

Melrose *Forward*

A Community Vision and Master Plan



JUNE 2017



A Note from Melrose City Hall

June 26, 2017

Dear Melrose Community Members,



Melrose Forward: A Community Vision and Master Plan kicked off at the September 2015 Victorian Fair, and since then, the Office of Planning and Community Development, the Master Plan Advisory Committee, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council have worked with our community to identify our community's needs and wishes for the coming decade. Melrose Forward will serve as a guiding policy document for all future decisions on growth and preservation in the City in the years to come. It is our pleasure to present this plan for our City's future.

A few of the plan's findings include:



Housing: Melrose is in high demand – it has been featured as the “hottest ZIP code” in the United States, one of the “Best Small Cities in America,” and was recently featured on WCVB's *Chronicle*, which highlighted many reasons why the community is so desirable. Being a “hot” city has its perks, but also its challenges: local realtors, faced with bidding wars and not enough inventory, have noted that our housing market is not at its healthiest. Even when adjusted for inflation, recent home sales prices are close to what they were in 2005, which, as you know, preceded a nationwide housing market crash. The Greater Boston Region faces a housing crisis, with a need for substantial housing production in order to stem rising prices, address low inventory, and retain a strong economic position. Here in Melrose, as more of our Baby Boomer residents approach retirement, it will be harder to find affordable places to live. Young families looking to become homeowners will be faced with a small number of options at a relatively high price tag within Melrose. Options for renters and homeowners alike are limited, and according to the Commonwealth's standards for affordable housing, we are falling short on the amount of subsidized housing we have available as well. In order to maintain both our desirability and our accessibility, we need to look at options for increasing housing production and ways to reduce barriers to creating new housing units.



Economic Development: Melrose's Downtown and our neighborhood commercial districts are part of what attract people to this community. Additionally, Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, Hallmark Health, and the healthcare industry in general contribute to the City's economic base. Keeping our commercial areas strong and keeping these jobs in Melrose must be a priority.



Transportation: Melrosians have identified the ability to get around by a variety of modes of transportation as one of the best parts of living in this City. Transit, including the Commuter Rail, access to the Orange Line, and MBTA buses, are the lifeblood of our community. Our compact city design make biking and walking attractive, whether for exercise or to get from place to place. We are improving accommodations for the many ways people use our streets and sidewalks, following the Complete Streets Policy we adopted in 2016. Additionally, we will continue to advocate for strong MBTA service.



Facilities and Infrastructure, Energy: In the past decade, the City has employed many new technologies that have helped to identify infrastructure spending priorities, increase energy efficiency, reduce waste, and save money. We have streamlined facilities management staffing by bringing custodial, maintenance, and facility management responsibilities for our schools under the umbrella of DPW, allowing School Administration to focus on well-rounded educational excellence and curriculum. We have built new facilities such as the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and have continued to upgrade existing facilities, including Melrose High School and Milano Center, among others. As a designated Green Community, we have substantially reduced the City's energy use and have taken a

proactive stance on climate adaptation. All of these investments have been needed, but our ability to proactively address our facilities and infrastructure is limited. We will need to continue to find ways to address our capital improvement needs as well as keep up with money-saving technologies to keep us agile and responsive as a city government.

History, Culture, Open Space, Land Use: Melrosians value the community's historical character as a "streetcar suburb" largely developed during the early 20th century, with Victorian architecture, a tight-knit development pattern that makes walking, biking, and taking public transportation feasible, green spaces at the periphery of the city as well as neighborhood parks throughout. Additionally, Melrosians enjoy a strong sense of community, which is supported by our arts, culture, and civic organizations. Melrosians value the city motto as "One Community, Open to All." As we look forward, we want to encourage both development and preservation, maintaining ties and strong physical reminders of the city's historical roots while also serving the needs of a 21st century populace. City zoning and other policies will be updated to reflect this balance.

This plan will guide local decision-making over the next decade.

Following a thorough analysis of current conditions and forecasted trends, **Melrose Forward: A Community Vision and Master Plan** concludes with a practical implementation plan that outlines goals, strategies, and actions, along with clearly defined responsibilities and timeframes for each action.

Let's work together to move Melrose Forward!

With warmest regards,



Mayor Robert J. Dolan
City of Melrose



Denise Gaffey
Director, Melrose Office of Planning &
Community Development



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the community members who provided input to ensure the success of this plan. This plan was developed over two years by the Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development, with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the regional planning agency for Greater Boston, as its consultant.

City of Melrose

Many City of Melrose staff and officials provided input for **Melrose Forward: A Community Vision and Master Plan**. The following contributed substantially to research, writing, editing, promotion, and coordination as the plan was developed.

Mayor's Office

Mayor Robert J. Dolan
Brigid Alverson, Assistant to the Mayor

Office of Planning and Community Development

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Erin Heacock Zwirko, AICP, LEED AP, Assistant Planning Director
Martha Grover, Energy Efficiency Manager
Lori Massa, AICP, Planning Coordinator
Jane Pitts, GIS Analyst and Office Manager

Department of Public Works

John Scenna, Director
Elena Proakis-Ellis, City Engineer
Sadie Brown, Solid Waste + Recycling Coordinator

In addition, special thanks to Kathy Pigott-Brodeur, Operations Manager of Memorial Hall, and Dawn Folopoulos, Executive Director of the Council on Aging, for assistance with meetings and facility coordination.

Master Plan Advisory Committee

Anne DeSouza Ward, Chair, Planning Board Member
Joan Cassidy, Housing Authority Commissioner
Christopher Cinella, Chamber of Commerce President
Margaret Driscoll, School Committee Chairman
Ryan Fuller, Business Community Member
Lauren Grymek, Community At Large
Gail Infurna, Ward 5 Alderman
Elizabeth Moroney, Community At Large
Dorothy Travis, Melrose Cultural Council Member
Aaron Weieneth, Conservation Commission Member



Participants at the final Melrose Forward forum in March 2017 at Memorial Hall.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

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Emma Schnur, Regional Land Use Planner
Amanda Chisholm, AICP, Chief Economic Development Planner
Sarah Kurpiel Lee, Assistant Director of Transportation
Christine Madore, AICP, Regional Planner

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Additional Thanks

Melrose Planning Board (Plan Review and Adoption)
Melrose Board of Aldermen (Appropriation of Funding)
Melrose Chamber of Commerce (Victorian Fair 2015)

Data Sources and Images

Data sources and images are cited as captions and endnotes throughout the full plan.

I AM YOUR CITY!

I REFLECT YOU AS THE LAKE MIRRORS THE SKY,
IF I AM FAIR SO THAT THE STRANGER PASSING THROUGH SAYS,
“THIS IS A CITY OF PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEIR HOMES,”
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE.

IF I AM ILL PLANNED, UNKEMPT, SPRAWING LIKE A BLOT,
IT IS YOUR NEGLIGENCE WHICH HAS WROUGHT THE RUIN.
I AM THE EMBODIED IMAGE OF THE PRIDE OR NEGLIGENCE
OF ALL WHO HAVE CALLED ME HOME.

I AM WHAT YOU MAKE ME -
I AM YOUR CITY.

Eva G. Osgood

1930

Melrose Planning Board

1921-1935

The Melrose Vision

As community members in 2017 look to the City's future, the following vision reflects communitywide values and aspirations for Melrose in the coming decade. These statements are a set of desired characteristics for what Melrosians endeavor the City to become. The goals and recommended policies in **Melrose Forward: A Community Vision and Master Plan** identify benchmarks by which to evaluate success and are intended to transform this vision into achievable action steps.

Melrose Community Aspirations

- The physical character of Melrose reflects a balanced approach to planning and development, with the protection and enhancement of the City's historical, cultural, recreational, and natural resources. The City represents a blend of urban and suburban design true to its roots as a community largely developed as a streetcar suburb during the Victorian era.
- It is convenient and safe to travel within Melrose as well as to access destinations outside the City via a multimodal transportation network, including the ability to get around by rail, bus, bicycle, walking, and driving, making it an attractive location within the Greater Boston Region.
- Melrose is an inclusive and welcoming community and provides equal access and opportunities that contribute to the wellbeing of all its residents.
- Melrose City government is approachable and responsive to the evolving needs of residents, businesses, schools, and institutions.
- Melrose is recognized as a great place to do business and enjoys a vital economic climate. Boasting a vibrant downtown and charming neighborhood commercial areas, Melrose supports a wide variety of business opportunities, from small, independent shops to large institutions that provide employment options and community services. These amenities enhance the quality of life for residents while also making Melrose a destination for surrounding communities.
- All students have the opportunity to achieve excellence in the Melrose Public Schools.
- Melrose is a regional leader in energy efficiency, renewable energy development, climate resilience planning, and communitywide sustainability initiatives.
- People of all income levels and ages, including families as well as non-family households, can find suitable and affordable housing in Melrose.
- City infrastructure and publicly-owned properties are well-supported with continued investment, maintenance, and enhancements.
- Melrosians enjoy a strong sense of community thanks to their active civic participation and spirit of volunteerism.



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Making the Plan

In June 2004, the City of Melrose completed its last Master Plan. For over two years, the City's Office of Planning and Community Development worked with its Master Plan Advisory Committee to create a blueprint for Melrose's future. Developing the plan involved an extensive public engagement process that included multiple public forums and presentations to community groups. For over a decade, the research, analysis, and recommendations that came out of the 2004 Master Plan have served as a guide for the City as it made decisions regarding development, zoning, updates to aging infrastructure, and more.

Melrose has changed over the last thirteen years, both as a result of actions that came out of the Master Plan and other planning processes, and because of trends affecting the City and the Boston region as a whole. The community's priorities have also changed during this time, especially as residents grapple with the rising costs of living in the City.

The 2004 Master Plan provided the building blocks for **Melrose Forward: A Community Vision and Master Plan**, however this plan is not simply an update of the previous plan. The Melrose Forward planning process included new opportunities to engage the public in crafting a vision for the City and set Melrose on a thoughtful and proactive strategic path looking forward to the next decade.

Community Engagement

Extensive public input was essential to the success of Melrose Forward. The community was engaged in a myriad of ways, including monthly Master Plan Advisory Committee Meetings, two public forums, focus groups with stakeholders, and a booth at the Victorian Fair. In addition, Master Plan Advisory Committee members, City staff, and MAPC staff attended the Melrose Human Rights Commission's International Welcome Reception, learned about city transportation accommodations from the Melrose Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee, received input from the Melrose Energy Commission and Recycling Committee, and more.

Master Plan Advisory Committee

The Master Plan Advisory Committee was selected to work with staff from the Office of Planning and

Community Development (OPCD) and the City's consultants from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on all elements of the master planning process. In addition to brainstorming and assisting with community outreach, the Master Plan Advisory Committee met monthly from August 2015 to May 2017 to review and inform Melrose Forward's Vision Statement, provide input on plan chapters, and develop the implementation plan.

The Master Plan Advisory Committee represented a broad array of local stakeholders with expertise and interest in various topics covered in the Master Plan. On the committee was representation from the Planning Board, Board of Aldermen, School Committee, Housing Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Conservation Commission, Melrose Cultural Council, the local business community, and the community at large. These committee members represent a variety of community decision makers and constituencies within the City of Melrose.

Master Plan Advisory Committee Members:

Anne De Souza Ward, Chair, Planning Board Member
Joan Cassidy, Housing Authority Commissioner
Christopher Cinella, Chamber of Commerce President
Margaret Driscoll, School Committee Chairman
Ryan Fuller, Business Community Member
Lauren Grymek, Community At Large
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Elizabeth Moroney, Community At Large
Dorothy Travis, Melrose Cultural Council Member
Aaron Weieneth, Conservation Commission Member

Master Plan Advisory Committee Members at Melrose Forward Visioning Forum, February 2016



Source: TDM Photography



Staff:

Denise Gaffey, Director, OPCD
Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director, OPCD
Martha Grover, Energy Efficiency Manager, OPCD
Jane Pitts, Accounting Manager & GIS Analyst, OPCD
Lori Massa, Planning Coordinator, OPCD

Melrose Victorian Fair

Melrose Forward had its own booth at the Melrose Victorian Fair on September 13, 2015. This was a fantastic opportunity to reach a diverse segment of the population, particularly those who would not otherwise be able to attend a nighttime public meeting. Activities at the Victorian Fair booth provided many ways of soliciting input from the hundreds of people who stopped by the booth.

MAPC worked with the Master Plan Advisory Committee to create a list of seven distinct community attributes about the character of and quality of life in Melrose. When Victorian Fair attendees approached the Melrose Forward booth, they had the opportunity to participate in an activity where there were seven buckets representing each of these community attributes. Over 300 fair visitors chose to answer the question, "Which of these community attributes are most important to you?" The results of this activity

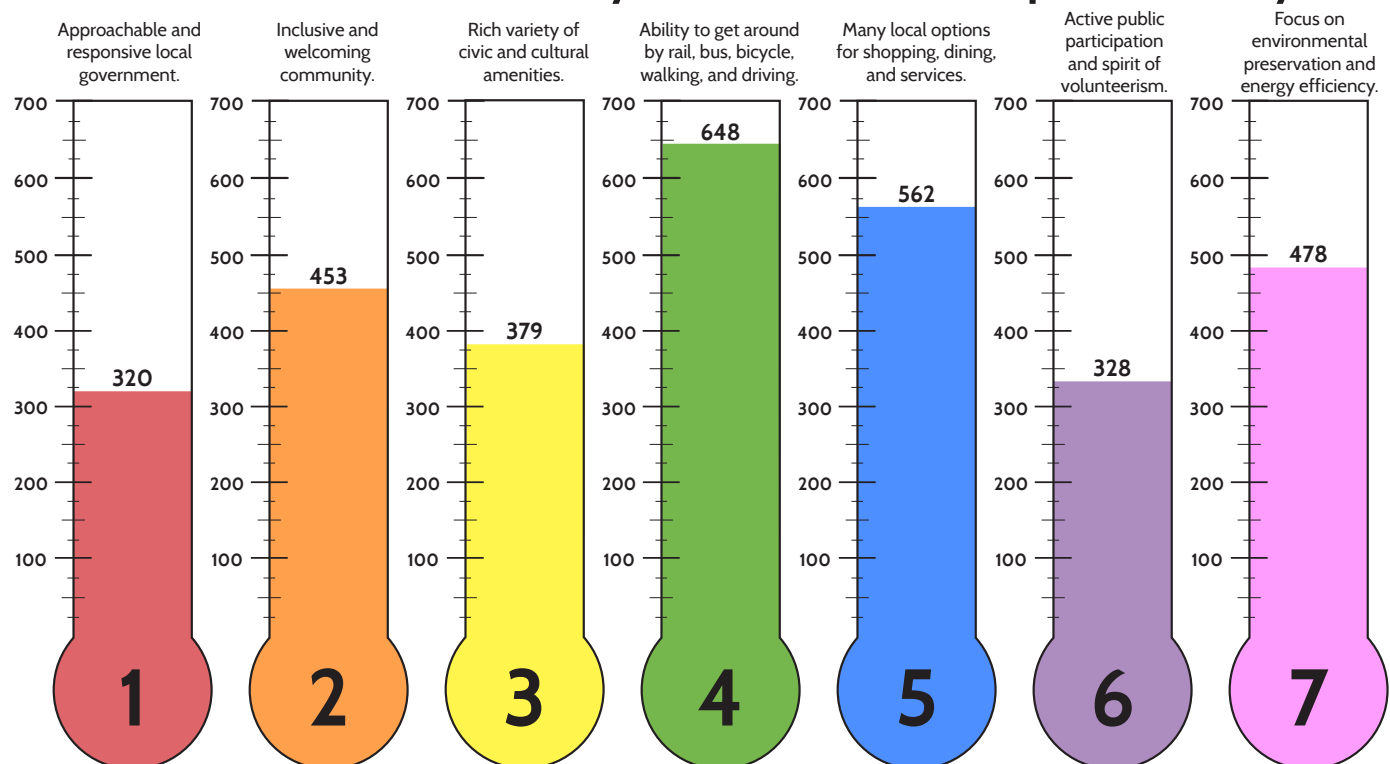
Melrose Victorian Fair, September 2015



Source: MAPC

Figure 1: Victorian Fair Activity Results

Which of these community attributes are important to you?



What do you love about Melrose?

The word cloud features the following terms:

- personality
- environmental
- around
- desirable
- involvement
- Tons families
- Play everywhere
- schools
- places
- atmosphere
- Everybody
- community
- car way
- Franklin
- new ideas Home
- Fun Quiet ECC
- nice
- seems without
- Family events
- playgrounds
- Elementary Inclusive many
- Chamber code
- know Open
- Park diversity
- welcome Walkable
- Gooch here
- great dogs
- Most houses
- preschool care
- active pool
- zip all
- Downtown Melrose
- Convenient involved welcoming protection Sustainability
- Everything beautiful
- friendly
- parks
- People
- lot
- go
- Everyone Easy Roosevelt amazing dedicated things Lots
- Walkability love Economic neighborhood good place iRaiders America playground moved Common neighbors

Melrose Forward
A Community Vision and Master Plan

MAPC
METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

Melrose's Vision: 2004

- EA Equal access to resources and opportunities
- UD Balanced and responsible urban design
- EC A vital economic climate
- T A multimodal transportation system
- AC Academic excellence for all students
- H Housing and homeownership for all income levels
- J Enhancement of job opportunities
- IF Maintenance and enhancement of the city's infrastructure
- C Active citizenry

Melrose's Accomplishments

Site Plan and Design Review Ordinance

To maintain Melrose's physical character and conserving natural resources through sustainable development practices

UD IF



Photo: Zillow.com

Ell Pond Memorial Park Improvements

Addition of dog park and skate park

EA IF



Renovation of Athletic Fields

Fred Green Field, Morelli Baseball Field, Cabbage Patch

EA IF



Photo: Manisha Bewtra

Rail Corridor Overlay District

Creative zoning to promote growth and redevelopment along the commuter rail corridor

Before



Proposed



EC EA H

Highlands Business District Improvements

Overall streetscape enhancement and addition of bike and pedestrian amenities

Before



Google Maps

After



Photo: Manisha Bewtra

T IF

Affordable Housing Ordinance

Creating housing and homeownership opportunities for all income levels

EA H

New Middle School and High School Investments

EA IF AC



MHS Learning Commons Rendering

Smart Growth District

Innovative zoning to promote transit-oriented development and redevelopment at historic mill complex on Lower Washington Street

EC H UD J T



Alta Stone Place

2015 Open Space & Recreation Plan

A seven-year action plan to continue to enhance and preserve green space

IF EA



2015 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
City of Melrose

Melrose Common Playground Renovation

IF



are shown in Figure 1. This activity was repeated at the International Welcome Reception on November 12, 2015.

In addition to this fun and engaging activity that drew people to the Melrose Forward booth, fair attendees were asked to share their ideas for Melrose Forward on brown paper. They also could write what they love about Melrose on a chalkboard and take a picture with it, which was shared on the Melrose Forward's Facebook page after the event. A compilation of all the answers is depicted in Figure 2, which shows the most commonly used phrases.

The Melrose Forward booth also included posters of data about Melrose and a timeline with accomplishments since the last Master Plan in 2004, such as passage of the Affording Housing Ordinance, renovations of athletic fields, and the creation of the Smart Growth Overlay District, as shown in Figure 3.

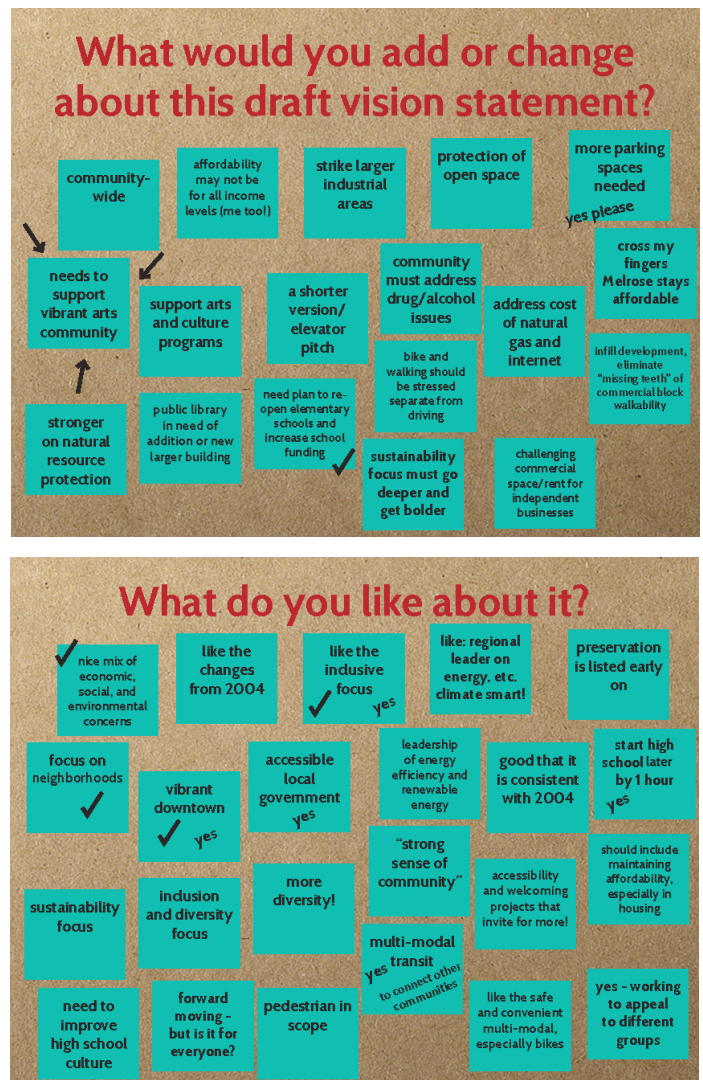
Melrose Forward Visioning Forum

On February 10, 2016, over 75 people came together at the Milano Center for the Melrose Forward Visioning Forum. When attendees first arrived at the forum, they were invited to provide information about themselves and their interest in Melrose Forward, learn about the accomplishments since the 2004 Master Plan, and hear about project activities since Melrose Forward kicked off in August 2015. Additionally, they were asked to read the draft Vision Statement and provide feedback about what they liked about it, what they would add or change, and if they felt that it was relevant and forward-thinking, as shown in Figure 4.

Once everyone had arrived, Melrose Mayor Robert J. Dolan welcomed participants to the forum and introduced the project team. MAPC staff presented an overview of the project to date along with key findings. The audience was asked to call out answers to questions about what they love about Melrose and what they think are the biggest issues facing the community.

All forum participants were given hand-held audience polling devices which they used to answer a series of interactive questions about themselves. The answers to these demographic questions have since been compared to data for Melrose as a whole, as shown in Figure 5. The forum attendees, as a group, were older, similar in terms of racial diversity, more likely to own single family homes, had higher incomes and higher levels of educational attainment, and had shorter commutes than the population of Melrose as

Figure 4: Vision Statement Feedback



a whole. There was a similar mix of residents that have lived in the City for some years versus newcomers. Although the attendees at the forum did not mirror the population, the Master Plan Advisory Committee was charged with considering the populations that were under-represented. A diversity of residents gave input at the Melrose Victorian Fair in September 2015 and the International Welcome Reception in November 2015.

During the last portion of the evening, forum attendees visited stations with information about demographics, housing, economic development, zoning, and transportation. They were asked to share their ideas for the next decade in Melrose at each station.

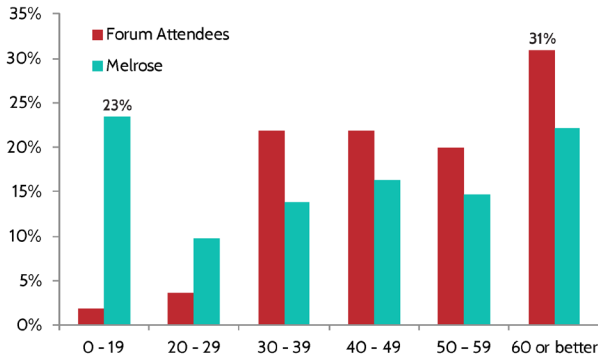
Focus Groups

In June 2016, MAPC held two focus groups in Melrose with assistance from the City's Office of Planning and Community Development, one with a group of seniors, and another with a group of real estate professionals

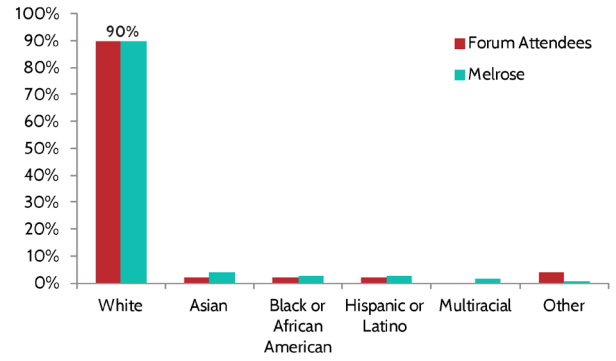


Figure 5: Comparison of Public Forum Attendee Characteristics to Melrose as a Whole

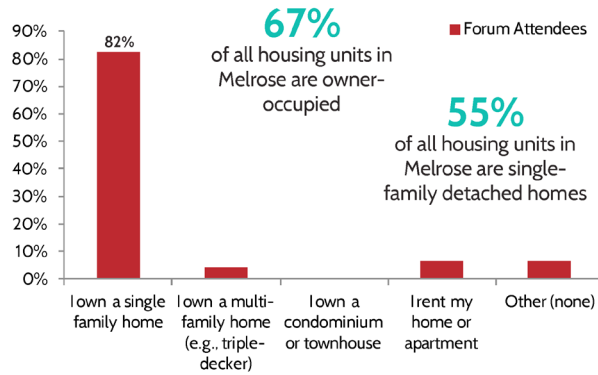
What is your age?



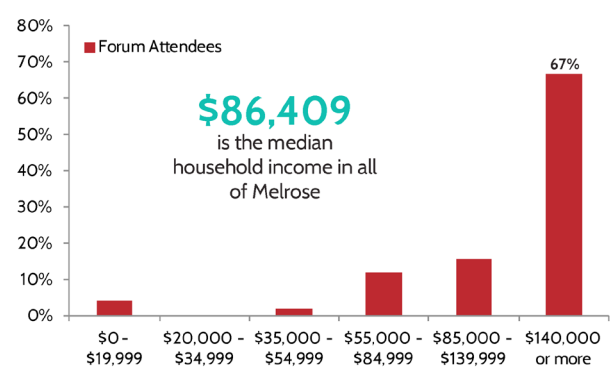
How do you identify yourself?



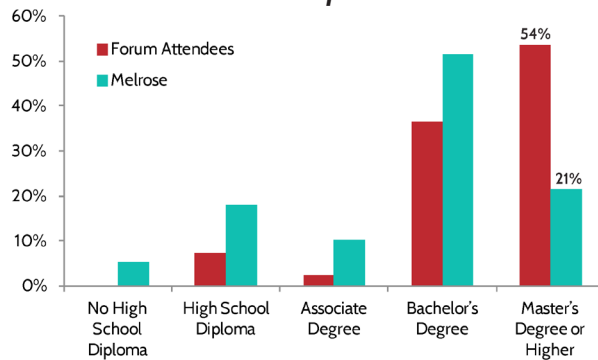
Do you own a home or rent?



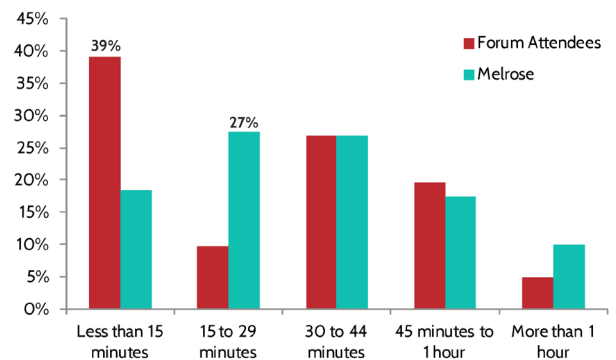
What is your annual household income?



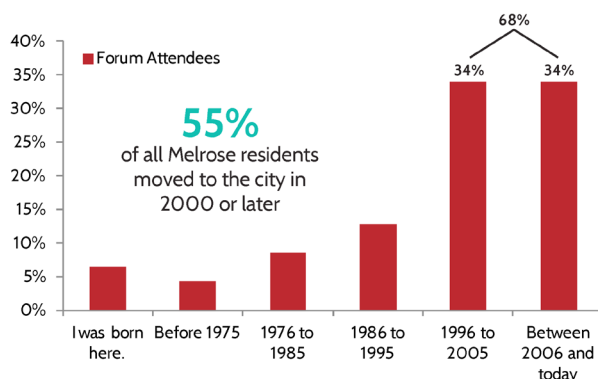
What is the highest level of education you have completed?



What is your travel time to work?



When did you move to Melrose?



Melrose Forward Visioning Forum



Source: TDM Photography

working in the City. The aim of the first focus group was to identify and discuss the major barriers faced by older adults living in Melrose, as well as the ways the City has already been “age friendly.” The goal of the

second focus group was to understand overall how the commercial and residential real estate markets are doing in the City. As it relates to healthy community design for seniors, the City wanted to hear more about affordable housing, mixed-use, transit-oriented development, and specific accommodations for older adults.

Ten people joined MAPC for the focus group at the Milano Center in Melrose on June 14, 2016. During the course of the two-hour meeting, the relevance and complexity of healthy aging and healthy community design was clear. The major areas of discussion were transportation, housing, destinations of interest, and stigmatization of older adults.

On June 29, 2016, MAPC held a second focus group in Melrose, this time with real estate professionals working in the City. We spoke with a mix of eight realtors, lawyers, bankers, Planning Board members, and consultants involved in the many components of residential and commercial development. The focus group attendees provided invaluable insight into Melrose’s real estate market, and were able to provide additional context for the previous focus group with Melrose seniors.

The invaluable information heard during these two focus groups was incorporated into the relevant elements of Melrose Forward, such as housing, transportation, and economic development. The findings from the healthy community design and healthy aging research, as well as from the focus group conversations, were critical for crafting recommendations in the plan that can help promote housing affordability and a high quality of life for older adults living in Melrose.

Other Events and Community Input

As mentioned earlier, OPCD staff and Master Plan Advisory Committee members attended the Melrose Human Rights Commission’s International Welcome Reception in November 2015 and conducted the community attributes activity presented at the Victorian Fair. Participating in this event allowed more people to engage with the project, particularly immigrant families that live in Melrose.

Additionally, OPCD staff met with many community groups and other City of Melrose staff over the course of the project to gather input on the plan. OPCD met with the Melrose Energy Commission, the Conservation Commission, Sustainable Melrose, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Rotary Club, and



Melrose Forward Goals and Strategies Forum



Source: MAPC

other groups to help shape the plan. These meetings helped to solidify the notions of sustainability and healthy aging as guiding principles for the plan.

Melrose Forward Goals and Strategies Forum

On March 30, 2017, the City of Melrose and MAPC held a final public forum for the Melrose Forward planning process at Memorial Hall. This well-attended event purposely coincided with the release of the draft Melrose Forward document and the start of the public comment period. Following introductions by Mayor Dolan and Denise Gaffey, Director of OPCD, MAPC gave a presentation on Melrose Forward's process and major findings.

Attendees were asked to spend the rest of the evening offering their feedback on the goals and strategies proposed in the draft plan. They could do this by writing down their thoughts on the goals and strategies, using

dot stickers to prioritize their top strategies, and marking up maps of Melrose with site-specific ideas.

The wealth of feedback received from the Visioning Forum and other Melrose Forward engagement activities directly informed the draft plan released to the public on March 30. Likewise, the feedback from the Goals and Strategies Forum and public comment period were incorporated into the text and associated recommendations of the final plan.

Comment Period

The public forum kicked off a three-week comment period that concluded on April 23, 2017. During that time, OPCD received written feedback on the draft plan. Each of the comments was cataloged and OPCD, MAPC, and the Master Plan Advisory Committee met on April 27 to discuss the comments and how to address them. Many of the comments helped to refine the plan's recommendations and content.

Planning Board Adoption

OPCD presented the draft plan and updated recommendations to the Planning Board on May 22. The plan was adopted by the Planning Board at its meeting on June 26, 2017.





Location and Regional Context

The City of Melrose, Massachusetts is located in Middlesex County and lies approximately seven miles north of Boston. As shown in Figure 1, it is surrounded by four cities and towns: Wakefield to the north, Saugus to the east, Malden to the south, and Stoneham to the west. Melrose is sandwiched between Interstate 93 and Route 1 and is just a few miles south of Route 128, a major thoroughfare for the State. The City is served directly by public transportation. The MBTA Haverhill Line of the Commuter Rail has three stops in Melrose: Wyoming Hill, Melrose Cedar Park, and Melrose Highlands. The Oak Grove stop of the MBTA Orange Line is located at the border of Melrose and Malden.

Melrose has a geographic area of 4.76 square miles and a population of 26,983 as of the 2010 Census. It is characterized by MAPC as a Streetcar Suburb within the Inner Core. Streetcar Suburbs are high-density suburbs located near the urban core. These village-oriented residential neighborhoods marked by multifamily homes and small apartment buildings often have high historic value. There is very little new growth in these communities because they are essentially built-out. As such, new-growth consists of limited redevelopment, infill, and the expansion of already existing structures. These cities or towns tend to have a moderately diverse population but may be facing a loss of population due to decreasing household sizes, a trend seen throughout the region.

Melrose differs from its neighbors in terms of its community type. Malden is a Metropolitan Core Community, a high density inner city, with a mixed building typology of apartments and houses. While these communities are completely built-out, market pressures encourage a large amount of new growth and development. Stoneham, Wakefield, and Saugus are all Mature Suburban Towns. The housing stock in these communities is predominately owner-occupied single family homes from the mid-century. Unlike Streetcar Suburbs, they have relatively stable populations and some vacant land available for redevelopment. Melrose has approximately half the population density of Malden but between 1.7 and 2.5 times the densities of the other adjoining towns.

The City of Melrose is self-sufficient in that it boasts

a variety of services for residents ranging from employment to shopping to recreation, among others. The “center” of the City could be considered its central business district, Downtown Melrose. This area of Main Street between Grove Street and Essex/Upham Streets includes many family-owned stores, municipal buildings, and religious facilities. This area, designated as a local historic district in 1979 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 as the Melrose Town Center Historic District, was largely developed in the early 1900s.

Government Structure

The City of Melrose is located in Massachusetts's 5th Congressional district. It has seven wards and 14 precincts. As of 2017, it is represented by Paul Brodeur (D) in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Jason Lewis (D) in the Massachusetts Senate, Katherine Clark (D) in the U.S. House of Representatives, and Edward J. Markey (D) and Elizabeth Warren (D) in the U.S. Senate.

The current City mayor is Robert J. Dolan (D), who has held this office since 2002. As of 2007, Melrose mayors are elected to four-year terms and must sit as a member of the School Committee. The City is also served by an eleven-member Board of Alderman. The entire city elects the four At-Large Aldermen while voters of individual wards elect the seven Ward Aldermen. All aldermen are elected for two-year terms. Elections for both the mayor and aldermen are held in odd-numbered years.

There are 31 city departments that manage the day to day operations of Melrose. These departments are listed in alphabetical order on the City's website as: Animal Control, Assessor's Office, Auditing Department, Cemetery Department, City Clerk, City Yard, Council on Aging, Elections, Emergency Management, Engineering, Fire Department, Fire Prevention, Health Department, Human Resources, Information Technology, Inspection Services, Library, Mayor's Office, Memorial Hall, Office of Planning and Community Development, Park Department, Parking Office, Pine Banks Park, Police Department, Public Works Department, Recreation Department, Retirement, School Administration, Treasurer/Collector's Office, Veteran Services, and Water Department.



Figure 1: Melrose Regional Context

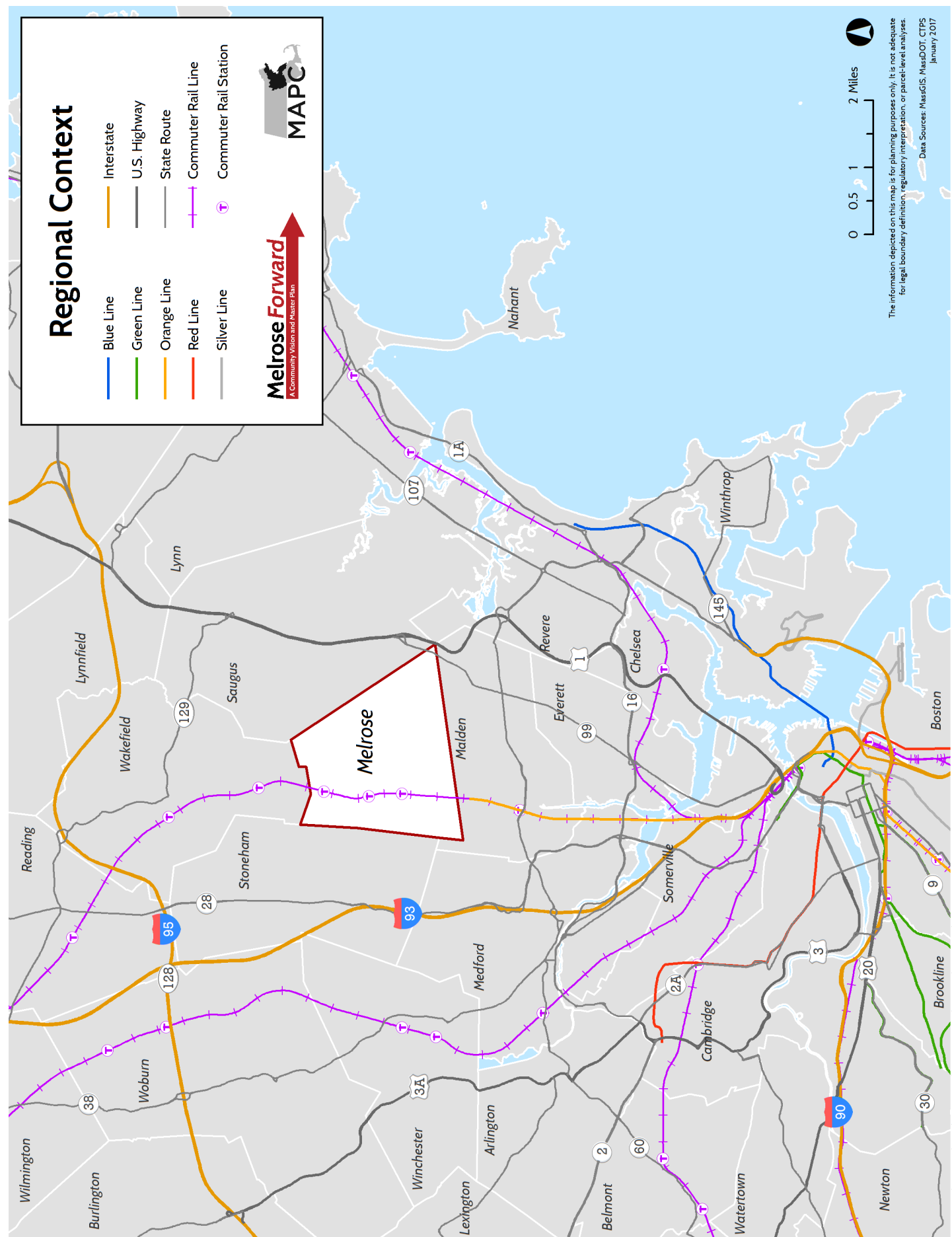
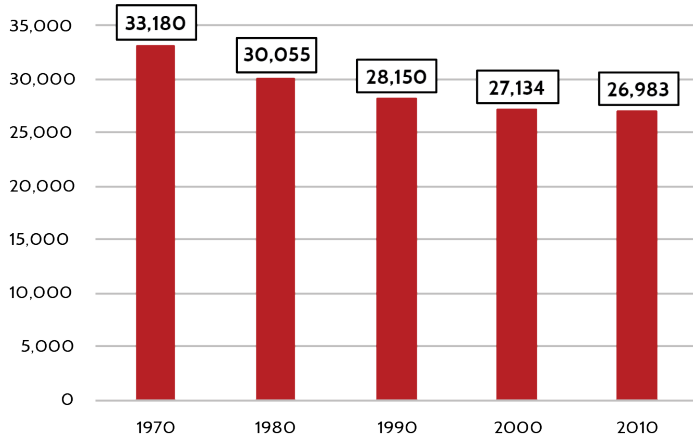
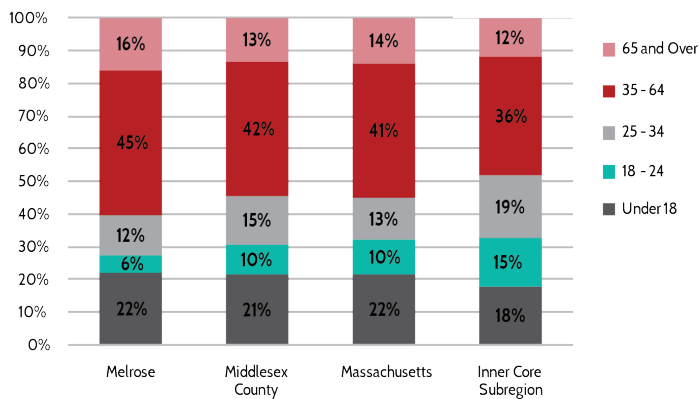


Figure 2: Total Population, 1970 to 2010



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 4: Population by Age, 2010



Source: U.S. Census

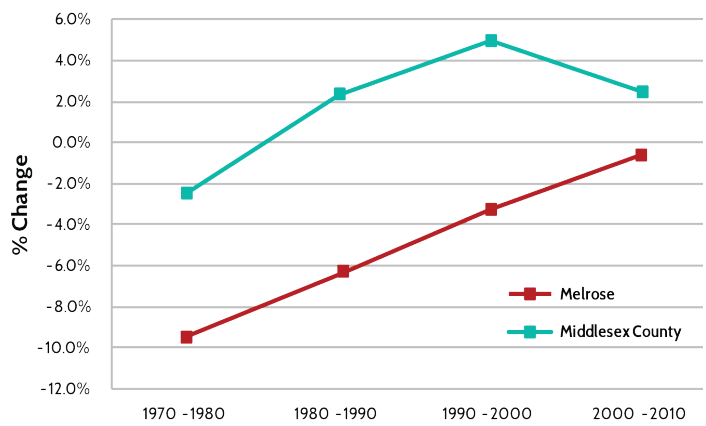
The citizens of Melrose elect the members of the Board of Aldermen and the School Committee, the two governmental boards and committees in the city. There are 30 multiple-member appointive organizations including the Board of Health, Planning Board, and Traffic Commission. There are eight school site councils representing each of the schools in Melrose.

Population Characteristics

Population Size and Age

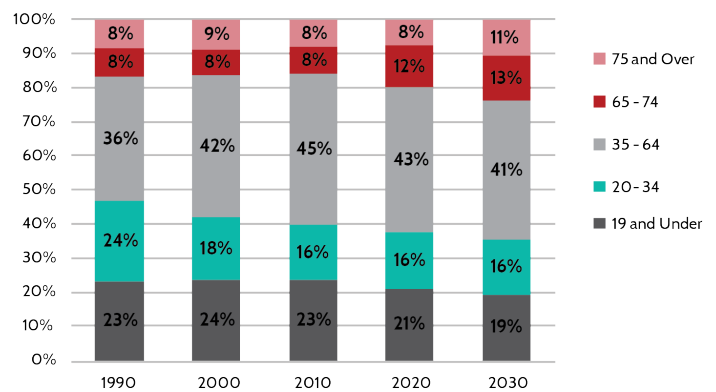
Melrose is a small-sized city that has experienced a population decline since it peaked in 1970 at 33,180 people (see Figure 2). Melrose's total population in 2010 was 26,983. Population decline has slowed to 0.6% in the past decade from almost 10% between 1970 and 1980. Recent Census data suggests that population may be rebounding. While population decline has slowed, the City has still not experienced the same growth as the rest of Middlesex County and

Figure 3: Population Change by Decade



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 5: Population Projections by Age, 1990 to 2030



Source: U.S. Census and Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, Stronger Region Scenario, MAPC 2014

Massachusetts, which grew 3.1% and 2.6% between 2000 and 2010, respectively (see Figure 3).

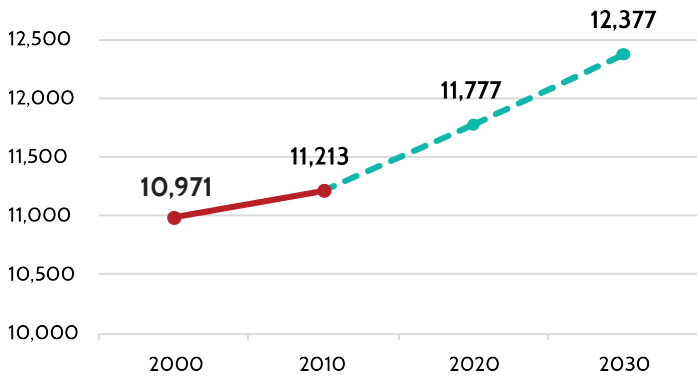
Close to half (45%) of the current population is between 35 and 64 years old (see Figure 4). Overall, the City's residents are slightly older than those in the rest of the Inner Core Subregion where 36% of residents are between 35 and 64. Over the next 10 years, the senior population, or those 65 years and older, will experience the most significant growth (see Figure 5). Another indicator of this trend is the City's rising median age (39.4 in 2000 and 41.9 in 2010).

Households

Since 2000, Melrose has added households at a slightly faster pace (4%) than Middlesex County and the state (both 3.4%). As shown in Figure 6, the number of households in Melrose is expected to continue increasing by 2020 and 2030. Given that the average household size has also shrunk the City (2.5 in 2009 and 2.37 in 2013), these figures suggest trends such as



Figure 6: Household Projections, 2000 to 2030



Source: U.S. Census and Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, Stronger Region Scenario, MAPC 2014

single people and couples are moving in, families having fewer children, and parents becoming empty nesters. Non-family households make up 37% of households in Melrose which is about the same as that of the county and the state.

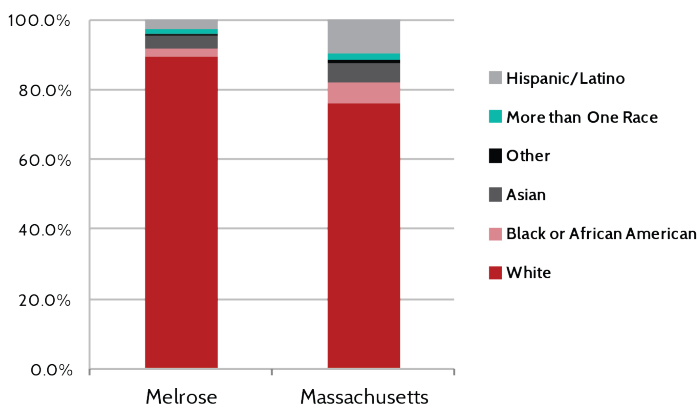
Meanwhile, the City's household profile is quite diverse, as 1 in 3 households have either senior householders and/or school-aged children. The group of householders aged 60 to 74 is expected to grow the most between 2010 and 2030, from 2,396 to 3,370 households, as shown in Figure 7. The number of households with householders aged 75 and above is expected to increase from 1,531 and 2,081 during those same years.

Race and Ethnicity

Overall, Melrose is less racially and ethnically diverse than Massachusetts, as almost 90% of its population is White Non-Hispanic, as shown in Figure 8.

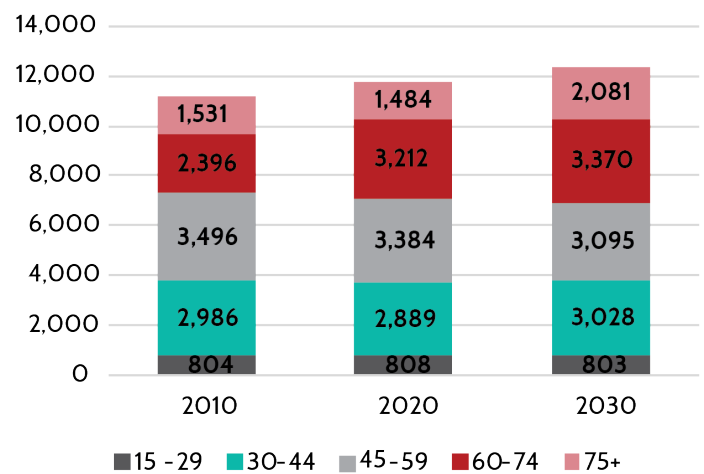
Melrose has become more diverse. Between 2000

Figure 8: Race and Ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census 2010

Figure 7: Household Projections by Age, 1990 to 2030



Source: U.S. Census and Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, Stronger Region Scenario, MAPC 2014

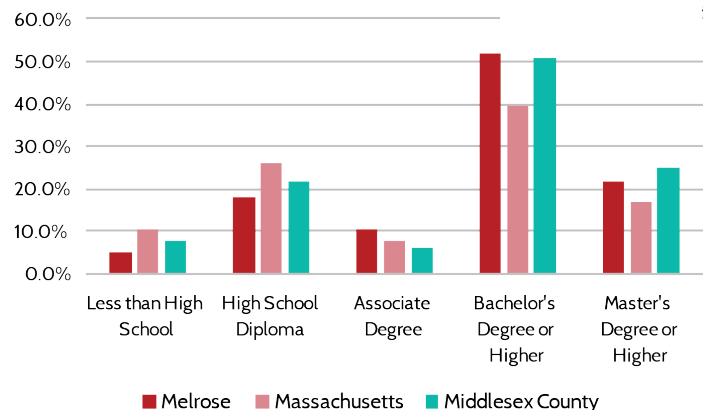
and 2010, the White Non-Hispanic population declined from 95%, while all other races and ethnicities increased during that decade. According to American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates, approximately 15% of Melrose residents speak a language other than English at home and 13% are foreign born.

Educational Attainment and Income

Melrose residents are well educated, which is illustrated by the fact that 62.2% have completed an Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree, or Master's Degree, compared to 48.2% of Massachusetts residents (see Figure 9).

The City of Melrose is more affluent than the rest of Middlesex County and the State. The median household income in Melrose is \$85,521, compared to \$85,118 in Middlesex County and \$68,563 in Massachusetts. While

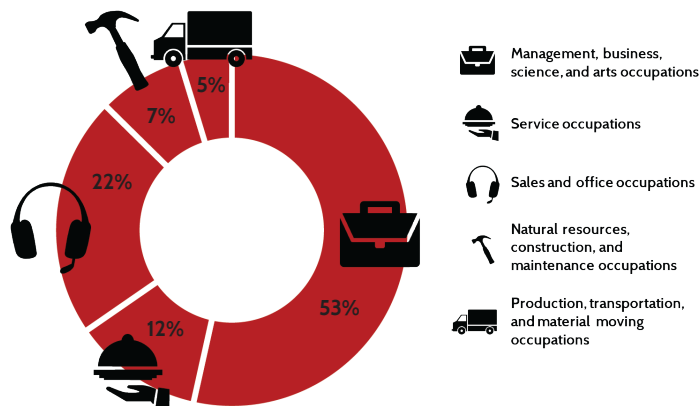
Figure 9: Educational Attainment



Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates

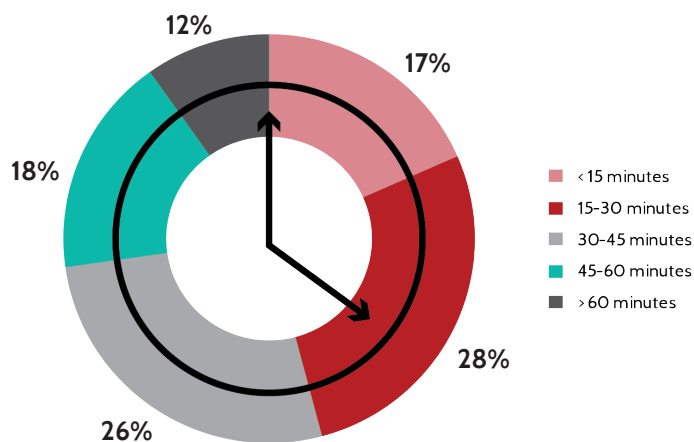


Figure 10: Occupation



Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates

Figure 12: Travel Time to Work



Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates

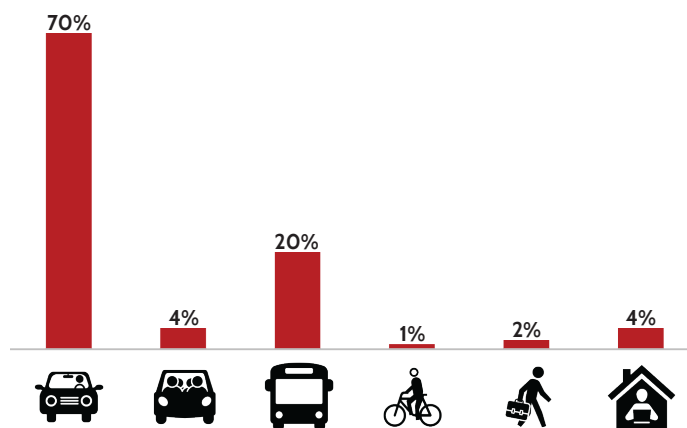
the City has a median household income that is quite high, there is a great discrepancy between the incomes of homeowners and renters; the median household income for Melrose owners is \$107,359 and \$49,243 for renters. Associated with relatively high incomes is a low poverty rate for Melrose (3.4%). The poverty rate for Melrose is less than half of Middlesex County's rate (8.3%) and almost a third of Massachusetts' (11.6%).

Employment and Transportation to Work

More than half of Melrose's population works in management, business, science, and art occupations; another 22% work in sales and office occupations; and 12% work in service occupations (see Figure 10). Unemployment is lower in Melrose than in the state as a whole.

While 70% of residents drive alone to work, almost 20% take public transportation and 4% carpool (see Figure 11). A much higher proportion of residents in

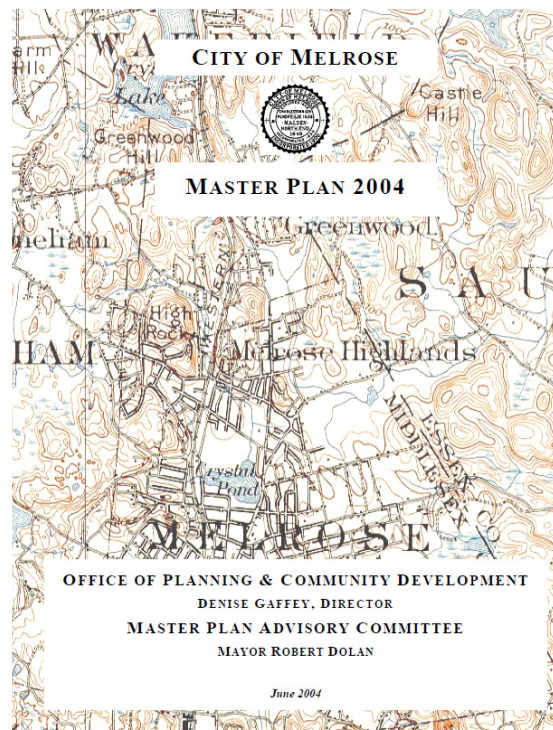
Figure 11: Transportation to Work



Source: ACS 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates

Melrose commute to work via public transportation compared to Middlesex County (11%) and Massachusetts (10%). Almost half of Melrose residents can get to work within half an hour, though it takes 30 to 45 minutes for another 26% of residents to get to work (see Figure 12).

Recent Planning Initiatives



2004 Master Plan

The City of Melrose completed its last Master Plan in June 2004. This comprehensive document explores current conditions (as of 2004) and outlines goals, objectives, and strategies for aspects of the city



related to land use; housing; economic development; transportation; public facilities and infrastructure; natural resources, open space and recreation; and historic and cultural resources. The last segment of the document, the Implementation Plan, identifies the time frame and party responsible for completion of each of the strategies identified in the plan. In the ten plus years since the 2004 Master Plan was completed, the City of Melrose has completed and made ongoing progress on most of the strategies put forward by the plan. For example, in order to better control the impacts of new and much larger developments, the City adopted a Site Plan Review Ordinance in 2005. Other notable initiatives that have been completed and implemented include:

- Creating an Affordable Housing Incentive Program Ordinance;
- Creating a Smart Growth Overlay District;
- Creating a Rail Corridor Overlay District;
- Receiving federal funds and MassWorks grants for improving the attractiveness of the neighborhood business districts;
- Evaluating and redesigning the crosswalk at the intersection of Melrose Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway;
- Developing a system of walking trails through the Mt. Hood Memorial Park;
- Developing a comprehensive inventory of historic homes and buildings;
- Evaluating the need for and studying the feasibility of additional parking downtown; and
- Remediation of areas that frequently flood.

Open Space and Recreation Plan

Melrose updated its previous Open Space and Recreation Plan from 2007 in March 2015. The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for the preservation, enhancement, and expansion of open space and recreation opportunities in the City. The plan examines the condition of Melrose's existing park and open space inventory, in addition to describing improvements made since the 2007 plan. There have been additions to Melrose's recreation facilities, such as the Melrose Skate Park in 2008, extensive improvements to almost all playing fields, renovations to school playgrounds, and upgrades to City parks and playgrounds. The 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan also provides goals, recommendations, and a seven-year policy action plan. Key recommendations include locating new recreational facilities in areas that evenly distribute services, improving opportunities for trail use, acquiring unprotected parcels that are critical for providing wildlife corridors, and developing a citizen participation

process that will include residents and community groups in the ongoing designing and planning of park improvements.

Commuter Rail Corridor Study

The Commuter Rail Corridor Study was conducted by MAPC in October 2013 in order to investigate opportunities and impediments for growth and development along the Tremont/Essex Street Corridor, an area adjacent to the Haverhill Commuter Line with easy access to downtown, schools, and recreational opportunities. Residents, businesses, and property owners along the Corridor agreed that improvements to the area, such as adding new development in a few key locations and improving infrastructure, must maintain the walkability and ease of access that currently exists there. The study also found that residents would like more restaurants and services located near the train stations in addition to pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements that would better connect the downtown to surrounding neighborhoods.

Key recommendations from the study include creating a transit-oriented overlay district for the Corridor, increasing allowable building heights and floor area ratios, improving pedestrian crosswalks, providing more streetscape treatments, and identifying opportunities for locating murals and public art. In 2014 and 2015, the City of Melrose implemented zoning changes in the three station areas and along the Corridor. Additionally, the City received MassWorks grant funding to make improvements to the Melrose Highlands station area and to the Essex Street corridor between Cedar Park and downtown. These zoning changes and physical improvements have helped to set the stage for transit-oriented redevelopment in Melrose.

Parking in Downtown Melrose

Completed in March 2012 by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, the Parking in Downtown Melrose report was created to provide a framework for managing downtown parking to best ensure that the parking needs of residents and visitors are being met. This project engaged the community through a hands-on "Parking Open House" and a Parking Survey. The engagement revealed that both customers and employees of downtown perceive that it takes a relatively long time to search for a parking space, people would be willing to walk a bit farther from more remote parking if it meant that it was easier to find a spot, and that even more people would shop downtown if parking were more convenient. The City created Parking Utilization Profiles and conducted a Spatial Analysis



of Parking Utilization which broke down the demand for parking in both public and private facilities and on weekdays and weekends.

This study revealed that there is actually an excess of parking spaces downtown during most times of day, and that occasional pressure on spaces could be addressed with minor adjustments to the parking management system. Recommendations for the short-term include increasing time limits in parking lots, reconfiguring the Dill's Court parking lot, improved signage, and implementing a tiered commercial permit program. For the long-term, recommendations include uncoupling parking from land uses, creating a bicycle parking program, and implementing smart parking technology should there be a need for priced parking to manage a significantly increased parking demand.

Main Street Corridor Study

In January 2012, MAPC completed a Main Street Corridor Study for the City of Melrose and the Towns of Reading and Wakefield. This study looked to improve upon the transportation network in the three communities along Main Street by reducing automobile traffic as well as promoting and improving infrastructure for walking, bicycling, and public transportation. At the community forum that took place in Melrose, residents identified areas in need of improvements: better lighting and more bicycle parking at Oak Grove Station; better pedestrian connections near Ell Pond and Melrose-Wakefield Hospital; and better bicycle accommodations along Main Street and adjacent roadways where roads are too narrow for cyclists alongside cars. Recommended strategies that emerged from this study include increasing visibility for pedestrian crossings, exploring a bicycle right-of-way along the Haverhill Line, and encouraging seniors to more frequently utilize public transportation.

Integrating Healthy Community Design into Melrose Forward

During the community engagement process of this Master Plan, a number of themes emerged consistently. The rising cost of housing in Melrose was mentioned repeatedly, with residents expressing concern that people who had lived in Melrose for many years could no longer afford to do so. Another theme discussed regularly was the fact that Melrose has an aging population with distinct needs regarding affordability, transportation, access, and more. The rising cost of housing and an aging population are very much related as seniors on a fixed income may struggle to remain

in Melrose if they cannot find an affordable housing option.

In order to better understand the needs of seniors in Melrose and how the City can be a better partner to this large sector of the population, MAPC utilized funding from the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) to study the emerging area of healthy community design, with a focus on healthy aging. This funding enabled the project team to be able to include more opportunities for older adults to participate in decision-making for Melrose Forward, as well as to ensure that the plan incorporated age-friendly policy recommendations.

Introduction to Healthy Community Design

There are strong connections between the way communities are designed and the health and well-being of their residents. "Healthy communities" are those that have green spaces, have opportunities for physical activity, are accessible, foster opportunities for social interaction, and are safe (and give off the perception of safety). These desirable community attributes do more than just provide amenities for residents—they also impact health. The most researched are the health implications resulting from clean air and water and those of increased physical activity.

Healthy community design involves an integrated approach to examine and improve upon the physical conditions of a community in order to promote positive health outcomes. This comprehensive effort thus encourages additional, and perhaps less obvious, health outcomes than those listed above. Other benefits of healthy community design include reducing injury, improving mental health, improving social connections and a sense of community, increasing access to healthy food, minimizing the effects of global climate change, and maximizing our prepared response to it. Such design can better the community as a whole by strengthening the existing social fabric and providing fair access for all residents to jobs, education, and important services.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), the regional planning authority for the Pioneer Valley in Massachusetts, has done extensive research on healthy community design, in addition to crafting strategies for creating healthier and safer communities in the state. In June 2014, the PVPC released its second edition of *Healthy Community Design Toolkit: Leveraging Positive Change*, which included a focus on healthy aging.¹ This work highlighted the need for healthy community design in all cities and towns. Healthy aging has also



been recognized by the World Health Organization which has created its own guide for age-friendly cities with an extensive “Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities.”² This research outlines a fundamental tenet of healthy community design: if the public realm is great and functional for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be great for everyone.³ MAPC referenced the *Health Design Toolkit* and the Age-Friendly Cities checklist to develop strategies for integrating healthy community design in Melrose.

