item toward repair of its sidewalks; according to the Department of Public Works, however, need for sidewalk repairs invariably exceeds available budgets.

Standard two-lane stripes are no longer considered safe because motorists often can not see them until they are within a 100' distance. Neither Main Street nor the Fellsway have any two-lane crosswalks – but they are seen on several of Melrose's side streets.

Ladder stripes, featured along the length of Main Street, are preferable due to increased visibility.

Zebra stripes are highly visible, but tend to wear quickly.

Variegated ladder stripes provide even higher visibility than traditional ladder striping, and the markings tend to last longer as vehicle wheels travel in between marking

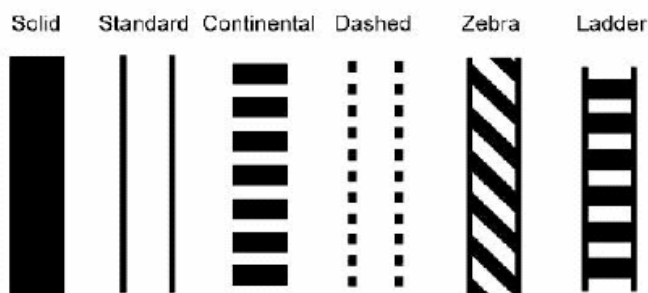
Bituminous and concrete sidewalks are found throughout the City, though the latter are preferred and required for all new developments.

Crosswalks

A visual inspection of the City's marked crossings illustrates the challenge of maintaining the paint in clearly visible condition, especially in areas where there tend to be frequent turning vehicles (where tire friction accelerates paint removal). The City repaints crosswalks every year, through its sidewalk program. Lack of sufficient funding, however, causes the cycle of maintenance for many crosswalks to far exceed the life expectancy of the markings (two years, typically). Crosswalks that are on school routes receive top priority in maintenance.

Both **standard and ladder-type markings are featured** in the City (see Figure 36). Studies that focus on the relative benefits of the various types of markings have revealed standard two lane markings to be the most economical method of striping (less paint), but their relative low visibility has generally deemed them unsuitable for intersections with high traffic. Zebra markings are highly visible, but wear more quickly than others. Ladder marking are also highly visible, and can be painted so that vehicle tires travel in between markings, thereby improving longevity. Use of inlaid, reflective tape or thermoplastic improve longevity significantly, and although initial costs are much higher, may prove to be the most cost effective over time.

Figure 36: Types of Crosswalk Markings



Source: FHWA-RD-01-075, Safety Effects of Marked vs. Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations

A number of municipalities have tried to increase crosswalk visibility by using a contrasting paint color and/or surface treatment (e.g. brick, stamped concrete) in between the standard white marking lines. In Massachusetts, green and blue can be frequently seen. Anecdotal information suggest these methods increase visibility. In 2002, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the use of fluorescent green for pedestrian signs and pavement markings, but continues to suggest the use of white borders for a crosswalk to maintain optimal daytime visibility.



Discussions with the Melrose Police Department, the Department of Public Works, and members of the City's Traffic Commission, coupled with accident records, indicate that pedestrian safety is an issue. There are areas that receive particularly heavy pedestrian volumes, and deserve continual monitoring and evaluation. There is a need to upgrade pedestrian traffic signals in the downtown and other busy pedestrian areas to allow for dedicated time for pedestrians to cross intersections.

The intersection at Melrose Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway is an example of an intersection that needs improvements. It carries a substantial number of students going to and from the Melrose Middle and High Schools. A crossing guard assists students crossing during the morning and afternoon school commute.

Figure 37: Pedestrian Crossing at Melrose Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway



The crossing that extends from the northwest corner of the intersection across Melrose Street appears to have a few issues that should be addressed:

- The eastern terminus of the crosswalk leaves pedestrians amid a vehicular egress to the Johnny's Foodmaster shopping center, and close to the exit for Dunkin Donuts. No curbing exists here, requiring pedestrians to travel an addition 20-55 feet before they arrive in an area safe from vehicular passage.
- The width of the crosswalk is approximately 73 feet. Assuming the average pedestrian travels at approximately 5 feet/second, it would take someone about 15 seconds to cross at this location. This crossing is approximately 320 feet from the intersection of Main Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway. Assuming a travel speed of 25 mph, a car would reach the crosswalk in under 10 seconds upon leaving the intersection, well before a pedestrian had time to complete crossing. Given that this section of roadway also incorporates a merging of lanes, vehicle operators have relatively little time and space to react to these conditions.
- Due to the heavy volume of pedestrians it carries, this crossing should be among the best-maintained in the City, and should be regularly repainted.

The City should consider a re-design of this walkway, perhaps curb extensions or a crossing island on Melrose Street would help to solve some of these issues. Working in concert with construction of the new Middle School may be a good opportunity to address this walkway. At the same time, a proper handicapped accessible route from the Knoll parking area to the Middle and High Schools should also be considered (curb cuts exist, but lead to a curbed walkway without access).

From the intersection of Wyoming Avenue with Main Street southward to Malden, several pedestrian improvements are planned in conjunction with construction of the Pembroke development. The Planning Board's written decision to grant a special permit for that project enumerates these improvements:

- Main Street and Banks Place:
 - Install new traffic and pedestrian signals
 - Provide new crosswalks and ramps
 - Provide pavement markings and signage
 - Inter-connect new signal with Main Street/Sylvan Street
- Main Street and Sylvan Street:
 - Inter-connect with new signal at Main Street/Banks Place
- Mid-Block Pedestrian Signal between Banks Place and Sylvan Street:
 - Remove existing pedestrian signal
- Main Street and Wyoming Avenue:
 - Relocate MBTA bus stops from approach sides to departure sides along Main Street (subject to MBTA approval)
- On-Site Measures:
 - Implement and maintain a Transportation Demand Management Program (TDM Program), which shall include the following components: parking management policies and enforcement, car-sharing program, transit promotion, bicycle storage, transportation coordinator, pedestrian connection to Oak Grove Station.

There are no marked crossings on the Lynn Fells Parkway from its intersection with Green Street to the Saugus border, a distance of about 0.8 miles. Pedestrians do, however, cross at sites along this section. **The lack of safe crossing locations causes the Parkway to be a significant barrier to both pedestrians and bicycles** who seek to travel in a north-south direction. While studies have shown that marked crossings alone at uncontrolled locations (no stop sign, traffic light, etc.) do not increase pedestrian safety, the issue should nevertheless be explored to determine if an appropriate solution exists.

Finally, there are **a number of pedestrian improvements that will also be completed in conjunction with the Willow Street condo development.** The Planning Board's decision to grant a special permit to this project describes these:

- Tree plantings on Cottage Street to fill in open spaces along both sides of the street in an effort to calm and mitigate the impacts of cut-through traffic.
- Signage on Cottage Street for traffic control and calming purposes.
- New sidewalks along the Willow Street portion of the development and along the West Foster Street portion of the development, extending to the railroad tracks. Handicapped access curbs shall be installed on West Foster Street from the development east to the municipal "Shaws" parking lot.

Street Trees and Planting Strips

It is hard to imagine any successful walking corridor fully void of trees. The richness of a young or mature canopy of trees cannot be matched by any amount of pavers, colorful walls or other fine architecture, or other features...the most charming streets are those with trees gracing both sides of a walkway. This canopy effect has a quality that brings pedestrians back again and again.

FWHA Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

The experience of walking in Melrose varies widely partly due to landscaping and lighting that characterize the streetscape. The MA Highway Design Manual acknowledges the contribution street trees make to the pedestrian environment: “in addition to the environmental benefits of cooling and particulate absorption, street trees on the traffic side of the walk provide a sense of enclosure and separation between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.”

Two of Melrose’s most traveled corridors, Main Street and the Lynn Fell Parkway, are mostly tree-lined. Maintaining and replanting trees along these routes is important to preserve their character and walking environment.

There are dozens of streetscapes in Melrose that enjoy the benefit of mature tree canopies. While the City should think about a comprehensive tree replacement program, recommended priority areas include:

Main Street from the Fellsway to Franklin Street



Large parking lots line both sides of the street, and pedestrians are effectively “sandwiched” between stationary and moving vehicles. Street trees would also substantially improve the environment from the Fellsway to the Wakefield City line, but particularly on this block where pedestrians walk to businesses. Adjacent businesses could be approached to partner with the City to perform these enhancements in conjunction with the Main Street reconstruction project.

Dunkin Donuts on the Lynn Fells Parkway



This route to Melrose Middle and High Schools is well traveled. According to the Traffic Impact and Access Study performed for the Dunkin Donuts project, “it is recommended that any plantings, vegetation, and landscaping along the site frontage be kept low to the ground to allow for adequate sight distance.” That said, the pattern of street trees along the Fellsway breaks here, and the result stands in stark contrast to the character of the street. **This is the only portion of the Fellsway that lacks street trees – even the opposite side of the street at this block supports four trees.** Although trees may impact sight distances, this issue should be carefully weighed against the benefits trees offer to the streetscape. In this area, street trees, or at a minimum a landscaped planting strip along the street (it is presently filed with stones), would improve the pedestrian travel experience, and enhance the streetscape overall.

Main Street from Grove Street to Wyoming Avenue



An extension of the central business district, the block that spans between Grove Street and Wyoming Avenue has a markedly different character from the two blocks to the north that lie at the heart of downtown Melrose. There is a stark contrast from the regularly spaced street trees that line the block to the north, and the complete absence of trees along this 600 foot section of Main Street. If trees were planted every 50 feet, a total of 24 could cover both sides of the street. In addition, the use of the “Victorian” street lighting at this location would reinforce the connection of this block to the rest of downtown.

Grove Street from Main to the Wyoming Commuter Rail stop



Making an attractive pedestrian connection between downtown and the Wyoming stop would encourage people to walk this short distance (approx. 1,000 feet), and possibly attract commuter rail users to downtown. Grove Street is devoid of trees. Parking lots occupy much of its south side, and the park (Mary Foley park) on the north side fails to complement the streetscape as its edge is marked only by grass as it meets the sidewalk. The addition of trees, landscaping, and pedestrian-scaled lighting in this area would make a dramatic improvement.

The City has a Tree Committee and an arborist dedicated to these issues. Street tree replanting efforts, particularly on the two blocks of downtown Main Street, have been the focus of this group. Their activities are further discussed in the Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter.

In addition, Melrose has a long-standing Adopt-A-Site Committee that organizes volunteer efforts to beautify City parkland, traffic islands, and streetscapes. Their work should continue to be supported.



Street Lighting

The type of street lighting fixture can have a significant impact on the street's quality of pedestrian space. In Downtown Melrose, as well as along Wyoming Avenue from the commuter rail to Main Street, "Victorian" type lanterns are used to illuminate the street. All other streets in Melrose are lit with typical cobra style lighting.

As further discussed in the Economic Development section of this plan, the City would like to strengthen its neighborhood commercial centers (Wyoming, Cedar Park, and the Highlands). Enhancing the pedestrian streetscapes in these areas with "Victorian" light fixtures would promote walking at night, and provide additional patronage for local businesses.



Bicycle Facilities

At present, the City of Melrose has no specific policies or programs that promote the use of bicycle travel through the City. At one time, a Bicycle Committee met regularly and provided input into the re-design of the Main Street corridor, but the group has not been active for over a year.

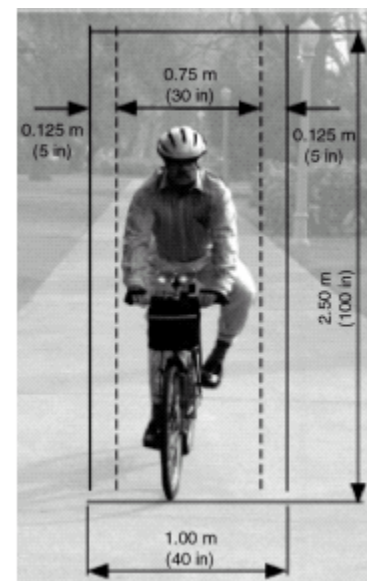
There are no marked bicycle travel lanes or signed routes in Melrose, and there are very few publicly owned bicycle racks. Private bike racks are likewise few.

Many cities that seek to reduce vehicle traffic and improve air quality look to promote bicycling as a viable alternative mode of transportation. Studies have shown a solid correlation to the existence of marked bicycle lanes and increased use of bicycles. An "if you build it, they will come" type of relationship is proven.

There are a variety of bicycle facilities that Melrose can consider to enhance conditions for bicycle travel. They include:

- **Shared roadways** – The term shared roadway is used to refer to the existing street network, which was likely designed with vehicular use in mind. Often, minimal intervention can substantially improve roadways for bicycle use: ensuring that road shoulders are swept free of debris and the pavement is in good condition, retrofitting or replacing drainage grates that are hazardous to bicycles, installing bicycle racks along popular routes, enforcing parking restrictions near intersections, etc.
- **Shared signed roadways** – Shared roadways that have been deemed as preferred routes for cyclists can be signed to indicate this preference. These routes should be in good condition for cycling, but may not be wide enough to accommodate a marked lane.

Figure 38: Bicycle Operating Space



Source: AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (1999)

- **Bicycle lanes** – Marked by striping, signage, and pavement markings, lanes are designed to be used primarily by bicycles. They must be a minimum of 4 feet wide, though some places employ a 5 foot minimum for increased safety. On streets with parking, lanes are located in between the parking lane and the vehicle travel lane; on streets without parking, they are marked a distance from the curb.
- **Shared use paths** – These paths are separated from roadways, are often primarily recreational, and are open to users other than cyclists (joggers, pedestrians, etc.). Shared use generally requires a minimum width of 10 feet to accommodate two-way traffic and multiple users.

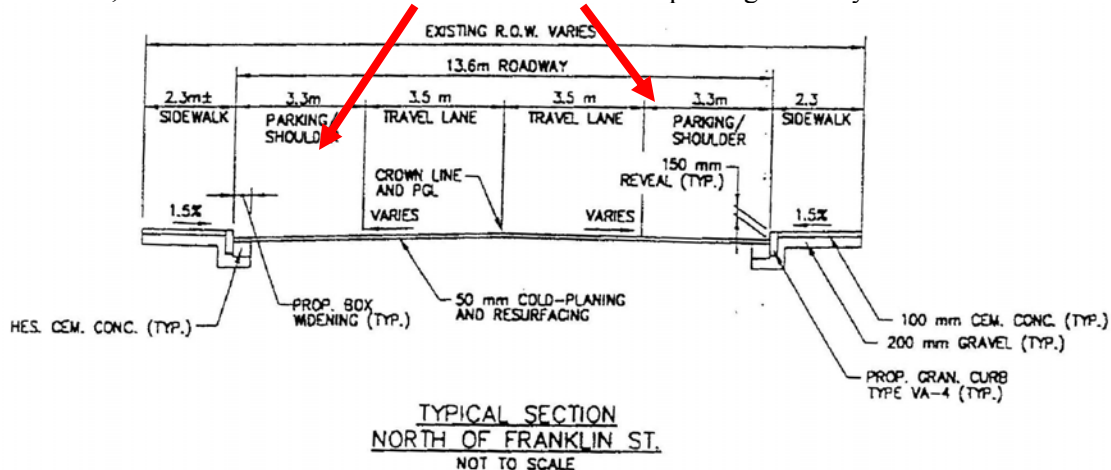
The American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (1999) is a comprehensive guide for bicycle accommodation. The following basic standards are taken from its recommendations. MA Highway has published its own set of standards for bicycle accommodation entitled “Building Better Bicycling.” Originally written in 1994, its most recent update occurred in 1999.

Pavement width is the primary limiting factor when considering bike routing. On shared roadways, a minimum paved shoulder of 4 feet is recommended for bicycle travel, but as travel speeds increase, wider shoulders should be provided.²³ In all cases, any shoulder is better than no shoulder.

A minimum paved width of 44 feet is required to meet standard marking guidelines for bicycle lanes in each direction on a two-way street. Very few, if any, Melrose streets meet this width criteria, but this is not to say that bicycle-friendly improvements are not possible.

The **Main Street improvement project has incorporated bicycle travel into its design.** In an effort to accommodate parked cars, traveling vehicles, and bicycles in both direction on the roadway, several items are planned:

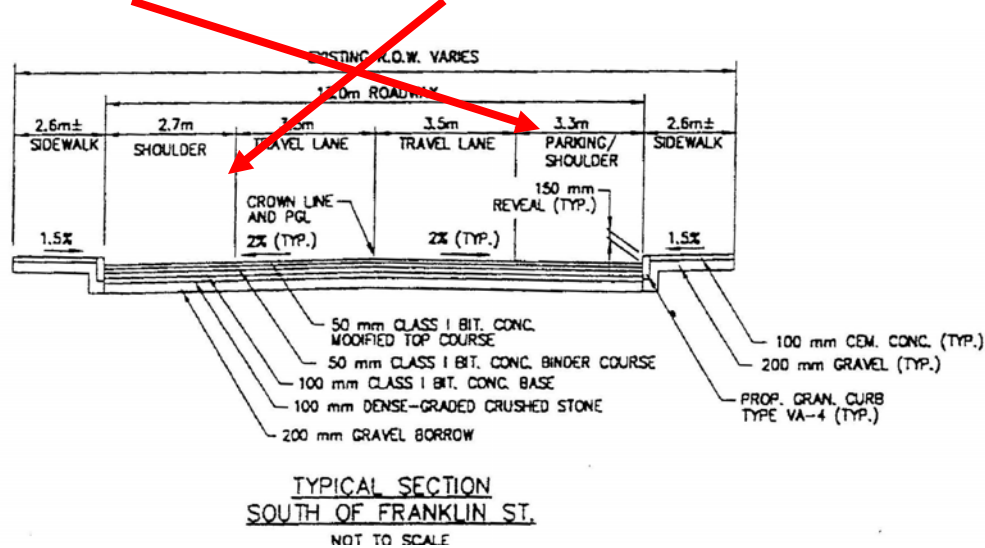
- North of Franklin Street will feature a 13.6 meter road width, with two 3.5 meter travel lanes in each direction, and a shared 3.3 meter shoulders for on-street parking and bicycle travel.



Source: STP Segment “A” Design Exception Report, November 2000

²³ See AASHTO’s A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (Green Book) for the relationship of recommended roadway width to travel speeds.

- The road south of Franklin Street will be 13m wide, have two 3.5 travel lanes, and one shared shoulder of 3.3m and the other will be 2.7m with no parking.



Source: STP Segment "A" Design Exception Report, November 2000

- Parking spaces will be marked with a "T" to encourage vehicles to park close to the curb, allowing for better bicycle flow.
- All controlled intersections will be upgraded with fully-actuated stoplight systems.
- Due to MA Highway requirements, the shared lane will not be marked as part of the project; rather, the City has agreed to mark the lane after the construction project is complete.

In order to receive project approval, the project engineers had to file a design exception report requesting design waivers at three locations. It is worth noting that while this project is strongly supported by the community, the Bicycle Committee's letter of support highlighted a serious issue: "...that all parties agreed that the MHD requirements for bicycle accommodations are seriously flawed. MHD considers a shared lane for vehicles and bicyclists as adequate bicycle accommodations even though this has the effect of widening the roadway, which may encourage faster vehicle speeds, and decreases the safety margin for bicycles and pedestrians." Further, the Committee recommends a thorough revision to "Building Better Bicycling," that incorporates a clearer, more flexible menu of options for improved bicycle accommodation.

The Bicycle Committee felt that **Main Street is the top priority corridor to be adapted for bicycle use**, since it is the spine that links Melrose to adjacent communities as well as to the commuter rail station.

The **Lynn Fells Parkway** also functions to connect Melrose to destinations outside of the City, and its width accommodates a wide shoulder that could be used by bicyclists. Signage marking this as a bike route, along with proper maintenance of the roadway shoulders (e.g. regular sweeping, crack sealing, etc.) would improve its bikeability.

In looking at existing and proposed regional bikeways, it appears that Melrose's most direct opportunity for connection into this network is via either Main Street or the Fellsway. Featured in Figure 39, some of the area connections to be explored include:

- *Bike to the Sea*: Founded in 1993, a group of over 100 members is working to plan a bicycle and pedestrian trail from Malden through Everett and Saugus to beaches in Revere and Lynn. Ultimately, this path would also connect to trails to Medford and Boston.
- *Mystic River Reservation Bike Trail*: Along the Mystic River in Medford and Somerville, this State-owned parkland is home to miles of looping bike trails that could be connected to the Minute Man trail and Boston Harbor in the future. This systems is accessible from the Fellsway in Malden.
- *Tri-Community Bikeway*: This proposed 5.7 mile route would connect green spaces in Stoneham, Woburn, and Winchester to existing trails in the Middlesex Fells and the Mystic River Reservation to Bike to the Sea, Border to Boston, and East Coast Greenway paths.
- *Border to Boston*: Since 1994, Mass Bike/North Shore has been working to develop a route from Boston to Newburyport – as currently planned, this path passes through Wakefield, and perhaps Melrose, in its “urban” section to Boston.
- *East Coast Greenway*: The largest, most well-known of planned bicycle routes, the East Coast Greenway is frequently described as the “urban alternative to the Appalachian Trail.” Stretching from Maine to Florida, the Massachusetts section of this route may pass directly through Melrose. Figure 41 is a map of the proposed trail.

Melrose should maintain regular communication with area bicycle planning groups to give strength to its efforts and coordinate activities as necessary. The Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition, an organization dedicated to improving bicycle conditions for all cyclists, has set advocacy as one of their top priorities in its 2004/2005 Strategic Plan. Working with groups like MassBike would help Melrose “get on the map” in the region.

Potential connections to be made from Main Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway can be seen in Figure 40: Main north to Spring Street to the potential Tri-Community Bikeway; Main south to the Bike to the Sea; the Fellsway west to Pond Street to the Tri-Community Bikeway; and the Fellsway east to Main Street in Saugus to the Bike to the Sea. There is also interest in pursuing a shared use corridor along the MBTA line. These ideas should be further explored in a Bicycle Plan for the City.

Figure 39: Regional Bicycle Connections

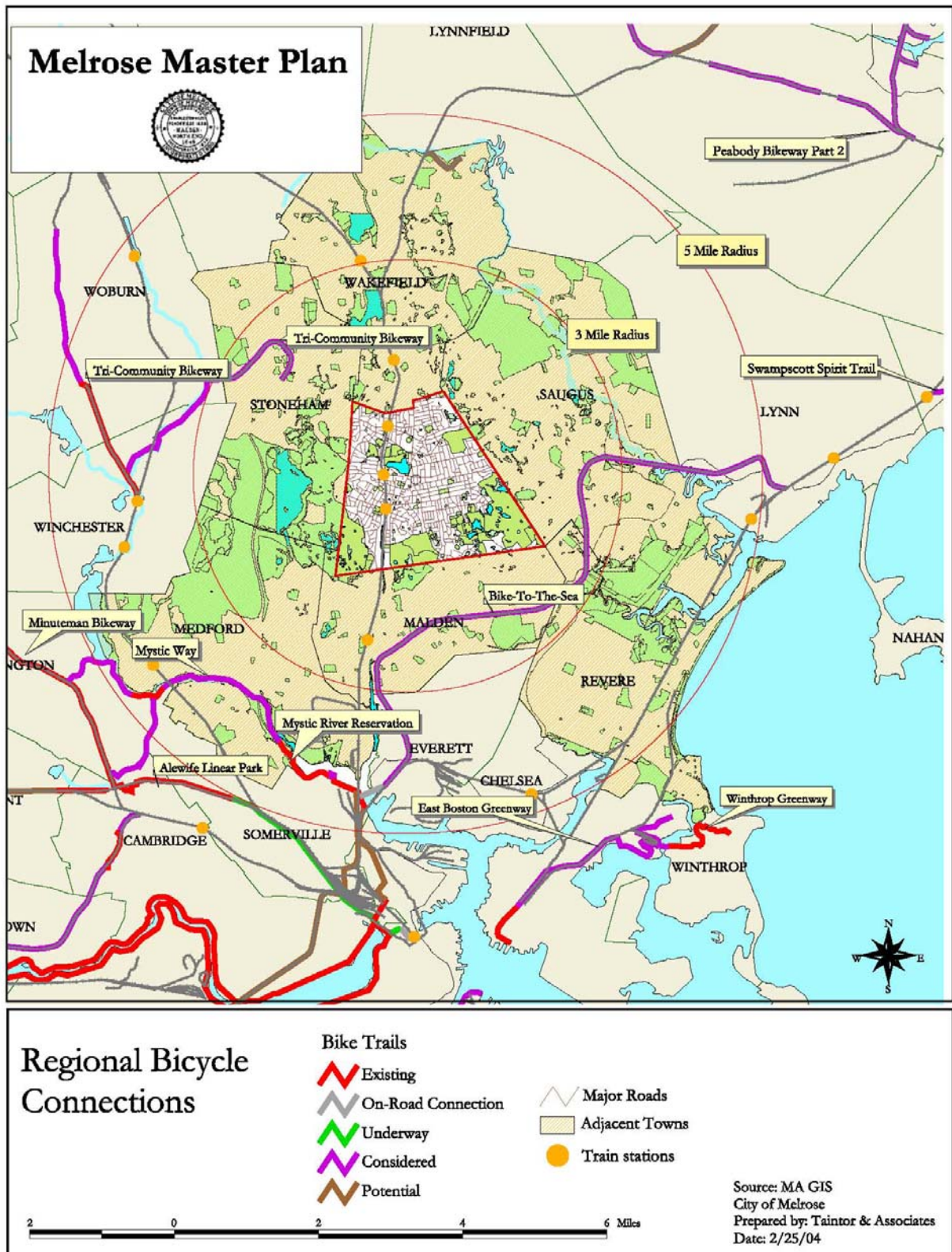


Figure 40: Potential Bicycle Route Connections

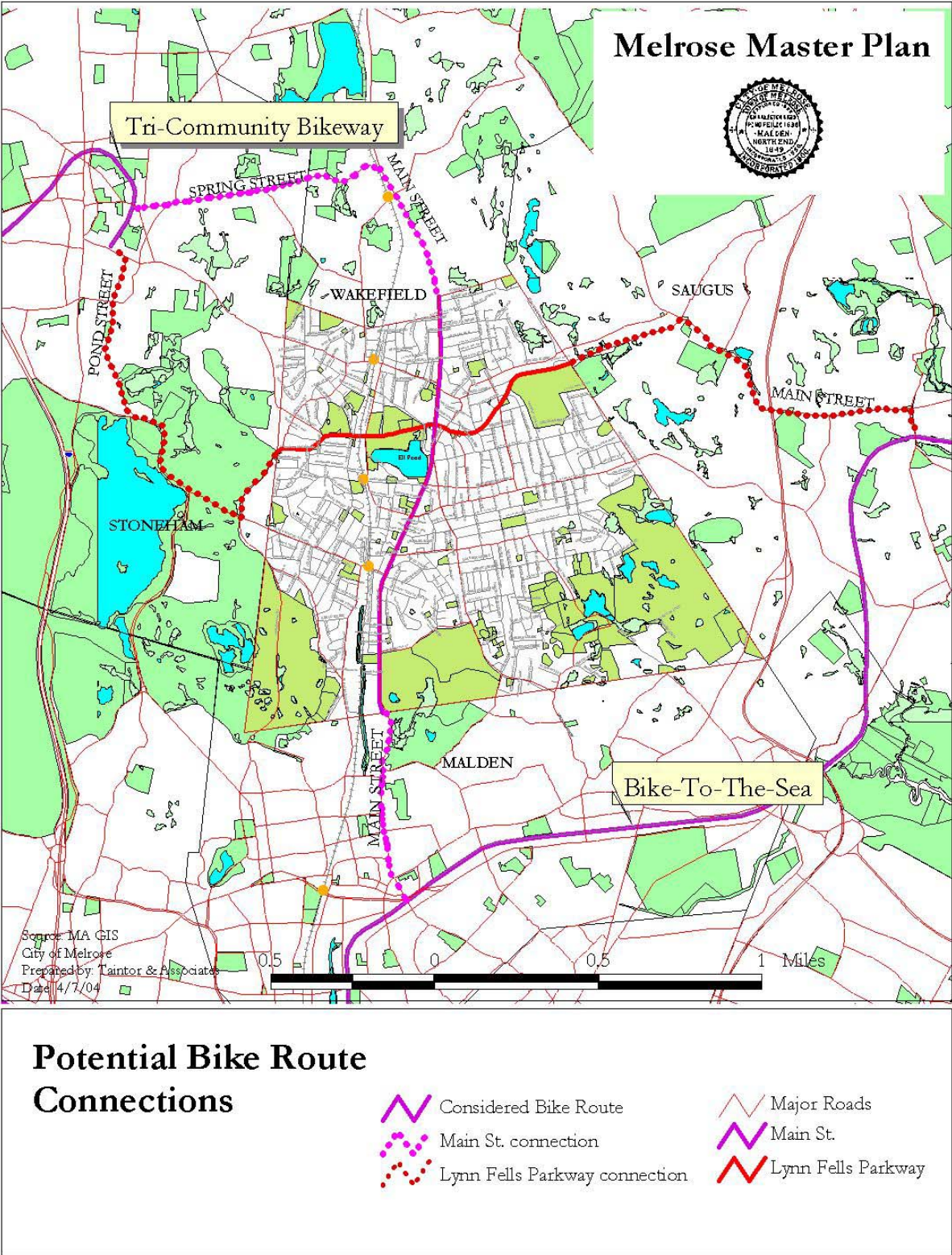
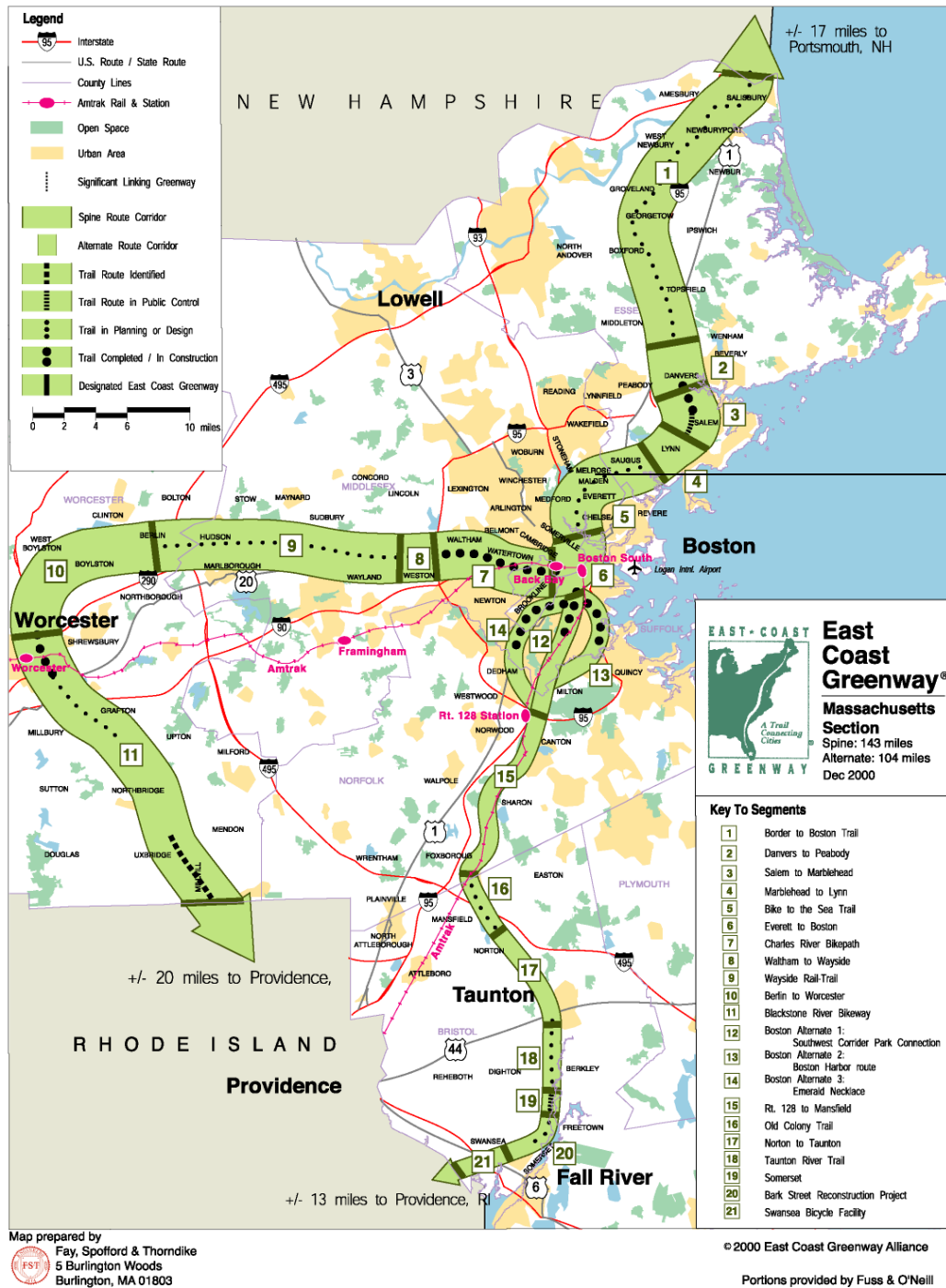


Figure 41: East Coast Greenway Massachusetts Map



Melrose

Source: <http://www.greenway.org/>

Planned Transportation Improvement Program Projects

Per Federal Department of Transportation regulations, any project that receives funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must be described in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Melrose is part of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization, which is comprised of 101 communities in the region.

