

**Town of Hopkinton**  
**Planning Board**  
**Growth Study Committee**



**April 2021**



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## Executive Summary

The Growth Study Committee was formed in the summer of 2019 as a sub-committee of the Planning Board, and charged with studying how to:

- Proactively manage growth.
- Enable better planning for town services.
- Identify parcels or zones that may have a significant impact on future growth patterns within the Town.
- Create plans to ensure continued use that is in the best interest of Hopkinton.
- Be proactive about maintaining the level of required affordable housing inventory in town.

The work of fall 2019 was to gather data and identify trends. We reviewed a combination of Hopkinton population growth, financial data, and housing development over time. At the same time, we looked at similar data from over thirty towns in eastern Massachusetts, both neighboring towns to Hopkinton and “peer” towns further afield.

This data was all presented at two community forums in December 2019, and January 2020. Among the more interesting findings presented:

- Hopkinton’s population has grown at a steady pace since 1980 with particular bubbles occurring in the 1990’s when population jumped 45% and again over the last ten years at 24%. The slowest growth of the last 40 years occurred in the decade from 2000 to 2010.
- The percentage of Hopkinton’s population made up by school children has remained steady at right around 22% -- not dissimilar to peer towns, and our per-pupil expenditure of around \$ 15,000 is in line with peer towns
- Our average tax bill of \$ 10,640 is mid-range amongst the four peer towns which were studied in more depth (Acton, Medfield, Westborough, and Westford).
- Our non-Legacy school population is slightly lower than it was ten years ago, but Legacy has added 560 new students to date to our population.
- The non-Legacy students per house-hold is .61. For Legacy, the number is .70

A COVID hiatus delayed further committee work until the fall of 2020 when we re-focused on five areas aligned with our original charge:

- Continued bench-marking against other towns.
- Developing a financial modelling project with the town finance department.
- Mapping and evaluating remaining large, unprotected parcels of land.
- Advocating for establishing an economic development office in Town Hall
- Developing a series of potential planning initiatives

We worked extensively with the town’s chief financial officer, Tim O’Leary, School Superintendent, Carol Cavanaugh, and Land Use Department head Elaine Lazarus to encourage the sharing of information which could enable more accurate predictability of

housing development, revenue growth, and student populations. Though there are certain parcels of developable land in town, much of the remaining open space is tied up with such entities as the Hopkinton Country Club, the Hopkinton Sportsman's Association, The YMCA, and the Laborers Training Center. Other parcels in private hands may be developed over time, but there is no land to develop on the scale of Legacy Farms. We suggest that the Town, through the Planning Board, become aware of properties not already developed and look for ways to protect them or to encourage minimum impact development.

We encourage the town to prioritize effective growth management strategies in two areas:

1. The industrial zones on South and Lumber Streets, and in Elmwood Park
2. The greater downtown area.

With respect to the greater downtown and the Main Street Corridor, we have included an extensive section on various zoning initiatives to protect the existing historic residential look and feel of the area. At the same time, it will encourage greater density of development and redevelopment in a broader range of uses to include, for example, restaurants and inns. By encouraging greater density in already developed areas, there is potential to develop housing at a variety of price points. Several factors can contribute to cost reduction, including unit size, pre-existing infrastructure, and reduced land costs due to more units per acre.

For the industrial areas, our recommendation is to develop a stronger focus on understanding the commercial real estate market, particularly whether mixed commercial and residential uses will make sense in the post-COVID workspace environment. With life science already having a strong presence in town, the opportunity to expand it is obvious, but to do so will require outreach to new and existing firms, having infrastructure fully in place, and offering a streamlined, albeit rigorous, permitting process.

Hopkinton is an attractive town – well-managed, with up-to-date municipal facilities, lots of open space and park lands, and well-regarded public schools. The recently released National Research Center's Citizen Satisfaction Survey showed very positive results in all categories (except public transportation). It appears we are, in fact, managing our growth very well. It is the hope of the Growth Study Committee that our work over the last eighteen months will be helpful in continuing the town's success into the future.

## **Introduction**

Much of Hopkinton's physical attractiveness results from its large areas of state park, town park, and other open space. To experience Hopkinton – even on its main roads (Route 495, 135, and 85) is to sense a wooded wilderness removed from suburban sprawl. And thanks to our Open Space Landscape Preservation by-law many of our sub-divisions are surrounded by protected woodlands. There are miles and miles of “wilderness” trails for hiking, biking, and riding. Being on the water in Hopkinton State Park or on Lake Whitehall is to feel far more than the mere 26.2 miles running distance from Boston.

The construction of Interstate 495 fifty years ago literally put Hopkinton “on the map”. Suddenly, we were at the crossroads of New England – halfway from Boston to Worcester, Providence to Manchester. People and businesses would circle the Mass Pike / 495 interchange on a map and look here for a place to live and work. Before 495 the Hopkinton demographic was described as “rural blue collar”. Today we are home to a highly educated population working in town for two large global corporations and many smaller start-ups, as well as commuting all over eastern Massachusetts in a wide variety of occupations. Hopkinton's job base has the highest average salary of any town in MetroWest. Our school system is top ranked in Massachusetts.

## **Origin and Purpose**

In 2005 long time Hopkinton business, Weston Nurseries, announced that it would sell its over 1,000 acres of land on the open market. Following a multi-year public and private planning process, the large Open Space Mixed Use Development now known as Legacy Farms was approved through a series of Town Meeting votes and Select Board and Planning Board actions.

In 2019 the rapid development at Legacy Farms, coupled with a newly completed 280-unit apartment project near 495, resulted in citizen petition to institute a development moratorium at the 2019 Town Meeting. The petitioners failed to achieve Planning Board endorsement and ultimately moved for no action at Town Meeting. Recognizing, however, that the growth issue was of real concern in town, the Planning Board established the Growth Study Committee (GSC) to evaluate the impacts of potential future growth and to recommend actions and policies to manage it.

## **Planning Board Charge**

Hopkinton Growth Study Committee Mission, Aims & Deliverables (As discussed and voted on by the Planning Board on 5/29/19 & 6/10/19) were/are as follows:

### **Mission Statement**

Hopkinton is endowed with open space, natural resources, facilities and programs that promote a well-educated and healthy community. The mission of this project, utilizing public input, analytics, and objective experts, is to examine growth trends and development within the Town of Hopkinton and identify and recommend actions to ensure Hopkinton can continue to support its citizens throughout their lives to the highest of standards in education, public safety, health, and protection of natural resources.

### **Specifically, the project aims to:**

- Proactively manage growth;
- Enable better planning for town services;
- Identify parcels or zones that may have a significant impact on future growth patterns within the Town create plans to ensure continued use that is in the best interest of Hopkinton; and
- Be proactive about maintaining the level of required affordable housing inventory in town.

### **Deliverables shall include:**

- Summary of public input collected throughout the project;
- Financial impact assessment of growth (residential and commercial) over the past 10 years (by zoned area);
- Forecast model of growth and financial impact (forward looking) by zoned area over the next 10 years;
- Identification and prioritization of current parcels and/or zones with highest potential for growth/change. Recommend optimal land uses/practices for each and contingency plans if alternative uses are proposed; and
- Create POA (Plan of Action) that incorporates major stakeholders (other boards, town leadership, etc.) and includes cadence and deliverables for ongoing growth monitoring.

### **Membership:**

The appointed committee included two members of the Planning Board, two members of the Hopkinton Chamber of Commerce, three citizens at-large, and two alternates. In addition, there were formal liaison members from the Hopkinton School Committee, Appropriation Committee, and Select Board.

## Work of the Committee

Thus charged, the Growth Study Committee began work in late summer 2019 with significant data collection effort including Hopkinton's growth history and bench-marking against neighboring and peer communities. This effort led up to two reports to the public in interactive forums in December 2019 and January 2020. The intent was two-fold:

- 1) To determine to what extent Hopkinton was unique among area towns (if at all)
- 2) To put the current rapid development into historic perspective – Have we seen this before? How have we handled it? What mechanisms are in place to manage it in the future?

The slide presentations for the public forums are available here:

[Final - Growth Study Committee Forum Slide Set - Google Slides](#)

[Growth Study Committee Forum Slide Set 1-9-20 - Final - Google Slides](#)

and in Appendix A

The HCAM videos of the presentations are available here:

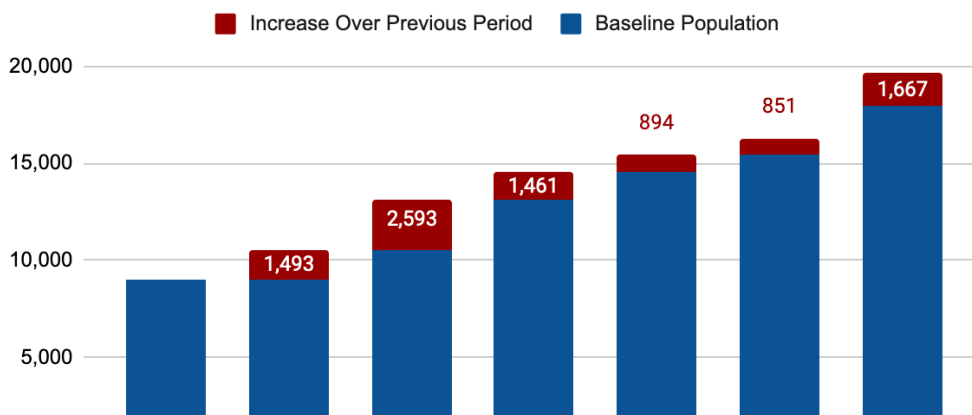
[Growth Study Committee Work Shop: November 20, 2019 - YouTube](#)

[Hopkinton Growth Study Committee Workshop Forum: January 9, 2019 - YouTube.](#)

The GSC met with the school department, the town finance department, the police and fire chiefs, and the Department of Public Works Director to receive input and thinking about what lay ahead in terms of infrastructure and employment needs. In addition, these meetings provided a well-rounded tutorial regarding operations of the town.

The following is a sampling of the data collected:

Hopkinton Population Change in 5-Year Increments 1990-2020

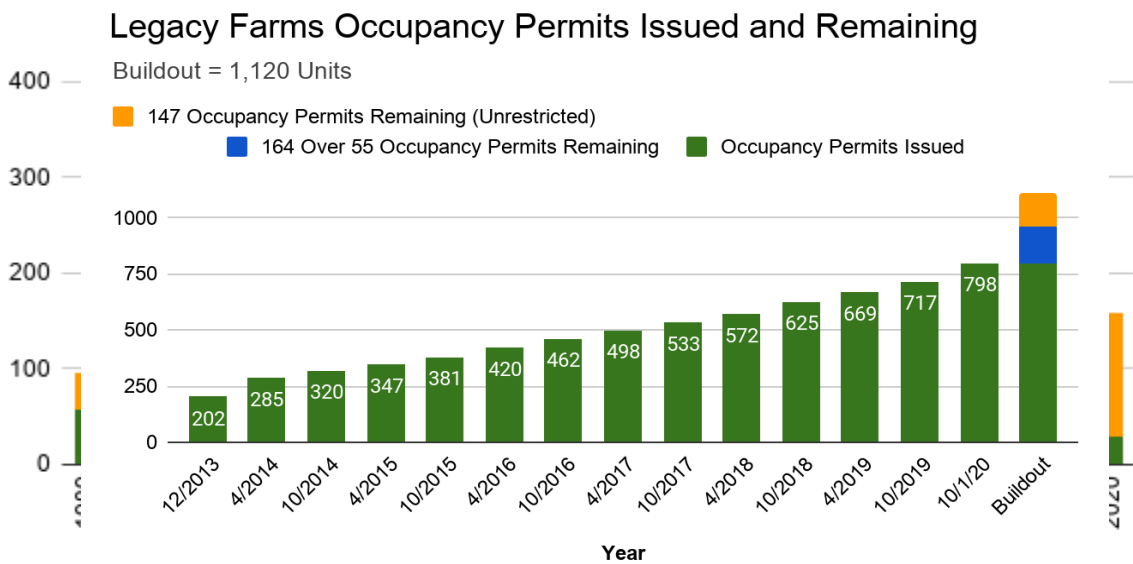




The two charts below show Hopkinton’s population growth and development history over the last three decades. There was a surge in single-family home building in the 1990’s and a similar surge after 2011, but in more dense multi-family units. (the spike in 2016 building permits is attributable to the 280-unit apartment project on Lumber Street).