The rise of suburbanization and the reliance on the personal motor vehicle following World War II contributed to the sprawling landscape seen today in many communities across the United States. Such development patterns that prioritized automobile transportation and provided many parking opportunities led to destinations locating farther and farther apart from one another. Further, zoning trends encouraged the homogenization of uses, effectively segregating housing from commercial and industrial uses. Under this development scenario, it became increasingly difficult to walk or bike to destinations, and less efficient to provide transit service to them. Healthy community design is one of many techniques designed to re-think the auto-centric development model. It also goes beyond this to improve safety, quality of life, service provision, affordability, and more.

Fortunately, the City of Melrose has avoided many of the negative consequences of sprawl, thanks to its Victorian-era development patterns and proactive policies since the 1970s, such as zoning changes and transit advocacy, which helped to preserve a pedestrian-friendly downtown and retain access to transit. Much of Melrose was developed in the early 1900s as a “streetcar suburb” and that character has remained. The City is relatively well-served by transit, with three commuter rail stops, proximity to the MBTA Orange Line at Oak Grove Station, and bus routes to Oak Grove and points north. It also has walkable neighborhoods, mixed-use districts in Downtown and surrounding the three commuter rail stations, and proximity to parks and other facilities for both active and passive recreation.

The City has many progressive zoning policies, including zoning to promote transit-oriented development around Oak Grove Station and more recently, along the commuter rail corridor. Zoning overlays in these areas encourage mixed-use development, reduced setbacks, more housing options, and streetscape improvements to encourage walking and biking.

Downtown Melrose has many amenities to support

residents as well as visitors: grocery stores, laundromats, tailors, pharmacies, doctors’ offices, convenience stores, gyms and fitness studios including the YMCA, salons, boutique stores, and restaurants. City Hall and Memorial Hall, where many civic and cultural events happen, are in Downtown as well. The Melrose Public Library and the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital are both about 0.3 miles from City Hall.

With respect to older adults in Melrose, the City offers resources such as the Council on Aging. The Melrose Council on Aging serves residents age 60 and over, by supporting aging in place and providing free local transportation, services and information, and outreach. The Milano Center, run by the Council on Aging, provides a gathering place for local seniors, where social, recreational, health, and educational programs are offered, with participation by 750-900 seniors every month.⁴

The Aging Factor

Like most communities in the Boston region, the proportion of Melrose’s population over age 65 is expected to grow significantly in the next 15 years. According to US Census 2010 data, 4,260 people in Melrose were age 65 or older in 2010 and made up about 16% of the City’s population. MAPC projects that this share will grow to 20% by 2020 with about 5,400 residents 65 and older; and to 24% by 2030 with about 6,600 residents 65 and older.

Overall, the health of Melrose residents over the age of 65 is on par with their counterparts in the rest of the state. Melrose seniors actually have lower rates of diabetes, high cholesterol, and osteoarthritis/ rheumatoid arthritis compared to seniors in the rest of the state. However, older adults in Melrose have higher than average rates for emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and nursing home stays.

Healthy community design is particularly relevant for aging populations. The built environment of a person’s home and neighborhood has an increasing effect on them as they age. Whether or not an older adult has a physical disability, a person’s daily travel radius tends to shrink with age. As their physical health starts to decline, getting around becomes more and more difficult. Something in the built environment that was once an inconvenient barrier can become a deterrent to going to a certain place or leaving their house at all. Not only does this impact quality of life, but it can lead to further declines in mental and physical health.

A key element of healthy community design is the



availability of options, especially in terms of housing options for older adults. The overwhelming majority of seniors would prefer to age-in-place in their own home as opposed to moving to a nursing home. However, their current home may not be meeting their needs, whether they may be physical, economic, family, or lifestyle. In many cases, the homes of older adults are lacking the modifications that allow for safety and independence. On the other hand, homes may not be designed to encourage physical activity, or located in places that would make physical activity easier. For example, they may not be located within walking distance to destinations and services that would allow for physical activity exertion. In general, communities lack options for seniors to downsize to desirable and affordable units that are in central locations.

Another principal of healthy community design that is particularly relevant for older adults is what the Healthy Community Design Toolkit calls “destinations of interest.” Whether they are stores or restaurants, healthcare facilities, senior centers, or religious institutions, trips out of the home to such destinations are important for more than just obtaining goods and services—they are essential for staying active and remaining involved in one’s community. Like accessibility issues with housing, there are impediments related to destinations that make them inconvenient and even dangerous for seniors. Such impediments include unclear and unsafe routes through parking lots, lack of shaded benches or public restrooms, and even parallel parking which is often more difficult for older adults. Moreover, many communities lack park-once destinations that allow individuals to park close to a variety of destinations where they can fulfill multiple goals in close proximity.

In terms of transportation, the availability of options for older adults again appears as a crucial element of healthy community design. The ability to get around one’s community, whether it be via driving, walking, biking, or public transportation, is very important for ensuring self-reliance and maintaining an older adult’s physical and emotional well-being. Unfortunately, due to the land use and zoning patterns previously discussed, transportation for most people in both the country and the state are limited, especially for seniors. When a variety of transit options and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities are lacking, driving becomes the only choice for getting around one’s community. Although older adults have fewer crashes per capita than other age groups, they are significantly more likely to be severely injured or killed if they are involved in a car accident.

Design elements that are good for seniors have benefits for the whole community. Crosswalks that are safer for older adults are safer for people of all ages. Having multiple transportation options for seniors means multi-modal options for everyone. Having diverse housing options not only benefits older adults, but also millennials, families, and more. As such, healthy community design that incorporates elements of healthy aging does not happen at the expense of other age groups—it instead modifies the physical conditions of an area in order to promote positive health outcomes for all.

Addressing Healthy Community Design

Principles related to healthy community design for older adults, such as encouraging affordable housing and transportation options, were integrated into Melrose’s 2004 Master Plan as the City has long acknowledged the importance of maintaining a high quality of life for all of its residents. A number of the strategies detailed in the 2004 have since been implemented.

In order to promote policies to ensure that residents of all ages and incomes can remain in Melrose, in 2004 the City adopted an Affordable Housing Incentive Special Permit which requires that residential and mixed-use developments with five or more residential units include 10% of the units as affordable to families making between 50% and 80% of area median income. Through the creation of a Rail Corridor Overlay District, the City now allows for assisted living facilities and continuing care retirement communities of appropriate scale.

Parking ratios in transit locations have been reduced to free up more land for development and to encourage residents to utilize public transportation. Through an ongoing process, the City has added bike racks at area parks, commuter rail stations, and City facilities. It continues to identify existing roadways preferred for bicycles and locations for roadway improvements.

To improve pedestrian safety, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in consultation with the City of Melrose, evaluated and redesigned the crosswalk at the intersection of Melrose Street and the Lynn Fells Parkway. Ongoing initiatives include installing traffic signals that are ADA compliant, upgrading pedestrian crossing signals, and identifying other intersections that should be redesigned for safety. In order to maintain sidewalks and fund their repair, the City has established an inventory and priority list of needed sidewalk repairs, annually allocates funds



for sidewalk repair with concrete, and has created a sidewalk fund to receive contributions from developers.

In order to respond to neighborhood speeding and pedestrian safety issues, the City of Melrose has implemented a variety of traffic calming measures with assistance from MassWorks grants. Street trees are included in roadway reconstruction projects and, with assistance from the Bike and Pedestrian Committee, the City has implemented an education program with regard to traffic and pedestrian safety.

Current Challenges in Melrose

A January 2015 survey of seniors conducted by Civitas Strategies and the Councils on Aging in Melrose, Stoneham, and Wakefield (with the bulk of respondents from Melrose) indicated that key challenges identified by seniors were the ability to pay bills, remain in their current homes, attend a variety of events, and obtain knowledge of devices/technology.

Housing affordability is a challenge for all residents of Melrose. While Melrose was selected by Realtor.com in August 2015 as the “hottest ZIP code in the U.S.”⁵ the flipside of this recognition is that Melrose is becoming a more expensive place to live. Melrose does not currently meet the 10% threshold on the Commonwealth’s Subsidized Housing Inventory, which means that housing for low- and moderate-income households is in short supply.⁶

Additionally, cost burden for all households is of concern. When a household pays more than 30% of its household income for housing, it is considered cost burdened. Severe cost burden is when a household pays more than 50% of its income on housing. Of all owner-occupied housing in Melrose, about one in three is cost burdened and about one in ten is severely cost burdened.⁷ Around 40% of renter-occupied households are cost burdened, and about 20% are severely cost burdened. About a third of the Elderly Family Households are cost burdened and more than half of the Elderly Non-Family Households are cost burdened. When families are cost burdened, they may have difficulty affording other necessities such as food, medical care, clothing, and transportation.

While Melrose has MBTA transit access and transportation services via the Council on Aging, and is a relatively walkable community, there are still improvements that can be made with regards to getting around the City. Currently, MBTA transportation is geared towards commuters who travel into Boston for work; service is limited outside weekday commuting

hours. Additionally, accessibility of sidewalks and at transit stops could be improved.

Due to the presence of these challenges and community concerns about them, the City of Melrose and MAPC held focus groups on these topics with seniors and members of the real estate community, which are described in the Making the Plan section. The issues raised at the focus groups were also echoed throughout the entire public engagement process. This plan studies challenges related to healthy community design in Melrose and provides recommendations for addressing the challenges.

From Melrose Today to Melrose Forward

This overview of Melrose’s location and regional context, government structure, population characteristics, recent planning efforts, and the effort to incorporate healthy community design into the planning process set the stage for understanding how to move Melrose Forward. The chapters that follow will go deeper on specific topics, and all of it comes together at the end with a plan for implementing the Melrose Forward recommendations.

Endnotes

¹*Healthy Community Design Toolkit*, 2nd Edition (2014). Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

²*Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* (2007). World Health Organization.

³<http://880cities.org/index.php/about/who-we-are>

⁴<http://www.cityofmelrose.org/departments/council-on-aging/>

⁵<http://www.realtor.com/news/trends/top-10-hottest-zip-codes-in-america/>

⁶<http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/40b-plan/>

⁷<http://www.housing.ma/melrose/profile>





Historic and Cultural Resources

Melrose boasts a variety of historical and cultural resources. Since the City was first settled, its woodlands and ponds have been valued natural resources, and since its incorporation in 1850, its built character, including its architecture, parks, and streets, have contributed to the City's legacy.

Complementing the City's Victorian era physical characteristics and historical resources are cultural amenities that speak to the spirit of the community. Melrose is home to vibrant performing arts, fine arts, and visual arts organizations. Performing arts groups that have operated for many decades and strong traditions of cultural events create a sense of pride in the community. Events for all ages and in different styles are hosted throughout the year. Providing funding for these groups is the Melrose Cultural Council, the Melrose Messina Fund for the Arts, the City, and private sponsors, which have allowed smaller, homegrown events to occur.

Melrose's character today reflects the vision and commitment of the City's earlier leaders. Preserving, renewing, and refreshing the Melrose's historical and cultural resources is critical to ensuring that these resources stay vital and meet the City's needs.

A Brief History of Melrose

While little has been documented about settlement in and around Melrose during the "Contact Period", 1500-1620, historians have surmised that trails around water bodies such as Ell Pond and Swains Pond, "major lithic quarries northeast of Wyoming Cemetery" and trails and likely "quarry and workshop sites" around Mount Hood are evidence that this was "undoubtedly an area with a large, if seasonal, native population." The subsistence pattern at that time was "wintering and ice fishing" and "upland hunting and gathering."¹ Roads that still exist today, such as Main Street, Lebanon Street, and Lynde Street, which form a triangular path between Ell Pond and Boston Rock to its south, as well as connections in the vicinity of Vinton Street, Franklin Street, and Howard Streets, around Forest Street and Swains Pond Avenue, and around Washington Street near Black Rock and Spot Pond in Stoneham, were likely built along routes dating back to this period. According to the Melrose Centennial Committee's publication *Melrose: Past, Present, and Future*, a signal

station at Mount Hood was used by the Wampanoag tribe to communicate with other tribes as far away as Mount Wachusett.

In 1633, after the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, present day Melrose was part of Charlestown.² In 1649, the areas that today are known as Malden, Everett, and Melrose separated from Charlestown and became Malden. Melrose became an independent town in 1850. On October 3, 1898 at a special town meeting, "the citizens of Melrose voted to become a city" and the City Charter was enacted shortly thereafter in 1899.³ The City of Melrose was named after a town in Scotland.⁴

English settlers arrived in the 1630s-1650s,⁵ but the town had a small population, probably around "150-200 people by 1765."⁶ Economic activity during this early colonial settlement included agriculture and fishing. There were grist mills and sawmills installed near the ponds during the 1600s and 1700s.⁷

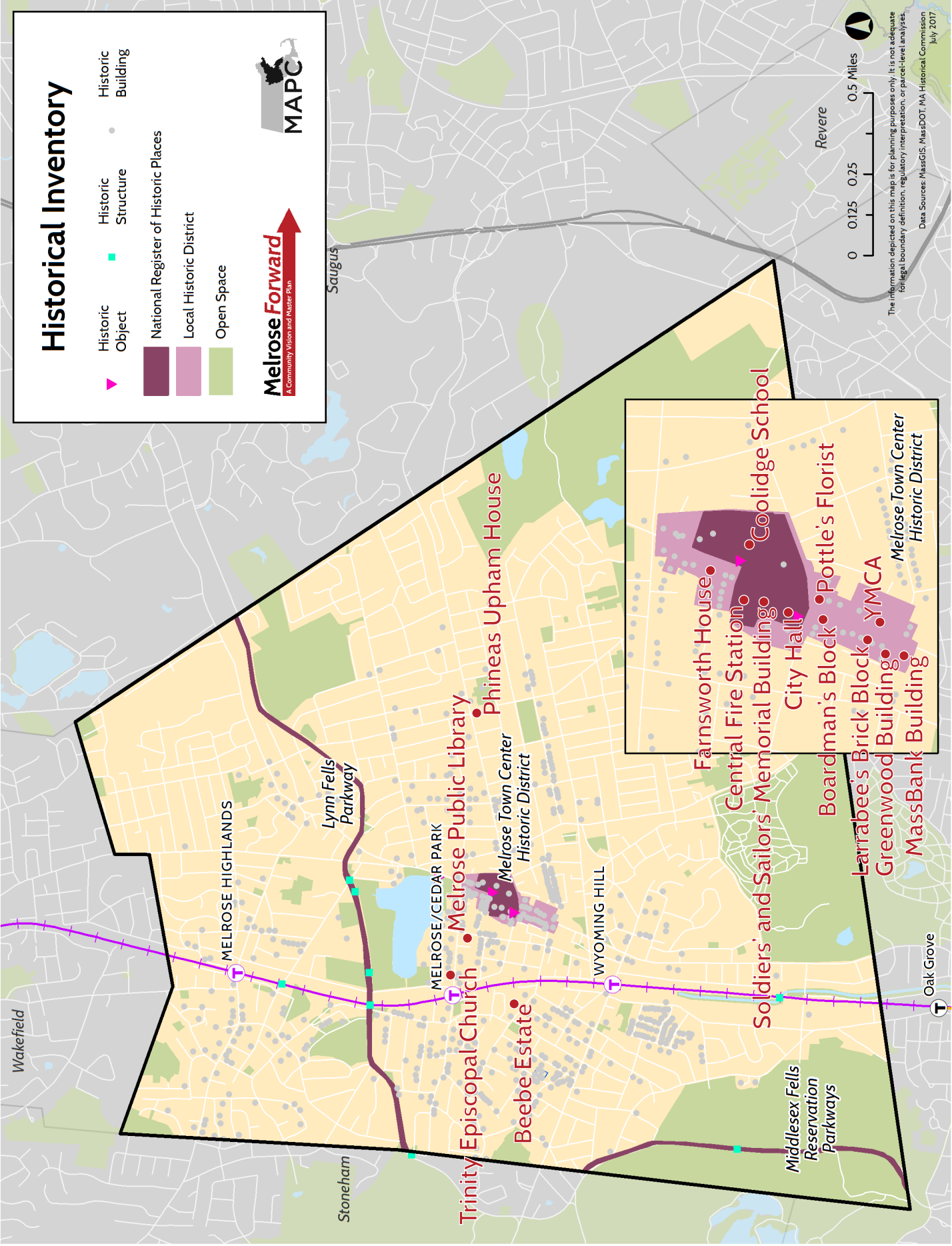
The population continued to grow slowly during the Federal Period (1775-1830), with an estimated total of 30-35 houses and a population of 300-350 people by 1830.⁸ During this period, commercial activity was noted in Melrose center, and at least one church and one school were established. Agriculture continued to be a primary economic activity during this period, and shoemaking and commercial ice cutting were also notable economic activities.⁹

The Boston & Maine railroad was built in 1845 with stations at Wyoming Hill and Melrose Highlands. The arrival of the railroad spurred exponential population growth: in 1845, there were only about 400 people and 35 houses in Melrose, by 1850 the population had increased to 1,260, and by 1870 reach 3,414. About 13% of the population in 1865 was foreign born. Residential development around the center of Melrose began to flourish during this period, and a three-story commercial block on Main Street was constructed prior to the Civil War.¹⁰ Melrose Common, Melrose's first park, was established in 1856.¹¹ Also in 1856, the City purchased land to establish Wyoming Cemetery.¹²

During the Late Industrial Period (1870-1915), streetcar routes were expanded to link Melrose to Malden and Wakefield along Main Street, as well as a loop to the east along Upham and Grove Streets, and another



Figure 1: Melrose Historical Map



route along Howard Street to Saugus. In addition to the continued residential and commercial growth seen in the mid-1850s, during this period industrial uses began to crop up along the rail corridor. The population of Melrose was 16,880 in 1915, and in 1905 about 22% of the population was foreign born. During this period, several more churches, civic buildings, community facilities, and schools were built, including City Hall in 1873 and the YMCA in 1897.¹³ With a grant from Andrew Carnegie, the Melrose Public Library was built in 1904. Many of the city's parks and open spaces were also established; in 1891 the Sewall Estate bequeathed land to establish what is today known as Sewall Woods Park north of Lynn Fells Parkway, the Converse Estate donated land in Malden and Melrose to establish what is today known as Pine Banks Park, and Ell Pond Park was established in 1910.

The City continued to develop at a steady pace as the automobile became a more dominant mode of transportation. In the Early Modern Period (1915-1940), the streetcar route to Malden Center was discontinued and roadways such as the Metropolitan District Commission East Fellsway were built. Between 1931 and 1937, the City developed the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course with assistance from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The City's population was 25,333 in 1940.¹⁴

In the 1960s, families leaving Boston began to view Melrose as a place to live for a few years before moving even further away from the city. This perception of Melrose changed with the arrival of rapid transit in the mid-1970s, when the Orange Line was extended to Oak Grove Station in Malden, making Melrose more accessible to those commuting to and from Boston. New residents were drawn to Melrose not only for its Victorian architecture, but also its accessibility. During the 1970s, the population of Melrose peaked. The 1970 Census recorded 33,180 residents in Melrose.¹⁵

Since its peak in 1970, the City's population has steadily declined; in 1980 the population was 30,055, and it continued to drop through 2010, when the population was recorded at 26,983. This trend may be shifting, as recent population estimates since the last decennial Census have indicated an increase in population.

In 1976, the Melrose Planning Board and city planner developed a "Downtown Turnaround" plan that highlighted the Victorian character of Main Street, and the City was awarded a HUD Community Development Block Grant, the City's first Federal grant, to support Main Street revitalization.¹⁶

YMCA Building on Main Street



Source: City of Melrose

In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, much of the downtown commercial district was revitalized, including investments in Victorian streetlights, street and sidewalk improvements, and signage and façade improvements. During this time the City also updated its zoning policies to retain the design of Downtown and to prevent its suburbanization. Smaller neighborhood commercial districts, including those around the commuter rail stations, also received investment from the City. The Downtown Historic District was established as a local historic district in 1979 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. City policies to preserve Downtown's character have helped to make Melrose the destination it is today.¹⁷

Historic Resources

Melrose Downtown Historic District¹⁸

Probably the most notable "historic" resource in the community is Downtown Melrose. The building boom of the late 19th century had created handsome commercial and mixed use 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 places of worship). A spurt of construction in the 1920s produced the Massbank for Savings building (now TD Bank), as well as many other commercial storefronts that incorporated Art Deco design features and other architectural features. See Figure 1.

Development slowed down during the Great Depression and World War II, and following the war, in the 1950s and 1960s, development preferences, consumers, and investment dollars shifted to emerging



Historic Photo of Main Street, including City Hall



Source: City of Melrose

highway malls in Saugus, Stoneham, and Medford. Downtown Melrose merchants tried to compete by emulating highway-oriented mall signage and storefront styles, 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. The development trends seen in Melrose and surrounding communities were happening throughout the country, and a national historic preservation movement began. The US Congress enacted the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, which established the National Register of Historic Places and State Historic Preservation Offices. Over the next decade, federal funds became available for historic preservation.

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 revitalization 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 efforts to generate popular support for the preservation and renewal of Melrose's exceptional Victorian heritage. The combined efforts 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

Historic Photo of Central Fire Station, Main Street



Source: City of Melrose

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."

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 expand the current Historic District along Main Street and develop other Historic Districts in the commercial areas surrounding the commuter rail stations and Franklin Square. Most people believe that the Historic District extends south to Grove Street, when in fact its southern boundary is Foster Street. In recent years, efforts have been made to investigate the possibility of expanding the district, but no firm decision has been made on a new southern boundary. These boundary discussions have focused on whether the expansion should continue to West Wyoming Avenue to capture some of the residential structures at the intersection with Main Street even though several structures would be included from the 300 block of Main Street that have very little to no historical significance. As Melrose continues to see strong demand for residential and commercial space within the vibrant downtown, the expansion to Grove Street is critical to ensuring that redevelopment is consistent with the Victorian style downtown.

Melrose Historic District Commission

Since its formation in 1979, the Melrose Historic District Commission has advised owners and public officials in extensive restoration and preservation of several key properties in the District including:

- Pottle's Florist at the corner of Main Street and Upham Street
- Greenwood Building



- YMCA
- City Hall
- Central Fire Station
- Coolidge School
- The Queen Anne-style Farnsworth House at 630 Main Street
- MassBank Building
- Boardman Block

The City has also assisted many dozens of others with façade, sign, and similar improvements. Grant and loan funds to assist property owners in restoration and improvements have been vital for encouraging 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 of the community. Although there has been success, with the increased attention and redevelopment potential in the district, the Commission and property owners would benefit from establishing rules and design standards to ensure transparency, consistency and appropriate design continues within the district.

Housing Stock

Paralleling the restoration of the downtown in the last quarter century has been the revitalization of Melrose's historic housing stock. 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.

Inventories of Historic Places

As public funds for preservation activities have been reduced, 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. The Melrose Historical Commission, with the assistance of other volunteer groups, has worked toward the completion of an inventory of historic homes that was begun in the 1970s and consolidated into the Massachusetts Historical Commission's inventory for public use. The Historical Commission also sponsors an annual "Research Your Home" event where homeowners have the opportunity to learn from

Construction of 1890 Victorian Home on Bellevue Ave.



Source: *Old House Dreams*

Commission members and others about the history of their homes. These efforts could also spark an interest in individual owners to list their properties on 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. Melrose's listings in the National Register of Historic Places are:

- The Beebe Estate
- Larrabee's Brick Block
- Melrose Public Library
- Trinity Episcopal Church
- Phineas Upham House
- The Melrose Town Center 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)
- First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts (National Register Thematic Resource Area)

Wakefield currently has approximately 100 listings, Stoneham has approximately 70, and Medford has approximately 30. It might also encourage residents to consider the benefits of creating Local Historic Districts or National Register Districts in various residential neighborhoods, and it will provide an archival collection for local historical research.¹⁹

Other projects that the Melrose Historical Commission could undertake to record and provide educational materials to the community include: maintaining historic markers, memorial tablets, and memorial square markers; mapping historic resources and producing an educational brochure; developing walking



tours for different neighborhoods with the installation of interpretive panels; and, exploring certification from the Certified Local Government Program to increase eligibility for state grant funds.

Demolition of Historical Buildings

Although Melrose has not experienced a large number of tear downs of the existing housing stock in favor of new construction, some notable historic structures have been lost or threatened in recent years including 160 Green Street. The Aaron Green House was demolished in 2005, following a determination by the Massachusetts Historical Commission that the structure is an architecturally and historically significant property eligible for listing on the National Register. With the loss of the Aaron Green House and other structures, there is interest in pursuing a demolition delay ordinance. Approximately 146 Massachusetts cities and towns have adopted a demolition delay ordinance or bylaw. A demolition delay ordinance does not ultimately prevent the demolition of a structure, but delays that action to allow consideration of other options to potentially save the structure in consultation with the Melrose Historical Commission. This can be a useful tool to bring attention to the historic resources within the City during the delay period, but often the delay period is too short to be able to find a viable alternative to demolition. A future demolition delay ordinance in Melrose will have to consider appropriate thresholds and delay periods.

Preservation Projects

Over the past twenty years, the City has undertaken significant investment in the improvements and restoration of some of Melrose's most treasured historic assets. The Office of Planning and Community Development has been and continues to be instrumental in all of these efforts, from securing grant funds through managing the renovation projects.

Beebe Estate and Milano Center

In 1998, the Beebe Estate mansion, which was suffering from water damage and neglect, was restored and revitalized 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 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

Balustrade Repair at Beebe Estate



Source: *The Beebe Estate*

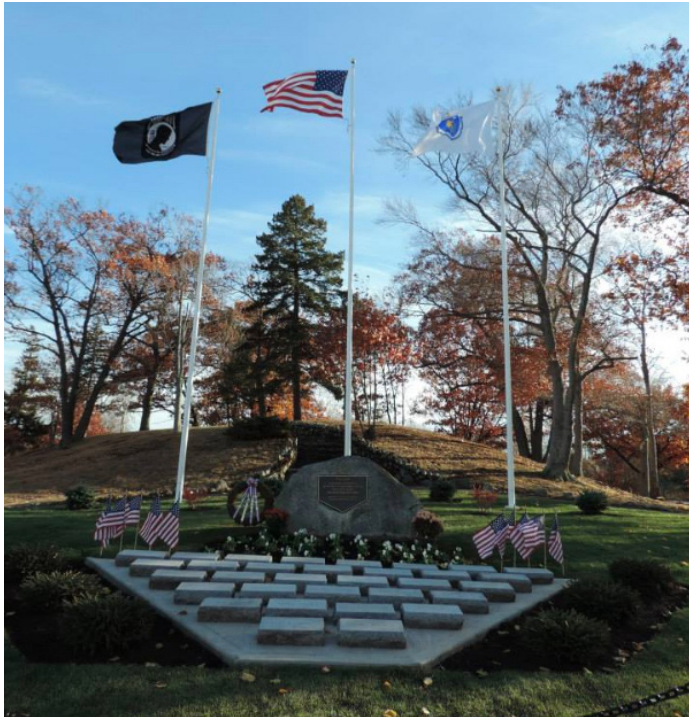
the Milano Center a few years earlier in a successful adaptive reuse project.

More recently, between 2013 and 2014, the balustrade of the Beebe Estate, was repaired due to the effects of a snowstorm and rot. The entire balustrade was removed and the existing original elements were repaired. Where the damage was too great, the various elements were recreated. The restored balustrade was reinstalled in spring 2014. In 2016, the Trustees of the Beebe Estate received a grant from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development Mass Marketing Partnerships and the Office of Travel and Tourism Program to repaint the Beebe Estate, restoring the structure to its original colors.

Memorial Hall

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Building ("Memorial Hall") and the City Hall were repointed and made weather tight during the 1990s. Memorial Hall was made accessible for people with disabilities in 1998 and its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems were upgraded in 2008. The HVAC project involved a complete overhaul of the original steam heating system which dated to the construction of the building in 1912 and the installation of air conditioning throughout the building. This project improved the building's comfort level, operations, and energy efficiency, and created the opportunity for its year-round rental use. The design of the upgraded system was integrated into the building in a sensitive way with little visual impact to the historic and architectural features of the building.

World War I Memorial at the Ell Pond Knoll



Source: City of Melrose

Melrose Public Library

The Melrose Public Library last received a partial renovation over 20 years ago, and the last addition made to the building was built in 1963. The most recent long-range plan indicates that the Melrose Public Library building is not flexible enough to provide the services the community desires. The Library administration and the Library Board of Trustees are currently pursuing a grant opportunity offered by the Massachusetts Library Board of Trustees. In support of this grant application submitted in January 2017, a feasibility study and schematic drawings were prepared to position the City for matching grant funds needed to undertake a major renovation to the beloved and well-used treasure.

Wyoming Cemetery

In 1857, the Wyoming Cemetery was established at its current location near the intersection of Lebanon Street and Sylvan Street. The Cemetery was generally modeled after Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge with plantings, stones, and statuary. The Works Progress Administration constructed the walls surrounding the Cemetery in 1937, but in some areas these walls have fallen into disrepair. The City has begun the process of evaluating whether the Cemetery could be included on the National Register in addition to identifying potential grants to make the necessary repairs, regardless of a

potential listing.

Veterans Memorials

The City has a strong tradition of recognizing our veterans at eleven memorials located throughout the City. In 2015, the World War I Memorial at the Ell Pond Knoll was renovated and rededicated, and a Korean War Memorial was added. A Women's Service Memorial was established and dedicated in 2014 on the lawn at City Hall. The Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Memorial at Wyoming Cemetery was rededicated and civil war graves and memorials at the Cemetery were refurbished in 2014. Efforts are currently underway to establish a World War II Memorial at the Knoll.

Continuing Preservation Efforts

The improvements and restoration projects described above have greatly improved the longevity of these buildings. Grants have been instrumental in funding these projects, and the City should continue to seek grants to fund the preservation of its historic resources, particularly the Melrose Public Library, Memorial Hall, and the Central Fire Station. Additionally, the adoption of the Community Preservation Act by the City could provide an ongoing and dedicated funding source for historic preservation projects and should be strongly considered by the City's leaders.

Arts and Cultural Resources

The performing arts and fine arts culture in Melrose has been a source of community pride for many decades. Melrose enjoys a number of long-standing cultural organizations that showcase talent from the community and beyond. Support for the arts and culture has a long history in Melrose which has allowed cultural organizations to thrive and which also fosters new programs, events, and an arts community which is well-integrated into the City.

The Arts in the Melrose Schools

In the Melrose Schools, there are strong fine arts and music programs from elementary school through high school. Students have a wide array of options to get involved in the performing arts, including a band, symphonic orchestra, choir, marching band, jazz band, theater, dramatic theater, and musical theater. These organizations are well-supported in the community and through parent groups. Both the Melrose Symphony Orchestra and Polymnia Choral Society provide opportunities for high school students to participate in



Melrose Symphony Orchestra



Source: City of Melrose

and be showcased by these organizations. Every spring, the Beethoven Society hosts a scholarship recital for talented high school students. The Victoria McLaughlin Fund hosts the annual Celebrate the Arts show for middle school and high school student artwork and performances. The musical theater performances and other dramatic offerings by the faculty and students in the Melrose Schools have been recognized by the Massachusetts Educational Theatre Guild. Community members have identified a need for a smaller, "black box"-type theater venue in the Melrose Public School System.

Music

Melrose Symphony Orchestra

Founded in 1918, the Melrose Symphony Orchestra has the distinction of being the oldest continuously performing volunteer orchestra in the country. Every year the Melrose Symphony provides exciting programs of musical and seasonal variety, including a children's program with an instrument "petting zoo". In the coming year, the Symphony will celebrate its 100 year anniversary.²⁰

Polymnia Choral Society

Polymnia Choral Society, founded in Wakefield in 1953 and based in Melrose since 1956, is a chorus of more than 60 voices from the greater Boston area. Polymnia provides Melrose and surrounding communities many occasions to experience live performances of high-quality choral music, ranging from Beethoven to Broadway, newly commissioned musical works, multicultural selections from around the world, and classic choral standards.²¹

Beethoven Society

The Beethoven Society is in its 90th season and

Melrose Victorian Fair



Source: Elaine Foley

hosts monthly Sunday concerts. The Sunday concerts showcase includes professional and amateur performers presenting a wide variety of musical genres.

Other Organizations and Events

These organizations, in addition to other community-sponsored concert series, such as the jazz series at Temple Beth Shalom, the Melrose Four Corners Festival, and coffee-house style offerings provide many opportunities to make and listen to good music.

Visual and Performing Arts

In the visual arts, the organization called Melrose Arts has been successful in promoting fine arts and artists in Melrose. Melrose Arts accomplishes this through the Fall Art Walk and the Spring Arts Festival. The Beebe Estate Gallery promotes monthly shows of local and regional artists.²² Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the Victoria McLaughlin Fund hosts Celebrate the Arts annually. In the performing arts, Melrose Youth Ballet as well as a number of dance schools and academies provide settings for adult and youth dancers to learn and perform. Theater To Go, a performance group, is the artists-in-residence at Trinity Episcopal Church presenting three performances a year. The thriving community access television facility at MMTV has made possible not only expansion of civic and cultural broadcasting but has offered many opportunities for skill and talent development for Melrosians of all ages.

Community Events

Melrose hosts a number of annual events, which celebrate holidays, draw attention to important civic and cultural issues, and attract a regional crowd. Memorial Day and the Fourth of July are celebrated



with parades and bandstand concerts, activities which are popular with Melrose residents. The Melrose Human Rights Commission hosts many community events, including an annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and Evening Program in January and an International Welcome Potluck every fall. The Melrose Alliance Against Violence hosts the Mother's Day Run for Women as well as the Annual Walk and Candlelight Vigil, which draws attention to domestic violence.

The Victorian Fair, hosted by the Melrose Chamber of Commerce in the fall, is one of the premier annual events in Melrose that brings a large number of people from the region to Main Street. The Melrose Chamber of Commerce also hosts other events to build community, create networking opportunities, and draw people to local businesses, such as trick-or-treating on Main Street for Halloween, a Summer Stroll event on Main Street, the citywide Home for the Holidays event, and other events for networking and to promote local businesses throughout the year. The Sally Frank's Farmers' Market also brings a regional crowd to Bowden Park, adjacent to the Cedar Park commuter rail station, every Thursday during the summer months for local produce and entertainment. Its Winter Market, a monthly indoor market, has been successful for vendors that frequently appear at the Melrose and Wakefield summer markets.

Facilities

While public buildings are open to community groups, access to venues is a persistent challenge. Exhibit and performance space has been greatly enhanced in recent years with the opening of the Beebe Estate, the resurgence of the Melrose Arts Festival at Memorial Hall, and the construction of the state of the art Performance Center at the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School (MVMMS). While many of the groups described above have secured venues year over year, there are many groups that have difficulty accessing venues for performance or exhibit space due to advance bookings or no consistent point of contact. For example, the MVMMS Performance Center is very difficult to book by groups unaffiliated with the school system. It is also in need of some reinvestment over the next ten years to remain the premier performing arts space in Melrose. A clearinghouse with information on each venue would benefit the cultural community in many ways, especially for the smaller groups to establish themselves in the community. More informal options for events and community gatherings also exist in Melrose.

Funding and Organizational Support

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 community, upon whose interest and support these cultural organizations depend. Supporting cultural activities and the arts are the Melrose Cultural Council and the Melrose Messina Fund for the Arts.

The Melrose Cultural Council, a local affiliate of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, shares the Massachusetts Cultural Council's mission to promote excellence, access, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences. The Melrose Cultural Council pursues its mission by distributing funds from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to local nonprofit cultural organizations, schools, community groups, and artists. In Fiscal Year 2016, the Melrose Cultural Council distributed \$9,200 to twenty-two organizations.

The Melrose Messina Fund for the Arts parallels and supplements the Melrose Cultural Council activities, and is funded through the City budget. The Messina Fund grant awards supplement the budgets of local arts organizations and individual artists in order to encourage diversity in arts presentations in the City and to provide broad-based arts experiences to the citizens of Melrose. Each Fiscal Year, the Messina Fund is budgeted for \$10,000.

The support of these two committees that make important monetary grants to the local arts and cultural community should be continued especially as funding sources are regularly at risk of being reduced or eliminated. Local corporate and individual sponsors in Melrose have generously donated to bridge any funding gaps. The City should continue to support the awareness and promotion of events through the City's website and the Mayor's Blog, and investigate other ways of marketing cultural events.

Summary

From a historic downtown drawing regional visitors to the popular Melrose Symphony Orchestra concerts, Melrose has much to contribute to the region. Participants at the March 2017 Public Forum echoed this feeling, and made it known that the City should prioritize historic preservation in downtown Melrose in addition to supporting the local arts and cultural resources in the community. This includes



continuing to fund the sign and façade improvement grant programs offered by the Office of Planning and Community Development and seeking funds to support the historically appropriate renovations of public buildings like the Melrose Public Library, Memorial Hall, and Central Fire Station. As it relates to supporting the local arts community, the participants indicated that increased awareness of cultural events in Melrose, support of funding streams for arts and cultural resources, and maintenance and enhancement of spaces for use by local arts and cultural groups are priorities for the City. The following goals, strategies, and actions will enable the City to respond to these priorities in addition to protect, enhance, and promote historic resources in Melrose.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Preserve and protect historic Downtown Melrose.

Strategy 1.1: Maintain and support the Historic District Commission.

- Action 1.1.1: Continue to provide staff support from the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD).
- Action 1.1.2: Create rules and design standards for the Historic District Commission.

Strategy 1.2: Provide resources to preserve downtown buildings.

- Action 1.2.1: Continue to fund the façade and sign grant program offered through the City.
- Action 1.2.2: Continue to seek grants and other funding sources to support historically appropriate renovations of public buildings.

Goal 2: Publicize and promote historic resources.

Strategy 2.1: Increase historic district designations in Melrose.

- Action 2.1.1: Expand the Downtown Historic District.
- Action 2.1.2: Explore creating additional Local Historic Districts in Melrose.

Strategy 2.2: Augment records and educational materials regarding historic resources.

- Action 2.2.1: Complete the comprehensive inventory of historic homes and other buildings.

- Action 2.2.2: Maintain historic markets, memorial tablets, and memorial square markers.
- Action 2.2.3: Map historic resources and produce an educational brochure.
- Action 2.2.4: Develop walking tours for different neighborhoods of Melrose with the installation of interpretative panels.

Strategy 2.3: Review historic resources for possible additions to the National Register of Historic Places.

- Action 2.3.1: Evaluate Wyoming Cemetery for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places.
- Action 2.3.2: Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places.

Goal 3: Protect and enhance historic resources.

Strategy 3.1: Prevent the incremental loss of historic structures.

- Action 3.1.1: Adopt a demolition delay ordinance.

Strategy 3.2: Seek funding to preserve historic resources.

- Action 3.2.1: Adopt the Community Preservation Act.
- Action 3.2.2: Explore certification from the Certified Local Government Program to increase eligibility for state grant funds.
- Action 3.2.3: Seek funds to repair the Wyoming Cemetery walls.
- Action 3.2.4: Seek funds for appropriate renovations and improvements to the Melrose Public Library, Memorial Hall, and the Central Fire Station.

Goal 4: Support local arts and cultural resources.

Strategy 4.1: Increase awareness of cultural events in Melrose.

- Action 4.1.1: Promote cultural events through the City's website and the Mayor's Blog.
- Action 4.1.2: Promote the use of Lookwhathappening.org for marketing cultural events.

Strategy 4.2: Support funding streams for arts and cultural resources.



- Action 4.2.1: Advocate for increased funding for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which in turns funds the Melrose Cultural Council.
- Action 4.2.2: Continue to fund the Melrose Messina Fund for the Arts through the City budget.

Goal 5: Provide adequate space for community events and meetings.

Strategy 5.1: Maintain and enhance space for community groups, cultural groups, and community functions, and provide space at a cost within reach of these groups

- Action 5.1.1: Evaluate the desirability and feasibility of establishing a “black box” theater venue at Melrose High School.
- Action 5.1.2: Consider creating an Operations Manager position for the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Performing Arts Center.
- Action 5.1.3: Continue to explore City-owned buildings and parkland to use for arts and cultural centers to provide performance, practice, studio, and community gathering space.
- Action 5.1.4: Develop a clearinghouse of information regarding existing venues, both public and private, that are available for use, including the venue’s capacity and equipment.
- Action 5.1.5: Work with neighboring communities for regional solutions to limited cultural space.
- Action 5.1.6: Continue support of the Sally Frank’s Farmers’ Market by allowing the use of Bowden Park and Memorial Hall.

Endnotes

¹Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHP) Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, Melrose, 1981, page 2. Available at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Boston/mel.pdf>, accessed February 19, 2017

²*Melrose: Past, Present and Future*, page 20, Wikipedia – alternate spelling “Mistick Side” also seen

³*Melrose: Past, Present and Future* Melrose Centennial Committee publication, page 12, MHP Report, Wikipedia

⁴*Melrose: Past, Present and Future*, pages 18-19

⁵Melrose Open Space and Recreation Plan 2015-2022, MHP Reconnaissance Report for Melrose

⁶MHP Reconnaissance Report, page 3

⁷MHP Reconnaissance Report, page 3

⁸MHP Reconnaissance Report, page 4

⁹MHP Reconnaissance Report, pages 4-5

¹⁰MHP Reconnaissance Report, pages 5-6

¹¹*Melrose: Past, Present and Future*, page 22

¹²*Melrose: Past, Present and Future*, page 59

¹³MHP Reconnaissance Report, page 6-7, *Melrose: Past, Present and Future*, page 22

¹⁴MHP Reconnaissance Report, page 8

¹⁵Melrose Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2015-2022, US Census

¹⁶*Melrose: Past, Present and Future*, page 22

¹⁷Melrose Open Space and Recreation Plan 2015-2022, Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development

¹⁸The name of the district in the National Register is “Melrose Town Center Historic District”

¹⁹A 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.

²⁰www.melrosesymphony.org

²¹www.polymnia.org

²²www.melrosearts.com





Open Space and Recreation

Melrose still retains its Victoria-era garden city design, with open spaces such as the Middlesex Fells Reservation, Pine Banks Park, conservation lands around Swains Pond and Towners Pond, Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, and the Bellevue Golf Club forming a greenbelt around the City. Other natural resources and open spaces, such as Ell Pond, have been central features to settlers in the area as long as people have inhabited what is today known as Melrose. Melrosians today can enjoy many parks, ponds, and other open spaces, natural resources, and recreation areas. About a third of the City's land area is classified as open space or otherwise undeveloped.

Open space provides environmental and recreational benefits to the City, which in turn contributes to the high quality of life found in Melrose. The environmental benefits provided by open space include water absorption and 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 lifestyles. 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. Public recreation areas and open space provide a setting for community life and promote a unique and identifiable community character. 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

In 2015, the City updated the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) in order to set forth a seven-year framework for the preservation, maintenance, and improvement of open space and recreation areas in the City of Melrose. The 2015 OSRP is an update to the 2007 Open Space Plan and the 2010 Updated Action Plan. Master Plan readers should refer to the 2015 OSRP for detailed information regarding open space and recreation in Melrose.

Community Vision

The high quality of life enjoyed by Melrose residents is due in part to its abundance of recreational opportunities, open spaces, and conservation lands. Overall, the community's goal is to ensure that there is a deliberate mix of land devoted to natural conservation, passive recreation use, and active recreation use, which is distributed around and throughout the City for a variety of users. A corollary to these goals is to ensure that these resources are adequately developed and well maintained.

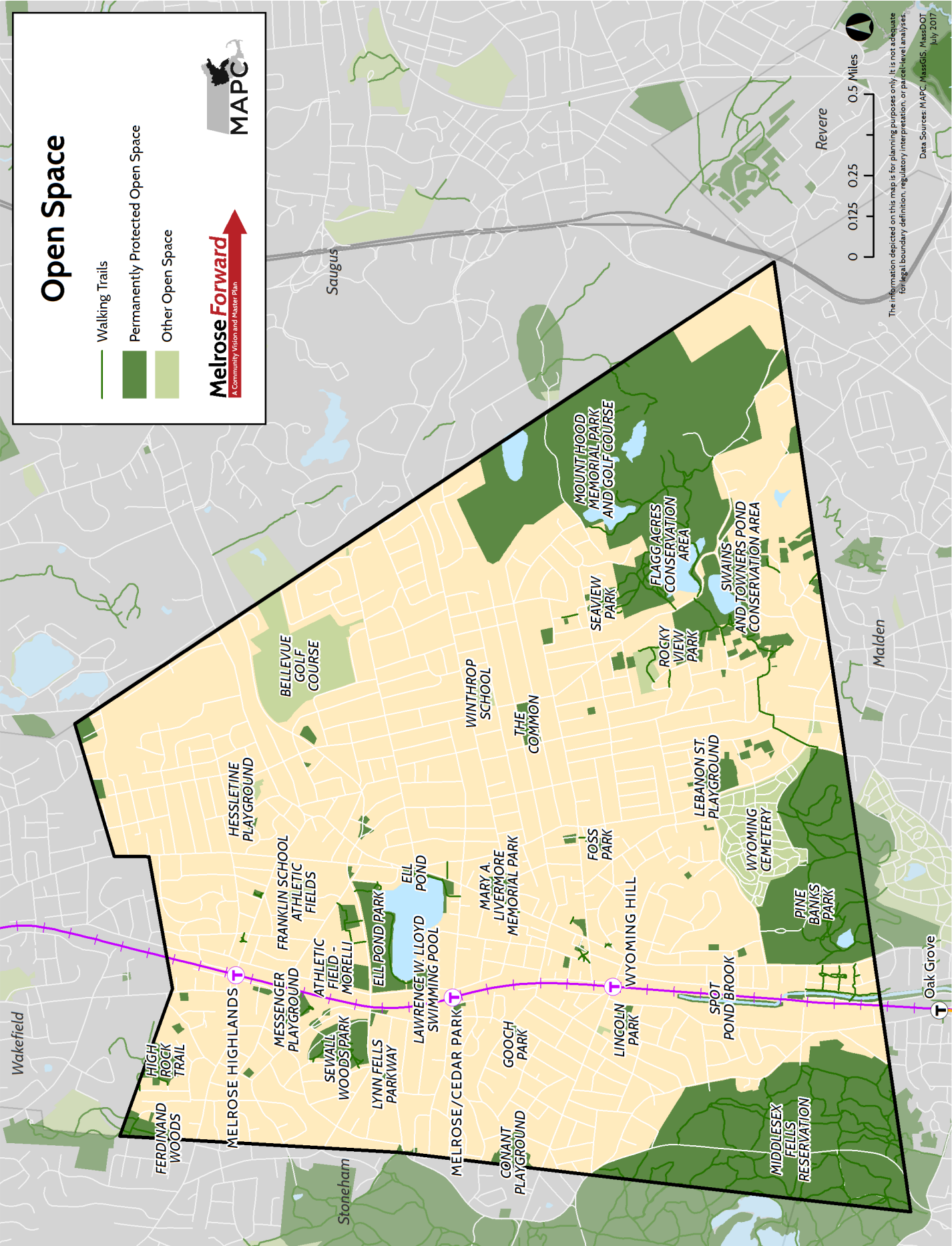
Additionally, the City hopes to expand not just the physical attributes of its open space and recreational facilities, but also to expand the programming that these special places offer to the community. The Recreation Department and Milano Center should continue to be supported so that they can provide activities based on our recreational and natural resources. More programming through the Conservation Commission, Beebe Estate, Memorial Hall, and Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, and the City's numerous volunteer organizations should also be encouraged. The programming offered through these organizations should promote inclusivity and activities for individuals with disabilities.

In recent years, the City made a significant investment in open space and recreation facilities in the community including investing five million dollars in a complete overhaul of the High School Athletic Complex and the new facilities at Pine Banks Park. Public-private partnerships have been developed between school groups and the City to redevelop existing playgrounds. With many new and improved facilities, the City looks to improve the stewardship of these properties. Through education and signage, establishing a volunteer corps, and fostering more public-private partnerships, the City hopes to instill a level of ownership of and responsibility for open space and recreation facilities in its citizens.

Melrose seeks to plan for and preserve sufficient land resources to meet the needs of both current and future residents. A network of high quality open space and recreation areas is fundamental to protecting and enhancing the character of Melrose. Seeking out new and innovative ways to fund and develop open space



Figure 1: Melrose Open Space



and recreation areas is necessary for future planning and acquisitions. Promoting alliances at the subregional level and continuing to make our green space accessible by many different modes of transportation are also components of the community's vision for an equitable, accessible, and enjoyable environment.

The 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan included a Seven-Year Action Plan, a list of achievable action steps in order to fulfill the community vision stated in the plan.

Open Space and Recreation Land

Open space can be protected or unprotected. Protected open space often refers to open space owned by a municipality, a state or federal agency, a non-profit land protection agency, or private entities, and managed primarily for conservation, recreation, or environmental protection. Protected open space is often sheltered from development. Ordinary open space is often unprotected; for instance, land owned by a school department or public works department and privately owned parcels are often relatively easy to develop, even if the land has been maintained as open space for many years. In Melrose, there is both protected and unprotected open space, with the amount of protected land far exceeding the amount of unprotected land. Figures 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of open space by ownership and type.

The City currently owns approximately 577 acres of protected open space. This figure includes land controlled and managed by the Park Department, the School Department, the Public Works Department, and the Conservation Commission. These facilities are distributed throughout the City and vary in size from 251 acres to less than one-quarter of an acre. The largest City-owned park is the 251-acre Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, which includes an eighteen-hole golf course, function facility, walking trails, and a playground. The Athletic Complex and the Ell Pond Memorial Park, located along the Lynn Fells Parkway, totals 33 acres and serves the community's needs for athletic fields. Pine Banks Park, a 107.5 acre park located in Melrose and Malden (78 acres in Melrose), has been jointly maintained by both Cities since 1905. Pine Banks Park provides additional capacity for recreational facilities and has helped alleviate the field shortages felt by both communities. Most parks and playgrounds in Melrose are less than three acres in size.

The Conservation Commission manages approximately

Figure 2: Open Space Categorized by Owner and Protection Status

Protected Parcels	Total Acreage
City of Melrose	577.2
Parks and Playgrounds	429.2
Cemetery	49.0
Conservation Commission	99.0
Commonwealth/DCR	157.5
Private (Cemetery)	6.2
Total Protected	740.9
Unprotected Parcels	
City of Melrose (Squares, Schools, and Undeveloped Land)	31.4
MBTA/DCR Right-of-Way	2.2
Private Recreation (Bellevue Golf Club and Incarnation Church)	53.4
Other Private	69.2
Total Unprotected	156.2

Source: City of Melrose

99 acres of undeveloped land. Figure 3 lists the primary conservation areas in the City, which are located in the southeast and northwest corners of the City. The Commission also owns numerous smaller parcels distributed around the City. Many of these small parcels have little developmental value due to steep slopes and the presence of wetlands, but these areas serve to protect the natural landscape of Melrose and provide precious naturally wooded areas in densely developed neighborhoods.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns

Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course



Source: Mount Hood Park Association



Figure 3: Primary Conservation Areas

Conservation Area	Location	Description
Towners Pond and Swains Pond Conservation Area including:	Swains Pond Avenue	Wooded conservation land surrounding the two ponds
Flagg Acres Trail	Swains Pond Avenue	Main trail network around Towners Pond with connections to Mt. Hood Park Trails
Knox Memorial Trail	Swains Pond Avenue	Trail around perimeter of Swains Pond with connections to Rocky Hill Trail
Rocky View Trail	Glendower Road	Trail through wooded areas with rocky ledges leading from the Hoover School to Swains Pond including an outdoor classroom
Seaview Trail	Beech Street	Trail connects neighborhood on Beech/Water Streets to conservation area
Ferdinand Woods	Ferdinand Street	Woodland with informal trails and connections to Stoneham and Wakefield
High Rock Trail	West Hill Terrace	Sparsely wooded hilltop with ledge outcrops and views to Boston

Source: City of Melrose

approximately 160 acres of open space in the City through the following agencies: the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). By far the most significant state holding is the 150-acre portion of the Middlesex Fells Reservation that lies within city limits. Additionally, the DCR operates the Lawrence W. Lloyd Memorial Swimming Pool, located on Tremont Street. Much of the remaining land is held as part of the Lynn Fells Parkway, which passes through the City. The City's partnerships with DCR and the Friends of the Fells should be enhanced to showcase the Middlesex Fells Reservation in Melrose.

The largest area of privately owned open space is the 49-acre Bellevue Country Club. The Club offers a 9-hole golf course, tennis courts, and swimming facilities to its

Pine Banks Park



Source: City of Melrose

members. Though it is not legally protected, this area is highly unlikely to develop in the future.

There are, however, a number of scattered areas throughout Melrose that are more susceptible to development. Many of these parcels are adjacent to existing conservation areas and, as such, should be considered a focus of efforts for future protection. A brief description of each is provided in Figure 4.

Management and Resource Priorities

The Park Department, the Recreation Department, Melrose Conservation Commission, various other 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.

Park Department and Park Commission

The Park Department, headed by the Superintendent of Parks, is a small department of two people who protect, maintain, and develop the City's parks, fields, and recreational facilities listed in Figure 5. The Park Department is also responsible for parks and playgrounds on School Department property. The Superintendent of Parks is charged with auditing these facilities and equipment yearly for operational and safety needs. These properties are maintained by the Department of Public Works, with the exception of Mount Hood, which is currently operated and



Figure 4: Private Unprotected Parcels

Location	Description
Mill Road	Three and a half acre parcel wedged between Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course and the Towners Pond Conservation Area. The existing single family house on the site has been abandoned. The parcel contains a large wetlands area and the streams connecting First Pond (at Mount Hood) and Towners Pond. Acquisition of this parcel would provide increased access and connectivity of conservation land.
Off Beech Avenue and Highland Street	These three parcels abut paper streets (streets shown on plans but that have never been built) and the Seaview Trails.
Slayton Road	The 3.9-acres area is a large swampy low land, which contains a culverted stream. The property is within flood plain and abuts the Mt. Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course. Protecting this property will protect the Bow Street bowl area from further impact due to flooding.
Off Porter Street (East Rock Park, Bowdoin, Indian Hill Lane)	This natural wooded area is the only open wooded area on the eastern boundary of Melrose and it serves as part of the greenbelt. Several paper streets bisect these seven parcels and wetlands are present. Conservation restrictions should be pursued as part of any development.
Windsor Street	Power lines transverse this 20.5-acre area, which is vegetated and serves as part of the greenbelt on the northeast side of the City.
Greenwood Street	Area is swampy and historic drainage problems are a serious concern.
Woodland Avenue	Land connects conservation land on Woodland Avenue to Summit Avenue. The area serves as part of the greenbelt on the northwest side of the City.
Swains Pond Avenue, Penney Road and Dexter Road	Several undeveloped or underdeveloped parcels in this area are surrounded by conservation land and contain streams, steep slopes and even small ponds. This environmentally sensitive area is under increasing development pressure and is a priority area for possible conservation land acquisition.
Bellevue Golf Course	One-hundred-year-old private golf course and pool and tennis club located at 320 Porter Street. This parcel is unlikely to be developed but the property has no legal conservation restrictions.
Incarnation Parish Fields	The Incarnation Parish is located at 425 Upham Street on a parcel that exceeds 8 acres. There are three baseball fields located at the rear of the property used for the church's league and other youth leagues. This parcel is unlikely to be developed and disposing of church-owned property can be a lengthy process but the property has no legal conservation restrictions.

Source: City of Melrose

maintained under a management agreement between the City of Melrose and Golf Management, LLC. The Park Commission is a five member volunteer board overseeing the activities of the Park Department and the Recreation Department.

The facilities overseen by the Park Department have seen significant improvements in recent years as the result of priorities identified in the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Major renovations to existing playing fields helped address the shortage of field and recreation space and also improved the usability of these fields. New facilities were added to Melrose's inventory of recreation facilities including the Melrose Dog Park and the Melrose Skate Park, and through investments at Pine Banks Park and the Athletic Complex. Important park and playground renovations have significantly increased the usability and the level of accessibility at these locations. These recent improvements were made possible through a

variety of sources, including the Open Space Fund and the Streetscape Improvement Fund, which are funded through monetary contributions from projects in the Smart Growth District and the Rail Corridor Overlay District, respectively.

The recent investment in playing fields has been focused on maintenance and improvement since the availability of land for new facilities is limited. Improving the functionality of the playing fields through a review of existing facilities is a priority for the Park Department. It may be possible, for example, to convert certain grass fields to turf fields in order to improve the longevity of these fields, reduce maintenance costs, and provide more opportunities for field usage.

Similarly, several parks and playgrounds throughout the City have received investment in recent years through grants and public-private partnerships with the school communities. Along with assessing the existing play



Melrose Skate Park



Source: SkateCatalyst

fields, the Park Department should continue to assess the existing parks and playgrounds for usability and longevity enhancements, especially those that do not have an established school group to support them. Two components of the assessment should include provisions for trash and recycling to help prevent littering, as well as the incorporation of equipment, such as bocce ball and horseshoe courts, to attract residents of all ages.

Over the last year, the Park Department worked closely with the Melrose Community Garden group to identify a location for a community garden, which was found at Franklin Field. The Melrose Community Garden established rules and regulations in consultation with the Park Superintendent. Construction is underway with the financial assistance of the Melrose Rotary, and plots will be offered for the 2017 growing season through a lottery process.

Recreation Department

The Recreation Department strives to create high quality recreational programs and events that are affordable and safe for citizens of all ages and abilities. These programs take place at the City's parks, playgrounds, and fields. The Recreation Department is staffed by four people, including the Recreation Director. The Department is also supplemented by many volunteers that assist in the supervision and coordination of programmatic activities.

Since 2004, the Recreation Department has seen exponential growth with its program and event offerings. Over the past ten years, participation has increased from less than 2,000 participants per year to now over 12,000 participants per year. Additionally, the Department offers full and partial financial aid

and scholarships for any residents in need of financial support, and has routinely given over 150 scholarships each year. Expanded programming and events run by the Recreation Department include the Common Ground Teen Center, Middle School after school teams and clubs, Melrose Winter Festival, Fall Flag Football Leagues, Lego Robotics teams and camps, Zumba, Outdoor Pickleball, Men's and Women's athletic leagues, Melrose Tennis Open, Movie Nights, tennis programs, among others.

The Recreation Department also offers a diverse range of activities throughout the year, including summer recreation activities, field sports clinics, and arts and crafts classes. These activities appeal to a broad cross-section of residents. A priority is to continue this tradition of providing interesting active and passive recreation opportunities.

Melrose Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is a seven member volunteer board assisted by a part-time staff member, a position the City began funding in 2008. The Conservation Commission is charged with protecting the community's natural resources, primarily by enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Melrose Wetlands Protection Ordinance, which was adopted in 2007. In addition to wetland protection, the Conservation Commission is responsible for maintaining the undeveloped conservation land. The City budget that is dedicated to the Commission's protection of conservation land and staff support should be maintained.

The Conservation Commission properties have historically had inconsistent upkeep. They would benefit from a management strategy specific to these lands and a volunteer corps or a Trail Committee. More consistent maintenance may lead to more interest in Melrose's trail network and to other opportunities to improve connectivity as was done with the Hoover Elementary School's outdoor classroom. Installing consistent signage at Conservation Commission properties would also improve this effort. Signage is particularly needed at Flagg Acres, Knox Memorial Trail, and Ferdinand Trail.

Acquisition of critical unprotected properties is a goal of the Conservation Commission that is not funded. The recent land acquisitions have been gifts to the Commission. The City must seek out partnerships or funding opportunities to acquire these unprotected properties. The most critical properties are identified in the Metro North Land Use Priority Plan published by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and



Figure 5: Park Department Properties

Park	Location	Description of Facilities
Athletic Fields (Fred Green Field, Morelli Field, Cabbage Patch)	High School and Middle School Complex – Lynn Fells Parkway	Football Field, Baseball Field, Practice Field
Beebe School Play Yard	West Foster St.	School Play Yard
Bingham Community Playground	W. Wyoming St. & Cottage St.	Tot Lot
Bowden Park	W. Emerson St. & Vinton St.	Passive Park
Burnett Park	Burnett St.	Wooded Undeveloped Land
Colby Park	Lynn Fells Parkway and Larchmont Rd.	Passive Park
Conant Park	Baxter St. & Conant Rd.	Baseball Field, Tot Lot
Drinkwater Tot Lot	East End of Porter St.	Small Tot Lot
Dunton Park	Franklin St. & Pratt St.	Small Park with Tot Lot
Ell Pond Memorial Park (Knoll Fields, Lewis Monk Field, Crystal Street Tennis Courts, Lyons Memorial Tennis Courts, Dog Park, Skate Park)	Lynn Fells Parkway	2 Soccer Fields, Junior Soccer Field, Little League Field, 8 Tennis Courts, Dog Park, Skate Park, Passive Recreation Areas
Ell Pond Park	700 Main St.	Passive Park with Gazebo
Foss Park	Lynde St. & Malvern St.	Softball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court
Franklin Field	Greenleaf Place	Two Soccer Fields, Tot Lot
Franklin Early Childhood Center Tot Lot	Main St. & Franklin St.	School Tot Lot
Gooch Park	Maple St. and Florence St.	Park with Basketball Court, Tot Lot
Hesseltine Field	Ruggles St. adjacent to Horace Mann School	Baseball Field, Basketball Court, Multipurpose Field, Tot Lot
Hoover School Playground	Glendower St.	School Tot Lot
Lebanon Street Playground	Lebanon St. across from Wyoming Cemetery	Softball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court
Lincoln Playground	Pleasant St. behind Lincoln School	Baseball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court
Mary A. Livermore Memorial Park	Upham St. & Felton Place	Tot Lot and Basketball Court
Mary Foley Park	Grove St. & Myrtle St.	Small Passive Park with Benches
Melrose Common	East Foster, Sixth, Laurel, & Larrabee St.	2 Softball Fields, Tot Lot, Basketball Court, Riding Track
Messengers Field	Brunswick Park at Roosevelt School	Softball Field, Tot Lot, Basketball Court
Milano Park	Main St. & Grove St.	Small Passive Park with Benches
Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course	Slayton Rd.	Golf Course, Tot Lot, Trails
Ripley School Play Yard	Lebanon St. & Forest St.	School Tot Lot
Sewall Woods Park	Lynn Fells Parkway & Sewall Woods Rd.	Passive Park with Trails
Volunteer Park	Warren St. & Melrose St.	Park with Tot Lot
Winthrop School Playground	First St. at Winthrop School	School Tot Lot

Source: City of Melrose and MAPC



Ell Pond



Source: Boston Globe

Economic Development.

The Conservation Commission has also identified water quality of the City ponds as a priority. Addressing nonpoint source pollution, which can cause eutrophication of the ponds, is one way to improve the water quality. A targeted campaign should focus on the impact of dumping around Mount Hood, Swains Pond, and Towners Pond. Another way to address water quality is to identify and eliminate sanitary sewer cross-connections and overflows that result in nutrient and other pollutant loads to ponds. Improving the water quality at the ponds will open up this resource for residents to enjoy. Possible activities or events include fishing derbies and boating activities.