The **Main Street Reconstruction project** is listed as part of the 2004-2008 TIP. The project is conceived in three segments:

- Segment A: Main Street and Green Street from Wakefield line to the Lynn Fells Parkway (4,600 ft.);
- Segment B: Lebanon Street from the Hospital to Grove Street (3,500 ft.);
- Segment C: Main Street from the Fellsway to Wyoming (8,000 ft.).

Briefly aforementioned, Segment A of this project is currently undergoing 75% design review, and construction is planned for sometime in 2004-2005. The project will include:

- Combination of cold-plane/resurface and full depth reconstruction of Main Street;
- Cold-plane/resurface and minor “box-widening” along Green Street and Franklin Street approaches to Main Street;
- Cold-plane and resurface Lynn Fells Parkway between Main Street and Green Street as well as the intersection of the Lynn Fells Parkway and Green Street to allow the installation of wire loop detection as part of the traffic control upgrade;
- Cement concrete sidewalks on Main and Green Streets and at the intersection of Green Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway. Brick sidewalk (non-participating item) is proposed for Franklin Square;
- Granite curbing along both sides of Main and Green Streets;
- ADA compliant access and protected pedestrian phasing and crosswalks at signals;
- Bicycle travel along Main Street in the shoulder area;
- Redesign all existing driveway facilities and property access within the project limits;
- Redesign existing drainage system.
- Traffic control upgrades with wire loop detection.

Other proposed TIP projects in Melrose include:

Table 32: Proposed Roadway Improvement Projects

ID#	Location	Description
DM0049	Grove Street from Main to Lebanon	Roadway reconstruction, new pavement markings and signs, intersection improvements for traffic safety. Sidewalk construction and handicap access for pedestrian safety. Opticom, detection, and signals will provide pre-emption for emergency vehicles.
DM0050	Lebanon from Grove to Malden line	Roadway reconstruction, new pavement markings and signs, intersection improvements for traffic safety. Sidewalk construction and handicap access for pedestrian safety. Opticom, detection, and signals will provide pre-emption for emergency vehicles.
DM0094	Wyoming from Main to Stoneham	Roadway reconstruction, new pavement markings and signs, intersection improvements for traffic safety. Sidewalk construction and handicap access for pedestrian safety. Opticom, detection, and signals will provide pre-emption for emergency vehicles. Signal will have pedestrian indications and push buttons and bicycle accommodation will be provided.

ID#	Location	Description
DM0158	Swains Pond from Grove to Wheeler	Roadway reconstruction, new pavement markings and signs, intersection improvements for traffic safety. Sidewalk construction and handicap access for pedestrian safety.

Source: Department of Public Works

Future Transportation Issues

Main Street, the City's top accident location and one of its heaviest volume carriers, is scheduled to undergo **substantial reconstruction that should enhance safety and alleviate congestion.**

Melrose's major thoroughways (Main Street, the Lynn Fells Parkway, Green/Franklin Streets, and West Wyoming Avenue) serve regional destinations, and their ability to provide adequate service depends in part on traffic that may be generated from beyond the City's borders. As it has with the Stoneham Executive Center project, **the City should continue to be aware of developments in adjacent communities that may have substantial impacts on its roadways.**

High accident areas and places of high pedestrian traffic require safety improvements. Implementation of **traffic calming and sidewalk improvements** in these areas will address long-standing problems, particularly near commuter rail stops. In addition, every effort should be made to upgrade existing signalization and provide curb cuts to accommodate persons with disabilities.

Because Melrose commuters depend so heavily on **public transportation**, the City should seek to maintain and improve this service to the extent it is able to influence regional transportation planning. It should regularly communicate with its neighbors (Malden, Wakefield, Stoneham, Saugus) to identify opportunities for cooperation in this effort. In the past, the MBTA has considered a variety of modifications to the three stop service it provides in Melrose, so the City must prepare itself to respond to future proposals. In addition, alternative modes of travel, whether for transportation or recreational purposes, should be encouraged.

Finally, Melrose should carefully consider **parking** as it relates to downtown, the commuting population, and its neighborhoods.

Goals, Objectives and Action Items for Transportation

GOAL T-1: IMPROVE AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC FLOW AND SAFETY ON MELROSE STREETS

Objective A: Implement roadway improvement projects identified in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- Complete design and construct Segment A of the Main Street Reconstruction Project.
- Pursue funding to construct Segments B and C of the Main Street Reconstruction Project.
- Pursue funding for other Melrose projects on the TIP.

Objective B: Consider a wide range of traffic calming methods in response to neighborhood speeding and pedestrian safety issues.

- Include street trees in roadway reconstruction projects.
- Explore the possibility of grant programs and/or resident donations to implement traffic calming measures.
- Implement an education program with regard to traffic and pedestrian safety.

Objective C: Improve pedestrian safety.

- Maintain sidewalks in good condition to facilitate use by pedestrians and those in wheelchairs or with strollers.
- Install up-to-date traffic signals that are ADA compliant for the blind or visually impaired.
- Repair and make accessible the crosswalk leading from the Knoll to the Middle School/High School complex during construction of the new Middle School.
- Upgrade pedestrian crossing signals to provide dedicated crossing phase.
- Evaluate and redesign the crosswalk at the intersection of Melrose Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway.
- Identify other intersections that should be redesigned for safety.

GOAL T-2: PROACTIVELY MITIGATE POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS ON MELROSE TRAFFIC FLOWS STEMMING FROM NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Objective A: Continue to analyze traffic impacts on new development proposals within Melrose.

- Update Planning Board regulations to require developers to pay for traffic studies.

Objective B: Establish better communication with surrounding communities to mitigate traffic impacts of developments outside of the City.

- Create contacts and establish regular forums for discussion of regional traffic issues.
- Improve information-sharing between the Planning Board and the Traffic Commission.

GOAL T-3: ENCOURAGE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES TO AUTOMOBILE USE

Objective A: Enhance public transit options and opportunities.

- Advocate for expansion of parking capacity at Oak Grove.
- Advocate for MBTA Sunday bus service and for improved Saturday bus service from Franklin Square to Malden Station.

Objective B: Ensure that curb-to-curb transportation remains available to senior citizens unable to drive or take MBTA buses.

- Regularly fund vehicle maintenance and other necessary costs for the Council on Aging van through the City budget.
- Continue to apply for grant funding to support drivers' salaries.

GOAL T-4: DEVELOP FACILITIES FOR BICYCLES

Objective A: Develop a Bicycle Plan.

- Identify locations for bike racks at area parks and city facilities and bike storage facilities at the train stations.
- Identify existing roadways preferred for bicycles and locations for roadway improvements.
- Explore the possibility of a bike trail along the right-of-way at the railroad tracks.

GOAL T-5: IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY, APPEARANCE, AND FUNCTION OF MELROSE'S PUBLIC PARKING SUPPLY

Objective B: Address the issue of downtown parking.

- Rethink downtown parking controls to improve usage.
- Determine the need for and study feasibility of additional parking downtown.

Objective A: Improve parking at the commuter rail stations.

- Explore opportunities to increase available parking near commuter rail stations.
- Pursue and promote improvements in the maintenance of the train stations.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE



Introduction

Infrastructure of the city includes five areas: the water distribution system, wastewater management, rainwater disposal, roads and sidewalks, and city and school buildings. Each of these areas requires continual maintenance and evaluation for adequacy. Like other cities across the Commonwealth, ongoing scheduled maintenance and replacement has been limited over the years. Large portions of the city's infrastructure now need to be replaced and/or repaired. The cost for completing this work is substantial. There are various ways to fund such work, and these are discussed below.

This chapter is divided into a section on various funding alternatives to address infrastructure needs, a section for each of the different infrastructure parts mentioned above, and a final section identifying goals and objectives for improving and maintaining the city's infrastructure.

Funding for Infrastructure Improvements

Based on the current condition of the city's infrastructure, it is clear that **needed capital improvements have been continually deferred due to budgetary constraints and the lack of a pragmatic method to fund various projects on an ongoing basis.** The City has not yet reached a crisis stage where the underlying infrastructure is not viable for day-to-day services. However, that point may arrive in the not-too-distant future if a mechanism to fund various infrastructure projects is not agreed upon by city leaders. The realities of city government, not unique to Melrose, make it difficult to proceed on long-term capital improvements when there is no immediate tangible benefit clearly visible to the public. As such, consideration should be given to exploring ways to de-politicize decisions on funding capital improvements. One possible approach is to set up an independent Water and Sewer Commission to review and recommend infrastructure capital improvement projects and funding sources for the recommended projects.

There are theoretically five different funding sources for infrastructure projects:

1. Allocate additional money from the **city's current operating budget for capital improvements.** This approach would require consideration of the impact caused by diverting money from other critical city needs, and would be subject to review each fiscal year.
2. Fund projects through **debt exclusion overrides or allocate money from a general override.** The general override has the same drawbacks as funding from the current operating budget.²⁴ Debt exclusion overrides represent money that is allocated to a specific project, e.g., new building, road improvement,

²⁴ It should be noted that general overrides can specify how money is to be spent only in the fiscal year which it is approved. After that first year, the money reverts to the General Fund.

etc., and do not constitute a permanent increase to the city's tax base.²⁵ Since either method represents an increase in property taxes, they would be tax-deductible by residents.

3. The City can **borrow and incur additional debt** within the parameters of the City's bond rating and debt capacity.
4. **Enterprise Funds.** These are funds collected through user fees based on sewage and water usage. These funds are used to pay the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) for such usage. Excess funds may be collected and then used to fund capital improvement projects. These fees do not represent a tax, and are therefore not tax-deductible by residents. Funding of projects through the Enterprise Funds is not subject to an override, but requires approval by the Board of Aldermen.
5. **State sources.** The City has historically relied on money from the state to fund a variety of projects. Road improvements have been funded exclusively through **Chapter 90** money. Historically, these have been an inadequate source of revenue to fund the required improvements in a timely manner. The Lincoln and Roosevelt schools were funded largely through the Commonwealth's school construction program, and any new schools including the Middle School will be similarly funded. The MWRA also has helped finance various water and sewage projects.

As a result of the fiscal crisis of the past few years, cities and towns are struggling with funding cutbacks and the highly uncertain future of funding sources from the Commonwealth. For example, in 2003 MWRA reduced by 10% the subsidy on water rates that it had traditionally provided to cities and towns. Accordingly, Melrose raised water rates to make up for the shortfall but there was no improvement in services that accompanied the rate increase. In addition, the MWRA is in the process of considering a sunset clause for its Sewer Rehabilitation Loan Program. This proposal would take away any grant or interest free loan money not used by 2005. The City currently has over \$1,000,000 in grants and interest free loans on the books with MWRA which would be lost. This process of reduced funding and the elimination of grants and loans may stabilize as the Commonwealth's financial picture improves, but it is not likely to reverse in the near future. New funding sources from the Commonwealth are certainly not something that the city can rely upon for projects that need to be funded currently.

Water

The objective of Melrose's water distribution system is to distribute water effectively throughout the city for residential and commercial use, and to provide water for fire emergencies. To meet these objectives, three issues must be addressed:

1. Ensure that water pressure is adequate for residential and commercial use as well as fire protection.
2. Ensure that the quality of water is satisfactory for drinking.
3. Minimize the cost of water delivery under the parameters of Objectives 1 and 2.

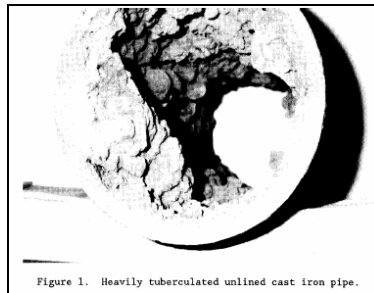
The City obtains water from the MWRA. Water is distributed via natural (gravitational) flow through most of the city. The exception is at high elevation areas in which the water is distributed through two pumping stations. These are in the northwest (Botolph Street and surrounding areas) and southeast corners (Park Street and surrounding areas) of the City. The high-pressure service systems are small, representing only about 10 percent of total system demand. Both pumping stations were replaced by new facilities in the summer of 2003.

There are about **75 miles of water pipes** in the Melrose water distribution system ranging in size from 2-to 16-inches in diameter, which is the responsibility of the City to maintain. Pipe materials consist of cement lined

²⁵ This means the monies coming from a debt exclusion cannot be increased by 2-1/2 % each year.

ductile iron (DIP), unlined and cement lined cast iron, copper, some transite (asbestos cement) pipe, and copper pipe for two inch diameter piping. There are also many lead joint appurtenances associated with the older asbestos and cast iron pipe. Most water pipes installed after approximately 1975 (representing 28 percent of all pipes in the city) are cement-lined ductile iron pipes, which is the current industry standard. The remaining piping network is generally comprised of unlined cast iron, with some copper and transite (asbestos cement) pipes.

Figure 42: Heavily-Tuberculated Pipe



Source: Army Center of Public Works, PWTB 420-46-1

Any transite piping needs to be replaced due to the asbestos. Lead appurtenances when found to exist within the water system need to be replaced. Cast iron pipe is brittle and if disturbed by any construction or through the freeze/thaw cycle is likely to break and leak. Unlined cast iron pipe, besides being brittle, undergoes significant tuberculation or "clogging" which reduces the inside diameter of the pipe significantly and can completely block the pipe. Tuberculation is caused by the reaction of the water on the unlined cast iron. Cement lining the inside of the pipe eliminates this natural process from starting. Unlined cast iron pipe is a significant cause of water line breaks and negatively impacts water quality.

The majority of the piping on private property was constructed before 1965 and is considered not to meet current industry standards. Pipes on private property are the responsibility of the property owners. Lead piping has public safety implications. Therefore, the MWRA, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) require periodic water sampling and testing to assure water quality parameters are met and maintained in lead serviced households. An aggressive lead service replacement program has been undertaken by the City. The City, through yearly budgeted funds, replaces the city owned portion of lead services from the water pipe to the property line. When this is done, private owners could opt to have their lead piping replaced. Some households, however, have not taken advantage of this opportunity to replace their lead services. There currently are no specific programs or funding sources to minimize the financial impacts to homeowners for changing privately owned portions of the water service.

The unlined steel pipes commonly found on private property are subject to the same tuberculation problems as the unlined clay mains. Tuberculation often has extremely deleterious effects on water service, including the reduction of volume, pressure, flow, and water quality to the private property. It is imperative that residents upgrade their services to copper whenever possible and certainly when the water main in their street is upgraded.

In addition to the pipes, the City maintains approximately 650 hydrants, about 1,400 gate valves in the distribution system, and most of the approximately 8,500 water meters in Melrose are maintained by the City.

In 2002, the amount of unbilled water (the difference between what Melrose purchased from the MWRA and the amount that Melrose billed its customers) was estimated at approximately 340 million gallons or roughly 32% of the water purchased, with about 60% of that unaccounted for, placing Melrose in the bottom 1/3rd of the MWRA communities. The unbilled and unaccounted for water use in the City was drastically reduced during 2003. By

the end of 2003, only 15% of the water consumed by the City was unbilled and 6% of the unbilled water was unaccounted for.²⁶ Additionally, the overall consumption of water purchased from MWRA was reduced by 180,300,000 gallons of water, which is an 18% reduction and a savings of roughly \$700,000. The significant reduction in water consumption and the percentage of unbilled and unaccounted water use occurred because of proactive efforts made by the Public Works Water Division. Many annual maintenance procedures, such as evaluating water meters for malfunctions and inspecting fire hydrants for leaks, had been neglected for several years. Thus, reinstating these maintenance procedures in 2003 created significant savings.

In addition to the reinstated maintenance procedures, an effort to replace old leaking water pipes also played a significant role in reducing the City's water consumption. In 2003, the City applied for interest free loans through the MWRA Local Pipeline Assistance Program for the amount of \$658,000 per year over a ten-year period. Each of these \$658,000 loans is paid back in ten annual installments of \$65,800, starting the first year after the loan is received. These loans will be paid off through the Water Enterprise Fund. These funds can only be used to upgrade existing water infrastructure and cannot be used for any new system components. The city has recently taken advantage of the first 3 years of this program by borrowing \$1,974,000 to upgrade the water distribution system in the North and South High Service Areas. These funds were used in conjunction with a \$2,226,000 City bond and some FY 2003 & FY 2004 budget money which funded the construction of the two new pump stations, the new booster pumps, and new transmission piping which the MWRA funds could not be used for.

The Public Works Water Division will continue the maintenance program annually and will seek funding to continue to replace old pipes on a regular basis. Spending money now to improve the City's infrastructure saves the City money in the long run. This recent effort of the Public Works Water Division has led to large savings for the City and will continue to save the City money in the future.

In a report from 2000 on the city's water distribution system, Camp Dresser and McKee Inc. (CDM) performed a complete review of the system, and made recommendations for required improvements. These improvements were rated based on safety issues first and water quality issues second. CDM estimated the total cost of the five recommended phases at \$28,000,000; however, due to changes in current industry standards and inflation the total cost of the five phases has significantly increased. The Department of Public Works now estimates the total cost of the project at \$48,800,000 and the five phases of work include:

1. Phase I - Booster Pump Facility Improvements, \$900,000
2. Phase II - ISO Fire Protection Rating System - Fire Flow Improvements, \$4,100,000
3. Phase III - Local Area Fire Protection Deficiencies - Piping & Looping Improvements , \$8,300,000
4. Phase IV- Transmission Piping Improvements, \$5,500,000
5. Phase V - Water Quality & Structural Integrity - System-Wide Piping Improvements, \$30,000,000

The City of Melrose Public Works Departmental has indicated that system-wide piping improvements will be implemented based on an annual assessment of fire protection needs, flow and pressure issues, water quality issues, and leak/break history. Recommendations in the CDM report are currently the top priority for capital improvements in the water distribution system. Priorities will, of course, have to be updated periodically as capital improvements are made and new issues arise.

The City has started to implement these recommendations. In particular, as stated above, the City has recently completed \$4.2 million dollars of water piping improvements including the construction of the two new pump stations. The actual cost to replace the pumping facilities in 2003 was \$4.2 million instead of the \$3.2 million estimated by CDM (\$700,000 for the pumping stations and approximately \$2.5 million for piping rehabilitation), an increase of approximately 35%. In addition, the cleaning and lining of pipe less than 8" in diameter as

²⁶ The 15% of unbilled water is even more than a 50% reduction because the total amount of water consumed in the City was reduced significantly.

recommended by CDM, has proven to be an unreliable method of upgrading. Six inch cast iron pipes scheduled in the report to be cleaned and lined will need to be replaced with 8" DIP at an additional cost. **This example illustrates that revised cost estimates will be required as capital improvement projects are scheduled for implementation.**

Wastewater

The purpose of the wastewater system is to remove sewage water coming from residential and commercial properties. The MWRA treats Melrose sewage and charges the City by metering the volume of sewage entering and leaving Melrose. The City then charges property owners based on water use. There are roughly **78 miles of sewage disposal pipes in the city, approximately 2,060 sewer manholes and 3 sewer pump stations. The current standard pipe for sewage removal is polyvinyl chloride pipe (PVC). Most of Melrose's sewage pipes are made of clay. Clay pipe is extremely fragile and easily damaged** by roots or broken from traffic or other loads or any excavation adjacent to the existing pipe. In addition, the damage to the pipes caused by tree roots and other natural causes opens the joints of the pipe. These open joints and fractured pipes allow seepage of sewage into the ground, and allow rainwater to infiltrate into the system at various locations.

The **groundwater infiltration during peak rainstorms has resulted in significant sewage backups and overflows** onto city streets, as well as raw sewage backup into private properties, buildings and homes. These issues are **made worse by illegal sump pump hookups** into the sewer system. The illegal sump pump hookups are partially a result of the property owners being unaware of the cost to the city of rainwater being disposed through the sewage system. For example, many property owners are not aware that it is illegal to drain flood water from their sump pumps into their sink where it ends up entering the sewage system. Rather, pumps should drain into the street to drainage catch basins. This issue could be resolved through a public education program. City personnel estimate that a significant amount of rainwater improperly infiltrates the sewer system, and this in turn result in another substantial cost to the city, as the city pays a significant cost to the MWRA for sewage removal, which currently includes the volume from infiltration and inflow.

Over the last ten years, Weston and Sampson Engineers, Inc. (W&SE) has performed several reviews of the city's sewer system, and has made numerous recommendations to improve the system. Such improvements are aimed at reducing the amount of non-sewage infiltration and inflow (I/I) into the system and eliminating the sewage overflows into streets and private homes. Based on their studies, W&SE proposed 4 phases of major improvements to the system:

1. Phase I- City Wide Inflow/Infiltration Sewer Rehabilitation, estimated cost \$1,000,000

This rehabilitation project consisting of chemical grouting of sewers, manhole sealing techniques, and excavating and replacing sewers would save the City \$3,038,230 per year.

2. Phase II- Inflow/Infiltration Rehabilitation in Sewers Tributary to the Upham Street Pump Station, estimated cost \$450,000

The result of the efforts involved in Phase II may eliminate the need to upgrade the Upham Street Pump Station and only require the construction of the new force main which would save the City millions of dollars.

3. Phase III-Upham Street Pump Station and Force Main, estimated cost \$5,000,000

The efforts of Phase III would result in the reduction in overflows at Melrose Towers, Ell Pond Watershed, and the Upham Street Pump Station site, the elimination of force main breaks and sewage spills due to the old force main, the provision of station reliability during power outages, the increase in operator safety, the reduction in operation and maintenance costs, and the compliance with present electrical code.

4. Phase IV- Inflow/Infiltration Rehabilitation, estimated cost \$800,000

The project will reduce extraneous Inflow and Infiltration in the City's sewer system in the areas of the City with the most sewer system defects, thereby increasing system capacity and reducing system overflows, which in turn will lead to a reduction in system operation and maintenance costs and in future increases in MWRA sewer charges to the City.

Again, these costs will have to be adjusted periodically until the construction actually occurs. Similar to capital improvements related to the city's water distribution system, priorities will have to be updated as capital improvements are made and new issues arise.

Storm Water Management

Rainwater disposal occurs through a different system than the sewage disposal, and there is no charge for rainwater disposal. Rainwater is collected throughout the city via over **1,500 catch basins**. Regular cleaning of the catch basins avoids blockage of the piping system which in turn helps to prevent flooding of streets, private properties, and basements caused when the flow of water into the catch basins is impeded. The EPA has mandated through the National Pollution Elimination Discharge System (NPDES) that all catch basins be cleaned at least once a year. Due to the lack of funding, this has not been taking place on a regular basis. Rather, Public Works staff focus primarily on troubleshooting various problem areas that require immediate attention. There is a significant cost associated with the cleaning of basins since the cleanup must be monitored for hazardous materials. The catch basins were cleaned in 2003; however, before this past cleaning, the basins had not been cleaned in seven years.

Ell Pond is a major receptor for storm water. There are three main tributary inflows into Ell Pond, and one outflow that is located under Main Street and adjacent buildings. The outflow system leads to a culvert which eventually flows into the Mystic River. Closing of the Amelia Earhart Dam located at the mouth of the Mystic River can cause a backup in Melrose's storm water outflow system which exacerbates flooding in neighborhoods around the culvert and Ell Pond.

In addition to flooding concerns, a recent study of inflows into Ell Pond undertaken by the Ell Pond Improvement Council, Inc., suggests that sewage waste might be commingling with rainwater and subsequently discharging into Ell Pond. According to the study, during wet weather conditions in the spring and summer, the Pond's levels of bacteria do not meet the State's guidelines for safe boating and fishing.²⁷ The study pinpointed the Tremont Street storm drain as discharging the highest level of bacteria. The City should address the source of the commingling.

The City recently received grant funding to develop a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. Flooding, which is the City's most commonly felt natural hazard, is a focus of the plan. The Plan identifies the areas of the City that are prone to flooding, what the City can do to mitigate this flooding and provides a response plan for the City to implement when flooding occurs.²⁸ The Plan documents that in order to mitigate the City's flooding problems the City must regularly clean the catch basins, protect local wetlands, and monitor new development to ensure that adequate drainage systems are installed. Increasing communication with the operators of the Amelia Earhart dam to understand when the dam will be closed will allow the City to be better prepared for the ensuing effects during flood events. The City needs to obtain certification from State and Federal agencies to remain eligible to receive grants to address these issues.

²⁷ At no point during the year does Ell Pond's bacterial level drop low enough to make swimming in the Pond safe.

²⁸ The Action Plan developed with the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan will be included in the City's existing Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

Roadways and Sidewalks

Melrose has approximately **90 miles of roadway** comprised of 349 roadway segments. In addition, the City is responsible for numerous public parking lots and municipal building sites. According to the Public Works Superintendent, thirty roadway segments have been rebuilt in the last ten years and **120 currently need to be rebuilt within the next 5 years** with 30 of these segments requiring work to be done in the next year. The average road life is 10 years before routine maintenance is required. Over the next 10 years more extensive maintenance is required with a maximum road life of 40 years. The City conducts a new inventory every two years, evaluating the roads for defect modes. Over the last decade, **State Chapter 90 funds have been the only source of funding utilized by the city for road improvements. In 2003 the City saw a decrease of 33% in these funds versus 2000 as a result of changes to federal and state formulas.**

According to the Public Works Superintendent, **the City's commitment to routine maintenance problems (i.e., patching, painting, and sealing roads) needs to be doubled.** Currently \$170,000 is allocated to maintenance while it should be at least \$300,000. This funding is used for outside contractors who conduct the work. Additional work is done by City employees and does not come out of \$170,000 budget. Since the mid-1980s public works employees have gone from approximately 104 to under 30, of which 10 are required for solid waste disposal and yard waste pickup. **Inadequate staffing** of the Public Works Department contributes to the City's infrastructure problems.

In the past, roadway and water projects for the same location have not always been coordinated to take place at the same time. Generally, this occurs because there are different funding sources for roadway projects and water or sewer projects and funds for all the necessary work may not be available at the same time. In some cases, this has resulted in situations where roadwork has had to be completed twice. Common sense dictates that steps should always be taken to ensure that work is coordinated on both water and roadway projects to avoid any redundancy and minimize costs.

The City has pursued funding through the Massachusetts Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the complete reconstruction of Main Street from the Melrose-Wakefield line down to Wyoming Street. Phase 1 of the project, valued at \$2.4 million runs from the Melrose-Wakefield line to Green Street at Hospital Square and is currently funded. Work on the project is expected to begin early fall 2004. The state legislature funds approximately ten TIP projects annually.

The sidewalk repair budget is approximately \$20,000 annually. It is acknowledged that this is not enough money on an annual basis. City personnel estimate that a minimum of \$100,000 should be allocated annually in order to maintain the sidewalks. There are currently about 51 miles of public sidewalk in the City. The City becomes aware of sidewalk damage primarily through notification from residents. They prioritize the repairs based on the "trip hazard" of the sidewalk, and liability issues. To save money, the city will frequently just pave over the damaged sidewalk with blacktop instead of replacing it completely with new concrete. Given budgetary constraints, this is a reasonable temporary solution. However, such paving will have a long-term negative aesthetic impact on the neighborhoods. As such, city officials should work to adequately fund the sidewalk repair budget in order to maintain concrete sidewalks. This is not an issue when either a complete roadway or sidewalk are being replaced since the City is legally required to replace the existing roadways and sidewalks with the same quality that existed before the replacement.

The City Charter provides a Betterment Program to improve/replace sidewalks in a neighborhood where the majority of the neighbors support the project. The Betterment Program entitles a qualifying neighborhood to 50% matching funds from the City to fund a neighborhood sidewalk replacement.

City Buildings

The City has a tremendous investment in its buildings. Many, such as City Hall, Memorial Hall and the Beebe Estate, are irreplaceable historic treasures. According to figures provided by the Assessor's office, **Melrose has 31 buildings conservatively valued at \$65,567,900.** Included among them are the schools, fire and police stations, city hall, and public works facilities. They range in value from \$18,538,600 for Melrose Middle and High Schools and \$1,527,000 for City Hall to \$390,000 for the police station and \$30,500 for a pumping station on the Lynn Fells Parkway.

Recent Building Projects

The incentive of state money with a city match resulted in several renovation projects between 1994 and 2003. Exceptions were the City Hall renovation (2000), which was funded entirely by the city, and the Milano Senior Center (1995), which used no city funds but relied on state grant money and private donations. Renovations to Memorial Hall (2001), Beebe Estate (1999) and Lincoln School (2000) and the construction of the new Roosevelt School (2002) were accomplished using a combination of city money and state grants. The 1994 renovation to the library was accomplished with a combination of private donations, a state grant, and city money. The replacement of the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, with construction scheduled for completion in 2007, will be funded with state grant funds and tax payer funds as a result of a successful debt-exclusion voted in November 2003.

Current Building Priorities

The city building arguably most in need of major renovations or replacement is the **Police Station** located on West Foster Street. The Police Station was never designed as a police facility, has serious structural faults, needs major repairs and is not handicapped accessible. The Police Department cannot optimize its efficiency while housed in such an ill-designed, deteriorated facility. In the mid 1990's the City funded a study, which recommended combining the police and fire headquarters, and evaluated possible sites for a new public safety facility.²⁹ The site identified in the study as the best site for a public safety facility is the "bowling alley" site, on Willow Street. However, this site has recently been sold to a developer who intends to build a large condominium building. With this site no longer available the City now needs to reconsider options. One of the other options identified in the Public Safety Facilities Study was the Armory located across from Pine Banks. The State is currently indicating that this building may be outdated for military use. The City should pursue the possibility of acquiring this building from the state.

Maintenance and Capital Improvements

Maintenance of city buildings has been under-funded for many years resulting in conditions, once easily remedied with timely maintenance, that have deteriorated to the point of requiring much more extensive and costly repairs. An example of this practice can be seen in the FY2004 school maintenance budget that allocates \$5,000 per elementary school and \$10,000 each for the middle and high schools. According to the School Maintenance Supervisor, these figures are one-tenth of what they should be to properly maintain the buildings. In many cases, city buildings, unless renovated with state or foundation grants, suffer the same fate as much of the city's infrastructure due to limited resources.

Maintenance of city buildings falls under the Public Works Department and school buildings under the Schools Department. However, in practice, maintenance and repairs up to \$25,000 have been budgeted in individual, departmental line item budgets. Since 1994, expenditures over \$25,000 have largely been handled through the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).³⁰

²⁹ Public Safety Facilities Study, Melrose, MA, prepared by Donham & Sweeny, Inc., December 1996

³⁰ Capital needs for water and sewer projects are not included in the CIP Program because they are funded through the Sewer and Water Enterprise Fund.

The Capital Improvement Program funds major, non-recurring expenditures that typically cost \$25,000 or more and have a useful life of five or more years. **Between fiscal years 1994 and 2001, over 67 CIP projects were funded at a cost of \$29 million.**³¹ Projects ranged from the construction of two elementary schools – the Lincoln and Roosevelt schools, to funding of municipal software, a new roof at Memorial Hall, and sidewalk improvements. In fiscal year 2002, with the slow economy already affecting the city budget, CIP funded just four projects for a total of \$196,000. **Since fiscal year 2002, CIP has not been funded due to limited resources.**

The current mechanism for funding maintenance and capital improvements of the city's buildings is inadequate. Department budgets are frequently tight, and ongoing maintenance is a lower priority when pitted against the need to provide services to the city's residents. Deferred maintenance can and ultimately will lead to much more expensive solutions, such as the replacement of buildings.

The Capital Improvement Program has the potential to be a more effective approach for funding capital needs, but it needs to be implemented annually and funded on a consistent basis. **Failure to adequately fund the program on an annual basis will lead to more costly solutions in later years.** It may also be appropriate to review the guidelines for the CIP program now that it has been in place for ten years. For example, the \$25,000 threshold may need to be adjusted.



Photo Source: Melrose Public School web site

School Buildings

The City of Melrose operates eight public schools. The schools include an Early Childhood Center at the Ripley School³², five elementary schools—Hoover, Winthrop, Horace Mann, Lincoln, and Roosevelt—a middle school, and a high school.

In addition to the eight currently used school facilities, the School Department also operates the Franklin School and the Beebe School. The Franklin and Beebe Schools are former elementary schools. The Franklin School was taken off line as an elementary school in the 1980s in response to declining enrollment. The Beebe School was taken offline in 2003 in response to a significant deficit in the School Department budget and the belief that students could be accommodated in the five remaining elementary school buildings. The Franklin School was instrumental as swing space to house students during the Lincoln and Roosevelt construction projects. Both the Beebe and the Franklin are currently leased to other educational programs and will be available to provide swing space for middle school students during the construction of the new middle school, scheduled for June 2005 through June 2007.

³¹ It should be noted that roughly \$22 million of the \$29 million was allocated to the Lincoln and Roosevelt Elementary School Projects.

³² The Early Childhood Center houses pre-school and pre-kindergarten programs and Title 1. The pre-school (3 year olds) and pre-kindergarten (4 year olds) programs are funded by tuitions. Title 1 is supported by the Federal Assistance Program.

Over the years the School Department has reconfigured school facilities and closed building based on enrollment needs. In the 70s and 80s the school department closed the Coolidge and Washington Schools and turned ownership of them to the City. The City in turn sold both, and they have been converted to residential facilities. In the 80s the Franklin Schools was closed but ownership was retained by the School Department for future needs. The Ripley was converted from an elementary school to an Early Childhood Center in September 2001 and the Beebe closed in September 2003, as noted above. The decision to maintain ownership of these schools allows the district flexibility for unforeseen needs. **For this reason, it is recommended that the ownership of the existing school facilities remain with the School Department.**

Current School Building Needs

The **Melrose School Facilities Master Plan**, prepared by HMFH Architects, Inc., identified significant reconstruction or renovation needs in the elementary school facilities and was adopted by the Melrose School Committee on September 29, 1997. The plan was updated in March 2000 to include the needs of the Middle School and High School complex.

As Table 33 indicates, the elementary school buildings, with the exception of the Lincoln and Roosevelt schools, are relatively old. Since the passage of Proposition 2 ½, funding for maintenance has been severely limited and the buildings reflect this neglect. Although clean and welcoming they all exhibit deferred maintenance and none contain adequate space for specialized activities such as computer labs, libraries, and designated art and music rooms. The School Facilities Master Plan specifically identifies the Winthrop School as the next priority to address over crowding.³³ A renovation and addition to the Winthrop School is needed to provide ancillary spaces including a gymnasium, library media center, computer lab, and music and art rooms. With the exception of the Ripley School, the remaining elementary schools require minor renovations.

Table 33: Elementary Schools Master Plan Renovations and Priority List

School	Year Built	Proposed Action	Existing Area (sf)	Proposed Area (sf)
Lincoln	New 2000	New facility		65,899
Roosevelt	New 2002	New facility		68,700
Winthrop	1926 with 1956 addition	Renovation and Addition	38,320	50,000
Horace Mann	1949 with 1956 addition	Minor Renovation	28,040	28,040
Beebe	1956 with 1963 addition	Minor Renovation	30,560	30,560
Hoover	1966	Minor Renovation	30,700	30,700
Ripley	1924 with additions in 1930 and 1965 after a fire	No Renovations Proposed	16,680	16,680

Source: Melrose School Facilities Master Plan Update and Amendment, March 2000

The Middle School became the priority of the updated Facilities Master Plan. Except for a handicapped ramp constructed in 1987 and the renovation of the Barry Auditorium completed in 1999, the Middle School has

³³ Enrollment in the elementary schools will be fluid in the coming years due to changes in redistricting policy recently adopted by the School Department.

had no significant renovations since it was built in 1933. Although solidly built in an attractive art deco design, the Middle School has deteriorated significantly over the years. Due to severe flooding in the current Middle School, the decision was made to build a new building, instead of renovating the old building. Due to the lack of open space for a new Middle School, the new building will be built on the current site. The advantages of the current site are its central location in the City and the many resources that are shared with the High School. Melrose High School uses the Daffinee Gym, the Barry Auditorium, and the music facilities within the Barry Auditorium. Both schools also share the parking lots.

In November of 2003, a **debt exclusion override was approved to build the a new Middle School**. As with the building of the Lincoln and Roosevelt Schools, the Middle School project is eligible for state funding under the **School Building Assistance (SBA) program**. The project has received approval from the SBA program, and **Melrose will be reimbursed for up to 60% of eligible project costs**.

The High School was built in 1975 and is structurally sound. It was, however, built in an **open classroom design that is not fully consistent with today's educational approaches**. Two large open spaces have been broken up with temporary partitions, making for inadequate classroom space. Renovations to the High School open space areas are included in the design plans for the Middle School.

In June 2003, the School Department prepared a Capital Improvement Plan for all school buildings. This plan delineated the costs for exterior and interior improvements needed on the school buildings. As described in Table 34, most of the costs are associated with improvements to the elementary schools that have not recently had major repairs or renovations, and the High School. It is recommended that the capital improvement plan be updated and funded annually.

Table 34: School Facilities Capital Improvement Plan

School	Costs Exterior Improvements	Costs Interior Improvements	Total
Beebe	\$437,600	\$135,060	\$571,660
Franklin	\$503,900	\$126,000	\$629,900
Hoover	\$422,215	\$137,100	\$559,315
Horace Mann	\$370,800	\$430,900	\$801,700
Lincoln	\$13,200	\$14,700	\$27,900
Ripley	\$21,600	\$34,100	\$55,700
Roosevelt	\$25,000	\$15,150	\$40,150
Winthrop	\$49,800	\$370,800	\$420,600
Melrose High	\$735,820	\$1,599,900	\$2,335,720
Total			\$5,442,645

Source: School Department, June 2003

Funding Issues

Melrose educational funding is comprised primarily of Chapter 70 funds from the state (30%) and residential real estate tax revenue (70%). A heavy reliance on state funding, during this time of state budget constraints and cuts, has had a significant negative impact on Melrose's school budget. The operational budget funds staff, nominal textbooks and supplies and nominal facility maintenance. Approximately 88% of the budget is allocated for salaries with the balance for day-to-day operating expenses. There is no allowance for major maintenance needs or capital improvements. As articulated throughout this Master Plan, regular maintenance of City facilities

increases the longevity and usefulness of the facilities and thus extends the time period for replacements or renovations. In other words, neglecting maintenance needs to save money now leads to greater costs in the future.

In the last few years the schools have benefited from the city's capital improvement funds for some improvements and new building needs. These funds are allocated city wide, with no guarantee of funds for school buildings. Additionally, for the past three years, prior to the FY 2003 budget, the schools were given supplemental funds from the city's free cash. Reliance on this method to fund operating expenses is not recommended.

Goals, Objectives and Action Items for Public Facilities and Infrastructure

GOAL PF-1: PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

Objective A: Develop and implement a Capital Improvement Program for Sewer and Water Projects.

- Prioritize projects based on studies and current conditions in each area and develop schedule for completion.
- Consistently set water and sewer rates at a level that allows for funds to accrue in the Enterprise Fund Account that can be specifically used for capital projects and to leverage state grants and low/zero interest loans.
- Continue to pursue grants, such as MWRA grants, to cover partial costs of capital projects.
- Seek certification to remain eligible for state and federal grant funding.

Objective B: Reinstate the existing Capital Improvement Program for all non-sewer and water projects including school facilities.

- Implement and fund the CIP Program annually.
- Review and update the guidelines for the CIP program.
- Determine appropriate funding sources, including grants, state funds, supplemental budget funds, bonds, and debt-exclusions, and establish funding levels annually.

Objective C: Pursue Funding for Critical Building Project.

- Continue repair and upgrades to aging school facilities.
- Update the Public Safety Facilities Study to include an analysis of the ideal type of complex needed, the best location for such complex, and how it will be funded.
- Pursue acquisition of the Armory site from the state for potential uses such as a new Public Safety Facility.
- Continue to pursue grants, such as preservation grants and community development grants, to fund building projects.
- Support continued use of SBAB funding for school building renovations.

Objective D: Provide sufficient funding for road repairs.

- Diversify the source of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state funds.

Objective E: Fund sidewalk repair.

- Establish an inventory and priority list of needed sidewalk repairs.
- Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually and ensure sufficient funds to repair sidewalks with concrete and/or unit pavers instead of blacktop.
- Create a sidewalk fund to receive contributions from developers.
- Promote education of the Betterment Program.

Objective F: Reduce unnecessary water and sewer costs.

- Continue aggressive monitoring and corrective actions to decrease unaccounted water and sewer.

GOAL PF-2: IMPLEMENT A PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAM TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

Objective A: Eliminate illegal sump pump hookups.

- Educate public on consequences of illegal sump pump hookups.
- Determine if there are enforcement procedures that can be implemented. If such procedures do not currently exist, determine if new laws can be passed and enforced.

Objective B: Gather public support for funding infrastructure projects.

- Educate the public on the need for ongoing maintenance of the city's infrastructure.
- Educate the public about the different approaches to funding infrastructure improvements.
- Educate the public about the poor condition of the public safety facilities and the need for ongoing upgrades of the school buildings.
- Educate the public about their responsibility to maintain the water and sewer pipes on their property.

GOAL PF-3: IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Objective A: Explore the possibility of establishing a water and Sewer Commission.

- Appoint a committee to explore the possibility of establishing a Water and Sewer Commission to review and recommend capital improvement projects, determine best sources of funding, and to set water and sewer rates.

Objective B: Maintain adequate staffing to monitor and address infrastructure issues.

- Assess staffing levels in the Public Works Department and determine if additional personnel are required and how personnel should be distributed.

Objective C: Encourage regional planning and information sharing to address mutual infrastructure concerns.

- Establish a formal vehicle for the Public Works Superintendent to communicate with counterparts in bordering communities.

NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE & RECREATION



Introduction

A systemic challenge for the City of Melrose as described throughout this Master Plan is to balance the needs of the community while ensuring that the unique character of the City is not lost. **A major component of Melrose's character is the open space which is interspersed throughout the city and forms a "greenbelt" that runs along most of the City's borders.** The "greenbelt" consists of the major parks and conservation lands surrounding the city on three sides, including the Middlesex Fells Reservation, Pine Banks Park, Mt. Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, the Bellevue Country Club, and the conservation areas around and including Towners and Swains Ponds.

Open space provides environmental and recreational benefits to the City, which in turn contribute to the high quality of life found in Melrose. The environmental benefits provided by open space include water absorption and water filtering, flood control, removal of carbon dioxide and other pollutants from the urban environment, habitat and food for wildlife, and shade that mitigates the urban heat index. By providing opportunities for outdoor activity for all age groups in Melrose, open space promotes healthy life styles. Outdoor opportunities include both active recreation, such as structured sports, running, biking, and hiking as well as passive activities, such as bird watching, picnicking, and strolling. Open space parcels that are environmentally diverse, such as Flagg Acres on Melrose's southeast corner, also provide opportunities for environmental education. Lastly, open space has the aesthetic function of buffering the urban landscape.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Summary

In 2000, the City developed an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) that fulfills eligibility requirements for a variety of State grant programs. It includes a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the City's natural resources, open spaces, and recreation facilities. Master Plan readers are referred to the OSRP for detailed information regarding open space in Melrose.³⁴ A brief summary of the OSRP is included in this Plan.

Open space and recreation areas account for roughly 25% of the land in Melrose and represent approximately 890 acres of land, owned by both public and private entities. The City of Melrose owns the largest amount of land, equaling roughly 631.3 acres. The largest open space area owned by the City is the 235-acre Mt. Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, which contains an 18-hole golf course, hiking trails, and picnic areas. Melrose and Malden share ownership of Pine Banks Park, a park spreading roughly 107 acres, which includes 6 baseball fields, a new synthetic turf rugby field, walking and bicycling trails, and a tot lot. A Board of Trustees manages the park, which lies on the border of the two cities.

³⁴ Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2000. The Plan is available in the Office of Planning and Community Development and the Melrose Public Library.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns 158 acres of open space in the City, including a 140-acre portion of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, which lies within Melrose's boundaries. The largest privately owned open space area is the Bellevue Golf Course on 54-acres. Most of the privately owned land and some of the city and state owned land is not protected from development, while the majority of state and city owned land is protected with deeds that restrict development. Table 35 shows the division of open space categorized by owner and protection status.

Table 35: Open Space Categorized by Owner and Protection Status

PROTECTED PARCELS	Total Acreage
City of Melrose Total	529.6
Parks	381.2
Cemetery	49.0
Conservation Commission	99.4
Commonwealth/MDC	157.0
Private (cemetery)	6.2
Total Protected	692.8
UNPROTECTED PARCELS	
City of Melrose (Schools)	101.7
Commonwealth/MDC	1.0
Private Recreation	54.0
Other Private	41.2
Total Unprotected	197.9

Source: 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Melrose Conservation Commission, the Park and Recreation Department, various city and state agencies and citizen groups actively work to protect the open space in Melrose to ensure that the environmental benefits and active and passive recreational opportunities available to the City are protected and when possible, enhanced. The roles and responsibilities of these groups are described below.

Park and Recreation Department

The Park and Recreation Department is made up of 3 city staff who organize recreational activities, maintain recreational facilities, and manage private contractors who maintain some of the city-owned land. A Park Commission made up of five community members oversees the activities of the Park and Recreation Department. The Park and Recreation Department manages 23 neighborhood playgrounds and parks on 72.24 acres of land and 18 tot lots which are distributed fairly evenly throughout the city

According to the Park and Recreation Department, while neighborhood parks and tot lots seem to meet the needs of community members, the demand for playing fields is significantly greater than the supply. The City needs to analyze the demand for playing fields and devise a plan to address this shortage.

Another priority identified by the Park and Recreation Department is to diversify the recreational opportunities at Mt. Hood. A landscape architect recently studied the Park and delineated an extensive trail system that could be created to link with the existing network of trails on city conservation land. If these trails in Mt. Hood were established and maintained, a broader segment of the community could partake in the

benefits that this resource provides. Enhancements to Mt. Hood should include an effort to renovate and maintain the picnic areas as well.

The Park and Recreation Department also identified the need to create additional recreational opportunities for youth. Currently, efforts are being made to create a youth center, to provide a safe, adult-supervised space for youth to congregate. Youth advocates in the community also have been advocating for a skateboard park for many years, to provide a dedicated place for the large number of adolescents who have an interest in this activity.

Existing park and recreational facilities require continual funding for maintenance and improvements to ensure their longevity and usefulness. The low staffing levels of the Park and Recreation Department and the elimination of the Park Director position, which occurred recently due to budget shortfalls, limit the work that the Department can accomplish. The City needs to evaluate the staffing level and structure of the Department to make sure maintenance occurs regularly and enhancements to park facilities occur as needed.

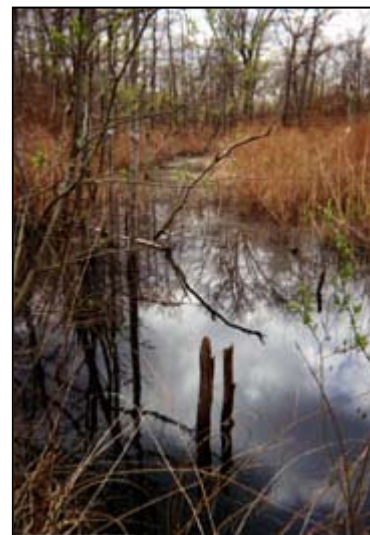
Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is governed by a board of seven volunteer community members who are charged with protecting the community's natural resources. One of the primary mandates of the Conservation Commission is to protect wetland resources by enforcing the Wetlands Protection Act. Because wetlands provide functions that are particularly important, they are afforded a greater level of protection than other types of natural resources. In carrying out their duties the Commission reviews and conditions any project that falls within 100 feet of a wetland or floodplain.

As less and less land is available in the city, developers seek to build on land which is not inherently suitable for development, such as on or near wetlands, greatly sloped land, and extremely rocky terrain. Developing on such land can cause environmental damage and should be strictly regulated. The Conservation Commission has identified the need to create a **local wetlands protection bylaw** to strengthen the Commission's ability to protect the functions and values of wetland resources. Additionally, as recommended in the Land Use chapter, Melrose should create a **slope/hillside protection ordinance** to regulate development in areas with steep slopes.