SOURCE: Town Clerk’s Office 3/23/21

### Hopkinton Residential Building Permits by Year



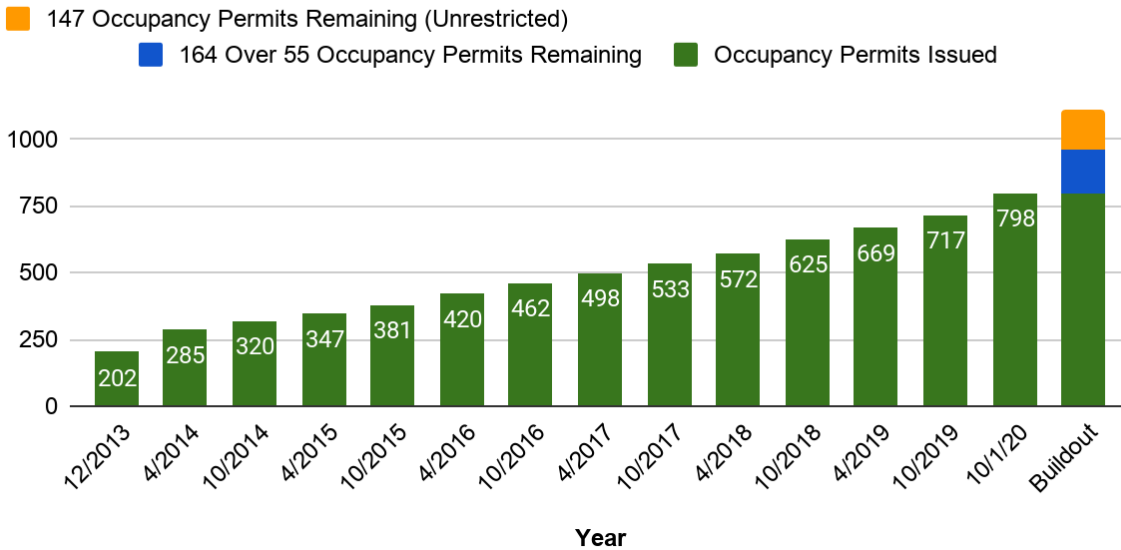
Principal  
April 1, 2021

Planner

For Legacy Farms, specifically, one can see that the pace of development has slowed as the project nears completion

## Legacy Farms Occupancy Permits Issued and Remaining

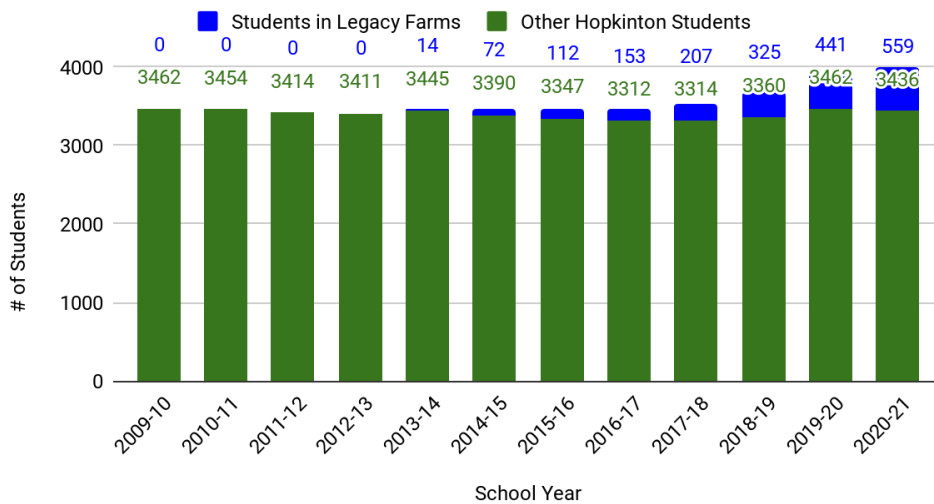
Buildout = 1,120 Units



SOURCE: Principal Planner 3/24/21

Legacy has contributed significantly to an increase in school population (559 students). It is interesting to note that, though there has been a steady volume of new development outside of Legacy, the school population created has been a net zero over ten years.

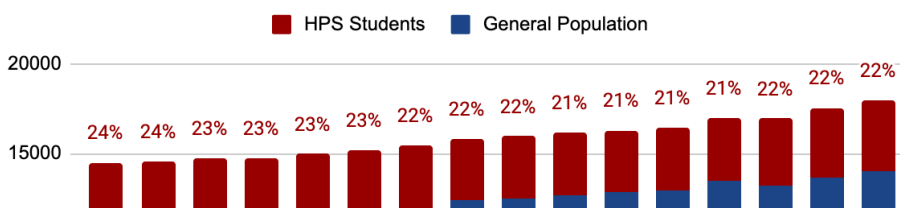
## Legacy Farms Enrollment



Superintendent's Office 10/1/20

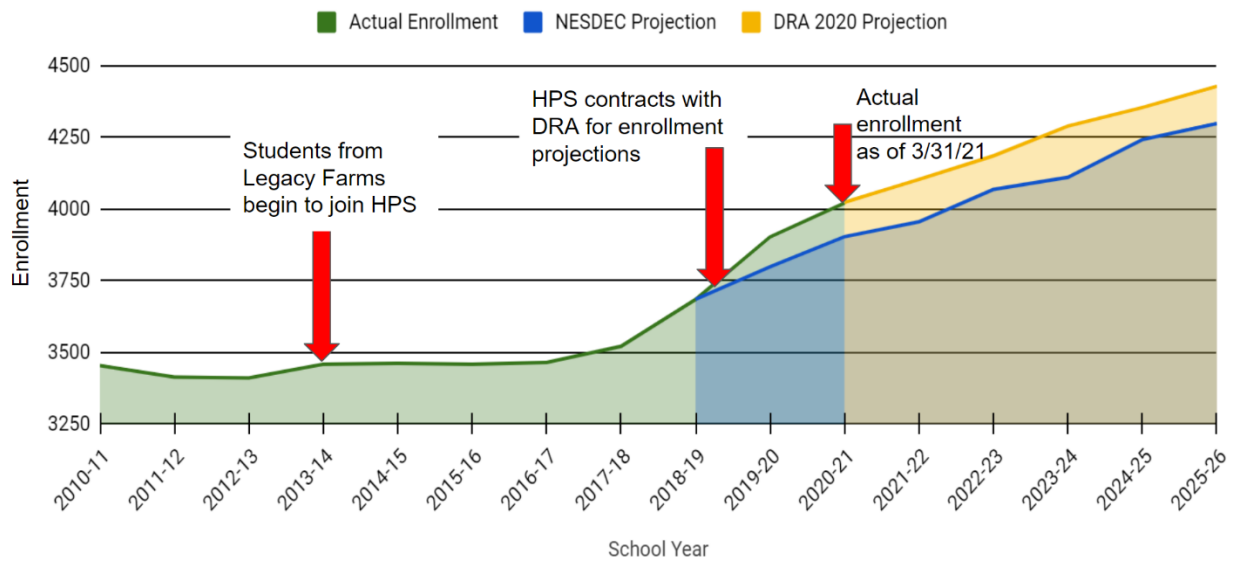
SOURCE:

## Percentage of HPS Students of the Total Population (21-24%)



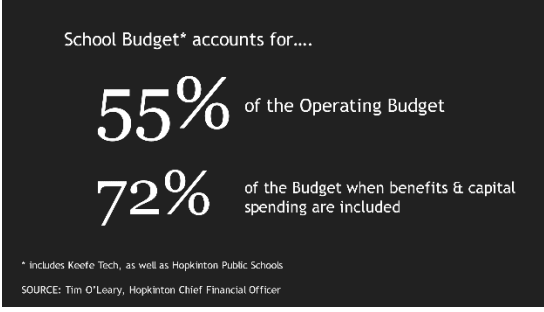
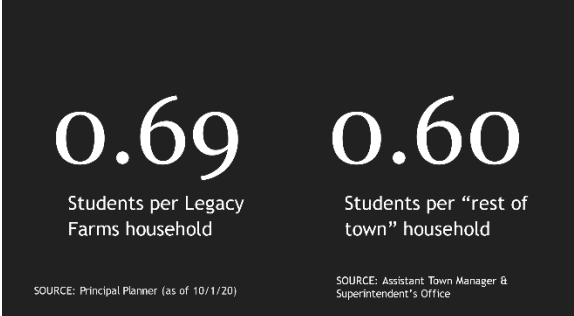
SOURCE: Town Clerk's Office 3/23/21. DESE 10/1/20.

### HPS PreK-12 Enrollment Over Time



Shows PreK-12 enrollment, does not include vocational, charter, out of district, home school, school choice or local private schools.  
**NOTE:** 2020 Numbers are artificially low due to the pandemic.  
 SOURCES: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 NESDEC Reports. 2020 DRA Report. DESE.

**Finally, here is a town “dashboard” – the most current data from a variety of sources:**



## Summary of Public Input: Public Forums

Forums to share information and gather public input were held on November 20, 2019 at 7pm at Hopkinton High School with members of the public plus town officials attending, and on January 9, 2020 at the Hopkinton Senior Center. Both forums followed a similar agenda in which the GSC presented historical and current data concerning growth in Hopkinton, compared Hopkinton's growth patterns to surrounding and peer towns, then met in small group break-out sessions, led by members of the GSC, to provide attendees the opportunity to express their thoughts, ideas, and concerns on Hopkinton's growth.

The GSC used the following key questions to guide break-out discussions:

- Was there anything you were surprised about?
- What else would you like to learn?
- What would you like us to research further?
- What ideas do you have?
- What do you believe are contributing factors affecting Hopkinton's growth?
- Do you think the town should be proactive in maintaining and/or growing our commercial and industrial areas?

Themes to each key question emerged during discussions which helped guide the ongoing work of the committee and are presented below.

### **Was there anything you were surprised about?**

1. Attendees expressed that it feels like we are experiencing more growth than we have in the past, but the data suggest a consistent growth pattern over time that generally mirrors neighboring/peer towns.
2. There was skepticism of the data presented by the GSC to support the notion that a large residential development (i.e. Legacy Farms) "pays for itself" in terms of schools and public safety needs.
3. Attendees questioned the data indicating Hopkinton has .60 students per household.

### **What else would you like to learn?**

1. Attendees asked fiscal management questions regarding borrowing and the debt calendar, debt services and why some are excluded from the levy limit, tax implications of large capital projects, and the impact of all this on long-term residents of the town for whom increasing taxes are a struggle.
2. Attendees wanted to know how the commercial/industrial growth of neighboring towns may impact Hopkinton (i.e., Amazon in Westborough)
3. There were concerns expressed for how/when we reach a growth plateau, and where our "breaking point" may be.

### **What would you like us to research further?**

1. Traffic was brought up in nearly every breakout session. Questions and ideas include whether there has been a traffic study of the number of cars travelling through Hopkinton, what could Hopkinton do with that information to manage the traffic, and whether traffic is factored into the approval of new residential construction.
2. How will new growth revenue be affected once Legacy Farms is complete?
3. What can Hopkinton do to keep “non-student households” in town; specifically, to keep empty nesters from moving out? Attendees made suggestions of 55+ communities, more affordable senior housing, and more single floor 2-3 bedroom homes.
4. How much more development is possible given the remaining available open space in town, and what is being done to prepare or plan should those large parcels come for sale?
5. Are we about to embark on an infrastructure upgrade (schools & public safety) during this peak population growth? Is now the right time to do it? Some attendees were concerned we did not have infrastructure in place to continue to provide services to citizens, while others worried what could happen if we experience a future decline in population.

### **What ideas do you have?**

1. Transportation: Attendees once again brought up the issue of heavy traffic in town and suggested alternative transportation ideas (busing, ride-share, looking at what other towns have done about this). Additionally, residents are looking for more accessible parking downtown.
2. Preservation of open space: Attendees wanted to preserve the rural feel of town, were concerned about loss of wetlands, and would like the town to “put value on the intangibles” such as walkability and rural character.
3. Attracting services to the town to support all age groups, school-aged to seniors: It was noted in several discussions that many residents go to surrounding towns for most of their services and entertainment (Westborough and Milford). How might Hopkinton attract and maintain those services and entertainment businesses?

## **What do you believe are contributing factors affecting Hopkinton's growth?**

In general, attendees in all breakout sessions came to nearly identical conclusions to this question:

1. Schools
2. Safety
3. Character of the town
4. Being on the top-10 lists for 'good things'
5. The Marathon
6. Location (close to commuter rail and major highways)
7. Open space, trails, lakes

## **Do you think the town should be proactive in maintaining and/or growing our commercial and industrial areas?**

Attendees at both forums unanimously agreed the town must be proactive in maintaining commercial & industrial business development in Hopkinton to maintain or increase our 16% commercial tax revenue. Discussions focused on three major themes:

1. Creation of town positions to effectively manage commercial/industrial growth: Attendees were generally in support of creating a Grant Writer and/or an Economic Development Officer to attract companies in the Boston/Cambridge area to come to South Street on the 495 belt. Discussion also included bringing in diversified small-businesses (a mix of services) and increasing commercial/industrial tax revenue.
2. How the Town will manage when Dell/EMC downsizes and/or leaves Hopkinton: Discussions surrounded whether Hopkinton is poised to absorb this potential loss in commercial tax revenue and how that may be proactively managed.
3. The already empty office buildings on South Street: Suggestions for zoning changes to allow the empty buildings to be converted into entertainment (i.e. Apex) or other uses.

## **Growth Study Year 2**

Covid 19 halted the committee's work until September 2020. With new focus in the fall, the GSC worked on five areas which generally respond to the original mandate from the Planning Board:

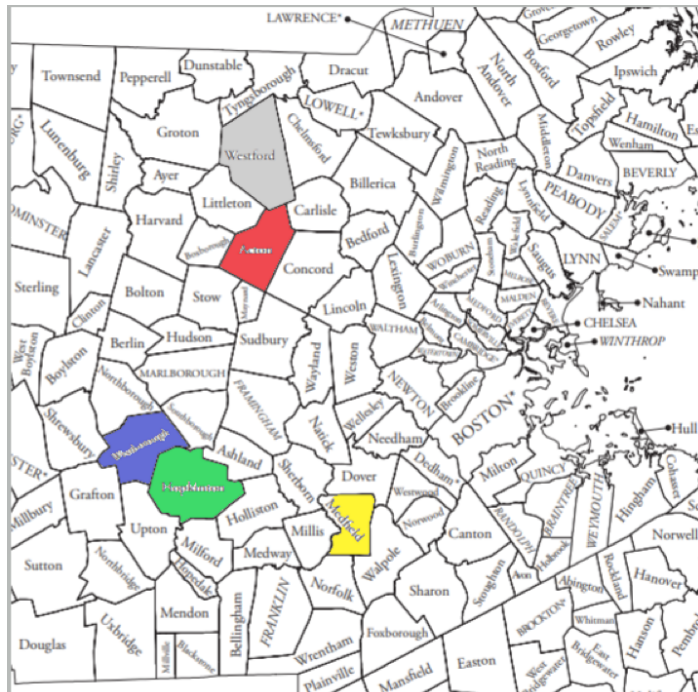
- 1) Data gathering and refined bench-marking**
- 2) Impact of growth on town finances**
- 3) Mapping and evaluating vulnerable properties**
- 4) Action Plan (a) the case for an Economic Development Office**
- 5) Action Plan (b) managing growth**