Ell Pond Improvement Council

The Ell Pond Improvement Council (EPIC) provides stewardship over critical open space areas surrounding Ell Pond and the pond itself. EPIC is comprised of volunteers who actively pursue grants and other funding sources for the protection and enhancement of Ell Pond and the surrounding parkland. This group focuses on improving the environmental quality of the resource, educating the public about Ell Pond's importance and enhancing passive recreation opportunities around the pond. EPIC hosts a well-attended yearly spring cleanup at Ell Pond, during which invasive species are removed and native plants installed. The City works collaboratively with EPIC to support their efforts, specifically as it relates to the health and use of Ell Pond and the adjacent parkland.

Cemetery Department and Cemetery Commission

The Cemetery Department manages and maintains

Wyoming Cemetery. The Cemetery Department is headed by a Superintendent, and the Department of Public Works provides support. The Cemetery Commission is a three-person volunteer commission overseeing activities at Wyoming Cemetery.

Enhancements to the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Since the release of the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan and the start of this master plan effort, elements that would further support the Seven-Year Action Plan have been identified. Specifically, the elements identified below could help the City manage impacts from development that affect the open space and recreation facilities that contribute to the high quality of life in Melrose. The recommended additions would allow Melrose and the departments, boards, and commissions that are charged with the creation, maintenance, and protection of open space and recreation facilities to be proactive rather than reactive to the forces in the community.

There are approximately 41 acres of privately-owned open space in Melrose identified in the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan as critical to acquire and protect. In many cases, this land is not suitable for development due to site constraints, but property owners are enticed by increasing land values. Recent subdivision proposals have demonstrated that the City's land use regulations do not adequately protect the City from inappropriate development or encourage creative development proposals that enhance the community's character.

The Melrose Subdivision Rules and Regulations, for example, are outdated and should be rewritten to allow cluster subdivisions or Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ) in order to better control development of privately-owned open space. As the name implies, cluster subdivisions concentrate development in one or more areas of a project site leaving the remainder of the site designated as permanent open space or recreational use. In exchange, the developer may be relieved of certain zoning requirements, such as setbacks or minimum lot sizes, through a special permit process. NRPZ replaces a by right conventional subdivision in order to maximize resource protection while allowing the development to be financially feasible. The core concept behind NRPZ is the linking of low underlying densities with compact patterns of development so that significant amounts of land can be permanently protected.



The City of Melrose could also better position itself to acquire and protect critical land that is currently privately-owned if the citizens adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) by ballot referendum. The Community Preservation Act allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and outdoor recreation. A Community Preservation Fund is funded through a surcharge of not more than 3 percent of the tax levy against real property supplemented by distributions from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund. A local Community Preservation Committee identifies projects for funding subject to approval of the Board of Aldermen. A clear use of this funding could be to acquire those critical privately-owned open space parcels.

Similarly, the Community Preservation Act could fund recreational opportunities, including the acquisition of land for recreational use, capital improvements, or the rehabilitation of existing facilities or land. As of the writing of this Master Plan, 172 municipalities have adopted the CPA to take advantage of this funding opportunity. The City of Melrose should adopt the CPA as well.

The 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan identified action items related to water quality and reducing nonpoint sources of pollution. Since the publication of the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Environmental Protection Agency released the 2016 Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit, which will become effective on July 1, 2017. The MS4 Permit recognizes that stormwater is the primary cause of water quality impairments in Massachusetts. The City of Melrose will have to comply with the requirements of this permit, which may have new financial considerations. One way to raise funds to accomplish stormwater improvements is through the establishment of a stormwater utility fee based on the amount of stormwater runoff produced by a property's impervious surfaces. The City could use the revenues generated to implement stormwater planning and implementation projects such as engineering, inspection, construction, repair, maintenance improvement, reconstruction, and administration. This revenue could also be used to implement stormwater pollution prevention programs that improve the water quality in the City's ponds by eliminating illicit discharges, managing waterfowl and pet waste programs, implementing a pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer program, public education, among other items that could improve water quality.

A simple step towards advancing the City's open space and recreation goals could be to reinstate Melrose as a "Tree City USA" through the Arbor Day Foundation. The City previously participated in this program, which aims to celebrate the importance of urban trees and improve their care, and a sign with this designation still stands on Main Street near Pine Banks Park. The City should investigate the requirements to reinstate Melrose as Tree City and make efforts to meet the requirements, including designating a Tree Board or Department, passing a Tree Care Ordinance, and observing and celebrating Arbor Day.

During the course of the Melrose Forward planning process, residents identified a number of ways to improve and enhance Melrose's existing open space and recreational facilities. Ideas ranged from turning the Common into an ice rink during the winter, allowing boating on City ponds, and enabling more recreational use of Mount Hood through improved paths and better signage. Others suggested that there is a need to support effective recycling and waste management options, and a desire to use native plants and organic lawn care materials when landscaping.

Summary

Melrose's natural environment, open spaces, and recreational resources add tremendous value to quality of life in the City. In 2015, the City released an update to its Open Space and Recreation Plan, which delves deeper into topics around open space and recreation in Melrose. Given its recent publication, this Master Plan carries over many of the recommendations of the 2015 plan to be implemented by the departments, commissions, and advocacy groups mentioned in this section. During the public process on the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the City was directed to expand programming, continue upgrading facilities, encourage greater stewardship, and preserve open space. Many of these same priorities were expressed during the public process for this Master Planning effort, and expanded upon to include further stewardship of the ponds in the City. In addressing these priorities, the recommendations direct the City to be more assertive in funding by adopting the Community Preservation Act and creating a stormwater utility.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Satisfy the active and passive recreation needs of present and future residents.



Strategy 1.1: Provide a variety of recreational activities throughout the City that can be enjoyed by a broad cross-section of residents, regardless of age, gender, ability, or interests.

- Action 1.1.1: Continue City support of existing recreational programming at the Milano Center, Mount Hood, and through the Recreation Department.
- Action 1.1.2: Continue support of the community garden at Franklin Field.
- Action 1.1.3: Ensure new development is served by adequate park space.

Strategy 1.2: Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and undertake improvements that advance accessibility.

- Action 1.2.1: Continue ongoing ADA improvements to City parks.
- Action 1.2.2: Add curb cuts to all sidewalks to make them accessible to people with disabilities, seniors, and those with strollers.
- Action 1.2.3: Establish partnerships with community organizations that promote inclusive programs and activities for individuals with disabilities.

Strategy 1.3: Ensure that the need for regional facilities is addressed.

- Action 1.3.1: Enhance partnerships with other municipalities in the region to plan for and create recreational facilities and protect conservation land.
- Action 1.3.2: Enhance partnerships with the Friends of the Fells and the Department of Conservation and Recreation to showcase the Middlesex Fells Reservation in Melrose.

Strategy 1.4: Generate new and innovative ways to finance open space and recreation development and maintenance.

- Action 1.4.1: Adopt the Community Preservation Act.
- Action 1.4.2: Continue to pursue funding for parks projects through the Capital Improvement Plan, the Open Space Fund, the Streetscape Improvement Fund, and grant opportunities.

Goal 2: Improve, repair, and maintain existing park, playground, and trail facilities.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to improve the ongoing

maintenance program.

- Action 2.1.1: Implement an integrated pest management to control pests on City properties to reduce the use of fertilizer.
- Action 2.1.2: Continue partnership with the Ell Pond Improvement Council (EPIC) to work on tree and park maintenance at Ell Pond.
- Action 2.1.3: Assess the availability, usage, and signage of trash and recycling receptacles at the City's open space and recreation facilities, and address any inadequacies.
- Action 2.1.4: Continue to support, enhance and publicize the Adopt-a-Site program.

Strategy 2.2: Enhance existing playing fields and parks to increase usability and longevity.

- Action 2.2.1: Evaluate the desirability and feasibility of converting existing grass fields to turf fields (i.e., the Cabbage Patch, the West Knoll field, interior of Pine Banks track).
- Action 2.2.2: Assess and replace equipment at the City's parks and playgrounds as identified in the City of Melrose's 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Action 2.2.3: Make improvements to the Athletic Complex to enhance the player and visitor experience.

Strategy 2.3: Improve opportunities for trail use.

- Action 2.3.1: Establish a volunteer corps or Trail Committee to routinely evaluate and maintain trails.
- Action 2.3.2: Expand and increase the curriculum to be used at the Hoover Elementary School Outdoor Classroom and nearby trails.
- Action 2.3.3: Develop new consistent signage to replace outdated signage at larger Conservation Commission properties (i.e., Flagg Acres, Knox Memorial Trail, and Ferdinand Trail).

Goal 3: Preserve existing and acquire new open space, scenic areas, and environmentally sensitive lands.

Strategy 3.1: Protect conservation lands.

- Action 3.1.1: Ensure that the future land use plan in the Route 99 area is compatible with neighboring conservation lands at Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course.
- Action 3.1.2: Develop a targeted campaign that addresses the impact of dumping around Mount Hood, Swains Pond, and Towners Pond.



- Action 3.1.3: Continue dedicated funding through the City budget for clean-up and maintenance of conservation land.
- Action 3.1.4: Adopt cluster subdivision or Natural Resource Protection Zoning to control the development of privately-owned open space in a context-sensitive manner.

Strategy 3.2: Acquire critical unprotected parcels.

- Action 3.2.1: Acquire and protect the critical properties identified in the Metro North Land Use Priority Plan published by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.
- Action 3.2.2: Acquire and protect the critical properties identified in the City of Melrose's 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Strategy 3.3: Protect and improve the urban tree canopy.

- Action 3.3.1: Reinstate the Tree Warden position, exploring the possibility of a shared employee for Melrose and neighboring municipalities.
- Action 3.3.2: Reinstate Melrose as a National Arbor Day Tree City.
- Action 3.3.3: Evaluate adopting a Tree Preservation Ordinance.
- Action 3.3.4: Investigate and plant tree species that will thrive in warmer climates expected in the near future.

Goal 4: Protect and improve water resources, including Ell Pond, Swains Pond, Towners Pond, and the Ponds at Mount Hood.

Strategy 4.1: Assess water quality at City ponds.

- Action 4.1.1: Increase funding for water quality testing at Ell Pond and other City ponds and expand the testing program.
- Action 4.1.2: Update the Ell Pond Master Plan to create a vision for Ell Pond and address the area's environmental and recreation needs.

Strategy 4.2: Develop measures to protect against eutrophication at City ponds.

- Action 4.2.1: Establish strong nonpoint source reduction programs (i.e., fertilizer reduction, pet waste cleanup, animal water reduction) to reduce the nutrient inputs to ponds.
- Action 4.2.2: Strengthen programs to identify and eliminate sanitary sewer cross-connections

and overflows, which allow wastewater to flow into water bodies.

- Action 4.2.3: Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects.

Strategy 4.3: Increase educational and recreational opportunities at City ponds.

- Action 4.3.1: Post signage regarding the acceptable activities at City ponds.
- Action 4.3.2: Explore opportunities for special events at City ponds, such as fishing derbies and boating activities.





Housing

Melrose is increasingly recognized as a desirable place to live within Greater Boston. As a streetcar suburb it offers some of the amenities of a city such as a great downtown and the ability to walk from place to place. It is characterized by the historic, yet unassuming character of its many century-old Victoria-era homes. Melrose's proximity to the MBTA Orange Line and Commuter Rail as well as to Route 1, I-93, and I-95, make it a convenient location for commuters whether their jobs are located in Boston or in suburban locations. Many residents express a strong sense of community and pride in the city, whether it is their lifelong or newly adopted hometown.

The desirability of the City, while a source of pride, is also a pressure point. For longtime residents who would like to stay in the City as they age, for those looking to upgrade from a starter home or apartment as their families grow, and for prospective residents looking to move to Melrose – finding and maintaining a home is becoming increasingly difficult due to low inventory and high prices.

On August 14, 2015, Realtor.com named Melrose as the “hottest ZIP code” in the United States. According to their economic data team, homes in their list of top ten communities “sell four to nine times faster than the national average, and spend 20 fewer days on the market than their respective metropolitan statistical areas.” Additionally, listings in these communities are viewed on Realtor.com “three to eight times more often than overall U.S. listings – an average of 2.3 times more often than their respective metros.” The communities in this top ten list have higher median household incomes than the metropolitan areas where they are located, and are situated in regional economies with low unemployment. Melrose topped the list as “a magnet for young professionals and families due to its relative affordability, access to public transportation, and attractive downtown area.”¹

On October 31, 2016, WalletHub, a website that offers free credit score reports, listed Melrose as one of “2016’s Best Small Cities in America,” ranking 26th among 1,268 small cities it rated based on several indicators of livability including affordability, economic health, education and health, quality of life, and safety. Although Melrose was in the lower half of the 1,268 for affordability, it was in the top 15% for economic health and quality of life, in the top 7% for safety, and the top

2% for education and health.² These accolades garnered Melrose a lot of press attention once again, and in November 2016, WCVB-TV’s news magazine show *Chronicle* came to Melrose to learn more about what makes Melrose great. The episode aired in January 2017.

Indeed, what Realtor.com gleaned from nationwide clicks on real estate listings on its website, what WalletHub gleaned using its livability metrics, and what the producers of *Chronicle* learned when they visited Melrose is mirrored by the experience of those in Melrose. Throughout the outreach for Melrose Forward, participants identified Downtown Melrose, transit access, and its family-friendly community atmosphere as things that attracted them to the city and keep them in Melrose.

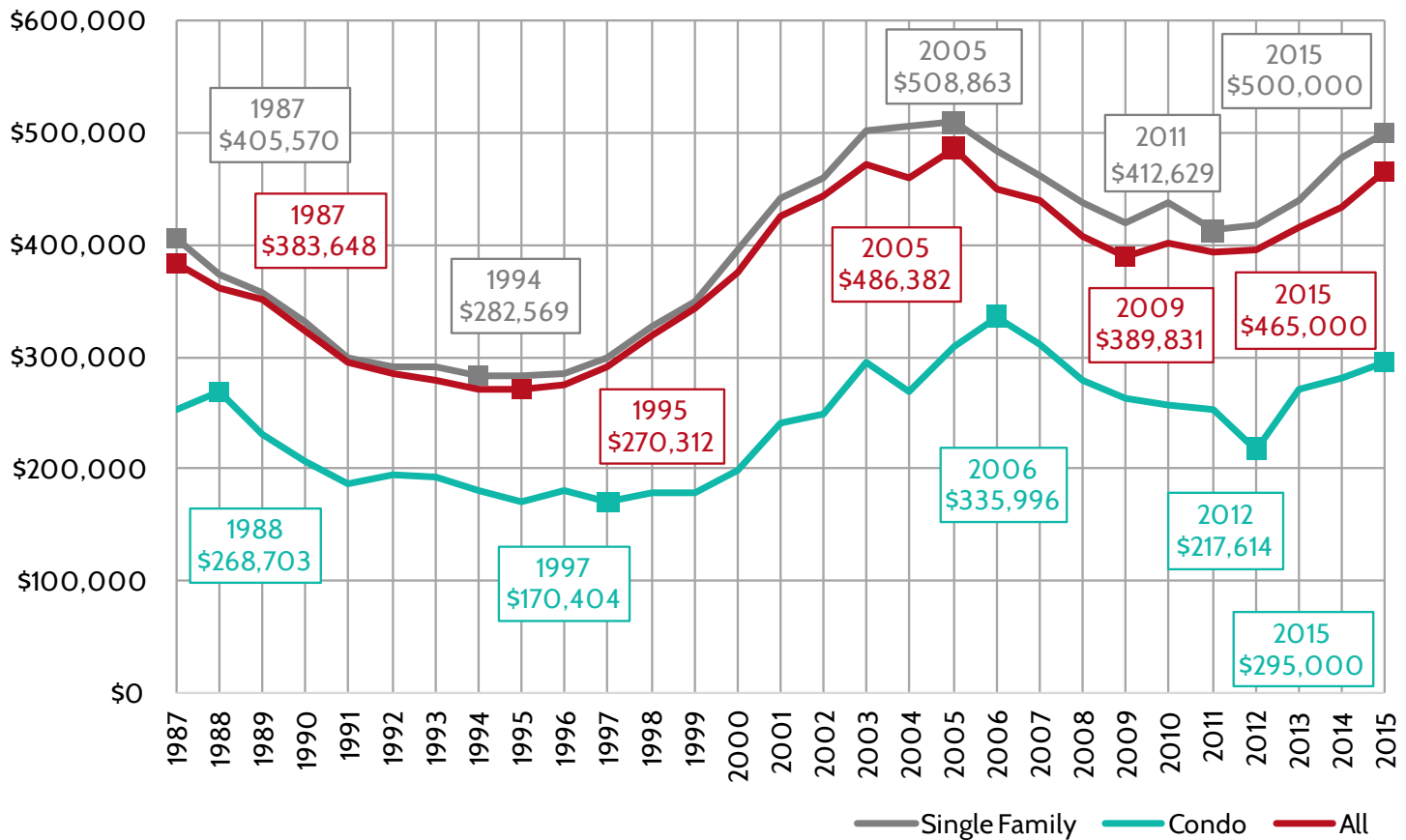
MAPC held a focus group in Melrose with real estate professionals working in the City on June 29, 2016. The group included a mix of eight realtors, lawyers, bankers, Planning Board members, and consultants involved in the many components of residential and commercial development. The focus group attendees provided invaluable insight into Melrose’s real estate market and could contextualize trends seen in the market.

All of the focus group attendees agreed that Melrose’s real estate market is “red hot,” particularly its residential market. While this seems great from the outside looking in, one realtor remarked that it may not be a healthy market. For example, there could be fifteen offers for any one house listing and only one person can buy that property. The same is true for the commercial sector: companies are vying to get in but there is a lack of inventory. These participants thought that to some degree, Melrose has become a “victim of its own success.”

Because Melrose’s local residential real estate market is so hot, there are not many homes on the market, sales prices are going up quickly, making it more difficult to afford living in Melrose, and new housing units are being produced at a slower pace and volume than needed to meet demand. This analysis examines Melrose’s housing conditions and household characteristics to identify local housing needs and goals.



Figure 1: Melrose Median Home Prices, 1987-2015, adjusted to 2015 dollars



Source: The Warren Group 2016. Adjusted by BLS Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT Annual Urban Consumers CPI

Housing Market: Sales Prices, Sales Volume, and Rents

How does data from other sources stack up with the analysis done by Realtor.com, which was based on January-June 2015 listings? According to data published in Banker and Tradesmen from The Warren Group, which collects and compiles data on real estate sales and ownership throughout New England, the median sales price for all Melrose homes in 2015 was \$465,000, with the median for single family homes at \$500,000 and the median for condominiums at \$295,000. The highest median sales price from 1987-2015 for homes in Melrose was recorded in 2005, and median home sales in 2015 were 95% of the 2005 median sales price, once adjusted for inflation.

As shown in Figure 1, median sales prices for single family homes and for all home sales recorded by The Warren Group closely mirror each other, with prices for single family homes generally higher than other housing types. Single family homes are the dominant housing type in Melrose, and thus they have the most influence on the overall median price. Median condo prices show a bit more fluctuation from year to year, which likely

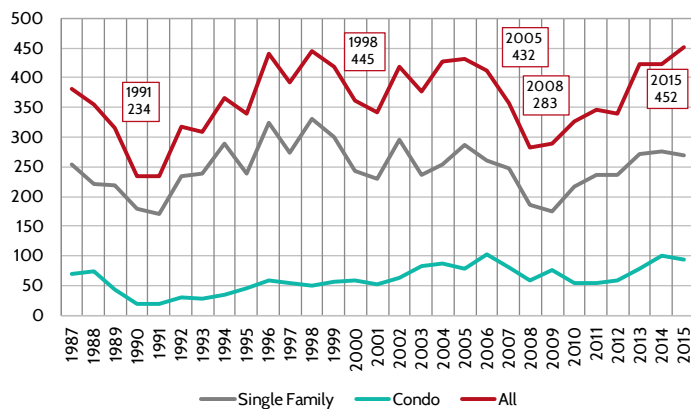
has more to do with a smaller number of annual condo sales than with market turbulence specific to condos. The overall trend line for condos is generally consistent with market trends.

Figure 1 includes a few callouts where there have been declines or increases in the median home sales price. All sales combined are shown in red, and the troughs and peaks generally match national economic booms and recessions over the last three decades. The most substantial increase in home sale prices occurred between 1995, when prices were at their lowest for the 28-year period shown, and 2005, when prices were at their peak – the median sales price for a house in 2005 was about 1.8 times more than a decade earlier. The median sales price in 2009, around the end of the Great Recession of 2007-2009, was about at the same level as the median sales price in 1987. The median sales price in 2015 was about 19% higher than the 2009 median sales price.

Figure 2 shows the number of home sales each year from 1987-2015 for all homes, single family homes, and condominiums. The peaks and troughs for volume of sales in Melrose roughly coincide with economic conditions and the peaks and troughs for sales prices.

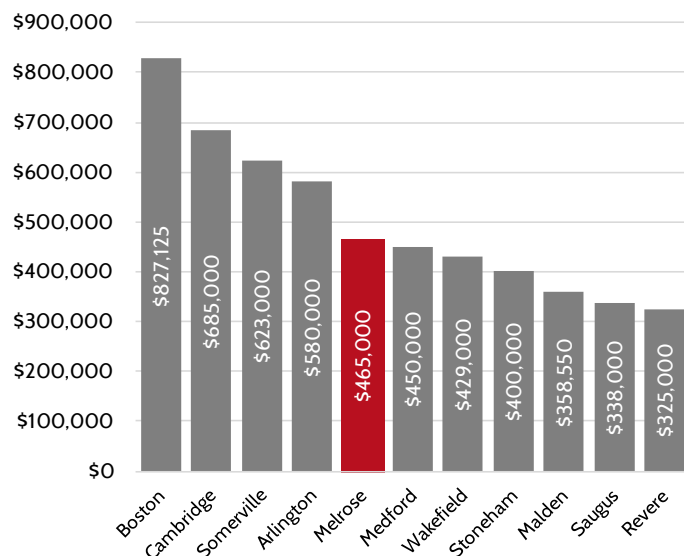


Figure 2: Number of Home Sales by Type, 1987-2015



Source: The Warren Group, 2016

Figure 3: 2015 Median Sales Price for All Home Sales, Comparison Municipalities



Source: The Warren Group 2016

Volumes of sales varied more from year to year during the period between 1995-2005 when sales prices increased by 80% as described earlier.

During the years shown, the fewest homes were sold in 1991, when 234 homes were sold in Melrose, and the most were sold in 2015, when 452 homes were sold – close to twice as many as in 1991. There were about 5% more sales in 2015 than in 2005, which reiterates how “hot” the market is – the median sales price in 2015 is 95% of what the 2005 sales price was, and sales volume slightly exceeds 2005 sales volume.

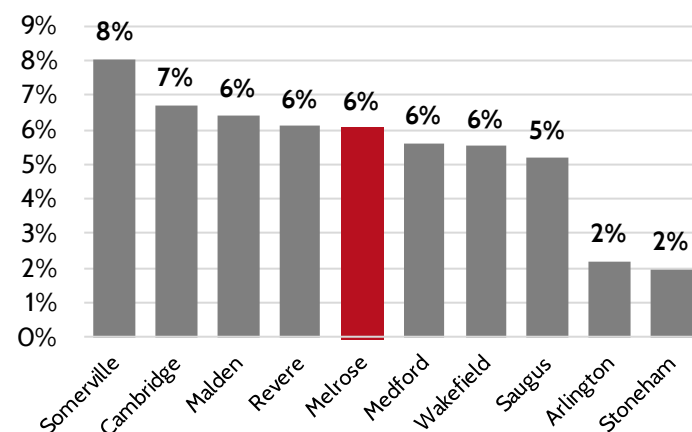
Figure 3 shows what many people looking to buy a home know from their search experience: prices in Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, the most populous cities among the comparison municipalities, are the

highest. Arlington, a streetcar suburb like Melrose, which is located at the end of the MBTA Red Line, has the next highest 2015 median sales price among the municipalities listed.

Anecdotally, many young professionals who are looking to purchase a home and to have children move out of Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, and choose communities like Arlington and Melrose. These communities are close to transit, with vibrant downtowns of their own, places that have both urban and suburban characteristics. Medford, also a streetcar suburb, has many of the same characteristics as Arlington and Melrose, and as investments are made in its downtown and transit options, housing prices there have increased as well. Malden and Revere are part of the metropolitan core, Malden on the MBTA Orange Line and Revere on the Blue Line, with overall slightly more urban characteristics such as greater population density and a denser built environment. On the other hand, Wakefield, Stoneham, and Saugus are further away from the metropolitan core and have relatively more suburban characteristics. Wakefield is served by the commuter rail and its median sales price is the highest among the three more suburban communities.

To provide some context for how significant the number of home sales in a given year is in each municipality, Figure 4 shows 2015 sales volume expressed as a percentage of the 2010 owner-occupied households in each of the comparison municipalities except Boston (where both sales volume and population size far exceeded the other comparison municipalities). Sales volume as a percentage of owner-occupied households in Somerville, Cambridge, Malden, and Revere all exceeded the sales volume in Melrose. Using this metric, sales volume in Arlington and Stoneham

Figure 4: 2015 Home Sales as a Percentage of 2010 Owner-Occupied Household Population



Source: The Warren Group 2016, U.S. Census



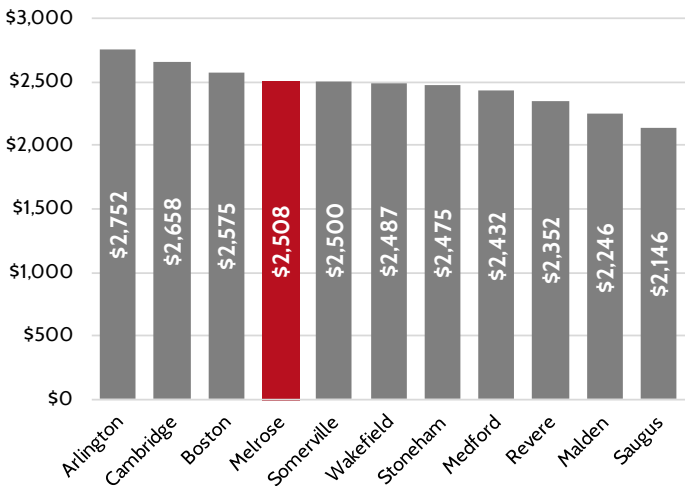
was the lowest in 2015. Figure 4 should be interpreted with caution since the populations of each municipality would have changed somewhat during the five years between the 2015 sales figures and the last full count of population for Census 2010.

This generally corroborates the conclusions drawn by Realtor.com regarding the pace of sales in Melrose as compared with nearby communities. Somerville, Cambridge, Malden, and Revere are all designated as Metropolitan Core Communities according to MAPC's Massachusetts Community Types classification system,³ which are the high density cities including and closest to Boston. Melrose, Medford, and Arlington are all classified as Streetcar Suburbs and Wakefield, Saugus, and Stoneham are classified as Mature Suburban Towns by MAPC. So, among the communities most similar to it in this comparison group, Melrose had the highest volume by owner-occupied household population.

The Realtor.com article also mentioned a higher median household income than the region as a metric used to determine the hottest ZIP codes. According to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2010-2014, among the comparison municipalities, Melrose has the 2nd highest median household income following Arlington. If comparing the median household income for owner-occupied households only, Melrose has the third highest, following Arlington and Cambridge.

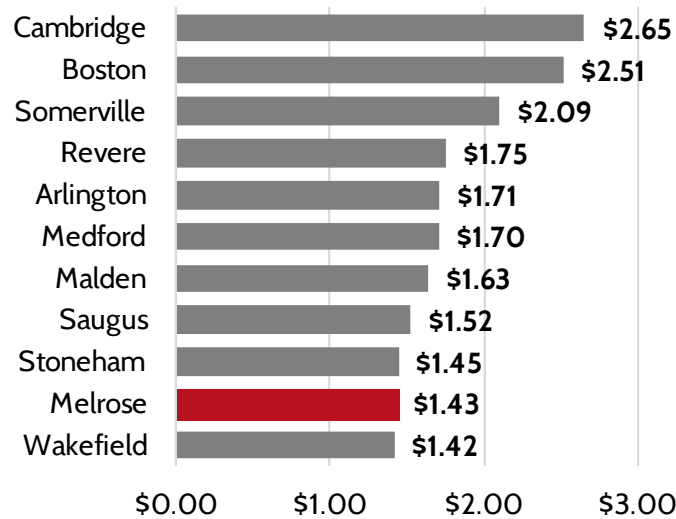
The May 2016 estimated median rental listing was \$2,508, about the same as the estimated median rent for Somerville, Wakefield, and Stoneham, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: May 2016 Median Rent Estimates



Source: Zillow Rent Index, July 2016

Figure 6: May 2016 Median Rent Estimates



Source: Zillow Rent Index, Per Square Foot All Homes, July 2016

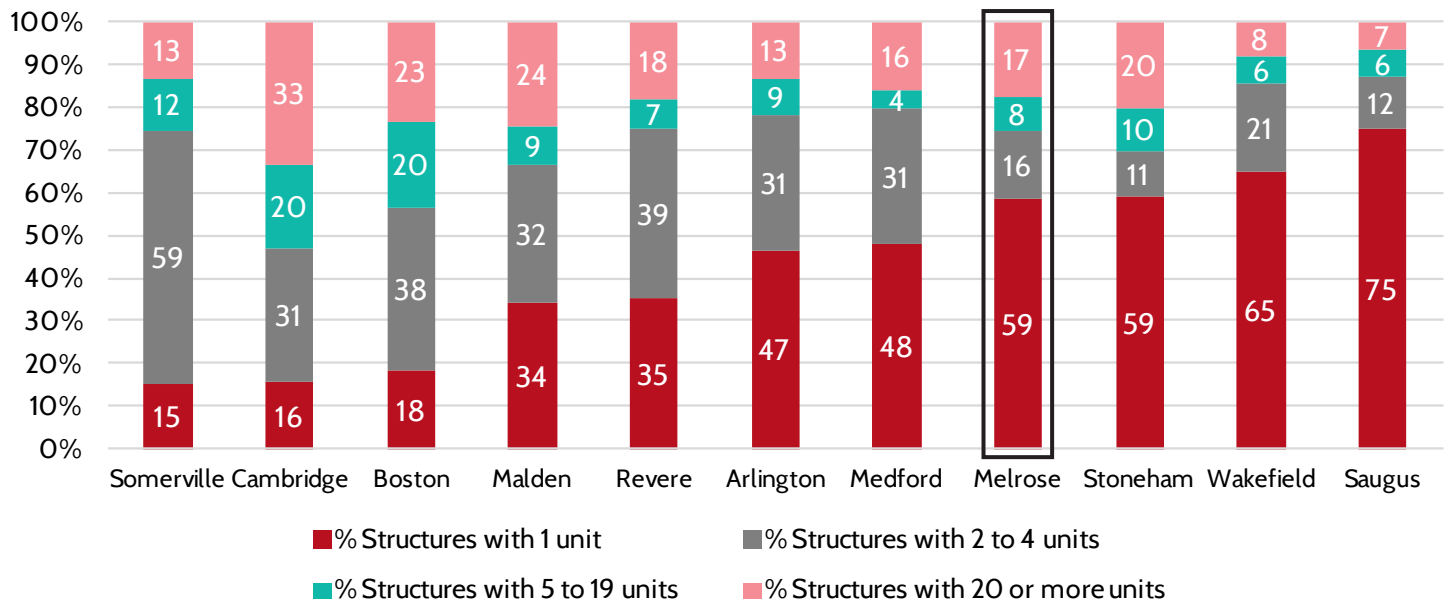
On a per-square-foot basis, based on a single month of data, rent is relatively more affordable than many of the comparison municipalities, as shown in Figure 6. The more densely populated municipalities appear to command higher per-square-foot rents. So while rents in Melrose appear to be on the higher side in terms of total asking rent, at least for the month shown, prospective renters are likely to get more space for their money in Melrose as compared with the more densely populated neighboring communities.

According to participants in the June 2016 real estate professionals focus group, the rental market in Melrose is particularly thriving because it makes sense from a lending perspective. According to a lawyer heavily involved in the real estate sector, investors are much more likely to finance rentals because it is easy to recoup a profit, as tenants are essentially paying back the investment as the value of the property increases. This is certainly what is being seen within large developments like Jack Flats Apartments near Oak Grove. There are a select number of recent larger condominium developments such as 130 Tremont Street and the condo market for smaller developments is still lively. In particular, for two- and three-family houses, “condoization” is increasingly more likely due to the very high values of these properties; it is more profitable to sell them off separately.

The 2004 Melrose Master Plan was written when the housing market was close to its peak, a time period that has since been called a “housing bubble,” which preceded major drops in housing prices during the Great Recession across the United States. In 2015-2016, the period during which this plan was written, prices appear

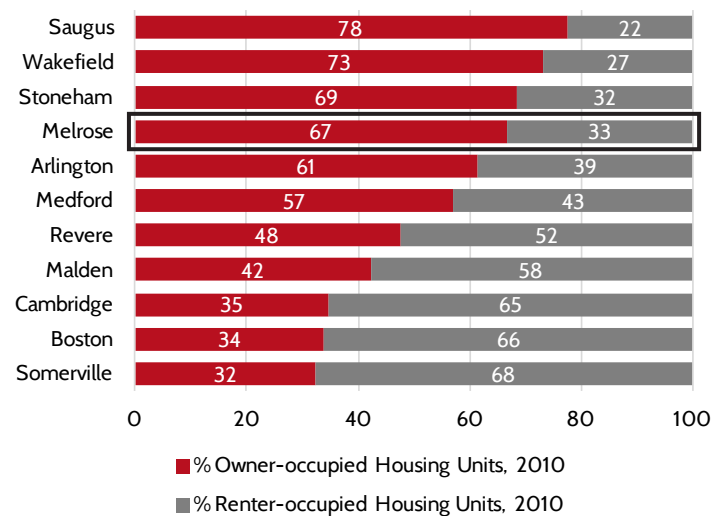


Figure 7: Estimated Percentage of Housing Units by Type, Melrose and Comparison Municipalities



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014

Figure 8: Housing Tenure, Comparison Municipalities



Source: Census 2010

Figure 9: Melrose Housing Vacancy Rates, 1990-2014

Source and dates	% vacant (± margin of error if applicable)
Census 1990	3.2%
Census 2000	2.4%
Census 2010	4.6%
ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2009-2013	2.6% ± 1.1%
ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014	3.5% ± 1.4%

to have matched the levels they were at during the housing bubble a decade earlier.

Housing Supply: Types of Homes, Vacancies, and New Development

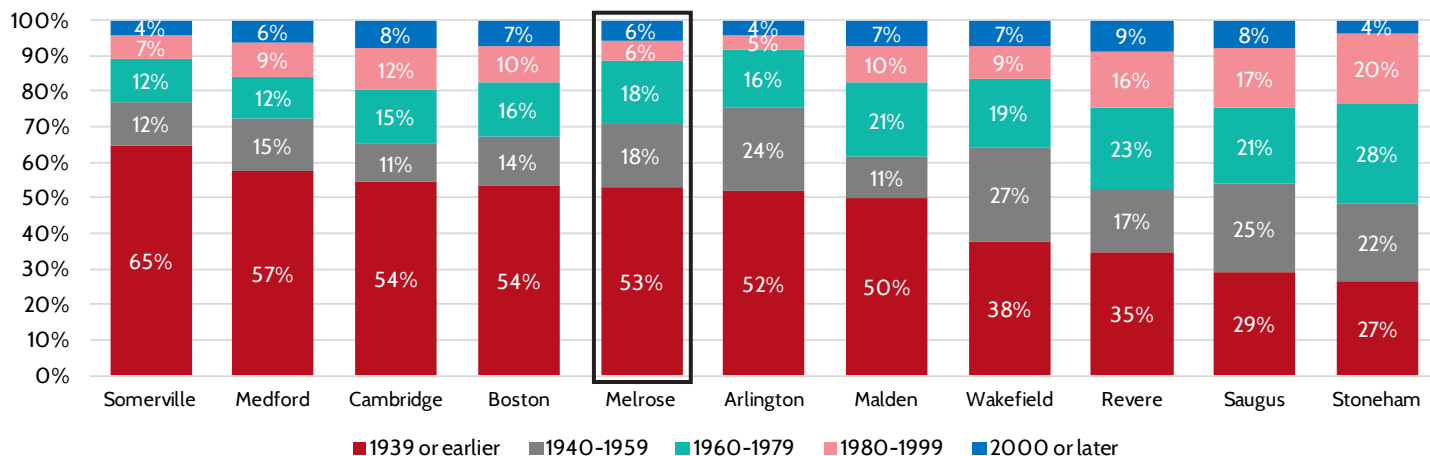
As of Census 2010, there were 11,751 housing units in Melrose; up about 4% from Census 2000, when 11,248 housing units were recorded.⁴ More than half, about 59%, of the housing units in Melrose are single-family homes, according to American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2010-2014. About 75% of Melrose homes are in structures with four or fewer units, and about a quarter are in structures with five or more units. Among the Inner Core Community Type comparison municipalities, as shown in Figure 7, Melrose has the highest proportion of single family homes – in terms of housing stock it is more similar to its north suburban neighbors, classified by MAPC as “Mature Suburban Towns.”⁵

As of 2010, two-thirds of occupied homes in Melrose were owner-occupied and a third were renter-occupied, as shown in Figure 8. Similar to the trends for types of housing by municipality, Melrose more closely matches its north suburban neighbors than its Inner Core counterparts in that it has a higher overall rate of homeownership than other Inner Core municipalities.

Melrose has had a vacancy rate under 5% for many years, as indicated in Figure 9. In 2010, the overall vacancy rate for the MAPC region was 5.9% and for



Figure 10: Estimated Percentage of Housing Units by Year Built, Comparison Municipalities



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014

Figure 11: Recent Housing Development Activity

Development Name	Stage	Completion Year	Housing Units	Subsidized Housing Units
419-429 Main Street	Permitted	2018	4	0
524-530 Main Street	Permitted	2018	11	1
Blueberry Hill Townhouses	Permitted	2018	19	2
10-14 Corey Street	Permitted	2018	40	4
116-158 Essex Street	Construction	2017	90	0
Stone Ridge Heights	Construction	2017	8	0
407-413 Pleasant Street	Complete	2017	6	0
Stone Place Phase II	Complete	2016	88	8
130 Tremont Street	Complete	2016	26	2
2 Washington Street	Complete	2015	94	9
150 Green Street	Complete	2015	6	0
160 Green Street	Complete	2015	6	0
Total			398	26

Source: City of Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development

all of Massachusetts, 9.3%. The low vacancy rate in Melrose is another indication that the supply of housing available on the market may be inadequate and that the housing options for prospective buyers and renters are limited.

As shown in Figure 10, more than half of the homes in Melrose were built before 1939. For this statistic, Melrose is more similar to its Inner Core counterparts than its north suburban neighbors.

Figure 10 shows that for the comparison municipalities,

between 4-9% of the units were estimated to have been built since 2000; for Melrose about 6% of the total units were estimated as built since 2000. Even for the municipalities with relatively newer housing stock, three-quarters or more of the total housing units were built before 1980.

The Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development reported in January 2017 that there are currently nine development projects in Melrose that would add 398 additional housing units to the City's supply of housing once completed, as shown in Figure

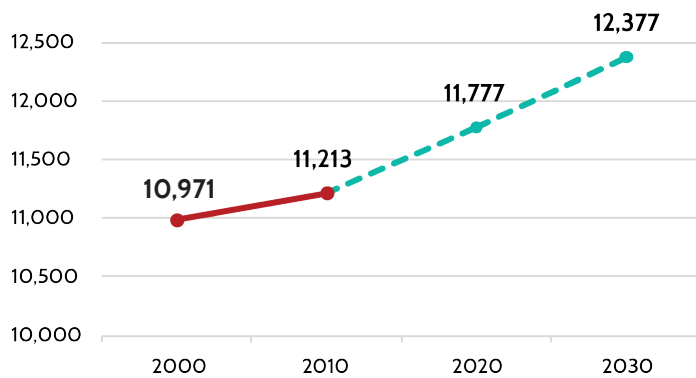


11. Of the 398 units, 226 units have been constructed. The 90-unit assisted living facility at 116-158 Essex Street and the 8-unit Stone Ridge Heights subdivision will be completed in 2017. The remaining 74 units are expected to be completed in 2018.

Household Characteristics, Local Perceptions, and Projected Demand

As discussed in greater detail in the Melrose Today chapter, MAPC projects that the City's population will grow by 3% between 2010 and 2030, and households are anticipated to grow at a faster rate during the same time period – by 10%, or an additional 1,164 households over the 11,213 households recorded in Census 2010 as shown in Figure 12.⁶ The reason households are anticipated to grow at a faster rate than the population is because household size is decreasing. For housing, this means more homes will be needed, and that these homes on average will house smaller households than in past decades. Additionally, the population is aging: the median age in 2010 in Melrose was 40.93 years-old and by 2030 it is projected to increase by 3.48 years

Figure 12: Melrose Recent and Projected Households



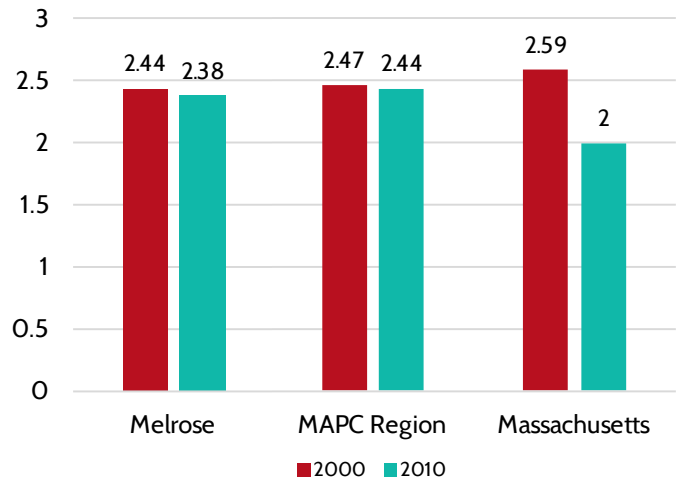
Source: US Census, MAPC Metro Boston Population and Household Demand Projections, 2014, Stronger Region Scenario

to 44.41 years-old. Looking forward, both the types of housing available as well as the number of units need to be considered in order to accommodate the housing needs and desires of a diversity of Melrose households.

In Melrose, like trends across the state and the rest of the United States, household size is shrinking. As the population grows and smaller households begin to form, the number of housing units needs to be built at a rate faster than the growth in population. As shown in Figure 13, average household size in Melrose decreased from 2.44 people per household in 2000 to 2.38 in 2010. Owner-occupied household size also decreased, from 2.78 to 2.69, while renter-occupied households increased slightly in size, from 1.75 to 1.77. Shrinking household size is a trend that is projected to continue in Melrose, declining to 2.21 people per household by 2030.

Melrose's decreasing household size during this period is consistent with regional trends, as shown in Figure 14. While Melrose's average household size in 2000 and 2010 was close to the average household size for the MAPC region, household size for Massachusetts as

Figure 14: Average Household Size 2000-2010 for Melrose, MAPC Region, and State



Source: US Census 2010

Figure 13: Melrose Recent and Projected Average Household Size by Tenure, 2000-2030

	Census 2000	Census 2010	MAPC Projections 2020	MAPC Projections 2030
Total Households	2.44	2.38	2.29	2.21
Owner-Occupied Households	2.78	2.69	(owner and renter occupied average household size not projected)	
Renter-Occupied Households	1.75	1.77		

Source: US Census, MAPC Metro Boston Population and Household Demand Projections, 2014, Stronger Region Scenario



Figure 15: Households in Melrose by Type

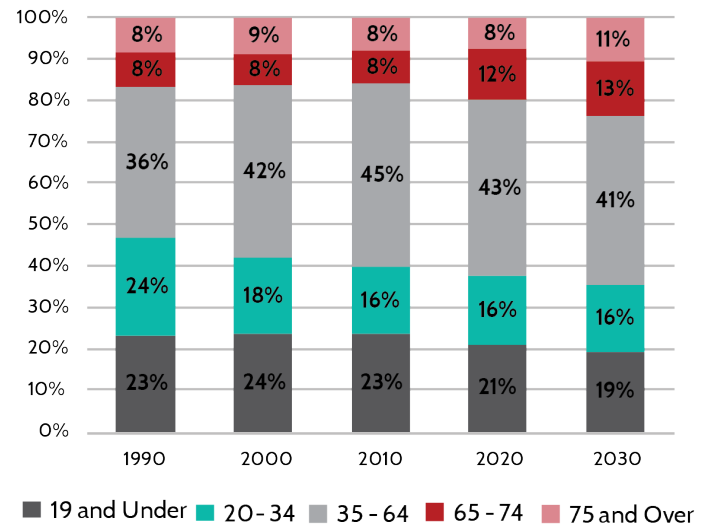
Household Type	Number	Proportion of Population
All households	11,213	100% of all households
Family households	7,076	63% of all households
Family households with children under 18	3,336	47% of family households; 30% of all households
Nonfamily households	4,137	37% of all households
1-Person households	3,509	85% of nonfamily households; 31% of all households
Nonfamily households with more than one person	628	15% of nonfamily households; 6% of all households
Households with senior(s) age 65 or older	3,141	28% of all households
Senior (age 65+) living alone	1,505	43% of 1-person households; 48% of households with seniors; 13% of all households
Senior(s) (age 65+) in households with more than one person	1,636	52% of all households with seniors; 15% of all households

Source: US Census 2010

a whole changed more considerably during this period – from an average household size that was larger than Melrose and the MAPC region in 2000 to an average household size notably lower than Melrose and the MAPC region in 2010.

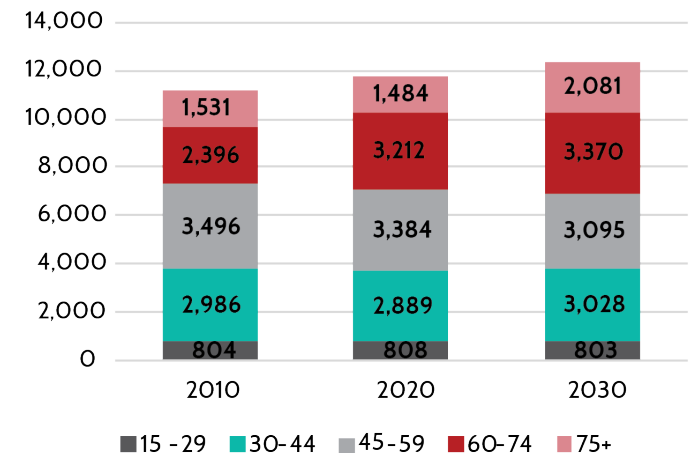
The City is dominated by family households, households with at least one person present who is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. A householder is defined by the US Census as the person in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned, age 15 years-old or older.⁷ 63% of all households are family households, as indicated in Figure 15, 31% of households are 1-person households and 6% are nonfamily households with more than one person. Many of the 1-person households, 43%, are seniors age 65 or older. 30% of all households are family households with children under age 18, and 28% of all households include seniors age 65 or older.

Figure 16: Population Projections by Age, 1990 to 2030



Source: U.S. Census and MAPC Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, 2014, Stronger Region Scenario

Figure 17: Household Projections by Age, 1990 to 2030



Source: U.S. Census and MAPC Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, 2014, Stronger Region Scenario

As stated earlier, the City's population is aging. In 2010, 16% of the City's total population was age 65 or older, shown in Figure 16 as the 65-74 and 75 and over cohorts added together, or 8% + 8%. These were residents who were born in 1945 or earlier. The population cohort born between 1945 and 1970 represents Massachusetts' baby boom – a slightly longer timeframe than the nationwide definition of the Baby Boomer generation. In 2010, those born in 1970 were 40 years old, so the baby boomers were between ages 40-65. In 2020, this same cohort would be ages 50-75, and in 2030 they would be ages 60 and over. In 2020, 20% of the City's population is projected to be 65 or older, shown in Figure 16 as 12% + 8%, and by 2030, that age cohort will grow to 24% of the City's population, shown in Figure 16 as 11% + 13%.

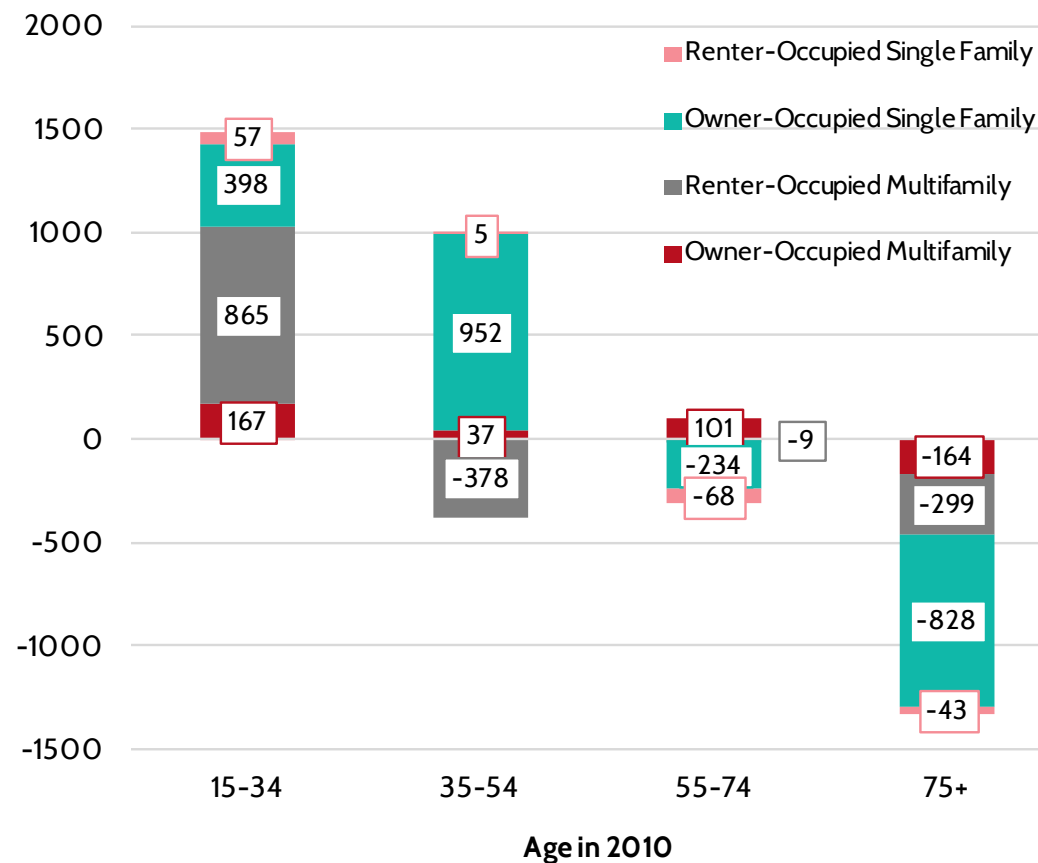


Figure 18: Housing Demand Projections by Age of Householder, 1990 to 2030

Age in 2010	Age in 2020	Renter-Occupied Single Family Units	Owner-Occupied Single Family Units	Renter-Occupied Multifamily Units	Owner-Occupied Multifamily Units	Total Single Family Units	Total Multifamily Units	Total Renter-Occupied Units	Total Owner-Occupied Units	Total Units
15-34	25-44	57	398	865	167	455	1,032	922	565	1,487
35-54	45-64	5	952	-378	37	957	-341	-373	989	616
55-74	65-84	-68	-234	-9	101	-302	92	-77	-133	-210
75+	85+	-43	-828	-299	-164	-871	-463	-342	-992	-1,334
Total by Type and Tenure		-49	288	179	141	239	320	130	429	559

Source: U.S. Census and MAPC Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, 2014, Stronger Region Scenario

Figure 19: Housing Demand Projections by Age of Householder, 1990 to 2030



Source: U.S. Census and MAPC Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, 2014, Stronger Region Scenario



In 2010, there were 3,927 householders in Melrose over age 60, shown in Figure 17 as 2,396 + 1,531. The number of householder over age 60 is projected to increase by 28% to 5,451 householders in 2030, as shown in Figure 17 as 3,370 + 2,081. In 2030, 44% of all households will have a householder over age 60, as compared with 35% of households in 2010.

So what do more total households and an aging population yield in terms of housing demand? It is projected that there will be a net demand for 559 additional housing units in 2020, and 672 more between 2020-2030 for a total of 1,231 additional housing units expected to be needed in Melrose over the 20 year period 2010-2030.

MAPC projected the change in housing unit demand from 2010 to 2020 with more detail, by age of householder, type of unit – single family or multifamily, and by tenure – renter-occupied or owner-occupied. Since this projection has many components, it has been shown as a table in Figure 18 and as a chart in Figure 19.

The youngest cohort, those age 15-34 in 2010 would be 25-44 in 2020. It is anticipated that this cohort would form new households and some would start families and have children. Based on current housing trends, it is projected that about two-thirds of these households would demand multifamily units and one-third would demand single family homes. There would be more renters than homeowners for this age cohort.

The 35-54 year-old cohort in 2010 would be ages 45-64 in 2020. It is anticipated that these households, in between forming families and approaching retirement age, would as a cohort tend to move out of multifamily units and into single family units. Many of them will also become homeowners during this time period.

Increases in demand are the result of new households forming, immigration, or increasing preference for certain types of housing. Decreases in demand are the result of outmigration, mortality, or decreased preference for a given housing unit type. The two younger cohorts will on the whole have positive net housing demand. The older cohorts, those 55 and older in 2010 and 65 and older in 2020, will be returning housing units to the overall supply of housing. For those ages 55-74, or 65-84 in 2020, there will be a net positive demand for owner-occupied multifamily units; all other unit types for this cohort as well as the eldest cohort will see a decrease in demand.

In total over the ten-year period 2010-2020, there is projected to be demand for 239 new single family

homes and 320 new multifamily homes in Melrose. Also, although renting will be the most popular option for the youngest cohort, net demand for homeownership on a citywide basis will be about three times higher than rental.

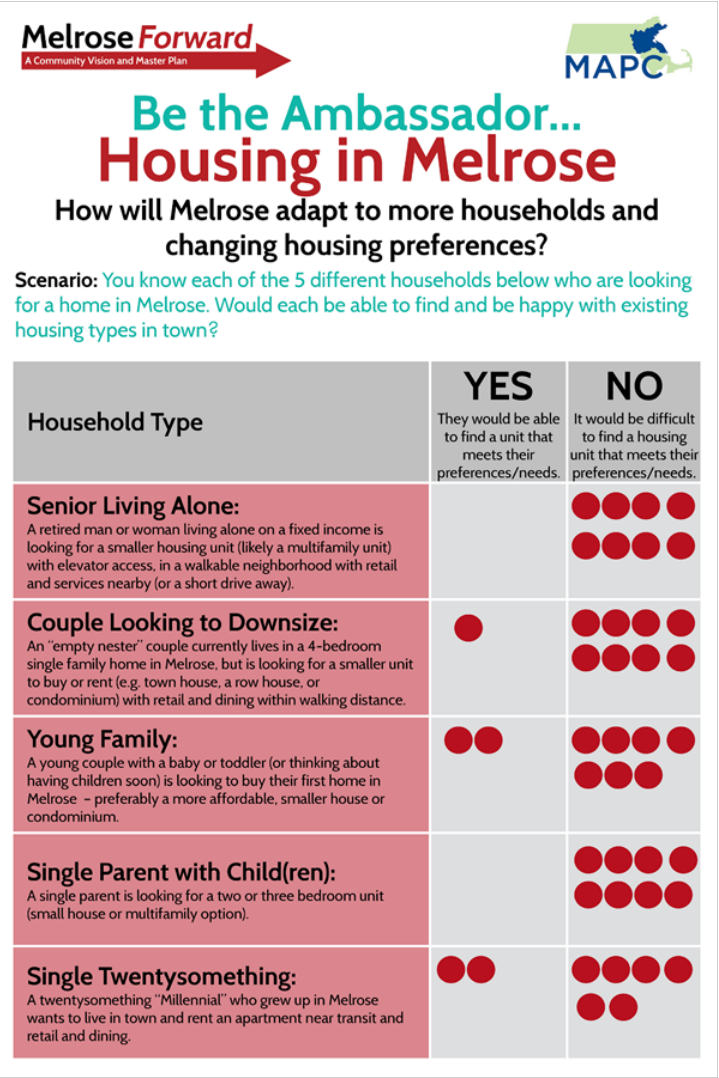
Since 2010, according to the Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development, 21 single family homes have been built in Melrose, and another 27 are in the pipeline, for a total of 48 single family units. During this same period, 497 multifamily units have been built and another 145 are in the pipeline for a total of 642 multifamily units. 90 of the multifamily units are for assisted living only. Based on this information, Melrose has permitted about 20% of the new single family homes needed by 2020. According to the projected need through 2020, Melrose has developed about twice the number of multifamily units needed for the near term. Since 2010, a few large developments have been built or are in the development pipeline: the multi-phased Alta Stone Place (in total, 300 units), 2 Washington Street, which was 94 units, and the Residence at Melrose Station, which will be 90 assisted living units. Based on current land availability and development constraints, there is little opportunity for developments of this size in the future. However, given current low vacancy rates and in order to meet demand beyond 2020, there is still additional need for both single family and multifamily housing in Melrose.

While the population is aging, the greatest household growth actually comes from younger cohorts and the net housing unit demand is for those still in the labor force, before they reach retirement age. That said, while households with seniors will not be creating new housing unit demand, on the whole, they will still represent a larger share of households than in years past and many of these older adults will choose to stay in their homes as they age.

To explore housing options at the February 2016 Melrose Forward Visioning Forum, many participants noted that they were concerned about the availability and affordability of homes in Melrose. MAPC conducted an exercise where participants could put a dot sticker on a poster indicating “yes” or “no” for whether different household types – a senior living alone, a couple looking to downsize, a young family, a single parent with children, or a single twentysomething – would be able to find a home in Melrose, and whether they would be happy with the options available. This was only intended as an illustrative question to get a sense of community perceptions and opinions about housing – it should not be read as a scientific survey or as a recommendation on what types of housing should be



Figure 20: Participant responses to questions about housing options, needs, and characteristics at the Melrose Forward Visioning Forum



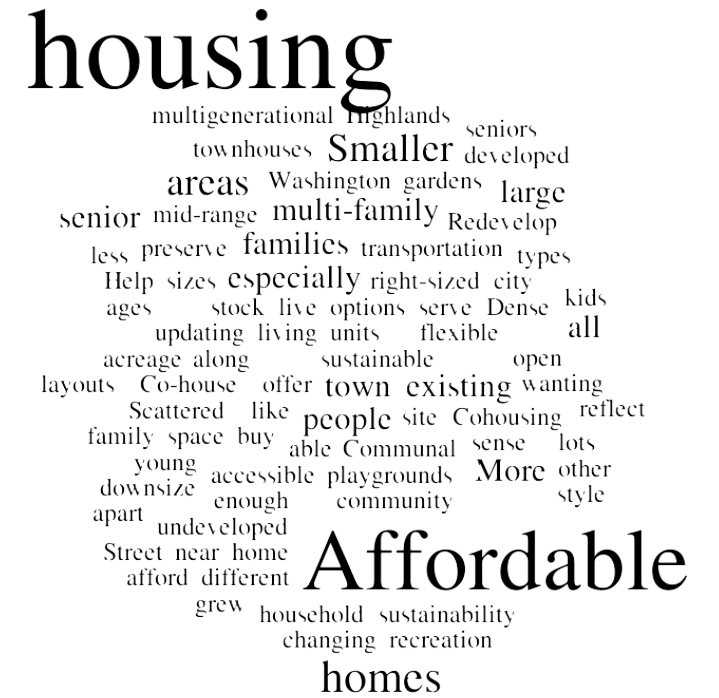
built. The results of how participants responded to this exercise is in Figure 20.

MAPC and the Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development conducted two focus groups to get more in-depth perspectives on housing and other community issues in June 2016. One focus group was with seniors, and the other, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, was with real estate professionals working in the City.

One of the concerns the real estate focus participants noted regarding the high demand for real estate in Melrose is that it is impacting affordability. As the City becomes more expensive to live in, its demographics are changing. According to a banker in the City who was present during the focus group, the people who are looking for loans are coming from outside of Melrose and have little or no ties to Melrose. People who grew up in Melrose are now looking for housing in less expensive cities and towns—a pattern seen consistently throughout the Boston region.

According to focus group participants, the people who are selling properties and leaving Melrose are primarily those above the age of 55, who would otherwise stay in the city if there were enough options available for downsizing or "right-sizing." A concern is that many of the units that would seem to fit in the right-sizing category are also being demanded by millennials. There is a high demand from the younger demographic for rental units. Rents in Melrose, while pricy, are considerably lower than in Boston. As one participant said, "Melrose is 12 minutes longer on the train but they'll be \$1,000 richer." Not only does renting save the upfront cost associated with purchasing a home, but renting appeals to millennials who are less committed to settling down in one place while still young. Like seniors, they do not want the commitment associated with homeownership. One attendee claimed that she personally would sell her home upon retirement, cash out, and begin renting. For all demographics, and specifically older adults, there is a serious advantage to not having to worry about home maintenance.

Participants acknowledged that there are certain housing types lacking in Melrose, such as cluster developments, single-story ranch houses, and cohousing that might appeal to the city's older population. There are also a lack of microunits, apartments averaging around 300 square feet that provide a somewhat affordable option for the younger demographic. While the demand is not necessarily in Melrose yet, it is in places like Somerville that are just a few miles away.



It was widely acknowledged that places for new development are limited in that Melrose is nearly built out under current zoning policies and land use constraints. One participant suggested that a great opportunity to create more mixed-use development could be by building additional stories on top of retail buildings within commercial districts, such as along Main Street. He explained that while there could be structural and cost challenges, many of the buildings actually used to be three or four stories but burned down years ago due to poor fire safety standards. As a result, the upper floors of these buildings were removed and only one story remains. This type of redevelopment is occurring and should be supported and encouraged,

It was noted that there are fairly severe barriers to residential development that are particularly stifling affordable housing development for older adults and the low-income population. A number of these barriers involve the City's Zoning Ordinance. For example, the ordinance does not effectively enable cluster development and accessory dwellings. There are some areas of the city that could be suitable for a cluster type development but there is no mechanism in place in the City to make that happen. According to one participant, "Relaxing these regulations would create more opportunities without changing the fabric of the city."

According to the Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit, an Accessory Dwelling Unit, also called an ADU, is "a self-contained apartment in an owner occupied single-family home/ lot that is either attached to the principal dwelling or in a separate structure on the same property."⁸ Under current zoning in the City of Melrose, in-law apartments that are attached to the principal structure, which are a type of ADU, are allowed, but are limited only to family members related to the householder in the main dwelling unit. Melrose could consider allowing ADUs that are open to anyone, as well as ADUs in accessory structures not attached to the principal structure.

The Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit defines cluster development as "A pattern of development in which industrial and commercial facilities, and homes are grouped together on parcels of land in order to leave parts of the land undeveloped. Cluster development is often used in areas that require large lot sizes, and typically involves density transfer. Zoning ordinances permit cluster development by allowing smaller lot sizes when part of the land is left as open space."⁹

Another barrier of the Zoning Ordinance involves provisions for incentive zoning to encourage affordable

housing production. The current incentive zoning structure in the City includes an option to contribute to a payment in lieu of developing subsidized units. The option was established to provide an alternative for projects where construction of affordable units is economically prohibitive. The fee, however, does not yield enough capital to build affordable units, and increasing the fee could make smaller development projects cost prohibitive. Since Melrose has not met the threshold of having 10% of its housing stock as affordable under MGL Chapter 40B, there is the constant threat of a 40B development in the City. One attendee suggested the option of seeking out a "friendly 40B" developer that is willing to work with the City and can help increase Melrose's stock of affordable housing.

When asked specifically about options for older adults in Melrose, many agreed that there is no incentive for developers to build subsidized senior housing, because there is so much demand for market rate housing. Tax incentives or federal subsidies would need to accompany any major plan to build more of this type of housing. Beyond just financing, other barriers related to housing for older adults emerged that relate to what we heard during the senior focus group. One realtor also added that the older generation desire "sexier" housing options— housing should now include design elements and amenities that are not typically thought of when discussing housing for seniors, to serve a sophisticated and active senior population.

Ten older adults joined MAPC for the focus group, held at the Milano Center on June 14, 2016. Healthy aging as it relates to housing was a major topic of conversation. Amongst all the attendees, there was a mix of some people who live in the same home they have lived in for many years and others who have downsized in recent years. The living situations of the focus group attendees provide an excellent snapshot of the options available for older adults in Melrose, while also revealing the personal decisions that go into housing choice.

The overwhelming majority of seniors would prefer to age-in-place in their own home as opposed to moving to a nursing home. However, their current home may not be meeting their needs, whether they may be physical, economic, family, or lifestyle-related. In many cases, the homes of older adults are lacking the modifications that allow for safety and independence. The houses are not located walking distance to destinations and services that would allow for healthy physical activity. Most communities lack options for seniors to downsize to desirable and affordable units that are in central locations close to their life-long



homes. Seniors who want to “age in place” by staying in the community, either in the home where they live now or in a smaller home that will meet their needs as they grow older, are facing challenges with lack of options, in terms of unit price, size, and features.

Some of the focus group attendees have chosen to remain in their same homes, mostly because the house is still working for them. However, they also mentioned that they wanted to stay in their house because it can seem uneconomical to leave. New condominiums in central and convenient locations are so expensive—largely due to monthly condo fees—that they are not necessarily an affordable option for downsizing. One of the attendees did move to Station Crossing Condominiums when it opened and is very happy with his decision.

For the attendees who have downsized in Melrose, the reasons are consistent. The most common reason is that keeping up a large home became challenging, specifically for owners of older homes that require additional maintenance. One woman was previously living in Danvers, but chose to move to Melrose in order to not have to maintain a house and to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren. Moving to Melrose also made sense for her because it is a closer commute into Boston than up on the North Shore. She now lives in Jonathan Cochrane House of Congregational Retirement Homes (CRH), an independent living facility for senior residents 62 years and older.

While only one participant lives in CRH, many expressed a desire to. As far as downsizing options are concerned, the Congregational Retirement Homes provide an important middle-ground option between expensive condominiums and subsidized housing (that some will not qualify for). They also come with excellent amenities for older adults such as a recreation room, beauty salon, library, laundry care, and more. However, these units are in such high demand that people are on waitlists for years for them. According to one attendee, “When the decision to downsize is made, it is often too late due to the long wait.”

Unlike the Congregational Retirement Homes, facilities owned by the Melrose Housing Authority (MHA) have a preference policy for Melrose residents. As such, the wait for their units is only about three or four months for Melrose residents. The MHA has two high-rise elderly housing developments, the Julian Steele Building and the CJ McCarthy Apartments, which together have 305 units. During the focus group conversation, it was suggested that there is some reluctance among Melrose seniors to live in these homes due to perceptions about

publicly subsidized housing, even though these facilities also provide amenities and community spaces.

One focus group participant described a previous initiative in Melrose that could enable seniors to stay in their homes but with access to a wide variety of services. Inspired by Beacon Hill Village in Boston, “At Home in Melrose” (AHIM) was a nonprofit organization designed to be a concierge service for Melrose seniors. For example, members would pay a yearly cost and AHIM could provide access to vetted providers for home maintenance, personal and financial services, and affordable transportation. It also was committed to creating connections amongst members and facilitating life-enriching activities. Unfortunately, the recession hit around the time that AHIM was ready to begin operations. While the organization never came to be, focus group attendees recognized the importance of such a service for Melrose seniors and expressed interest in trying to make it happen again.

Housing Affordability and Need

Housing affordability is a technically complex subject, and is often fraught by conflicting community values and a variety of perceptions about what “affordability” means and implies. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, recent community accolades signal Melrose’s desirability as a community and rising home values. The pursuit of homeownership and the ability to build equity in a home have long been seen as the American Dream, and many current and new homeowners in the city likely expect a high return on their investment thanks to the City’s status as a sought-after place to live.

On the other hand, many households, including homeowners, are cost burdened and pay a high proportion of their incomes on housing. Melrose’s Victorian-era housing stock contribute to its character and identity, but century-old homes often require modernization, upgrades, and maintenance that add to overall household expenditures. Community members who want to stay in Melrose as they age may have difficulty downsizing to smaller homes due to the high cost of housing on the market, and may not have the resources to perform the necessary adjustments to their current residences to allow them to age in place comfortably. Furthermore, in order for the City to be accessible to households at a wider range of income levels, more subsidized deed-restricted affordable housing is needed to serve low-income households, as well as “workforce housing,” housing that serves middle-income households.



Figure 21: Estimated Percentage of Cost-Burdened Households, Melrose and its Neighbors



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2010-2014

Figure 21 shows the estimated percentage of cost-burdened households for Melrose and its immediate neighbors. Cost burden is a metric used by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that evaluates households' ability to pay their housing costs based on their reported gross household income. Households that spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing are considered to be housing cost burdened, and those that spend more than 50% are considered to be severely cost burdened.

While Melrose appears to have the lowest rates of cost burdened households among the municipalities shown, there are many cost-burdened households. HUD considers a rate of 30% or higher cost-burdened households in a community and 15% severely cost-

burdened households in a community to pose a significant issue. The relatively high rates of cost burdened households in Melrose and comparison municipalities point to the regional need for less expensive housing. Melrose has about 3,000 to 4,000 households that are cost burdened, estimated at about 32% of all households. Though the share of severely cost-burdened households is below 15%, at 12% it should still be considered an area of concern. Additionally, 40% of renters are cost-burdened. The lower level of cost burdened households in Melrose as compared with its neighbors does not necessarily contradict the notion that housing costs are high in the City – it is likely that the barrier to entry is so great for some households that moving to Melrose is not even an available option.

Figure 22: Cost Burdened Households by Type, All Households

Household Type	Households	Cost Burdened		Severely Cost Burdened	
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent
1-2 members households with at least one age 62+	1,445	455	32%	135	9%
Nonfamily households with householder age 62+	1,480	800	54%	435	29%
Small family household with 2-4 people	5,015	1,330	27%	565	11%
Large family household with 5 or more people	730	170	23%	80	11%
Other	2,255	775	34%	405	18%
Total	10,925	3,530	32%	1,620	15%

Source: Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2007-2011



Figure 23: Cost Burdened Households by Type, Low-Income Households

Household Type	Total	Cost Burden	Severe Cost Burden
1-2 members households with householder age 62+	435	28%	29%
Nonfamily households with householder age 62+	1150	24%	35%
Small family household with 2-4 people	630	70%	0%
Large family household with 5 or more people	50	38%	57%
Other	675	22%	47%
Total	2940	28%	41%

Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2008-2012

Being cost burdened does not impact all types of Melrose households equally. Further analysis reveals which household types are most cost burdened. Specifically, HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) parses the cost-burden data by different types of households,¹⁰ as well as by different income categories as shown in Figure 22.

Because households of any income level can become cost burdened just by buying or leasing dwelling units somewhat beyond their means, even if alternative market-rate housing is affordable to them, it is important to consider rates of cost burden among low-income households specifically, who tend to have fewer options. As shown in Figure 23, in Melrose, about 28% of all low-income household types are cost burdened and pay between 30% and 50% of their income on housing costs. About 41% of all low-income households are severely cost-burdened and pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs.

Another measure of affordable housing need is the

number of households eligible for housing assistance. Federal and state programs use Area Median Income (AMI)¹¹, along with household size, to identify these households. Figure 24 shows the HUD income limits for extremely low income (below 30% of AMI), very low income (30-50% of AMI), and low income (50-80% of AMI) households by household size for the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Melrose. Typically, households at 80% of AMI and below qualify for housing assistance, though there are some exceptions based on household size. The numbers shown in Figure 24 are from Fiscal Year 2016, when the MSA median income used by HUD was \$98,100.

Because HUD's regulations are in part based on household size, it is important to understand how Melrose's income distribution as a percent of AMI corresponds with this variable. According to CHAS 2008-2012 estimates in Figure 25, more than a quarter of all Melrose households are low-income and earn less than 80% of AMI. Of that population, 44% is

Figure 24: Affordable Housing Income Limits, Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area, FY 2016

Household Size	Extremely Low Income (<30% AMI)	Very Low Income (30-50% AMI)	Low Income (50-80% AMI)
1 Person	\$20,650	\$34,350	\$51,150
2 Person	\$23,600	\$39,250	\$58,450
3 Person	\$26,550	\$44,150	\$65,750
4 Person	\$29,450	\$49,050	\$73,050
5 Person	\$31,850	\$53,000	\$78,900
6 Person	\$34,200	\$56,900	\$84,750
7 Person	\$36,730	\$60,850	\$90,600
8 Person	\$40,890	\$64,750	\$96,450

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

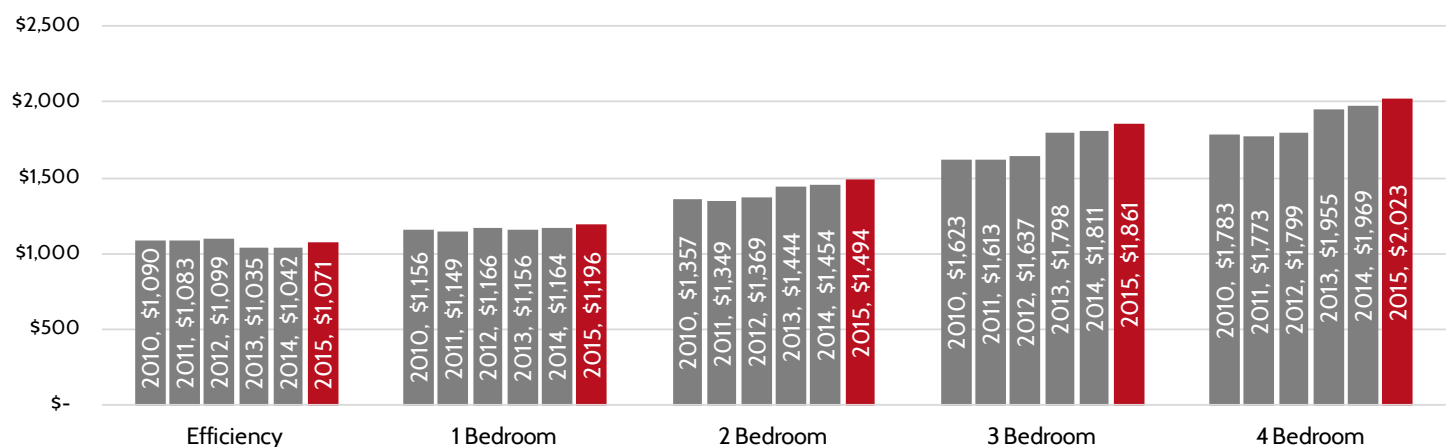


Figure 25: Income as Percent of AMI by Household Type/Size

	Total Households	Extremely Low Income (<30% AMI)	Very Low Income (30-50% AMI)	Low Income (50-80% AMI)	Moderate Income (80-100% AMI)	Middle Income and Higher (>100% AMI)
Age 62+ Family (1-2 members)	1,465	12%	13%	5%	12%	59%
Age 62+ Nonfamily	1,550	42%	19%	13%	11%	15%
Small Family (2-4 Persons)	5,010	2%	5%	6%	6%	82%
Large Family (5+ Persons)	655	0%	2%	5%	11%	81%
Other	2,340	15%	5%	8%	6%	66%
Total	11,020	12%	8%	7%	9%	66%

Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2008-2012

Figure 26: Fair Market Rent, Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, NA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area



Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010-2015

Figure 27: Melrose Median Rents

# of Bedrooms	Median Rent
1 Bedroom	\$1,923
2 Bedrooms	\$2,103
3 Bedrooms	\$3,000
All	\$2,417

Source: January 2016 Zillow Listings

extremely low income. Further, 52% of households with seniors over age 62 are either low-, very-low-, or extremely-low-income, compared to 17% of non-senior households.

Another measure of housing affordability is whether local rent exceeds Fair Market Rents (FMR), or maximum allowable rents (not including utility and other allowances), determined by HUD for subsidized units in the Boston MSA. In Figure 26, the upward trend reflects the annual adjustment factor intended to account for rental housing market demands. Given the constraints on the Greater Boston rental housing market, rising rent is unsurprising and points to the need for more housing of this tenure at multiple price points.



Figure 28: City of Melrose Subsidized Housing Inventory as of January 2017

Project Name	Address	SHI Units	Developed with Comprehensive Permit?	Year Deed Restriction Ends	Ownership or Rental?	Funding Agencies
Cefalo Memorial Complex	235, 245 W. Wyoming Avenue	107	Yes	2033	Rental	MassHousing
Congregational Retirement Homes II	101 Cottage Street	114	Yes	2015	Rental	HUD
Congregational Retirement Homes I	200 West Foster Street	109	No	2016	Rental	HUD
Congregational Retirement Homes III	80 Grove Street	101	No	2019	Rental	HUD
Grove Street	Grove Street	3	No	2034	Rental	HUD
Hurd Street	Hurd Street	6	No	2036	Rental	HUD
West Wyoming Avenue	West Wyoming Avenue	3	No	2042	Rental	HUD
Holbrook Court	Holbrook Court	3	No	2046	Rental	HUD
Cedar Crossing	185 Essex Street	2	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Ownership	DHCD
Greywood Estates	354 Upham Street	1	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Ownership	DHCD
Station Crossing Condominiums	16 Willow Street	5	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Ownership	HUD
The Essex	534 Main Street	3	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Ownership	DHCD
Webster Willows	391 Pleasant Street	3	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Ownership	HUD
Windsor at Oak Grove	10 Island Hill Avenue	48	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
Jack Flats	1000, 2000, 3000, & 4000 Stone Place	19	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
Essex Street Apartments	99 Essex Street	2	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
2 Washington Street	2 Washington Street	9	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
37/47 Washington Street	37/47 Washington Street	8	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
130 Tremont Street	130 Tremont Street	2	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Ownership	DHCD
McCarthy House	910 Main Street	150	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
Melrose Housing Authority	42-44 Otis St./37 Lebanon	3	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
Melrose Housing Authority	scattered sites	6	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
Melrose Housing Authority	scattered sites	8	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
Steele House	1 Nason Drive	155	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
Vine Street	24 Vine Street	14	Yes	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
919 Main Street	919 Main Street	8	No	Affordable in Perpetuity	Rental	DHCD
DDS Group Homes	Confidential	24	No	N/A	Rental	DDS
DMH Group Homes	Confidential	6	No	N/A	Rental	DMH

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development and City of Melrose



Figure 29: Melrose Housing Authority Units

Address	Number of Units	Program	Year Built	Type
Steele House, 1 Nason Drive	155	Ch. 667 Elderly & Disabled	1968	Elderly
McCarthy House, 910 Main Street	150	Ch. 667 Elderly & Disabled	1940	Elderly
969 Main Street	2	Ch. 705 Family	1900	Family
446 Lebanon Street	2	Ch. 705 Family	1920	Family
487 Lebanon Street	2	Ch. 705 Family	1900	Family
76 Beech Avenue	2	Ch. 705 Family	1900	Family
70 East Wyoming Ave	2	Ch. 705 Family	1910	Family
2 Trenton/319 Washington Ave	2	Ch. 705 Family	1900	Family
37 Lebanon Street	1	Ch. 705 Family	1900	Family
42-44 Otis Street	2	Ch. 705 Family	1920	Family
15-17 Fellsvie Terrace	2	Ch. 705 Family	1920	Family

Source: City of Melrose

Figure 30: Melrose Affordable Housing Production Goals, 2015-2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total year-round housing*	11,714	11,826	11,938	12,049	12,161	12,273
Cumulative state-certified affordable units**	892	951	1,010	1,069	1,130	1,190
10% requirement	1,171	1,183	1,194	1,205	1,216	1,227
Chapter 40B gap	279	232	184	136	86	37
Required units for relief at .5% of total units	59	59	60	60	61	61
Required units for relief at 1.0% of total units	117	118	119	120	122	123

* Based on MAPC projected need of 559 units between 2010-2020 ** Based on December 2014 SHI plus 0.5% rate of increase

According to Zillow.com, Melrose has an overall median rent of \$2,508 as of May 2016, as stated earlier in this chapter. Zillow median rents for units with different bedroom counts in Melrose pulled in January 2016 show that the median rent for all categories, shown in Figure 27 is above fair market rent, as shown in Figure 26. Of course, these are only one-month medians, and furthermore, median means that half the available units were listed at a lower asking rent and half were listed at a higher rent. Based on the January 2016 listings, it seems that on a per-bedroom basis, one-bedroom units are relatively expensive as compared with larger units. This could be an indication that some small households, such as singles and couples, could be priced out of the Melrose rental market, and those who can afford to rent 1 bedroom units in Melrose have higher incomes.

Under M.G.L. Chapter 40B, affordable housing units

are defined as housing that is developed or operated by a public or private entity and reserved by deed restriction for income-eligible households earning at or below 80% of the AMI. In addition, all marketing and placement efforts follow Affirmative Fair Housing marketing guidelines per the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Housing that meets these requirements, if approved by DHCD, is added to the subsidized housing inventory (SHI). A municipality's SHI fluctuates with new development of both affordable and market-rate housing. The percentage is determined by dividing the number of affordable units by the total number of year-round housing units according to the most recent decennial Census. As the denominator increases, or if affordable units are lost, more affordable units must be produced to reach, maintain, or exceed the 10%



threshold.

Melrose has not yet reached that threshold, although the City has shown progress over the last decade. The latest Subsidized Housing Inventory published by DHCD in January 2017, 922 housing units out of 11,714 year-round units, or 7.87%, were included on Melrose's SHI, as shown in Figure 28. For comparison, Melrose was at 6.94% in 2004.

At the publication of the 2004 Master Plan, Melrose's SHI was limited to Melrose Housing Authority properties, also listed in Figure 29, the Congregational Retirement Home properties, and the Cefalo Memorial Complex. The adoption of inclusionary zoning which extended to private developments of 5 or more units has been successful in adding a larger variety of affordable units to Melrose, in particular ownership units. Additionally, the creation of the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation has added units through the purchase of smaller multifamily homes.

As shown in Figure 30, in order to address unmet housing need and be compliant with M.G.L. Chapter 40B, Melrose officials should establish and work to achieve housing production targets. Melrose would need 1,172 units in order to achieve the M.G.L. Chapter 40B requirement of 10% of the year-round housing inventory designated for households earning at or below 80% of the area median income.

With 922 units on the SHI, Melrose is 250 units short of this goal. If the City submits a five-year Housing Production Plan for approval by DHCD and sets an annual production goal of 0.5% (59 units), or 1.0% (118 units), it would achieve a "safe harbor" according to Chapter 40B and thereby have relief from Comprehensive Permit projects for one or two years respectively. The City has some residential developments in the pipeline, all of which will add to the year-round housing unit total, but only some units may be added to the SHI. The City should ensure that new developments include units that can be added to the SHI to keep ahead of the 250-unit 40B goal.

Summary

Melrose has benefited greatly from recent accolades. The City continues to be recognized as a desirable place to live; but with these recognitions, comes difficulties in keeping up with demand and maintaining affordability in a City that is loved by longtime residents and newer residents alike. This sentiment was present through the

entire development of this Master Plan. The analysis included in this chapter highlights the fact that there is very little inventory available at all price points to meet the respective demand, in particular for those households that are low-income or cost-burdened. In addition to maintaining a strong pipeline of new housing construction, the City of Melrose needs to take a more creative approach to creating and retaining a variety of housing types that promote diversity and equal access. The recommendations that follow prioritize creation and retention in ways that will maximize development options in a dense community by allowing new types of housing to be built for all Melrose residents regardless of age and income.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Encourage the creation of housing units that are affordable to a broad range of incomes.

Strategy 1.1: Promote regulations that permit a variety of residential types, ensuring Melrose residents of all ages and incomes can remain in Melrose.

Action 1.1.1: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to decrease restrictions on in-law apartments.

Action 1.1.2: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to regulate accessory dwelling units.

Action 1.1.3: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance and General Ordinances to regulate short term rentals.

Action 1.1.4: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to regulate cohousing in select Melrose locations.

Strategy 1.2: Identify opportunities where the City will encourage new housing affordable to a broad range of incomes.

Action 1.2.1: Revise the Affordable Housing Incentive Program Ordinance to increase the stock of deed-restricted affordable housing in Melrose.

Action 1.2.2: Prepare a Housing Production Plan to identify locations ideal for new housing development and include annual affordable housing production metrics for the City to target.

Action 1.2.3: Build relationships with mission-driven developers dedicated to building housing affordable to low and moderate income households.

Action 1.2.4: Adopt the Community Preservation Act.

Action 1.2.5: Explore opportunities for a "friendly 40B" – a housing development project that meets



MGL Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Law requirements for development with a maximum of 25% affordable units, built by a private developer in cooperation with the City of Melrose.

Strategy 1.3: Support the efforts of community groups and nonprofit organizations to pursue funding for affordable housing.

Action 1.3.1: Continue to proactively participate as a member of the North Suburban Consortium to obtain funding for affordable housing initiatives.

Action 1.3.2: Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Action 1.3.3: Consider additional incentives for affordable housing production, such as reduced or waived permit fees.

Action 1.3.4: Develop options to increase the number of affordable housing units available to veterans.

Strategy 1.4: Promote programs that lower the cost of housing.

Action 1.4.1: Connect eligible first time homebuyers with the First Time Homebuyer Program provided by the North Suburban Consortium.

Action 1.4.2: Develop a process to make tax lien properties available for purchase by nonprofit developers and/or the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation first, before market-driven developers.

Action 1.4.3: Build relationships with area banks to offer financing for first time homebuyers and attractive credit lines for nonprofit developers.

Goal 2: Encourage the creation and retention of housing that promotes diversity and equal access.

Strategy 2.1: Provide a range of housing for the entire life cycle.

Action 2.1.1: Evaluate whether micro units would fulfill a need for seniors, empty nesters, young couples, and one-person households.

Action 2.1.2: Continue to promote the Property Tax Work-Off Programs for seniors and people with disabilities.

Action 2.1.3: Establish a program that allows seniors to stay in their homes as they age, such as the At Home in Melrose Program.

Strategy 2.2: Provide a range of housing that promotes economic and housing type diversity.

Action 2.2.1: Ensure that subsidized housing units

do not lose their deed-restricted affordability by monitoring deed restriction expiration dates and proactively work with property owners to renew these restrictions.

Action 2.2.2: Continue to support the Melrose Housing Authority and the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation in their efforts to develop and maintain low-income housing.

Action 2.2.3: Continue strict adherence to State and Federal Fair Housing laws.

Endnotes

¹"The Hottest of the Hot: What Are the Top 10 ZIP Codes in America?," by Cicely Wedgeworth, August 14, 2015. Available at: <http://www.realtor.com/news/trends/top-10-hottest-zip-codes-in-america/>.

²"2016's Best Small Cities in America," by Richie Bernardo, October 31, 2016. Available at: <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-worst-small-cities-to-live-in/16581/>,

³"Massachusetts Community Types: A Classification System Developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council," July 2008. Available at: http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Massachusetts_Community_Types_-_July_2008.pdf

⁴The American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates 2010-2014 estimate 11,711 housing units with a margin of error of 364 units. Since the Census 2010 count is within the margin of error for the ACS estimate, the estimate does not clearly indicate an increase or reduction in total housing units.

⁵Massachusetts Community Types, and specifically the community types of the Comparison Municipalities, are described in the *Melrose Today* chapter.

⁶US Census and Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, Stronger Regional Scenario, MAPC 2014

⁷"Families and Households: Glossary," available at <https://www.census.gov/topics/families/families-and-households/about/glossary.html>

⁸http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-adu.html

⁹http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/glossary.html

¹⁰CHAS uses the following terminology: small related households (2 persons, neither 62 years of age or over, or 3 or 4 persons, large related households of 5 or more persons, elderly households with 1 or 2 persons with either or both 62 years of age or over, and all other households including 1-person non-elderly household households and non-related living together. For consistency with other terminology used in this document, the following terminology are used instead: small family household with 2-4 people, large family household with 5 or more people, 1-2 member households with at least one age 62+, nonfamily households with householder age 62+, and other.

¹¹Area Median Income, or AMI, is a technical term used by HUD and often refers to the median income of a large metropolitan statistical area, but is sometimes used for smaller geographies.





Economic Development

Melrose is part of the Greater Boston economy and most Melrose residents leave the City for their jobs in Boston, Cambridge, the 128 corridor, or in surrounding communities. MBTA transit access facilitates access to jobs outside the City, and the lack of direct highway access limits large scale businesses from locating within Melrose. Although the City is predominantly residential, there are close to 600 businesses employing almost 6,000 in Melrose. The City has a thriving Downtown with a growing restaurant scene. Additionally, Melrose offers a few neighborhood retail districts and a few areas that support larger businesses and industries, which help to diversify the City's economic structure.

Having a strong workforce is a key element of sustainable economic development. This pertains to those who live in Melrose, those who work in Melrose, and those who both live and work in the City.

Melrose has a higher rate of labor force participation than the state as a whole and has historically had lower unemployment than the state as a whole. Labor force participation rates could change as the population ages and more current residents retire.

Employers in Melrose such as the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital and numerous smaller businesses and organizations contribute to local economic activity, and strategies to bolster this economic activity should be considered.

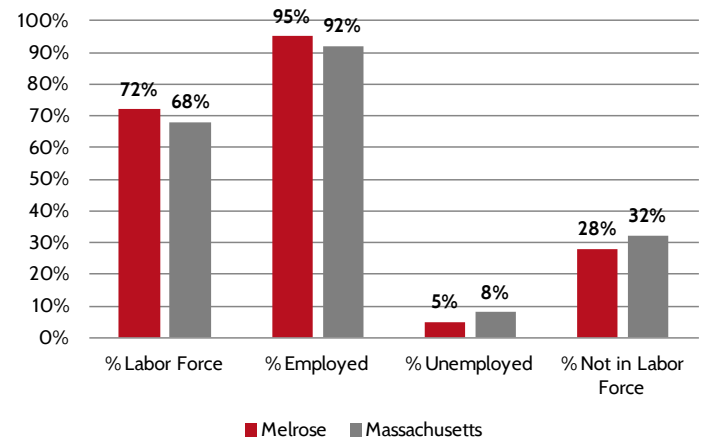
Workforce Profile

Most Melrose residents of working age work outside of Melrose. Only about 18% of Melrose residents also work in the city. Over a quarter of residents (26%) commute into Boston for work. Melrose residents work in all areas of the state, through primarily in other nearby communities in the Boston region like Cambridge (7%), Wakefield (4%), and Malden (3%).

Labor Force

Melrose residents are slightly more likely to participate in the labor force when compared with the state as seen in Figure 1. They are also more likely to be employed within the labor force. The civilian labor force in Melrose is 16,063 workers, which represents about 72% of Melrose's population 16 years and over.

Figure 1: Employment Status of Population Age 16+



Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

Unemployment rates in Melrose have risen and fallen throughout the last decade, and generally followed trends seen throughout the whole state. However, Melrose's unemployment has consistently remained below that of the state. As shown in Figure 2, the annual unemployment rate in Melrose in 2014 was lower than the state by 0.6 percentage points (4.4% and 5.8%, respectively). When looking at available 2015 data, the unemployment rate in Melrose continues to decrease significantly and now may be close to 3%. A low unemployment rate is typically correlated with high incomes and education levels.

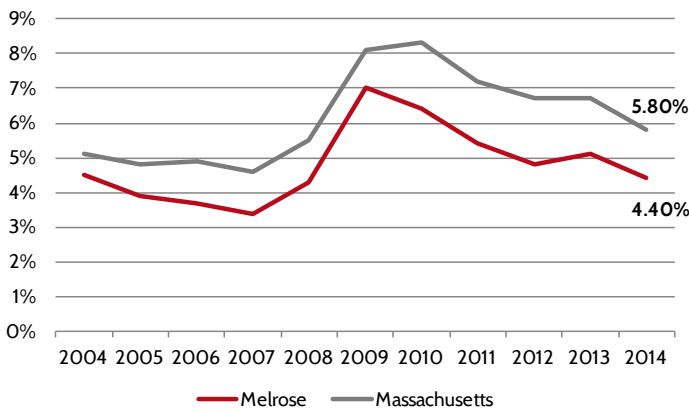
Melrose's labor force is highly educated. As evident in Figure 3, a significantly higher rate of Melrose residents in the labor force have bachelor's degrees or higher when compared to the state. About 57% of Melrose residents in the labor force have a bachelor's degree as opposed to only 46% of state residents in the labor force. Melrose compares about evenly with the state in terms of residents in the labor force who have some college or an associates degree. Melrose has a smaller percentage of residents in the labor force that have attained just a high school degree or less when compared with the state.

The relationship between education and income is evident in Melrose's workforce. Not only are working adults in Melrose well educated, they also have high incomes compared to residents in the rest of the state. As shown in Figure 4, the City of Melrose has a higher median household income, median family income, and



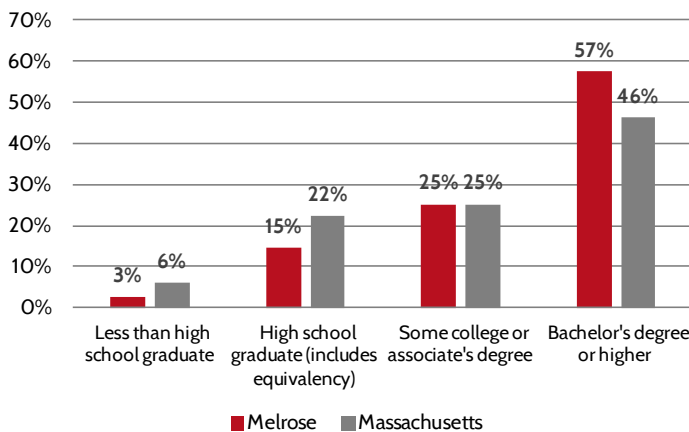
per capita income compared to Massachusetts as a whole. Only 3.9% of Melrose residents are living below the poverty line, compared to 11.6% of state residents. These higher incomes may also mean that Melrose

Figure 2: Unemployment Rate



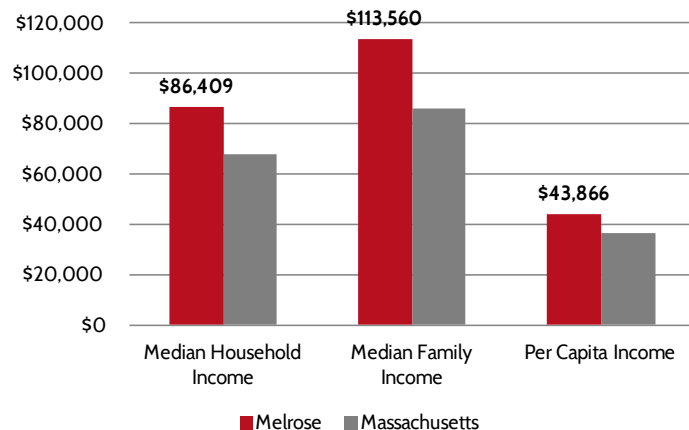
Source: MA EOLWD

Figure 3: Educational Attainment of Labor Force



Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4: Income



Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

households on the whole have more disposable income than households elsewhere in the state.

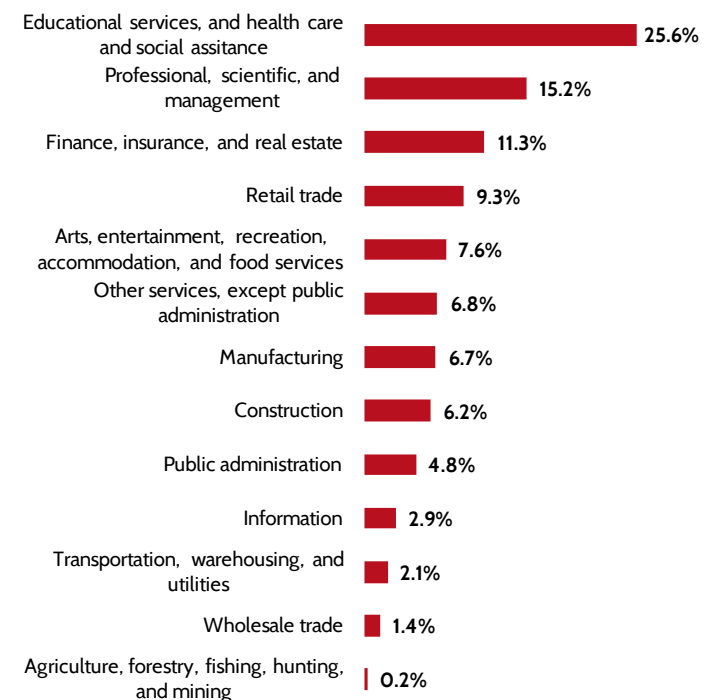
Resident Occupations

Melrose residents are employed in a number of different industries. The most significant percentage of Melrose residents are employed in educational services, health care, and social assistance (25.6%); followed by professional, scientific, and management (15.2%); and finance, insurance, and real estate, rental, and leasing (11.3%). Not only do these three industries employ more than half of the working age population, as shown in Figure 5, they also offer good paying jobs. The average yearly wage statewide for educational services, health care and social assistance is slightly over \$52,000. For professional, scientific, and management jobs, the average yearly wage statewide is between \$104,000 and \$130,000. Finance and insurance is over \$135,000 and real estate, rental and leasing is about \$73,000 statewide. Administrative and waste management services have a statewide wage of roughly \$42,000.¹

Industry Profile

An industry profile looks at the characteristics of employment—the type of jobs and wages—that are located within a community. Melrose has a small

Figure 5: Industry Employment of the Working Population 16+



Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates



Figure 6: Employment and Wages, Melrose Jobs

Industry	Number of Jobs	% of Local Jobs	Average Annual Wages (2014)
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,263	38%	\$53,144
Educational Services	613	10%	\$45,604
Retail Trade	538	9%	\$30,212
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	484	8%	\$23,140
Accommodation and Food Services	480	8%	\$17,784
Construction	304	5%	\$78,468
Professional and Technical Services	285	5%	\$50,232
Finance and Insurance	156	3%	\$58,812
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	142	2%	\$18,512
Administrative and Waste Services	124	2%	\$35,828
Wholesale Trade	99	2%	\$62,036
Information	57	1%	\$40,768
Manufacturing	56	1%	\$51,272
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	52	1%	\$52,988
All industries	5,934	100%	\$45,448

Source: MA EOLWD 2014

economy with 571 businesses and 5,934 jobs. Jobs in Melrose are concentrated in health care and social assistance (38%), educational services (10%) and retail trade (9%). The jobs-to-resident ratio in the City is 0.4. This means that for roughly every three residents in the workforce, there is one local job.² As such, it is not surprising that so many residents of Melrose commute outside of the city for work. In contrast, cities like Boston and Cambridge have jobs-to-resident ratios of greater than one: 1.5 and 1.7, respectively. This indicates that they attract workers because they actually have more jobs than residents.

Wages

The average annual wage for jobs located in Melrose is \$45,448 as seen in Figure 6. This is lower than the average wage for jobs located in adjacent towns such as Stoneham (\$48,204), Medford (\$55,328), and Wakefield (\$67,600). Sectors that offer the most competitive wages include construction (5% of local jobs), wholesale trade (2% of local jobs), and finance and insurance (3% of local jobs).

The majority of Melrose businesses have fewer than 20 employees. Only ten businesses employ more than 50 people as shown in Figure 7. The largest employers in

Melrose include Melrose-Wakefield Hospital followed by the Melrose Public Schools, Melrose Emergency Physicians, Golden Living Center, Shaw's, and Whole Foods Market. These large employers clearly represent the dominant industries in the City: health care, education, and retail.

It is possible that the lack of large businesses in Melrose is due to limited potential development space. Companies with more than 20 employees may be unable or unwilling to come to Melrose because buildings that would accommodate companies of this size with the desired amenities, such as parking capacity and immediate highway access are unavailable. According to AtoZdatabase, the industry with the highest number of individual businesses in Melrose is health care and social assistance. This is followed by other services (except public administration), which includes barber shops, beauty salons, and dry cleaners. The next highest number of individual businesses is within professional and technical services, followed by construction.³

Historical Job and Wage Growth

From the period of 2001 through 2014, the City of Melrose has seen its number of jobs decrease. In 2001,



Figure 7: Largest Employers

Employer	Number of Employees
Melrose-Wakefield Hospital	1,000-4,999
Melrose Public Schools	250-499
Melrose Wakefield Emergency Physicians	100-249
Golden Living Center	100-249
Shaw's Supermarket	100-249
Whole Foods Market	100-249
City of Melrose	100-249
SEEM Collaborative	50-99
Hunt's Photo & Video	50-99
Turner's Seafood Grill & Market	50-99

Source: MA EOLWD 2014

there were 6,549 jobs in the City and in 2014 there were 5,934. Since the peak of the recession in 2008, some individual industries have seen job growth. These include arts, entertainment, and recreation as well as accommodation/food services and wholesale trade. Reversing the overall decrease in the number of jobs will be important since even key industries such as health care saw a decrease in Melrose-based jobs between 2008 and 2014, despite growth in the health care sector overall in Middlesex County. See Figure 8.

Melrose wages for all industries also have not grown at the same pace as wages in the county and the state. Melrose saw an 8% growth in wages between 2008 and 2014 versus Middlesex County, which saw a 16% growth in wages, and the state, which saw a 13% growth in wages. Individual industries such as health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and construction have seen wage growth that outpaced the County and the state. Health care and social assistance may be industries to concentrate on growing considering that wages are competitive and increasing. See Figure 9.

Opportunity Sectors

As noted previously, healthcare, education, and retail trade are the industries that employ the highest percentage of workers in Melrose. One way to measure the relative strength of these industries is to do a location quotient analysis. Location quotients measure

the concentration of industry in a certain area as compared to a broader area and provide some insight into the relative competitive strength that an area has in certain industries. Melrose's location quotient was found in comparing industries in the City with the Inner Core subregion, the MAPC region, and the state in order to better understand where the City of Melrose may have some competitive advantages. A location quotient that is higher than one generally indicates a higher concentration or a stronger competitive position. When compared with the Inner Core, MAPC, and the state, Melrose competed well in four industries: "other services," construction, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality. See Figure 10.

This analysis suggests that Melrose should grow its healthcare industry, particularly in the medical district area that contains the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. During a focus group with commercial and residential real estate experts in the Melrose, participants discussed the enormous potential that Melrose has to become a key part of the Greater Boston medical system. Instead of trying to compete with the best hospitals in the world just a few miles away, Melrose could contain outposts of larger institutions. This has already happened when Hallmark Health, the parent company of Melrose-Wakefield Hospital, joined Wellforce, the parent company of Tufts Medical Center, on January 1, 2017.

Construction jobs also present an opportunity for future growth as these are relatively well-paying jobs, though they often are shorter-term opportunities. "Other services" industries include repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services, personal care services, death care services, dry-cleaning and laundry services, membership organizations and associations, and more. Although there is a high concentration of these types of services in Melrose, this is not likely to be an industry to prioritize for future growth since many of these jobs are not particularly well-paying.

The leisure and hospitality industry includes arts, entertainment, recreation/amusement, and recreation industries, accommodation and food services, and restaurants. New businesses within the leisure and hospitality industry should be focused within the downtown and other prioritized commercial areas, including those adjacent to the commuter rail stations.

Employment Projections

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (MA EOLWD) projects job growth for approximately eighty industries in each of



Figure 8: Historical Job Growth

Source: MA EOLWD 2014

	Melrose				Middlesex County				Massachusetts						
	2001	2008	2001-2008 % Change	2014	2008-2014 % Change	2001	2008	2001-2008 % Change	2014	2008-2014 % Change	2001	2008	2001-2008 % Change	2014	2008-2014 % Change
51 - Information	101	83	-18%	57	-31%	47,784	37,704	-21%	40,052	6%	117,751	95,197	-19%	92,060	-3%
52 - Finance and Insurance	161	152	-6%	156	3%	26,021	26,187	1%	26,176	0%	183,989	179,999	-2%	166,469	-8%
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	49	86	76%	52	-40%	9,925	9,357	-6%	9,821	5%	44,899	42,454	-5%	43,060	1%
54 - Professional and Technical Services	294	302	3%	285	-6%	106,668	113,405	6%	122,248	8%	247,890	262,502	6%	287,943	10%
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	212	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20,916	21,387	2%	23,605	10%	71,925	61,461	-15%	63,519	3%
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	360	126	-65%	124	-2%	50,986	45,195	-11%	51,744	14%	170,152	168,860	-1%	173,830	3%
61 - Educational Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	613	N/A	82,618	89,256	8%	91,998	3%	294,213	318,545	8%	346,140	9%
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	2,321	2,396	3%	2,263	-6%	83,109	97,742	18%	115,389	18%	429,761	500,348	16%	600,253	20%
Office/Institutional Sectors	3,498	3,145	-10%	3,550	13%	428,027	440,233	3%	481,033	9%	1,560,580	1,629,366	4%	1,773,274	9%
44-45 - Retail Trade	695	634	-9%	538	-15%	83,144	78,296	-6%	77,326	-1%	359,024	348,176	-3%	350,186	1%
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	74	125	69%	142	14%	9,178	10,173	11%	11,841	16%	46,961	54,391	16%	59,942	10%
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	309	397	28%	480	21%	49,758	53,981	8%	59,612	10%	237,739	257,074	8%	288,985	12%
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	472	481	2%	484	1%	25,863	26,445	2%	26,466	0%	113,608	129,707	14%	114,971	-11%
Retail/Commercial Sectors	1,550	1,637	6%	1,644	0%	167,943	168,895	1%	175,245	4%	757,332	789,348	4%	814,084	3%
23 - Construction	407	292	-28%	304	4%	40,747	36,095	-11%	35,611	-1%	151,270	144,233	-5%	140,314	-3%
31-33 - Manufacturing	329	99	-70%	56	-43%	117,656	85,439	-27%	76,014	-11%	389,232	286,458	-26%	250,534	-13%
42 - Wholesale Trade	68	85	25%	99	16%	45,983	40,810	-11%	35,439	-13%	141,086	136,527	-3%	124,109	-9%
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	13	18	38%	N/A	N/A	21,873	20,867	-5%	21,063	1%	113,128	101,241	-11%	101,302	0%
Industrial/Warehousing Sectors	817	494	-40%	459	-7%	226,259	183,211	-19%	168,127	-8%	794,716	668,459	-16%	616,259	-8%
92 - Public Administration	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	24,301	25,445	5%	26,039	2%	140,511	137,140	-2%	136,808	0%
Total, All Industries	6,549	6,151	-6%	5,934	-4%	850,289	821,771	-3%	854,760	4%	3,276,103	3,245,755	-1%	3,363,035	4%



Figure 9: Historical Wage Growth by Average Weekly Wage

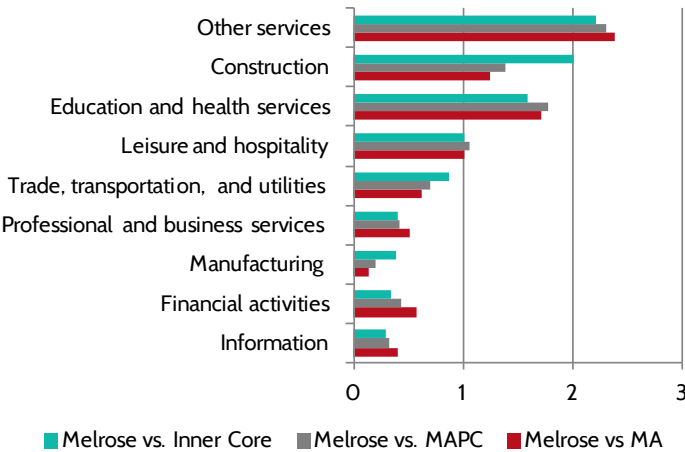
Source: MA EOLWD 2014

	Melrose				Middlesex				Massachusetts						
	2001	2008	2001-2008 % Change	2014	2008-2014 % Change	2001	2008	2001-2008 % Change	2014	2008-2014 % Change	2001	2008	2001-2008 % Change	2014	2008-2014 % Change
51 - Information	\$830	\$793	-4%	\$784	-1%	\$1,495	\$1,973	32%	\$2,423	23%	\$1,244	\$1,590	22%	\$1,898	19%
52 - Finance and Insurance	\$710	\$911	28%	\$1,131	24%	\$1,190	\$1,585	33%	\$2,021	28%	\$1,682	\$2,286	26%	\$2,651	16%
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$761	\$947	24%	\$1,019	8%	\$826	\$1,109	34%	\$1,608	45%	\$831	\$1,086	23%	\$1,400	29%
54 - Professional and Technical Services	\$937	\$1,219	30%	\$966	-21%	\$1,582	\$2,073	31%	\$2,396	16%	\$1,428	\$1,855	23%	\$2,185	18%
55 - Management of Companies/Enterprises	\$860	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,401	\$2,169	55%	\$2,966	37%	\$1,280	\$1,934	34%	\$2,433	26%
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	\$368	\$711	93%	\$689	-3%	\$602	\$783	30%	\$875	12%	\$585	\$744	21%	\$813	9%
61 - Educational Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$877	N/A	\$819	\$1,069	31%	\$1,283	20%	\$741	\$977	24%	\$1,094	12%
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	\$685	\$909	33%	\$1,022	12%	\$697	\$936	34%	\$983	5%	\$698	\$958	27%	\$1,023	7%
44-45 - Retail Trade	\$410	\$494	20%	\$581	18%	\$524	\$551	5%	\$594	8%	\$477	\$532	10%	\$578	9%
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$372	\$835	124%	\$356	-57%	\$389	\$633	63%	\$473	-25%	\$530	\$655	19%	\$679	4%
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	\$282	\$302	7%	\$342	13%	\$337	\$393	17%	\$422	7%	\$311	\$371	16%	\$408	10%
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	\$336	\$384	14%	\$445	16%	\$557	\$641	15%	\$739	15%	\$477	\$542	12%	\$660	22%
23 - Construction	\$975	\$1,093	12%	\$1,509	38%	\$1,039	\$1,246	20%	\$1,361	9%	\$963	\$1,178	18%	\$1,311	11%
31-33 - Manufacturing	\$637	\$865	36%	\$986	14%	\$1,287	\$1,685	31%	\$2,096	24%	\$1,047	\$1,327	21%	\$1,603	21%
42 - Wholesale Trade	\$1,135	\$1,329	17%	\$1,193	-10%	\$1,451	\$1,765	22%	\$1,970	12%	\$1,190	\$1,479	20%	\$1,696	15%
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	\$912	\$601	-34%	N/A	N/A	\$736	\$865	18%	\$910	5%	\$750	\$899	17%	\$972	8%
92 - Public Administration	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$907	\$1,128	24%	\$1,346	19%	\$861	\$1,108	22%	\$1,342	21%
Total, All Industries	\$651	\$809	24%	\$874	8%	\$995	\$1,255	26%	\$1,451	16%	\$865	\$1,092	21%	\$1,233	13%



the state's 16 Workforce Investment Areas. Melrose is part of the Metro North Workforce Investment Area (WIA).⁴ The industries that are projected to grow the most through 2020 in the Metro North WIA are construction (31%), arts/entertainment/recreation (25%), and healthcare and social assistance (22%). Healthcare is the industry that employs the largest amount of workers in Melrose so this may represent an opportunity for Melrose to attract further healthcare establishments. MA EOLWD also projects job growth at a more specific occupational level. Figure 11 shows the ten occupations projected to add the largest number of jobs within the Metro North WIA.

Figure 10: Location Quotients for Melrose compared with the Inner Core, MAPC Region, and Massachusetts



Source: MA EOLWD 2014

While these industry and occupational projections are for the entire Metro North WIA, they represent an opportunity for Melrose to capitalize on. The City of Melrose should consider opportunities to capture the growth in the construction, arts/ entertainment/ recreation, and healthcare and social assistance industries, both in terms of more jobs and more commercial property tax revenue.

Retail Opportunities

Melrose has the market to support additional retail opportunities based on demand for goods and services that is not being met locally as indicated by the retail gap analysis. When people are leaving a certain trade area (the City of Melrose, in this case) to purchase goods and services, this is referred to as leakage, where estimated purchases by area residents exceed estimated sales of purchases by establishments within that trade area. Leakages may point to the retail categories that have the greatest potential for growth. This information can help with identifying the types of retail businesses that could do well in Melrose, because there is untapped demand for those categories. Leakage is not necessarily negative and the City should not endeavor to eliminate retail gap – this gap analysis does not factor in land use suitability, availability of commercial space for lease or purchase, for example. Also, the retail gap for Melrose is probably similar to the retail gap for neighboring communities, and the retail environment beyond the City's borders should be considered in order to flesh out a more comprehensive business recruitment strategy.

Figure 11: Projected Growth in Occupations, Metro North Workforce Investment Area

Title	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	Change Level	Change %
Registered Nurses	7,147	8,505	1,358	19.%
Software Developers, Systems Software	5,416	6,709	1,293	24%
Software Developers, Applications	4,939	6,140	1,201	24%
General and Operations Managers	7,632	8,629	997	13%
Personal Care Aides	2,328	3,299	971	42%
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	5,051	5,936	885	18%
Nursing Assistants	4,180	5,062	882	21%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	2,626	3,470	844	32%
Waiters and Waitresses	6,418	7,261	843	13%
Retail Salespersons	10,169	10,980	811	8%

Source: MA EOLWD 2014

Figure 12: Retail Gap Analysis

Industry Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	# of Businesses
Total Retail Trade	\$553,684,224	\$192,860,033	\$ 360,824,191	100
Food & Beverage Stores	\$112,954,646	\$67,237,307	\$ 45,717,339	10
Grocery Stores	\$94,410,797	\$65,122,509	\$ 29,288,288	5
Specialty Food Stores	\$8,282,498	\$922,731	\$ 7,359,767	3
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$40,318,238	\$22,905,204	\$ 17,413,034	12
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$40,803,602	\$2,045,612	\$ 38,757,990	8
Clothing Stores	\$27,886,156	\$1,153,652	\$ 26,732,504	5
Shoe Stores	\$5,030,152	\$369,344	\$ 4,660,808	1
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$7,887,294	\$522,616	\$ 7,364,678	2
General Merchandise Stores	\$69,459,382	\$512,736	\$ 68,946,646	2
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$19,619,174	\$4,390,559	\$ 15,228,615	22
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$7,499,138	\$569,745	\$ 6,929,393	5
Used Merchandise Stores	\$2,401,108	\$552,944	\$ 1,848,164	4
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$7,944,687	\$2,591,725	\$ 5,352,962	7
Total Food & Drink	\$62,799,423	\$15,704,794	\$ 47,094,629	38
Full-Service Restaurants	\$38,223,745	\$11,113,199	\$ 27,110,546	29
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$ 21,318,925	\$4,482,254	\$ 16,836,671	8
Special Food Services	\$1,507,136	\$109,341	\$ 1,397,795	1
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$ 1,749,617	\$-	\$ 1,749,617	0

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

As highlighted in Figure 12, there are retail leakages (positive green numbers) across all the retail and restaurant industry groups shown. Considering this data and the relative strength of the City in these industries, focusing on bringing more restaurants and retail to the downtown and other neighborhood commercial districts should be a priority for Melrose. Residents of Melrose have expressed their interest in buying local and supporting “mom and pop shops,” as opposed to doing their shopping at large department stores.

Melrose residents have expressed a desire to loosen restrictions that limit the purchase of more than one alcoholic beverage without purchasing food, though opinions on this are conflicting. Melrose has certainly come a long way since it was a “dry town” less than a decade ago, but the City should continue to review and evaluate the various restrictions for further flexibility.

Opportunity Areas

There are several commercial districts in Melrose with their own unique identities and opportunities for future investment. At the public meeting held in February 2016, many Melrose residents expressed their desire to see the neighborhood commercial districts throughout the City enhanced, with particular attention to those areas around the Commuter Rail stations. One way to do this is to implement a pedestrian way-finding program to increase awareness of the variety of attractions and business destinations in the community. Many participants also noted that the Downtown is one of their favorite areas in the community and they would like to see a continued focus on ensuring that this area is thriving and active. General comments included the desire for additional businesses, including those focused on the arts, more restaurants and nightlife including a brew pub, and more retail options to complement the restaurants. Participants also expressed interest in co-working space, and high tech business close to Oak Grove station.



While it is important and critical to encourage housing production throughout the City, it is also important to maintain a healthy commercial base and to ensure that existing commercial space in business districts is preserved. Businesses not only contribute to the local economy, they also ensure that residents can live in walkable amenity rich areas that limit their need to drive in order to accomplish all of their daily tasks.

Like the residential real estate market, demand for commercial space is also very high in Melrose. During the real estate focus group, a lawyer explained that while marketing surveys show that there is no demand for office space in Melrose, for example, available office space fills up quickly. This is especially true for smaller spaces for small firms that could occupy the second floor of buildings above retail space.

While the community is demanding restaurants and retail close to residential areas and in mixed use developments, these are the most high risk businesses from a financial perspective. It is less risky for uses like doctor's offices to occupy these spaces, even though they are less desirable from a foot-traffic perspective. In order to support retail uses, the City is responding by discouraging ground floor medical uses in business districts while actively steering such uses to the Medical District, amongst other actions to enhance the commercial vitality of business districts.

Downtown

Melrose's downtown has been very successful. There is a great mix of vibrant businesses that attract many visitors to the community. It is important to the community that the retail space fronting Main Street is preserved because of its contribution to the active streetscape. There is an opportunity to expand the activity into the alleyways that connect Main Street to the downtown parking lots. There are a variety of improvements that could make the alleyways interesting spaces in which to spend time or safely pass through. Signage and physical enhancements could be unique for every alleyway for interest and wayfinding. It is also a priority to continue to grow the mix of businesses downtown.

The City recently implemented a parking strategy aimed at better managing parking lots and making the district more business and customer friendly. This strategy is based on the findings of the Parking in Downtown Melrose study which was carried out by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates and completed in March 2012. The City is monitoring the effectiveness of this program and should make adjustments if needed

Downtown



Sources: City of Melrose and MAPC

to accomplish the goal of using parking spaces most efficiently to have a vibrant downtown district.

Melrose's Chamber of Commerce works diligently to bring more people downtown. For over four years, the Chamber has sponsored an annual Summer Stroll which includes shutting down Main Street to vehicles from Upham to Grove Streets and creating a vibrant pedestrian walkway. Retailers and restaurants extend their footprints onto the sidewalk so patrons can eat, drink, listen to live music, and explore the diversity of businesses in Melrose's downtown. While events like the Summer Stroll have been wildly successful, they are not inexpensive; it costs approximately \$5,000 to shut down Main Street for such events.

Another avenue that the City should explore for getting residents and visitors downtown and to other business corridors is temporary parklets. These sidewalk extensions temporarily occupy a parking space, creating community spaces that can bring activity to business districts. Parklets can include anything from seating, to trees and shrubs, to art, and more. The City of Boston,



Highlands



Source: City of Melrose

for example, offers a Parklets Program through which local businesses and community groups can apply to create a parklet which they must “activate” once a month with a small event or happening.⁵

Highlands

The Highlands area is currently a mix of small businesses, including a deli, a few small restaurants, cafes, stores, some professional offices, a hair salon, a dry cleaner, and an auto repair shop. The recent Commuter Rail Station Area rezoning addressed issues with the previous zoning in the area that limited commercial development, namely the Special Permit requirement to open a restaurant. Tahpas 529, a new full-service restaurant at 529 Franklin Street that opened in January 2017, benefited from these zoning changes and now serves as a new destination restaurant in Melrose outside Downtown. The City anticipates more transit-oriented development opportunities in this area. In order to facilitate this development, the City should monitor parking in this area to understand the existing conditions and future opportunities.

Cedar Park



Source: City of Melrose

Cedar Park

The Cedar Park area is home to the Melrose/Cedar Park Commuter Rail station, as well as a mix of small businesses. Although the business district is fragmented by the railroad crossing, the businesses in the area are doing well. Businesses here are somewhat more unique with a bakery, coffee shop, jewelry shop, an interior design studio, and a knitting store. Similar to the Highlands district, the Cedar Park area was included in the recent rezoning efforts to encourage market-driven redevelopment, new commercial and mixed use development, and a more pedestrian friendly, vibrant atmosphere in the neighborhood commercial district. The Cedar Park area is adjacent to the Rail Corridor Overlay District.

Sally Frank's Farmers' Market is held in Bowden Park every Thursday afternoon from June to October. While the market is right across the street from some of the businesses in the Cedar Park area, there is little cohesion between them. Integrating the local businesses into the Farmers' Market is good business for both types of retailers.



Wyoming

The Wyoming business district has struggled more than the other neighborhood business districts. Certain locations have turned over many times, and there are a few vacancies. Currently, there are convenience stores, two popular diners, and takeout food establishments geared toward commuters. Cloud 9 Coffee and Ice Cream opened in late 2016, filling a niche in Melrose's retail community.

The Wyoming District was also rezoned as part of recent efforts to encourage transit-oriented and mixed-use development. The redevelopment of 10-14 Corey Street could spur additional redevelopment by bringing a large number of new residents to this area who may demand a mix of businesses similar to the other neighborhood business districts.

Main Street: Lynn Fells Parkway to Franklin Street

This business district has two distinct areas: the 880 Main Street Plaza, which contains the Whole Foods, and

the small business district at the intersection of Main Street, Franklin Street, and Green Street. Larger chain stores are located within the 880 Main Street Plaza and a Walgreens is across the street from the Whole Foods. There may be opportunities for the City to work with the owner of the parcel to add components of green infrastructure, such as planter boxes or bioswales, into this large parking lot to improve stormwater quality.

There is a mix of smaller, local businesses located closer to the intersection of Franklin Street and along Green Street. Some of the retail spaces at the intersection have turned over, but it appears that these spaces have been re-leased quickly. Along Green Street, there has been residential encroachment along the fringe of this small commercial area, although in an area with difficult access where businesses may not have been successful. In the future, further encroachment may be concerning. However, at this time, supporting the businesses in this area is a priority.

Medical District

The cornerstone of the medical district is Melrose-

Wyoming



Source: City of Melrose

Main Street, Lynn Fells Parkway to Franklin Street



Source: City of Melrose



Medical District



Source: Melrose Wicked Local

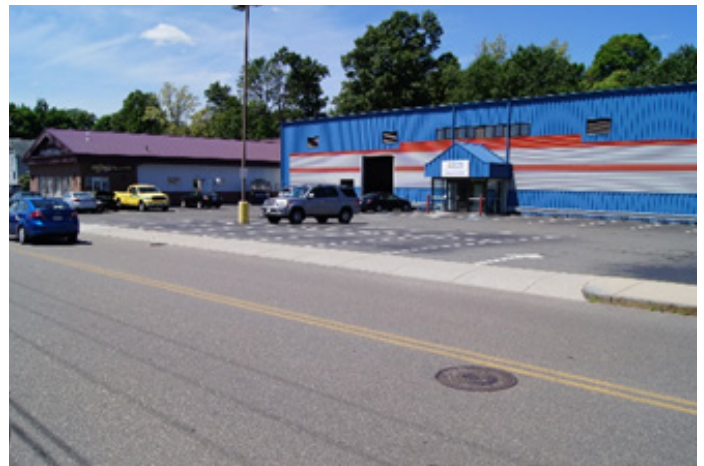
Wakefield Hospital, owned by Hallmark Health. The Hospital is in the early phases of a master plan, which will modernize its facilities to keep pace with the healthcare needs of the future. Hallmark Health's transition to join Wellforce could represent a growth opportunity for the medical sector in Melrose. However, if modernization effort are not fully realized, Melrose-Wakefield Hospital and the City are at risk of losing jobs, so it is important that a strong relationship between Hallmark Health and the City is maintained.

The medical district is the one district in the City where hospitals and medical offices are allowed by right. Recent rezoning efforts in the neighborhood business districts have limited medical offices to second floor locations. The City is working to encourage medical uses to locate within the Medical District. This can help to facilitate a healthcare cluster around the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital and take advantage of Melrose's relative competitiveness in the Health Care industry.

Rail Corridor Overlay District

The City recently established an overlay district along the Essex Street and Tremont Street rail corridor to create opportunities for transit-oriented redevelopment of underutilized sites. The zoning allows for mixed-use and multifamily residential, among other uses. It is likely that when redevelopment occurs, the primary use will be residential with a few commercial businesses that are geared towards residential development. This may lead to a loss in business opportunities in the BB-1 District. There is somewhat of a concern about losing commercial uses, many of which are automotive businesses, to residential uses in this particular area. The Residence at Melrose Station assisted living facility received approval in mid-2015, taking advantage of the overlay district zoning. The completed project at

Essex/Tremont Street Rail Corridor Overlay District



Source: MAPC

130 Tremont Street and older projects at 185 Essex Street and 99 Essex Street took advantage of zoning tools available for multifamily developments. Future opportunities may be somewhat limited by the large number of individual property owners.

Smart Growth District

The Smart Growth District, located along lower Washington Street to the border with Malden, has been a site of significant investment redevelopment over the last ten years. The goal of the Smart Growth District is to create a mix of high-quality residential and mixed-use development through redevelopment and reuse of the existing buildings, which is built on a pedestrian scale and takes advantage of the close proximity to mass transit. Large multifamily complexes have been constructed at 1000-4000 Stone Place, 2 Washington Street, and 37/47 Washington Street. Between these three complexes, 394 residential units have been constructed since 2008.

The former Registry of Motor Vehicles building was redeveloped as an early child care facility, Little Sprouts,



Smart Growth District



Source: City of Melrose

during 2015. The reuse of this formerly underutilized building as a child care facility compliments the high density residential uses. Similarly, the addition of a physical therapy facility at 2 Washington Street creates activity along Washington Street.

The existing mill building occupied by Marty's Furniture and other smaller businesses has not been redeveloped, but could be on the horizon. The Smart Growth District encourages mixed use, and this building could represent the best opportunity to create a true mixed-use building in the Smart Growth District.

Route 99

The area of Melrose fronting on Route 99 contains a few businesses including a large quarry, hotel, plumbing supply warehouse, and a fitness center. However, a significant amount of land is cemeteries. This area is segregated from the rest of Melrose and is more connected to the business district fronting on Route 99 in Malden and Saugus.

The quarry site, located primarily in Saugus, is owned

Route 99



Source: Google Street View

by Aggregate Industries. Aggregate Industries signed an agreement with the Town of Saugus in February 2017 to fill the quarry and reclaim the land to make it suitable for mixed use development. The Town of Saugus will work with Aggregate Industries on a plan for reuse of the site, and given its proximity to the Melrose border, the City of Melrose should actively engage in this planning effort.⁶

A large parcel of land on Route 99 whose future remains a question is currently leased to Waste Management, but the lease expires in December 2021. The lease expiration may be an unique opportunity to engage the local community in planning for future uses along Route 99.

Main Street Local Business Districts

This is a very small business district with just a funeral home, which is currently for sale, and a florist. On the Wakefield side of the line, there is a small mix of businesses and residential. The existing zoning allows mixed use.



Main Street at Wakefield



Sources: Google Street View and Yelp

Main Street at Malden



Source: Google Street View

The small business district across from Pine Banks Park has the same zoning designation as the area at the northern end of Main Street. There are three businesses and the National Guard facility. Due to the location's proximity to Oak Grove Station, this area has redevelopment potential. At this time though, there are many individual owners which may present some obstacles. A holistic approach to these parcels bringing the businesses to the street and moving the parking to the rear should be considered as part of redevelopment efforts. Housing could be supported at this location as well. In the past, the National Guard property was considered for a public safety facility in the late 1990s, and may be considered again in the future, but the facility has been active since the early 2000s.

Fiscal Considerations

Melrose's revenue is highly dependent on property

taxes, which account for 69.7% of the city's revenue stream.⁷ The City has split tax rates for residential (\$12.33 per \$1,000 assessed value in FY 2016) and commercial/industrial/personal (CIP) properties (\$18.78 per \$1,000 assessed value in FY 2016). Despite having a higher CIP tax rate, 92% of property taxes are collected from residential tax receipts, while commercial/industrial properties contribute 6%.⁸

Property tax rates for FY2016 have decreased slightly without a negative impact on total levies, indicating that property values have risen in Melrose. The average single family tax bill in Melrose is around \$5,746 for FY2016. Figure 13 shows how Melrose compares with surrounding communities regarding assessments, values, and tax rates. Single family homes have the highest value when compared with this subset of communities. The City's residential tax rate falls in the middle and their commercial tax rate is the lowest amongst these communities.

Land values vary throughout Melrose, with the highest assessed values (over \$5 million per acre) popping up in major commercial areas such as the Downtown, the 880 Main Street shopping center, around the Commuter Rail Stations, and the large mixed use parcel in southern Melrose by Oak Grove. Melrose-Wakefield Hospital is another very high value parcel. The lower value parcels (under \$1 million per acre) are primarily the publicly owned parcels, such as open spaces and schools, since it is assumed that they will stay within public ownership. Other concentrated, lower value areas are the industrial and vacant parcels, though there are some parcels scattered throughout the residential and commercial areas. Most parcels in Melrose's residential neighborhoods fall within the \$1 to \$3 million per acre range, though there are many worth between \$3 and \$5 million.

Figure 14 shows how general fund expenditures in Melrose compare with those of surrounding communities. In terms of expenditures, the City spends the highest percentage of its general fund on education (36.7%), though this amount is less than what nearby communities like Malden and Wakefield allocate towards education. The City has experienced an 11.92% increase in fixed costs over the past 5 years.⁹ The City spends a high percentage of funds on important municipal functions that are related to economic development when compared with surrounding communities. They spent the second highest percentage of funds after education on public works, dedicating money to ensure that roadways, sidewalks, and other public realm improvements are funded. This is critical for both local businesses and larger companies



Figure 13: Tax Rates and Assessed Values

	Land Area (sq mi)	Total Assessed Value (2016, in billions)	Land Value Per Capita (2014*)	Residential Tax Rate (2016)**	CIP Tax Rate (2016)**	Average Single Family Value (2016)	Average Single Family Tax Bill (2016)
Malden	5.1	5.8	86,248	15.16	23.72	N/A	N/A
Medford	8.1	8.0	128,128	11.19	21.82	424,189	4,747
Melrose	4.7	4.2	139,994	12.33	18.78	465,988	5,746
Saugus	11.0	3.9	135,787	12.20	26.51	347,915	4,245
Stoneham	6.2	3.3	145,620	12.70	22.55	435,095	5,526
Wakefield	7.5	4.2	157,427	13.49	27.03	440,414	5,941

Source: MA EOLWD; *Most recent available data **Per \$1,000 assessed value

Figure 14: FY 2014 General Fund Revenue and Expenditures by Function (% of total Expenditures)

	Total Revenues	Expenditures*						
		General Government	Police	Fire	Education	Public Works	Culture & Recreation	Fixed Costs
Malden	\$160,255,284	5.31%	7.57%	6.68%	44.62%	5.68%	1.38%	7.42%
Medford	\$133,590,030	3.01%	9.19%	8.22%	37.67%	7.25%	1.34%	20.63%
Melrose	\$76,827,108	3.94%	4.80%	5.21%	36.47%	10.90%	2.21%	22.74%
Saugus	\$72,613,933	3.52%	7.84%	5.50%	41.17%	7.67%	1.00%	23.47%
Stoneham	\$59,982,740	3.27%	5.80%	4.52%	43.08%	5.64%	2.67%	22.22%
Wakefield	\$75,638,984	3.65%	6.54%	6.02%	44.20%	13.08%	2.10%	20.99%

Source: MA EOLWD; * This is a representative sample of general fund expenditures and does not include all general fund expenditures

that may be considering locating in Melrose. The City also spent a comparable amount on culture and recreation which can be a huge draw for future business owners and residents alike.

An example of one type of funding that benefits businesses is a public-private partnership for façade and signage improvements. The City reimburses business owners for fifty percent of the cost of façade improvements up to a maximum of five hundred dollars per project and the cost of signage up to a maximum of one thousand dollars per business.

Another public private partnership that could be established to benefit businesses is a Business Improvement District or Community Benefits District. These districts require property owners to pay fees and in return receive services such as marketing assistance, snow clearing, and other services as identified by those within the district. These tools are an effective way to expand upon the City's services to improve upon the

success of the district and directly meet the needs of those paying the fees.

In order to staff such a district, the City should evaluate the desirability for and identify a funding source for an Economic Development position in the City. This staff person could also reinvigorate the Business Development Team that is represented by a member of the Planning Department, Health Department, Fire Department, Inspectional Services, and the City Solicitor. The purpose of the team is to expedite permitting for businesses and they have created a permitting guide to make the process easier to navigate. They would benefit from a designated staff person to coordinate meetings and accomplish tasks such as updating the permitting guide and developing partnerships with local employers to identify their employment needs and help connect residents with jobs in Melrose.



Summary

Melrose's downtown, as a retail and restaurant destination, attracts visitors from across the Greater Boston region. Many participants in this process have identified the downtown as a reason why they love Melrose. Participants at the March 2017 public forum prioritized support for downtown Melrose and the other business districts by retaining current businesses and continuing to attract new ones. Opportunities for new business development may exist in the Rail Corridor Overlay District and on Route 99, and the participants at the public forum recommended that the City have a more proactive approach to these areas. In addition, the analysis in this section shows that the healthcare industry is one that could grow in Melrose, especially with the anchor of Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. The following goals, strategies, and actions will enable the City to respond to these priorities within the timeframe of the Melrose Forward Master Plan.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Support all of Melrose's business districts to enhance neighborhoods and provide new business opportunities.

Strategy 1.1: Maintain and improve Downtown Melrose as a regional shopping and dining destination and community hub for services and gathering.

- Action 1.1.1: Focus on retaining current businesses as well as continuing to attract a diverse mix of businesses to the Downtown Area.
- Action 1.1.2: Consider establishing a Business Improvement District or Community Benefits District in Downtown.

Strategy 1.2: Work to retain and attract additional business activity and mixed use development in Melrose.

- Action 1.2.1: Continue to promote the sign and façade grant program.
- Action 1.2.2: Work to fill vacancies, retain existing businesses, and attract additional business activity in all of the business districts.
- Action 1.2.3: Identify locations where additional retail space, office space, and housing could be added and consider implementing zoning changes should there be a market for redevelopment in the future.
- Action 1.2.4: Evaluate opportunities to use large parking lots for pop-up events.

- Action 1.2.5: Support Hallmark Health's efforts to enhance service and provide 21st century facilities in Melrose.
- Action 1.2.6: Capitalize on the health care opportunity sector by identifying potential service providers willing to move to Melrose.
- Action 1.2.7: Review rules and regulations of liquor licensing for restaurant and specialty food establishments to reduce barriers related to operating such establishments.

Strategy 1.3: Enhance the customer and visitor experience in all of Melrose's business districts.

- Action 1.3.1: Implement a Pedestrian Way-Finding Program to increase awareness of the variety of attractions and business destinations in the community.
- Action 1.3.2: Install Alleyway Signage and Gateway Enhancements to draw visitors from the parking areas and provide unique identities to the alleyways to Main Street.
- Action 1.3.3: Monitor the effectiveness of the new Merchant Parking Permit Program and make adjustments as needed.
- Action 1.3.4: Monitor parking issues at the Highlands Business District to understand how parking opportunities may affect future economic growth in the area.
- Action 1.3.5: Consider streetscape and other design improvements that would make lower Main Street more cohesive and walkable.
- Action 1.3.6: Continue to hold listening sessions in the business districts and address any concerns appropriately.

Goal 2: Support local and small businesses.

Strategy 2.1: Connect with local businesses in the City to understand their needs.

- Action 2.1.1: Reinvigorate the City's Business Development Team.
- Action 2.1.2: Update the "Permitting 101" guide and promote its availability and use.
- Action 2.1.3: Evaluate the desirability for an Economic Development position in the City.
- Action 2.1.4: Work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop events to market restaurants and other businesses in Melrose.

Goal 3: Promote economic development and increase the tax base by encouraging business development and redevelopment.



Strategy 3.1: Ensure zoning districts encourage economic development.

- Action 3.1.1: Evaluate the BC District to promote additional mixed use in these areas.
- Action 3.1.2: Review the BD regulations to remove barriers for medical use development.
- Action 3.1.3: Evaluate the desirability of urban agriculture regulations in the Zoning Ordinance or General Ordinance.
- Action 3.1.4: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit medical offices on the first floor in all business districts, except the BD District.
- Action 3.1.5: Reach out to property owners in the Rail Corridor Overlay District to understand if there is any potential for redevelopment.

Strategy 3.2: Identify optimal land uses for the Route 99 area and adjust zoning to encourage preferred redevelopment.

- Action 3.2.1: Continue to plan for the expiration of the Waste Management lease on the Route 99 parcel.
- Action 3.2.2: Work with the Town of Saugus on planning for the closing of the Aggregate Industries quarry to ensure that redevelopment is compatible and cross-beneficial.
- Action 3.2.3: Conduct a public process to develop a future vision for this area, including working with property owners about redevelopment options and constraints.

Endnotes

¹ MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Statewide Wage Report (2014)

² ACS 2011-2014 5-Year Estimates and MA Dept of Labor and Workforce Development

³ AtoZdatabase February 2016

⁴ The Metro North WIA includes the communities of Belmont, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop, and Woburn.

⁵ <https://www.boston.gov/transportation/boston-parklets-program>

⁶ <http://saugus.wickedlocal.com/news/20170216/saugus-town-manager-crabtree-announces-partnership-with-aggregate-industries-that-benefits-parks-recreation>

⁷ City of Melrose (2016)

⁸ MA Dept of Revenue (2015)

⁹ City of Melrose (2016)





Infrastructure and Facilities

Over the past decade, the City of Melrose and Melrose Public Schools have strategically invested resources and reconfigured operations to address deferred infrastructure and facilities needs and to bring state-of-the-art technologies to the City that help save money, time, and environmental resources.

The City has made unprecedented investments in its infrastructure and facilities in the last decade, such as the construction of Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and the remediation of longstanding flooding issues in Ward 2 and in the areas around the Lynn Fells Parkway and Ell Pond. School facilities management responsibilities were transferred from the School Department to the Department of Public Works (DPW). This centralization of facilities management in the City allowed for more sophisticated energy monitoring capabilities and streamlined how maintenance needs were addressed. The Department of Public Works now has a strong commitment to an ongoing program of prioritized upgrades and preventative maintenance to infrastructure and public buildings. Funding continues to be a challenge, but the City has leveraged a combination of grants, loans, development funds and annual budget allocations to accomplish major infrastructure and building projects.

Melrose's infrastructure systems fall into four main categories: water distribution, wastewater collection and conveyance, stormwater management, and right-of-way management. Municipal solid waste and recycling management is also discussed. Additionally, while the City does not own the natural gas distribution system, it plays a significant role in the City's right-of-way and is thus included in the discussion below. These infrastructure systems, along with options for funding improvements to these systems and information on the technologies and methods used to plan for these improvements are described in this chapter. Facilities needs for buildings owned by the City of Melrose are described here as well.

There are many other infrastructure systems that are not discussed at length in this chapter including information technology infrastructure. The City owns hardware and software, as well as networks and facilities that contribute to information technology. Not only does the City of Melrose rely on this infrastructure, so do the City's regional partners. In today's age, information technology is at risk of being compromised

through the Internet. As such, the City should develop an information technology policy with a strong emphasis on security.

Water Distribution System

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

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

The City obtains water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Water is distributed via natural (gravitational) flow throughout 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 (Bottleph Street and surrounding areas) and southeast (Park Street and surrounding areas) corners of the City. The high-pressure service systems are small, representing only about 10 percent of the total system demand. Both pumping stations were replaced by new facilities in the summer of 2003 and are operating as intended.

There are approximately 90 miles of water mains in the Melrose water distribution system ranging in size from 2 to 16 inches in diameter. These pipes receive water from several large MWRA transmission mains in Melrose and are the responsibility of the City to operate and maintain. Pipe materials include cement lined ductile iron (CLDI), unlined and cement lined cast iron, asbestos cement, and copper. Most water mains installed after approximately 1975 are CLDI pipe, which is the current industry standard. The remaining piping network is mostly comprised of cement lined cast iron and unlined cast iron, with few asbestos cement pipes, and some copper pipes of smaller diameters.

Cast iron pipe is brittle and, if disturbed by construction or through the freeze-thaw cycle, is more likely to



Tuberculated Pipe



Source: City of Melrose

break and leak than newer ductile iron pipe. Unlined cast iron pipe, besides being brittle, undergoes significant “tuberculation,” or clogging, which reduces the inside diameter of the pipe and can eventually completely block the pipe. Tuberculation is caused by the reaction of the water and the unlined cast iron. Lining the inside of a pipe with cement prevents this natural process from starting. Unlined cast iron pipe is a significant cause of water main breaks and can make meeting water quality objectives more challenging. The DPW, through its annual capital program, replaces deteriorated or undersized pipes. Over the last decade, the City has replaced approximately 12 miles of water main through its annual capital program. Much of this work has been accomplished using the MWRA’s Loan Assistance Program, which offers zero-percent interest loans for water distribution system upgrade projects.

Lead pipes have been a cause of national concern in recent years due to the public health implications. While the water delivered to Melrose by the MWRA is lead-free, lead can get into water through a lead service line (the pipe connecting a home to the main in the street) or through household plumbing. Lead service lines are often present in homes constructed prior to 1940, which includes a large number of the residential structures in Melrose; although over time, many of these service lines have been replaced. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental

Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency require periodic water sampling and testing to assure water quality parameters are met and maintained in lead serviced households. In Melrose, because of the age of the housing stock, the City is in the process of completing an inventory of the homes that still have lead service lines. The City is aggressively replacing lead service lines within the public right-of-way, while simultaneously encouraging private property owners to replace their portion of lead services as well.

Unlined steel pipes commonly found on private property are subject to the same tuberculation problems as the unlined mains. Tuberculation often has deleterious effects on water service, including a reduction in volume, pressure, and water quality to the private property. It is recommended that residents upgrade their services to copper from lead or other materials that are prone to tuberculation whenever possible and particularly when the water main in their street is upgraded or when other major site work (such as home renovations) are undertaken. When water main upgrades are performed in the street, the City replaces all water services along the corridor with copper services within the City’s right-of-way. Therefore, private property service line upgrades at this same time would result in a new copper service all the way from the water main in the street to the water meter in the basement.

In addition to pipes, the City maintains approximately 700 hydrants, 1,300 gate valves in the distribution system, and 8,800 residential water meters in Melrose. Hydrants are flushed every other year, in order to clean out any sediment that has collected in the water mains and to maintain desirable water pressure for domestic use and fire prevention. In April 2015, the City initiated a residential water meter replacement program, because many of the current meters were twenty years old on average and required the reader to visit the property for accurate readings. The new meters are read via radio frequencies and have the capability of providing hourly water data within individual homes and businesses, to facilitate more detailed usage assessments. The goals of the program are to more accurately track water usage, more efficiently read meters, provide detailed consumption history, eliminate estimated bills, and provide indicators of high usage or leaks. As of the writing of this plan, approximately 90 percent of residential water meters have been replaced.

In addition to the meter replacement program, the City is recently completed a long-term Capital Efficiency Plan (CEP) that will guide water main capital project spending over the next ten to twenty years. The final



report was issued in March 2017 by Tata & Howard, a consultant who has performed numerous water projects with the City.

The CEP methodology uses three metrics to assess the needs of the water system. These metrics are: system hydraulics, asset criticality, and asset condition. Hydraulic deficiencies and recommendations are identified using the City's water model. Critical areas of the water system include large mains, areas lacking redundancy, and pipes serving sensitive receptors such as school facilities and Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. The asset condition rating is based on parameters such as water main age, material, break history, and soil conditions. This GIS-based analysis overlays data pertaining to all three of these metrics to identify the locations in Melrose that have the most critical need of water infrastructure upgrades, then prioritizes those areas into a long-term capital plan. Ultimately, this planning tool is being coordinated with the other GIS planning tools used for pavement management, Complete Streets prioritization, sewer rehabilitation, and gas infrastructure replacement to develop a long-term, phased program whereby underground infrastructure needs are undertaken first, followed by above-ground right-of-way restoration and improvements. The goal is to create an organized, deliberate, and holistic approach to community-wide infrastructure improvements.

Finally, the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee has actively worked to implement sound fiscal policy in rate setting for water and sewer services consistent with MWRA and state requirements. Included in these efforts are the establishment and funding of Enterprise Funds through which the MWRA is paid for usage, and additional funds are applied to operations, maintenance, capital improvements, debt service repayment, and reserves. The resulting rate system has a fixed base rate and a tiered rate structure. In 2016, a rate model was built to facilitate future rate setting and allow for continual evaluation of the rate impacts of proposed near- and long-term system investments.

Wastewater Collection and Conveyance

The purpose of Melrose's wastewater collection and conveyance system is to remove wastewater coming from residential and commercial properties and convey it to the MWRA's wastewater interceptor pipes. The MWRA treats Melrose's wastewater at the Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Facility and charges the City by metering the volume of wastewater both entering

and leaving Melrose and calculating the difference. The City then charges property owners based on a tiered rate structure set by the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee.

There are roughly 78 miles of sewer mains in the City, approximately 2,060 sewer manholes, and 5 City-owned sewer pump stations. The current standard pipe for wastewater conveyance is polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe. However, many of Melrose's sewer pipes are made of clay. Clay pipe is extremely fragile and easily damaged by roots or broken from traffic loads or 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 some seepage of wastewater into the ground, and, more significantly, allow groundwater to infiltrate into the sanitary sewer system.

Infiltration and inflow (I/I) into a wastewater system is clean, extraneous flow that enters the system and is conveyed and treated along with sanitary flows. These flows reduce the capacity of sewers and drive up the costs of transporting and treating wastewater. Infiltration is groundwater that enters a sewer system through defective pipe joints, pipe breaks, and other defects such as offset joints and poorly installed service connections ("taps"). Inflow is rainfall-induced flow that enters sewers through direct connections such as roof leaders, yard drains, catch basins, defective manhole frames and covers, sump pumps, and unintended connections between wastewater and drainage piping networks.

Sump pump connections to the sanitary sewer system, a source of inflow, are illegal and often times result from property owners being unaware that they are not only costly to the City, but also prohibited by state law. For example, many property owners are not aware that it is illegal to drain flood water from their sump pumps into a basement sink or washing machine waste pipe, where it ends up entering the sanitary sewer system. Rather, pumps should drain outside, ideally within a homeowner's private property, or, as a last resort, into the City's drainage piping network. This issue could be improved through a public education program.

City personnel estimate that between 50 and 60 percent of the flows in Melrose conveyed to the MWRA sewer system are clean groundwater and rainwater that comprise I/I. This results in a substantial cost to the City, as the City pays a significant dollar value per gallon to the MWRA for wastewater removal, which currently includes this significant volume from I/I.



Over the last 10 years, the City has undertaken capital improvements to reduce the amount of I/I entering the system and to reduce sanitary sewer overflows into streets and private homes. One significant project was the Upham Street Sewer Force Main project constructed between 2006 and 2007. The project was funded through the Massachusetts Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) and cost approximately \$3 million. The project diverted outflow further south on Main Street away from the Melrose Towers, Ell Pond, and the Upham Street Pump Station where wastewater overflows had previously occurred. This was accomplished by increasing the size of the sewer force main and relocating its discharge location. In addition, while the subject streets were being disturbed, gas and water infrastructure were replaced or upgraded where needed.

Because of the substantial cost implications of I/I, the DPW has initiated a new, more aggressive and comprehensive multi-year program to identify and remove the most cost-effective I/I. This began with deploying 29 flow meters throughout the City and tracking flows, rainfall, and groundwater elevation data between March and May 2016. The results were analyzed, and, with this data, the City has identified the areas with the largest and most costly inflow and infiltration of rain water or groundwater. Rehabilitation methodologies are likely to focus on trenchless technologies that will minimize disruption of roadways and neighborhoods. The City is eligible to request over \$2.1 million in grants and loans from the MWRA to be used for further investigations and construction to remove these flows and began pursuing that funding in fall 2016. The MWRA I/I Assistance Program is currently offering 75 percent grants and 25 percent zero-interest loans.

Additionally, in June 2016, the Board of Aldermen approved a new I/I Mitigation Fee Ordinance (Chapter 228-78) to fund removal of non-wastewater inflow and infiltration into the sewer system, to offset the capacity required to allow for proposed new flows from development or renovation projects. The previous fee was a one-time fee of \$2.14 per gallon per day, which was not enough to cover the cost of removing I/I. The approved fee is now \$6.89 per gallon per day, which is equal to the City's cost for removing I/I based on its most recent I/I reduction project. The Ordinance codified the calculation methodology using Title 5 flow and evaluates the applicability this one-time fee for any project requiring a building permit. The fees collected will be used to offset future I/I reduction projects. The Engineering Division and Inspectional Services developed a protocol to ensure that the I/I mitigation

fee is assessed in accordance with the Ordinance.

In addition to tackling the high rates of I/I that enter into the wastewater system, the five sewer pump stations require continued maintenance and upgrades, including consideration of backup power needs should there be extended loss of power in Melrose. The City has entered into a recent contract with Weston & Sampson, who currently perform monthly inspections of all of the City's pump stations (water and sewer). The new contract entailed having the consultants review each of the pump stations in greater detail to identify the items most in need of rehabilitation. This included both process mechanical updates (e.g., pumps, motors, etc.), and also updates to the structures themselves, such as structural, architectural, and electrical needs. The conclusions of this study include recommendations for more advanced remote oversight and alarming of the pump stations, as well as online, real-time tracking of operational and flow data. The near-term recommendations are being addressed, and the long-term recommendations need to be planned for in future years including associated budget allocations

Stormwater Management

Rainwater conveyance occurs through a different system than sanitary wastewater disposal, and there is no direct charge to the property owner for rainwater conveyance. Rainwater is collected throughout the City via over 1,600 catch basins. For many years, the DPW deferred maintenance and capital investment in these catch basins and other drainage infrastructure, causing extreme flooding in various areas of the City. 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. Cleaning each catch basin at least every two years is now part of DPW's routine work plan.

Melrose's drainage is tributary to two different water bodies: the Saugus River and the Mystic River (via the Malden River). Ell Pond is within the Malden River watershed and is a major receptor for stormwater in Melrose. There are three main tributary inflows into Ell Pond, and one outflow that is located under Main Street and the adjacent buildings. The outflow system leads to a culvert which eventually flows to the Malden then Mystic Rivers.

The Mother's Day Storm of 2006 is remembered by many for the dramatic flooding north of Ell Pond with flood depths up to six feet high and National Guard



2006 Mother's Day Flood



Source: *The Melrose Mirror*

rescues via boat. The flooding resulted from the original single outlet channel which only began draining the pond when it was nearly full, meaning that the pond level could not be lowered in anticipation of this storm and the resulting runoff. The Ell Pond Project, funded with \$1.7 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program, supplemented by \$1 million in City funds, addressed the flaws in the outlet by installing a control gate structure that allows the water level to be adjusted. But the central part of the project was the installation of a new 48-inch drain outlet, extending from Ell Pond to Grove Street, to carry increased flows away from areas in Melrose that experienced flooding. When historic rains hit in March 2010, the flooding experienced was substantially reduced to isolated low spots, demonstrating the success of the project.

In response to these improvements around Ell Pond, the City believed that there would be the opportunity to petition FEMA to lower the base flood elevation and revise the associated flood hazard areas. Lowering the base flood elevation and revising the associated flood hazard areas may have the positive effect of reducing the number of private property owners carrying costly flood insurance. CDM Smith, a consultant for the City, completed hydrologic and hydraulic simulations of the Ell Pond watershed and found that the improvements do warrant a request to revise the flood maps. The City now needs to complete the required application to FEMA, known as a Letter of Map Revision.

At the same time that the Ell Pond outlet was corrected, flooding issues in Ward 2 and on Converse Lane were addressed. The \$6 million Ward 2 project, funded entirely by the City, addressed the lack of flood storage within the Bennett's Pond Brook watershed (part of the larger Saugus River watershed). During flood events,

excess water would back up into the compromised drainage system and eventually flood streets and private properties. During the 2006 Mother's Day Storm, approximately 70 percent of the homeowners in Ward 2 experienced some property damage as a result of the storm. The major element of the project replaced a compromised 36-inch main that crosses Hesseltine Field with three 30-inch mains. Other elements of the project included drainage improvements and upgrades from Hesseltine Avenue north to Bay State Road and from Ruggles Street to Howard Street.

Converse Lane had been plagued with flooding nearly twice a year due to the undersized culvert beneath Washington Street. The existing 30-inch and 24-inch culverts beneath Washington Street and Converse Lane were replaced with 48-inch culverts and additional catch basins were added on Converse Lane. Farther downstream, the 48-inch culvert beneath Pleasant Street that carried stormwater to Spot Pond Brook was replaced with an 8-foot by 4-foot concrete box culvert. The Converse Lane Project was also funded through a FEMA PDM grant and a matching share from Melrose for a total of approximately \$1.5 million. These projects also included gas and water main upgrades and replacements when the streets were reconstructed.

The City does not currently have an approved Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. The previous plan was completed in 2004 and expired in 2009. The 2004 Plan recognized flooding as a significant weather-related hazard to the City. Two of the three projects described above were completed with grant funding made available to the City due to having an approved Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. For municipalities to continue to be eligible to receive FEMA funding for hazard mitigation projects, the plan must be updated every five years. The City plans to update this Plan because stormwater and the resulting flooding from undersized drainage infrastructure is still a hazard in the community, albeit greatly reduced.

One such location that may be able to benefit from funds resulting from an updated Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is the drainage that terminates adjacent to Wyoming Cemetery. This area is in need of redesigned and relocated discharge piping to alleviate flooding in the adjacent residential neighborhood. In addition, present day challenges include addressing long-term climate change concerns related to flooding, which could be examined and mitigated through an updated Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Another major initiative related to stormwater will be compliance with the newly approved National



Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit for small municipal (MS4) drainage systems. The NPDES stormwater program focuses more on stormwater quality than quantity. As such, it contains a series of requirements for first better understanding the City's drainage system, via mapping and outfall sampling, followed by further investigation to look for illicit connections between the drainage and sanitary wastewater systems. The permit also requires additional documentation of operations and maintenance practices such as catch basin cleaning and street sweeping, enhanced City policies and procedures, and a substantial public outreach component. The City will need to begin complying with the new regulations on July 1, 2017.

Finally, the City has been exploring some green infrastructure options to enhance stormwater quality. Specifically, through a 604b grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the City has preliminary designs for some right-of-way rain gardens and other infiltration treatment systems proposed for City property. The City hopes to pursue piloting of these types of technologies within the right-of-way as funding becomes available.

Roads and Sidewalks

Melrose has approximately 87 miles of roadway. In addition, the City is responsible for numerous public parking lots and municipal building sites. Every year a roadway program is developed by the DPW. Through Chapter 90 money, which amounts to approximately \$590,000 each year, the City can fund a handful of roadway improvement projects. The amount of Chapter 90 money is based on a formula related to the number of miles of road. The City typically supplements the money received from Chapter 90 with a roadway bond. In 2013, the City bonded \$1.5 million for use over 3 years, and the Director of Public Works anticipates a request for a second \$1.5 million road bond beginning in Fiscal Year 2018.

In the past decade, the City has completed large roadway projects including two projects listed on the Massachusetts Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and two projects funded through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program. The two TIP projects were reconstruction of Main Street from the Wakefield line to Robinson's Funeral Home and reconstruction of Lebanon Street from just north of Hospital Square to Grove Street. These projects included water and gas replacements and upgrades while the streets were open. The MassWorks-funded projects were

Design of Franklin Street Project



Source: City of Melrose

the reconstruction of Franklin Street between Howie Street and Greenwood Street and the reconstruction of Essex Street between Main Street and West Emerson Street. Both MassWorks projects included safety improvements, sidewalk reconstruction, Victorian lighting, and infrastructure improvements, and were supplemented with funds from the City and private developers.

The TIP needs to be reenergized with local Melrose projects. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' TIP is a federally-mandated, prioritized listing of highway, bridge, intermodal, and transit investments implemented with funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Local communities and Metropolitan Planning Organizations partner to develop local priorities to be included in the TIP. Currently, Melrose has no projects listed in the TIP. However, the City should consider advocating for the following projects to be included in the TIP: full reconstruction of lower Lebanon Street from Grove Street to Malden, full reconstruction of West Wyoming Avenue from Main Street to Stoneham including Pleasant Street, and full reconstruction of Upham Street from Lebanon Street to Saugus. These are viewed as long-term projects that are not likely to be undertaken within the next several years.

The City should continue to diversify the sources of funding for roadway projects as reliance on state and federal funds are uncertain. In the immediate future, the emphasis will be on smaller roadway projects in residential neighborhoods that include gas, water, and sewer main rehabilitation and improvements to sidewalks and accessibility. To assist in the prioritization of projects, the City completed a Pavement Management Study and is presently developing a

Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. The Pavement Management Study involves a condition assessment of all roadways and sidewalks on public ways in Melrose, and the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan will identify active and potential Complete Streets projects and rank the projects based on the criteria outlined in the City's newly enacted Complete Streets Policy. The Complete Streets projects focus on network connectivity throughout the City between property owners and their destinations, using a variety of modes of transportation and providing accessibility to all ages and abilities. Modes of transportation considered include motor vehicles, bicycles, walking, and transit. Where there are overlaps between the Pavement Management Study and the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, especially those that can be dovetailed with below-ground infrastructure rehabilitation needs, those projects will be advanced first.

There are currently about 97 miles of public sidewalks in the City. Often, the City is made aware of sidewalk damage primarily through notification from residents. "Trip hazards" receive the priority for repairs due to the liability concerns of uneven sidewalks. Often, the damaged sidewalk will be repaired with asphalt rather than replacing the damaged concrete panel as a temporary solution. However, this temporary solution may have long-term aesthetic impacts to a neighborhood. As part of roadway projects, sidewalks are always addressed. The City's standard is to replace sidewalks with concrete panels and granite curbing when full reconstruction is undertaken. The Engineering Division is sensitive to neighborhood context when considering whether a sidewalk should be added to a road that is under construction and what materials should be used. As the City moves to prioritize projects using data-driven tools and the completion of the Complete Street Prioritization Plan, sidewalk condition and availability will be one of the many factors that the City uses to prioritize potential roadway improvement projects.

Another relevant component of the right-of-way is private, above- and below-ground energy and communications infrastructure. Moving forward, the City will continue to review and approve locations for these private utilities through the Grant of Location process. An issue that has continually been raised with regards to this infrastructure is the presence of double utility poles throughout the City. City personnel will continue to work with private utilities to alleviate the double pole issue and ensure their removal in a timely manner into the future.

Solid Waste and Recycling

Over the past decade the amount of solid waste (trash) that residents of Melrose generate has declined while the amount of recycling has increased. In a recent survey conducted by DPW and the Melrose Recycling Committee (MRC), the percentage of households in the City found to be participating in the curbside recycling program increased from 67% in 2013 to 76% in 2016. The increase in residential recycling accompanies a decrease in trash tonnage compared to previous years. These promising trends save taxpayer dollars, reduce environmental costs, and pave the way for further progress.

After recycling rates plateaued from 2013-2014, DPW proposed changes with the intent of reinvigorating the programs. By introducing and implementing weekly curbside pickups of non-sorted (single stream) recyclables in mid-2014, DPW strived to make recycling easier and more convenient for residents, and the numbers suggest that the enhanced convenience is paying off both for the residents at home and for the City financially. Between 2013 and 2015 (the years before and after weekly single stream recycling was introduced), trash tonnage decreased just 3% while recycling tonnage increased 38%.¹ These numbers, in conjunction with figures from 5 years ago indicating that trash tonnage has dropped almost 15% while recycling tonnage has increased almost 28% since 2010, suggest an encouraging trend towards recycling and away from solid waste disposal, but they also indicate that overall consumption is increasing in Melrose.

In addition to curbside recycling service, DPW offers access to paper, cardboard, plastic, glass and aluminum recycling to all members of the public – including businesses – at the City Yard and Recycling Center. By doing so, DPW endeavors to make recycling easily available to all Melrose residents and businesses, regardless of their living situation or access to recycling pickup services at their home or business. While the City Yard is available for those who do not have curbside recycling services, expanding curbside recycling services to the residential structures not serviced (those with more than 6 units) and to businesses should be evaluated.

While the recycling trends are impressive, to continue being a leader the City also needs to embrace the importance of reducing consumption (recycling as a last resort after reducing and reusing). This could mean enacting a mandatory recycling ordinance, adopting a plastic bag ban, eliminating polystyrene (Styrofoam) trays from the schools, and providing organic food

waste disposal options. All of these actions would have to be evaluated for feasibility, especially financially, and desirability within the community. Looking forward, the City strives to lead by example and continue educating and inspiring the next generation of citizens by improving practices in municipal buildings, including schools.

Natural Gas System

While the City of Melrose does not own or maintain the gas mains under City streets, the DPW works closely with National Grid, the natural gas utility, when infrastructure projects occur to ensure that the gas infrastructure is repaired, upgraded, and new lines are provided in areas not currently serviced by natural gas where desired by abutting property owners. Melrose is participating in a grant received by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to study natural gas leaks in the region. The project endeavors to help the region better understand the risk posed by gas leaks and identify ways to accelerate leak repair and pipe replacement. Melrose has been highlighted in the project as a Best Practice case-study by actively working with National Grid to consistently improve the coordination to reduce costs, time and impacts on the residents. These efforts help the utility replace more pipe at a faster rate.

By working closely with the utility, public safety relative to gas infrastructure is advanced in the community. In recent years the prevalence of leaks in natural gas distribution pipelines has emerged as an important public concern. Leaky gas lines can lead to explosions. They add to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming. Finally, transmission losses increase ratepayers' costs.

A 2014 state law, *An Act Relative to Natural Gas Leaks*, requires natural gas distribution companies to annually report the location, age, and grade of each existing and repaired leak in their system. The grade of a leak refers to its safety risk:

- Grade 1 leaks pose an imminent safety hazard and are required to be repaired immediately.
- Grade 2 leaks do not pose an imminent safety hazard but are likely to be a future hazard. Grade 2 leaks must be repaired within 12 months and must be re-evaluated every 6 months.
- Grade 3 leaks do not pose an imminent hazard and are not likely to be a future hazard.

As of December 2015, National Grid reported sixty-nine repaired natural gas leaks, including thirty-nine Grade 1 leaks, forty-seven Grade 2 leaks, and four Grade 3 leaks in Melrose, with the oldest being first reported in 1995. Additionally, National Grid reported 76 unrepaired natural gas leaks, the oldest of which was first reported in 2011. Of the 76 unrepaired leaks reported, four are classified as Grade 2 and seventy-two are classified as Grade 3.

Most leaks occur in old cast-iron or non-cathodically protected steel pipes, collectively known as "leak prone pipe." In addition to repairing individual leaks, National Grid is working to replace all leak-prone pipe throughout its system. Across National Grid's entire network of 11,064 miles of distribution pipeline, 3,544 miles or 32% is leak-prone pipe. As part of *An Act Relative to Natural Gas Leaks*, National Grid has filed a Gas Safety Enhancement Plan (GSEP) that will accelerate the replacement rate. Currently, National Grid plans to replace all leak-prone pipes within 20 years. National Grid publishes its GSEP plan each year which identifies specific replacement sections for the upcoming year and likely sections for the following three years. The relationship that the Engineering Division has cultivated with National Grid ensures that leak-prone pipe within Melrose is addressed quickly and efficiently, especially in areas where the City is proposing other subsurface work.

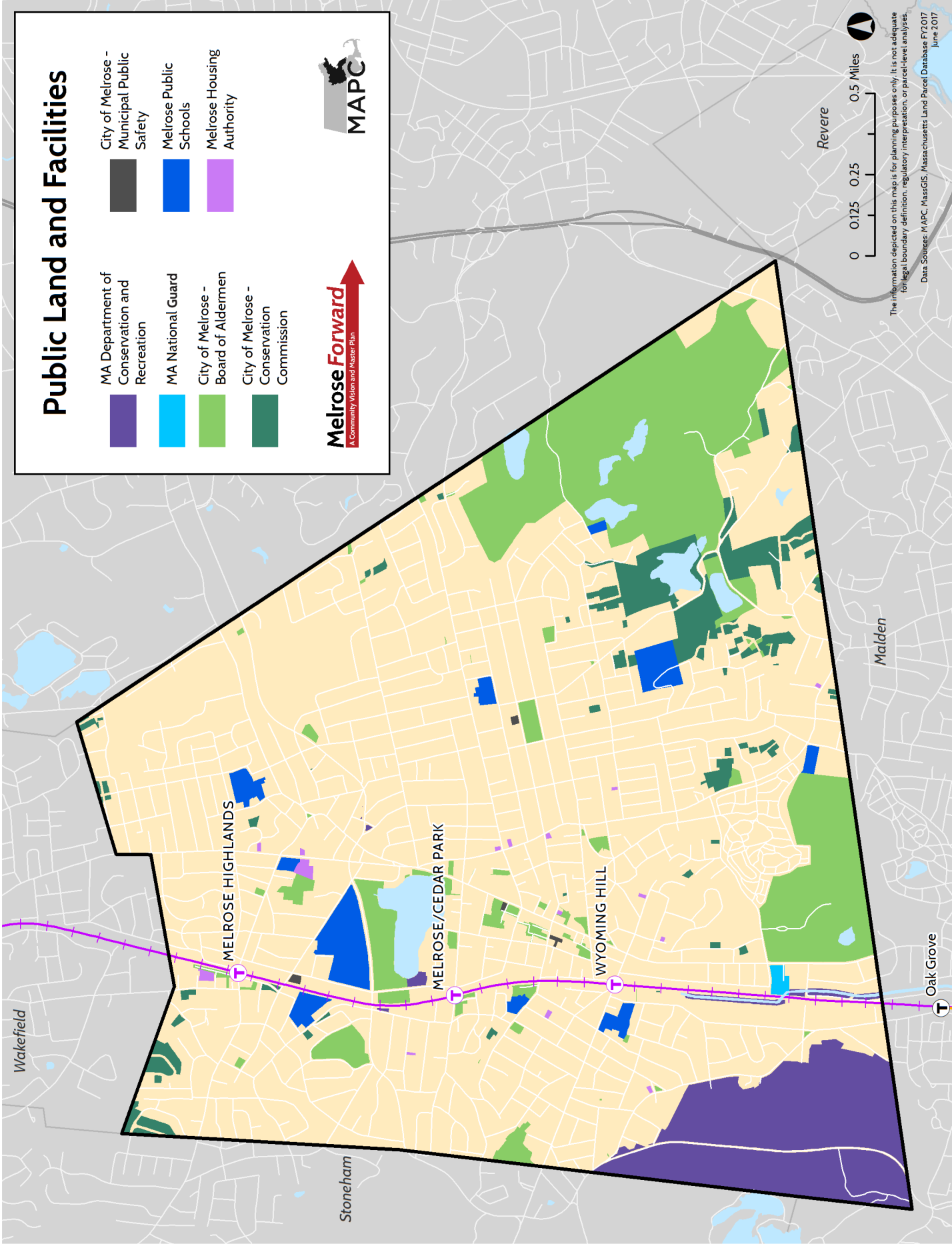
Prioritizing Infrastructure Improvements

The infrastructure of the City requires continual maintenance and evaluation for adequacy. To do this efficiently, the DPW is developing data-driven tools to evaluate infrastructure priorities in Melrose, allowing the City to make the best use of its limited funding. The DPW relies on accurate and current data and has increasingly made greater use of geographic information systems (GIS) to track, map, and prioritize needs. Currently, three assessments are under development:

1. Assessing the needs of the water distribution system via a Capital Efficiency Plan;
2. A combination of a roadway and sidewalk condition assessment and a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan; and
3. The identification of locations where extraneous flows (infiltration and inflow, or I/I) in the sewer system can be cost-effectively removed.



Figure 1: Publicly-Owned Land and Facilities



The DPW and its Divisions have invested in upgrading the data for each infrastructure system, so that a prioritization analysis can be completed using GIS tools. Additional infrastructure data sets will be added into the analysis as they are developed to enable the DPW and its Divisions to further evaluate maintenance and capital infrastructure needs.

Additionally, to ensure that private developments adhere to the same high standards applied to public works projects, the Engineering Division is developing written policies, standards and details for the installation of water, sewer, and drainage lines, as well as roadways and sidewalks. Having written policies that are adopted by the City carries more weight when working with private developers.

These efforts represent a more proactive and cost-effective approach to infrastructure maintenance than prior practices. Having robust, up-to-date data ensures that DPW and its Divisions know what the status and condition of the City's infrastructure is and can effectively prioritize projects to make the best use of funding.

Public Facilities

The City has a tremendous investment in its buildings. Many, such as City Hall, Memorial Hall, the Public Library and the Beebe Estate, are irreplaceable historic treasures. The City's facilities are assessed conservatively and range in value from \$51,254,900 for the High School and Middle School complex and \$1,939,600 for City Hall to \$413,000 for the Police Station and \$17,500 for a sewer pumping station on Upham Street. See Figure 1 for the publicly-owned land and facilities.

Melrose's public facilities are used much more than they ever have been in the past. Memorial Hall's bookings have increased by 300 percent since Fiscal Year 2009, and the schools are used for longer periods throughout the day with before and after school programs and during the summer months, weekends, and vacation weeks. The increased use causes wear and tear, and in turn, additional maintenance is required. In 2010, the maintenance of all public facilities including schools, municipal buildings, and other City properties was consolidated under the DPW, resulting in greater efficiencies and cost savings. Increased building use has resulted in increased energy use and higher utility bills, although this has been offset by an emphasis on energy efficiency as discussed in the Energy and Sustainability chapter.

The following is a brief description of major City owned public buildings, summarizing building use, past investment and current capital needs.

City Hall

Most City Departments operate out of City Hall, located at 562 Main Street. City Hall was built in 1873 as a three-story building but the third story and cupola feature were later destroyed by fire.² Today, the two-story building contains City offices in the basement, on the ground floor, and on the second floor. There are three meeting spaces in the building: the Aldermanic Chamber on the ground floor, the Cassidy Conference Room on the second floor, and a small conference room in the basement. These are primarily used for City business and for publicly-posted Board and Commission meetings. City Hall is open Monday through Thursday 8:30am-4pm, Friday 8:30am-12:30pm and at other times when there are posted meetings. The Aldermanic Chamber is equipped to broadcast meetings on MMTV, the local cable access channel.

City Hall was most recently renovated in 2000 in a project managed by the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) that involved repainting the brick façade, replacing the roof and upgrading the heating system. Facility investments since that time have mostly been cosmetic or involved reconfiguring office space and have been managed in-house by DPW.

City Hall houses much of the IT infrastructure for the City and for some of Melrose's regional partners. When the building loses power, this infrastructure goes down crippling City systems. Adding a generator to City Hall will ensure that crucial infrastructure systems remain in service during power outages.

Memorial Hall

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Building, also called Memorial Hall, is a commemorative monument and meeting place for veterans and also serves as a community meeting facility. It was dedicated in 1912 in remembrance of the soldiers and sailors of the Civil War. It includes an auditorium that seats 800 people and a GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) Hall that is handicap accessible, features a kitchen, and seats up to 100 depending on the type of event. Use of the facility is coordinated by an operations manager.³

Memorial Hall is protected by a preservation restriction. In the mid-1990s, a facilities plan was completed for

Memorial Hall



Source: City of Melrose

Memorial Hall which identified a comprehensive list of building needs. The plan set the stage for a series of preservation projects managed by OPCD that began in the late 1990s. With a combination of Preservation Project Fund Grants through the Massachusetts Historical Commission and municipal funds, the City restored the windows, repointed the granite, replaced the roof, upgraded the electrical service and made essential handicap accessibility improvements. In 2008, with partial funding from a state economic development grant, the HVAC system at Memorial Hall was upgraded. This involved a complete overhaul of the original steam heating system which dated to the construction of the building and the installation of air conditioning, enhancing the comfort level in the building, improving building operations, and promoting energy efficiency. Since that time, Memorial Hall has become a year-round facility and the usage has escalated accordingly.

Over twenty years have elapsed since the City secured Memorial Hall through the series of weatherproofing projects noted above and the building is beginning to show evidence again of water infiltration. In addition, many interior features need investment including the light fixtures and decorative plaster in the main hall and the walls and ceilings in the GAR Hall. An assessment is currently underway to identify the needed upgrades and the City will have to find the funds to pay for this work to protect this cherished resource.

Public Library

Since its establishment in 1871, the Public Library has provided Melrosians with a wide range of periodical and

Public Library



Source: Melrose Public Library

hardcover materials for engaging children and adults with the world of learning. 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 library users want more services that cannot be adequately accommodated in the existing building.

The current Melrose Public Library facility, located at 69 West Emerson Street, was initially built in 1904 with a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. An addition was built in 1963 to accommodate the library's increasing collection and a growing demand for youth services.⁴ The Library has not seen any significant investment since that time, except for a modest renovation in the early 1990s. The most recent long-range plan indicates that the Melrose Public Library building is not flexible enough to provide the services the community desires, including dedicated meeting rooms, dedicated space for young adults and children, more efficient staff space, and improvements to technology and climate control.

The Library administration and the Library Board of Trustees are currently pursuing a grant opportunity offered by the Massachusetts Library Board of Trustees. A grant application positions the City for the matching funds needed to undertake a major renovation of this National Register-listed Historic Property. The grant application requires the building to be considered from top to bottom and to look at its use over the next 20 years.

In support of the grant application, which was submitted in January 2017, a feasibility study and schematic drawings were prepared. The proposed

design includes a community meeting space with an independent entrance that can accommodate up to 150 people, or be split into multiple meeting rooms to accommodate smaller events. The stacks on the second floor will be rebuilt, children and young adult services will have enhanced space in close proximity on the second floor and all building systems will be upgraded. The Public Library is operated by a Library Director with oversight provided by the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Director works closely with the DPW to address maintenance issues when they arise.

Beebe Estate and Milano Center

The Beebe Estate, located at 235 West Foster Street, was built around 1828 and was acquired by the City of Melrose in 1963. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. The Milano Center located at 201 West Foster Street was originally the barn behind the Beebe Estate, until it was completely rehabilitated and converted to a senior center in the 1990s.⁵

In the late 1990s, after sitting vacant for several years, the Beebe Estate was restored and repurposed. OPCD secured a series of preservation grants to replace the slate roof, repair the windows and siding, and perform interior renovations. Office space was created in the rear addition for the Council on Aging and for several local non-profits and art gallery space was created in the original mansion. In addition, the landscape and gardens were restored to create welcoming outdoor space for functions and community use.

The Beebe Estate is overseen by a Board of Trustees, which manages a revolving fund and an endowment fund that can be used for maintenance and preservation projects. In recent years, the Trustees have used the endowment fund to restore the balustrade and secured a grant from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to paint the building exterior. The building will need an upgrade to its heating system and boiler replacement in the coming years.

The Milano Center is home to the Senior Center and features a variety of community programming. It has meeting spaces that can be reserved for public and private events. In 2015, the Milano Center celebrated its 20th year anniversary providing social, recreational, health and educational programs for older adults. The anniversary spurred several projects to reinvest in the space to keep it vital for the community, including the build out of the lower level for a computer room and casual café style meeting space and new floors and window treatments in the community room on the

Central Fire Station



Source: City of Melrose

upper level. The building is in need of exterior repairs and painting, which is currently being completed. The Milano Center is operated by the Executive Director of the Council on Aging and supported by a Friends group that has had great success leveraging private funding to support facility improvements and other initiatives.

Police and Fire Departments

The Melrose Fire Department maintains three fire stations: Central Headquarters at 576 Main Street, Melrose Highlands at 206 Tremont Street, and East Side Station at 280 East Foster Street. The Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services for the City.⁶ The Central Fire Station is located within the local historic district as well as the National Register-listed Historic District. The Central Fire Station has structural concerns due to unstable soils. Recently, the boiler was replaced and the bathrooms were renovated. The Police Department is located at 56 West Foster Street. There are nine divisions included in the Melrose Police Department: Patrol Division, Detective Bureau, Domestic Violence Division, K-9 Division, Traffic Division, Honor Guard, School Resource Officer, Animal Control, and Human Resources Division.⁷ The boiler at the Police Station and Central Fire Station was recently replaced and the Dispatch Center at the Police Station was renovated in 2013. These investments notwithstanding, the Police Station suffers from serious structural faults and accessibility constraints and was never designed as a police facility.

A combined public safety building was studied and has been under consideration by Melrose officials since the mid-1990s. Both the Police Station and the Central

Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School



Source: Hromadka / Associates

Fire Station are long overdue for renovations. In 2016, the Mayor formed a Public Safety Building Committee and the Board of Aldermen approved funding for a new Public Safety Building Feasibility Study. The challenge of siting a facility that can house the two Departments is the major task because many of the large sites previously considered are no longer available. It is expected that a feasibility analysis will consider a range of options including a combined location and renovations to existing buildings. Funding upgrades to existing buildings or construction of a new facility will likely require a debt exclusion.

Department of Public Works

Operations for the Public Works Department takes place in the DPW Operations Building on Tremont Street. Facility needs were assessed in the mid-1990s when the City was also studying other critical building priorities, such as Public Safety and Memorial Hall, but renovations did not occur until 2010 when consolidation of all facility maintenance under DPW necessitated the investment. The project included addressing the air quality issues in the building with a new HVAC system, a new roof, and new electrical systems, along with the creation of office space for additional DPW employees. The DPW salt shed was not addressed at that time and needs to be repaired to correct structural issues with the building.

Mount Hood Clubhouse

The Clubhouse at Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The Clubhouse and Golf Course are privately managed but owned by the City. This facility is used for

events such as banquets and fundraisers.

Between 2012 and 2014, interior and exterior renovations of the buildings at the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course were completed to address inaccessibility. Most of the renovations included installing ramps at an accessible slope and widening doorways. At this time, the next major investment in the Clubhouse building is replacing the windows.

School Buildings

The City of Melrose operates eight public schools. The schools include an Early Childhood Center (ECC) at the Franklin School, five elementary schools – Hoover, Winthrop, Horace Mann, Lincoln and Roosevelt – the Veterans Memorial Middle School and Melrose High School. In addition, the City owns two buildings that were formerly used as elementary schools in Melrose – Beebe and Ripley – and are leased as educational facilities to the SEEM Collaborative.

Over the years, the City has been prudent in its use of school buildings, responding proactively to changing enrollments by reconfiguring classrooms and making use of surplus space as swing space to house students during the Lincoln, Roosevelt and Middle School construction projects. The decision to maintain ownership of the Beebe and Ripley school buildings allows flexibility for the future in addition to providing an annual revenue stream. It is recommended that the City continue to maintain ownership of these buildings.

A School Facilities Master Plan was prepared for the City by HMFH Architects, Inc. and adopted by the Melrose School Committee in 1997. The study identified significant reconstruction needs in the elementary schools and was amended in 2000 to include consideration of the Middle School and High School. The Lincoln Elementary School was completely rebuilt through a renovation/addition project in 2000 and the Roosevelt Elementary School was rebuilt in 2002. These capital projects were funded through a combination of state grants through the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and matching city funds.

The Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School became the priority of the amended Facilities Master Plan and was the next school building to be addressed. Despite being solidly built in an attractive art deco design, the Middle School had deteriorated significantly since it was built in 1933 and severe flooding limited programming and periodically created school closures. In November 2003, a debt exclusion override was approved to build

a new Middle School and construction was completed in 2007. As with the Lincoln and the Roosevelt, the City was reimbursed approximately 60% of the cost of the new Middle School, with the difference paid for by Melrose taxpayers in annual assessments over a finite period, projected to end by the year 2029.

The 2004 Master Plan cited major concerns about deferred maintenance and the lack of investment in school facilities, the major capital projects at the Lincoln, Roosevelt and Middle School notwithstanding. Funding is often hard to come by due to Proposition 2 ½ limitations and other critical municipal needs. Nevertheless, over the past decade, the City has made it a high priority to invest in school facilities and has taken advantage of grants and other funds, including municipal bonds, to maximize the opportunities for capital investments. The reorganization of DPW to include operations and maintenance of school buildings has helped to streamline limited resources and find efficiencies which have led to maintenance improvements. In addition, the projects spearheaded by the City's Energy Efficiency Manager have led to improved comfort and conditions throughout the district and utility savings that have leveraged other improvements.

Noteworthy among the school facility investments over the past decade has been the emphasis on making dramatic improvements to Melrose High School. The High School was built in 1975 at a time of rapid population growth in the City. The building has adequate space and is structurally sound but was built in an open classroom design that is not compatible with current educational approaches. The High School shares a campus with the Middle School, so with the construction of the new Middle School the City capitalized on the opportunity to convert a large wing of open space area in the High School to 14 individual classrooms to be used as 8th grade classrooms during construction. These classrooms have subsequently been converted back to use by High School students and provide a vastly improved learning environment. The roof over this wing, which was original to the building, was replaced with a new roof at the same time. This project, completed in the year 2005, was the first of eight major capital projects at Melrose High School over the past decade. The other projects include:

- **Electrical Upgrades Project:** Comprehensive electrical and data technology upgrades to support the installation of smart board technology in every classroom in the high school, new computers and a new telephone system. (2008)

- **Athletic Complex Project:** Comprehensive renovation of the High School Athletic Complex to provide for a new synthetic turf multi-purpose field, new stadium seating, press box, and field lighting, along with a new baseball stadium, stadium seating press box, and field lighting, and a new field house for concessions and a visiting team room. (2011)
- **Roof Replacement Project:** Replacement of approximately 46,000 square feet of the high school roof that was original to the building with a new fully insulated and energy efficient white roof. (2011)
- **Energy Efficiency Improvements:** Implementation of a series of energy efficiency projects including the installation of a 300kw solar photovoltaic system on the High School/Middle School Roof through a Power Purchase Agreement which promotes the use of renewable energy and reduces electricity costs, along with miscellaneous energy upgrades throughout the High School including new energy efficient lighting and occupancy sensors. (2013)
- **Science Lab Project:** New state of the art science labs and associated equipment, technology and support spaces in the 18,000 square foot science wing, completed with a grant through the MSBA Science Lab Initiative. (2013)
- **HVAC Upgrades Project:** A comprehensive upgrade to the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems designed to improve comfort, air quality and reliability and replace old mechanical systems that could no longer be maintained. (2014)
- **Learning Commons and Student Services Wing:** The former High School Resource Center was transformed into a modern Learning Commons providing a blended learning space, computer labs, presentation space that can accommodate up to 200 people, a graphics studio, collaborative student space, new business classroom, CAD lab, and an upgraded TV studio. The project also included the creation of new office space for the guidance department and academic department heads to better serve students and their families, and the creation of a Maker Space. (2016)

Together these projects have converted a building historically plagued by poor design into a twenty first century learning facility which will serve Melrose



students for decades to come. Valued at over \$20,000,000, most were accomplished with partial funding from state grants, including MSBA Accelerated Repair funds, MSBA Science Lab funds, Green Community Grant funds and other sources.

In addition to the work at Melrose High School, the City replaced the windows and doors and installed a safe and welcoming front entry to the Hoover Elementary School in 2016. This project was accomplished with partial grant funding from the MSBA Accelerated Repair Program and has vastly improved the quality of the learning environment on that campus. In 2012, the City completed a ventilation project at the Winthrop School, which has improved comfort, air quality and energy efficiency.

The School Building Committee and Office of Planning and Community Development have been instrumental in seeing school building projects funded and completed successfully. The City of Melrose has been able to leverage funds through the MSBA, and has matched these grants with local bond funds, although the rebuilding of the Middle School required a debt exclusion, and the debt exclusion option may be necessary again for large capital projects.

Current School Building Needs

As noted, the City and School Administration work collaboratively and proactively to adjust to changing conditions with enrollment and educational mandates that may affect the learning environment. Increased enrollment in recent years has been accommodated by making creative use of space at the existing elementary schools and in some cases converting spaces formerly used as teachers work rooms or offices into classrooms. This approach had been adequate until very recently when a surge in elementary age population began to put too much pressure on existing resources and exacerbated the limitations inherent with the older elementary schools. The City commissioned a demographic study to better understand and plan for enrollment changes and considered a variety of options to accommodate the projected increased enrollment. Ultimately, the community endorsed a plan that involves building five new modular classrooms (three at the Hoover School and two at the Winthrop School) and renovating the Horace Mann School. The new modular classrooms will provide some flexibility at the elementary school level should enrollment continue to grow, but at significantly less cost than reopening the Beebe School, for example, or building a new elementary school. The Horace Mann improvements will allow for dedicated library, art and music spaces

equivalent to those in the rest of the District and provide essential accessibility and building security modifications. These projects are underway and are planned to be in place for the 2017/2018 school year.

This recent issue around enrollment has brought into focus the need for the City to begin to think about a future capital project at the Winthrop Elementary School, which is the next priority identified in the School Facilities Master Plan. The Winthrop School is the oldest elementary school in the District and, while it is bigger than the Hoover and the Horace Mann, it serves a much larger student population and the site could accommodate a larger building. The modular classrooms provide a great solution to the current enrollment pressure and have a long life expectancy, but the City may want to begin to plan for a MSBA funded project sometime within the next decade.

Other capital needs anticipated, include replacing the windows at the Franklin ECC, replacing and/or repairing the elementary school roofs, the Horace Mann roof being the most pressing, and repairing the heating systems at the Winthrop School and Franklin ECC. The heating systems in the Beebe School and the Ripley School also need to be evaluated and possibly replaced. While the City does not use the Beebe School and the Ripley School, the City is responsible for the maintenance of these buildings as part of the long-term lease with the SEEM Collaborative.

Funding Capital Improvements

Capital improvements are not inexpensive. The realities of a city government, not unique to Melrose, make it difficult to make long-term capital improvements when there is no immediate crisis at hand and when so many projects compete for the same limited funds. At the time when the previous Master Plan was written, the City was deferring needed capital improvements due to budgetary constraints and the lack of a pragmatic method to fund various projects on an ongoing basis. Since then, the City has been more proactive in funding capital improvements but there remain limited options for funding sources. Some of the ways infrastructure improvements can be funded include:

- **City operating budget:** Allocating money from the City's current operating budget for capital improvements requires consideration of the impact caused by diverting money from other critical city needs, and is subject to review each fiscal year.
- **General override:** Allocating money from a

general override has the same drawbacks as funding from the current operating budget, and after the first year, the money reverts into the General Fund. This would be funded through property taxes, which would be tax-deductible for residents who itemize.

- **Debt exclusion override:** Debt exclusion overrides represent money that is allocated to a specific project, such as a new building and road improvements, and do not constitute a permanent increase to the City's tax base. This would be funded through property taxes, which would be tax-deductible for residents who itemize.
- **Loan to City:** The City can borrow and incur additional debt within the parameters of the City's bond rating and debt capacity.
- **Enterprise funds:** Enterprise funds are funds collected through user fees based on usage, such as water and wastewater usage. The Water and Sewer Enterprise funds are used to pay the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and the maintenance associated with such usage. Excess funds may be collected and then used to fund capital improvements. 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.
- **State grants and loans:** The City has historically relied on state sources to fund a variety of projects. However, these sources typically require matching funds and are often insufficient to meet the City's needs. For example, most road improvements are funded through Chapter 90 money, but the City has used bonds to augment road improvement budgets. School construction projects have been funded largely through the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) grants and loans which require matching funds from the City. The MWRA also has helped finance various water and wastewater projects with zero-interest loans and grants.
- **Capital Improvement Stabilization Fund:** The Melrose Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds major, non-recurring expenditures that cost \$25,000 or more and have a useful life of five or more years. Between fiscal years 1994 and 2011, over 120 CIP projects were funded at

a cost of \$98,009,742. Projects in the CIP have ranged from the construction of two elementary schools (the Lincoln and Roosevelt Schools) and a new Middle School to funding municipal IT infrastructure, news roofs, and sidewalk improvements. In 2007, the City created a Capital Projects Stabilization Fund to fund the purchase of capital expenditures on a more predictable cycle. The CIP guidelines should be reviewed and updated to ensure that they accurately reflect today's priorities and processes.

- **Community Preservation Fund:** If Melrose were to adopt the Community Preservation Act, a local Community Preservation Loan Fund could be used for capital improvements in projects related to open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and outdoor recreation. The funds are raised through a local tax surcharge and a match from the state.⁸

Summary

Management of the City's infrastructure and facilities has made strides since the 2004 Master Plan. The use of data-driven tools will enable the City to effectively assess projects to make the best use of limited funding. Challenges that the City is facing now include funding upgrades to the wastewater conveyance system as well as maintaining and upgrading public buildings to meet current and future needs. One of the most critical challenges facing the City is the I/I flow within the wastewater conveyance system. While capital improvements have been completed and an aggressive new program is being implemented, I/I removal is a constant funding challenge. On the public facilities side, the challenges presented in the next ten years include the increasing elementary school enrollment and the need for comprehensive renovations to the fire and police stations, Memorial Hall, and the public library. These challenges are top priorities of those who have participated in the public process, and the following recommendations will address these challenges and the continued proactive approach to infrastructure and public facilities.



Recommendations

Goal 1: Create an organized, deliberate, and holistic approach to community-wide infrastructure improvements.

Strategy 1.1: Finalize planning tools for each infrastructure system.

- Action 1.1.1: Complete inventory of lead water service pipes and continue testing at school properties.
- Action 1.1.2: Complete water meter replacement.
- Action 1.1.3: Complete pavement management assessment.
- Action 1.1.4: Finalize the long-term Capital Efficiency Plan for water main capital improvements.
- Action 1.1.5: Finalize the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- Action 1.1.6: Further pursue the recommendations of the 604b study for Ell Pond and green infrastructure as feasible.
- Action 1.1.7: Complete the base flood elevation analysis for approval by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Strategy 1.2: Achieve high standards across private developments and public works projects.

- Action 1.2.1: Develop written policies, standards, and details for the installation of water, sewer, and drainage lines, as well as roadways and sidewalks.
- Action 1.2.2: Continue to actively work with National Grid to consistently improve the gas infrastructure coordination to reduce costs, time, and impacts on residents.
- Action 1.2.3: Continue to review and approve locations for private utilities within the right-of-way through the Grant of Location process.
- Action 1.2.4: Continue to advocate for removal of double utility poles throughout Melrose.

Strategy 1.3: Upgrade infrastructure to ensure that delivery of services is achieved.

- Action 1.3.1: Continue to replace water pipes with cement lined ductile iron pipe.
- Action 1.3.2: Update the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Action 1.3.3: Improve backup power to the five sewer pump stations.
- Action 1.3.4: Remove infiltration and inflow (I/I) where cost effective.
- Action 1.3.5: Reenergize the Transportation

Improvement Plan (TIP) with Melrose projects.

- Action 1.3.6: Enhance service level and reduce negative impacts to water bodies by going beyond compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit for small municipal (MS4) drainage systems.
- Action 1.3.7: Install a generator at City Hall.
- Action 1.3.8: Develop an Information Technology Plan with a strong emphasis on security.

Strategy 1.4: Continue to remove barriers to waste reduction and diversion.

- Action 1.4.1: Explore the viability and potential impact of introducing a City-wide mandatory recycling ordinance.
- Action 1.4.2: Promote that businesses can recycling at the City Yard.
- Action 1.4.3: Explore opportunities with third-party companies to provide expanded curbside recycling removal from multifamily structures and businesses.
- Action 1.4.4: Adopt a plastic bag ban ordinance.
- Action 1.4.5: Remove polystyrene (Styrofoam) trays in the schools.
- Action 1.4.6: Work proactively with businesses and institutions in Melrose to help identify responsible food-waste disposal options.

Goal 2: Provide adequate funding for infrastructure and public facility improvements on an annual basis.

Strategy 2.1: Fund water and sewer capital projects.

- Action 2.1.1: Consistently set water and sewer rates at a level that allows for funds to accrue in the Enterprise Funds to be used for capital projects.
- Action 2.1.2: Continue to pursue grants, such as MWRA grants, to cover partial costs of capital projects.

Strategy 2.2: Fund the removal of Infiltration and Inflow (I/I).

- Action 2.2.1: Annually review the I/I Mitigation Fee Ordinance fee structure.
- Action 2.2.2: Pursue MWRA grants for I/I removal.
- Action 2.2.3: Evaluate other sources to fund I/I removal, including the sewer enterprise fund.

Strategy 2.3: Provide sufficient funding for road and sidewalk repairs.



- Action 2.3.1: Continue to diversify the sources of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state funds.
- Action 2.3.2: Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually.

Strategy 2.4: Fund stormwater improvements.

- Action 2.4.1: Continue to fund stormwater improvements through the general fund.
- Action 2.4.2: Allocate annual funding for compliance with the NPDES MS4 stormwater permit.
- Action 2.4.3: Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects.

Strategy 2.5: Utilize the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process for all non-water and sewer projects, including school facilities.

- Action 2.5.1: Implement and fund the CIP annually.
- Action 2.5.2: Review and update the guidelines for the CIP.
- Action 2.5.3: Determine appropriate funding sources, including grants, state funds, supplemental budget funds, bonds, and debt-exclusions, and establish funding levels annually.

Strategy 2.6: Pursue funding for critical building projects.

- Action 2.6.1: Continue proactive repair and upgrades to aging school facilities.
- Action 2.6.2: Complete a new comprehensive analysis and study of the existing public safety properties including an analysis of funding options.
- Action 2.6.3: Pursue funding for future Melrose Public Library and Memorial Hall renovation projects.
- Action 2.6.4: Support continued use of the MSBA funding for school building projects.

Endnotes

¹ In the past 5 years, trash tonnage has dropped almost 15 percent (from 8564.59 tons in 2010 to 7295.15 tons in 2015). Over this same time period recycling tonnage has increased almost 28 percent (from 1946.43 tons in 2010 to 2,487.73 tons in 2015). These figures capture the solid waste generated by residential households of 6 units or less as well as trash collected from municipal buildings and public land in Melrose. Solid waste generated by commercial buildings, as well as residents living in apartments and condominiums consisting of more than 6 units, are not represented in these figures and are not currently tracked for the City of Melrose. Introducing hauler regulations would enable more complete data tracking in the future.

² *Melrose: Past, Present and Future*, publication of the Melrose Centennial Committee, 2000

³ <http://www.cityofmelrose.org/departments/memorial-hall/>

⁴ <http://www.melrosepubliclibrary.org/home/mpls-history/>

⁵ <https://www.beebeestate.com/history/>

⁶ <http://www.cityofmelrose.org/departments/fire-department/>

⁷ <http://melrosepolice.net/>

⁸ <http://www.communitypreservation.org/content/cpa-overview>





Transportation and Circulation

Participants who visited the Melrose Forward booth at the September 2015 Victorian Fair identified the “ability to get around by rail, bus, bicycle, walking, and driving” as the most important community attribute for them as residents of the City. Issues identified repeatedly during the creation of this plan include improving accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians in Melrose, stressing the importance of the MBTA Orange Line, Buses, and Commuter Rail to the quality of life and economy in Melrose, the availability of parking in commercial districts, overnight visitor parking, accessibility, vehicle speeds, and traffic signal timing.

Melrose’s transportation network is multifaceted, and includes roadways, public rail and bus service, off-road paths and trails, sidewalks, bike accommodations, and parking. Transportation access is a large benefit and attraction for many in the community. A successful transportation network plans for the efficient and safe movement of people and goods, and provides multiple modes of travel to access locations. Well-designed transportation can have positive impacts on economic development, limiting pollution and greenhouse gases, and improving the quality of life for the community in terms of health and social well-being.

Transportation Planning

The support for a multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of a range of users has grown over the last decade, with more emphasis placed on active transportation (walking and biking) and transit access than in the 2004 Master Plan. Since the last Master Plan, the Melrose Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee was reenergized, a Mass-in-Motion Coordinator was hired, and more attention to the range of potential users has been given in roadway projects, setting the stage for the increased focus on active transportation. Additionally, the City recently adopted a Complete Streets Policy and future infrastructure improvements will be made with accommodations for active transportation in mind.

Additional discussion is found in the Infrastructure and Facilities Chapter on the Massachusetts Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is a regional planning process for federal funding of transportation projects, and future locally funded transportation projects.

Previous Transportation Planning Efforts

Since the 2004 Master Plan, the City of Melrose, led by the Office of Planning and Community Development, has undertaken transportation planning efforts and made zoning changes to promote transit-oriented development in appropriate locations. The City participated in the Main Street Corridor Study completed by MAPC in 2012. This cooperative effort between Melrose, Wakefield, and Reading looked at ways to improve upon the existing transportation network by reducing automobile traffic while promoting walking, biking, and transit options throughout the three communities.

The Smart Growth Overlay District and the Rail Corridor Overlay District are examples of planning efforts to encourage transit-oriented development in Melrose. The Smart Growth Overlay District, adopted in 2008, is located on lower Washington Street, just minutes from Oak Grove Station. Since the adoption of the Smart Growth District, high density residential and mixed-use developments have been constructed, creating new housing opportunities where public transit is available. The Rail Corridor Overlay District was adopted in 2014 for the area along the commuter rail and is generally located on Essex and Tremont Streets. Encouraging similar high density residential development, the vision for the Rail Corridor as outlined in the Commuter Rail Corridor Plan prepared by MAPC in 2013, includes accessibility within the corridor and to the surrounding neighborhoods and downtown through improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Complete Streets

The City adopted a Complete Streets Policy in June 2016. The purpose of the Complete Streets Policy is to “accommodate road users of all ages and abilities by creating a transportation network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes.” Following adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, the City of Melrose will plan, design, operate and maintain streets so that they are safe for all users as a matter of routine. The policy guides decision makers in consistently planning, designing, and constructing streets to reasonably accommodate current and future users for all publicly and privately funded projects. The policy also establishes a Complete Streets Working



Group, which is charged with ensuring implementation of the Policy and, where necessary, altering the existing practices and overcoming barriers that may act as impediments to implementation.

The Engineering Division is currently working on a Complete Street Prioritization Plan, which will identify and prioritize projects based on the criteria outlined in the policy. As discussed in the Infrastructure and Facilities Chapter, a number of data-driven tools are under development to inform the Prioritization Plan, all of which will be used along with the Prioritization Plan as planning tools for future transportation projects in Melrose. The adoption of the Complete Streets Policy and the completion of the Prioritization Plan allows the City to pursue funding from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) that would not otherwise be available.

Traffic Commission

The Traffic Commission was established in 1998 to discuss and respond to traffic-related issues throughout the City. This 10-member Commission is chaired by the City Engineer and includes representatives from 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. Recurring requests include sidewalk repairs, accessible curb cuts, complaints of speeding, and installation of stop signs.

The Traffic Commission recently addressed parking around the Highlands commuter rail station and business district as well as implementing a blanket 25 mph speed limit on local roads, among other items such as signage and intersection controls.

Melrose Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee was reestablished in 2012, with the task of providing guidance and feedback on cycling and walking projects and initiatives. The Committee is comprised of local volunteers, and has organized a number of “fun rides” for local residents and children, developed a Bicycle Priority Network for the City, and worked collaboratively with the City to ensure active transportation is considered when the City implements transportation projects.

The Committee’s goals for Melrose include improving regional connectivity, engaging new casual cyclists, and developing Citywide standards for roadways that

better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. The City’s Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, currently underway, will address some of these issues and the Committee will be part of the ongoing evaluation of Complete Streets implementation.

Safe Routes to School

All of the Melrose elementary schools and the Middle School participate in the Safe Routes to Schools program, a federally-funded initiative of MassDOT. The Safe Routes to School program encourages elementary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely by implementing the “Safe Routes Five E’s”: education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation, and engineering.

While many of the Melrose schools have participated in the Safe Routes to School Annual Walk and Bike to School Day, participation has been aided when a school nurse, parent, or other faculty/staff member has spearheaded the effort. For example, “walking school buses” have been used for younger students on the Annual Walk to School Day. In Melrose, a more coordinated approach is needed for consistent participation in the program.

Transportation Today

The transportation options in Melrose have largely been the reason for the City’s growth and strength. According to the 2010-2014 ACS data, three out of four (74%) Melrose residents drive to work, 19% utilize public transportation, and the remaining 7% of residents walk, bike, or work from home. This information marks a notable change from the 2000 Census, as 4% of Melrose residents have shifted from driving alone/ carpooling to public transit. Work from home and walk/ bike rates have remained relatively consistent.

In terms of vehicle ownership, 8% of households in Melrose do not own a vehicle. One vehicle households account for 39% of the population, and another 39% of households own two vehicles. The remaining 14% of households own 3 or more vehicles. The average number of vehicles per household in Melrose is 1.6 vehicles, compared to 1.2 vehicles per household in the Inner Core subregion, and 1.5 vehicles per household in the MAPC region. Overall, there are approximately 18,000 vehicles registered in Melrose.

Commuting Patterns

The origin and destination of trips within Melrose,



Figure 1: Commute to Work

Mode of Travel	2000 Percent	2010-2014 Percent	2000-2014 Change
Drive Alone	70.7%	68.9%	-1.8%
Carpool	7.9%	5.1%	-2.8%
Public Transit	14.7%	18.9%	+4.2%
Walk/Bike/Other	3.9%	3.6%	-0.3%
Work from Home	2.8%	3.5%	+0.7%

Source: 2000 Census, ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2: Vehicle Ownership

Vehicle Ownership	Percent
No Vehicles	8%
1 Vehicle	39%
2 Vehicles	39%
3+ Vehicles	14%

Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

especially during peak hours, can be determined by reviewing commute shares showing where Melrose residents work, and where Melrose workers live. As shown in Figure 3, Melrose residents generally commute to jobs easily accessible by transit or walking. The largest job center for Melrose residents is the City of Boston (26%), followed by work within Melrose (18%), and nearby in Cambridge (6%).

As shown in Figure 4, a high number of Melrose employees live within Melrose (38%), followed by workers from nearby Malden (6%), Saugus (6%), and Boston (6%).

Roads

Roadways and safe vehicle access are an important component for every community. Geographically, Melrose is surrounded by Wakefield, Saugus, Revere, Malden, Medford, and Stoneham, and there are multiple roadways providing access to those communities. There are no state highways that run through or within Melrose, but two major transportation corridors run north-south directly adjacent to the City lines (Route 1 to the east and Route 93 to the west). The City is responsible for maintaining all roads within Melrose, with the exception of the Fellsway East and the Lynn Fells Parkway, which are maintained by the Department of Recreation and Conservation (DCR), and

Route 99, which is controlled by MassDOT.

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 Grove, Upham, Emerson, Howard, Wyoming and Franklin Streets and the Lynn Fells Parkway. Major north-south corridors are Lebanon, Main, Pleasant, Washington, and Tremont Streets and the Fellsway East. These major corridors within Melrose often become congested during peak times, as residents and others try to access job centers in Boston and beyond.

The Lynn Fells Parkway adjacent to the Middle School and High School becomes especially congested at school drop off and pick up times. Drop off and pick up cannot be accommodated on school property, so vehicles queue in the shoulder of the Lynn Fells Parkway and, to a lesser extent, on Melrose Street. Two traffic lights control pedestrian crossings on the Lynn Fells Parkway in front of the campus, but students often cross the street without the safety of the pedestrian signal. Additionally, students with parking privileges park at the Knoll, the driveway of which is an unsignalized intersection with the Parkway. The combination of queuing vehicles, pedestrian crossings, and the unsignalized intersection, in addition, to the Parkway being a major east-west connector, creates congestion and has led to pedestrian and vehicular accidents. The same occurs on Melrose Street to a lesser extent. On Melrose Street, the chief concern is that vehicles standing in both shoulders make it difficult for the unrestricted movement of traffic on the street and hampers emergency access. Because the City does not control the Lynn Fells Parkway, any improvements to relieve congestion at the campus require close coordination with the DCR.

Functional Classification of Roadways

There are 87 miles of roadway within the City of



Figure 3: Resident Commute Share Map

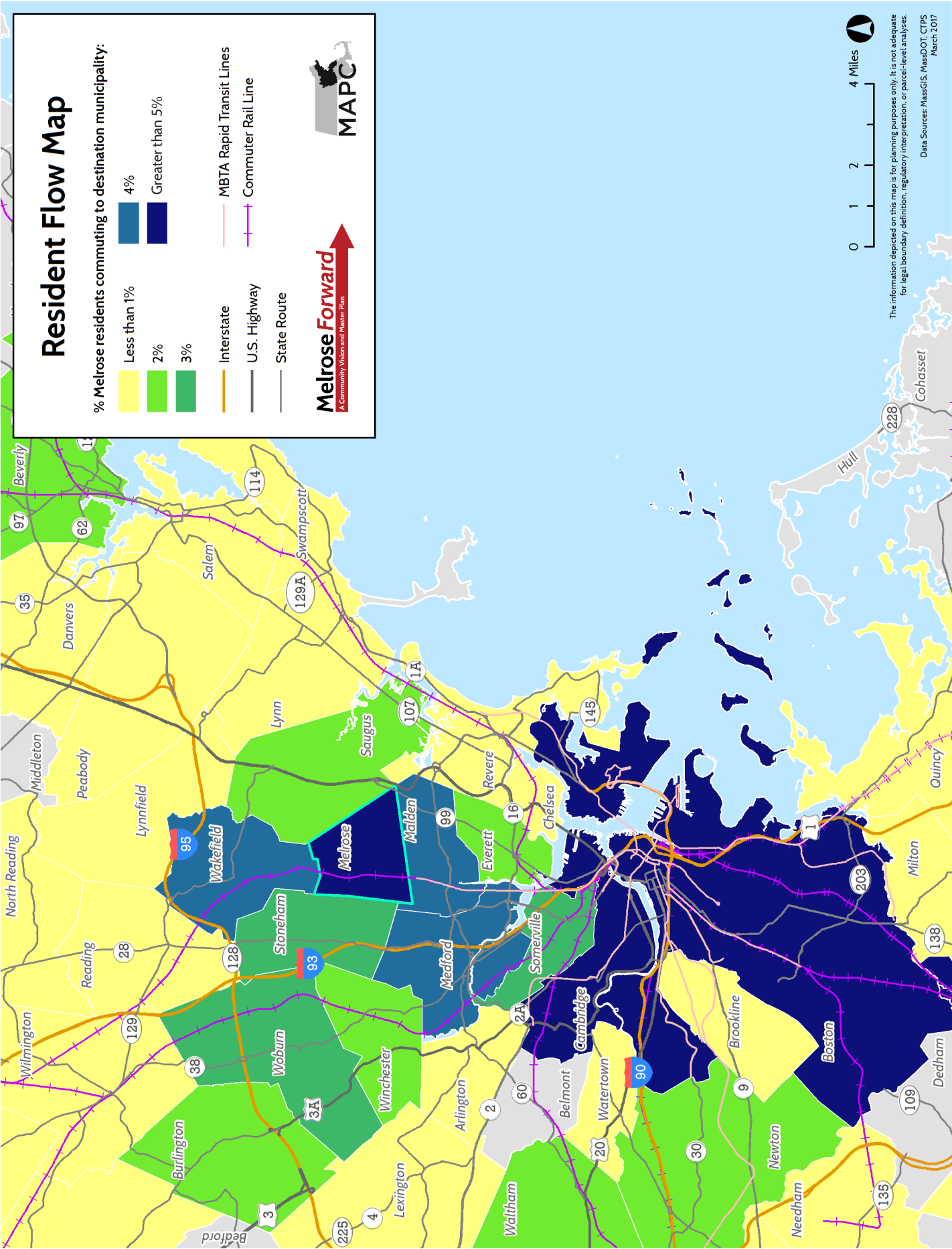


Figure 4: Worker Commute Share Map

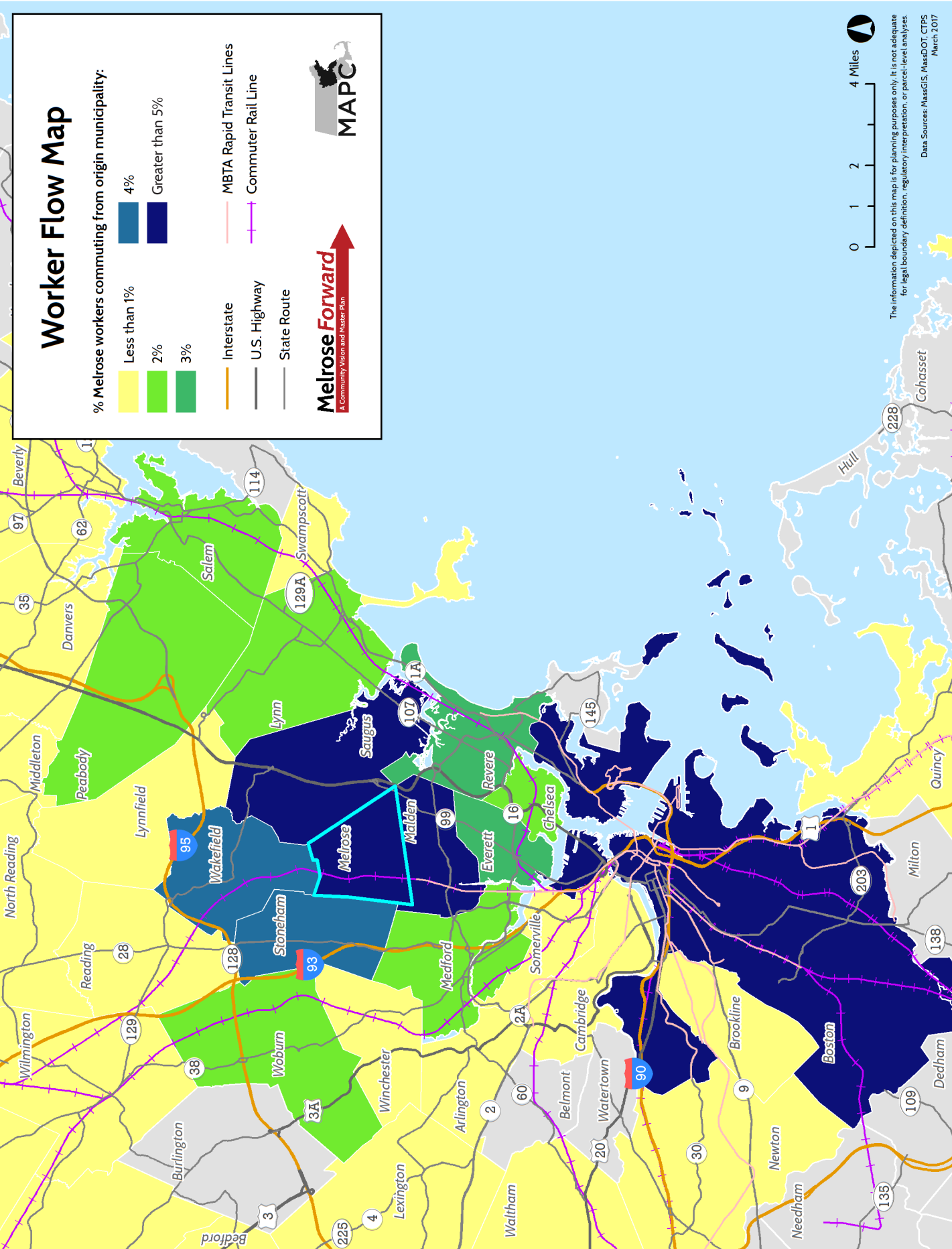


Figure 5: Roadways in Melrose

Functional Classification	Total Miles
Urban principal arterial	4
Urban minor arterial	7
Urban collector	7
Local road	69
Total	87

Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

Melrose. As shown in Figures 5 and 6, the overwhelming majority of these roads (79%) are considered local roads, characterized mainly as quiet residential streets with low traffic volumes. The remaining 21% of roadways consist of arterials which experience heavier traffic volumes (Main Street, Lynn Fells Parkway, and Franklin Street), as well as minor arterials, and collector roads.

Traffic Volumes

As described above, Melrose has a variety of roadways ranging from local roads to heavily traveled commuter corridors. MassDOT provided the traffic counts for roadways within Melrose, shown in Figure 7. In general, the highest volumes are found downtown, and along the major roads that connect to I-93 and surrounding communities. This includes the West Wyoming, Franklin Street, and Lynn Fells Parkway corridors, which are the major access routes to and from I-93.

Vehicle Crash Locations

According to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Top Crash Locations analysis, traffic safety in Melrose is most problematic on Main Street near the Lynn Fells Parkway. In particular, this area saw 42 reported crashes between 2012 and 2014, and an additional 10 bicycle crashes between 2005 and 2014. Vehicular crash counts for the City can be found in Figures 8 and 9.

Additionally, City staff identified the following intersections for design, signal, or other improvements that may help reduce the incidents of vehicular and pedestrian accidents:

- Lincoln Street at Lynn Fells Parkway
- Franklin Street at Greenwood Street
- Franklin Street at Tremont Street
- Franklin Street at Vinton Street

- Green Street at Howard Street
- Penny Road, Dexter Road, and Swains Pond Avenue
- Malvern Road at Lebanon Street
- Trenton Street at West Wyoming Avenue
- Washington Street at the Fellsway East

These intersections suffer from issues such as limited sight lines and other geometrical deficiencies. Additionally, many of the streets listed above are roads known to have speeding issues due to their use as short cuts and may benefit from traffic calming strategies or speed indicator signs. Traffic calming strategies can include speed calming measures (vertical and horizontal deflection and horizontal narrowing), volume-reducing measures (divertive or restrictive measures), a combination of both speed calming and volume reducing methods, as well as adding street trees, curb extensions, cross walk bump outs, restriping, among other measures. These strategies and infrastructure are not inexpensive, but can be components of the Complete Streets Policy currently being implemented in the City.

In March 2017, the Traffic Commission approved lowering the speed limit in Melrose to 25 miles per hour (mph) on all roads unless the posted speed limit is lower and with the exception of the State-controlled roadways. Howard Street, Upham Street, and Franklin Street are often cited as roads where drivers routinely exceed the posted speed limit. Advocates of this change acknowledged that a posted speed limit sign may not change drivers' behaviors, but in combination with other traffic calming efforts, increased enforcement, and public education, drivers may be more inclined to slow down on Melrose roads leading to less damaging collisions and fewer fatalities.

While deploying traffic calming strategies and implementing the new 25 mph speed limit, the City should review the Vision Zero concepts to reduce traffic collisions. The goal of Vision Zero is to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. The City of Melrose can use the Vision Zero concepts as part of a public education campaign and as a guide to implementing the Complete Streets Policy.

Autonomous Vehicles

Autonomous vehicles—also sometimes referred to as driverless vehicles or self-driving vehicles—are vehicles that rely on onboard technologies such as radar, Lidar (light detection and ranging), and GPS (global positioning systems) to sense and interpret

Road Class

- Principal Arterial
- Urban principal arterial
- Urban minor arterial
- Urban collector
- Local

Melrose Forward
A Community Vision and Master Plan

MAPC

Scale: 0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Revere

Malden

Wakefield

Stoneham

Oak Grove

MELROSE HIGHLANDS

WYOMING HILL

MELROSE/CEDAR PARK

Transit Stations (T): Melrose Highlands, Wyoming Hill, Melrose/Cedar Park

Streets shown include: Windsor Street, Lynn Falls Parkway, Ellis Farm Lane, Gentry Club Road, Norman Road, East Foster Street, Laurel Street, Mill Road, Swains Pond Avenue, Penney Road, Dexter Road, Hilda Avenue, Conard Road, Lovell Road, Garfield Road, Spear Street, Main Street, Albion Street, Crystal Street, Rowe Street, Lake Avenue, Tremont Street, Vinson Street, Maple Road, Young Street, Otis Street, Oakland Street, Bank Street, Boston Road, Swan Street, Banks Place, Knoll Street, Willoway East, and Elm Street.

Water bodies: Swains Pond, Lake Avenue, and various smaller ponds.

Green spaces: Various parks and green areas throughout the map.

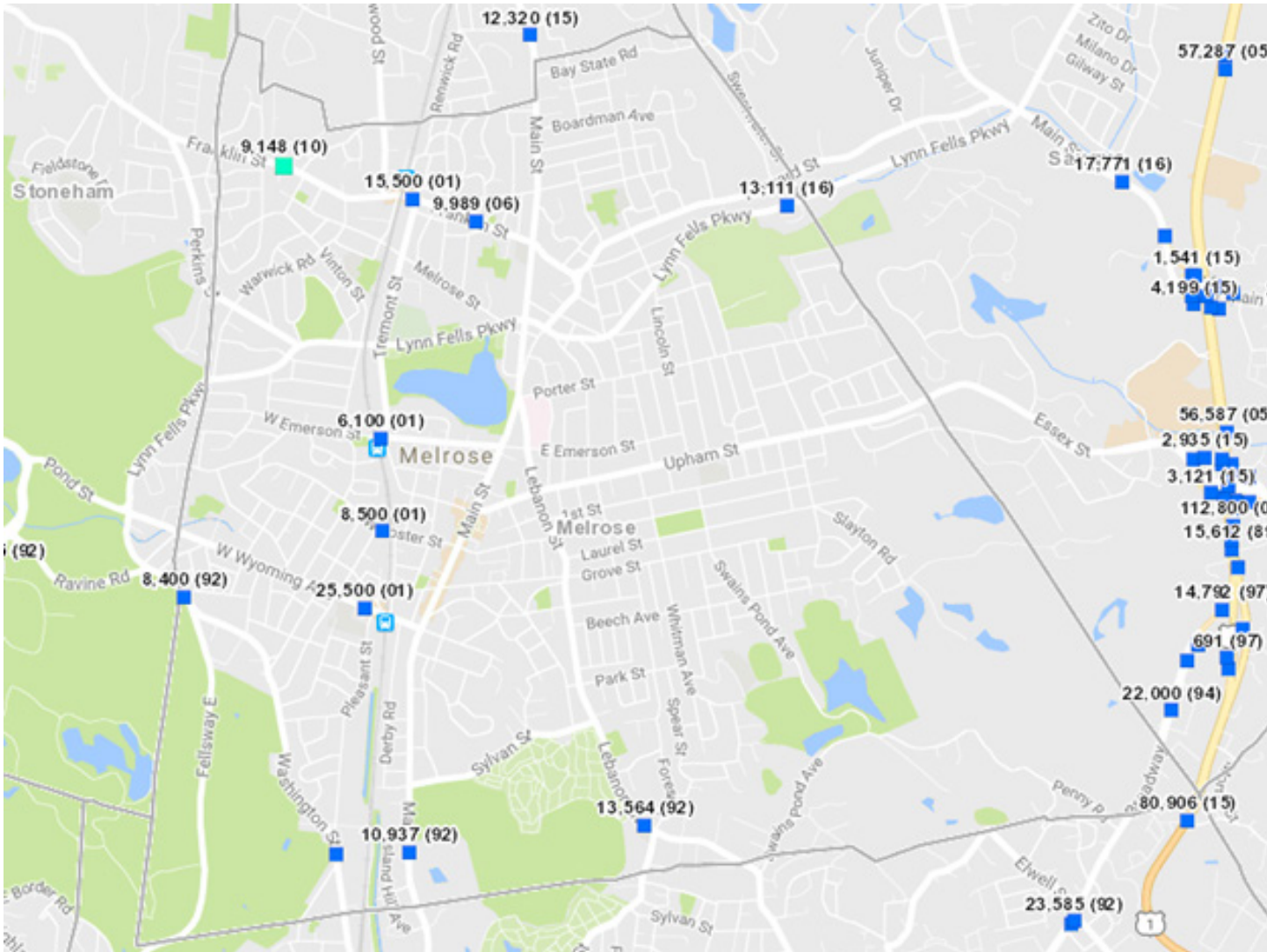
Map scale: 0 to 0.5 miles.

Compass rose indicating North.

Source: MAPC, June 2017.

Disclaimer: The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis.

Figure 7: Average Daily Traffic Volumes*



Source: MassDOT. *Last 2 digits refer to year data was collected

its environment and navigate itself without human intervention. Autonomous vehicles are intended to safely operate on public roadways and interact with existing infrastructure and other roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles operated by humans.

The deployment of autonomous vehicles holds the potential to positively transform the transportation network. Autonomous vehicles will affect not only transportation systems, but also the economy, safety, workforce, environment, land use, and energy use. The positive transformational impacts include strengthening public transportation, reducing crashes and fatalities for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Autonomous vehicles also have the capability to lessen the need for parking facilities and increase mobility for those who cannot drive. However, without appropriate legislation and policies in place, the eventual

Figure 8: Vehicular Crashes

Year	Crashes
2004	288
2005	372
2006	330
2007	359
2008	367
2009	284
2010	307
2011	294
2012	298
2013	307
2014	280

Source: MassDOT



Figure 9: MassDOT Top Crash Locations in Melrose

Intersection/Corridor	Source	Crash Count	Fatal Crashes	Injury Crashes	PDO Crashes
Main Street (Shopping Plaza to Lynn Fells Parkway)	2012-2014 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cluster	42	0	9	33
Main Street (Franklin Street to Melrose Street)	2005-2014 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Bicycle Clusters	10	0	8	2

Source: 2000 Census, ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates (Note that the actual number of crashes may be higher than the reported crashes)

widespread deployment of autonomous vehicles could increase safety risks for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists in addition to increased traffic congestion, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and greenhouse gas emissions.

An important step to prepare for the future of autonomous vehicles is for the City of Melrose to start discussing and planning for the onset of autonomous technologies. The City of Melrose can start planning by holding public workshops with constituents as well as monitoring federal and state developments and make sure their interests are voiced.

Parking

Nearly all communities grapple with issues of parking, including how much to provide, whether to charge for parking or not to, and how to encourage turnover of on-street parking while still encouraging residents and visitors to support local businesses. The overall parking system is a model for historic downtown areas where the parking spaces are located behind buildings and have no negative impact on the character of the business district.

Parking in the downtown tends to be the area of biggest concern among local residents and business owners. To this end, the City conducted a detailed downtown parking study in 2012, and identified a number of management opportunities to improve vehicle turnover and improve parking conditions in the downtown area. A number of improvements have been rolled out already including:

- Repaving and restriping Dill's Court;
- Lengthening the maximum time limit from 2 hours to 3 hours in municipal parking lots;
- Improving the wayfinding signage for municipal parking lots;
- Implementing a snow removal program for the municipal lots; and

- Improving inconsistent signage.

The City continues to make improvements. In 2015, the City purchased the Killam property at 1 Kimball Court to expand Dill's Court by a net of twenty-three parking spaces, which has improved the utilization rate of this popular downtown parking lot. The 2012 Parking Study recommended better managing where employees park in downtown Melrose. In 2017, the City implemented a new merchant parking permit program for downtown, which encourages employees (long-term parkers) to park on the fringe of the business district, and has made more parking available for visitors and customers. There may be a need to implement a similar program in the Highlands business district following adjustments made by the Traffic Commission to parking signage in 2016. Currently, the City is monitoring this area to determine if an employee parking program is necessary.

In the long term, the City may find that installing parking meters equipped with smart technology could be warranted if the parking demand exceeds the ability of the City to ensure turnover in the municipal parking lots with a simple permit system. The technological solutions now available for parking meters provide greater customer convenience allowing the City to simplify permitting, revenue collection, and enforcement.

The parking study also recommended a comprehensive wayfinding program for the entire City and improvements to the alleyways that connect the downtown municipal parking lots to Main Street. These recommendations would also improve the customer and visitor experience and should be considered in the future.

Public Transit

As highlighted earlier, public transportation played a significant role in the development of Melrose,



Figure 10: Commuter Rail Ridership

Station	Daily Boardings (Inbound)		
	2008	2009	2013
Melrose Highlands	343	380	299
Melrose Cedar Park	341	230	223
Wyoming Hill	220	184	123
Total	904	794	645

Source: MBTA Blue Book (2014, 2010, 2009)

transforming farm land into residential housing and bringing in new residents. Public transportation – by rail and bus – continues to be a vital asset in the community.

Because Melrose commuters depend on public transportation, the City should seek to maintain and improve this service to the extent it is able to influence regional transportation planning. This includes a strong presence on the MBTA Advisory Board and advocating for maintaining the station areas in good repair.

The Advisory Board member should communicate the Board’s priorities and decisions to the City. The representative should seek participation and feedback from residents and businesses, and express how he or she intends to vote on important decisions. This will provide a stronger connection between the residents and businesses and the MBTA, and ensure that Melrose’s needs are heard by the Board. Some of the priorities already voiced by residents include: maintaining the bike facilities at the commuter rail stations, and making improvements to the circulation at Oak Grove including repairing and upgrading Banks Place.

Commuter Rail

The MBTA Haverhill line provides frequent access at three stations within Melrose with 19 inbound and 20 outbound trains each weekday, and 6 in each direction on Saturdays and Sundays. During the peak hours, rail service is available every 30 minutes. The line provides access south to Boston (North Station), and also provides access north to Wakefield, Reading, Andover, and Haverhill, among others. As of July 1, 2016, Melrose (Zone 1) monthly commuter rail passes cost \$200.25 (an increase from the previous monthly rate of \$182), and individual one-way rides cost \$6.25 (an increase from \$5.75).

Figure 11: Location of Origin for Commuter Rail Riders in Melrose

Community of Origin	Percent
Melrose	80%
Stoneham	9%
Wakefield	6%
Saugus	4%
Other	1%

Source: MBTA Commuter Rail Survey (2008-2009)

Figure 12: Access to Commuter Rail Stations in Melrose

Mode of Travel	Percent
Walk	63%
Drive	31%
Drop off	4%
Bike/other	2%

Source: MBTA Commuter Rail Survey (2008-2009)

The commuter rail service is popular and the three Melrose stations (Melrose Highlands, Melrose Cedar Park, and Wyoming Hill) have 645 combined daily boardings, as shown in Figure 10. However, according to the MBTA, the commuter rail ridership numbers in Melrose have decreased 29% between 2008 and 2013, also shown in Figure 10. It has been suggested that the drop in ridership is due to the cost disparity between taking the commuter rail and boarding the subway at Oak Grove Station.

According to 2008-2009 MBTA survey data, shown in Figure 11, ridership at the three Melrose stations consists predominantly of residents from Melrose (80%), with additional ridership from the surrounding communities of Stoneham (9%), Wakefield (6%), and Saugus (4%). As shown in Figure 12, the majority of the surveyed commuter rail riders walk to the station (63%), however nearly one-third opt to drive (31%).

As shown in Figure 13, residential and employee density in the half mile walking distance surrounding the three MBTA commuter rail stations is fairly high. This means that transit access in Melrose provides access to a high number of jobs and residences. Density is highest in the area between Wyoming Hill and Melrose/Cedar Park, with the area north of Melrose/Cedar Park, and surrounding Melrose Highlands, providing the least amount of residential and employee intensity along

Figure 13: Commuter Rail Service Area Map with Residential and Employee Intensity

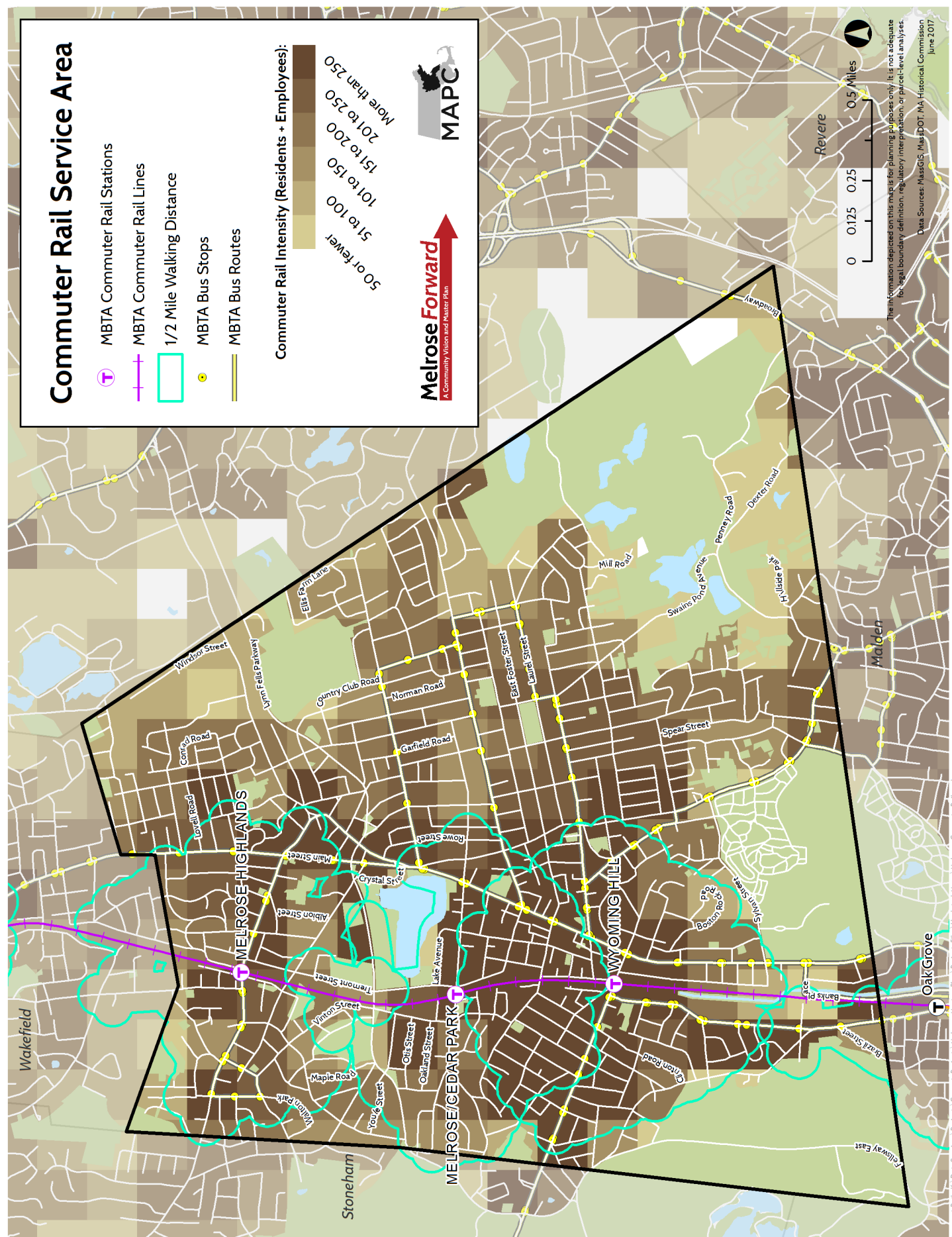
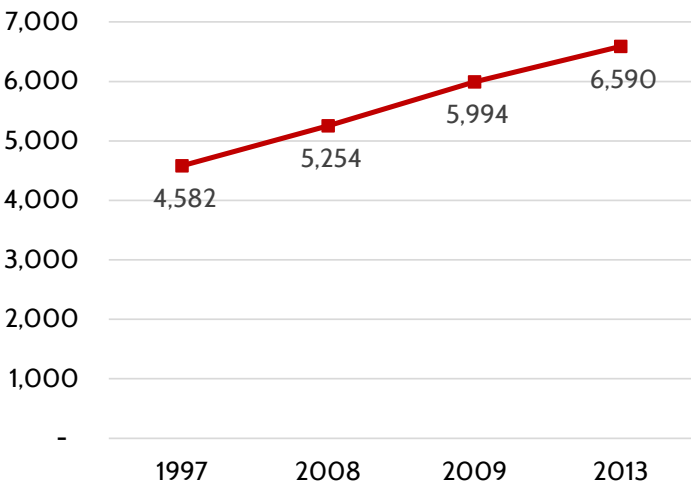


Figure 14: Oak Grove Ridership



Source: MBTA Blue Book (2014, 2010, 2007)

the commuter rail tracks in Melrose. The area beyond the half mile walking distance from the commuter rail (namely, the eastern part of Melrose) has much less residential and employee density.

Rapid Transit

Although Melrose does not have any rapid transit stations, Oak Grove, the northern terminus of the MBTA Orange Line is located just over the border in Malden. According to 2013 ridership data shown in Figure 14, Oak Grove has nearly 6,590 daily weekday boardings, marking a 25% rise from 2004 ridership levels. The significantly lower cost for a monthly subway pass (\$84.50, compared to the \$200.25 commuter rail pass), may explain some of the drop in commuter rail ridership and the increase in rapid transit use at Oak Grove.

The Orange Line provides service to Downtown Boston, Malden, and the Boston neighborhoods of Charlestown, Back Bay, and Jamaica Plain. Orange Line service runs every 6-10 minutes in the weekday morning and evening peak hours. Oak Grove station provides 788 parking spaces, and 210 covered and secure bicycle parking spaces.

Bus

There are five bus routes that run through Melrose, routes 106, 131, 132, 136, and 137, carrying more than 7,000 total daily passengers, as shown in Figure 15. The 136 and 137 routes provide direct north-south travel along Main Street. The 106 route provides service to Franklin Street and the east side of Melrose. The 131 route travels through the east side of Melrose into Malden where it continues west through Malden Center. The 132 route provides service along Washington and Pleasant Streets and West Wyoming Avenue toward Stoneham. All of the bus routes provide access to local MBTA stations such as Malden Center, Wellington, and Oak Grove. While there is frequent service during peak hours, during off-peak hours and on weekends, the bus service is limited.

The Ride

In addition to bus and train service, Melrose is also served by The Ride, which provides transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities. There are 19,000 annual The Ride trips that originate within Melrose.

Transit Amenities

Shelter is available at the three commuter rail stations within Melrose; however, bus stops are generally open

Figure 15: Bus Routes and Frequency

MBTA Route	Peak Hour Frequency	Hours of Operation	Weekday Boardings
106 – Franklin Square to Wellington Station via Main Street	20 minutes	5:00am-12:20am	3,136
131 – Melrose Highlands to Malden Center via Oak Grove	20 minutes	6:20am-7:30pm	669
132 – Redstone Shopping Center to Malden Center	20 minutes	6:00am-11:50pm	958
136 – Reading Depot to Malden Center	20 minutes	5:30am-9:15pm	1,150
137 – Reading Depot to Malden Center	20 minutes	6:15am-10:30pm	1,157

Source: MBTA Blue Book (2014)

Bike Melrose Campaign



Source: City of Melrose

to the elements, including those Downtown and near schools. The lack of amenities does not encourage ridership, particularly given the local climate, which is often wet and cold. Adding additional amenities, such as shelter from the elements, bicycle racks, benches, and posting schedules may make transit ridership more attractive.

Pedestrian and Bike Facilities

Melrose has an active community of walkers and cyclists, and as previously mentioned, the City recently adopted a Complete Streets Policy that will incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into local transportation projects.

Bike Racks

The Melrose-Wakefield Mass-in-Motion Coordinator has been instrumental in adding bicycle racks throughout the City using funding available to Mass-in-Motion communities since 2012. At this time, there are thirty-three bike racks installed throughout Melrose on Main Street, at the commuter rail stations, at popular destinations such as parks and playgrounds, and at municipal and school facilities. The Mass-in-Motion Coordinator maintains a list of potential locations, so when funding is available, the coordinator and other City staff can quickly identify locations for new installations.

In 2015 and 2016, to highlight the installation of new bike racks, the Mass-in-Motion Coordinator launched a social media campaign to encourage people to bike to popular destinations and take a picture with the “Bike Melrose” signs affixed to all of the bike racks. Taking advantage of the opportunity to engage people, the campaign also provided basic safety information on biking around Melrose and advertised that the Health Department sells adult and child helmets.

Sidewalks

Sidewalk condition varies by location, but sidewalks are generally in good condition. Bituminous and concrete sidewalks are found throughout the City, through the latter are preferred and required for all new developments. Sidewalks are available along nearly all major roadways as shown on Figure 16, which projects the demand for sidewalks by comparing the presence of sidewalks to both the population that lives in the area and the presence of nearby destinations, such as schools and major commercial areas. Road segments that are highlighted with thicker red or pink indicate roads lacking a sidewalk on one or both sides of the road, but due to the population density surrounding the segment, there is a demand for sidewalks. The Engineering Division recently completed a gap analysis to identify locations where sidewalks do not exist.

Most roadways without sidewalks are located within quiet residential neighborhoods. However, as seen in Figure 16, there are a number of roadways, particularly around the Hoover Elementary School, without sidewalks that would benefit from the construction of sidewalks. As noted in the Facilities and Infrastructure chapter, sidewalk availability and condition will be one of the many factors the City uses to prioritize potential road improvement projects.

Lack of pedestrian safety on local roadways can be due to high vehicle speeds, wide crossings that lengthen the amount of time that pedestrians are exposed to vehicle traffic, lack of adequate time for pedestrians to cross at the signal, or a lack of crosswalks in heavily traveled areas. Traffic calming strategies, lower speed limits, and adjusting signal timing to include a dedicated pedestrian phase or to activate the pedestrian phase more quickly are all ways to increase pedestrian safety.

Main Street is one area on which to focus to ensure the safe interaction of pedestrians and vehicles. The midblock crosswalks and bump outs are amenities that help pedestrians to cross the street safely. At the intersections, the signal equipment should be updated to make pedestrian crossing easier, such as including



Figure 16: Sidewalks in Melrose Map

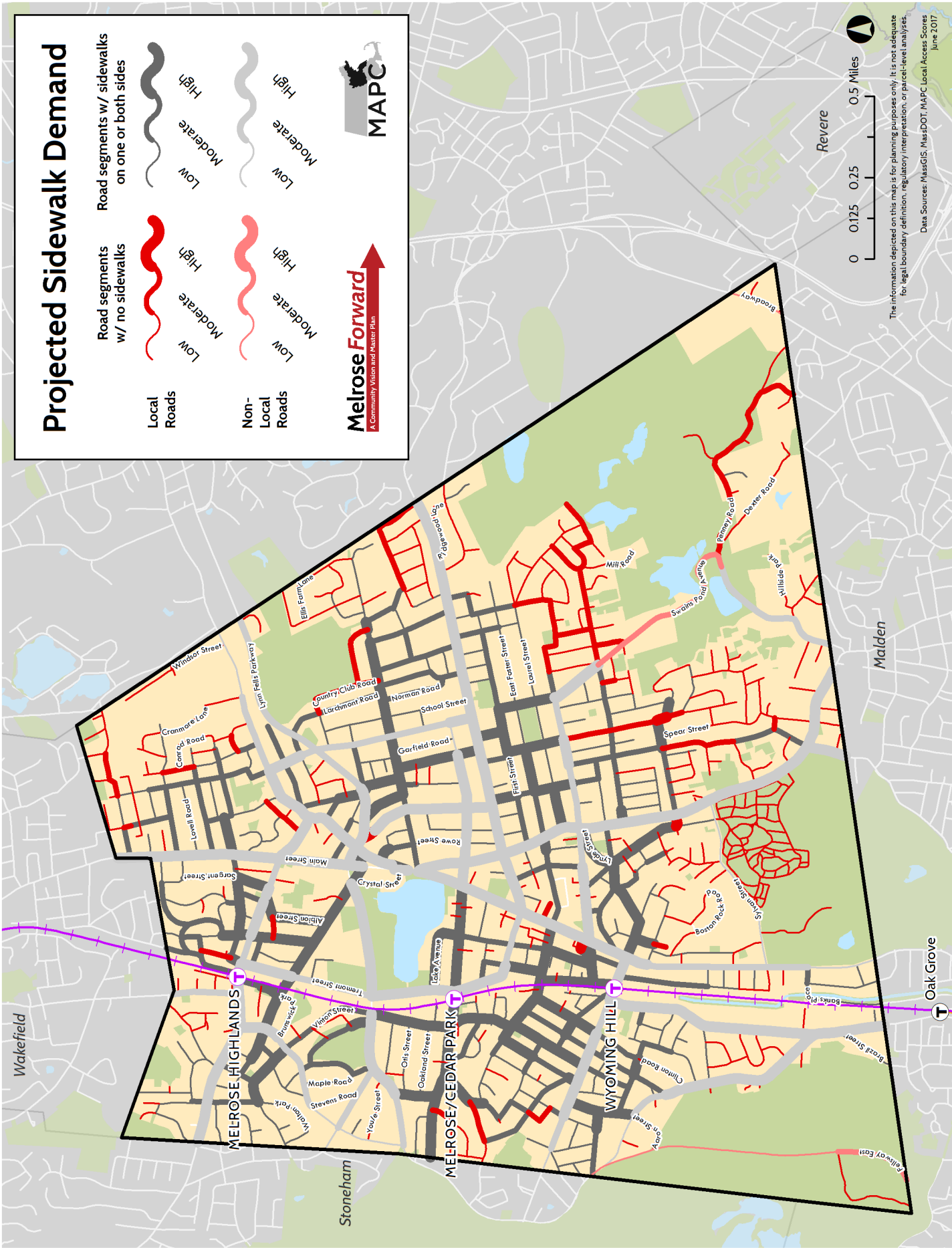
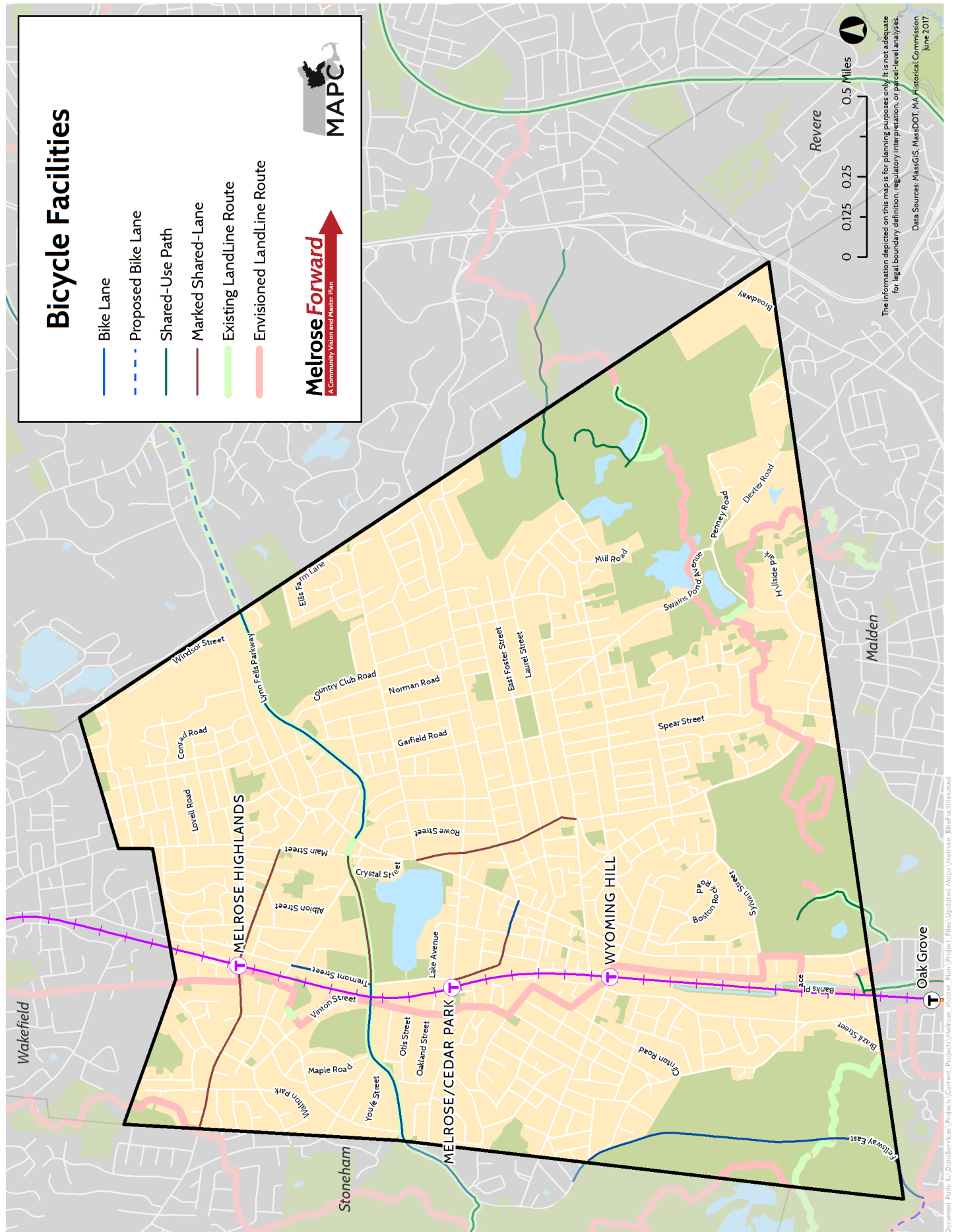


Figure 17: Bicycle Facilities in Melrose Map



The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis.

Data Sources: MassGIS, MassDOT, MA Historical Commission
June 2017

Document Path: \\DataServices\Projects\Current\Projects\Melrose_Melrose_Master_Plan\Project_Files\Updated Maps\Melrose_BikeFacilities.mxd

countdown signals and less wait time. In addition to Main Street, pedestrian crossings city-wide should be studied to make walking safer and more convenient.

There are a handful of off-road walking trails in Melrose, including Pine Banks Park, Mount Hood Memorial Park, and Ell Pond. For a detailed discussion of these facilities, please reference the Open Space and Recreation chapter.

Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle use is permitted on all streets within Melrose, and many roadway corridors are popular for on-road cycling. However, there are currently only a few on-road bicycle lanes or shared lanes within the City, as shown in Figure 17. Currently there are bicycle facilities on sections of Franklin, Lebanon, Essex, and Remont Streets and the Lynn Fells Parkway, but are only pieces to a larger network. These bicycle facilities as well as the bike rack locations and regional trails should be made into an accessible map for residents. Including the Massachusetts bicycle laws and rules of the road on the map would be beneficial for all to understand. Producing other educational materials on the benefits of active transportation and installing signage on sharing the road may increase the use and safety of the bike network.

The potential demand for cycling heavily outweighs accommodations currently, especially in the heart of the City near Downtown and the Commuter Rail stations. Bicycle traffic could be very high on nearly all major roads if a bicycle network was installed and further safety improvements were made to encourage cycling, which is currently being studied by the Melrose Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee. The Committee has also recommended launching a pilot project on Main Street between West Wyoming Avenue and Banks Place during which a dedicated bike lane would be temporarily established to understand if a permanent installation would be successful.

In the immediate vicinity of Melrose are a number of regional multi-use trails that have been constructed or will be constructed, including the Northern Strand Community Trail with access in Malden, the Tri-Community Bikeway and Greenway, which broke ground in May 2017 and will extend through Winchester, Woburn, and Stoneham, and the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail, which is still in the design phase. In addition to promoting the Northern Strand Community Trail, which will eventually connect to Nahant Beach, investigating the feasibility of a bicycle sharing program with the communities along these

regional trails could create better regional connectivity. MAPC is working with various stakeholders in Melrose in furtherance of the LandLine Greenway Network. This regional greenway network is for active transportation use and is separated from vehicular traffic to the greatest extent possible. Corridors identified as part of the LandLine network are typically shared use paths, or protected bike and sidewalk lanes. In Melrose, a proposed trail runs along the Lynn Fells Parkway from the Stoneham Line to the Saugus Line, as shown in Figure 17. An additional north-south connection is in the initial phases, and aims to provide access between Oak Grove and Downtown.

Summary

Melrose's access to MBTA transit as well as its proximity to major highways make it attractive to commuters. The ability to get around the City and to easily travel to surrounding communities using active modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking was identified as a top priority by the community during the development of Melrose Forward. The City recently pivoted toward broad consideration of all modes of transportation in roadway projects following the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy in 2016. During the 2017 public forum, participants indicated their preference to fund projects for walking, biking, and transit users over automobile users, creating a supportive environment to encourage more walking and biking, and strong advocacy in regard to the MBTA services and facilities. Additionally, there is public support behind implementing traffic calming strategies without further impacting the flow of traffic within the community. The following recommendations will guide the City as it improves upon its valuable transportation assets.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Promote active transportation, including walking and biking.

Strategy 1.1: Increase active transportation and recreation options by increasing facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.

- Action 1.1.1: Implement the Complete Streets Policy and evaluate effectiveness with the Complete Streets Working Group at least annually.
- Action 1.1.2: Require sidewalks in new subdivisions.



- Action 1.1.3: Evaluate existing roadways for opportunities to add sidewalks where sidewalks are currently unavailable and create a priority list of new sidewalk opportunities.
- Action 1.1.4: Design all new and rehabilitation projects with consideration of active transportation amenities.
- Action 1.1.5: Recommend the inclusion of active transportation amenities in private development reviews.
- Action 1.1.6: Investigate the feasibility of a bike share program.

Strategy 1.2: Create a more supportive environment to encourage walking and biking.

- Action 1.2.1: Create and implement a bicycle network, which would include a system of on and off-road routes for cyclists to safely access Oak Grove, the Commuter Rail stations, business districts, schools, parks, and regional trails.
- Action 1.2.2: Encourage “walking school buses” to increase the number of students and families walking to school.
- Action 1.2.3: Continue to provide information on Massachusetts bicycle laws, create a map of local bicycle amenities, and install signage that clarifies the rules of the road.
- Action 1.2.4: Educate the public on active transportation benefits and sharing the road.
- Action 1.2.5: Continue to pursue funding and training opportunities through the Massachusetts Safe Routes to Schools program.
- Action 1.2.6: Study, increase, and improve pedestrian crossings City-wide.

Strategy 1.3: Prioritize funding for amenities for walking, biking, and transit users over funding that primarily benefits personal automobiles.

- Action 1.3.1: Pursue construction funding from MassDOT’s Complete Streets Funding Program.
- Action 1.3.2: Look for opportunities to incorporate walking and biking accommodations in projects funded through Chapter 90, local bonds, and City funding sources.

Strategy 1.4: Support regional off-road trail networks.

- Action 1.4.1: Install or improve signage to make more people aware of existing networks.
- Action 1.4.2: Host community walking or biking events across the City to increase awareness

and improve resident comfort with using regional trails.

Goal 2: Advocate for continued MBTA Commuter Rail, Orange Line, Bus, and “The Ride” services and encourage use of MBTA transit.

Strategy 2.1: Maintain a strong presence on the MBTA Advisory Board.

- Action 2.1.1: Ensure that a representative of Melrose regularly attends MBTA Advisory Board meetings and coordinates with the appropriate City Officials.
- Action 2.1.2: Communicate MBTA Advisory Board priorities, decisions, and how the Melrose representative intends to vote to residents and businesses.
- Action 2.1.3: Seek feedback and participation in advisory efforts from Melrose residents and business owners

Strategy 2.2: Advocate for maintaining station area amenities in good repair, and for providing additional amenities to facilitate increased transit use.

- Action 2.2.1: Maintain bike parking facilities at Commuter Rail Stations.
- Action 2.2.2: Work with the MBTA, the City of Malden, and the Melrose and Malden Pedestrian and Bike Committees to identify improvements to bicycle parking and circulation for bicyclists at Oak Grove.
- Action 2.2.3: Work with the MBTA and City of Malden to repair Banks Place and Washington Street and upgrade these roads to a Complete Streets design.

Goal 3: Facilitate the efficient and safe flow of traffic.

Strategy 3.1: Update signal equipment.

- Action 3.1.1: Update signal equipment to include pedestrian countdown signals and to reduce wait time for pedestrians in Downtown and other popular destinations.

Strategy 3.2: Address speeding concerns on area roads.

- Action 3.2.1: Implement the 25 mph program and monitor success.
- Action 3.2.2: Implement traffic calming strategies where there are high incidents of vehicular and pedestrian accidents.
- Action 3.2.3: Fund and install speed indicator



- signs in areas with known speeding concerns.
- Action 3.2.4: Develop and disseminate a public education campaign about speeding and Vision Zero concepts for Melrose.
- Action 3.2.5: Consider allocating funds in the City budget for traffic calming and traffic management pilot projects.





Energy and Sustainability

Energy use is of particular importance because of the ramifications it has on budgets, public health and the climate. In the municipal sector, energy costs for City-owned buildings and facilities constitute a significant portion of annual budgets. In addition, residential and business energy costs can fluctuate dramatically throughout the year which poses a particular challenge for residents with fixed or low incomes. Emissions of air pollutants based on fossil fuel generation contribute to asthma and other health issues. Some of these effects are felt locally, related to point source emissions, and others affect our regional atmosphere. Indoor air quality also impacts health, particularly at schools and offices where older systems may not achieve proper ventilation rates.

Fossil fuel consumption emits greenhouse gases (GHG), which contribute to climate change. The impacts of climate change include negative health effects from heat waves and smog, water stress, increased severe weather events, and biodiversity loss. By effectively managing energy use, a municipality can deliver both local and global benefits.

For over a decade, the City of Melrose has taken proactive steps to manage its energy consumption to reduce total use, shift toward cleaner forms of generation, and to control costs in municipal and other sectors. In 2005, the Mayor formed the Melrose Energy Commission (MEC) to advise and make recommendations to the City regarding energy conservation, energy efficiency, and conversion to

greener energy sources. MEC has also undertaken several community-wide initiatives to encourage energy efficiency and solar photovoltaics in the residential and business sectors.

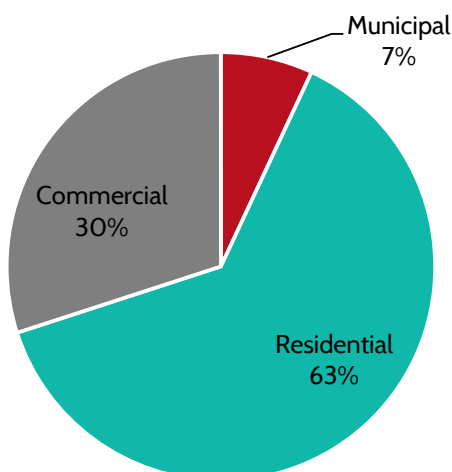
In Melrose, the residential sector represents approximately two-thirds of fuel usage, followed by the commercial sector at nearly one-third, and a small portion for the municipal sector. The City is served by the investor-owned utility National Grid for both electricity and natural gas. Figures 1 and 2 show the total electricity and natural gas consumption across municipal, commercial, and residential sectors in calendar year 2015.

Municipal Sector

In 2010, the City of Melrose was designated a Green Community by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER). Melrose became one of the first 35 Green Communities in the state by meeting the following criteria:

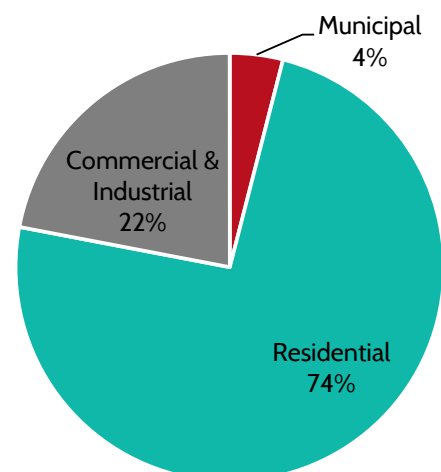
1. Provided as-of-right siting for renewable energy research and development facilities on the City's Industrial zoned land.
2. Adopted expedited application and permitting for renewable energy research and development facilities.
3. Established an energy use baseline of fiscal year 2009 (July 2008 - June 2009) and developed an

Figure 1: CY 2015 Electricity Use by Sector (kWh)



Source: National Grid and Mass Energy Insight

Figure 2: CY 2015 Natural Gas Use by Sector (therms)



Source: National Grid and Mass Energy Insight



Energy Reduction Plan to reduce usage by 20% within five years.

4. Committed to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for its municipal fleet.
5. Adopted the Stretch Energy Code, an advanced building code that minimizes lifecycle energy costs for new construction across all sectors.

Green Community designation brought with it an initial grant and eligibility for additional annual grants. Since 2011, Melrose has secured three Green Communities grants totaling \$651,265, as outlined in Figure 3.

Staffing

The Energy Efficiency Manager in the Office of Planning and Community Development is responsible for the annual Green Communities reporting requirements and Green Communities grant applications and project management. The Energy Efficiency Manager also staffs the volunteer Melrose Energy Commission. This position was created in 2011 with Green Community grant funding but is now funded by operational savings from several energy efficiency projects.

Additionally, the Department of Public Works (DPW) recently filled a new Building Systems Supervisor position. This position is responsible for the oversight of energy and operations for most City buildings, including schools, and providing annual maintenance to key energy infrastructure. It is important that facility management staff are provided ongoing training to ensure that the buildings systems are functioning properly.

Energy Costs

For the purposes of budget stability, the City has historically entered into long-term fuel supply contracts with competitive suppliers. The City recently took

advantage of low fuel prices and contracted for it through 2020 and for natural gas through 2018. In addition, savings from energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy projects have resulted in the ability for the City to level-fund utility budgets for most departments for the past three years.

Energy Use

The City uses Mass Energy Insight (MEI), a tool provided by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, to track its municipal energy use. In FY2016, the municipal sector used 71,133 MMBTUs (a measure that standardizes multiple fuel sources) of energy. Figure 4 shows the usage by category.

Figure 5 lists the top ten municipal building energy users in Melrose. These buildings account for 42,557 MMBTUs of annual energy use, or 60% of Melrose's total municipal sector energy use in FY 2016.

Energy Efficiency

Much progress has been made toward implementing the Green Community Energy Reduction Plan (ERP) since FY2009, the baseline year. By FY2016 overall municipal energy use decreased by 15%. Park and streetlight energy use is expected to decrease by 65% due to savings from a comprehensive conversion to LED streetlights in 2016. A lighting control system should be installed in fixtures as appropriate to decrease energy usage between 11pm and 4am, which would decrease energy use from streetlights by an additional 10%. Figure 6 lists all of the energy efficiency projects completed since 2011. This figure also illustrates that \$994,457 in utility incentive funds have offset the costs of many of these projects.

Melrose has been able to achieve energy reductions despite a significant increase in technology assets and

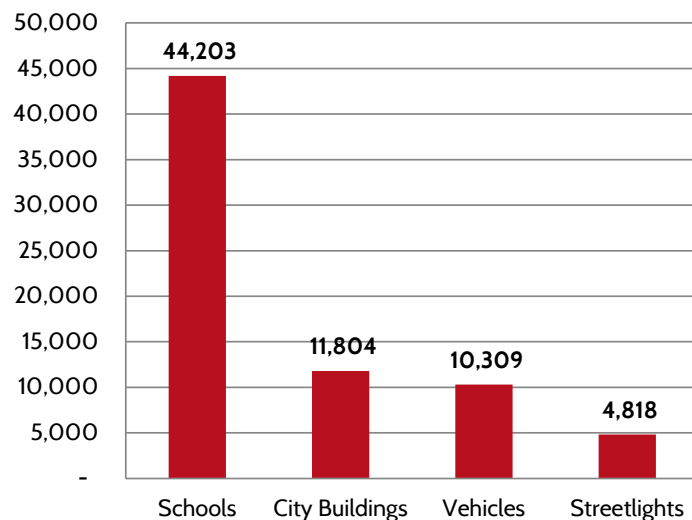
Figure 3: Green Communities Grant Awards to Melrose

Year	Amount	Projects
2011	\$176,265	White roof and R30 insulation at Melrose High School LED conversion of Main Street Victorian post-tops Lighting upgrades at the library and police station and lighting controls at West Knoll Soccer Fields Funding for part-time Energy Manager
2013	\$250,000	HVAC upgrade at Melrose High School
2015	\$225,000	City-wide LED streetlight conversion

Source: City of Melrose



Figure 4: FY2016 Energy Use by Category (MMBTU)



Source: Mass Energy Insight

Figure 5: Highest Energy Consuming Municipally-Owned Buildings in FY 2016

Building	Use (MMBTU)
Melrose High School	10,322
Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School	8,870
Roosevelt Elementary School	6,464
Lincoln Elementary School	3,945
Franklin Early Childhood Center	3,154
Hoover Elementary School	2,708
Winthrop Elementary School	2,355
Horace Mann Elementary School	1,974
City Hall	1,477
Memorial Hall	1,288

Source: City of Melrose

Figure 6: Installed Energy Conservation Measures

Building/Site Name	Energy Conservation Measure Name	Date Completed	Green Community Grant (\$)	Utility Incentives (\$)
Melrose High School	White roof and R30 insulation	Sept 2011	\$123,801	\$32,561
Post-Top Victorian Lights	LED retrofit	2011 & 2012	\$35,076	\$17,106
Winthrop Elementary School	EMS & ventilation upgrades	April 2012	\$0	\$0
Public Works Operations Facility	Lighting, HVAC upgrades, roof insulation	June 2012	\$0	\$0
Six Elementary Schools	Interior and exterior lighting upgrades	Nov 2012	\$0	\$233,266
Melrose Public Library	Children's Room lighting upgrade	March 2013	\$2,472	\$1,340
West Knoll Soccer Complex	Lighting controls	Feb. 2013	\$8,750	\$0
Police Station	Lighting upgrade	March 2013	\$6,166	\$504
Melrose High School	Science wing renovation	August 2013	\$0	\$11,066
Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School	Gym light replacement	Sept 2013	\$0	\$12,180
Melrose High School	HVAC upgrade	Dec 2014	\$250,000	\$95,100
20 City and School Buildings	Energy Savings Performance Contract	Dec 2014	\$0	\$315,000
Streetlights	LED conversion	June 2016	\$225,000	\$250,104
Melrose High School	Learning Commons renovations	August 2016	\$0	\$26,230
		Totals	\$651,265	\$994,457

Source: City of Melrose



building use since FY2009. For example, Memorial Hall's operational hours have increased 300% as a result of booking many more events and rentals. Schools are now used for before and after school programs until 6:00 PM or later, around-the-clock on weekends for sports and other rental activities, and during vacation weeks and over the summer for camps and other extended-year educational programs. None of these programs existed in fiscal year 2009. In addition, in response to a wave of new school-age children moving to Melrose, the City is looking at adding 5 modular classrooms at the Hoover and the Winthrop in 2017 which will increase energy usage at those facilities. By focusing on making buildings as energy efficient as possible the City can avoid unnecessary and additional energy usage and costs.

The project with the most impact to date is the 2013 Energy Savings Performance Contract Project (ESCO). The ESCO project installed energy upgrades in twenty municipal buildings. The fourteen energy conservation measures (ECMs) in that project included lighting, occupancy sensors, integrated energy management systems, pneumatic controls rehabilitation, demand controlled ventilation, infiltration reductions, pipe insulation, steam trap replacements, variable frequency drives, boiler improvements, and a new City Hall chiller. The integrated energy management systems allow the DPW Facility Manager to remotely monitor building mechanical systems and to set schedules to coincide with building use.

The other major energy efficiency project was the 2014 Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) upgrade at Melrose High School. New high efficiency, gas-fired boilers enhanced energy efficiency and ventilation improvements enhanced comfort and air quality. However, improvements in air quality caused by increased ventilation also increased energy usage, which is a necessary tradeoff to making these kinds of improvements.

In 2016, the City converted all City-owned outdoor lighting to LED technology. In addition to the 65% energy savings, the City will also realize maintenance savings as LEDs last three to four times longer than the high pressure sodium fixtures they replaced.

Future projects to further reduce energy use in municipal buildings should focus first on the largest energy users, namely Melrose High School, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, Roosevelt and Lincoln Elementary Schools. The lighting in these buildings should be retrofitted to LED fixtures with new generation sensors and controls and ongoing

Solar Panels on High School and Middle School



Source: City of Melrose

commissioning activities should be performed. Other specific projects include replacing the energy management controls at the Lincoln Elementary School and converting the Melrose High School cafeteria kitchen appliances to energy efficient models.

The City should continue to pursue Green Community grants and utility incentives to fund these projects and consider establishing an Energy Efficiency Revolving Account with incentive funds, project savings, and other sources.

Renewable Energy

Two rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) systems operate at the middle school and high school (50kW and 301kW). Installed in three phases in 2008, 2012, and 2014, they are expected to generate electricity for at least 20 years. The City has evaluated all other public facility roofs for solar and other than the DPW Operations Facility building; they are not currently suitable due to roof orientation, shading, roof age and structure. Two other possible sites for solar include the Melrose High School parking lot as a solar canopy structure and Mt. Hood. The City should continue to evaluate potential host sites for community solar opportunities and pursue funding and installation.

The City and MEC investigated the potential for a 100kW or larger wind turbine at Mt. Hood but due to numerous regulatory and other obstacles, the project was abandoned. The City hopes to find other opportunities to utilize more solar and wind power, and to go beyond Melrose's borders if necessary.



Vehicle Fleet and Fuel Reduction Efforts

As a Green Community, Melrose has a fuel-efficient vehicle replacement policy for all fleet vehicles. The policy does not apply to heavy-duty trucks over 8,500 pounds or to police cruisers. The City has been very proactive about reducing the fleet and retiring gas-guzzling vehicles such as Ford Crown Victorias and other equipment. Overall vehicle fuel use has decreased by 30% since FY09 although fuel usage varies greatly from year to year depending on snow removal requirements. The City should install anti-idling devices on all City vehicles and switch to bio-diesel as an alternative to continue to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

In 2015, the City purchased two battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and installed an electric charging station which is available for the public to use at no cost in the City Hall parking lot. The BEVs and charging station were partially funded through a \$30,000 grant award from the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (EVIP) available from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The BEVs are used by City engineers and the fire prevention officer with much success as both maintenance and fuel costs are greatly reduced compared to other fleet vehicles. As a result, the City is considering adding more BEVs to the fleet inventory in the future. The City should also consider providing charging station infrastructure in every municipal parking lot to encourage residents to purchase BEVs.

Electric Charging Station



Source: City of Melrose

Residential and Commercial Sectors

Residential Energy Use

As of calendar year 2014, 56% of Melrose homeowners heat with natural gas, 32% with oil, and an additional 12% with electricity as reported by the American Community Survey. Figure 7 shows calendar year electricity and natural gas usage for residential accounts. The data is not weather-normalized. For the most recent year of complete utility data, calendar year 2015, residents used 66.1 million kWh of electricity and 6.9 million therms of natural gas. Since 2013 electricity usage has increased by 11% and natural gas usage has increased by 9.5%. These increases are likely due to conversions from oil to cheaper and cleaner natural gas for heating and the increase in new housing units during that time.

Commercial Energy Use

Figure 8 shows calendar year electricity and natural usage for commercial accounts. The data is not weather-normalized. For the most recent year of complete data, calendar year 2015, commercial accounts used 41.2 million kWh of electricity and 2.4 million therms of natural gas. Since 2013, total electricity use has increased 1% and total natural gas use has increased 33.3%.

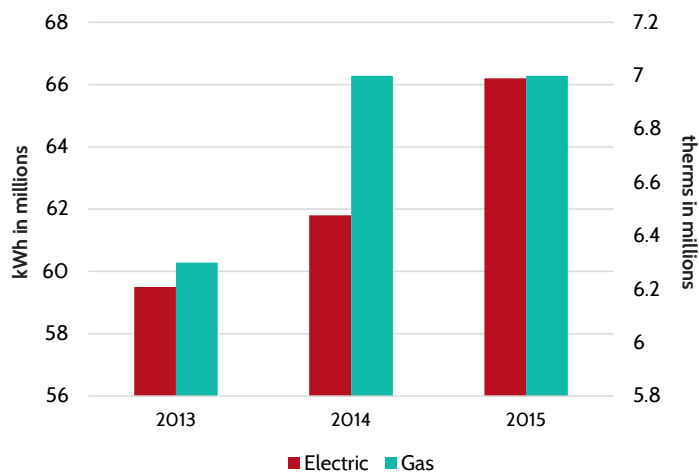
In 2016 the state legislature passed a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy bill (C-PACE) that will allow commercial property owners to finance energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy projects, and water conservation efforts through property tax assessments. C-PACE regulations and program roll-out are still in process at Mass Development and are expected in early 2017. The City hopes to play a role in facilitating the use of C-PACE financing to encourage commercial real estate owners to make upgrades.

Renewable Energy

In 2012, Melrose took part in the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's (MassCEC) Solarize program. Melrose selected a solar installer who incentivized solar PV installations by offering tiered discounts based on the total number of installations achieved in the City. Prior to the program, the City had three solar PV arrays. Solarize Melrose increased that number to 79. By the end of 2017, there were over 300 solar PV installations including churches and businesses and there continues to be a lot of interest in small-scale solar. MEC now offers residents and businesses a website, www.EnergySage.com/Melrose, that provides consumers

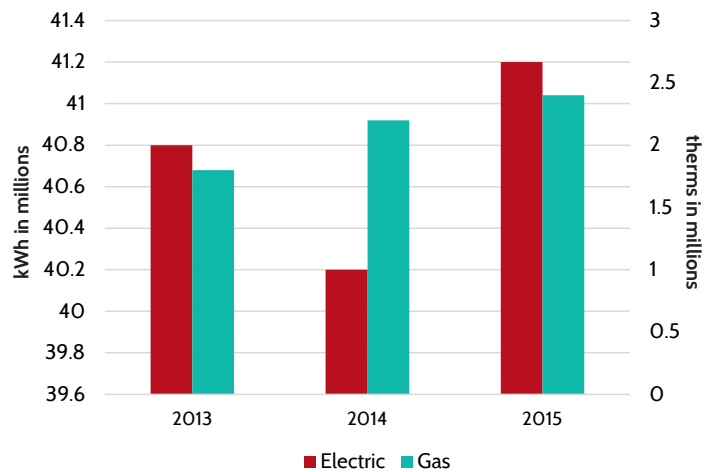


Figure 7: Total Residential Electricity & Gas Use



Source: National Grid

Figure 8: Total Commercial Electricity & Gas Use



Source: National Grid

Figure 9: Residential Sector Participation in Mass Save Program

Year	Home Energy Assessments	Insulation	Air Sealing	Heating System Replacement	Programmable Thermostats
2016	751	157	124	65	107 (Wifi)
2015	568	164	132	23	4 (Wifi)
2014	681	209	152	43	238
2013	684	208	151	48	257

Source: National Grid

with quotes from vetted installers, price comparisons, local case-studies, and access to current information about going solar.

Energy Efficiency

In 2011, MEC and the City launched the Melrose Energy Challenge, focused on increasing participation in the Mass Save residential energy efficiency program sponsored by National Grid and other utilities. The City partnered with a Mass Save Home Performance Contractor to promote, educate and deliver services. The energy assessments, which now include the installation of LED light bulbs, programmable thermostats, and other measures, are provided at no cost. The Mass Save program also offers financial incentives for installing insulation, high efficiency heating and cooling equipment and other measures. MEC reached its goal of 1,000 energy assessments in less than two years as shown in Figure 9.

Melrose continued this outreach effort by being selected to participate in the 2016 National Grid Community Initiative in order to boost the number of

residential energy assessments and insulation projects. All of the residential energy efficiency goals set for Melrose by National Grid were met or surpassed and as a result, Melrose was awarded \$34,000 which can be used for future community energy projects.

In 2014, MEC volunteers undertook an outreach campaign to small businesses in Melrose to encourage business owners to take advantage of enhanced incentives by going door-to-door to explain the program benefits and potential energy savings. As a result of the targeted outreach effort, 62 businesses installed energy efficiency measures that year, a 200% increase over 2013. The City should build on the positive response from the business community and implement a green business initiative to help businesses become more energy efficient and implement environmentally friendly practices.

Energy Costs – Community Electricity Aggregation

To address the seasonal price fluctuations in electricity supply costs, in early 2014, the Melrose Board of



Aldermen approved pursuing a Community Electricity Aggregation (CEA) plan. A CEA plan is a process by which the City arranges for an electricity supplier on behalf of residents and businesses. The City procured a broker to develop the aggregation plan and secure an electricity supply contract for the community. The plan was developed with public input and submitted to the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) for review. DPU granted approval in fall of 2015 and in October 2015 the City entered into a contract with an electricity aggregation supplier.

As of January 2016, all residential and commercial rate payers who did not opt out of the program or had not already contracted for their own competitive electricity supply were enrolled in the Melrose CEA Program. The initial contract was for one year at a rate of 9.6 cents per kWh. The rate guarantees price stability for one year, as opposed to the price fluctuations that occur every six months with the National Grid default supply rate, and provides modest savings. About 95% of eligible rate payers participate in the Melrose CEA Program.

Melrose has been a pioneer in the state by including renewable energy from local sources in the aggregation supply mix. Sixteen percent of the electricity supply is sourced from facilities that qualify for Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) MA Class, which is 5% more than what is required by the state. This was accomplished at an affordable cost of just 0.2 cents per kWh or less than \$20 annually per household. Investing in local renewable energy in this way increases the demand for more new clean energy resources in our region and the City should increase the percentage of the electricity supply that is sourced from Class I Renewable Energy to create even more demand for it.

After a successful first eighteen months, the electricity aggregation program will be suspended in July 2017. Due to a supply cost spike limited to the northeast region of Massachusetts, Melrose was unable to procure a competitive supply rate compared to National Grid's Basic Service rate, which is based on a blended rate from across the state. Melrose residents participating in the electricity aggregation program will be transitioned back to the Basic Service rate. The City plans to reinstate the program in 2018 after prices are projected to come down.

Climate Preparedness and Resiliency

Although Melrose has done a lot to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate

change, more can be done. In addition, actions need to be taken to plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change that will threaten public health and safety, the local economy, and the City's quality of life. As such, in May 2015, Mayor Dolan, along with fourteen other municipal leaders in the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition adopted the Metro Boston Climate Preparedness Commitment and created the Metro Boston Climate Preparedness Taskforce. The Taskforce guides regional climate decisions in a collaborative manner by working across municipal boundaries to become more resilient as a region.

In its first year, the Taskforce gathered data and information on climate impacts and efforts to shore up regional infrastructure such as stormwater and drainage systems, transportation, energy, regional food distribution centers, and dams. Four strategic priorities were established for 2017 which include 1) Enhancing local alignment and capacity building; 2) Mitigating heat impacts; 3) Mitigate flooding; and 4) Deepening regional, state, and federal coordination on public and private infrastructure activities.

At the end of 2016, the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition committed to continued climate mitigation actions by pledging to achieve Net Zero/Carbon-Free status by 2050, which coincides with the Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act goal. The 2016 Commitment also includes a shorter-term goal that each community will develop a local climate mitigation plan and implement three mitigation actions not yet taken by 2020.

The Net Zero by 2050 Commitment is the foundation of future work to create a greenhouse gas inventory for Melrose and to create a plan to reduce those emissions over the next thirty years. In addition, Melrose needs to conduct a vulnerability assessment to determine local risks to climate change and the actions needed to be more resilient. One action that has already been identified is that the City needs to develop a microgrid system to increase energy resiliency in Melrose from future power grid outages.

Summary

The City of Melrose has been a leader in energy efficiency efforts. As one of the first 35 communities to be designated a Green Community in 2010 and since then, the City has leveraged more than \$1.6 million in state and utility funds to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy use. The City has been forward-thinking in having an Energy Efficiency Manager to



make sustainability efforts a priority. More efforts can be made in the municipal and school buildings to ensure that energy use reductions are continually achieved over the long-term, which was identified as an important need by the participants at the March 2017 public forum. Further, the City of Melrose, in coordination with the Melrose Energy Commission, has a strong commitment to outreach and education for residential energy customers. In addition to continuing to support residential customers, the City was directed to extend efforts to commercial energy customers in Melrose. The following goals, strategies, and actions will enable the City to respond to these priorities within the timeframe of this Master Plan.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Reduce municipal sector energy use.

Strategy 1.1: Create a robust program of regularly scheduled preventative building maintenance and ongoing commissioning.

- Action 1.1.1: Retain skilled facility management staff by providing ongoing building operator training.
- Action 1.1.2: Perform annual measurement and verification of energy efficiency measures through 2029 as stipulated in the ESCO project.

Strategy 1.2: Target the largest energy users for further energy reduction measures.

- Action 1.2.1: Retrofit all building lighting to LED fixtures with new generation sensors and controls.
- Action 1.2.2: Update and replace outdated energy management controls at Lincoln Elementary School.
- Action 1.2.3: Convert Melrose High School cafeteria kitchen appliances to energy efficient models.
- Action 1.2.4: Perform ongoing commissioning activities at Melrose High School, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, Roosevelt, and Lincoln Elementary Schools.

Strategy 1.3: Secure funding to support municipal energy reduction efforts.

- Action 1.3.1: Seek new energy reduction opportunities with upgraded equipment and controls using Green Community grant funding, utility incentives, and new funding

opportunities.

- Action 1.3.2: Establish an Energy Efficiency Revolving Account from portions of incentive funds, project savings, and other sources to fund future energy efficiency projects.

Strategy 1.4: Reduce street light, parking lot, and park lighting energy usage beyond the already-achieved reduction from LED conversions.

- Action 1.4.1: Purchase and install a lighting control system to cut down on energy use between 11PM and 4AM in appropriate areas.

Strategy 1.5: Continue to reduce municipal fleet fuel use.

- Action 1.5.1: Make all eligible replacement vehicles electric or hybrid.
- Action 1.5.2: “Right-size” the fleet and dispose of unnecessary fleet vehicles.
- Action 1.5.3: Install anti-idling devices on all City vehicles.
- Action 1.5.4: Switch to bio-diesel (B20 waste oil).

Strategy 1.6: Increase demand for renewable energy.

- Action 1.6.1: Pursue renewable energy opportunities on municipal buildings, parking lot carports, and open space.
- Action 1.6.2: Increase the percentage of Class 1 Renewable Energy Credits in Melrose Community Electricity Aggregation Program to create more demand for local renewable energy projects in Massachusetts.

Goal 2: Continue to work with residents to reduce residential energy usage.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to provide opportunities that promote residential energy efficiency by relying less on fossil fuels.

- Action 2.1.1: Continue to support the volunteer Melrose Energy Commission.
- Action 2.1.2: Pursue grant funding, special initiatives and challenges, and other funding opportunities to support residential efforts in reducing energy usage.
- Action 2.1.3: Evaluate potential host sites for community solar opportunities.
- Action 2.1.4: Provide charging station infrastructure in every municipal parking lot.

Goal 3: Reduce commercial sector energy use.



Strategy 3.1: Provide opportunities that promote commercial energy efficiency.

- Action 3.1.1: Facilitate the adoption of C-PACE for commercial energy efficiency project financing.
- Action 3.1.2: Implement a green business initiative based on the survey of local businesses conducted in early 2016 to encourage “green” business practices.

Goal 4: Position the City of Melrose to be prepared for climate change.

Strategy 4.1: Advance initiatives on climate preparedness and resiliency.

- Action 4.1.1: Continue to be active in the Metro Mayor’s Climate Change Taskforce.
- Action 4.1.2: Prepare a Vulnerability Assessment for the City of Melrose infrastructure.
- Action 4.1.3: Develop a micro-grid system to increase energy resiliency in Melrose from future power grid outages.
- Action 4.1.4: Plan for the goal to be Net Zero by 2050.





Land Use and Zoning

Part of what gives any community its unique character is the way land is used, developed, and preserved. Melrose's topography, natural features, and its development as a streetcar suburb are all evident in the way that the City is laid out, with green spaces around much of the City's periphery, a rail line bisecting the City, and many streets following a grid pattern. Examining the way land is used and the regulations that control where different types of development and preservation occur is a critical component of planning for the future.

Much of Melrose was settled in the Victorian era, when the City's basic street grid and rail lines were developed. For over a century, the City has maintained a "garden city" design – one with preserved green spaces around its periphery and parks, ponds, and other open spaces throughout the city – while also preserving its character as a streetcar suburb. During the 1970s, the character of the City could have changed considerably when auto-oriented shopping plazas were becoming more fashionable, but the city updated its zoning policies to help ensure that Downtown would maintain its traditional, pedestrian-oriented design. This foresight is part of what makes Downtown Melrose the regional destination it is today. During the last decade, the City has updated local zoning to encourage redevelopment of its commercial districts as mixed-use neighborhoods where people can live, shop, socialize, work, and easily access MBTA transit. These transit-oriented zoning changes are a response to changing preferences for housing, shopping, services, and commuting, and provide new opportunities for redevelopment in the city.

Looking forward, there will be new challenges and opportunities for the community to consider. The increasing desirability of Melrose as a place to live or to open a business, as is described in the housing and economic development chapters, new housing development, and options for commercial real estate are needed to meet community needs and fiscal demands. A key part of achieving the Melrose Vision will be updating the City's land use policies to encourage both development and preservation in appropriate locations.

"Land use" is a term used to describe the primary use, or combination of uses, occurring on a parcel of land at any given time. A number of factors influence land use

patterns over time such as population and economic growth, historical development patterns, infrastructure and transportation investment, environmental constraints, and more. It is not a fixed element of a community, rather it can and does change over time.

In Massachusetts, municipal tax assessors classify land uses by property type classification codes. Mapping a municipality using these property type classification codes is one way to begin evaluating local land use patterns. There are several primary land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, tax-exempt, and open space. These categories are usually further classified by subtype or combination of uses. For example, commercial land can be classified as retail or office, just as residential land use can be classified as single family, multifamily, and more. Parcels that have multiple uses such as residential and commercial are usually classified as mixed-use. Tax-exempt properties can be separated into public and institutional.

Land use and zoning are two different but complementary concepts. While land use classifications identify the current use of an area, zoning is the mechanism by which municipalities regulate current and future use of land. Zoning regulates what can be developed on a parcel of land such as the allowed uses, the amount of open space required, the placement, height, and footprint of buildings, and the number of parking spaces.

A community's preferences in terms of form and location of development inform local zoning policies and land uses. Melrose Forward is an opportunity to update land use and zoning goals based on regional trends and local input, in accordance with the community's vision.

Land Use

Historical Land Use and Topography

Melrose was incorporated as a Massachusetts town in 1850, and later incorporated as a city in 1900. Early planning efforts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries acknowledged the importance of Melrose being a self-sufficient city with varied land uses and services. Elements of the "garden city" concept were integrated into Melrose's early form: a commercial and



institutional core surrounded by housing of varying density, interspersed with neighborhood schools, small parks, and enclosed by a green belt with ample passive recreation opportunity that could buffer Melrose from neighboring communities. While times have changed and connections between Melrose and the Boston region have strengthened—and the necessity for self-sufficiency have decreased—the garden city model of development has largely remained intact.

Geographically, Melrose is situated amidst the Middlesex Fells, a plateau high above the Boston Basin, whose surface is broken into numerous hills, bowls, and valleys. The topography of Melrose consists of a valley running north-south through the middle of the city with moderate to steep slopes on either side. While elevations in the valley area are approximately 50 feet above sea level, the hilly areas to the east and west average between 100 and 150 feet. High points of rocky ledge within Middlesex Fells and Mt. Hood Memorial Park.

Ell Pond, located in the central portion of Melrose, is a large scenic pond surrounded partly by a park and playing fields. In the southeast are several smaller ponds: Swains Pond, Towners Pond, and Long Pond. Three additional ponds in the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course act as watershed collectors for irrigation.

Past development in Melrose has been influenced by these geographic conditions. Most of Main Street and the rail line are along the part of the City that is relatively flat and with the lowest elevation, with the exception of Melrose Highlands where elevation increases somewhat. Many of the highest elevation areas have been left as relatively natural areas, including the Middlesex Fells Reservation on the southwestern corner of the city, Pine Banks Park along the City's border with Malden to the south, and Flagg Acres and Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course to the southeast. In the Flagg Acres and Mount Hood area, the topographic changes are very abrupt and are characterized by ledge and rock outcroppings, which historically made development of these areas difficult. Lower-density residential neighborhoods are located in the remaining areas of the City.

Current Land Use

Figure 1 shows land use by parcel in Melrose as classified for tax assessment purposes. Yellows and orange indicate residential land uses, red indicates property with retail or other commercial uses, dark pink indicates mixed use commercial, light pink is office, and purple

View from Mount Hood



Source: Mount Hood Park Association

is industrial. Publicly-owned tax-exempt land is shown in green while land with institutional ownership is blue. Vacant land is classified as either developable or undevelopable in light and dark gray. A significant proportion of the land in Melrose is also used for transportation rights-of-way such as roads and rail lines; this area is left white. Bellevue Golf Club is shown in dark green and is classified as Chapter 61B Recreational Land, land that receives preferential tax treatment by being preserved for recreation. Figure 2 shows the acreage and percentage of land that make up each use classification.

Residential Uses

Melrose is about 4.76 square miles in size, or about 3,051 acres. While more urban than its neighbors, such as Stoneham, Wakefield, and Saugus, Melrose is very much a residential community. This is depicted in the large amount of land dedicated for residential use in the City; over half of all land in Melrose is used for residential purposes. About three quarters of residential land, and almost 40% of all land in Melrose, is specifically single family residential. Another 5% of land in Melrose is dedicated to slightly higher density two- and three-family homes.

Residential buildings with more than four units are scattered throughout the City's residential areas, but are mostly concentrated near the Commuter Rail stations and on the southern end of Melrose near Oak Grove station. These high density residential structures make up about 2% of total land area in the City.

Less than 1% of land in Melrose is either mixed-use with residential and commercial uses or falls into the "other residential" category. The latter describes a variety of miscellaneous uses such as multiple houses

Figure 1: Land Use Map

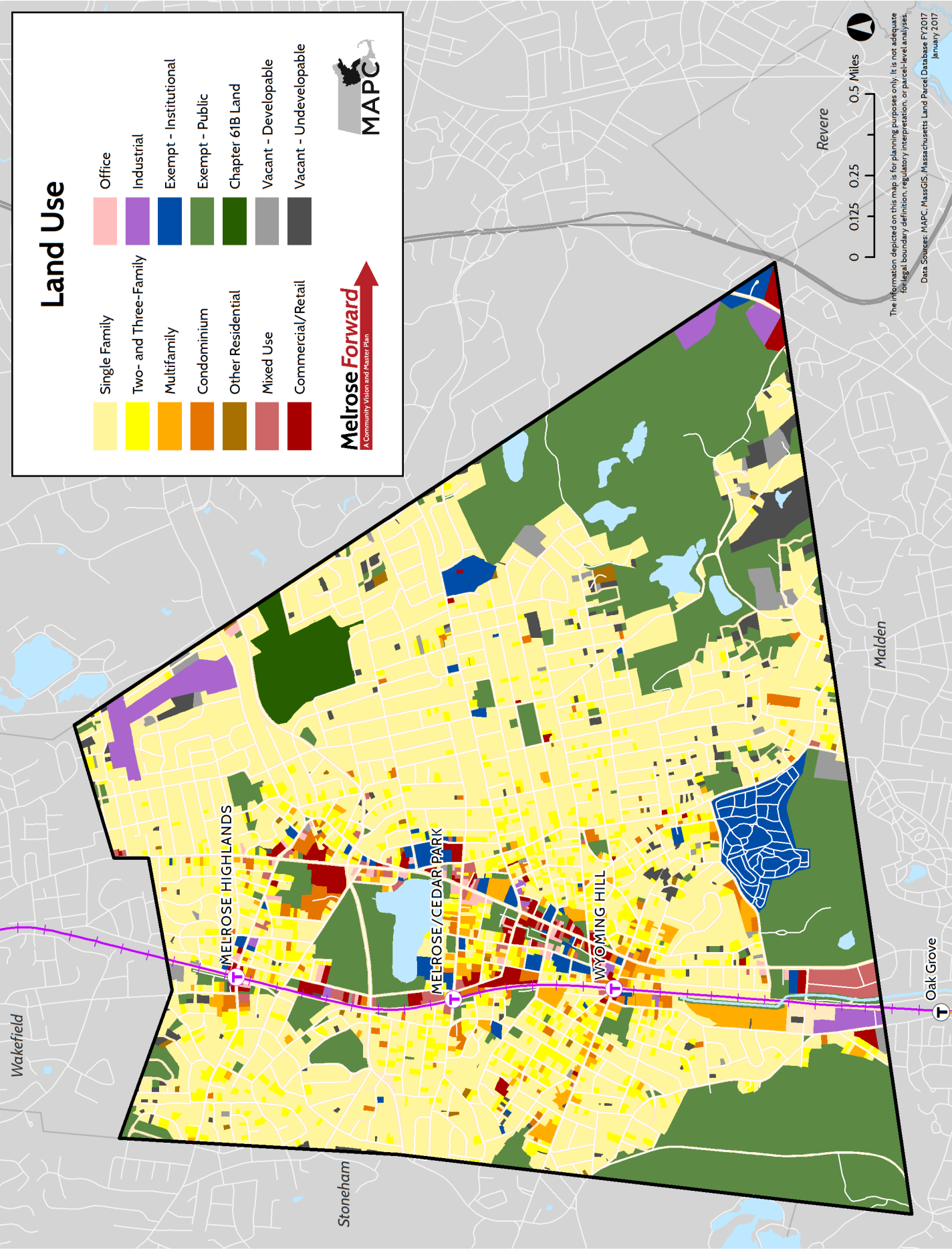


Figure 2: Land Use Table

	Total Acres	% Total
Residential	1554.1	50.9%
Single Family	1189.3	38.9%
Condominiums	45.5	1.5%
Two- and Three-Family	151.0	5.0%
More than Four Units	60.2	2.0%
Mixed Use Residential	18.0	0.6%
Other Residential	7.4	0.2%
Vacant - Developable	25.4	0.8%
Vacant - Undevelopable	57.3	1.9%
Commercial/Industrial	93.9	3.1%
Commercial/Retail	35.2	1.2%
Office	9.3	0.3%
Mixed Use Commercial	5.6	0.2%
Industrial	42.9	1.4%
Vacant - Developable	0.3	0.0%
Vacant - Undevelopable	0.6	0.0%
Tax-Exempt Land	884.8	29.0%
Public	850.2	27.9%
Institutional	34.6	1.1%
Other	518.8	17.0%
Right-of-Ways	469.8	15.4%
Chapter 61B	49.0	1.6%
Total	3051.6	

Source: MassGIS, Massachusetts Land Parcel Database, MAPC Analysis, Melrose City Assessor, Melrose Office of Planning and Community Development Analysis

on one parcel, rooming and boarding houses, child care facilities, and accessory dwellings.

The remaining residential land in Melrose is vacant, and most of it is categorized as “undevelopable” rather than “developable” or “potentially developable.” Melrose only has about 25 acres of vacant land (about 0.04 square miles) that can be developed for residential purposes, highlighting the massive constraints placed on the future of housing development in the City. These few vacant developable parcels are mostly located in the southeastern area of the City (close to some large undevelopable parcels) and in the north near both the Wakefield and Saugus borders. The undevelopable residential land in Melrose is mostly due to environmental constraints, such as difficult

topography, or a lack of access. Because there is so little vacant developable land left in Melrose, the City will have to rely on the redevelopment of existing sites to create new housing.

Acknowledging the need to preserve areas with difficult terrain and associated runoff and erosion issues from development, the City of Melrose enacted a Slope Protection Ordinance in 2005. According to this provision, all natural slopes exceeding 25% over a horizontal distance of 30 feet are to remain in their natural state. Landowners can only utilize areas with natural slopes exceeding 25% if they apply for a special permit and receive approval from the Planning Board.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

Only 3.1% of Melrose’s total land area is used for commercial and industrial purposes. With limited exceptions, commercial uses, including retail, office, and mixed-use (such as retail and office in one building), are concentrated together. The main commercial areas in Melrose are Downtown; near the Highlands, Cedar Park, and Wyoming Hill Commuter Rail stations; Main Street from Lynn Fells Parkway to Franklin Street; Tremont Street from Essex Street to Melrose Street; and Route 99. Each of these commercial areas is described in detail in the Economic Development chapter of this plan in terms of its business mix and opportunity for future investment.

Downtown Melrose consists largely of one- to three-story retail and office buildings. There are a wide variety of commercial uses downtown, including small retail and service stores, eating and drinking establishments, and office and bank buildings. Most of these uses fall into the retail trade category.

Industrial uses in Melrose are primarily segregated to select areas of the city, and only make up 1.4% of the City’s land area. An area of land on Route 99, which is nearly physically separated from the rest of the City, is an area in the City that is zoned industrial and used for industrial efforts. Bordered by Mount Hood on the west and Saugus on the east is a mining and quarrying site used for sand and gravel extraction purposes. While eleven acres are within Melrose, the quarry extends across the border of Saugus where the majority of the operation is located. Waste Management operates a solid waste transfer and dumpster storage facility.

Other areas that previously supported manufacturing uses have largely been redeveloped. In the southern area of Melrose along lower Washington Street by Oak Grove Station are three large adjacent parcels that,



according to tax assessor records, are buildings used for manufacturing operations. However, in 2008, a Smart Growth Overlay District was adopted for this area, and has since enabled redevelopment of many of these parcels as high density residential and mixed use. The southernmost parcel is currently used as an office and storage facility for a local contracting business while the parcel to the north of it recently underwent major redevelopment. Construction on this site broke ground in December 2015 for “37/47 Washington,” an 88-unit rental complex, and was completed in late 2016. To the north of that is an old mill building occupied by Marty’s Furniture and other smaller businesses. Jack Flats, at the northernmost parcel in the Smart Growth Overlay District, was the first redevelopment project in the District. Jack Flats is a 212-unit apartment complex in four buildings, including a former mill building that was extensively renovated for residential use. On the opposite side of Washington Street within the District, is 2 Washington Street, a 94-unit rental complex with a small commercial storefront, and a day care facility is located at 40 Washington Street.

Finally, a large swath of land located in the northeast area of Melrose, close to the Saugus border, is a utility property used for an electricity transmission right-of-way. While the use is industrial, the land is zoned residential.

The amount of vacant land developable or potentially developable for commercial or industrial uses in Melrose is negligible. Less than one acre of land is vacant and not constrained by other factors limiting development potential.

Tax-Exempt Land

Land in Melrose is tax-exempt because it is either publicly-owned by a government entity or owned by a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution. The latter applies to private educational facilities, religious congregations, or charitable organizations like hospitals and museums. Over a quarter of land in the city is publicly-owned and tax-exempt. The vast majority of this land consists of the City’s parks and open spaces, of which most are protected in perpetuity from future development. For example, Mount Hood alone is over 250 acres. The City also owns Wyoming Cemetery, which is considered open space from a land use perspective.

Other large parcels of publicly-owned land in Melrose are primarily used for the Melrose Public Schools. Most of the other uses are for the City of Melrose and public authorities, such as City Hall, fire stations, and the Melrose Housing Authority’s buildings.

A much smaller proportion of tax-exempt land is not publicly-owned and has other institutional purposes. A major institutional landholder in Melrose is Melrose-Wakefield Hospital and Hallmark Health, the current owner of the hospital. This includes a 4.5 acre parcel that Melrose-Wakefield Hospital sits on, as well as adjacent parcels used for doctors’ offices and other medical purposes. While medical uses are largely concentrated in this area, there are others dispersed throughout Melrose.

Many other institutional parcels in Melrose are those used for religious purposes like churches and temples. Various charitable uses are scattered throughout the City such as the YMCA and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) buildings.

Other

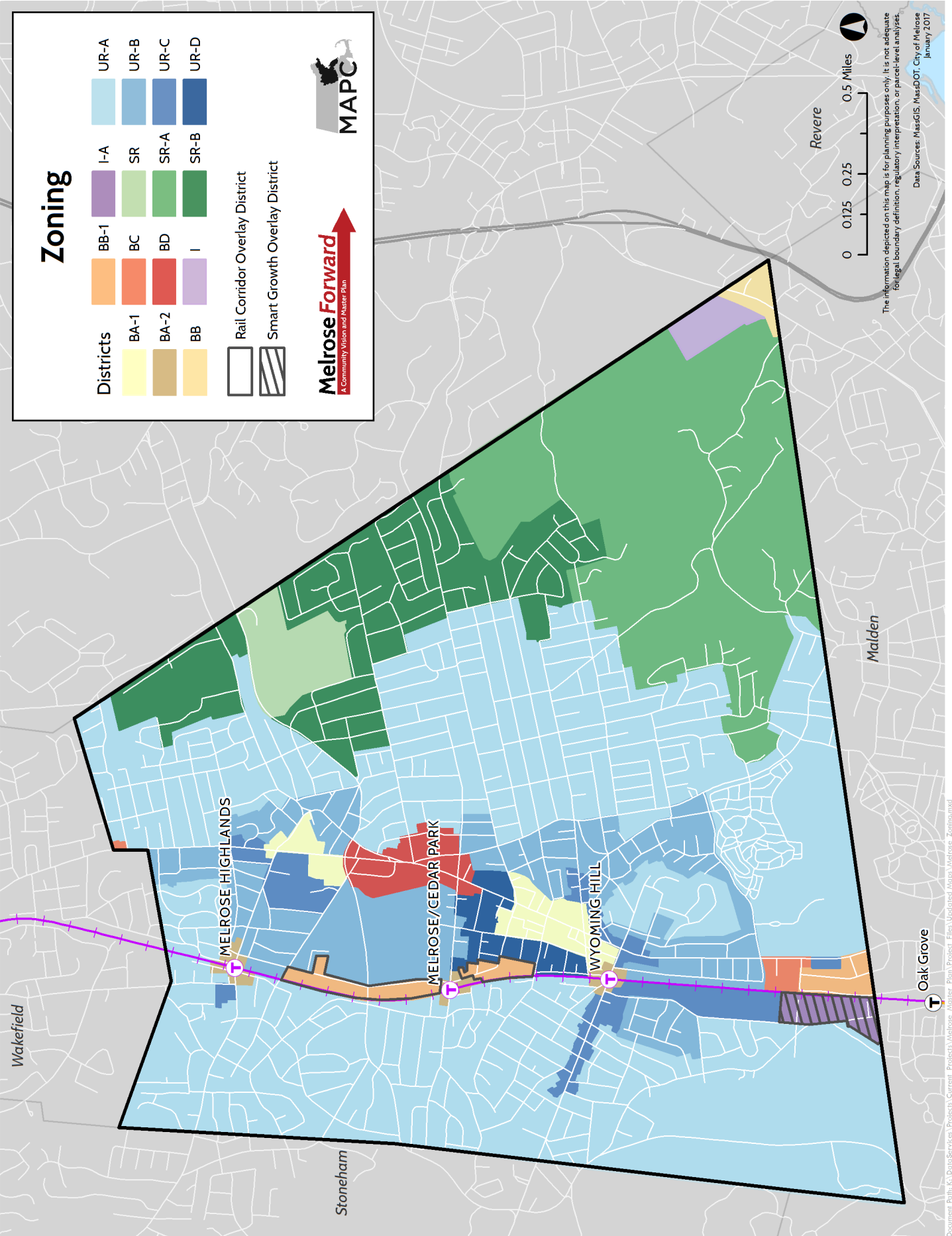
For the most part, the land indicated as “other” on Figure 2 does not describe the use of a parcel; rather, it describes the use between parcels. About 15% of Melrose’s total land area is devoted to right-of-ways which include roads and state routes. They are all paved, impervious surfaces. This also includes the MBTA railroad right-of-way and the land on either side of the Commuter Rail tracks.

Massachusetts’ Chapter 61 programs give preferential tax treatment as an incentive to landowners who maintain their properties of at least five acres as open space—rather than developing it—for the purposes of timber production, agriculture, or recreation. In Melrose, the Bellevue Golf Club has Chapter 61B status as recreational land. The Bellevue Golf Club parcel alone makes up almost 2% of the City’s total land area.

Zoning

Zoning is a set of local regulations regarding what land uses are allowed in different areas of a municipality. It serves as a policy for directing growth and preservation in appropriate areas, helping to ensure that a variety of activities are allowed in the community as a whole while also considering the economic, environmental and social impacts of each type of use. In Massachusetts, zoning is authorized through the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A. Zoning regulations are adopted through the government’s “police power,” which allows the enactment of laws to ensure health, safety, and well-being of the public. In 1926, the Supreme Court upheld the validity of zoning, ruling it appropriate to limit an individual’s property rights in the best interest of the general public.

Figure 3: Zoning Map



Melrose zoning is detailed in a written Zoning Ordinance and a Zoning Map. The Table of Use and Parking Regulations and the Table of Dimensional and Density Regulations, taken together, give a good idea of how a property may be able to be developed. Zoning works by establishing zoning districts that determine what uses are allowed “by right” in each district and what uses require a “special permit” to establish and distinguish their dimensional and density requirements as detailed in the Table of Use and Parking Regulations. A “nonconforming” use is one that existed before Zoning Ordinance prohibited the use. This use may be “grandfathered” if it remains unchanged, but must conform to current zoning if the parcel is redeveloped. If a landowner seeks to develop their property for a use not allowed in its zoning district, they must apply for a “use variance,” which are allowed in Melrose but not common in other Massachusetts cities and towns. Dimensional regulations determine the intensity of the use, its size, height, and its relationship to other uses by regulating frontage, setbacks, coverage, floor to area ratio (FAR), and parking.

The Melrose Planning Board reviews and makes decisions on applications for particular special permits, site plan review, and subdivision proposals. The Board also reviews Zoning Board of Appeals cases and proposes zoning amendments to the Board of

Aldermen. Melrose’s Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) provides recommendations to the Board regarding changes in zoning and all major land use proposals, including subdivision plans and significant residential and commercial development proposals.

Figure 3, the Melrose Zoning Map, shows where different zoning districts are located throughout the city. Figure 4 shows Melrose’s zoning districts along with the acreage and proportion of total land area of each district.

Residential Districts

Melrose has two categories of residential districts, suburban and urban, which together, make up a total of seven residential districts. For the most part, these districts allow a variety of community uses but do not allow commercial or industrial uses. Most of the City’s parks and open spaces are included within its residential districts.

Suburban Residence (SR) Districts

Suburban Residence districts, SR, SR-A, and SR-B, are located along the eastern edge of the City, primarily bordering Saugus. These districts, which make up 28% of Melrose’s land area, allow single family homes and some community facilities, but two-family, townhouses, multifamily housing, commercial uses, and industrial uses are not allowed. Single family homes with an in-law apartment require a special permit in all Suburban Residence, as well as Urban Residence, districts. The SR district includes the Bellevue Golf Club and some of the surrounding land. The SR-A district includes the Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course, parkland and ponds adjacent to Swains Pond Avenue, and land that surrounds these green spaces. The SR-B district is relatively more densely developed than the SR and SR-A districts, and includes primarily residential uses as well as some open land.

Properties in the Suburban Residence districts can cover up to 35% of their lots and must be set back from the edges of the lots they are on, with more ample setbacks in SR and slightly smaller minimum setbacks in SR-A and SR-B. The minimum lot size for each of these three districts is 25,000 square feet for SR, 15,000 square feet for SR-A, and 10,000 square feet for SR-B. These lots require at least 50% open space in SR and SR-A and at least 40% open space in SR-B. All homes in the Suburban Residence districts can have a maximum of 2.5 stories and must be a maximum of 35 feet tall.

Figure 4: Zoning Districts

Zone	Description	Acres	Percent
SR	Suburban Residence	54.9	2%
SR-A	Suburban Residence	521.5	17%
SR-B	Suburban Residence	282.3	9%
UR-A	Urban Residence	1565.2	51%
UR-B	Urban Residence	321.8	11%
UR-C	Urban Residence	83.0	3%
UR-D	Urban Residence	36.2	1%
BA-1	General Business	46.1	2%
BA-2	General Business	15.0	0%
BB	Extensive Business	11.3	0%
BB-1	Extensive Business	39.7	1%
BC	Local Business	0.7	0%
BD	Medical Business	39.1	1%
I	Industrial	17.8	1%
I-A	Industrial	19.1	1%

Source: MassGIS, Melrose Zoning Ordinance, and MAPC Analysis

Urban Residence (UR) Districts

Urban Residence districts, UR-A, UR-B, UR-C, and UR-D are located throughout the City, with UR-B, UR-C, and UR-D all within close proximity to Main Street and UR-A in the remaining areas west of the Suburban Residence districts and outside the City's commercial corridor. Urban Residence districts make up two thirds of Melrose's land area.

The UR-A district covers the largest land area, serving as a transition from the less dense SR-A to the denser residential and commercial districts closer to Downtown Melrose, and also covering all of the area west of Downtown Melrose along the City's border with Stoneham. This district allows single family homes by right, as well as two-family homes and townhouses by special permit. Multifamily and apartment homes are not allowed in the UR-A district. The minimum lot area allowed varies by use; for single family homes it is 7,500 square feet, for townhouses it is 7,500 square feet per dwelling unit, for two-family homes it is 13,500 square feet, and for any other permitted uses it is 10,000 square feet. All lots in the UR-A district must be at least 35% open space, and the homes in the district can have a maximum of 2.5 stories and must be a maximum of 35 feet tall.

The UR-B district allows a higher level of density; the minimum lot size is still 7,500 square feet for single family homes and 10,000 square feet for nonresidential or mixed uses, but for townhouses, two-family, and multi-family homes, the minimum lot size needs to have an additional 3,000 square feet per additional dwelling unit. Single family and two-family homes are allowed by right in the UR-B district. Multifamily homes, townhouses, and apartment homes are allowed by special permit. Mixed use with businesses on the ground floor and residential above is also allowed by special permit in the UR-B district. Homes in the UR-B district have the same maximum height and story restrictions as in the UR-A district, but they have a slightly lower minimum open space requirement.

The UR-C and UR-D districts allow the greatest density amongst residential zoning districts in Melrose (though mixed use with residential at even greater density is allowed in some business/commercial districts, as described in the following section). They share dimensional and density requirements and the uses allowed in each are the same. These districts have slight differences with respect to other requirements, such as screening and buffering requirements when adjacent to non-residential districts and design review

requirements. The minimum lot size for residential uses in the UR-C and UR-D is 6,000 square feet for the first dwelling unit plus 1,250 square feet for each additional dwelling unit. Nursing homes require a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet and all other permitted uses require a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet.

Single family homes are only allowed by special permit in the UR-C and UR-D districts. Two-family homes, multifamily homes, townhouses, apartment homes, and other types of multi-unit residential are permitted by right in the UR-C and UR-D districts. Mixed use with businesses on the ground floor and residential above is allowed by special permit in these districts. Buildings in these districts can be up to four stories and 50 feet tall.

Business Districts

The Business zoning districts in Melrose include BA-1, BA-2, BB, BB-1, BC, and BD. The Zoning Ordinance still includes reference to a BA district, but there are no areas currently zoned BA in the city. Only about 4% of land in Melrose is within one of the business districts.

Residential uses are generally limited in business districts, though the BD district allows single family homes by special permit and most other types as of right. Additionally, BC districts allow multifamily by special permit. The BA, BA-1, BA-2, BC, and BD districts all allow mixed residential and business where all dwelling units are above the first floor level. Convenience retail, certain retail food establishments, and personal and consumer establishments are allowed by right in all the business districts.

General Business (BA) Districts

The BA-1 and BA-2 districts are considered General Business districts in the Melrose Zoning Ordinance. In addition to the uses allowed by right in all business districts, they also allow professional and business offices, retail establishments selling general merchandise, for profit membership clubs, eating and drinking establishments, movie theaters, and business and trade schools or colleges. Hotels and motels, medical offices, indoor amusement facilities, bakeries, and laundry or dry-cleaning plants are allowed with a special permit. Lots in both of these districts must be at least 5,000 square feet and only require that 5% of the land is open space. Buildings can be up to four stories and 50 feet tall with a floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 2.0. No setbacks are required.

BA-1 exists in two areas along Main Street. The southern BA-1 district is the area most commonly identified



as Downtown Melrose. The northern BA-1 district is north of Ell Pond and includes the strip shopping development at 880 Main Street, including the Whole Foods and other smaller retail businesses, as well as the Walgreens across the street and businesses along Green Street. Allowed in the BA-1 district, but not the BA-2 district, are commercial parking lots or garages as of right, and private day nurseries, establishments selling new or used vehicles, automotive repair stations, and funeral establishments, by special permit.

BA-2 is a recently created zoning district, designed to accommodate neighborhood appropriate uses at the three Commuter Rail stations: Wyoming Hill, Cedar Park, and Melrose Highlands. It shares many of the same uses of the other business districts, especially BA-1, but is somewhat more restrictive in its uses. In particular, to prioritize the transit-accessible nature of this district, automotive uses such as parking garages and repair stations are discouraged. Medical offices are allowed in the BA-2 district by special permit, but are not permitted as a ground floor use. Prior to the 2015 zoning change, most of the area around Wyoming Hill station was in the BA-1 zoning district and most of the areas around the Cedar Park and Melrose Highlands stations were in the BC zoning districts. The change in zoning allows for greater density and more transit-oriented land uses around the train stations.

Extensive Business (BB) Districts

The BB and BB-1 districts are considered Extensive Business districts in the Zoning Ordinance. These are the business districts that are most flexible regarding wholesale, transportation, and industrial uses. Allowed as of right in the two districts are construction suppliers, bakeries, laundry or dry-cleaning plants, railroad yards and other transportation services, and wholesale trade and distribution facilities. In terms of retail-oriented commercial services, hotels and motels, establishments selling new or used transportation vehicles, automotive repair stations, and indoor amusement facilities are allowed by right. The districts allow professional and business offices, adult uses, and drive-in eating and drinking establishments with a special permit.

The BB district currently exists at the southeast corner of Melrose, near the City's borders with Malden, Revere, and Saugus. BB-1 zoning districts are located in neighborhoods proximate to transit amenities (though not immediately surrounding the Commuter Rail stations). The southernmost BB-1 district touches the Malden border and is on the eastern side of the rail right-of-way, near Oak Grove station. The other BB-1 districts are sandwiched between the rail right-

of-way and the Tremont/Essex Street corridor, from Melrose Street to West Foster Street. Lots in the BB and BB-1 districts must be at least 10,000 feet with 20% dedicated to open space. Buildings can be at most two stories and 30 feet tall; an FAR of 0.75 is allowed.

Local Business (BC) District

The smallest zoning district in Melrose, which is less than an acre in size, is the BC, or Local Business, district. Few commercial uses in this district are allowed as of right, most require a special permit. Multifamily housing is also allowed with a special permit. Most of the BC district is located just north of the BB-1 district in southern Melrose and contains the YMCA childcare facility, East Boston Savings Bank, Hunt's Photo and Video, and a National Guard facility. A very small BC district is located along the Wakefield border, and contains a funeral home and florist. As mentioned earlier, the Cedar Park and Melrose Highlands areas were previously zoned BC but were changed to BA-2 in 2015, which was better suited for the commercial areas around these Commuter Rail stations. For nonresidential uses in this district, building heights cannot exceed 30 feet and lots must be a minimum of 5,000 square feet. The dimensional and density regulations for the UR-C district apply to multifamily buildings in BC districts. For mixed uses, the minimum lot area increases by 1,000 square feet for each dwelling unit.

Medical Business (BD) District

The BD district is Melrose's Medical Business district, which consists of Melrose-Wakefield Hospital and the surrounding area. This is the only zoning district in the City that allows medical uses as of right, and the only area allowing hospitals at all. It is also the only commercial district where most residential uses are allowed. Most are allowed as of right, with the exception of single family homes with or without an in-law apartment that require a special permit. Other commercial uses allowed as of right in the BD district include nursing homes, business offices, trade schools or colleges, and funeral establishments. Nursing homes in this district conform to the same dimensional and density regulations as nursing homes in the UR-C and UR-D districts. Like in the BC district, the minimum lot area increases by 1,000 square feet for each dwelling unit for mixed uses.

For all uses in the BD District, with the exception of nursing homes, lots must be a minimum of 5,000 square feet and buildings can be up to eight stories and 80 feet high. This differs from other business

districts in Melrose, where the maximum number of stories is predominantly four. The eight story height allowance may be appropriate for a hospital building, but would be uncharacteristic throughout the medical district. The City should consider modifications to the BD regulations to remove the eighty feet/eight story allowance for any permitted use.

Industrial Districts

Only 2% of Melrose's land area falls within the City's industrial districts, I and I-A. In general, most commercial uses are not allowed in the I and I-A districts, though automobile service stations and repair shops are allowed with a special permit. Wholesale, transportation, and industrial uses allowed as of right in the districts include construction suppliers, manufacturing, laundry or dry-cleaning plants, railroad yards and railway express service, wholesale trade and distribution, and research offices devoted to research and development activities.

The I district is located in the southeast corner of Melrose, adjacent to the BB district. It contains the Waste Management site and a portion of the Aggregate Industries quarry. The I-A district is to the west of the Commuter Rail right of way at the Malden border. Lots in these two districts must be at least 20,000 square feet with 30% of their land devoted to open space. Buildings can be at most 50 feet tall and 4 stories with an FAR of 2.0.

Overlay Districts and Special Districts

The 2004 Master Plan recommended the establishment of overlay districts to attract the redevelopment of long-underutilized sites and to enhance their reuse potential. Overlay districts are a type of zoning district that "lies" on top of the underlying zoning district and can allow for greater flexibility or greater protections depending on the goals of the community. Since the publication of the 2004 Master Plan, two overlay districts have been implemented: the Smart Growth Overlay District (SGD) in 2008 and the Rail Corridor Overlay District (RCOD) in 2014. Both of these overlay districts have enabled the City to create greater opportunities for redevelopment in transit-oriented areas.

Both the SGD and RCOD allow a variety of commercial and industrial uses, along with multifamily residential uses. Since the establishment of the two districts, market forces have suggested that high-density residential development is a more secure and profitable venture. The City of Melrose will continue working

with developers to expand business opportunities in the SGD and RCOD to supplement the tax base and provide a diverse array of uses.

Smart Growth Overlay District

The Smart Growth District overlays the I-A district, also known as the Lower Washington Street Industrial Zone, in southern Melrose. This overlay district was first created in March 2008; amendments were proposed in March 2014 and approved that following July. According to the Melrose Zoning Ordinance, the purposes of the Smart Growth District are:

1. To promote economic development and neighborhood revitalization through the redevelopment and reuse of industrial buildings and related sites;
2. To provide housing options which are sufficient to meet the needs of households at varying income levels and different stages of life;
3. To promote high quality, sustainable design that reinforces and enhances neighborhood identity and minimizes negative impacts on the environment;
4. To create a pedestrian-friendly environment that promotes walking, bicycling and transit use, and encourages reduced vehicle ownership; and
5. To promote a mix of compatible uses.

In order to encourage the above, a number of additional uses are permitted in the zone beyond what is allowed in the industrial districts, such as multifamily residential, restaurants, personal and consumer establishments, artist studios, live/work spaces, and retail establishments selling food, convenience goods, or general goods. Recognizing that there will be increased demand for open space and recreation as a result of the new residential development in the SGD, developers must contribute \$1,100 per dwelling unit to the City's Open Space Fund.

The creation of the Smart Growth Overlay District prompted significant investment and redevelopment of a large portion of this district as discussed earlier in this chapter. Since 2008, 394 residential units, all luxury rental apartments, have been created in the Smart Growth District due to the new zoning and the proximity to Oak Grove Station. The Jack Flats Apartments, formerly Alta Stone Place before it entered into new ownership, contains 212 units. The centerpiece of this project was the conversion of a former mill building for residential use. The building at 2 Washington Street and its sister property at 37/47 Washington Street contain 182 units in three

Washington Street Apartments



Source: The Washingtons - Wood Partners

buildings on formerly underutilized and largely vacant properties. The three projects have helped to transform the Lower Washington Street corridor into a vital new neighborhood.

Rail Corridor Overlay District

The Rail Corridor Overlay District was established in July 2014 and revised through a minor amendment in April 2015. The overlay district covers the Extensive Business (BB-1) districts on Tremont and Essex Streets. It shares the same purposes as the Smart Growth Overlay District. Additional uses allowed in the RCOD are the same as in the SGD, except for retail food establishments and live/work spaces which are only allowed as of right in the SGD. Allowed in the RCOD but not the SGD are veterinary hospitals under 10,000 square feet and assisted living facilities.

Buildings developed using the RCOD are allowed up to 4 stories, or in some cases 5 stories if certain site design and streetscaping requirements are met. The maximum FAR in an RCOD project can be up to 1.5, compared to 0.75 in the underlying BB-1 district. Similar to the SGD, developers in the RCOD must contribute \$1,100 per dwelling unit to the City's Streetscape Improvement Fund, and \$1.00 per gross square foot for all other uses. This is specifically targeting the need for streetscape improvements that will result from new development in the district.

The RCOD is the only district in Melrose that allows assisted living facilities by right. The first project in the RCOD is a 90-unit assisted living facility currently under construction at the former Deering Lumber site on Essex Street. The developer, who will own and manage the facility at completion, worked closely with the City to bring this project to fruition. The new development

Design for The Residence at Melrose Station



Source: LCB Senior Living

will be called The Residence at Melrose Station.

Multifamily Residential Uses in Nonresidential Zoning Districts

A useful tool in the Zoning Ordinance to promote redevelopment is the Special Permit from the Planning Board for multifamily residential uses in nonresidential zoning districts and its companion Design Review Special Permit. With certain dimensional and density requirements, the Planning Board may authorize multifamily residential uses in certain commercial zoning districts after making findings related to open space, affordable housing, traffic and pedestrian improvements, and the surrounding properties. These special permits have been critical to creating new housing opportunities in Melrose; the most notable project being Windsor at Oak Grove, formerly Oak Grove Village, completed in 2009. This mixed-use development located near Oak Grove Station covers 15 acres (12 acres in Melrose and 3 acres in Malden). Across the thirteen buildings are 550 residential units, including 14 affordable units in Melrose, and 17,000 square feet of retail space. This successful project prompted the City to move forward with the overlay districts described above to create other redevelopment opportunities in underutilized, transit-oriented areas of the City.

Other successful redevelopment projects that took advantage of these special permits include Station Crossing at 16 Willow Street, the condominium building at 185 Essex Street, the rehabilitation of a former church building for residential use at 99 Essex Street in downtown Melrose, and the condominium building at 130 Tremont Street.

Parking Regulations

Parking ratios can be a barrier to development. Zoning Ordinances often contain outdated and onerous parking requirements that do not reflect the increasing desire of residents to limit or forgo driving and vehicle ownership in favor of other transit options, such as walking, bicycling, public transit, carpooling, and car sharing. Melrose has responded to this trend toward reduced reliance on vehicle use and ownership in recent years and has updated parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, particularly in areas of the City that are well-served by public transit options.

A provision in the Zoning Ordinance that has been particularly effective at supporting the redevelopment of the downtown is the provision that exempts downtown buildings from providing parking. This provision applies to parcels that abut municipal parking lots within an area bounded by Essex and Upham Streets to the north, Grove Street to the south, Myrtle Street to the west, and the boundary of the BA-1 District to the east between Grove and Upham Streets. It was enacted in 1980 as part of the City's comprehensive efforts to revitalize the downtown and has been used effectively to promote investment in important downtown properties and to encourage mixed-use redevelopment.

The Zoning Board of Appeals has the ability to grant special permits to reduce parking requirements under certain conditions pursuant to two provisions in the Zoning Ordinance that have been present since the last time the Ordinance was recodified in 1972. Outside of the downtown core, a special permit may be granted to substitute parking spaces within a municipal lot for the required parking, provided the municipal parking spaces are within 1,000 feet of the building which is intended to be served. And in any zoning district, a special permit may be granted to reduce the parking requirements to 80 percent where conditions unique to the use justify the reduction.

In recent years, the Zoning Ordinance has been amended to reduced parking requirements in zoning districts that are located in close proximity to public transit options. In the BA-1 and BA-2 Districts, for example, only 1 space per dwelling unit in a multifamily structure is required, where the standard used to be 2 spaces per dwelling unit. In the RCOD, the parking ratios for residential and commercial uses are reduced to 1 space per dwelling unit and 1 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area for office, retail, and similar uses. In the SGD, the residential parking ratio increases based on bedroom size, from 1 space for a one bedroom unit

to 2 spaces for a three bedroom unit, and depending on the location of commercial uses, 1 space per 350 square feet of gross floor area on the ground floor to 1 space per 500 square feet of gross floor area on upper floors. The Planning Board is also authorized to allow shared or reduced parking for uses having different peak times of parking demand if appropriate evidence is provided for projects within the BA-1, BA-2, RCOD, or SGD. Finally, when considering a project under the Affordable Housing Incentive Program, the Planning Board may reduce the parking ratio to not less than 1.5 spaces per unit regardless of the project location.

The Planning Board generally supports lower parking ratios for locations and housing types that can support fewer parking spaces. However, because overnight on-street parking is not allowed in Melrose, the need for appropriate off-street parking options for residents without access to such parking continues to be a concern. The residential parking permit scheme should be evaluated for improvements, particularly for those residents who also do not have daytime parking options.

Zoning Analysis

The 2004 Master Plan identified a number of areas where the Zoning Ordinance could be improved including developing provisions for affordable housing, site plan review, slope protection, and overlay districts. In the years since the publication of that Master Plan, these amendments have been made to the Zoning Ordinance. Other amendments to the Zoning Ordinance include the overhaul of the signage ordinance, provisions for open space and drainage, and defining and restricting the use of dormers. All of these efforts have been piecemeal, and the Zoning Ordinance still has many outdated and unused provisions.

Melrose's Zoning Ordinance would benefit from recodification, during which the ordinance could be reviewed holistically, outdated provisions removed, and formatted in a more user friendly way, which is also consistent with state law. Recodification would allow the City to evaluate whether the ordinance accurately reflects its desired vision, where it inadvertently prevents that vision from being realized or allows undesirable development to occur, and, as necessary, identify possible amendments to the ordinance.

Because recodification is an intensive and time consuming process, there are a number of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that should be evaluated and considered in the short term, and if approved, would address many of the common

issues that need clarification or create unnecessary hurdles. Among these items are addressing setbacks associated with corner lots to be less restrictive; revising the nonconforming section of the Zoning Ordinance to provide clarity and to allow certain alterations of structures through a special permit or, in some cases, by right; and, allowing for compact car parking spaces. The Zoning Ordinance should also be amended to be consistent with recent changes in state law.

While the Zoning Ordinance has been amended many times since the last Master Plan, the Melrose Subdivision Rules and Regulations have not been updated since 1992. Recent subdivision proposals have illustrated that the existing Rules and Regulations do not result in the kind of development that is desirable in Melrose, particular in areas that are difficult to develop. Further, the Planning Board consistently grants waivers from the Rules and Regulations to reduce the required roadway width from 32 feet to 24 feet, which is more similar to existing neighborhood streets. The Subdivision Rules and Regulations should be updated to reflect the fact that much of the developable land is constrained by topography or wetlands by allowing tools such as cluster zoning or natural resource protection zoning. Revisions to the Subdivision Rules and Regulations should be aligned with amendments to the cluster zoning provision in the Zoning Ordinance which is limited to certain zoning districts and for parcels over 15 acres. The City can make cluster zoning more feasible by decreasing the required acreage and allowing increased density within cluster developments as long as it is consistent with the character of Melrose.

Land Use and Zoning Opportunities

Melrose is a mature community with a well-established “garden city” land use pattern, with relatively little undeveloped land available for development. Its residential zoning districts have very little developable land, its neighborhood commercial centers are stable, and Main Street storefronts are rarely vacant. New development is likely to occur as infill or redevelopment of already developed areas. Since the publication of the last Master Plan, the City has actively amended the Zoning Ordinance to encourage smart growth in areas of Melrose that represented significant opportunities for redevelopment. The Smart Growth District and the Rail Corridor Overlay District are examples of these efforts that have led to successful redevelopment opportunities.

There are areas in the City where redevelopment opportunities still exist, and there are zoning districts

that should be evaluated to determine if current regulations are consistent with the community’s desires for those areas. At the same time, an evaluation of uses would be beneficial to determine if certain uses still align with the community’s vision and if there are opportunities to introduce new uses into the City that can meet the needs that have been identified through this planning process. Land use regulations are not static and are most effective when they evolve to reflect the community’s vision and when they are evaluated and fine-tuned on a regular basis.

Zoning Districts

During the 2015 rezoning of the Commuter Rail Stations from BC to BA-2, the issues around the remaining BC Districts came into focus. The City now only has two areas zoned as BC: at the Wakefield border and north of Windsor at Oak Grove along Main Street. The BC district at the Wakefield border is three parcels most recently occupied by the Carr Funeral Home (1159 Main Street), its adjoining parking lot, and a florist (1147 Main Street). The area’s zoning allows for mixed residential and business uses where all dwelling units are above the first floor level as of right, and multifamily dwellings without first floor business with a special permit, as well as a variety of commercial uses. The Funeral Home is on the market as of March 2017, and may be redeveloped before the zoning is evaluated. The other BC District is four parcels occupied by active uses: Hunt’s Photo, a day care, a bank, and a National Guard facility. However, the configuration of parking lots bordering the street and the structures set back on the lot, without landscaped buffer, is one of the few areas where Main Street’s character dramatically departs from the pattern seen closer to downtown. While these businesses do well, planning for the future of these properties where buildings would be brought to the street frontage with parking to the rear and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape will be desirable for this location.

The UR-D district, which is in close proximity to Downtown Melrose and the Rail Corridor Overlay District, should also be studied. This district is primarily located between Myrtle Street and the railroad, extending north to Vine Street, Winthrop Street, and West Emerson Street, and a small area on the east side of Main Street. In the areas west of Main Street, the district serves as a transitional neighborhood between Downtown Melrose and the BB-1 District and Rail Corridor Overlay District, all of which allow greater density and height. A substantial amount of redevelopment including the projects at 99 and 185 Essex Street, Station Crossing, and the Caritas

Community project in the UR-D District as well as the construction of the assisted living facility in the neighboring zoning district have occurred in the last decade, but the neighborhood is still primarily single family and two-family residences. A vision should be developed for this district and the Zoning Ordinance amended appropriately.

One area that may be suitable for redevelopment in the future is the land along Route 99 within the I and BB districts, which contain the Aggregate Industries quarry, the Waste Management site, a motel, and cemeteries that cover six parcels. Properties on Route 99 could offer potential commercial tax benefits for the City, as seen with the F.W. Webb building. The Aggregate Industries quarry has an approved closure plan for the quarry, which is located primarily in the Town of Saugus, and the Waste Management lease will be renegotiated in 2021 when it expires. Because this area is quite fragmented from the rest of Melrose, the land use goals for this area have not been fully identified. With the timing of the quarry closure and the lease expiration, the City may have the chance to create some unique opportunities for the area. Reviewing the zoning and implementing changes that fulfill a vision for Route 99 will better position the City for the quarry closure and lease renegotiation.

The BD District was designed around Melrose-Wakefield Hospital as a zoning district that could support medical uses. It is also located immediately adjacent to a residential district. As discussed in more detail in the Economic Development chapter of this Plan, Hallmark Health's master plan for the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital campus could lead to new economic opportunities for the City especially following the merger of Hallmark Health and Wellforce. The BD District zoning should be evaluated to ensure that medical uses will continue to be supported in this district, while also codifying design and use requirements that would be compatible with neighboring residential areas.

Existing Uses

The Zoning Ordinance allows a variety of housing types throughout Melrose, with single family homes the housing type that is allowed in nearly every residential district. Other housing types, such as two and three family homes, multifamily residences, townhouses, and in-law apartments, are restricted in certain areas to ensure that the existing fabric of the neighborhood is maintained. In particular, the townhouse use and the in-law use should be evaluated to determine where the use could be expanded or if it should be contracted.

Example Accessory Dwelling Unit



Source: City of Raleigh

A townhouse is defined by the Zoning Ordinance as being a row of at least 3 units but not more than 5, each separated by a fire wall. The density and mass created with a townhouse structure, which must be sited in a row, is often inconsistent with the lower density urban residential districts. Currently, a special permit is required for the use in the UR-A and UR-B, and it is by right in the UR-C and UR-D. Any amendments to this use should be carefully considered so that housing options do not become more restrictive than necessary.

During a focus group with real estate professionals, participants discussed the barriers in the City's Zoning Ordinance that may be limiting development, specifically of affordable housing. Limitations to in-law apartments were mentioned, specifically that these types of apartments could not be accessory to the principle structure. The Zoning Ordinance defines an in-law apartment as:

A dwelling unit either contained within an owner-occupied one-family structure (such as, but not limited to, a cellar or attic) or attached thereto (such as, but not limited to, a garage or barn) which constitutes separate living facilities for immediate members of the family, such as a mother and/or father or a son and/or daughter and their respective spouses (§235-5).

As it currently stands, the Zoning Ordinance restricts in-law apartments to those within single family dwellings as they existed on January 1, 1990 (and requires a special permit). This limits the creation of any new structures for in-law apartments, and it specifically prevents units in detached garages or other detached buildings. The City should consider amending the zoning for in-law apartments to allow the utilization of new or converted detached structures. This could



allow for the creation of a great deal of small, affordable units within Melrose for the elderly, adult children with development disabilities, and others who want to be close to their families but still retain independence.

New Uses

As the City considers modern regulations to promote smart growth within Melrose and also continue to serve the residents of the City, there are several amendments that should be considered. Many of these would modernize the Zoning Ordinance and address uses that are not included in the Zoning Ordinance, and thus are prohibited. By addressing these items in the Zoning Ordinance (and General Ordinances, if appropriate), the City could create new housing opportunities and new economic development opportunities. Included in these opportunities are allowing and regulating accessory dwelling units, short term rentals, cohousing, and urban agriculture.

The City should consider allowing accessory dwellings that are not necessarily in-law apartments, as described previously. Currently, the City restricts lodgers or boarders from occupying in-law apartments, preventing homeowners from receiving supplementary rental income. Receiving additional income by renting out such a dwelling could be an effective way to help homeowners supplement the high costs associated with living in Melrose and the Boston region in general. The key questions that will need to be addressed if the City considered accessory dwelling units include whether these units should be restricted to certain zoning districts, setbacks and other dimensional regulations, and parking. Today, the ability to provide the required off-street parking is the limiting factor when adding density to existing structures.

These accessory dwelling units and other unused rooms in existing structures could be used as income producing short term rentals. Short term rentals have proliferated in the greater Boston area with the availability and ease of using websites such as Air BnB. Although the Zoning Ordinance prohibits short term rentals because it is silent on the use and the definition for a lodging house is limited, there are short term rentals listed in Melrose. Many communities in Massachusetts have sought to regulate short term rentals by defining the use in ordinances or bylaws and by requiring the property owner to receive a license to ensure that the rental is safe and sanitary. Melrose may want to pursue regulating short term rentals, especially as more property owners view it as a simple way to supplement their income. Similar to accessory dwelling units, there are a number of factors that the City will

Example Cohousing Development



Source: *The Cohousing Association of the United States*

need to consider including the term of the license, the number of people allowed to occupy a short term rental, whether the unit needs to be owner-occupied, among many other concerns.

Cohousing is a popular living arrangement, in which private dwelling units also share communal living facilities such as large kitchens, great rooms, and outdoor space. This housing model can appeal to a variety of ages and demographics by being more affordable, creating a sense of community, and providing safety and security. While there are successful cohousing developments in Massachusetts, they are often difficult to develop due to zoning provisions that limit the number of principal structures on a parcel and minimum parking requirements, among other concerns. In Melrose, only one principal structure is allowed on a lot, which could make developing cohousing difficult today. While some interest in finding a site suitable for a cohousing development in Melrose has been expressed, this type of housing model should be evaluated for its desirability and feasibility in Melrose.

Further, as backyard chickens, bee hives, and even goats have become popular for Melrose backyards, there is some interest in legitimizing these urban agriculture uses in the City as well as providing guidance for those interested in urban agriculture. Producing your own food can reduce your food bill and provide peace of mind in regards to where your food comes from, and understanding the state and local rules related to urban agriculture are important to ensure products are safe. Melrose currently requires Health Department licensing for keeping animals, and there are no requirements for a backyard food-producing garden. However, regulations may be needed when the food grown is sold. Additionally, nuisance regulations may be needed



to ensure that animals, hives, and gardens operate properly. The need for urban agriculture regulations should be evaluated in coordination with the Health Department.

Other Refinements

As zoning is put into practice, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the regulations. Since the adoption of Site Plan Review and the Affordable Housing Incentive Zoning, aspects of both regulations have been found to work well, but could be fine-tuned in order to continue to be effective and produce results for the City.

Both the City and representatives from Melrose's real estate community acknowledge the importance of design as an aspect of new development. Focus group participants mentioned that there is a need for stronger design standards and design review in the City. The City has a Site Plan Review Ordinance that was implemented after the passage of its last Master Plan in 2004 which pertains to all new industrial or commercial uses, new residential developments of four or more, extensions in excess of 2,500 sq. ft. of an existing industrial, commercial, or multi-family use, or the construction or expansion of a parking lot for a municipal, institutional, commercial, industrial, or multi-family structure or purpose. There is sentiment that the design review aspect of Site Plan Review could be strengthened through the adoption of design standards. It is important that all new development is consistent with the character of Melrose, regardless of its size and scale.

Certain elements of the existing Affordable Housing Incentive Zoning should be adjusted to capitalize on the success of the City's inclusionary zoning policy and maximize its effectiveness. For example, smaller projects, between five and ten units, sometimes struggle financially to contribute an affordable unit, so the threshold trigger may need to be raised. The developers of smaller projects typically ask to make a monetary contribution rather than construct the unit, but the resulting payment is not adequate to fund the construction of other affordable units. There may be a more appropriate calculation for determining the monetary contribution. Finally, the contribution level of 10 percent of the project should be reconsidered if the project threshold increases to ensure that the City makes continual gains on developing affordable housing and reaching the State's 10% mandate.

Summary

At its core, this Master Plan is a land use plan, and this effort is a chance to update land use and zoning goals in line with the community's vision. The analysis in this chapter shows that there are many aspects of the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Rules and Regulations that should be evaluated to ensure that development is consistent with the character of Melrose. Not only does this theme apply to land use and zoning, but also to implementing actions that promote the goals outlined in the Housing chapter and Economic Development chapter. The public process also placed a high priority in ensuring that the recommendations of this Master Plan do not compromise the character of Melrose's natural, scenic, and built environment, and the following recommendations will promote this objective.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Maintain the character of Melrose's natural, scenic, and built environment.

Strategy 1.1: Perform a thorough review of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to ensure all new development is consistent with the character of Melrose.

- Action 1.1.1: Create more detailed design review guidelines as part of the Site Plan Review Ordinance.
- Action 1.1.2: Review and amend the Subdivision Regulations to ensure that new development complements existing neighborhoods.
- Action 1.1.3: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to decrease restrictions of the existing Cluster Development Ordinance.
- Action 1.1.4: Complete a comprehensive review of the parking regulations, including the residential parking permit program.
- Action 1.1.5: Review and amend, as appropriate, the townhouse use in residential zoning districts.
- Action 1.1.6: Review and amend, as appropriate, the density and dimension regulations for the UR-D District.

Strategy 1.2: Remove common barriers in the Zoning Ordinance to simplify the permitting process.

- Action 1.2.1: Recodify the Zoning Ordinance.
- Action 1.2.2: Amend the definition of corner lots.
- Action 1.2.3: Amend the nonconforming section



- of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Action 1.2.4: Allow compact vehicle parking spaces.
- Action 1.2.5: Review the Zoning Ordinance for consistency with state law and amend as necessary.

Strategy 1.3: Promote regulations that permit a variety of residential types for Melrose residents (see Housing actions).

Strategy 1.4: Ensure zoning districts encourage economic development (see Economic Development action).

Strategy 1.5: Update and maintain the City's land use data and zoning ordinance to reflect state-of-the-art information management and decision-making capabilities.

- Action 1.5.1: Continue to maintain strong Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping capacity.
- Action 1.5.2: Ensure that the City's ability to manage land use data evolves with changing technologies and trends.





Implementation Plan

Implementation is key to any successful planning process, and it is the phase in which the recommendations laid out in a plan become a reality. The City of Melrose implemented many of the recommendations detailed in its 2004 Master Plan, and for almost 13 years, the document served as a guide for decisions related to development, zoning, updates to aging infrastructure, and more.

Implementing **Melrose Forward: A Community Vision and Master Plan** will be no different, and it will be bolstered by an Implementation Committee appointed by the Mayor. This committee will have a similar composition to the Master Plan Advisory Committee in that it will represent the various stakeholder groups in Melrose. The group will have annual check-ins and produce progress reports to show the status of Melrose Forward's implementation. The Implementation Committee will help communicate the plan to City residents for years to come and motivate City Boards and Committees to be conscientious in pursuing their respective action items.



This Implementation Plan includes a series of recommendations that will help achieve **The Melrose Vision**. The recommendations are organized by chapter/topic and include Goals, Strategies, and Actions. Responsible parties and timeframes are assigned to each action.



Goals: What do we want to achieve?

At the Goal level, the Implementation Plan moves from the Melrose Vision toward the specifics of how to realize this vision over the next several years.

Strategies: How do we get there?

Strategies break down the Goals into tasks that help accomplish each goal.

Actions: What specific steps do we need to take?

Actions are specific activities assigned to one or more City department, board, commission, committee, or when appropriate, private organization. Each action includes a recommended timeframe.



Timeframe

These symbols are used to indicated the anticipated timeframe for each action:



Short Term: 1-3 years



Medium Term: 4-7 years



Long Term: 8-10+ years



Ongoing



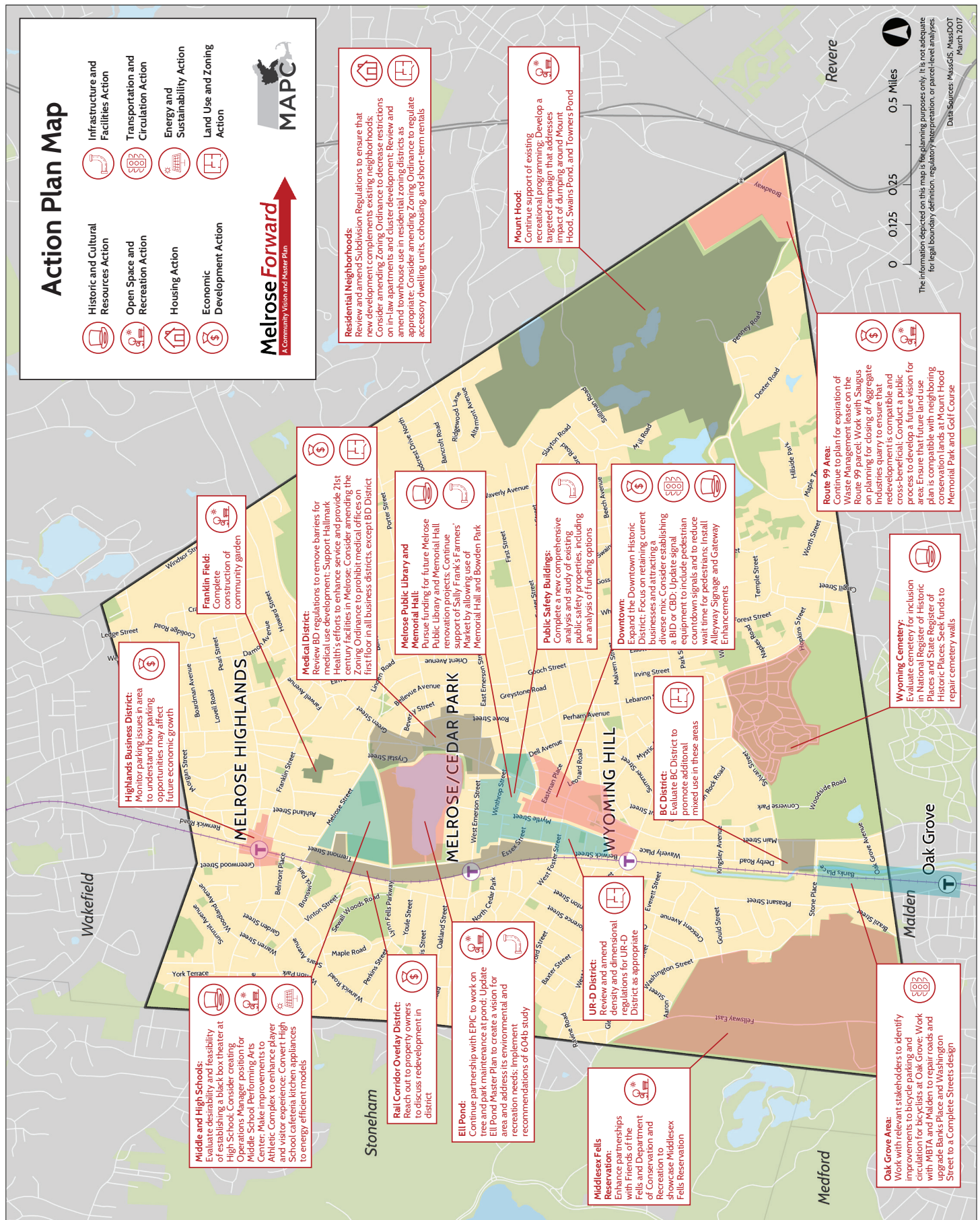
Abbreviations Used

Assessor	Assessor's Office	MAHC	Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation
Auditor	Auditor		
BC	Building Commissioner	MBTA	Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority
BOA	Board of Aldermen	MassDOT	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
BOAssess	Board of Assessors		
CC	Chamber of Commerce	MIMC	Mass-in-Motion Coordinator
CemCom	Cemetery Commission	MO	Mayor's Office
ConCom	Conservation Commission	MHPA	Mount Hood Park Association
COA	Council on Aging	MHT	Memorial Hall Trustees
CSWG	Complete Streets Working Group	OPCD	Office of Planning and Community Development
DPW	Department of Public Works		
EC	Energy Commission	ParkDep	Park Department
EEM	Energy Efficiency Manager	PB	Planning Board
EM	Emergency Management	PBAC	Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
EPIC	Ell Pond Improvement Council	PD	Police Department
ESCO	Energy Services Company	PSBC	Public Safety Building Committee
FD	Fire Department	PTOs	Parent-Teacher Organizations
FHO	Fair Housing Officer	RC	Recycling Committee
HC	Historical Commission	RecDep	Recreation Department
HD	Health Department	SD	School Department
HDC	Historic District Commission	TC	Traffic Commission
IS	Inspectional Services	TO	Treasurer's Office
IT	Information Technology	VSO	Veterans' Services Office
LC	Liquor Commission	WSC	Water and Sewer Committee
LT	Library Trustees	ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals



Action Plan Map

Site-specific action items in the Implementation Plan are identified on the following map:





Historic and Cultural Resources

Goal 1: Preserve and protect historic Downtown Melrose.

Strategy 1.1: Maintain and support the Historic District Commission.

Action 1.1.1: Continue to provide staff support from the Office of Planning and Community Development.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2: Create rules and design standards for the Historic District Commission.

Responsibility: OPCD, HDC

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2: Provide resources to preserve downtown buildings.

Action 1.2.1: Continue to fund the façade and grant program offered through the City.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2: Continue to seek grants and other funding sources to support historically appropriate renovations of public buildings.

Responsibility: OPCD, MO

Timeframe:

Goal 2: Publicize and promote historic resources.

Strategy 2.1: Increase historic district designations in Melrose.

Action 2.1.1: Expand the Downtown Historic District.

Responsibility: OPCD, HDC

Timeframe:

Action 2.2.2: Explore creating additional Local Historic Districts in Melrose.

Responsibility: OPCD, HDC, HC

Timeframe:

Strategy 2.2: Augment records and educational materials regarding historic resources.

Action 2.2.1: Complete the comprehensive inventory of historic homes and other buildings.

Responsibility: HC

Timeframe:

Action 2.2.2: Maintain historic markers, memorial tablets, and memorial square markers.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 2.2.3: Map historic resources and produce an educational brochure.

Responsibility: HC

Timeframe:

Action 2.2.4: Develop walking tours for different neighborhoods of Melrose with the installation of interpretative panels.

Responsibility: HC

Timeframe:



Short Term
1-3 years



Medium Term
4-7 years



Long Term
8-10+ years



Ongoing



Strategy 2.3: Review historic resources for possible additions to the National Register of Historic Places.

Action 2.3.1: Evaluate Wyoming Cemetery for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places.

Responsibility: CemCom, HC

Timeframe: 

Action 2.3.2: Encourage residents with historic homes to list them on the National Register of Historic Places.

Responsibility: HC

Timeframe: 

Goal 3: Protect and enhance historic resources.

Strategy 3.1: Prevent the incremental loss of historic structures.

Action 3.1.1: Adopt a demolition delay ordinance.

Responsibility: HC, OPCD, BC

Timeframe: 

Strategy 3.2: Seek funding to preserve historic resources.

Action 3.2.1: Adopt the Community Preservation Act.

Responsibility: MO

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.2: Explore certification from the Certified Local Government Program to increase eligibility for state grant funds.

Responsibility: OPCD, HC

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.3: Seek funds to repair the Wyoming Cemetery walls.

Responsibility: CemCom, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.4: Seek funds for appropriate renovations and improvements to the Melrose Public Library, Memorial Hall, and the Central Fire Station.

Responsibility: OPCD, DPW, LT, MHT


Timeframe: 




Goal 4: Support local arts and cultural resources.

Strategy 4.1: Increase awareness of cultural events in Melrose.

Action 4.1.1: Promote cultural events through the City’s website and the Mayor’s Blog.


Responsibility: MO
Timeframe: 

Action 4.1.2: Promote the use of Lookwhatshappening.org for marketing cultural events.

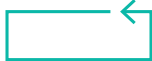
Responsibility: MO
Timeframe: 

Strategy 4.2: Support funding streams for arts and cultural resources.

Action 4.2.1: Advocate for increased funding for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which in turns funds the Melrose Cultural Council.

Responsibility: MO
Timeframe: 


Action 4.2.2: Continue to fund the Melrose Messina Fund for the Arts through the City budget.

Responsibility: MO
Timeframe: 


Goal 5: Provide adequate space for community events and meetings.

Strategy 5.1: Maintain and enhance space for community groups, cultural groups, and community functions, and provide space at a cost within reach of these groups.


Action 5.1.1: Evaluate the desirability and feasibility of establishing a “black box” theater venue at Melrose High School.

Responsibility: SD
Timeframe: 


Action 5.1.2: Consider creating an Operations Manager position for the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Performing Arts Center.

Responsibility: SD
Timeframe: 


Action 5.1.3: Continue to explore City-owned buildings and parkland to use for arts and cultural centers to provide performance, practice, studio, and community gathering space.

Responsibility: SD, ParkDep, MO
Timeframe: 


Action 5.1.4: Develop a clearinghouse of information regarding existing venues, both public and private, that are available for use, including the venue’s capacity and equipment.

Responsibility: MO
Timeframe: 

Action 5.1.5: Work with neighboring communities for regional solutions to limited cultural space.

Responsibility: MO
Timeframe: 

Action 5.1.6: Continue support of the Sally Frank’s Farmers’ Market by allowing the use of Bowden Park and Memorial Hall.

Responsibility: MO, ParkDep, MHT
Timeframe: 



Open Space and Recreation

Goal 1: Satisfy the active and passive recreation needs of present and future residents.

Strategy 1.1: Provide a variety of recreational activities throughout the City that can be enjoyed by a broad cross-section of residents, regardless of age, gender, ability, or interests.

Action 1.1.1: Continue City support of existing recreational programming at the Milano Center, Mount Hood, and through the Recreation Department.

Responsibility: MO, ParkDep, COA, MHPA

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2: Continue support of the community garden at Franklin Field.

Responsibility: ParkDep, DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.3: Ensure new development is served by adequate park space.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2: Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and undertake improvements that advance accessibility.

Action 1.2.1: Continue ongoing ADA improvements to City parks.

Responsibility: ParkDep, DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2: Add curb cuts to all sidewalks to make them accessible to people with disabilities, seniors, and those with strollers.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.3: Establish partnerships with community organizations that promote inclusive programs and activities for individuals with disabilities.

Responsibility: ParkDep, RecDep

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.3: Ensure that the need for regional facilities is addressed.

Action 1.3.1: Enhance partnerships with other municipalities in the region to plan for and create recreational facilities and protect conservation land.

Responsibility: MO, ParkDep, ConCom

Timeframe:

Action 1.3.2: Enhance partnerships with the Friends of the Fells and the Department of Conservation and Recreation to showcase the Middlesex Fells Reservation in Melrose.

Responsibility: MO, ParkDep, ConCom

Timeframe:



Strategy 1.4: Generate new and innovative ways to finance open space and recreation development and maintenance.

Action 1.4.1: Adopt the Community Preservation Act.

Responsibility: MO

Timeframe: 

Action 1.4.2: Continue to pursue funding for parks projects through the Capital Improvement Plan, the Open Space Fund, the Streetscape Improvement Fund, and grant opportunities.

Responsibility: MO, OPCD, ParkDep, ConCom

Timeframe: 

Goal 2: Improve, repair, and maintain existing park, playground, and trail facilities.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to improve the ongoing maintenance program.

Action 2.1.1: Implement an integrated pest management to control pests on City properties to reduce the use of fertilizer.

Responsibility: DPW, ParkDep, ConCom

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.2: Continue partnership with the Ell Pond Improvement Council to work on tree and park maintenance at Ell Pond.

Responsibility: DPW, ParkDep, EPIC, ConCom

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.3: Assess the availability, usage, and signage of trash and recycling receptacles at the City’s open space and recreation facilities, and address any inadequacies.

Responsibility: DPW, ParkDep, RC

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.4: Continue to support, enhance and publicize the Adopt-a-Site program.

Responsibility: CC, ParkDep, DPW, MO

Timeframe: 

Strategy 2.2: Enhance existing playing fields and parks to increase usability and longevity.

Action 2.2.1: Evaluate the desirability and feasibility of converting existing grass fields to turf fields (i.e., the Cabbage Patch, the West Knoll field, interior of Pine Banks track).

Responsibility: ParkDep, SD, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.2: Assess and replace equipment at the City’s parks and playgrounds as identified in the City of Melrose’s 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Responsibility: ParkDep, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.3: Make improvements to the Athletic Complex to enhance the player and visitor experience.

Responsibility: SD, DPW

Timeframe: 

Strategy 2.3: Improve opportunities for trail use.

Action 2.3.1: Establish a volunteer corps or Trail Committee to routinely evaluate and maintain trails.

Responsibility: ParkDep, ConCom

Timeframe: 

Action 2.3.3: Develop new consistent signage to replace outdated signage at larger Conservation Commission properties (i.e., Flagg Acres, Knox Memorial Trail, and Ferdinand Trail).

Responsibility: ConCom

Timeframe: 

Action 2.3.2: Expand and increase the curriculum to be used at the Hoover Elementary School Outdoor Classroom and nearby trails.

Responsibility: ConCom, SD

Timeframe: 

Goal 3: Preserve existing and acquire new open space, scenic areas, and environmentally sensitive lands.

Strategy 3.1: Protect conservation lands.

Action 3.1.1: Ensure that the future land use plan in the Route 99 area is compatible with neighboring conservation lands at Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.3: Continue dedicated funding through the City budget for clean-up and maintenance of conservation land.

Responsibility: ConCom, MO

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.2: Develop a targeted campaign that addresses the impact of dumping around Mount Hood, Swains Pond, and Towners Pond.

Responsibility: ConCom, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.4: Adopt cluster subdivision or Natural Resource Protection Zoning to control the development of privately-owned open space in a context-sensitive manner.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe: 

Strategy 3.2: Acquire critical unprotected parcels.

Action 3.2.1: Acquire and protect the critical properties identified in the Metro North Land Use Priority Plan published by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

Responsibility: ConCom, MO

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.2: Acquire and protect the critical properties identified in the City of Melrose's 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Responsibility: ConCom, MO

Timeframe: 

Strategy 3.3: Protect and improve the urban tree canopy.

Action 3.3.1: Reinstate the Tree Warden position, exploring the possibility of a shared employee for Melrose and neighboring municipalities.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 3.3.3: Evaluate adopting a Tree Preservation Ordinance.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe:

Action 3.3.2: Reinstate Melrose as a National Arbor Day Tree City.

Responsibility: DPW, MO

Timeframe:

Action 3.3.4: Investigate and plant tree species that will thrive in warmer climates expected in the near future.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Goal 4: Protect and improve water resources, including Ell Pond, Swains Pond, Towners Pond, and the Ponds at Mount Hood.

Strategy 4.1: Assess water quality at City ponds.

Action 4.1.1: Increase funding for water quality testing at Ell Pond and other City ponds and expand the testing program.

Responsibility: ConCom, DPW

Timeframe:

Action 4.1.2: Update the Ell Pond Master Plan to create a vision for Ell Pond and address the area’s environmental and recreation needs.

Responsibility: ConCom, DPW, ParkDep, EPIC

Timeframe:

Strategy 4.2. Develop measures to protect against eutrophication at City ponds.

Action 4.2.1: Establish strong nonpoint source reduction programs (i.e., fertilizer reduction, pet waste cleanup, animal water reduction) to reduce the nutrient inputs to ponds.

Responsibility: ConCom, DPW, ParkDep

Timeframe:

Action 4.2.2: Strengthen programs to identify and eliminate sanitary sewer cross-connections and overflows, which allow wastewater to flow into water bodies.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 4.2.3: Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects.

Responsibility: ConCom, MO, DPW

Timeframe:

Strategy 4.3: Increase educational and recreational opportunities at City ponds.

Action 4.3.1: Post signage regarding the acceptable activities at City ponds.

Responsibility: ConCom, DPW, ParkDep

Timeframe:

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Action 4.3.2: Explore opportunities for special events at City ponds, such as fishing derbies and boating activities.

Responsibility: RecDep, ParkDep

Timeframe:

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Housing

Goal 1: Encourage the creation of housing units that are affordable to a broad range of incomes.

Strategy 1.1. Promote regulations that permit a variety of residential types, ensuring Melrose residents of all ages and incomes can remain in Melrose.

Action 1.1.1. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to decrease restrictions on in-law apartments.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to regulate accessory dwelling units.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.3. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance and General Ordinances to regulate short term rentals.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.4. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to regulate cohousing in select Melrose locations.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2. Identify opportunities where the City will encourage new housing affordable to a broad range of incomes.

Action 1.2.1. Revise the Affordable Housing Incentive Program Ordinance to increase the stock of deed-restricted affordable housing in Melrose.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2. Prepare a Housing Production Plan to identify locations ideal for new housing development and include annual affordable housing production metrics for the City to target.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.3. Build relationships with mission-driven developers dedicated to building housing affordable to low and moderate income households.

Responsibility: OPCD, MO, MAHC

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.4. Adopt the Community Preservation Act.

Responsibility: MO

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.5. Explore opportunities for a “friendly 40B” – a housing development project that meets MGL Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Law requirements for development with a maximum of 25% affordable units, built by a private developer in cooperation with the City of Melrose.


Responsibility: OPCD, MO

Timeframe:




Strategy 1.3. Support the efforts of community groups and nonprofit organizations to pursue funding for affordable housing.


Action 1.3.1. Continue to proactively participate as a member of the North Suburban Consortium to obtain funding for affordable housing initiatives.

Responsibility: OPCD
Timeframe: 


Action 1.3.2. Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Responsibility: OPCD
Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.3. Consider additional incentives for affordable housing production, such as reduced or waived permit fees.

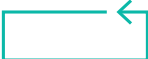
Responsibility: OPCD, IS, MO
Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.4. Develop options to increase the number of affordable housing units available to veterans.


Responsibility: OPCD, VSO
Timeframe: 

Strategy 1.4. Promote programs that lower the cost of housing.

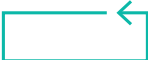
Action 1.4.1. Connect eligible first time homebuyers with the First Time Homebuyer Program provided by the North Suburban Consortium.

Responsibility: OPCD
Timeframe: 

Action 1.4.2. Develop a process to make tax lien properties available for purchase by nonprofit developers and/or the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation first, before market-driven developers.

Responsibility: OPCD, TO
Timeframe: 


Action 1.4.3. Build relationships with area banks to offer financing for first time homebuyers and attractive credit lines for nonprofit developers.

Responsibility: OPCD, MAHC
Timeframe: 


Goal 2. Encourage the creation and retention of housing that promotes diversity and equal access.

Strategy 2.1. Provide a range of housing for the entire life cycle.

Action 2.1.1. Evaluate whether micro units would fulfill a need for seniors, empty nesters, young couples, and one-person households.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB
Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.2. Continue to promote the Property Tax Work-Off Programs for seniors and people with disabilities.

Responsibility: COA, BOAssess, MO
Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.3. Establish a program that allows seniors to stay in their homes as they age, such as the At Home in Melrose Program.

Responsibility: COA, MO

Timeframe: 

Strategy 2.2. Provide a range of housing that promotes economic and housing type diversity.

Action 2.2.1. Ensure that subsidized housing units do not lose their deed-restricted affordability by monitoring deed restriction expiration dates and proactively work with property owners to renew these restrictions.

Responsibility: OPCD, MO

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.2. Continue to support the Melrose Housing Authority and the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation in their efforts to develop and maintain low-income housing.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.3. Continue strict adherence to State and Federal Fair Housing laws.

Responsibility: FHO

Timeframe: 





Economic Development

Goal 1. Support all of Melrose's business districts to enhance neighborhoods and provide new business opportunities.

Strategy 1.1. Maintain and improve Downtown Melrose as a regional shopping and dining destination and community hub for services and gathering.

Action 1.1.1. Focus on retaining current businesses as well as continuing to attract a diverse mix of businesses to the Downtown Area.

Responsibility: OPCD, CC, MO

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2. Consider establishing a Business Improvement District or Community Benefits District in Downtown.

Responsibility: OPCD, CC, MO

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2. Work to retain and attract additional business activity and mixed use development in Melrose.

Action 1.2.1. Continue to promote the sign and façade grant program.

Responsibility: OPCD, CC

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2. Work to fill vacancies, retain existing businesses, and attract additional business activity in all of the business districts.

Responsibility: CC, MO

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.3. Identify locations where additional retail space, office space, and housing could be added and consider implementing zoning changes should there be a market for redevelopment in the future.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.4. Evaluate opportunities to use large parking lots for pop-up events.

Responsibility: MO, CC

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.5. Support Hallmark Health's efforts to enhance service and provide 21st century facilities in Melrose.

Responsibility: MO, OPCD, PB, CC

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.6. Capitalize on the health care opportunity sector by identifying potential service providers willing to move to Melrose.

Responsibility: CC, MO

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.7. Review rules and regulations of liquor licensing for restaurant and specialty food establishments to reduce barriers related to operating such establishments.

Responsibility: LC, MO, CC

Timeframe:



Short Term
1-3 years



Medium Term
4-7 years



Long Term
8-10+ years



Ongoing



Strategy 1.3. Enhance the customer and visitor experience in all of Melrose’s business districts.

Action 1.3.1. Implement a Pedestrian Way-Finding Program to increase awareness of the variety of attractions and business destinations in the community.

Responsibility: OPCD, CC, MO

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.2. Install Alleyway Signage and Gateway Enhancements to draw visitors from the parking areas and provide unique identities to the alleyways to Main Street.

Responsibility: OPCD, CC, MO, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.3. Monitor the effectiveness of the new Merchant Parking Permit Program and make adjustments as needed.

Responsibility: OPCD, CC

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.4. Monitor parking issues at the Highlands Business District to understand how parking opportunities may affect future economic growth in the area.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.5. Consider streetscape and other design improvements that would make lower Main Street more cohesive and walkable.

Responsibility: OPCD, MO, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.6. Continue to hold listening sessions in the business districts and address any concerns appropriately.

Responsibility: PD, DPW

Timeframe: 

Goal 2. Support local and small businesses.

Strategy 2.1. Connect with local businesses in the City to understand their needs.

Action 2.1.1. Reinvigorate the City’s Business Development Team.

Responsibility: MO

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.2. Update the “Permitting 101” guide and promote its availability and use.

Responsibility: MO, OPCD, BC

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.3. Evaluate the desirability for an Economic Development position in the City.

Responsibility: MO, OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.4. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop events to market restaurants and other businesses in Melrose.

Responsibility: MO

Timeframe: 



Goal 3. Promote economic development and increase the tax base by encouraging business development and redevelopment.

Strategy 3.1. Ensure zoning districts encourage economic development.

Action 3.1.1. Evaluate the BC District to promote additional mixed use in these areas.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.2. Review the BD regulations to remove barriers for medical use development.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.3. Evaluate the desirability of urban agriculture regulations in the Zoning Ordinance or General Ordinance.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB, HD

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.4. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit medical offices on the first floor in all business districts, except the BD District.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.5. Reach out to property owners in the Rail Corridor Overlay District to understand if there is any potential for redevelopment.

Responsibility: OPCD, MO

Timeframe: 

Strategy 3.2. Identify optimal land uses for the Route 99 area and adjust zoning to encourage preferred redevelopment.

Action 3.2.1. Continue to plan for the expiration of the Waste Management lease on the Route 99 parcel.

Responsibility: OPCD, MO

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.2. Work with the Town of Saugus on planning for the closing of the Aggregate Industries quarry to ensure that redevelopment is compatible and cross-beneficial.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.3. Conduct a public process to develop a future vision for this area, including working with property owners about redevelopment options and constraints.

Responsibility: OPCD

Timeframe: 



Infrastructure and Facilities

Goal 1. Create an organized, deliberate, and holistic approach to community-wide infrastructure improvements.

Strategy 1.1. Finalize planning tools for each infrastructure system.

Action 1.1.1. Complete inventory of lead water service pipes and continue testing at school properties.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2. Complete water meter replacement.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.3. Complete pavement management assessment.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.4. Finalize the long-term Capital Efficiency Plan for water main capital improvements.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.5. Finalize the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.

Responsibility: DPW, CSWG

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.6. Further pursue the recommendations of the 604b study for Ell Pond and green infrastructure as feasible.

Responsibility: DPW, ConCom, EPIC

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.7. Complete the base flood elevation analysis for approval by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2. Achieve high standards across private developments and public works projects.

Action 1.2.1. Develop written policies, standards, and details for the installation of water, sewer, and drainage lines, as well as roadways and sidewalks.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2. Continue to actively work with National Grid to consistently improve the gas infrastructure coordination to reduce costs, time, and impacts on residents.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:



Action 1.2.3. Continue to review and approve locations for private utilities within the right-of-way through the Grant of Location process.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 1.2.4. Continue to advocate for removal of double utility poles throughout Melrose.

Responsibility: DPW, BOA, PB

Timeframe: 

Strategy 1.3. Upgrade infrastructure to ensure that delivery of services is achieved.

Action 1.3.1. Continue to replace water pipes with cement lined ductile iron pipe.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.2. Update the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Responsibility: DPW, EM, OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.3. Improve backup power to the five sewer pump stations.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.4. Remove infiltration and inflow (I/I) where cost effective.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.5. Reenergize the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) with Melrose projects.

Responsibility: DPW, CSWG, MO, OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.6. Enhance service level and reduce negative impacts to water bodies by going beyond compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit for small municipal (MS4) drainage systems.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.7. Install a generator at City Hall.

Responsibility: DPW, IT

Timeframe: 

Action 1.3.8. Develop an Information Technology Plan with a strong emphasis on security.

Responsibility: IT

Timeframe: 

Strategy 1.4. Continue to remove barriers to waste reduction and diversion.

Action 1.4.1. Explore the viability and potential impact of introducing a City-wide mandatory recycling ordinance.

Responsibility: DPW, RC

Timeframe: 

Action 1.4.2. Promote that businesses can recycle at the City Yard.

Responsibility: DPW, RC, CC

Timeframe: 

Action 1.4.3. Explore opportunities with third-party companies to provide expanded curbside recycling removal from multifamily structures and businesses.

Responsibility: DPW, RC

Timeframe: 

Action 1.4.4. Adopt a plastic bag ban ordinance.

Responsibility: RC, BOA, CC

Timeframe: 

Action 1.4.5. Remove polystyrene (Styrofoam) trays in the schools.

Responsibility: DPW, RC, SD

Timeframe: 

Action 1.4.6. Work proactively with businesses and institutions in Melrose to help identify responsible food-waste disposal options.

Responsibility: DPW, RC, SD, CC

Timeframe: 

Goal 2. Provide adequate funding for infrastructure and public facility improvements on an annual basis.

Strategy 2.1. Fund water and sewer capital projects.

Action 2.1.1. Consistently set water and sewer rates at a level that allows for funds to accrue in the Enterprise Funds to be used for capital projects.

Responsibility: WSC, BOA

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.2. Continue to pursue grants, such as MWRA grants, to cover partial costs of capital projects.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Strategy 2.2. Fund the removal of Infiltration and Inflow (I/I).

Action 2.2.1. Annually review the I/I Mitigation Fee Ordinance fee structure.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.2. Pursue MWRA grants for I/I removal.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.3. Evaluate other sources to fund I/I removal, including the sewer enterprise fund.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Strategy 2.3. Provide sufficient funding for road and sidewalk repairs.

Action 2.3.1. Continue to diversify the sources of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state funds.

Responsibility: MO, Auditor, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.3.2. Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually.

Responsibility: MO, DPW

Timeframe: 



Strategy 2.4. Fund stormwater improvements.

Action 2.4.1. Continue to fund stormwater improvements through the general fund.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.4.3. Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects.

Responsibility: ConCom, MO, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.4.2. Allocate annual funding for compliance with the NPDES MS4 stormwater permit.

Responsibility: DPW, MO

Timeframe: 

Strategy 2.5. Utilize the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process for all non-water and sewer projects, including school facilities.

Action 2.5.1. Implement and fund the CIP annually.

Responsibility: MO, Auditor, OPCD, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.5.2. Review and update the guidelines for the CIP.

Responsibility: MO, Auditor, OPCD

Timeframe: 

Action 2.5.3. Determine appropriate funding sources, including grants, state funds, supplemental budget funds, bonds, and debt-exclusions, and establish funding levels annually.

Responsibility: MO, Auditor

Timeframe: 

Strategy 2.6. Pursue funding for critical building projects.

Action 2.6.1. Continue proactive repair and upgrades to aging school facilities.

Responsibility: MO, OPCD, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.6.2. Complete a new comprehensive analysis and study of the existing public safety properties including an analysis of funding options.

Responsibility: MO, Auditor, PSBC, FD, PD

Timeframe: 

Action 2.6.3. Pursue funding for future Melrose Public Library and Memorial Hall renovation projects.

Responsibility: OPCD, MHT, LT

Timeframe: 

Action 2.6.4. Support continued use of the MSBA funding for school building projects.

Responsibility: OPCD, MO

Timeframe: 





Transportation and Circulation

Goal 1. Promote active transportation, including walking and biking.

Strategy 1.1. Increase active transportation and recreation options by increasing facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.

Action 1.1.1. Implement the Complete Streets Policy and evaluate effectiveness with the Complete Streets Working Group at least annually.

Responsibility: DPW, CSWG

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2. Require sidewalks in new subdivisions.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.3. Evaluate existing roadways for opportunities to add sidewalks where sidewalks are currently unavailable and create a priority list of new sidewalk opportunities.

Responsibility: DPW, CSWG

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.4. Design all new and rehabilitation projects with consideration of active transportation amenities.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.5. Recommend the inclusion of active transportation amenities in private development reviews.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.6. Investigate the feasibility of a bike share program

Responsibility: PBAC

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2. Create a more supportive environment to encourage walking and biking.

Action 1.2.1. Create and implement a bicycle network, which would include a system of on and off-road routes for cyclists to safely access Oak Grove, the Commuter Rail stations, business districts, schools, parks, and regional trails.

Responsibility: DPW, CSWG, PBAC

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2. Encourage “walking school buses” to increase the number of students and families walking to school.

Responsibility: HD, SD, PTOs, PBAC

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.3. Continue to provide information on Massachusetts bicycle laws, create a map of local bicycle amenities, and install signage that clarifies the rules of the road.

Responsibility: PBAC, MO, DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.4. Educate the public on active transportation benefits and sharing the road.

Responsibility: MIMC, PBAC, MO

Timeframe:



Short Term
1-3 years



Medium Term
4-7 years



Long Term
8-10+ years



Ongoing



160



Action 1.2.5. Continue to pursue funding and training opportunities through the Massachusetts Safe Routes to Schools program.

Responsibility: SD, PTOs

Timeframe:   

Action 1.2.6. Study, increase, and improve pedestrian crossings City-wide.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Strategy 1.3. Prioritize funding for amenities for walking, biking, and transit users over funding that primarily benefits personal automobiles.

Action 1.3.1. Pursue construction funding from MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program.

Responsibility: DPW, CSWG, MO

Timeframe:   

Action 1.3.2. Look for opportunities to incorporate walking and biking accommodations in projects funded through Chapter 90, local bonds, and City funding sources.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Strategy 1.4. Support regional off-road trail networks.

Action 1.4.1. Install or improve signage to make more people aware of existing networks.

Responsibility: DPW, ParkDep, ConCom, PBAC

Timeframe:   

Action 1.4.2. Host community walking or biking events across the City to increase awareness and improve resident comfort with using regional trails.

Responsibility: PBAC

Timeframe: 

Goal 2. Advocate for continued MBTA Commuter Rail, Orange Line, Bus, and "The Ride" services and encourage use of MBTA transit.

Strategy 2.1. Maintain a strong presence on the MBTA Advisory Board.

Action 2.1.1. Ensure that a representative of Melrose regularly attends MBTA Advisory Board meetings and coordinates with the appropriate City Officials.

Responsibility: MO, DPW

Timeframe:   

Action 2.1.2. Communicate MBTA Advisory Board priorities, decisions, and how the Melrose representative intends to vote to residents and businesses.

Responsibility: MO

Timeframe:   

Action 2.1.3. Seek feedback and participation in advisory efforts from Melrose residents and business owners.

Responsibility: MO

Timeframe:   

Strategy 2.2. Advocate for maintaining station area amenities in good repair, and for providing additional amenities to facilitate increased transit use.

Action 2.2.1. Maintain bike parking facilities at Commuter Rail Stations.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.2. Work with the MBTA, the City of Malden, and the Melrose and Malden Pedestrian and Bike Committees to identify improvements to bicycle parking and circulation for bicyclists at Oak Grove.

Responsibility: MO, DPW, PBAC

Timeframe: 

Action 2.2.3. Work with the MBTA and City of Malden to repair Banks Place and Washington Street and upgrade these roads to a Complete Streets design.

Responsibility: MO, DPW, CSWG

Timeframe: 

Goal 3. Facilitate the efficient and safe flow of traffic.

Strategy 3.1. Update signal equipment.

Action 3.1.1. Update signal equipment to include pedestrian countdown signals and to reduce wait time for pedestrians in Downtown and other popular destinations.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Strategy 3.2. Address speeding concerns on area roads.

Action 3.2.1. Implement the 25 mph program and monitor success.

Responsibility: DPW, PD, TC

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.2. Implement traffic calming strategies where there are high incidents of vehicular and pedestrian accidents.

Responsibility: DPW, CSWG, TC

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.3. Fund and install speed indicator signs in areas with known speeding concerns.

Responsibility: DPW, PD, TC

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.4. Develop and disseminate a public education campaign about speeding and Vision Zero concepts for Melrose.

Responsibility: DPW, PD, PBAC

Timeframe: 

Action 3.2.5. Consider allocating funds in the City budget for traffic calming and traffic management pilot projects.

Responsibility: DPW, PD

Timeframe: 



Energy and Sustainability

Goal 1. Reduce municipal sector energy use.

Strategy 1.1. Create a robust program of regularly scheduled preventative building maintenance and ongoing commissioning.

Action 1.1.1. Retain skilled facility management staff by providing ongoing building operator training.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2. Perform annual measurement and verification of energy efficiency measures through 2029 as stipulated in the ESCO project.

Responsibility: DPW, EEM

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2. Target the largest energy users for further energy reduction measures.

Action 1.2.1. Retrofit all building lighting to LED fixtures with new generation sensors and controls.

Responsibility: DPW, SD, EEM

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2. Update and replace outdated energy management controls at Lincoln Elementary School.

Responsibility: DPW, SD, EEM

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.3. Convert Melrose High School cafeteria kitchen appliances to energy efficient models.

Responsibility: DPW, SD, EEM

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.4. Perform ongoing commissioning activities at Melrose High School, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, Roosevelt and Lincoln Elementary Schools.

Responsibility: DPW, SD, EEM

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.3. Secure funding to support municipal energy reduction efforts.

Action 1.3.1. Seek new energy reduction opportunities with upgraded equipment and controls using Green Community grant funding, utility incentives, and new funding opportunities.

Responsibility: DPW, EEM, EC

Timeframe:

Action 1.3.2. Establish an Energy Efficiency Revolving Account from portions of incentive funds, project savings, and other sources to fund future energy efficiency projects.

Responsibility: Auditor, EEM

Timeframe:



Strategy 1.4. Reduce street light, parking lot, and park lighting energy usage beyond the already-achieved reduction from LED conversions.

Action 1.4.1. Purchase and install a lighting control system to cut down on energy use between 11PM and 4AM in appropriate areas.

Responsibility: DPW

Timeframe: 

Strategy 1.5. Continue to reduce municipal fleet fuel use.

Action 1.5.1. Make all eligible replacement vehicles electric or hybrid.

Responsibility: DPW, FD, PD

Timeframe: 

Action 1.5.2. “Right-size” the fleet and dispose of unnecessary fleet vehicles.

Responsibility: DPW, FD, PD

Timeframe: 

Action 1.5.3. Install anti-idling devices on all City vehicles.

Responsibility: DPW, FD, PD

Timeframe: 

Action 1.5.4. Switch to bio-diesel (B20 waste oil).

Responsibility: DPW, FD, PD

Timeframe: 

Strategy 1.6. Increase demand for renewable energy.

Action 1.6.1. Pursue renewable energy opportunities on municipal buildings, parking lot carports, and open space.

Responsibility: DPW, EEM, EC

Timeframe: 

Action 1.6.2. Increase the percentage of Class 1 Renewable Energy Credits in Melrose Community Electricity Aggregation Program to create more demand for local renewable energy projects in Massachusetts.

Responsibility: EEM

Timeframe: 

Goal 2. Continue to work with residents to reduce residential energy usage.

Strategy 2.1. Continue to provide opportunities that promote residential energy efficiency by relying less on fossil fuels.

Action 2.1.1. Continue to support the volunteer Melrose Energy Commission.

Responsibility: MO, EEM, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.2. Pursue grant funding, special initiatives and challenges, and other funding opportunities to support residential efforts in reducing energy usage.

Responsibility: EEM, EC, OPCD, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.3. Evaluate potential host sites for community solar opportunities.

Responsibility: EEM, EC, OPCD, DPW

Timeframe: 

Action 2.1.4. Provide charging station infrastructure in every municipal parking lot.

Responsibility: EEM, EC, DPW

Timeframe: 

Goal 3. Reduce commercial sector energy use.

Strategy 3.1. Provide opportunities that promote commercial energy efficiency.

Action 3.1.1. Facilitate the adoption of C-PACE for commercial energy efficiency project financing.

Responsibility: MO, EEM, EC, CC

Timeframe: 

Action 3.1.2. Implement a green business initiative based on the survey of local businesses conducted in early 2016 to encourage “green” business practices.

Responsibility: MO, EEM, EC, CC

Timeframe: 

Goal 4. Position the City of Melrose to be prepared for climate change.

Strategy 4.1. Advance initiatives on climate preparedness and resiliency.


Action 4.1.1. Continue to be active in the Metro Mayor’s Climate Change Taskforce.

Responsibility: MO, EEM, EC

Timeframe: 

Action 4.1.2. Prepare a Vulnerability Assessment for the City of Melrose infrastructure.

Responsibility: DPW, EEM, EM

Timeframe: 

Action 4.1.3. Develop a micro-grid system to increase energy resiliency in Melrose from future power grid outages.

Responsibility: DPW, EEM, EM

Timeframe: 

Action 4.1.4. Plan for the goal to be Net Zero by 2050.

Responsibility: DPW, EEM, EC

Timeframe: 





Land Use and Zoning

Goal 1. Maintain the character of Melrose's natural, scenic, and built environment.

Strategy 1.1. Perform a thorough review of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to ensure all new development is consistent with the character of Melrose.

Action 1.1.1. Create more detailed design review guidelines as part of the Site Plan Review Ordinance.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.2. Review and amend the Subdivision Regulations to ensure that new development complements existing neighborhoods.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB, DPW

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.3. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to decrease restrictions of the existing Cluster Development Ordinance.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.4. Complete a comprehensive review of the parking regulations, including the residential parking permit program.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.5. Review and amend, as appropriate, the townhouse use in residential zoning districts.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.1.6. Review and amend, as appropriate, the density and dimension regulations for the UR-D District.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Strategy 1.2. Remove common barriers in the Zoning Ordinance to simplify the permitting process.

Action 1.2.1. Recodify the Zoning Ordinance.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB, BC

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.2. Amend the definition of corner lots.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB, ZBA

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.3. Amend the nonconforming section of the Zoning Ordinance.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB, ZBA

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.4. Allow compact vehicle parking spaces.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB

Timeframe:

Action 1.2.5. Review the Zoning Ordinance for consistency with state law and amend as necessary.

Responsibility: OPCD, PB, ZBA, BC

Timeframe:




Strategy 1.3. Promote regulations that permit a variety of residential types for Melrose residents (see Housing actions).

Strategy 1.4. Ensure zoning districts encourage economic development (see Economic Development action).

Strategy 1.5. Update and maintain the City’s land use data and zoning ordinance to reflect state-of-the-art information management and decision-making capabilities.

Action 1.5.1. Continue to maintain strong Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping capacity.

Responsibility: OPCD
Timeframe: 

Action 1.5.2. Ensure that the City’s ability to manage land use data evolves with changing technologies and trends.

Responsibility: OPCD, Assessor, IT
Timeframe: 

