



TOWN of  
**GROVELAND**  
MASSACHUSETTS

# Town of Groveland 2023 Comprehensive Plan

Adopted by the Groveland Planning Board  
October 2023



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# Executive Summary

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a document that expresses the community's vision for its future and establishes a plan to achieve that vision. States have different requirements for the productions of a comprehensive plan; in Massachusetts, those requirements are in the Massachusetts General Laws in Chapter 41, Section 81D.

This plan has all the components of a typical comprehensive plan:

- states a vision and supporting goals;
- provides data about existing conditions within the community that need to be addressed; and
- includes an implementation plan that has
  - the actions to achieve the vision and goals; and
  - the people, timeline, and resources needed for each action.

However, Groveland's comprehensive plan views the town through a geographic lens; in other words, the focus of this plan is on exploring the elements by focusing on three specific areas in town that have components of all those elements. The rest of the town is not forgotten – outside these three areas, the land is already developed as established neighborhoods, or it is primarily open space. Much, but not all, of that open space is protected from future development. This approach relates to the earliest days of comprehensive planning when the planning process and the plan itself was mostly focused on the use of land within a community. Services provided by the Town and Town-owned facilities are not forgotten; such services are funded primarily by property taxes. Thus changes in land uses over time may have an impact on demand for services and municipal capacity; new growth can provide more revenue to fund operating needs.

## ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Town received a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Urban Agenda program, which is part of the Community One Stop for Growth grant program. The Town hired the consultant team of Innes Associates and Form + Place to assist with the planning process.

Community engagement was an important component of this planning process, and the team included several different ways for members of the Groveland community to interact with the consultant team. These included an online survey in Spring 2022, series of public workshops in May 2022, presentation of recommendations at Groveland Day in September 2022 and the final plan in 2023 and a matching online survey for each event.

The team designed the combination of online surveys and in-person events as a way to engage with people when and where they felt most comfortable.

In between meetings, the consultant team researched the many plans the Town had already completed, gathered additional data appropriate to this planning process, and met with the Steering Committee.

## WHY PLAN FOR GROVELAND?

Groveland is facing many of the same challenges as other communities in the region and state: an aging population; a lack of housing that is affordable to all; shifting trends in how and where people work, shop, and play; and the projected impact of climate change on natural resources and public health.

Like many other towns in the region, Groveland has limited resources in terms of both capacity (staff, elected officials, and volunteer) and money ( operating and capital funds). The lack of resources suggested a planning process that was targeted towards Groveland's highest priorities. Fortunately, the Town had already completed several key planning reports, including a recent Open Space and Recreation Plan, a recent Housing Production Plan, and some key studies of parking and economic assessments for Elm Square.



## Focus Areas

The initial three focus areas were (1) Elm Square, (2) the Town-owned land at 150 Center Street (known to some residents as Strawberry Fields), and (3) the stretch of Route 97 from the Georgetown line to the Bagnall Elementary School. (See map on pages 12-13.) During the planning process, The Pines was added to Elm Square focus area to create a sense of connection between the two places. Similarly, Veasey Memorial Park and the stretch of Washington Street from the park to the triangle of Washington, Center, and Salem Streets were added to the evaluation of 150 Center; the Valley Screw site and the stretch of Washington Street between that site and Center Street were added later in the summer.

### Focus Areas: Key Concerns

These three areas allowed the consultant team to focus on some specific concerns:

- Addressing conditions in Elm Square, including vacant or underutilized buildings, negative perceptions about parking availability and building conditions, and appropriate future uses within the area.
  - Providing housing that meets identified needs for both affordability and the needs of both young people wanting to live in their community and seniors wanting to remain in their community.
  - Understanding the possibilities for housing and economic development along Route 97, especially with the draw of the Community Trail.
  - Considering options for the town-owned land at 150 Center including protection of the aquifer, recreational opportunities, housing, and economic development.
  - Considering options for Valley Screw and what could happen if the Town acquired the site.
  - Linking the new Groveland Community Trail to these three areas with extended Complete Streets investments so the entire town can benefit from this new resource.