The Conservation Commission is also responsible for maintaining 99.4 acres of undeveloped conservation land, including ponds, wetlands and uplands. These areas provide opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education. In addition to protecting the acres of designated conservation land, the Conservation Commission looks for opportunities to acquire additional environmentally sensitive land. For example, the Commission worked recently with officials in City Hall to place 27,000 square feet of City owned land into conservation. In addition, the Conservation Commission is in the process of obtaining two lots of land donated by a Melrose resident. Efforts to facilitate these types of land transfers to enhance the Conservation Commission's land holdings should be encouraged, especially in environmentally sensitive areas.

The Conservation Commission is responsible for the maintenance of a series of trails running through the City's conservation land. The Conservation Commissioners along with the help of community groups, such as the boy scouts, have volunteered their time to do light maintenance of the trails. A small budget is



available to hire a contractor or solicit the help of the Department of Public Works when heavier work on the trails is required. Additionally, the Conservation Commission pays for the removal of trees from conservation land that fall or lean ominously onto private property. The following is a list the trails throughout Melrose that the Conservation Commission maintains:

- **Rocky View Trail (7.8 acres):** The trail begins about 150 feet south of the Hoover School and is marked by a large sign stating “Rocky View Trail.” The blue marked trail follows a southerly course down to Swains Pond (with connection to Knox Trail), up hills and through low shrubs. The end of the trail offers a panoramic view of the Boston skyline, harbor, and lowland Melrose.
- **Knox Memorial Trail:** The trail begins on Swains Pond Avenue just north of Swains Pond. The trail runs westerly along the perimeter of the pond then in a southerly direction to a large rock outcropping offering a terrific view of the pond and the surrounding natural setting. This trail branches off to the Rocky View Trail system.
- **Flagg Acres Trails (10 acres):** Established in 1977, Flagg Acres is a scenic wooded area with steep hills used as a passive recreation area for hiking, environmental study, and scenic observation. The highest elevation at 200 feet offers a panoramic view of lowland Melrose, Mt. Hood Tower, Lynn Harbor, and the Boston skyline. Flagg Acres consists of 3 trails: The red trail connects to the Seaview Trail System; the blue trail is a moderate to difficult trail leading to Mt. Hood, and the green trail follows the shoreline of Towners Pond.
- **Seaview Trails (2.5 acres):** The trail begins at the end of Water Street off Beech Avenue. The area is a sparsely wooded hilltop and is used for passive recreation and as a nature area.
- **Mt Hood Memorial Park (235 acres):** The Mt Hood Memorial Park is located on Stillman Road. The park is utilized year round as a multi-purpose recreation facility. Summer activities include golf, hiking, fishing, picnicking, and passive recreation. Winter activities include skating, sledding, cross country skiing, and snow-shoeing. The park is connected to the Conservation Commission’s Trail network.
- **Melrose and Black Rock Trails:** The trail begins at gate 49 on the East Fellsway Highway. This extensive trail system is part of the Middlesex Fells Reservation. The trails are level and at points provide look-out areas for viewing Melrose, Malden, and the Boston skyline.
- **High Rock Trail (5.0 acres):** The trail begins at West Hill Terrace and is marked with blue markers. The area is a sparsely wooded hilltop and is used for passive recreation and as a nature area. It has numerous exposed bedrock outcroppings and offers a view toward the Boston skyline and Melrose.
- **Ferdinand Wood Trails (4.3 acres):** The trail begins at the end of Ferdinand Street and has three trails entering the adjoining woods.

Melrose Tree Committee

The City of Melrose has a part time Tree Warden and a volunteer Tree Committee to oversee the planting and care of the city’s trees. The part time Tree Warden is a certified arborist, which ensures that the Tree Warden has expertise in the proper care and maintenance of trees. The Tree Committee, formed in 1995 and comprised of approximately 10 community members, meets regularly and supports the work of the Tree Warden.

Through the efforts of the Tree Committee and the Tree Warden, **Melrose has maintained the designation of “Tree City” for many years.** This designation, provided by the National Arbor Day Foundation, acknowledges the City’s commitment to planting and caring for the City’s trees.

The Tree Warden and Tree Committee actively pursue grant funds to support their efforts to plant new street trees, maintain existing trees and educate the public about the importance of street trees and proper tree maintenance. For the past several years, they have applied for and received funding for tree plantings from

the state through the Mass Relief program and have received funds for tree planting projects from the Mass Memorial Tree Fund, a funding partnership of the state and the Massachusetts Association of Funeral Directors. Just recently, the City received an Urban Forestry matching grant from the state to enhance the Melrose public library's collection of books relating to trees and tree-care projects.

Grant funds have supported special tree planting projects in recent years. For example, trees were planted recently at the entrance to the Cemetery. This project was funded through the Mass Memorial Tree Fund and replaced a previously paved area with trees. In addition to these tree-planting projects that are supported by grants, **the Public Works Department typically schedules tree plantings in coordination with all major street construction projects.** In recent years, such plantings have occurred on Russell, Dell, Grove, and Clifford Streets. The Public Works Department should continue to ensure that sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate tree plantings.

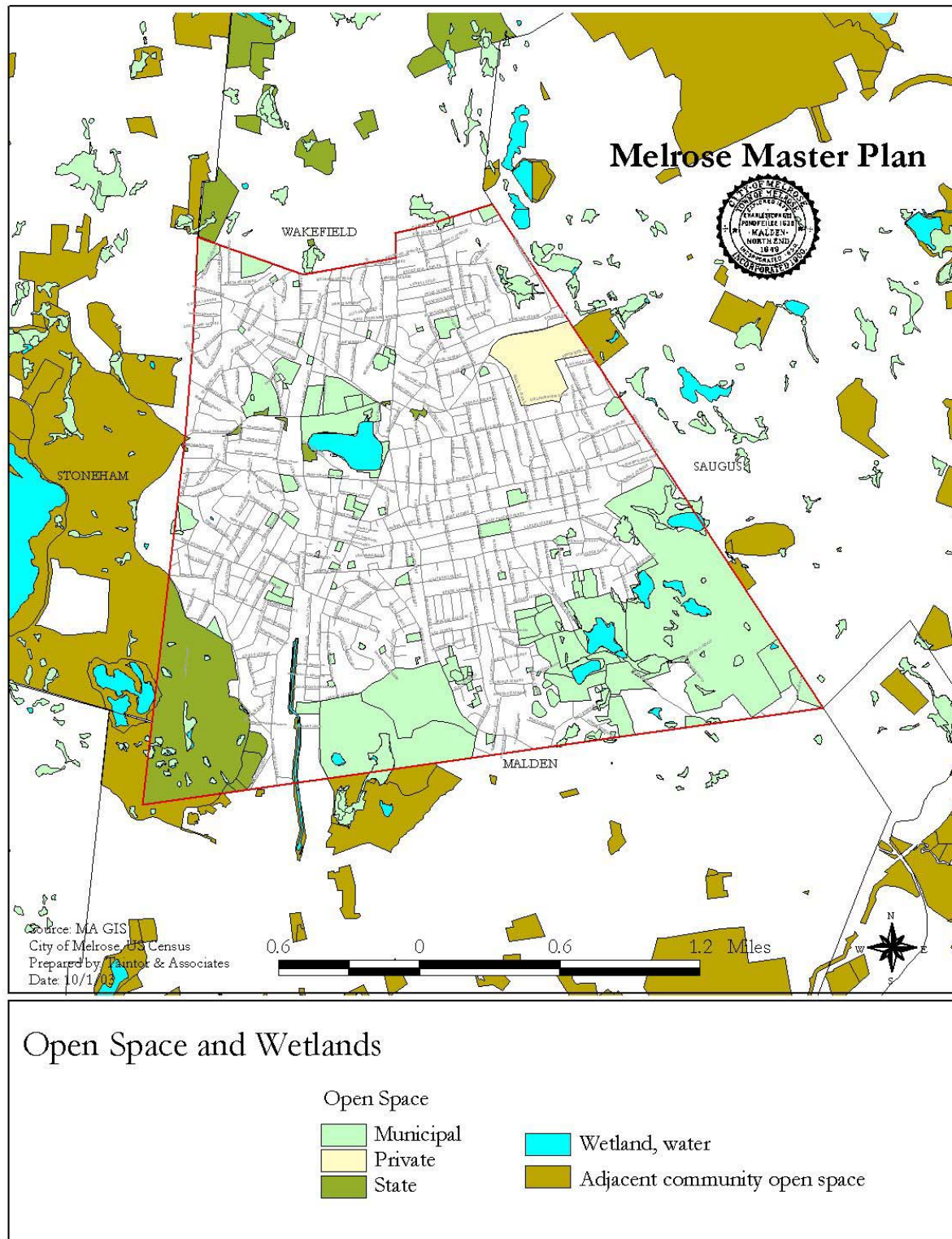
When trees die and the City is notified the City will arrange to cut them down. However, currently, the only maintenance of City trees is done by request. According to the Tree Warden, **a more pro-active maintenance program should be adopted.** Such a maintenance program would include a comprehensive stem-by-stem inventory of all of the City trees and the development of a maintenance schedule to address the needs of each of the trees. This program would require continued updates to the inventory as well as a commitment to funding on-going maintenance. This type of pro-active approach towards maintenance would increase the health and longevity of City trees.

While many of the Tree Committee and Tree Warden's efforts are accomplished through grant funds, the City funds the Tree Warden position out of the city budget. Funding for the position was reduced during the recent budget shortfall, which has significantly curtailed the work that the Tree Warden can accomplish. Restoring additional hours to this position should be a priority when budget funds become available.

Ell Pond Improvement Council

Another entity in the community that provides stewardship over critical open space areas is the non-profit Ell Pond Improvement Council (EPIC). EPIC is comprised of a core group of volunteers who actively pursue grants and other funding sources for the protection and enhancement of Ell Pond and the surrounding parklands. They have been steadfastly implementing elements of the Ell Pond Master Plan with a focus on improving the environmental quality of the resource, educating the public about Ell Pond's importance and enhancing opportunities for passive recreation (walking, bird watching, etc.) around the Pond. The City should continue to work collaboratively with EPIC to support their efforts.

Figure 43: Protected and Unprotected Open Space in Melrose



Goals, Objectives and Action Items for Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation

GOAL OSR-1: SATISFY THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION NEEDS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS

Objective A: Improve, repair and maintain existing park and playground facilities.

- Develop a plan for addressing the shortage of playing fields.
- Pursue funding for reconstructing the Athletic Field.
- Develop active recreational facilities for senior citizens, such as a bocce court or chess/checker boards at Gooch Park.
- Continue to improve the on-going maintenance program.
- Continue to support the Adopt-A-Site Program.
- Evaluate staffing needs of the Park and Recreation Department.

Objective B: Support continued enhancements at the Mt. Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course to provide a range of recreational activities for the community.

- Develop a system of walking trails through the Park.
- Establish a trailhead at Mt. Hood to connect the observation tower with the Flagg Acres trail system.
- Provide adequate maintenance for picnic areas and furnish tables and benches as needed.

Objective C: Implement a cohesive plan for improvements to Ell Pond and the surrounding parkland.

- Maintain walking paths along the shoreline.
- Address the major issues of the Main Street shoreline at Ell Pond, including the invasive growth of plants and trees and the associated damage to rip-rap and the need for the removal of the trash that collects along the shoreline, and extensive poison ivy.
- Pursue Historic Landscape grant for the Memorial Knoll.
- Clarify the ownership and management of Ell Pond and the surrounding park land.

Objective D: Provide recreational opportunities for youth in the after school hours.

- Support on-going effort to establish and maintain a youth center.
- Identify a site and develop a plan for funding a Skateboard Park.

GOAL OSR-2: PRESERVE OPEN SPACE, SCENIC AREAS AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE RESOURCES

Objective A: Protect open space and conservation lands.

- Establish a local wetlands protection bylaw.
- Provide a mechanism for funding maintenance of conservation lands including tax title lands.
- Update the Open Space Plan every five years.

Objective B: Develop an acquisition program for obtaining undeveloped parcels in Greenbelt areas.

- Prioritize sites and establish procedures for purchasing land in the event such sites become available.

Objective C: Establish a Maintenance Plan for City trees.

- Develop a comprehensive stem-by-stem inventory of City trees.
- Restore hours to the part-time Tree Warden position, when budget funds become available, to develop and implement a pro-active maintenance plan for City trees.

GOAL OSR-3: PROTECT AND PRESERVE WATER RESOURCES

Objective A: Improve water quality of Ell Pond, Swains Pond, Towner's Pond and the ponds at Mt. Hood Memorial Park.

- Assess water quality at the ponds.
- Develop measures to protect against eutrophication of Ell Pond, Swains Pond, Towner's Pond and the ponds at Mt. Hood.
- Manage problem with Canada Geese at Ell Pond.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



Introduction

In its 150 years of independent existence, the community of Melrose has established a legacy by building on its enviable natural environment, developing a viable local economic climate, and creating an atmosphere that has fostered exploration and expression in a range of the arts. Taken together, these factors have created a community with a range of recreational parks and woodlands, a vibrant commercial center, sound housing in attractive residential areas, and cultural organizations that reflect and speak to the spirit of the citizens. All of these have come about from the vision and commitment of Melrose's earlier leaders. As with most creations, they have from time to time required renewal and refreshment to keep them vital and able to serve the city's needs.

Probably the most notable "historic" resource in the community, at least in the public's eye, is the revitalized central business district. It is difficult to believe that thirty years ago the commercial center was in danger of moldering. The building boom of the late 19th Century had created handsome commercial/residential structures (the Boardman, Eastman, Stearns and Hill, and Greenwood blocks) along Main Street, with their complementary proud public buildings (City Hall, the Central Fire Station, Memorial Hall, YMCA and churches). A spurt of construction in the 1920s produced the Massbank for Savings building and filled in the downtown streetscape with many less ambitious but useful stores which still incorporated popular Art Deco and other architectural flourishes to attract the eye and the consumer. Development collapsed, however, during the decades of Great Depression and the Second World War, and when prosperity returned in the 1950s and 1960s, reinvestment money and customers were fleeing to emerging highway malls in Saugus, Stoneham, and Medford. Downtown merchants competed with ever louder and more garish signs, and many of the fine architectural features of their storefronts were paneled over to modernize them or abandoned to decay. As a result of fire damage, several of what are today two-story buildings had become ghosts of their original three-story structures, when their owners opted not to go to the expense of repairing a complex Mansard roof or projecting bays and instead replaced them with simple flat roofs at the second-story level and plain front facades.

Historic Downtown

The revitalization that began in the 1970s came from a confluence of factors. Congress, horrified at the destruction of New York City's magnificent Penn Station, had in 1966 enacted legislation to encourage preservation of historic buildings and creation of Historic Districts. Federal funds to support the Bicentennial were granted to state historic commissions. In Melrose, several key city officials with vision emerged to lead the way toward rehabilitation and established an Office of Planning and Community Development to work with the Melrose Redevelopment Authority to direct and supervise the effort. They were assisted by civic groups such as the newly-organized Victorian Melrose Society, by the Melrose Historical Commission, and the Melrose Historical Society which undertook to generate popular support for the preservation and renewal of Melrose's exceptional Victorian heritage. The combined effects of these factors resulted in the formation of

Melrose's Downtown Historic District and a Commission whose purpose was *"to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics or architecture of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and the City of Melrose, and through the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings and places and the encouragement of design compatible therewith."*

In the last 25 years, the Historic District Commission has advised owners and public officials in extensive restoration and even preservation of several key properties in the District (Pottle's Florist, Greenwood Building, YMCA, City Hall, Coolidge School, the Queen Anne style Farnsworth House at 630 Main Street) and assisted many dozens of others with façade, sign, and similar improvements. The grant and loan funds to assist property owners in restoration and improvements, available from federal and state sources, were a vital part of launching the Historic District revitalization. Just as important, enthusiasm over the results has brought much private investment into a thriving downtown business district where space is at a premium and which now attracts many customers from outside the community. The manifest success of the Historic District on Melrose—commercial and economic, aesthetic and cultural, and the boost to the community's image of itself—has raised the question of whether the city should investigate the usefulness of expanding the current Historic District along Main Street and of developing other Historic Districts in the commercial areas surrounding the commuter rail stations and Franklin Square.

