



Upton Master Plan

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Upton Master Plan Sub-Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Master Plan Overview

Upton's previous Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board in 1966 and needed to be updated. In 2002, the Planning Board formed the Master Plan Committee to write a new Master Plan.

Chapter 41, 81D of the General Laws of Massachusetts requires a community Master Plan to provide a basis for decision making regarding long term physical development of a community. The law requires a master plan to include the following nine elements or chapters; visioning, housing, economic development, transportation, public facilities, natural resources, open space & recreation, land use and implementation. Public participation must play an important role in developing the goals and policies of the Master Plan.

Mission Statement

To present a five to ten year plan for the Town of Upton; including specific recommendations rooted in research and best practice, as to how to accomplish town goals. The plan will provide action guidelines for the citizens, officials and town committees of the community and serve as a continuing reminder of what the town needs to do to accomplish a shared vision for the town of Upton.

Benefits

The benefits to the Town Upton for having a community Master Plan are considerable. They include: a better bond rating, bonus points on State grant applications, and a better bargaining position to negotiate with developers on residential, commercial, industrial, and affordable housing proposals. In addition, the Master Plan will provide focus, create and organize action items, set priorities, and chart a course for the community. As Upton continues to grow, the Master Plan will guide residents, town officials, and committees in preserving Upton's strengths, overcoming its weaknesses, combating threats and exploiting opportunities for improvement.

Impact to the Community

The recommendations from this Master Plan fall into different categories; some apply town wide, some apply to specific locations, and some are policy statements that the town should pursue. Most of the recommendations will not have a fiscal impact on the community but will require a Town vote to amend the zoning bylaws and/or appropriate funding for studies and planning.

Assumptions

The goals and objectives that have evolved from the community survey and visioning sessions accurately reflect the resident's desires pertaining to the future growth of Upton.

The professional planning consultants hired to assist the Master Plan Committee provided relevant information to the committee regarding towns of similar size and demographics



to Upton. This information, combined with best practices based on expert experience served as the basis for the Master Plan Committee's recommendations.

Elements of the Master Plan

Vision Statement

This element presents the goals and objectives of residents related to the growth of Upton. It reflects the collective opinions of residents derived from the following events:

- Community Survey
- Vision Session I : A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) exercise
- Vision Session II: A task and goal examination of key elements.

Land Use

This element provides an overview of the town's land use patterns, existing zoning, and the likely future development patterns associated with the current zoning scheme.

Goal: Maintain and enhance Upton's rural, small town character and limit commercial, industrial, and residential growth to what is appropriate to Upton's character and supportable by the available infrastructure, while being environmentally responsible.

Key Strategies: Strengthen the site plan review bylaw and regulations; create a design review guideline, bylaw, and review committee; strengthen the Open Space Preservation Subdivision Bylaw.

Housing

This element focuses on population growth in Upton and the region and its affects on demands for housing.

Goal: Preserve Upton's rural, small-town character and open space; ensure that housing development is slow, deliberate and planned; and provide a diversity of housing affordability while maintaining a largely single family character.

Key Strategies: Establish a definitive municipal water and sewer service area; establish a major residential review process; form a local housing partnership committee.

Economic Development

This element examines Upton's labor force, existing business community, and the impact of commercial development on the tax base.

Goal: Encourage economic development that maintains a balance between resident's preferences for limited, selective commercial/industrial growth while recognizing that increasing Upton's 3.5% commercial/industrial tax base will lessen the residential property tax burden.

Key Strategies: Revitalize and expand Upton's Development & Industrialization Committee; develop the Town's grant writing capacity; initiate a town center revitalization program.



Natural Resources, Open Space, & Recreation

This element is a summary of the draft Town of Upton Open Space and Recreation Plan, including an inventory and analysis of Upton's natural resources, wildlife, vegetation, and recreation sites.

Goal: Ensure Upton has a good and ample amount of publicly accessible, multi-use open space land that provides both passive and active recreational opportunities, as well as aesthetic enjoyment, wildlife protection, and watershed protection. Create and maintain plans to safeguard Upton's many scenic and recreation lands, undeveloped parcels, fragile water resources, and wildlife habitats.

Key Strategies: Complete the Open Space & Recreation Plan and get State approval; perform an assessment of open space and active recreation needs; increase the size of the Recreation Commission.

Transportation

This element discusses access to various modes of transportation, circulation within Upton, and approaches that the town can implement to improve both.

Goal: Achieve safe, efficient, convenient transportation for vehicles and people in a way that preserves and enhances Upton's rural character.

Key Strategies: Explore options to mitigate commuter traffic; develop street design guidelines; initiate traffic calming.

Public Facilities

This element discusses Upton's public facilities, services and infrastructure and provides strategies to invest in infrastructure that will support the community's overall vision for the future.

Goal: Ensure the adequate performance of the town's water, wastewater infrastructure, and public facilities taking into account the needs of all citizens, future growth pressures and objectives in other chapters.

Key Strategies: Hire a Town Planner; update and revise the sewer/water replacement and improvement plan; establish a definitive municipal and sewer service area.

Implementation

This element is a step-by-step guide for Upton to follow over the next fifteen years to ensure that the Master Plan recommendations are put into action. Implementing the Master Plan will require a concerted and ongoing effort on the part of the town's elected and appointed officials, volunteers, and dedicated citizens.

Goal: Implementing the element recommendations in a progressive and timely fashion.

Key Strategies: Form a Master Plan Implementation Committee; hire a Town Planner.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Community Master Planning Process in Upton

The Town of Upton began a community master planning process in June 2002 with the formation of the Master Plan Subcommittee under the Planning Board. The first phase of the process culminated in the completion of the Community Development Plan (funded through the Executive Order-418 Planning Program). Upton decided to use the EO-418 funds provided by the Commonwealth to cover the cost of two public forums, a citizen survey and the Housing and Economic Development chapters of the Master Plan. In Phase I of the process, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) provided technical assistance and overall project guidance; Mullin and Associates Inc. was brought in to facilitate the two public forums. The Master Plan Subcommittee completed the Natural Resource, Open Space and Recreation chapter with assistance from CMRPC and the Upton Conservation Commission.

Phase II of the process addressed the remaining elements of this Master Plan, including Land Use, Transportation, Public Facilities and the Implementation Plan. This phase was completed by the Master Plan Subcommittee, appointed by the Upton Planning Board, with assistance from Daylor Consulting Group, Inc. A member of the Planning Board participated on the Subcommittee to act as a liaison between the two groups. The Master Plan Subcommittee met twice a month throughout the planning process until the Plan was finished. The Planning Board was continually apprised of the Subcommittee's progress and reviewed all draft chapters before they were finalized. Town funds supported the efforts to complete the second phase of this Master Plan.

1.2 Public Involvement

To further increase the public's involvement in the planning process, the Master Plan Subcommittee hosted two public forums, one in early 2003 and one in early 2004. The first public forum was general in nature and dealt with residents' opinions, both positive and negative, about living in Upton. The feedback from the first public forum was supplemented with the results of a random sample citizen survey. Six hundred Upton households received a 26-question survey that polled their thoughts on a broad array of planning issues. All told, 327 surveys were returned and tabulated. The second public forum was held in April 2004 and focused on more specific issues pertaining to Upton's future. This event was widely advertised throughout the community and attended by many interested citizens. Town planners and attendees discussed at length the issues of land use, housing, economic development and the natural environment.

1.3 Key Findings

A number of important themes came to light through the master planning process after analysis of background research and solicitation of public opinion. These key findings include:

- Upton citizens want to maintain the town's rural character; any new development, whether residential, commercial or industrial, should have a scale and appearance that allows it to blend into existing neighborhoods without disruption of the community fabric.



- Upton’s municipal government will continue to be largely volunteer-based; any new planning initiatives need to take into account the town’s administrative capacity in terms of implementation. (This Master Plan does recommend that the town hire a full time professional Planner.)
- Upton has made a concerted effort to provide suitable housing options for low and moderate-income households, senior citizens and first-time homebuyers; the town should continue to do so.
- Upton needs to be proactive in protecting its open spaces; a prioritized list of properties to be protected should be prepared.
- Upton has a shortage of recreation facilities; the town needs to be proactive in planning for new recreation facilities.
- Upton lack’s sufficient infrastructure; the town should promote low impact economic development that is consistent with the town’s character and create a sustainable tax base.

1.4 Report Organization

Following an introduction to the Plan in Chapter 1.0 and the description of the Town Vision in Chapter 2, Chapter 3.0 discusses the major land use issues within the town, including land use patterns, population growth, and development trends consistent with local zoning regulations. Following this element is Chapter 4.0, which covers issues related to housing and affordable housing development. This analysis takes into account current housing types in the town as well as an assessment of housing demand and needs. Chapter 5.0 assesses economic development efforts in Upton and looks at strategies to provide increased economic activity in a manner consistent with the residents’ vision to maintain a small-town atmosphere. The plan then proceeds to Chapter 6.0, which details the town’s available natural resources, open spaces and recreational areas. This chapter provides a thorough description of Upton’s landscape features and environmentally significant areas as well as the needs for both conservation and recreation land. Chapter 7.0 discusses transportation issues and strategies that will help the town increase pedestrian safety while providing for proper circulation throughout Upton. Chapter 8.0 provides an analysis of the town’s public facilities and infrastructure, including the water and wastewater systems, municipal buildings, fire and police coverage, and school facilities. To conclude, Chapter 9.0 outlines the suggested steps towards implementation of the plan, with an evaluation program to help the town measure its progress.

1.5 How to Use Plan

This plan is the composition of many hours of research and analysis on issues specific to Upton and the town’s future. While this document is not law, town officials and committees should refer to it for strategies that will help Upton progress towards the vision shared by its citizens. As a policy document, the Plan will provide guidance on prevailing methodologies and suggestions for proper execution of the strategies as outlined in Chapter 9.0 - the Implementation Plan. Over time certain strategies may prove to be more successful than others; subsequently, the town should revisit this document in five years both to gauge its progress towards achieving the goals and vision outlined in this Plan and revise elements that may be outdated.



2.0 VISION STATEMENT

The Master Plan is based upon an extensive public process including a community survey and two vision sessions intended to develop an understanding of the resident's goals and desires for Upton's future. The Vision Statement is a broad set of themes identifying what type of community residents would like in the future. Intended to be general, the Vision Statement attempts to capture the sentiments of the majority of Upton's residents.

2.1 Vision Statements

Upton will continue to have the look and feel of a New England village as it continues to develop. Upton is a family-oriented town that enjoys a bedroom community atmosphere, a quality public education system, an effective town government and open space and recreation amenities. We strive to provide affordable housing opportunities for moderate income families.

Upton residents want to limit the commercial and industrial development within the community. They welcome commercial and light industry that is environmentally sensitive and is of an appropriate scale and appearance. This type of development should not strain Upton's water resources or impact traffic circulation within the community.

Upton residents regard open space, recreation, scenic vistas and natural resources preservation as essential elements that are needed to maintain the health and well being of the community. Residents embrace developers who will integrate these concepts into their design/building process. Residents want to continue to pursue opportunities to protect and expand open space and recreation facilities for everyone.

In the future, Upton residents would like to create a traditional New England town center or town common. They envision a central gathering spot with village shops, a vibrant green common and a gazebo for enjoying summer evenings and gatherings for special events.

2.2 Summary of Survey and Visioning Sessions

Below is a summary of the key points from the community survey and vision sessions.

Survey Results			
Land Use	Housing	Open Space/ Recreation	Economic Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Against rezoning residential property Land acquisition by the Town is a split decision Improve streetscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefer single family housing More elderly housing Less expensive housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Community Preservation Act Support scenic road designation Support the creation of an historic district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal new industry No fast food chains Prefer restaurants Small retail stores



Vision Results

Assets	Liabilities	Looking Ahead	Choices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional location • Rural landscape • Strong school system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure decay • Rapid growth/sprawl • Lack of Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and obtain State approval of Open Space & Recreation Plan • Prepare a comprehensive water/sewer plan • Create a town center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a Town Planner • Establish a Master Plan Oversight Committee • Limit commercial and industrial development by type and size



3.0 LAND USE

3.1 Summary

The Land Use Chapter provides an overview of Upton's existing land use, as well as an assessment of how land use is likely to change in the future under the town's current zoning. Included with this analysis is a discussion of regional land use trends affecting Upton, historic trends that dictate current land use patterns and the various factors that influence development in Upton.

3.2 Goals

Ensure that the land-use-related recommendations in the other chapters of this master plan are implemented effectively and expeditiously.

Maintain and enhance Upton's rural, small town character and limit commercial, industrial, and residential growth to what is appropriate to Upton's character and supportable by the available infrastructure, while being environmentally responsible.

3.3 Objectives

1. Improve Upton's land use regulations and policies to provide growth management guidelines and environmental protection.
2. Encourage a compatible combination of small businesses and residences along Route 140 between Upton Center and West Upton with the long term goal of a more integrated and accessible town center.
3. Limit future commercial, industrial and general business development to the existing strip along Route 140.
4. Preserve the traditional New England village appearance of the town.

3.4 Regional Context

Unlike many Massachusetts communities, Upton was the conglomeration of parts of the four surrounding towns: Sutton, Hopkinton, Mendon, and Uxbridge. The town began as a farming community in the early 1700s and later diversified to include a few manufacturing enterprises, particularly boot and hat production.

Upton's rural character, combined with the town's proximity to major metropolitan areas, has made it increasingly attractive as a bedroom community for commuters. The town is 15 miles southeast of Worcester, 36 miles southwest of Boston, and 60 miles east of Springfield. Transportation access, with close proximity to I-90, I-395, and I-495 and State Route 140, along with rail access, have facilitated commuting to and from Upton and is likely to continue to do so.

3.5 Town History

When Upton was incorporated in 1735, it was a farming community; early families in Upton were self-sufficient farmers, weavers, saw mill operators, grist millers, and tanners.



Upton was created so that early settlers in the area could more easily go to church services.

Upton's original meeting hall was located on the south end of town, but was moved to Upton Center in 1771, making it more accessible to major transportation routes and residents on the north end. This relocation set the foundation for growth in Upton, as development remained primarily in the Town Center area until the late 20th century.

Small industries grew, stimulated by the water supplied by the Mill River. By the 1800's, shoes were the most important manufactured products, later being replaced by the Knowlton Hat Factory erected in 1840. The Knowlton factory, on the west side of town, became the primary industrial employer in Upton. The Knowlton family in turn helped build many public buildings in town and attracted new residents with manufacturing work. The Knowlton Hat Factory has been converted to a residential complex as have many of the structures contributed by William Knowlton and his family. They include the "Lodge" across the street from the former hat factory and the Unitarian Church, which still stands in the center of West Upton.

This industrial expansion was significant in terms of Upton's land use and development patterns. Agriculture was in a slow growth period with respect to land consumption as the farming economy began to shift from the cultivation of vegetables to dairy production. More land became available for residential and industrial development or was returned to a wooded state, although most new buildings, both residential and commercial, were located in the town center near rail lines and major roads. The Knowlton factory in West Upton created another viable secondary center, with higher density residential areas close to the plant. Settlement patterns remained compact and centralized as growth occurred in and around the town center and villages.

Today the Knowlton Hat Factory is no longer in production and little industry or commercial development has moved into Upton. With Upton's close proximity to Worcester, Boston and major commuter routes, it has become a bedroom community experiencing a significant growth in population and residential development. This development has moved beyond the town centers to outlying sections of the town. This growth is altering the small town charm and open landscape characteristic of Upton as open space and farms outside of the town centers are developed at lower density.

3.6 Town Land Description

The Town of Upton is approximately rectangular with the long dimension oriented north-south. Route 140, the only state highway running through the town, passes through slightly below the midline in a northwest/southeast direction, coming from Milford and Hopedale in the east and going to Grafton on the western border. While Route 140 bisects the town from east to west, Westborough Road and Mendon Road bisect the town from north to south, both originating roughly from the center of town. Hopkinton Road, which travels northeast above the town's center and runs along Pratt Pond, is a heavily traveled commuter road connecting Upton to Route 495 and from there the Mass Pike (Interstate 90).

The corridor along Route 140 contains dense housing, areas zoned for commercial and industrial use and areas zoned for general business use. This corridor contains most of Upton's businesses and many historical features such as the Town Hall, the Library housed in the Knowlton-Risteen Building, churches and many historic homes. The town's two



centers, the elementary school, a playground and two ball fields at the VFW hall are also located on Route 140.

The areas to the north and south of Route 140 corridor are zoned Agricultural/Residential (2 acre minimum), contain significant tracts of state forest land and are sparsely to moderately populated today. This Agricultural/Residential (AR) zoning constitutes 74% of Upton's land area; the bulk of Upton's preserved open space can be found in land zoned AR.

Upton has five significant bodies of water and a number of rivers and brooks. Pratt Pond, the largest body of water, is located near the center of town and includes a town beach, tennis courts, a baseball and a soccer field. Wildwood Lake, a long, narrow lake, is located along the western part of Route 140. Goss Pond is located in the southern part of town and is surrounded by a residential development. After Pratt and Wildwood, Fiske Mill and Taft Pond are the largest.

With the exception of Route 140, Hopkinton Road, Mendon Road and Westborough Road, which are used as the main thoroughfares for travel to surrounding towns, Upton's remaining roads are quiet, curving country roads used primarily by residents traveling to and from private homes. The bulk of Upton's roads are narrow, tree-lined streets connecting residential developments. (See the Transportation Section for additional information on Upton's roads.)

3.6.1 Land Use Patterns

Land use trends in Upton suggest a town that is moving away from its traditional New England roots and towards the modern incarnation of a suburban bedroom community. Over the past three decades, the once compact development pattern found within the historic centers has transformed to a less dense suburban pattern spread throughout the entire town.

In recent years, Upton has faced several issues related to its growing population and the new development required to accommodate it. According to town data, the total population in Upton increased from 3,886 in 1980 to 6,369 in 2000, and 7,052 in 2003 (see **Chart 3-1**). Given the town's proximity to both Boston and Worcester, an increase in population may occur at a similar pace as in previous years and require creative solutions to sustain Upton's rural character.

The increase in population over the last few decades corresponds with the increased consumption of land in Upton (see **Figure 2: Historic Land Use Changes**). In 1999, 51% of the town was developed, up from 21% in 1971 and 29% in 1985 (see **Chart 3-2**). In addition, between 1971 and 1999, Upton lost approximately 40% of its open space, while residential land use increased by 140% (see **Chart 3-3**). This trend indicates two things. First, since the change in acreage for other uses was negligible, nearly all new development over the past thirty years was for residential use. Second, this residential development was built almost completely on land that was previously open space.

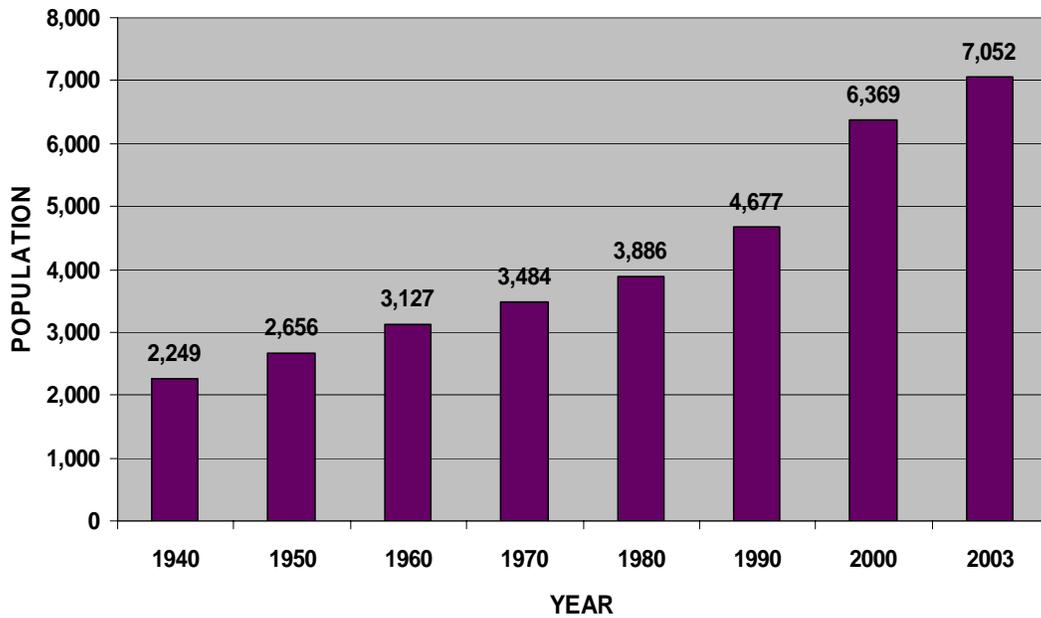
Along with a drastic loss of open space was an increase in average lot size. In 1970, the average acreage of developed land per person was 0.069. By 2000, this number increased to 0.104 acres per person, indicating that along with a rise in both population and developed land, there was also an increase in the amount of developed land



occupied per person. This pattern indicates that, over time, development patterns have shifted towards larger lot sizes, with less communal open space for residents.

Another major shift in land development patterns is that residential development has spread past the town center and into the outlying areas of town. Historically, major development activity in town was clustered around Upton's centers. This compact development helped maintain the small town character that attracted many Upton residents. Most development prior to 1971 was located around interconnected roads near the center of town while more recent development has ventured farther from this compact pattern, primarily on the southern end and away from areas with existing infrastructure (see **Figure 1: Current Land Use**).

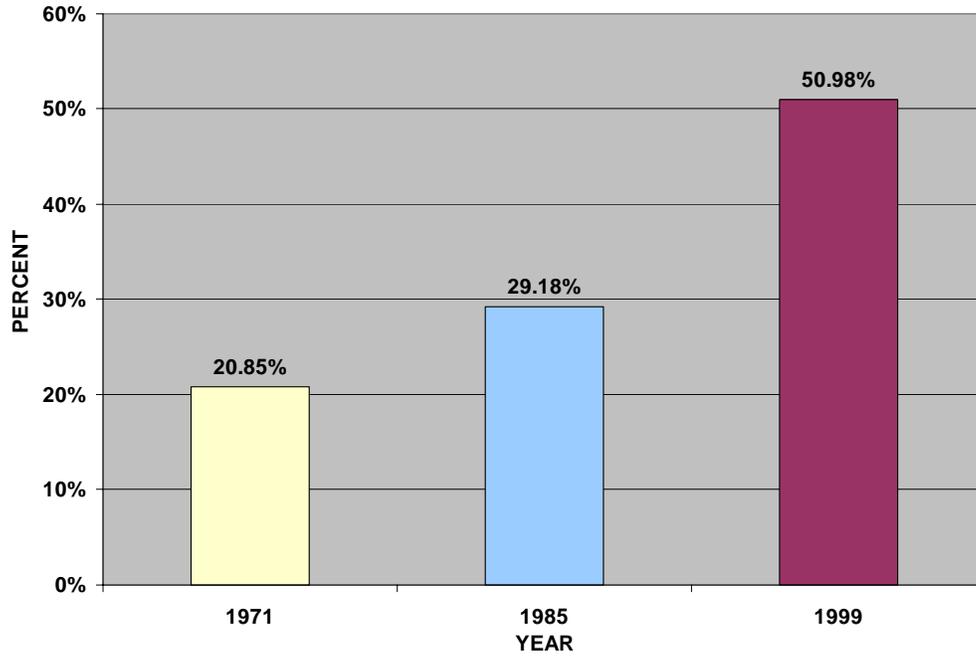
Chart 3-1
Total Population



Source: Upton Town Clerk's Office

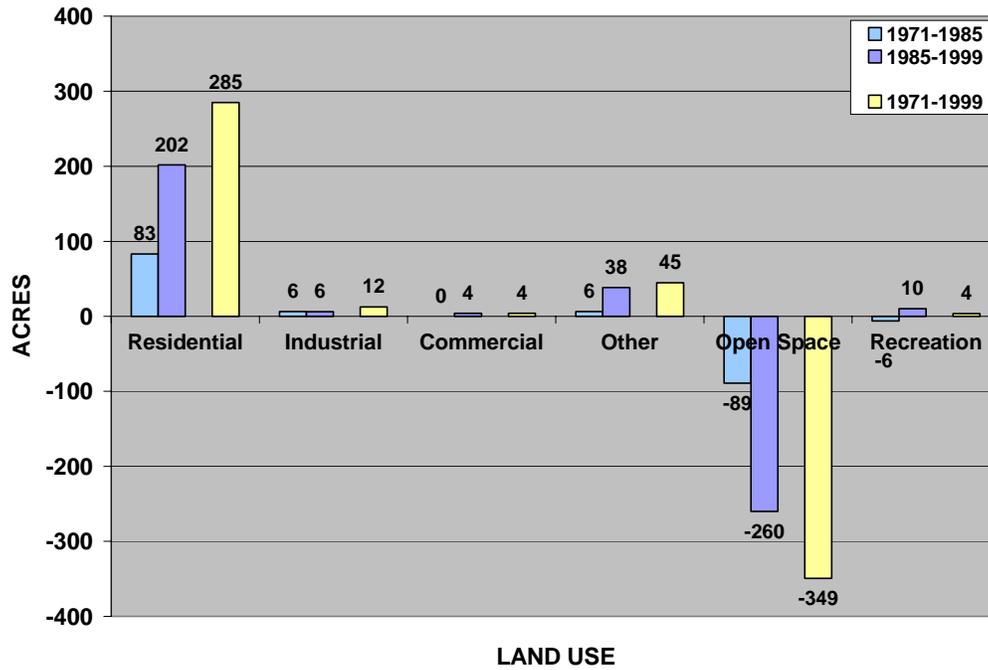


Chart 3-2
Percentage of Total Land Developed



Source: MassGIS

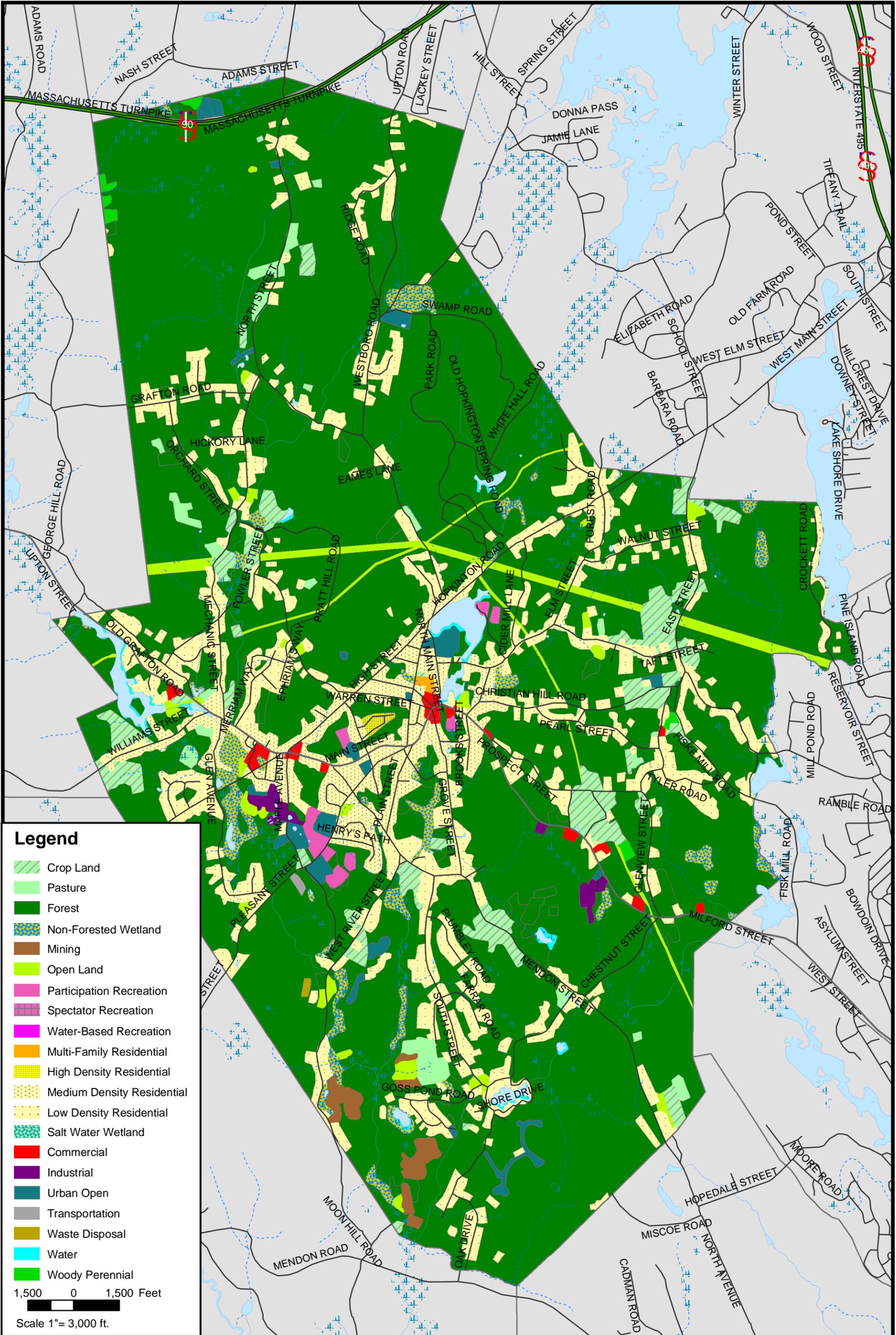
Chart 3-3
Change in Land Use (Acres)



Source: MassGIS



It is the end user's responsibility to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of the data contained herein. Use of this map constitutes agreement with the terms of the Daylor GIS Data Disclaimer.



Legend

- Crop Land
- Pasture
- Forest
- Non-Forested Wetland
- Mining
- Open Land
- Participation Recreation
- Spectator Recreation
- Water-Based Recreation
- Multi-Family Residential
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Salt Water Wetland
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Urban Open
- Transportation
- Waste Disposal
- Water
- Woody Perennial

1,500 0 1,500 Feet
Scale 1" = 3,000 ft.

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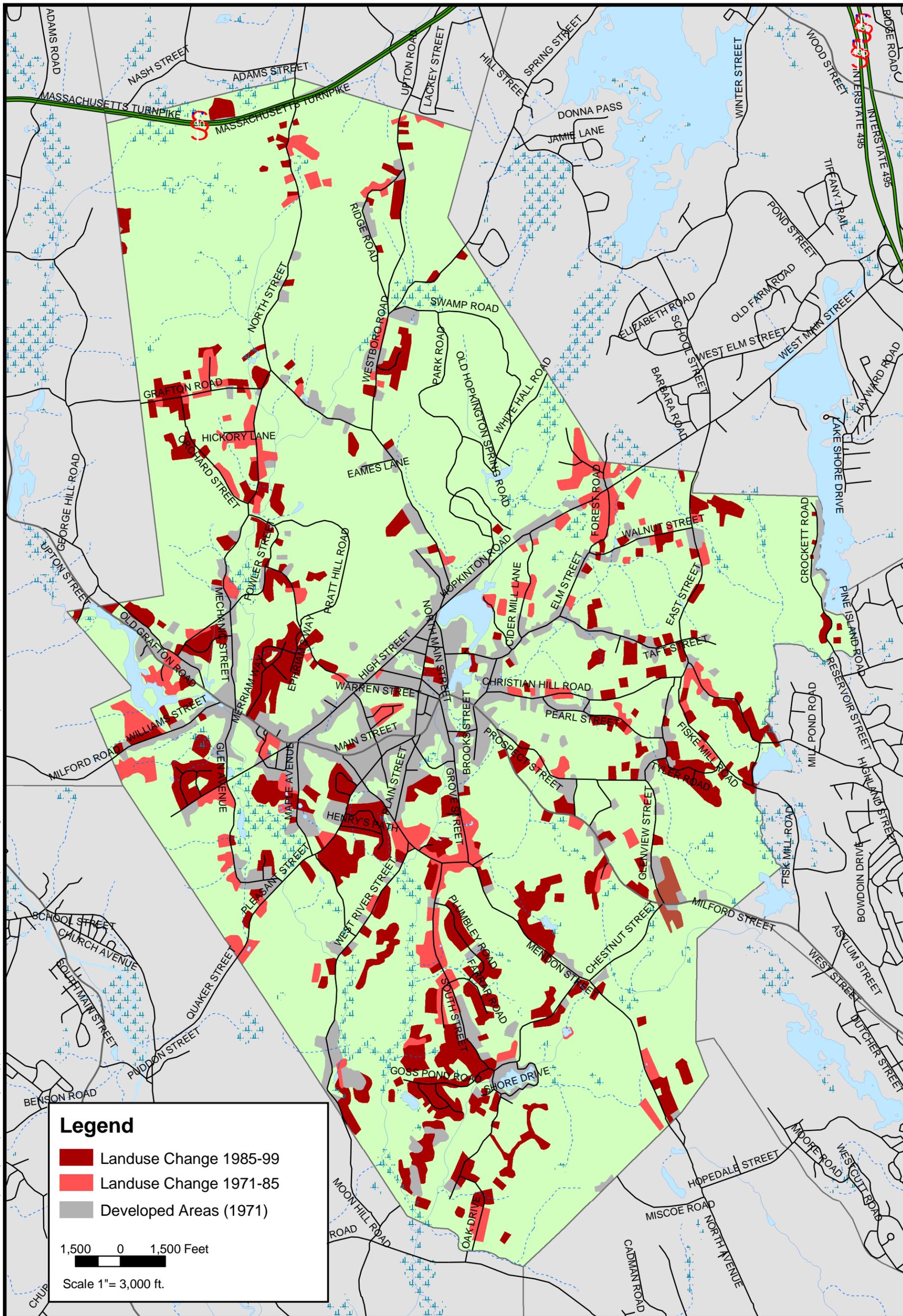
Ten Forbes Road Braintree, MA 02184 781 / 849-7070

Current Land Use (1999)
Town of Upton

Figure 1

Source: MassGIS

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Historic Land Use Changes (1971-1999) Town of Upton

Z

Figure 2

Source: MassGIS

3.6.2 Existing Zoning

Zoning and other land use laws constitute a town’s “blueprint” for its future. Land use patterns over time will continue to look more and more like the town’s zoning map until the town is finally “built out”—that is, there is no more developable land available. Zoning is therefore, the primary land use tool the town may use to manage development and direct growth to suitable and desired areas while protecting critical resources and ensuring that development is in keeping with the town’s character.

Upton has ten base zoning districts and one overlay district. The base districts define the allowed uses and dimensional requirements in all parts of the town, while the overlay district provides for additional restrictions in certain areas. These districts are described below, and are shown in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1
Upton Zoning Districts

District	Area (Acres)	% of Town
Single Residential A	109	1.52
Single Residential B	130	1.8
Single Residential C	609	8.5
Single Residential D	396	5.5
Agricultural/Residential	5,301	74.1*
General Business	133	1.9
Commercial and Industrial	424	5.9
Municipal Government	54	0.8
Recreation District	0	0.0
Total Area	7,156	100.0%

Sources: Town of Upton, CMRPC

* Please note that some of this land is protected open space and so all 5,301 acres are not developable.

- **Single Residence (A, B, C, D) District:** These districts are primarily intended for suburban single family subdivision development. The minimum lot area increases from SRA (15,000 sq. ft.) to SRD (60,000 sq. ft.).
- **Agricultural-Residential District:** This district allows all the same uses as the Single Residence Districts and also allows for more intensive agricultural uses, such as hog farms. This district has a minimum lot area of 80,000 sq. ft.
- **General Business District:** This district allows retail, commercial, and service establishments. The only size limits imposed are on the height of the building (two stories maximum) and the minimum lot size is controlled by the least restricted adjacent Single Residence District per Section VI C.
- **Commercial/Industrial District:** This district allows more industrial uses such as light manufacturing. Structures are limited to one story in height and the minimum lot size is controlled by the least restricted adjacent Single Residence District per Section VI C.
- **Recreation District:** This district is ‘designated for the exclusive use of the inhabitants and property owners of the Town of Upton’.



- **Special Use District:** This district is primarily for municipal uses, including buildings, recreation facilities, and water supply.

Overlay District

- **Flood Plain District:** This District includes all lands designated as Zone A, A1-30 on the Upton Flood Insurance Maps. Uses that are permitted in the underlying district are still permitted, but they must comply with additional flooding related requirements.

The Zoning Bylaw establishes a Site Plan Review procedure for all business and commercial buildings within the General Business and Commercial and Industrial District. Site Plan Review allows the Planning Board the ability to review a development proposal to ensure that the basic safety and welfare of the people of Upton are protected. However, the Zoning Bylaw does not create a Special Permit procedure for more intensive uses, such as light manufacturing or larger retail establishments such as 'Big Box' or Shopping Centers. Special Permit procedures would protect the town from the potential impacts of these more intense uses. This procedure is used for the Senior Housing Community Use (Section XVIII), but is not found elsewhere.

Though the Zoning Bylaw has an in-depth section outlining provisions for Wireless Service Facilities, it is over five years old and should be updated. When the Federal Telecommunications Act was updated, towns were advised to update their wireless regulations accordingly.

The Zoning Bylaw does not regulate Adult Uses and by not regulating these uses, essentially prohibits the use town wide. This may sound appealing, but is, in fact, considered by the courts to be unconstitutional and has the undesired effect of actually allowing adult uses to be constructed wherever similar non-adult related activities are permitted.

3.6.3 Buildout Analysis

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) completed a buildout analysis for the Town of Upton in the spring of 2000 as part of a region-wide effort sponsored by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). This analysis determined the amount of vacant, developable land available in town and the impacts on infrastructure and services if the land were fully developed under the town's existing zoning policies. There is no timeline associated with full buildout, but it does reflect what the town's land use policy is calling for in terms of overall development of a community.

The analysis for Upton determined that on 7,112 acres of vacant, developable land, maximum buildout would bring in an additional 6,701 new residents in 2,713 new dwelling units and require 66 extra miles of roadway (see **Table 3-2**). Of this vacant land, only 383 acres was identified within the town's commercial and industrial zoning districts.

Under current zoning regulations, Upton's character would transform from a rural New England town to a modern day residential suburb. In addition to the changes in town character, financial and environmental strains from the increases in students and necessary supporting resources (roads, water, and sewer) could have profound impacts on the community.



**Table 3-2
Upton 2000 Buildout Summary**

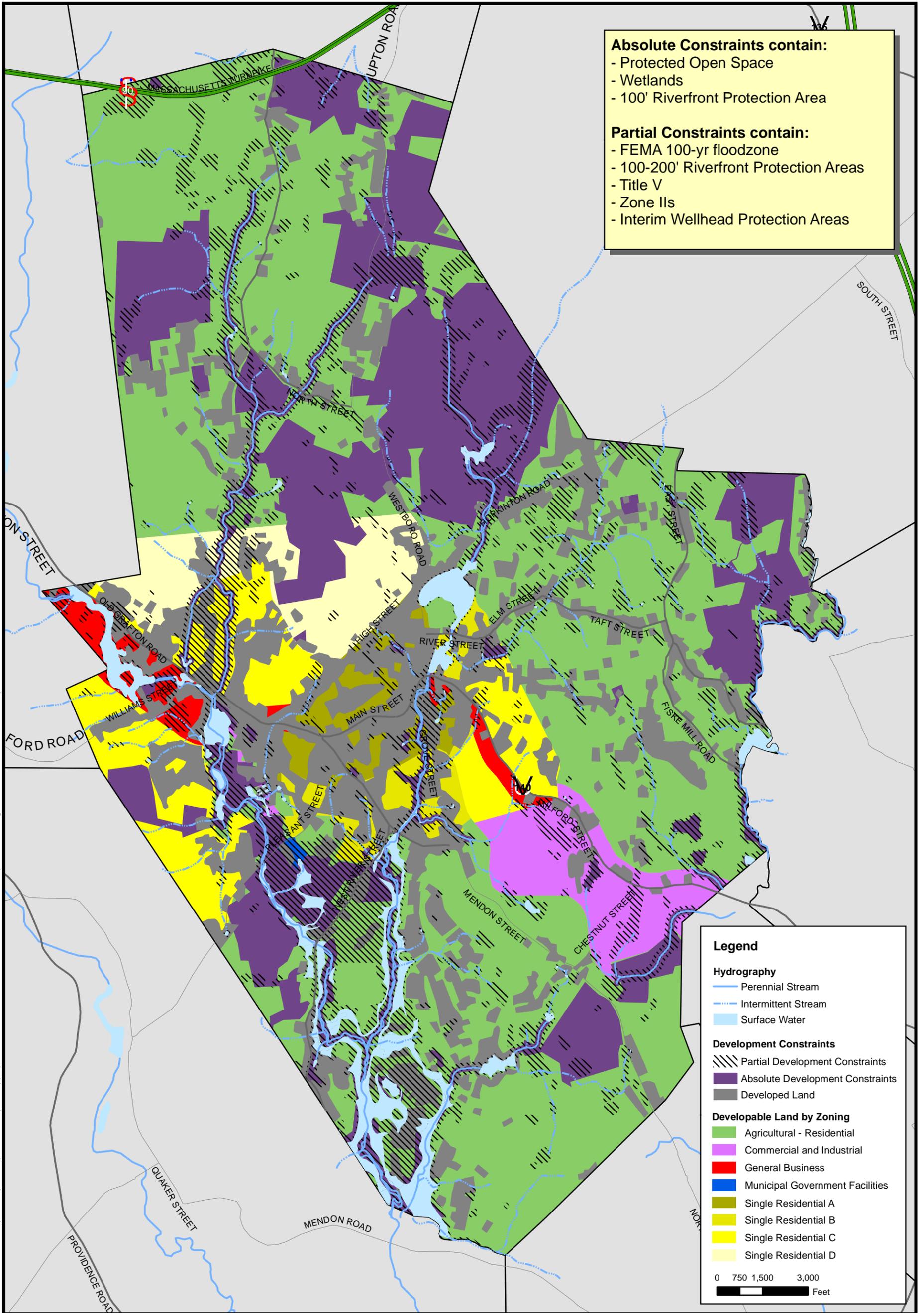
Demographic Projections	
Residents*	
1990	4,677
2000	5,642
Buildout	12,343
Students (K-12)	
1990	663
2000	994
Buildout	2,541
Residential Units	
1990	1,810
2000	2,084
Buildout	4,797
Water Use (gallons/day)	
2000	400,866
Buildout	1,220,602
Buildout Impacts	
Additional Residents	6,701
Additional Students (K-12)	1,547
Additional Residential Units	2,713
Additional Developable Land Area (sq ft)	309,798,720
Additional Developable Land Area (acres)	7,112
Additional Commercial/Industrial Buildable Floor Area (sq ft)	4,227,962
Additional Water Demand at Buildout (gallons/day)**	819,736
Residential	502,639
Commercial and Industrial	317,097
Additional Solid Waste (tons/yr)	4,041
Non-Recyclable	2,446
Recyclable	1,595
Additional Roadway at Buildout (miles)	66

Source: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

* Population for 1990 and 2000 is based on the U.S. Census, not the town clerk's figures

** Note, this number refers to overall water demand, not just demand for public water





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Ten Forbes Road Braintree, MA 02184 781 / 849-7070

Buildout Map

Town of Upton

Scale 1" = 3,000 ft.

Z

Source: Mass GIS

Figure

3

3.6.4 Town Center Development

Upton has two town centers located along Route 140 in the approximate geometric center of the town's boundaries. Upton Center is the more eastward; a mile to the west is West Upton. The two centers each have a small General Business zone around them with Single Residential A zoning in between. Single Residential A zoning is Upton's most dense residential district with a 15,000 sq.ft. minimum lot size. The zoning notwithstanding, there are small businesses and housing intermixed all along this part of Route 140. Upton Center holds two churches, the Town Hall, the Library and some small businesses around a rectangular shaped center green. West Upton holds the post office, two gas stations, and a heavily used strip mall. In general, Upton Center is considered the civic/town government hub, while West Upton is more commercial. Both centers have busy intersections, with West Upton hosting one of only two traffic lights in town and Upton Center hosting one of the more challenging intersections.

Town Center Zoning

The town centers, with their unique attributes and historic character, are zoned exactly the same as the business district along Rt. 140. Traditional town center development, with its pedestrian orientation, strong street-facing façade, and mixture of uses, is essentially prohibited by mandated setbacks and use codes that were designed to create strip style development along the major roadways. Over time, the town centers could look more and more like other business zones in town unless the zoning is altered to reflect the center's unique attributes.

3.6.5 Historic Patterns

The character of Upton's buildings has shifted over time, reflecting the trends of the times. Upton is fortunate to have a wide variety of these structures remaining today, acting as a catalog of Upton's architectural heritage and perhaps serving as inspiration for future development.

Upton's historic homes range from Colonial and Federal style homes to the stately Georgian and elaborate Greek Revival structures. Many homes of historic significance are clustered around the town centers, however, some are scattered throughout the community. West Upton's multi family homes, such as the Piano Row houses, provided housing for the factory workers during Upton's Industrial Age. The remaining commercial establishments of the past are characterized by their relationship to the street and their pedestrian scale. This is in stark contrast to the modern commercial development that is set back great distances and caters exclusively to the automobile. Upton's churches and municipal structures, with their Greek revival features, provide evidence of Upton's importance in the region and the strength of the local industries in town.

Perhaps just as interesting as the surviving structures are those that have not survived, for they may provide inspiration for future development. The historic structures indicate that Upton Center used to be dominated by two to three-story buildings. Perhaps this provides clues for how Upton Center could be developed in the future.

3.7 Land Use Issues

1. Upton is losing its open space at a rapid rate. Most of the open space is being converted to single- family homes.



2. Development patterns have shifted away from the traditional town center to a more spread out pattern. Residents have large lots and are taking up more land area than previous Upton residents.
3. Zoning is rather conventional and has established a blueprint for a conventional community with single-family homes throughout most of the town and strip commercial within the commercial districts. There is no special zoning for the unique character of the town centers.
4. The town lacks appropriate protective zoning in terms of aquifer protection, adult uses, telecommunications, and others.
5. The town lacks appropriate tools to manage large scale developments.
6. The town's build out analysis indicates that over 66 more miles of roadway could be constructed if zoning is not altered. The additional roadways would serve, almost exclusively, single family homes in what is now open forest and farmland.
7. The town centers are special and unique places, but are not zoned and regulated as such. Traditional village style development is prohibited under the General Business and Single Residential A zoning found in these locations.
8. The town has a unique and valuable architectural history, but new development is not guided to be consistent with that architectural heritage.

3.8 Land Use Recommendations

1. Strengthen Site Plan Review Bylaw and Regulations

Site plan review allows the Planning Board to review site design, lighting, vehicle and pedestrian access, architecture, landscaping, parking, stormwater management and other site features prior to the granting of a permit for the construction of commercial, industrial, and multi-family housing developments.

Upton's current Site Plan Review Bylaw is a good first step, but could benefit from some improvements. Additional review criteria and submittal requirements should be added to strengthen the review process. Further, detailed submittal requirements and review criteria could help to take the "guess work" out of the permitting process and help to foster a fair process. Many of these elements can be added to the Site Plan Review Standards and Regulations as opposed to the Bylaw itself. However, the Planning Board should ensure that the standards and regulations are referenced within the Bylaw and are consistent with the language of the Bylaw as well.

Box 3-1: Suggested Elements of Site Plan Review

- Enhance review procedure with pre-application meetings and site visits.
- Enhance application materials to include documented design process, detailed plan requirements (by individual sheet for ease of review), impact reports, and proposed mitigation.
- Impact Reports are key and should include Environmental, Traffic, Municipal Service, and Financial aspects. Each Impact Report should have a trigger related to the individual impact that mandates the preparation of the report. For example, any project that proposes over 20 parking spaces should prepare a traffic impact report.
- Create a Site Plan Best Development Handbook that outlines the town's preferred development details including innovative stormwater management, parking lot design, erosion control and other elements.



Responsible Entity: The Planning Board should revise the Site Plan Review Bylaw; these changes would need to be approved by Town Meeting. The various land use boards should work together with a consultant to create Site Plan Best Development Practices.

2. Create Design Review Guidelines, Bylaw, and Review Committee

The town should establish a Design Review Committee and an accompanying set of Design Review Guidelines to guide the design of all new signs, commercial projects and multi-family projects in the town. THIS PROCESS WOULD NOT APPLY TO SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS. The Design Review Committee¹ typically reviews the building architecture, building materials, landscape treatments, lighting design, and signage of proposed projects with reference to the published Design Review Guidelines. The Committee then provides a non-binding advisory report to the actual permit granting authority (Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Inspector, etc.). In practice, developers appreciate having a set of design guidelines to assist in the design of their building and site plan. The Design Review process is a complement to the existing Site Plan review process. Site Plan Approval addresses technical criteria such as conformance with zoning, proper drainage, and safe access. Design Review focuses on aesthetic criteria.

The Design Review Guidelines is a written document that identifies what types of building designs, building materials, and landscape treatments are preferred in the town. In Upton's case, preferred designs would probably be consistent with the rural development patterns and historic structures. The Guidelines give developers an up-front idea of what the town is looking for and ensures that the Design Review process is as objective as possible.

Box 3-2: Suggested Elements of Design Review

- Architectural Standards that address building materials, roof lines, windows, facades, and other elements.
- Sign standards that give preference to pedestrian scale monument signs over tall, highway scale internally lit signage. Materials and lighting should also be addressed.
- Landscape standards that give preference to native species.

These guidelines could be established through the assistance of a consultant and/or could be created by a citizen task force comprised of land use regulators, business representatives, historical advocates, landscape architects, and architects. It is critical that business leaders be involved at the beginning of the process to ensure that the guidelines are fair and reasonable. It should be noted that these guidelines and the accompanying review process should be a top priority as the new Planned Village Zoning District could result in large scale projects in which design review will be critical.

Responsible Entity: A separate committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, should work on the Community Character Statement and the Design Review Guidelines. The Planning Board should work with this committee to produce the Design Review Bylaw, and finally, the Town Meeting will need to approve the Bylaw.

¹ A Design Review Committee typically consists of five members appointed by the Board of Selectmen (3 appointees), Planning Board (1 appointee), and Historical Commission (1 appointee). Members of the Design Review Committee should include individuals familiar with design, construction, and real estate, such as architects, landscape architects, lawyers, realtors, and contractors.



3. Strengthen the Open Space Preservation Subdivision Bylaw

One of the most important planning issues in Upton is the future of the town's remaining large, undeveloped, unprotected tracts of land. In addition, there are numerous smaller tracts of land that are still large enough to be subdivided but have not yet been developed. One possibility for these parcels is to protect them as open space through an outright purchase or conservation restriction. However, this may not be possible due to cost or other factors. For this reason, the town must have in place a zoning framework to encourage environmentally and aesthetically sensitive development if these lands are developed in the future.

It is the intent of the Master Plan that for any given site there is at least one development option that is more appealing to a developer than a conventional residential subdivision. However, in a rural community such as Upton, not all areas can accommodate the densities and types of housing that would be permitted under alternative housing strategies. In contrast, the Open Space Subdivision Bylaw may be applied in all residential settings. In this way, the town can ensure that each new residential development provides at least some public benefits—open space, affordable housing, or increased housing diversity—as opposed to a conventional subdivision, which usually provides none.



Conventional Subdivision: In a conventional subdivision, all of the land is taken up with individual house lots and roads. While some natural vegetation is often retained on the site, it is usually fragmented as to provide little value for habitat, recreation, or the preservation of rural character. In addition, conventional subdivisions do not contribute to housing diversity in Upton because they only provide one type of housing—single-family detached—and rarely provide any affordable housing.

Open Space Subdivision (OSS): The open space subdivision technique seeks to promote a more efficient use of land by allowing houses to be “clustered” on smaller lots on one or more sections of a tract in order to set aside open space on the remainder of the tract. This technique is a relatively simple way of protecting open space, natural resources, scenic vistas, and rural character as part of new subdivisions. The Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (www.mapc.org) has an excellent document that will help the town improve the Open Space Subdivision Bylaw, *The Conservation Subdivision Design Project: Booklet for Developing a Local Bylaw*.



Box 3-3: Suggested Elements of an Open Space Subdivision Bylaw

The following are some possible elements that Upton may include in the Open Space Subdivision Bylaw to make it attractive to developers, the town, and more likely to create a desirable outcome:

Minimum Tract Size: Do not include a minimum tract size requirement so as to allow the conservation cluster technique to be used on more of the town's vacant sites. If a minimum tract size is preferred, make sure that it is no more than five acres.

Submission Requirement: An open space preservation design should be encouraged for any subdivision within the Agricultural Residential District and the Single Residential D and C Districts. The developer can also submit a conventional subdivision plan if he or she chooses. This policy means that no more time or effort is required for an applicant to obtain an Open Space Subdivision Special Permit than to undergo ordinary subdivision review.

Site Planning Process: Site planning for all subdivisions should be conducted by a registered landscape architect and should begin with the preparation of an Environmental Constraints and Opportunities Plan that shows not only regulated areas (e.g., wetlands and flood plains) but also vegetation cover, viewsheds, stone walls, and scenic, unique, or notable site features that might merit preservation. The Planning Board and the applicant should discuss this Constraints and Opportunities Plan and establish general guidelines for site planning prior to the preparation of the preliminary Conservation Cluster Development Plan.²

Lot Size: Do not require minimum lot sizes within the Open Space Subdivision except as driven by waste water concerns and as a device to determine overall site density. (See below for a discussion on waste water concerns.) This maximizes the flexibility of the design process, thus allowing the town and the developer to preserve the best land as open space.

Flexibility: Allow for flexibility in lot shape, frontage and other conventional requirements. Flexibility, when properly administered, will result in developments that reflect the underlying land while rigid requirements result in cookie cutter developments that do not reflect any design sensitivity to the land.

Minimum Open Space Percentage: At a minimum, 50% of the original site should be permanently protected as open space. The Planning Board should create detailed Open Space Guidelines that describe the types of open space that may be included, how it should be arranged within the site, how it should interact with surrounding lands, and how it should be preserved.

Wastewater Management Considerations

Within Open Space Subdivisions, there are several different options for the disposal of wastewater. In a single-family development, where house lots are at the larger end of the scale (e.g., 20,000 sq.ft. to 80,000 sq.ft. or more), all of the septic systems might be situated within each individual lot. On smaller lots (under 20,000 sq. ft.) or in

² Please refer to Conservation Design for Subdivisions: a Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks by Randall G. Arendt.



developments where there are multi-family homes, the individual house lots may not be large enough or have enough adequate soils to accommodate the septic leach field. In this case, there are two options. The first option is to pipe wastewater from several residential structures to one or more shared septic systems, ranging in size from 1,000 to 9,999 gallons per day (2-40 dwelling units), which would drain to a leaching field on the common open space. (The open space can still be used and enjoyed by residents, so long as it is kept open and is not compacted by heavy vehicles.) A homeowners' association would be responsible for maintaining the system. The second option is to use one septic system per residential structure, but allow the leach field to extend onto the common open space if necessary. The system could then be maintained by a homeowners' association and enforced through a deed restriction (for a multi-unit building), or by the individual homeowner (for a single-family house). In this latter case, the homeowner would be granted an easement to use a portion of the common open space for his/her leach field.

Wastewater disposal in decentralized systems up to 15,000 gallons per day (equivalent to about 35-40 single-family homes) is regulated by Title 5 of the State Environmental Code, which is administered locally by the Upton Board of Health. The Planning Board and Board of Health should be flexible about accepting a wide variety of system types, so long as they comply with Title 5 and will not pose a long-term administrative burden for the town. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has many resources that may assist the town when researching shared and innovative waste water management proposals. (<http://www.state.ma.us/dep/brp/wwm/t5pubs.htm>)

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board should work with the Board of Health and the Conservation Commission to develop appropriate Open Space Preservation Subdivision language

4. Update the Use Regulations

Upton's current Use Regulations are outdated and rather generic. For example, all manufacturing and industrial uses are under one definition and are permitted as of right³ in the Commercial and Industrial District. Other uses, such as Health Clubs and Shopping Malls are not described or defined, thus leaving interpretation up to the Zoning Enforcement Agent and the Zoning Board of Appeals. In addition, almost every use is allowed by right, providing the town limited opportunity to condition or regulate (certainly not deny) a proposed use. Any use that would have the potential to have a moderate to heavy impact on the surroundings or environment should only be permitted by a Special Permit from the Planning Board. A detailed Table of Use Regulation would take the guess work out of deciding if a particular use is permitted or not. Further, such a table protects the town from uses that may not have been anticipated when the bylaw was originally created.

Update the current Table of Use Regulation with new uses that reflect current development practices. These uses should be defined and added to the Table of Use as either Permitted as of Right, Special Permit Required, or Prohibited.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY- Public or privately owned and operated facilities housing persons serving a sentence after being found guilty in a court of law. This use includes

³ 'As of right' refers to a use allowed to be built under the current Zoning Bylaw without any process or review. Requiring special permit, site plan, or another layer of review allows the Planning Board to request special considerations in a project, such as open space, landscaping and others.



juvenile detention facilities, and temporary detention facilities, but does not include those facilities customarily found within a police station or a court house.

ELECTRIC POWER PLANT- A facility that creates electricity by any means, including thermal, steam, wind, solar, wood, trash, coal, oil, nuclear, natural gas with a generating capacity of more than 500 kilowatts.

HEALTH CLUB- A building or portion of a building designed and equipped for the conduct of sports, exercise, muscle building, and physical fitness. This use may include indoor and outdoor uses as well as swimming pools.

INDOOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION, GENERAL- A commercial recreation use conducted entirely within a building and having minimum external impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. Such uses include assembly halls, auditoriums, exhibit halls, performance theaters, swimming pools, skating rinks, and art centers.

INDOOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION, CONCENTRATED- A commercial recreation use conducted entirely within a building with potentially significant, external impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. Such uses include bowling alleys, skating rinks, billiard halls, gymnasiums, racing tracks, and shooting ranges.

MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING, LIGHT- The manufacture, predominantly from previously prepared materials, of finished products or parts, including processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, storage, packaging, and sales of such products, which activities are conducted solely within an enclosed building. The processing of raw materials is not included in this use. This use is capable of operating with minimal external effects such as noise, odor, smoke, dirt, and vibration.

MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING, MEDIUM- The manufacture, predominantly from raw materials, of products or parts usually for sale to wholesalers or other industrial users. This includes processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, storage, packaging and sales of such products, which activities are conducted primarily within an enclosed building, but may include temporary outdoor storage of finished or partially finished products. This use produces moderate external effects such as noise, odor, smoke, dirt, and vibration.

MANUFACTURE AND PROCESSING, HEAVY- The manufacture or compounding process of raw materials. These activities would necessitate the storage of large volumes of flammable, hazardous, toxic, corrosive, or explosive materials. These activities may include outdoor operations as part of their manufacturing process. This use produces moderate to significant external effects and may pose significant risks due to the nature of the use and materials stored and utilized on site.

MOVIE HOUSE- A specialized theater with no more than two screens or a total of 350 seats for showing movies or motion pictures. Such use may include refreshment stands and accessory retail and restaurant uses.

OFFICE PARK- A single office building with a building footprint of 25,000 square feet or greater, or a group of contiguous or adjacent office buildings, with a total footprint of 40,000 square feet or greater, planned as a total entity with supporting ancillary uses and employee parking provided on-site. Office Parks include, but are not limited to, medical or dental, professional, clerical, and administrative offices. Retail and service uses, but excluding VSEs, (see below) that are permitted within the underlying zoning district, may



be incorporated into the office park as an accessory use. These accessory uses may include, but are not necessarily limited to, restaurants, coffee shops, barber shops, dry cleaners, and banks.

OUTDOOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION, LIGHT- A commercial recreation land use primarily conducted outside of a building, characterized by minimal impact on traffic, the natural environment, and the surrounding neighborhood. Such uses may include botanical gardens, hiking trails, historic sites, picnic areas, and cross country ski areas.

OUTDOOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION, GENERAL- A commercial recreation land use primarily conducted outside of a building, characterized by potentially moderate impacts on traffic, the natural environment, and the surrounding neighborhood. Such uses may include athletic fields, paint ball course, miniature golf, pitch and put, skateboard park, tennis club, basketball courts, batting cages, and driving ranges.

OUTDOOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION, CONCENTRATED- A commercial recreation land use primarily conducted outside of a building, characterized by potentially significant impacts on traffic, the natural environment, and the surrounding neighborhood. Such uses may include water parks, amphitheater, amusement parks, auto cycle or go-cart tracks, campgrounds, recreation vehicle parks, stadium, horse or dog racing track, shooting range, zoo, automobile race track, outdoor movie theatre, and other like uses.

PUBLIC RECREATION- Any recreation facility, not including golf courses, owned and operated by the Town of Upton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the Federal government. This includes active recreation facilities, such as soccer fields and tennis courts, and passive recreation facilities, such as trails, canoe launches, and their associated structures.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT- A facility that engages in research, or research and development, of innovative ideas in technology-intensive fields and does not include the mass manufacture, fabrication, processing, or sale of products. This use is capable of operating with minimal external effects such as noise, odor, smoke, dirt, and vibration. (Wet labs should be considered separately and have stronger regulations.)

SOLID WASTE FACILITY- Establishment for the management and storage of solid waste material, including garbage, sewage, automobiles and parts, rubble, construction debris, and all other kinds of organic and inorganic refuse. Management and storage includes transfer, dumping, incineration, recycling, composting, reduction, burial, or other similar means of management. This use excludes onsite sewage disposal systems used in conjunction with an approved use.

STORAGE FACILITY- Any structure that is rented or sold for the purpose of storing goods, materials, or personal property.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board should work with the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee and the Town Attorney

5. Update Subdivision Rules and Regulations

The current Planning Board Subdivision Rules and Regulations are based on sound engineering principles, but are not necessarily based on the town's vision and goals related to street design, land use development patterns, subdivision design, and stormwater management. For example, the subdivision rules and regulations mandate a



one hundred foot wide, paved cul-de-sac. This requirement is inconsistent with a community that wants to retain rural character and preserve trees and open space. In addition, the Subdivision Regulations should be absolutely clear on the Planning Board's procedures for reviewing definitive subdivision plans so that developers wishing to build in Upton know what is required.

Rules and Regulations should not prohibit good design and development. Therefore the revised Rules and Regulations should be flexible to allow for creativity and to maintain consistency with Upton's character and the vision of its residents

The Planning Board, with assistance from a planning consultant should conduct a review of the rules and regulations. The revisions to the Subdivision Rules and Regulations should include:

Box 3-4: Suggested Elements of Subdivision Rules and Regulations

- Develop erosion and stormwater best management practices that place an emphasis on 'green stormwater management, including vegetated swales, bioretention cells, and other innovative and low impact techniques.
- Adopt progressive street design with traffic calming. These should also include specific design standards for different types of streets. For example, streets within the Residential A District should be permitted to be slightly more 'formal' with, perhaps, a central green running through the middle of the street, or sidewalks set back further from the street (similar to Middle Street), and more street trees.
- Adopt additional landscaping requirements, such as only permitting indigenous species, drought tolerant plantings, minimizing lawn (to reduce irrigation and water use) and using landscaping for stormwater management.
- Use alternative surface materials for sidewalks, crosswalks, and shoulders complete with revised construction standards. These could include paver stones, stamped and dyed pavement or concrete and other more aesthetic and durable materials. These materials are especially applicable within the Residential A District.
- Create pedestrian connections (not just sidewalks, but paths and bike routes) to other neighborhoods, schools, main streets, and commercial areas.
- Develop additional submittal requirements detailing the design process, as conducted by a Landscape Architect as opposed to an Engineer. Please refer to the book, Conservation Design for Subdivisions by Randall Arendt for more on the design process.
- Require deed restrictions that address long term maintenance requirements.
- Adopt special requirements for agriculture land access.
- Adopt tree preservation techniques and standards.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board (No Town Meeting vote is necessary)

6. Town Center Improvement Plan

Upton's primary town center, the secondary center in west Upton and the connecting area along Route 140 currently lack a unified system of sidewalks, lighting, shade trees, and other amenities. The major intersection is vehicle friendly insomuch as it has wide turning radii, but certainly is not pedestrian friendly, thus hampering pedestrian movement throughout the center and beyond. The amenities of the town center, including the municipal facilities, monuments, nearby schools, and businesses present a



unique opportunity to strengthen the sense of place and enhance the civic and commercial centers of the community.

A town center improvement and economic development plan usually contains an existing conditions study (parking, landscaping, lighting, building façade appearance, signage, utilities and infrastructure, and an inventory of businesses residing in the town center). Such studies usually conclude with a set of recommendations for both the town and private property owners aimed at the visual improvement of the town center and a revitalization of the town center as a base of economic activity. There are several entities in Massachusetts that are available to assist Upton with such an effort:

- The John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor has funded several downtown and town center revitalization studies, including one for nearby Uxbridge in 1997. The Corridor does not prepare such studies itself; rather, it provides funding for a planning professional of the town's choosing.
- There are two institutions of higher education that can assist Upton with preparing a town center economic development program, including: the Department of Landscape Architecture and Planning at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, and the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- The National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center offers technical assistance to member communities on comprehensive town center revitalization plans. The Center offers the following types of assistance: town center market analysis, publicity and promotion, targeted business development strategies, design standards for new development, parking and traffic management assistance, and site plan review assistance. The Center operates a regional office in Boston (617-523-0885).

The town should start by forming a Town Center Committee. The Committee should include members of the residential and business community, planners, architects, historic experts, pedestrian and bicycle advocates, and other interested parties. This group would begin the process of redesigning the town center, finding funds and other mechanisms to complete the work, work closely with Mass Highway to ensure that the state plans do not contradict the town's goals, and finally completing the work over time. This type of project will take years to complete, but is possible through cooperation between the town, local businesses, the Commonwealth, and other agencies and groups.

The following projects and elements should be included in a Town Center Improvement Plan:



Box 3-5: Suggested Elements of a Town Center Improvement Plan

- Construct shared access and parking facilities for municipal uses. Instead of each building having its own parking, allow for shared parking to maximize green space and minimize pavement. Further, parking lots should be buffered from the public way by trees, low shrubbery, and tasteful fences or walls.
- Work aggressively with Mass Highway to ensure that their plans for the redesign of the intersection and the major state roads within the town center are consistent with the town's goals and sensitive to the rural and historic nature of the center. This element is critical to the successful future of the town center and should be addressed immediately.
- Use uniform signage themes. Consistent signage themes that employ external illumination, monument style signage, carved wood elements, etc. should be utilized for all municipal structures and parks in the vicinity and private signage should compliment this uniform theme as well.
- Improve pedestrian paths, crosswalks, and amenities. Sidewalks, paths, and pedestrian amenities, such as benches and pedestrian refuges, should be integrated into the redesign of the area. In addition, wheelchair ramps and other design elements should be included to comply with ADA requirements.
- Create a child friendly area that will facilitate the safety of children walking from school to the town centers, and surrounding neighborhoods. Crosswalks, walk signals, pedestrian crossing signage, lit crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, and other techniques should be explored to make this intersection safer for children who will be walking from school to the library.
- Install amenities such as benches, street trees, trash receptacles, and decorative lights. These amenities should have a consistent theme throughout the area. Street trees and flowering trees should be installed along all road sides, parks, plazas, and parking lots.
- Link the town center to any existing or planned pedestrian networks.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen should oversee this process with guidance from the Planning Board, the Development & Industrialization Committee, and the 'Town Center Committee'

7. Create Village Scale Zoning District for Town Centers and West Main Street

Upton cherishes the village feel of the town center and the connecting neighborhoods along West Main Street. However, the existing zoning mandates a strip commercial style of development that is inconsistent with the traditional village scale and design of the area. The neighborhood could see continued disinvestment, particularly if the Planned Village Development west of the two town centers creates a new destination for shopping and services. Therefore, in an effort to preserve the existing neighborhood, create additional and appropriate economic development, and to permit small scale mixed use structures, complete with apartments on the upper stories, the town should create a new zoning district for the town centers and the connecting segment of West Main Street. This new zoning district would allow for small scale commercial and mixed use structures with minimal front yard and side yard setbacks. Parking should be on street or to the side or rear of the structures. Drive-Throughs should be prohibited, and the overall landscape should be one of pedestrian scale and design.



8. Establish Retail and Business Size Limitations

Uses that have a footprint between 5,000 sq. ft. and 25,000 sq. ft. should be regulated through a special permit process due to their potential impact on the community. Uses over 25,000 sq. ft. should be prohibited in every zoning district. A special definition and permit process should be created for those uses over 25,000 sq. ft. if the town would like to leave the door open for this type of use. This would ensure that large scale development is of a design and scale that matches the goals of the people of Upton and provides a significant improvement over conventional commercial development patterns.

Box 3-6: Suggested Definitions for Shopping Center and Office Park

SHOPPING CENTER – A single retail establishment with a building footprint of 25,000 square feet or greater, or a group of contiguous or adjacent stores, shops and similar commercial establishments, with a total footprint of 40,000 square feet or greater, planned as a total entity with customer and employee parking provided on-site.

OFFICE PARK- A single office building with a building footprint of 25,000 square feet or greater, or a group of contiguous or adjacent office buildings, with a total footprint of 40,000 square feet or greater, planned as a total entity with supporting ancillary uses and employee parking provided on-site. Office Parks include, but are not limited to, medical or dental, professional, clerical, and administrative offices. Retail and service uses, but excluding VSEs, (see below) that are permitted within the underlying zoning district, may be incorporated into the office park as an accessory use. These accessory uses may include, but are not necessarily limited to, restaurants, coffee shops, barber shops, dry cleaners, and banks.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board

9. Create a Vehicle Service Establishment (Drive-Through) Use

Vehicle Service Establishments (VSE) can include drive thru establishments, car washes, gas stations, or any other use that services and caters to vehicles. These uses have tremendous traffic and visual impacts and should require a Special Permit and be prohibited in certain areas where excessive vehicle traffic is undesirable.

These uses should be defined, as detailed below, added to the Use Regulations discussed above, and prohibited outright in every Zoning District but the Commercial/Industrial District, where it would be permitted only by Special Permit. The criteria for review should be stringent, as the potential impact from Drive-Throughs can be significant. Automatic teller machines (ATM's) and bank Drive-Throughs should be defined separately and should be permitted by Special Permit within all commercial/business districts.



Box 3-7: Suggested VSE Definition

VEHICULAR SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT (VSE) – A commercial or business establishment where patrons are provided goods and/or services while in or near their motor vehicle. “VSE” includes eating and drinking establishments where food is purchased on the premises from a drive-through or drive-up window, but is not regularly consumed within the building. The term also includes establishments where patrons receive goods and/or services from drive-through or drive-up establishments, including, but not limited to: dry-cleaners, drive-through automotive facilities, car washes, gasoline/refueling operations and substantially similar establishments.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board

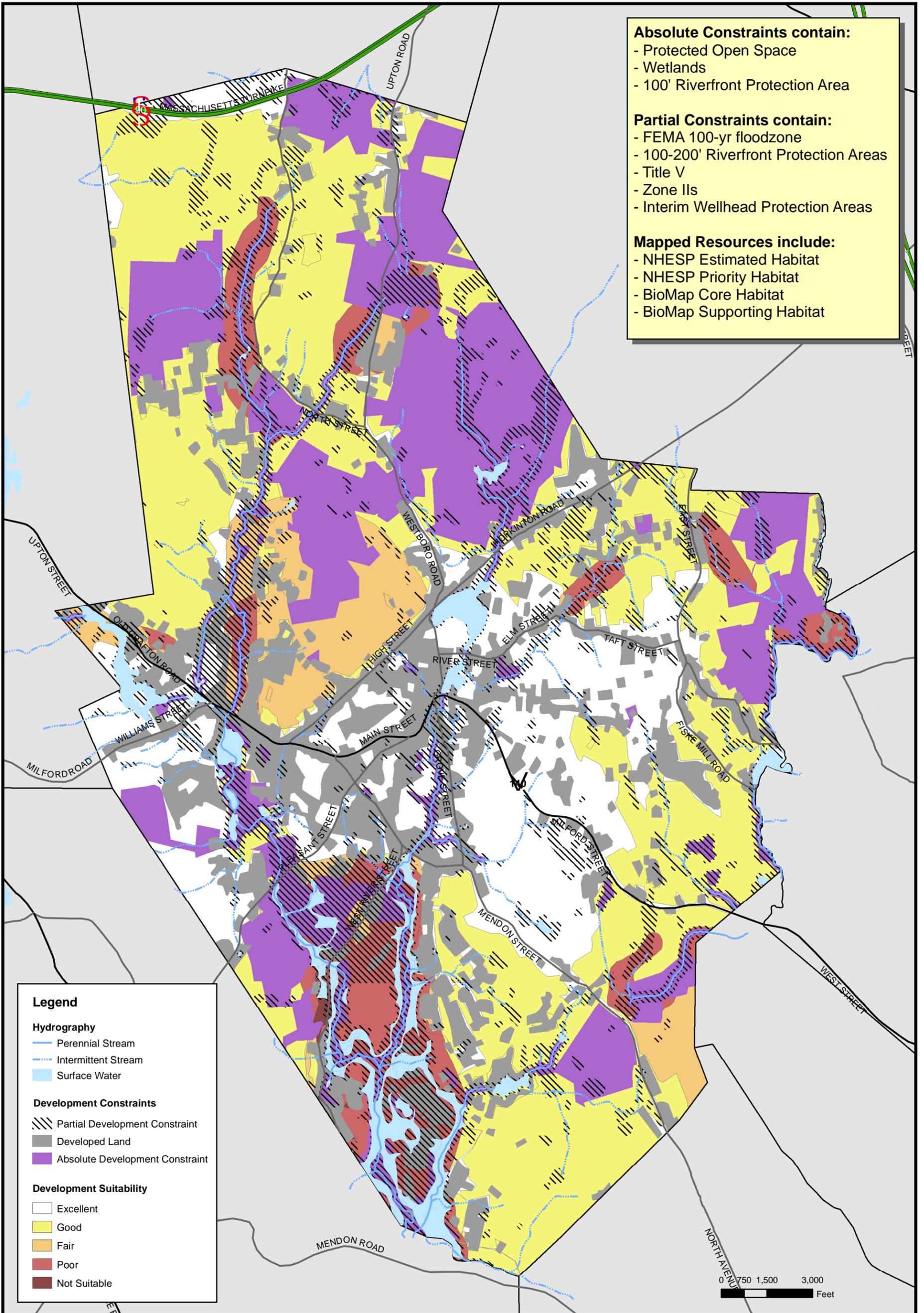
3.9 Land Use Suitability Map & Land Use Guide Plan

The following pages contain a Land Use Suitability Map and a Land Use Guide Plan for the Town of Upton. The Land Use Suitability Map displays several key resources such as wildlife habitat, water resources, and wellhead protection areas. The mapped resources are explored in more detail in subsequent chapters of this Master Plan. The map shows where these various resources overlay with one another and in so doing indicates where development is more or less suitable based on the number of underlying resources. Those areas with few or no underlying resources are presumably more suitable for development than those areas with more resources present.

The Land Use Suitability Map helped to inform the planning process and in turn led to the Land Use Guide Plan. The ‘Guide Plan’ displays several key strategies that are described in the Land Use Chapter and subsequent chapters. The location of many strategies is dictated, in part, by the suitability of development in that area. For example, areas that had several resources on the Land Use Suitability Map are targets for preservation or areas where open space linkages are recommended to be established. Meanwhile, areas that had limited resources present and are suitable for development are recommended to be rezoned to facilitate development that will have a positive impact on the community and serve the goals of this Master Plan.



It is the end user's responsibility to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of the data contained herein. Use of this map constitutes agreement with the terms of the Daylor GIS Data Disclaimer.



Daylor Consulting Group Inc.



Ten Forbes Road Braintree, MA 02184 781 / 849-7070

Land Use Suitability Map

Town of Upton

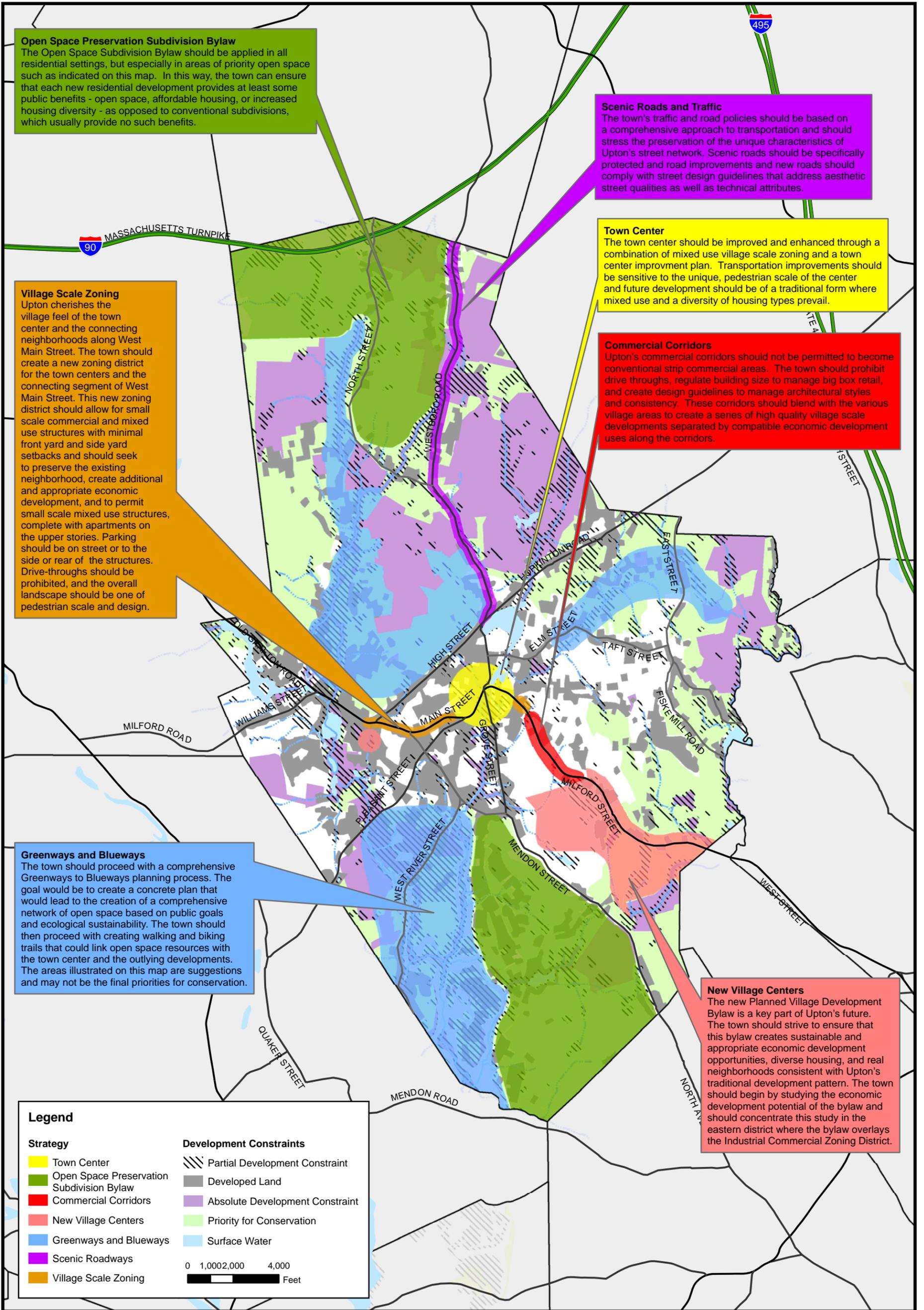
Scale 1" = 3,000 ft.

Z

Source: Mass GIS

Figure 4

It is the end user's responsibility to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of the data contained herein. Use of this map constitutes agreement with the terms of the Daylor GIS Data Disclaimer.



Open Space Preservation Subdivision Bylaw
 The Open Space Subdivision Bylaw should be applied in all residential settings, but especially in areas of priority open space such as indicated on this map. In this way, the town can ensure that each new residential development provides at least some public benefits - open space, affordable housing, or increased housing diversity - as opposed to conventional subdivisions, which usually provide no such benefits.

Scenic Roads and Traffic
 The town's traffic and road policies should be based on a comprehensive approach to transportation and should stress the preservation of the unique characteristics of Upton's street network. Scenic roads should be specifically protected and road improvements and new roads should comply with street design guidelines that address aesthetic street qualities as well as technical attributes.

Town Center
 The town center should be improved and enhanced through a combination of mixed use village scale zoning and a town center improvement plan. Transportation improvements should be sensitive to the unique, pedestrian scale of the center and future development should be of a traditional form where mixed use and a diversity of housing types prevail.

Commercial Corridors
 Upton's commercial corridors should not be permitted to become conventional strip commercial areas. The town should prohibit drive throughs, regulate building size to manage big box retail, and create design guidelines to manage architectural styles and consistency. These corridors should blend with the various village areas to create a series of high quality village scale developments separated by compatible economic development uses along the corridors.

Village Scale Zoning
 Upton cherishes the village feel of the town center and the connecting neighborhoods along West Main Street. The town should create a new zoning district for the town centers and the connecting segment of West Main Street. This new zoning district should allow for small scale commercial and mixed use structures with minimal front yard and side yard setbacks and should seek to preserve the existing neighborhood, create additional and appropriate economic development, and to permit small scale mixed use structures, complete with apartments on the upper stories. Parking should be on street or to the side or rear of the structures. Drive-throughs should be prohibited, and the overall landscape should be one of pedestrian scale and design.

Greenways and Blueways
 The town should proceed with a comprehensive Greenways to Blueways planning process. The goal would be to create a concrete plan that would lead to the creation of a comprehensive network of open space based on public goals and ecological sustainability. The town should then proceed with creating walking and biking trails that could link open space resources with the town center and the outlying developments. The areas illustrated on this map are suggestions and may not be the final priorities for conservation.

New Village Centers
 The new Planned Village Development Bylaw is a key part of Upton's future. The town should strive to ensure that this bylaw creates sustainable and appropriate economic development opportunities, diverse housing, and real neighborhoods consistent with Upton's traditional development pattern. The town should begin by studying the economic development potential of the bylaw and should concentrate this study in the eastern district where the bylaw overlays the Industrial Commercial Zoning District.

Legend

Strategy	Development Constraints
 Town Center	 Partial Development Constraint
 Open Space Preservation Subdivision Bylaw	 Developed Land
 Commercial Corridors	 Absolute Development Constraint
 New Village Centers	 Priority for Conservation
 Greenways and Blueways	 Surface Water
 Scenic Roadways	
 Village Scale Zoning	

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

4.0 HOUSING

4.1 Summary

The Housing Chapter focuses on the population growth of Upton, how this growth compares to surrounding towns, and the effects it is having on housing. In addition, the types of housing Upton now has and what is needed in the future are discussed. Finally, to deal with the growth in coming years, a set of proposed recommendations is listed at the end of the chapter.

4.2 Goals

Preserve Upton's rural, small-town character and open space; ensure that housing development is slow, deliberate, and planned; and provide a diversity of housing affordability while maintaining a largely single-family character.

4.3 Objectives

1. Maintain the 80,000 square-foot lot size requirement that currently exists in Upton's Agricultural-Residential zone and do not reduce the size of this zone.
2. Coordinate housing development with municipal services.
3. Provide housing options that will allow residents to remain in town as they age and allow children of residents to establish families in Upton.
4. Encourage developers to incorporate open space designs into new housing projects.
5. Strengthen the review process for new development and enforcement of town bylaws and regulations.
6. Recommend enacting bylaws to ensure that future housing development maintains the town's compliance with the 10% affordable housing requirement.

4.4 Population

The Upton Town Clerk's 2003 annual census counted 7,052 Upton residents, a significant increase from the 1990 US Census count of 4,677 residents. With a total landmass of 21.5 square miles, Upton has a population density of approximately 325 people per square mile.

The Census Bureau has designated the center of Upton as a Census Designated Place (CDP), a term given to a high-density urban cluster. In Upton's case, the CDP begins near the intersection of Fowler and Main Streets and extends through West Upton, Central Square, to the intersection of Prospect and Main Streets. According to the 2000 Census, 2,326 Upton residents (or 41.2% of the town's total population) live in the center of Upton. The table below presents Upton's growth in population over the years.



Table 4-1
Upton Population Growth

Year	# of People	Numerical Change	% Change	AARC
1930	2,026	----	----	----
1940	2,249	223	11.0%	1.10%
1950	2,656	407	18.1%	1.81%
1960	3,127	471	17.7%	1.77%
1970	3,484	357	11.4%	1.14%
1980	3,886	438	12.7%	1.27%
1990	4,677	791	20.4%	2.04%
2000	6,369	1,692	36.2%	3.62%
2003	7,052	683**	10.7%**	3.57%

Sources: US Census Bureau and Upton Town Clerk (2003 only).

** These figures represent the numerical and percentage changes since the 2000 Town Clerk Census.

AARC = Average Annual Rate of Change

Table 4-1 indicates that Upton experienced a significant escalation of population growth in 1990. Between 1930 and 1980, the average annual rate of change (AARC) averaged 1.4%, but in the past decade the AARC doubled to 2.8%. The housing boom of the late 1980s is partially responsible, as is Upton's accessibility to I-495 and the commuter rail located in nearby Grafton.

The Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER) projects that Upton will have a total of 6,840 residents by the year 2010; however, as the Town Clerk has already documented 7,052 residents during the 2003 Town Census, the MISER population figure is not accurate. Similarly, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) used the disputed 2000 US Census figures to project that Upton will have 7,145 residents by the year 2010. The Town Clerk's Town Census data indicates that Upton is likely to surpass this figure in the very near future.

In an effort to prepare a reasonable population projection for the year 2010, the town's average number of new home construction building permits issued annually for the past decade will be used along with the town's person per household figure. Upton has issued an average of 49 building permits for new housing units per year during the past decade (1993-2003). Multiplied against the average household size of 2.74 people per household, the projection estimates an additional 943 new residents between 2003 and 2010, or a total town population of 7,995 people by the year 2010.

Table 4-2
Population Growth – Comparable Communities

Year	Upton	Grafton	Hopkinton	Mendon	Milford	Northbridge	Westborough
1980	3,886	11,238	7,114	3,108	23,390	12,246	13,619
1990	4,677 (20.4%)	13,035 (16.0%)	9,191 (29.2%)	4,010 (29.0%)	25,355 (8.4%)	13,371 (9.2%)	14,133 (3.8%)
2000	6,369 (36.2%)	14,894 (14.3%)	13,346 (45.2%)	5,286 (31.8%)	26,799 (5.7%)	13,182 (-1.4%)	17,997 (27.3%)

Sources: US Census Bureau and Upton Town Clerk (for Upton's 2000 population figure).



Table 4-2 indicates that Upton and its adjacent neighbors have experienced sizable increases in population over the past twenty years. The communities of Hopkinton and Westborough have added the most people in sheer numbers while Hopkinton, Mendon and Upton have seen the greatest percentage rate of growth. In terms of sheer numbers Upton, Mendon and Northbridge added the least amount of new residents

Of the five sub-regions that constitute CMRPC’s 40-town planning area, the Southeast Sub-region (of which Upton is a part) has experienced the second highest rate of growth during the past twenty years, growing by 19% in the 1980s and by 11% in the 1990s. Only the Northeast Sub-region (consisting of Berlin, Boylston, Northborough, Shrewsbury and Westborough) grew at a faster rate over the past twenty years. In the CMRPC report entitled 2020 Growth Strategy for Central Massachusetts (issued in 2000), the Southeast Sub-region was identified as a target area for significant growth over the next twenty years. Easy access to I-395, I-495, the Mass Turnpike in Millbury and the revitalized Route 146 corridor are all factors in this assessment. Other factors driving growth include the new CenTech Park and Tufts Biomedical Science Park (both in Grafton) located along the commuter rail line between Worcester and Boston.

4.5 Housing Growth

The following table shows the growth of Upton’s housing stock since 1960 and allows for a comparison to the growth in population. Please note that this table refers only to Upton’s year-round occupied housing units. In this analysis a “housing unit” or “dwelling unit” is defined as “a single housing unit providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation” (source: Massachusetts State Building Code).



New housing development in Upton

Table 4-3
Housing Unit Growth

Year	No. of Occupied Housing Units	Numerical Change	% Change	AARC
1960	926	----	----	----
1970	1,069	143	15.4%	1.54%
1980	1,369	300	28.1%	2.81%
1990	1,810	441	32.2%	3.22%
2000*	2,351	541	29.9%	2.99%
2003	2,613	262**	11.1%**	3.70%**

Sources: US Census and Upton Town Clerk.

* 2000 US Census figure is in dispute.

** These figures represent the numerical and percentage changes since the 2000 Town Clerk Census.

AARC = Average Annual Rate of Change



Table 4-4
Housing Unit Growth – Comparable Communities

Year	Upton	Grafton	Hopkinton	Mendon	Milford	Northbridge	Westborough
1980	1,369	3,863	2,362	1,036	8,216	4,157	4,825
1990	1,810 (32.2%)	4,799 (24.2%)	3,159 (33.7%)	1,362 (31.5%)	9,362 (13.9%)	4,754 (14.4%)	5,392 (11.8%)
2000	2,351 (29.9%)	5,694 (18.5%)	4,444 (40.1%)	1,815 (33.3%)	10,420 (11.3%)	4,800 (1.0%)	6,534 (21.2%)

Sources: US Census; Upton Town Clerk (for Upton’s 2000 housing figure).

4.6 Average Household Demographics

Upton has seen its average household size decrease and its median resident age increase. At the same time the fastest growing segment of Upton’s population has been the number of children under the age of 10.

Upton’s average household size has been in decline since the 1950’s when the post-WWII population boom was at its peak. This is consistent with a national trend toward smaller household sizes and is driven by couples having fewer children and an increase in single parent households. Upton’s US Census data confirms this trend. In 1960, the typical Upton household contained 3.38 people. By 1980, the persons per household figure had declined to 2.81 and by 2003 (using the Town Clerk’s figures for population and housing), to 2.70 persons per household. Another factor contributing to smaller household sizes is the nation’s expanding elderly population. This factor is referred to as “the graying of America”. The Census data clearly demonstrates that this national trend is taking place in Upton. In 1970, the median age of Upton’s population was 30.2 years of age. By 1990, the median age had increased to 36.0 years of age, and the recent year 2000 Census shows the median age has continued to increase and now stands at 37.0 years of age.

Table 4-5
Population by Age Group

Age Group	1990	2000	# Change	% Change	AARC
Under 5	333	558	225	67.6%	6.76%
5 to 9	290	514	224	77.2%	7.72%
10 to 19	564	656	92	16.3%	1.63%
20 to 44	2,016	2,126	110	5.5%	0.55%
45 to 64	905	1,253	348	38.5%	3.85%
Over 65	569	535	-34	-6.0%	-0.60%

Source: US Census.

Table 4-5 indicates that children under the age of 10 have been the fastest growing segments of Upton’s population over the past decade. This most certainly has local implications for classroom size and new school construction. The second fastest growing segment of Upton’s population is the 45-to-64 age group, or Upton’s soon to be senior citizens. The growth of this population segment will likely increase the demand for more senior housing options in Upton over the next decade.



4.7 Housing Unit Inventory

Please note that **Table 4-6**, **Table 4-7**, and **Table 4-8**, account for all housing units in Upton, including vacant and seasonal houses.

Table 4-6
Type of Housing Units – Year 2000

Housing Type	No. of Units	Percentage of Total
One Unit (detached)	1,659	79.6%
One Unit (attached)	39	1.9%
Two Units	71	3.4%
Three or Four Units	100	4.8%
Five or More Units	215	10.3%
Mobile Homes	0	0.0%
TOTAL	2,084	100%

Source: 2000 US Census, Town Clerk breakdown not available.

Table 4-7
Type of Housing Units in Comparable Communities – Year 2000

Town	One Unit	Two Units	3-4 Units	5+ Units	Mobile Homes
Upton	1,698	71	100	215	0
Grafton	3,988	579	433	822	6
Hopkinton	4,088	111	199	139	11
Mendon	1,676	143	22	39	6
Milford	6,463	1,616	948	1,643	16
Northbridge	3,077	709	449	699	15
Westborough	4,010	324	286	2,082	71

Source: 2000 US Census.

While Upton's housing mix has been fairly stable over the past twenty years, the percentage of single-family homes has grown at a faster rate than multi-family housing units. In 1980, multi-family housing units comprised 24% of Upton's housing stock compared to 19% by the year 2000. Building permit data since the 2000 US Census indicates that single-family homes have continued to be built at a faster rate than multi-family units. **Table 4-6** indicates that roughly 81% of Upton's housing stock consists of single-family homes. **Table 4-7** above presents a comparison of the housing stocks of neighboring communities and shows that only Hopkinton at 90% and Mendon at 89% have a higher percentage of single-family homes than Upton. Of Upton's immediate neighbors, Westborough's housing stock contains the largest percentage of multi-family housing units at 41%, although Milford and Northbridge are not far behind at 40% and 38% respectively.



4.8 Age of Housing Stock

Table 4-8
Age of Housing Stock

Year Structure Built	Number of Units	% of Housing Stock
1990-2000	553	26.6%
1980-1990	292	14.0%
1970-1980	268	12.9%
1960-1970	130	6.2%
1940-1960	313	15.0%
1939 or earlier	528	25.3%
TOTAL:	2,084	100.0%

Sources: US Census.

Table 4-8 indicates that just over 25% of Upton's housing stock was built before the start of World War II. Of Upton's immediate neighbors, only Milford at 32% and Northbridge at 34% have a larger percentage of pre-World War II housing stock.

Roughly 60% of the housing stock was constructed during the last forty years. It is interesting to note that all of the compared communities have had at least 50% of their housing stock built since 1960, with Hopkinton and Westborough each having 71% of their housing stock built during the last forty years.

With just over 25% of Upton's housing stock being over 60 years old, it is quite likely that many of Upton's older residential dwellings would not meet the State's current building code or pass the requirements of the Town's Building Inspector.

4.9 Housing Occupancy

The percentage of owner-occupied housing in Upton has grown steadily over the past twenty years, from 71.1% in 1980 to 82.4% in the 2000 US Census, a rise of over 11%. Of Upton's immediate neighbors, only Mendon at 89% and Hopkinton at 90% have a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing. The other five comparable communities had owner-occupancy rates ranging from 54% to 72%.

Table 4-9
Type of Occupancy (Owner/Renter – 2000)

Type of Occupancy	Number of Units	Percentage
Owner Occupied Housing:	1,683	82.4%
Renter Occupied Housing:	359	17.6%

Source: 2000 US Census.

In terms of the percent of occupied housing units versus the percentage of vacant units, the 2000 US Census reported that 98% of Upton's housing units were occupied, indicating a vacancy rate of 2% (mostly rental units). Although Upton and its adjacent neighbors all report very low vacancy rates, Upton has the lowest housing vacancy rate. The other five



comparable communities had vacancy rates ranging from 2% to 3.5%. When compared to the vacancy rate for Worcester County at 5% and the State at 6.8%, the vacancy rate for the Blackstone Valley communities is much lower and indicates a strong real estate market.

Table 4-10
Type of Occupancy in Comparable Communities (Owner/Renter – 2000)

Type of Occupancy	Upton	Grafton	Hopkinton	Mendon	Milford	Northbridge	Westborough
Owner Units:	1,683	4,116	4,009	1,606	6,744	3,176	4,208
	82%	72%	90%	96%	65%	66%	64%
Renter Units:	359	1,578	435	209	3,676	1,624	2,326
	18%	28%	10%	4%	35%	34%	36%

Source: 2000 US Census.

Table 4-10 indicates that of the surrounding towns, Mendon and Upton have the smallest supply of rental units. Rental units comprise roughly 18% of Upton’s housing stock. Only Hopkinton and Mendon have a smaller percentage of rental units and none of the other comparable communities have rental units that comprise more than 36% of their local housing stocks. This indicates that Upton fairs reasonably well in the provision of rental units when compared to its adjacent neighbors.

4.10 Types of Households

Table 4-11
Households by Type (2000)

Household Type	Number of Households	Percentage
Family Households	1,562	76.5%
Non-Family Households	480	23.5%

Source: 2000 US Census.

Table 4-11 indicates that 76.5% of Upton’s households consist of families. This represents a slight increase since the 1990 Census when family households accounted for 72.2% of all Upton households. The number of households headed by females has increased from 122 in 1990 to 134 in 2000. In addition, households headed by senior citizens have declined from 182 in 1990 to 156 in 2000.



Table 4-12
Households by Type – Comparable Communities (2000)

Household Type	Upton	Grafton	Hopkinton	Mendon	Milford	Northbridge	Westborough
Family	1,562	3,952	3,624	1,451	7,197	3,501	4,520
Household	76%	69%	81%	80%	69%	73%	69%
Non-Family	480	1,742	820	364	3,223	1,299	2,014
Household	24%	31%	19%	20%	31%	27%	31%

Source: 2000 US Census.

Table 4-12 indicates that of the comparable communities, only Hopkinton and Mendon have a higher percentage of family households than Upton. It is typical for communities with a majority of the housing stock made up of single family homes to have a higher percentage of family households than those communities with a significant number of multi-family rental units in their urban centers such as Milford.

4.11 Housing Demand Assessment & Needs Analysis

The following analysis will document the demand for housing in Upton, the housing needs of local residents and what is actually available (and affordable) for housing opportunities. Before going any further, it is important to outline the assumptions used in this analysis.

- The analysis makes use of year 2000 statistics so that they may be cross-referenced to the 2000 US Census data, which is the only available source of household income data and rental unit costs.
- The median family income (family of four) for the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), as determined by the federal Department Housing & Urban Development (HUD) HOME Program income limits for the year 2000 was \$65,500.
- The State Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) Year 2000 Housing Certification Program listed the median family affordable purchase price for a new home in the Boston MSA at \$297,000.
- Upton’s poverty-level income figure of \$17,029 for a family of four in 2000 was obtained from the 2000 US Census.
- Housing demand and need was calculated for poverty-level households as follows:
 - low-income households at poverty-level to 50% of the area median income
 - low-to-moderate income households at 50-65% of the area median income
 - moderate-to-middle income households at 65-80% of the area median income
 - middle-income households at 80-150% of the area median income
 - upper income households at above 150% of area median income
- It was assumed that households making up to 65% of the area median income would not be in the market for buying a home but instead would most likely rent their housing.
- It was assumed that households making more than 65% of the area median income would most likely be in the market for buying a home.



- For renters, it was assumed that 30% of their annual income would go towards rent. This is a standard assumption set by DHCD when determining the household family income limitations for HUD program eligibility.
- For homebuyers, it was assumed that 28% of their monthly income would go towards a house mortgage principal and interest (Source: CMRPC survey of regional banking and financial institutions). It was further assumed that homebuyers would make a down payment of at least 10% and have a 30-year mortgage at 6%.
- The number of rental units and their price ranges were estimated from the 2000 US Census.
- Year 2000 home sales data was obtained from the Upton Assessors Office and only qualified homes sales were used in the ensuing analysis.

4.11.1 Rental Demand Assessment & Needs Analysis

The following table provides an affordability analysis for Upton rental units. The table outlines the various renter income categories, the number of Upton households in each category, the number of rental units in Upton that are affordable to those income categories and the gap/surplus for such rental units.

Table 4-13
Rental Unit Need/Demand Analysis

Income Group	Range of Incomes	Range of Affordable Rent	Number of Units Needed	Number of Actual Units	Deficit/Surplus
Poverty	\$17,029 and below	\$425 and below	249	144	-105
Poverty-to-Low	\$17,029 - \$32,750	\$425 - \$820	188	138	-50
Low-to-Moderate*	\$32,750 - \$42,575	\$820 - \$1,065	126	32	-94

* Households earning between 50-65% of the area median income.

Table 4-13 indicates that Upton has a shortage of rental units that are affordable to poverty-level households, poverty-to-low income households, and low-to-moderate income households. Upton has an affordable rental unit deficit of 249 units. The 2000 US Census further highlights the lack of affordable rental units in Upton, as 153 Upton households were identified as paying more than 30% of their monthly income towards rent. It is generally assumed that renters paying more than 30% of their monthly income towards rent are exceeding their affordability. The waiting list of the Upton Housing Authority and the town's other two subsidized housing developments further supports the need for additional affordable rental units in Upton:



Millhaus Apartments

- **Coach Road Apartments:** Elderly/Handicapped Housing Units (DHCD Program 667). This development consists of 40 one-bedroom units, with five units reserved for



persons with disabilities. There is a current waiting list of 15 households (local residents and non-local), with about a yearlong wait.

- **Millhaus Apartments:** The Massachusetts Housing Finance Authority (MHFA) was the primary project financier and mortgage holder. This development consists of 89 one and two-bedroom apartments for low and moderate-income households. There is a current waiting list of 24 households (local residents and non-local).
- **Upton Inn:** The MHFA was the primary project financier and mortgage holder. This development consists of 34 one and two-bedroom units with seven units reserved for persons with disabilities. Three of the 34 units are unsubsidized and rented at the market rate. The waiting list consists of local residents and people from across the Commonwealth. The waiting list fluctuates from month to month.

While the waiting lists for Upton's subsidized housing developments indicate a significant demand for elderly/low-income/disabled housing the substantial number of non-local households on the waiting lists indicates the demand is regional in nature. While there is a demand for more affordable rental units, Upton's rental units are quite affordable when considered in a regional context. The Year 2000 DHCD Housing Certification Program lists an affordable monthly rent figure of \$1,638 or 30% of area median family income for the Boston MSA. According to the Year 2000 US Census, of the 359 rental units in Upton none had monthly rents exceeding \$1,500.

As most rental units are within multi-family dwelling structures, it should be noted that Upton's Zoning Board of Appeals is authorized to allow multi-family housing in the Residence A & B Districts. The town also allows the conversion of single-family homes into two-family homes in all of its residential zoning districts, upon authorization from the Zoning Board of Appeals if certain conditions are met. According to CMRPC's 2001 build-out analysis for Upton, there are a total of 239 acres of vacant developable land in Upton's Residence A & B Districts that could be developed for multi-family housing.

4.11.2 Homeownership Demand Assessment & Needs Analysis

There were ninety-five (95) property sales in Upton during the year 2000, of which seventy (70) were qualified home sales. **Table 4-14** on the following page provides an analysis of demand for homeownership in Upton. The table outlines the various homeownership income categories, the number of Upton households fitting each category and the median sales price of various types of housing units in Upton for the year 2000.



Table 4-14
Homeownership Need/Demand Analysis

Income Group	Range of Incomes	Range of Affordable Housing Prices	Number of Households
Moderate-to-Middle*	\$42,575 - \$52,400	\$184,000 - \$227,000	110
Middle-to-Upper**	\$52,400 - \$98,250	\$227,000 - \$424,000	640
Upper***	\$98,250 and above	\$424,000 and above	751

Year 2000	Home Type	Price	Qualified Sales (2000)
Median Sales Price	Single Family Home	\$289,000	62
Average Sales Price	Single Family Home	\$317,848	62
Median Sales Price (per unit)	Two-Family Home	\$54,350	1
Median Sales Price	Multi-Family Home (over 2 units)	\$51,832	7

Single Family Homes	
Price Range	Number
\$100,000-\$199,999	14
\$200,000 - \$299,999	22
\$300,000 - \$399,999	13
\$400,000 - \$499,999	9
\$500,000 - \$599,999	1
\$600,000 - \$699,999	2
over \$700,000	1

Source: Upton Assessors Office.

Note: The range of affordable housing prices assumes 10% down payment and a 30-year mortgage at 6% interest.

* Households earning between 65-80% of the area median income.

** Households earning between 80-150% of the area median income.

*** Households earning above 150% of the area median income.

Table 4-14 indicates that homeownership in Upton is affordable for those households that earn at least 65% of the median area income. Although the average sales price for a single-family home in Upton was \$317,848 for the year 2000, 22 of the 62 qualified single-family home sales sold in the \$184,000 \$227,000 range of affordability for moderate-to-middle income households.

As mentioned previously, the median family income in the Boston MSA was \$65,500 for the year 2000, which translated into an affordable single-family home purchase price of \$297,000. Of the 62 qualified single-family home sales that took place in Upton during 2000, only 20 single-family homes sold for more than the Boston MSA median family income affordable purchase price for a single-family home (\$297,000) and Upton's



overall median sales price for a single-family home was \$289,000, slightly less than the Boston MSA figure.

While Upton's housing costs fall within affordability guidelines, housing costs and household incomes rarely remain static and recent trends are not encouraging. The 2003 median family income figure for the Boston MSA (as determined by DHCD) has increased to \$74,200. This represents an increase of 13.2% over the year 2000 median family income figure of \$65,500. Meanwhile, the price for a new single-family home in the Boston MSA (as determined by DHCD) now stands at \$375,123, an increase of 26% since 2000. Thus, the cost of housing in the Boston MSA has risen twice as fast as the rise in the area's median family income during the last three years. This trend has serious implications for the affordability of housing in Upton.

Single-family homes are allowed By Right in all five of Upton's residential zoning districts. Upton also allows the conversion of single-family homes into two-family homes in all of Upton's residential districts, upon authorization from the Zoning Board of Appeals. According to CMRPC's build-out analysis for Upton (completed in the spring of 2001), Upton has a total of 6,545 acres of vacant developable land within its five residential zoning districts, the vast majority (5,301 acres) within the Agricultural-Residential zoning district. This is enough land to accommodate as many as 2,400 new house lots.

4.12 Upton's Regulatory Framework & Housing

4.12.1 Zoning Bylaw

1-A.

Accessory Apartments: Upton's current zoning bylaw doesn't address the issue of accessory apartments. An accessory apartment can be a second dwelling unit located within a single-family home (attached), or it can be located above a garage or within a barn (detached) on the property whose primary use is for a single-family home. Another term for accessory apartments is "in-law apartments", as in the apartment is used by a related family member. Accessory apartments allow elderly people to live in close proximity to their family, as well as young people who cannot afford their own home at the time. Accessory apartments also allow the primary homeowner to collect a bit of rent, thus helping them cope with property taxes. For detached accessory apartments, local bylaws usually include a number of safeguards aimed at ensuring that the apartment does not obtain legal status as the lot's primary dwelling unit. Such safeguards typically include a provision that the apartment can only be rented to a member of the extended family, the lot owner must reside in the lot's principal dwelling structure, the apartment be limited to a single bedroom, that no new driveways are created, and that Board of Health approval must be obtained in order to ensure that the on-site septic system has enough capacity to accommodate the increased load. Upton's zoning bylaw does allow for the alteration of a single-family dwelling to accommodate two families if the dwelling is located on a lot having an area of not less than twice that required for the erection of a single-family dwelling in the same district. This option must receive authorization from the Zoning Board of Appeals and does not constitute a true accessory apartment provision because neither dwelling is designated as the "principal" use or the "accessory" use.

1-B.

Senior Housing: Upton's zoning bylaw provides a wide variety of senior housing options (Section 18 – Senior Housing Community). The bylaw defines seniors as people that are



fifty-five years of age or older. Upton allows senior housing by Special Permit within its five residential zoning districts, with the Planning Board being the Special Permit granting authority. Upton's zoning bylaw allows by Special Permit the following types of senior housing (whether under single ownership or condominium ownership):

- Assisted Living Facilities: Senior housing that includes the provision of services geared to an aging adult population which may have difficulty functioning independently and may require oversight including, but not limited to the provision of a full meal plan, transportation services, personal care and assistance with medication.
- Congregate Senior Housing: Senior housing consisting of private dwelling units/apartments which may have kitchen facilities within a complex containing central dining and other common areas and is designed for an adult population requiring some supportive services including but not limited to meals, housekeeping, home health and other support services.
- Independent Senior Housing: Senior housing consisting of residential dwelling units, individually equipped with a minimum of a kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and living area. Geared towards independently functioning adults, this housing typically does not offer on-site supportive services but is designed to be barrier-free and should include emergency call features complemented by housing management and facility maintenance services.
- Restorative Care/Skilled Nursing Facility: Senior housing that includes the provision of service for long-term nursing, convalescent or rehabilitative care and includes supervision and care incident to advanced age, retirement home care for elderly persons.
- Senior Housing Community: Senior housing consisting of multi-family residential dwellings on one single contiguous parcel of land, with the intent that at least one resident of each dwelling unit be 55 years of age or older.

Upton's Senior Housing Bylaw allows for a density bonus when affordable housing units that can be counted towards the town's 10% low/moderate housing threshold are proposed as part of a development's housing mix. For each affordable housing unit proposed, the developer may build four additional bedrooms as long as the density bonus does not represent an increase greater than 15% in the number of bedrooms permitted in the applicable senior housing community. The affordable units must be subject to use restrictions of a substantial duration to ensure that the units remain available exclusively to persons of low/moderate income households.

1-C.

Two-Family and Multi-Family Housing: Upton's current zoning bylaw provides the Zoning Board of Appeals the authority to allow multi-family housing in the Residence A & B Districts either as garden apartments or townhouses. The Residence A District requires a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet for each dwelling unit, while the Residence B District requires a minimum lot size of 25,000 square feet per unit. In addition, both districts require that each dwelling unit created must have a minimum of 8,000 square feet of usable common open space. The zoning bylaw also allows the conversion of single-family homes into two-family homes in all of its residential zoning districts, upon authorization from the Zoning Board of Appeals and if certain conditions are met. One of



these conditions is that the lot in question must be twice the size of what the underlying zoning district would require for a single-family dwelling.

4.12.2 Subdivision Regulations

Upton's Subdivision Regulations contain minimal safeguards for controlling erosion during construction. Topsoil is often exposed for long periods of time during road and house construction phases. Erosion control measures, such as silt fences and hay bales should be in place to minimize soil erosion. Failure to adequately control erosion during construction can result in the erosion of topsoil, clogging of down-slope drainage facilities, as well as flooding of the property and adjacent properties. Erosion control measures need to be in place during the construction phase with adequate monitoring and regular maintenance in order to ensure that disturbed soil does not wash away. Erosion control problems can be expensive to fix after the fact.

4.13 Housing Issues in Upton

4.13.1 Subsidized Housing & Affordable Housing

Chapter 40-B of Massachusetts General Laws outlines a municipality's responsibilities regarding the provision of low and moderate income housing. The law defines low and moderate-income housing as "...any housing subsidized by the federal or state government under any program..." Thus, by definition, a government subsidy is required in order to qualify as low and moderate-income housing. However, the State of Massachusetts provides several subsidy options: subsidies provided to the property owner through a mortgage program, technical assistance provided by the State (DHCD), and construction financing. There are several entities that engage in construction financing in Massachusetts: the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, DHCD (Local Initiative Program), Massachusetts Housing Partnership Fund (Housing Starts program), and the Federal Home Loan Bank (New England Fund). These construction finance programs are available to municipalities, non-profit entities, and/or private developers.

Please note that the Chapter 40-B definition of low and moderate income housing is quite different from the issue commonly known as "affordable housing" which is generally defined as housing that costs no more than one third of a person's total income. Looking at the average home sale price and average contract rent in Upton, it would be hard to argue that Upton does not provide reasonable opportunities for affordable housing especially when Upton's numbers are compared to similar communities in the region.

Chapter 40-B states that at least 10% of a community's housing stock must consist of low and moderate-income housing. For municipalities that do not meet the 10% threshold, the practical consequences are as follows: any developer proposing low and moderate-income housing can have the project exempted from local zoning and subdivision requirements and the development could be built in any zoning district, regardless of suitability. In reality, low and moderate-income housing developments are usually built in areas that have suitable infrastructure and convenience amenities such as water, sewer and a proximity to public transportation. Chapter 40-B is commonly known as the "Anti-Snob Zoning Act".



Currently, there are only a handful of municipalities in Massachusetts that have achieved this 10% threshold and only Worcester in the CMRPC region. According to the State's most recent inventory of Chapter 40-B housing units (prepared by DHCD in April 2002), Upton has 163 housing units representing 7.83% of the town's total housing stock that count towards the Chapter 40-B 10% affordable housing threshold. The 40 units managed by the Upton Housing Authority at Coach Road Apartments count towards the Chapter 40-B affordable housing threshold, as do the 89 units of Millhaus Apartments and the 34 units of Upton Inn.

The table on the following page looks at how Upton's percentage of low and moderate income housing stock stacks up against comparable communities in the Central Massachusetts region.

Table 4-15
Percent of Low/Moderate Income Housing – Comparable Communities

Upton	Grafton	Hopkinton	Mendon	Milford	Northbridge	Westborough
7.83%	3.75%	2.70%	1.60%	6.28%	7.02%	7.01%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development – Chapter 40-B Subsidized Housing Inventory (April 2002).

Table 4-15 indicates that Upton provides the highest percentage of low/moderate income housing when compared to its adjacent neighbors. With 163 housing units currently counted towards Upton's 10% low/moderate income housing unit threshold, the town would need to have another 45 such units created in order to reach the goal of having 10% of its housing stock consist of low/moderate income housing. Upton will soon reach the 10% low/moderate income housing unit threshold through the recent approval of three Chapter 40-B housing developments. Upton's Zoning Board of Appeals has recently approved three Chapter 40-B housing proposals that will yield an additional 52 units that will count towards the town's 10% threshold for affordable housing. These developments include:

- Samreen Villa I (52 total units, with 13 being sold for below market rate)
- Samreen Villa II (8 total units, with 2 being sold for below market rate)
- Noble Vista (150 total units, with 37 units being sold for below market rate)

The Samreen Villa developments were subsidized through the New England Fund construction-financing program offered by the Federal Home Loan Bank, and the Noble Vista development was subsidized by the DHCD Local Initiative Program. Once approved by the State, the subsidized housing units of these three developments will bring Upton's low/moderate income housing stock to 10.3% of the town's total housing. That a community of Upton's size will soon be achieving the State's 10% threshold requirement for low/moderate income housing is nothing short of outstanding and it represents a genuine commitment on the town's part to provide housing opportunities to low/moderate income households. Only 26 of 351 Massachusetts communities have reached the State's 10% threshold requirement, and only five of them have populations of 10,000 residents and under. That Upton will soon be joining this list is a credit to the community and its planners. To further put the situation in perspective, there are 178 Massachusetts communities with populations under 10,000. Upton will soon be only the sixth such community to reach the State's 10% threshold requirement for low/moderate income housing.



Upon achieving the State's 10% threshold requirement for low/moderate income housing, Upton will no longer be subject to having developers circumvent local zoning through the Special Permit process. Upton's challenge in the future will be to ensure that new low/moderate income housing continues to be built in proportion to new market rate housing. Many communities in Massachusetts have seen their percentage of low/moderate income housing drop during the past twenty years as market rate housing was constructed at a much faster rate than subsidized housing. Based on local building permit records, Upton has issued an average of 49 building permits for new housing units per year during the past decade (1993-2003). Thus, in order to keep pace with the State's 10% threshold requirement for low/moderate income housing, Upton will need to ensure that approximately 10% of new home construction consists of subsidized housing. Based on the current average number of new housing unit building permits issued by the town, this translates into about five new subsidized housing units per year.

The two zoning concepts that can help Upton keep pace with the State's 10% threshold requirement for low/moderate income housing are inclusionary zoning and incentive-based zoning. The general purpose behind inclusionary zoning and incentive-based zoning is to increase a community's subsidized housing for low/moderate income households. Inclusionary zoning can be seen as the "stick" approach while incentive-based zoning is the "carrot" approach. An inclusionary zoning bylaw is one that requires new subdivisions to set aside a certain percentage of new housing units as below-market units that can be counted towards the town's affordable housing unit inventory under Chapter 40-B. Typically, inclusionary bylaws require that anywhere from 10% to 25% of new subdivision housing units consist of below-market rate units. The Massachusetts Zoning Act does not explicitly authorize inclusionary zoning, however, many Commonwealth communities have inclusionary zoning bylaws on the books and have made the case that such bylaws are legally valid under the State's "Home Rule" approach to zoning. Massachusetts courts have generally approved of inclusionary zoning; however, they have frowned on assessing fees in lieu of providing actual affordable housing units.

Incentive-based zoning attempts to increase the affordable housing stock by offering incentives to developers to create below-market units as part of their developments. Such incentives can include higher densities, reduced frontage, reduced setback requirements, a reduction in the required roadway width, reduced infrastructure connection fees, and other incentives that can improve a developer's bottom line. Incentive-based zoning is an example of giving something to get something. The density bonus offered as part of Upton's Senior Housing bylaw is an excellent example of incentive-based zoning. Incentive-based zoning is explicitly authorized within the Massachusetts Zoning Act.

4.13.2 Older Homes in Need of Rehabilitation

As indicated in **Table 4-4**, roughly 25% of Upton's housing stock was built prior to World War II. Although no comprehensive inventory has been compiled, it is likely that many of these older residences would not meet today's various housing codes (plumbing, electricity, weather-proofing, building code, etc.). The federal government offers numerous grant opportunities for building rehabilitation projects, especially when they benefit low and moderate-income families. A brief description of available federal housing rehab grants is provided on the following pages.



Community Development Block Grant Program

This program was developed at the federal level by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program is implemented at the State level by DHCD. Offered annually, the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) presently has two pots of money available to Massachusetts municipalities: Community Development Fund I (CDF-I) and Community Development Fund II (CDF-II). A community is eligible to apply for one or the other. In Upton's case, the town is eligible to apply for CDF-II Program. Be forewarned that communities interested in applying for CDF funds need to do a substantial amount of advance work prior to submitting an application. Eligible activities include: economic development projects that create and/or retain local/regional jobs, community facilities, housing rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements (including sewer and water). A CDF project must either benefit low and moderate-income people, aid in the prevention and/or elimination of slums and/or blight, or meet an urgent condition posing a serious threat to the health and welfare of the community.

The Housing Development Support Program

The Housing Development Support Program is a component of the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by DHCD. The program is designed to assist with project-specific affordable housing initiatives with the emphasis on small-scale projects that might otherwise go un-funded. Typical projects include housing rehabilitation, new construction, reclamation of abandoned properties, elderly and special needs housing, and the conversion of obsolete and under-utilized buildings for housing. Funds can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, site work and related infrastructure. Projects are limited to a maximum of seven housing units, 51% of which must be affordable to and occupied by low and moderate-income households (up to 80% of the area's median household income). This is a grant program and communities that have been Housing Certified by DHCD (Upton is not currently certified) receive bonus points totaling 10% of the available points for this program.

The Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust Fund

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) was established by an act of the State Legislature and is codified under Chapter 121-D of the Massachusetts General Laws. The AHTF operates out of DHCD and is administered by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Authority (MHFA) with guidance provided by an Advisory Committee of housing advocates. The purpose of the fund is to support the creation and/or preservation of housing that is affordable to people with incomes that do not exceed 110% of the area median income. The AHTF can be used to support the acquisition, development and/or preservation of affordable housing units. AHTF assistance can include:

- Deferred payment loans, low/no-interest amortizing loans.
- Down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers.
- Credit enhancements and mortgage insurance guarantees.
- Matching funds for municipalities that sponsor affordable housing projects.
- Matching funds for employer-based housing and capital grants for public housing.

Housing developments financed by the AHTF can include market-rate units, but the Trust Fund cannot be used to support such units. The level of assistance provided by the AHTF to a specific project must be the minimum amount necessary to achieve the desired degree of affordability. Housing units created through the AHTF can be counted towards the town's 10% threshold for affordable housing under Chapter 40-B.



The Local Initiative Program

The Local Initiative Program (LIP) is administered by DHCD and was established to give municipalities more flexibility in their efforts to provide low and moderate-income housing. The program provides technical assistance and other non-financial assistance to housing developed through the initiative of local government to serve households below 80% of the town's median household income. The program limits the State's review to the most basic aspects of affordable housing: the incomes of the people served, the minimum quality of the housing provided, fair marketing and level of profit. LIP projects must be initiated by the municipality, either through zoning-based approvals (rezoning, special permits, density bonuses, etc.), financial assistance and/or through the provision of land and/or buildings. These projects can include new construction, building conversion, adaptive re-use and building rehabilitation. LIP projects are usually administered at the local level by a local housing partnership or, in the absence of a housing partnership, the Board of Selectmen. Affordable housing units created by a LIP project will be counted towards the municipality's 10% low and moderate-income housing threshold.

The HOME Program and the Housing Stabilization Fund

These programs are offered by HUD (managed at the state level by DHCD), are designed to support the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of existing structures, and are only available to low-income families. Eligible projects include: property acquisition; housing construction and/or rehabilitation; connecting to public utilities (sewer and water) and making essential improvements such as structural improvements, plumbing improvements and energy-related improvements. These programs are offered every two years. Once again, interested communities need to do a substantial amount of advance work prior to submitting a grant application.

The 'Get the Lead Out' Program

This HUD-sponsored program is managed at the State level by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). This is a lead abatement program available to single family homes and 2-4 family properties. Offered on an annual basis, these funds are generally easier to apply for than the above referenced CDBG funds.

Home Improvement Loan Program

Another HUD program managed by the MHFA, this program offers funds to eligible owners of one-to-four unit residential properties so that they can make necessary improvements to their residential structures. Eligible improvements include: sewage disposal systems and plumbing needs; alterations and renovations that will enhance property safety; energy-related improvements and repairs designed to bring the structure up to local building codes. Offered on an annual basis, these funds generally have an easier application process than the above referenced CDBG funds.

Community Septic Management Program

This program is administered at the State level by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The program makes available to homeowners loan money (at 5% interest) for repairing failing septic systems.

Weatherization Assistance

HUD provides funding assistance to regional non-profit organizations for fuel assistance and weatherization programs. The Worcester Community Action Council, Inc. is the regional agency that provides such services for Worcester County communities. In order



to be eligible for the weatherization program, the applicant must receive some form of federal fuel assistance benefits.

4.13.3 Open Space & Preserving Rural Character

Based on the results of the Master Plan's citizen survey, it is evident that Upton citizens are concerned about maintaining the community's rural character. Although much of Upton's land to the north and south remains rural and undeveloped, the region's intensive development pressure does have the potential to alter the landscape in less than desirable ways. There are several options for allowing residential development in the north and south while maintaining the landscape's rural character:

3-A Cluster Housing and Open Space Subdivisions

Cluster housing or open space subdivisions allows for building houses closer together than would normally be allowed under the underlying zoning requirements, while preserving the remaining land as open space. Cluster housing appeals to developers because it enables them to build shorter subdivision roads and, where available, extend public utilities at a reduced cost. Cluster housing can help to preserve rural character if the local bylaw gives the Planning Board the flexibility to determine what areas of the property are to remain as undeveloped open space. Cluster housing can make economic sense for a municipality in several instances such as having a central bus-stop location for picking up school children, reduced infrastructure costs, and the permanent protection of open space. If municipal utilities are required, the lines for such utilities can be extended into a cluster subdivision which is cheaper than extending them down an existing road as part of a conventional subdivision. A portion of the cluster development's open space can be used to provide recreation facilities for the residents instead of the town having to acquire and develop recreational lands/facilities.

Upton does have a provision for Open Space Subdivisions within its current zoning bylaw (Section 3, Item 1 – Use Regulations, Open Space Preservation Subdivisions). This development option requires that no less than 40% of the original tract shall be preserved in perpetuity as open space. Of the required open space area, no more than 30% shall consist of wetlands. The open space provided shall be preserved in perpetuity by being conveyed to the town (at no cost), a not-for-profit organization, land trust, or a corporation/ association/trust owned by the owner of the lots created as part of the open space preservation subdivision. Unless conveyed to the town, a restriction enforceable by the town shall be approved and recorded to ensure that the open space land is kept in its natural state as permanently protected open space. Although Massachusetts case law has generally been supportive of cluster housing bylaws where the regulatory entity is given the discretion of specifying what portions of the overall tract of land are to be preserved as open space and the purpose of such open space (active and passive recreation, resource protection, etc.), Upton's open space preservation subdivision bylaw does not explicitly give the Planning Board the discretion of specifying what portions of the overall tract are to be preserved for open space or what purpose the open space lands are intended to serve. The bylaw simply provides some dimensional requirements and a few general guidelines as to the layout of the open space.

Upton's open space preservation subdivision provision is unique in that it does not specify a density bonus or even the total amount of new lots that can be created under this option. Rather, it is left to the Planning Board to determine the maximum number of lots that can be created under the open space preservation subdivision option on a case-by-case basis. In practice, the Planning Board has not allowed open space subdivisions



to create more lots than could be created through a traditional subdivision plan. Although the current situation may provide the Planning Board with flexibility regarding the number of lots that can be created as part of an open space preservation subdivision, the provision as written is somewhat ambiguous for developers. Without a clearly defined density bonus, developers may choose to forgo the option of an open space preservation subdivision and opt for the more straightforward traditional definitive subdivision plan.

3-B Major Residential Development Review

Currently Upton does not have any mechanism to review development plans unless they are submitted to the Planning Board as a subdivision proposal which would include the construction of a new subdivision road. Thus, if a developer wanted to create 20 new lots along an existing public way, the town would have limited review authority. The plan would simply be submitted to the Planning Board for its signature as an Approval Not Required (ANR) plan. The only municipal review would occur when the developer applies for driveway permits from the Department of Public Works or building permits from the Code Enforcement Department. Typically, these permits are issued after the lots have been created. It should be noted that the current ANR approval process is not of Upton's choosing; rather, it is a peculiarity of the State law (MGL Chapter 41, Section 81-P) governing local ANR approvals across the Commonwealth.

Although Upton's current ANR approval process does require the submission of site-specific information, it does not allow, nor could it under the law, for a comprehensive review of site drainage issues including: volume, degree of infiltration, flow direction and the ability of down-slope drainage structures to accommodate the increased surface water runoff. Many Massachusetts communities have addressed the lack of review authority for ANR lots by instituting Major Residential Development Review provisions within their local zoning bylaws. A Major Residential Development Review provision provides a mechanism for the municipal review of a variety of site planning issues such as drainage, environmental impact and neighborhood impact. It is up to the community to determine what constitutes a "major" residential development. Some local bylaws trigger the review process at four newly created lots while others aren't triggered unless ten or more lots are proposed.

4.14 Housing Recommendations

1. Strengthen the Open Space Provisions of the Open Space Subdivision Bylaw

See **Chapter 3.0 – Land Use, Recommendation 3** on page 19 for more information.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board

2. Major Residential Development Review

See **Chapter 3.0 – Land Use, Recommendation 1** on page 17.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board

3. Affordable Housing /Local Housing Partnership Committee

The town should make every effort to ensure that 10% of its housing stock consists of low and moderate-income housing, to both avoid the negative implications of 40-B developments and to provide diversity in the housing options available to residents.