## Beyond the Focus Areas

Outside of these three areas, much of the remainder of the town is either residential neighborhoods or open space. Groveland has significant areas of protected open space, including areas owned by the Town and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the Department of Conservation and Recreation is a significant landowner). The 2020-2027 Open Space & Recreation Plan (2020), descibed on page 51, has more information about these resources.

Some topics to explore include how to work with private property owners to protect areas with natural resources in perpetuity and how to address concerns about new development in existing neighborhoods. The Town and other partners, such as the Essex County Greenbelt Association, could help inform private property owners about tools, such as Conservation Restrictions, that can preserve open space and provide benefits to the owners and the neighborhood.

## Tools for the Town

Through its zoning by-laws, a town is able to place certain controls on the use of land. Those controls include the type of use and the intensity of the development. Zoning regulations have an impact on the physical development of an area over the long term and can include measures to protect natural resources and historic assets. This is one tool a town can use to encourage development that meets the community's needs for housing and economic development. In Massachusetts, the largest source of revenue to municipalities is a tax on properties. Appropriate use of land can provide a sustainable source of property tax revenue.

Towns have other duties which include providing services to residents, businesses, and property owners. These services include many familiar ones, including police, fire, education, library, recreation, and senior services. However, towns can also have a role in direct economic development, housing production and land conservation.

People who participated in this planning process were excited about new possibilities for improvements in the three focus areas. Such improvements are part of the Town of Groveland's responsibilities but may also require partners. Planning helps the Town understand who needs to help with what, and to allocate its resources to the goals that support the community-developed vision.



## A VISION FOR GROVELAND

Vision statements are written in the present tense and express the future conditions after the goals have been mostly achieved. Comprehensive plans have a life of about ten years.

The vision for Groveland, developed to capture the input from the community during this process is on the facing page.

### KEY GOALS

The goals support the vision by identifying the most critical areas of Town action and intervention.

- **GOAL 1.** Enhance Elm Square and The Pines as community gathering places with separate identities and purposes but that are physically connected; link both to the Merrimack River and the Community Trail. Elm Square is also the gateway into Groveland from Haverhill.
- **GOAL 2.** Integrate Valley Screw site, Washington Street, 150 Center Street ("Strawberry Fields"), and Veasey Memorial Park into a network of open spaces, neighborhoods, and community amenities.
- **GOAL 3.** Create a significant gateway to Groveland from Georgetown that balances open space with new mixed-use development along Route 97 and in the Industrial District.
- **GOAL 4.** Preserve existing smaller-scale neighborhoods and protect open space and natural resources.

In 2035, Groveland is a pleasant place to live, with expanded recreational opportunities at The Pines, connections to the Merrimack River, a revitalized Elm Square, and a new identity for Route 97 that includes a mix of uses. The Community Trail extends from the Merrimack River to the Georgetown line and beyond, and Groveland's neighborhoods have safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to the trail. 150 Center Street, also known as Strawberry Fields, and Valley Screw are now part of a mixed-use area that includes new trails, protection for the aquifer, and new uses that support community needs for housing, recreational space, and commercial uses. Existing neighborhoods have some smaller additional housing, and the Town and property owners have protected more areas of open space and natural resources.

**FOCUS AREA 1: ELM SQUARE, THE PINES, AND THE MERRIMACK RIVER.**

**FOCUS AREA 2: VALLEY SCREW, 150 CENTER, TO VESEY MEMORIAL PARK.**

**FOCUS AREA 3: ROUTE 97 FROM TO THE GEORGETOWN LINE TO BAGNALL ELEMENTARY.**





# Introduction

## PURPOSE OF THE PROCESS

- Identify the existing conditions in the Town of Groveland.
- Work with community members to understand the implications of those existing conditions.
- Develop a set of goals, policies, and actions to address those implications in a way that achieves the vision of the community.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The Town received a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Urban Agenda program which is part of the Community One Stop for Growth grant program. The Town hired the consultant team of Innes Associates and Form + Place to assist with the planning process.

The process included a combination of public interactions, both in person and via online surveys, and research by the consultant team. The Town of Groveland has already produced many planning documents; one of the goals of this planning process is to understand the relationships among the recommendations of those plans and how those recommendations can be grouped into a more coordinated implementation program. The previous planning efforts are discussed in greater detail in the Key Areas chapter; the plans reviewed by the planning team include the following:

- **2021 ELM SQUARE PARKING MANAGEMENT STUDY.** Stantec, 2021.
- **2020-2027 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN.** Town of Groveland and MVPC, 2020.
- **ELM SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT: ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND MARKET CONDITIONS.** Groveland Planning Department, the Elm Square Committee, and FinePoint Associates, Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (DHCD), January 2020.
- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN GROVELAND.** Groveland Community Preservation Committee, 2020.
- **COMPLETE STREETS NEEDS ASSESSMENT.** Stantec, 2019.
- **TOWN OF GROVELAND HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN (2018-2022).** Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) and JM Goldson, 2018.
- **GROVELAND MASTER PLAN (DRAFT).** Town of Groveland and Cammett Engineering, 2000.
- **SUMMARY REPORT ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR GROVELAND, MASSACHUSETTS.** Economic Development Associates, Inc.. February 1964.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

People involved in this process included a combination of Town staff, elected officials, and members of the general Groveland community. The Urban Agenda grant provided funds for the project, and the Town hired the consultant team of Innes Associates and Form + Place to assist with the process. Rebecca Oldham, Town Administrator, and Annie Schindler, Town Planner & Environmental Program Coordinator, worked directly with the consultant team during the project.

The members of the Town’s Steering Committee were as follows:

- Joseph D’Amore
- Michael Dempsey, Conservation Commission
- Chris Goodwin, Planning Board
- Jason Naves, Selectman
- Walter Sorenson, Planning Board
- John Stokes III, Planning Board

These volunteers provided helpful feedback on ideas and materials throughout the planning process.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was an important component of this planning process, and the team included several different ways for members of the Groveland community to interact with the consultant team. The planning process began with a public survey to gather ideas about Groveland and people’s hopes and concerns for the future.

The results of that survey fed into three public workshops on May 10, 12, and 14, 2022. Each workshop was dedicated to one of the three focus areas. The consultant team provided boards with in-depth information about existing conditions in the area and facilitated a discussion of possibilities for each area.

Town staff passed out a mini-survey at the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

During the summer, the team worked with each other and the Steering Committee to develop a more refined set of recommendations. Town staff and the consultant team shared a table at Groveland Day, on September 10, 2022. The planning team engaged with people attending Groveland Day and

discussed the draft recommendations. People were also invited to take a second online survey.

The results of these surveys and meetings had a direct impact on the development of this draft plan. A summary of the results and copies of public presentations are provided in Appendix A.

PLAN MEETINGS:

- A Master Plan Steering Committee which met regularly during the process
- Three public workshops in May 2022 (one for each focus area)
- Public survey released in spring 2022
- Table at Groveland Day in September 2022 and a second public survey
- Presentation to the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board in August 2023
- Table at Groveland Day in September 2023 and a third public survey
- Final adoption of the Plan by the Planning Board at a public hearing in October 2023.

RELATIONSHIP TO SECTION 81D

In Massachusetts, the requirements for a comprehensive (or master) plan are in the Massachusetts General Laws in Chapter 41, Section 81D. This plan addresses the nine items required by Section 81D, shown below. Because this plan uses a geographic lens to view these seven elements, each element is not assigned a separate chapter. In the Key Focus Areas and the Implementation Plan chapters, icons will identify the element(s) applicable to the discussion.

Planning Elements		Goals and Policies Statement (Vision)
		Land Use
		Housing
		Economic Development
		Natural and Cultural Resources (including Historic Resources)
		Open Space and Recreation
		Services and Facilities (provided by the municipality)
		Circulation (now often called Transportation or Mobility)
		Implementation Plan

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 41, SECTION 81D:  
ELEMENTS OF A MASTER PLAN

(1) Goals and policies statement which identifies the goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community shall conduct an interactive public process, to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals.

(2) Land use plan element which identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. This element shall relate the proposed standards of population density and building intensity to the capacity of land available or planned facilities and services. A land use plan map illustrating the land use policies of the municipality shall be included.

(3) Housing element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. This element shall identify policies and strategies to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all citizens.

(4) Economic development element which identifies policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.

(5) Natural and cultural resources element which provides an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas.

(6) Open space and recreation element which provides an inventory of recreational and resources and open space areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the management and protection of such resources and areas.

(7) Services and facilities element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.

(8) Circulation element which provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.

(9) Implementation program element which defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master or study plan. Scheduled expansion or replacement of public facilities or circulation system components and the anticipated costs and revenues associated with accomplishment of such activities shall be detailed in this element. This element shall specify the process by which the municipality's regulatory structures shall be amended so as to be consistent with the master plan.



## HOW TO WORK WITH THE PLAN

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This targeted comprehensive plan includes two main chapters: Key Areas and the Implementation Plan.

### Key Areas

The Key Areas chapter introduces the critical components of this plan: information about Groveland today, the concerns that motivated this planning process, the choice to focus on specific geographic areas, the areas chosen, the vision and goals, and a summary of the existing plans and reports.

The three key focus areas are as follows:

- Elm Square to The Pines.
- Valley Screw to Veasey Memorial Park, including 150 Center Street (Strawberry Fields).
- Route 97 from the Georgetown line to Bagnall Elementary School.

This plan uses these three areas to examine the seven planning elements described above. The discussion of each area includes several of the Section 81D planning elements.

The fourth section of this chapter discusses existing conditions and recommendations for the areas of the town that are not included in the three focus areas.

Each section of this chapter includes a Recommendations section to identify the primary goal for the section and the related strategies and actions. This allows the recommendations to be tied to the discussion of the key concerns and existing conditions for each focus area.

## Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is an action plan – it includes the steps required to address the goals and produced the desired vision. In this comprehensive plan, the recommendations for strategies and actions are provided in two different places:

- This chapter provides the list of individual actions under each of the goals, ties them to the seven planning elements in Section 81D, lists the responsible entity (board, committee, or department), and partners (both Town and other organizations). The Implementation Plan also identifies a timeline and any available resources. If those resources are funding sources, then they are identified in the Funding sources chapter. This organizational additional commercial or multifamily in those three areas would enhance Groveland structure works as a checklist for the Town as it begins to implement this plan.
- Three other sections support the Implementation Plan and the information in the Key Areas chapter.
  - **BENCHMARKS.** A selection of metrics the Town can use to understand progress towards the completion of the goals.
  - **FUNDING SOURCES.** Grants and other programs that can support the Town's own resources.
  - **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.** A glossary of terms and links to useful information, including a list of previous planning documents.



# Existing Conditions

## INTRODUCTION

Groveland is a small town in Essex County (northeastern Massachusetts), bounded by the Merrimack River to the north, Haverhill to the north and west, Boxford to the southwest, Georgetown to the south, Newbury to the southeast, and West Newbury to the east. The Town has two major roads, Route 97, which connects Elm Square to the center of Georgetown, and eventually to I-95, and Route 113, which connects Elm Square to Haverhill and West Newbury, and eventually to I-495.

Groveland was incorporated in 1850 after being part of Rowley and then Boxford.<sup>1</sup> Much of its industrial history (shoes and textiles) is no longer visible; the Town demolished most of the mill buildings except the last standing one at 46 Washington Street. The vacant Valley Screw building at 64 Washington Street is another of the few reminders of this history; its status as a Superfund site a reminder of the environmental impact of the more noxious industrial uses of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Remaining industrial uses are located in the Industrial Zoning District to the west of Route 97.

<sup>1</sup> MVPC and JM Goldson, *Town of Groveland Housing Production Plan: 2018-2022*, 2018, p. 9.

Most commercial uses are concentrated in Elm Square, Route 113, Route 97, and portions of Washington Street. Groveland's largest employer is A.W. Chesterton Company; the company's headquarters are located on Salem Street. Home-based businesses are scattered throughout town. Most commercial uses serve the local market; there are a few regional draws, such as the Groveland Fairways Event Center and the network of wildlife management areas. This reflects Groveland's proximity to Haverhill and its development, over time, as a primarily residential community.

Of the Town's 9.41 square miles, approximately 8.94 square miles are land.<sup>2</sup> A significant portion of this land is devoted to open space and recreation. The Town owns 48 acres of active recreational land at four sites: The Pines (25 acres), Bagnall Elementary School (10 acres), Shanahan Recreation area (8 acres), and the Washington Park Area (5 acres).<sup>3</sup> Some agricultural land remains, but most of that land is not used for crops.<sup>4</sup>

Protected open space that is publicly owned is just over 1,997<sup>5</sup> acres of land. Major area with trails and/or water access include the Crane's Pond Wildlife Management Area, the Center Street Greenway, the Meadow Pond Reservation, Veasey Memorial Park, and Groveland Town Forest. Connections between some of these areas and trails in abutting communities offer an unparalleled recreational resource to residents and the opportunity to consider recreation-based economic development. The new Groveland Community Trail, which will link to regional trail networks, could be a catalyst for such development.

Unprotected open space of another 332 acres<sup>6</sup> provides an opportunity for the Town to work with landowners to protect those properties through conservation agreements.

<sup>2</sup> Town of Groveland and MVPC, *Town of Groveland Open Space & Recreation Plan: 2020-2027*, 2020, p. 4

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-89.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 100-102.



DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic data captures information about who is living in Groveland and how that profile has changed over time. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, data from the 2020 Decennial Census has not yet been fully released. The data in this section will use information from both the 2020 Census and the 5-year American Community Survey from 2016-2020 (2016-2020 ACS). The ACS is an estimate, so the number will not correlate perfectly with the information from the 2020 Census. Again, because of the pandemic, both the Census and the ACS has smaller than usual sample sizes, especially for smaller communities. This means that the data may have a higher margin-of-error; in other words, the count and the estimates may not be as accurate. The *Town of Groveland Housing Production Plan: 2018-2022* is a source of pre-pandemic data; comparing this source with the 2020 Census data when it is released (anticipated in 2023) and with the 5-year ACS in another few years should help assess any changes to living and working patterns during the pandemic and smooth out fluctuations in the trends during 2020-2022.

Population Trends

DataTown<sup>7</sup> tracks population growth from 1930. In 1930, Groveland’s population was about 2,336. After increasing sharply to a high of 5,400 in 1970, the population declined in the 1970s and 1980s and then began increasing in the 1990s at a more gradual rate. The estimated peak was 6,849 in 2019 with an estimated small decline in 2020. The US Census estimates the population in 2021 to be 6,737.

Over time, Groveland’s population has shifted in age. In 1990, the population was younger than that of the state as a whole in the 0-14 age range and the 30-59 age range. However, the 2016-2020 ACS shows that while the percentage of younger children is still significantly higher than that of the state, the population of Groveland is aging faster, with gaps in the 25-29 age range and the 45-49 age range.

7 The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) supports DataTown, a data-based platform that allows communities to understand key demographics that affect housing. The site provides both graphs and statistics and allows users to compare communities. The link to the site is here: <https://mhpcenterforhousingdata.shinyapps.io/DataTown/#>

Figure 1. Population Trends

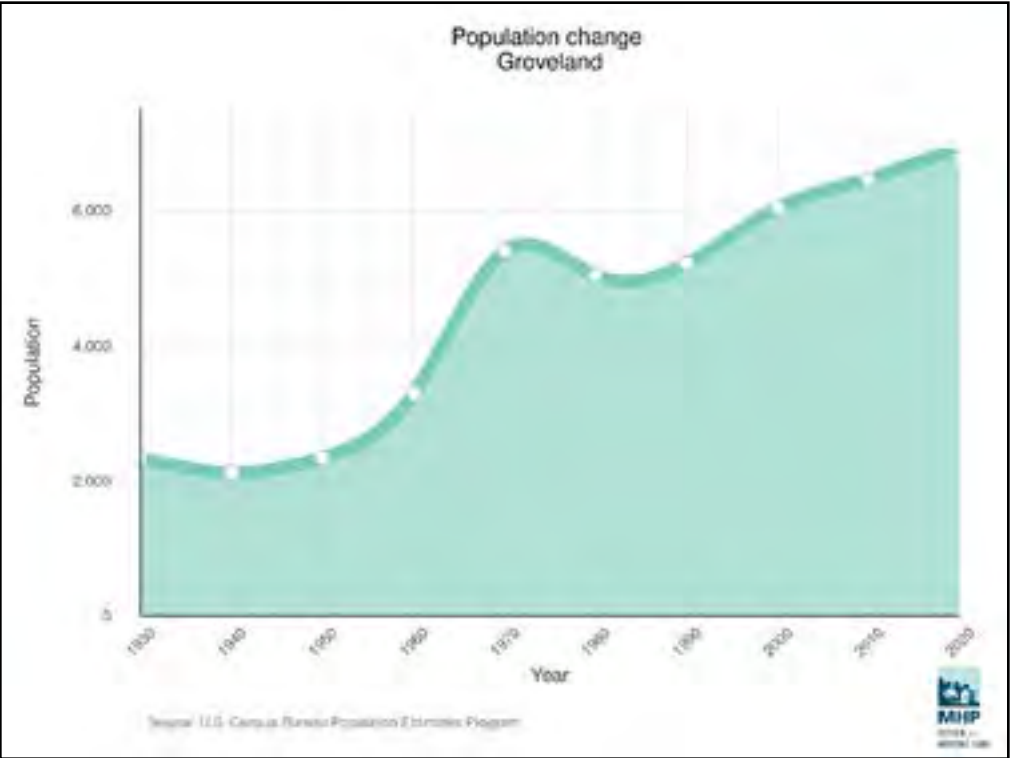


Figure 2A. Age Trends: 1990

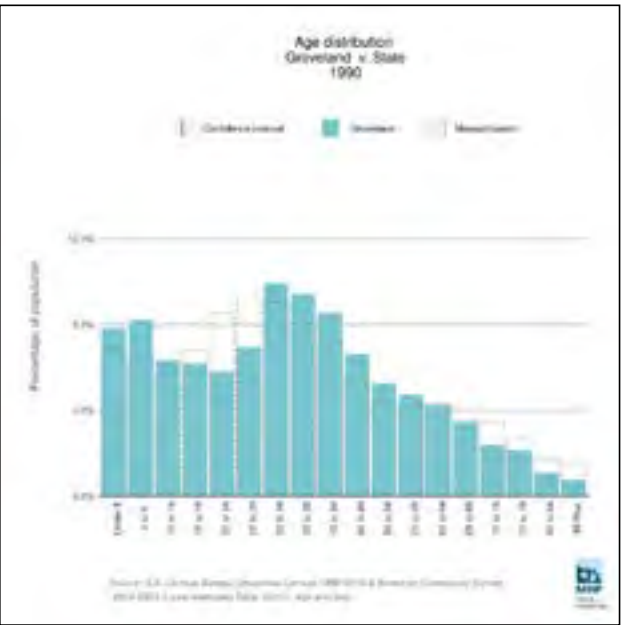
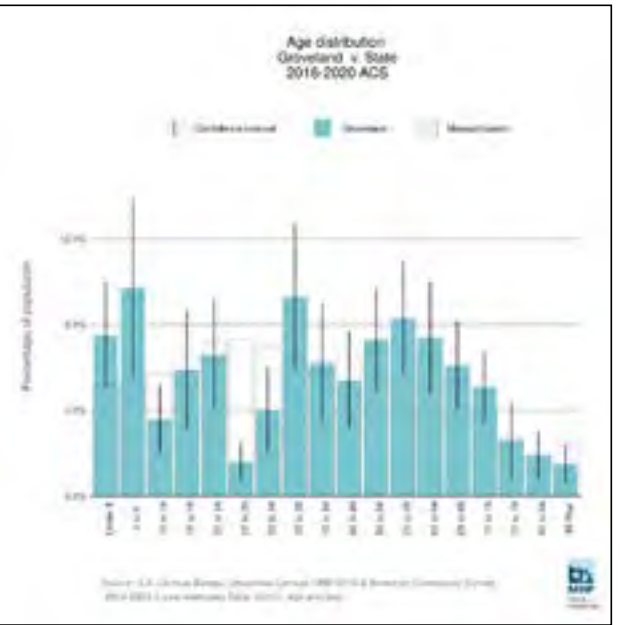


Figure 2B. Age Trends: 2020



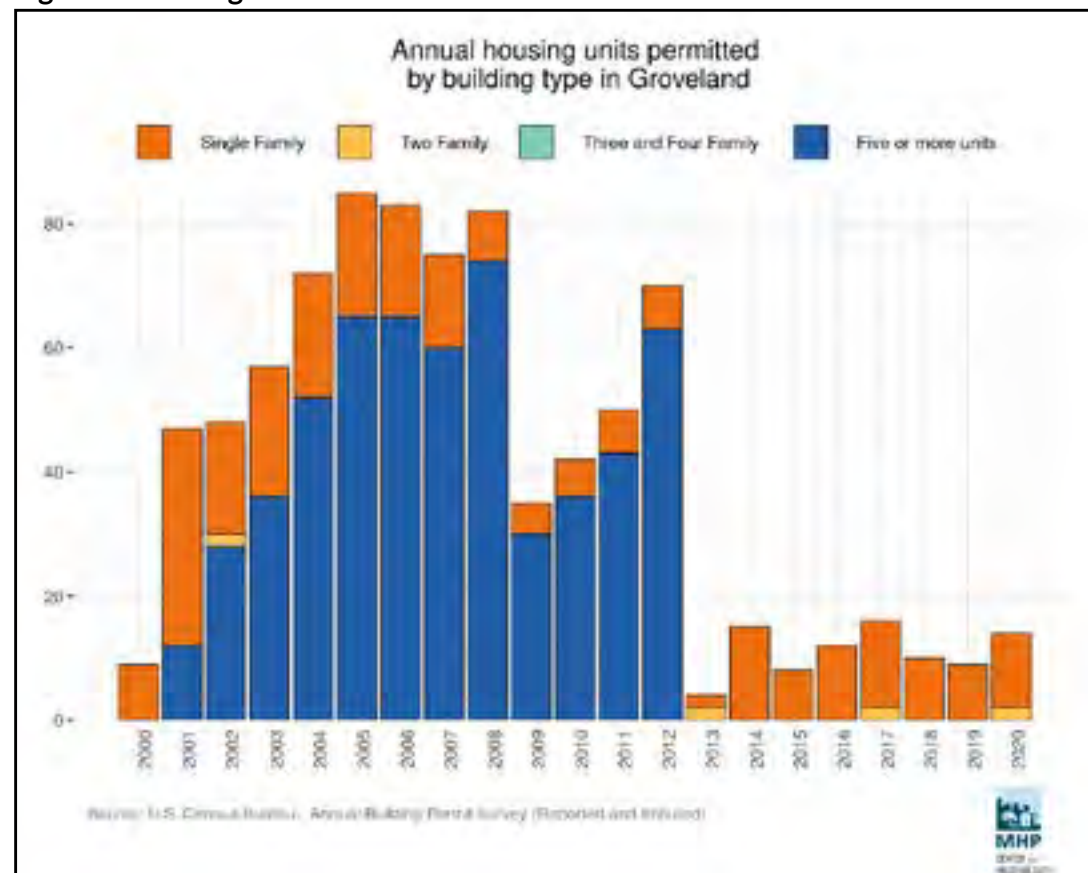
Source: All three graphs: MHP: DataTown



## HOUSING

**Housing** is a critical issue for two reasons: the first is that an aging population needs a different type of housing that increases the ability of an older person to remain independent for a longer period. Often this housing is smaller in size and is on a single level. Such housing can be provided in single-family homes and in other typologies, such as cottages, duplexes, townhouses, or groups of apartments or condominiums in multifamily buildings (three units or above per structure). Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) can also be a strategy either for a senior to live independently with family or for a senior to earn income while staying in their home.