Housing Stock

Paralleling the restoration of the downtown in the last quarter century has been the revitalization of Melrose's historic housing stock. By the 1960s, Melrose was becoming known less as a desirable place to settle and more as a fine place for families leaving the city of Boston or the inner core of suburbs to live for a few years on their way to a permanent home further out from the city. The impact of this on long-term reinvestment in housing was notable. Maintenance on older homes was deferred and trees removed as a result of utility improvements or street repairs were not replanted. Money that was reinvested in property often went into removing ornamental detailing from Victorian-era homes, hastily converting single-family homes into multi-family homes and stripping them of original period features, or to paving lawn or garden space to provide off-street parking. The renewed interest in Victorian style buildings that bloomed in the 1970s was assisted by multi-year federal grants to support low-cost rehabilitation loans for low and moderate income home owners and gradually produced increased private investment in preserving a whole range of structures. The Melrose Housing Authority worked jointly with the Melrose Redevelopment Authority under the Office of Planning and Community Development to plan, direct, and supervise these and other programs, such as the development of senior housing. While the requirements of maintenance and restoration will continue, Melrose can be justifiably proud of the progress that is being made in preserving its historic neighborhoods and ambience.

As public funds for preservation activities have been reduced in recent years, the allocation of limited grant monies has become predicated on local communities' making progress in their own preservation programs working in conjunction with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. For the last three years, a coalition of Melrose groups, called Preserving Historic Melrose and operating in support of the Melrose Historical Commission, has undertaken to complete the inventory of historic homes that was begun in the 1970s. This will be a multi-year project and, when completed, will help the City's chances to receive funding for its needed preservation projects. It could also spark an interest in individual owners to list their properties in the National Register of Historic Places and become eligible for the recognition that this affords. Compared with

adjacent communities, Melrose, with 10 such listings, has been slow to pick up on this opportunity.³⁵ Wakefield currently has approximately 102 listings, Stoneham has approximately 72, and Medford has approximately 31. It might also encourage residents to consider the benefits of creating new Local Historic Districts or National Register Districts in various residential neighborhoods, and it will provide an archival collection for local historical research.³⁶

Preservation Projects

The decade of the 1990s saw significant investment in the improvements and restoration of some of Melrose's most treasured historic assets. In 1998, the Beebe Estate mansion, which was suffering from water damage and neglect, was restored and made vital when the City created office space for the Council on Aging in the rear of the building. The Beebe Estate Association took a lead role in this preservation project and has transformed the main building into a lively space for art exhibits and special events. The Beebe Estate Preservation project also included restoration of a portion of the formal gardens, made possible by a State Historic Landscape Preservation Grant. The City set the stage for the Beebe Estate restoration when it converted the old carriage house on the property to the Milano Senior Center a few years earlier in a successful adaptive reuse project. During the same period the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Building ("Memorial Hall") and the City Hall building were repointed and made weather tight. The Office of Planning and Community Development was instrumental in all of these efforts, from securing grant funds through managing the renovation projects. The City should continue to seek grants to fund the preservation of its historic resources.

Cultural Resources

Along with the architectural heritage, there are a number of other cultural resources that enhance the quality of life in Melrose which also require continual support and attention. Chief among these is the Melrose Public Library. Since its establishment in 1871, it has provided Melrosians with a wide range of periodical and hard-cover materials for engaging pre-school and school children with the world of learning and to answering questions on social, political, and economic affairs. Its archives are an invaluable public resource, and its first floor is a vital community display space. Its endowments are dedicated toward keeping its collections current and lively, but the city and state budget cuts have produced reductions in staff, hours of service, and book and periodical acquisitions that begin to affect its ability to serve the community.

In the arts, the Melrose Symphony has the distinction of being the oldest continuously performing volunteer orchestra in the country, and the Polymnia Choral Society has just completed its gala 50th Anniversary Season. Beyond these two established assets to the community, there is a wide range of musical organizations, ranging from the traditional Beethoven Society to the sprightly Jubilate Ringers, from church- and temple-sponsored concert series to informal coffee-house offerings. From classical to jazz to folk to popular music, Melrose offers many opportunities to make and listen to good music.

³⁵ The ten listings in Melrose include five individual properties on the National Register of Historic Places (the Beebe Estate, Larrabee's Brick Block, Melrose Public Library, Trinity Episcopal Church, Phineas Upham House), the Downtown Local Historic District, the Lynn Fells Parkway (National Register District), the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Building (National Register District), the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston (National Register Multiple Property Submission) and First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts (National Register Thematic Resource Area).

³⁶ A National Register District is a federal designation administrated by the Secretary of the Interior through the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Listing on the National Register provides limited protection; its primary purpose is to provide recognition. A Local Historic District is far more effective at providing protection from unwanted changes. Any changes visible from a public way in a Local Historic District must be approved by the local Historic District Commission.

Complementing these resources are the Melrose Youth Ballet and Northeast Youth Ballet companies and a number of dance schools and academies, which provide settings for adult as well as youth dancers to learn and perform. Theatre II has been presenting a lively set of musicals, giving local performers and theatre lovers an easy access to well-staged and well-performed Broadway shows. The thriving community access television facility at MMTV has made possible not only a great expansion of civic and cultural broadcasting but has offered many opportunities for skill and talent development for Melrosians of all ages. The Program for Afterschool Learning continues to provide an array of artistic and cultural instruction for the youth of the community, adding to the basic but budget-attenuated programs in the schools and the many private lesson providers in the city. Exhibit space for artists and crafts-makers has been quite enhanced with the opening of the Beebe Estate Mansion and even more so with the enthusiastically-received but short-lived Melrose Arts Festivals in Memorial Hall.

All of these outlets for the community's cultural energy provide great enjoyment not only for the practitioners but for their audiences as well. They reflect and nurture the spirit of the public, upon whose interest and support these cultural organizations depend. The increase in rental costs for rehearsal and performance space has been a growing burden for some of these groups, most of which are non-profit. In the current budget tightness, appropriations for the arts have been especially hard hit, and the grant awards by the Melrose Arts Council, funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, have been reduced by almost sixty percent. Melrose's opportunity to continue to enjoy the benefits the Library and these groups provide will be conditioned by its ability and willingness to provide them the support they need to maintain their operations.

Goals, Objectives and Action Items for Historic and Cultural Resources

GOAL HCR-1: PRESERVE AND PROTECT HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MELROSE

Objective A: Maintain and support the Historic District Commission.

- Continue to provide staff support from the Office of Planning and Community Development.
- Expand local bylaws and create rules for the Historic District Commission.

Objective B: Provide resources to preserve downtown buildings.

- Continue to fund the façade and sign grant program offered through the city.
- Continue to seek grants to support historically appropriate renovations of public buildings, including, for example, the Central Fire Station.
- Seek grants to restore the decorative scroll work at Memorial Hall.

GOAL HCR-2: PUBLICIZE AND PROMOTE HISTORIC RESOURCES

Objective A: Increase Historic District designations.

- Encourage neighborhoods with older homes to apply for either Local Historic District designation or National Register District designation.
- Explore the expansion of the Downtown Historic District.

Objective B: Augment records and educational materials regarding historic resources.

- Develop a comprehensive inventory of historic homes and buildings.

- Maintain historic markers, memorial tablets and memorial square markers.
- Compile an inventory of historic trees and create a program for preserving and safeguarding them.
- Map historic resources and produce an educational brochure.

Objective C: Review historic resources for possible placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places to promote the preservation of historic architectural features.

GOAL HCR-3: PROTECT AND ENHANCE HISTORIC RESOURCES

Objective A: Prevent the incremental loss of historic structures.

- Adopt a demolition delay procedure for all historically significant structures.

Objective B: Seek funding to preserve historic resources.

- Reinstate the housing rehabilitation program for income eligible residents.
- Pursue historic landscape grants for Bowden Park and the Knoll at Ell Pond Park.
- Explore certification from the Certified Local Government Program to increase eligibility for state grant funds.

GOAL HCR-4: PROTECT AND ENHANCE CULTURAL RESOURCES

Objective A: Maintain and enhance space for community groups, cultural groups and community functions and provide space at a cost within reach of these groups.

- Explore City owned buildings, such as vacant schools, to use for arts and cultural centers to provide performance, practice, studio, and community gathering space.
- Seek funds for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) improvements at Memorial Hall.
- Work with neighboring communities for regional solutions to limited cultural space.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Master Plan links its goals to future implementation by identifying a range of strategies and recommended actions. Because it focuses on the City's physical development, implementation of the Master Plan is closely linked to strategies that address land use and development, and in particular, the zoning ordinance. However, it is important to recognize that there are many other ways in which the City can act to further the goals of the Master Plan. The strategies in the Master Plan include recommendations for additional studies and plans on specific areas or topics, and actions that have direct financial implications, such as infrastructure improvements or staffing evaluations.

The Implementation Plan identifies the suggested entities that will be responsible for implementing the recommended strategies, based on past experience and the Master Plan Advisory Committee's knowledge of municipal processes. Strategies are intended to be completed on the following basis: Short term (S) for 0 to 3 years, Medium term (M) for 4 to 6 years, Long term (L) for 7 to 10 years, or Ongoing (O).

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Suggested Responsibility
GOAL LU-1: MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF MELROSE			
Objective A: Perform a thorough review and update of the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to ensure all new development is consistent with the character of Melrose.	➤ Develop a Site Plan Review Process (including design review).	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Review and amend the Subdivision Regulations to ensure that new developments complement existing neighborhoods: reduce minimum pavement width required (currently 32'), require street trees and planting strips, require underground utilities, set standards for lighting, etc. Consider shared driveways, courts & lanes, and alternatives to the cul de sac.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ In order to minimize erosion and the removal of natural vegetation, enact a slope/hillside protection ordinance in the zoning code which prevents the development of areas with a naturally steep slope of over a certain percentage to be counted as developable area.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Make fundamental changes to/or re-zone the Industrial (I) zones to ensure that new uses and redevelopment in these locations reinforce considered and appropriate planning objectives.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Address the issue of "mansionization" through evaluation of a variety of zoning tools (lot coverage ratios, floor-to-area ratios, maximum height reductions, site plan review for homes over a certain size, bulk control plans, and setbacks).	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Land Use

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Suggested Responsibility
Objective B: Promote policies that permit a variety of residential types, ensuring Melrose residents of all ages and incomes can remain in Melrose.	➤ Adopt incentive zoning for affordable housing.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Consider flexibility in parking requirements within walking distance to public transportation.	O	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Define and allow for assisted living facilities and continuing care retirement communities of appropriate scale in select locations in the Zoning Ordinance.	M	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Consider increased flexibility in allowing in-law apartments in certain areas of the City.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
Objective C: Prevent the incremental loss of historic structures.	➤ Adopt a demolition delay procedure for all historically significant structures.	S	Historical Commission
	➤ Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places to promote the preservation of historic architectural features.	M	Historical Commission
Objective D: Support the continued success of neighborhood commercial areas at Cedar Park/West Emerson, the Highlands, Franklin Square, and Wyoming.	➤ Review and revise the zoning ordinance for allowed uses and dimensional regulations to ensure that desired growth is allowed as of right and that variances are not typically required for development.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
GOAL LU-2: ENCOURAGE SMART GROWTH TO ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOODS, PROVIDE NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, AND ADD TO THE TAX BASE			
Objective A: Encourage additional mixed-use and redevelopment along the commuter rail corridor, near the Wyoming, Cedar Park, and Highlands stops, as well as near the Armory/Hunts site.	➤ Use creative zoning techniques, such as overlays, to attract redevelopment of long-underutilized sites and to enhance their reuse potential.	S	Office of Planning and Community Development, Planning Board and Ward Aldermen
	➤ Consider incorporating the recommendations of the Commonwealth Housing Task Force.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Work with the MBTA to identify areas in public ownership that could be subject to reuse.	S	City Hall MBTA Representative
	➤ Make the signage and façade grant program widely publicized and available in these areas.	S	Office of Planning and Community Development

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Land Use

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Suggested Responsibility
Objective B: Determine future vision for the lower Washington Street corridor near the historic mills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct a public process to determine a future vision for this area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the neighbors to identify needs and concerns. • Work with property owners to understand constraints to redevelopment. • Explore alternative development scenarios with neighborhood input; employ consulting assistance where necessary to evaluate future impacts. • Develop a consensus-based future vision; communicate results to the Planning Board and the Board of Aldermen. • Draft and adopt zoning changes to implement the vision, if necessary. 	M	Office of Planning and Community Development, Planning Board and Ward Alderman
Objective C: Identify optimal land uses for the Route 99 frontage and adjust zoning to encourage preferred redevelopment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assign a Planning Board subcommittee to focus on this issue. 	M	Planning Board Subcommittee

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Housing

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
GOAL H-1: MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF MELROSE			
Objective A: Ensure all new housing is consistent with the character of Melrose.	➤ Develop a Site Plan Review Process.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Review and amend the Subdivision Regulations to ensure that new developments complement existing neighborhoods.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ In order to minimize erosion and the removal of natural vegetation, enact a slope/hillside protection ordinance in the zoning code which prevents the development of areas with a naturally steep slope of over a certain percentage to be counted as developable area.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Address the issue of “mansionization” through evaluation of a variety of zoning tools (lot coverage ratios, floor-to-area ratios, maximum height reductions, site plan review for homes over a certain size, bulk control plans, and setbacks).	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
Objective B: Maintain the historic character of single family homes in Melrose.	➤ Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places to promote the preservation of historic architectural features.	M	Historical Commission
	➤ Encourage neighborhoods with older homes to apply for either Local Historic District designation or National Register District designation.	M	Historic District Commission and Historical Commission
Objective C: Ensure that the housing stock meets public health and safety standards.	➤ Reinststate a housing rehabilitation program for income eligible residents.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development and Community Development Council
GOAL H-2: COMPLY WITH THE GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE ORDER #418, WHICH ENCOURAGES THE CREATION OF HOUSING UNITS THAT ARE AFFORDABLE TO A BROAD RANGE OF INCOMES			
Objective A: Identify opportunities where the City will encourage new housing affordable to a broad range of incomes.	➤ Develop an Incentive or Inclusionary Zoning provision in the Zoning Ordinance to provide incentives, such as increased density, in exchange for the development of a percentage of affordable housing units.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Apply for housing certification each year.	S	Office of Planning and Community Development

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Housing

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
	➤ Identify any publicly owned parcels that may be available for affordable housing development.	S	Property Valuation Board, Office of Planning and Community Development and Mayor
Objective B: Support the efforts of community groups and non-profit organizations, such as the newly formed Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation to pursue funding for affordable housing.	➤ Continue to participate pro-actively as a member of the North Suburban Consortium to obtain funding for affordable housing initiatives.	O	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Pursue grant funds and assistance through the North Suburban Consortium to fund a Housing Planner position to coordinate affordable housing activities.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Identify whether the scope of the Melrose Redevelopment Authority should be expanded to include affordable housing activities.	S	Mayor
Objective C: Promote programs that lower the cost of housing.	➤ Provide subsidies for first time home buyers through the First Time Homebuyers Assistance Program.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Expand the existing First Time Homebuyers Program by trying to increase the qualifying limits.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Develop relationships with area banks to offer financing for first time home buyers and attractive credit lines for non-profit developers.	M	Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Promote discussion within the city of the Community Preservation Act.	S	Mayor and Community Interest Groups
	➤ Develop a process to make tax lien properties available for purchase by non-profit developers and/or the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation.	S	Mayor and Board of Assessors
GOAL H-3: ENCOURAGE THE CREATION AND RETENTION OF HOUSING THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND EQUAL ACCESS			
Objective A: Provide a range of housing for the entire life cycle.	➤ Define and allow for assisted living facilities and continuing care retirement communities of appropriate scale in select locations in the Zoning Ordinance.	M	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Housing

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
	➤ Maintain elderly apartments beyond HUD funding.	L	Mayor and Congregational Retirement Homes Administrators
	➤ Increase the supply of apartments and condominiums for elders who are downsizing, empty nesters, and young couples and seek creative solutions to parking constraints.	L	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Promote the Property Tax Work-Off program for senior citizens and the disabled.	O	Council on Aging and Board of Assessors
Objective B: Provide a range of housing that promotes economic and cultural diversity.	➤ Continue to support the Melrose Housing Authority in its efforts to develop and maintain low-income housing.	O	Mayor
	➤ Continue strict adherence to Massachusetts Fair Housing laws.	O	Fair Housing Officer