Towards this end, the town should create an Upton Local Housing Partnership committee of volunteers to oversee the orderly development of affordable housing. The Partnership should consider both regulatory and non-regulatory means of promoting affordable housing in Upton by considering the following:

- Regular meetings to review Upton’s affordability status and initiatives to pursue.
- Review the State’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the various housing grant programs offered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for possible use in Upton, and act on such grants as are deemed appropriate.
- Draft and implement either inclusionary zoning or incentive-based zoning bylaw for the purpose of ensuring that Upton remains above the 10% threshold in the future.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and the Upton Local Housing Partnership (once created)

4. Accessory Apartments

The town should consider adopting an accessory apartment provision within its Zoning Bylaw. Issues to consider when drafting an accessory apartment provision include access/egress to the apartment, external appearance of the principal or secondary structure, parking, sewage disposal, trash disposal, size limitations and the permitting process. Allowing accessory apartments would provide another housing choice for Upton’s elder residents and young people who cannot yet afford to buy a home.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board, in conjunction with the Building Inspector and Health Inspector

5. Conversion of Existing Single-Family Homes into Two-Family Homes

Upton’s zoning bylaw currently allows the conversion of single-family homes into two-family homes in all of its residential zoning districts, upon authorization from the Zoning Board of Appeals and if the lot in question is twice the size of the underlying zoning requirement for a single-family dwelling. We recommend the double lot size requirement be dropped in Residential A and B districts to promote less expensive housing options, particularly where the town provides both municipal water and sewer.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals

6. Multi-Family Dwellings in Residential-A District

The town currently allows multi-family dwellings in Residential-A district under a Special Permit, authorization from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The town should relax the Special Permit criteria to encourage more multi-family dwellings in the Residential A district where town water and sewer are supplied. This will promote less expensive housing options. If the town is concerned about how a particular site would be developed, then design standards could be built into a site plan review process.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals

7. Erosion Control Standards

See **Chapter 3.0 – Land Use, Recommendation 5** on page 23.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board



5.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Summary

This chapter examines Upton's labor force, including where people work and the types of employment available in town. We also examine the impact on the tax base of existing commercial businesses in Upton and recommend steps to increase the commercial tax base while adhering to the residents' desire to retain the community's small town, rural character.

5.2 Goals

Encourage economic development that maintains a balance between residents' preferences for limited, selective commercial/industrial growth while recognizing that increasing Upton's 3.5% commercial/industrial tax base will lessen the residential property tax burden.

5.3 Objectives

1. Re-energize the Upton Development & Industrial Committee in its efforts to coordinate an overall economic development program that will include both long and short term planning and short-term facilitation.
2. Review and, where necessary, revise zoning bylaws for commercial/industrial and general business districts along with site plan review standards to ensure they will protect Upton's small town, rural character.
3. Coordinate the extension of municipal water and sewer service to the town's two industrial districts.
4. Take advantage of services and funds offered by local, regional, and state agencies to encourage desired economic growth.

5.4 Upton's Labor Force

The number of employed Upton residents has grown 26% over the past twelve years, from 2,511 employed people in 1990 to 3,159 people by the end of 2002. Of Upton's immediate neighbors, only the towns of Hopkinton, at 33%, and Mendon, at 27%, have experienced a larger increase in their number of employed residents. During this same time, Upton's unemployment rate, historically lower than the State average, hit a high of 8.3% in 1992 and a low of 1.8% in 2000. However, over the last two years, the trend reversed and Upton's unemployment rate dramatically increased from 1.8% to 6.4% in 2002.

Table 5-1 presents the number of employed/unemployed Upton residents dating back to 1990. The table also allows for a comparison of Upton's unemployment rate with the State's overall unemployment rate.



**Table 5-1
Employment Status of Upton Residents**

Year	Total Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate of Unemployment (Upton)	Rate of Unemployment (Massachusetts)
1990	2,670	2,511	159	6.0%	6.0%
1991	2,652	2,446	206	7.8%	9.1%
1992	2,744	2,516	228	8.3%	8.6%
1993	2,832	2,672	160	5.6%	6.9%
1994	2,924	2,770	154	5.3%	6.0%
1995	2,855	2,725	130	4.6%	5.4%
1996	2,929	2,814	115	3.9%	4.3%
1997	3,053	2,948	105	3.4%	4.0%
1998	3,100	3,021	79	2.5%	3.3%
1999	3,131	3,058	73	2.3%	3.2%
2000	3,173	3,115	58	1.8%	2.6%
2001	3,254	3,148	106	3.3%	3.7%
2002	3,376	3,159	217	6.4%	4.8%

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training.

5.5 Where Upton Residents Work

The US Census Bureau compiles workplace origin/destination statistics as part of its once-a-decade national census effort. The information gleaned from this effort can be used to determine where Upton residents work and where the people that work in Upton live. In terms of where Upton residents work, the 2000 US Census counted 2,725 people in the labor force working in the following locations:

In Upton: 388 Framingham: 195 Worcester: 185 Westborough: 153 Milford: 145
 Marlborough: 113 Hopkinton: 95 Franklin: 87 Newton: 79 Boston: 76

Elsewhere in Worcester County: 418
 Elsewhere in the State: 721
 Out of State: 70

The above numbers indicate that roughly 14% of Upton’s employed people worked in town during 2000, while a little less than 7% worked in Worcester. This indicates that Upton’s workforce is not solely influenced by Worcester’s economy. Instead, Upton’s workforce will be influenced by other economic centers to the east, such as Framingham, Westborough, Boston, and other communities within the I-495 beltway.

5.6 The Number and Types of Jobs in Upton

The Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training (DET) is the State entity in charge of tracking the changes taking place in the various sectors of the State’s economy at both the state and local levels. The following table presents changes that took place in Upton’s local economy during the 1990’s based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) national coding system. The table refers to jobs existing in Upton and not the employment status of Upton residents (see **Table 5-1** for this).



**Table 5-2
Employment and Wages in Upton**

Year	Total Annual Payroll (Millions)	Average Annual Wage	No. of Establishments	No. of Workers	Sector							
					Agriculture/ Forestry/Fish	Government	Construction	Manufacturing	TCPU [^]	Wholesale/ Retail Trade	FIRE*	Service
1990	\$18	\$19,861	114	915	13	399	56	44	73	117	24	189
1991	\$18	\$20,395	103	873	12	384	59	39	56	103	19	201
1992	\$19	\$24,064	101	787	**	330	82	38	45	94	21	174
1993	\$15	\$22,659	102	675	9	221	55	38	**	102	17	174
1994	\$17	\$24,358	107	702	10	225	62	44	**	117	14	173
1995	\$22	\$25,336	109	855	13	245	86	40	**	124	19	271
1996	\$25	\$26,941	132	946	13	267	129	44	**	132	21	282
1997	\$28	\$28,487	131	984	**	299	132	43	**	148	23	287
1998	\$33	\$33,099	140	986	10	405	117	43	**	169	20	192
1999	\$35	\$36,748	146	946	**	379	139	39	15	179	18	176
2000	\$37	\$36,296	145	1,010	**	403	159	36	**	202	20	173
2001	\$38	\$27,390	158	1,039	3	416	147	36	0	185	20	217

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

[^] - TCPU = Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities.

* FIRE = Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate.

** Data suppressed due to confidentiality.

Table 5-2 indicates that the number of businesses operating in Upton has risen steadily during the past decade, as have the number of workers (or jobs in Upton). The most notable increase in jobs took place in the construction and wholesale/retail trade sectors. The construction sector has almost tripled the number of jobs since 1990, and the wholesale/retail trade sector saw a 58% increase in jobs. The most dramatic loss of jobs occurred in the transportation, communication, public-utility sector, dropping from a high of 73 jobs in 1990 to none by the end of 2001. It is also interesting to note that the number of manufacturing jobs in Upton has held fairly steady during the 1990's, whereas the CMRPC Region as a whole lost close to 7,000 such jobs during the same time period.

The previous table indicates there were 1,038 jobs in Upton at the end of 2001, with the government sector accounting for the highest percentage of these jobs at 40%, followed by the service sector at 21%, trade sector at 18%, and construction sector at 14%.

The employment categories presented in Table ED-2 are comprised of a variety of businesses that fit each category description. Presented below are the various businesses that make up each employment category along with the number of such businesses within Upton.



5.6.1 Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Agriculture & Mining

Crop production; animal production; forestry and logging; fishing, hunting, and trapping; support activities for agriculture and forestry; oil and gas extraction; and mining. According to DET, there is one such business in Upton employing a total of three people.

5.6.2 Government & Education

Federal, state, regional, and local governmental entities; elementary and secondary schools; junior colleges; colleges, universities and professional schools; business schools and computer training; technical and trade schools; fine arts schools; and support services. According to DET, there are three educational institutions in Upton, and one governmental entity (the Town of Upton). These entities employ a total of 416 people.

5.6.3 Transportation; Communication; & Public Utilities

Air and water transportation; railroads; truck transportation; transit and ground passenger transportation; pipeline transportation; scenic & sightseeing; transportation support activities; postal service; couriers and messengers; warehousing & storage; electric; hydroelectric; fossil fuel; nuclear; natural gas; other fuel; water supply and irrigation systems; sewage treatment facilities; steam and air-conditioning; publishing industries; motion picture and video industries; broadcasting and telecommunications; information and data processing services. According to DET, there are no such operations in Upton.

5.6.4 Construction

Building, developing and general contracting; heavy construction; and special trade contractors. According to DET, there are 38 construction firms in Upton, employing approximately 147 people.

5.6.5 Manufacturing

Food manufacturing; beverage and tobacco products; textile mills; textile product mills; clothing and apparel; leather and allied products; wood products; paper; printing and related support activities; petroleum and coal products; chemicals; plastics and rubber products; nonmetallic mineral products; primary metals; fabricated metal products; machinery; computer and electronic products; electrical equipment, appliances and components; transportation equipment; furniture and related products; miscellaneous manufacturing. According to DET, there are seven manufacturing operations in Upton, employing approximately 36 people.

5.6.6 Wholesale/Retail Trade

Durable goods and non-durable goods; motor vehicle and parts dealers; furniture and home furnishing stores; electronics and appliance stores; building material and garden equipment and supply dealers; food and beverage stores; health and personal care stores; gasoline stations; clothing stores; sporting goods, hobby and musical instrument stores; general merchandise stores; miscellaneous retail stores. According to DET, there are five wholesale trade and seven retail trade establishments in Upton. These establishments employ approximately 185 people.



5.6.7 Finance; Insurance & Real Estate

Monetary authorities; credit intermediation and related activities; securities, commodity contracts, and other financial investments and related activities; insurance carriers and related activities; funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles; general real estate, rental and leasing services. According to DET, there are five finance and insurance establishments and four real estate establishments in Upton. These firms employ approximately 20 people.

5.6.8 Services

The Service employment category includes a number of subcategories, including professional, scientific and technical services; administrative support; health care; accommodations and food services; as well as arts, entertainment, and recreation. According to DET, there are ten professional service providers, 13 administrative support establishments, nine health care and social assistance establishments, one arts, entertainment, and recreation establishment, nine food service establishments, and 15 "other" service providers in Upton. All told, these businesses employ approximately 217 people.

The Division of Employment and Training did not classify the remaining business establishments in Upton.

It is interesting to note that the Master Plan's citizen survey identified the "lack of retail shopping opportunities" as one of the most undesirable aspects of living in Upton. According to the survey, Upton residents would like to see more new restaurants and small-scale retail stores in town. The least favored types of new businesses were fast-food establishments and large-scale retail stores. It seems that Upton residents are content to obtain the majority of services and shopping needs from neighboring communities with a larger retail base.

5.7 Upton's Largest Employers

Upton's two largest employers are as follows:

- The Town of Upton currently employs 173 people (full and part-time).
- The Blackstone Regional Vocational High School currently employs 166 full-time staff people. The School also employs a number of part-time people, and this number will vary over the course of the school year. The High School serves thirteen Blackstone Valley communities, including Upton.

These two employers account for approximately 33% of the jobs in Upton.

5.8 The Region's Largest Employers

According to the Worcester Business Journal's 2003 Book of Lists, the top five employers in Central Massachusetts are located within the I-495 beltway, a short drive away from Upton. It should be noted that the listed employee numbers below reflect national employment numbers:

- TJX, Inc. – Framingham (94,000 employees)



- Staples, Inc. – Framingham (58,000 employees)
- EMC, Inc. – Hopkinton (17,400 employees)
- BJ’s Wholesale, Inc. – Natick (17,000 employees)
- Computer Associates, Inc. – Framingham (14,450 employees)

5.9 Economic Sector’s Contribution to the Local Tax Base

In fiscal year 2002, Upton levied a total of \$7,175,157 in taxes, based on a local tax rate of \$11.32 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Upton homeowners accounted for approximately 94% of the total 2002 tax base (\$6,739,502), while businesses and industries accounted for approximately 3.5% of the tax base (\$259,941). The remaining 2.5% was derived from taxes on personal property (\$175,714).

Of the 40 communities in the CMRPC region, only three obtain a higher percentage of their tax base from residential property taxes: Princeton (97%), Rutland (95%) and Millville (95%). Of the 351 municipalities in Massachusetts, only 50 towns/cities obtain a higher percentage of their tax bases from residential property taxes. This indicates that Upton has become a bedroom community where people live but work elsewhere. The next two tables look at how Upton compares to similar communities in the region in terms of the commercial and industrial tax base.

Table 5-3
Commercial Tax Base Comparison (FY 2002)

Community	Commercial Tax Rate	Assessed Taxes Levied	% of Total Valuation	Tax Levy
Upton	\$11.32	\$201,211	\$17.8 mill.	2.6%
Grafton	\$14.74	\$697,901	\$47.3 mill.	4.5%
Hopedale	\$23.88*	\$443,566	\$18.6 mill.	4.5%
Hopkinton	\$14.66	\$893,010	\$60.9 mill.	3.3%
Mendon	\$11.34	\$346,279	\$30.5 mill.	5.6%
Milford	\$25.49*	\$5,612,087	\$220.1 mill.	16.7%
Northbridge	\$12.79	\$666,516	\$52.1 mill.	6.2%
Westborough	\$13.50	\$5,655,193	\$418.9 mill.	17.5%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

* Hopedale and Milford have split tax rates (Milford: \$14.28 for residential and \$25.49 for commercial and industrial, and Hopedale: \$14.66 for residential and \$23.88 for commercial and industrial).

Table 5-3 indicates that when compared to its adjacent neighbors, Upton levies the least amount of taxes on commercial development, has the lowest assessed value for commercial development, and the taxes levied for such development make up the smallest percentage of the total local tax levy. The towns of Milford and Westborough levy the highest amount of taxes on commercial development and thus have commercial tax levies which make up the largest percentage of the local tax levy. Milford and Westborough also have the highest assessed valuation for commercial development. This indicates that Milford and Westborough serve as the Blackstone Valley’s primary commercial centers.



**Table 5-4
Industrial Tax Base Comparison (FY 2002)**

Community	Industrial Tax Rate	Industrial Taxes Levied	Assessed Valuation	% of Total Tax Levy
Upton	\$11.32	\$58,730	\$5.2 mill.	0.8%
Grafton	\$14.74	\$453,182	\$30.7 mill.	3.1%
Hopedale	\$23.88*	\$199,279	\$8.3 mill.	2.0%
Hopkinton	\$14.66	\$3,585,440	\$244.5 mill.	13.2%
Mendon	\$11.34	\$58,613	\$5.2 mill.	0.9%
Milford	\$25.49*	\$3,449,723	\$135.3 mill.	10.3%
Northbridge	\$12.79	\$242,950	\$19.0 mill.	2.3%
Westborough	\$13.50	\$5,160,911	\$382.2 mill.	16.0%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

* Hopedale and Milford have split tax rates (Hopedale: \$14.66 for residential and \$23.88 for commercial and industrial; Milford: \$14.28 for residential and \$25.49 for commercial and industrial).

Table 5-4 indicates that when compared to its adjacent neighbors, Upton levies the least amount of taxes and has the lowest assessed value on industrial development. As a result, Upton collects a small percentage of its taxes from industrial property. Of its adjacent neighbors, only Mendon has a comparable industrial tax levy situation. The towns of Hopkinton, Milford, and Westborough levy the highest amount of taxes on industrial development and have the highest assessed valuation for industrial development. Because of this, their industrial tax levies make up the largest percentage of the local tax base. This indicates that Hopkinton, Milford, and Westborough serve as the Blackstone Valley's primary industrial centers. The proximity to the region's major highways is, in large part, responsible for the industrial prominence of these communities. Hopkinton has direct access to I-90 and I-495; Milford has direct access to Route 16 and I-495; and Westborough has direct access to Route 9, I-495, and I-90 (just over the border in Hopkinton).

5.10 Home Occupations & Accessory Retail Uses

Upton's existing zoning scheme currently allows home occupations By Right in all of its zoning districts as long as certain standards are met (See Upton Zoning By-laws, section 2, paragraph 4). It is a trend of our modern-day economy that more people are establishing home businesses and/or working from their homes. Increasingly, companies are permitting employees to spend a good deal of their workweek working from home or "telecommuting". The Internet and advances in home computers have created conditions where people can be productive in this environment. There are no definitive rules or regulations that govern telecommuting, and the practice is still evolving. Like other communities, Upton can expect to see an increase in the number of people working from their homes, whether they are starting home businesses or simply telecommuting.



5.11 Regional Economic Trends

The Greater Worcester Area Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee is the regional entity charged with forging an economic strategy for Central Massachusetts. The Committee is comprised of the Greater Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), and the Worcester City Manager's Office of Economic Development. Every year the Committee prepares an annual report that outlines its regional economic development strategy, notes trends in the regional economy, and highlights successful projects occurring during the previous year. A CEDS Committee is a prerequisite for obtaining grants from the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The CEDS Committee has identified the following trends in the region's economy:

5.11.1 *The Regional Economy in General*

- The national recession that began in early 2001 continued to affect the regional economy throughout 2002. Many companies were forced to cutback on hiring and spending, thus placing proposed expansion plans on hold. Perhaps hardest hit were the high technology and information technology sectors, both of which experienced severe declines in revenues and numerous company closings. At the spring 2002 Economic Outlook Conference sponsored by the New England Economic Project (NEEP), economists predicted that the Massachusetts economy would continue to lag behind most of the nation in emerging from the recession because the State is more reliant on the high technology and information technology sectors. The State's revenue crisis has only worsened the situation. Unemployment rose, but consumers spending remained strong, and local retailers were not adversely affected. The Worcester region, in general, has weathered the recession better than expected due to its diverse economic base. In fact, there were 20 new or expanded manufacturing facilities during 2002, and 43 new or expanded small businesses. In addition, eight industrial parks are in the planning stage.

5.11.2 *Manufacturing*

- In spite of declines, manufacturing still accounts for 22% of the region's employment base and the following industries are actually on the rise: biotechnology, photonics, plastics, and electronic components.
- Approximately two thirds of the region's manufacturing firms have eventual plans to expand and three quarters have plans to diversify their product lines.

5.11.3 *Service Industry*

- The service sector of the regional economy has shown the highest increase in jobs created since the 1980's, with the health care industry responsible for the largest amount of job growth in the service sector.

5.11.4 *Start Up & Small Businesses*

- Although small businesses are becoming an ever-increasing part of the regional economy, all of the banks still have difficulty making commercial loans under \$10,000 profitable and none of them have micro-loan programs for under \$2,000.



5.11.5 Workforce Development

- Firms are still having difficulty finding skilled and semi-skilled workers or people with strong engineering skills.
- Many firms are not familiar with area job training programs, and yet, the Regional Employment Board (REB) has experienced more demand for job training than it has the resources to deliver.

5.11.6 Industrial Space Availability

- State and regional economic development officials have noted a regional shortage of fully serviced (water and sewer) industrial land, and many companies have had difficulty finding suitable expansion land in their host community and the region as a whole.
- While water and sewer capacity is sufficient on a regional-basis, such infrastructure often does not extend to key parcels of land.
- The region, as a whole, has done a poor job of cleaning up its “Brownfield” sites due to cuts in state and federal funding. There are more than 950 such sites scattered throughout Central Massachusetts, and less than 50 of them have been cleaned up to an acceptable level.

5.12 Opportunities for Economic Development

As outlined in the Municipal Facilities and Services chapter, Upton has a long list of financial matters (mostly capital equipment needs) that will need to be addressed during the next decade. If Upton’s commercial and industrial sectors do not grow and increase their contribution to the local tax base, then it will be up to the homeowners to cover an ever-larger percentage of the town’s annual budget. Simply put, placing a greater emphasis on creating opportunities for economic development will help ease the tax burden on local homeowners. The issue of infrastructure aside, Upton has more than enough vacant industrially zoned land in its eastern industrial district to accommodate a number of new industrial operations. Upton’s upcoming municipal needs are going to be there even if the town’s vacant industrial land lies dormant. Thus, the question becomes, what opportunities for appropriate economic development exist for Upton.

The ensuing discussion outlines the economic development opportunities available to Upton, as well as, the impediments to economic development facing the town.

5.12.1 Local Economic Development Initiatives

The Development & Industrialization Committee is the local entity charged with planning for economic development in Upton. This is a four-member Committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen; however, it only meets once a year, has no operating budget, and its activities have been limited to fielding a modest number of inquiries from developers regarding Upton’s industrially zoned land. The town does not have a long-term economic development strategy; however, the Committee has been an advocate of extending municipal water and sewer to the town’s eastern industrial district. Unfortunately, there are several significant infrastructure improvements that need to be addressed before the town can realistically consider this possibility (lack of sewer system capacity, old pipes, size of pipes, etc.). The town’s western industrial district is largely built out residentially and has a minimal amount of land (eight acres) available for new industrial development. Through the Master Plan citizen survey conducted in the spring of 2003, Upton citizens



have expressed their reluctance for rezoning residential land for the purpose of industrial development. Thus, Upton needs to find a way to make its few remaining industrial areas work for both potential developers and for the town. The Committee stands ready to help developers utilize Upton's industrially zoned land despite its lack of resources.

5.12.2 The Massachusetts Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP)

Created by the Legislature in 1993, the EDIP is designed to stimulate job creation in distressed areas, attract new businesses, encourage existing businesses to expand, and increase overall economic readiness among Massachusetts towns and cities. The Massachusetts Office of Business Development administers the EDIP. The Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) oversees the EDIP and is charged with three responsibilities:

- Designating Economic Target Areas (ETAs)
- Designating Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs) within an ETA
- Designating Certified Projects within an EOA

There are two benefits the State confers on Certified Projects within designated EOAs: a 5% State Investment Tax Credit for qualifying tangible, depreciable investments and a 10% Abandoned Building Tax Deduction for costs associated with renovating an abandoned building.

Upton is a member of the Blackstone Valley Economic Target Area (ETA) established in 1994. This ETA covers eleven municipalities in the Valley, including Upton. There has not been any Economic Opportunity Areas (EOA) designated for Upton, and Certified Projects have never been initiated within Upton.

5.12.3 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Program

In an effort to lure new economic development and retain existing businesses, Upton has the option of establishing a local Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program. A local TIF program usually operates in the following manner: a new business or existing business wishing to expand would need to demonstrate it will hire people from Upton and the immediate area, and it will utilize local businesses and construction firms for its new/expanded building. In return, the town would forgive a percentage of the taxes assessed on the new/expanded building over a period of several years. The percentage of forgiven assessed taxes would get smaller over a designated period of time. The establishment of a TIF project would require Town Meeting approval.

Local TIF programs have been the subjects of criticism lately due to concerns over lost tax revenue. However, citizens need to realize that local TIF programs help to keep jobs in their community (most of which are held by local residents), promote the use of local businesses for the building/expansion effort, and help to attract new businesses that otherwise may not come to their community. A local TIF program in Upton would be a valuable tool for attracting new businesses and industries, especially when one considers that the town cannot offer much in the way of infrastructure (namely, municipal sewer service and publicly controlled industrial land).



5.12.4 The Central Massachusetts Economic Development Authority (CMEDA)

Established in 1996, this regional organization was created to address former industrial sites that have been contaminated, specifically for cleanup and re-use. Under Chapter 21-E of the Massachusetts General Laws, the State's Department of Environmental Protection has the authority to designate such sites for cleanup. Such sites are more commonly known as "Brownfields". There are over 950 such sites in Central Massachusetts (up from 471 sites in 1994), however, there are no such sites in Upton at present, and the town is not currently a member of the CMEDA. Should such sites be identified in Upton at a later date, the town does have the option of working with the subject property owners to utilize the CMEDA process for cleanup and re-use. It should be noted that recent State budget cuts have decimated CMEDA's staff and institutional capability.

5.12.5 Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber is a valuable information resource for local businesses and for businesses considering locating in the Valley, offering business planning assistance, peer-to-peer business counseling, capital planning assistance, export assistance, networking opportunities, educational seminars, and health insurance assistance. The Chamber provides a forum for business owners/operators to talk about the local business climate and economic development in general. The Chamber's Public Affairs Department represents the region's business community on Beacon Hill and Capital Hill. Upton is one of the Chamber's member communities.

5.12.6 The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission

Covering Blackstone communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, The John H. Chafee Corridor was established under the National Park Services' National Heritage Corridor Program. The Program's purpose is to encourage grassroots efforts for the preservation and restoration of significant historic and natural assets within the Corridor, foster compatible economic development (including tourism), and enhance recreational opportunities. The Program is administered at the local level by an Advisory Council comprised of local officials and residents, regional planning agencies and councils of governments, tourism districts, and several agencies from both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Council has prepared a Management Plan to guide their efforts. It is anticipated that approximately one million dollars in annual federal funds will be provided to the Council during the current decade. The Corridor's various programs represent a significant economic development opportunity for the Massachusetts communities included in the project area. These communities can work with the Corridor's Advisory Council to obtain significant funds for developing recreation opportunities along the Blackstone River, preserving historic buildings, creating tourism attractions around old mill buildings and other sites of historical significance, and developing other history-related tourism projects.

5.12.7 The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

SCORE is a division of the Small Business Administration, and they maintain an office with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce. Consisting of retired business executives that volunteer their time, SCORE councilors are available for free consultations on any business-related problem.



5.12.8 *The Industrial Services Program (ISP)*

Operating out of Boston, the ISP provides financial and management assistance to companies and re-employment training to workers with the goal of ensuring the competitiveness of Massachusetts manufacturing companies.

5.12.9 *The Massachusetts Business Development Corporation (MBDC)*

Located in Boston, this private, for-profit entity provides supplemental financing to promising small and medium-sized companies in Massachusetts. The MBDC also serves as a contractor to the State in the administration of its recycling, Brownfields redevelopment, and capital access programs.

5.12.10 *The Massachusetts Capital Resource Company (MCRC)*

The MCRC is a limited partnership, privately owned by seven Massachusetts-based life insurance companies. The MCRC is a source of risk capital for Massachusetts businesses.

5.12.11 *MassDevelopment*

MassDevelopment acts as the State's industrial financing authority. It works primarily with industries and non-profit organizations; however, it does offer several programs that provide technical assistance to municipalities. MassDevelopment administers the Predevelopment Assistance Program that can help municipalities fund projects that will result in economic benefits to the community and the region. MassDevelopment can help with site-specific projects and can assist with appraisals, financing, site planning, and architectural services. Under its Economic Development Lending program, MassDevelopment can also assist with the planning and financing of industrial parks. It should be noted that MassDevelopment does have a regional office in Worcester.

5.12.12 *Vacant, Developable, Industrial-Zoned Land*

CMRPC completed a buildout analysis for the Town of Upton in the spring of 2000 as part of a region-wide effort sponsored by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). A build-out analysis is a planning tool that determines the amount of vacant, developable land in town and assesses the potential impacts if this land were fully developed under the town's existing zoning standards. A buildout analysis does not attempt to determine when a community will reach full buildout; rather, it simply attempts to determine what the community would look like if it were fully built out according to the town's current zoning policies.

In the case of Upton, approximately 383 acres of vacant, developable land was identified within the town's commercial and industrial zoning districts. The table on the following page presents a rough breakdown of the amount of vacant, developable land in each of the town's non-residential zoning districts and how much commercial/industrial floor space could be created if the land were fully developed under the town's current zoning standards.



**Table 5-5
Non-Residential Buildout Analysis**

Developable Zoning District	Potential Vacant Land	Potential Floor Space (sq. ft.)	Estimated New Jobs*,**	Tax Revenue
General Business	92 acres	557,444	2,230	\$410,167
Comm./Ind.-West	8 acres	37,282	149	\$27,432
Comm./Ind.-East	283 acres	3,005,499	12,022	\$1,633,068
TOTAL:	383 acres	3,600,225	14,401	\$2,071,167

Source: CMRPC Buildout Analysis for the Town of Upton, March 2000.

* The new jobs figure is based on four employees per 1,000 square feet of floor space (multiplier supplied as part of the EOEA buildout methodology).

** The estimated tax revenue is based on the year 2002 tax rate (\$11.32 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation) and the assessed value of the newly created floor space is based on the Assessor's Base Rate Table for new commercial uses (\$65 per square foot) and new industrial uses (\$48 per square foot).

Table 5-5 indicates that Upton has a moderate amount of developable commercial land in its General Business districts and a substantial amount of developable industrial land in its eastern Commercial & Industrial district. This eastern Commercial & Industrial district still has a great deal of undeveloped road frontage along Route 140. There are three essential factors that reduce the desirability of the eastern Commercial & Industrial district: poor soil conditions (including the presence of ledge), lack of direct access to a major transportation corridor (I-495), and lack of infrastructure (this district is not served by either town water or sewer). Additionally, all of the vacant land in this particular zoning district is under private ownership. Currently, there are only three companies residing in this industrial district, all off of Walker Drive on the south side of Route 140: the Croft Corporation, W.W. Equipment, and P.M. Zilioli, Inc. These companies employ less than 40 people.

The new jobs created figure of 14,401 is somewhat dubious; as a full buildout of Upton's vacant commercial/industrial land is quite unlikely. With 1,038 jobs existing in Upton at the end of 2001, this would mean that Upton would have 15,439 jobs if the town were fully built out under its current zoning standards. Again, this is highly unlikely. Zoning standards will likely change periodically, new development can render backland unusable and land protection efforts can effectively preclude development on certain properties. It should be noted that the estimated tax revenue of \$2,071,167 is based on the assumption of a full buildout of the town's commercial and industrial districts and is based on the town's 2002 tax rate of \$11.32 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Again, a full buildout of the commercial/industrial districts is highly unlikely in the near future.

5.13 Impediments to Economic Development

5.13.1 Lack of Sewer System Capacity

The single biggest impediment to future economic development in Upton is the municipal sewer system's lack of capacity. Upton's sewer system has a serious inflow/infiltration problem that reduces the system's capacity and limits the number of new connections to the system. The town's treatment plant has the capacity to treat up to 400,000 gallons per day (gpd), and it currently treats an average of 150,000 gpd (thus utilizing 37.5% of the plant's capacity). However, periodic episodes of inflow/infiltration



can result in the plant having to treat as much as 300,000 gpd (thus utilizing 75% of the plant's capacity). The capacity that is occasionally eaten up by the inflow/infiltration problem further thwarts Upton's economic expansion efforts. Complicating matters further, the sewer system's receiving source (Center Brook) does not have the capacity to accommodate any more wastewater than is currently being discharged into it. The Sewer Department is also understaffed and does not have the manpower to conduct routine system inspections or implement a pipe replacement program. The Public Works Department also does not have a clear-cut policy regarding the treatment of industrial wastewater.

All of the above factors combine to create a situation where new businesses and industries wishing to settle in Upton cannot be assured municipal sewer service. The ability to tie into a municipal sewer system is one of the key elements that new businesses and industries look for when deciding where to locate (in addition to municipal water, easy highway access, and a skilled labor force). Upton clearly needs to deal with its inflow/infiltration problem in order to free up additional system capacity, and the Public Works Department needs to become a partner in the town's overall strategy to attract new economic development. The Department needs to be able to provide clear direction and assistance to new businesses and industries wishing to establish operations in Upton.

One option for covering the cost of both an infiltration/inflow study that would result in a sewer master plan, and for actually fixing the problems identified by such a study, is the State's Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund. Funded by the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement Trust (MWPAT) and administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the revolving loan fund offers municipalities no-interest loans for planning, designing, and implementing improvements to their water and sewer systems. To apply for this loan program, Upton would first need to complete a DEP Project Evaluation Form. Utilizing the State's revolving loan fund would provide a way to start dealing with the myriad of problems facing Upton's Sewer Department.

5.13.2 Lack of Town-Controlled Industrial Land

Upton does not have much in the way of town-controlled land (industrially zoned or otherwise) to offer new businesses and industries. In fact, the town controls only one acre of the 491-acre Business & Commercial district that lies east of the town center. Many Massachusetts communities create industrial parks on town-owned land so that it may attract the types of businesses/industries it wants and offer them a coordinated delivery of municipal services; however, municipal ownership of industrial land is not an absolute requirement for the creation of an industrial park. Many communities have industrial park zoning bylaws that set forth design standards for private landowners to follow when locating in designated industrial areas. Currently in Upton, it is up to the new business to identify a suitable property and work with the various town departments to obtain the necessary municipal services.

5.13.3 Lack of Water & Sewer Infrastructure for the eastern Commercial & Industrial District

This particular zoning district is located east of town center with approximately 2.55 miles of frontage along Route 140 (1.275 miles of frontage along either side of Route 140). The majority of developable land is located on the southern side of Route 140 as the district extends south all the way to the inactive railroad tracks, while the northern side of the



district extends 500 feet back from Route 140. The district does not have direct access to either municipal water or sewer, with both amenities being located at least three quarters of a mile away to the northwest. The district does abut the Town of Hopedale and its associated municipal infrastructure. Hopedale's wastewater treatment plant has the capacity to treat up to 588 million gallons per day (gpd) and currently treats anywhere between 300,000 gpd and 400,000 gpd, or 51-68% of the system's treatment capacity. Thus, conceptually speaking, Hopedale's sewer system could accommodate another 188,000 gpd from new development. The possibility exists for Upton to work out an arrangement with Hopedale to use some of its reserve sewer capacity to service Upton's eastern Commercial & Industrial District.

If Upton wanted to extend its own municipal infrastructure to service this district, one option for covering the cost would be the Community Development Action Grant (CDAG) offered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Eligible CDAG projects are those that help attract and leverage private investment, create/retain jobs for low and moderate-income persons, and address the needs of blighted neighborhoods. It could be argued that extending infrastructure to this industrial district will meet the CDAG program's first two objectives.

5.14 Economic Development Recommendations

1. Revitalize and Expand Upton Development & Industrialization Committee

As noted previously, the Development & Industrialization Committee meets only once a year and has no operating budget; its activities have been limited to fielding a modest number of inquiries from developers regarding Upton's industrially zoned land. There is no local Chamber of Commerce, and the town is unlikely to hire an Economic Development Coordinator. Thus, the town is left with the options of revitalizing its Development & Industrialization Committee or creating a new municipal entity charged with creating/implementing an economic development strategy for Upton. It is recommended that Upton reorganize its Development & Industrialization Committee, expand its membership, and charge them with the task of developing and implementing an economic development strategy for Upton. A revitalized Development & Industrialization Committee would need to begin by reviewing the town's zoning scheme, tax policies, road improvement plans, and water/sewer expansion plans as they relate to Upton's ability to attract new businesses. The Development & Industrialization Committee would then need to work with the various municipal boards and departments to develop an economic development strategy for Upton. As part of an economic development strategy, the town should designate a staff person in Town Hall to handle economic development issues. One contact person is essential, as businesses want straight answers, fast.

Responsible Entity: The Development & Industrialization Committee and the Board of Selectmen

2. Develop the Town's Grant Writing Capacity

Upton is eligible for a wide variety of Federal and State grant programs, however, applying for them can be a time consuming endeavor that requires a great deal of research and narrative writing. Many town departments would like to apply for grants but simply do not have the manpower or time to adequately deal with the application process. With numerous capital expenditures anticipated, it is imperative the town cultivate its grant writing capacity so that it may access the significant amount of money



being made available through State grants. The town's grant writing capacity could be developed in-house by hiring a professional grant writer, or through establishing a town planner/ economic development coordinator position. If the town cannot afford to hire additional municipal staff for the purpose of grant writing/administration, then perhaps the town could contract with a professional grant writer on an as-needed basis. There are numerous private sector planning consultants that could work with Upton on a specific grant application. Another option would be to utilize the grant writing services of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). As a member of CMRPC, Upton is eligible to receive 24-hours of planning assistance every year. Many member communities have utilized their 24-hours of planning assistance for the purpose of having CMRPC assist them with a particular grant application.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen

3. Initiate a Town Center Revitalization Program

See **Chapter 3.0 – Land Use, Recommendation 6** on page 24 for more information.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and the Development & Industrialization Committee

4. Dimensional Setbacks in Upton's Commercial & Industrial Zoning Districts

It is recommended that the town undertake a complete review of the dimensional standards that govern Upton's commercial and industrial zoning districts to ensure they meet the town's current needs for businesses and industries. These dimensional standards should include, but not be limited to: lot size, frontage, front/rear/side setbacks.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board, in conjunction with the Development & Industrialization Committee

5. Closely Examine Drive-Through Restaurants

See **Chapter 3.0 – Land Use, Recommendation 9** on page 27.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board

6. Coordinate Development Activity With the Owners of Industrial Land

As noted previously, the vast majority of Upton's industrially zoned land is under private ownership. Since the town is highly unlikely to purchase such land, it is paramount that Upton planners work in partnership with the owners of industrial land to make sure this land is developed in accordance with the town's objectives and render assistance when possible. Such assistance could be in the form of extending municipal infrastructure, or simply helping the landowners access the technical assistance made available by the myriad of private/public entities that promote economic development.

Responsible Entity: The Development & Industrialization Committee, Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals

7. Investigate Tax Increment Financing

Upton should investigate the possibility of establishing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program to create and retain jobs in town and stimulate the local economy. A local TIF program should insist that new businesses reserve a certain percentage of jobs for Upton



residents, use local contractors for building construction/rehabilitation, and that local businesses are used as service providers. Although it would take a few years before Upton could reap the tax benefits from any TIF-created projects, the benefits to the local economy will be felt immediately. If Upton wants to maintain a low tax rate while still providing quality municipal services, then it has to increase its non-residential tax base, even if the tax benefits get pushed ten years into the future. Since the town cannot offer new businesses much in the way of infrastructure (e.g. municipal sewer), a local TIF program would be a significant draw for new economic development.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen

8. Increase Participation in the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce

Upton should strengthen its relationship with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber provides a forum for local businesses to discuss the economy and the problems they encounter doing business at their particular location. Upton should establish a dialogue with the Chamber in order to listen and respond to the concerns of its local businesses.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen and the Development & Industrialization Committee

9. Increase Participation in the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission

Upton should take advantage of the economic development opportunities offered by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, whether on its own or in conjunction with other Massachusetts communities that lie within the Corridor's boundaries. Upton and the Corridor's other Massachusetts communities can work with the Corridor's Advisory Council to obtain funds for preserving historic buildings, creating tourism attractions around old mill buildings and other sites of historical significance, and developing other history-related tourism projects. As the Corridor is expected to receive as much as one million dollars a year in federal funds over the next ten years, Upton should take full advantage of this economic development opportunity to promote its historic buildings and sites, and become a player in the region's significant historic tourism market. The town could start the process by compiling a list and description of its historic resources and share this information with the Corridor's Executive Director. The Director has an office in Woonsocket, Rhode Island and can be reached at 401-762-0250.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen, the Upton Historic Commission, and the Development & Industrialization Committee

10. Economic Development Feasibility Study for the Eastern C/I District

It is recommended that the Town of Upton initiate an economic development feasibility study for its eastern Commercial/Industrial district. This large area is suitable for development and is currently zoned Commercial Industrial as well as Planned Village Development Overlay. The area is critical for the financial stability of the community and is large enough to have a major impact on the community (both positive and negative) when and if the property is developed. However, infrastructure constraints related to wastewater disposal, public water, and road capacity severely limit the desirability of this area for development. If the community is serious about seeing this property developed



in a way that provides maximum benefits to the town while minimizing any negative impacts, an economic development feasibility study should be initiated.

A feasibility study should include an environmental survey of the land in question, traffic analysis, market conditions, and infrastructure assessment. Of primary interest to the community should be the question of whether this area should be developed with Industrial, Commercial, or planned Mixed Use developments. Pending the outcome of this study the town should make the necessary zoning changes and prepare a long term infrastructure improvement plan that would meet the challenges detailed in the feasibility study.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board and the Development & Industrialization Committee

A graphic depiction of Upton's economic development preferences can be seen on the Land Use Suitability Map that follows **Chapter 3.0 Land Use**.



6.0 NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE, & RECREATION

6.1 Summary

The Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter is a summary of the complete Town of Upton Open Space and Recreation Plan which is available from the Upton Town Clerk or at www.upton.ma.us. This chapter includes an inventory and analysis of Upton's natural resources, wildlife and vegetation. In addition, an inventory of open space, conservation lands, and active and passive recreation opportunities and shortfalls can be found in this chapter.

It should be noted that throughout the chapter the term "open space" refers to conservation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways, or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation. Open space will also refer to undeveloped land with particular conservation or recreation interest.

6.2 Goals

Ensure Upton has a good and ample amount of publicly accessible, multi-use open space land that provides both passive and active recreational opportunities, as well as, aesthetic enjoyment, wildlife protection, and watershed protection.

Create and maintain plans to safeguard Upton's many scenic and recreation lands, undeveloped parcels, fragile water resources, and wildlife habitats.

6.3 Objectives

1. Protect water resources.
2. Protect and manage critical natural resources.
3. Promote a cooperative and regional approach to open space resource protection.
4. Preserve significant land for open space and recreation.
5. Remedy Upton's shortage of recreational fields and facilities and continue to enhance recreational opportunities appropriate and accessible to all Upton residents.

6.4 Environmental Inventory & Analysis

6.4.1 Soils

Upton's soils are composed largely of soils formed from glacial deposits. The soils of Upton have been grouped into five categories according to the properties that most affect broad land-use planning decisions. Please refer to **Table 6-1** on the following page for a listing of Upton's soil groupings.



**Table 6-1
Soils Association Table**

Association	% of Town	Characteristics	Best Uses	Corrections Needed for Other Uses	Suggested Minimum Lot Size (SF)
Gloucester – Hollis - Acton	36	Stony / Hilly well to moderately drained (hardpan)	Woodland Wildlife / Recreation / Low Density Residence	Municipal water for non-residential	40,000
Merrimac – Hinckley	19	Sandy / Drouthy / Gravelly	Residential / Commerce / Industry	Irrigation for crops	30,000 without Municipal Services / 20,000 with water / 15,000 or less with water & sewer
Hollis – Gloucester – Acton	17	80% shallow to bedrock / 10% well drained stone / 10% high water table	Woodland Wildlife / Scattered tracts for houses / Recreation	Municipal water	40,000 plus water
Essex - Scituate	14	Bedrock outcrops / some water saturation / stony moderately drained	Agriculture / Recreation / Woodland	Municipal sewer for industry, commerce, high density residence	40,000 without services / 30,000 with water only
Muck – Scarboro – Ridgebury	14	Poorly drained / hardpan / water saturation	Wildlife / recreation	Difficult and costly drainage	Not feasible

6.4.2 Landscape Character

Upton has a wide range of landscape characteristics, including: lowlands, wetlands, rolling hilltops, crags, outcrops, ledges, and glacier erratic. The topography of Upton is mostly hilly. The highest hills include Pratt Hill, Peppercorn Hill, George Hill, and an unnamed hill north of Grafton Road. Expansive flat areas are uncommon, confined mostly to floodplain areas along the West River and Center Brook. Most of the town is within the Blackstone River watershed and major streams generally flow to the south. While the town is also dotted with several fresh water ponds and lakes, most of the town is forested.