Figure 3: Housing Production



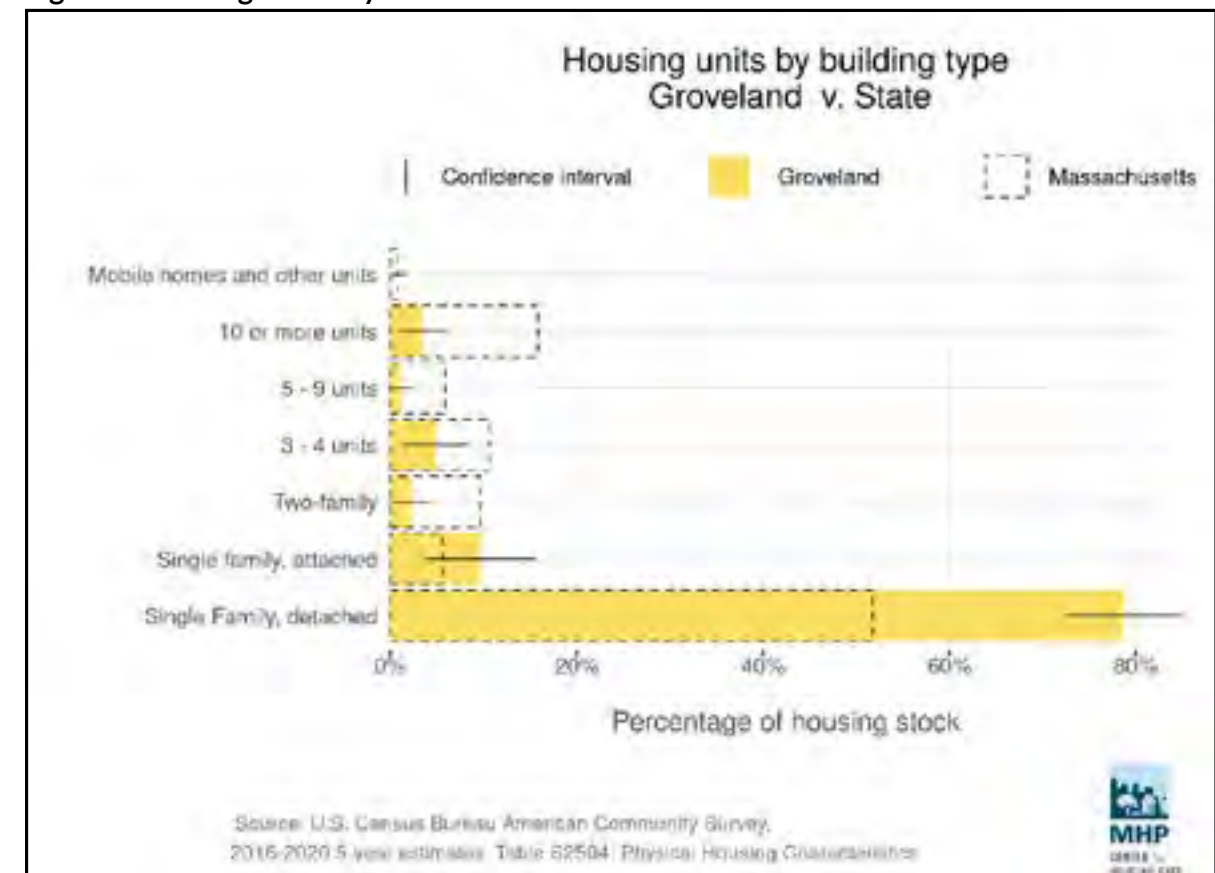
Source: MHP: DataTown

Similar homes can also act as starter housing for young adults – the missing gap for adults 25-34 shown in Figure 2B. Figure 3 shows that Groveland stopped producing this type of housing in 2013; during the eight years from 2013-2020, most of the housing produced was single family homes with a few two-families.

As a result, Groveland has a much higher percentage of single-family homes than Massachusetts as a whole and a much lower diversity in housing options.

This lack of diversity leads to two problems: the inability for (1) seniors to age in their own community by not having appropriate housing type and (2) young people to remain in the community in which they grew up because of a lack of affordable starter homes. