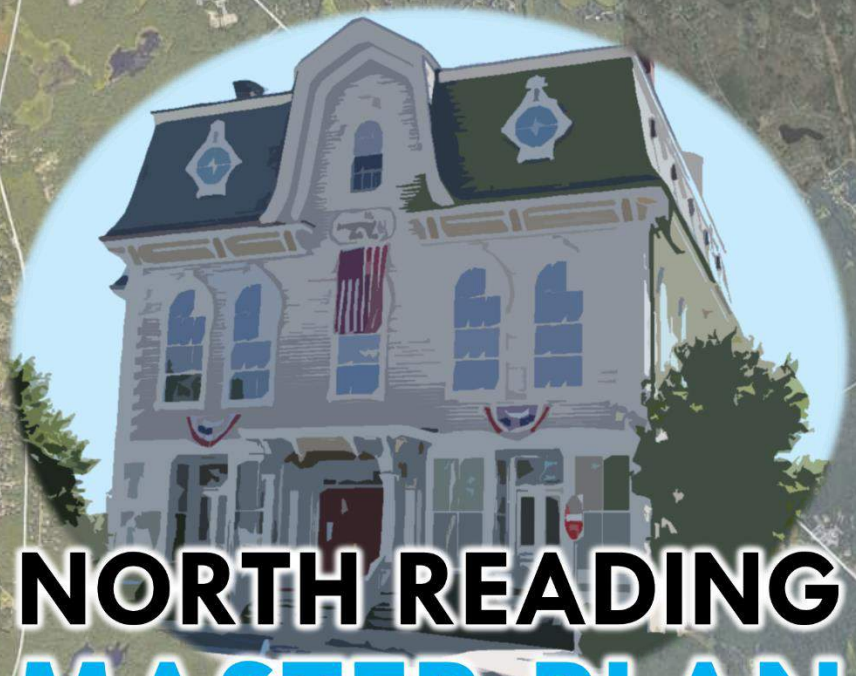


NORTH READING
MASTER PLAN
2018-2028



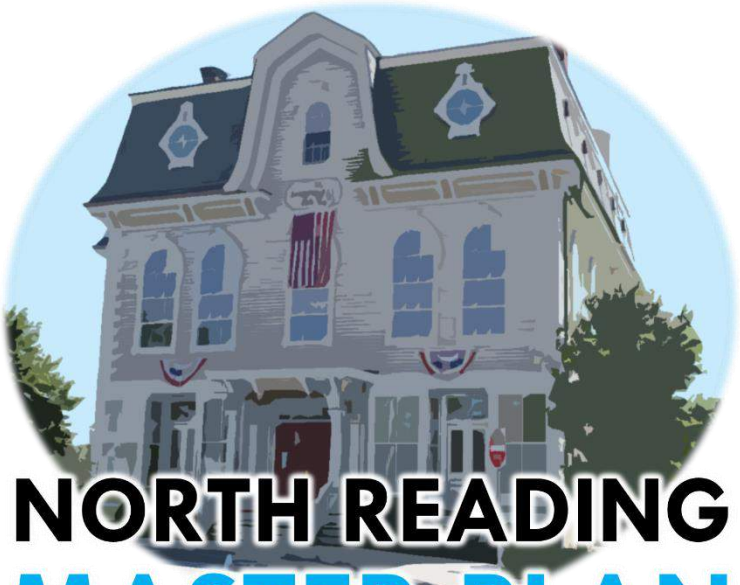
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NORTH READING MASTER PLAN 2018-2028

technical assistance provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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LETTER FROM TOWN PLANNER & MASTER PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

Summer 2019

The Town of North Reading has embarked on its first Master Plan since 2004 in order to gather input from participating community voices, and help shape how and where the Town might grow moving toward the year 2028.

The North Reading Master Plan for 2018-2028 gathers community ideas for improving the Town's future in general, various ideas and options for transforming Main Street, and presents a series of potential Town decisions, actions and investments that could be pursued in order to achieve various desired goals.

It is hoped that the Master Plan report, and its abbreviated visual executive summary will serve as a guiding tool during future Town board, committee and Town Meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Community Planning Commission

Warren Pearce
Bill Bellavance
Christopher Hayden
Ryan Carroll
David Rudloff
Jon Cody
(served May 2016-January 2019)

Town of North Reading Master Plan Advisory Group

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Rich Wallner
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The North Reading Master Plan 2018-2028 was developed based on feedback from advisory group meetings, community workshops, an extensive online survey, and feedback from Town staff. Thank you to all who participated throughout the process. The planning process and analysis was conducted with Town of North Reading funding supplemented by MAPC. The Metropolitan Area Council (MAPC) is grateful for the opportunity to work with the Town of North Reading on assisting it to develop goals and ideas for how to shape its future. Supplemental funding was provided from the MAPC Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMTA) program. Such funding enables the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to achieve its mission in providing towns and cities with assistance in achieving equitable local smart growth that also benefits the greater Boston region. MAPC is grateful to the Governor and the Legislature for their support and funding of this program.

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Vice President, Erin Wortman, Town of Stoneham
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Workshop Participants and Community Stakeholders

Special thanks to the workshop and other participants who provided feedback.

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VISION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose – Setting the Stage

The Town of North Reading Master Plan for 2018-2028 is intended to provide a **roadmap** based on community consensus ideas that when implemented throughout the years can set the groundwork for the Town achieving its long term quality-of-life goals. Master planning involves a process whereby a community evaluates its assets, and envisions how to shape and/or preserve certain parts of Town in order to leave a legacy for itself and the next generation. In addition to serving as a reference document to **inform decision-making at local boards, committees and Town Meeting,** the Master Plan also provides a certain sense of mutual certainty for existing and prospective residents and businesses about what type of community North Reading would like to be in the future. Ideally, future zoning amendments, Town policies and/or investments will be in harmony with the goals and recommendations, and **create conditions** that will get the Town closer to its **long term vision.**

Vision Statement

North Reading is an inviting outlying suburban town off of the Ipswich River with a strong sense of community and solid school system that seeks to shape its future looking ahead to 2028. Looking ahead to the year 2028, North Reading residents and business owners would like to take the necessary decisions and actions to enhance its community for residents of all ages. As part of our vision for the future, North Reading endeavors to protecting its natural landscape, enhancing and growing its existing developed or developing areas, and providing its residents with as many options as possible for healthy quality of life.

North Reading's vision for 2028 encompasses working toward steady progress on five main fronts (not in any prioritizing order). The first involves **PROTECTING AND CELEBRATING ITS NATURAL AREAS** and parks including the Ipswich River Park and its historic Town Common. The second relates to **IMPROVING AND EXPANDING ITS WALKING AND BIKING TRAIL SYSTEM** as well as sidewalks for leisure, health and more community connections.

The third front of the Town's vision is for **IMPROVING THE AESTHETICS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT** through straightforward urban design guidelines, and gradually transforming its Route 28 into a traditional and **pleasant Main Street.**

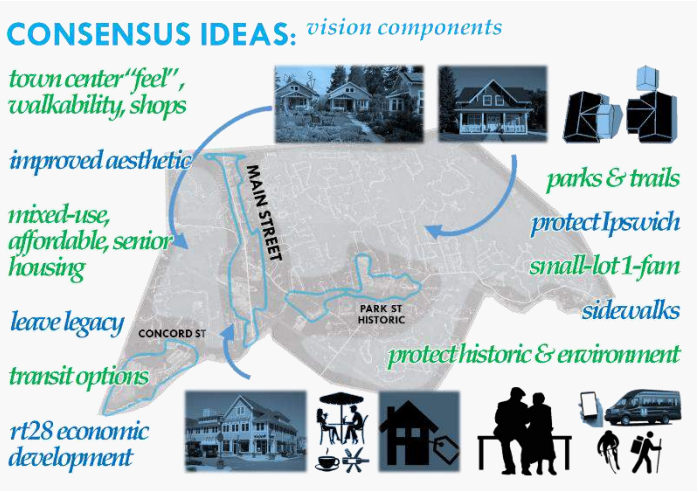
The fourth involves **STRENGTHENING THE TOWN'S COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** As part of this, investments and/or by-law amendments could allow **greater residential choices** for all ages including senior/affordable options along Route 28, and smaller-lot single-family options in certain parts of Town; as well as more **mixed-use development all along Route 28** that creates more job and housing options. The Town will also strive toward creative public/private solutions for **local mass transit options** including trolleys and shuttles connecting to neighboring commuter rail stations.

The fifth and potentially most transformative involves **LEAVING A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS** that could include a recognizable and **walkable Town Center shopping village,** and enhanced Town facilities such as a **centrally relocated Town Hall** with a potentially **integrated senior/community center** or **new town square.**

It is hoped that the ideas in the Master Plan document will serve as our community roadmap to guide our decisions at Town Meetings, and other decision-making boards and committee meetings throughout the next ten years or so. The North Reading community hopes that through consistent decisions and actions, we can create the right conditions that will allow us to realize our goals toward creating the future we envision.

What is a Vision Statement?

- A brief, aspirational statement that prefaces a Master Plan, and explains how the Town wants to be in the future.
- Sets the tone for the rest of the Master Plan and should be consistent with specific goals and recommendations for subsequent actions to be taken by the Town.
- Sends a message to prospective residents and businesses about what can be anticipated.
- Could be posted on Town website and/or shared with Chamber of Commerce, business associations, and/or repurposed in Town marketing pamphlets, et cetera to attract interest.



Overarching Consensus Goals

Subsequent chapters or "elements" of the Master Plan will recommend a variety of recommendations, goals and strategies based on community input. The following is a brief preview of some of the goals and strategies that garnered more interest and support.

- **ATTRACT PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT** with desired uses and traditional walkable Main Street streetscape form.
- **MAKE DESIRED LEISURE-RETAIL AND NEEDED CONDO/APARTMENTS VIABLE** by investing-in and/or supporting wastewater infrastructure.
- **CREATE A SHOPPING DISTRICT WITH LEISURE RETAIL** uses along an inviting streetscape with outdoor seating areas, and upper-story homes and offices (that reinforce ground-floor retail uses).
- **ADDRESS HOUSING DEMAND BY ALLOWING MORE OPTIONS** (including market-rate small lots/dwellings) that also enliven mixed-use/retail developments.
- **CREATE ATTRACTIVE ROADWAY AND NEW ROBUST TOWN CENTER** to attract private investment and desired development type.
- **MAKE ZONING CLEARER** to allow desired and/or needed uses, as well as compact, vertically-integrated mixed-use that can eventually help support goals such as local mass transit, affordable housing, and leisure retail.
- **SUPPORT WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE** to in turn support desired physical landscape and uses along Route 28.
- **PROTECT DRINKING WATER QUALITY** by preventing runoff and contamination.
- **ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** by attracting more retail, commercial/ office and light industrial development in order to ease the residential tax base.

1 MAIN STREET TRANSFORMATION



MIXED-USE COMPACT GROWTH

LEISURE RETAIL

AFFORDABLE WORKFORCE

SENIOR AGING IN PLACE

REDESIGN MAIN ST & MOBILITY OPTIONS

LOCALIZED SEWER

LESS RESTRICTIVE ZONING

5 WALKABLE RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS



POCKET NEIGHBORHOODS



SMALLER LOT SINGLE FAMILY "MARKET AFFORDABLE"

ACCESSORY DWELLING OPTIONS

POTENTIAL CREATION NEW RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

MARTIN'S POND

MAIN STREET

PARK STREET HISTORIC CENTER

CONCORD STREET

2 LEAVE A LEGACY

"PUT A THERE, THERE"

- RELOCATED TOWN HALL
- CONSOLIDATED SENIOR/COMMUNITY CENTER
- NEW TOWN SQUARE ON MAIN ST

3 ENHANCE JOB CENTERS



SHUTTLE BUS & ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT

ATTRACT & RETAIN JOBS

LOCALIZED SEWER

4 PROTECT & ENHANCE HISTORIC CENTER

SMALL SHOPS

SIDEWALKS

PROTECT PARKS

WALKING TRAILS

LOCALIZED SEWER

INTRODUCTION

Town Context [i]

Originally settled in 1651 as a farming community, and incorporated as a Town in 1853, North Reading has open town meeting governance, and a population of approximately 15,000 residents over 13.5-square miles. Its population is 98% white, and the Town has a median household income of $123,103. Additionally, it has an 88% residential tax base with a residential/commercial tax rate of $15.58 that is higher than that of adjacent communities and the State median. From an MAPC regional context, the Town is designated as an established maturing suburb with mostly single-family homes, and limited vacant land for new development.

The Town of North Reading does not have any direct highway access to Interstate-93. It has indirect access via exit 40 connecting to Route 62, and exit 39 in Wilmington connecting to Concord Street. While the Town does not enjoy any mass transit service, in 2018 the Town contracts with MVRTA for a "Ring & Ride" program for pre-scheduled transportation for seniors to their medical appointments, and uses a Council on Aging van for a variety of in-town trips. The nearest commuter rail station is located to the south off of the Haverhill Line in downtown Reading. Similarly, the nearest MBTA bus routes are located in downtown Reading (routes 136 and 137 to Malden Center).

The Town's Main Street coincides with State Route 28, and is characterized by mainly auto-oriented retail and small office uses. Currently, the development potential along the Route 28 area is limited due environmental constraints and the absence of sewer infrastructure. Presently, the Town's Main Street has more of a highway character with high speed traffic, limited sidewalks and crossings that do not make it safe or pleasant for pedestrians to cross. The Town's segment of Route 28 is under the control of the Massachusetts Highway Department of Transportation.

The Town's historic civic center is around its Town Common located at the intersection of Park and Haverhill streets. Its Town Hall, however, is not located along the retail corridor nor the historic Town Common, and instead is located about a fifth of a mile from its nearest intersection with Main Street at North Street. The Concord Street corridor located in the southwest corner (adjacent to the Town of Wilmington) is home to large scale commercial, office and industrial uses.

What is a Master Plan and Why?

A master plan is typically a long-term planning guide that summarizes the goals and aspirations of residents and property owners, describes existing concerns, and recommends various decisions and actions that the Town could take to achieve its own goals. It is intended to be a reference document regularly by Town officials and residents during meetings to inform and contextualize decisions on project approvals, investments, infrastructure, and zoning changes that can affect the Town's Master Plan vision and goals.

Master plans can provide communities with the following benefits if they are followed up with consistent efforts to implement various recommendations. Realistically, any given expressed Master Plan goal will be accompanied by more than a single recommendation. Communities oftentimes need to take action on more than one in order to proactively create conditions that get them closer to their long term vision.

- A town vision based on community input and priorities
- Strategies and actions to improve livability, opportunity and sustainability
- A land use plan to guide physical development in town
- An implementation strategy to effectively achieve plan goals
- Predictability for residents, businesses, and developers, and elected official

Master planning for a community like the one the Town of North Reading has undertaken is a process whereby a community evaluates its historic and present-day assets, and imagines how and where it should grow in order to leave a legacy for the next generation. The vision statement that prefaces the Master Plan serves a brief "headline" for residents and business owners to help identify overarching priorities for the preservation, enhancement, and growth of different areas, and sets the tone for a wider array of more specific master plan elements and goals.



Typical comprehensive master plan elements include plan elements such as: land use and zoning, open space, historic and cultural resources, economic development, housing, public facilities and services, and transportation. More specific goals within these master plan elements can inform decision on policies, by-laws and zoning regulations, and provide mutual certainty and predictability for residents and businesses alike.



Chapter 41, Section 81D of the General Laws of Massachusetts provides the legal basis for the creation of Master Plans.

Planning Process, Outreach & Participation

BRIEF OVERVIEW

- 4 public workshops (including senior event)
- 2 Advisory Group meetings
- Select Board – future
- builds upon past studies
- tax bill notice 5,000 households
- paid Facebook advertisements: 2 months, 14,400 reached, 45,071 "impressions", 501 link clicks, 129 from seniors
- the Patch, Town website, posters, emails
- participation: 554-survey respondents, 1 to 4 dozen workshop participants, 15-member Advisory Group, Town staff

As part of the scope of work for the production of the North Reading Master Plan 2018-2028, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council employed a multipronged approach to outreach, participation, and obtaining input, including the following: (a) bringing awareness to the master planning initiative, (b) extensive vetting of the questions for the online survey through the Advisory Committee and staff, (c) distilling key findings from pertinent, recent Town planning studies, and prefacing both the online surveys and the workshop materials for informed decision making, and (d) creating specific questions with photo examples in order to measure consensus for what types of housing/building typologies, and other physical improvements should go in specific areas of Town.



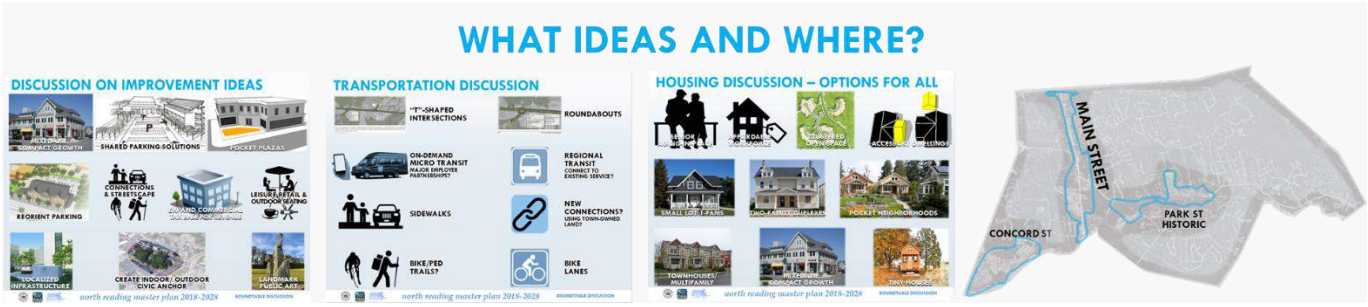


Community Input & Consensus

COMMUNITY INPUT MEASURED

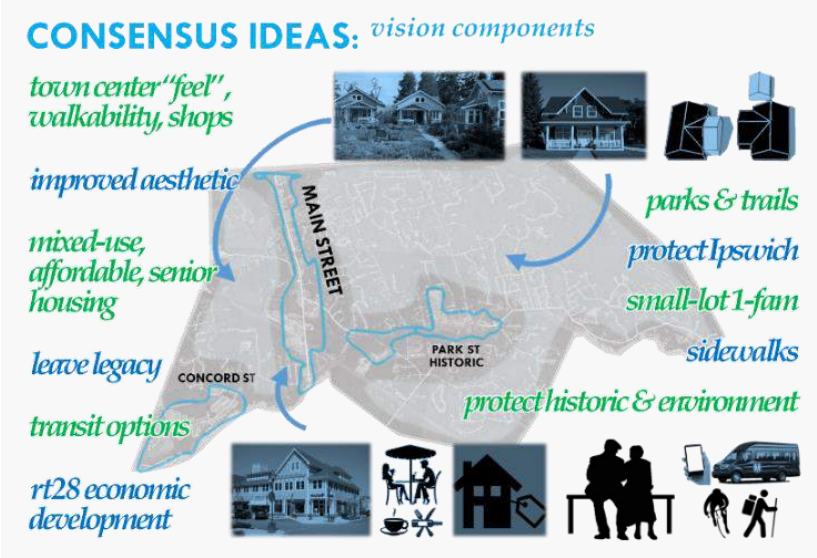


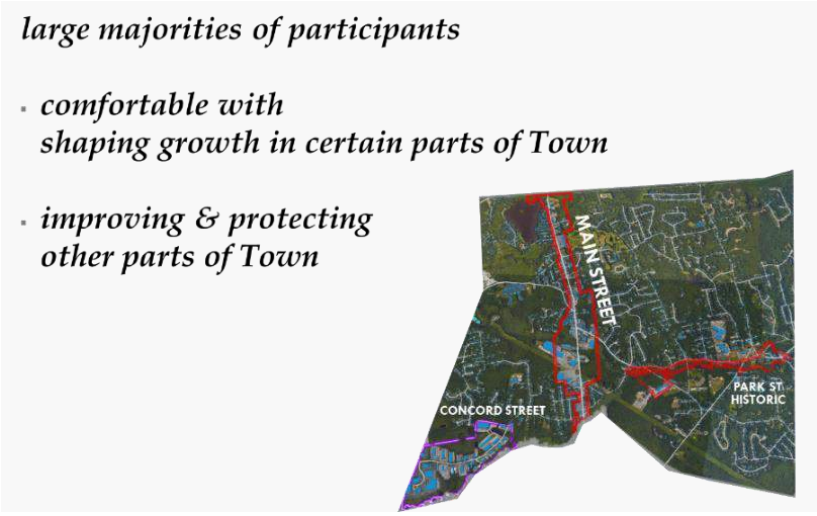
North Reading Master Plan participants who took the 7-week online survey and/or attended the workshops and meetings were presented with visual materials and questions to measure their input and potential support for ideas. The questions presented were purposeful ones intended to measure community interest for key ideas, and were devised to be specific enough so that they could lend themselves to actionable master plan recommendations. Potentially abstract planning ideas were illustrated with photo examples, icons, and/or briefly captioned and explained with bullet points. In addition to measuring input on planning ideas, participants were also asked to indicate what parts of Town they believed these ideas made more sense. In addition to providing a simplified map of Town with the pertinent target subareas, participants were provided multiple choice questions, and also the option of writing in "free-form open comments". The multiple choice responses were tallied, and open comments were synthesized to measure recurring themes to supplement the multiple choice responses. Similarly, workshop and committee input was examined to supplement online input. Below are excerpts of some the key recurring ideas by planning topic for which there was consistent interest and support for throughout the online survey and public meetings.



OVERALL CONSENSUS

Based on all of the feedback from the 15-member Advisory Group, the approximately four dozen workshop participants, and the 554-survey respondents, there was consensus for supporting the following overarching master plan ideas. The excerpts from the last public workshop presentation highlights the key consensus ideas from the survey and meetings. These key consensus ideas were used to draft the Master Plan Vision statement, and these ideas permeate many of the Master Plan recommendations. From a very simplified perspective, question after question that was asked and measured, large majorities of participants were: (a) comfortable with shaping growth in certain parts of Town; and (b) supportive of improving and protecting other parts of Town. In essence, the comfort level and interest in growth and change coincided with redevelopment along Main Street, and elsewhere in Town, there was interest in much more modest, minor enhancements.





The goals, strategies and recommendations that follow in the rest of the Master Plan Element chapters are based on a combination of these community consensus items and/or planning profession best practices. The master plan report will clearly indicate when a strategy or recommendation is being discussed that is not based on strong community consensus.

For the purposes of qualifying consensus surrounding recommendations, there will be loosely three categories for community online survey consensus ideas.

- Overwhelming consensus: approximately ¾ or 75% of responses, or more
- Strong consensus: approximately 2/3 or 66% of responses, or more
- Consensus: approximately ½ or 50% of responses, or more
- Some support: approximately ¼ to 49% of responses, or more

Additionally, the Vision Statement is also largely grounded in these consensus ideas. Ideally, master plan vision statements are consistent with both community input, and the goals, strategies and recommendations in them.

Planning Context

When the planning process for the North Reading Master Plan for 2018-2028 was initiated, several recently-completed and/or on-going planning studies had been completed for the Town. Many of these completed studies identified and/or confirmed planning ideas and challenges in the Town. The following Town planning studies were evaluated for pertinent ideas, findings, data and/or follow-up recommendations:

- Housing Production Plan 2018;
- Hazard Mitigation Plan 2016;
- Town Facilities/Buildings Plan (2017-2018);
- Sewer/Tax Revenue Study;
- Complete Streets Prioritization Plan;
- Main Street Streetscape Concept Plan;
- Paratransit Study 2017;
- Suburban Mobility Study;
- Priority Mapping Study;
- Economic Development Strategy Route 28; and
- Retail/Housing Demand Analysis.

Some of the key ideas, issues and/or questions from these studies were posed again to master planning participants to determine community interest and level of support (if any). Generally speaking, as can be seen in a workshop presentation excerpt above, the key ideas that Town residents have been considering for the past few years involve decisions on: (a) investing in wastewater treatment infrastructure (localized sewer) along Main Street; (b) investing in streetscape improvements; and (c) transforming some predominantly or exclusively commercial districts into mixed-use business districts with sewer and residential options for young adults and seniors.



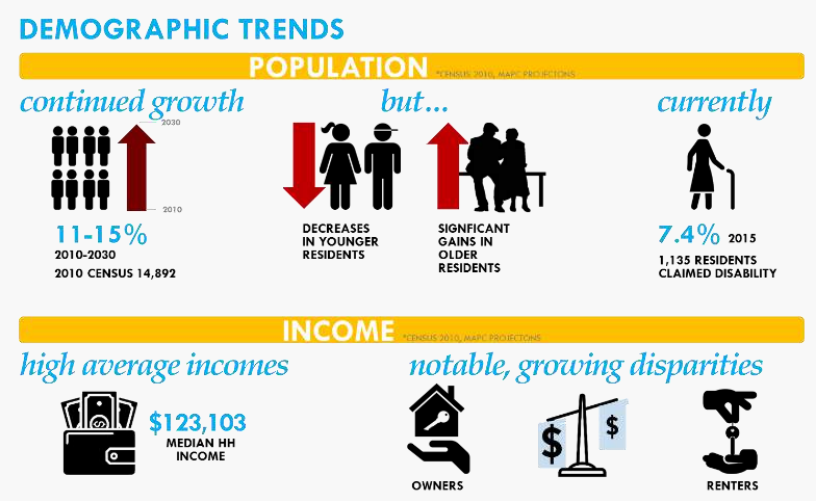
"I've lived in town for 40 years. Over the years, I've watched as the town centers in Andover and Reading have thrived and grown. I'd always hoped a similar change would happen here too, and it's been disappointing that it never has."."

QUOTE FROM PARTICIPATING RESIDENT – OCTOBER 30, 2018

Summary of Past Studies & Demographic Trends

The following data are the most noteworthy and key demographic trends that are intended to contextualize existing conditions in the Town as well as the strategies and recommendations. They are largely based on recent and pertinent planning studies[ii] conducted for the Town.

POPULATION



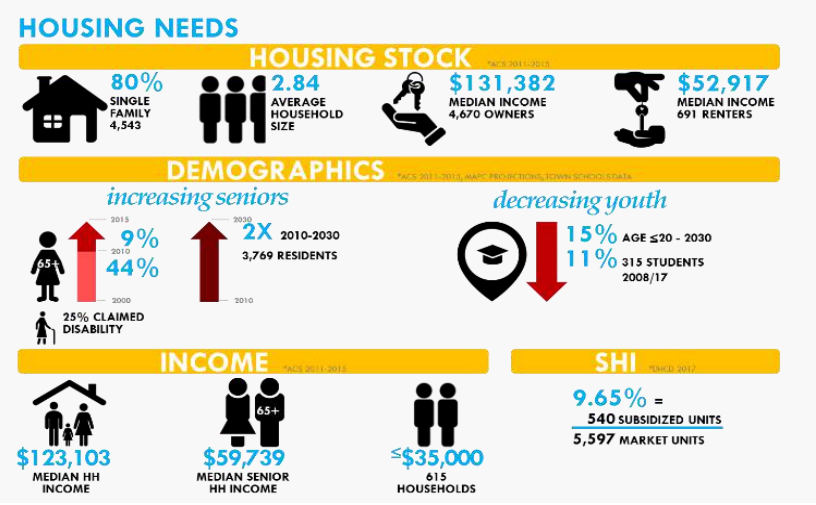
- North Reading's Census 2010 population of 14,892 residents is expected to grow by 11% to 15% from 2010 to 2030.
- However, when examining different age cohorts within the overall population, there are projected decreases in younger residents, and significant gains in older residents. This is also on trend with most surrounding communities, greater Boston and the State as a whole.
- The growth in senior residents was by 44% between 2000-2010, by 9% between 2010-2015, and is projected to approximately double between 2010-2030.
- The projected decrease in youth by the year 2030 is estimated between 11-15%. Past school enrollment statistics for 2008-2017 indicate a decline in enrollment of 315 students.
- According to year 2015 American Community Survey estimates, 7.4% or 1,135 residents claimed a disability.

HOUSING STOCK

- 80% of the Town's housing stock is comprised of single family dwelling units.
- The average household size is 2.84.
- The median household income of the Town's 4,670 owners is $131,382 compared to $52,917 of the Town's 691 renters.

INCOME

- The overall median household income (regardless of ownership/rental tenure) is $123,103 compared to $59,739 for senior households.
- There are 615 households townwide with a median household income at or below $35,000.



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & NEEDS

- The Town's recently completed Housing Production Plan indicates that the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory is at 9.65% with 540 subsidized units in relation to 5,597 market-rate units. It is worth noting that the meeting the State minimum of 10% does not necessarily mean that the Town has met the overall demand for existing residents who are still seeking housing options that do not require paying more than a third of their income toward housing (i.e., cost-burdened households).
- 82% of renters, and 29% of owners are cost-burdened. Cost-burdened households are those that spend more than one-third of their monthly income on housing costs. This puts such households in challenging position to meet their transportation, medical, and grocery needs.



- Overall, 31% of the Town's households are cost-burdened, and a subset of those (14% are severely cost burdened and spend more than half of their monthly income on housing).
- According to HUD 2016 data, the qualifying incomes for affordable units at 80% of the metropolitan Boston area median income (AMI) is $56,800 for a single-person household, $65,750 for a three-person household, and $81,100 for a four-person household.
- According to the Housing Production Plan (HPP), there is a very large affordability gap in the Town of North Reading. The median price for a single family is $508,950. As an example, based on maximum one-third of monthly income toward housing, a three-person household should only spend $236,000 toward a home. This would leave such a household with a gap of $272,950 for a median-priced single-family in North Reading. There are limited housing stock options in North Reading for condominiums, very few rentals exist, and none were vacant as of the HPP. For illustrative purposes, based on the much lower median price for a condominium, the affordability gap for that same three-person household would be only of $24,000.

MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

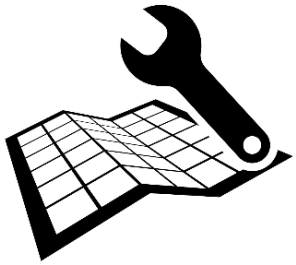


- The Town has had on-going discussions and several planning studies that have considered whether Main Street can be redeveloped in the future to become walkable and with more retail shops. These various studies have examined pedestrian safety streetscape improvements, potential zoning changes, and crucial wastewater treatment infrastructure to support higher-water usage retail shops.
- The overall conclusion has been that Town investment and regulatory changes are needed to create favorable conditions to attract private investment.

LAND USE & ZONING: *directing growth*

Introduction

Land use is a general term used to describe the primary use (or combination of current uses) occurring on a tract of land at a given time, including residential, retail/commercial, office, industrial, open space, transportation, mixed use and more. Land use patterns are influenced by numerous factors including historical development patterns, population and economic growth over time, infrastructure investment, transportation access, natural resources and environmental constraints, and quality of life. Importantly, land use is not permanent – it can and often does change over time. For example, a residential subdivision can be built on former farmland, or a residential condominium can be built on the site of a former hotel.

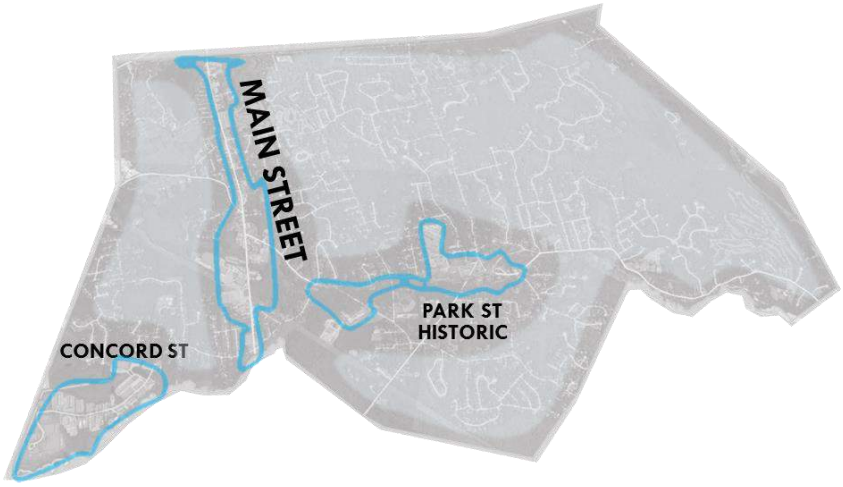


There are several primary land uses including residential, commercial, industrial, open space and more. However, each category can be further classified by subtype or combination of uses. For example, residential land use can include single-, two- and multifamily types, and commercial land use can include retail and office. Parcels with multiple uses such as residential and commercial can be classified as mixed-use, whereas tax-exempt properties can be separated into public and religious/institutional.

> *"We need to create 'a there, there'."*
> QUOTE FROM PARTICIPATING RESIDENT – 2018

Zoning land use regulations are a tool for communities to slowly shape the physical landscape through permitting, determine the proportion of area dedicated to residential and non-residential uses, and affect tax revenue generation for the Town. Zoning dictates what can be developed on every parcel of land: the allowed uses (there can be multiple allowed), the placement and massing of structures, the amount of open space required, the number of parking spaces, and more.

Local zoning bylaws are dictated by a community's preferences in form and location of development. The master plan captures community input on how to proactively craft a land use framework to guide future growth to advance the Town's vision.



Land Use & Zoning

LAND USE

Existing Gross Acres of Zoning Land Use Categories & Districts

The following table is a summary of how much of the Town of North Reading's territorial extent is dedicated to certain land uses and developments/buildings. These are in gross zoning acres and does not account for environmental and open space features/constraints. It is useful to understand how the Town's existing zoning can affect and limit the supply of land area available for residential, commercial, office and industrial uses.

The aggregated and zoning district tables below show that 89% of the Town's territorial extent is dedicated to residential uses, and 11% is dedicated to commercial office and industrial uses. Approximately 71% of the residential land is zoned for approximately, minimum one-acre lot single-family dwellings, and 10.5% is zoned for approximately minimum half-acre lot single-family homes.

GENERALIZED AGGREGATED MACRO ZONING LAND USES[iii] BY GROSS ACREAGE & EXTENT OF TOWN'S TERRITORIAL EXTENT

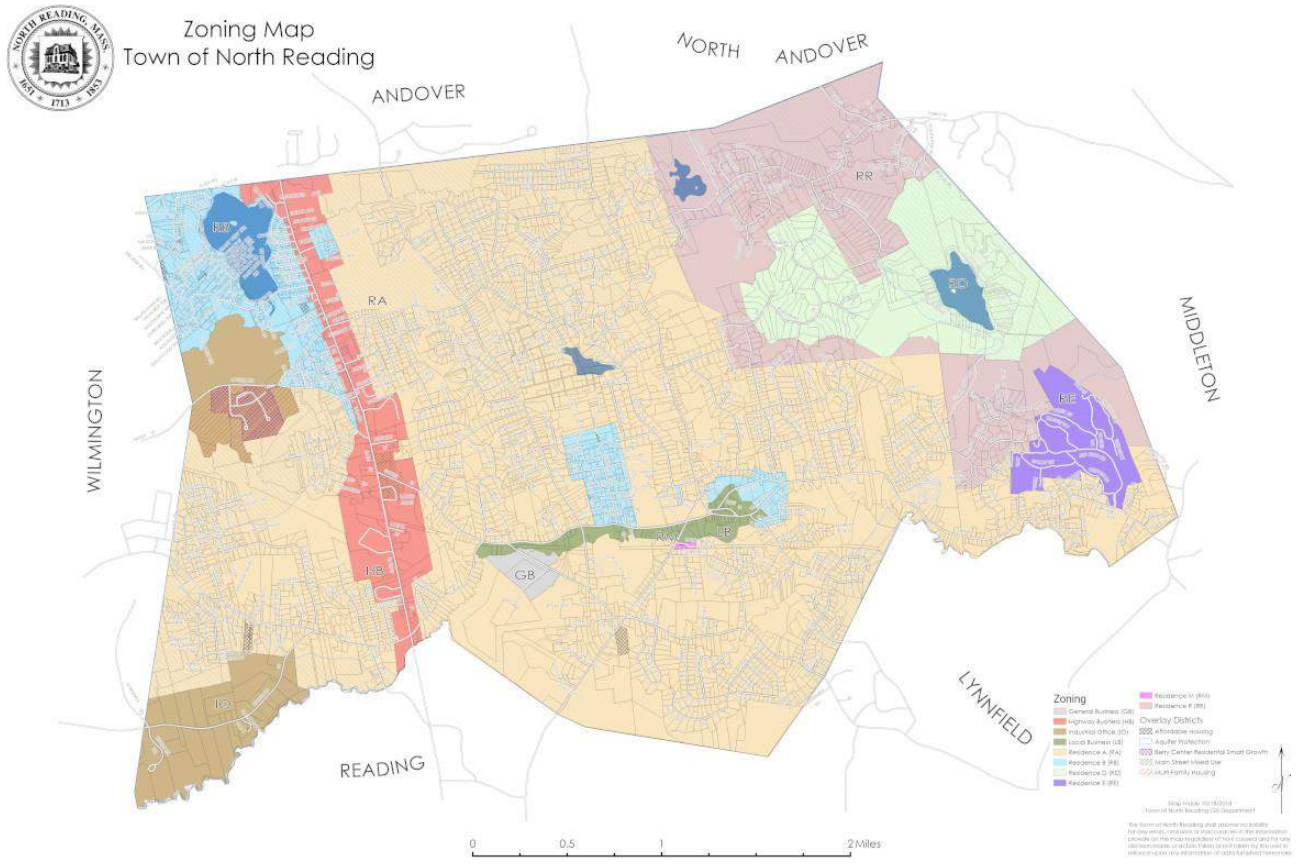
Land Use	Gross GIS Acres	Percent of Town Territorial Extent
Residential	8,043	**89%**
Business	547	6%
Industrial/Office	453	5%
Total	9,043	100%

ZONING LAND USES[iv] BY ZONING DISTRICTS - BY GROSS ACREAGE & EXTENT OF TOWN'S TERRITORIAL EXTENT

Land Use	Gross GIS Acres	Percent of Town Territorial Extent
Residence A	5,217	**57.7%**
Residence R	1,068	11.8%
Residence B	952	10.5%
Residence D	636	7.0%
Industrial Office	453	5.0%
Highway Business	420	4.6%
Residence E	171	1.9%
Local Business	89	1.0%
General Business	38	0.4%
Residence M	3	0.0%
Total	9,043	100%

In terms of general distribution of throughout the Town, as can be seen by the following zoning map, business uses run north to south along Main Street (Route 28), and east to west along Park Street (a central segment of Route 62). Industrial/office uses are in two parts of Town to the west near the Town of Wilmington. The first is to the southwest along the Concord Street corridor where many of the Town's major employers are located. The second is located north and south of Lowell Road (and south of Martin's Pond) where concrete batch processing companies are located as well as a large rental apartment building complex and a new condo complex under construction. Route 28 also contains several single-family homes and multifamily condo and apartment complexes, constructed prior to the current zoning, which now prohibits residential uses along most of Route 28. The exception to the current prohibition on housing in commercial districts lies in several overlays in the Town. There are nine properties on Main Street and Winter Street, the intersection of Routes 28 and 62, that have been rezoned with an overlay (Main Street Mixed Use Overlay) to allow residential as a component of a mixed use development (with residential

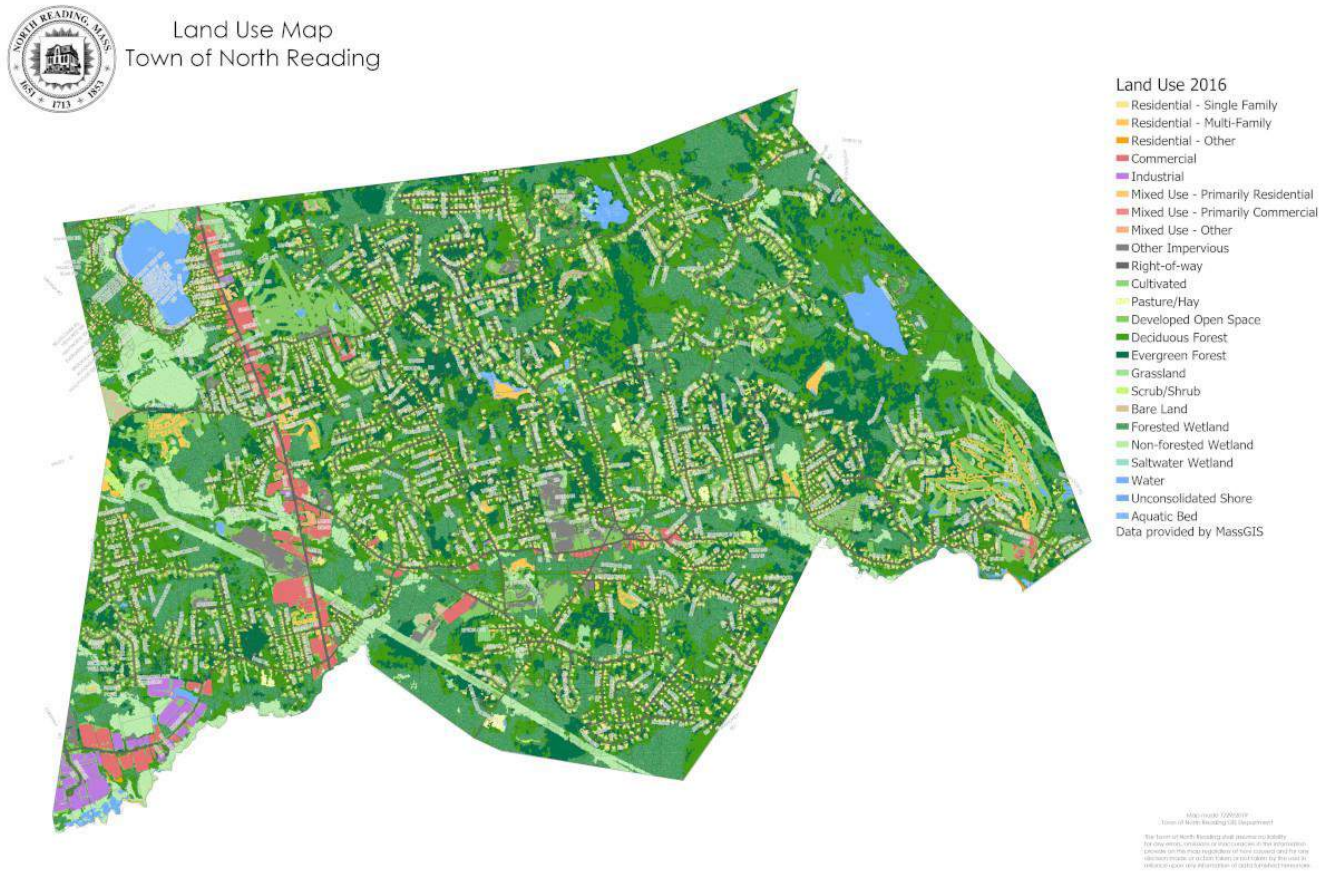
limited to 80% of the building area of any one parcel). Additionally, there are two overlay zones in the Industrial Office zoning district allowing multifamily development, one of which is a 40R development, and the other a multifamily residential overlay, both of which allow residential development by right. While no residential development has yet occurred in the Main Street Mixed Use Overlay, two large residential developments have been permitted in the Industrial Office district on Lowell Road, one of which is built and the other under construction. As noted later in this report, the result has been that the highest density of housing anywhere in the Town exists on Lowell Road, on properties with an underlying zoning of Industrial Office.



