

Town of Maynard
Community Development Strategy
2017



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Town of Maynard

Community Development Strategy 2017

Introduction

Maynard is committed to community development to make the Town a vibrant, livable community. The Town has adopted the following community development principles: concentrate development and integrate uses; protect the village character of downtown Maynard; redevelop and re-use; use natural resources wisely; expand housing opportunities; provide a variety of transportation choices; respect cultural and historic resources; protect land, river and ecosystems; make effective land use decisions; and manage infrastructure effectively. These principles are similar to the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles (noted following sections below). Within this framework, Maynard will work for decent, affordable housing, the vitality of its downtown, accessible facilities and services, the availability of educational, cultural, recreational and open space resources, and sustainable economic activity.

This Community Development Strategy (CDS) summarizes the Town's recent strategic planning efforts and projects, highlights community development outreach efforts, and prioritizes intermediate and immediate (one year action plan) projects. The Town will work to leverage a substantial private investment including *Mill and Main*, the historic mill complex that is part of downtown and is a growing source of employment and ancillary economic activity.

The Town, through public policy and budget discussions, has and will continue to make substantial investments for community development. Sources of funding for community development include but are not limited to: private investment, Maynard Business Environment Enhancement Program, Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding, and Chapter 90 transportation funds. In addition to Community Development Block Grant funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Town anticipates pursuing grants from a variety of sources including the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Program (PARC) from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

As described below, the Town reaches out to residents and the business community through active groups concerned with community development. Town staff are often included in the membership and boards of these groups, make presentations, and are included in the decision making process. In addition, elected and appointed boards, including the Board of Selectmen, hold regular public meetings to discuss planning, projects, and public policy. The Board of Selectmen held an advertised public hearing to consider and adopt the CDS on February 21, 2017.

Community Development Planning and Projects

Downtown Development

Mill and Main

Historically, this 40-acre site with 1.1 million square feet of mill space has defined economic development for Maynard. Refurbished space has been the previous location of Digital Equipment Corporation and Monster.com. The current developer has plans for some building demolition and continued substantial renovation. Space is available for office, retail/hospitality, and light manufacturing. Current employment in Mill and Main is 700 positions with build-out projections reaching 3,000. Over 200 jobs were added this year in 2016 alone. Mill and Main is an economic driver for Maynard and the downtown.

Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, protect land and ecosystems, and increase job and business opportunities.

129 Parker Street

This mixed use development on a 58-acre site is part of the extended downtown. “Shoppes at Maynard Crossing” will develop: up to 180 residential units, including 22 affordable units; 143 senior independent living units; and approximately 310,000 sq. feet of retail/office/commercial space including a supermarket. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, expand housing opportunities, and increase job and business opportunities.

Redevelopment Areas

DHCD has approved redevelopment areas in Maynard under the designation of ‘Slum and Blight’. The West Main Street area’s designation is effective until November 2017. The area designated ‘Approach to Downtown’ is in effect until 2021. The area including the Basin as an extension to the ‘Approach to Downtown II’ is expected in 2017. Improvements to infrastructure, including road, sidewalk, parking surfaces, and park facilities, are a priority for redevelopment areas in Maynard. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, and increase job and business opportunities.

Business Environment Enhancement Program (BEEP)

The Town provides funding through BEEP for efforts conducive to enhancing Maynard’s business environment. Proposed projects/initiatives may include but are not limited to: aesthetic improvements, investment in infrastructure, and promotional efforts. Recipients of funds may include business owners, boards/committees, community groups, or property owners. Maynard’s Economic Development Committee considers applications and encourages businesses to commit matching funds. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, and increase job and business opportunities.

Downtown Market Study

This study profiled the retail market in downtown Maynard in 2014 and identified new market opportunities. Recommendations included improvements to the Basin area in downtown and working with the developer for the 129 Parker Street site. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, and increase job and business opportunities.

Downtown Parking Study

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) expects to complete a downtown parking study in 2017. This work will examine the parking needs of the downtown to provide information on parking capacity, occupancy, duration, and physical improvements. The Study will include parking in the ‘Basin’, a part of the downtown redevelopment area (recognized as part of the blight inventory). Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, increase job and business opportunities, and plan regionally.

Wayfinding Study

The Town completed a Wayfinding study in 2009 to create a visual guide for visitor navigation and information. The study, intended to promote heritage tourism, recommended a coordinated design and specific messages for 24 locations in the downtown. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, and increase job and business opportunities.

Housing

Housing Production Plan

The MAPC completed Maynard's Housing Production Plan in 2015. Population and household projections as well as housing needs and demand were profiled. The report contains an analysis of existing housing conditions and development constraints, and compiled current housing market information. Housing goals and implementation strategies for the Town are now in place.

Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, advance equity, make efficient decisions, protect land and ecosystems, expand housing opportunities, and plan regionally.

Housing Production

The Town is working with developers, including owners of 129 Parker Street and Mill and Main, to create housing opportunities, including affordable housing. Also, Distinctive Acton Homes is developing 18 two and three bedroom townhomes near downtown. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, advance equity, and expand housing opportunities.

Zoning Changes

The Town is working with MAPC to prepare an inclusionary zoning by-law. This long term effort is intended to create affordable housing throughout Town but with an emphasis on downtown "mixed-use" opportunities from the existing housing stock. The by-law is expected to mandate provision of affordable housing units for projects exceeding a size threshold, thus increasing the affordable housing inventory. Maynard presently has a downtown overlay district that recognizes the historic and aesthetic context of the existing downtown while providing for redevelopment initiatives including mixed use. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, advance equity, expand housing opportunities, plan regionally.

Transportation

Complete Streets

Maynard is currently working to redesign roads for walking, biking, transit, and vehicle safety in the downtown. Expected benefits are safer roadways, improved streetscapes, and economic development. A pilot project was initiated for Summer Street, Nason Street, and Main Street in the summer of 2016. Extensive community outreach insured merchant and resident participation. The next steps for the Complete Streets program are: education, further analysis, pedestrian and school paths, and pursuing funding. In September 2016 Maynard received a \$47,000 technical assistance grant to move this program forward. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, increase job and business opportunities, provide transportation choice, promote clean energy, and make efficient decisions.

CrossTown Connect

CrossTown Connect is a regional transportation management association (TMA) comprised of five towns (including Maynard) and eight private companies. This TMA is the first public-private partnership of its kind in Massachusetts and received an 'Innovations in Government' award from the International City Managers Association in 2015. The primary goal of the organization is to provide and improve regional transportation. Regional transportation is considered an important economic driver in the communities served by CrossTown Connect as there is no public transit available beyond the commuter rail. Sustainable development principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, advance equity, expand housing opportunities, provide transportation choice, increase job and business opportunities, and plan regionally.

Open Space, Parks, and Recreation; Arts and Culture

Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT)

The ARRT is a 12.5 mile trail for bicycle and pedestrian access built on a former rail right-of-way. This regional effort, funded by MassDOT, spans five communities. The 2.5-mile Maynard section is scheduled to open in 2017 and passes through the downtown. It is expected to bring renewed vitality and increased spending in the downtown. Sustainable development principles achieved: protect land and ecosystems, use natural resources wisely, provide transportation choice, promote clean energy, and plan regionally.

Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Maynard Open Space and Recreation Plan was last updated in 2004 after extensive community outreach. Maynard is finalizing a revised plan for adoption in the 1st quarter of 2017. The Plan is a comprehensive, proactive, and coordinated effort among town government, residents, and business owners to preserve natural resources and improve recreation facilities and programs. The Plan serves as a guide to balancing growth pressures by preserving open space, expanding recreation opportunities, and ensuring the protection of natural resources. One of the Plan's major goals is to improve multi-use recreation facilities such as the Veterans' Memorial Park. Such facilities provide community amenities for a wide cross-section of residents. Sustainable development principles achieved: protect land and ecosystems, use natural resources wisely, advance equity, and plan regionally.

Veterans Memorial Park (VMP)

The VMP is an integral part of the downtown and is part of the downtown 'redevelopment' (designated Slum and Blight) area. It provides open space, recreation facilities, a performance venue, and a memorial to Maynard military veterans. The VMP has serious accessibility issues. Aging facilities are now presenting a blighting influence. The Town is actively planning park improvements. A conceptual design was completed in the 2nd quarter of 2016 after extensive community outreach. Construction drawings are expected to be complete by February 2017. Funding sources for VMP improvements include CDBG and PARC. Sustainable development principles achieved: protect land and ecosystems, use natural resources wisely, and advance equity.

Boys & Girls Club of Assabet Valley, Inc.

The Club is located in Maynard which supports its activities and outreach to the Town's youth who do not have to be a member of the Club to participate. Beyond the Bell, an after school program serving ages 5 to 18, see substantial annual membership growth. The program provides an alternative to unsupervised activities and is an important economic tool for the Town, supporting households where parents are working during that time of the day. Over 55% of the children live in subsidized housing and/or qualify for free or reduced lunches. Beyond the Bell is based on a youth development strategy that builds self-confidence and self-esteem, while fostering a sense of belonging, competence, usefulness, and influence. Sustainable development principle achieved: advance equity.

Cultural District.

Maynard has applied to the Massachusetts Cultural Council to designate the downtown as a recognized cultural district. The designation will validate Maynard's track record as a cultural destination and help local arts (including Art Space Maynard), humanities, and other cultural organizations to improve the quality and range of programs. Partly an economic development tool, the district designation will enhance the experience for visitors and thus attract more tourist dollars and tax revenues. The district's designation will help attract artists, cultural organizations, and entrepreneurs of all kinds, filling vacant space, enhancing the vibrancy of the downtown, and

increasing property values. Sustainable principles achieved: concentrate development and mix uses, increase job and business opportunities.

Art Space Maynard

Art Space Maynard provides a campus setting for the arts in Maynard. Housed in the former Fowler Middle School, it offers 53,000 square feet of space devoted to the arts within 300 yards of the downtown. Art Space has 47 artist studios housing 80 artists, a gallery, and a printmaking studio. It includes the Acme Theater, managed by Team Acme, an all volunteer group. Art Space reaches out to local schools and non-profits about art and related creative subjects. The Town is planning an art trail from Art Space to downtown which will increase economic and community activity. Sustainable development principles achieved: increase job and business opportunities, and advance equity.

Outreach

Maynard has several committees working on economic development, the downtown, and such subjects as open space/recreation. Of course, the Town has the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board, and the Conservation Commission. The outreach and activities of these committees complement Town appointed Boards. Outreach for specific activities and planning efforts was noted above.

The Economic Development Committee (EDC)

This committee fosters the economic development of the community. The EDC includes members of the Maynard Business Alliance, Town officials, the State Representative, and at-large residents and business owners. They meet regularly and post minutes of their meetings. One of the EDC projects is the BEEP which funds improvements to business property. The EDC was designated as the lead advisory board for the CDS and the Community Development application to the Commonwealth. The EDC has been briefed on this Community Development Strategy (CDS) on an ongoing basis. The EDC meeting on January 10, 2017, had a detailed briefing on the CDS, the Slum and Blight inventory for 'Entrance to Downtown', and the Community Development application.

The Planning Board

The Maynard Planning Board, responsible for reviewing development applications, issuance of Special Permits as well as long-term planning, has been on the cutting edge of development initiatives for the Town. Recent examples include critical review responsibility for developments such as the 1.1 million square foot Mill and Main campus and 129 Parker Street mixed-use development. The Board approved the Downtown Overlay Zoning District and the Town's community development principles. The Planning Board conducted a public hearing on this Community Development Strategy, the Slum and Blight Inventory of the area, Entrance to Downtown II, and the Community Development Block Grant application to the Commonwealth at a regularly scheduled meeting on January 25, 2017.

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

The CPC meets twice a month with posted agendas. The CDC oversees selection of activities for use of CPA funds, which can be used for a variety of community development projects. CPA dollars can sometimes be listed as a matching funding source to complement state and federal resources.

The Assabet River Rail Trail, Inc. (ARRT)

ARRT is a non-profit group that is promoting the trail development and long-term recreational activity. This group is not central to the CDS, but the project will be viewed as an open

space/recreation initiative and is expected to bring visitors through the downtown. This could have long-term positive impacts as visitors may return to visit the theatre, dining, and art opportunities in town.

Cultural Council

The Council is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and has nine members and meets monthly. The Council's activity will focus on downtown with cultural programs and events. Non-profits, businesses and residents are expected to volunteer, participate in events, and promote the district.

Maynard Business Alliance (MBA)

By membership and mission, the MBA is a retail oriented group that focuses on the downtown by sponsoring events and promoting revitalization initiatives. The Alliance does not provide the full activities of a chamber of commerce, but it serves similar functions. The Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce also has a significant presence in town and has a seat on the EDC. The Town recently began a relationship with the Metro-West Visitor's Bureau to further promote Maynard as a shopping, arts, and entertainment destination.

Maynard Affordable Housing Trust

This group was appointed in September, 2016. The Trust will implement the objectives of the recently adopted Housing Production Plan, obtain funding for housing objectives (including CPA money), and continue to address affordable housing issues in Maynard.

Green Communities Committee

The Committee assists in developing programs and projects to foster energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, and sustainability planning. This committee gathers information to select approaches for improving the energy efficiency of major energy users. The Committee investigates renewable/alternative energy technologies and seeks funding to help the Town achieve its energy and sustainability related goals. Additionally, the Committee shall develop and recommend approaches for influencing the town residents and businesses to maximize their environmental sustainability through educational outreach, information programs and incentives.

Cross Town Connect (CTC)

CTC is a group of local transportation advocates representing five public and eight private partners. CTC focuses on increasing mobility and commuting options while also reducing traffic congestion and air pollution. In addition to Maynard, the town partners are: Acton, Boxborough, Littleton, Maynard and Westford. The private partners are: Mill and Main of Maynard, Guitierrez Company of Westford, IBM of Littleton, Juniper Networks of Westford, Red Hat of Westford, West Acton Villageworks of Acton, Potpourri Group of Littleton, and Associate Environmental Systems of Acton. The CTC works both with communities to address transportation concerns and increase economic development opportunities as well as with employers to provide their employees with commuter services that enable them to have more options for getting to and from work.

Priority Projects

High Priority – Action Year

Significant private investment is at work to revitalize Maynard. Mill and Main is expected to add 2,000 jobs over the next 3 to 4 years. The development at 129 Parker Street will include retail/commercial/office and housing. The abundance of "infill" residential and commercial projects in Maynard in 2016 is indicative of private market confidence in Maynard.

Dedicated resources for community development include funding from the Town's Capital Improvement budget, Community Preservation Act funding, and the Business Environmental Enhancement Program (BEEP). Other expected resources include the Commonwealth's Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program and Complete Streets program as well as the planning assistance of the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC).

Community Development Block Grant funding will provide key resources at this time for the Veterans' Memorial Park, the 'Basin' parking lot and the Boys and Girls Club. The need for Veterans' Memorial Park improvements is detailed in the Slum and Blight report for the area (Entrance to Downtown II), the Downtown Marketing Plan, and the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. The need for the 'Basin' parking area is detailed in the Slum and Blight report for the area (Entrance to Downtown II), the Downtown Marketing Plan, and the Downtown Parking Plan.

Downtown Redevelopment

Basin parking area

Complete Parking Plan

Design reconstruction

Veterans' Memorial Park

Complete construction design

Include plans in new Parks and Recreation Plan

Start construction

Work with 129 Parker St. developer

Work with Mill and Main developer

Support for Boys & Girls Club

Complete new Open Space and Recreation Plan

Zoning changes: enable code enforcement for the Town

Expand regional transportation options

Intermediate/Long Term

Downtown Redevelopment

Continuing:

129 Parker Street development

Mill and Main development

Additional park improvements at Veterans' Memorial Park

Construct art trail between downtown and art center

Wayfaring/branding work

Façade Improvement for commercial property

Support for Boys & Girls Club

Housing rehabilitation

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and approved Maynard's Community Development Strategy on _____, 2017. Selectmen are: Chris DiSilva, Chair; Jason Kreil, Clerk; David Gavin; Tim Egan; Terrence Donovan.