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Economic Development

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
GOAL ED-1: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE DOWNTOWN MELROSE AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS			
Objective A: Maintain a visually attractive downtown area	➤ Continue to promote the sign and façade incentive program.	O	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Consider expansion of the Downtown Historic District.	M	Historic District Commission
Objective B: Improve the attractiveness of the neighborhood shopping centers.	➤ Encourage and promote façade improvements in the neighborhood shopping areas.	S	Office of Planning and Community Development and Chamber of Commerce
	➤ Explore the possibility of federal funds to improve these areas.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Explore the possibility of Local Historic District designation for the Highlands area and possibly other neighborhood commercial areas.	M	Historic District Commission and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Encourage business groups in the neighborhood commercial centers to become more active in sprucing up their areas.	S	Chamber of Commerce and Ward Aldermen and Melrose Garden Club
Objective C: Stay informed of local business needs.	➤ Work with the Chamber of Commerce to determine the feasibility of developing a comprehensive database of businesses in Melrose.	M	Chamber of Commerce and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Encourage communication between City leaders and Chamber of Commerce to recruit and retain desirable businesses.	M	Chamber of Commerce and Mayor
GOAL ED-2: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INCREASE THE TAX BASE BY ENCOURAGING NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT			
Objective A: Determine a future vision to explore mixed use redevelopment of underutilized properties to encourage new business development (see Land Use Goals).	➤ See Land Use Strategies.		
Objective B: Encourage new business development citywide	➤ Create a streamlined process for new businesses to facilitate new business development.	M	Chamber of Commerce and Office of Planning and Community Development

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Economic Development

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
	➤ Update the zoning ordinance with regard to Home Occupation to encourage the growth in appropriate home-based businesses.	S	Planning Board, Office of Planning and Community Development and Chamber of Commerce
	➤ Reinstate a small business loan program.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development and Chamber of Commerce

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Transportation

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
GOAL T-1: IMPROVE AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC FLOW AND SAFETY ON MELROSE STREETS			
Objective A: Implement roadway improvement projects identified in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).	➤ Complete design and construct Segment A of the Main Street Reconstruction project.	S	Mayor and Department of Public Works
	➤ Pursue funding to construct Segments B and C of the Main Street Reconstruction project.	L	Mayor and Department of Public Works
	➤ Pursue funding for other Melrose projects on the TIP.	L	Mayor and Department of Public Works
Objective B: Consider a wide range of traffic calming methods in response to neighborhood speeding and pedestrian safety issues.	➤ Include street trees in roadway reconstruction projects.	O	Tree Committee, Tree Warden, and Department of Public Works
	➤ Explore the possibility of grant programs and/or resident donations to implement traffic calming measures.	S	Office of Planning and Community Development, Traffic Commission, and Mayor's Office
	➤ Implement an education program with regard to traffic and pedestrian safety.	S	Traffic Commission and Department of Public Works
Objective C: Improve pedestrian safety.	➤ Maintain sidewalks in good condition to facilitate use by pedestrians and those in wheelchairs or with strollers.	S	Department of Public Works
	➤ Install up-to-date traffic signals that are ADA compliant for the blind or visually impaired.	M	Traffic Commission and Department of Public Works
	➤ Repair and make accessible the crosswalk leading from the Knoll to the Middle School/High School complex during construction of the new Middle School.	S	Traffic Commission, Department of Public Works and Office of Planning, and Community Development
	➤ Upgrade pedestrian crossing signals to provide dedicated crossing phase.	M	Traffic Commission and Department of Public Works
	➤ Evaluate and redesign the crosswalk at the intersection of Melrose Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway.	S	Traffic Commission and Department of Public Works
	➤ Identify other intersections that should be redesigned for safety.	M	Traffic Commission and Department of Public Works

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Transportation

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
GOAL T-2: PROACTIVELY MITIGATE POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS ON MELROSE TRAFFIC FLOWS STEMMING FROM NEW DEVELOPMENTS			
Objective A: Continue to analyze traffic impacts on new development proposals within Melrose.	➤ Update Planning Board regulations to require developers to pay for traffic studies.	S	Planning Board and Office of Planning and Community Development
Objective B: Establish better communication with surrounding communities to mitigate traffic impacts of developments outside of the City.	➤ Create contacts and establish regular forums for discussion of regional traffic issues.	S	Mayor's Office and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Improve information-sharing between the Planning Board and the Traffic Commission.	S	Office of Planning and Community Development and Traffic Commission
GOAL T-3: ENCOURAGE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES TO AUTOMOBILE USE			
Objective A: Enhance public transit options and opportunities.	➤ Advocate for expansion of parking capacity at Oak Grove.	M	Mayor's Office and MBTA
	➤ Advocate for MBTA Sunday bus service and for improved Saturday bus service from Franklin Square to Malden Station.	M	Board of Aldermen and The City's MBTA Representative
Objective B: Ensure that curb-to-curb transportation remains available to senior citizens unable to drive or take MBTA buses.	➤ Regularly fund vehicle maintenance and other necessary costs for the Council on Aging van through the City budget.	O	Council on Aging
	➤ Continue to apply for grant funding to support drivers' salaries.	O	Council on Aging
GOAL T-4: DEVELOP FACILITIES FOR BICYCLES			
Objective A: Develop a Bicycle Plan.	➤ Identify locations for bike racks at area parks and city facilities and bike storage facilities at the train stations.	S	Bike Committee

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Transportation

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
	➤ Identify existing roadways preferred for bicycles and locations for roadway improvements.	M	Bike Committee
	➤ Explore the possibility of a bike trail along the right-of-way at the railroad tracks.	L	Bike Committee and the MBTA representative
GOAL T-5: IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY, APPEARANCE, AND FUNCTION OF MELROSE'S PUBLIC PARKING SUPPLY			
Objective A: Address the issue of downtown parking.	➤ Rethink downtown parking controls to improve usage.	M	Traffic Commission and Chamber of Commerce
	➤ Determine the need for and study feasibility of additional parking downtown.	M	Traffic Commission
Objective B: Improve parking at the commuter rail stations.	➤ Explore opportunities to increase available parking near commuter rail stations.	L	Mayor's Office and MBTA
	➤ Pursue and promote improvements in the maintenance of the train stations.	S	Department of Public Works

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
GOAL PF-1: PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS			
Objective A: Develop and implement a Capital Improvement Program for Sewer and Water Projects.	➤ Prioritize projects based on studies and current conditions in each area and develop schedule for completion.	S	Mayor and Department of Public Works
	➤ Consistently set water and sewer rates at a level that allows for funds to accrue in the Enterprise Fund Account that can be specifically used for capital projects and to leverage state grants and low/zero interest loans.	S	Department of Public Works, Mayor, and Auditor
	➤ Continue to pursue grants, such as MWRA grants, to cover partial costs of capital projects.	O	Department of Public Works and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Seek certification to remain eligible for state and federal grant funding.	O	Department of Public Works
Objective B: Reinstate the existing Capital Improvement Program for all non-sewer and water projects including school facilities.	➤ Implement and fund the CIP Program annually.	S	Mayor, the Auditor and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Review and update the guidelines for the CIP Program.	S	CIP Committee
	➤ Determine appropriate funding sources, including grants, state funds, supplemental budget funds, bonds, and debt-exclusions, and establish funding levels annually.	S	Mayor and Auditor
Objective C: Pursue Funding for Critical Building Projects.	➤ Continue repair and upgrades to aging school facilities.	O	School Department
	➤ Update the Public Facilities Study to include an analysis of the ideal type of complex needed, the best location for such complex, and how it will be funded.	S	Mayor, Fire and Police Department, and the Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Pursue acquisition of the Armory site from the state for potential uses such as a new Public Safety Facility.	L	Mayor

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
	➤ Continue to pursue grants, such as preservation grants and community development grants, to fund building projects.	O	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Support continued use of SBAB funding for school building renovations.	O	Mayor and School Department
Objective D: Provide sufficient funding for road repairs	➤ Diversify the source of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state funds.	L	Mayor
Objective E: Fund sidewalk repair.	➤ Establish an inventory and priority list of needed sidewalk repairs.	S	Department of Public Works
	➤ Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually and ensure sufficient funds to repair sidewalks with concrete and/or unit pavers instead of blacktop.	S	Mayor, Department of Public Works and Board of Aldermen
	➤ Create a sidewalk fund to receive contributions from developers.	S	Mayor, Board of Aldermen, and Department of Public Works
	➤ Promote education of Betterment Program.	S	Ward Aldermen and Department of Public Works
Objective F: Reduce unnecessary water and sewer costs.	➤ Continue aggressive monitoring and corrective actions to decrease unaccounted water and sewer.	O	Department of Public Works
GOAL PF-2: IMPLEMENT A PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAM TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES			
Objective A: Eliminate illegal sump pump	➤ Educate public on consequences of illegal sump pump hookups.	S	Department of Public Works and Ward Aldermen

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
hookups.	➤ Determine if there are enforcement procedures that can be implemented. If such procedures do not currently exist, determine if new laws can be passed and enforced.	S	City Solicitor and Board of Health and Building Commissioner
Objective B: Gather public support for funding infrastructure projects.	➤ Educate the public on the need for ongoing maintenance of the city's infrastructure.	M	Mayor and Department of Public Works
	➤ Educate the public about the different approaches to funding infrastructure improvements.	M	Mayor and Department of Public Works
	➤ Educate the public about the poor condition of the public safety facilities and the need for ongoing upgrades of the school buildings.	M	Mayor and Department of Public Works and School Department
	➤ Educate the public about their responsibility to maintain the water and sewer pipes on their property.	M	Mayor and Department of Public Works
GOAL PF-3: IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES			
Objective A: Explore the possibility of establishing a Water and Sewer Commission.	➤ Appoint a committee to explore the possibility of establishing a Water and Sewer Commission to review and recommend capital improvement projects, determine best sources of funding, and to set water and sewer rates.	S	Mayor and Board of Aldermen
Objective B: Maintain adequate staffing to monitor and address infrastructure issues.	➤ Assess staffing levels in the Public Works Department and determine if additional personnel are required and how personnel should be distributed.	S	Mayor and Superintendent of Public Works
Objective C: Encourage regional planning and information sharing to address mutual infrastructure concerns.	➤ Establish a formal vehicle for the Public Works Superintendent to communicate with counterparts in bordering communities.	S	Department of Public Works and the Mayor

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
GOAL OSR-1: SATISFY THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION NEEDS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS			
Objective A: Improve, repair, and maintain existing park and playground facilities.	➤ Develop a plan for addressing the shortage of playing fields.	S	Mayor and Parks and Recreational Department
	➤ Pursue funding for reconstructing the Athletic Field.	M	School Department
	➤ Develop active recreational facilities for senior citizens, such as a bocce court or chess/checker boards at Gooch Park.	L	Park and Recreation Departments
	➤ Continue to improve the on-going maintenance program.	O	Park and Recreation Departments
	➤ Continue to support the Adopt-A-Site Program.	O	Chamber of Commerce
	➤ Evaluate staffing needs of the Park and Recreation Department.	S	Park Commission and Mayor
Objective B: Support continued enhancements at the Mt. Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course to provide a range of recreational activities for the community.	➤ Develop a system of walking trails through the Park.	L	Park Commission, Mt. Hood Association, and Volunteers groups (i.e. scouts)
	➤ Establish a trailhead at Mt. Hood to connect the observation tower with the Flagg Acres trail system.	L	Mt. Hood Association and Park Commission
	➤ Provide adequate maintenance for picnic areas and furnish tables and benches as needed.	M	Mt. Hood Association and Park Commission
Objective C: Implement a cohesive plan for improvements to Ell Pond and the surrounding parkland.	➤ Maintain walking paths along the shoreline.	O	Ell Pond Improvement Council and Parks and Recreation Department
	➤ Address the major issues of the Main Street shoreline at Ell Pond, including the invasive growth of plants and trees and the associated damage to rip-rap and the need for the removal of the trash that collects along the shoreline, and extensive poison ivy.	S	Ell Pond Improvement Council and Parks and Recreation Department
	➤ Pursue Historic Landscape grant for the Memorial Knoll.	S	Ell Pond Improvement Council and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Clarify the ownership and management of Ell Pond and the surrounding park land.	S	Mayor and School Department

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
Objective D: Provide recreational opportunities for youth in the after-school hours.	➤ Support on-going effort to establish and maintain a youth center.	O	Community Coalition
	➤ Identify a site and develop a plan for funding a Skateboard Park.	M	Parks and Recreation Department
GOAL OSR-2: PRESERVE OPEN SPACE, SCENIC AREAS AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE RESOURCES			
Objective A: Protect open space and conservation lands.	➤ Establish a local wetlands protection bylaw.	S	Conservation Commission
	➤ Provide a mechanism for funding maintenance of conservation lands including tax title lands.	S	Conservation Commission
	➤ Update the Open Space Plan every five years.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development
Objective B: Develop an acquisition program for obtaining undeveloped parcels in the Greenbelt areas.	➤ Prioritize sites and establish procedures for purchasing land in the event such sites become available.	L	Conservation Commission
Objective C: Establish a Maintenance Plan of City trees.	➤ Develop a comprehensive stem-by-stem inventory of the City's trees.	L	Tree Warden and Tree Committee
	➤ Restore hours to the part-time Tree Warden position, when budget funds become available, to develop and implement a proactive maintenance plan for City trees.	S	Mayor
GOAL OSR-3: PROTECT AND PRESERVE WATER RESOURCES			
Objective A: Improve water quality of Ell Pond, Swains Pond, Towner's Pond and the ponds	➤ Assess water quality at the ponds.	L	Board of Health and Ell Pond Improvement Council
	➤ Develop measures to protect against eutrophication of Ell Pond, Swains Pond, Towner's Pond and ponds at Mount Hood.	L	Park Commission

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
at Mt. Hood Memorial Park.	➤ Manage problem with Canada Geese at Ell Pond.	O	Park Commission and Parks and Recreation Department

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Historic and Cultural Resources

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
GOAL HCR-1: PRESERVE AND PROTECT HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MELROSE			
Objective A: Maintain and support the Historic District Commission.	➤ Continue to provide staff support from the Office of Planning and Community Development.	O	Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Expand local bylaws and create rules for the Historic District Commission.	S	Historic District Commission
Objective B: Provide resources to preserve downtown buildings.	➤ Continue to fund the façade and sign grant program offered through the city.	O	Office of Planning and Community Development and Community Development Council
	➤ Continue to seek grants to support historically appropriate renovations of public buildings, including, for example, the Central Fire Station.	O	Office of Planning and Community Development and Community Development Council
	➤ Seek grants to restore the decorative scroll work at Memorial Hall.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development and Memorial Hall Trustees
GOAL HCR-2: PUBLICIZE AND PROMOTE HISTORIC RESOURCES			
Objective A: Increase Historic District designations.	➤ Encourage neighborhoods with older homes to apply for either Local Historic District designation or National Register District designation.	M	Historical District Commission, Historical Commission and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Explore the expansion of the Downtown Historic District	M	Historic District Commission and Office of Planning and Community Development
Objective B: Review historic resources for possible placement on the National Register of Historic Places.	➤ Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places to promote the preservation of historic architectural features.	L	Historical Commission and Office of Planning and Community Development

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Historic and Cultural Resources

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
Objective C: Augment records and educational materials regarding historic resources.	➤ Develop a comprehensive inventory of historic homes and buildings.	M	Historical Commission and other historic oriented public interest groups
	➤ Maintain historic markers, memorial tablets and memorial square markers.	O	Department of Public Works
	➤ Compile inventory of historic trees and create a program for preserving and safeguarding them.	M	Tree Committee and Tree Warden
	➤ Map historic resources and produce an educational brochure.	M	Historical Commission
GOAL HCR-3: PROTECT AND ENHANCE HISTORIC RESOURCES			
Objective A: Prevent the incremental loss of historic structures.	➤ Adopt a demolition delay procedure for all historically significant structures.	S	Historical Commission
Objective B: Seek funding to preserve historic resources.	➤ Reinstatement the housing rehabilitation program for income eligible residents.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development and Community Development Council
	➤ Pursue historic landscape grants for Bowden Park and the Knoll at Ell Pond Park.	M	Office of Planning and Community Development and Ell Pond Improvement Council
	➤ Explore certification from the Certified Local Government Program to increase eligibility for state grant funds.	S	Historical Commission and Office of Planning and Community Development
GOAL HCR-4: PROTECT AND ENHANCE CULTURAL RESOURCES			
Objective A: Maintain and enhance space for community groups,	➤ Explore City owned buildings, such as vacant schools, as arts and cultural centers to provide performance, practice, studio, and community gathering space.	S	Melrose Arts Council, School Department, Beebe Estate Board of Trustees and the Mayor's Office

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Historic and Cultural Resources

Goals/ Objectives	Strategies	Time table	Responsibility
cultural groups and community functions and provide space at a cost within reach to these groups.	➤ Seek funds for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) improvements at Memorial Hall.	M	Memorial Hall Trustees and Office of Planning and Community Development
	➤ Work with neighboring communities for regional solutions to limited cultural space.	L	Mayor's Office