# Data Gathering and Refined Bench-Marking

## Peer Town Benchmarking

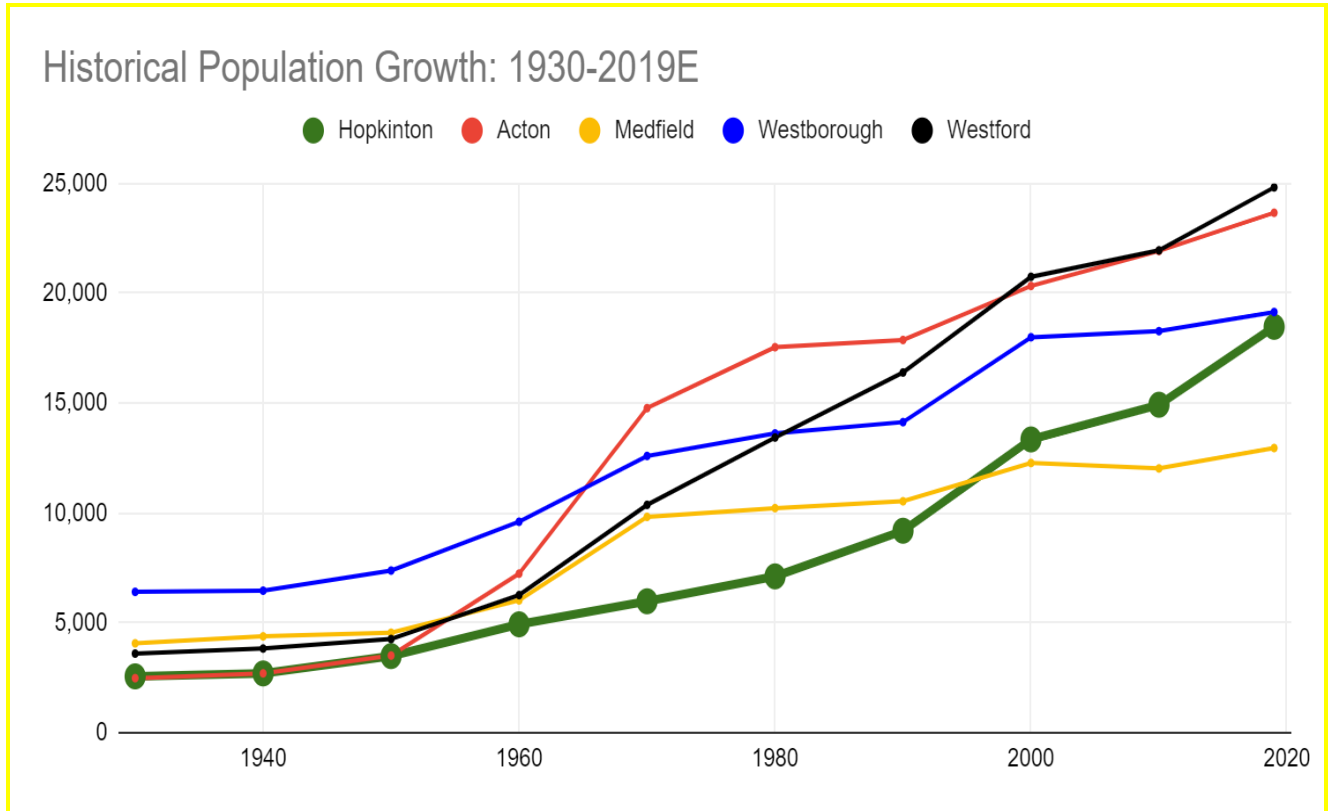
After the public forum in 2019, the GSC chose four peer towns for further analysis: Acton (red), Medfield (yellow), Westborough (blue), and Westford (gray). These four were selected based on their comparable demographics, relative proximity, and similarly high-quality school districts. They also offered four distinct growth trajectories to compare and contrast with Hopkinton's.



Source: [https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cispdf/city\\_town\\_map.pdf](https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cispdf/city_town_map.pdf)

In terms of population growth (see chart and table below), most peer town's saw the sharpest increases between 1950-1970. Acton (red line) experienced the earliest and most acute surge, doubling its population between 1950-1960 and again between 1960-1970. After 1970, it experienced more modest gains. Medfield (yellow line) also nearly doubled its population between 1950-1970 but has grown very little in the ensuing years. Westborough (blue line) saw steady growth between 1950-1970 with a more modest secondary pop between 1990-2000. Westford's (black line) growth trajectory has trended most closely with Hopkinton's over the 1960-2019E period. However, there were two notable divergences. Westford saw much higher growth than Hopkinton between 1960-1970, while Hopkinton outpaced Westford between 1990-2000, perhaps due in part to a growth management bylaw that Westford enacted between

1997-2007.<sup>1</sup> Regardless, the dominant post-1970 trend in both towns was repurposing agricultural land for single-family housing, in Westford's case about 4100 acres.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> "Westford Comprehensive Plan Final Report - 2009," p.63.  
<<https://westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2258/Westford-Comprehensive-Master-Plan-PDF>>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.51.

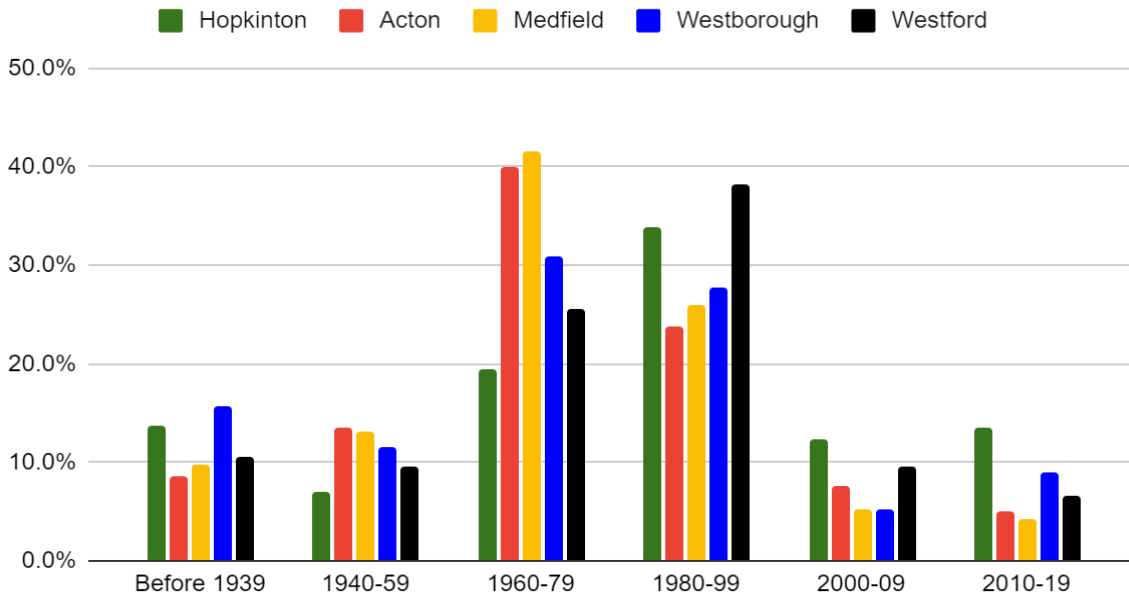
## Population Growth (%) by Decade: 1930-2019E

	Hopkinton	Acton	Medfield	Westborough	Westford
<b>1930-40</b>	5%	9%	8%	1%	6%
<b>1940-50</b>	29%	30%	4%	14%	11%
<b>1950-60</b>	41%	106%	32%	30%	47%
<b>1960-70</b>	21%	104%	63%	31%	66%
<b>1970-80</b>	19%	19%	4%	8%	30%
<b>1980-90</b>	29%	2%	3%	4%	22%
<b>1990-2000</b>	45%	14%	17%	27%	27%
<b>2000-10</b>	12%	8%	-2%	2%	6%
<b>2010-19E</b>	24%	8%	8%	5%	13%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via <https://mhpcenterforhousingdata.shinyapps.io/DataTown/#>

Not surprisingly, the age of the housing stock in each town roughly corresponds with population growth (chart below). The building booms in Acton, Medfield, and Westborough occurred between 1960-1979, whereas Westford's and Hopkinton's happened later (1980-1999). Amidst its housing boom, Westford passed a growth bylaw that capped new occupancy permits, excluding affordable housing units and assisted living facilities, at 30 per year between 1997-2007. Whether the threat of that growth bylaw "pulled forward" construction activity or not is hard to determine. Hopkinton has the youngest housing stock in the peer group. Almost a quarter of the stock was built after 2000.

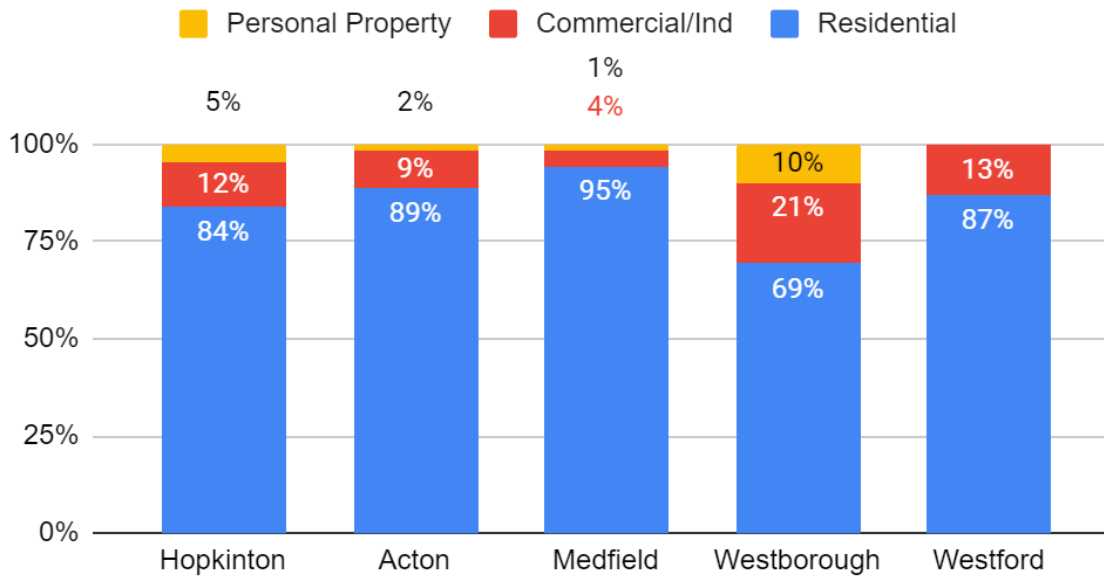
## Housing Stock by Construction Date



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-year estimates; table S2504: Physical Housing Characteristics via <https://mhpcenterforhousingdata.shinyapps.io/DataTown/#>

In all cases, taxes on residential properties account for the vast majority of peer town revenues. They all maintain single property tax rates for both residential and commercial/industrial, including Westborough, which has a considerably larger commercial/industrial base than peers.

## Property Tax Base



Source: FY2020 Town Reports.

### Acton

Acton's 1960-1979 construction boom included both single-family homes and several pockets of apartment buildings. Today, units in buildings with 10 or more units comprise roughly 20% of Acton's housing stock, helping to make it the most densely populated town in the peer set at 1,104 people per square mile (Exhibit 2).<sup>3</sup>

Acton has a high number of students both in absolute terms (Exhibit 4) and as a percentage of the population (Exhibit 5). (Acton students account for ~80% of the headcount in the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School.) While its education budget as a percentage of the total budget (Exhibit 8) is much higher than Hopkinton's, the size of Acton's total budget (Exhibit 7) is roughly comparable. Acton's prudent fiscal management has helped keep its average single-family tax bill on par with peers (Exhibit 6), despite its tax base skewing more heavily toward residential taxpayers (89%) than all but one peer town (Medfield, 94%).

This prudent fiscal management is also reflected in its balance sheet. Acton has the lowest levels of total debt and school debt in the group (Exhibit 10). Debt burdens per household are low, in some cases just one-fifth of peer towns (Exhibit 9). Not reflected in the charts is a bond approved in FY 2020 that will add \$4.65M to Acton's school debt load (and total debt load). The proceeds will be used for school-related capital improvement projects starting in FY 2021. Acton has no

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-year estimates; table S2504: Physical Housing Characteristics; Housing Stock by Year Built via <https://mhpcenterforhousingdata.shinyapps.io/DataTown/#>

stated plans to build additional school facilities. Even if one includes the new bond, Acton would remain the town with the lowest debt burden in the peer set.

One notable disconnect between Hopkinton and Acton was the assessed value of personal property, almost \$195M for Hopkinton in FY 2020 and only about \$76M in Acton. For towns with fairly similar median household incomes and average single-family home values, this almost \$120M difference in revenue indicates that Hopkinton has done an especially thorough job finding and assessing personal property in recent years.

## **Medfield**

Medfield is a suburban community located approximately 20 miles southwest of Boston. Medfield's population is the smallest in the peer set (Exhibit 1). It is, however, slightly more densely populated than Hopkinton, due to its smaller land area. Medfield's current rate of growth is the lowest in the peer set (Exhibit 3). As cited in Medfield's [Master Plan RFP](#) issued in 2019, the town's population is relatively stable. Historically the town experienced significant population increases during the following time frames: in 1900 96%, an anomaly due to the opening of Medfield State Hospital in 1896) and again in the 1960's (32% increase) and 1970's (63% increase).

Medfield's total student population is lower than Hopkinton, but in terms of students as a percentage of the total population, the two towns are similar (Exhibit 5). Medfield's school budget, as a percentage of its total budget, is slightly higher than Hopkinton (Exhibit 8), while its total budget is significantly less (Exhibit 7). Medfield's average single-family tax bill is also higher than Hopkinton (Exhibit 6).

## **Westborough**

Westborough and Hopkinton are much more similar today than they were ten years ago. One of the most glaring statistical differences is the rate of population growth experienced between 2010-2019. Westborough's population grew by 4.7% while Hopkinton's grew by 24%. As a result, the towns' populations are now quite similar, and the number of school children is almost identical. Westborough's population density remains higher at 888 people per square mile versus Hopkinton's 704, but is comparable when one accounts for the fact that Hopkinton has about 20% more land.

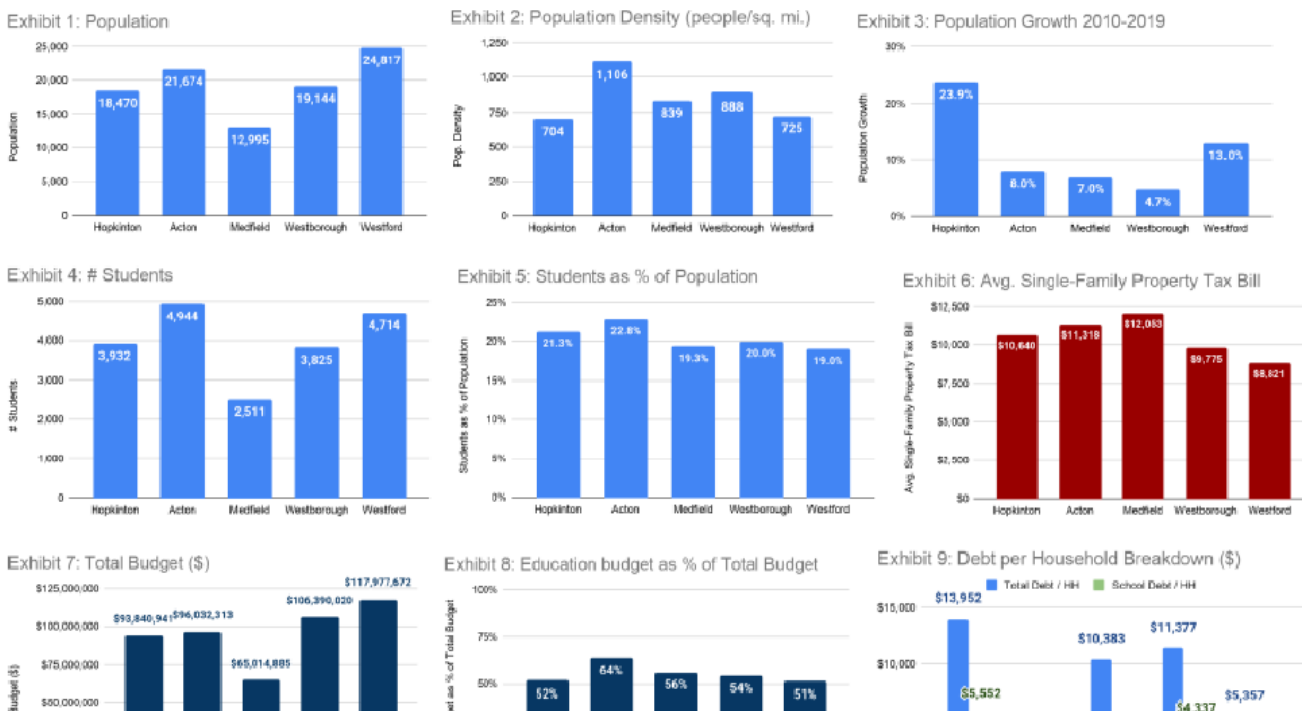
Westborough's annual budget is about 12% larger than Hopkinton's. Westborough's average single-family tax bill of \$9,775 is a little lower than Hopkinton's at \$10,640. Residential property owners benefit from the higher percentage of commercial/industrial property in Westborough.

Westborough appears to be a little further along its growth curve than Hopkinton when it comes to residential buildout. Under current zoning by-laws, it appears that both communities most likely have experienced the lion's share of their residential growth and will settle into being more "stable" communities.

**Westford** Westford has the highest population in the peer group (Exhibit 1), though, like Hopkinton, its population density is low (Exhibit 2). Westford's population growth over the last decade was second only to Hopkinton, and while the two towns' population growth trajectories have largely mirrored one another since 1970, their recent school enrollment trends have not. K-5 enrollment has been slowly decreasing in Westford since 2015, in line with the projections the district made back in 2015.<sup>4</sup> As a result, Westford faces no similar pressure to build new school facilities over the next decade. In fact, their most recent Housing Production Plan, authored jointly with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DoT) and Northern Middlesex County Organization of Governments (NMCOG) in 2016, forecasted Westford's total population to grow very slowly, 2.6% cumulatively, over the next decade (2020-2030).<sup>5</sup> Thus, one could reasonably assume that Westford's population growth rate peaked around 2015. Westford built two new schools and renovated or expanded three existing schools between 1971 and 1999, Westford also constructed a new fire station and two pumping stations for new water supplies. The Nashoba Valley Vocational-Technical School was built in this period, too. With its most rapid growth behind it, Westford has the luxury of spacing out future capital projects in ways that will not encumber its AAA debt rating.

While students are a lower percentage of Westford's overall population (Exhibit 5), education accounts for roughly the same percentage of the total budget as it does in Hopkinton (Exhibit 8). Westford's total debt is modest, and its school debt is similarly manageable (Exhibit 10-11). On a per household basis, Westford's debt levels are second lowest in the peer group behind Acton (Exhibit 9). According to the Pioneer Institute, Westford's debt service as a percentage of the operating budget was just 8% in 2019, five percentage points lower than Hopkinton, which has helped keep single-family homeowners' average tax bills quite low (Exhibit 6).

### PEER TOWN BENCHMARKING EXHIBITS



## Impact of Growth on Town Finances

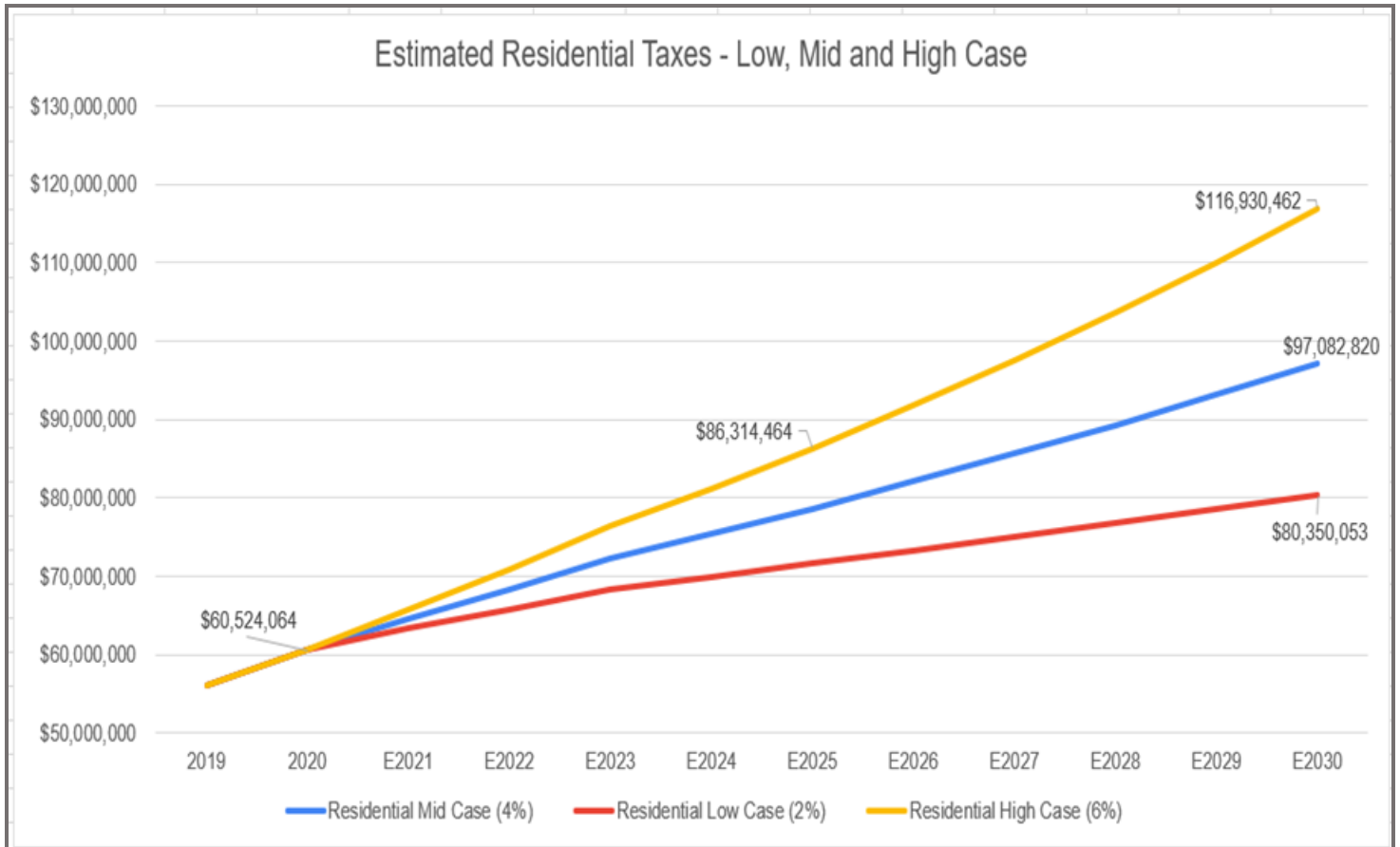
To assess the impact of growth on town finances, we worked closely with Tim O'Leary, the town's Chief Financial Officer. Mr. O'Leary has developed an initial but comprehensive modeling methodology in Excel format to both look at history, and then model the future. These models are presented in Appendix B showing actual figures from the past ten years and modest assumptions for growth going forward. Using these models, any department, whether Finance, Land Use, or School Department, can play out different scenarios based on best guesses for new growth. It is important to note that these are models for income only. Individual departments can check their own expense projections against a variety of income scenarios.

It should be noted that Hopkinton's long-term debt at +/- \$ 85 million as a percentage of the Commonwealth-mandated debt limit is the highest in the peer group studied above at 46% (Exhibit 12). By law, municipal debt cannot exceed 5% of a town's equalized value (EQV). This number is approximately \$ 220 million at our current valuation -- something to consider carefully given the school district's future capital requirements.

The GSC recommends Hopkinton officials look to Acton and Westford as successful examples of historical debt management in the midst of similar growth patterns.

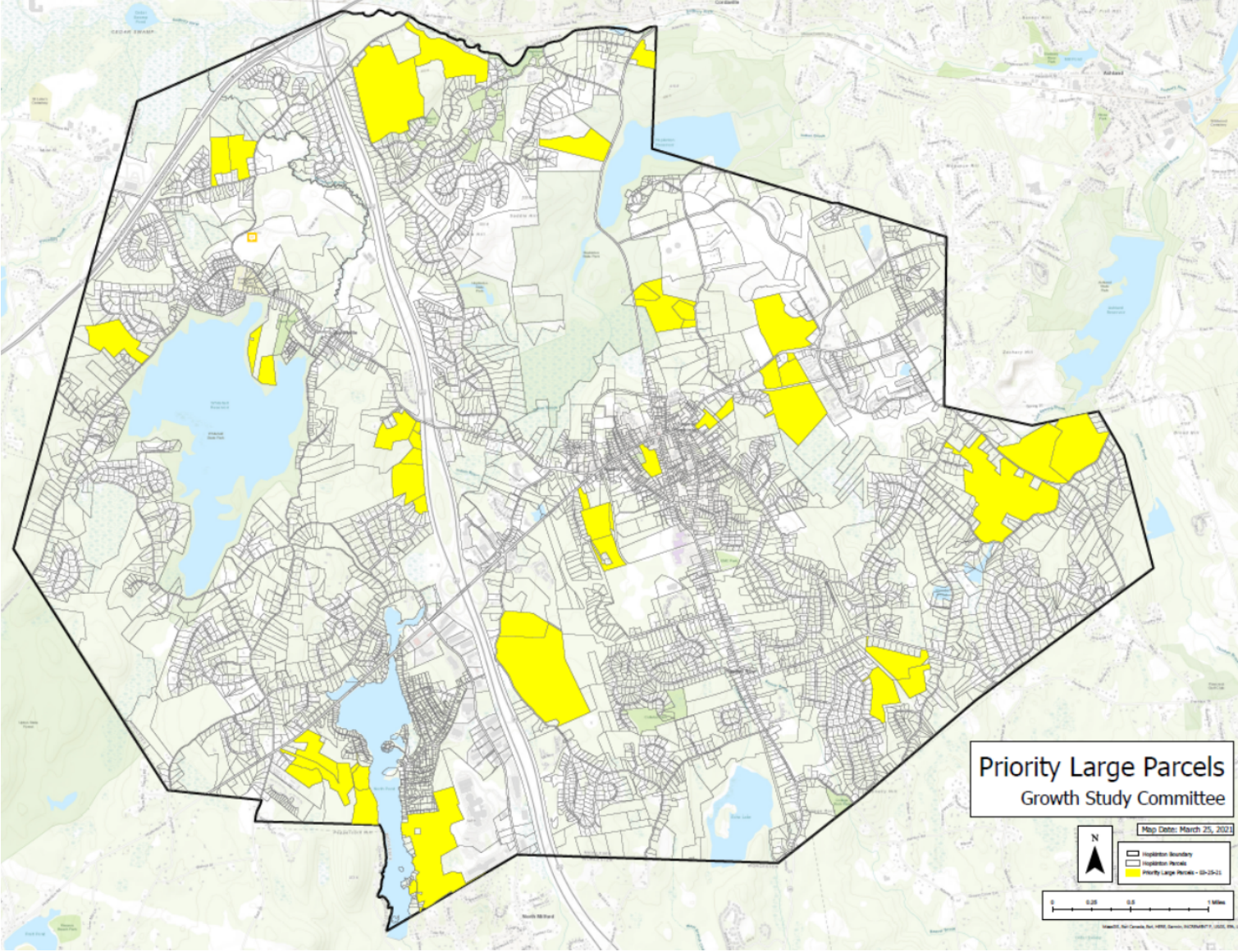
Finally, the chart on the next page, developed from Mr. O'Leary's data, demonstrates both the opportunity and the challenge of predicting the future. There is a range of possibilities. Planners would do well to focus on the range rather than a single outcome.





Graphic contributed by Rachel Rossin

# Mapping and Evaluating Vulnerable Properties



This map was developed by a sub-group of the GSC working with the Town Planner to identify large unprotected developable parcels. These parcels are shown in yellow on the map. Some are in private hands and may seem more possible for early development. Others are in various forms of institutional hands (clubs, YMCA, Laborers Union) and would seem less likely to be developed in the near term.

What does this mean in terms of future development, population growth, and school population?

1. Predicting development patterns is very difficult.
2. By studying the already developed areas in town it shows that development in general has followed the underlying zoning, providing a starting point for judging potential numbers of units.
3. Most remaining developable larger parcels are in “agricultural” (60,000 SF area, 200 feet frontage) residential zones
4. Zoning is only the beginning. Further considerations are limits on access (one way in necessitates a cul de sac street limited by the Planning Board to 600’), wetlands, steepness of slopes, rock and ledge, sewer and water availability, and other limitations. Numbers can only be estimated based on experience and familiarity with the area.
5. Timing is another factor. It’s very hard to predict when a larger vacant parcel, or one potentially re-developable from a non-residential use (solar farm, YMCA, sportsmen’s club for example), might hit the market, if at all.
6. There is a possibility of redeveloping parcels within existing residential neighborhoods (i.e.: tear-downs or substantial re-models). For purposes of this exercise, it is assumed that this activity would result in increased valuation, but no increase in population.
7. Over the past two decades (and outside of Legacy and the Lumber Street apartment complex) there has been an average of 30 – 40 new homes per year.
8. At 0.60 to 0.70 school children per household, this level of growth suggests twenty to thirty added students per year.
9. And finally, there is new impetus for developing solar farms on large tracts of open land. The negatives are loss of tree cover and viewscapes with no particular tax benefit. The positive is no added school population, and minimal added traffic.

## The Case for an Economic Development Office

Throughout this work - whether during our public meetings, in conversations with the business community, with town officials, and with the public in community forums – the topic of establishing an economic development office in Town Hall has come up repeatedly. Though Hopkinton is primarily a residential community, it is also home to divisions of two large global corporations, several small local family businesses, and everything in between. It's clear that businesses both large and small play a significant part in community vitality and the quality of life in Hopkinton. Having a broad-based business presence in town ensures a robust inventory of well-paid jobs along with a variety of services, shops, and restaurants, and yet to be developed hotel and event venues for which zoning was voted in over a decade ago.

Additionally:

1. Hopkinton's tax base is currently split 84% - 16% residential to commercial/industrial. Hopkinton at a minimum maintain this commercial tax base.
2. Much of our 495 industrial area at South Street and Elmwood Park is arguably "under-developed" – older single story "flex" buildings and newer larger buildings with significant vacancies.
3. Our largest corporate property owner in the area is now located out of state.
4. Our nascent life science and bio-tech presence represents the future of Hopkinton's industrial base. Attracting these companies is competitive as many other towns along 495 are positioning themselves to draw in the same industries.

Role, Duties, and Activities of an Economic Development Office --

- Be Hopkinton's ambassador to the outside world.
- Develop collaborative relationships with area-wide business development entities -- chambers of commerce, the 495/MetroWest Partnership, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, the Massachusetts Biotech Council, etc.
- Establish regular outreach and connection with Hopkinton's business, industrial, and commercial citizens.
- Assist business community in its official dealings with various community boards, committees, and permitting authorities.
- Develop relationships with regional commercial real estate brokers. Be aware of property searches in the area. Ensure the market is aware of the opportunities and vacancies in Hopkinton.
- Open avenues of communication around what is important to business; what infrastructure, transportation, and support services are appropriate? What commercial enterprises in the way of stores, restaurants, hotels, banking services, are needed? How can we partner together to bring needed amenities to our business and industrial zones?
- Assist town leaders in developing relationships with Hopkinton's industrial citizens. Create a regular give and take leading to a more common understanding between business and governance.

- Maintain a data base of all commercial and industrial properties in Hopkinton – occupancy, square footage, lease rates, taxes, etc.
- Be a ready source of information on navigating licensing, permitting, and regulatory interactions. Assist in making appropriate connections
- Know what challenges are coming up and prepare the town when they occur.
- Attend local, regional, and national business development and public policy conferences relevant to community interests.
- Spend time at the State House with our legislative delegation. Understand opportunities and challenges presented by various bills under consideration. Get used to testifying on Beacon Hill. Become a presence in public policy advocacy on behalf of 495 regional development.
- Work with ZAC and the Land Use Department to bring forward innovative zoning and permitting opportunities which could attract appropriate industries and the amenities needed to serve them.
- Coordinate a closer relationship between our best-in-class school department and our business community. Develop an internship program, for example, or a high school “business” curriculum, and other potential business partnerships further integrating our businesses into the fabric of community life.
- Help to develop additional town-to-business partnerships with entities like the Hopkinton Center for the Arts, perhaps, or the Fruit Street fields.
- Develop a framework for residents to interact with the office and build a pathway for regular input and feedback from and for residents.

## **Considerations for Managing Growth -- Focus development where it makes sense, disincentivize development where it doesn't**

There are several key areas to monitor for ongoing growth and development in Hopkinton; therefore, in alignment with the Town's Master Plan, the GSC makes the following recommendations for future growth management in Hopkinton focused in three major areas:

1. The downtown area
2. The industrial/commercial areas (South Street, Elmwood Park, and Lumber Street)
3. For the rest of the town, the GSC recommends several growth management strategies for the Planning Board to consider the intent of which would be to disincentivize further development of existing "green space" without specifically restricting it.

### **Downtown:**

The Town's 2017 Master Plan presented this vision theme for downtown:

*"In 2025, Hopkinton's Town Center is a vibrant part of the town's identity where civic events, including the Boston Marathon are celebrated. It is a hub of community and commercial activity, with shops, restaurants, and an attractive streetscape. It is pedestrian friendly with new development that respects the character and heritage of the town."*

Some progress has been made to that end including construction of a new Public Library, approval of the Main Street Corridor Project, the Town's purchase of land to provide off-street parking, and a pre-2020 increase in restaurants and coffee shops. Due to the rapidly changing economic climate in 2020 and the increased reliance on home delivery for goods and services, this vision likely requires adjustment to accommodate an increased focus on entertainment and dining, and a lesser emphasis on retail shopping. To those ends, we recommend the following:

### **Explore Creation of a Historic Preservation with Development Overlay District Downtown**

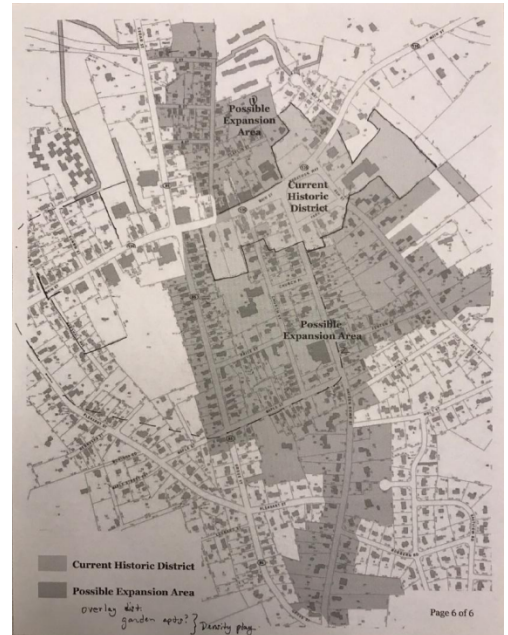
Focusing on the downtown area (specifically around the Common and along Main Street up to Marshall Ave.), consider allowing greater mixed use capabilities and appropriate increased density. Incentivize development honoring the historic character

of the area along with increased retail, restaurant, and bed & breakfast types of businesses. Create a "destination" area that is attractive to a diverse group of townspeople.

According to Massachusetts' Smart Growth Toolkit, "the intent of these overlay districts is to retrofit existing municipal centers with clearer allowances for mixed use, more creative dimensional requirements, and other supporting mechanisms such as shared

parking or design guidelines." ([MA Smart Growth Toolkit](#), 2020). These intents align well with Hopkinton's vision for a more vibrant, thriving downtown.

As part of this initiative, expand the Hopkinton Center Historic District and enable a partnership between property owners and Town boards to focus on additional buildings, landmarks, streetscapes, and possibly other factors that highlight the town's history and are worthy to preserve and maintain. Areas to the north (including A,B,C streets), south (down Hayden Rowe to Maple St) and west (to Hopkinton Lumber) should be in consideration. The map illustrates what it could look like.



Scanned with CamScanner

### ***Economic incentives for developers of historic buildings***

Numerous incentives exist for those who seek to develop Hopkinton's historic downtown areas. Hopkinton's existing Master Plan encourages the use of these incentives for downtown development (see *NCO4. Examine incentives and alternate financing mechanisms to facilitate historic preservation; NCO5. Implement Town bylaws that encourage, require, or reward the preservation of historic resources; NCO19. In order to preserve the downtown streetscape as the Town becomes more developed and downtown lots become more desirable, study the expansion of the Hopkinton Center Historic District, working with property owners and Town boards*).

1. **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** funds may be applied for, for both town-owned and privately owned properties. In return, the home or business owner may need to enact a historic preservation restriction/easement if such funds were to be used for restoration, for example becoming part of a local Historic District. [CPA Historic Preservation Success Stories](#) CPA funds may also sometimes be used for active religious institutions (for example the Korean Presbyterian Church on the Common) depending on the purpose, for example

restoring stained glass windows with religious imagery would not be allowed, but exterior restoration of a steeple would likely be allowed. [CPA Historic Preservation Church Projects](#)

2. **Federal 20% Tax Credit** - A 20% income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to be “certified historic structures.” The State Historic Preservation Offices and the National Park Service review the rehabilitation work to ensure that it complies with the Secretary’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Internal Revenue Service defines qualified rehabilitation expenses on which the credit may be taken. Owner-occupied residential properties do not qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit. Buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places or in local or state districts that the Secretary of the Interior has certified qualify for this tax credit. Hopkinton has three local Historic Districts: Center District, 76 Main Street District and Woodville District. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>
3. **State 20% Tax Credit** - The Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit is a program where a certified rehabilitation project on an income-producing property is eligible to receive up to 20% of the cost of certified rehabilitation expenditures in state tax credits. There is an annual cap, so there are selection criteria that ensure the funds are distributed to the projects that provide the most public benefit. The MHC certifies the projects and allocates available credits. <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhctax/taxidx.htm>
4. Municipalities may develop property owner assistance programs to encourage historic preservation. Hopkinton could consider this. See Town of Bedford
5. Private foundation grants may be available if a property is significant.

### ***Form Based Zoning***

This zoning tool, in contrast to traditional zoning focus on land use, incorporates “the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks.” (Form Based Codes Institute). In other words, the character of the building facades and the form and scale of development are the emphasis rather than simply the land use itself. By enacting Form Based Zoning, the Planning and Zoning Appeals Boards will allow for creative solutions to downtown development, specifically areas which are residential may be used for commercial/business opportunities provided they maintain the historical facade, character, and community vision for the downtown area.

### ***Increased Downtown Residential Density***



Incentivize increased downtown residential density. by reviewing allowable floor area ratios. Further developing or redeveloping existing parcels at greater density reduces per-unit land costs allowing for potentially less costly housing. Other advantages would include a minimized environmental impact, more “walkable” neighborhoods, and new populations to support local businesses.

Allowing greater density encourages the transformation of larger single family homes into smaller condominium/apartment dwellings. This increases the “walkability” to downtown businesses, offers more affordable housing, appeals to buyers who prefer low-maintenance smaller dwellings to the typical large-family homes, and contributes to a healthier and more environmentally friendly community.

Such planning often includes using existing community assets, engaging community members in the planning, taking advantage of grants and incentives, and creating the Town’s own incentives for this type of development

### ***Establish a Business Improvement District (BID)***

According to [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov), “a BID creates a stable local management structure that provides a sustainable funding source for the revitalization and long-term maintenance of downtowns and city/town centers. The goal of a BID is to improve a specific commercial area by attracting customers, clients, shoppers and other businesses.”

Several Massachusetts towns have enacted BIDs; the oldest was established in Springfield in 1998 and the newest was created in Amherst last year. In addition to those two communities and Westfield, BIDs exist in Hyannis, Northampton, Boston, Hudson, and Taunton.

If successfully implemented, our downtown could become an economic driver for the community and would become the hub of shops, restaurants, and activities many community members hope for. The challenge is finding the balance between business owners’ voluntary responsibilities to the BID and expectations by the community for how the BID will contribute to downtown vitality; to meet this challenge, a working group or sub-committee would be required.

### ***Restore Woodville as a village of Hopkinton***

Master Plan Implementation Items:

“NCO3. Celebrate and commemorate the old villages of Hopkinton, including Woodville, Hayden Rowe and Claflinville. Erect monuments and markers and promote local history.”

Woodville is in the Residential A Zoning District. A portion of Woodville is a local Historic District, but the oversight is not as strict as it is in the Hopkinton Center Historic District. Shops, restaurants, and offices would not be allowed as the zoning stands now. Next steps would be to determine if the residents of the area would be interested in more amenities, such as a general store or cafe or ice cream shop, or more community spaces to socialize. It would be important to meet with stakeholders including the Woodville Historic District Commission, Woodville Rod & Gun Club, the Sanctuary at Woodville and Parks & Recreation which manages the nearby athletic facilities on Fruit Street and Reed Park. The athletic fields, the nearby Whitehall State Park and the planned Fruit Street dog park will bring more visitors to this area of town, who may enjoy having a place to grab a snack while they are in the area for recreation.

## **South Street/Lumber Street/Elmwood Park**

The commercial/industrial zoned area around the 495 interchange is largely responsible for the portion of the Hopkinton tax base (16%) that is non-residential. There were three phases of development in this area. First, were the 1970's style single story multi-purpose buildings erected along South St. that served as the initial commercial district. Many of these building still stand in some evolution within their original shells. The second phase was large scale office facilities that corresponded to the unprecedented growth of EMC Corporation in Hopkinton. The final phase was retail development that traditionally follows the maturity of a suburban town both residentially and commercially.

Given the normal flow of market forces and the current pandemic realignments, it is likely that this commercial/industrial area and its associated tax revenue will undergo some significant changes in the next 10 years. Hopkinton would do well to anticipate and plan for it with the appropriate examination of rezoning possibilities. Importantly, the purchase of EMC by Dell Technologies and the resultant, continued downsizing of their Hopkinton presence has left several unoccupied or partially occupied large facilities on South St. This fact, along with the now inevitable trend toward a hybrid work paradigm for traditionally in-office white collar workers, is being interpreted by the commercial real estate market as indicating a permanent reduction in the demand for office space. Therefore, Hopkinton would do well to re-examine its current zoning regulations for the area with an eye towards alternative future uses. The current literature indicates that in-building uses such as laboratories, research facilities, manufacturing, and, perhaps surprisingly, residential uses hold the most potential for such areas in suburban settings.

# **Strategies for Disincentivizing Growth in Existing Green Space**

## ***Purchase Development Rights (PDR)***

A PDR program may help protect open space and serves as a growth management tool by limiting or restricting development on PDR land; in return landowners are compensated or receive state and/or federal tax credits. These land restrictions are often due in part to conservation easements or preservation of wildlife habitat but may also be used by landowners who would like to preserve their large parcel for the benefit of the Town.

To enact a PDR program, the Town will need to create a committee or entity whose role is to ensure public funds are spent appropriately and to enforce development restrictions and land preservation. The challenge for this program is, as always, funding. According to the Sustainable Development Code website “Some local government PDR programs are funded through tax levies. The program may also be funded through external sources such as grants, foundations, land trusts, and public donations.”

## ***Conservation Easements***

“Conservation Restrictions are legal agreements that prohibit certain acts and uses, while allowing others, on private or municipally-owned property in order to permanently protect conservation values present on the land. The Conservation Restriction Review Program reviews CR’s for the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, who must approve of the CR in the public interest in order for it to be a permanent restriction, pursuant to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws (Ch. 184 Sec. 31-33). Conservation Restrictions (CRs) may be granted by public or private landowners to qualified organizations. The landowner granting the CR is the “Grantor”. Organizations qualified to hold CR’s (the “Grantee”) include governmental units (e.g., Conservation Commissions or Water Supply Divisions) and non-profit organizations whose purposes include conservation of land or water (e.g., a land trust/conservancy or other conservation organization). CR’s may “co-held” by more than one grantee.

## ***Commonwealth Conservation Land Tax Credit (CLTC)***

“The Conservation Land Tax Credit program recognizes and rewards landowners who donate a real property interest either outright, or through a Conservation Restriction. The donation must permanently protect an important natural resource such as forest

land that is in the public's interest. The program is funded for up to \$2 million a year. The donor(s) are provided a tax credit of 50% of the donation value, up to the \$75,000 max. Donors do not have to reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to qualify.”(Source: [MAgov](#))

### ***Enact rural open space protection for large parcels currently zoned residential***

The Growth Committee has identified a number of parcels that could be candidates for open space protection. In order for such protections to be enacted, they would require a coordinated effort from Planning, town officials and members of the private sector. If the Planning Board were to adopt such an initiative, there would need to be an overarching vision of protecting open space in the town and get buy-in from town administration as well as the townspeople via town meeting. We recommend identifying certain parcels to the Planning Board for review and possible action.

### ***Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ)***

Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ) describes local zoning techniques designed to link land conservation to land development. It can take a number of forms, but its essence is to combine low underlying densities with compact patterns of development so significant areas of land are left undeveloped and available for agriculture, forestry, recreation, watershed, or wildlife habitat. Importantly, development is permitted by right versus special permit and the attendant process that is involved with special permits. Developers have greater flexibility to preserve natural resources and features on a parcel. In Hopkinton, such zoning would represent a cross between our existing Open Space Landscape Preservation zoning (OSLP) and our Open Space Mixed Use Development special overlay district (OSMUD)

[https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/pdf-doc-ppt/natural\\_resources\\_protection\\_zoning.pdf](https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/pdf-doc-ppt/natural_resources_protection_zoning.pdf)

### ***Right of First Refusal***

One ROFR can come to a town through the Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B laws. Each law provides a means to assess land for tax purposes at its current use (forests, agriculture, or recreation) as opposed to its development value.

**Ch. 61:** Assessment based on long-term management of woodlands

**Ch. 61A:** Assessment based on agricultural and horticultural use

**Ch. 61B:** Assessment based on land in natural, wild, open, or landscaped use; or an approved recreational use, including commercial horseback riding and boarding.

Landowners entering one of the Chapter 61 programs (61, 61A, or 61B) agree to maintain the use of the land in a way consistent with their chosen program. There is a not-particularly-onerous penalty for early withdrawal from the program – payment of roll-back taxes for up to five years – should the property be sold for development at some future date. Once the land is enrolled in one of these programs, the municipality has the right of first refusal on the land. Landowners in Hopkinton have made extensive use of this provision of law over the years.) Slightly over 1,000 acres are in the program as of the writing of the 2017 Master Plan.) The most notable case was Weston Nurseries in 2005. The town's ROFR was the instigation for a two-year planning effort conducted by the town that led to the current OSMUD. The town's planning preserved over 50% of the land as open conservation and recreation space

# General Growth Management & Planning Considerations

## *Ongoing Growth Monitoring*

Create a permanent Growth Monitoring section or page on the town website. Update annually at the beginning of the fiscal year with key documents and statistics to help town staff, board and committee members and the public understand the big picture before we head into budgeting season in the fall. This was discussed with various department representatives during a number of GSC meetings, and the interest and receptivity to such an idea was very positive. We would encourage the Planning Board to examine this further.

Key documents to be presented annually to stakeholders and easily accessible to the public on the **Town Dashboard**:

- Number of building permits issued (dwelling units and commercial buildings) by year.
- Annual Population
- School Enrollment Report and Projections
- Miles of road in town
- Financial metrics
- Other metrics to be added over time

## *New Housing Choice Law*

Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020 (the economic development legislation of 2020) made several amendments to Chapter 40A of the General Laws, the Zoning Act. Among these are (1) changes to section 5 of the Zoning Act, which reduce the number of votes required to enact certain kinds of zoning ordinances and bylaws from a  $\frac{2}{3}$  supermajority to a simple majority; and (2) changes to section 9 of the Zoning Act, making similar changes to the voting thresholds for the issuance of certain kinds of special permits.

The intent of the legislation was to make it easier to get more housing built by reducing the challenges inherent in passing zoning changes. Regulations and guidelines are still being developed by the Department of Housing and Community Development, but the focus of the law is to encourage denser development in town centers, encourage accessory dwelling units, and encourage developments located near transit. In fact, so-called MBTA communities, of which Hopkinton is one, are required to create such a district.

Not all zoning change votes are reduced to 50% plus one, just certain changes as noted.

See:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dhcd-preliminary-guidance-for-mbta-communities/download>





## Potential Planning Board initiatives

1. Consider requiring all PB and other land use board members to take basic land use regulatory training such as those offered by the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative <http://www.masscptc.org/>. There is no requirement in law that planning board members be trained in the work they do, but neither is there a prohibition on town's requiring that their members become knowledgeable in the complexities of municipal planning and regulation. This, in itself, could make meeting time more efficient.
2. Understanding that the vast majority of planning board meeting time is devoted to hearings – sub-division plans, preliminary plans, definitive plans, scenic road hearings, tree removal hearings, ANR plan approvals, and so on, little time in the normal meeting calendar is left over for the intellectual exercise of actual planning. The Planning Board's Zoning Advisory Committee has the potential to fulfill this role. ZAC has recently committed to expand its working calendar to a year round one. We applaud this change. We further recommend that ZAC establish a multi-year planning calendar taking up a particular topic or topics in depth on a pre-scheduled basis.
3. Consider a comprehensive review of our zoning by-law by independent land use law and planning experts. Does it match modern land use theory and best practice? Are the by-laws incentivizing future growth where it makes the most sense? Can zoning do more than define sizes and uses of plots of land? Can zoning promote community health, welfare, and vitality?
4. Lastly, consideration should be given to the mental health challenges presented by the way our suburban sub-division development has evolved in Hopkinton. Studies suggest the isolation inherent in spread out suburban sub-divisions compared to more tightly developed town centers can lead to less multigenerational interpersonal contact, potentially more anonymous bullying, and a general loss of sense of community. This is a yet to be fully developed conversation in town, but it is a consideration the GSC has become aware of through the efforts of the Town Manager and the town's Youth and Family Services Department. Such thinking is outside the usual parameters of Planning Board function, but it is clearly a topic worthy of further exploration in managing future growth in Hopkinton.

## Conclusion

Taking into consideration all of the data that the GSC has accumulated during its tenure, a clear picture of Hopkinton's development history begins to emerge. As early as the mid 1980's Hopkinton began to experience the beginnings of a four-decade path of development that similar towns to the east had felt in the 1950's and '60s. The process of growth occurred at a rather natural pace picking up steam in the mid 1990's before leveling off after 2000. Following the global financial crisis ten years ago, as Legacy Farms commenced its build-out the town has experienced a single one-time developmental anomaly resulting in an increase of approximately 15% in total households within a very short time. Had this not been a single owner, but rather several landowners, the development would have occurred as each private landowner decided it was the appropriate time to sell their land. Because this intense period of development was/is an anomaly, it is important that we don't forecast data based on this unusual period of 5-8 years, but rather look at the development data pre-Legacy Farms and the most recent data outside of the numbers contributed by Legacy. In doing that, a more predictable, stable picture begins to take shape.

A second area of analysis was conducted comparing Hopkinton to comparable towns in the MetroWest region. Looking at many indicators, it is the conclusion of the GSC that, except for the recent significant and intense period of population growth (see above), Hopkinton is within a comparable range on almost all measures with these comparable towns.

So where does this leave the present-day Hopkinton? There will be some catching up with the ramifications of the current growth spurt specifically with respect to schools, DPW, and public safety services), but because Hopkinton has engaged in a significant construction program for municipal buildings over the past 20 years, it is already well positioned to service much of our new population. The data from the last ten years indicates that subtracting out the Legacy Farms housing developments as well as the large apartment complex at Lumber Street, the town has averaged 36 residential building permits per year. This number has remained quite constant during this decade. It is appropriate to anticipate that once the one time anomaly of Legacy is completed, this would more accurately reflect the rate of growth going forward. Having built out most areas of town suitable for sub-divisions of single family homes, we are entering a period wherein we may wish to encourage the redevelopment of existing parcels, or the intensification of development near the town's center and transportation nodes.

The town currently has an 84% /16% residential / commercial tax base. As such, the GSC feels strongly that the town should adopt a proactive posture ensuring the commercial portion of our tax base doesn't decrease because of an uncertain commercial market due to the ongoing pandemic and changes to suburban office dynamics. The GSC is in favor of the town hiring an Economic Development Officer.

Along these same lines, two areas of town, one identified as the Village Center and the second as the 495/South St/Lumber St interchange represent the most significant areas

for potential to maintain or expand the commercial tax base. As such, it appears to the GSC, that individually focused study groups should ascertain if any zoning changes would enhance the probability of maintaining that base.

Based on the data and factors described above, there are a number of recommendations that the Planning Board should consider in the near term:

1. Planning is hard to do. There is just no knowing the future. When is the next large parcel of land going to come on the market? What are the market shifts coming our way following the COVID pandemic? It will be important to consider ways to both increase and maintain engagement with residents to help in long term visioning and planning for desired growth to better guide professional staff and volunteer boards.
2. Hopkinton must do a better job in the future predicting and planning for the impact of increased student enrollment in the schools as well as providing increased financial discipline to reduce the overall debt load and maintain the services residents have come to enjoy and expect.
3. Growth management strategies should consider housing opportunities that cross socioeconomic boundaries and take into account long-term residents who have concerns about increasing taxes. Additionally, Hopkinton has long supported and desired a more vibrant downtown as well as increased commercial/industrial development along South Street and at the interchange of Lumber and West Main. Thought must be given to new approaches and initiatives to make progress in these areas.
4. There is always more to do. The town has a responsibility to be always visioning, planning, and managing – thinking collectively, engaging residents to maintain fidelity to a shared vision for growth, and managing financial resources sustainably. Actively managing growth and change for the good of all residents has defined Hopkinton's past. The strong and vital partnership between the town's professional staffs and our volunteer boards suggests a continuing prosperous future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Finley Perry, Chair  
Michelle Murdock, Vice Chair  
Tim Brennan  
Jenn Devlin  
Fran DeYoung  
Muriel Kramer  
Chuck Joseph

Wilson St Pierre, Alternate Member  
David Wheeler, Alternate Member

## **Acknowledgements:**

The committee would like to express particular gratitude to Amy Ritterbusch, our original chair who more recently has been Select Board Liaison to the committee. Thanks as well to Joe Markey as School Committee Liaison, and Shahidul Mannan as Appropriations Committee Liaison; and to previous Select Board Liaison, John Coutinho.

Rachel Rossin of the Zoning Advisory Committee was a faithful attendee at our meetings contributing her data analytic skills.

Further, the town's professional department personnel were of tremendous assistance in our work. Dr. Carol Cavanaugh, School Superintendent, attended so many of our meetings. Town Planner, John Gelcich, provided both logistical support and intellectual guidance; Tim O'Leary, town CFO, and John Neas, Principal Assessor, provided valuable and understandable backgrounding on municipal finance. Town Manager, Norman Khumalo, and Assistant Town Manager, Elaine Lazarus; Fire Chief, Steve Slaman; Police Chief Joe Bennett and his predecessor, Ed Lee; Public Works Director John Westerling, all were most generous with their time and the information they provided.

The Hopkinton Chamber of Commerce, through its Economic Development Committee Chair, Nick Slottje, was instrumental in convincing the Committee of the validity and need for establishing an Economic Development Office in Town Hall.

Finally, the Committee is indebted to the Hopkinton Planning Board for the attention paid by its Chair, Gary Trendel, and member Jane Moran in overseeing our work.

## **Appendix A**

Growth Study Committee  
1st Public Workshop - 11/20/19

1

~6,000  
Households as of 10/21/19

4

The "Big Picture"

2

2019 - 2020 School Population  
3,978  
• 410 from Legacy Farms  
• 3,568 from rest of town

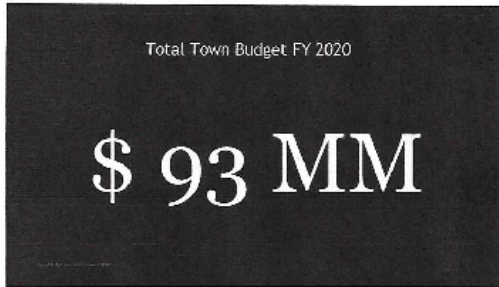
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17,644  
Hopkinton Population as of 10/21/19

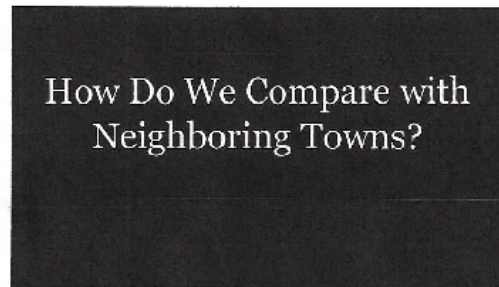
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0.62      0.67  
Students per Legacy Farms household      Students per "rest of town" household

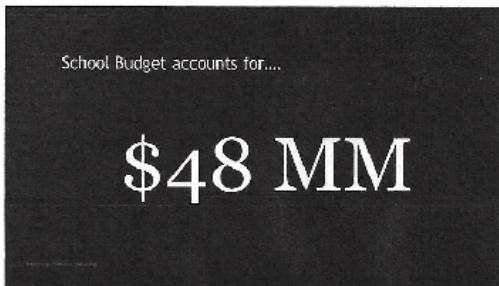
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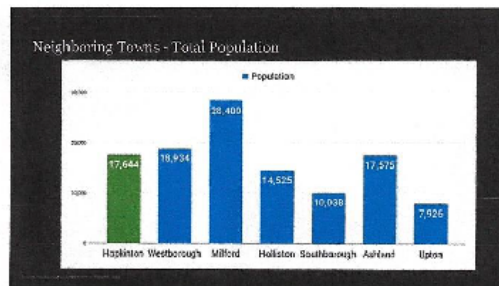
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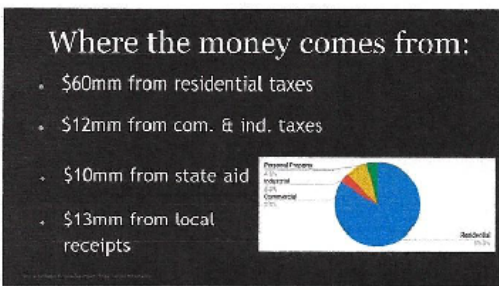
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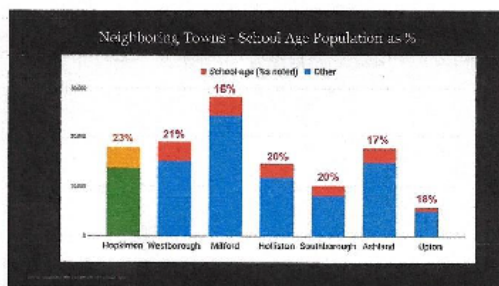
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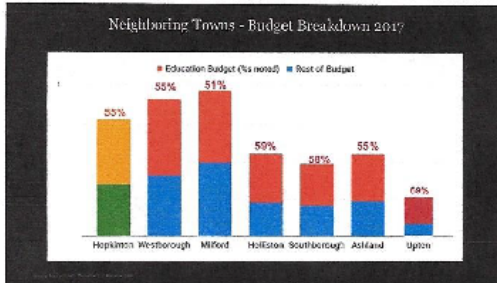
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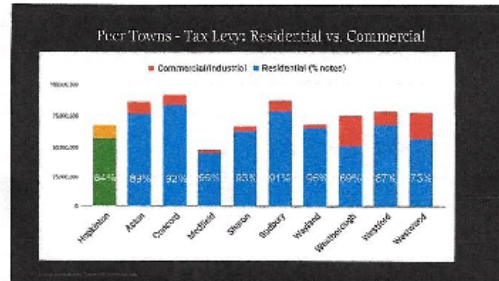
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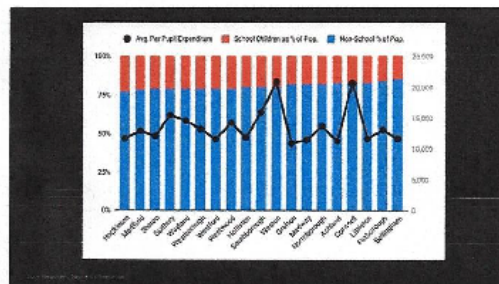
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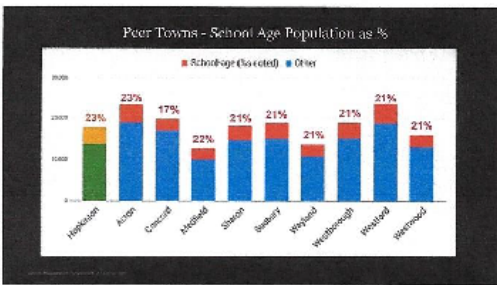
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How Do We Compare to Peer Towns?

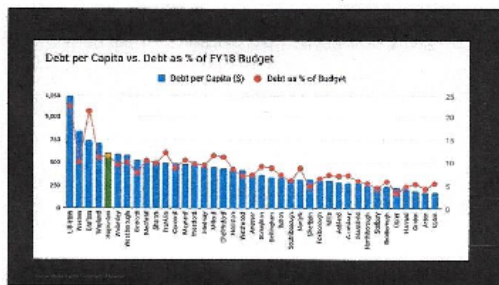
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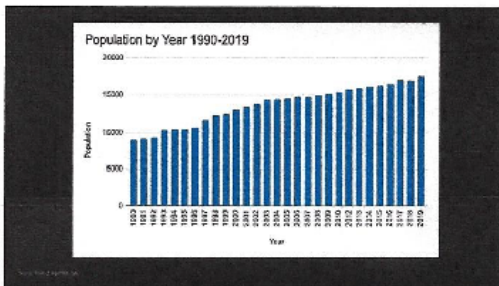


# A Bit of History

19

# We Have Been Planning & Managing!

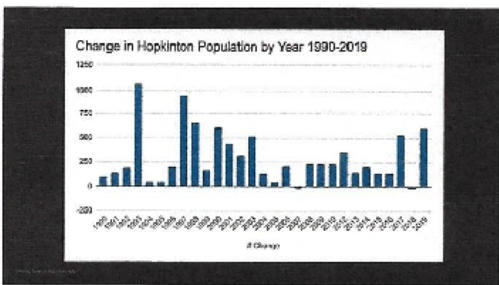
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20

- ### Forty Years of Planning for Growth.....
- 1979 - Downtown Historic District
  - 1988 - Open Space and Landscape Preservation By Law (Classroom Zoning - Over one sq. mile with set back as Permanent Open Space)
  - 1989 - Water Resources Protection Overlay zoning
  - 1995 - Migration adds Local Wetland Protection By Law on top of State Wetland Protection Act
  - 2001 - Adopted Community Preservation Act - Numerous Streets and Open Parks Added to Inventory of Open Space
  - 2002 - Woodville Road, Frank
  - 2003 - Town Purchased Fruit Street Property
  - 2005 - Land Use Study Committee - Sale of Water Resources Land
  - 2006 - General Town Manager Form of Government
  - 2007 - Inclusionary Zoning, Added to Encourage Development of Affordable Housing
  - 2008 - Open Space Mixed Use Development Overlay Zone Adopted for Legacy Farms
  - 2010 - Voter Approves State Mandate for 100 Affordable Housing
  - 2015 - Fruit Farm Purchased

23



21

- ### Forty Years of Managing Growth
- Power in Six Phases 1970's, 80's, 90's
  - Waterwell addresses performance standards - New storage tanks
  - Senior School and Howard Wood Additions in the 1990's
  - Hopkinton School and New High School in the 1990's
  - Walden Elementary School
  - Fire Department Expansion Twice
  - Two New Police Stations in the 1980
  - Senior Center
  - Library
  - New DPW HQ
  - Fruit Street Sewer Treatment Plant

24

# What Does the Future Look Like?

25

### Two Looks at School Population.....

Percentage of PK-12 Students of the Total Population (2000-2020)

70% birth cohorts live about 25% of their lives in school.

Legacy Farms Enrollment

28

## Legacy Farms

- 228 Unrestricted Units left to Develop
- 175 Age-Restricted Units Left to Develop

26

### Can We Trust These School Projections?

Sch. Yrs.	Total PK-12
2020-21	4111
2021-22	4186
2022-23	4239
2023-24	4311
2024-25	4458
2025-26	4561
2026-27	4627
2027-28	4709
2028-29	4770
2029-30	4856

900 Additional kids at the current household ratio of 0.67 suggests 1,450 new homes will be built over the next ten years — is this realistic?

29

### Legacy Farms Buildout

With 251 units left (assuming 84% build-out), if the pattern of 0.62 students per household stays, this one unit could absorb 447 new students when those units are occupied.

#### Legacy Farms Occupancy Permits Issued and Remaining (Buildout = 1,120 Units)

27

### Open Developable Land and Property in Hopkinton – Fall 2019

Parcel 100 acre and above:  
 Lebanon Training site  
 Hopkinton Country Club  
 MITA  
 plus one additional private parcel in Wardsville

Parcel 50 – 100 acres:  
 Lively Mutual and four additional private parcels

Other parcels less than fifty acres

30

# What about Commercial & Industrial Development?

31

# Discussion

34

**The Challenge:**  
 Keep our Current Ratio of Residential to Comm/Ind Tax Revenue

- Whither Dell / EMC?
- What Replaces Liberty Mutual?
- What Up-Zoning is Possible on South Street and Elmwood Park?
- IS IT TIME TO REALLY FOCUS ON THIS ASPECT OF TOWN PLANNING?

32

**Will New Growth Continue to Balance Our Budget?**

*As Liberty Mutual, Blockbuster, and Dell leave, can we make a count of "New Growth" to replace our levy limits?*

**a. Commercial / Industrial Development Cost / Revenue**

**b. Potential Residential Growth (Levy / 10, How much more?)**

**Growth as % of Prior Year Levy vs. Fiscal Year**

Fiscal Year	Growth as % of Prior Year Levy
2004	1.20%
2005	1.00%
2006	1.00%
2007	1.00%
2008	1.00%
2009	1.00%
2010	1.00%
2011	1.00%
2012	1.00%
2013	1.00%
2014	1.00%
2015	1.00%
2016	1.00%
2017	1.00%
2018	5.00%

33

Growth Study Committee  
2nd Public Workshop - 1/9/20

1

6,543  
Households as of May 2019

SOURCE: Assistant Town Manager via Facebook

4

The "Big Picture"

2

2019 - 2020 School Population

3,978\*

- 141 from Legacy Farms
- 3,837 from rest of town

Number includes vocational schools, charter schools and out-of-town commuters.  
SOURCE: Superintendent's Office 10/27/19, Planning Board Report 10/1/19.

5

17,644  
Hopkinton Population as of 10/21/19

SOURCE: Town Clerk's Office, 10/21/19.

3

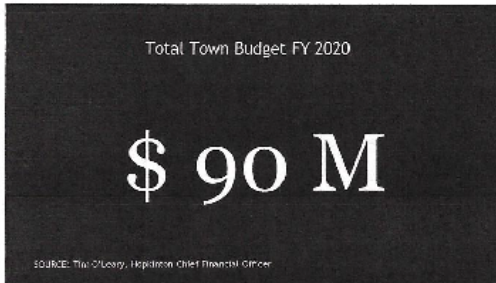
0.62      0.60

Students per Legacy Farms household      Students per "rest of town" household

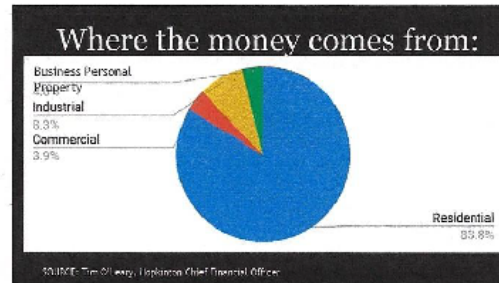
SOURCE: Planning Board Report 10/1/19.      SOURCE: Assistant Town Manager & Superintendent's Office