This diverse representation of landscape character allows residents and guests of the community to engage in a variety of recreational activities. Such activities include: biking, boating, swimming, hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, hunting, and observing wildlife.

6.4.3 Water Resources

Surface Water

About 150 acres, or 1.6%, of Upton is surface water. The four largest bodies of water, Pratt Pond, Lake Wildwood, Fiske Mill Pond and Dean Pond were created by the damming of Center Brook, West River, and Mill River. In addition to these larger bodies of water, there are several other natural ponds including: Taft, Goss, Zachary, Nydam, Davidson, Baker



and Beaver. Finally, Ye Old Town (Knowlton) Reservoir is of substantial size and volume. Principle streams include Center Brook, West River, Mill River, Warren Brook, and Taft Pond Brook. There are also numerous intermittent streams, which are critical to maintaining water quality.

Flood Hazard Areas

There are several flood hazard zones in the town of Upton. The most significant is the West Hill Dam Area, which is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project area is a dry bed reservoir that includes flowage easements along West River and Center Brook. There is a flood hazard area on the eastern border of town, which follows the path of Mill River. Also, in the western part of town, there is a flood hazard area that follows Warren Brook.

Wetlands

Recent mapping by the Massachusetts Wetlands Conservancy Program indicates about 12.7 % of Upton is wetland. Small wetland areas are scattered along the many small streams, which drain Upton in a southerly direction. The larger and more important wetland areas are generally located along West River, Mill River, Center Brook, and Warren Brook. In particular, the wetlands and floodplain along the West River include substantial areas of forested (deciduous) and scrub/shrub wetlands.

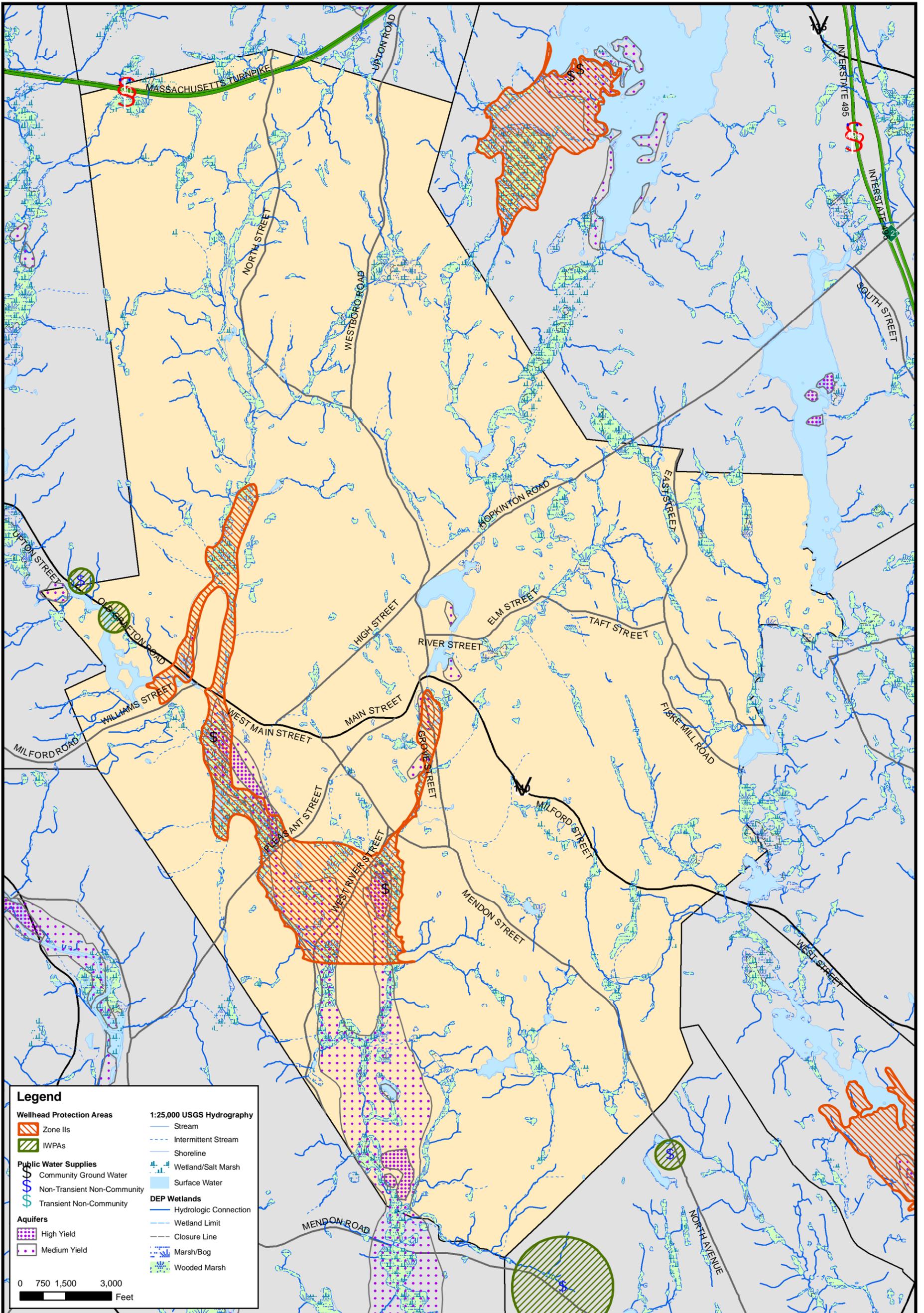
The majority of wetlands located within Upton are deciduous, forested wetlands (red maple swamps). However, fairly large areas of scrub/shrub wetland are present along West River and Mill River. Of particular interest are several former cranberry bogs (inactive since the 1920's) that are located in town. One of the former bogs is located within the Peppercorn Hill property (town-owned), and another is located along Mill River in the eastern part of town. Other small, inactive cranberry bogs are located in the vicinity of Goss Pond, in the southern portion of town, near Shore Drive, and near the town's Glen Avenue well field.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has identified several unusual wetlands within the town of Upton. A graminoid (grass) fen is present within the town-owned Peppercorn Conservation Area. A coniferous-forested wetland bog (Atlantic white cedar swamp) is present within the Upton State forest along the Upton and Hopkinton border. Most of this community lies within Hopkinton. An acidic shrub fen is present within Upton State Forest near Westboro Road. A small "level bog" dwarf shrub peatland is present in Upton State Forest east of Dean Pond. In addition, Gosse Pond supports an unusual floating bog community.

The town has numerous productive vernal pools, several of which are certified by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program.



It is the end user's responsibility to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of the data contained herein. Use of this map constitutes agreement with the terms of the Daylor GIS Data Disclaimer.



Legend

Wellhead Protection Areas	1:25,000 USGS Hydrography
Zone IIs	Stream
IWPA's	Intermittent Stream
Public Water Supplies	Shoreline
Community Ground Water	Wetland/Salt Marsh
Non-Transient Non-Community	Surface Water
Transient Non-Community	DEP Wetlands
Aquifers	Hydrologic Connection
High Yield	Wetland Limit
Medium Yield	Closure Line
	Marsh/Bog
	Wooded Marsh

0 750 1,500 3,000
Feet

Daylor Consulting Group Inc.



Ten Forbes Road Braintree, MA 02184 781 / 849-7070

Water Resources Map

Town of Upton

Scale 1" = 3,000 ft.

Z

Source: Mass GIS

Figure 6

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Upton's public water supply comes from two well fields. The original site off Glen Avenue near the West River was developed in the 1950's and consists of twenty-four, gravel packed wells at a depth of 60 feet. These wells are primarily recharged by the running surface water and subsurface flow of Warren Brook, Miscoe Brook (source is in Grafton from the Great Meadows Wetland) and West River. These streams are vulnerable to degradation from development within their watersheds.

The other well field site is off West River Road and was developed in the mid-1970s to meet anticipated future needs. This well field is recharged by water from Center Brook, with its headwaters through Mill Pond and Pratt Pond in east Upton and the State Forest areas.

6.4.4 Biological Resources

Vegetation and Plant Species

Plant communities within the town are dictated by the climate, historical land uses and varying topography and soils found within Upton. Upton's vegetation is typical of southern New England, with forests, wetlands and various agricultural lands located throughout most areas of the town. Approximately 10,650 acres of forest land are present within Upton. Predominant upland forest cover types within the town are comprised of northern red oak, white oak and eastern white pine. Red maple is the dominant tree in forested wetlands. Most of the forest is second-growth (previously cleared or logged) and less than 150 years old. There is no known "Old Growth" in Upton.

Open fields, meadows, and shrub land is far less common than forest. Agriculture, although no longer a major industry within the town, provides some areas of open fields consisting of pastures and cropland.

Several natural gas pipeline right-of-ways and an electrical transmission line right-of-way provide significant early successional habitat dominated by grasses or shrubs. Very little grassland habitat is permanently protected.

Fisheries and Wildlife

Many people place high value on fish and wildlife. Recreation (hunting & observation), food and income are some of the more obvious benefits of fish and wildlife. Fish and wildlife also perform important ecological functions which contribute to and offer indicators of environmental quality. Interactions among and between species and their physical environment are necessary for a healthy environment.

Wildlife relies on a variety of natural habitats to provide the food, cover, water, and space necessary for survival and reproduction. The composition and biological diversity of a town's fish and wildlife community is directly related to the amount and diversity of habitats present within the town. Upton is primarily comprised of forested uplands, consisting predominantly of oaks and pines, with much smaller areas of open water, agricultural lands, and wetlands. Therefore, the wildlife community of Upton is dominated by species adapted for the predominant upland forested habitat types.

Amphibians: A variety of salamanders and frogs are found within the town. Several species of "mole" salamanders (so named because they spend a large portion of their life living underground) and frogs require temporary ponding areas (which are free of fish predators) in order to reproduce. These areas support



dense aggregations of breeding amphibians in the spring and are called vernal pools. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has instituted a vernal pool certification program to assist in the protection of these critical areas. While Upton currently has several certified vernal pools, many other vernal pools are present throughout the town and should be certified in the near future.

Reptiles: Ten species of snakes and six species of turtles may be found within Upton. These species can be found in upland and wetland habitats located throughout the town. Three species of turtles found within Upton are considered rare within the state.

Birds: A wide diversity of breeding birds (over 100 species) is likely to be present in Upton due to the diversity of habitats found within the town. Bird species adapted for upland forest habitats (oaks and pines) will predominate within Upton due to the large areas of this habitat present within the town. The usual bird species that can be found in Upton are the chickadee, titmouse, and blue jay. But some unusual types, the red-bellied woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, bluebirds, and barred owl, can be heard in the forests and pastures around town. The overall diversity and distribution of birds within Upton will likely change because increased development will cause habitat fragmentation. The town currently has large blocks of forested areas that provide suitable habitat for forest interior neotropical migrants. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife currently stock a small number of ring-necked pheasant in Upton for sportsmen. However, as the amount of suitable habitat (primarily agricultural/field areas) continues to decline in town, the stocking of pheasants is also likely to decrease.

Mammals: Approximately 40 species of mammals may potentially inhabit the town of Upton. These species include several species of bats and a variety of rodent species. In addition, white-tailed deer, opossum, raccoon, fox (gray and red), coyote, and various mustelids (weasels, fisher cats, mink, and otter) have also been observed within areas of the town. Species adapted for forested habitats, such as the gray squirrel, white-tailed deer, white-footed mouse, and eastern chipmunk will be predominant as this habitat is present throughout the town. Beaver are becoming common in Upton. Although beaver impoundments increase habitat diversity and serve other valued ecological functions, they also may threaten roads, septic systems and other development.

Fish: Several large ponds provide warm water fisheries habitat. In addition, several streams (Center Brook, Warren Brook, and West River) are of sufficient size and quality to provide suitable habitat for coldwater fish species such as trout.

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife currently stock several species of trout within four water bodies located in Upton. These water bodies provide an exceptional recreational resource on both a local and a statewide basis.

West River represents the largest stream in southeastern Worcester County suitable for trout stocking and is managed as a "major" trout stream by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Upton also has an exceptional number of streams that support wild brook trout due to the presence of numerous gravel deposits that contribute cold, high quality groundwater flows to these streams. However, these systems are fragile and extremely susceptible to watershed development.



Warren Brook is managed as a wild trout stream and has one of the finest native brook trout populations in the eastern part of the state. Center Brook is managed as both a stocked and wild trout fishery. This stream has an exceptionally high diversity of fish and contains a number of different warm and coldwater species. Several other small brooks within Upton, such as Taft Pond Brook and small tributary streams to Center Brook also contain known populations of wild brook trout.

Warm water fish species, which have been reported to be present in previous fish surveys conducted in Pratt Pond and Lake Wildwood, include largemouth bass, brown bullhead, chain pickerel, yellow perch, black crappie, bluegill, pumpkinseed, and white suckers.

Corridors and Critical Habitat

Space is an important component of wildlife habitat. Wildlife species need varying amounts of suitable habitat to meet their basic requirements. In general, large animals need large areas while smaller species require much smaller areas. However, although most songbirds have small space requirements as individuals, many of these same species (as a group) require large areas of suitable habitat in order to avoid increased predation and nest parasitism that frequently occurs along the borders of small habitat patches. Therefore, when large areas of undisturbed habitat are fragmented into small, isolated patches by development, wildlife diversity is reduced since species requiring large, undisturbed areas are lost. The fragmentation of forested habitat is a particularly significant factor for birds such as various warblers, flycatchers, and raptors (hawks and owls).

Animals may need only one habitat to satisfy all their life requirements, or they may need several habitats. Wildlife species requiring two or more habitats must travel between these various habitats. These movements may only be seasonal (as observed in various amphibians, reptiles and mammals) or may be undertaken by young individuals (primarily mammals and some birds) in order to disperse to new areas to establish their own living area. These movements within travel corridors are often along riparian zones, ridges, and other borders of differing habitats. Movement may be difficult or impossible if required habitats are widely separated or exist as isolated fragments. Although the movement of wildlife within most areas of Upton may presently be fairly unrestricted, in order to conserve wildlife diversity within Upton, important areas of wildlife habitat, Upton State Forest property, Peppercorn Hill area, Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area, town water bodies and large wetland systems should be connected by travel corridors.

Significant sections of Upton have been mapped by The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (MNHESP) program as rare wildlife habitat. This includes large blocks of habitat along Warren Brook and Center Brook. Approximately 65% of Upton is mapped as core or sustaining habitat by the MNHESP BIOMAP project. The map identifies areas that, if protected, would sustain a variety of common and rare terrestrial and wetland species and natural communities. This includes much of Warren Brook watershed, land along West River, portions of Center Brook and Peppercorn Hill. Less than half of land mapped by the BIOMAP in Upton is permanently protected.



Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

Several rare wildlife species are known to inhabit portions of Upton. The MNHESP have confirmed three rare turtle species and two, rare salamander species within the town. In addition, one, rare insect has also been previously reported to occur in Upton.

The spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*), wood turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*), and eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*) have all been reported within areas of Upton in the last few years. Many sightings of spotted turtles have occurred in Upton since 1990. Several sightings of wood turtles have also been reported in Upton with the last observation (Warren Brook) noted in 2004. At least three credible sightings of the Eastern box turtle are known, including a 2004 sighting. All three of these turtles are presently classified as species of Special Concern by the MNHESP.

The marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*) is a mole salamander that was last observed in Upton near Grafton Road in 1996. This species is listed as a Threatened species by the MNHESP. The blue spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*), a Special Concern Species, was observed migrating to a vernal pool near Fowler Street in of 2001 and 2003.

The ringed bog haunter or banded bog skimmer (*Williamsonia lintneri*) is a dragonfly species that is presently listed as Endangered by the MNHESP. The ringed bog haunter was first observed in Upton in 1916 and was last sighted in town in 1988. The oak hairstreak, a butterfly, and the triangle floater, a freshwater mussel, were both recently observed in Upton. Both are listed as Special Concern species.

Center Brook supports one of the only two known populations of the Bridle Shiner in the Blackstone River Watershed. This fish is listed as a Special Concern species.

Two rare plant species have been reported to occur within the town of Upton. Philadelphia panic-grass (*Panicum philadelphicum*) was found near Pratt Pond in 1944 and was recently reported to be present in town as late as 1990. This grass is listed as a Special Concern species. The other rare plant species observed in Upton is arethusa (*Arethusa bulbosa*), an attractive orchid that was rediscovered in Upton in May of 2001 (the last prior report was in 1934). Arethusa is listed as a Threatened species.

6.5 Scenic Resources & Unique Environments

6.5.1 *Inventory of Scenic Landscapes*

There are many scenic landscapes within Upton. Here are brief descriptions of the landscapes with special distinction.

North Street

At the town border with Westborough (near the Mass. Pike), North Street travels southward for 2 1/2 miles and ends at Westborough Road. The road is very narrow, hilly, twisted and lined heavily with woods. The road opens up to a wonderful pasture that looks down into the Warren Brook Watershed. Here one passes three unique 18th century houses that are in good repair. This road offers a beautiful old New England setting.



Upton State Forest

The Upton State Forest has an extensive system of roads and trails, many of which pass through scenic wooded areas. One of the most scenic trails is the Whistling Cave Trail, which winds through an unusual field of glacial erratic boulders.

Kuczinski's Farm

Kuczinski Farm (located on Williams Street) rises rather steeply toward the southwest, past the remains of a once large dairy complex, toward a wooded crest. Since the area has been opened up to considerable development in recent years, the view toward the northwest now encompasses a number of dwellings in what had been pasture and cropland. Beyond these buildings, there is a wooded margin around some visible sections of Lake Wildwood. Past the lake and Route 140, the land rises past some older buildings toward the crest of the State Forest beyond. While not the pristine landscape it once was, the area still has a pleasing view of mixed structures, water and wooded areas to retain a pleasant semi-rural charm.

Goss Pond

This kettle hole pond and associated exemplary wetland bog community provide a nice view from the adjacent upland pine woodlands. The low shrub vegetation, backed by taller spruce and tamarack trees, affords a nice contrast to the blue waters of Goss Pond present in the foreground.

Hartford Avenue

Climbing the hill on Hartford Ave., a panoramic view of the village of Upton develops behind. The sounds of the bustling, modern village are muffled, and the trees hide much of the modern activity.

Maplewood Cemetery

Iron gates and a four-foot stonewall greet you at Maplewood Cemetery. A path leads to a pond, and then to a second, larger pond. Giant, mature pines ring the cemetery. A covered seating area built of stone on the shore of the larger pond allows visitors to sit. The cemetery rises from these ponds. The cemetery has graves of Upton's famous residents of the nineteenth century. The period of Upton's industrial achievement and world famous hat production is chronicled in the grave markers.

Old 1700's Cemetery

Situated on a private setting at the end of a half-mile of unpaved road, the cemetery is an undisturbed piece of Upton's history. This area was the location of Upton's first meetinghouse, from 1735 to 1770. The cemetery contains about 160 marked graves, with some headstones coming from the 18th and 19th centuries. A stonewall surrounds the cemetery, and it is ringed by a mature pine forest. Standing at the meetinghouse marker affords a view of a classic New England scene of stonewalls, ragged terrain, and the graves of Colonial New Englanders.

Pratt Hill

This fully wooded hill northeast of Upton Center is the highest point in Upton. When viewed from the area of Kiwanis Beach, it is seen to rise above and beyond a very pretty body of water, Pratt Pond. Taken in combination with the pond, the hill and, occasionally, its reflection, produce a pleasing picture. Because it is so fully wooded, there are few opportunities to see grand vistas from Pratt Hill itself.



Christian Hill Road

Large open fields afford nice views along the eastern end of this scenic roadway. Mature deciduous trees frame Christian Hill Road and a nearby two-story, red barn with a cupola provides additional beauty.

Stockwell (Brooks) Farm Area

This stretch of Mendon Street from Grove to just north of Chestnut is scenic and very rural feeling. Mendon Street rises quite a bit in this area; looking toward the north it affords a view of the valley in which the Town Center sits. A view of the center is generally blocked by the woodlands beyond the fields, but during the drive in a northbound direction, the spire of the United Parish Church can be seen above the trees. The combination of the well kept farmhouses, the white rail fences with their enclosed fields, and the trees beyond make this a most pleasing rural scene, and one of the most beautiful in Upton. Sadly, the large antique barn and its newer companion, which once contained the Brooks Dairy operation, have been lost.

Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area

A ridge top trail along Peppercorn Hill, the second highest point in Upton, offers several excellent unobstructed vistas looking to the west. The western slope of Peppercorn Hill features an extensive field of rock outcrop, glacial erratics, and shallow caves. A trail also passes a picturesque former cranberry bog at the base of the hill.

Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area

Located in the northern part of Upton on the Grafton Town Line, this 230 acre wooded area offers excellent opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing. The area abuts nearly two square miles of privately owned open space.

Stefan's Farm (George Hill)

Much of the property is on George Hill and offers nice views of the surrounding wooded hills.

6.5.2 Unusual Geologic Features

On the southern slope of Pratt Hill and on the south side of Upper Mendon Road is a rock formation called Devil's Footprints. They are impressions in solid rock, over two miles apart, both about five feet long and two feet wide. Both prints point southward.

6.5.3 Cultural & Historic Areas

One of the most unusual historic structures in Upton is a stone chamber located on private land on Elm Street. This beehive-like chamber is built into a hill and is accessible through a long stone passageway. The chamber is one of several similar structures in New England that are sometimes attributed to pre-Columbian European monks. Orientation of the access passage suggests the Upton chamber may be related to stone cairns found on nearby Pratt Hill.

6.5.4 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

The Grafton, Upton, and Hopkinton Conservation Commissions nominated portions of the upper West River watershed for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in 1999. Following a long series of public meeting, the State Secretary of Environmental Affairs designated the area as the state's 26th ACEC in July of 2000. The



8,700-acre Miscoe, Warren, Whitehall Resource Area ACEC encompasses much of the Miscoe Brook watershed in Grafton and Warren Brook watershed in Upton. The ACEC includes 5,280 acres in Upton, about 38% of the town. The ACEC is highly valued because it provides habitat for rare wetland wildlife and plants, includes large, contiguous parcels of undeveloped wetland and forest, contains numerous historic properties and viewscapes, and is an important watershed for Upton and Blackstone River. This area is the headwater for West River, one of the most pristine remaining tributaries of the Blackstone. Twenty-eight percent of the area is permanently protected open space. Acquisition of Chapter 61 parcels within the area and open space developments could one day insure permanent protection of about 50 % of the area.

6.6 Inventories of Lands of Conservation & Passive Recreation Interest

The rural farmland and wooded areas in Upton that provided an aesthetically pleasing and environmentally healthy balance to the industrial mill towns that developed in the Blackstone Valley have changed little over time. In addition to 2,068 acres of state forestland, 740 acres of open space is owned by the town confirming the residents' commitment to preserving Upton's natural beauty. Given such a foundation of existing protected open space, the parcels of conservation and recreation land of interest to the town are many.

Open space land is defined as areas that are unable to be developed due to some kind of protection that prevents development. Areas that are publicly owned (i.e. town, state or federal government) are protected in that they are out of private hands. The certainty of protection depends on use or nonuse. Private lands that are protected in the state's Agricultural Protection Restriction (APR) and Chapter 61 programs can also be considered open space. This land is not necessarily permanently protected however; landowners are enrolled in 10-year increments and have the right to withdraw from the program.

6.6.1 Private Parcels

There are numerous private properties in town that are under protection through the state's APR program. There are three parcels in town that are in the Chapter 61 Forest program totaling 74.3 acres. There are twelve properties in the Chapter 61A Agriculture program, totaling 478.24 acres. There are also two properties in the Chapter 61B Recreation program, totaling 75 acres. One of the recreation properties is the Nipmuc Rod and Gun Club, which owns 74.3 acres (28 of which are in chapter 61) in the southern part of town off Fiske Mill Road and includes fishing spots, an archery range, and recreation building. The other is owned by the Central Mass Beagle.

An additional 740 acres of land along the West River is protected by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flowage easements-640 acres of this land is privately held. Other protected parcels on private land include 15 acres at the Preserve at Wildwood Subdivision and a 12 acre parcel at the Taft Mill Subdivision.

Other privately held protected parcels include a 64-acre parcel on Chestnut St. protected by a conservation restriction held by the Metacomet Land Trust.



6.6.2 Public & Nonprofit Parcels

Upton State Forest

The Upton State Forest is comprised of 2,068 acres. Various privately held parcels, such as those noted above, separate it. Connecting them with the state forest would be possible, as the forestland is concentrated in three main areas of town: the northeast corner, the southwest corner, and the southeastern corner. Linking these preserved areas is possible through the acquisition of open space, which would also add value, protect and expand usage of the forest, as well as enhance the quality of life for local residents, and attract visitors from other Massachusetts communities. The State Forest is owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The various forest areas offer year-round usage from hiking to cross country skiing and many other types of passive recreation. Dirt roads provide access to the forest when needed, and footpaths guide pedestrian visitors.

Town Conservation Lands

Upton owns 583 acres of protected land that offers residents and visitors a wide variety of outdoor pleasures including stone caves, the town beach, and hiking trails, and high elevation views.

The largest parcel is 283 acres of Peppercorn Hill managed by the Conservation Commission as a passive recreation area offering trails, and wooded hiking areas. The area is largely forested uplands, but includes some wetlands, productive vernal pools, and an old cranberry bog. The area is the headwater of Mill River, a valued, coldwater stream. This area also allows interested outdoor enthusiasts access to stone caves and beautiful brooks and is used year-round for hiking. The Conservation Commission is working on a Stewardship Plan for the area, partially funded by the Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program.

The second largest parcel is 225 acres at Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area. Located off Grafton Road, it is mostly forested and was purchased by the town in 1995. Recent approval of preliminary plans for the Glen Echo Estates "open space" subdivision promises to add an additional 45 acres of high quality, riparian habitat and rare species habitat to this area. Future acquisitions could eventually increase size of Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area to 400 – 600 acres. A small parking area and limited trail system provide recreational access. Linkage of the trails in the area to the state forest trail system, via the proposed Glen Echo Estates, is anticipated.

The town owns two beach areas, one of which is Kiwanis Beach and adjacent recreation area. It is 38 acres of land that is managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. The town beach offers swimming, fields for softball and soccer, basketball and tennis courts, a horseshoe pit, picnic areas, a recreation building and parking area. The area is very busy during the swimming season especially and generally used year-round. It is located off Elm Street, and signs at nearby traffic intersections help visitors find their way. The town also owns a smaller beach area at Lake Wildwood that is made up of 4.5 acres of land managed by the Conservation Commission and used for beach and passive recreation activities. The Conservation Commission manages a 10-acre parcel adjacent to Pratt Pond.

The town was also donated a 8.5 acre parcel located within the West River floodplain off West River Road that has been made into a soccer field, with parking.



In 2001, the town exercised its option to purchase the Stefans Farm, a 126-acre property bordered by Mechanic and Orchard Streets. The land is within the Warren Brook Watershed and the recently designated Miscoe, Warren, and Whitehall Watersheds Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The property includes a variety of wetland and upland habitats, including forested uplands and wetlands, meadows, hedgerows, streams, and a vernal pool. Deer, fisher, wild turkey, and numerous songbirds have all been observed on the property. Eastern box turtle have been seen in an adjacent power line easement. Much of the property is on George Hill and offers nice views of the surrounding wooded hills. Approximately 20 acres of meadow (hay field) is present.

Other lands with conservation value owned by the town of Upton include a 33 acre forested parcel off Warren Street and a 12 acre parcel near the Taft Mill Estates development. The Taft Mill parcel contains a certified vernal pool.

Table 6-2

Summary of Upton Protected Open Space

State – Upton State Forest	2068
Town	
Peppercorn Hill	283
Warren Brook	225
Stefan’s Farm	126
Kiwanis Beach	38
Pratt Pond	10
Lake Wildwood	5
Warren St	33
Taft Mill Estates	12
Private – Metacomet Land Trust	64
Utility Easements - US Army Corps of Engineers	400
Chapter 61	637
Total	3,901

6.7 Inventories of Active Recreation Areas

6.7.1 *Wildwood Park*

Access is from a right-of-way through private property that fronts on Williams Street. The Park is open from the first of April through the end of October (the Park is gated through the winter). There is no formal parking area, but cars can park along the unpaved loop. Amenities: there is an unpaved boat launch near the dam and a few picnic benches. The Upton Public Works Department is responsible for property management. Although this is a relatively unimproved site, it does appear to be well maintained with no debris blocking passage in and around the site. The only deficiency noted was the lack of an entry sign along Williams Street. Unless you knew where you were going, you would never be able to find this site. The property is 4.3 acres in size (Map 19, Lot 101).

6.7.2 *Pratt Pond – Kiwanis Beach/Upton Athletic Facility Complex*

This property is accessed by Kiwanis Beach Road off of Elm Street. The Upton Public Works Department is responsible for property management. There is a paved parking area that



can accommodate roughly 70 cars. There is a gate attendant at the front during the summer months and users are charged \$2 per car or \$25 for a season pass. Amenities: beach area, the Ramsey building for use by recreation groups, softball field, soccer field, two asphalt surfaced tennis courts, an asphalt surfaced basketball court, 2 volleyball courts, 15 picnic benches and four grills (these are located in two, tree-covered groves on either side of the beach area, as well as above the baseball field), a horseshoe pit, and beach house with restrooms. The Upton Recreation Commission charges user fees for use of the fields, with the proceeds paying for field maintenance and fertilizer. An irrigation system for the fields is currently in construction. The Recreation Commission sponsors swim lessons during the summer, and ice fishing is allowed during the winter.

All in all, this site is very well maintained and only a few deficiencies were noted: there are no designated parking spots for the handicapped population, and although there is a paved ramp leading to the beach house, it may not meet the ADA's ramp code because of its slope. Also, the viewing stand for the baseball field is elevated in such a way as to be inaccessible to the handicapped population. The backboards of the basketball court are beginning to show signs of rust. Lastly, there is the remnant of a metal pole that sticks up between the basketball and volleyball courts. The property is 27.35 acres in size (Map 16, Lot 39).

6.7.3 Pratt Pond Boat Launch

There is a paved boat launch on the other side of Pratt Pond that is accessed off North Main Street. The boat launch is for Upton residents only. It abuts Lakeview Cemetery. There is no formal parking, and cars have to pull over to the side of the road to park. There is a bench on site. The Upton Public Works Department is responsible for property management. No deficiencies were noted at this site. The property is 10.3 acres in size, although it is shaped as a narrow strip along the pond's frontage (Map 16, Lot 8).

6.7.4 Upton Veterans Memorial Playground

Located at 15 Milford Street, this is a toddler playground area in Upton's town center. Parking is associated with the nearby municipal parking lot that has enough space to accommodate roughly 100 cars, including several spaces for the handicapped. The Upton Public Works Department is responsible for property management. Amenities include: two slides, two sets of swings, two sandboxes, a tire swing, monkey bars, a climbing apparatus, six benches, and five picnic tables. Hours of operation are from dawn to dusk. No deficiencies were noted at this site; however, the sign stating the facility's rules is a bit dilapidated. The property is half an acre in size (Map 201, Lots 53 & 54).

6.7.5 West River Street Soccer Field

The town owns this 8.5-acre property and has constructed a soccer field and a paved parking area for roughly 45 cars. The Upton Public Works Department is responsible for property management.

6.7.6 Other Sites (not under town ownership)

- The town had access to one youth baseball field, a basketball court, a tennis court and an indoor gymnasium at the Memorial Elementary School. It is anticipated this access will be reestablished under the new school.



- Nipmuc High School, located off of Pleasant Street: The school has a baseball field, softball field, soccer field, field hockey field, and an indoor gymnasium. These facilities are solely for the use of the regional school district.
- Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, located off of Pleasant Street: The school has one indoor gymnasium and is building another one (called a competition center) as part of the facility expansion effort, currently underway. The school also has a softball field and a baseball field whose outfield doubles as a soccer field. There is an oval running track with a football field inside of it. The field inside the running track is also used for lacrosse and track and field events. There is also a cross-country running path throughout the property. The school does allow private entities to rent out its fields, and they are heavily utilized by an assortment of recreation groups throughout the Blackstone Valley.
- Blackstone Valley has been donated a 5-acre tract of land along Chestnut between 140 and Mendon Rd. to be designated the Trask Athletic Complex. The plan calls for building passive and active recreation facilities there with the town sharing some of the cost (via CPC) and, in return, having some access to the facilities.
- There are two youth baseball fields owned by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) located in Upton's town center at 15 Milford Street. The Upton Youth Club makes use of these during the summer months.

6.8 Analyses of Needs

6.8.1 Environmental Protection Needs

Upton has seen rapid growth occur in the last decade. This development has put an increased emphasis on the need to protect Upton's wildlife and water resources. The town has sought to accomplish these goals through land preservation. The preservation of Upton's water supply is seen as the highest priority of those surveyed. The town also feels that scenic beauty, agricultural character, and wildlife habitat should be protected through land conservation.

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

Wildlife habitat continues to be lost as development occurs throughout the town, with a recent build-out analysis projecting possible development of an additional 7,112 acres (11 square miles). In addition to the direct loss of habitat, the remaining areas of undisturbed woodlands, fields, and wetlands are becoming increasingly fragmented into "islands" of habitat. The loss of large areas of open space will result in a decrease in wildlife diversity within portions of the town, as those species requiring large tracts of undeveloped or lightly developed land are eliminated. In order to maintain the rich wildlife diversity throughout many areas of the town, there exists a need to preserve contiguous areas of habitat and connect the large remaining areas of open space with each other through "greenbelt" corridors.

Threats to Cold Water Streams

Upton has several high-quality, cold-water streams that support native brook trout populations. The streams are groundwater dependent and sensitive to development that draws down regional water tables. According to the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, habitat quality of one of these streams, Warren Brook, has already



been adversely affected. Considerable future development in the Warren Brook watershed is possible, placing the brook at even greater risk.

Eutrophication of Town Ponds

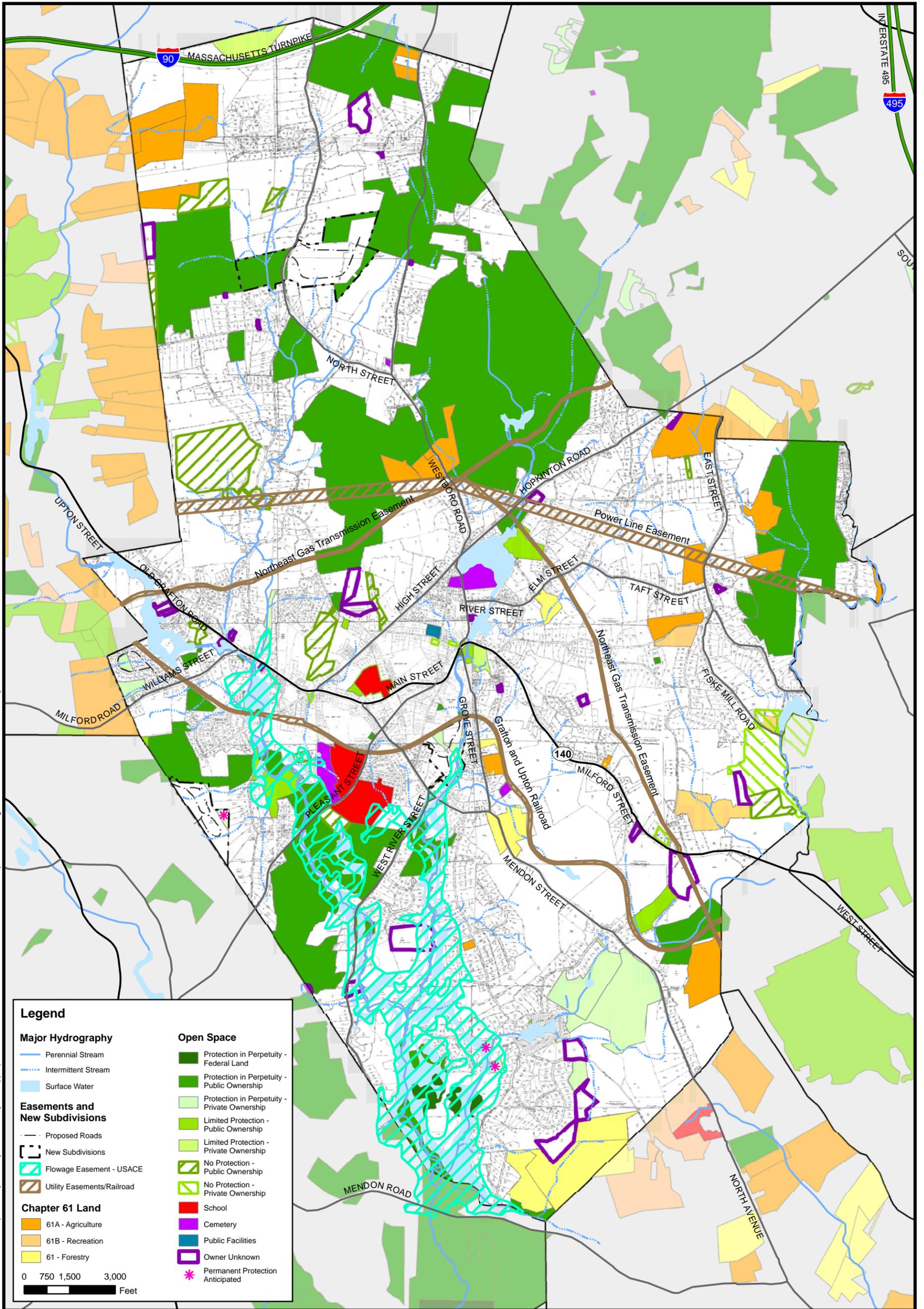
Upton has several large lakes, which provide recreational opportunities and warm water fisheries habitat. Many of these lakes are shallow, eutrophic, and plagued by invasive, aquatic weed problems. The town has an active aquatic weed control program, but lacks long-term lake and watershed management plans for any of the lakes.

Encroachment of Invasive Species

Some of Upton's open space is at risk from the encroachment of invasive species. For example phragmites, purple loosestrife, and oriental knotweed are threatening wetlands and riparian habitat. High quality wetlands associated with Zachary Pond are threatened with phragmites, and oriental knotweed is spreading along Warren Brook.



It is the end user's responsibility to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of the data contained herein. Use of this map constitutes agreement with the terms of the Daylor GIS Data Disclaimer.



6.8.2 Recreation Needs

The town offers many recreational activities for the community, but as the population continues to grow and development eats away at valuable open space land, much of the lands available for recreation will be threatened. The continued preservation of land through town ownership would ensure the protection of future recreation land.

Upton's existing recreation facilities are very well maintained and, by and large, in very good shape. However Upton does not meet national standards for the provision of recreation facilities and is deficient in all but two recreation facility categories. As a volunteer entity, the Recreation Commission already has a large workload trying to organize annual recreation programs and oversee the management of Kiwanis Beach. There is a documented need for more recreation facilities in Upton, and expanding the Commission's membership would help spread the workload so that the Commission may begin some much needed planning for new recreation facilities.

A comparison of Upton's recreation organizational structure and facilities with surrounding towns can be seen in **Table 6-3** and **Table 6-4**.

Table 6-3
Comparison of Recreation Organizational Structures

Town	2000 Population	# of Members	Elected/Appointed
Upton	5,642	3	Elected
Mendon	5,286	3	Elected
Grafton	14,894	7	Appointed
Uxbridge	12,183	7	Appointed
Hopkinton	13,093	5	Elected
Westboro	17,997	5	Appointed
Northbridge	13,182	7	Appointed
Barre	5,113	5	Appointed
Warren	4,776	3	Elected
Dudley	10,036	3	Appointed
Leicester	10,471	7	Appointed

*Source: Annual Town Reports



**Table 6-4
Comparison of Existing Recreation Facilities**

Type of Facility	Town					
	Upton*	Mendon*	Hopkinton	Grafton	Uxbridge	Westboro
Playground / Tot Lot	1	1	8	10	0	10
Baseball / Softball Fields	1 (6)**	1	11	16	10	15
Football Fields	0 (1)**	0	1	2	1	2
Soccer Fields	1 (1)**	7	4	2	7	9
Tennis Courts	2 (1)**	0	7	9	4	11
Basketball Courts	1 (1)**	0	5	8	5	7
Volleyball Courts	2	0	0	0	0	0
Swimming Pool	0	0	0	0	0	3
Outdoor Track	0 (1)**	0	0	2	0	1

*Note that Upton and Mendon are unable to count the recreational facilities associated with the regional school systems within their towns, because the fields are not controlled by the towns.

**Additional fields not under town control which may or may not be available.

The Upton Recreation Commission has developed a “wish list” of future projects that includes: more soccer fields, a skate park, a recreation director, a second swim director, and a summer program coordinator. In addition, the Recreation Commission would like to add more picnic tables, benches, grills, signs, storage facilities, a concession stand, and a pavilion at Kiwanis Beach.

There is a need to map the town’s extensive trail system. Such mapping would identify key linkages and allow for plans to acquire easements or linkages to insure the long term preservation of the system. In addition to mapping the town’s trails, the trails would benefit from a maintenance program that would manage and monitor erosion and address the damage caused by motorized and bike traffic on the trails.

Finally, many feel that a town wide loop trail with links to trails in surrounding towns is a valuable and attainable goal.

6.9 Natural Resources, Open Space, and Recreation Recommendations

1. Complete the Open Space & Recreation Plan:

The town has a nearly-complete Open Space Plan that has been in preparation for close to ten years. The town needs to wrap this up and obtain approval by the state of Massachusetts. Reaching this milestone will make the town eligible for State open space grants such as the “Self-Help” grant program from DCR that provides money for open space acquisition. It also allows the town to be eligible for State recreation-related grants.

Responsible Entity: The Conservation Commission and the Recreation Commission

2. Create a ‘Greenways to Blueways Plan’:

A ‘Greenways to Blueways Plan’ is an approach to planning for local open space that prioritizes valuable resources and seeks to tie the town’s land and water resources into a



comprehensive network. Although Upton has been very successful in preserving critical open space, a comprehensive prioritization process and future vision of open space could enhance this process even more. The town should create a “wish list” of parcels it would like to acquire. This will require an inventory and assessment of existing open spaces in Upton, documenting the reason for listing parcels as high priority along with a plan for the use of each parcel. This list should include plans to acquire Chapter 61 parcels within the ACEC area to help achieve permanent protection status for these parcels.