Open Space

Although not reflected on the zoning map, North Reading has set aside large amounts of its land area for public passive and active use, and natural resource protection. Of the Town's approximately 1,270 acres[v] owned by the Town of North Reading, 71% or 902 acres are set aside for water resource protection, conservation, and active and passive recreational use. These 902 publicly-owned acres for open space purposes represent approximately 14% of the Town's total land area. Approximately 42% or 532 acres of the total amount Town-owned land is for conservation land for potable water quality protection and passive recreation uses. Another 16% or 209 acres is set aside for the Town Parks and Recreation Department for active and passive recreational uses. A more comprehensive look can be found in the Open Space Element of the Master Plan.

OPEN SPACE ORIENTED TOWN-OWNED LAND	Acres	**% of Town Owned Land**	% of Town Territorial Extent
Conservation Commission Land	532	**42%**	6%
North Reading Water Department	33	3%	0%
Town Parks and Recreation Properties	209	**16%**	2%
School Department Property	98	8%	1%
Town Cemeteries	30	2%	0%
Subtotal	902	**71%**	**10%**
Balance of Non-Open-Space Town-Owned Land	368	29%	4%
Total Town-Owned Land	1,270	100%	14% Town-Owned Land of 9,043 acres



ZONING

North Reading's current Zoning-By-Law[vi] was adopted in 1975. The most recent amendment occurred in June 2018. For the purposes of the Master Plan, the zoning assessment addresses pertinent zoning regulations, policies and permitting procedures as they relate to challenges, concerns and potential obstacles to the community achieving its expressed needs, desires, and overall vision.

Residential Districts

North Reading's seven residential districts (RA, RR, RB, RC[1], RD, RE and RM) are established in Section 200-29B. The general purpose of the districts is described as for providing satisfactory areas for people to reside that are removed from potential unhealthy aspects of commercial district, as well as to provide for a variety of population densities. These residential zoning districts cover approximately 89% of the Town. The primary residential uses allowed in these districts are: (a) single-family detached dwellings except for RM [which is for 4 or more multifamily units by special permit only]; (b) three or fewer Housing Authority apartment units by Special Permit; and (c) open space residential developments in RA, RR and RE by Special Permit. There are also two overlay districts (Berry Center Residential Smart Growth Overlay District [SGA], and the Affordable Housing Overlay District), which also allow residential uses. The former allows them by-right while the latter by Special Permit.

In terms of dimensional regulations, of the seven residential districts, four could be described as "almost one acre" minimum lot districts with a minimum lot area requirement of 40,000-SF. Three are for single-family dwellings (RA, RR, RE) and one is for multifamily residential (RM). The RB district has a smaller minimum lot size requirement of 20,000-SF, which is more aligned with expressed community goals and Master Plan Vision Statement. However, the minimum lot size requirements for the RD district on the opposite end of the spectrum, at 120,000-SF (or 2.75 acres). The RE district allows for multi-family development, but requires a minimum site of 100 acres. The RE district currently contains only one site, the Greens golf course and condominium development. It is recommended that the Town assess whether this district needs to be expanded, or its minimum lot area made smaller, in order to allow for more PUD development, one of the Town's tools for creating multi-family housing.

The Local Business and General Business Zoning Districts are zones that allow for Planned Unit Developments by special permit, which may include multi-family.

With the exception of the Multi-Family Overlay District and the Main Street Mixed Use Overlay District, the maximum building heights and maximum building area are: 35 feet and 2.5 stories, and 20%, respectively. The minimum front yard setbacks vary between 25-40 feet, the side yards between 20-25 feet, and the rear setbacks between 24-50 feet. The minimum open space regulations vary between 50 and 60% for them.

The Main Street Mixed-Use Zoning District follows the height and building area regulations of its underlying zone, Highway Business, where maximum height is 60 feet and maximum building area is 70%. The Multi-Family Overlay District follows the height and building area regulations of its underlying zone, Industrial Office, where maximum height is 60 feet and maximum building area is 50%. It is worth noting, that clearer zoning regulations that are easy to understand for residents, property owners, and

[1] Zoning Residence C District (RC) is mentioned in Section 200-29 of the Zoning-By-Law but is no longer included in the Town's zoning map.

prospective businesses includes minimizing the use of overlay districts to minimize the number of separate zoning by-law section consultations in order to understand how a property is regulated. A robust rezoning initiative to provide clearer zoning could include: (a) reconciling the differences, purposes, and regulations of overlays with their respective underlying zoning districts; (b) clearly renaming the underlying zoning districts to rebrand them [e.g., renaming the Highway Business district along Route 28 to a Main Street Mixed-Use Retail District); and (c) enlarging the new rebranded Main Street Mixed-Use District to cover the same area as the existing HB district in order to allow the desired goals along the entirety of the corridor's length.

In terms of spatial allocation of these residential zoning districts:

- there is a single small multifamily RM district located near the Town Common (south of Railroad Avenue);
- there are two notable RB districts adjacent to the Part Street and Town Common Local Business District;
- there is a sizeable RB district that almost entirely surrounds the Martin's Pond area, and that abuts the northern segment of Main Street.

These areas due to their proximity to retail/business/office zoning districts are suitable for potential zoning amendments to encourage walkability and more residential options such as accessory dwelling units.

1 Excerpt from Zoning-By-Law

District	Use	Minimum Lot Area (sq. feet)	Minimum Continuous Lot Frontage (feet)	Minimum Yards (feet)			Maximum Height (feet)	Maximum Stories	Maximum Building Area (%)	Minimum Open Space (%)
				Front	Side	Rear				
RA	Any permitted use	40,000	160	40	25	50	35	2.5	20	60
RR	Any permitted use	40,000	160	40	25	50	35	2.5	20	60
RB	Any permitted use	20,000	125	25	20	24	35	2.5	20	50
RD	Any permitted use	120,000	160	40	25	50	35	2.5	20	60
RE	Planned unit development	100 acres	See Art. XI							
RE	Any other permitted use	40,000	160	40	25	50	35	2.5	20	60
RM	Multi-family residential	40,000	See § 200-90							
LB	Any permitted use	20,000	125	25	20	20	35	2.5	None	10
GB	Any permitted use	20,000	125	25	20	20	35	2.5	None	10
HB	Any permitted use	20,000	See § 200-39							
IA	Any permitted use	40,000	160	40	25	50	40	4	40	20
IB	Any permitted use	40,000	160	40	25	50	40	4	40	20
IC	Any permitted use	40,000	160	40	25	50	40	4	40	20
I/O-1	Any permitted use	40,000	See § 200-40							

It should be noted that the strict separation of residential from non-residential (i.e, commercial/office/ business) uses that is stated in the general purpose does not align with community input, goals and a vision along its primary commercial corridor along Main Street (and potentially to lesser extent along a small segment along Park Street).

Of the aforementioned residential districts and the highlighted regulations, it is worth mentioning that the multifamily RM district should allow multifamily units by-right with Site Plan Review, and not by Special Permit as it currently stands. It is also worth noting that this is the only area of Town zoned as RM, and that this RM district represents less than 1% of the Town's total land area. As noted above, RE allows for Planned Unit Development, including multi-family housing, by special permit. The Multi-Family Housing Overlay and Berry Center Residential Smart Growth Overlay districts allow multi-family residential by right, but are nearly completely built out. The Main Street Mixed Use Overlay district allows multi-family by special permit, and only as a component of a mixed use development that is at least 80% commercial

in building area. The Local Business and General Business Zoning Districts are zones that allow for Planned Unit Developments, which may include multi-family development, but only by special permit. The Affordable Housing Overlay District allows for modest multi-family development by special permit where affordable units are provided. Currently, all these parcels are owned by the Town. Overall, the opportunity to address housing needs and demand for residential options for residents of varying incomes and ages is limited.

Commercial Business Districts

North Reading has three commercial business districts (LB, GB, and HB) as established in Section 200-29B. The general purpose of the districts is to provide for adequate areas for establishments which provide goods and services for the public convenience and welfare. The Highway Business (HB) district follows the length of Main Street (Route 28), the Local Business District runs east-west along Park Street from Freedom Drive to Wright Street, and the General Business District is to the south of the Ipswich River near the intersection of Chestnut Street with Park Street.

Use regulations for the Highway Business (HB) District are located in Section 200-39. The stated intent and purpose of that zoning district is for intensive or mixed uses of a neighborhood to regional scale with desirable amenities. Presently, this district does not mention any type of residential use as being permitted. It is a best practice to allow a variety multifamily residential options in mixed-use districts as the residential and non-residential uses mutually reinforce each other with weeknight and weekend activity. While the HB district does not allow residential uses by-right nor Special Permit, there is an overlay zone that allows multifamily with limitations. The limitations are the following: (a) the overlay zone only covers a small area and portion of the underlying HB district, and would not achieve the desired transformation along the entirety of Main Street; (b) requires that the multifamily uses be a component of an 80% or more commercial building gross square footage; and (c) is only considered via the discretionary Special Permit process. As a best practice, uses that are desired to provide options for residents should be allowed by-right, and reliance on overlay districts to regulate overarching goals should be avoided. Instead, overarching goals that are of high importance to the Town – such as Main Street transformation into walkable shopping district with housing options – should be prominently embedded into an underlying zoning district that makes it abundantly clear to residents, property owners, and prospective business investors. An important NRMP 2028 recommendation explained elsewhere in the plan report is for a zoning map and text amendment to rebrand/rename the Highway Business zoning district to reflect the desired goals for a Main Street mixed-use village shopping district.

Overall, permitted uses in Section 200-39-E cover various retail trade uses including shopping, and dining with/without drinking; offices including finance, insurance, real estate, legal, health, social, etc. However, absent from the list are hotels and motels, and drinking places (i.e., bars) which are also known to be uses that can activate shopping and entertainment districts. These two uses are listed as Special Permit uses only in Section 200-39-D. The Town should consider allowing hotels and motels as by-right with Site Plan Review. Ideally, if politically feasible, drinking places (i.e., bars) could be allowed by-right as well to further bolster vibrancy and activity in the desired mixed-use retail district. The Town does already allow restaurants with the potential for serving alcoholic beverages with dinner and/or at an in-restaurant bar area. This is beneficial since the ability to obtain a liquor license assists in financially supporting the restaurant business as well as ensuring the success of the community's Main Street district.

The existing dimensional regulations do not present any significant redevelopment challenges for the stated zoning purpose and the Master Plan Vision Statement and goals. The maximum building height is 60 feet, the maximum floor-to-area ratio is 2.0, the maximum building area is 70%, and the minimum front, side and rear setbacks are 20 feet. Nonetheless, these dimensional regulations could be complemented with urban design guidelines to assist in Site Plan Review to accomplish the desired neighborhood form and "feel". Regarding the minimum frontage requirement of 125 feet, additional flexibility could be given for smaller parcels in the form of a lot consolidation provision and/or incentive to allow smaller adjacent parcels that do not meet this minimum to propose joint redevelopment proposal. From an urban design perspective, traditional "Main Street" shopping villages have smaller lot frontages and building facades with many storefront entrances within a short walk from each other.

Industrial / Office District

The stated purpose of Section 200-40 of the Zoning-By-Law for the Industrial/Office (IO) district indicates its purpose for medium-rise developments for administrative/research industries, offices, limited light manufacturing and assembly as uses that provide employment opportunities. As part of the purpose, the same land development is intended to also provide environmental protections to safeguard underground aquifers. The maximum height is 4 stories and 60 feet, and the maximum building area is 50%. The minimum lot area is 40,000-SF, and the minimum frontage is 200 feet. The floor-to-area ratio is stated at 2.0, and is missing the presumed "maximum" adjective to indicate the extent of the regulation. The setbacks are also indicated without a "minimum" descriptor, and are 40 feet for the front, 25 feet for the side yards, and 50 feet for the rear. There are no foreseeable planning challenges or issues related to the district's use regulations. Private residential households are forbidden the underlying Industrial Office district to avoid quality-of-life conflicts, and the operations of necessary industrial/commercial businesses. This is as it should be along the Concord Street corridor, one of the two I/O areas of the Town. However, the other I/O zoned area, the Lowell Road corridor from the Wilmington Line to the North Street intersection, does contain the large Multi-Family Overlay zoning district containing the vast majority of the Town's multi-family housing (this area will exceed 950 households once built out). Conflicting land uses are an issue here, with asphalt, concrete and gravel operations located on one side of Route 62 and high-density housing on the other, built on what was formerly the site of the JT Berry Rehabilitation Center. Despite these conflicts, this area of the I/O zone continues to evolve, and is helping the Town to meet its goals for varied housing types.

It is worth mentioning that if the economic development goals for the IO zoning district along Concord Street are different than the goals of IO zoning districts elsewhere in Town, then they should be treated differently, and Concord Street could become its own zoning district to reflect its purpose. Additionally, it is worth highlighting that the potential introduction of municipal sewer could have unintended consequences for the existing Concord Street light manufacturing, commercial business park. Industrial uses usually do not depend on multistory buildings for their operations, and they have less of a need for a high volume of sewer water treatment capacity as opposed to residential and restaurants uses. Introducing septic along Concord Street could inadvertently spark private-sector investment interest to introduce other uses that might be incompatible with industrial uses and associated truck traffic: namely residential uses.

Open Space

The Town of North Reading does not currently reflect its protected public open spaces on the zoning map as distinct zoning districts. Protected open spaces do not necessarily need to be zoned as separate districts, and are protected by other measures such as conservation restrictions recorded in land deeds, etc.

Communities throughout Massachusetts vary in terms of their approach on offering additional protections in the form of open space zoning districts on zoning maps. Arguments for the creation of such open space zoning districts include that such a zoning map can:

- readily convey the location and approximate amount of open space of a community;
- intuitively contextualize and reflect how much of the Town is not developable; and
- contextualize the (re)development potential for adjacent developable properties.

Should North Reading be interested in pursuing such an approach, it can afford these benefits and additional protection, and still retain its ability to allow and permit essential public recreational facilities in a land use regulations table.

POTENTIAL FUTURE LAND USES

The master planning process, the Master Plan and its Vision Statement focused largely on growth areas where to channel new development and redevelopment of existing properties, which areas of Town mainly needed minor or modest "enhancements", and which areas were implicitly to remain preserved and/or as-is. The goals and recommendations throughout the Master Plan reference whenever possible the specific areas of Town that the recommendations are geared toward. Based on community input and best planning practices, overall, the **ENTIRETY OF THE MAIN STREET (ROUTE 28) IS TREATED AS THE PRIMARY GROWTH AREA**. This primary growth area allows the Town to encourage reuse of existing commercial properties for infill developments and/or redevelopments for uses that are suitable to transforming Main Street, and for uses that not appropriate elsewhere in Town. To the extent that is possible, these areas will be highlighted on the visual executive summary map. It is hoped that these areas will serve a reference for potential zoning amendments so that the Town can realize its stated goals.

Recommendations

The following land use and zoning recommendations are intended to allow the Town to channel its stated community input goals and Master Plan vision into clear and purposeful regulations. In addition to other Master Plan recommendations geared around streetscape improvements and sewer infrastructure investments, **CLEARER, GOAL-ORIENTED ZONING CHANGES** are also needed to allow the Town to get closer to its long term vision.

GOAL 1: ALLOW MAIN STREET TO BECOME AN ACTIVE MIXED-USE TRADITIONAL MAIN STREET BY ALLOWING NEEDED AND SUPPORTING USES IN THE "HIGHWAY BUSINESS" DISTRICT.

STRATEGY 1A - Coordinate the multi-pronged transformation of Route 28 into a traditional main street through **deliberate sequencing of this first out of three primary decisions and actions related to main street transformation.**

RECOMMENDATION 1.1 - Allow upper-story multifamily residential uses by-right with Site Plan Review throughout the entirety of the HB district so that it is consistent with the zoning district's stated "intensive" and "mixed-use" objectives as well as those of the community's master plan goals and Vision Statement. Additionally, allow residential-only multifamily developments by Special Permit with Site Plan Review. Ideally, the entirety of Main Street should not have developments that all have groundfloor residential dwelling units since they do not activate the streetscape with shopping opportunities for the community.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2 - Consider allowing hotels and motels as by-right with Site Plan Review. Consider allowing drinking places (i.e., bars) by-right to further bolster vibrancy and activity in

the desired mixed-use retail district.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3 - All related "Main Street transformation" Town discussions and decisions should always provide residents and officials with the context of the three related decisions regarding rezoning, sewer and streetscape enhancements.

GOAL 2: CREATE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES TO SHAPE REDEVELOPMENT ALONG MAIN STREET, AND MIMIC FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL NEW ENGLAND SHOPPING VILLAGES.

STRATEGY 2A - Coordinate the multi-pronged transformation of Route 28 into a traditional main street through deliberate sequencing of this corresponding first out of three primary decisions and actions related to main street transformation.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1 - Revisit and revise the design guidelines in the Site Plan Review regulations, and also consider moving them to the zoning bylaw. These give non-exhaustive examples of "desirable amenities" for the district that is indicated in the zoning's stated purpose. Rather than keeping the focus almost exclusively on maintaining green space and certain architectural elements, as the design guidelines do now, these could also emphasize: (a) site layout guidelines for introducing multimodal vehicular/pedestrian circulation resembling streets to break up large parcels and parking areas; (b) outdoor street furniture such as benches; (c) covered outdoor seating areas with tables; and (d) small- to medium-sized hardscaped plazas or courtyards adjacent to (indented into proposed building front or side facades, or corner) to accommodate outdoor seating for customers, tenants, workers, and visitors.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3 - Provide flexibility with the minimum lot frontage requirement of 125 feet by providing smaller parcels with a "lot consolidation provision and/or incentive" to allow smaller adjacent parcels that do not meet this minimum to propose joint redevelopment proposals.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4 – Consider adding a zoning amendment with a requirement or option for "shared parking ratios" for potential joint development proposals and/or proposals submitted as part of the consolidation of smaller lots along Main Street. The "shared parking" best practice is premised on the more efficient use of parking spaces for complementary adjacent uses or those within the same mixed-use development. It should be employed only and when there are complementary uses that have different "peak-hour" usage: daytime versus evening/nighttime, and weekday versus weekend. The overall purpose is to reduce the total number of parking spaces to the extent that is possible. This shared parking recommendation is intended to work in tandem with the recommended lot consolidation option and/or mutual shared access points between the sides and rear lots of adjoining parking lots.

GOAL 3: ALLOW RESIDENTIAL RB DISTRICTS (ADJACENT TO MAIN AND PARK STREET) TO POTENTIALLY BECOME VILLAGES WITH MORE HOUSING OPTIONS THAT ARE WALKABLE TO A REVITALIZED MAIN STREET RETAIL.

STRATEGY 3A - A strategy toward achieving zoning amendments to realize housing and walkability goals, could involve separate warrant articles to allow the consideration of certain zoning adjustments to different areas of Town. This approach could isolate concerns or issues with certain changes in a given part of Town from support for changes in another part of Town.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1 - Allow more housing options and market-regulated (i.e., non-income-restricted) affordable options by allowing accessory dwelling units by-right to increase the housing options available to residents of all ages, and to provide options to all for unforeseeable life circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2 - Recalibrate RB district use and dimensional regulations for the residential districts that are in close proximity to Main Street business/retail districts in order for

the Town to achieve the desired "compact, walkable mixed-use residential shopping village" stated in the Master Plan Vision Statement. This includes: (a) reducing the distances of buildings from the road and sidewalk, and (b) minimizing the distances between buildings to encourage walkability; in order to mimic the character of historic and traditional residential villages found throughout the region and state. Also explore opportunities for rezoning part of the RA district into a third zone (proximate to a rezoned and rebranded Main Street mixed-use corridor) that could allow for smaller minimum lot sizes to facilitate market-rate units that are affordable due to their limited lot sizes and dwelling unit square footages, as well as encourage walkability by reducing distances between homes and possibly walkability toward Main Street.

GOAL 4: ALLOW MULTIFAMILY USES BY-RIGHT IN THE TOWN'S ONLY MULTIFAMILY RM ZONING SUBDISTRICT, AS WELL AS IN AN EXPANDED RM DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATION 4.1 - The multifamily RM zoning district does not allow for multifamily uses by-right, and only allows them by Special Permit. It is recommended that the Town amend the regulation to allow multifamily uses within its RM multifamily zoning district as a by-right use with Site Plan Review. Doing so would allow the Town to start to address the housing demand and needs of residents of all age groups. It is also worth noting that this is the only area of Town zoned as RM, and that this RM district represents less than 1% of the Town's total land area. Therefore, the opportunity to address housing needs and demand for residential options for residents of varying incomes and ages is extremely limited. The same principle applies to the existing RM district to facilitate needed residential options other than large-lot single-family homes through different parts of Town. Consideration should be given to also expanding the coverage of the RM district through a map amendment in order to provide such residential options (two-families, three-families, townhouses, ADUs, etc.) within greater proximity of the Town's Main Street as well as Park Street.

GOAL 5: FURTHER PROTECT AND "MARKET" PUBLIC OPEN SPACES BY CREATING DEDICATED ZONING DISTRICTS FOR THEM ON THE ZONING MAP.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1 - It is recommended that the Town of North Reading consider creating an Public Protected Open Space zoning district, and carve out such districts on its zoning map to reflect all publicly owned and permanently protected open spaces..

GOAL 6: REVISIT PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TOWARD ACHIEVING HOUSING DEMAND AND NEEDS OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN'S MAIN STREET GROWTH AREA

RECOMMENDATION 6.1 - That the Town consider reexamining the 100 acre lot requirement for Planned Unit Development to see if it is too onerous in allowing other potential PUD proposals that could meet the Town's needs outside of the Master Plan growth area outside of Main street. Additionally, the Town should consider whether PUD's could be allowed in additional zoning districts, and/or the RE district expanded to include more land area. As of 2019, there has only been PUD application for "The Greens" development project, which encompasses the entire RE zoning district.

HOUSING: *options for all ages*

Introduction

North Reading is a desirable place to live because of its many amenities and a location that offers access to local and regional employment opportunities. The town has been a place where families have settled, but now demographic trends are changing, and so are the town's housing needs. The senior population is increasing while younger demographics are declining, and there is a significant income disparity between renters and owners. The current housing stock is appealing but expensive, and it will need to expand and diversify in order to adapt to the emerging needs of North Reading residents.

The master planning process provides an opportunity to connect housing to economic development, transportation, public open space, and other topics that need to be considered in the vision for North Reading's future. Furthermore, public input gathered through this process gives the town the ability to work on initiatives supported by the public and focus its efforts on issues that matter most to North Reading residents. This chapter analyzes housing trends and public input to establish recommendations that support housing development based on the needs of North Reading residents.

BFIEF OVERVIEW & KEY FINDINGS

- The North Reading housing stock must diversify in order to meet the needs of aging households, and provide new opportunities to young families, and young professionals
- The senior population is increasing and is expected to reach 3,769 residents by 2030.
- Senior households make significantly less than the median household income in North Reading. While the North Reading median income is high; $123,103, the median income of seniors in North Reading is significantly lower; $59,739. There are 615 senior households in North Reading that make $35,000 or less.
- The town is losing younger demographic groups. The population of children under age 18, college-age residents, and young adults have all declined. Adults age 25 to 34 dropped from 17.3% of the population in 1990 to 8.9% in 2010. This figure indicates that new families are not settling in North Reading at the same pace as in the past.
- School enrollment has decreased from 2,811 public students in the 2007/2008 school year to 2,496 in the 2016/2017 school year. This also indicates a decline in family sized households with children.
- There is a significant income disparity between renters and owners. Renters in North Reading are overwhelmingly cost burdened. 82% of renters pay more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. In juxtaposition, 29% of owners are cost burdened.
- Purchasing a single-family home in North Reading is extremely difficult. The housing affordability gap to purchase a single-family home is $272,950 for a family of three with a household income of 80% of the area median income; $65,750. The gap is significantly lower when purchasing a condominium; $24,000, but these housing types are limited. [2]

[2] Data used in these findings are sourced from the North Reading Housing Production Plan 2018.

Previous Research

There have been several planning efforts in recent years that have begun to address housing needs in North Reading. The town had a Market Analysis (2015) and Economic Development Study (2016) prepared by MAPC, that together provide a five year strategy for improving the economy. This research identified impediments to affordable housing caused by the town's zoning bylaw and showed how housing is strongly tied to economic development. Most recently, a Housing Production Plan (HPP) was completed in April of 2018. The plan includes a thorough housing needs analysis that lead to recommendations that will help the town meets its State mandated Affordable Housing requirements as well as satisfy its overall housing demand.[3] Each of these studies serve as a starting point for addressing housing needs in North Reading.

MARKET ANALYSIS (2015) AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY (2016)

The Market Analysis and Economic Development Study conducted by MAPC in 2015 and 2016, evaluated development potential in North Reading and targeted Main Street (Route 28) for commercial development in Areas A and B in the map below. These studies stressed the importance of mixed-use and multifamily housing along Main Street to support existing and new businesses. Housing within and nearby this commercial corridor provides the spending power needed to support the success and growth of businesses in this area. For instance, residential units located above businesses supply a consistent customer base because the units ensure that patrons are within walking distance.

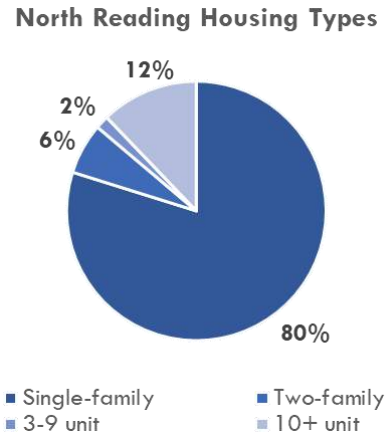
However, mixed-use housing and many other types of housing that would integrate well with the Route 28 commercial area are not currently permitted by the North Reading Zoning Bylaw. In the market analysis report, a zoning audit was conducted and it was recommended that mixed-use residential and a range of other residential uses should be permitted within the Highway Business Zone spanning Route 28, as shown in map within the pink boundary. The recommendation specified that the permitting process should be expedited by allowing these residential uses by right rather than special permit. The report also included recommendations to reduce zoning setback distances and other dimensional requirements to provide for a variety of different housing types. Together, these proposed zoning changes can encourage diverse residential development that supports economic growth in North Reading.



[3] Affordable Housing is defined as housing that is required to be affordable to certain income levels as described by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through a subsidy or deed restriction. Natural occurring affordable housing (NOAH) is market rate housing that is affordable without a subsidy or deed restriction.

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN 2018

The town staff worked with a consultant to complete a Housing Production Plan in April of 2018. Housing Production Plans examine demographic trends, assess housing needs, and set forth a strategy that municipalities can use to address their housing needs. These plans are reviewed by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for completeness and must be consistent with State guidelines. Many municipalities will commission a HPP if they need to comply with State Law Chapter 40B regulations that require each municipality to have a housing stock with at least 10% deed-restricted Affordable Housing. This regulation is designed to address housing needs on a regional scale by asking each municipality to supply its fair share of Affordable Housing.



For 40B purposes, a municipality's Affordable Housing supply is also referred to as its Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). SHI is calculated by taking the decennial census record of market rate housing units divided by the number of deed-restricted Affordable Housing units. If a municipality has a SHI lower than 10% it can be subject to a 40B development which allows an Affordable Housing developer to override local zoning regulations and build Affordable Housing through a special expedited permitting process. The primary ways municipalities can achieve "Safe Harbor" from a Chapter 40B development, giving them the option to deny such a development, is if they reach 10% SHI, or complete a Housing Production Plan and increase their SHI by 0.5% in one year or 1% in two years. [4]

According to the 2018 Housing Production Plan, North Reading has an SHI of 9.65%; 540 deed-restricted units divided by 5,597 market-rate units, as recorded in the 2010 Census. 20 new deed-restricted housing units will need to be constructed to reach the 10% SHI requirement. However, this number is a moving target. After the 2020 Census is completed, the SHI could decrease farther below the 10% minimum as more market rate units are added to the housing supply. For instance the town once had an 11% SHI but this was reduced after the 2010 census figure became available.

540 subsidized units =
5,597 market units
9.65%

It is also important to note that the 10% SHI requirement is not commensurate with actual housing need. Out of 540 deed-restricted housing units, 1,280 households made less than 80% of the Boston Metropolitan Area Median Income and are therefore eligible for Affordable Housing. [5]

[4] The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development keeps a record of each municipality's subsidized housing inventory.

[5] Area Median Income (AMI) is based on the median income of the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH Metropolitan Area as defined by HUD. AMI is grouped by household size. The household income of a single-person household making 80% AMI is $56,800 and $81,100 for a four person household. Households making less than 80% AMI are eligible for Affordable Housing.

Housing Needs Summary

HOUSING STOCK

The HPP includes a thorough housing needs assessment based on current data that can be relied upon to form strategies to address housing needs in North Reading. The needs assessment identifies critical demographic changes occurring in North Reading that have implications on its current housing stock. Right now, there isn't a great enough variety of housing types in North Reading. Single-family homes account for 80% of the housing stock. Since the supply of housing in North Reading is homogenous, it is difficult to meet changing demographic needs which require a mix of different housing types to accommodate a variety of household sizes and compositions.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

A lack of different housing types also has implications for housing affordability. The median price of a single-family home in North Reading in 2016 was $508,950, up 38% from 2000 when it was $317,950. The cost of a condominium in North Reading is much more affordable with a median sales price of $200,000 between 2016 and 2017. 40% of condominiums sold during this time were below $200,000. But condos make up only 13% of the housing supply, so there is limited opportunity to occupy this more affordable homeownership option.[6]

Renting could be a more affordable option in North Reading but few rentals are available, which restricts the opportunity to rent and increases rental costs due to limited supply. The HPP documented the median rent in 2015 as $1,482, but this figure is based on the rent that was reported in the Census issued American Community Survey. This figure is likely lower than the actual cost of rent. Based on 2018 data from Padmapper and Craigslist, the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in North Reading is approximately $2,000.[7] The HPP identified only a handful of rental listings and the 2015 census estimated a zero percent vacancy rate of rental units in North Reading.[8] Such a small supply of rentals could be inflating the costs of renting in North Reading. Currently 87% of households own while only 13% rent.[9] Rental options are often desired by young professionals which support the town's workforce, and so increased rental options are important for the success of the town's economy.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

As the following figure shows, the median household income in North Reading is relatively high, but many households in the town make well below the median. The North Reading median household income is $123,103 which is higher than Middlesex County; $89,019, and Massachusetts; 70,954. However, the median income of seniors in North Reading is only $59,739 and there are 615 senior households in North Reading that make less than $35,000.[10]

[6] North Reading Master Plan, Section 5.5 Affordability Analysis
[7] This data was compiled by MAPC from online listings on Padmapper and Craigslist from January-March 2018
[8] North Reading Housing Production Plan 2018, Section 5.2 Housing Occupancy
[9] American Community Survey, 2016
[10] North Reading Housing Production Plan 2018, Section 4.1 Incomes



KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The growing senior demographic in North Reading has a need for smaller housing types, and the demand from this demographic will continue to grow. From 2000 to 2010 the population of single-person households 65 years and older increased by 44% and another 9% from 2010 to 2015. There are currently 477 single-person senior households and ¼ of them claimed a disability.[11]

Elderly households will have difficulty maintaining larger single-family homes because of ownership costs, potential repairs, and the work capacity needed to take care of these homes. Seniors may want to downsize to something that is more cost efficient and easier to manage. Many of them will also want to stay in North Reading but will have difficulty finding housing once they re-enter the housing market and are subject to the high cost of current rentals. This group needs a range of different housing types that allows them to downsize and sometimes live off a fixed-income so they can remain in North Reading. If not, they may be forced to look for different options in places where rentals and smaller housing types are available. A lack of housing options for seniors also has implications for other demographics in the North Reading housing market. These households are over housed, and if they don't have options to downsize, this housing won't be freed up for families.

Family sized households as well as school enrollment have each declined in North Reading. Family sized households decreased from 80.6% of all households in 1990 to 73.6% in 2010, though family sized households are estimated to have slightly increased to 75.9% since then. The decline in school enrollment is more evident. Over the last decade, there has been a loss of 315 public students, decreasing from 2,811 students in the 2007/2008 school year to 2,496 in the 2016/2017 school year. This decline also indicates a loss of families in North Reading which may be due to rising housing costs.[12]

The cost of a single-family home in North Reading is also too expensive for first-time homebuyers and young professionals. Young professionals are looking for condominiums, duplexes, and rental options. The town will need to introduce a variety of housing types to meet the needs of middle-income families and attract young professionals. As noted in the above, these workforce demographics are especially important for the town's economy.

In terms of overall affordability, another trend is clear. The ability to afford housing is vastly different between those that rent and those that own. 82% of renters in North Reading spend more than 30% of their income on housing and are considered cost burdened.[13] Comparatively, only 29% of owners are considered cost burdened. This income disparity is another sign that although the median income in North Reading is high, a significant portion of the population has housing needs that aren't being met. North

[11] North Reading Housing Production Plan 2018, Section 5.7 Targeted Housing Needs,
[12] North Reading Housing Production Plan 2018, Section 5.7 Targeted Housing Needs, p.60
[13] HUD considers a household to be cost burdened when they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Cost burdened households will have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, health care and medical expenses. When a significant portion of households are cost burdened, this can have a negative impact on the local economy because these households will have less money for discretionary spending that supports local businesses.

Reading needs more affordable options for those who cannot afford the high cost of single-family housing in town.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY GAP

Opportunity to purchase a single-family home in North Reading is very limited. A family of three making 80% of the Metropolitan Area Median Income has a household income of $65,750. A household of this composition and income level is able to afford a $236,000 home based on 30% of their household income. [14] The median price of a single-family home is $508,950. This type of household's affordability gap to purchasing a single-family home is $272,950. However, other options such as condominiums are much more affordable. The housing gap when purchasing a condominium is calculated at $24,000.[15] However, like renting, this type of housing is limited. The difference in affordability between a single-family home and condominium is another indication that a variety of different housing options is greatly needed in North Reading.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

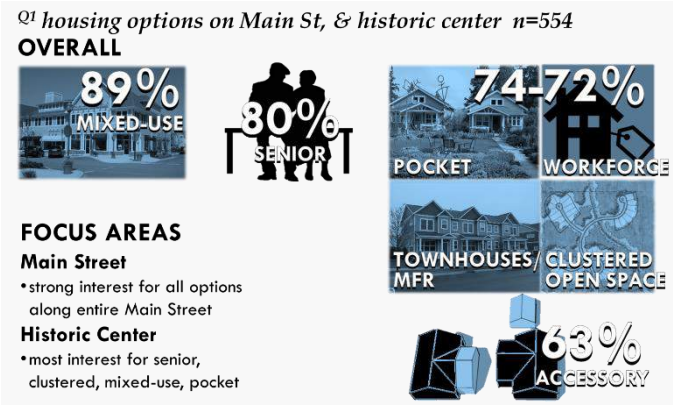
Public input on housing needs and strategies was gathered throughout the master planning process at two community workshops and an online surrey. Results can be viewed in detail in an appendix and are summarized below. The first workshop and survey indicated general support for new housing and identified locations where housing development is supported by North Reading residents. At the second workshop, participants ranked draft housing recommendations prepared by MAPC staff.

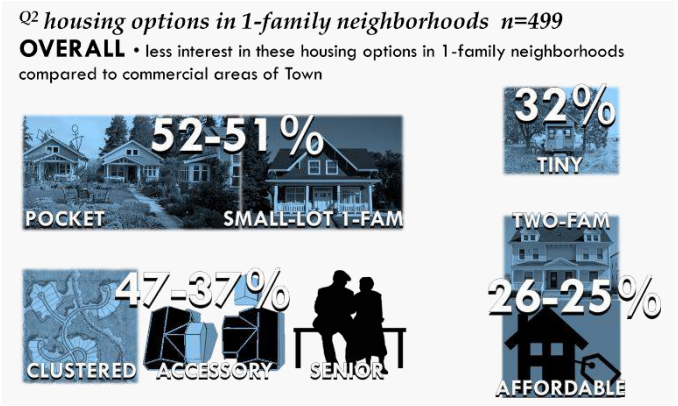
The results from the first community workshop showed overall public support for new housing and a variety of different housing types. Support for new housing development was strongest in the commercial areas along North and South Main Street but there was also support for new housing near the Historic Town Center, and existing residential areas. A range of housing types were heavily supported along both sections of Main Street. In the Historic Town Center area, senior housing/age-in-place options, clustered open space subdivisions, pocket neighborhoods, accessory dwelling units, and mixed-use residential all had moderate to high support. Comparatively, there was less support for new housing in existing single-family neighborhoods. Even so, just under half of respondents support pocket neighborhoods and small-lot single-family homes in existing residential areas. Additionally, approximately 40% of respondents supported clustered open space subdivisions, accessory dwelling units, and senior/aging-in-place options. Approximately 30% supported tiny houses, and approximately 23% supported two-family duplexes and affordable/workforce housing in existing residential areas.

At the second community workshop, participant's ranked preliminary recommendations drafted by MAPC based on public input and research gathered up to that point. The ranking was consistent with the results of the first community workshop and survey. Participants highly supported zoning changes that would allow all housing types in the Highway Business Zone along Main Street and moderately supported changes to the single-family residential zones that would allow smaller housing types in these areas. Overall, none of the recommendations received significant opposition.

[14] The 30% metric is used in reference to HUD's definition of cost burden. According to HUD, a household should not spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

[15] Assumptions about housing financing are needed to calculate estimated housing affordability. The HPP bases these calculations on 80% financing, interest of 5%, 30-year term, annual property tax rate of 16.41 per thousand, and insurance costs of $4 per $1,000 for condominiums and $6 per thousand for single-family homes.





Recommendations

The following housing goals, recommendations, and tasks are a collection of options the town can choose from to address its housing needs. These recommendations closely follow the 2018 Housing Production Plan, expand upon these recommendations, and prioritize when they can be implemented in connection with other elements of the Master Plan and feedback from North Reading residents.