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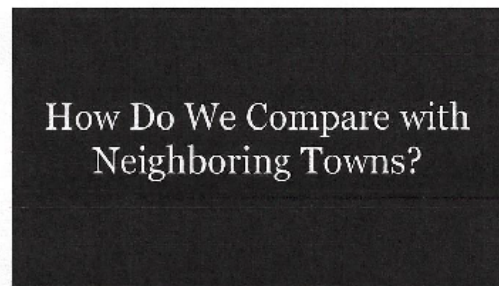
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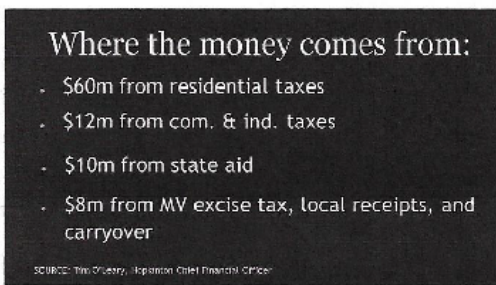
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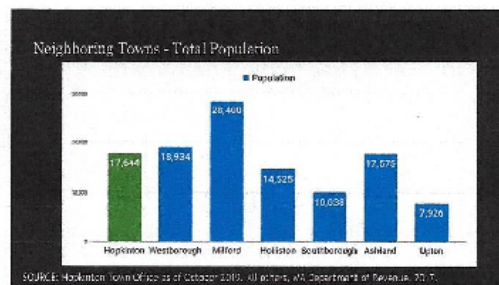
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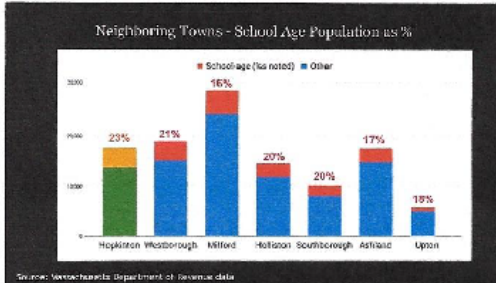
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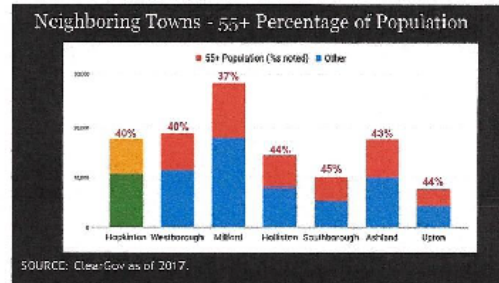
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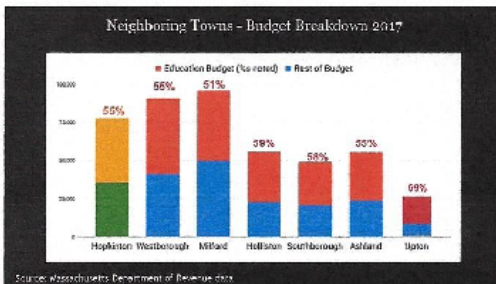
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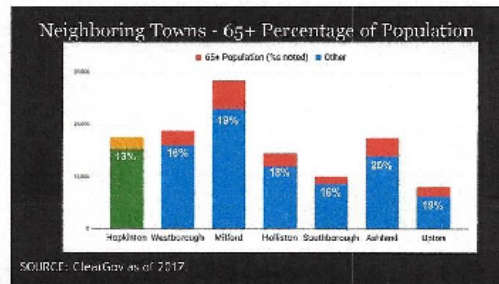
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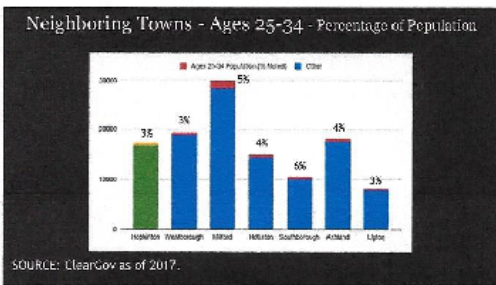
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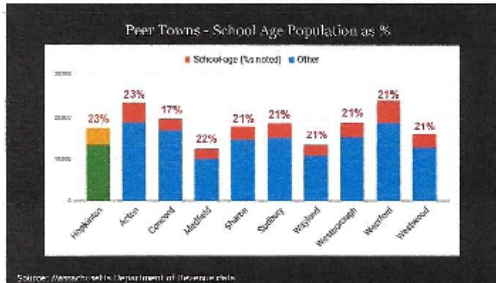
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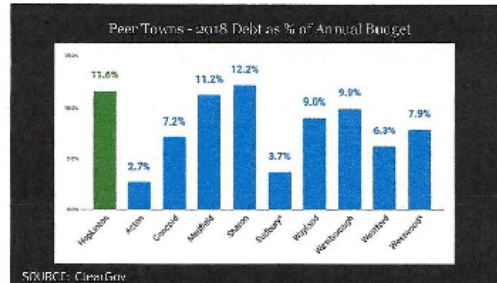
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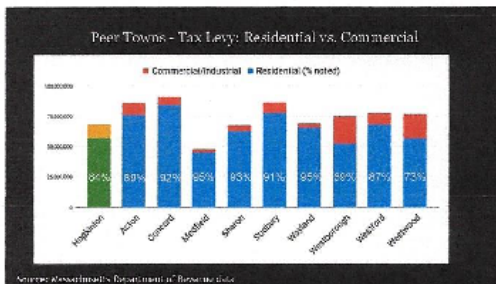
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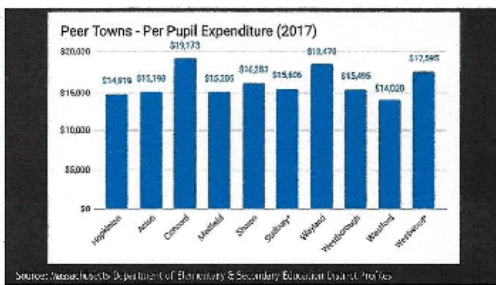
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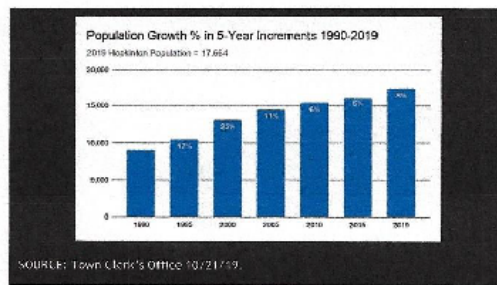
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A Bit of History

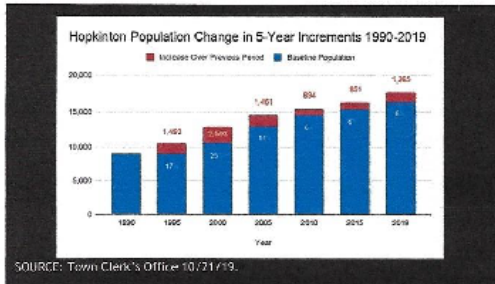
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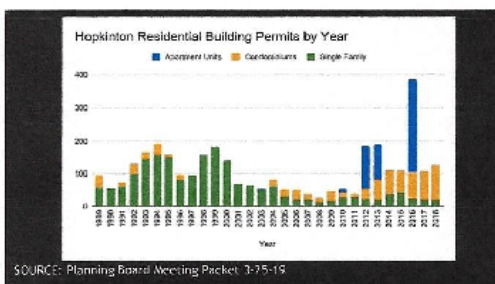
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25

- ### Growth Management Tools help with....
- Preserving Open Space and Rural Character
  - Influencing the Pace and Location of Development
  - Enhancing State Environmental Regulations
  - Influencing the Design and Character of Development
  - Affordable Housing
- SOURCE: Growth Management Tools: A Summary for Planning Boards in Massachusetts Metropolitan District Commission August 2002

28



26

- ### Forty Years of Planning for Growth.....
- 1979 Reorganize into 6 Districts
  - 1988 Open Space and Landscape Element for By-Laws (Cluster zoning, Open and Square Miles set aside as Permanent Open Space)
  - 1989 "Wald" Residential Protection Overlay Zoning
  - 1993 Top Honey adds Local Wetland Protection By-Laws (in line of State Wetland Protection Act)
  - 2007 Revised Community Preservation Act - Numerous Small and Large Parcels added to Inventory of Open Space
  - 2009 Hopkinton Historic District
  - 2011 Town purchased Fruit Street Property (7.5 Acres)
  - 2005 Land Use Study Committee - sets of Vision, Timeline, List, 13 Recommendations
  - 2005 Adopted Town Manager Form of Government
  - 2007 Incubatory Zoning adopted to Encourage Development of Affordable Housing
  - 2008 Open Space and Land Use Development Overlay Zone adopted for Legacy Farms
  - 2015 Enclosed South Village in the 10th Affordable Housing
  - 2017 Fruit Farm, Endicott Tobacco Properties Purchased 93 acres
- SOURCE: Hopkinton Assessor Plan 20-7, Hopkinton General By-Laws, Multiple Zoning Ordinance

29

# Hopkinton: Planning & Management

27

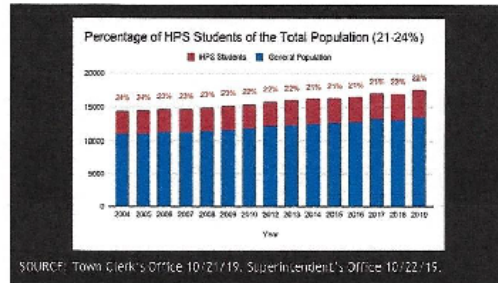
- ### Forty Years of Managing Growth
- Growth Six Phases: 1970's, 1980's, 1990's
  - Water Pollution and Sewer Wastewater - New Long Term
  - Senior Centers and Community Centers additions in the 1980's
  - Hopkinton School opened 1998 and New High School (opened 2011)
  - Johnston Elementary School (opened 2018)
  - Fire Department Expansion Timeline
  - Two new Police Stations since 1980
  - Senior Center
  - Library
  - New DPH HQ

30



# What Does the Future Look Like?

31

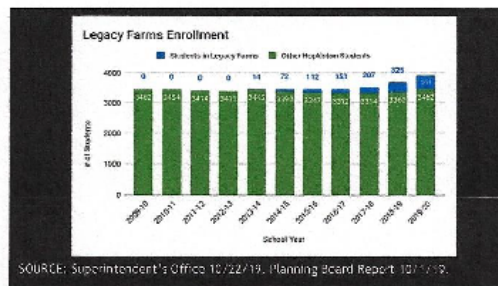


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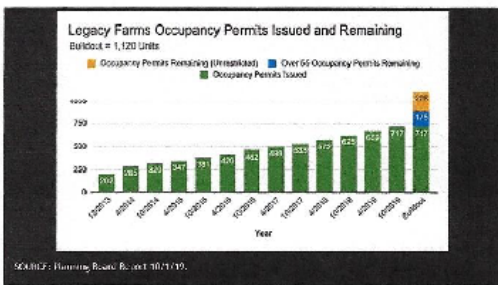
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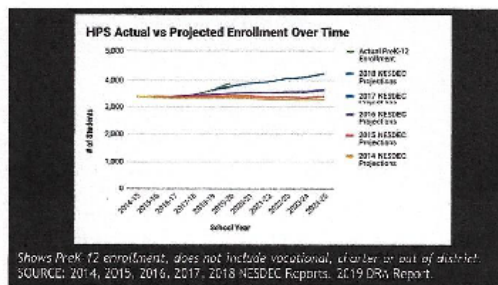
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36

### School Planning

School Capacity Study - Voted at Town Meeting 2019 (article 17L)

- Drumsey, Roscoe Anderson, Inc. (DRA) was contracted to do the study
- A Public Forum was held on **December 5, 2019** to present the results
- The video is available on I-CAM-TV

SOURCE: School Committee Meeting 12/5/19.

37

### Police Department Strategic Plan 2020-24

Development Process July 2019 - January 2020:

- Surveys - Internal & external
- Meetings with town officials, union head & stakeholders
- Focus Groups with administrative staff
- Stakeholder Meetings

SOURCE: Hopkinton Police Department Strategic Plan Stakeholders Presentation 12/19

40

### Proposed School Projects

- Hopkinton High School Expansion - Construction of 6 Permanent Classrooms - \$5 million
- Elmwood School: Installation of 4 Modular Classrooms - \$2 million
- Hopkins School: Installation of 4 Modular Classrooms - \$3 million

Projects Must Pass at **BOTH a Town Meeting & a Town Election:**

- Special Town Meeting 12/9/19 - All three projects passed
- Special Town Election 2/3/20 - coming up...

SOURCE: Special Town Meeting Warrant 12/9/19 & Select Board Packet 12/17/19

38

### Open Developable Land and Property in Hopkinton - Fall 2019

Parcels 100 acres and above:

- Laborers Training site
- Hopkinton Country Club
- YWCA
- plus one additional private parcel in Woodville

Parcels 50 - 100 acres:

- Liberty Mutual plus four additional private parcels

Nine parcels less than fifty acres

Based on data provided by Rewax Executive Realty October 2019

41

### Public Safety Planning

Public Safety Facility/Fire Station Feasibility Study - Voted at Town Meeting 2019 (article 17C)

- Public safety officials are meeting with the Permanent Building Committee on January 9, 2020
- A RFP will be going out in January 2020
- Proposals will be reviewed in February 2020

SOURCE: Fire Chief 11/12/19.

39

### What about Commercial & Industrial Development?

42

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SOURCE: Hopkinton Police Department Strategic Plan Stakeholders Presentation 12/18

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39

### What about Commercial & Industrial Development?

42

## The Commercial Industrial Sector

How to incorporate into future growth  
of the community?

43

## Discussion

44

Change from w Growth	70 01 Val Chg from New Growth	\$ Change from Valuation Adjustments	70 01 Val Chg from Adjustm ents
41,460,651	130.8%	-\$9,752,213	-30.8%
56,275,791	109.7%	-\$4,954,972	-9.7%
72,554,979	94.7%	\$4,035,055	5.3%
99,236,516	85.7%	\$16,561,124	14.3%
35,865,468	34.7%	\$161,610,006	65.3%
25,396,951	58.6%	\$88,459,712	41.4%
56,039,592	64.0%	\$93,326,485	36.0%
31,340,349	50.8%	\$127,333,167	49.2%
34,919,840	44.2%	\$170,148,826	55.8%
	74.8%		25.2%

## Appendix B

by Category	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Prop	Total
5,337	\$1,055,744	\$206,900	\$14,642,670	\$41,460,651
7,931	\$7,704,931	\$145,729	\$20,547,200	\$56,275,791
3,234	\$6,246,070	\$2,063,545	\$17,207,130	\$72,554,979
4,786	\$4,788,400	\$30,620	\$14,972,710	\$99,236,516
2,118			\$30,712,300	\$85,865,468
1,641			\$16,495,910	\$125,396,951
2,700			\$37,432,360	\$166,039,592
0,303			\$23,612,130	\$131,340,349
9,280			\$32,226,260	\$134,919,840
2,330			\$207,848,670	\$913,090,137
	6.4%	0.7%	22.8%	

**Where Our "New Growth" Revenue has Come From in Last Ten Years**

Division of Property Tax Revenue by Property Class

**Where Are We Headed?  
Projecting Future  
Revenues**

Year	Commercial	Industrial	Office	Open Space	Personal Property	Total Property Tax Revenue
	Tax Revenue	Tax Revenue	Tax Revenue	Tax Revenue	Tax Revenue	
2022	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2023	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2024	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2025	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2026	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2027	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2028	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2029	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2030	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2031	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2032	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2033	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2034	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2035	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2036	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2037	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2038	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2039	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2040	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2041	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2042	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2043	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2044	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2045	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2046	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2047	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2048	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2049	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260
2050	\$ 8,345,090	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 2,411,990	\$ 3,345,090	\$ 20,758,260

Enter estimates below; see resulting projections in tables T.3 & T.4 to left

	Estimated Residential % Value Change	Estimated \$ Residential New Growth	Estimated Commercial %	Estimated \$ Commercial	Estimated Industrial Value Change	Estimated \$ Industrial New Growth	Estimated Pers Prop % Value Change
	<b>Where Are We Headed?</b>						
	<b>Modeling Future Revenues</b>						
11	4.0%	\$97,700,000			2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
12	4.0%	\$70,000,000			2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
13	4.0%	\$70,000,000			2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
14	4.0%	\$15,000,000			2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
15	4.0%	\$15,000,000	2.0%	\$2,000,000	2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
16	4.0%	\$15,000,000	2.0%	\$2,000,000	2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
17	4.0%	\$15,000,000	2.0%	\$2,000,000	2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
18	4.0%	\$15,000,000	2.0%	\$2,000,000	2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
19	4.0%	\$15,000,000	2.0%	\$2,000,000	2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%
20	4.0%	\$15,000,000	2.0%	\$2,000,000	2.0%	\$500,000	2.0%