The town should proceed with comprehensive Greenways to Blueways planning process. This would be a public open space prioritization process that is based on the town’s goals AND ecological and agricultural sustainability. The goal would be to create a concrete plan that would lead to the creation of a comprehensive network of open space. Each parcel or area would be prioritized based on its role in achieving the overall vision. The end result of this process would be a complete guide and visual picture of the future open space network within Upton.

Creating an integrated network of open space and water resources could provide numerous public benefits, from strengthening the tourism market, protecting wildlife, providing additional recreation opportunities, preserving agricultural resources, to creating a green stormwater management system. The integrated network could be based on one or several frameworks and would provide a picture of the town’s future open space network. A very good example of this type of plan, called the Green Ring Plan, can be found on Ipswich’s web page at <http://www.town.ipswich.ma.us>.

Responsible Entity: The Conservation Commission and the Open Space Committee

3. Increase the Size of the Recreation Commission:

The town should increase the size of the current Recreation Commission and consider appointing the added membership. By increasing the Commission’s size, manpower will be available not only to continue to manage the town’s existing recreation programs but to invest time and energy into future planning, field acquisition and the development of new programs.

Responsible Entity: The Recreation Commission

4. Complete an Assessment of Active Recreation Needs:

The town needs to complete an inventory of current and future active recreation needs. This assessment should go beyond an inventory of recreation fields and facilities. It should study the recreation needs of the population and then use this inventory to develop a plan for the future acquisition and development of active recreation spaces. Using CPA funds to complete this assessment and fund future acquisitions is highly recommended.

Responsible Entity: The Recreation Commission

5. Preserve Contiguous Areas of Open Space:

The town should look for opportunities to merge newly acquired protected open space with existing open space to promote interior wildlife, reverse fragmentation of forests and maintain significant travel corridors between open space parcels.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board & the Open Space Committee



6. Develop Lake and Watershed Management Plans:

While the town has an active aquatic weed control program, it needs to develop long term lake and watershed management plan.

Responsible Entity: The Conservation Commission

7. Enact a Scenic Roads Bylaw

The community has stressed the importance of maintaining the town's rural character, but over time Upton will lose some of its charm if these areas are developed in accordance with the town's current zoning and subdivision regulations. To protect the town's scenic assets, these regulations need to be revised to encourage development that is more in keeping with the Upton's landscape and natural environment.

The town should include scenic protections within the Subdivision Rules and Regulations and the site plan review criteria. A combination of incentives and development reviews could help to create new development that blends naturally into the town's rural landscape. These policies can be incorporated into the town's existing regulations and bylaws to avoid adding a new bylaw and permitting process. In terms of incentives, landowners and developers should be given additional options for increased setbacks and visual buffers.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen



7.0 TRANSPORTATION

7.1 Summary

Transportation provides the means by which people are able to travel through a town; it impacts the lives of the people of Upton through convenience of travel, congestion, safety, and pedestrian and bicycle access. Upton's land use policies are linked to transportation; the impacts and patterns of local traffic are affected by the placement of land use and the quality of the roads and infrastructure in the vicinity. For example, retail centers typically generate heavier traffic and schools and highway access points often create cut through routes on residential streets. This section will discuss transportation access in Upton and approaches the town can implement to improve circulation.

7.2 Goals

Achieve safe, efficient, convenient transportation for vehicles and people in a way that preserves and enhances Upton's rural character.

7.3 Objectives

1. Address the more dangerous intersections/roadways in town and focus improvement efforts to protect vehicular traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists.
2. Continue to petition the state for timely and appropriate maintenance, design, and construction of state controlled roadways.
3. Maintain and enforce lower speed limits in residential developments, through traditional means and through the use of appropriate street design, in order to preserve Upton's small town rural character.
4. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic by designing facilities and systems that safely accommodate such traffic.
5. Control and manage additional vehicular traffic through transportation guidelines that encourage shared access, limit vehicular traffic, and encourage pedestrian traffic.
6. Weigh the inconvenience of traffic congestion carefully against widening of small, rural roads and safety.

7.4 Existing Conditions

The I-495 corridor has experienced unprecedented growth over the last ten years. As home prices increased along the corridor, many people were enticed to the Blackstone Valley region for more reasonable home prices while still remaining within a comfortable commuting distance to points within the Boston metropolitan area. This influx of new residents placed increased demands on the transportation infrastructure in and around Upton.

7.4.1 Roads & Intersections

Upton is served by a number of major roadways that run through or are in close proximity to the town, including federal interstate highways (I-495, I-395, and I-90) and state



highways (Routes 146, 122, 140, 135, 85, 109, and 16). These roadways are maintained by federal and state agencies such as the US Department of Transportation, the Massachusetts Highway Department, and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) completed a study of existing and future traffic conditions in September 2003. Their analysis included data compiled from Mass Highway, the US Department of Transportation, and their own collection methods.

The study noted that travel patterns have shifted over time. The region grew with a north-south orientation along Route 140, which parallels the Blackstone Valley. However, with the increased residential population of commuters in the Boston metropolitan area, the average commute is now oriented in an east-west fashion, with the bulk of traffic headed east in the morning and west in the evening.

Traffic Congestion

With the growth of the region comes increased traffic congestion. The CMRPC study employed Turning Movement Counts (TMCs) to estimate the traffic flow and calculate average intersection delays in certain locations. These figures were then analyzed to determine a Level of Service (LOS) for each roadway. LOS is categorized by six levels, A through F, with A being the shortest delay and F the longest. According to Mass Highway, levels A through D are acceptable under normal conditions. It is important to note however, that LOS data alone are not sufficient to determine communities' transportation needs. LOS measures quality of service, as reflected in congestion, travel speed, and delays at critical intersections. It does not measure safety, nor is it necessarily an indication of poor intersection design. LOS is simply a measure of the amount of time one waits at an intersection.

In Upton, three areas were observed at morning and evening peak hours and reported in the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) September 2003 Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study.⁴ Route 140 was observed at Hartford Avenue and Maple Avenue. The LOS analysis indicated that this area was in the F category, and thus, unacceptable to Mass Highway standards. Unfortunately, the study does not report on the number of minutes a single car would wait at the intersection on average. However, the 2003 CMMPO study determined that cars wait 7,651 in-car-minutes during peak travel times at this signalized intersection.⁵ Route 140 in the area of Grove Street and Warren and North Main Streets received an E/F level of service in the morning; however, the evening peak times saw the LOS increase to an A/B, which signifies considerably less delay at this stop sign intersection at this time. The last area analyzed, Hopkinton Road, School Street, High Street, and Westboro Road, received an A/F and recorded one of the highest total in-car-minutes of 12,183 in the CMMPO study.

Like many intersections in eastern Massachusetts, Upton contains some that are congested during the peak commuting times. The traditional 'solution' to this situation has been to widen the intersections through the use of dedicated turn lanes and additional lanes to accommodate the rush hour traffic. However, this 'solution' can often have other consequences, such as actually increasing vehicle traffic ("if you build, it they

⁴ From CMRPC *Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study* September 2003, p. 14.

⁵ In car-minutes per hour is the total number of minutes that drivers as a group wait at the intersection during the AM and PM peak hours. Surveyors used one hour in the morning (usually 7:45-8:45 or 7:30-8:30) and one hour in the evening (usually 4:30-5:30 or 5:00-6:00). Counts were performed in either September 2000 or August 2002. From the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) 2003 Regional Transportation Plan, August 22, 2003, p. III-31.



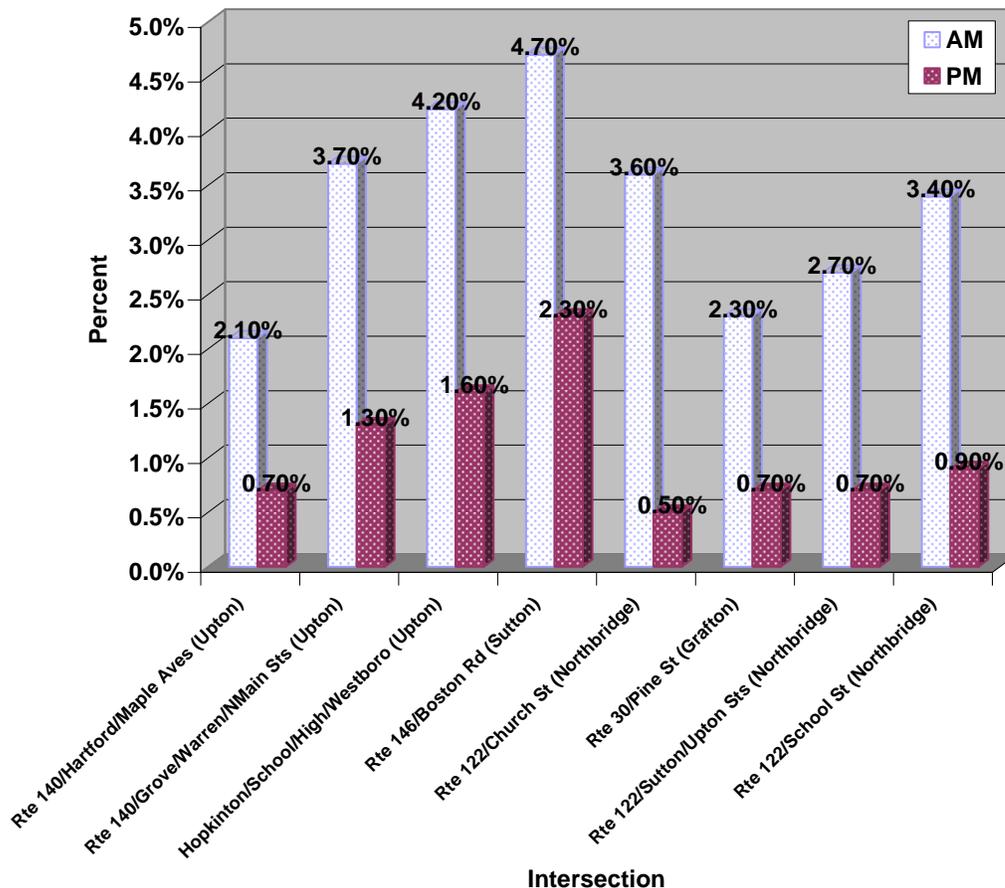
will come" scenario) and decreasing pedestrian and bicycle safety, thus providing additional disincentive for alternative means of transportation. Upton should carefully weigh all the considerations before lobbying for intersection redesign at these intersections.

Truck Traffic

Truck numbers from neighboring communities show that, excluding Sutton, the three intersections studied above generally have more truck traffic than critical intersections in neighboring communities (see **Chart 7-1** below). These communities were selected because of their inclusion in the CMRPC study. Truck traffic is an indication that Upton's roads are being used as main thoroughfares. This use may be inconsistent with the design of the roadway and the overall character of the community. Unfortunately, regulating truck traffic is very difficult; however, the Town of Upton should pursue aggressive truck traffic management techniques to bring the situation under control and ensure that the truck traffic does not spread to local streets and commuter cut through routes.

Chart 7-1

Truck Traffic at Critical Intersections in Upton and its Neighbors



Source: CMRPC

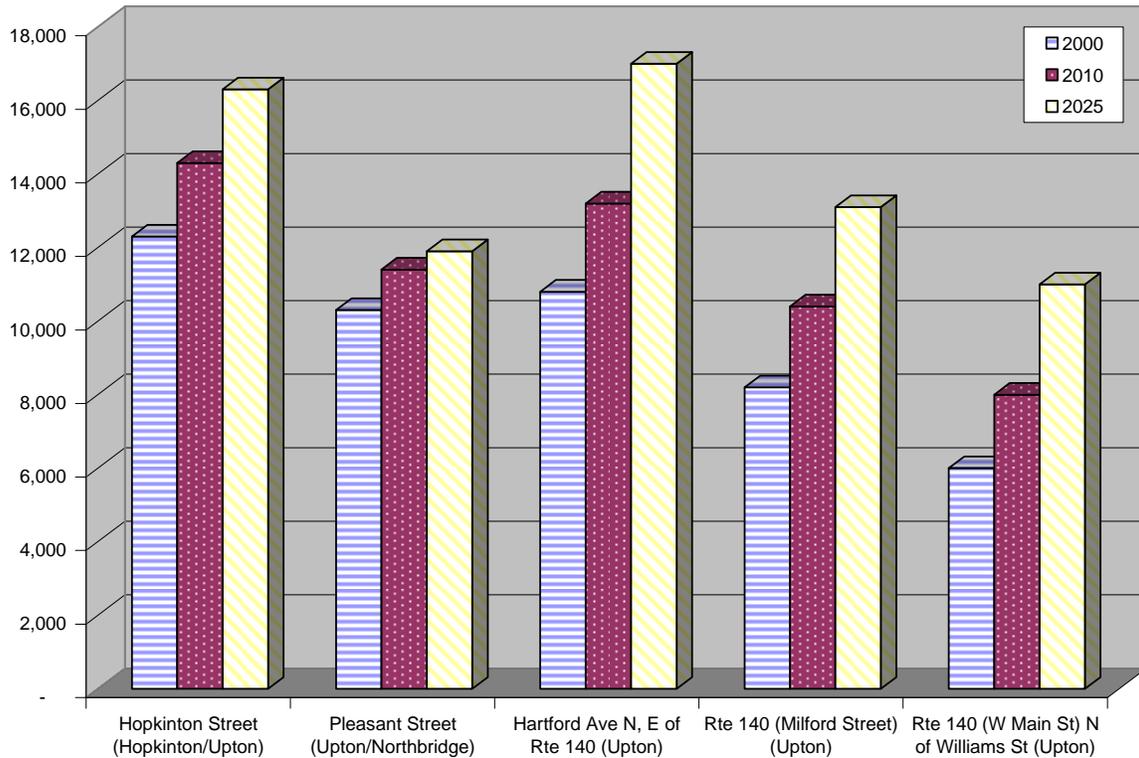


Traffic Volume

Average vehicle counts per day have generally increased over the last ten years, and they are expected to continue to increase, as shown in **Chart 7-2**. September 2003 data obtained on Hopkinton Road at the Hopkinton town line showed 12,300 vehicles traveled the road per day on average, which was an increase from 11,400 in 2002.⁶ The regional highways near Upton also noted increased vehicle counts. Average daily counts along the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) between interchanges 11A and 12 in Hopkinton increased from 65,521 in 1994 to 85,288 in 2000. Also, along I-495 south of the Massachusetts Turnpike, traffic volumes increased from 71,400 in 1995 to 89,822 in 2003.

Much of this traffic on Upton streets is from neighboring communities in the Blackstone Valley who use town roads to access major highways. Residents of neighboring communities in the Blackstone Valley pass through Upton to reach I-495 and I-90 as part of the daily commute. As a result of traffic at the roads and intersections mentioned above, cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods and side streets is a growing problem. School Street, in particular, is subject to excessive cut-through traffic for those avoiding the signal at Pleasant and Maple Street in West Upton Center and heading towards I-495 from Northbridge. This problem will only get worse as intersection delays and vehicle volume worsens over time. The Town of Upton will need to address the issue of cut through traffic in the near future.

Chart 7-2
Average Week Day Traffic Volumes
Actual (2000) and Projected (2010-2025)



Source: CMRPC

⁶ From CMRPC *Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study* September 2003.



7.4.2 Vehicular Safety

Several roads and neighborhoods in Upton are experiencing decreases in overall safety, primarily as a result of increased traffic. The primary issues with vehicular safety stem from the drastic increase in residential development over the past ten years in Upton and in neighboring towns. Roads that were formerly quiet and designed for the community that was there are now seeing traffic jams and increased incidents of accidents. In an attempt to combat this trend, speed limits in many residential areas were recently reduced to mitigate the problems of fast paced traffic.

The Police Department identified three areas of town as having the most cases of serious accidents:

- Pratt Pond Intersection (High Street, Hopkinton Road, Westboro Road, and School Street)
- West Upton Center
- Route 140 to the Hopedale town line

Though traffic volumes have increased overall, particular areas of Route 140 and around West Upton Center, where new commercial development is located, are of primary concern. The intersection in Upton Center near Town Hall, with no traffic light or other control, is one of the most dangerous intersections in town. According to vehicle crash data, this intersection has a crash rate of 0.81 with an average 6.67 accidents per year. In comparison, the average crash rate since 2000 for unsignalized intersections was 0.67 within the state and 0.83 in the Blackstone Valley region. The Massachusetts Highway Department determined that more than five crashes per year at any intersection is problematic. Obviously, this intersection warrants a comprehensive analysis, not only from a safety point of view, but from an overall design point of view, as the intersection is within one of the most historic neighborhoods in town.

The stretches of roadway along Route 140 from Prospect Street to the Hopedale town line, at Glen View Street, and at Chestnut Street are also problematic. The 45 mile per hour speed limit installed in the 1950s is now too fast for a growing commercial and residential area that sees more pedestrians and a higher traffic volume. The police department has petitioned local and state authorities to reduce the speed limit to 40 mph and change this section of roadway to a no passing zone, but no response has been forthcoming to date.

Additionally, speeding is a problem along on the full length of Route 140 as described above and on Pleasant Street, which is another major route for the Blackstone Valley traffic to access I-495. Upton's two schools are located on Pleasant Street; though the schools inevitably contribute to the traffic, safety of those going to and from school is a primary concern.

7.4.3 Pedestrians & Bicycles

The Police Department indicated there have been very few accidents in Upton involving pedestrians or bicycles. The Chief of Police identified one bicycle accident on a secondary road a "few years ago" and a serious pedestrian accident in West Upton Center, where the crosswalks are not located at the signalized intersection. The lack of accidents could be a result of well designed pedestrian and bicycle facilities, or it could result from the fact that very few people walk or cycle on the major roadways in Upton.



However, overall safety and facilities warrant attention and improvement. Minor accidents have occurred with pedestrians or cyclists at the dangerous, uncontrolled intersections in town. In particular, Route 140 through Upton Center, near Town Hall, is the confluence of five roads with no traffic lights or stops to control the intersection. The area was originally designed in the 1700s for horse and buggy traffic, but the advent of the car has caused a dangerous situation whereby pedestrians and cyclists have no means to stop vehicular traffic to safely cross the road. Redesigning this, and other, intersections in town, with an eye toward pedestrian and vehicular safety, could provide an improvement to this situation.

Most key roadways around the town centers have sidewalks that can accommodate pedestrian traffic. Additionally, every new development is required to provide sidewalks; however, if these developments are located away from the town center, the sidewalks in the development often lead to a road without a sidewalk. Sidewalks are generally not appropriate for traditional rural streets, and alternative pedestrian networks should be explored.

One area near the town center that does not have a sidewalk is Maple Avenue from West Upton Center to the High School. The sidewalk ends half way to the school at the railroad tracks. As a potential route to school, this is an essential location for a sidewalk. Furthermore, a blind curve proves especially dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists who must use the road and cannot be seen easily by cars.

7.4.4 Land Use Laws & Transportation

Applications for subdivisions in Upton must undergo review by the Planning Board under the Subdivision Control Law. The laws for subdivision of land dictate the standards for new roads into and around the subdivision. The most recent amendments to these regulations were enacted on March 14, 2000.

The Town of Upton Subdivision Rules and Regulations set standards for street location and layout, street and Right of Way width and radius, street length, and cul-de-sac width. Some of these standards may have unintended impacts that affect pedestrian safety vehicular traffic, and land use patterns. For example, the current standards call for Right of Ways of at least fifty feet in width and provide no standards for traffic calming. Wide streets may, in fact, encourage speeding, while a narrower, carefully designed street with appropriate traffic calming mechanisms could slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

The Town of Upton's Zoning Code is fairly silent on transportation impacts, with the possible exception of parking regulations and a brief reference to pedestrian and vehicular movement within the Site Plan Approval section. As transportation issues increase in importance, the zoning bylaw needs to be amended to include a stronger emphasis on transportation related issues and impacts. Traffic impact statements, transportation related mitigation, shared access standards, and other issues should be fully explored. (See Transportation Strategies)

The future impact of transportation decisions and regulations is made acute when one considers the town's buildout analysis. The EOEA estimated that, at buildout under the current zoning, the town would add an additional 66 miles of roadway to its current infrastructure. While no timeline is associated with full buildout of the town, the zoning bylaw and subdivision regulations have the potential to mandate a significant new



amount of roadway and access locations. These new roadways and curb cuts should be carefully designed to ensure that they do not cause new transportation problems.

7.4.5 Transportation Issues & Deficiencies

Upton's transportation related issues and deficiencies may be divided into three main categories: overall circulation; safety; and standards and design criteria. Circulation is a primary concern as the residential base has increased in and around Upton, especially within the last ten years. Roads that were formerly quiet and could accommodate daily traffic demands are now over capacity. Most commuters from the region pass through the town to reach I-495. This situation is not likely to change as new residential developments are planned within Upton and in the surrounding communities.

At buildout, the town could contain an additional 5,974 residents according to the EOEA's estimates. Daylor's conservative estimates—based on building permit data and household size—suggest an 18% population increase by 2010. While there is no timeline associated with a buildout analysis, the impact of doubling Upton's current population would be detrimental to the current roadway and infrastructure. Perhaps a greater problem in Upton is residential growth in neighbors to the South in Blackstone Valley, including Northbridge and Mendon. **Chart 7-3** below shows the rate of growth from 1980 to 2000 and the projected buildout in Upton and its neighbors. This chart shows that all communities have the capacity to grow exponentially, and this will compound Upton's transportation safety issues.

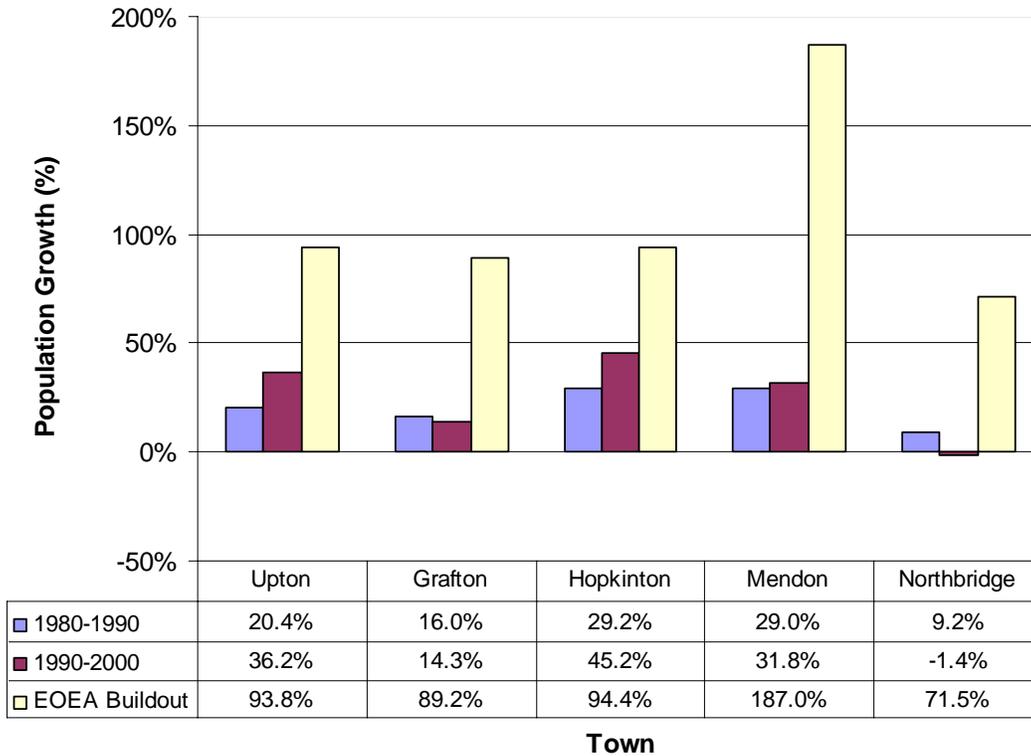
The Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study also predicts that traffic volume in the region will continue to outpace the population growth. In 2010, the average vehicle miles traveled (VMT) will have increased 1.48 percent per year since 2000, while population in the region will grow 0.74 percent.⁷ Through 2025, VMT is projected to increase 1.26 percent per year compared to a 0.52 percent increase in transportation. This data indicates that, in addition to population growth, people will be driving more. In order to curtail the resulting congestion and safety problems, the town and region needs to address alternative modes of transportation.

⁷ From CMRPC *Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study*, September 2003, P. 35.



Chart 7-3

Population Change (1980-2000) and projections
in Upton and Surrounding Communities



Sources: US Census Bureau, Upton Town Clerk (for Upton’s 2000 population figure) and Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) for buildout projections.

Safety involves both vehicular safety and pedestrian/bicycle safety. There are several critical roadways and intersections that need design modifications to increase the overall level of safety. However, the town needs to be an active participant in any design changes to ensure that safety is not used to dramatically alter the character of the community’s roadways and intersections. Design needs to balance vehicular safety and pedestrian and bicycle safety with rural design.

The town’s regulations, design standards, and review criteria need to be reviewed and revised to ensure that the new roadways and development within the community are not exacerbating already existing issues.

7.5 Public/Alternative Transportation

Upton and the Blackstone Valley region have limited public transportation service. Four towns in the region (Douglas, Grafton, Millbury, and Sutton) are members of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) and are eligible to receive state and federal funding for their transit services. Upton is not a member of this agency, but is a member of the MBTA as one of the “other served communities” with limited voting power. Under a decision from the Secretary of the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction



(EOTC), all towns currently under MBTA jurisdiction that are not members of the WRTA cannot join the WRTA. Thus, if the opportunity arose, Upton would not be able to join the WRTA to benefit from their paratransit and bus services. Under the current law (MGL Ch. 161A Sect. 47), an MBTA community that is not served by local bus service can enter into a contract with a licensed, private bus provider.

While no bus routes run through Upton, they do run in nearby towns. The WRTA operates a fixed bus line between Millbury and Worcester on two lines. These buses run daily and on weekends. The MBTA also runs two bus lines to Milford. One, operated by Brush Hill Transportation, goes to Boston's South Station, Park Square, and Copley Square. The second one is operated by Local Inter Framingham Transportation and provides daily local service throughout the Metro West area, including Framingham, Ashland, Hopkinton, and Holliston. Upton ridership numbers are not kept for this service, but anecdotal evidence would suggest that few Upton residents take advantage of this service.

The closest commuter rail station to Upton is in Grafton. Ridership along this line, which extends from Boston to Worcester, has been greater than anticipated. Half the riders come from the Blackstone Valley. Parking has always been a critical issue at MBTA commuter rail stations. The 2002 opening of the Westborough, Southborough and Ashland stations successfully decreased ridership at Grafton Station and subsequently eased the parking burden. According to the CMRPC, the Grafton station regularly has 50-75 unused parking spaces.⁸ Advocates are pushing for increased service between Boston and Worcester to accommodate commuters and reverse-commuters; the provision of more service could increase pressure on parking and road traffic if the current concerns are not addressed.

Under state law, communities that are within one town away from commuter rail service must be assessed for a portion of its operating expenses. Upton and Northbridge are the two communities assessed by the MBTA for this service and Upton should remain apprised of the future plans of the MBTA.

7.6 Future Project Options

Regionally, the most important issue to address is the commuter traffic through Upton to the I-495 beltway. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's report details a number of possible options that could benefit the region.

One option specifically increases the roadway capacity between West Upton and I-495. As this corridor was identified as problematic on both the local and regional level, repairs and upgrades to the existing conditions would be necessary to accommodate new traffic demand. Phase I of the project would include signaling key intersections. If necessary, Phase II would see the road widened along Hartford Avenue North, High Street, and Hopkinton Road in Upton and West Main Street in Hopkinton, which is the main corridor leading to I-495. Traffic demand projections indicate that without widening the road, traffic volumes will increase more than 16% by 2010. However, projections indicate volume would increase by more than 30% if the road is widened because the road will better accommodate increased travel. Although the widening of the road could reduce neighborhood cut through traffic, the town is concerned about the design implications of the widening and signalization project.

⁸ From CMRPC *Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study* September 2003, p. 17.



As commuting patterns will most likely remain the same, fewer commuters will find reason to seek alternate routes if extra capacity is added to the roadway. Implementation of this plan is projected to take five years for short-term items, such as intersection improvements, and ten to twenty years for long-term items, including capacity expansion. The project is estimated to cost \$450,000 to \$650,000 for the intersection signalization and \$14.7 million for the roadway widening, for a total of between \$15.1 million and \$15.3 million.

A smaller scale approach to this option is also suggested, which would focus more on conducting studies to determine select intersections to optimize and widening the road only in certain sections rather than through the entire corridor between Upton and Hopkinton. This would not provide for additional capacity on the roadway. The smaller scale project would cost \$2.8 million for roadway improvements, up to \$200,000 for intersection signalization, between \$1.8 million and \$2.1 million for intersection optimization, and between \$180,000 and \$480,000 for bridge reconstruction, for a total cost of between \$4.7 million to \$5.4 million. Another idea is to identify alternate truck routes to remove truck traffic from certain residential roads and perhaps ease congestion and increase safety.

7.7 Transportation Recommendations

1. Overall Transportation Policy

As the town and surrounding region has grown, traffic congestion has become an issue on many of Upton's major roads. At times, this congestion causes other issues such as cut-through traffic, excessive speeding on side roads, and a degradation of pedestrian safety. Congestion issues are conventionally addressed through more roads, additional lanes, more traffic lights, wider streets, larger turning radii at intersections, and other similar design 'solutions'. Many of these strategies have been suggested by various traffic studies and state transportation organizations.

However, the Town of Upton does not favor the conventional solution, which would continue to degrade the scenic value of the roads. The town has continuously stressed the importance of the rural character of Upton's streets, the pedestrian scale of the town's neighborhoods, and the importance of overall road safety, for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. In other words, the Town of Upton would like to embrace the inconvenience of congestion because the alternative is untenable. Therefore, the townwide Transportation Policy should prioritize vehicular and pedestrian safety and character of the roads instead of expanding the roads to accommodate more traffic.

Upton's transportation policy should include a review of key intersections and roadways to measure safety, congestion, vehicle speed and the users. The policy should suggest recommendations for signalization, intersection and road redesign, speed limit redesignation and road capacity that will help curtail cut-through commuter and truck traffic on streets that cannot accommodate it. This should include a policy on truck traffic management techniques. Upton should carefully weigh all the considerations of safety and congestion before lobbying for intersection redesign.

The strategies found within this Master Plan address this comprehensive approach to transportation by stressing and preserving the qualities of Upton's street network that makes Upton the unique community that it is. The strategies do not call for major



changes that would lessen the congestion on Upton’s roads. Rather, the strategies seek to improve overall safety, preserve the characteristics of Upton’s rural streets, enhance the pedestrian and bicycle environment, and manage and regulate future development’s transportation impacts.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board should work with the Board of Selectmen, the DPW, and interested citizens

2. Develop Street Design Guidelines

The town’s rural roads have unique attributes that need protecting and enhancing. As Mass Highway, private developers, and the town go about creating new roads and modifying existing roads, a set of Street Design Guidelines could provide guidance and direction as to the characteristics of streets that are supported by the public. The town should work to produce a short (5-10 page) document that outlines the preferred characteristics and attributes of the town’s streets.

Box 7-1: Elements Included within Street Design Guidelines
<p>Shared streets: Streets are not just for cars. Upton should address the gap between street design and the shared nature of streets. Street design should accommodate and welcome the needs of pedestrians, and bicyclists.</p>
<p>Intersections: Modern intersections have a huge turning radius designed for large trucks. However, shorter turning radii make vehicles slow down more and make for a shorter cross walk.</p>
<p>Landscaping and street trees: Streets and street trees should go hand in hand. Vegetated medians on wide streets, landscaped islands, and other features should be included in all new streets.</p>
<p>Lights and street furniture: The town should state a clear preference for decorative lighting (both street lights, traffic lights, and pedestrian lights) as an alternative to the highway spun aluminum poles that are frequently used by Mass Highway. Other features, such as benches and wastepaper baskets, should be used in appropriate locations.</p>

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board should work with the Board of Selectmen

3. Initiate Traffic Calming

Traffic calming measures should be included in the Planning Board’s Subdivision Rules and Regulations and the Site Plan Review Criteria. Examples of potential traffic calming measures include a range of strategies to slow down traffic, increase pedestrian safety, improve street aesthetics, deter inappropriate truck traffic, and deter the use of local residential roads for through traffic. Examples of traffic calming devices include one-way streets, neck downs, bump outs, traffic circles, narrow travel lanes, raised crosswalks or intersections, pavement markings, on-street parking, and alternative paving materials (see the photos above). Non-structural traffic calming measures, such as traffic law enforcement and traffic impact statements, can also play an important role. However, traffic calming must be conducted in a comprehensive manner—not piecemeal—otherwise, traffic might simply shift from one problem area to another.



The best way for Upton to proceed with traffic calming is on a gradual, experimental basis. Two or three sites should be selected for trial applications—key intersections near schools and areas within the town centers—and the results of these trials should be evaluated before moving ahead with additional sites. Additionally, the town should permit private developers to use appropriate traffic calming measures in new developments, such as new commercial settings and larger residential developments.

Concerns are often raised about how traffic calming devices affect snowplowing operations. While it is true that some traffic calming measures require additional care when plowing, others, such as one-way streets, do not. Many Massachusetts communities, most notably Cambridge but also Boston, Gardner, Brookline, and others, have successfully adapted their plowing operations to accommodate traffic calming devices.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen should work with the Planning Board, the DPW, and interested citizens

4. Permit and Advocate Shared Access

The Planning Board should encourage developers of commercial properties to share curb cuts and provide shared parking, shared vehicular access, and shared pedestrian access. Shared access requirements should be included in the updated Site Plan Review Criteria. When reviewing proposals, the Planning Board should negotiate shared parking and shared vehicular and pedestrian access between adjacent commercial sites. If the abutting property owner is not willing to cooperate, the town could still get the applicant to agree to shared provisions and negotiate for improvements when and if there is a change proposed to the abutting property.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board

5. Traffic Impact Statements & Mitigation

The town needs to monitor the traffic safety and traffic impacts resulting from new developments. Without these measures in place, the town cannot control and monitor the traffic growth and vehicle delays that may further deteriorate traffic safety, impact remaining (excess) roadway capacity, and damage the rural character of the town.

The town should create a more detailed Traffic Impact Assessment process to be used by Permit Granting Authorities. This process would be used for Site Plan review as well as subdivision Review. The purpose of the process is to ensure consistency in the review of traffic-related issues related to development plans submitted to the town.



Box 7-2: Traffic Impact Assessment Language

(a) Traffic Impact Assessment

[1] Purpose: To document existing traffic conditions (both vehicular and pedestrian) in the vicinity of the proposed project, to describe the volume and effect of projected traffic generated by the proposed project, and to identify measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impacts on traffic.

[2] Applicability: Projects with one or more of the following characteristics shall prepare a Traffic Impact Assessment: 1) proposing thirty (30) or more parking spaces, 2) proposing a Vehicular Service Establishment (See Land Use Strategy), and/or 3) containing frontage and access on a state road. The Board or town staff may request any applicant to prepare a Traffic Impact Assessment, even if the project does not meet any of the above criteria.

[3] Qualifications: Author of the Traffic Impact Assessment shall be a certified traffic engineer.

[4] Format and Scope:

(i) Existing traffic conditions:

The Traffic Impact Assessment should study existing average daily and peak hour volumes; average and peak speeds; sight distances; accident data; and levels of service (LOS) of intersections and streets likely to be affected by the proposed development. Generally, such data shall be presented for all streets and intersections adjacent to or within 1000 feet of the projected boundaries, and shall be no more than six (6) months old at the date of application. Further, information regarding existing pedestrian circulation and ways shall be provided.

(ii) Projected traffic conditions for design year of occupancy:

These projections should include a statement of design year of occupancy; background traffic growth on an annual average basis; and impacts of proposed developments, which have already been approved, in part or in whole, by the town.

(iii) Projected impact of proposed development:

The impact projections include projected peak hour and daily traffic generated by the development on roads and ways in the vicinity of the development; sight lines at the intersections of the proposed driveways and streets; existing and proposed traffic controls in the vicinity of the proposed development; proposed pedestrian ways and design elements to maximize pedestrian safety and usage; and projected post-development traffic volumes and LOS of intersections and streets likely to be affected by the proposed development.

(iv) Proposed measures to minimize traffic conflict and mitigate any affected intersections or ways conclude the suggested component of a Traffic Impact Assessment.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board



6. Develop Walking/Biking Trails

The town should develop a trail plan in conjunction with the Greenways to Blueways Plan described in the Land Use Section of this Plan. This effort should also highlight and expand the existing bicycle trails within Upton and should work to connect these trails to the neighborhoods and commercial centers of the community. Second, whenever possible, the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should work with developers to include trail easements through new developments, connecting to existing or proposed trails. Third, if key trails require segments to pass through private property in order to complete a usable trails network, the town with possible collaboration from the Open Space Committee, should work with the private landowners to see if they would be willing to grant a trail easement.

Responsible Entity: The Open Space Committee and Planning Board; Board of Selectmen action may be necessary at a later time

7. Mass Highway Interaction Policy

The town should immediately enter into a public dialogue with Mass Highway regarding the future plans for key intersections and the possible 'improvements' planned for the town's state maintained roadways. This dialogue should stress public involvement and should involve the strong participation of Upton's political representatives. The town may also wish to create an ad hoc committee to work with Mass Highway on future projects.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen



8.0 PUBLIC FACILITIES

8.1 Summary

Growth in a community places new demands on public services, facilities, and infrastructure. Conversely, the development of new public facilities and the provision of services may influence how much growth occurs, and where. This section discusses Upton's public facilities, services, and infrastructure based on information from previous studies and reports. The purpose of this section is not to undertake a thorough analysis of the town's facilities and services (some of which is being done through other studies), but to integrate this information into the overall master planning process so that the town's public investment decisions are consistent with the community's overall vision for the future.

8.2 Goals

Ensure the adequate performance of the town's water, wastewater infrastructure and public facilities taking into account the needs of all citizens, future growth pressures, and objectives in other chapters.

8.3 Objectives

1. Maintain the integrity of the municipal water system, including the quality and quantity of water available as well as improvements and maintenance to the distribution system.
2. Maintain the integrity of the municipal wastewater system, including controlling infiltration and inflow, and improvements/maintenance to the collection system.
3. Expand the wastewater system to existing neighborhoods that are in need of municipal sewer services.
4. Ensure the town's public facilities, including schools, library and town offices, are operating efficiently with respect to space use, staffing needs and energy consumption.
5. Ensure public facilities are accessible to all citizens.

8.4 Water System

In October 1998, Tata and Howard, Inc. prepared a report for the Town of Upton that detailed an analysis of the town's water usage and distribution. Specifically, the study examined the existing water demand and projected future needs as well as the ability of the water distribution infrastructure to meet these demands. Demand was projected out twenty years (2020) with the required storage capacity in the water system calculated using fire flow requirements from Insurance Service Office (ISO) data. A separate report was completed for the Department of Public Works by Weston & Sampson Engineers in July 2004, which agreed that Upton has adequate water supply under average demand conditions. However, this report found a supply deficit during emergency conditions. Additionally, a new water connection to Northbridge is done and there is a planned connection to Grafton for emergency situations.



8.4.1 Existing Systems

Upton's water distribution system consists of approximately 30 miles of water mains ranging from six to sixteen inches in diameter. System pressures run from 25 pounds per square inch (psi) near the Pearl Street Tank to 135 psi near the wastewater plant, the lowest elevation. Certain areas, generally located at elevations above 475 feet, regularly experience pressures below 35 psi under normal operating circumstances. These areas include portions of the northern section of Upton, such as George Hill, and Upton State Forest, as well as the Pearl Street and Pratt Hill Tanks.

Upton contains one wellfield and one additional well along with two water storage facilities. The Glen Avenue Wellfield, adjacent to the West River, contains twenty-four 2.5-inch tubular wells, separated into two groups of twelve wells each. The valve configuration allows for one group of wells to be shut off while another is still in operation. Well depths ranged from 37 to 63 feet in 2004, with yields of 25 to 75 gallons per minute (gpm) per well. The pumping capacity of the wellfield is about 180 to 200 gpm. The town operates the wellfield 10 to 12 hours per day during non-peak usage periods and 24 hours per day during peak periods, with the wells redeveloped every three to five years to maintain yield. The authorized withdrawal rate for the wellfield is 0.21 million gallons per day (mgd) between 2004 and 2009.

The West River Street Well is 18 inches in diameter, 90 feet deep, and gravel packed. It is located about one mile north of where the West River and Center Brook meet. The town calculated the safe yield as 0.85 mgd, based on a well depth of 99 feet.⁹ This well has a three stage, 300 gpm pump that operates at a Total Dynamic Head (TDH) of 425 feet. It is in use, on average, 14 to 16 hours per day, and 24 hours a day during peak demand periods. The permit withdrawal rate is 0.27 mgd through the year 2009.

The Pearl Street and Pratt Hill Tanks are the two water storage facilities in Upton. The Pearl Street Tank, located on the east side of town, connects to the system via a 16-inch ductile iron main. This tank has a capacity of one million gallons (MG). With normal usage the capacity is generally 65 to 75 percent full, which limits the storage capacity of the tank to approximately 0.75 MG. The Pratt Hill Tank, located in the northwest section of the system, is connected to the distribution system by a 12-inch main located off Warren Street. The tank has a capacity of 0.50 MG, but under normal operating conditions the available storage capacity is about 0.32 MG. Between both the Pearl Street and Pratt Hill Tanks, the total storage capacity is approximately 1.07 MG.

8.4.2 System Deficiencies & Needs

The Tata and Howard report outlined the water usage in Upton in 1998 and forecasted future trends through 2020 based on population projections from the area's planning agencies and the town.

Water Usage

The residential per capita consumption of water is equal to the total quantity of water metered at homes divided by the total population serviced by the system. When the report was released, only 61 percent of the town's population was serviced by the water distribution system. Trends indicated that as Upton adds new development, 85 percent of the town will be connected to the distribution system by 2020. While industrial/commercial water consumption remained fairly constant between 1992 and

⁹ The safe yield is most likely lower than this because the well depth is 90 feet and not 99 feet.



1996, further development is possible and the estimate for overall increase in industrial/commercial usage is 2,000 gpd over a 20 year period. Unmetered water used for water and sewer system maintenance, fire fighting, meter losses, unauthorized use, and street flushing is considered unaccounted-for. This figure is generally represented as a percentage of all water usage, calculated by subtracting the total water billed from the total water used and dividing by the total water used. From 1996-2003, Upton's unaccounted-for water has averaged 22 percent, which is above standard guidelines of 10% to 15%.

Average day demand is calculated by dividing the total water supplied to a town by 365 days and is usually reported in millions of gallons per day (mgd). Analysis indicated that the average day demand for Upton ranged from 0.39 mgd in 1992 to 0.43 mgd in 1995. On average, residential use accounted for 72% of water supplied, municipal/commercial use used 8%, and 20% was unaccounted for. The Tata and Howard projections relied on assumptions that by the year 2020, residential consumption will be up to 90 gpd, industrial/commercial usage will increase to 35,000 gpd, 15% of supplied water will be unaccounted-for, and 85% of Upton's projected population (the Tata & Howard report assumes 7,400) will be serviced by the system. With these factors, the average day demand is estimated to be 0.71 mgd in the year 2020.

Maximum day demand is the maximum amount of water supplied during a one year period and is a critical factor to determine if the water supply system is adequate. Between 1992 and 1996, the maximum day demand ranged from 0.721 mgd to 0.816 mgd. Based on analysis of the MDD/ADD ratio for these years, Tata and Howard reported that the projected maximum day demand for the year 2020 is 1.48 mgd.

Peak hour demand, much like maximum day demand, is the maximum amount of water supplied in a single hour during a one year period and determines the adequacy of water storage facilities. Tata and Howard estimated the year 2020 projections from the Merrimac Curve, which is based on statistical analysis of sanitary sewage flows and water usage that relates peak hour flows to average day flows. The peak hour demand for 1996 was estimated at 1.17 mgd. Factoring in the year 2020 projected average day demand of 0.71 mgd, the 2020 peak hour demand is estimated at 2.41 mgd.

Based on this analysis, Tata and Howard calculated the adequacy of the water supply system through the year 2020. For a system to be adequate it must be able to meet the demands of peak consumption periods and provide flows at sufficient pressure for fire protection. It is assumed that the water distribution system can handle any other demand conditions if it can meet minimum pressure requirements for a maximum day demand with a coincident fire. Generally, the system must maintain a pressure of 35 psi during peak hour conditions and a minimum pressure of 20 psi under all flow conditions. The upper limit of the system is recommended to be at 120 psi to allow proper maintenance of older fittings. Pressures above 120 psi may result in wasted water from fixtures and also leakage throughout the distribution system. In their calculations, Tata and Howard assumed a minimum pressure of 35 psi at ground level to account for all flow conditions, with a minimum of 20 psi throughout the system during fire flow conditions.

The study concluded that the town's distribution system can adequately meet the estimated fire flow requirements while maintaining minimum pressure requirements in a majority of the distribution system. The only areas where pressure dropped below 35 psi



under these conditions were at elevations above 475 feet. The drop in pressure was more of a function of the elevation than a failure of the distribution system.

Upton's system formerly had issues with water main breaks, caused by high system pressures in areas of low elevation. These areas included Route 140 between Elm Street and Town Hall, North Main Street near Town Common, Route 140 and School Street, and the intersection of Mendon Street and Pleasant Street. The town subsequently lowered the operating level of the storage tanks to reduce the pressure in the system, which has resulted in a significantly lower number of water main breaks. Additionally, the town has implemented a water main replacement program to replace older, asbestos cement water mains throughout the distribution system in an effort to eliminate water main breaks and reduce the percentage of unaccounted-for water in the system.

Water Storage

To evaluate storage requirements, the key indicators of adequacy are equalization, fire flow requirements, and emergency storage. Equalization allows for water to be released from the storage tank during peak hour flow demands, which is expressed as a percentage of the maximum day demands. Since Upton is considered a small system, with less than 3,300 customers, equalization storage calculations were based on 25 percent of maximum day demand. Fire flow storage is the amount of water required for basic fire flow multiplied by the length of time required for the flow. Tata and Howard estimated a basic fire flow of 2,000 gpm with a duration of two hours for the storage analysis. Emergency storage is about equal to the average day demand, but this calculation does not need to be included since the town has emergency power at the pumping stations.

Tata and Howard analyzed these factors and determined that in the year 2020, the town will need 0.61 MG of water storage. This accounts for maintaining a pressure of 35 psi at an elevation of 475 feet during average day demands, maximum day demands, and peak hour demands. The combined usable storage between the two tanks would be 0.97 MG, which exceeds the minimum necessary requirement.

Water Supply

In order for Upton to meet maximum day demands, both the Glen Avenue Wellfield and West River Street Well must pump continuously for 24 hours a day. This does not allow any time for the aquifer to recharge, which results in overpumping of the wells and air drawn into the system. The estimated safe yields¹⁰ of the Glen Avenue Wellfield and West River Street Well are 0.346 mgd and 0.85 mgd, respectively. Pumping rates are 180 gpm for the Glen Avenue Wellfield and 300 gpm for the West River Street Well. The town holds a Water Management Act Permit (WMA) for their existing supply. The average permitted withdrawal rate for the Glen Avenue Wellfield is 0.21 mgd, while the permitted withdrawal rate for the West River Street Well is 0.27 mgd through 2009. The current average day demand for Upton is 0.42 mgd. The town has adequate permitted withdrawal volume and pumping capacity to meet their current demands.

Historically, the town has used the available water in the storage tanks to meet demands. This practice is not encouraged, since the storage facilities are primarily intended for fire flows, peak fluctuations, and emergencies. By the year 2020, the

¹⁰ Note, the estimated safe yields are reported and no date exists to verify the actual safe yields of the wells. Pumping capacities of the wells was used as a conservative approach in the Tata & Howard Water Distribution System Study. Pumping rates do not correlate to the reported safe yields of the wells.



maximum day demand is estimated at 1.48 mgd, which will create a deficit of 0.79 mgd in the town's supply.

8.4.3 Long Range Plans for Water Systems

Based on the analysis of Upton's water distribution system, Tata and Howard outlined a number of actionable strategies to mitigate issues with future demand. The short-term issues included expansion of the distribution system, mitigation of water leakage, and general maintenance. The Weston & Sampson concurred with the general recommendations of the Tata and Howard report, adding identifying new water sources as a major goal to accommodate new demand. The town should make a concerted effort to check and maintain the system so that larger problems are not further complicated.

Since the 1998 study, the town has improved overall water efficiency and water quality by incorporating corrosion control facilities at both supply sources, recalibrated an overregistering source meter and enacted water conservation methods.

The major issue for future consideration is the lack of supply to meet future demand. Tata and Howard suggested that the town perform pump tests to determine the maximum yield at both the Glen Avenue Wellfield and West River Street Well. In July 2004, Tata & Howard reported that the Glen Avenue Wellfield is unlikely to support a significant increased withdrawal. Furthermore, no additional withdrawal is likely at the West River Street Well due to the presence of endangered species in the adjacent water bodies. Therefore, new source development will be necessary, since by the year 2020 the current infrastructure and facilities will not be adequate to meet the town's needs. In 1999, the town initiated a study to identify potential public water supply source; this program is ongoing.

Furthermore, the town's infrastructure suffers from frequent breaks and should be updated to maintain seamless operations. The town has implemented a water main replacement to repair in response to suggestions by both the Tata & Howard and Weston & Sampson reports. Specifically, Tata & Howard proposed the replacement of four water mains with larger diameter mains in order to reduce breakage of the brittle asbestos cement water mains and ensure operation at higher capacity. The town has been actively replacing these mains as monies become available. Hydraulic analysis conducted as part of the Tata & Howard Water Distribution Study shows these mains have adequate inherent carrying capacity to meet the estimated fire flow requirements.

8.4.4 Water System Issues

1. The town's water system suffers from many of the same issues as the wastewater system and the issues are interrelated. Please refer to the discussion of wastewater issues.
2. As the town continues to grow, the demand on the public water system will increase. Although the town's existing water supply is adequate, over time new sources would add capacity and would also provide a safeguard in the unlikely event of well contamination or failure.



8.5 Wastewater System

In March 1997, Metcalf and Eddy prepared a Sewer System Evaluation Study for the Town of Upton that detailed an analysis of the town's wastewater system. This report built upon information provided in the February 1996 Upton Wastewater Treatment Facility Evaluation Study, also prepared by Metcalf and Eddy. The report outlined existing sewer system conditions and projected future needs as well as the ability of the wastewater infrastructure to meet these demands.

8.5.1 Existing Systems

Wastewater Flows

The 1996 study determined that the average wastewater flows in Upton were approximately 200,000 gpd. The majority of the flows consisted of domestic sewage, with the remaining composed of institutional and commercial wastewater as well as groundwater infiltration and inflow. Infiltration is the steady flow of groundwater into the wastewater system, which seeps into the system from defects such as leaks in pipes and manholes. Inflow generally enters the system from street drainage systems, roof and yard drains, building foundation drains, and sump pumps.¹¹ Infiltration and inflow in the wastewater system decreases the effectiveness of the system to process wastewater by reducing the amount of wastewater that is able to be carried and treated.

Wastewater Collection Infrastructure

Upton's wastewater collection infrastructure contains approximately 44,000 linear feet of gravity sewers, two pumping stations and force mains; it serves the West Upton and Upton Center areas of town. The system transports an average of 200,000 gpd of wastewater to the treatment plant. That flow rate can increase to over 300,000 gpd in the spring.

The first collection system, most of which is still in use today, was built in the 1870s to support the Knowlton Hat factory's company buildings and surrounding homes. The system has undergone subsequent expansion in 1950 and 1970 to add service to the Upton Memorial Elementary School and the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical School, respectively. In 1972, a new wastewater treatment facility was built along with the Main Street Interceptor, which extended from the plant to Hartford Avenue. More infrastructure was added in the late 1970s to serve Upton Center and again in the 1990s to connect new residential developments. Two pump stations were also constructed to serve the system's needs. The Center Brook station on Station Street was constructed in 1978 to serve Upton Center and the Henry's Path station, currently owned by the town, was constructed in 1995. Two moratoriums on new sewer system connections were put into effect in order to complete improvements to the treatment plant, with the exception of the new high school that was connected in 1997.

Wastewater Treatment Facility

The treatment facility currently in operation was constructed in 1972. The extended aeration facility uses seasonal sand filtration processes, as well as comminution, secondary sedimentation, chlorination, and dechlorination. The plant's general

¹¹ *From the Metcalf and Eddy Report (March 1997):* There are three types of inflow: steady inflow, direct inflow, and delayed inflow. Steady inflow includes water discharged from basement and foundation drains; direct inflow is caused by stormwater runoff that enters through direct connections to the system, such as through manhole covers and storm drains; and delayed inflow is water that takes a few days to infiltrate the wastewater system.



operations are efficient, with the only reported problems occurring during daily peak flow and wet weather peak flow periods when the solids will carry over from the secondary settling tanks. The plant was also unable to meet NPDES effluent discharge limitations for ammonia, phosphorus, copper, lead, and zinc.¹² Modifications to the wastewater treatment facility will be imminently necessary. The town has received an Administrative Consent Order (ACO) from the EPA requiring modifications to meet the NPDES requirements and money was budgeted at a Special Town Meeting to evaluate mitigation measures regarding the ACO requirement. Continued violation of the NPDES discharge regulation creates an unnecessary financial burden on the town.

8.5.2 System Deficiencies & Needs

Metcalf and Eddy analyzed the flow data from temporary flow metering in accordance with DEP guidelines to estimate wastewater flow components, such as sanitary flow, infiltration, and inflow. Elevated amounts of both infiltration and inflow (I/I) entering the collection system were noted in the 1997 Metcalf & Eddy report.

Sanitary Flow

As part of the initial evaluation study, sanitary flow, which includes domestic, commercial, and institutional sewage, was estimated to account for approximately 100,000 gpd, or about 50%, of the average daily annual wastewater flow.

Infiltration

Infiltration was estimated to account for more than 90% of the minimum recorded nighttime flow during a dry weather period. During high groundwater conditions, the amount of infiltration entering the treatment plant can account for two thirds of the overall flow entering the wastewater treatment facility. The calculated domestic wastewater rate was 100,000 gpd from over 1,400 connections; the corresponding infiltration rate ranged from 100,000 to 200,000 gpd as a result of leaking service connections, collection pipes and manholes within the system. The highest daily wastewater flow was estimated at 300,000 gpd.

Inflow

The 1996 study also noted elevated levels of inflow, which is introduced to the system directly as a result of a specific precipitation event. Extraneous stormwater enters from manhole covers, storm drain interconnection, illegal roof leaders, sump pumps, or sub-drain connections from abutters to the system. Metcalf & Eddy analyzed rainfall data and metered flow data to estimate peak, direct, and delayed inflow for each metered subarea. They also conducted manhole inspections and reviewed building survey data, smoke testing results, and dyed water testing results to identify inflow sources and volumes.

The study identified that inflow entering the system can exceed 250,000 gpd during a 1.2 inch storm event. Review of historical data suggests that up to 250,000 gallons of inflow may enter the system during the design storm. This data also suggests that groundwater infiltration may have occurred 24 to 72 hours after the storm events due to rising groundwater levels and that peak inflow rates may be as high as 400,000 gpd during the design storm. Their final observed inflow estimates were 150,000 gallons from manholes, 25,000 from direct private sources and 75,000 from indirect sources.

¹² From Metcalf and Eddy, *Sewer System Evaluation Survey Draft Report*, March 1997, p 1-6.



Cost-Effective Analysis

The Metcalf and Eddy report prepared a detailed cost effective analysis of the wastewater system in order to make long-term recommendations. This analysis determined whether the cost of transporting and treating the additional inflow and infiltration was greater than the cost of rehabilitating the system to reduce inflow. Based on historical operating costs and projected flows through the year 2015, the study determined that the town could remove 80% of the estimated peak inflow from manholes and 50% of the estimated peak infiltration from manholes and sewers while still remaining cost effective. Thus, removing the infiltration and inflow is more cost-effective than treating the extraneous infiltration and inflow at the wastewater treatment facility. However, the report also stressed that many of their recommendations were not wholly intended to reduce inefficiencies in the system, but also were intended to upgrade aging and damaged infrastructure within the system.

8.5.3 Long Range Plans for Wastewater System

The Metcalf and Eddy report outlined a number of strategies and improvements to the wastewater system that could reduce inflow and infiltration while maintaining the overall quality of the system. These recommendations were based on the feasibility of upgrading the system with available technologies.

Manhole Rehabilitation

Based on the analysis of peak infiltration and inflow, the data suggests that rehabilitating defective manholes could reduce peak inflow by up to 100% and peak infiltration by up to 50%. The town should rehabilitate all manholes that contained defects and establish a yearly inspection and maintenance program to identify defective manholes more quickly. The associated reduction of infiltration and inflow will result in a savings in capacity within the collection system and at the treatment plant.

Sewer Rehabilitation

Many segments of the sewer infrastructure in West Upton are up to 120 years old and suffer from the effects of age, such as cracked and broken pipes and open and off-set joints. These defects cause leakage from the system. In addition, the Metcalf and Eddy team observed a number of light to moderate root growths in sewer lines and service laterals. To control for cracked and off-set joints, the report suggests that sewer lines are tested and sealed with a chemical grout. For segments of sewer line that suffer from multiple defects, including root control and cracking, the 1996 report suggests that the line be replaced altogether. This damage occurs specifically between manholes 235 and 210.

Private Source Connections

The Metcalf and Eddy report suggests that private source connections, which include sump pumps, roof leaders, and yard drains, should be removed from the system. An estimated 25,000 gallons could be removed from the peak inflow volumes if all of these connections are removed. In order for this to be feasible, the town may need to extend or rehabilitate the existing stormwater collection system.

Annual Sewer Inspection Program

In order to maintain the wastewater system, Upton should perform routine inspections of the system. Programmatically, the town should regularly perform internal inspection and cleaning of at least 4,000 to 5,000 linear feet of the system along with 20 to 25 manhole inspections each year, so that the entire system will be checked every ten years. Other



tests, such as smoketesting and dyed water testing, should be done only when necessary.

Recent changes in regulations governing the disposal of residential wastewater (Title V) and the geologic conditions in town will continue to increase pressure for additional connections to the wastewater collection and treatment system. Thus the town must anticipate and prepare for future growth. DEP's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) is the currently accepted tool for wastewater planning. An interactive process, the CWMP addresses a range of wastewater issues such as existing infrastructure shortfalls, future buildout of the collections system and compliance with the NPDES discharge regulations. Completing the CWMP process is an opportunity for the town to broadly assess the status of the wastewater system.

8.5.4 Wastewater System Issues

1. As the town pursues the land use recommendations found within this Master Plan, it will be critical for the wastewater replacement and improvement plan to keep pace with these significant land use changes. The land use and zoning strategies need to be integrated into a comprehensive wastewater solution as well.
2. Private connections to the wastewater system are proving to be an issue. This unanticipated flow is taking-up valuable capacity and is impossible to monitor properly. The situation will only worsen as the system progresses toward capacity.

8.6 Schools

Upton and Mendon share a combined school district, with facilities in both towns. The district is comprised of four schools, two of which are located in Upton. The region has two elementary schools serving grades K-3, the new Henry B. Clough Elementary School located in Mendon and the Memorial Elementary School located at 69 Main Street in Upton. Grades 4 through 7 are now served by the Miscoe Hill School, located in Mendon. The Nipmuc Regional Middle/High School is located on a 50-acre wooded lot at 90 Pleasant Street in Upton and serves grades 8-12. Both Memorial and Clough Elementary Schools are new buildings and were dedicated on October 27, 2004.

In addition, the town is a member of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional High School District, which operates Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (Valley Tech) on a 28-acre parcel at 65 Pleasant Street in Upton.

8.6.1 Mendon-Upton Regional School District

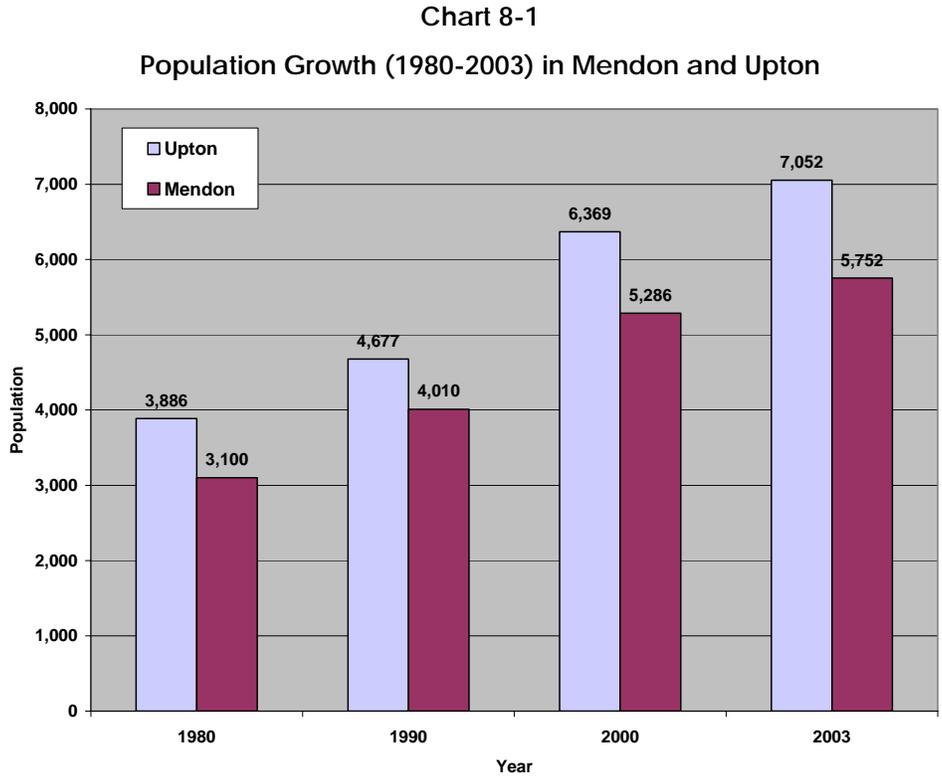
Enrollment Projections and Facility Plans

Enrollment within the Mendon-Upton Regional School District has steadily increased over the past twelve years. In 2002-2003, there were 2,450 students in the district; this increased to 2,575 in 2003-2004. This includes 1,040 students attending the Miscoe Hill Elementary School, 137 attending the Henry B. Clough School, 413 attending Memorial Elementary School, and 999 attending the Nipmuc Regional Middle/High School.¹³ Since 1992, the region has seen a steady increase of total student enrollment in the schools from

¹³ Enrollment numbers for the first two schools are from the 2002-2003 academic year while numbers for the latter two schools are from the 2003-2004 academic year. All enrollment data is from the School Report Cards filed under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and available at <http://mu-regional.k12.ma.us/schoolreportcardsmain.htm>.



approximately 1,300 in 1992 to just over 2,500 in 2003. This represents at least a 90% increase in twelve years, with the larger proportion of that increase from Upton. Upton residents comprised just fewer than 1,400 students in 2003-2004 and more than 50% of the total student population. The upwards trends predicted in residential growth and shown in **Chart 8-1** will continue to affect enrollment figures for the schools.



Sources: Upton – 2003 CMRPC Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study (1980 and 1990 U.S. Census); Town of Upton (2000 and 2003) and Mendon - 2003 CMRPC Blackstone Valley Corridor Planning Study (1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census); 2004 Claritas, Boston Globe Town Report (2003)

The projected increase for the 2004-2005 academic year was 4.4%. As of May 2005, enrollment numbers are as follows: Memorial School 502; Clough School 443; Miscoe Hill School 892; and, Nipmuc Regional High School 868. As mentioned in the discussion on population change in **Chapter 3.0**, the 5 to 9 year olds were the fastest growing age group in Upton during the 1990s. The rapid growth of the school age population shown in **Chart 8-2** will also significantly impact the capacity issues in local schools.

Chart 8-2
Population Growth (1980-2003) in Mendon and Upton

Age Group	1990	2000	# Change	% Change	AARC
Under 5	333	558	225	67.6%	6.76%
5 to 9	290	514	224	77.2%	7.72%
10 to 19	564	656	92	16.3%	16.30%

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000
Note: AARC is the Average Annual Rate of Change



As mentioned above, the regional school district recently completed two new facilities for elementary education. These buildings will reduce pressure on the elementary schools and improve efficiency. The current high school will reach capacity in the next several years. Additionally, the District will be out of classroom space by 2009-2010. Consequently, discussions have been initiated by the School Committee to evaluate the potential for the expansion of the current Nipmuc facility. There are several options being considered including adding on classrooms and building a new middle or high school.

The regional aspect of the school compounds traffic and parking issues, specifically at the High School. With limited parking, the school initiated a permit system, which causes students without permits to park on the streets in surrounding neighborhoods. This has become a nuisance and a safety concern for residents because of the added traffic.

School Issues

The School District has established a Strategic Plan to review the Mendon-Upton School District's upcoming needs. The 2003-2008 Strategic Plan identified four goals, including the following:

1. To improve the process of teaching and learning through examination of curriculum, instruction, and assessment PreK-12
2. To improve communication between, among, and within schools, home and community
3. To develop a realistic, fundable technology plan
4. To maximize the utilization of available and potential funds

Other issues to be addressed include:

5. Parking and traffic concerns, specifically at the Nipmuc Regional Middle/High School and at Valley Tech in light of future expansion

8.6.2 Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School

Valley Tech serves thirteen communities in Blackstone Valley. In 2005, Blackstone Valley Regional had 28 students from Upton and a total of 60 combined from Upton and Mendon. It provides students with vocational/technical programs in Auto Body, Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Drafting, Electrical, Electronic Technology, Graphic Arts, Health Services, HVAC/Refrigeration, Manufacturing Technologies, Office Technology, Painting & Decorating/Property Maintenance, and Plumbing. The school will add programs in Cosmetology and Telecommunications in the fall of 2005 and plans to add a Dental Assistant program in coming years. In addition to their vocational technical course of studies, all students take core academic courses in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, and are subject to the same state-mandated test standards as students in non-vocational technical high schools.

Enrollment Projections and Facility Plans

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District officially broke ground May 16th, 2004 on a \$36 million expansion and renovation of the 1960s-era building housing the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School. Expected to be complete by January 2006, the goals of this project are twofold: 1) to better accommodate the increasing number of secondary students in the region who could benefit from a vocational technical education, and 2) to upgrade classrooms, programs



and technology to provide a “state of the art” facility. The project will add 14 new classrooms, three new vocational programs and a 1400-seat competition center to the campus. Every student and faculty member will have internet access.

According to published reports, last year Valley Tech turned away over 300 applicants to the school because of space issues. The expansion will allow the school to increase enrollment from 900 to 1,250.¹⁴ The 2004-2005 enrollment figures include 850 Valley Tech students, 20 students in a collaborative special needs program, and 25 students in Quinsigamond Community College’s post-secondary automotive technology program. School officials project an annual increase in class size of approximately 40 students per year through 2009 in the general student body. Though staffing needs are currently appropriate, the facility and program expansion will require additional teachers.

Community Programs

Valley Tech has historically provided Night School and Post-Secondary programs for adults in the region. Although on hold during the expansion process, these programs will continue once expansion is complete. The 1,400-seat Competition Center, nearing completion, will be available to Upton residents for meeting, performance and recreation space.

The District proposes to create an athletic field complex with appropriate parking spaces, bathroom facilities, storage, or practice facility buildings on the front portion of the property. On the rear of the site, which abuts a segment of State Forest Land, the District proposes to ensure the preservation of wetlands while creating an ecologically protected observation area for student research activist and passive community use. A \$12,000 Upton Community Preservation grant was approved by Upton Town Meeting in November 2004 to assist with the preliminary phase of this proposal.

8.7 General Municipal Facilities

There are three municipal buildings operated and managed by the town’s custodial and maintenance services. These include the Town Hall, the Knowlton Risteen Building, and the Police Department. As the traditional seat of government, the Town Hall building houses the Town Clerk, Board of Selectmen, Assessor, the Treasurer/Collector, Accountant, local access television, general custodial services for municipal buildings, and the Veterans Agent. The Knowlton Risteen Building, across the street from Town Hall, houses the Public Library, Board of Health, Code Enforcement, Historical Commission and the non-governmental Historical Society.

8.8 Town Government

Upton operates under an Open Town Meeting form of government, represented by a Board of Selectmen.

8.8.1 Town Hall

As mentioned above, the Town Hall houses the significant governmental functions in Upton including Town Clerk, Assessor, Treasurer, Planning Board Office and Board of

¹⁴ Though the school will be able to accommodate 1,250 students, a more realistic projection in the near future is 950-1,000.



Selectmen. However, this facility houses only seven of the 28 Departments and Boards in town. Four more are facilitated in the Knowlton Risteen Building. 12-15 people work full-time in Town Hall. These staff levels are adequate for the town's needs. The eight to nine boards and commission, including Open Space Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Conservation Commission and others, range from three to seven members each.

In addition to office space, Town Hall also houses a general conference room and the Main Hall. The Main Hall is an asset to the town; it is programmed seven nights a week with governmental, recreational and social activities. For example, Wednesday night the space is used by the Fire Department's basketball league, youth basketball, and the Cub Scouts who meet there once a month. Tuesday night is government night. Although this space is in constant use, demand has been offset by the facilities provided in the new elementary school and the conference room in the new Fire Department building.

The 20 boards and commissions not housed in municipal buildings use shared general meeting space to hold regularly scheduled meetings; these agencies have no space to "hang their hat" according to the Administrative Assistant. As it is, most of these boards and commissions hold each meeting in a different location; it would be helpful if each could rely on a set space to hold these meetings, even if this space is shared among part-time boards and commissions. Many of these commissions could benefit from dedicated space to store files, have a desk to work, entertain public concerns and hold meetings.

8.8.2 Police Department

The Upton Police Department, located at 30 School Street, is approximately 1/8 mile from Upton Center. The building, originally constructed as a school house, dates back to 1924 and was remodeled for the police department in 1991 at a cost of \$1.3 million. The department's operations are housed in facilities that encompass a total of 9,000 square feet on two floors. The first floor contains six holding cells (four adult male, one adult female, and one juvenile), a training room, and a small exercise room. The second floor contains the main control dispatch, male and female locker rooms, and administrative offices. Seven patrol cars are located in a secured lot, with a controlled access gate and video surveillance, that leads directly to the cell block.

The facility was designed for thirty (30) years of service. The demand for office space, however, is greater than the available area; the three sergeants currently share one office. The department has expressed interest in rearranging its floor plan to accommodate the need for more offices. The records system is completely computerized with plans to add mobile data terminals and wireless communications.

The Upton Police Department is informally assessing a number of future initiatives. Currently, they are researching the feasibility of expanding the building to provide a larger training room, more storage room, and to allow the downstairs area to be converted into additional office space. The department would also like to hire additional officers and acquire more patrol vehicles.

8.8.3 Fire Department

The Upton Fire Department, along with Emergency Medical Service personnel, relocated to a new facility at 20 Church Street in June 2003. The project, which totaled \$3.5 million,



adequately provides administrative offices and vehicle storage for the department's needs. Staff members include four full-time firefighters and one part-time accounting assistant, all of whom are also Emergency Medical Technicians. The Fire Department also operates one ambulance, five fire trucks, and one ladder.

Future investments are dependent on town approval of the budget. The department would like to replace one truck that is 30 years old and hire additional staff.

8.8.4 Public Library

The Upton Library, located in the ground floor of the Upton Knowlton Risteen Building at 2 Main Street, was originally constructed as a church in the early 1876. It is a two-story, wood frame building that was converted to office space in 1974 and currently houses the Public Library, the Historical Society, four part-time governmental offices and boards mentioned above and storage. The Library is 2,290 gross square feet with seating capacity for 23. There are no dedicated parking spaces; however the Library staff shares a small parking lot of approximately eight spaces with the other departments. The public generally park on the street when visiting the Library by car.

The Library's staff includes the Director, a Children's and Young Adult Librarian, a part-time Circulation Assistant and two additional 1/3-time circulation staff. In the spring, the Library was authorized an additional Circulation position, which has not yet been filled. The facility is open 40 hours per week from Tuesday to Saturday. On average, the Library receives 456 visits weekly. An online borrowing site provides access to electronic books and journals during non-business hours. As of fiscal year 2003, it had 4,260 registered borrowers and circulated approximately 42,800 direct holdings per year, 53% of which was children's material. The Library's 2003 holdings totaled 25,268 items, of which 31.5% was children's. The Library is supported by the Library Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Mendon and Upton Libraries, a nonprofit established to enrich these facilities.

In early 2004, a Feasibility Committee was formed by the Trustees to locate a site for the Upton Town Library in Upton. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners unexpectedly opened up a new grant round with applications due on February 9, 2005. The Trustees decided to apply although the timeline was compressed. A building program was written and an architect was hired to provide schematic drawings and a cost estimate. The site selected was 1-1/2 acre parcel located in the planned village on the old Upton Fuel and Construction property. The building program indicated that 18,000 to 20,000 square feet of space would be required to meet the state requirements.

The decision as to the grant award will be made in July 2005. There will be immediate funding awards and provisional awards. The provisional award will be funded upon approval of a bond issue by the General Court and the Governor. If a funding award is received then a town meeting will have to be call in late 2005 or early 2006 to approve the town's share. If a provisional award is received, then the Trustees must wait until the funding is approved by the state. If a funding award is made in July 2005 and the town approves its share by town meeting and ballot, then the new Library should open in late 2007 or early 2008.

8.8.5 General Municipal Facilities Issues

1. The town has no professional planning staff. The town has no professional grant writer. In addition, the complicated web of planning and land use issues that the



- town will address in the coming years warrants full time attention and professional knowledge and skill.
2. The space needs of the Town Hall, Library, and Police Station warrant attention. These space needs should be studied collectively. Further, the town center benefits from the 'critical mass' of uses that currently exist and this would be in danger of being lost if municipal uses left the town center.

8.9 Public Facilities Recommendations

8.9.1 Water & Sewer

1. Update and Revise the Sewer/Water Replacement & Improvement plan

The Public Works Department's Sewer Division should update the existing plans based on the land use recommendations found within this Master Plan. Given the recommendations for shifts in density and development preference, the town should strive to correlate the infrastructure improvements to those areas. These areas include the town centers, West Main Street, and the Planned Village Zoning District.

Responsible Entity: The Public Works Department's Sewer Division

2. Expand Water & Sewer to Upton's Eastern Industrial District

The lack of municipal water and sewer remain the biggest obstacles to development within Upton's eastern Industrial/Planned Village Zoning District located along either side of Route 140. There are three options the town can pursue to finance the extension of infrastructure to this district. First, the town could apply to the State's Revolving Loan Fund to cover the cost of extending municipal water and sewer to this district. The Revolving Loan Fund has two programs: the Clean Water Fund for sewer projects, and the Drinking Water Fund for water projects. Secondly, the town could pursue a CDAG grant through DHCD to cover the cost of infrastructure expansion. The last option would be to meet with Hopedale government representatives about the possibility of extending Hopedale's municipal water and sewer service to this district. The State's Revolving Loan Fund and the CDAG grant should be pursued as the first options of choice, with the Hopedale option as a fallback option.

However, before any sewer extension is considered, the town should conduct a planning study to fully understand the impacts and potential ramifications of such an extension. Once a sewer line traverses in front of a parcel, that parcel may tie into that sewer line and the town should fully understand the development and land use implications of any extension.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen, the Development & Industrialization Committee, in conjunction with the Planning Board and the Public Works Department's Water and Sewer Divisions

3. Establish a Definitive Municipal Water & Sewer Service Area

The presence of municipal water and sewer often dictates the location and intensity of development. Water and sewer service that continues to radiate from the center, with no well-defined limits to the service area, results in an inefficient land use pattern and an infrastructure system that is expensive to maintain and upgrade. In addition, expanding water and sewer service based on the ability to pay for it will create pressure to increase



the amount and intensity of development in these areas, some of which may not be suitable for increased density.

Infrastructure systems should be used to encourage growth in those areas where it's suitable and discourage growth in those areas that the town has determined should remain rural. It is highly recommended that Upton's Public Works Department work with the Planning Board and Conservation Commission to clearly delineate a definitive infrastructure service area with the understanding that water and sewer will not be extended beyond the delineated service area. Upton needs to start using its infrastructure to direct growth to the town center and Planned Village District instead of extending the water/sewer service areas based on the ability of a landowner/developer to pay for service extensions.

Once a Service Area is established the town should look into having the Sewer and Water system funded by an Enterprise. This would allow for a dedicated stream of funds to be used exclusively for the upkeep and improvement of the water and sewer system.

Responsible Entities: The Public Works Department in conjunction with the Planning Board and Conservation Commission

4. Remove Private Hookups from the Wastewater System

The Metcalf and Eddy report suggests that private source connections, which include sump pumps, roof leaders, and yard drains, should be removed from the system. An estimated 25,000 gallons could be removed from the peak inflow volumes if all of these connections are removed. The Public Works Department should commission a detailed study of this issue. The study should seek to determine where these private hookups are located, how much of an impact they are having, and if they are illegal or legal hookups. The study should also recommend methods that have proven successful in other communities for dealing with this situation.

Responsible Entity: The Public Works Department and the Board of Selectmen should pursue this study

5. Develop a Plan to Upgrade and Modernize the Stormwater Management System

Metcalf and Eddy note that in order for the private hookup situation to be addressed, the town may need to extend or rehabilitate the existing stormwater collection system. In addition, the town is pursuing other strategies to update and modernize the stormwater management systems such as new site plan and subdivision regulations. The town should commission a detailed plan on how to best replace, expand, integrate, and modernize the stormwater management system. Best management practices should be recommended and an emphasis on 'green' stormwater practices should be evident.

Responsible Entities: The Public Works Department should coordinate with the Planning Board

6. Identify and Secure New Water Sources

The Town of Upton would be well served by planning for long term water independence. This could be done through a combination of identifying new water sources within the town's borders, and/or tying the existing system to neighboring towns for redundancy and backup purposes. The town should identify areas where high yield aquifers exist. This



information should be used as part of the evaluation process for potential open space purchases.

Responsible Entities: The Public Works Department should coordinate with the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Health, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission

8.9.2 Schools

7. Support Plans for the Development of Athletic Facilities and Preservation of Open Space on Valley Tech's Chestnut Street Property.

The Blackstone Valley Vocation Regional High School District and the Town of Upton have well-documented needs for additional athletic playing fields for students and the town's youth. Despite limited availability of playing fields on the District's Pleasant Street campus, the District has consistently demonstrated its willingness to make fields available for community use whenever possible.

Additionally, the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor "Blackstone Valley Trail & Greenway Vision Report," which outlines a federally-endorsed vision for trail and greenway development in the region for years to come, has identified a greenway area along the Grafton & Upton railroad tracks and through the section of State Forest abutting the School District property. The proximity of the Valley Tech project to the envisioned greenway enhances the potential for Upton citizens to use existing State Forest resources by providing a corridor between parcels for passive recreational use.

As the School District moves forward on its development/preservation plan, the town should identify available resources, such as Community Preservation funding, to assist with implementation of the plan.

Responsible Entity: The Community Preservation Committee, Board of Selectmen, Recreation Committee, and Open Space Committee should all work cooperatively with the Valley Tech School Board to identify and support a request for supplementary funding and to create appropriate plans for community use of the facilities/property.

8.9.3 General Municipal Services

1. Hire a Town Planner

The town has spent a great deal of effort, time and resources on completing this Master Plan. However, without a full time Town Planner, there is a significant risk that the implementation plan and the critical strategies contained therein, may begin to fall behind schedule and slip through the cracks of an all volunteer form of government. The town should give serious consideration into amending the form of government to include an administrative arm. However, at the very least, the town should hire a full time Town Planner. The public forums consistently supported the hiring of a town planner because the public understood the important role that the planner would fill. A town planner would primarily be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Master Plan. The planner would be a central repository for the town's vision and would work closely with the town boards and commissions to coordinate and implement the recommendations found within this Plan. Furthermore, the planner would review incoming development proposals to ensure that they were consistent with this plan. And finally, the town planner would apply for grants and strengthen the town's grant potential. The state and federal



government has many grants that would benefit the Town of Upton, but without a full time planner, the community is not taking full advantage of this resource.

Responsible Entity: The Planning Board should bring a proposal to the Board of Selectmen and they should jointly bring it to Town Meeting for funding

2. Conduct a comprehensive Municipal Space Needs Assessment.

The space needs of the Town Hall, Library, and Police Department should be studied with the help of a consultant. This facility needs analysis should take into account present and anticipated staffing levels and necessary resources. In addition, the continued survival of the Town Center is contingent on a continued presence of economic, civic, and cultural activity. To that end, a key component of the space needs study should be that the Town Hall should not relocate far from the Town Center. After hiring a consultant, the Library Feasibility Committee has already begun the process of siting and designing a new facility near West Upton.

Responsible Entity: Board of Selectmen should coordinate and commission this study



9.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan is a step-by-step guide for Upton to follow over the next fifteen years to ensure that the Master Plan recommendations are put into action. Implementing the Master Plan will require a concerted and ongoing effort on the part of the town's elected and appointed officials, volunteers, and dedicated citizens. The actions that the town takes now will create a lasting legacy for future generations. Implementing the Master Plan is the best way to ensure that Upton will continue to be a desirable community in which to live, work, and play five, ten, twenty, and even fifty years into the future.

The Implementation Plan is divided into two components. The first part is the Implementation Action Plan, which identifies the group or groups responsible for implementing each Master Plan recommendation as well as the approximate timeline for action. The second component is a simple evaluation form template designed to help the town measure the success of the Master Plan recommendations (once they have been implemented) compared to the public mandate and the goals that were established early in the planning process.

Planning is an iterative process whereby a community should continually evaluate and respond to new external and internal circumstances and challenges as well as changes in the goals and desires of its residents. This Master Plan has a planning horizon of approximately 15 years: that is, planning needs are evaluated and recommendations are made based on their projected benefit over the same timeline. However, the Implementation Plan only has a six-year timeframe in the sense that most of the Master Plan recommendations are targeted to be implemented (or least commenced) within six years. After about five years (around 2010), Upton should revisit the Master Plan to determine whether its goals and general strategies are still appropriate to the town. A full re-write of the Master Plan will not be necessary at this time, but the town should facilitate a public review of the document, modify the goals and strategies as necessary, and prepare a new Implementation Plan for the subsequent six years. The town should consider preparing a new Master Plan after 15 years (around 2020), at which time conditions in the town will probably have changed substantially and a new plan will be needed to address the challenges that these conditions present.

9.1 Implementation Action Plan

The Implementation Action Plan summarizes all of the Master Plan recommendations in a matrix format that identifies the approximate timeline and the group(s) responsible for implementing each one. The recommendations are divided according to the element in the master plan that is addressed. Most of the actions will cost little or no money to implement because they can be brought about by Town Meeting vote or other action to change local policies. In some cases, the town may need to devote staff resources or hire an attorney or consultant to assist with this process (e.g., to help prepare zoning changes). If the town is able to hire a professional planner, this staff person may take the place of a consultant in many of these recommendations. Some of the actions in that involve facility or infrastructure improvements will require the expenditure of funds, which may come from the town, the state, and/or other sources. Preparing cost estimates for these items is generally beyond the scope of the Master Plan, although rough estimates are provided for some items where such information is readily available.

In the "Timeframe/Priority" column of the Action Plan matrices, actions are classified as either "Short-Term" (indicating action within 12-24 months), "Middle-Term" (indicating action within 2-4 years), "Long-Term" (indicating action within 3-6 years), or Ongoing (indicating action that should be continually repeated as necessary). A priority designation is also given to each Action



Plan item indicating “high”, “middle” or “low priority.” All items and strategies within this Master Plan are important however, and the priority designation is simply a means to prioritize generally among all the actions contained within the plan. A handful of actions that require state involvement and/or major capital expenditures may require more than six years to implement.

Many strategies are linked to one another, requiring much effort in the early phases to lay the groundwork for future progress. The feasibility of implementing certain strategies will be dependent on the town’s ability to set the foundation with a number of the shorter-term strategies and allow the longer-term strategies build from those efforts.

9.1.1 Master Plan Implementation Committee

Upon the acceptance of this Master Plan, the town should immediately form a **Master Plan Implementation Committee**. The formation of this Committee is CRITICAL to the successful implementation of this Master Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board and should contain members from the various boards and committees who are responsible for implementing the Master Plan. The committee should be responsible for making sure that the action items identified in this Master Plan are being implemented in a timely and organized manner. Suggested duties include:

- Meeting monthly to assess progress in implementing the plan.
- Twice annual meetings with key boards such as the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission and Board of Health. These meetings would be to ensure that all the Boards are on the same page, receive updates on progress, and let the Boards know what implementation steps are next on the horizon.
- Asking for updates regularly from the key boards and agencies responsible for implementation as identified in the Implementation Plan.
- Working with key Boards to help involve the public in the implementation process.
- Making recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on issues related to the Master Plan including the hiring of consultants who may be assisting the town in implementation.



9.1.2 Implementation Matrix

Plan for Implementing Land Use Strategies		
Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe/Priority
Strengthen site plan review bylaw and regulations	Planning Board; various land use boards	September 2006 High
Create design review guidelines, bylaw and review committee	Planning Board; separate Committee appointed by Board of Selectmen	September 2006 High
Strengthen the Open Space Preservation Subdivision bylaw	Planning Board; Board of Health, Conservation Commission	September 2008 High
Update the use regulations	Planning Board; Zoning Bylaw Review Committee, Town Attorney	September 2006 Moderate
Update subdivision rules and regulations	Planning Board	September 2007 Moderate
Town Center Improvement Plan	Board of Selectmen; Town Center Committee	September 2010 Low
Establish retail and business size limitations	Planning Board	September 2008 Low
Create a Vehicle Service Establishment (Drive Thru) use	Planning Board	September 2007 Low



Plan for Implementing Housing Strategies

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe/Priority
Affordable Housing: Local Housing Partnership Committee	Board of Selectmen; Planning Board; Upton Local Housing Partnership	September 2006 High
Accessory Apartments	Planning Board; Building Inspector; Health Inspector	September 2007 Moderate
Conversion of existing single-family homes into two-family homes	Planning Board; Zoning Board of Appeals	September 2007 Low
Multi-family dwellings in Residential-A District	Planning Board; Zoning Board of Appeals	September 2007 Low



Plan for Implementing Economic Development Strategies

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe/Priority
Revitalize and expand Upton Development and Industrialization Committee	Development and Industrialization Committee; Board of Selectmen	September 2006 High
Develop the town's grant writing capacity	Board of Selectmen	September 2006 High
Dimensional setbacks in Upton's Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts	Planning Board; Development and Industrialization Committee	September 2008 High
Coordinate development activity with the owners of industrial land	Development and Industrialization Committee; Board of Selectmen; Planning Board	September 2008 Moderate
Investigate Tax Increment Financing	Board of Selectmen	September 2007 Moderate
Increase participation in the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce	Board of Selectmen; Development and Industrialization Committee	September 2007 Moderate
Increase participation in the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission	Board of Selectmen; Upton Historic Commission; Development and Industrialization Committee	September 2008 Low
Industrial Park Feasibility Study	Planning Board; Development and Industrialization Committee	September 2009 Low



Plan for Implementing Natural Resources, Open Space, & Recreation Strategies

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe/Priority
Complete the Open Space & Recreation Plan	Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission	September 2006 High
Create a 'Greenways to Blueways Plan'	Conservation Commission; Open Space Committee	September 2007 High
Increase the Size of the Recreation Commission	Recreation Commission	September 2008 High
Complete an Assessment of Active Recreation Needs	Recreation Commission	September 2006 Moderate
Preserve Contiguous Areas of Open Space	Planning Board and the Conservation Commission	September 2009 Moderate
Develop Lake and Watershed Management Plans	Conservation Commission	September 2008 Low
Enact a Scenic Roads Bylaw	Board of Selectmen	September 2009 Low



Plan for Implementing Transportation Strategies

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe/Priority
Develop an Overall Transportation Policy which prioritizes safety and rural character	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and DPW	September 2006 Moderate
Develop street design guidelines	Planning Board or Board of Selectmen should form a committee to explore this idea	September 2007 High
Initiate traffic calming	Board of Selectmen; Planning Board; Public Works Department; Interested Citizens	September 2007 High
Permit and advocate shared access	Planning Board	September 2007 Moderate
Traffic Impact Statements and mitigation	Planning Board	September 2007 Moderate
Develop walking/biking trails	Open Space Committee; Planning Board; Board of Selectmen	September 2009 Low
MassHighway interaction policy	Board of Selectmen	September 2006 Low



Plan for Implementing Public Facilities Strategies

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe/Priority
Update and Revise the Sewer/Water Replacement and Improvement Plan	Sewer Department	September 2007 High
Expand Water and Sewer to Upton's Eastern Industrial District	Board of Selectmen; Development & Industrialization Committee; Planning Board; Public Works Department's Water and Sewer Divisions	September 2015 Low
Establish a Definitive Municipal Water & Sewer Service Area	Public Works Department; Planning Board; Conservation Commission	September 2007 High
Remove Private Hookups from the Wastewater System	Public Works Department; Board of Selectmen	September 2009 Moderate
Develop a Plan to Upgrade and Modernize the Stormwater Management System	Public Works Department; Planning Board	September 2007 Moderate
Identify and Secure New Water Sources	Public Works Department; Planning Board; Board of Health; Conservation Commission	September 2009 High
Hire a Town Planner	Planning Board; Board of Selectmen; Town Meeting	September 2006 High
Conduct a comprehensive Municipal Space Needs Assessment	Board of Selectmen;	September 2006 Low



9.2 Evaluation Program

The Evaluation Program is a tool to help the town measure the success of the Master Plan recommendations (once they have been implemented) in relation to the goals established by the community. The Evaluation Program is also a way for the town to revisit the Master Plan three, five, or even ten years into the future and take stock of new challenges and opportunities. In this way, the town can keep the Master Plan current without undertaking a complete re-write of the document every few years. The following page can be photocopied, modified for each specific goal, and filled out every few years by the Planning Board as a concise summary of the successes and failures toward meeting each of the Master Plan goals.



Master Plan Goal:

A) Overall, is the town closer to meeting this goal than it was in 2005 [or the date of the last evaluation]? Please comment.

B) List any Master Plan strategies related to this goal that have been implemented since the date of the last evaluation. Has each strategy helped, hurt, or had no effect on meeting the goal?

Strategy	Effect (positive, negative, or none)	Comments

C) Are there any other factors, internal or external, that have affected the town's progress toward meeting this goal (e.g., major new developments or state actions or policies)?

Positive Factors:

Negative Factors or New Challenges:



Appendix A: Resident Survey Results

- I. Raw Survey Results
- II. Survey Summary and Analysis

From Stephen Wallace, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



CITIZEN SURVEY FOR UPTON'S COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
Rev 3/9/03

Dear Upton Resident:

At the request of Upton's Planning Board, the Master Plan Subcommittee is in the process of updating the Town's Master Plan (last done in 1966). The updated plan will help the Town prepare for and manage growth over the next 5-10 years. It will address a full range of issues relating to land use, economic development, natural and cultural resources, recreation, housing, transportation, community services, and town facilities. Once completed, the Master Plan will present an inventory and analysis of the town's existing conditions, and set forth a blueprint for future development consistent with the direction of its citizens.

A survey of town residents is one of several components to the master planning process. To ensure the survey results fully reflect the diversity of Upton's population, we have randomly selected 600 residents from the town's voting age population of 4800. You were among those randomly chosen to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Because this survey is based upon a random sample, it is **essential that all participants complete and return it as soon as possible**. Be assured that your opinions are neither right nor wrong, and they will be held in confidence.

Completed surveys need to be returned to the Town Clerk in the enclosed, stamped addressed envelope by April 15, 2003. The results will be made public at the town-wide forum on the Master Plan to be held this Spring. Notification of the meeting will be posted at the Town Hall and in the Town Crier. If you have questions about either the survey or the master planning process itself, please do not hesitate to call one of the subcommittee members below.

Again, please help your town plan for the future by returning your questionnaire promptly.

Thank you for your assistance.

The Upton Master Plan Subcommittee

Don Arthur, Chairman
Ken Picard
Tony Dick
Peter Ianniciello
Richard Gazoorian
Dan Rose
Harvey Trask



A Few Facts About Upton

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Population	3884	4699	6369
Change		815	1670
%		21%	36%

Land Area: 21.7 square miles.

Current Population Density: 294 people per square mile.

Total Housing Units = 1833	Breakdown	<u># of units</u>	<u>% of housing stock</u>
	Owner Occupied Housing:	1477	81%
	Renter Occupied Housing:	356	19%
Persons per Household in 2000 = 3.5			

New Home Building Permits Issued Per Year

1990 -1999: 60 average per year

2000: 58

2001: 65

2002: 58

Median sales price of a single family home in 2002: \$360,000.

Taxes levied for fiscal year 2003: \$ 8408000. (total)

Upton has a single tax rate that is applied to all classes of property. The breakdown of the tax base is as follows:

Residential taxes:	93%
Commercial taxes:	3%
Industrial taxes:	2%
Personal property taxes:	2%

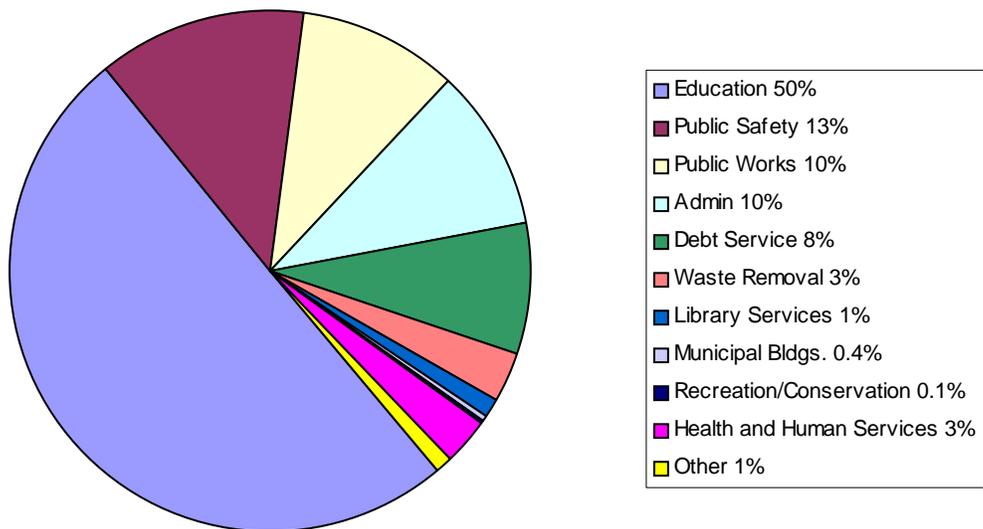
Total Town of Upton Budget for Year 2003: \$9,990,018.

This money is spent as follows:

Education	50.4%
Public Safety	13.3%
Consists of Police, Fire, Ambulance, Code Enforcement	
Public Works	10.4%
Admin	9.9%
Consists of Accountant, Assessors, Treasurer, Clerk, Communications, Tech Committee, Selectmen, Town Officer, Moderator, Finance Committee, Personnel Board, Registrar, Planning Board, Counsel	
Debt Service	7.6%
Waste Removal	3.0%
Health and Human Services	2.7%
Consists of Board of Health, Council on Aging, Veterans Svcs., Nurse Health Svcs, Dog Officer	
Library Services	1.5%
Municipal Buildings	0.4%
Recreation/Conservation	0.1%
Other	0.8%
Consists of Cemetery, Capital Budget, Cable Access, Misc	



Upton Town Budget



Upton Town Survey

General

1. What do you like about living in Upton? (Please rank your responses, i.e., put 1 next to what you find most desirable; 2 next to your second choice; 3 next to your third choice, and so on).

1-22	1-9	1-150
2-27	2-8	2-73
3-30 low tax rate	3-13 affordable housing	3-28 small town rural character
1-40	1-16	1-7
2-15	2-48	2-14
3-12 family ties	3-56 low crime rate	3-18 convenience to work
1-15	1-38	1-10
2-20	2-62	2-23
3-32 access to highways	3-43 open spaces	3-29 school system
1-3	1-1	1-0
2-4	2-3	2-5
3-6 services	3-4 historic resources	3-5 recreation opportunities
1-2	1-0	1-0
2-3	2-0	2-2
3-9 community activities	3-1 employment opportunities	3-6 convenience to services

Other _____

2. What do you find undesirable about living in Upton? (Please rank your responses, i.e., put 1 next to what you find most undesirable about living in Upton, 2 next to your second choice, and so on).

1-38	1-35
2-17	2-32
3-18 high tax rate	3-22 lack of retail shopping opportunities
1-11	1-16
2-7	2-9
3-3 school system	3-12 lack of affordable housing
1-8	1-13
2-14	2-15
3-13 municipal services	3-13 lack of recreation opportunities
1-42	1-3
2-49	2-12
3-32 excessive traffic	3-15 lack of employment opportunities
1-90	1-26
2-51	2-47
3-34 excessive development	3-43 loss of small town character

1-18
2-18
3-16 downtown Upton

Other _____



Economic Development

3. What types of businesses would you like to see come to Upton? (Choose as many as you like)
158 restaurants 20 fast food establishments 45 hardware/home improvement stores
19 clothing stores 98 small-scale retail stores 20 large-scale retail stores (Wal-Mart etc.)
47 services (dry-cleaners, printers, tailors, etc.) 27 movie theater
65 professional services (doctor's office, lawyer's office, etc.)
66 Large Scale Grocery Store 186 I prefer minimal additional business

Other _____

4. What types of improvements would you like to see in downtown Upton? (choose as many as you like)
("Downtown Upton" is defined here as Route 140 roughly between Town Hall and West Upton)
96 building façade improvements 35 more parking 87 larger public common area
155 streetscape improvements (sidewalks, benches, street trees, etc.)
112 No improvements are needed

Other _____

5. What types of industries, if any, would you like to see come to Upton? (you can choose more than one)
81 light manufacturing 57 research & development 64 office parks
9 heavy manufacturing 9 freight shipping 26 warehousing/storage
24 medical research 30 bio-technology 12 defense industries
225 I prefer minimal new industry

Other _____

Housing

6. What types of additional housing do you think Upton needs? (you can choose more than one type)
75 single-family homes 16 two-family homes 9 multi-family units
19 apartments 36 condominiums 71 elderly housing
37 subsidized housing for low income citizens 38 cluster housing
57 in-law apartments in existing residences 93 less expensive housing

Other _____

Land Use

7. Rural Upton (to the north and south of downtown) has a minimum lot size requirement of approximately two acres (80,000 sq. ft.). Do you think...
17 this is too large 44 this is too small 252 this is just right



22. What is your level of education?
9 some high school 57 high school 44 some college
133 college graduate 68 graduate degree

23. How long have you lived in Upton?
54 less than five years 71 5-10 years 75 11-20 years 118 over 20 years
If less than five years, what made you choose Upton as a place to live?

Reason: _____

24. Geographically speaking, where do you work?
46 in Upton 31 at least 10 minutes outside of Upton
73 at least 20 minutes outside of Upton 84 at least 30 minutes outside of Upton
18 outside of the region 54 retired
Feel free to tell us the name of the community where you work _____

25. Did you vote at the last town meeting? (May 2002) 161 Yes 154 No

26. Do you use commuter rail service for your commute to work? 11 Yes 298 No

Additional Comments (please provide any additional comments or concerns you may have regarding the future development of Upton (feel free to attach your comments if the space provided is not enough)

The Upton Master Plan Committee thanks you for taking the time to complete this survey. You can look forward to learning the results of the survey this spring.



MEMO TO: Upton Master Plan Committee
FROM: Stephen Wallace, CMRPC
DATE: June 9, 2003
SUBJECT: Analysis of citizen survey results

Last week I sent you the numerical tallies of the 328 surveys that CMRPC tabulated on behalf of the Committee. I've now taken some time to analyze the numbers and provide a bit more feedback on what they mean. The good news is that the survey results and the public comments heard at the 5/28 forum are very much in line.

Question #1: What do you like about living in Upton?

Top three responses:

Small town rural character (150 first place votes)
Family ties (40 votes)
Open spaces (38 votes)

Choices receiving the most top three votes:

Small town rural character (251 top three votes)
Open spaces (143 top three votes)
Low crime rate (120 top three votes)

The results of the first question indicate that Upton residents enjoy the small town rural character and open spaces. That so many respondents would list "low crime rate" within their top three indicates that Upton residents feel the community is a safe place to live and raise a family.

Question #2: What do you find undesirable about living in Upton?

Top three responses:

Excessive development (90 first place votes)
Excessive traffic (42 votes)
Lack of retail shopping opportunities (35 votes)

Choices receiving the most top three votes:

Excessive development (175 top three votes)
Excessive traffic (123 top three votes)
Loss of small town character (116 top three votes)
Lack of retail shopping opportunities (89 top three votes)
High tax rate (73 top three votes)

The results of question #2 clearly indicate that Upton residents are concerned about over-development, its impact on the local traffic pattern, and the threat it presents to the town's rural character. Please note that "high tax rate" also received a high number (73) of top three votes.



Question #3: What types of businesses would you like to see come to Upton?

Top three responses:

I prefer minimal additional businesses (186 votes)

Restaurants (158 votes)

Small-scale retail stores (98 votes)

Least favored retail development options: This was a tie between fast-food establishments and large-scale retail stores (each received only 20 votes).

The results of Question #3 indicate that Upton residents are, by and large, happy to obtain their services from neighboring communities and would prefer to see Upton remain residential and rural as opposed to becoming a commercial hub. And yet, everyone wants a new restaurant in town.

Question #4: What types of improvements would you like to see in downtown Upton?

Top three responses:

Streetscape improvements (155 votes)

No improvements are needed (112)

Building façade improvements (96 votes)

Larger public common area (87 votes)

More parking (35 votes)

The top response to Question #3 was the desire for some streetscape improvements (sidewalks, benches, street trees, etc.) in the center of town; however, the second favored response was that no improvements are needed. Thus, while some “prettying up” of town center may be appreciated, quite a few residents are fine with the town center’s present condition.

Question #5: What types of industries, if any, would you like to see come to Upton?

Top four responses:

I prefer minimal new industry (225 votes)

Light manufacturing (81 votes)

Office parks (64 votes)

Research & development (57 votes)

The vast majority of respondents would prefer minimal new industry in Upton. As part of the master planning process, Upton residents are going to have to make a clear choice about its land use pattern: either remain a rural bedroom community that relies primarily on residential property taxes, or embrace a limited expansion of commercial & industrial development to offset the property tax burden on local homeowners. Both choices have implications that the Committee will need to think through when it gets to the Master Plan’s Land Use chapter. You should ask yourselves the following questions: if Upton residents prefer to remain a rural bedroom community, just how much new residential



development can be accommodated before the homeowner tax burden becomes unacceptably high (realizing that residential development almost always costs more in services than it provides in tax revenue)? This choice also has implications for the town's land preservation strategy. If Upton planners want to see the town have a more balanced tax base, it will need to educate residents on the value of new commercial & industrial development as a means of increasing tax revenue (and thus somewhat alleviating the tax burden on homeowners). This choice also has implications that need to be thought through such as: where to allow such development and what impact would it have on the local traffic pattern. Although the majority of survey respondents favor minimal new industry, the preference appears to be for "clean" industries if such new development is needed.

Question #6: What types of additional housing do you think Upton needs?

Top three responses:

Less expensive housing (93 votes)

Single-family homes (75 votes)

Elderly housing (71 votes)

The preference appears to be for single-family housing, in keeping with the town's current development pattern. The high number of votes for elderly housing indicates that Upton residents understand that seniors are a fast growing segment of the population and that they require new housing choices upon entering their golden years. In-law apartments and cluster housing received modest support (57 and 38 votes respectively), while multi-family and two-family housing received the least amount of support (9 and 16 votes respectively). That so many respondents listed expensive housing (93 votes) as a concern while showing moderate support for subsidized housing (37 votes), is indicative that Upton residents understand the cost of housing is a big issue in the region. It also shows that Upton many residents are savvy enough to know what subsidized housing means for the town (i.e., Chapter 40B and the town's 10% "affordable" housing threshold).

Question #7: Rural Upton's minimum lot size requirement.

The vast majority of respondents (80.5%) believe the current lot size requirement of 80,000 square feet is just right. Only 17 respondents felt the requirement is too large.

Question #8: Would you support the rezoning of land currently zoned residentially for the following commercial/industrial purposes?

Top three responses:

I am against rezoning residential property (211 votes)

Office and professional uses (69 votes)

Retail use (51 votes)

Clearly, the majority of respondents do not favor rezoning residential property for commercial/ industrial uses. This brings several questions to mind: does the town have enough vacant developable land within its existing commercial & industrial districts to



expand its tax base if this land was developed? What is the actual likelihood of having the town's remaining commercial and industrial land developed for such purposes? These questions (and many more) will need to be answered as you move into the Land Use chapter.

Question #9: Would you support any of the following measures to control residential growth?

Top three responses:

Limit number of building permits (204 votes)

Tie residential growth to available infrastructure and municipal services (163 votes)

Use the town's water/sewer systems to guide where development occurs (128 votes)

There was no clear consensus on the best way to control residential growth. However, since each choice offered received a significant number of votes, it is clear that Upton residents are concerned about the pace of development.

Question #10: In an effort to preserve Upton's rural character, would you support any of the following initiatives?

There was no clear consensus here as each of the three options received a significant amount of support: create an historic district (132 votes), adopt the CPA (105 votes), and add scenic road designations (74 votes).

Question #11: How would you rate Upton's commitment to the preservation and acquisition of open space?

This was another split decision: 133 respondents (or 46% of the people that answered this question) felt Upton's commitment was "not enough", while 120 respondents (or 42% of those who answered) felt Upton's commitment was "just right".

Question #12: Is there any specific parcel of land you think the town should purchase?

This was an open-ended question and there were too many properties listed to tabulate. However, the Stockwell property was frequently mentioned.

Question #13: Would you favor raising taxes to purchase this property?

103 survey respondents said no, 85 were undecided and 58 said yes. The results were not surprising as the issue of funding often depends of the particular property in question.

Question #14: Rate the services.

Not surprisingly, Upton's police and fire services received the highest ratings with each department receiving a 97.7% excellent-to-good rating. The public works department fared the worst receiving a 46.5% excellent-to-good rating (meaning that 53.5% of



respondents rated this service either fair or poor). The Planning Board didn't fare very well either, with only 55.4% of respondents rating it excellent-to-good. But it is important to remember that the Planning Board is an approval granting authority that sometimes has to say "no". Thus, a lower approval rating for local planning boards is the norm. Surprisingly, recreation received poor grades with only 57.1% of respondents giving it an excellent-to-good rating.

Question #15: In general, are you happy with how easily you can access town services and offices?

The overwhelming majority of respondents (87.2%) are happy with the current level of access. Of the small percentage of the dissatisfied, most listed "limited hours" as their point of discontent.

Question #16: Would you favor raising taxes for the municipal sewer and water systems for the following uses?

There were two clear choices that rose to the top here: 147 respondents are in favor of upgrading the current outdated system, while 144 respondents are against raising taxes for the sewer and water systems. Thus, while Upton residents would like to see the water/sewer systems upgraded, few are willing to see taxes raised for this purpose. Although there is no way to tell for sure, I imagine that many of the respondents that are against raising taxes for upgrades do not live within the service areas.

Question #17: How many people in your household?

The survey average was 3.08 persons per household. This is somewhat higher than your 2000 US Census persons per household figure of 2.74.

Question #18: Are there children under 18 in your household?

Slightly less than half of the respondents (46%) have children in the household while the majority (54%) do not have children in the household.

Question #19: How many people over 65 are there in your household?

More than three quarters (77%) of respondents do not have seniors living in their households, while 23% have at least one senior in the household.

Question #20: Do you own or rent?

The survey respondents overwhelmingly own their home (92.2%). Compare this with the actual percentage of home-ownership in Upton as outlined in the 2000 US Census: 82.4%. Thus, homeowners responded at a higher rate than renters. This is typically the case with town-sponsored surveys. Homeowners in the community have a greater stake in community affairs than renters because they often have sunk in roots and/or have



children in the local school system Renters on the other hand are often single people and are more likely to be transitory.

Question #21: What type of housing do you live in?

The vast majority of respondents (90%) live in single-family homes. The 2000 US Census states that 81.5% of Upton's housing stock consists of single-family homes. Thus, single-family homes responded at a higher rate than apartment dwellers and multi-family households.

Question #22: What is your level of education?

Almost two thirds (64.6%) of the respondents have at least a college education.

Question #23: How long have you lived in Upton?

17% of respondents have lived in Upton less than five years.
22% have lived in Upton 5-10 years.
24% have lived in Upton 11-20 years.
37 % have lived in Upton for over 20 years.

Question #24: Geographically speaking, where do you work?

Only 15% of the respondents said they work in Upton while 58% said they work at least 20 minutes outside of Upton. This is indicative of a bedroom community.

Question #25: Did you vote at the last town meeting?

51% of respondents said they did while 49% said they did not.

Question #26: Do you use commuter rail service for your commute to work?

Just 3.6% of respondents said they make use of the commuter rail service. It would be interesting to see how this number changes over the next several years as the service becomes more popular and as housing costs east of I-495 continue to rise.

There you have it. Perhaps it might be advantageous to have a meeting to discuss the survey results with the Planning Board before bringing them to the Board of Selectmen as a formal presentation from the Master Plan Committee.



Appendix B: Upton Master Plan Public Forum #1

From Stephen Wallace, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



Upton Master Plan
Public Forum #1
May 28, 2003
7:00PM – Nipmuc High School

Upton Public Forum Comments

All told, there were 35-40 participants throughout the course of the evening. Dr. John Mullin of Mullin Associates led the forum. The audience was broken up into four groups. Each group was instructed to develop a list of Upton's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – ranking the top three of each category. At the end of the forum, a list of actions was developed, and the participants determined the order of their significance by placing red dots beside the preferred action item. The results of this effort are listed below.

Group 1

Top Three Strengths:

- 1. Land-beauty, state-owned**
- 2. Location-near Boston, Providence, Worcester**
- 3. Strong Schools**

Other Strengths:

Highway accessibility

Educated residents

High per capita income

Small population per square mile

Small businesses vs. a lot of large businesses

No large chains but accessible within ten miles

Strong schools

Voters support schools

Low tax rate

Access to cultural resources

Youth-sports-recreation

Mill House-affordable housing

Preservation of history



Top Three Weakness:

- 1. Inadequate Infrastructure**
- 2. Lack of volunteerism in Town Government**
- 3. Need a stronger commercial/ industrial base**

Other Weaknesses:

Lack of water and sewer in commercial and industrial areas

No Master Plan since 1966

Lack of public transportation

Lack of sports field

Limit the number of homes per year

Lack of tax breaks for elderly especially large landowners

Lack of municipal space

Top Three Opportunities:

- 1. Aesthetic presence**
- 2. Developing more recreational opportunities**
- 3. Regionalization of police, fire, and library**

Other Opportunities:

Master Plan

More communication with residents

Historic district

Strengthen wetland bylaw

Top Three Threats:

- 1. Traffic**
- 2. McDonalds**
- 3. Infrastructure decay**

Other Threats:

Fragmentation of town by development

Cliques

Public utilities

10% of population is under 5 years old. 100 graduating, 250 in kindergarten

Lack of voter participation

Cluster zoning bylaw



Group 2

Top Three Strengths:

- 1. Rural Character**
- 2. Not in Debt**
- 3. School System**

Other Strengths:

Safe for raising children
Open space
Approachable officials
Friendly
Location
Forests-state forest
Blackstone Heritage Corridor/history
Clean water-ponds, rivers
Limited urban sprawl
No pollution endangerment

Top Three Weaknesses:

- 1. Rapid Development**
- 2. Traffic-rush hour traffic, traffic being funneled in one spot**
- 3. Chapter 40B-affordable housing**

Other Weaknesses:

No Public transportation
Some school district strains
New vs. old, old vs. new strains
Road conditions
Environment concerns- town dump
Lack of enough sport fields
Lack of tax revenue-commercial development
No drug store, doctors, etc.
No tax break for senior citizens
Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, limited
Library
Community center
Parking
Chapter 40B/affordable housing
Over 55 housing opportunities



Top Three Opportunities:

1. **Doing the Master Plan**
2. **Community Involvement**
3. **Streamlining the permitting process**

Other Opportunities:

Library
Ponds are desirable
Summer recreation
Year round youth programs/space
A third water choice
Open Space development-use bylaw for trails
Conservation
Railroad Trail
West Upton's Church

Top Three Threats:

1. **495 Connection**
2. **Rapid growth/sprawl**
3. **40B housing**

Other Threats:

State revenue reductions
Districts-school, library, streets, etc.
State mandates-sewer

Group 3

Top Three Strengths:

1. **Rural**
2. **Schools**
3. **Safety**

Other Strengths:

Central location
Infrastructure (water and sewer)
Historic
Town people
Volunteers



No big business
Current zoning

Top Three Weakness:

1. **Roads**
2. **Lack of Recreation**
3. **Lack of Planning**

Other Weaknesses:

Lack of Town government communication
Citizen security
Subdivision regulations
Access to current zoning map
Historic preservation
Fire Dept.-handling growth

Top Three Opportunities:

1. **Master Plan**
2. **Valley Corridor**
3. **Diversify the Housing Base**

Other Opportunities:

Regular social gatherings
Recreational fields
Improve traffic flow
Being in the Blackstone Valley Corridor
Citizen communication

Top Three Threats:

1. **Uncontrolled Growth**
2. **Funding/financial crisis**
3. **Zoning**

Other Threats:

Failure of Town Water
Commercial Development



Group 4

Top Three Strengths:

- 1. Location**
- 2. Small town environment**
- 3. Protected open space**

Other Strengths:

History

Community Cohesiveness

Attractiveness

Commitment of workers and volunteers

Educational strength

Accessibility

Off the beaten Path

Civic involvement

Sewer capacity

Community Preservation Act

Top Three Weakness:

- 1. Lack of long-term planning**
- 2. Unplanned development**
- 3. Heavy traffic through town**

Other Weaknesses:

Water capacity

Roads

Lack of Infrastructure for Community Development

Lack of Economic Development

Lack of Definition-agreement

Library

Schools-pay-curriculum

Lack of sidewalks

Lack of recreational facilities

Top Three Opportunities:

- 1. Extend pedestrian walkways**
- 2. Economic development**
- 3. Town Center**



Other Opportunities:

Master Plan Process
Community Preservation Act
Schools
Railroad right of way
Location
Potential open space
Library grant
Expand water and sewer
Grants for recycling
Historic district
Better Town Government
Not being built out
Recreation expansion
Public transportation
Compliance with AAB regulations

Top Three Threats:

- 1. Loss of Small Town Character**
- 2. Traffic patterns**
- 3. Chapter 40B**

Lack of ADA-AAB compliance
Scenic vistas threatened by development
Public transportation
Economy
No diversity
Downward Educational achievement

Actions:

1. Cost of growth analysis (14 red dots)
2. Prioritize open space/ protection strategy (11)
3. Downtown appearance-Main Street (11)
4. Improve Grant Writing Capacity (9)
5. Capitol improvement plan (7)
6. Small scale business-no big businesses (7)
7. Comprehensive Zoning Review (5)
8. Control traffic on town roads (5)
9. Prepare an affordable housing plan (4)
10. Determine environmental capacity (4)



11. Balance Tax Rate (3)
12. Plan for new recreational facility (3)
13. Natural resource survey (3)
14. Improve Town department coordination (3)
15. Have an oversight committee for Master plan implementation (3)
16. Implement Town Manager form of Government (2)
17. Scenic roads (2)
18. Coordinate growth with infrastructure (2)
19. Town government should communicate better with the residents (2)
20. Understand the implications of improving infrastructure (2)
21. Preserve town character in new developments (1)
22. Historic District (1)
23. Embrace your diversity in planning (1)
24. Study demographic trends (0)
25. Prepare town legislative agenda (0)
26. Regionalization (0)
27. Make best use of land (0)



Appendix C: Upton Master Plan Public Forum #2

From Stephen Wallace, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



Upton Master Plan Public Forum #2

Stephen Wallace – Central Massachusetts Regional Planning

April 3, 2004

Public Forum Comments

All told, there were roughly 60 participants throughout the course of the morning. Dr. John Mullin of Mullin Associates led the forum with assistance from his partner, Dr. Zenia Kotval. Stephen Wallace from CMRPC, Todd Ford of Daylor & Associates, and Elizabeth Krautscheid of DHCD provided additional assistance.

The audience was broken up into four groups, each group dealing with a particular Master Plan topic: housing, land use, economic development, and open space protection. Each group was instructed to develop a list of actions for the topic being discussed, breaking them down into short-term actions (defined as something the Town could pursue within a year of completing the Master Plan); mid-term actions (something the Town could accomplish within 3-5 years of completing the Plan); and long-term actions (5 years and beyond timeframe). Each group was instructed to prioritize their lists of action items and present them to the entire audience.

After hearing from each group, the groups were sent away again to integrate what they've heard from the other groups and develop a list of their "top three" action items. The "top three" lists were presented to the audience at large and Dr. Mullin provided comments and suggested resources and ideas for their implementation.

Each audience member was then given three red dots and told to place them on their preferred action items; the only caveat was that they could not place their dots on their own group's list of action items.

Housing Group

Prioritized Short-Term Action Items:

Establish a separate local housing authority (I think they meant "partnership", SW) to manage, monitor and centralize housing information

Lower the density of housing units. Less density = fewer roads/infrastructure

Add municipal development review process, especially for frontage properties

Un-Prioritized Short-Term Action Items:

Establish a separate housing department/authority to:

- Repair what we have
- Manage, monitor waiting lists
- Centralize housing information



Keep 2-acre zoning for conventional subdivision plans
Lower density of units (less density = fewer roads, infrastructure)
Add municipal review process for frontage property

Prioritized Mid-Term Action Items:

Expansion of municipal services commensurate with development
Establish a building cap – limit unit/development per year bylaw
Improve developer implementation of open space – submit open space plan at preliminary stage

Un-Prioritized Mid-Term Action Items:

Look at bylaw that would cap the number of units per development per year
Housing for seniors 55 years and older
Inclusionary zoning bylaw – distribution of affordable units
Improve current open space plan (incentives to developers, plans for developers,
require developers to submit plans for open space during the preliminary phase)
Expand municipal services commensurate with development

Prioritized Long-Term Action Items:

More accessible/affordable housing to stay ahead of Chapter 40B
(Accessible for handicapped population)
(Allow fixed income households to stay in their houses)
(Municipal operated and maybe owned)
Create more homes for younger families – not condos
More sidewalks

Un-Prioritized Long-Term Action Items:

More accessible housing units (handicapped, affordable)
Housing for households on fixed incomes
More municipally-owned and operated housing
Homes for younger families, starter homes in small neighborhoods, not condos
More accessible/affordable units only to stay ahead of Chapter 40B
Preserve historic buildings
Sidewalks and curb cuts that match the AAD/AAB standards

Housing Group’s “Top Three” Action Items

Hire a Town Planner (14 votes)
Develop a community character statement that leads to design guidelines for commercial and
industrial development (4 Votes)
Encourage appropriate specific land use (2 votes)

Economic Development Group

Prioritized Short-Term Action Items:

Update the various Zoning Bylaws
Educate the general public on land use and zoning issues



Reduce the residential tax burden
Expand municipal water and sewer
Prepare a cost-benefit analysis for different types of land use
Establish and articulate community values

Un-Prioritized Short-Term Action Items:

Create high value office space (campus style)
Attract alternative industrial development
More shops, restaurants and retail
Grocery store and pharmacy
Public access to open spaces
Light industry
Recreation – ice hockey rink
Bike access to stores
Review of zoning bylaws
Assessment of neighboring infrastructure
Encourage volunteers for planning
Cost estimates for utilities and railroad
Explain benefits of economic development to the public
Focus development where infrastructure exists

Prioritized Mid-Term Action Items:

Highlight existing community amenities
Hire a town planner to pursue grant opportunities
Enhance the existing municipal infrastructure

Un-Prioritized Mid-Term Action Items:

Water and sewer expansion
Have developers pay for bylaw amendments
Railroad development – for freight, or excursion tourism
Improve transportation infrastructure
Highlight existing amenities: State forest, Town history
Hire town planner to pursue grants – have developers “kick in” their fair share
Research outside sources for revenue

Prioritized Long-Term Action Items:

Access and develop the Town’s natural resources, specifically water
Preservation of existing aesthetics especially when business outlets are proposed
Reduce residential tax burden

Un-Prioritized Long-Term Action Items:

Sorry gang, I could not find this sheet (SW)

Economic Development Group’s “Top Three” Action Items

Public consensus that articulates a clear vision for the future (12 votes)
Create zoning bylaws that reflect the Town’s clear vision for the future (16 votes)



Identify and maximize natural resources (7 votes)
All three to be facilitated by a professional Town Planner

Land Use Group

Prioritized Short-Term Action Items:

Review use for downtown West Upton
Identify scenic roads and establish bylaw
Have Master Plan be specific for Upton

Un-Prioritized Short-Term Action Items:

Have Master Plan be specific for Upton
Review use for downtown West Upton
Look into historic district
Look into cluster development (improve existing bylaw)
Identify scenic roads and establish bylaw
Review road width standards
Review Town policy regarding road maintenance
Water
Recreation

Prioritized Mid-Term Action Items:

Attract appropriate economic development to serve Upton with appropriate standards
(landscaping, setbacks, architectural design review, etc.)
Prioritize open space needs
Plan for additional recreational lands

Un-Prioritized Mid-Term Action Items:

Review industrial and commercial setbacks
Establish landscaping standards
Establish architectural design review
Increase public board education
Prioritize open space needs
Plan for additional recreational lands
Create a sidewalk plan
Attract appropriate economic development
Attract commercial development to serve Upton
Library

Prioritized Long-Term Action Items:

Create a long-term plan for municipal sewer and water
Protect and preserve water resources (both quantity and quality)
Create more indoor and outdoor community space (Town Common?)

Un-Prioritized Long-Term Action Items:

Create a long-term plan for municipal sewer and water



Protect and preserve water resources (both quantity and quality)
Revise tax structure to promote open space
Pursue agricultural preservation for working farms
Create more indoor and outdoor community space (Town Common?)
Rail trail – links/map trails

Land Use Group’s “Top Three” Action Items

Hire a Town Planner with skills in GIS and grant writing (15 votes)
Create Master Land Use Plan that covers zoning, water/sewer, housing, open space and economic development (17 votes)
Implement the Plan (4 votes)

Open Space & Recreation Group

Please note that it was not possible for me to determine how the Open Space & Recreation Group divided their priorities into short, mid and long-term actions.

Prioritized Action Items:

Identify what we have, what we need, and what we want
Determine parcels that meet needs
Utilize creative financing: land trusts, grants, budgeting, grant writer
Execute plan with help of Town Planner

Un-Prioritized Action Items:

Create linear parks with walking trails and sidewalks
Buy land for multiple use/development
Develop a list of all town properties and potential uses for them
Create development plans for Stephans and Stockwell properties
Utilize creative financing – have part of land sold for development
Investigate other purchase options used by other communities
Require developers to provide open space
Improve open space requirements in the zoning bylaw
Keep track of State land becoming available
(swaps/sales, park/forest/conservation lands,
conversion to golf courses and other projects (prisons too)
Determine how much open space is needed
Determine what lands are most critical – set priorities
Reactive versus proactive
Soccer for West River Street
Planning for fields – appropriate siting versus land that randomly becomes available
Upton State Forest
Town Departments – identify needs and identify space required
Need plans – cemetery, recreation, etc.
Inventory open spaces – ecological resources, animals, recreation (active & passive), clean air
and water, less development
Density – grouped/cluster development
Density within developed areas



Recreation – fields for kids, families, both passive and active (soccer, softball, etc.), bike paths, equestrian uses
 Input from committees of needs
 Guidelines for basic space needs
 Prioritizing needs
 Mass Pike – Tourism grant program
 Federal dollars for historical preservation
 Does Town need a Town Planner or GIS system?
 Can Community Preservation Act fund planning? (SW: no it cannot)
 Bring in new commercial development to increase \$ available for open space/recreation
 Land Trust dollars from local banks from the Community Reinvestment Act
 Historic preservation funds
 Agricultural land – development rights sold to the State
 Town purchase of agricultural land – rent back to the farmer
 Community Preservation Act dollars to buy agricultural lands for rent
 Acreage for tax breaks to leave in forest/farm – push these tax breaks
 Developers – Town needs to lay out open space/recreation in new development projects
 Safety planning in new developments – fields and their access
 Overlay so planning can identify corridors
 Plan and identify parcels that would achieve open space goals
 How to leverage \$
 Should Town budget for open space purchase above the Community Preservation Act?
 Utilize land trusts
 Promote Upton as part of the Blackstone Valley
 Pursue grants both State and federal
 Needs – identify parcels, actively seek out willing sellers
 Water sources and protection
 Identify municipal needs
 Passive recreation – corridors between parcels for wildlife and pedestrians
 Encourage contiguous properties

Open Space & Recreation Group’s “Top Three” Action Items.....(Plus Four)

Prepare a comprehensive water and sewer plan (9 votes)
 Establish a Town Planner position (18 votes)
 Define/create a Town Center (15 votes)
 Identify appropriate use of land (4 votes)
 Review existing bylaws for consistency with Town values (2 votes)
 Prepare a comprehensive Open Space & Recreation Plan (4 votes)
 Achieve a balance between residential and non-residential tax base (2 votes)



Action Item Vote Tallies

Hire a Town Planner (grand total of 47 votes)
Create a Master Land Use Plan (17 votes)
Create zoning bylaws that reflect the Town's clear vision for the future (16 votes)
Define/create a Town Center (15 votes)
Public consensus that articulates a clear vision for the future 12 votes)
Prepare a comprehensive water/sewer plan (9 votes)
Identify and maximize natural resources (7 votes)
Identify appropriate use of land (6 votes)
Implement Master Plan (4 votes)
Prepare a comprehensive Open Space & Recreation Plan (4 votes)
Design a community character statement that leads to design guidelines for commercial and industrial development (4 votes)
Achieve a balance between residential and non-residential tax base (2 votes)
Review existing bylaws for consistency with Town values (2 votes)

Dr. Mullin's Implementation Ideas

These came fast and furious during the group discussion, and I was not able to get them all down. I've forwarded this summary to Dr. Mullin in order to give him the opportunity to add or clarify the following implementation ideas.

- Look at the Town of Boxborough as a Town that has created a town center from scratch.
- Get your Open Space & Recreation Plan approved by the State so that Upton can be eligible for recreation facility and land acquisition grant programs.
- When working on a comprehensive water & sewer plan, work with your neighboring communities (i.e., Grafton & Hopedale).
- It is entirely appropriate to have the Town's values reflected in a set of design standards for commercial & industrial development, whether they are requirements within a site plan review process or simply design guidelines.
- Once the Master Plan is complete, establish a Master Plan Oversight Committee to keep track of its implementation.
- Have your Town boards, committees and departments meet together regularly to coordinate implementation activities.
- Others?