OVERARCHING HOUSING GOALS

OVERARCHING HOUSING GOALS	LEGEND	DESCRIPTION
Implementation		Ensure Implementation of the North Reading Housing Production Plan
Housing for Seniors	65+	Provide affordable and appropriate housing for seniors that allows them to remain in North Reading
Housing for Families		Reduce overall housing costs and provide Affordable Housing for young families
Housing for Cost Burdened Households	$	Meet the needs of cost burdened households
Housing Options		Provide a variety of housing options that increase naturally occurring affordable housing
Housing Supporting Other Plan Elements		Use housing to support economic development, transportation, environmental, and other plan goals

GOAL 7 – IMPLEMENTATION: ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH READING HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

STRATEGY 7A	GOALS ADDRESSED
FORM A HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE NORTH READING HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN AND MASTER PLAN	
RECOMMENDATION 7.1- Work with public officials, local stakeholders, affordable housing developers, and private lenders to pursue implementation of the HPP's goals, monitor progress, and steward the plan	

Recommendation Description

An implementation committee will be critical to ensuring that the North Reading Housing Production Plan and Master Plan are implemented and serve as a guide for future decisions made by the town. This committee will be able to represent the recommendations of the plan overtime. Such representation is needed so the plan can continue to be implemented after town administration and staff change in the future. The implementation committee should prioritize plan recommendations and action steps based on public input from the plan, balanced with current circumstances, dynamics, and events affecting the town's future.

The implementation committee should include individuals that were involved in the plan making process and can steward the plan or have expertise in areas helpful to implementing the plan. The committee should have broad representation from the North Reading community and experts in the fields of Affordable Housing, real-estate finance, community development, and other related fields.

Housing recommendations should be balanced with economic development, transportation, recreation and open space, and infrastructure recommendations. Recommendations made in these different elements are related to housing recommendations and can support each other. For example mixed-use housing supports economic development by increasing spending power for the growth of businesses. In certain situations, housing objectives and other objectives need to be balanced together. For example, housing and open space goals can be advanced on a single-site through cluster development by grouping housing in one area of the site and creating a park in another area of the site. These decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis with the information supplied in this master plan.

GOAL 7 – IMPLEMENTATION: ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH READING HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

STRATEGY 7B	GOALS ADDRESSED
RAISE AWARENESS OF FINDINGS FROM THE HPP AND THE TOWN'S HOUSING NEEDS	
RECOMMENDATION 7.2- Use the Housing Toolbox to find the best strategies for online and in-person engagement of the North Reading community to increase awareness among residents about housing issues and opportunities such as first time homebuyer education programs	
RECOMMENDATION 7.3- Hold office hours at Town Hall when stakeholders and interested parties can learn about the HPP and ask questions about implementation	

progress	
RECOMMENDATION 7.4- Distribute materials to the public and create training opportunities for town board members to inform them of housing needs and regulations	

Recommendation Description
Many housing recommendations will involve zoning changes and potentially other processes that require public support. Therefore, continued public engagement is critical to successfully implementing the HPP and Master Plan. The Housing Toolbox developed by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership and the Citizens Housing and Planning Association, provides a range of housing strategies and public engagement methods that can be used to raise awareness about housing issues, and help keep the public informed. This could include ongoing feedback through online and social media platforms, or in-person events such as community workshops and charrettes, or informal gatherings such as potlucks. MAPC provides tools and training assistance for community engagement including consulting, trainings, product development, and access to equipment.

It is important to give town residents opportunities to learn about the HPP and Master Plan. Office hours can be held at the Town Hall giving residents ongoing opportunities to ask questions, and express their opinions, ideas, and concerns about plan implementation. Town office hours will help officials understand and track public sentiment, and clear up any potential misunderstandings about the plan and implementation efforts. Continued public involvement will also help officials decide when and how it is best to attempt a zoning change or another process that requires public support.

Education and training for town board members will also help implement housing recommendations. These officials should be familiar with the plan and use it as an anchor for their decisions. Awareness of the housing recommendations in the Master Plan and HPP will allow them to consider housing needs in future decisions such as how to use public land. This consideration will help connect housing to other elements of the plan, such as economic development initiatives.

GOAL 7 – IMPLEMENTATION: ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH READING HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

STRATEGY 7C	GOALS ADDRESSED
BUILD CAPACITY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITH FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING	
RECOMMENDATION 7.5- Pursue funding opportunities identified in the HPP and expand on HPP recommendations by focusing on programs for seniors	

Recommendation Description
The HPP has a list of resources the town can use to seek out Affordable Housing funding to help finance or incentivize this development. These resources are listed below and can be referenced in detail within the HPP.

- Allocate a percentage of Berry property proceeds for affordable housing [16]
- Adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA)

[16] As the HPP notes, the town received significant funds from the sale of the Berry property for a mixed-use development with age-restricted senior housing. However, the housing there will all be market rate. Proceeds from the sale can be used to support Affordable Housing development in the town.

- Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Secure State and Federal Subsidies from sources such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, the HOME investment Program, Housing Stabilization Fund, Housing Choice Initiative and other State and Federal funds.

Funding from these sources can be used to support housing goals in connection with other elements of this plan. For instance funding from the Community Preservation Act can finance housing development as well as the creation of open space. Investing funding into Affordable Housing and naturally occurring affordable housing also supports economic development by providing housing for those in the work force and housing that can increase the spending power in mixed-use areas to provide a reliable customer base for existing and new businesses.

GOAL 8 – MAKE ZONING AMENDMENTS TO ALLOW HOUSING OPTIONS AND AFFORDABILITY FOR ALL AGES AND EVERCHANGING LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

STRATEGY 8A	GOALS ADDRESSED
MAKE ZONING CHANGES SPECIFIED IN THIS PLAN THAT ALLOW THE TOWN TO MEET THE STATE 10% SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY REQUIREMENT	
RECOMMENDATION 8.1- Establish a town-wide inclusionary zoning by-law. Base the Affordable Housing requirement percent on a town specific housing market analysis. Provide development incentives such as a density bonus to off-set the costs of Affordable Housing development and encourage more Affordable units to be built.	
RECOMMENDATION 8.2- Consider 40R Zoning in areas where higher density residential development is supported by the public. Utilize state funding from 40R zoning to help finance the infrastructure needed to support mixed-use development and residential development.	

Recommendation Description

Currently, the town has an inclusionary zoning by-law but it only applies within the Affordable Housing Overlay District. A town wide by-law will need to be adopted to keep pace with the town's State mandated Affordable Housing requirement of 10% deed-restricted Affordable Housing. The town's Subsidized Housing Inventory is just below 10% at 9.65%. An additional 20 housing units are needed, but as more market-rate housing is developed, more Affordable Units will be needed. A town-wide Affordable Housing by-law will help the town meet the 10% requirement, now and in the future. Providing deed-restricted housing will help seniors, single-person households, and can also be designed to create workforce housing by setting higher income limits for people working in industries that do have enough income to afford housing. Housing for the work force will support economic development by allowing recipients to live and work in North Reading. An Affordable Housing by-law should be drafted with careful consideration of the housing market in North Reading.

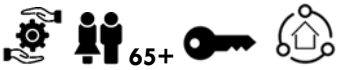
Development incentives will also be needed to support an inclusionary zoning policy. One way to do this is through a density bonus. A density bonus can be offered in exchange for Affordable Housing or other types of desired housing. This bonus will allow the developer to build to a higher density than what is normally allowed by the lot size and Floor Area Ratio. A density bonus can off-set costs incurred by the developer that discourage development, or give the developer a fiscal incentive to build more Affordable Housing units than what they would normally build. A density bonus should be considered

within the proposed Inclusionary Zoning By-law discussed above.

40R zoning can also help the town meet the 10% SHI requirement. It's also a good way to zone for housing located in strategic locations that provide opportunities to residents. Under this type of zoning, housing must be in areas with access to jobs, transportation, open space, and other amenities. There are specific criteria that must be met to use 40R zoning such as higher residential density. For instance, a multifamily development within a 40R zone must have at least 20 residential units per acre.

If the town can meet 40R standards, the State will award the town with funding for rezoning through 40R. This funding should be used on sewage infrastructure that is critical to both housing and commercial development. Currently there is not sufficient sewerage infrastructure to support residential and commercial growth. 40R zoning can help create new housing and commercial opportunities while also contributing funding for the utility infrastructure that is needed for this development.

GOAL 8 – MAKE ZONING AMENDMENTS TO ALLOW HOUSING OPTIONS AND AFFORDABILITY FOR ALL AGES AND EVERCHANGING LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

STRATEGY 8B	GOALS ADDRESSED
CHANGE THE HIGHWAY BUSINESS ZONE ALONG MAIN STREET TO A RENAMED MAIN STREET MIXED-USE ZONE	
RECOMMENDATION 8.3- Create housing opportunities in this area to increase spending power that supports existing and new businesses	
RECOMMENDATION 8.4- Allow vertical mixed-use housing, townhouses, condominiums, duplexes, multifamily housing, accessory dwelling units, and other community-supported housing types in this zone	
RECOMMENDATION 8.5- Expedite the permitting process and allow desired housing types supported by the public by right	

Recommendation Description

The Highway Business Zone spans both sides of Main Street. This vital commercial corridor is the location for many existing businesses and also an area targeted for future redevelopment and growth. Surveys and other public input show support for all types of housing development here, but housing development in this area require zoning changes. Vertical mixed-use housing; when housing is developed on the floors above commercial retail and office, will support existing businesses and encourage new businesses. The need for mixed-use housing to support economic development was a key finding in the town's Economic Development Study (2016) and Market Analysis (2015).

Housing in this corridor provides places to live in close proximity to existing transit and other amenities such as parks and open space. Creating opportunities for development here can also contribute to improvements to infrastructure through development exactions. Exactions are when the town requires developers to make payments that support infrastructure costs. This is possible only when the there is a nexus between the impacts of the development and the proposed contribution and when the proposed contribution is proportional to the impact of the development. Exactions can be used to pay for sewage infrastructure.

In addition to amending the zoning, permitting desired housing types by right and expediting the permitting process are some ways to encourage development in this area.

GOAL 8 – MAKE ZONING AMENDMENTS TO ALLOW HOUSING OPTIONS AND AFFORDABILITY FOR ALL AGES AND EVERCHANGING LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

STRATEGY 8C	GOALS ADDRESSED
MAKING ZONING CHANGES SPECIFIED IN THIS PLAN THAT ENCOURAGE A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES ALONG MAIN STREET	
RECOMMENDATION 8.6- Relax building height limits, parking requirements, and open space regulations to encourage development of mixed-use and multi-family development and townhouses	

Recommendation Description

In addition to prohibiting different housing types, the Highway Business Zone also restricts these uses with dimensional requirements and parking requirements. These regulations can prevent multifamily housing and other housing types that result in natural occurring affordable housing. Smaller housing types that have the potential to be relatively more affordable than larger single-family homes. The zoning audit in the town's 2015 Market Analysis found that building heights, lot sizes, and setbacks need to be relaxed to support mixed-use development and a variety of housing types. Furthermore, this plan recommends the town consider whether parking requirements should be reduced. Parking requirements stipulate how many spaces a developer must build based on different uses defined in the zoning code. These requirements are expensive and can impose a large financial burden on developers. Structured parking in the Boston area costs approximately $22,500 per space for structured parking and $10,000 per space for surface parking.[17] Often times, these requirements are outdated and aren't consistent with actual parking demand or current development goals. The Metro Boston Perfect Fit Initiative (2017) found that the average residential development in the Boston metro area supplied 1.15 parking spaces per residential unit, but only 0.85 parking spaces per unit were occupied. Reducing parking requirements can encourage naturally occurring affordable housing by reducing unnecessary development costs. A reduction in these requirements can also be offered in exchange for the production of Affordable Housing units as a part of an inclusionary zoning policy.

GOAL 8 – MAKE ZONING AMENDMENTS TO ALLOW HOUSING OPTIONS AND AFFORDABILITY FOR ALL AGES AND EVERCHANGING LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

STRATEGY 8D	GOALS ADDRESSED
CONSIDER CHANGES TO SINGLE-FAMILY ZONES THAT ALLOW FOR MORE NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF EXISTING HOUSING	
RECOMMENDATION 8.7- Consider reducing the minimum lot size in the RB and RA residential zones, or rezoning a portion of RA into a new residential zone with smaller minimum lot sizes.	
RECOMMENDATION 8.8- Allow pocket neighborhoods, small-lot single-family homes, clustered open space	

[17] MAPC. "Metro Boston Perfect Fit Parking Initiative." http://perfectfitparking.mapc.org/uploads/FINAL_Metro Boston Perfect Fit Parking Initiative Report_2-3-17.pdf.

subdivisions, accessory dwelling units, and housing types that allow seniors to age in place in the RB and RA zones by right	
RECOMMENDATION 8.9- Consolidate residential zones that have minor or insignificant differences in dimensional regulations	

Recommendations Description

While public support for new housing favored development along Main Street, there was also moderate support for housing near the Historic Town Center and existing residential areas.

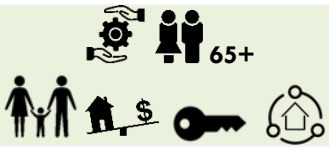
Currently, the lot sizes in the existing residential zones covering these areas are far too large to support naturally occurring affordable housing. The minimum lot size for development in the RB zone is 20,000 square feet and 40,000 square feet in the RA zone. When the lot size for the development of a single structure is this large, development costs associated with land prices are more difficult to recover. A larger or more expensive home is needed for a developer recover development costs and make a profit. A smaller minimum lot size allows for the development of smaller homes that are more affordable. Reductions in the minimum lot sizes in the RB and RA zones should be considered to support smaller lot single-family housing that will be affordable to downsizing seniors, young families, young professionals, and other smaller households looking to stay or settle in North Reading. Alternatively, portions of existing RA or RB zones could be rezoned to a new residential zone with smaller minimum lot sizes.

Consolidating residential zones is another way to reduce the minimum lot size and simplify the zoning code to be more clear and predictable. Having multiple single-family zones with different minimum lot sizes reduces opportunities to build smaller lot single-family developments that are more affordable. These residential zones were overlaid over existing residential areas and may not be consistent with the actual lot size and setbacks of existing homes. Varying dimensional requirements in different residential zones can discourage infill development by requiring variances from regulations, which lengthens the review process and increases development costs. Combining residential zones with minor differences into a new residential zone can help introduce a more straightforward development process and reduce the occurrence of variance requests.

These zones could also allow for different housing types that are consistent with the existing character of residential areas and commensurate with public sentiment. There is public support for pocket neighborhoods, small-lot single family homes, and cluster open space subdivisions in existing residential areas. These housing and development types can be coordinated with open space in a way that maintains the suburban character of residential areas. Smaller housing types such as duplexes or tiny homes can be clustered in one area of a site with open space in another. This open space can help separate and transition smaller housing types from existing residential areas that might be of a larger scale.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and aging-in-place options were also supported by the public. These housing types provide new opportunities for natural occurring affordable housing options that serve the needs of single-person households, young professionals, and others. Accessory dwelling units can also create opportunities for seniors to downsize. This housing type can allow seniors to move into a smaller home that is more manageable, while remaining on their property. ADUs also create the opportunity for seniors to pass their existing homes onto family and benefit from the support of family without giving up freedom and independence. Accessory dwelling units can also cause housing turnover that frees up existing homes for others. These changes are needed to retain existing residents and attract new residents that can support the tax base.

GOAL 9 – ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMAND BY IDENTIFYING SUITABLE PARTS OF TOWN FOR COMPACT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT ALSO CAN AFFORD FUTURE RESIDENTS WITH WALKABILITY TO NEARBY RETAIL AND FUTURE TRANSIT OPTIONS.

STRATEGY 9A	GOALS ADDRESSED
MEET THE HPP TARGET OF 140 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS BY DEVELOPING ON STRATEGIC TOWN-OWNED PARCELS WHEN APPROPRIATE	
RECOMMENDATION 9.1- Prioritize development of rental units. 80% of new housing should be rental housing to meet the needs of single-person households, seniors, and the work force as identified in the HPP	
RECOMMENDATION 9.2- Prioritize the development of starter homes and housing types that have lower down payments such as small lot single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses condominiums, and cottage houses	
RECOMMENDATION 9.3- Prioritize the development of more housing for seniors and single-person households that meet universal design standards and ADA requirements	

Recommendation Description

Analysis within this plan has identified several town-owned properties. These properties may be used for Affordable Housing development by the town or through a public-private partnership. Such an arrangement will significantly reduce the financial hurdles of building Affordable Housing. Any consideration of building Affordable Housing should be made alongside goals for economic development and recreation and open space. Some properties may be better suited to support one of these goals in particular but they may also support each of these goals. For example, a mixed-use development can provide affordable housing options for the workforce, and also support existing businesses and new businesses. Section 8.3.2 of the HPP identifies an RFP process the town can use to facilitate the process of conveying town-owned properties.

Development on town-owned property can also address the need for naturally occurring affordable housing for families. The town could use a public-private partnership to develop housing types specifically designed to be affordable to young families.

Affordable Housing on town-owned property should prioritize rental development and development for seniors. A public-private partnership will allow the town to require these kinds of developments through the conditions of a lease agreement. Since there are so few rentals in North Reading, and the senior population is one of the demographics with the greatest need, development on town-owned property should address these priorities.

GOAL 9 – ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMAND BY IDENTIFYING SUITABLE PARTS OF TOWN FOR COMPACT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT ALSO CAN AFFORD FUTURE RESIDENTS WITH WALKABILITY TO NEARBY RETAIL AND FUTURE TRANSIT OPTIONS.

STRATEGY 9B	GOALS ADDRESSED
USE THE LOCAL INITIATIVE PROGRAM (LIP) FOR FRIENDLY 40B COMPREHENSIVE PERMITTING IN AREAS SUPPORTED BY NORTH READING RESIDENTS	
RECOMMENDATION 9.4- Identify a list of sites well suited for the LIP program where the 40B process could remove barriers to Affordable Housing development	

Recommendation Description

The Local Initiative Program is a way to use the advantages of 40B regulations for an Affordable Housing development that is welcomed by the town. This type of development is called a "friendly 40B." This differs from a 40B Development that is permitted because the town is not at the 10% SHI requirement. A friendly 40B occurs when a town chooses to use the 40B process to override local zoning requirements that are often too stringent to allow for an Affordable Housing development. The 40B process encourages Affordable Housing development by offering an expedited development review through one town board; the Zoning Board of Appeals. Comprehensive permitting through the 40B process should be used in areas where higher density and more affordable development is supported by North Reading residents as identified in the Master Plan survey.

GOAL 9 – ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMAND BY IDENTIFYING SUITABLE PARTS OF TOWN FOR COMPACT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT ALSO CAN AFFORD FUTURE RESIDENTS WITH WALKABILITY TO NEARBY RETAIL AND FUTURE TRANSIT OPTIONS.

STRATEGY 9C	GOALS ADDRESSED
BUILD HOUSING NEAR EXISTING AND PLANNED TRANSIT SO SENIORS, YOUTH, AND COMMUTERS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO GET AROUND TOWN AND BEYOND	
RECOMMENDATION 9.5- Facilitate housing development along Main Street and near a potential "park-and-ride" lot and shuttle bus headed toward Concord-Street/I-93 & Anderson, Wilmington and Reading stations	

Recommendation Description

A shuttle to the Anderson, Wilmington and Reading commuter rail stations is being explored as a part of the transportation element of this master plan. If a station is created through a public private partnership, it should be planned in coordination with the development of Affordable Housing, workforce housing, and housing for families. This can be accomplished by changing the zoning along Main Street and near a potential park-and ride parking lot with shuttle bus service to commuter rail stations to encourage the development of these housing types. Building housing near a potential park-and-ride lot with shuttle bus service will allow households without a car to have access to employment opportunities in the Boston Metropolitan Region. It will also connect households with cars to mass transit options, and reduce the amount of cars on the road, alleviating congestion and its environmental impacts.

TRANSPORTATION: *mobility for all*

Introduction

The transportation and circulation element of the master plan provides an overview of existing conditions and future plans for the ability of residents and business owners to get around the Town. The purpose of the element is to provide information on how the Town can invest in a variety of transportation options to address recreational and quality of life needs, as well as help support its retail main street businesses.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Roads

- 94 miles of roadways
- Major regional arteries include Routes 28 (Main Street) and 62 (Lowell/Winter/Park/ Elm streets)
- Indirect access to Interstate 95 highway via exits 39 and 40 in Wilmington

Public Transit

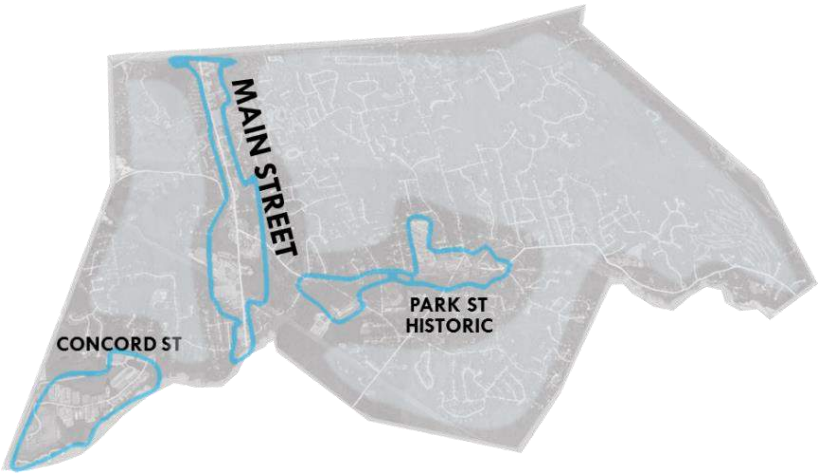
- No commuter rail, rapid transit or fixed-route bus service within its town limits
- Senior residents have access to prescheduled ride-sharing paratransit service for medical appointments

Bicycle and Pedestrian Amenities

- There are no dedicated bike lanes.
- Limited sidewalks are found throughout Town
- Pedestrian safety is a concern

Existing Conditions

North Reading is located approximately 20 miles north of Boston. It lies immediately east of Interstate 93 highway and has indirect exit access via two exits in neighboring Wilmington. The town's two major arterial roads are Route 28 and Route 62, which merge for a brief 0.2 mile segment. Route 28 traverses North Reading north to south, and connects to the Town to Andover to the north, and Reading to the south. Route 62 runs west to east, and connects the Town to Wilmington to the west, and Middleton to the east. Overall, North Reading has 94 miles of roads[18] [19], 14,838 registered vehicles[20], and as explained below, no public transit.



From a much generalized development/ transportation standpoint, North Reading can be described as having four major areas. It has an automobile-oriented retail business corridor along Main Street (Route 28). It has a historic, mainly civic village center surrounding its Town Common off of Park Street. To the southwest, it has a major commercial-office and industrial employers along the Concord Street corridor. And lastly, the remainder of the Town between all of these areas are primarily single-family residential neighborhoods and the Town's open spaces and natural areas.

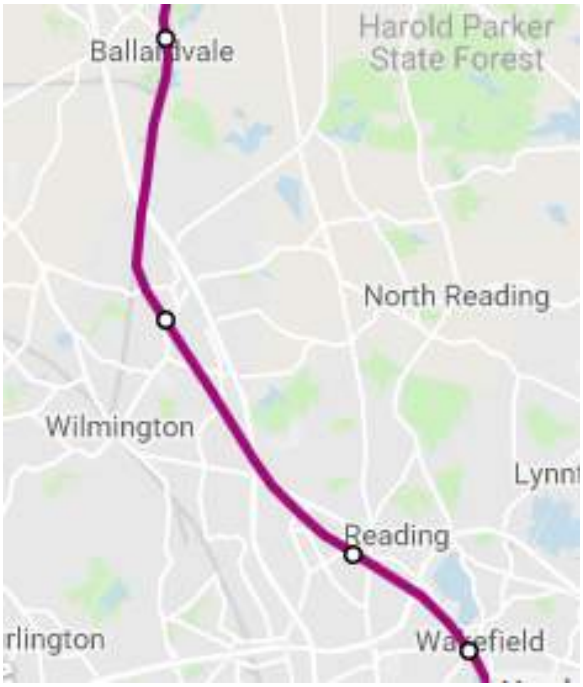
[18] Source: MassDOT 2017 Roadway Inventory
[19] Source: Massachusetts Division of Local Services (DLS) 2013 data
[20] Source: Massachusetts Division of Local Services (DLS) 2015 data

Sidewalks are found along segments of many of the Town's major roads, though many of major roads have significant sidewalk gaps or are missing sidewalks altogether. Most subdivisions have sidewalks on at least one side of the street. There are currently no dedicated bicycle facilities within North Reading. There is a former rail line bed that traverses part of the Town, and anecdotally, some informal walking and biking trail use has been mentioned by master plan workshop participants. At its October 2019, Town Meeting funded a rail trail feasibility study, to be undertaken by the Land Utilization Committee.

> *"Most people think they'll drive themselves to their own funeral."*
> MEG ROBERTSON, COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES – 25 FEBRUARY 2019

Public/Mass Transit

The Town of North Reading does not have any commuter rail, rapid transit or fixed-route bus service within its town limits. There are two MBTA commuter rail stations to south and west that are part of the Haverhill/Reading lines that provides access to Boston's North Station. These two are the Reading MBTA station on Route 28 to the south, and the North Wilmington MBTA station off of Route 62 (Middlesex Avenue) in Wilmington to the west of Town.



In terms of fixed-route bus service, the Town falls outside the service area of the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA), which provides service between the neighboring communities of North Andover, Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, Haverhill, Merrimac, Amesbury, Newburyport, and Salisbury. As is explained below in greater detail, the Town does have access to very limited "Ring-and-Ride" service for prescheduled trips for seniors to get to their medical appointments.

Participants of the master planning process survey and workshops expressed interest in having more transportation options including local mass transit. An opportunity could exist for Town officials and residents to form a partnership between major employers in order to: (a) connect to either the MVRTA, (b) some expansion of the MVRTA's paratransit service, and/or (c) explore a fixed-use shuttle bus, or on-demand micro-transit service.

PARATRANSIT STUDY

The 2017 North Reading Paratransit Study conducted by MAPC explored ways to help meet the paratransit needs of the Town's senior residents and those with limited mobility. Town staff, and members of the Council on Aging and Social Service Action Team have expressed that there is a significant risk that the Town could lose its seniors and disabled residents once they cannot drive. Part of the purpose of the study was to plan for future paratransit service (for a growing senior population; see table below) to allow these residents to remain part of the community.

POPULATION CHANGES IN NORTH READING AND MASSACHUSETTS, 1990-2015					
	1990	2000	2010	2015	Growth, 1990-2015
North Reading					
Population	12,002	13,837	14,892	15,396	28.3%
Senior* Population (60 and older)	**1,608**	**2,019**	**2,714**	**3,184**	**98.0%**
Senior Population Percentage	**13.4%**	**14.6%**	**18.2%**	**20.7%**	
Massachusetts					
Population	6,016,425	6,349,097	6,547,629	6,705,586	11.5%
Senior Population (60 and older)	1,080,881	1,096,567	1,273,271	1,386,681	28.3%
Senior Population Percentage	18.0%	17.3%	19.4%	20.7%	
* Senior defined as age persons 60 years and older					
Sources: US Census (1990, 2000, 2010) and American Community Survey (ACS 2011–2015)					

As the paratransit study was underway, the Town voted to join the MVRTA, and has since begun a program for the senior Ring & Ride service for senior residents' medical appointments. This Ring & Ride service covers nearby towns including Reading, Wakefield, Stoneham, Melrose, Woburn, and Burlington as well as to Boston and Bedford. At the time, the Town decided to limit the service to seniors aged 60 and older and disabled veterans for transportation to medical appointments only. The Town Veterans Services Department assesses individuals to determine their disabilities and eligibility for the service. All eligible trips must begin or end in North Reading. The limitations will allow the Town to monitor the costs during the first pilot program year and is aimed at service for the two populations who could most benefit from the service (seniors and veterans with disabilities). After a review of the ridership and costs, the Town will assess whether to extend the service to other types of trips.

The following are pertinent recommendations made by the paratransit study:

- determine if the Ring & Ride pilot program's trip patterns might lend themselves to being developed into a more efficient shuttle or flexible fixed-route service;
- work with adjacent towns such as Wilmington and Reading to see if they are interested in a pilot program for subsidized Uber, Lyft and taxi rides, as recommended in the North Suburban Mobility Study;
- monitor other similar sized towns to see what transportation pilot programs might develop that could be applied to North Reading. This includes monitoring the outcomes of ride hailing partnerships in Massachusetts in similar communities – such as Needham, MetroWest and Attleboro -- to determine if a subsidized ride program might help fill the gaps in transportation not provided by the Ring & Ride service; and
- eventually extend the service to/from the Reading, Wilmington or Anderson/Woburn commuter rail stations (similar to the Ring & Ride service to the Rowley station). This will help North Reading residents connect with MBTA bus and commuter rail.

SUBREGIONAL MOBILITY STUDY

The 2017 Subregional Mobility Study was conducted by MAPC for the North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) subregion. This MAPC planning subregion includes North Reading and surrounding communities. The purpose was to:

- examine how to provide "first and last mile" connections for transit work trips in the subregion; and
- explore options including: better coordination of existing transit services, employer- sponsored shuttles, new locally operated public transportation services, partnerships with private sector transportation network companies, and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections among transit, residences, and employment centers.

Below are **key findings** made by the mobility study, as they relate to North Reading:

- Several concentrations of residential and employment in areas such as Main Street/Route 28 in North Reading do have not transit service.

- A majority of the commute trips in the NSPC subregion are local work trips.
- Transit routes in the subregion (that includes North Reading) circumvent North Reading, and are designed mostly to serve workers who commute to the inner core of Boston.
- Most of the transit service in the subregion is not established to serve local work trips.

The following are **recommendations** made by the mobility study, as they relate to North Reading:

- The following geographic areas in and near North Reading might be suitable markets for enhanced transit services since they may have the density to support shuttles. In North Reading, the Riverpark industrial business district along Concord Street (that also straddles the border with Wilmington) is home to major employers such as Teradyne and Amazon Robotics. In Andover, and to the northwest of North Reading, is the Ballardvalle area anchored by an MBTA commuter station that may have also enough density of employers to support shuttles. While this may not directly serve North Reading residents as well as the a potential Concord Street / Riverpark location, the relative proximity of these two potential shuttle-bus transit nodes could mutually reinforce each other to secure enough ridership and transit service.
- Additional shuttle options could be explored in areas that have lower density and but still have concentrations of employment. While these geographic areas did not score high in the suitability analysis, they were identified as concentrated areas of development through the stakeholder engagement process and in the more refined geographic analysis. Among these areas identified by the mobility study, was a potential peak-period shuttle that could operate between the Anderson/Woburn station and the employment cluster around Concord Street near the I-93 interchange. See the following map excerpt from that plan.



Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

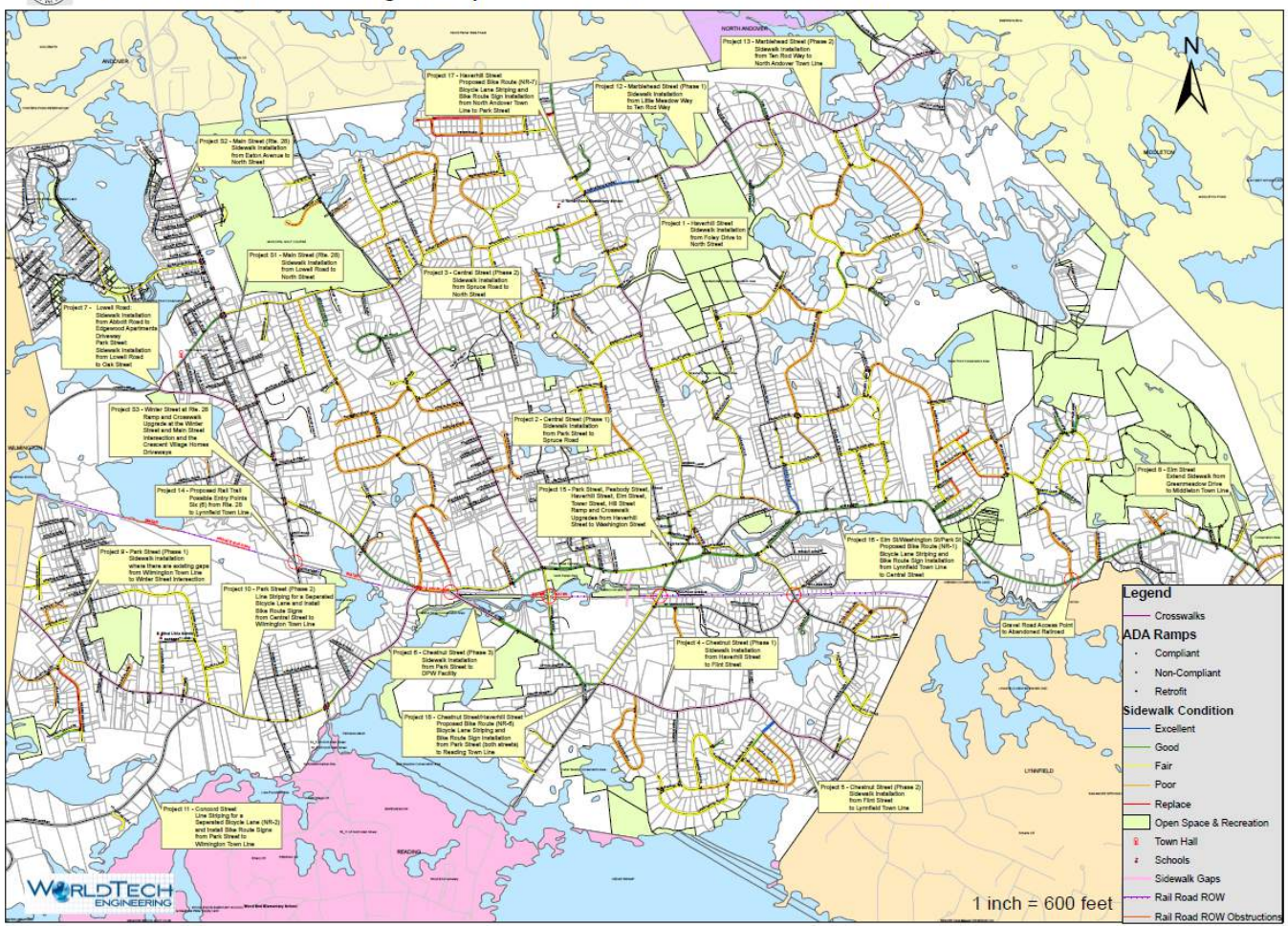
COMPLETE STREETS

The Town's 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan was intended to provide "safe and accessible options for all travel modes (walking, biking, transit, and motorized vehicles) for people of all ages and abilities". The State Massachusetts Department of Transportation Complete Streets program (and participating communities who conduct and have such a plan approved) is geared toward implementation of various small- and large-scale of improvements. Examples include "share the road" signs, sidewalk construction, and accommodating bicycle lanes. The plan recommended 22 street projects for transformation into "Complete Streets". For the purposes of the Master Plan and its implementation action table, the Master Plan will only reference and recommend those that also align with and provide synergy with other Master Plan goals. The following are the highlighted recommendations followed by a thumbnail except of the 2017 Complete Street plan map. Please refer to the Complete Streets Plan for a more legible and detailed version.

- Project S1 - Main Street (Rte. 28) Sidewalk Installation from Lowell Road to North Street
- Project S2 - Main Street (Rte. 28) Sidewalk Installation from Eaton Avenue to North Street

- Project S3 - Winter Street at Rte. 28 Ramp and Crosswalk Upgrade at the Winter Street and Main Street Intersection and the Crescent Village Homes Driveways
- Project 7 - Lowell Road: Sidewalk Installation from Abbott Road to Edgewood Apartments Driveway Park Street: Sidewalk Installation from Lowell Road to Oak Street
- Project 15 – Park Street, Peabody Street, Haverhill Street, Elm Street, Tower Street, Hill Street – Ramp and Crosswalk Upgrades from Haverhill Street to Washington Street
- Project 14 – Proposed Rail Trail Possible Entry Points – Six (6) from Route 28 to Lynnfield Town Line
- Project 2 - Central Street (Phase 1) Sidewalk Installation from Park Street to Spruce Road
- Project 11 - Concord Street Line Striping for a Separated Bicycle Lane (NR-2) and Install Bike Route Signs from Park Street to Wilmington Town Line

Town of North Reading Complete Streets Prioritization Plan



Transportation Planning

CONCEPTUAL PARK STREET IMPROVEMENTS

The Long-Range Transportation Plan[21] (LRTP) titled *Charting Progress to 2040* by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) assesses needs within greater Boston including the MAPC North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) subregion that includes the Town of North Reading. There is a single reference to the Town in the Boston MPO's long range plan. In the "Universe of Projects" (Table B.3), there is a project proposed by the Town of North Reading for "Conceptual Park Street Improvements" for a 0.7-mile roadway segment. It appears under Table B.3's subheading of "Projects That Do Not Add Capacity to the System/Cost Under $20 million", and the only other detail offered is that the project is "not included in the 2015-2018 TIP". The TIP is the Transportation Improvement Program that is the MPO's funded five-year capital investment program. Further advocacy by the Town to the State and Boston MPO will be needed to obtain State and regional approval, and get the project funded. The Master Plan will include such a recommendation for continued Town action.

MAIN STREET REDESIGN CONCEPTS

In 2015, the Town hired the Cecil Group to conduct a planning process and study two concepts for transforming the Route 28 highway into a safe and pleasant Main Street. Two alternatives were proposed. The first was the T-shaped intersection concept (also called the "Complete Corridor"), which involved keeping the existing four lanes of traffic, and improving them with sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and safer T-shaped intersections. This "Complete Corridor" is referred to with that description in reference to the urban planning concept of "complete streets" where roads are shared with pedestrians and bicyclists, and not only dominated by automobiles. The second alternative proposed calming traffic by replacing the intersections with roundabouts, which are oftentimes confused for rotaries. Roundabouts differ in that they tend to be smaller, and do not involve lane changes (i.e., there is no "weaving of traffic"). In addition to replacing the intersections with roundabouts, the second concept would add a shared path for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reduce the number of lanes from four to three on Main Street, north and south of each roundabout. The study concluded that the second concept had several advantages and was favored during that planning process. Participants of the subsequent Master Plan process were also polled on their preference for either concept, and participants overwhelming favored the Complete Corridor / T-Shaped Intersection concept. Below are excerpts from the 2015 plan with visuals of both alternatives.



Figure 16: The alternative "Complete Corridor" streetscape calls for maintaining the "T"-shaped intersections, and maintaining two lanes of vehicle traffic in either direction throughout the corridor. Sidewalks would be placed on both sides, with on-street bicycle lanes on either side of Main Street.
Aerial source: Google Earth

[21] Source: https://www.ctps.org/lrtp

Figure 12: Design Concept Diagram
Aerial source: Google Earth
Diagram produced by: The Cecil Group



POTENTIAL PARK-AND-RIDE LOT

In 2018, the Town initiated a separate study with the MAPC Transportation Department in order to identify potential sites suitable for a Park-and-Ride parking lot. At the time of the Master Plan publication, the study was still on-going. The objective of a park-and-ride lot is to allow residents to park at a parking lot, and have a shuttle bus service to bring them to a nearby MBTA commuter rail station. Presumably the shuttle bus would go to one (or both) of the closest stations located in downtown Reading to the south, Woburn to the south, or North Wilmington to the west. This would then allow North Reading residents to commute along the MBTA Haverhill Line either southward toward Boston's North Station, or northward to downtown Haverhill. The study also explores the option of having MVRTA provide an express bus from a Park & Ride location directly to downtown Boston.

Most of the potential sites being studied are along Main Street and Lowell Road due to feasibility and proximity of the western part of the Town to the nearest MBTA commuter rail stations. Such a potential Park-and-Ride facility could entail either: (a) using a publicly-owned site; or (b) a public-private partnership between the Town, and the use of existing land or parking spaces potentially available on a portion of privately-owned parcel.

Below is a tentative list of potential sites being examined as a part of that ongoing study.

Location	Address	Town Parcel ID	Notes	Ownership
Rita Mullin Field Parking Lot	96 Lowell Road	213/014.0-0000-0142.0	Would require paving of site	Town
Vacant lot near senior living	102 Lowell Road	213/014.0-0000-0148.0	Would require paving, drainage, etc.	Town
Vacant lot NW corner of North Street and Lowell Road	73 Lowell Road	213/014.0-0000-0011.0	Would require paving, drainage, etc.	Commonwealth of MA
Stop and Shop Shopping Center – out parcel	271 Main Street	213/013.0-0000-0014.0	Smaller parking area	Private
Ocean State Job Lot	97 Main Street	213/024.0-0000-0036.0	Available parking, but lot set back and not visible from street	Private
North Reading Plaza parking lot (Walmart)	72 Main Street	213/023.0-0000-0029.0	Appears to have considerable parking availability; portion of lot covered in FEMA flood zone AE	Private
Shopping Center at Park Street/Main Street	20 Main Street	213/022.0-0000-0080.0	Parking area not as large as other sites	Private
St. Theresa's Catholic Church	51 Winter Street	213/024.0-0000-0014.0	Just east of Main Street on Route 62	Private
International Family Church Parking Lot	99 Concord Street	213/002.0-0000-0011.0	Closer to employment center and I-93; FEMA Flood zone A covers portion of site	Private
Lobster Claw Restaurant	3 Main Street	213/022.0-0000-0107.0	Appears to have parking availability; portion of lot in FEMA flood zone	

Recommendations

The following transportation recommendations are largely based on community input and best planning practices in order to enhance mobility options for residents of all ages. The recommendations are made in the spirit of reflecting community input, and their pursuit would entail advocacy efforts and time, resources and investment toward achieving them.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Community input from the master planning process' online survey, public workshops, and committee meetings have provided very clear ideas for improving transportation, mobility and overall circulation.

<u>There was overwhelming consensus and support for:</u>

- multimodal streetscape improvements (82%) for traffic calming and pedestrian safety along Main Street and better connections to Park Street;
- reoriented parking and shared parking (approximately two-thirds);
- seeking permission and funding from the State for redesigning Route 28 (68%) to make it safer and pleasant to walk along and cross;
- sidewalks (86%) and walking trails (69%) in single-family residential neighborhoods; and
- redesigning both intersections of Route 28 at 62 into safer T-shaped intersections (66%).

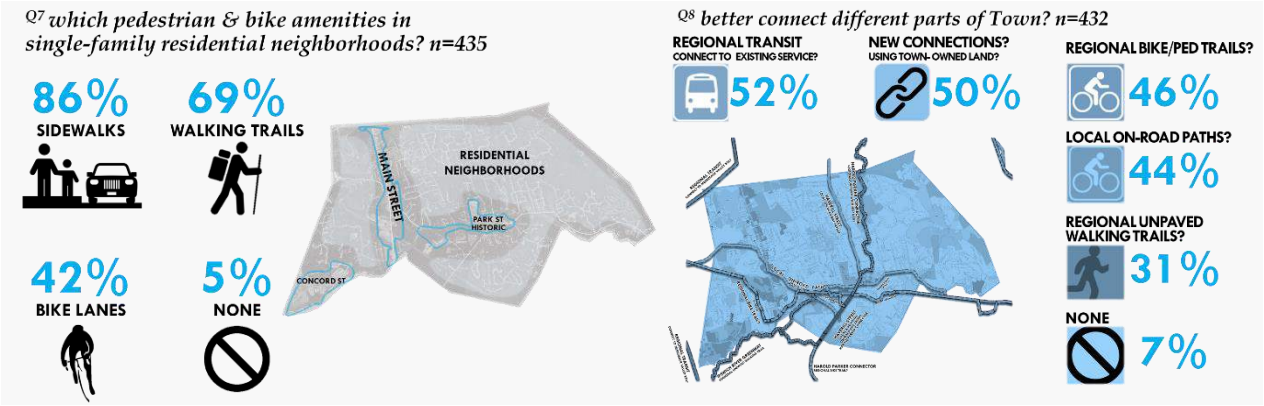
<u>There was strong consensus and support for:</u>

- transforming Route 28 into a walkable Main Street (60% very important, 30% somewhat important).

<u>There was consensus to some support for the following ideas:</u>

- regional transit connections to existing service (52%);
- new connections using Town-owned land (50%);
- regional bike/pedestrian trails (46%);
- local on-road bike lanes (42-44%); and
- regional unpaved walking trails (31%).





RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL 10: TRANSFORM ROUTE 28 FROM A HIGHWAY TO A SAFE AND WALKABLE MAIN STREET WITH STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS TO ATTRACT REDEVELOPMENT WITH LEISURE RETAIL SHOPS.

STRATEGY 10A - Coordinate the multi-pronged transformation of Route 28 into a traditional main street through deliberate sequencing of this **last out of three primary decisions and actions** (zoning, sewer and streetscape improvements) related to main street transformation.

RECOMMENDATION 10.1 - In concert with broader sewer investment and rezoning decisions related to the overall goal of a Main Street transformation, the Town should definitively decide which of the two Main Street redesign streetscape concepts to proceed with funding, final designs, and roadway construction. The goal is to advance decision-making on the redesign approach, funding sources, and to have final construction plans ready once the Town has already rezoned Main Street, and had sewer installed along it. The goal is to not have to significant gaps between these large actions, and to avoid the unfortunate scenario of sewer installation ripping up recently installed streetscape improvements.

RECOMMENDATION 10.2 - All related "Main Street transformation" Town discussions and decisions should always provide residents and officials with the context of the three related decisions regarding rezoning, sewer and streetscape enhancements.

GOAL 11: EXPAND SENIOR AND VETERAN PARATRANSIT SERVICES, AND PARTNER WITH MAJOR EMPLOYERS TO EXTEND SERVICE TO COMMUTERS AND CHILDREN FOR BETTER MOBILITY FOR ALL

STRATEGY 11A - Determine if the Ring & Ride pilot program's trip patterns might lend themselves to being developed into a more efficient shuttle or flexible fixed-route service.

RECOMMENDATION 11.1 - Work with adjacent towns such as Wilmington and Reading to see if they are interested in a pilot program for subsidized Uber, Lyft and taxi rides.

RECOMMENDATION 11.2 - Monitor other similar sized towns to see what transportation pilot programs might develop that could be applied to North Reading. This includes monitoring the outcomes of ride hailing partnerships in Massachusetts in similar communities – such as Needham, MetroWest and Attleboro -- to determine if a subsidized ride program might help fill the gaps in transportation not provided by the Ring & Ride service

RECOMMENDATION 11.3 - Eventually extend the service to/from the Reading, Wilmington or Anderson/Woburn commuter rail stations (similar to the Ring & Ride service to the Rowley station). This will help North Reading residents connect with MBTA bus and commuter rail

STRATEGY 11B – Work with the MVRTA and major employers along Concord Street's Riverpark

business park to explore the feasibility of public-private partnership that could serve the transit needs of residents and office workers through services such as shuttle buses, and joint procurement and/or partial subsidization of ride-sharing minivan pools.

RECOMMENDATION 11.4 - Explore shuttle bus service between Riverpark's major businesses, designated stops elsewhere in North Reading, and/or potential Park & Ride lot. Also, consider a second "transit anchor/destination" near Andover's Ballardvalle MBTA commuter station that may have also enough density of employers to support shuttles. While this may not directly serve North Reading residents as well as the Concord Street / Riverpark location, the relative proximity of these two potential shuttle-bus transit nodes could mutually reinforce each other to secure enough ridership and transit service.

RECOMMENDATION 11.5 - Additional shuttle options could be explored in areas that have lower density and but still have concentrations of employment. While these geographic areas did not score high in the suitability analysis, they were identified as concentrated areas of development through the stakeholder engagement process and in the more refined geographic analysis. Among these areas identified by the mobility study, was a potential peak-period shuttle that could operate between the Anderson/Woburn station and the employment cluster around Concord Street near the I-93 interchange. See the following map excerpt from that plan.

STRATEGY 11C – Continue and coordinate on-going Park & Ride lot with the preceding two strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 11.6 - Ensure that whatever chosen park and ride lot, does not conflict with other Master Plan goals such as ideal site for private redevelopment potential, or transformative capacity as a site for consolidated Town facility or signature outdoor social gathering town square.

GOAL 12: ENCOURAGE WALKABILITY BY CONSTRUCTING NEEDED SIDEWALKS AND OTHER MULTIMODAL COMPLETE STREETS IMPROVEMENTS

STRATEGY 12A – Continue the implementation of the Town's approved 2017 Complete Streets Plan in order to deliver walkability, biking and trail options to its residents.

RECOMMENDATION 12.1 - Prioritize the following Complete Streets projects since they also complement other Master Plan goals: (a) Sidewalk installation Projects S1, S2, 7, and 2 for Main Street, Lowell Road, Driveway Park Street and Central Street; (b) Ramp and crosswalks Projects S3 and 15 for Winter Street and Park/Peabody/Haverhill/Elm/Tower/Hill streets; (c) Six Proposed Rail Trail Entry Points for Project 14 along Route 28 to Lynnfield Town Line; and (d) Line Striping for Separate Bike Lane and Route Signs for Project 11 for Concord Street, and from Park Street to Wilmington Town Line.

RECOMMENDATION 12.2 - Continued advocacy on the part of Town of North Reading officials and residents to get the Town's proposed "Conceptual Park Street improvements" project approved and funded by the State in its Boston MPO 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan..

OPEN SPACE

Introduction

The purpose of the Open Space section of the Master Plan is to 1) provide information on the state of the community's open space and recreational resources and programs and identify trends that may affect these existing conditions, 2) assess community needs and desires as they relate to open space and recreation, and 3) to provide targeted recommendations that will help the Town of North Reading continue its mission to conserve natural resources, preserve and develop community open spaces, and provide sufficient recreation opportunities for its residents.

North Reading is a residential community and will likely continue to be so in the future. Its convenience to regional employment centers and attractive small town character will continue to attract new residential development. At the same time, the community places a high value on its open spaces, public parks, and recreation areas. It is through thoughtful planning and active stewardship that North Reading's open spaces, critical plant and animal habitats, neighborhood parks, and quality outdoor recreation facilities remain a part of the community's landscape. It is thought that without planning, the appearance of a community, the lifestyle of its residents, and the condition of its natural resources can be dramatically altered in a short period of time due to ill-conceived changes in land use patterns.

Residents desire more opportunities for safe walking and biking in North Reading; this was mentioned frequently in the online Community Survey and during the October 2018 Public Forum. The Town should prioritize where sidewalks, walking paths, and bike lanes should be added to connect open spaces and historic assets, as well as connect residential neighborhoods to major destinations. If the Town invests in these facilities, the planning and design should be consistent with the character of North Reading and consider future maintenance and upkeep needs.

In 2013, the Town of North Reading completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), which provided a comprehensive overview of the Town's cultural and natural history, a detailed inventory of all open space and recreational resources in North Reading, and recommendations for protecting and improving these resources. The 2013 OSRP is a formal inventory and planning document developed from existing Town, State and Federal information, from citizen and nonprofit organization input, and from the results of a town-wide survey. The 2013 plan is an update of the Town's prior plans, the most recent written in 2007. In 2019, the Town will undertake a new plan update, as the current one will expire in 2020. Additionally, in January 2016, North Reading completed its Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, with updated conservation and sustainability information.

OVERVIEW OF OPEN SPACE & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES & AREAS

Active Recreation Areas

- Harold Parker State Forest
- Benevento Memorial Field
- Chestnut Street Complex
- Clarke Park
- Hillview Country Club
- Ipswich River Park
- Mullin Recreation Park
- Park Street Field
- North Parish Park
- Murphy Field

Conservation Areas

- Town Center Area
- Swan Pond Area
- At Reading town line off Heritage Way and Crestwood Rd (Cedar Swamp)

- Along Martins Brook and Martins Pond abutting Clarke Park
- Along Skug River off Central St
- West of Little School, off Gordon Rd. and Sandspur Ln.
- Between Main St. and Martins Brook
- Ives Memorial Forest abutting Harold Parker State Forest
- North Parish Park on Park St. and land abutting Ipswich River Park
- Eisenhaures Pond Park
- Strawberry Acres
- Off Park St, abutting Chestnut Street recreation fields
- Furbish Pond/Stickney Well

School Department Property

- Town Little School
- Senior High School/Middle School Complex
- Hood School
- Batchelder School

Town Cemeteries

- Park St. Cemetery
- Harmony Vale Cemetery
- Riverside Cemetery

Existing Conditions

The Town is a suburban community which retains some of the character of its early rural heritage. Gentle rises and flat meadows descend to the Ipswich River Basin, which traces a path through the southern portion of the Town just south of the historic Town Center. Smaller streams and brooks meander through the central and western portions of North Reading with four ponds and connected wetland systems scattered throughout the northern half of the Town. Much of the undeveloped land is forested and there are traces of stonewalls from the Town's early agricultural heritage.

The general pattern of land use in North Reading consists of a linear core of more intensive commercial development, scattered industry, and higher-density housing running north and south along Route 28. The southwest corner of Town along Concord Street contains most of the more recent industrial development, and the Park Street business district accentuates the Town Center with its local businesses, schools, and town service buildings. Medium and low-density residential areas lie outside these more highly developed areas, with scattered tracts of undeveloped land which serve as reminders of the town's rural heritage.

WATER RESOURCES

As part of the Ipswich River Watershed area, North Reading is located in one of the most historically and ecologically significant river systems in the region. The Ipswich River is part of the Great Marsh ecosystem which extends to New Hampshire, and more than 330,000 people depend on the river and its aquifers for drinking water. According to the 2013 OSRP, the Ipswich River is considered a highly stressed river basin, due to the fact that segments of the river run dry on a regular basis.

The shallow Skug River, which originates along the Andover-North Andover border, enters North Reading on its northern border and flows westerly into Martins Pond. Eisenhaure's Pond, Martins Pond, and Swan Pond are the three largest ponds in North Reading.

North Reading's wetlands are predominantly comprised of red maple swamps, which much be protected from developmental impacts. Additionally, according to the 2013 OSRP, North Reading's wetlands are being degraded by invasive plant species, which inhibit or smother native plants that are important to the health of the wetlands system. Such invasive species include purple loosestrife and phragmites.

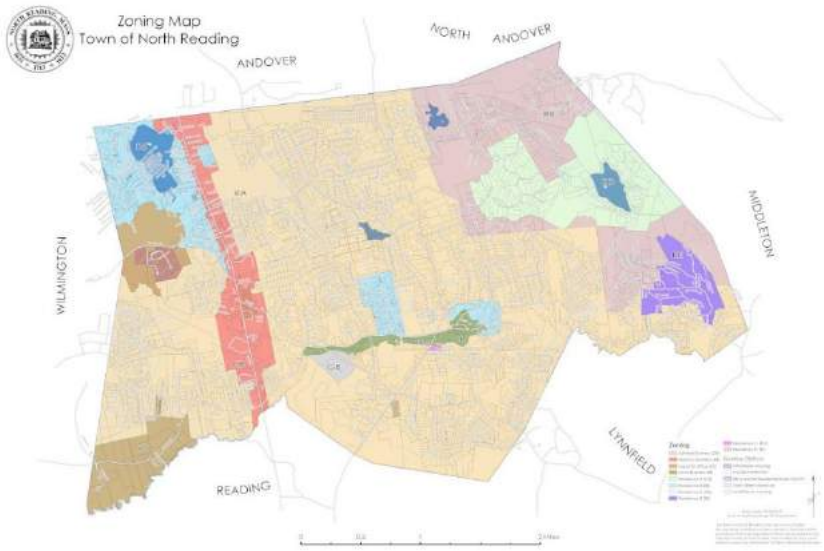
According to the 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan, flood hazards in North Reading include beaver dams, flood, heavy rainstorm and thunderstorm, and snow melt. The plan states the probability of future beaver dams and associated impacts is certain. While the exact number of beavers in North Reading is unknown,

the population is sizable enough to cause continued impacts. Regular maintenance is needed to prevent significant damage, such as flooding, from occurring.

The main sources of flooding in North Reading are the Ipswich River and Martins Brook Pond. Other sources of flooding in Town include Rapier Brook, Swan Pond, Eisenhaures Pond and a number of unnamed streams that are tributaries to the Ipswich River. The Martins Brook watershed, which includes Martins Brook, Martins Pond and the Skug River, is another significant flooding source in Town.

The description of the town's water supply and how it purchases water "from Andover at a rate that is not considered advantageous" supported information gathered in stakeholder and Hazard Mitigation Committee meetings. It also contributed to the development of mitigation actions related to water usage.[22] The Town has since reached an agreement with the Town of Andover for increased capacity in its water source, as detailed below in the Public Facilities & Services chapter.

The Aquifer Protection District is an overlay district that includes the Town of North Reading well fields and surrounding drainage basins. Located near the borders to Andover, North Andover, Wilmington and parts of Middleton, Reading and Lynnfield, if a proposed development lies within this District that overlays the basic zoning map of the Town, then the regulations for this overlay district, which are more restrictive than those of the underlying district, take precedence. The Zoning Board of Appeals is the Special Permit Granting Authority.



According to the 2018 Water Quality Report, North Reading draws water from four active wellfields: the Lakeside Boulevard Wellfield, the Route 125 Well, the Railroad Bed Wellfield, and the Central Street Wellfield[23]. In addition to these wellfields, North Reading maintains two active interconnection with the Town of Andover that are used to supplement town wells. In 2017, the North Reading Water Department supplied over 559 million gallons of water to the Town, averaging 1.53 million gallons per day. In the peak summer day, the water demand exceeded 2.16 million gallons. A sampling of water quality for North Reading shows that the water supply, as of 2017, was not in violation of state regulated and secondary substances.

GEOLOGY, SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

The USDA has determined that about 39% of the soils in North Reading are favorable for residential development, in light of the fact that the Town is not served by municipal sewers and instead relies on sub-surface disposal of sanitary waste. The favorable soils are typically better drained, sandier soils which are found in outwash deposits and yield acceptable percolation rates pursuant to the requirements of Title V of

[22] 2016 North Reading Hazard Mitigation Plan
[23] 2018 Annual Water Quality Report

the State Sanitary Code. Soils draining faster than 2 minutes per inch are considered poor filters of septage, and should be considered a constraint to development in aquifer recharge areas.

Most of the remaining soils are moist to wet because of imperfect drainage (such as the many areas underlain by dense basal till), shallowness to bedrock, or a high water table during a portion of the year. Other soils unfavorable to development are steeply sloped, or contain densely packed glacial till which is too impermeable for septic systems. Hence, as in much of New England, glaciation has left significant obstacles to development in North Reading.

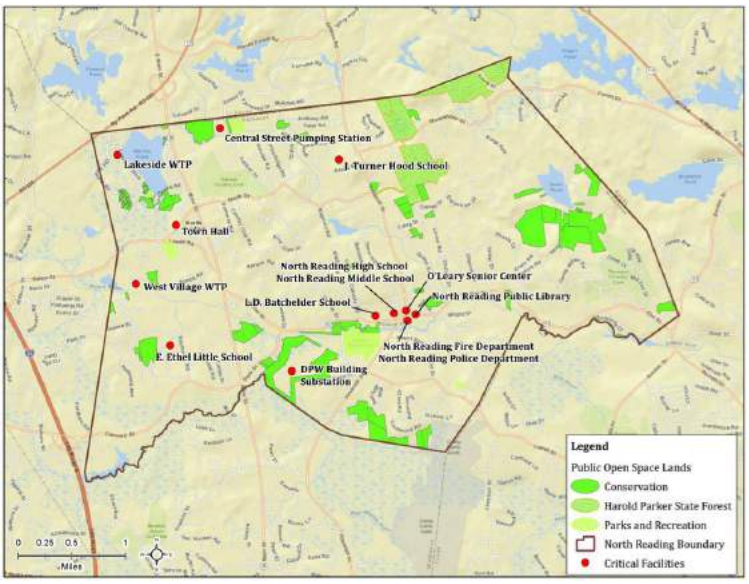
The Solid Waste and Recycling Division of the Department of Public Works is responsible for the collection of residential solid waste (trash) and recyclable materials from the residents of North Reading.

Conservation Land

Open space and recreational opportunities have a positive impact on the quality of life in a community for its residents from enjoyment of active, outdoor sports to appreciation of the character of the community. Protecting open space is critical in terms of our natural resources - drinking water, high value wildlife and plant habitat, farmland, forests, wetlands, floodplains, vernal pools, and scenic beauty.

The open space and recreation areas in the Town of North Reading encompass both land and water sites, publicly and privately owned. The purpose of this inventory is to identify areas of conservation and recreation interest in the Town in order to evaluate current and future open space planning needs. Areas of interest include open spaces that are valued for one or more of the following factors: recreation opportunities, protection of natural resources, historic and scenic character.

The inventory is divided into two sections –public or non-profit land and private open space. Within these sections, land has ranging degrees of protection, which prevent or restrict land uses and development. Protected open spaces are private or public parcels that are permanently committed to conservation or recreation purposes by deed restriction or easement. Unprotected open spaces are areas that are of conservation or recreation interest to the Town, but are not permanently protected as open space. Partially protected open spaces are areas that have a partial or short-term restriction on development, but are not protected forever. The inventory includes information about ownership and management, current use and condition of the land, recreation potential, accessibility, and types of protection. The map shows the Public Open Space Areas from the 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan with the distribution of public and private open spaces in North Reading.



PUBLIC/NONPROFIT OPEN SPACE

Of the approximately 1,270 acres of land are owned by the Town of North Reading, much of it is open land. A large portion of these lands were acquired for conservation purposes and fall under the jurisdiction

of the Conservation Commission (MGL ch. 40 s. 80). Uses of conservation lands include passive recreation, such as walking, nature study, picnicking and photography. An important purpose for conserving these lands is to protect the water resources of the Town, but also because they add to the character of the Town, provide natural beauty, and are home to many species of plants and wildlife. Many have ecological value due to wetland features, and provide protection from flooding. Parks and open space also add to the quality of life in the Town and are frequently cited by residents as valued amenities.

About 209 acres of town properties provide areas for various recreational activities, including access for boating and fishing, athletic fields, golfing, and playgrounds. In addition, many of the Town's organized recreation facilities (including fields, courts and indoor facilities) and playgrounds are located on the approximately 98 acres of school properties. As a community, North Reading has made a strong commitment to the setting aside of lands for public use and natural resource protection.

Town-Owned Land	Size
Conservation Commission Land	532 Acres
North Reading Water Department	33 Acres
Town Parks and Recreation Properties	209 Acres
School Department Property	98 Acres
Town Cemeteries	30 Acres

Approximately 115 acres of land area in North Reading are owned by nearby municipalities for the purpose of water supply protection. These include Danvers (107 acres), Lynn (less than an acre), and Reading (8 acres).

Regarding Commonwealth-owned land, Harold Parker State Forest comprises just over 3,000 acres. A portion of the Forest is located in the northeast corner of the Town and stretches north from there into the towns of Andover, North Andover and Middleton. Recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, swimming, camping and picnicking. The North Reading portion includes Bradford Pond where non-motorized boating is allowed. Access points in North Reading include Marblehead St., Haverhill St. and through Ives Memorial Forest from Arline Dr. off of Foley Drive. The three town-owned cemeteries (Harmony Vale, Park Street, and Riverside) cover approximately 30 acres.

A portion of Camp Curtis Guild, owned and operated by the Massachusetts National Guard, is located in North Reading. The Guild is located in Reading. Most of the approximately 40 acres in North Reading are wetlands and open marsh and are not accessible to the public.

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

There is approximately 600 acres of private land in North Reading, although most is not currently protected or restricted. Exceptions include private open space properties that are enrolled in the Commonwealth's Chapter 61 program. Chapter 61, 61A and 61B are tax laws that allow for significant reduction of property taxes for landowners willing to maintain their land as managed forest, outdoor recreation, or agriculture. If a landowner chooses to withdraw land from this classification, the owner must pay a penalty tax. When the land is put up for sale, the city or town has a right of first refusal to consider whether or not to buy the land outright. There are currently no lands that are subject to a private conservation restriction or enrolled in the state's agricultural preservation restriction program.

In addition to the Chapter 61 lands and other private recreation properties, there are approximately 295 vacant privately held lots that range in size from less than an acre to almost 20 acres in size and are not currently protected from development in any way. Some of these are considered undevelopable by the Town assessor (and are taxed as such), while others are considered to have development potential.

Private Recreation Land	Size
Thomson Country Club	28 Acres
North Reading Rifle Club	2 Acres
Chapter 61 Properties	209 Acres

Open Space Management

REGIONAL PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS

The 360-acre Swan Pond Area includes multiple parcels owned by the Conservation Commission and municipal land without any restrictions on how it can be used. This land would provide open space connections between Swan Pond and Middleton Reservoir land.

The upper portion of 99 Concord Street, which is currently undeveloped and privately owned, is a priority for protection and would extend the preservation area located in adjacent Furbish Pond Lane, which is preserved. This area is a high preservation priority according to EOEEA (Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs) criteria.

The Atlantic Cedar Swamp Area is a privately owned, undeveloped parcels containing rare Atlantic cedar swamp and is 9.3 acres. This area is a high preservation priority according to EOEEA criteria.

IDENTIFIED INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

The town would like to explore a bike/trail network in town that would connect with the Peabody Rail Trail that ends at Russell Street in Peabody. The North Reading Pedestrian Committee has examined the potential for a trail network that would connect to the Peabody Bike Trail. Additionally, at the Open House community forum in October, two of the highest ranked strategies were providing opportunities for safe walking and biking in in town and cooperating with neighboring towns and regional entities to plan and develop regional recreational areas and trail networks.

2016 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

Land use was a big theme throughout the planning process for the 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Protecting open space and developing an increasingly sustainable town are made possible by mitigating flood risk and considering other natural hazards when developing the town. It is evident the Town of North Reading is aware of their hazard risk and working toward mitigating that risk through the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Recommendations

The recommendations below list the goals, objectives, and strategies that are proposed to the Town of North Reading. At the October Open House event in North Reading, participants chose the strategies that they believe should receive the highest, or lowest, amount of support from the town. There is overall support for the recommendations for North Reading's open spaces, with only thirteen "low support" votes for all recommendations, compared to 117 for "high support" and 62 votes for "medium support".

However, the degree of support for each strategy varied between participants. Twenty-four categories received more "high support" votes than others, seven had more "medium support" votes than others, and seven categories were tied. Although there were no categories that got more "low support" votes than others, it did tie with "medium support" on one, expanding indoor recreation facilities.

OVERALL COMMUNITY CONSENSUS ON PRIORITIES

Protecting the town's drinking water quality ranked highest out of all other strategies. As mentioned before, as of 2017 the town was not in violation of either regulated or secondary substances. The town should **continue to inventory and inspect underground storage tanks** to protect water resources and **evaluate proposed development for potential impacts** to wetlands and Town water quality.

Furthermore, the town should **coordinate wellhead plans with neighboring towns** to ensure out-of-town protection of the Ipswich River Watershed. It could **educate the public about the Town's watersheds and aquifers** and how to help protect them. The town should work with partners, such as Greenscapes North Shore Coalition, on water issues such as proper disposal of dog waste on open space properties and best landscape practices to conserve water use.

Providing **opportunities for safe walking and biking** in North Reading also ranked high. The Town could **identify gaps in existing trail system** through available maps and site visits, as necessary; identify ways to **increase access to existing trails** and create shorter loops for children and seniors (there are currently shorter loops at Ipswich River Park). The Town should also identify Town-owned parcels that could address deficiencies or add to the existing trail system. Other potential actions include **constructing or completing new trails on Town-owned land**, as applicable, and working with owners of publicly accessible open space parcels to construct trail extensions. At October 2018 Town Meeting, a rail trail feasibility study was funded, and this project will be initiated by the Land Utilization Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL 13: MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL SERVICE FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

RECOMMENDATION 13.1 – Continue to provide a diversified selection of year-round recreational programs for residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

RECOMMENDATION 13.2 - Implement management strategies for the upkeep, maintenance and enhanced access of/to all recreational resources. Continue the recently initiated process of compiling and publishing an inventory list for each park and all of its amenities. The Town will begin a new Open Space and Recreation Plan in summer 2019.

RECOMMENDATION 13.3 - Regularly assess recreation needs of residents and continue to plan for necessary improvements to existing facilities and programs to meet these needs, including assessing accessibility of Town recreational facilities.

GOAL 14: MAKE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

STRATEGY 14A - Provide opportunities for safe walking and biking in North Reading

RECOMMENDATION 14.1 - Utilize sidewalks, walking paths, and bike lanes to connect open spaces and cultural/historic assets and connect residential neighborhoods to major destinations.

RECOMMENDATION 14.2 - Designate locations for sidewalks and bike lanes and develop design guidelines sympathetic to the character of North Reading's landscape and open space.

RECOMMENDATION #14.3 - Further North Reading's Complete Streets work to provide safe walking and biking in North Reading and surrounding communities.

STRATEGY 14B - Create ways to provide adequate access to open spaces and natural resources for all ages and mobility levels.

RECOMMENDATION 14.4 - Identify land available for development of neighborhood parks to provide all residents with recreation areas that are easily accessible, walkable, safe, and appropriately equipped for the population they serve.

RECOMMENDATION 14.5 - Build more quality trails at existing open space areas specifically for seniors, baby strollers, and wheelchairs.

RECOMMENDATION 14.6 - A number of facilities in North Reading do not contain accessibility measures, and efforts to improve/update open spaces should include ways to make all sites fully ADA-compliant.

STRATEGY 14C - Expand and improve access to public open space and recreation areas.

RECOMMENDATION 14.7 - Produce comprehensive maps of Town open spaces and recreation resources identifying parking, access points, trails, and permitted uses.

RECOMMENDATION 14.8 - Improve signage at conservation areas in town.

RECOMMENDATION 14.9 - Develop and connect a town-wide system of multi-use trails through existing Town open space lands, access easements, and public right-of-ways.

RECOMMENDATION 14.10 - Expand indoor recreation facilities.

GOAL 15: PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

STRATEGY 15A - Protect surface and groundwater resources to ensure a sustainable supply of drinking water and to preserve and restore the ecological integrity of the Ipswich River Watershed.

RECOMMENDATION 15.1 - Protect drinking water quality by preventing contamination, runoff, and diversion of water that directly contributes to aquifer recharge.

STRATEGY 15B - Protect North Reading's unique natural features to maintain biological diversity and preserve the Town's scenic qualities.

RECOMMENDATION 15.2 - Integrate historic and scenic resource protection into open space planning strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 15.3 - Continue efforts to monitor and implement clean up strategies for Town waterways.

RECOMMENDATION 15.4 - Continue to encourage and promote town-wide water saving techniques.

RECOMMENDATION 15.5 - Identify and eliminate sources of point and non-point pollution in all Town water bodies.

RECOMMENDATION 15.6 - Continue to educate residents about the influence of surface water on the town's groundwater.

RECOMMENDATION 15.7 - Protect corridors and minimize habitat fragmentation in natural areas that have high value for preservation of wildlife habitat, rare plants and animals, woodlands, wetlands, and waterways.

RECOMMENDATION 15.8 - Encourage private and public development that protects open space systems and enhances natural resources.

Improve Town zoning and development standards and regulations to support protection of natural resources.

RECOMMENDATION 15.9 - Identify natural resources in North Reading that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and develop long-term strategies to protect those resources.

GOAL 16: FURTHER TOWN MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES, FUNDING, AND LAND ACQUISITION

STRATEGY 16A - Coordinate protection and management of natural resource areas, recreational resources, and open spaces with multiple jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATION 16.1 - Cooperate with neighboring towns and regional entities to plan and develop regional recreational areas and trail networks.

STRATEGY 16B - Plan and coordinate protection of lands of conservation and recreation interest.

RECOMMENDATION 16.2 - Strategically acquire and protect land based upon past planning efforts and smart growth principles.

RECOMMENDATION 16.3 - Encourage private land conservation measures.

STRATEGY 16C - Manage town open space properties to protect natural resources while encouraging appropriate public use.

RECOMMENDATION 16.4 - Establish a public land use and access policy for all Town lands to guide public access and land management planning.

RECOMMENDATION 16.5 - Evaluate town-owned undesignated open space to dedicate portions to conservation or recreation use.

RECOMMENDATION 16.6 - Provide a cost-effective means of monitoring and maintaining town-owned open space to prevent overuse, illegal dumping, unauthorized trail creation, and resource degradation.

RECOMMENDATION 16.7 - Cooperate with neighboring towns and regional entities to design compatible and integrated management strategies for natural resource areas.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Introduction

The Public Facilities and Services element of a master plan helps to guide decisions and develop a plan relevant to public buildings, utilities, and infrastructure in order to meet future needs of the community. Public facilities make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to provide services for the public good. The adequacy of North Reading's municipal facilities for the functions they serve is largely determined by four factors:

- The form, size, and organization of the Town's local government;
- Projected population and economic growth;
- The Town's land use pattern; and,
- The expectations of the Town's population

The Town's ability to provide adequate facilities depends on effective capital planning and a commitment to implementation, asset management policies, and the amount of revenue available for local government operations. North Reading, like many other municipalities, receives very little funding from non-local sources and relies almost entirely on its own residents and businesses for financial support.
This chapter includes information about Town administration; services that keep the Town running including: Public Works, Facilities, Public Safety, and Community Services; properties owned by the Town of North Reading or the North Reading Public School District; and strategies for how the town can maintain and improve its public services and facilities.

Existing Conditions

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

North Reading is governed by the Home Rule Charter form of government, and is led by a five member Select Board and Town Administrator. The Select Board serves a three-year term and acts "as the chief goal-setting and policy-making body of the town," with their guidelines and policy directives implemented by the Town Administrator, and other town officers and employees. Pursuant to the Town Charter, Annual Town Meetings are held in June to handle primarily financial matters, and the first Monday in October to handle primarily zoning matters and other business.

As the chief administrative officer of the Town, the Town Administrator assumes general responsibility for coordinating day-to-day affairs of the community, including supervision of the division of finance, public works, public safety, public service and all town departments under the jurisdiction of the Select Board. Michael P. Gilleberto currently serves as the Town Administrator.

Capital Improvement Planning Committee

North Reading's Capital Improvement Planning Committee manages a five-year capital improvements program. Per the Town Charter, the Capital Improvements Program includes:

a) a list of all capital expenditures proposed during the five fiscal years next ensuing;
b) cost estimates, methods of financing, and a time schedule for each such acquisition; and
c) the estimated cost of operating and maintaining the equipment or facility to be acquired.

The capital program shall be revised and expanded annually.

As required, each year, department requests are submitted to the Committee, where they are discussed, evaluated and ranked. Final selections of capital projects are made by the Select Board and approved annually by Town Meeting. While the Capital Improvement Plan spans five years, the review process for capital projects is done yearly, with three-year projections for future needs from each department requested, where available.

With the Capital Improvements Program including an extensive yearly review of new projects and revisions, and with a dynamic, frequently updated five-year planning process in place, specific recommendations from past Capital Improvement Plans are not made in this ten-year Master Plan.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The North Reading Department of Public Works (DPW) is located at 235 North Street. The mission of the North Reading Department of Public Works is to provide municipal services in support of the residents, businesses and visitors of North Reading. The DPW, through its dedicated employees, strives to build, maintain and operate the public infrastructure ensuring safe, efficient and cost-effective services for all public property and assets.

The DPW is commissioned to provide services related to fleet maintenance, cemetery, public grounds, public buildings, engineering, solid waste collection, tree services, highway maintenance, snow and ice removal, storm water and water services. The DPW consists of several divisions that include the Facilities Division, Recycling and Solid Waste Division, Water Division and the Roads & Streets/Highway Division.

Recycling and Solid Waste Division

The Solid Waste and Recycling Division of the Department of Public Works is responsible for the collection of residential solid waste (trash) and recyclable materials from the residents of North Reading.
The Town contracts with JRM Hauling & Recycling Services Inc. for solid waste removal services, which charges the Town on a per ton basis. While the Town pays for every pound of solid waste hauled, it pays the same for recycling regardless of the amount of recyclables collected. Therefore, an increase in recycling and a reduction in unrecycled solid waste would also help reduce service costs. Recycling accounts for approximately 25% of the Town's total solid waste.

Over the past few years the amount of solid waste (trash) that residents of North Reading generate has declined while the amount of recycling has increased. Residents are currently limited to four (2) 35-gallon containers or bags per week, not exceeding 50 pounds in weight. In addition, one large item per week (mattresses, sofas, etc.) is permitted.

According to the Town's 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan trash production reduced from an average of 65 pounds per household per week in 2005 to 48 pounds per week in 2010. These promising trends save taxpayer dollars, reduce environmental costs, and pave the way for further progress. According to the Town's 2018 Annual Report, the total solid waste collection for FY 2017 was 4464.28 tons and total recycling collection was 1,389 tons. The total solid waste collection for FY 2018 was 4086.49 tons and total recycling collection was 1237.87 tons. These figures do not include the scrap metal collected at the DPW, yard waste collected at the curb or the Compost Center, or the textiles, books and other materials collected in the various bins around Town.

Along with other communities, North Reading has recently been facing challenges with planning and budgeting for recycling services. Contamination of food, plastic bags and wraps, and other unrecyclable material mixed with recycling has increased recycling costs and introduced difficulties in waste management companies finding end users[24]. The Town anticipates recycling will continue to be a challenge – budgetary and otherwise – for the foreseeable future.

Water Division

The Water Division of the Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Town's two water treatment plants, pumping stations, water supply wells, three water storage tanks, approximately 80 miles of water mains, 750 fire hydrants and 4,600 water service connections and water meters.

North Reading uses a combination of water pumped from Town-owned wells and water purchased from the Town of Andover (whose sources are the Merrimack River, Fish Brook and Haggett's Pond). The Town's four active wellfields are the Lakeside Boulevard Wellfield, the Route 125 Well, the Railroad Bed Wellfield, and the Central Street Wellfield. Approximately 33 acres of land are controlled by North Reading's Water Department for public water supply wells and wellfield protection.

According to the Town's Annual Report, the North Reading Water Department supplied over 559 million gallons of water to Town residents and businesses in 2017, averaging 1.53 million gallons per day. In addition, about 15% of homes in North Reading now have irrigation wells to supplement the public supply. The Town of North Reading lies within the watershed of the Ipswich River which is considered a highly stressed river basin. Due to water use restrictions and extremely low flows in the Ipswich River the Department has created policies and initiatives to help reduce water consumption, including regular watering bans. Town initiatives include a rain barrel program that provides rain barrels at a reduced price to encourage alternative non-potable water use and educational outreach that focuses on reducing water use for lawns and gardens. In conjunction, the Town is revising its drought and restriction plan and is seeking funding to develop a Capital Improvement Plan.

In 2017, the Town entered into negotiations with the MWRA and the Town of Reading to tie-into MWRA's service through the Town of Reading. However, the Town's Select Board voted to "pause" its proceedings with the MWRA after Andover granted a 2-year extension on its intermunicipal agreement to supply North Reading with water through July 1, 2019. Following this, North Reading negotiated a new contract for Andover to provide 100% of North Reading's potable water for 99 years, at a significant savings over the previous MWRA plan, and with fewer infrastructure needs. The new contract with Andover will increase North Reading's capacity over time, as follows: until June 30, 2019 up to a maximum daily withdrawal of 2.4 million gallons; then until June 30, 2025, up to a maximum daily withdrawal of 2.6 million gallons; then up to a maximum daily withdrawal of 3.0 million gallons to North Reading through new interconnections (all subject to permitting and any necessary infrastructure upgrades). The new capacity will ensure North Reading's development goals will not be hindered due to lack of available water. Without these upgrades, the Town would not be able to support significant new commercial or residential development.

[24]As Costs Skyrocket, More U.S. Cities Stop Recycling. NY Time, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/16/business/local-recycling-costs.html, retrieved 8/1/19

Sewer System

North Reading has no public sewer system or wastewater treatment facility. The High/Middle School complex and some larger developments operate private on-site wastewater treatment plants, but most residents and businesses are reliant on septic systems. The Town's lack of sewer infrastructure and reliance on septic systems constrains new development. However, development of a wastewater system is being explored as a strategy to protect the Town's water resources and to increase business development within the community.

In 2007, the Town completed a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan. The plan outlined a series of recommended steps the Town could take to develop a wastewater disposal system for areas in need. However, the disposal sites recommended in the plan, were not proven to be suitable. In 2011, the Town contracted with FXM Associates to conduct an analysis of potential increased property tax revenues in connection with proposed sewer service in the Concord Street and Main Street/Route 28 Study Area. The study provided the following recommended implementation strategy and next steps:

- Inform Concord Street property and business owners about planning for municipal sewer installation, and confirm their future redevelopment and business expansion.
- Consider a phased approach to municipal sewer, beginning with the Concord Street Study Area, and secure funding for pre-development planning, engineering and legal services.
- Determine water supply needs for potential additional Concord Street commercial and industrial uses and pursue options to ensure adequate capacity.
- Discuss with the Town of Wilmington and MWRA an agreement to extend existing sewer service to property on the north side of Concord Street and beyond.
- Determine estimated cost for Concord Street sewer installation and prepare a cost-benefit analysis for Concord Street and identified western sub-area.
- Determine adequacy of telecommunications infrastructure, service and coverage in the Concord Street Study Area, identify upgrades/improvements needed.
- Document Main Street/Route 28 roadway/traffic and circulation improvement needed to accommodate future volume, circulation and activity centers associated with Study Area potential build-out with municipal sewer.

Now, in 2019, the Town is actively seeking a permanent sewerage solution. The Town is working on plans for municipal sewer infrastructure through Andover to be part of the Greater Lawrence Sewer District. A feasibility study is currently underway to determine phasing and cost options, as well as determining the infrastructure improvements that will need to be made in Andover in order to make a municipal sewer along Route 28 and Concord Street, and potentially the Martins Pond neighborhood, a reality.

Roads & Streets/ Highway Division

North Reading is situated in the Greater Boston Area, between I-93 and I-95 and I-495 and Route 128. The principle highways through North Reading are Route 28 (north-south) and Route 62 (east-west). There are about 96 miles of roadway in the Town, of which 79 miles are Town-owned, and the remainder, are under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), or Private.

The Road and Street Division (Highway Department) of the Department of Public Works is responsible for the seasonal and winter maintenance of North Reading's roadways, the storm drainage system, and small construction projects.

The division oversees maintenance of the Town's streets, sidewalks, crosswalks and curbing. This maintenance includes normal seasonal maintenance such as street sweeping, applying pavement markings, filling potholes, repairing damaged curbing, grading and maintaining gravel roads, and winter snow and ice removal.

In 2015 the Cecil Group prepared a complete streets plan for a portion of Route 28 for the Town and its Community Planning Department through a grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, which is a program of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The study provided existing analysis, recommendations, alternatives and implementation strategies to assist the Town in advancing the complete streets strategies and techniques to the Main Street (Route 28) study area.

The 2015 Main Street complete streets study was followed up by the Town's 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan prepared by WorldTech Engineering LLC. The plan was developed in accordance with MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program guidelines and focused on identifying gaps in the Town's pedestrian and bicycle network, focusing on locations linking schools, recreational facilities, public buildings, public and senior housing, and commercial centers. The study found that Sidewalks were provided along a total of 51.9 miles of Town roadways. Of these, the total mileage of roadway with sidewalk on both sides was 32.9 miles, and an additional 19.3 miles of roadway had sidewalks on one side only. The plan helped to identify streets with poor pedestrian and bicycle accommodation and outlined a series of recommended steps the Town could take to further its complete street efforts.

In 2017, the Town applied for and received $384,000 from MassDOT's Complete Streets program to fund construction of a new sidewalk along Haverhill Street from approximately Foley Street to North Street, and the installation of new traffic speed recorders and signage for the Police Department.
The DPW makes street and road maintenance improvements in various locations throughout the Town, as funded through Chapter 90 and the Town's own road budget, allocated through the Capital Improvements Plan.

Stormwater

The Road and Street Division also maintains the North Reading's stormwater drainage system, which includes cleaning the Town's 1,512 catch basins annually. Regular cleaning of the catch basins avoids blockage of the piping system which in turn helps to prevent flooding of streets, private properties, and basements caused when the flow of water into the catch basins is impeded.

The Town has a Stormwater Management Plan in place to protect water resources and prevent flooding. The DPW disseminates information to residents about the cause and effect of stormwater and the Town's policies, regulations, and initiatives that address it.

In 2010 the Town created the Water and Wastewater Commission to focus on stormwater issues and guide community decisions and actions. The same year it also adopted updated stormwater rules and regulations to provide greater clarity of the Town's Stormwater Management Bylaw and improve effectiveness of its

administration and enforcement. The Department of Public Works is continually updating its Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of stormwater infrastructure.

In 2017 DPW submitted the Town's Storm Water Annual Report to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for General Permit compliance.

Facilities Division

The Facilities Division is responsible for the management of the towns municipal buildings maintenance program, facility related capital improvement projects, maintenance information systems, service contracts, vendor performance, division budget and the procurement of services and supplies. The Facilities Division is managed by the Building Superintendent and assisted by one Maintenance Technician. The Division oversees Town Hall, Flint Memorial Library, Department of Public Works Facilities, O'Leary Senior Center the Putnam House, Damon Tavern and the Public Safety Building.

Town Hall

Most Town Departments operate out of North Reading Town Hall, located at 235 North Street. The 2,601sf building was constructed in 1958 as the former Murphy School. The building serves as a municipal meeting space and houses town records and offices. Recent improvements to the facility include 4,000 sf of new flooring in the east wing, renovation of the front foyer restrooms, the addition of handicap accessible door openers and resurfacing of the rear parking area.

Flint Memorial Library

Since its establishment in 1872, the Flint Memorial Library has been an invaluable public resource providing residents of North Reading with a wide range of books and periodicals. The library's collection contains over 70,000 items and continues to grow in a variety of other media and formats including, music CDs, DVDs, and audiobooks. The library's mission is "to make readily available print and non-print materials selected in response to the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of all segments of the community."

The current library facility, located at 147 Park Street, was initially constructed in 1874 by Harriet Flint. The building which was known as Flint Memorial Hall, previously housed municipal offices but in 1991 was renovated as a new facility for the Flint Memorial Library. The library currently occupies all 22,000 square feet of the building. The Library Activity Room, located on the ground floor with direct access from the parking lot, was designed to be a community asset that permits use of the room even when the library is closed. Recent renovations of the facility include repainting of the building's exterior, the replacement of the library's second floor roof and the replacement of deteriorated clapboard.

Department of Public Works (DPW) Complex

The DPW is working to make improvements to the Public Works Complex located at 166 Chestnut Street. This facility houses the department's garage and contains town equipment necessary for disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Facility needs were assessed in the Town's FY 2019 Capital Improvement Plan and the department is working to renovate the building's personnel areas, install an exhaust removal ventilation system, replace the existing roof and resurface the main bay floor.

O'Leary Senior Center

The O'Leary Senior Center is located at 157 Park Street, on the first floor of the Third Meeting House, Building on the Common. The mission of the senior center is to help North Reading Elders safely age in place with dignity and independence in the homes and in the community which they helped build. The Department serves close to one quarter of the Town's population, residents 60 years of age and older. The Senior Center provides transportation, general informational services, tax assistance, fuel assistance, food stamp (SNAP) assistance, health screening, health and wellness programs, cultural/social events and community education to North Reading's senior population. In 2017 the Senior Center provided 12,217 meals to elders.

In 2017 the Town of North Reading contracted with the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority to announce the Ring & Ride North Reading program which provides transportation for seniors and disabled veterans to medical appointments in various surrounding communities including Boston.

Putnam House

The Putnam House is located at 27 Bow Street and was constructed in 1720. The structure was once home to Reverend Daniel Putnam, the first pastor of North Reading Parish. The two-acre property includes a late First Period colonial house, a barn and the West Village School House. The Putnam house and grounds are owned by the Town of North Reading and leased to the North Reading Historical and Antiquarian Society for its headquarters. The house is located in the Town's Center Village Historic District and

was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.

David Damon Tavern

The David Damon Tavern is located at 21 Bow Street. The building was constructed in 1817 and served as the town's first Post Office. The building marked the half way stop of the Salem-Lowell and Boston-Haverhill routes coaching roads. The Tavern is in the Town's Center Village Historic District and has been restored by the North Reading Historical and Antiquarian Society for use by the public. In 2017 the North Reading Historical Commission created a list of needed improvements for the tavern and is actively exploring ways to protect and preserve the facility.

Public Safety Building

Both the North Reading Police Department and the North Reading Fire Department are housed in the town's Public Safety Building located at 152 Park Street. Damages to the building's north side foundation causes the police department's evidence room to flood during down pours, snowmelts and during the weekly washing of Fire trucks at the adjacent fire station. Repairs to the building's foundation were added to the recommended list of the Town's FY 2019 Capital Improvement Plan.

Recent improvements to the Police Station include security cameras upgrades from analog to HD imaging, the replacement of an AC unit in the communication room and the replacement of two hot water heaters. Recent improvements to the Fire Station include renovations to the kitchen/living space, plumbing and electrical upgrades and energy efficient window replacement. Additionally, the Fire Department requested funding for the replacement of one service vehicle purchased in 2010 in the FY 2019 Capital Improvement Plan.

A new Facilities Master Plan is currently underway. A more detailed assessment of Town facilities (excluding school facilities) will be completed during this process. The purpose of the new plan is to evaluate the current and future space needs of various municipal departments, evaluate existing public buildings and land, and develop a 10-20 year plan that addresses the current, short and long-term needs of the Town's municipal services. While the intent of the Town is to evaluate all municipal facility needs at this time, the Town has previously advanced a limited master plan/feasibility study planning effort for an intergenerational center to include its Parks and Recreation, Elder Services, Veteran Services, and Youth Services departments. Additionally, the Town has also previously reviewed long-term needs for its Fire Department. The information assembled from these studies is intended to serve as a starting point for long-term capital planning.

The evaluations and conclusion of the study will create a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan for public buildings that will inform the Town's Capital Improvement Plan, reflect the North Reading Master Plan, and serve the Town's needs for the next 10 to 20 years. Buildings to be included in the Facilities Master Plan are Town Hall (235 North Street), Public Safety Building (152 Park Street), Flint Memorial Library (147 Park Street), Damon Tavern (21 Bow Street), Third Meeting House/Building on the Common (157 Park Street), DPW Facility (166 Chestnut Street), Water Treatment Facilities (various locations) Hillview Country Club Function Facility (149 North Street), Parks and Recreation Center (5 Central Street), Parks and Recreation Maintenance ("Wheeler") Barn (5 Central Street).

POLICE & FIRE

The Police Department is led by Police Chief Michael Murphy. The department's mission is "to work with all citizens to preserve life, maintain human rights, protect property, assist in providing a safe and healthy environment to live and work, and promote individual responsibility and community commitment." The police department is comprised of three main divisions; Administration, Detectives, and Patrol. The Department personnel roster includes approximately 40 persons. According to the Town's 2017 Annual Report, the Police Department responded to 14,258 service calls in 2017. According to the Town's 2018 Annual Report, the Police Department logged 17,979 service calls.

The North Reading Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the Town. The department is committed to "protecting the lives and property of residents from the ravages of fire and other disasters and are committed toward working together for the betterment of community." The Department is led by Acting Fire Chief Don Stats and Deputy Fire Chief Barry J. Galvin. The Department has approximately 30 staff members that include four captains and 23 firefighters. According to the Town's 2017 Annual Report, the Fire Department responded to 1,264 calls for emergency medical service in 2017.

EMS

North Reading does not have a hospital or medical center located within the Town. Therefore, residents either rely on facilities in adjacent communities in the area or hospitals in the City of Boston, such as Mass General, Beth Israel, Boston City, Boston Children's, and Brigham and Women's Hospital. There is one long-term care facility in North Reading called Meadowview Healthcare. In addition to hospitals located in the City of Boston, below is a list of hospitals in the area:

- Holy Family; Methuen, MA
- Lahey Clinic; Burlington, MA
- Lawrence General Hospital; Lawrence, MA
- Melrose-Wakefield Hospital; Melrose, MA
- Winchester Hospital; Winchester, MA

NORTH READING PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

North Reading operates its own school system, with 2,491 students enrolled across its five schools in the 2017-2018 school year. The district is governed by the North Reading School Committee and overseen by Superintendent Jon Bernard.

The district's elementary school population is spread across three schools with 336 students enrolled at J. Turner Hood Elementary, 464 students enrolled at L.D. Batchelder Elementary School and 331 students enrolled at E. Ethel Little Elementary School.

The Hood School recently repaved all parking lots and installed an Automated Logic energy management system. The system allows cooling and heating systems to be controlled from an external energy management computer thus, reducing energy costs.

Originally constructed in 1917, the Batchelder School is part of the Center Village Historic District. A plan was approved in 2003 to enlarge and renovate the existing historic school building. More recently, renovation work was completed to upgrade the stair landing and the portico columns to the historic Peabody Street entrance.

The Little School recently completed a major roof replacement project on three quarters of the roof area through funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority's, Accelerated Repair Program.
The district's middle and high school population is spread across two school buildings on a shared campus. Grades 6 through 8 attend North Reading Middle School which enrolls 548 students while grades 9 through 12 attend North Reading High School which enrolls 812 students.

North Reading High School opened in 2015 and is the most recently constructed school building. The new facility replaced the 1955 high school building which has since been demolished. Situated next to the new High School is North Reading Middle School which also received a complete renovation in 2015. The entire

energy-efficient High School/Middle School campus measures 270,000 square feet and includes a common gym, kitchen, media center and performing arts center.

Recommendations

COMMUNITY INPUT

At the 2nd Master Plan Workshop on October 30, 2018 participants were shown posters that asked them to rank their priorities for town facilities and the town's acquisition/disposition process, and ideas for improvements to public services and facilities based on three major goals developed in the 1st Master Plan Workshop on September 26, 2018.

- **Goal 1:** Ensure facilities meet community and departmental needs.
- **Goal 2:** Provide adequate funding for infrastructure and public facility improvements on an annual basis.
- **Goal 3:** Create an organized and holistic approach to community wide infrastructure improvements.


7a PUBLIC FACILITIES + SERVICES

Goal 1 – Ensure facilities meet community and departmental needs.

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
STRATEGY – Develop new department facilities and infrastructure capable of meeting current service needs and projected future demand.		3	
Consider the consolidation of Town facilities to encourage concentrated civic activity nodes, infill development and mixed uses along prominent Town corridors.	5	3	
Consider constructing a community center near Town Center, as recommended in the 2004 Community Development Plan. This location would be more accessible to elderly residents in the Housing Authority complex and to high school students and help strengthen the older historic town center.	3	2	1
Determine adequacy of telecommunications infrastructure, service and coverage in the Concord Street Study Area; identify upgrades/improvements needed.	1	2	
Relocate overhead utilities - Pursue funding that will allow utilities to be placed underground along Main Street, substantially improving the visual character of the area.	2	3	2
STRATEGY – Complete routine maintenance and reconstruction which allow host Departments to fulfill their missions.			
Fund foundation repairs for DPW's Public Safety Building.	1	1	1
Fund the replacement of the Little School Gymnasium Floor.	1	1	1
Fund the replacement of the DPW Garage building's roof.	1	1	1
Fund the purchase of an Exhaust Removal System for the DPW Garage.	1	1	1

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

STRATEGY – Approve equipment items outlined in the Town's FY 2019 Capital Improvement Plan to ensure departmental equipment is adequate enough to fulfill duties, and resources are efficiently distributed.			
Fund replacement of School Department's computer/mobile devices.		5	1
Fund the purchase of School Department's technology instructional equipment.	2	1	1
Fund the acquisition of the School Department's multi-function activity vehicle.			1
Fund town-wide computer/equipment replacement plan.	1	3	1
Fund replacement of Fire Department's service vehicle.	1	2	1

north reading master plan 2018-2028


7b PUBLIC FACILITIES + SERVICES

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
STRATEGY – Fund water and sewer capital projects.		1	
Negotiate with MWRA to extend existing sewer service to properties on the north side of Concord Street and the Route 28 corridor.	12	1	
As recommended in the 2011 Sewer Infrastructure Economic Impact Analysis, Determine estimated cost for Concord Street sewer installation, and prepare a cost-benefit analysis for Concord Street and identified western sub-areas.*	3	1	2
Explore the feasibility and desirability of package sewer treatment plants to support growth in concentrated commercial areas specifically, Main Street.*	6	1	
STRATEGY – Provide sufficient funding for road and sidewalk repairs.	5		
Continue to diversify the sources of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state and federal funds.	3	2	
Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually.*	3	2	
STRATEGY – Fund stormwater improvements.			
Continue to fund stormwater improvements through the Town's general fund.	1	3	1
Allocate annual funding for compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit	2	2	1
Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects.	1	4	1

Goal 3 – Create an organized and holistic approach to community wide infrastructure improvements.

STRATEGY – Create safe and convenient connections for all users between neighborhoods and destinations, including commercial areas, parks, and public buildings.	3	1	
Advocate for the establishment of MBTA bus stops/service in North Reading, especially along the Main Street (Route 28) corridor to link residences with local businesses, adjacent communities and regional train nodes.*	1	1	1
Adopt a Complete Streets Town policy and extend to other parts of the Main Street corridor		1	2
Enhance the Town's streetscape standards in commercial and residential districts, to address not only sidewalk design, but also streetscape furniture (benches, trash receptacles, lighting), street trees and landscape requirements.*	7	1	
Advocate for streetscape improvements on streets identified in the 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.*	2	1	1
Collaborate with the State and County to install improved "T" Shaped intersection and traffic calming features along Main Street, such as improved pedestrian crossings (crosswalks, center island crossings, signage).*	6	2	
Require pedestrian-friendly site design, such as providing pedestrian access from the street to the building and orienting buildings toward the primary public street, rather than a parking area for any new and future development.*	5	1	
Institute a build-as-few-as-you-can (Local/General and Highway Business districts to ensure future development remains compatible with pedestrian and bicycle activity.	4	1	
Conduct a mapped inventory of stream and bicycle facilities to identify locations for designated bicycle routes and locations for improved facilities (bike parking, bike lanes, shared streets, etc.)	4	2	

north reading master plan 2018-2028

EDSAT

When the Town underwent an EDSAT assessment (Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool) in 2015 to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses with regard to attracting and retaining businesses, the key concerns identified were related to infrastructure. Water supply, wastewater and public sewer were the most important factors hindering future growth and development in the Town. Since that time, the Town has been working to secure a long-term expanded water supply from the Town of Andover, and has been actively pursuing the permitting of a municipal sewer for its commercial areas. Where appropriate, privately owned wastewater treatment plants may be explored as an interim solution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below were identified through public outreach and review of existing conditions. These are meant to serve as a general guide; many specific decisions are reserved for the Town to decide through the Capital Improvement Planning process and through Town meeting. With regard to facilities, more specific goals and recommendations will be made in a new Facilities Master Plan, expected to be complete in 2020.

GOAL 17: ENSURE FACILITIES MEET COMMUNITY AND DEPARTMENTAL NEEDS.

STRATEGY 17A - Develop new department facilities and infrastructure capable of meeting current service needs and projected future demand, in accordance with the anticipated Facilities Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION 17.1.1 – Continue planning for an intergenerational community center, to include selected Town offices as well as a senior and youth center. Consider a location that is central, accessible, and compatible with the uses proposed to be contained within it, and has good synergy with its surroundings.

RECOMMENDATION 17.1.2 – Consider a more centrally located Town Hall, potentially exploring a Main Street location to improve resident access and convenience.

RECOMMENDATION 17.2 - Relocate overhead utilities - Pursue funding that will allow utilities to be placed underground along Main Street, substantially improving the visual character of the area.

RECOMMENDATION 17.3 - Determine adequacy of telecommunications infrastructure, service and coverage in the Concord Street Study Area, identify upgrades/improvements needed.

STRATEGY 17B - Complete routine maintenance and renovations which allow host Departments to fulfill their missions.

RECOMMENDATION 17.4 - Complete ongoing repairs and restoration of facilities identified in the yearly Capital Improvement Plan (ongoing).

GOAL 18: PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

STRATEGY 18A - Continue to fund and support the Capital Improvement Planning process to ensure departmental equipment is adequate enough to fulfill duties, and resources are efficiently distributed.

STRATEGY 18B - Fund water and sewer capital projects

RECOMMENDATION 18.2 - Continue progress toward installing sewer service to properties along Concord Street and Main Street/Route 28 through GLSD.

RECOMMENDATION 18.3 - Explore the feasibility and desirability of package sewer treatment plants to support growth in concentrated commercial areas specifically, Main Street, should municipal sewerage be determined to not be feasible in the near future. If installed in the interim, plan package treatment plans to be compatible with sewer line connections in the future.

STRATEGY 18C - Provide sufficient funding for road and sidewalk repairs

RECOMMENDATION 18.5 - Continue to diversify the sources of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state and federal funds

RECOMMENDATION 18.6 - Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually.

RECOMMENDATION 18.6.1 – Continue to consider leveraging Complete Streets funds with "seed money" from the CPC's Community Development Fund and Capital requests

STRATEGY 18D - Fund stormwater improvements.

RECOMMENDATION 18.7 - Continue to fund stormwater improvements through the Town's general fund.

RECOMMENDATION 18.8 - Allocate annual funding for compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit

RECOMMENDATION 18.9 - Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects.

GOAL 19: CREATE AN ORGANIZED AND HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMMUNITY WIDE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS.

STRATEGY 19A - Create safe and convenient connections for all users between neighborhoods and destinations, including commercial uses, parks, and public buildings.

RECOMMENDATION 19.1 - Enhance the Town's streetscape standards in commercial and residential districts, to address not only sidewalk design, but also streetscape furniture (benches, trash receptacles, lighting), street trees and landscape requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 19.2 - Collaborate with the State to install improved "T"- Shaped intersection and traffic calming features along Main Street, such as improved pedestrian crossings (crosswalks, center island crossings, signage).
RECOMMENDATION 19.3 - Require pedestrian-friendly site design, such as providing pedestrian access from the street to the building and orienting buildings toward the primary public street, rather than a parking area for any new and future development.
RECOMMENDATION 19.4 - Institute a build-to-line for the Local, General and Highway Business districts to ensure future development remains compatible with pedestrian and bicycle activity
RECOMMENDATION 19.5 - Conduct a mapped inventory of streets and bicycle facilities to identify locations for designated bicycle routes and locations for improved facilities (bike parking, bike lanes, shared streets, etc.). It is also recommended that the Town take the next steps in design and pursuing TIP funding based on the recommendations from the Rail Trail Feasibility Study.
RECOMMENDATION 19.6 - Advocate for the establishment of MBTA bus stops/service in North Reading, especially along the Main Street (Route 28) corridor to link residences with local businesses, adjacent communities and regional train nodes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:
putting the pieces together

Introduction

Economic development in an interdisciplinary practice that focuses on policies and interventions intended to improve the well-being of people. It involves facilitating access to resources for people to make a livelihood, and fulfill their housing, work, social and health needs.

Generally speaking, there are three main components involving jobs, physical growth, and resources for community development. The first is aimed at facilitating **JOB CREATION AND RETENTION**, which includes examining industry sectors and job trends to inform job training skills and needs. This first component also covers small business development. The second main component focuses on facilitating the **PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PLACES** for people to live and work. This physical component covers: (a) creating clear regulations for real estate development, and facilitating investment and business; (b) leveraging state/federal programs for the creation of infrastructure and services; (c) leveraging public investment to attract private development; and (d) allowing the creation of housing options within reasonable distances of job centers. The third component relates to promoting **RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** and social well-being. This last component is about allowing choices for people to satisfy their own needs such as health, education, mobility, recreation, safety, and shopping.

What is Economic Development?

- Policies and actions taken to: expand/diversify local economy, tax base, revenues, and allow more choices for jobs and housing options.
- Create favorable and attractive conditions for Town to capture its share of surrounding market demand. Essentially, taking actions on the things the Town can change: infrastructure/investments and zoning.



The purpose of the Economic Development Elements to put key pieces together from other master plan elements to effect the desired change with the Town's actions during the next ten years. The premise is that by completing key decisions and actions, the Town can create conditions that make it attractive to investment, and ultimately shape the desired physical and socioeconomic outcomes in the future.

The following sections of the Economic Development master plan element [vii] provide:

- a brief economic overview,
- a summary of major challenges and goals,
- a more detailed summary of industries and employment,
- a brief summary of a past retail market demand analysis; and lastly,
- key recommendations that tie together some of the most potentially transformative goals and recommendations from other Master Plan elements.

BRIEF OVERVIEW [25]

Local Employment (MA DLS)

- 2018 employed labor force: 8,573 workers or 55% of total population (15,636)
- 2016 Town unemployment rate of 3.2% according to MA Division of Local Services (DLS), compared to the Metro North Workforce Development Area (WDA) regional MADLWD unemployment rate of 2.8% as of January 2019.

Business and Employees (MA EOLWD LMI)

- 576 employers in North Reading (2017)
- 9,024 jobs in North Reading (2017)
- Three industry sectors employ the most people: transportation/warehousing (25%), manufacturing (17%), and construction (9%)
- Four industry sectors have the highest average weekly wages: manufacturing, professional/technical, wholesale trade, and construction (in that order).
- Average annual wage for North Reading jobs: $78,289

General Fund Sources (FY2019 – MA DLS)

- 63% from property taxes
- 12% from state local aid
- 15% from local fees/receipts
- 8% from other sources

Expenditures (FY2017 – MA DLS)

- In FY2017, education was the biggest expenditure ($29.3M), absorbing 48% of all Town expenses ($61.5M). The North Reading School District is also one of the Town's two largest employers.
- In FY2017, the lesser expenditure items were all fairly evenly distributed ranging between 5% to 9% for fire, public works, pension, police expenditures, and health insurance expenditures (in that ascending order).
- In FY2019, free cash is $4,060,380 or 5.2% of FY19 revenue. For reference purposes, the MA DLS and the MA Government Finance Officers Association recommend maintaining a reserve balance of between 5-15%.

Property Taxes (FY2019 – MA DLS)

- 88% of property taxes are paid by residential property owners.
- 6% of property taxes are paid for by commercial property owners.
- 4% of property taxes are paid for by industrial property owners.
- 2% of property taxes are paid for based on taxation of personal property.
- Average single family tax bill is $9,010, the 37th highest in the state based on MA DLS 2017 tax bill of $8,565.
- Total FY2019 assessed property value per capita is $208,345.
- FY2019 tax rate of 15.58.

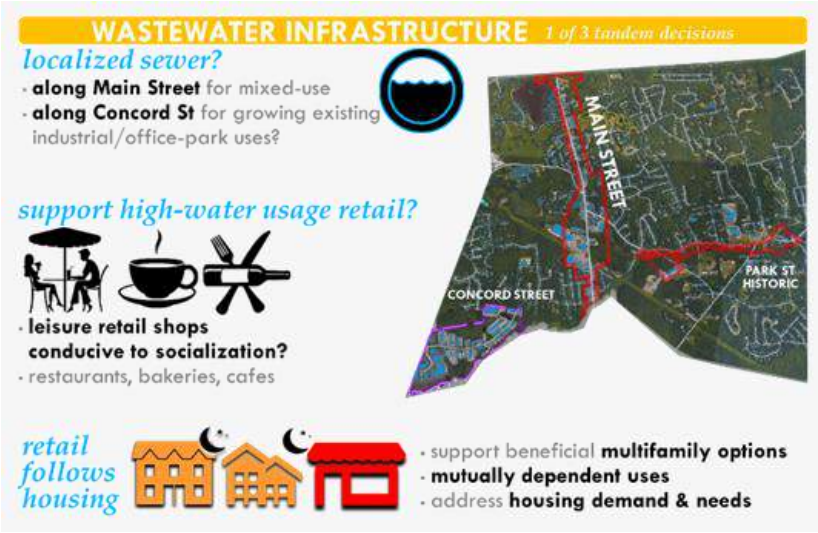
[25] Sources: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) Labor Market Information (LMI), LMI All Towns 202 Data, ES-202 Data http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/lmi_es_b.asp?AT=05&A=000493&Y=2017&P=00&O=00&I=10~0&lopt=2&Dopt=TEXT , Massachusetts Division of Local Services (DLS), MDOR, ACS, ESRI Business Analyst

Key Interrelated Challenges and Goals

Throughout the master planning process (as well as several prior planning studies), participating residents repeatedly expressed with overwhelming consensus that Route 28 should be transformed from a highway into a traditional, safe and walkable town center shopping village. Community participants have commented through the online survey, workshops and committee meetings that North Reading's segment of Route 28 differs greatly from that of the Town of Reading to the south, and the Town of Andover to the north.



If the Town is to achieve this Main Street transformation goal, then three key and interconnected decisions need to be made in order to create conditions in the near future (2019-2021). It will require consistent effort and discussions during local town planning and zoning meetings in order to inform Town Meeting decisions on these three key decisions connected to this major transformative Main Street goal. This major goal requires a three-pronged approach, and solely doing one or two of them is highly unlikely to achieve the expressed walkable Main Street shopping village goal. These three decisions relate to overcoming three types of challenges and barriers. These three categories of challenges are: wastewater treatment sewer infrastructure; physical improvements; and less restrictive zoning regulations.



The major barrier to achieving "leisure retail" uses such as cafés, bakeries, and restaurants is the **LACK OF SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH-WATER USES** and treat their wastewater. "Leisure retail uses" are those types that provide food or services, and are also conducive to lingering, sitting, reading, and socializing with fellow residents and patrons. Vibrant shopping districts that have many of these types of shops clustered together have sewer lines in place, and prospective businesses are unlikely to concentrate in places without such infrastructure.

Additionally, other master plan goals related to housing demand and needs, and office jobs and services also provide support to these retail uses. Very active and successful shopping and business districts often also have multifamily residents in close proximity as well as office workers who provide foot traffic, vibrancy, and patronage. The ability to support multifamily options for seniors and young adults in a

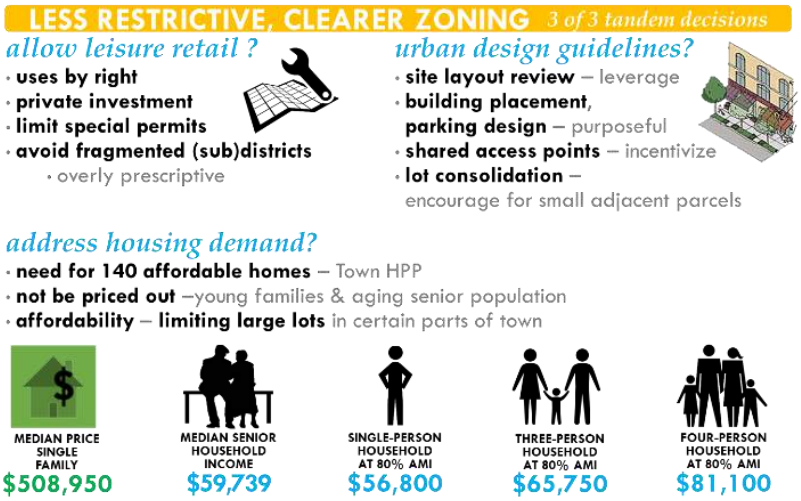
"mixed-use" transformed Main Street also depends on wastewater treatment via sewer infrastructure. Office uses are less dependent on sewer systems but "higher quality" Class A and B office uses usually seek out locations near leisure and convenience retail for office worker lunches and commute errands. It is important to note that these three retail, multifamily and office uses are mutually dependent uses that thrive together in mixed-use districts.

The second key barrier to transforming Main Street relates to its auto-oriented highway character and lack of pedestrian safety. **INVESTMENT IN PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS** is necessary in order to calm traffic speeds, enhance pedestrian safety and walkability, and potentially create a "landmark or signature" indoor/outdoor civic anchor to "create a there, there" that passersby would recognize as a Town center or square. If the desire is to have the ability to "park once, and walk and shop around", and to have outdoor seating facing a pleasant streetscape with sidewalks and slower traffic, then the Town could seek State permission and funding to redesign its segment of Route 28. Town investment in these streetscape improvements is an investment in the quality of life of its own residents, and can also attract desired businesses to come to Main Street. In this hypothetical future scenario, the Town will have approved the construction of sewer to literally support the wastewater treatment needs of these businesses, and also have enticed them to Main Street due to the physical attractiveness of its streetscape which also attracts their customers.



There is another type of physical improvement that could further catalyze and transform Main Street beyond sidewalks, slower traffic, reduced curb cut distances, attractive crosswalks, and bike lanes. This involves a potential Town decision to create a civic, non-retail-oriented, square near retail development. Presently, the Town Hall is located on the western edge of Town, separate from the other civic and town functions that are located near the Town Common off of Park Street. If the Town and community are interested in "creating a there, there" along Main Street, the Town should consider the sale of other Town-owned property to support the purchase of a site with frontage along Main Street, or one that could be part of a multi-property development with access to Main Street. On this site, the Town and community could fulfill a few goals. Ideally, a relocated Town Hall right on Main Street would include carving out a signature "pocket park" or hardscaped town square/plaza that would highlight the new Town Hall's main façade and front entrance. This would be a highly transformative project to serve existing residents and leave a legacy for the future. This Town Hall relocation could also involve including and consolidating other community functions such as a senior center or multigenerational youth/senior. Beyond "visually" marking the Main Street landscape with a recognizable village or Town center, both nearby retail uses and new Town Hall visitors and workers could bring more foot traffic and activity to each other. In this hypothetical future scenario, there would be multiple opportunities for nearby shoppers, Town Hall visitors, and/or seniors/youth community center visitors to move to and from the new indoor and outdoor facilities.

The third and last major barrier involves **TOWN ZONING REGULATIONS THAT ARE TOO RESTRICTIVE AND NOT STRAIGHTFORWARD ENOUGH** to prospective businesses. If the Town is to attract the desired uses and developments, then it needs to allow such uses in a clearer manner, and also provide upfront guidelines for purposeful building placement and site layout. Desired uses and businesses should be allowed by-right to remove uncertainty and delays from prospective businesses. The Town can retain some degree of control through Site Plan Review in which it can focus on how the redevelopments "look" and feel with relation to a transformed Main Street goal. The use of Special Permits should not be applied to uses in zoning districts that the community wants and needs. Additionally, if the desire is to have all of Main Street transformed, then its entire length should be treated as one single mixed-use zoning district with the same regulations and urban design guidelines. Doing so, will provide flexibility for the private market to decide where to potentially propose a development project.



With regards to the desired feel and form of a future transformed Main Street, the Town should consider the creation of "specific enough but not overly prescriptive" urban design guidelines. Having such guidelines "upfront" can save time and minimize opposition for developers and their architects as well as for Town officials and residents reviewing such proposals. Urban design guidelines can be used in tandem with Site Plan Review to guide that process. Beyond overall site layout and building placement criteria, urban design guidelines can also include:

- strategic/flexible open space requirements where some or most is required near the front building entrance to create usable space;
- closer "build-to" lines to create a "streetwall";
- minimized front yard parking with outdoor seating areas and amenities;
- majority of the parking to the rear and sides, with potential incentives for encouraging shared "side yard" parking lot access points to minimize traffic congestion for those driving to next-door developments; and
- lot consolidation incentives to encourage the redevelopment of adjacent parcels that might be too small to be redeveloped individually.

It is also worth mentioning that the Town's economic and community development goals are not solely limited to Main Street. Under the rubric of community development, housing options are needed for seniors, young adults, and those with limited mobility and/or unforeseen life circumstances. These housing options should not be limited to only within a rezoned mixed-use/residential Main Street but also to a different extent within certain nearby, smaller-lot residential neighborhoods.

In addition to the importance of taking action on all three of these challenges and goals, the sequencing of them is important. They have been explained in order of magnitude but they should be tackled in the

following sequence. It is also highly recommended that all written communications and meeting discussions involve providing context for each of three decisions so as to not lose sight of the greater goal.

- The Town could initiate and pursue discussions on all three fronts for rezoning, localized sewer along commercial districts[26] (as opposed to Town-wide sewer through most or all of the Town's geography), and streetscape redesign permission and funding.
- The Town can complete zoning amendments with urban design guidelines and/or streetscape improvement final design plans.
- However, the actual construction of streetscape improvements should not occur until after localized sewer along Main Street has been installed so as to not unnecessarily rip up streetscape improvements.
- The Town should finalize, approve and install localized sewer along Main Street.

It is worth reemphasizing the importance of all three actions working in tandem. In a hypothetical future scenario in which only the zoning and streetscape challenges are addressed without the localized sewer, the Town could end up with beautiful streetscape and not necessarily the desired shops, needed residential options, or vibrant resident pedestrian foot traffic along newly installed sidewalks.

Fiscal Conditions

According to Massachusetts Division of Local Services fiscal year 2019 data, 63% of North Reading's general fund is from property taxes, 15% came from local fees/receipts, 12% from state local aid, and 8% from other sources. 88% of its property taxes are paid by residential property owners, and the Town has the State's 37th highest tax bill with an average single family tax bill of $8,565 in 2017. Almost half of the Town's expenses went to education (48% of $61.5 million). The lesser expenditure items were all fairly evenly distributed ranging between 5% to 9% for fire, public works, pension, police expenditures, and health insurance expenditures (in that ascending order). Free cash as a percent of its budget is at 5.2% of FY2019 projected revenue. According to the State MA DLS and Government Finance Officers Association, a rule of thumb is for communities to maintain a reserve balance between 5-15%.

Industry Profile

EMPLOYMENT & WAGES

The following employment and wage figures are for the number of employment establishments (i.e., employers) located within North Reading. They do not reflect the wages of North Reading residents nor the industry sectors they are employed in since not all North Reading residents are employed within Town boundaries. The manner in which the Town regulates its land uses through zoning can affect the Town's ability to allow certain types of industries to do business in North Reading and therefore provide jobs, services, and generate tax revenue (the proportion of commercial versus residential tax base).

The three industry sectors that employ the most people in Town are the following: transportation/ warehousing (25%), manufacturing (17%), and construction (9%). The four industry sectors that have the highest average weekly wages are the following: manufacturing, professional/technical, wholesale trade, and construction (in that order).

[26] The Town's goal is to connect to the Greater Lawrence Sewer District (GLSD) municipal sewer through Andover. Should that not prove feasible, the Town's second choice would be to pursue shared treatment plants in strategic areas along Main Street. In either case, the purpose is to provide sewer treatment capacity to properties within the Main Street corridor.

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES REPORT (ES-202) – NORTH READING 2017
Source: MA EOWLD - LMI

NAICS	Description	No. of Establishments	Total Wages	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
	All Industries	576	$706,481,927	9,024	$1,506
48-49	**Transportation and Warehousing**	15	$92,814,688	**2,240**	$797
31-33	**Manufacturing**	10	$283,701,044	**1,507**	**$3,620**
23	**Construction**	96	$78,699,479	**847**	**$1,787**
72	Accommodation and Food Services	31	$13,617,318	621	$422
44-45	Retail Trade	50	$21,503,105	552	$749
54	**Professional and Technical Services**	89	$53,079,292	547	**$1,866**
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	65	$18,742,548	463	$778
42	**Wholesale Trade**	35	$39,360,087	414	**$1,828**
56	Administrative and Waste Services	35	$21,384,733	355	$1,158
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	69	$8,043,358	262	$590
52	Finance and Insurance	28	$13,727,845	208	$1,269
51	Information	10	$11,331,815	166	$1,313
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	12	$2,607,773	132	$380
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	10	$3,599,842	55	$1,259

EMPLOYERS

Of the 576 reported employers in the Town, the following table lists those above fifty employees. The top three are the North Reading School District and Teradyne with over 1,000 employees each, and Amazon Robotics with between 100 and 249 employees. Overall, the top companies that employ 100 or more people cover a variety of industries ranging from schools (1), electrical/electronics (2), offices (1), construction-related (3), trucking, waste management (1), stores (2), restaurants (1), and nursing (1).

TOP EMPLOYERS IN NORTH READING
Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), and Infogroup 2018.

Company Name	Address	Employees	NAICS Code
North Reading School District	Park St	1,000-4,999	6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools
Teradyne Inc	Riverpark Dr	1,000-4,999	4236 Electrical and Electronic Goods Merchant Wholesalers
Amazon Robotics	Riverpark Dr	100-249	5416 Management, scientific and technical consulting services.
Columbia Construction Co	Concord St	100-249	5611 Office administrative services.
Columbia Construction Co	Riverpark Dr	100-249	2379 Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction
Dec Tam Corp	Concord St	100-249	5629 Remediation and Other Waste Management Services
Dynamics Electrical	Concord St	100-249	2382 Building equipment contractors.
Kitty's Restaurant & Lounge	Main St	100-249	7225 Restaurants and other eating places
Meadow View Ctr	North St	100-249	6231 Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)
Moynihan Lumber & Hardware	Chestnut St	100-249	4441 Building Material and Supplies Dealers
Super Stop & Shop	Main St	100-249	4451 Grocery stores
Walmart	Main St	100-249	4522 Department Stores
YRC Freight	Concord St	100-249	4842 Specialized freight trucking.
Angelini's Plastering Inc	Main St	50-99	2383 Building finishing contractors
E Ethel Little School	Barberry Rd	50-99	6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools
L D Batchelder School	Park St	50-99	6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools
North Reading High School	Park St	50-99	6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools
North Reading Middle School	Park St	50-99	6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools
Reading Gymnastics Academy	Concord St	50-99	6116 Other Schools and Instruction
Russell Realty Group	Park St # 107	50-99	5312 Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers
Thomson Country Club	Mid Iron Dr	50-99	7139 Other amusement and recreation industries.
Tracelink Inc	Riverpark Dr # 200	50-99	5415 Computer Systems Design and Related Services

Employment Projections & Opportunity Sectors

EMPLOYMENT & INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

Long-term industry employment projections are available for Massachusetts and 16 Workforce Development Areas. Employment is projected for approximately 80 detailed industries (at the 3-digit NAICS industry level), and cover the 2014-2024 period. The latest available State projections[27] have been last revised as of September 30, 2016.
The Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) includes North Reading as the northernmost community (see map) in the Metro North Workforce Development Area (WDA[28]). As of January 2019, North Reading's unemployment rate is at 2.8%.

Long-term industry projections for the Metro North WDA Area (WDA) region that North Reading is a part of is expected to grow from 444,968 workers in 2016 to 483,625 workers by 2026. This represents an overall increase of 38,657 workers or 8.7%.

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS FOR METRO NORTH WDA – 2016-2026
Source: 2016 Labor Market Information – Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)

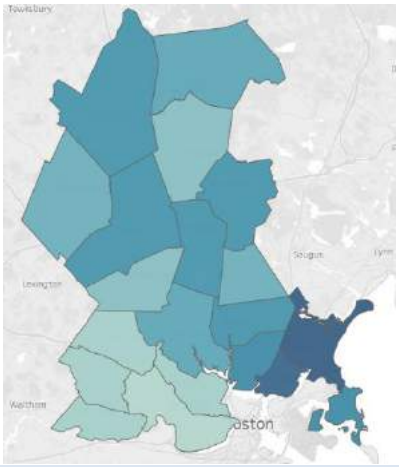
NAICS Code	Industry Title	Employment		Change	
		2016	2026	Net	Percent
000000	Total All Industries	444,968	483,625	38,657	8.7 %

Noteworthy Increases

The workforce region that North Reading is a part of will see increased employment opportunities in these two different professional/technical/scientific, and hospitality-related industry sectors.

- 19.3% or 11,765 additional workers in professional/scientific/technical services
- 13.2% or 7,614 additional workers in accommodation and food services

A workforce and economic development strategy could include the Town setting the right conditions (zoning, opportunity sites, outreach, marketing) to attract existing major regional employers in these sectors who could be potentially looking to relocate or expand.



TOP INDUSTRY SECTORS WITH GREATEST PROJECTED INCREASES FOR METRO NORTH WDA

NAICS Code	Title	Employment 2016	Employment 2026	Change Level	Change Percent
540000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	60,899	72,664	**11,765**	19.3%
620000	Health Care and Social Assistance	57,611	65,225	**7,614**	13.2%
720000	Accommodation and Food Services	33,531	37,515	3,984	11.9%
722000	Food Services and Drinking Places	29,960	33,791	3,831	12.8%
621000	Ambulatory Health Care Services	17,172	20,527	3,355	19.5%
560000	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediat	25,958	28,701	2,743	10.6%
561000	Administrative and Support Services	24,558	27,083	2,525	10.3%
230000	Construction	17,569	19,755	2,186	12.4%
624000	Social Assistance	13,180	15,170	1,990	15.1%
610000	Educational Services	49,633	51,527	1,894	3.8%

[27] Source: http://lmi2.detma.org/Lmi/projections.asp#Long-Term%20Occupational%20Projections
[28] More information on Massachusetts WDAs can be found at https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/04/MA2016_Workforce_and_Labor_Area_Review_0.pdf

Noteworthy Declines

The Metro North WDA workforce region that North Reading is a part of will see decreased employment opportunities in these two manufacturing industry sectors.

- 4.6% decrease or 1,108 fewer jobs in manufacturing
- 13.9% decrease or 1,004 fewer jobs in the computer and electronic product manufacturing

INDUSTRY SECTORS WITH GREATEST PROJECTED DECREASES FOR METRO NORTH WDA

NAICS Code	Title	Employment 2016	Employment 2026	Change Level	Change Percent
310000	Manufacturing	23,907	22,799	**-1,108**	-4.6%
334000	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	7,228	6,224	**-1,004**	-13.9%
451000	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	1,723	1,517	-206	-12.0%
333000	Machinery Manufacturing	890	695	-195	-21.9%
443000	Electronics and Appliance Stores	1,170	1,010	-160	-13.7%
339000	Miscellaneous Manufacturing	1,825	1,681	-144	-7.9%
323000	Printing and Related Support Activities	1,172	1,030	-142	-12.1%
336000	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	713	646	-67	-9.4%
448000	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	3,933	3,879	-54	-1.4%
517000	Telecommunications	2,676	2,634	-42	-1.6%

Workforce

LABOR FORCE

According to 2018 Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) data, the employed labor force in North Reading is comprised of 8,573 workers which represents 55% of the total population of 15,636 (ACS 2016 5-Year Estimates). The Town's unemployment rate of 3.2% is comparable to the Metro North Workforce Development Area (WDA) regional unemployment rate of 2.8%.

EDUCATION

A third (33%) of the population over 25 years old has a bachelor's or advanced degree. Of those, 20% have a master's degree or higher. When compared to Middlesex County, North Reading is comparable with regards to educational attainment: it has slightly more bachelor's degrees than the County but fewer graduate/professional degrees.

Community	% Some College	% Associate's	% Bachelor's	% Graduate or Professional
North Reading	13%	9%	33%	20%
Middlesex County	13%	6%	27%	27%

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

RESIDENT OCCUPATIONS

According to Census 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, of the civilian employed population 16 years and over of 8,662:

- 54% or 4,677 are in management, business, science and arts occupations;
- 23% or 2,006 are in sales and office occupations;
- 12% or 1,078 are in service occupations (includes health care support occupations);
- 7% or 625 are in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations; and
- 3% or 276 are in production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

It is worth noting that the State Metro North WDA industry projections indicate that professional/technical/scientific, and hospitality-related (accommodation/food-services) industry sectors are expected to grow at the regional level: by 19% or 11,765, and by 13% or 7,614 additional jobs, respectively. This could represent more opportunities for North Reading residents.

Market Demand Analysis

The North Reading Main Street Retail Market Demand Opportunity Gap Analysis was conducted as part of a prior short-term economic development strategy. The full analysis can be found in that plan document but this section of the Master Plan Economic Development element will provide a summary. The retail market demand analysis was conducted in order to conservatively assess the potential to support additional retail square footage. In order to potentially attract desired leisure retail uses that residents expressed as part of the survey, the Town can take actions to make itself more attractive and competitive so it can capture a part of the market demand from the retail trade areas.



Below are some of the key findings from the analysis to contextualize the Town's economic development goals. The market demand study examined a 96-acre, ¾-mile segment of Route 28 anchored at its two intersections with Route 62. The study area corridor represents 1.1% of the Town's land area, and the analyses determined how much of the potential regional demand, that the Town could potentially support, if the Town creates the right conditions to attract it.

KEY FINDINGS

- The study area could potentially support about 43,000-square feet of retail totaling about 16 retail establishments (including six restaurants and five clothing stores);
- The office market is not strong, has not fully recovered from the recession, and asking rents are high compared to regional competitors especially considering the quality of the existing supply (overwhelmingly Class B); and
- From a shorter-term (2020) housing demand standpoint, the Town is projected to capture about 9.9% of the surrounding region's projected housing growth totaling approximately 634 units. Of these projected 634-Town-wide housing units, it is anticipated that 59% (374 units) will be single-family units and that the study area (due to its major-arterial, auto-oriented nature) is not ideal location for most single-family housing types and at best could capture between 10% and 20% of those units in the form of for-sale townhouses (37 to 75 units). It is anticipated that the remaining 41% (260 units), will be for multifamily units, that the study area could conservatively capture 50-66% of those (128 to 169 multifamily units). Due to the Town' historical inconsistent multifamily housing production rate, a clear conclusion cannot be drawn as to what percentage of those multifamily units would be for for-sale condos versus rental apartments. Qualitative interviews with broker suggest condo ownership units would be well received. From a population change by age standpoint, the senior population is expected to grow substantially followed by younger millenials[29]. Given the strong projected increase

[29] Millennials are the demographic cohort with birth years ranging from the early 1980s to the early 2000s.

in the Town's senior population and more modest growth in the millennial population, it is plausible that the study area could capture a more aggressive share (75% or 195 units) of the multifamily units.

BRIEF SUMMARY

The market analysis estimated the demand for potential supportable uses and building square footage for them. The estimated demand is based on current and projected trends, and is a snap shot in time of market attractiveness and patterns. It is intended to help the Town identify and attract specific types of development that can be reasonably supported by the market. If the Town can overcome the challenges mentioned in the previous section, it can position itself better to minimize competition from neighboring towns and trade areas, and capture its estimated share of market demand.

The market analysis looked at housing, retail and office uses, and indicates that only one-fifth of what is physically possible to build[30] within the study area is market supportable by the year 2020.

The housing market analysis findings were that the entire Town can capture 10% of the regional housing market representing 634 new homes (374 single family and 260 multifamily dwellings). Of this Town-wide demand, the study area was better suited to reasonably accommodate a larger share of the multifamily demand (50% to 66% resulting in 130 to 172 dwelling units) and a smaller share of the land should be used single-family uses in the form of for-sale, attached townhouses (10% to 20% resulting in 37 to 75 dwelling units).

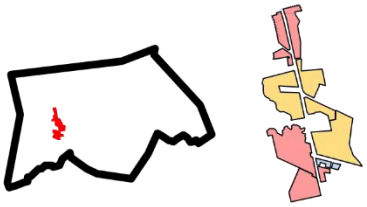


The retail market analysis identified 43,000 square feet of potentially supportable retail uses including 10 stores and 6 restaurants. The retail spending gap analysis looked at whether there was any untapped spending potential of households within a 10-minute drive, and converted that untapped spending potential for specific types of retail into average sales per square foot to estimate the number of potential new stores. Within a 10-minute drive, there are 47,000 residents with untapped spending potential, and can support about 12 retail establishments. Additionally, the analysis looked at how much local workers could reasonably spend in the area to support more retail, and estimated an additional 4 retail establishments.



[30] The MAPC hypothetically possible physical buildout analysis revealed the study area can physically accommodate 1.6 million square feet of development on the majority of the parcels (assuming a wastewater sewer system adequate capacity) in four-story mixed-use buildings including residential uses where appropriate with surface parking and 10-30% of open space depending on the predominant use-mix by parcel groupings. The calculations were done on net developable parcel square footages, and excluded existing residential properties, the US postal sorting facility, and an estimated area-wide wetland percentage of 10%. The market analysis revealed the Town-wide demand was for between 686,000 and 804,000 square feet of potential residential and retail development, and that the study area could potentially accommodate between 199,000 and 353,000 square feet of the Town-wide demand which is approximately 1/5th of what the study area can physically accommodate under the compact, mixed-use buildout assumptions.

The office market analysis looked at existing inventory and trends, and found that the Town has some major competitors in the office market: mainly Woburn, Burlington and Cambridge. It concluded there was limited potential for additional office due to outdated inventory composed of 75% Class B space, and with uncompetitive rates $16 to 22 per square foot versus $12 per square foot. Its Class A rates were competitive at $11 per square foot versus $16 per square foot but the inventory of available space was small. The Town and Chamber of Commerce should focus on its two strongest office sectors: the information industry, and finance/insurance.



office
limited office potential
uncompetitive rates
outdated inventory

Additionally, the analyses also indicate that the clustering of adjacent uses and developments is crucial to the success of desired uses such as retail shops, restaurants and offices. The idea of clustering uses is intended to help inform other decisions the Town could make regarding zoning and infrastructure investments. Specifically, many types of retail depend on "the roofs" of nearby households in order to tap into unspent disposable household income. Additionally, office uses are not only influenced by the quality of the interior space of the buildings but also by the amenities in the immediate area such as restaurants for its workers to go to lunch, and retail shops for convenience purchases during commutes and lunch hour breaks. Conversely, restaurants and retail rely not only on the spending from residents but also from these office workers. Housing, retail and office uses benefit from being in close proximity, and especially when integrated vertically in mixed-use developments where the land is used more efficiently and distances are shortened between them. In other words, the potential for these market supportable uses to thrive is less if they are developed separately in single-use, stand-alone buildings with individual parking lots.

Recommendations

GOAL 20: ACHIEVE ROUTE 28 TRANSFORMATION INTO A WALKABLE, MIXED-USE MAIN STREET WITH A NEW TOWN CENTER BY REMOVING BARRIERS

RECOMMENDATION 20.1 - All related "Main Street transformation" Town discussions and decisions should always provide residents and officials with the context of the three related decisions regarding rezoning, sewer and streetscape enhancements.

- Rezone according to details in the Land Use & Zoning Element in order to allow the desired uses by-right.
- Pursue State permission and funding to redesign Route 28 from a highway into a reduced safer traffic-calmed pedestrian Main Street that is conducive to successful leisure retail uses.
- Invest in localized sewer infrastructure along Main Street in order to literally support the wastewater treatment needs of high-water usage retail and residential uses.

RECOMMENDATION 20.2 - Coordinate the multi-pronged transformation of Route 28 into a traditional Main Street through the deliberate sequencing of the three primary decisions.

- The Town could initiate and pursue discussions on all three fronts for rezoning, localized sewer along Main Street, and streetscape redesign permission and funding.
- The Town can complete zoning amendments with urban design guidelines and/or streetscape improvement final design plans.
- However, the actual construction of streetscape improvements should not occur until after localized sewer along Main Street has been installed so as to not unnecessarily rip up streetscape improvements.

- The Town should finalize, approve and install localized sewer along Main Street.

GOAL 21: DECISIVELY STATE UPFRONT TO PROSPECTIVE BUSINESSES HOW RESIDENTS WANT TO SEE MAIN STREET TRANSFORMED WITH URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATION 21.1 - Create specific enough but not overly prescriptive urban design guidelines to save all parties review time, and minimize potential opposition. Leverage the guidelines with Site Plan Review. Consider the following guidelines for inclusion:

- Pedestrian Main Street oriented site plan layouts with the building placement as close as possible to a future Main Street with sidewalks, cafes, seating areas and slower traffic.
- Strategic/flexible open space requirements where some or most is required near the front building entrance to create usable space.
- Closer "build-to" lines to create a "streetwall".
- Reduced front yard parking with outdoor seating areas and amenities.
- Majority of the parking to the rear and sides, with potential incentives for encouraging shared "side yard" parking lot access points to minimize traffic congestion for those driving to next-door developments.
- Lot consolidation incentives to encourage the redevelopment of adjacent parcels that might be too small to be redeveloped individually.

GOAL 22: ADDRESS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS FOR HOUSING OPTIONS NOT LIMITED TO ONLY A TRANSFORMED MAIN STREET

RECOMMENDATION 22.1 - Housing options are needed for seniors, young adults, and those with limited mobility and/or unforeseen life circumstances. These housing options should not be limited to only within a rezoned mixed-use/residential Main Street but also to a different extent within certain nearby, smaller-lot residential neighborhoods. Details are specified in the Housing Element of the Master Plan.

GOAL 23: MAINTAIN SOUND TOWN FISCAL PRACTICES

RECOMMENDATION 23.1 - Remain vigilant to maintain the Town's percentage of free cash within the State's recommended 5-15% target range to have a healthy municipal reserve for unforeseen circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 23.2 - Beyond desired access for retail shops, potential office related job creation, and more residential options, the Town should allow for more of these land uses by-right in order to recalibrate the Town's property tax base to be less dependent on single-family residential property taxes.

GOAL 24: ALLOW BUSINESSES AND ATTRACT JOBS IN INDUSTRY SECTORS THAT ARE PROJECTED TO GROW

RECOMMENDATION 24.1 - State regional Metro North WDA industry and job projections foresee growth in the professional/technical/ scientific, and hospitality-related industry sectors. Allow these uses by-right in Town zoning, and make these zoning changes prominently known on the Town website, at business associations, and the Chamber of Commerce in order to attract exiting major regional employers who could be potentially looking to relocate or expand.

IMPLEMENTATION: *from vision to action*

The success of the **North Reading Master Plan 2018-2028** depends on the Town's commitment to follow through with implementation. Following the completion and adoption of the Master Plan, it is highly recommended that the Town form a **MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (MPIC**) comprised of residents, stakeholders, and pertinent Town staff. The MPIC should meet every 2 to 3 months. This meeting frequency should be enough to allow follow-up tasks and coordination with other Town bodies, departments and staff. It is hoped that MPIC meetings will result in summary meeting notes that can help inform other residents, Town decision-making bodies, and Town Meeting about Town business throughout 2018-2028. A Town administrative assistant should be designated as the MPIC meeting scheduler to assist the MPIC chairperson(s), Town Planner, and Community Planning Commission.

The composition of the MPIC can be a combination of residents interested in collaborating as "citizen planners" as well as other Town committee members. The intent of the MPIC is for MPIC members to serve as **"CHAMPIONS OF MASTER PLAN IDEAS"** who keep ideas alive and at the forefront of daily/monthly Town decision-making as well as at Town Meetings. In addition to the recommended MPIC, the following bodies, staff, and partners should be invited to MPIC meetings, and/or kept abreast of MPIC discussions through shared meeting summary notes via email communications:

- **Town Planner:** The Town's professional town planner on staff, together with the CPC, will be a primary point person for coordinating master plan implementation efforts with the support of the CPC, other Town bodies, and community stakeholders and partners.
- **Community Planning Commission (CPC):** Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41 Section 81D governs master plans and identifies planning boards and community planning commissions as the entities responsible for initiating and updating community master plans, and for approving these plans at the local level.
- **Select Board (BOS):** The Select Board has overall responsibility for making appointments to Town Boards and Committees and ensuring progress on the Town's goals.
- **Economic Development Committee (EDC):** The EDC advises the CPC and Select Board on matters relating to economic development in the Town, including the attraction and retention of businesses, support for infrastructure improvements (such as Town sewerage), aesthetic improvements to commercial districts, and incentivizing the redevelopment of the Town's many underutilized properties.
- **Department of Public Works (DPW):** The Department of Public Works is crucial to have as a partner and Master Plan implementer since many of the recommendations involve infrastructure, streetscape and other physical improvements.

For the sake of brevity, the following implementation action table is a non-exhaustive listing of only the recommendations, and does not list the accompanying goals and/or strategies that provide greater context. Those goals and strategies can be found in the corresponding Master Plan elements. The action table is intended to provide a general timeframe as well as ideal sequencing. The numbering of the Master Plan Recommendations reflect the order that they appear in the Master Plan report, and do not reflect the order in which they are to be implemented. The Timeframe columns indicate the sequencing of implementation. It is highly recommended as a way of keeping master plan ideas alive throughout the 2018-2028 period that the Town consider the prominent and public display of the North Reading Master Plan visual executive summary and/or implementation table at one or more Town locations. The goal is to

have a prominent visual reminder key master plan ideas in the same room in which Town decisions are being made during CPC, EDC, BOS and Town Meeting(s). Much in the same manner, as the Town has a large format zoning map framed in a Town Hall meeting chamber, a Master Plan visual executive summary map could be displayed to provide context for long-term planning goals.

Implementation Table

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATION	MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS						TIMEFRAME		
	LAND USE & ZONING	HOUSING	TRANSPOR-TATION	OPEN SPACE	PUBLIC FACILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOP-MENT	2019-2021	2022-2025	2026-2028
RECOMMENDATION 1.1 - Allow **upper-story multifamily residential uses by-right** with Site Plan Review throughout the **entirety of the HB district** so that it is consistent with the zoning district's stated "intensive" and "mixed-use" objectives as well as those of the community's master plan goals and Vision Statement. Additionally, allow residential-only multifamily developments by Special Permit with Site Plan Review. Ideally, the entirety of Main Street should not have developments that all have groundfloor residential dwelling units since they do not activate the streetscape with shopping opportunities for the community.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 1.2 - Consider allowing **hotels and motels as by-right** with Site Plan Review. Consider allowing **drinking places** (i.e., bars) by-right to further bolster vibrancy and activity in the **desired mixed-use retail district**.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 2.1 - Indicate **urban design guidelines** in the zoning that give non-exhaustive examples of "desirable amenities" for the district that is indicated in the zoning's stated purpose. These could include: (a) site layout guidelines for introducing multimodal vehicular/pedestrian circulation resembling streets to break up large parcels and parking areas; (b) outdoor street furniture such as benches; (c) covered outdoor seating areas with tables; and (d) small- to medium-sized hardscaped plazas or courtyards adjacent to (indented into proposed building front or side facades, or corner) to accommodate outdoor seating for customers, tenants, workers, and visitors.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 2.2 - **Additional urban design guidelines** could be included in the zoning to further guide property owners, prospective developers/architects, and the Town's Community Planning Commission for the Site Plan Review process. Urban design guidelines could provide the Town of the North Reading with a tool to tell property owners and prospective businesses in upfront manner, what type of Main Street shopping district the Town wants before potentially unsatisfactory plans are proposed to the Town. Such guidelines could also save property owners and businesses time in the development review, community review, and permitting process. An urban design goal and criterion that could be added to create a more "Main Street" feel along Route 28 could be a "building placement" requirement to treat the minimum front setback of 20 feet also as a "maximum" front setback, and that the maximum 70% building area (i.e., maximum lot coverage) should or must coincide with a "build-to" line. A "build-to line" can be used to create a typical Main Street "streetwall" where most of the main building facades and entrances are lined up, and the overall distances of the building entrances are not too far from the street and existing/proposed sidewalks.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 2.3 - **Provide flexibility** with the minimum lot frontage requirement of 125 feet by providing smaller parcels with a "lot consolidation provision and/or incentive" to allow smaller adjacent parcels that do not meet this minimum to propose joint redevelopment proposals.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 2.4 – Consider adding a zoning amendment with a **requirement or option for "shared parking ratios"** for potential joint development proposals and/or proposals submitted as part of the consolidation of smaller lots along Main Street. The "shared parking" best practice is premised on the more efficient use of parking spaces for complementary adjacent uses or those within the same mixed-use development. It should be employed only and when there are complementary uses that have different "peak-hour" usage: daytime versus evening/nighttime, and weekday versus weekend. The overall purpose is to reduce the total number of parking spaces to the extent that is possible. This shared parking recommendation is intended to work in tandem with the recommended lot consolidation option and/or mutual shared access points between the sides and rear lots of adjoining parking lots.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 3.1 - Allow **more housing options** and market-regulated (i.e., non-income-restricted) affordable options by allowing accessory dwelling units by-right to increase the housing options available to residents of all ages, and to provide options to all for unforeseeable life circumstances.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 3.2 - **Recalibrate RB district use and dimensional regulations** for the residential districts that are in close proximity to Main Street business/retail districts in order for the Town to achieve the desired "compact, walkable mixed-use residential shopping village" stated in the Master Plan Vision Statement. This includes: (a) reducing the distances of buildings from the road and sidewalk, and (b) minimizing the distances between buildings to encourage walkability; in order to mimic the character of historic and traditional residential villages found throughout the region and state. Also explore opportunities for rezoning part of the RA district into a third zone (proximate to a rezoned and rebranded Main Street mixed-use corridor) that could allow for smaller minimum lot sizes to facilitate market-rate units that are affordable due to their limited lot sizes and dwelling unit square footages, as well as encourage walkability by reducing distances between homes and possibly walkability toward Main Street.	X						X		

	LAND USE & ZONING	HOUSING	TRANSPOR-TATION	OPEN SPACE	PUBLIC FACILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOP-MENT	2019-2021	2022-2025	2026-2028
RECOMMENDATION 4.1 - The **multifamily RM zoning district does not allow for multifamily uses by-right,** and only allows them by Special Permit. It is recommended that the Town amend the regulation to allow multifamily uses within its RM multifamily zoning district as a by-right use with Site Plan Review. Doing so would allow the Town to start to address the housing demand and needs of residents of all age groups. It is also worth noting that this is the only area of Town zoned as RM, and that this RM district represents less than 1% of the Town's total land area. Therefore, the opportunity to address housing needs and demand for residential options for residents of varying incomes and ages is extremely limited. The same principle applies to the existing RM district to facilitate needed residential options other than large-lot single-family homes through different parts of Town. Consideration should be given to also expanding the coverage of the RM district through a map amendment in order to provide such residential options (two-families, three-families, townhouses, ADUs, etc.) within greater proximity of the Town's Main Street as well as Park Street.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 5.1 - It is recommended that the Town of North Reading **consider creating an Public Protected Open Space zoning district**, and carve out such districts on its zoning map to reflect all publicly owned and permanently protected open spaces.	X						X		
RECOMMENDATION 6.1 - That the Town **consider reexamining** the 100 acre lot requirement for **Planned Unit Development** to see if it is too onerous in allowing other potential PUD proposals that could meet the Town's needs outside of the Master Plan growth area outside of Main street. Additionally, the Town should consider whether PUD's could be allowed in additional zoning districts, and/or the RE district expanded to include more land area. As of 2019, there has only been PUD application for "The Greens" development project, which encompasses the entire RE zoning district.	X							X	
RECOMMENDATION 8.2 - **Consider 40R Zoning** in areas where higher density residential development is supported by the public. Utilize state funding from 40R zoning to help finance the infrastructure needed to support mixed-use development and residential development.		X					X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 8.4 - **Allow vertical mixed-use housing,** townhouses, condominiums, duplexes, multifamily housing, accessory dwelling units, and other community-supported housing types in this zone		X					X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 8.5 – Expedite the permitting process and allow desired housing types supported by the public by right		X					X		
RECOMMENDATION 8.6 - Relax building height limits, parking requirements, and open space regulations to encourage development of mixed-use and multi-family development and townhouses		X					X		
RECOMMENDATION 9.1 - **Prioritize development of rental units**. 80% of new housing should be rental housing to meet the needs of single-person households, seniors, and the work force as identified in the HPP		X					X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 9.2 - Prioritize the development of **starter homes** and housing types that have lower down payments such as small lot single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses condominiums, and cottage houses		X					X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 9.3 - Prioritize the development of more **housing for seniors** and single-person households that meet universal design standards and ADA requirements.		X					X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 9.4 - Identify a list of sites well suited for the LIP program where the 40B process could remove barriers to Affordable Housing development		X					X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 9.5 - Facilitate housing development along Main Street and near a potential "park-and-ride" lot and shuttle bus headed toward Concord-Street/I-93 & Anderson, Wilmington and/or Reading stations, or to Boston.		X							
RECOMMENDATION 10.1 - **In concert with broader sewer investment and rezoning decisions related to the overall goal of a Main Street transformation, the Town should definitively decide which of the two Main Street redesign streetscape concepts to proceed** with funding, final designs, and roadway construction. The goal is to advance decision-making on the redesign approach, funding sources, and to have final construction plans ready once the Town has already rezoned Main Street, and had sewer installed along it. The goal is to not have to significant gaps between these large actions, and to avoid the unfortunate scenario of sewer installation ripping up recently installed streetscape improvements.			X				X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 10.2 - All related "Main Street transformation" Town discussions and decisions should always provide residents and officials with the context of the three related decisions regarding rezoning, sewer and streetscape enhancements.			X				X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 11.4 - **Explore shuttle bus service** between Riverpark's major businesses, designated stops elsewhere in North Reading, and/or potential Park & Ride lot. Also, consider a second "transit anchor/destination" near Andover's Ballardvalle MBTA commuter station that may have also enough density of employers to support shuttles. While this may not directly serve North Reading residents as well as the Concord Street / Riverpark location, the relative proximity of these two potential shuttle-bus transit nodes could mutually reinforce each other to secure enough ridership and transit service.			X				X		

	LAND USE & ZONING	HOUSING	TRANSPOR-TATION	OPEN SPACE	PUBLIC FACILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOP-MENT	2019-2021	2022-2025	2026-2028
RECOMMENDATION 11.5 - Additional shuttle options could be explored in areas that have lower density and but still have concentrations of employment. While these geographic areas did not score high in the suitability analysis, they were identified as concentrated areas of development through the stakeholder engagement process and in the more refined geographic analysis. Among these areas identified by the mobility study, was a potential peak-period shuttle that could operate between the Anderson/Woburn station and the employment cluster around Concord Street near the I-93 interchange. See the following map excerpt from that plan.			X				X		
RECOMMENDATION 11.6 - Ensure that whatever chosen park and ride lot, does not conflict with other Master Plan goals such as ideal site for private redevelopment potential, or transformative capacity as a site for consolidated Town facility or signature outdoor social gathering town square.			X				X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 12.1 - **Prioritize the following Complete Streets projects** since they also complement other Master Plan goals: (a) Sidewalk installation Projects S1, S2, 7, and 2 for Main Street, Lowell Road, Driveway Park Street and Central Street; (b) Ramp and crosswalks Projects S3 and 15 for Winter Street and Park/Peabody/Haverhill/Elm/Tower/Hill streets; (c) Six Proposed Rail Trail Entry Points for Project 14 along Route 28 to Lynnfield Town Line; and (d) Line Striping for Separate Bike Lane and Route Signs for Project 11 for Concord Street, and from Park Street to Wilmington Town Line.			X				X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 14.4 - A number of facilities in North Reading do not contain accessibility measures, and efforts to improve/update open spaces should include ways to make all sites fully ADA-compliant.				X			X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 17.1.1 - Continue planning for an intergenerational community center, to include selected Town offices as well as a senior and youth center. Consider a location that is central, accessible, and compatible with the uses proposed to be contained within it, and has good synergy with its surroundings					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 17.1.2 – Consider a more centrally located Town Hall, potentially exploring a Main Street location to improve resident access and convenience.					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 17.4 - **Complete ongoing repairs and restoration of facilities** identified in the yearly Capital Improvement Plan (ongoing).					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 18.2 - **Continue progress toward installing sewer service** to properties along Concord Street and Main Street/Route 28 through GLSD					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 18.3 - Explore the feasibility and desirability of package sewer treatment plants to support growth in concentrated commercial areas specifically, Main Street, should municipal sewerage be determined to not be feasible in the near future. If installed in the interim, plan package treatment plans to be compatible with sewer line connections in the future.					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 19.1 - **Enhance the Town's streetscape standards** in commercial and residential districts, to address not only sidewalk design, but also streetscape furniture (benches, trash receptacles, lighting), street trees and landscape requirements.					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 19.2 - Collaborate with the State and County to install improved "T"- Shaped intersection and traffic calming features along Main Street, such as improved pedestrian crossings (crosswalks, center island crossings, signage).					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 19.3 - Require pedestrian-friendly site design, such as providing pedestrian access from the street to the building and orienting buildings toward the primary public street, rather than a parking area for any new and future development.					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 19.4 - **Institute a build-to-line for** the Local, General and Highway Business districts to ensure future development remains compatible with pedestrian and bicycle activity					X		X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 20.1 - All related **"Main Street transformation" Town discussions and decisions** should always provide residents and officials with the context of the three related decisions regarding rezoning, sewer and streetscape enhancements. • Rezone according to details in the Land Use & Zoning Element in order to allow the desired uses by-right. • Pursue State permission and funding to redesign Route 28 from a highway into a reduced safer traffic-calmed pedestrian Main Street that is conducive to successful leisure retail uses. • Invest in localized sewer infrastructure along Main Street in order to literally support the wastewater treatment needs of high-water usage retail and residential uses.						X	X	X	

	LAND USE & ZONING	HOUSING	TRANSPOR-TATION	OPEN SPACE	PUBLIC FACILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOP-MENT	2019-2021	2022-2025	2026-2028
RECOMMENDATION 20.2 - **Coordinate the multi-pronged transformation of Route 28** into a traditional Main Street through the deliberate sequencing of the three primary decisions. • The Town could initiate and pursue discussions on all three fronts for rezoning, localized sewer along Main Street, and streetscape redesign permission and funding. • The Town can complete zoning amendments with urban design guidelines and/or streetscape improvement final design plans. • However, the actual construction of streetscape improvements should not occur until after localized sewer along Main Street has been installed so as to not unnecessarily rip up streetscape improvements. • The Town should finalize, approve and install localized sewer along Main Street.						X	X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 21.1 - **Create specific enough but not overly prescriptive urban design** guidelines to save all parties review time, and minimize potential opposition. Leverage the guidelines with Site Plan Review. Consider the following guidelines for inclusion: • Pedestrian Main Street oriented site plan layouts with the building placement as close as possible to a future Main Street with sidewalks, cafes, seating areas and slower traffic. • Strategic/flexible open space requirements where some or most is required near the front building entrance to create usable space. • Closer "build-to" lines to create a "streetwall". • Reduced front yard parking with outdoor seating areas and amenities. • Majority of the parking to the rear and sides, with potential incentives for encouraging shared "side yard" parking lot access points to minimize traffic congestion for those driving to next-door developments. • Lot consolidation incentives to encourage the redevelopment of adjacent parcels that might be too small to be redeveloped individually.						X	X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 22.1 - **Housing options are needed for seniors, young adults, and those with limited mobility and/or unforeseen life circumstances**. These housing options should not be limited to only within a rezoned mixed-use/residential Main Street but also to a different extent within certain nearby, smaller-lot residential neighborhoods. Details are specified in the Housing Element of the Master Plan.						X	X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 23.2 - Beyond desired access for retail shops, potential office related job creation, and more residential options, the Town should allow for more of these land uses by-right in order to recalibrate the Town's property tax base to be **less dependent on single-family residential property taxes**.						X	X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 24.1 - State regional Metro North WDA industry and job projections foresee growth in the professional/technical/ scientific, and hospitality-related industry sectors. Allow these uses by-right in Town zoning, and make these zoning changes prominently known on the Town website, at business associations, and the Chamber of Commerce in order to attract exiting major regional employers who could be potentially looking to relocate or expand.						X	X	X	
RECOMMENDATION 7.2- Use the Housing Toolbox to find the best strategies for online and in-person engagement of the North Reading community to increase awareness among residents about housing issues and opportunities such as first time homebuyer education programs		X						X	X
RECOMMENDATION 8.1 - **Establish a town-wide inclusionary zoning by-law**. Base the Affordable Housing requirement percent on a town specific housing market analysis. Provide development incentives such as a density bonus to off-set the costs of Affordable Housing development and encourage more Affordable units to be built.		X						X	X
RECOMMENDATION 8.7 - **Consider reducing the minimum lot size** in the RB and RA residential zones or rezoning a portion of RA into a new residential zone with smaller minimum lot sizes.		X						X	X
RECOMMENDATION 8.8 - Allow pocket neighborhoods, small-lot single-family homes, clustered open space subdivisions, accessory dwelling units, and **housing types that allow seniors to age in place** in the RB and RA zones by right		X						X	X
RECOMMENDATION 8.9 - Consolidate residential zones that have minor or insignificant differences in dimensional regulations		X						X	X
RECOMMENDATION 11.1 - Work with adjacent towns such as Wilmington and Reading to see if they are interested in **a pilot program for subsidized Uber, Lyft and taxi rides**.			X					X	X
RECOMMENDATION 11.2 - Monitor other similar sized towns to see what transportation pilot programs might develop that could be applied to North Reading. This includes monitoring the outcomes of ride hailing partnerships in Massachusetts in similar communities – such as Needham, MetroWest and Attleboro -- to determine if a subsidized ride program might help fill the gaps in transportation not provided by the Ring & Ride service			X					X	X
RECOMMENDATION 11.3 - Eventually extend the service to/from the Reading, Wilmington or Anderson/Woburn commuter rail stations (similar to the Ring & Ride service to the Rowley station). This will help North Reading residents connect with MBTA bus and commuter rail			X					X	X

	LAND USE & ZONING	HOUSING	TRANSPOR-TATION	OPEN SPACE	PUBLIC FACILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOP-MENT	2019-2021	2022-2025	2026-2028
RECOMMENDATION 12.2 - Continued advocacy on the part of Town of North Reading officials and residents to get the Town's proposed "Conceptual Park Street improvements" project approved and funded by the State in its Boston MPO 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan..			X					X	X
RECOMMENDATION 16.2 - Strategically acquire and protect land based upon past planning efforts and smart growth principles.				X				X	X
RECOMMENDATION 18.9 - Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects.					X			X	X
RECOMMENDATION 19.5 - Conduct a mapped inventory of streets and bicycle facilities to identify locations for designated bicycle routes and locations for improved facilities (bike parking, bike lanes, shared streets, etc.) It is also recommended that the Town take the next steps in design and pursuing TIP funding based on the recommendations from the Rail Trail Feasibility Study.					X			X	X
RECOMMENDATION 7.1- Work with public officials, local stakeholders, affordable housing developers, and private lenders to pursue implementation of the HPP's goals, monitor progress, and steward the plan		X					<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 7.3 - Hold office hours at Town Hall when stakeholders and interested parties can learn about the HPP and ask questions about implementation progress		X					<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 7.4 - Distribute materials to the public and create training opportunities for town board members to inform them of housing needs and regulations		X					<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 7.5- Pursue funding opportunities identified in the HPP and expand on HPP recommendations by focusing on programs for seniors		X					<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 8.3 - Create housing opportunities in this area to increase spending power that supports existing and new businesses		X					<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 13.1 - Provide a diversified selection of year-round recreational programs for residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 13.2 - Implement management strategies for the upkeep, maintenance and enhanced access of/to all recreational resources. Continue the recently initiated process of compiling and publishing an inventory list for each park and all of its amenities. The Town will begin a new Open Space and Recreation Plan in summer 2019.							<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 13.3 - Regularly assess recreation needs of residents and plan for necessary improvements to existing facilities and programs to meet these needs.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 14.1 - Utilize sidewalks, walking paths, and bike lanes to connect open spaces and cultural/historic assets and connect residential neighborhoods to major destinations.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 14.2 - Designate locations for sidewalks and bike lanes and develop design guidelines sympathetic to the character of North Reading's landscape and open space.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 14.3 - Further North Reading's Complete Streets work to provide safe walking and biking in North Reading and surrounding communities.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 15.1 - Protect drinking water quality by preventing contamination, runoff, and diversion of water that directly contributes to aquifer recharge.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 15.2 - Integrate historic and scenic resource protection into open space planning strategies.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 16.1 - Cooperate with neighboring towns and regional entities to plan and develop regional recreational areas and trail networks.				X			<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 17.2 - Relocate overhead utilities - Pursue funding that will allow utilities to be placed underground along Main Street, substantially improving the visual character of the area.					X		<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 17.3 - Determine adequacy of telecommunications infrastructure, service and coverage in the Concord Street Study Area, identify upgrades/improvements needed.					X		<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 18.5 - Continue to diversify the sources of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state and federal funds					X		<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 18.6 - Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually.					X		<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 18.6.1 – Continue to consider leveraging Complete Streets funds with "seed money" from the CPC's Community Development Fund and Capital requests.					X		<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 18.7 - Continue to fund stormwater improvements through the Town's general fund.					X		<	-------	>

	LAND USE & ZONING	HOUSING	TRANSPOR-TATION	OPEN SPACE	PUBLIC FACILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOP-MENT	2019-2021	2022-2025	2026-2028
RECOMMENDATION 18.8 - Allocate annual funding for compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit					X		<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 19.6 - Advocate for the establishment of MBTA bus stops/service in North Reading, especially along the Main Street (Route 28) corridor to link residences with local businesses, adjacent communities and regional train nodes.					X		<	-------	>
RECOMMENDATION 23.1 - Remain vigilant to maintain the Town's percentage of free cash within the State's recommended 5-15% target range to have a healthy municipal reserve for unforeseen circumstances.						X	<	-------	>

APPENDIX A

Community Input

This appendix is intended to show summaries of the community input data that was obtained from a combination of the online survey, and community workshops. Below in an example of the one the online survey questions, followed by a graph showing participation levels through the summer and fall.

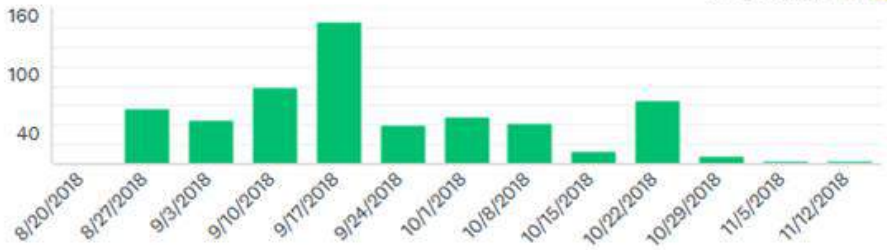
*3. **Which** of the following would you like to see in the **following non-residential focus areas** of North Reading?

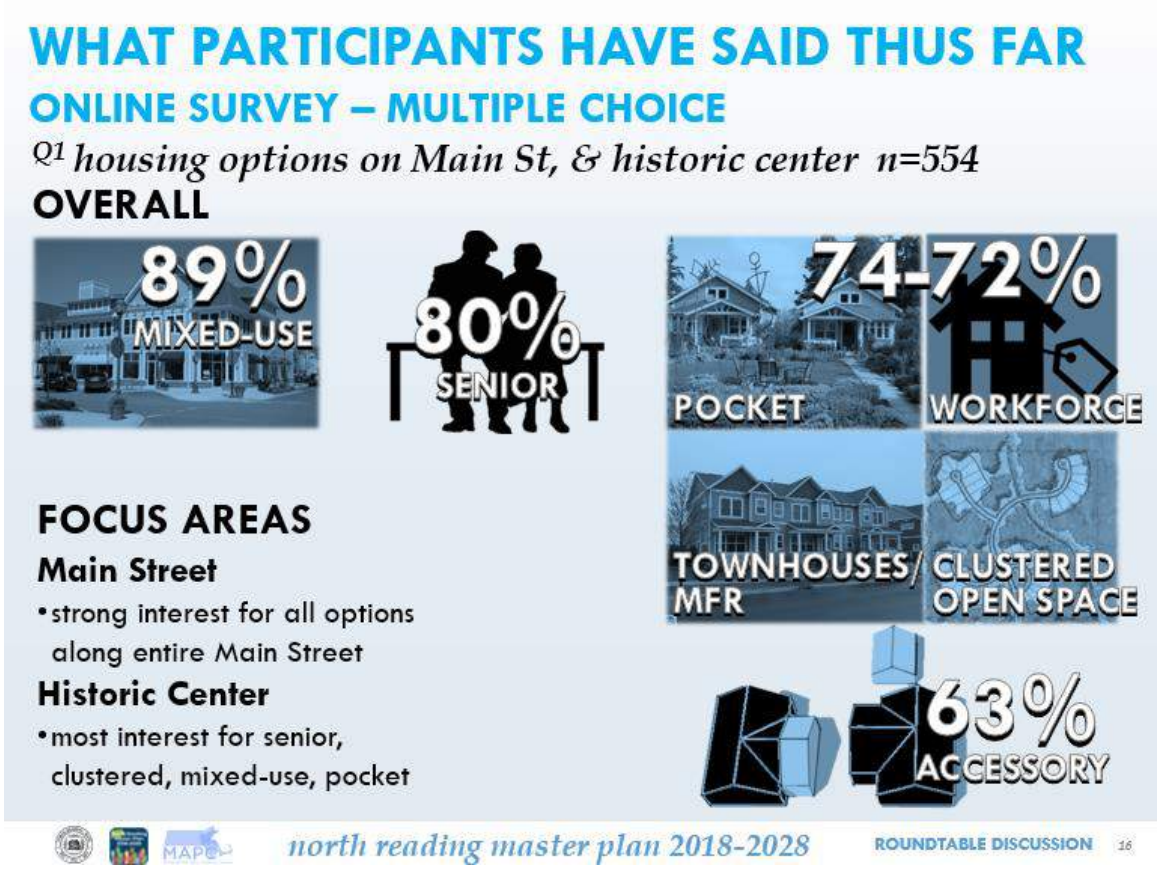
•Please **choose one or more.** •Scroll down for visual examples.

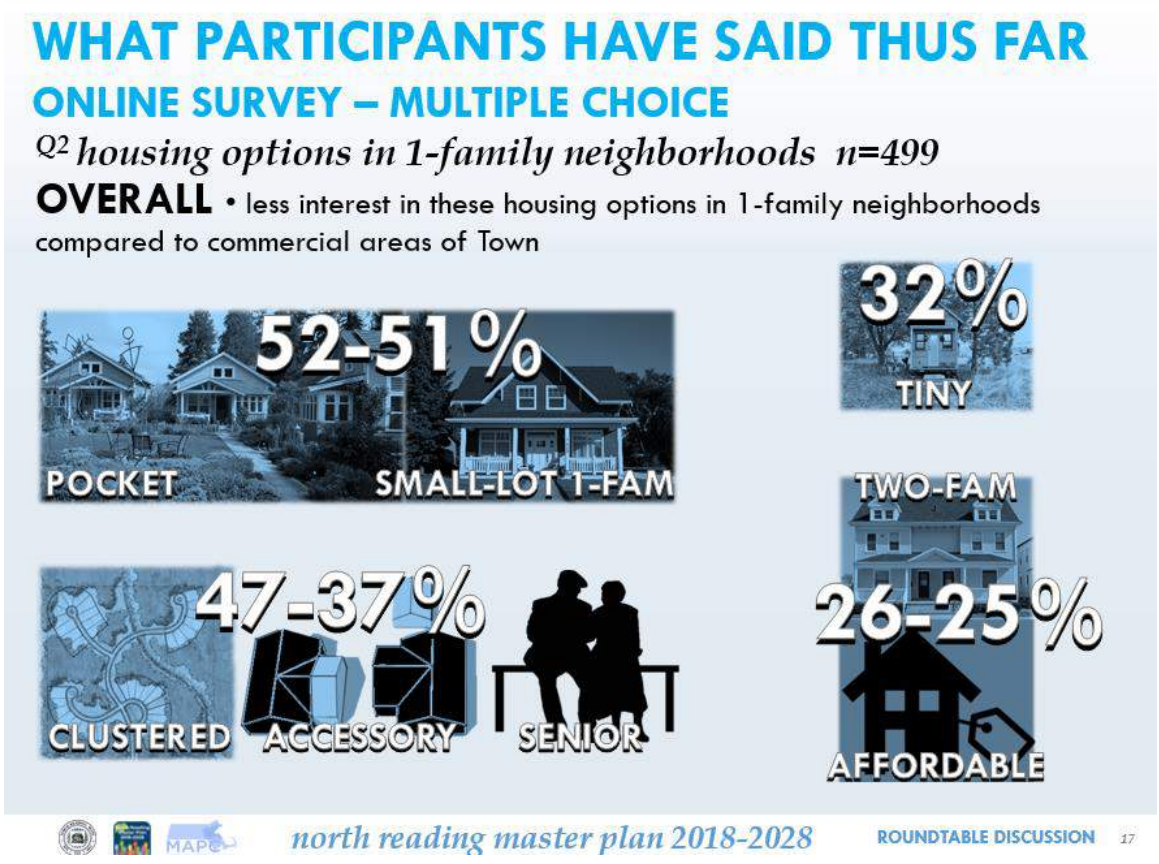
	A - North Main Street	B - South Main Street	C- Historic Town Center
1 -MIXED-USE, COMPACT GROWTH - residential over retail/office	☐	☐	☐
2 - SHARED PARKING SOLUTIONS - fewer parking lots make for more walkable environments	☐	☐	☐
3- POCKET PLAZAS • for leisure & community building • public outdoor social gathering spaces, such as small parks or plazas? • should the Town encourage gathering spaces as part of private developments through site layout design?	☐	☐	☐
4 - REORIENT PARKING • behind buildings • to allow the buildings to be somewhat closer to the roadway and create streetscapes reminiscent of quintessential New England town centers that shoppers like to visit?	☐	☐	☐
5 - CONNECTIONS & STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS • sidewalks, bike lanes, walking trails • should the Town invest in streetscape improvements to make areas more walkable and pleasant?	☐	☐	☐
6 - EXPAND COMMERCIAL TAX BASE FOR REVENUE • allow additional mixed/commercial compact growth	☐	☐	☐
7 - LEISURE RETAIL & OUTDOOR SEATING • conducive to social interactions • restaurants, cafes, bakeries and other uses depend on: (a) high water usage and need sewage treatment solutions; and (b) thrive with foot traffic and/or more residents to frequent them	☐	☐	☐
8 - LOCALIZED INFRASTRUCTURE • to support retail uses • should Town invest in or promote a compact, modular, district-based wastewater treatment plant to support desirable leisure retail uses, and residential uses? • can focus growth in targeted areas only	☐	☐	☐
9 - CREATE INDOOR / OUTDOOR CIVIC ANCHOR • join retail, civic & outdoor functions • consolidate certain town facilities • SEE VISUAL EXAMPLE BELOW	☐	☐	☐
10 - LANDMARK PUBLIC ART • attract passersby • sense of place	☐	☐	☐
NONE OF THESE. If you select this option, please provide your own suggestions.	☐	☐	☐

Other (please specify)? Comments?






WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
ONLINE SURVEY – MULTIPLE CHOICE
Q1 housing options on Main St, & historic center n=554
OVERALL
89% MIXED-USE
80% SENIOR
74-72% POCKET
WORKFORCE
TOWNHOUSES/ MFR
CLUSTERED OPEN SPACE
63% ACCESSORY
FOCUS AREAS
Main Street
•strong interest for all options along entire Main Street
Historic Center
•most interest for senior, clustered, mixed-use, pocket
north reading master plan 2018-2028
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 16


WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
ONLINE SURVEY – MULTIPLE CHOICE
Q2 housing options in 1-family neighborhoods n=499
OVERALL • less interest in these housing options in 1-family neighborhoods compared to commercial areas of Town
32% TINY
52-51% POCKET
SMALL-LOT 1-FAM
TWO-FAM
47-37% CLUSTERED
ACCESSORY
SENIOR
26-25% AFFORDABLE
north reading master plan 2018-2028
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 17

WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
ONLINE SURVEY – MULTIPLE CHOICE

Q3 improvements on Main St, & historic center n=449

OVERALL



FOCUS AREAS

Main Street

- strong interest for all options except public art, civic anchor

Historic Center

- strong interest for connections/streetscape, leisure retail
- moderate interest for landmark public art, civic anchor, pocket plazas, reoriented parking

WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
ONLINE SURVEY – MULTIPLE CHOICE *n=437*

Q4 importance of transforming Rt28 into a walkable street?

60% VERY

30% SOMEWHAT

Q5 seek permission & funds from state to redesign Rt28 to make it safer & pleasant?

68% YES

16% MAYBE

Q6 invest in improvements along rt28?





"T"-SHAPED INTERSECTIONS

- RETAIN EXISTING FOUR LANES,
- IMPROVE T-SHAPED INTERSECTIONS WITH RT62 (AT WINTER ST, & LOWELL RD), AND ADD SIDEWALKS ON BOTH SIDES, AND
- ADD BIKE LANES.

ROUNDABOUTS

- REPLACE INTERSECTIONS WITH ROUNDABOUTS,
- ADD A SHARED BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH, AND
- REDUCE THE NUMBER OF LANES IMMEDIATELY NORTH AND SOUTH OF EACH ROUNDABOUT.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
ONLINE SURVEY – MULTIPLE CHOICE

Q7 which pedestrian & bike amenities in single-family residential neighborhoods? n=435

86% SIDEWALKS

69% WALKING TRAILS

42% BIKE LANES

5% NONE



WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
ONLINE SURVEY – MULTIPLE CHOICE

Q8 better connect different parts of Town? n=432

REGIONAL TRANSIT
CONNECT TO EXISTING SERVICE? **52%**

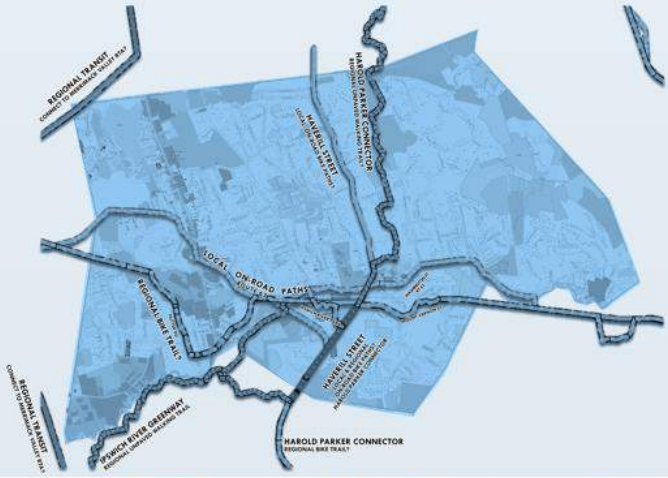
NEW CONNECTIONS?
USING TOWN- OWNED LAND? **50%**

REGIONAL BIKE/PED TRAILS? **46%**

LOCAL ON-ROAD PATHS? **44%**

REGIONAL UNPAVED WALKING TRAILS? **31%**

NONE **7%**



WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

ONLINE SURVEY – OPEN COMMENT THEMES

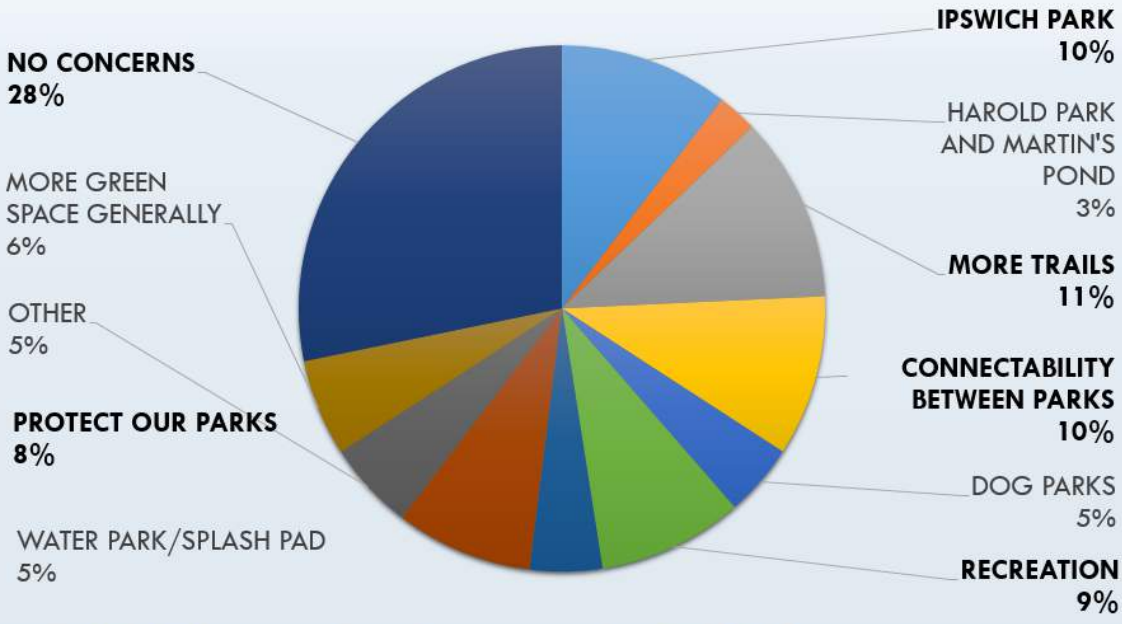
where it made sense, participants were provided with "free-form" open comment boxes for additional ideas & concerns

	total open comments	of total multiple choice responses	okay with change	concerns with change	none of choices given
q1 housing along Main St	6%	554	3%	3%	4%
q2 housing in neighborhoods	4%	499	1%	3%	10%
q3 how to improve Main St	4%	449	2%	2%	3%
q5 pursue Main St redesign	13%	437	6%	7%	16% - no
q6 roundabouts v T-intersections	11%	437	3%	8%	n/a
q7 sidewalks/bikes/trails in neighborhoods	7%	435	3%	4%	5%
q8 connectivity	5%	432	3%	2%	7%

WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

VISION STATEMENT THEMES

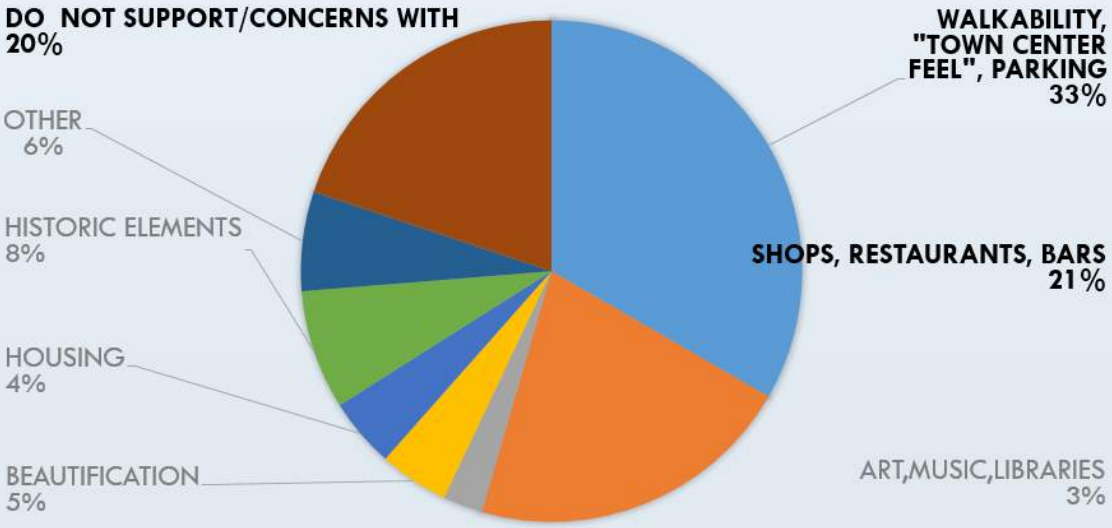
Q9.1 changes regarding parks & natural areas? n=258



WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

VISION STATEMENT THEMES

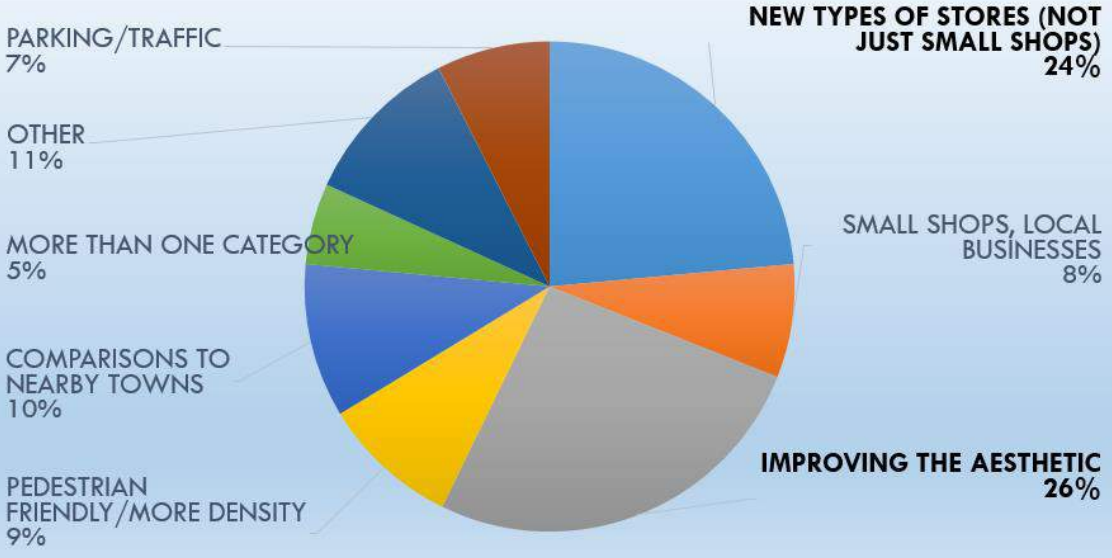
Q9.2 in the future, the historic town center along Park St & the Town Common might have… n=252



WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

VISION STATEMENT THEMES

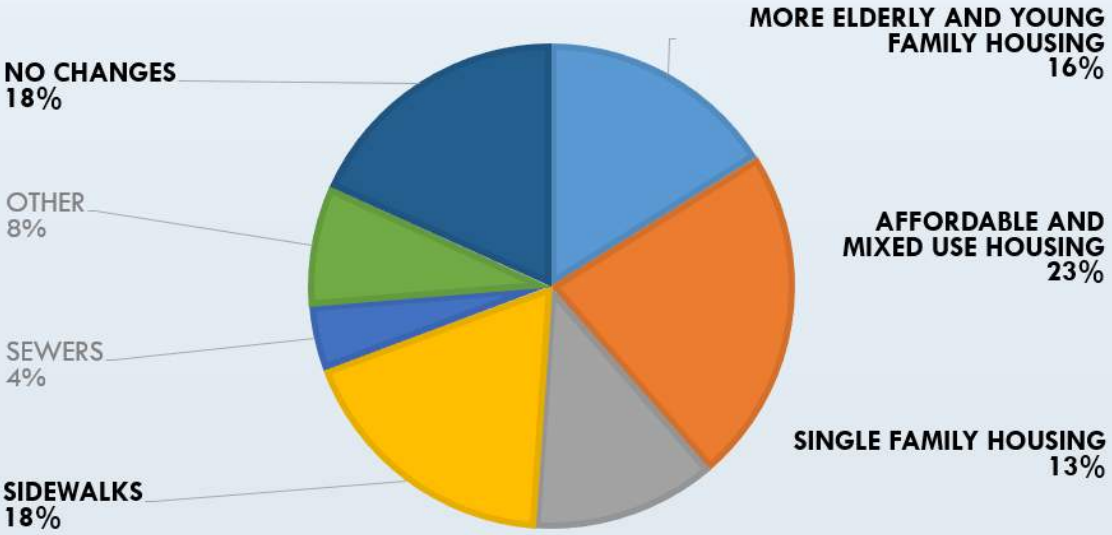
Q9.3 in the future, the retail strip along Main St/Route 28 might have… n=319



WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

VISION STATEMENT THEMES

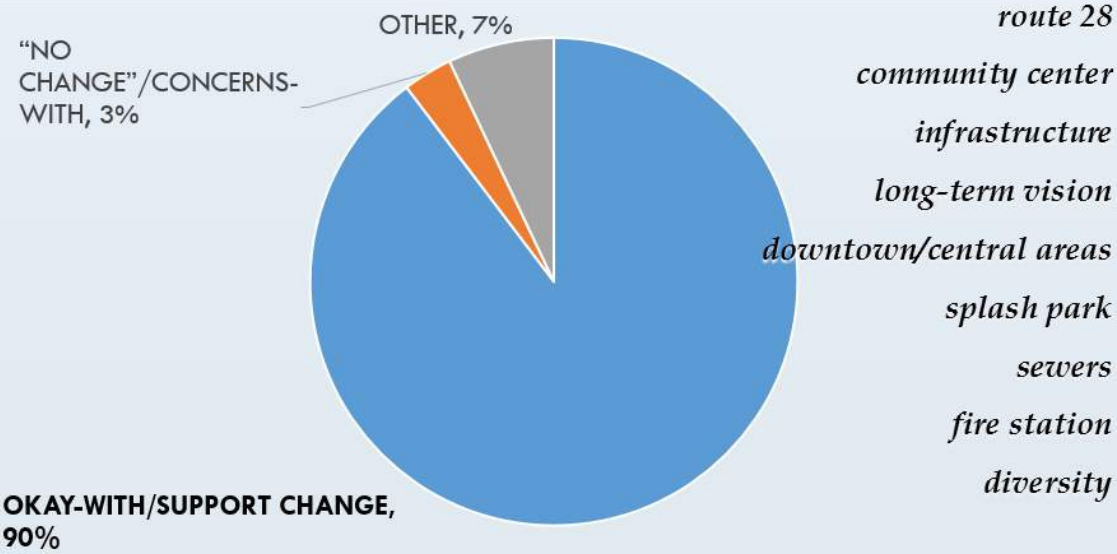
Q9.4 any changes regarding residential areas & housing choices? n=262



WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

VISION STATEMENT THEMES

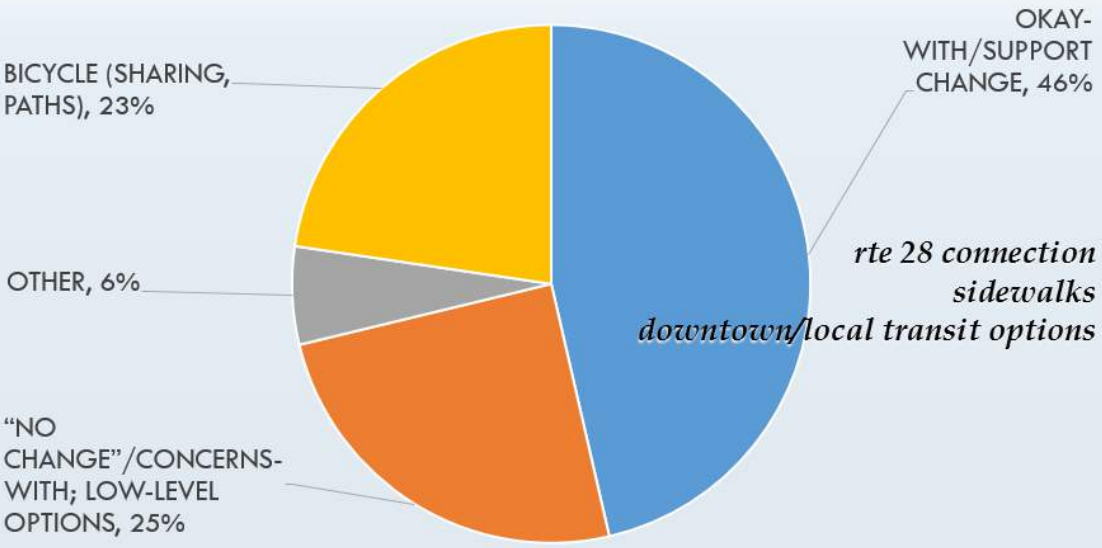
Q9.5 leave future generations with a legacy project? n=213



WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

VISION STATEMENT THEMES

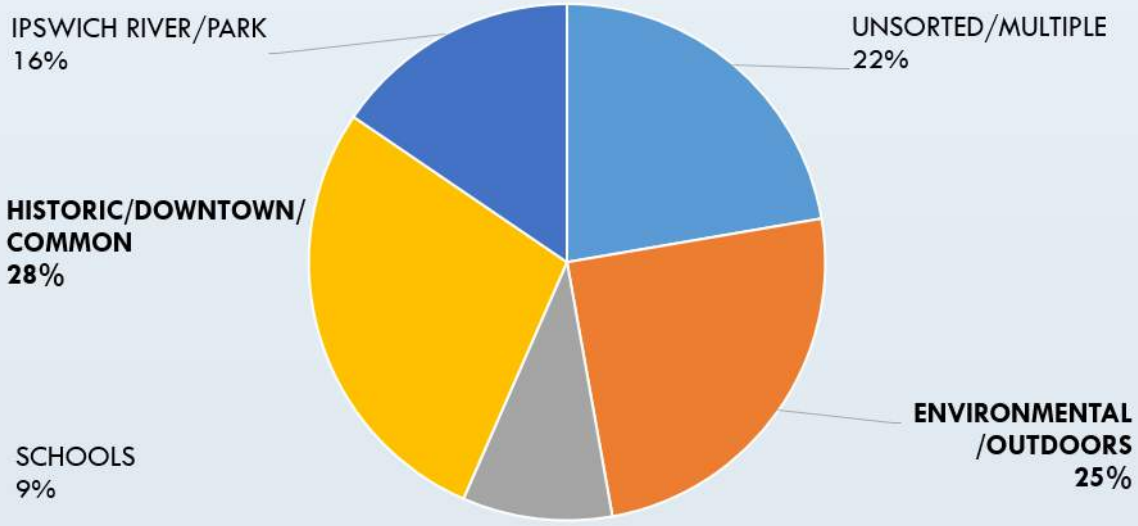
Q9.6 how might residents get around Town? n=290

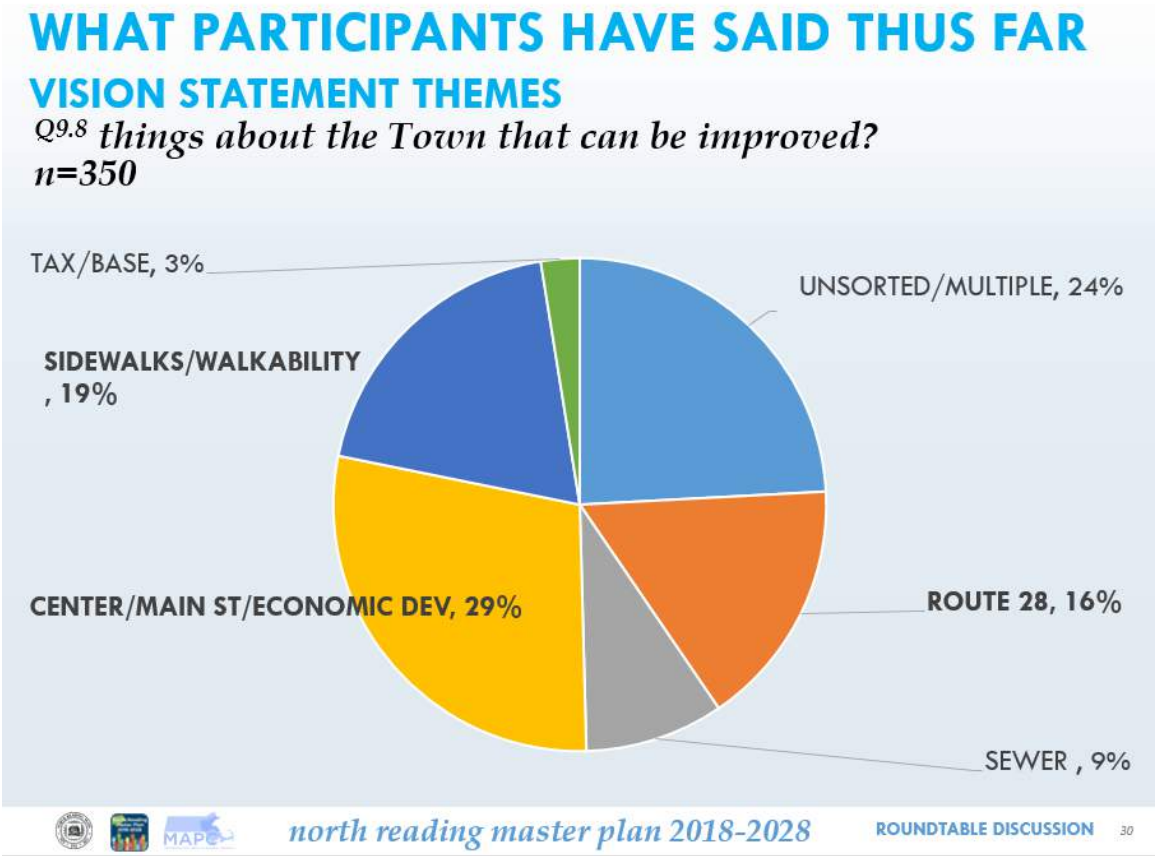


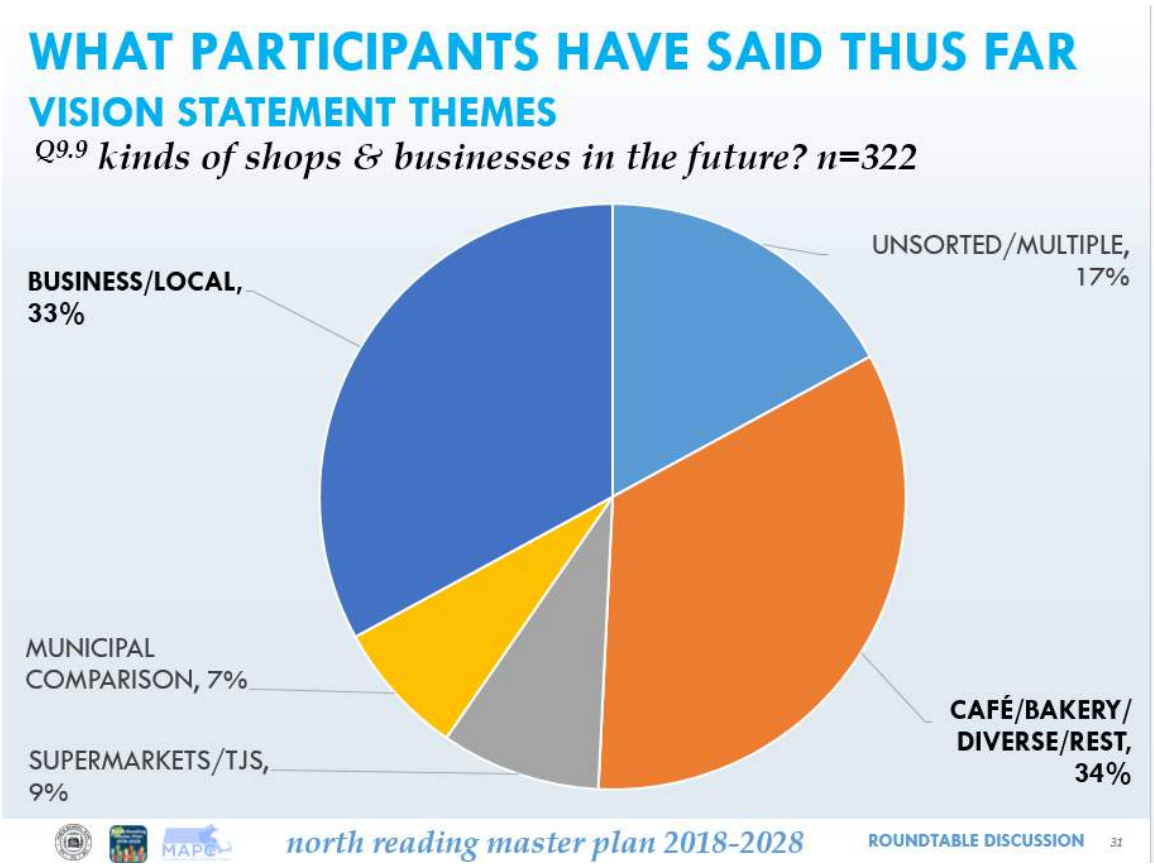
WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR

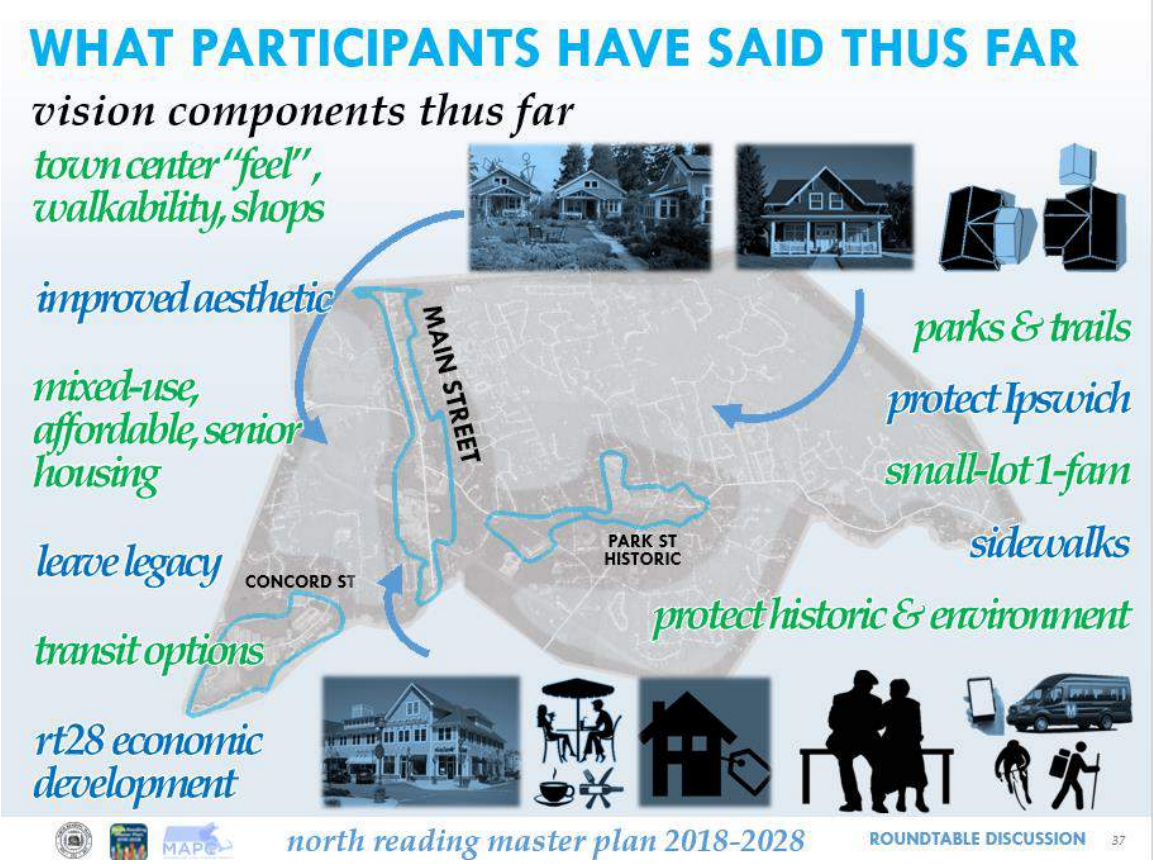
VISION STATEMENT THEMES

Q9.7 special things we should protect? n=318




WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
VISION STATEMENT THEMES
Q9.8 things about the Town that can be improved?
n=350
TAX/BASE, 3%
UNSORTED/MULTIPLE, 24%
SIDEWALKS/WALKABILITY, 19%
CENTER/MAIN ST/ECONOMIC DEV, 29%
ROUTE 28, 16%
SEWER , 9%
north reading master plan 2018-2028
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
30


WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
VISION STATEMENT THEMES
Q9.9 kinds of shops & businesses in the future? n=322
UNSORTED/MULTIPLE, 17%
BUSINESS/LOCAL, 33%
MUNICIPAL COMPARISON, 7%
SUPERMARKETS/TJS, 9%
CAFÉ/BAKERY/ DIVERSE/REST, 34%
north reading master plan 2018-2028
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
31


WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID THUS FAR
vision components thus far
town center "feel", walkability, shops
improved aesthetic
mixed-use, affordable, senior housing
leave legacy
transit options
rt28 economic development
MAIN STREET
CONCORD ST
PARK ST HISTORIC
parks & trails
protect Ipswich
small-lot 1-fam
sidewalks
protect historic & environment
north reading master plan 2018-2028
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
37

LAND USE & ZONING COMMUNITY INPUT

The following is iterative feedback from the second community workshop based on more extensive community feedback from the 7-week online 546-response survey.

3a LAND USE + ZONING *allowing + shaping growth*

creating favorable conditions + shaping desired streetscape

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 1 – Attract private investment & redevelopment with desired uses & traditional walkable Main Street streetscape form.			
STRATEGY – AMEND AND SIMPLIFY THE HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONING along the entirety of the Town's segment of Route 28 to: (a) **ALLOW DESIRED USES BY-RIGHT,** and (b) **CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE STREETWALL AND STREETSCAPE** where people, buildings and open space are prominent, and parking is not the dominant feature by amending certain dimensional and parking regulations.	13	2 Note: Rt. 28 is VERY LONG- $$$, maybe for this strategy?	
• **RENAME HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT,** and insert "intent and purpose" language to convey Town goal.		1	1
• If the Town were to consider **STRATEGICALLY AMENDING** use regulations within **AREAS ADJACENT TO THE EXISTING HB ZONING** district boundary, the Town should allow either by-right or through special permit the following housing options which received a high-level of support from the community survey: (a) pocket neighborhoods; (b) clustered open space subdivisions; (c) accessory dwelling units; (d) small-lot single-family homes; and (e) senior/aging-in-place options.		3	
• **ALLOW BY-RIGHT THE FOLLOWING HOUSING OPTIONS AND USES** that received strong support by the community survey: (a) multifamily residential, (b) attached townhouses, (c) mixed-use [including as many retail/office uses as possible], (d) senior-aging-in-place options, and (e) affordable/workforce options.	7		1
• Consider either a **REDUCED MINIMUM FRONT YARD SETBACK** (presently 25 feet), a maximum front yard setback of 25 feet, or a flexible range with a minimum and maximum in order to encourage pedestrians to walk along facades and storefronts.	5	2	
• Similarly, consider a **FLEXIBLE SIDE YARD REQUIREMENT** of 10 to 20 feet in order to potentially minimize distances between adjacent developments could help create of a village center feel that is human scaled.	5	2	
• Amend zoning to require that a majority of the required **PARKING BE LOCATED TO THE REAR** of developments. The zoning could specify a percentage range to provide flexibility (such as 50% to 66%) in the site layout review process.	4	1	2
• Amend zoning to include parking layout and design guidelines to **MINIMIZE THE PROMINENCE OF PARKING FROM THE STREETSCAPE** and make parking lots more pedestrian friendly. Ideas include landscaped islands and prominent pedestrian paths (potentially partially curbed) to building entrances.	7	1	
• Provide **DENSITY BONUSES** such as an additional story of building height in exchange for: **SHARED ACCESS POINTS ALONG STREETS** for adjacent properties to minimize curb cuts and points of potential traffic congestion. **SHARED MULTIMODAL ACCESS POINTS BETWEEN ADJACENT PARKING LOTS** to minimize unnecessary car trips on Main Street to nearby properties, and encourage walking to an adjacent development once already parked. **CONSOLIDATING ADJACENT LOTS** that do not meet the minimum lot size requirement of 20,000 square feet.	5		

3b LAND USE + ZONING *allowing + shaping growth*

creating favorable conditions + shaping desired streetscape

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
• Provide **DENSITY BONUSES** such as an additional two stories of building height for clustered development on targeted parcels at Route 28 and 62 intersection in exchange for the **CREATION OF A USEABLE PASSIVE RECREATION OPEN SPACE WITH SEATING** along the streetscape that is publicly accessible. The open space should be created in addition to the following recommended minimum open space requirements intended to accommodate for property setbacks.	7	1 Note: bonuses are a great way to encourage development and get public benefits	
• **AMEND THE MINIMUM OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS** to reflect the following: 30% for townhouses, 20% for mixed-use/multifamily residential, and 10% for retail/office.		3	
• **POTENTIALLY AMEND THE EXISTING "PARKING BONUS"** that "allows an additional 1.5 FAR in building square footage in exchange for a 20% surplus of the required parking" in order to clarify the denominator for the calculation. Careful consideration should be given to ensure that the denominator that is confirmed or changed does not inadvertently result in encouraging an excessive amount of parking or less than the necessary amount of reduced shared parking spaces to support a compact walkable mixed-use district.			
• Amend the zoning to **INCLUDE OR BOLSTER SHARED PARKING STRATEGIES** for certain complementary uses that can share the same parking spaces for daytime versus nighttime parking, and weekday versus weekend parking needs.	4		
• **AMEND THE PARKING RATIOS TO BE CLEARER.** The parking ratio for "mixed-use development" (Section 200-69-A.16) seemed to be confusing with two different standards, and what seems to be an implied addition of 1 parking space per 600 square feet of mixed-use development beyond the "sum of various uses computed separately." The existing regulation as written could be expressed more clearly and it seems that an additional parking space is being required unnecessarily for the type of development the Town would want to incentivize.	1		
• **CLARIFY THE REGULATIONS** in Section 200-39 to expedite the development review and permitting process for desired uses. Mixed-use developments are required to undergo Site Plan Review through the Community Planning Commission, which is a special permit process.	1	2	
• Amend the land use regulations that list under one section that **"HOTELS AND OTHER LODGING"** are allowed but in another section "hotels/motels" require a special permit.	2	1	1
• Potentially **CLARIFY THE FOLLOWING PARKING RATIO** with a footnote to make understanding and comparing parking requirements easier for potential developers since many are listed as the number of parking spaces per an increment of square feet. The restaurant parking requirement is presently stated as 1 parking space per 4 seats of seating capacity, which for the purposes of the MAPC buildout analysis was converted to 6 spaces per 1,000 square feet.	1	2	
Goal 2 – Allow more options within certain residential neighborhoods to allow young adults, young families with children, and seniors to not be priced out, and age in place.	7		1
STRATEGY – AMEND RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS "RB" AND "RA" to allow ideally by-right (or special permit) the housing options that received a certain level of interest and support according to the community survey results.	2	2	1
• **ALLOW BY-RIGHT (OR SPECIAL PERMIT) THE FOLLOWING HOUSING OPTIONS:** (a) pocket neighborhoods; (b) small-lot single-family homes; (c) clustered, open space subdivisions; (d) accessory dwelling units; and (e) senior/aging-in-place options.	4	1	1

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY INPUT

The following is iterative feedback from the second community workshop based on more extensive community feedback from the 7-week online 546-response survey.

4a ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

putting the pieces together to create favorable conditions

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 1 – Make desired leisure-retail and needed condo/apartments viable by investing-in and/or supporting wastewater infrastructure.	14	1	Note: local sewer funded by the users, not by [?]
STRATEGY – APPROVE & INVEST IN LOCALIZED SEWER along Main and Concord streets to support high-water usage retail uses (restaurants, bakeries, cafes) and also support multifamily options.	11	Note: A good sewer goes a long way to attract business	
STRATEGY – SUPPORT & SPEARHEAD PACKAGE SEWER TREATMENT PLANTS to support such uses and developments in targeted areas of Main Street, as an immediate, shorter-term strategy to catalyze growth while the longer-term sewer decision and eventual implementation occurs to capture market demand now.	12		
• The Town and an Implementation Committee should: (a) proactively **REACH OUT TO PROPERTY OWNERS** and the Chamber of Commerce to inform them of the benefits; (b) consider crafting **A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP** where it can provide seed money toward treatment plant large enough to service two or more adjacent or nearby properties to spur development, and/or (c) **SPEARHEAD AN ASSOCIATION** for area property owners with an agreement for the maintenance, operation, expansion of capacity, and procedure for other property owners to connect to it and/or start another treatment plant to service/jumpstart another cluster of adjacent development properties.	7		
Goal 2 – Create a shopping district with leisure retail uses along an inviting streetscape with outdoor seating areas, and upper-story homes and offices (that reinforce ground-floor retail uses).	14		
STRATEGY – LESS RESTRICTIVE, CLEARER ZONING – Allow desired uses by-right, limit the use of special permits, avoid being overly prescriptive, and avoid a series of fragmented sub(districts) and/or overlay districts. Please refer to the zoning recommendations in Land Use and Zoning for more details.	3	2	
STRATEGY – URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES – Create purposeful, clear urban design guidelines and/or requirements that are specific-enough but not overly prescriptive to accompany the Site Plan/Layout Review process. Examples include: building placement within a site envelope, parking design/placement, shared access points, lot consolidation; Please refer to the zoning recommendations in Land Use and Zoning for more details on some of the specific ideas.	4	1	
Goal 3 – Address housing demand by allowing more options (including market-rate smaller lots/dwellings) that also enliven mixed-use/retail developments.	14	2 Note: let's increase population to put all these other ideas to good use	
STRATEGY – MAKE POSSIBLE THROUGH MULTI-PRONGED SUPPORT THROUGH ZONING, WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION, AND STREETSCAPE INVESTMENTS – Refer to the Land Use and Zoning, and other Economic Development strategies/recommendations.	5	1	

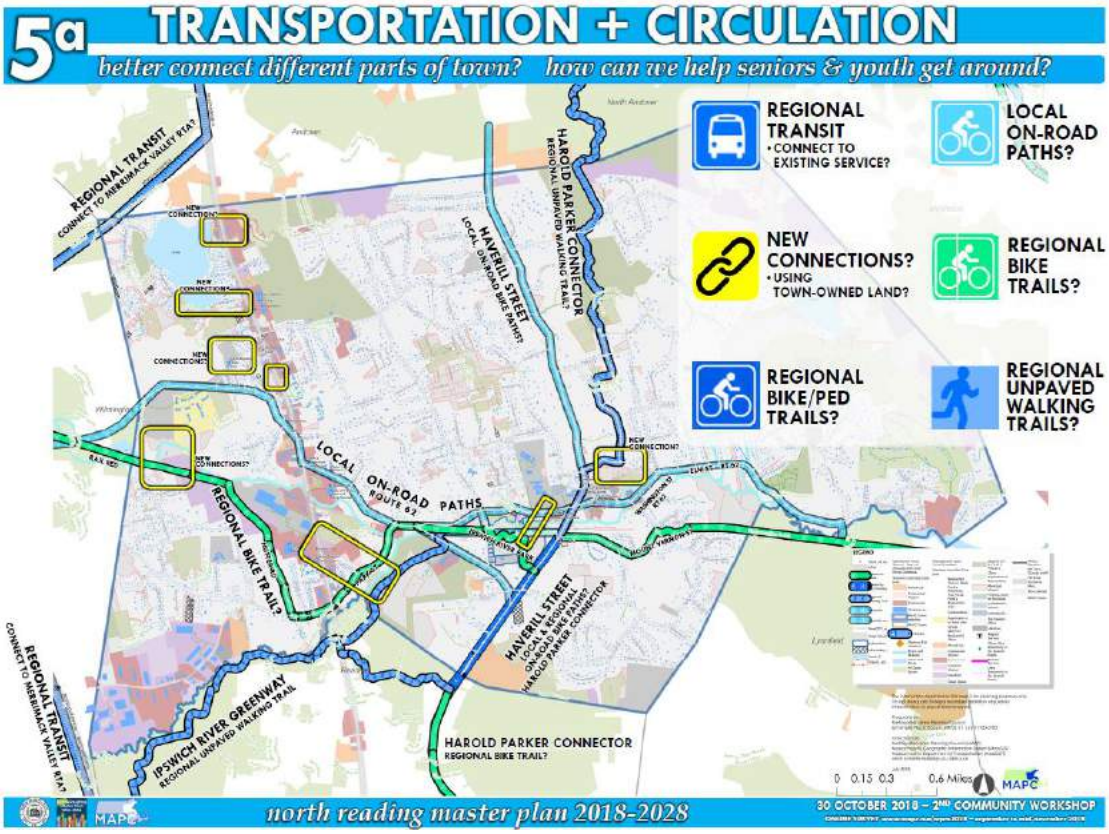
4b ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

putting the pieces together to create favorable conditions

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 4 – Create attractive roadway & new robust town center to attract private investment and desired development type.	11		
STRATEGY – TRANSFORM ROUTE 28 INTO WALKABLE MAIN STREET by redesigning it to make it safer, walkable, and multimodal. The community survey indicated a strong majority preferred redesigning Route 28's two intersections with Route 62 into "T"-shaped intersections (as opposed to roundabouts).	9 Note: Can this be done	4	
• **REQUIRE OUTDOOR AMENITIES & BETTER SITE LAYOUT & BUILDING PLACEMENT** through zoning requirements and urban design guidelines. The amenities could include pocket parks and/or small hardscaped plazas with a strong connection to a redefined streetscape with sidewalks and groundfloor uses.	6	1 Note: At [?]	1 Note: [?]
STRATEGY – TOWN INVESTMENT IN INDOOR/OUTDOOR CIVIC ANCHOR around which to attract and anchor private development.	7	1	1
• **CONSOLIDATE TOWN FACILITIES IN ONE CENTRAL LOCATION** to bring foot traffic and new attractive public investment and development frontages closer to Main Street retail developments. Ideas that could serve as an anchor include: a relocated town hall, a community parking lot, a dog park, or a senior or cultural center. This type of direct public investment can send a strong message to private property owners to invest in an area. It can not only transform the physical landscape for the better but also depending on the use, it can attract additional visitors to an area that in turn can bring additional customers to businesses.	9	3	1
• **CARVE ADJACENT OUTDOOR GATHERING SPACE** out of a larger development project (as an alternative to direct public investment). Provide development incentives such as additional building story heights in exchange for the joint development of two adjacent properties that could pool together their open space requirements into an open space or hardscaped plaza. This approach assumes that the other recommendations in the plan such as zoning and sewer package treatment plants will be in place to allow the desired development projects. While it does not require the Town to provide public funds for creating a node, it does result only in a privately owned common space that is publicly accessible and would not provide the benefits that the other types of ideas could. The Town already has a zoning by-law that might be applicable to furthering this approach. Section 200-50-B(4)b of the Open Space Residential Development by-law states: "In any case where the common open space is not conveyed to the North Reading Conservation Commission, a legally enforceable restriction under M.G.L. c.184, §§ 31-33, shall be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, providing that such land shall be kept in an open or natural state and not be built upon or developed for accessory uses such as parking or roadways."	3	4	

TRANSPORTATION COMMUNITY INPUT

The following is iterative feedback from the second community workshop based on more extensive community feedback from the 7-week online 546-response survey.



5b TRANSPORTATION + CIRCULATION

better connect different parts of town? how can we help seniors & youth get around?

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 1 – Create active transportation options for youth, residents and seniors to get around that promote healthy lifestyle, and neighborhood connections.			
STRATEGY – FUND & IMPLEMENT COMPLETE STREETS PROGRAM to create sidewalks, and on-road bicycle lanes (shared or dedicated).	9	2	
• The combination of priority streets identified by the Town, analysis of field data and information acquired from MAPC tool resulted in the following recommendations for Complete Street Infrastructure projects. **TOP TEN OUT OF 22:** 1. Haverhill Street (Foley Drive to North Street); 2. Central Street – Phase 1 (Park Street to Spruce Road); 3. Central Street – Phase 2 (Spruce Road to North Street); 4. Chestnut Street Phase 1 (Haverhill Street to Flint Street); 5. Chestnut Street Phase 2 (Flint Street to Lynnfield Town Line); 6. Chestnut Street Phase 3 (Park Street to DPW Facility); 7. Lowell Road: (Abbott Road to Edgewood Apartments); (8) North Street: (Lowell Road to Oak Avenue); 9. Elm Street (Route 62) (Green Meadow Drive to Middleton Town Line), 10. Park Street Phase 1 (Wilmington Town Line to Concord Street and Main Street to Winter Street).	1		Note: No on road bike lanes—leads to dead bike riders!
STRATEGY – PURSUE LOCAL & REGIONAL WALKING & BIKE TRAILS for recreational activities and to promote community connection.	7	Note: [?]	Note: IRP & Ocean Lot/ [?]
STRATEGY – REDESIGN ROUTE 28 TO ACCOMMODATE SIDEWALKS, BIKE LANES, & IMPROVED INTERSECTIONS FOR BETTER TRAFFIC CIRCULATION	8		
• Town decision needs to be made to **REQUEST PERMISSION AND FUNDING FROM MASSDOT** to redesign Route 28. A 2015 study explored two ways to make Route 28 into more of a walkable, pleasant "Main Street". The first alternative called for retaining the existing four lanes of traffic and 'T'-shaped intersections plus sidewalks and bike lanes. The second approach involved calming traffic by replacing intersections with roundabouts, adding a shared path for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reducing the number of lanes on Main Street north and south of each of the new roundabouts. The community survey found strong support for T-intersections as opposed to roundabouts.	2	1	2
Goal 2 – Pursue transit options for commuters, seniors and youth to get around Town and beyond.	3	4	1
STRATEGY – EXPLORE ON-DEMAND MICRO-TRANSIT SERVICE in partnership with adjacent towns, major employers, and ride-sharing companies like Uber, Lyft, and taxi companies.	1	2	3
STRATEGY – PURSUE PEAK-PERIOD SHUTTLE SERVICE BETWEEN CONCORD-STREET/I-93 & ANDERSON/WOBURN STATION in partnership with major employers, such as Amazon Robotics and Teradyne.	2	1	3
STRATEGY – EXPLORE SUBSIDIZED PERSONAL RIDE-SHARING SERVICE in partnership with adjacent towns, major employers, and ride-sharing companies like Uber, Lyft, and taxi companies.	1		2
STRATEGY – EXPLORE EXPANSION OF MVRTA/TOWN RING-AND-RIDE PILOT PROGRAM which currently serves senior citizens needing to get to medical appointments. Based on ridership numbers, explore whether is demand for a more efficient shuttle, or flexible fixed-route service.	1	4	

north reading master plan 2018-2028
30 OCTOBER 2018 – 2ND COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

HOUSING COMMUNITY INPUT

The following is iterative feedback from the second community workshop based on more extensive community feedback from the 7-week online 546-response survey.



	Priority: Use dots to place recommendations in order of importance.				Goal 1: Ensure implementation of the North Reading Housing Production Plan	Goal 2: Provide affordable and appropriate housing for seniors that allows them to remain in North Reading	Goal 3: Provide housing that is affordable to young families so they are able to settle in North Reading	Goal 4: Meet the housing needs of single-person households and cost burdened individuals	Goal 5: Increase Affordable Housing and naturally affordable housing with a variety of housing options	Goal 6: Integrate housing with economic development, transportation, and environmental goals
Capacity and Programming	High	Medium	Low		X					
• Work to build staff capacity, and subsidized affordable housing development expertise, and provide funding to pursue implementation of the HPP's goals, starting with programs and recommendations	4	2			X					X
2. Inform the public on housing from the HPP and the town's housing needs	High	Medium	Low		X					
• Use the recommended toolbox in the Housing Production Plan to engage the North Reading community and educate residents about housing issues and opportunities, including the benefits of production and preservation		4			X		X			
• Hold information sessions for Town officials, boards, and residents on key issues identified in the HPP and ask questions about the HPP and its implementation plan	2	2			X					
• Hold information sessions for the public on zoning changes and regulations that are needed to implement the HPP's goals of housing needs and regulations	1	1	1		X					X
3. Build capacity for affordable housing development within the Housing Authority	High	Medium	Low		X					
4. Pursue land acquisition for affordable housing on the HPP and expand on HPP recommendations for housing on publicly owned land	3	2			X	X		X		
5. Make zoning changes to allow for more flexibility in the 10% subsidized housing inventory requirement	High	Medium	Low		X	X		X	X	X
• Establish a set of criteria for projects that are allowed under Chapter 40B between 10-20% affordable housing requirement	4	2			X	X		X	X	X
• Consider additional zoning for mixed-use development opportunities, such as Multi-Family Housing, Chapter 40R Zoning, village districts, and mixed-use development and infill development	4				X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Change the Highway Business Zoning District to allow for mixed-use development along the Route 28 corridor	High	Medium	Low		X	X		X	X	X
• Consider changes to zoning that would encourage mixed-use development that supports walking and new businesses	6	1			X				X	X
• Allow vertical mixed-use housing, townhouses, condos, duplexes, multi-family housing, accessory dwelling units, and other types of housing, by-right	6	1			X	X	X	X	X	X
• Expand the locations and types of multi-family housing types allowed by-right	3	3			X	X			X	X
8. Develop zoning changes that encourage redevelopment of housing types along Main Street	High	Medium	Low		X	X		X	X	X
• Rezone land along Main Street to encourage new development and redevelopment to encourage new apartments above retail, multi-family, and townhouses	3	1			X	X		X	X	X
• Allow by-right zoning for mixed-use development, including multi-family housing, age-restricted housing, city homes, and two-family homes, in select areas that are easily accessible by North Reading residents	8	1			X	X	X	X	X	X
• Create small-scale, by-right zoning districts that provide a density bonus for encouraging mixed-use and mixed-income development of blocks 28 and 32 intersection	5				X	X		X	X	X
• Enhance village design and development through the Village Center Overlay District to encourage mixed-use development	3	2			X	X		X		
9. Consider changes to single-family zoning districts to allow for more affordable housing that is consistent with the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods	High	Medium	Low		X		X		X	X
• Create zoning to encourage the development of 55+ residential homes	4	4	2		X		X		X	X
• Allow accessory dwelling units, small single-family homes, shared open space subdivisions, cluster housing, and other housing types that are affordable to residents with special needs	7	2			X		X		X	X
• Consider developments that provide more affordable housing options for seniors	2	4			X		X	X	X	X
11. Provide housing with long-term affordability by developing a strategic plan to meet affordable housing needs	High	Medium	Low		X	X		X	X	X
• Encourage the development of mixed-use, 55+ housing developments that include a mix of single-person households, seniors, and families	5	3			X	X		X	X	X
• Encourage the development of mixed-use housing in areas and right-sized homes that meet the needs of single-person households that may not require as large of a home as the typical single-family home	5	2			X	X				
12. Provide opportunities to rent the home shown by developing rental housing options	High	Medium	Low		X		X			X
• Encourage the development of apartments and housing types that have been most requested, such as small single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, condominiums, and cottage homes	6	2			X		X		X	X
13. Use the town-owned property at 0 Park Street for affordable housing	High	Medium	Low		X	X	X	X	X	X
Comments received from respondents to the June 2019 HPP Survey and Survey		2			X	X	X	X	X	X
Comments received from respondents to the 2019 Workshop Survey	4	1			X	X	X	X	X	X
	3	1			X	X		X	X	X
• Work to develop the proposed Concord Street/I-93 Exit 38 area	4	1	1		X	X		X	X	X

Development

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMUNITY INPUT

The following is iterative feedback from the second community workshop based on more extensive community feedback from the 7-week online 546-response survey.

7a PUBLIC FACILITIES + SERVICES

An asterisk indicates the recommendation made based on input gathered from the North Reading Master Plan online survey taken by community residents and local stakeholders. See survey results at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-3QRCDZ6G/

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 1 – Ensure facilities meet community and departmental needs.			
STRATEGY – Develop new department facilities and infrastructure capable of meeting current service needs and projected future demand.		3	
Consider the consolidation of Town facilities to encourage concentrated civic activity nodes, infill development and mixed uses along prominent Town corridors.	5	3	
Consider constructing a community center near Town Center, as recommended in the 2004 Community Development Plan. This location would be more accessible to elderly residents in the Housing Authority complex and to high school students and help strengthen the older historic town center.	3	2	1
Determine adequacy of telecommunications infrastructure, service and coverage in the Concord Street Study Area, identify upgrades/improvements needed.	1	2	
Relocate overhead utilities - Pursue funding that will allow utilities to be placed underground along Main Street, substantially improving the visual character of the area.	2	3	2
STRATEGY – Complete routine maintenance and renovations which allow host Departments to fulfill their missions.			
Fund foundation repairs for DPW's Public Safety Building.	1	1	1
Fund the replacement of the Little School Gymnasium floor.	1	1	1
Fund the replacement of the DPW Garage building's roof.	1	1	1
Fund the purchase of an Exhaust Removal System for the DPW Garage.	1	1	1
Goal 2 – Provide adequate funding for infrastructure and public facility improvements on an annual basis.			
STRATEGY – Approve equipment items outlined in the Town's FY 2019 Capital Improvement Plan to ensure departmental equipment is adequate enough to fulfill duties, and resources are efficiently distributed.			
Fund replacement of School Department's computer/mobile devices.		5	1
Fund the purchase of School Department's technology instructional equipment.	2	1	1
Fund the acquisition of the School Department's multi-function activity vehicle.			3
Fund town wide computer/equipment replacement plan.	1	3	1
Fund replacement of Fire Department's service vehicle.	1	2	1

7b PUBLIC FACILITIES + SERVICES

An asterisk indicates the recommendation made based on input gathered from the North Reading Master Plan online survey taken by community residents and local stakeholders. See survey results at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-3QRCDZ6G/

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
STRATEGY – Fund water and sewer capital projects.		1	
Negotiate with MWRA to extend existing sewer service to properties on the north side of Concord Street and the Route 28 corridor.	12	1	
As recommended in the 2011 Sewer Infrastructure Economic Impact Analysis. Determine estimated cost for Concord Street sewer installation, and prepare a cost-benefit analysis for Concord Street and identified western sub-area.*.	3	1	2
Explore the feasibility and desirability of package sewer treatment plants to support growth in concentrated commercial areas specifically, Main Street.*	6	1	
STRATEGY – Provide sufficient funding for road and sidewalk repairs.	5		
Continue to diversify the sources of funding for roadwork to decrease reliance on uncertain state and federal funds.	3	2	
Allocate funds for sidewalk repair annually.*	3	2	
STRATEGY – Fund stormwater improvements.			
Continue to fund stormwater improvements through the Town's general fund.	1	3	1
Allocate annual funding for compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit	2	2	1
Explore the feasibility and desirability of a stormwater utility to fund stormwater improvement projects	1	4	1
Goal 3 – Create an organized and holistic approach to community wide infrastructure improvements.			
STRATEGY – Create safe and convenient connections for all users between neighborhoods and destinations, including commercial uses, parks, and public buildings.	3	1	
Advocate for the establishment of MBTA bus stops/service in North Reading, especially along the Main Street (Route 28) corridor to link residences with local businesses, adjacent communities and regional train nodes.*	1	1	1
Adopt a Complete Streets Town policy and extend to other parts of the Main Street corridor		1	2
Enhance the Town's streetscape standards in commercial and residential districts, to address not only sidewalk design, but also streetscape furniture (benches, trash receptacles, lighting), street trees and landscape requirements.*	7	1	
Advocate for streetscape improvements on streets identified in the 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.*	2	1	1
Collaborate with the State and County to install improved "T"- Shaped intersection and traffic calming features along Main Street, such as improved pedestrian crossings (crosswalks, center island crossings, signage).*	6	2	
Require pedestrian-friendly site design, such as providing pedestrian access from the street to the building and orienting buildings toward the primary public street, rather than a parking area for any new and future development.*	5	1	
Institute a build-to-line for the Local, General and Highway Business districts to ensure future development remains compatible with pedestrian and bicycle activity.	4	1	
Conduct a mapped inventory of streets and bicycle facilities to identify locations for designated bicycle routes and locations for improved facilities (bike parking, bike lanes, shared streets, etc.)	4	2	

OPEN SPACE COMMUNITY INPUT

The following is iterative feedback from the second community workshop based on more extensive community feedback from the 7-week online 546-response survey.

8a OPEN SPACE

Enhance access and connectivity between conservation areas, recreation facilities, & natural resources

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 1 – Maintain a high quality of recreational service for residents.			1
STRATEGY – IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES for the upkeep and maintenance of all recreational resources.	1	3	
STRATEGY – REGULARLY ASSESS RECREATION NEEDS of residents and plan for necessary improvements to existing facilities and programs to meet these needs.	1	3	2
STRATEGY – PROVIDE A DIVERSIFIED SELECTION of year-round recreational programs for residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities.	4	3	1
Goal 2 – Make recreation and open space accessible to all.	2	1	
SUBGOAL – *CREATE WAYS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES AND MOBILITY LEVELS.*	1	2	
STRATEGY – IDENTIFY LAND AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS to provide all residents with recreation areas that are easily accessible, walkable, safe, and appropriately equipped for the population they serve.	2	2	
STRATEGY – BUILD MORE QUALITY TRAILS at existing open space areas specifically for seniors, baby strollers, and wheelchairs.	3	2	1
STRATEGY – EFFORTS TO IMPROVE AND UPDATE OPEN SPACES should include ways to make all sites fully ADA-compliant	2	2	

8b OPEN SPACE

Enhance access and connectivity between conservation areas, recreation facilities, & natural resources

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 2 (con't) – Make recreation and open space accessible to all.	1		
SUBGOAL – *EXPAND AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AREAS.*		3	
STRATEGY – PRODUCE COMPREHENSIVE MAPS of town open spaces and recreation resources identifying parking, access points, trails, and permitted uses.	4	1	
STRATEGY – IMPROVE SIGNAGE at conservation areas in town.	2	2	1
STRATEGY – DEVELOP AND CONNECT A TOWN-WIDE SYSTEM OF MULTI-USE TRAILS through existing town open space lands, access easements, and public right-of-ways.	4	1	
STRATEGY – EXPAND indoor recreation facilities.		2	2
SUBGOAL – *PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAFE WALKING AND BIKING IN NORTH READING*	7	1	2
STRATEGY – UTILIZE SIDEWALKS, WALKING PATHS, AND BIKE LANES to connect open spaces and cultural/historic assets and connect residential neighborhoods to major destinations.	3	1	
STRATEGY – DESIGNATE LOCATIONS FOR SIDEWALKS AND BIKE LANES and develop design guidelines sympathetic to the character of north reading's landscape and open space.	4	1	1
STRATEGY – FURTHER NORTH READING'S COMPLETE STREETS WORK to provide safe walking and biking in North Reading and surrounding communities.	4	1	

8c OPEN SPACE

Enhance access and connectivity between conservation areas, recreation facilities, & natural resources

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 3: Protect natural resources			
SUBGOAL – *PROTECT SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER RESOURCES TO ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY OF DRINKING WATER AND TO PRESERVE AND RESTORE THE ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE IPSWICH RIVER WATERSHED.*	6		
STRATEGY – CONTINUE EFFORTS TO MONITOR AND IMPLEMENT clean up strategies for town waterways.	5	1	
STRATEGY – CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE and promote town-wide water saving techniques.	5		
STRATEGY – DEVELOP AND CONNECT A TOWN-WIDE SYSTEM OF MULTI-USE TRAILS through existing town open space lands, access easements, and public right-of-ways.	2	1	
STRATEGY – IDENTIFY AND ELIMINATE sources of point and non-point pollution in all town water bodies.	4		
STRATEGY – PROTECT DRINKING WATER QUALITY by preventing contamination, runoff, and diversion of water that directly contributes to aquifer recharge.	8		1
STRATEGY – CONTINUE TO EDUCATE RESIDENTS about the influence of surface water on the town's groundwater.	2	2	
SUBGOAL – *PROTECT NORTH READING'S UNIQUE NATURAL FEATURES TO MAINTAIN BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND PRESERVE THE TOWN'S SCENIC QUALITIES.*	2	1	
STRATEGY – PROTECT CORRIDORS and minimize habitat fragmentation in natural areas that have high value for preservation of wildlife habitat, rare plants and animals, woodlands, wetlands, and waterways.	5		
STRATEGY – ENCOURAGE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT that protects open space systems and enhances natural resources.	5	1	
STRATEGY – INTEGRATE HISTORIC AND SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION into planning strategies.	1	4	
STRATEGY – IMPROVE TOWN ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS and regulations to support protection of natural resources.	4	1	
STRATEGY – IDENTIFY NATURAL RESOURCES IN NORTH READING THAT ARE VULNERABLE to the effects of climate change, and develop long-term strategies to protect those resources.	2	2	

8d OPEN SPACE

Enhance access and connectivity between conservation areas, recreation facilities, & natural resources

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Goal 4: Further town management of open space properties, funding, and land acquisition		3	3
SUBGOAL – *PLAN AND COORDINATE PROTECTION OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST.*		3	
STRATEGY – STRATEGICALLY ACQUIRE AND PROTECT LAND based upon past planning efforts and smart growth principles.	3	5	1
STRATEGY – ENCOURAGE private land conservation measures.	2		
SUBGOAL – *MANAGE TOWN OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES WHILE ENCOURAGING APPROPRIATE PUBLIC USE.*	3	2	
STRATEGY – ESTABLISH A PUBLIC LAND USE AND ACCESS POLICY for all town lands to guide public access and land management planning.	3	2	
STRATEGY – EVALUATE TOWN-OWNED UNDESIGNATED OPEN SPACE to dedicate portions to conservation or recreation use.	4	2	1
STRATEGY – PROVIDE A COST-EFFECTIVE MEANS of monitoring and maintaining town-owned open space to prevent overuse, illegal dumping, unauthorized trail creation, and resource degradation.	2	2	
SUBGOAL – *COORDINATE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS, RECREATIONAL RESOURCES, AND OPEN SPACES WITH MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS.*	1	2	
STRATEGY – DESIGN COMPATIBLE AND INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS by working with neighboring towns and regional entities.	3	1	
STRATEGY – PLAN AND DEVELOP REGIONAL RECREATIONAL AREAS AND TRAIL NETWORKS by working with neighboring towns and regional entities.	6	1	

APPENDIX B

Community Outreach & Participation

This appendix provides a more detailed summary of the community outreach, participation, and input that MAPC conducted for the North Reading Master Plan 2018-2028.

As part of the scope of work for the production of the North Reading Master Plan 2018-2028, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council employed a multipronged approach to outreach, participation, and obtaining input, including the following:

- bringing awareness to the master planning initiative – online and offline,
- extensive vetting of the questions for the online survey through the Advisory Committee and staff,
- distilling key findings from pertinent, recent Town planning studies, and using this information as a preface to both the online surveys and the workshop materials for informed decision making, and
- creating specific questions with photo examples in order to measure consensus for what types of housing/building typologies, and other physical improvements should go in specific areas of Town.

This document provides a detailed summary of outreach efforts, community participation, and input as per the scope of work and budget in the contract. Additional outreach efforts including targeted focus groups for certain demographic/age cohorts are beyond the contracted scope of work and budget. The remaining budget was allocated in the scope to dedicating time to drafting a master plan document that:

- builds upon pertinent recently-completed planning studies [as a cost savings strategy requested by the Town during the scoping of the work, and incorporated into the contract];
- also incorporates community input from 554-survey respondents, a few dozen workshop participants (not all signed in), the 15-member Advisory Committee, and Town staff; and
- will connect various planning goals and challenges, and offer a multi-pronged strategy with prioritized recommendations in order for the Town to use as reference during Community Planning Commission and Board of Selectmen meetings, as well as Town Meetings, in order to contextualize shorter-term decision-making.

MAPC is confident that outreach goals were met within the budget and scope. Community participation during the workshops was complemented by MAPC staff team members fielding questions during open-house format workshops to allow participants to arrive, absorb information, and participate at their own pace. MAPC believes the input obtained was more than adequate in its breadth and level of detail for the drafting of the master plan document that the Advisory Committee, the Community Planning Commission, and the community at large can respond to with additional input within the public comment period. The plan document features an implementation "action" table that suggest priorities, and the logical sequence of actions (e.g., concurrent zoning amendments and wastewater infrastructure decisions, followed by traffic-calming streetscape improvements).

OUTREACH

- **POSTERS** – 11"x17" posters at the supermarket, a popular restaurant, Town Hall, and the library
- **TOWN TAX BILL** – a letter-size flyer mailed out to 5,000 households inside the tax bill mailing in September
- **TOWN WEBSITE** – the Town website advertised the planning process for several months
- **NORTH READING PATCH** – public posts for both public workshops, and the summer/fall online survey
- **FACEBOOK** – paid advertisements for approximately two months resulting in 14,400 people reached, 45,071 Facebook "impressions" in community members' newsfeeds, 501 actual link clicks, **including 129 link clicks from people 65 years and over.**
  - Money spent: $481.24
  - Link clicks: 501
  - 14,400 people reached
  - 45,071 impressions
  - $0.96 per result/link click
  - Add placements: 43.4% on Instagram mobile, 41% on newsfeed mobile, 11 % on messenger inbox, 4.6% on newsfeed desktop
    - Desktop: 23 link clicks
    - Facebook mobile: 301 link clicks
    - Instagram mobile: 164 link clicks
    - Messenger: 13 link clicks

Demographics: Looks like older women and younger men were most likely to click.



Women:

- Total: 278 link clicks (55%)
- 18-24: 17 link clicks
- 25-34: 16 link clicks
- 35-44: 39 link clicks
- 45-54: 55 link clicks
- 55-64: 53 link clicks
- 65+: 98 link clicks

Men:

- Total: 219 Link Clicks (44%)
- 18-24: 64 link clicks
- 25-34: 38 link clicks
- 35-44: 20 link clicks
- 45-54: 30 link clicks
- 55-64: 36 link clicks
- 65+: 31 link clicks

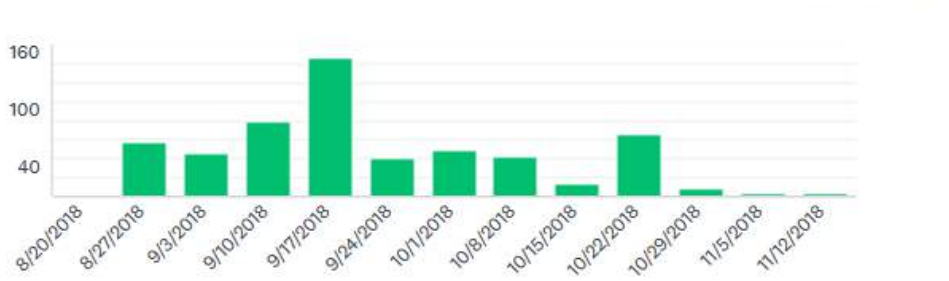
PARTICIPATION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- A 15-member Master Plan Advisory Committee[31] was created. Opportunities were given for Advisory Committee input and participation on the creation of the survey, two advisory committee meetings, two public workshops, and the content of the first workshop boards.

[31] Michael Houle, Sara Harrington, Wil Birkmaier, Kathleen Roy, Rich Wallner, Dan Mills, Diane Downing, Chris Herrick, Suresh Rao, Art DiNatale, Warren Pearce, Bill Bellavance, Christopher Hayden, Jon Cody, Ryan Carroll

ONLINE SURVEY



- 554 survey respondents took the 9-question survey from the end of August to early November.
- Initially, a shorter 4-question survey was devised but after extensive Advisory Committee and Town staff input, an expanded 9-question survey was devised in order to add needed questions, split certain questions into two, and also add an overview of existing conditions to inform survey takers before answering questions.
- The questions were multiple choice, illustrated with visual examples, and had short captions to explain the concepts.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

- Two public workshops were held, and approximately two dozen attendees came to the first workshop, and approximately a dozen and half attended the second public workshop. Not everyone signed the sign-in sheets.
- The following hyperlinked text items show the visual content and the agendas that participants were presented with: (a) first workshop – agenda and boards, and (b) second workshop – agenda and boards.

REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Due to the increase in the number of survey questions (and therefore its length) and a one-page key-findings summary to inform about pertinent and recent Town studies, there was MAPC, Town staff, and Advisory Committee consensus that adding an a "who took the survey" demographic question would make the survey longer, and potentially be off-putting to survey respondents.
- The combination of multiple choice answers coupled with photos/visual-examples, clarification bulleted captions, and what area of Town, was an approach that allowed for participants to react to a combination of new ideas as well as familiar ones discussed over the last several years regarding sewer decisions, Route 28 street improvements, and housing issues as part of the HPP.
- Since a "who took the survey" question was not added, there is no way to know whether or not certain Town demographic cohorts such as seniors, mothers with children, or others took the survey, or not. However, based on the analytics from the paid Facebook advertisement, we know that there were **129 link clicks from people 65 years and over.**
- The survey was one method of augmenting community input from the comfort of people's homes or workplaces, and was done in order to complement oftentimes low public meeting turnout by residents. It was never intended to be much more costly scientific survey/poll, and is much more akin to the type of community input typically acquired during conventional public meetings.

INPUT OBTAINED

ONLINE SURVEY, PUBLIC WORKSHOPS, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The 9 questions were devised in order to purposefully measure the extent of community interest for housing, mixed-use-retail, streetscape improvements, and infrastructure decisions. These questions were designed to be specific enough so that they could lend themselves to writing master plan recommendations that the Town could subsequently write zoning amendments, by-laws, or policies as part of the Town's

implementation. Through extensive vetting of the questions with the Advisory Committee, we were able use the questions for both the online survey, and the two public workshops.

The questions were multiple choice and were accompanied by photo/visual examples as well as short, bulleted explanations to make the choices to the questions less abstract and more accessible. On the online survey, where it made sense, there were "free-form" comment boxes where participants could provide additional comments. In addition to these explanatory captions, during the workshops, the visual boards that participants were "voting" on were also staffed by MAPC planners who were able to provide additional information to help participants make informed decisions.

SYNTHESIS AND INCORPORATION OF PERTINENT, AND RECENTLY-COMPLETED TOWN PLANNING STUDIES

The accommodation of the Town's request to incorporate recently completed, pertinent Town planning studies as a cost savings measure, also allowed for previously Town-vetted and approved plans and implicit public input to be incorporated into the start of the master planning process.

At the beginning of the online survey, as well as an introduction during the second advisory committee meetings, and the visual boards at both public workshops, participants were provided with brief key findings so as to not overwhelm them but also inform them about the questions they were about to be asked.

The following are the studies that were provided for review and potential incorporation to the extent that is possible and relevant (repurposing data sets as-is).

- Housing Production Plan 2018; Hazard Mitigation Plan 2016; Town Facilities/Buildings Plan (underway 2017-2018); Sewer/Tax Revenue Study; Complete Streets Prioritization Plan; Main Street Streetscape Concept Plan; Paratransit Study 2017; Suburban Mobility Study; Priority Mapping Study; and Retail/Housing Market Demand Analysis.

OPEN COMMENTS FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY

- Beyond the multiple choice questions that were devised to elicit input and consensus on specific ideas (and that would directly lend themselves to concrete goals, strategies, and recommendations), MAPC provided comment fields in order to allow for additional open "free form" comments not constrained by the options provided.
- For the 9-part Visioning Statement input question, MAPC created and shared Word Clouds to elicit further community input at the two public workshops.
- MAPC sorted over 2,800 open comments from the online survey into big positive-versus-negative buckets, and then by more specific planning subtopics/ideas/themes to further contextualize input from the multiple choice questions.



ENDNOTES

[i] Sources: (a) North Reading Short-Term 2016-2021 Economic Development Strategy; (b) North Reading Main Street Route 28 Market Demand Analysis

[ii] **Incorporation of Key Findings from Pertinent, Recently-Completed Planning Studies -.** As part of the initial discussions with the Town regarding budgeting and scoping the work tasks, and as agreed in the contract, the Town has requested to repurpose key data points and findings from recently-completed or pending planning studies that are pertinent. MAPC discussed with the Town which such plans will be reviewed for any appropriate data and/or recommendation repurposing. Key findings of pertinent data from relevant plans that will be partially or largely incorporated into appropriate master plans elements will be clearly referenced as pre-existing planning research and data. Any such repurposed data will be used as-is so as to not impact the budget. The following plans were provided by the Town at the beginning of the scoping process and were reviewed to determine what data and information from these plans can be folded into the master plan elements. Any clarifications regarding data and key findings referenced from prior planning studies can be sought by directly reading the following plan documents themselves: (a) Housing Production Plan 2018; (b) Hazard Mitigation Plan 2016; (c) Town Facilities/Buildings Plan (underway 2017-2018); (d) Sewer/Tax Revenue Study; (e) Complete Streets Prioritization Plan; (f) Main Street Streetscape Concept Plan; (g) Paratransit Study 2017; (h) Suburban Mobility Study; (i) Priority Mapping Study; (j) Economic Development Strategy Route 28; and (k) Retail/Housing Demand Analysis.

[iii] Source: 2018 Town of North Reading Zoning GIS Data provided by Town staff

[iv] Source: 2018 Town of North Reading Zoning GIS Data provided by Town staff

[v] Sources: 2013 Open Space Plan; and 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan as referenced in the Master Plan Open Space Element

[vi] Source: https://www.northreadingma.gov/sites/northreadingma/files/uploads/zoningbylaws_10-2010.pdf

[vii] **Incorporation of Key Findings from Pertinent, Recently-Completed Planning Studies -.** As part of the initial discussions with the Town regarding budgeting and scoping the work tasks, and as agreed in the contract, the Town has requested to repurpose key data points and findings from recently-completed or pending planning studies that are pertinent. MAPC discussed with the Town which such plans will be reviewed for any appropriate data and/or recommendation repurposing. Key findings of pertinent data from relevant plans that will be partially or largely incorporated into appropriate master plans elements will be clearly referenced as pre-existing planning research and data. Any such repurposed data will be used as-is so as to not impact the budget. The following plans were provided by the Town at the beginning of the scoping process and were reviewed to determine what data and information from these plans can be folded into the master plan elements. Any clarifications regarding data and key findings referenced from prior planning studies can be sought by directly reading the following plan documents themselves: (a) Housing Production Plan 2018; (b) Hazard Mitigation Plan 2016; (c) Town Facilities/Buildings Plan (underway 2017-2018); (d) Sewer/Tax Revenue Study; (e) Complete Streets Prioritization Plan; (f) Main Street Streetscape Concept Plan; (g) Paratransit Study 2017; (h) Suburban Mobility Study; (i) Priority Mapping Study; (j) Economic Development Strategy Route 28; and (k) Retail/Housing Demand Analysis.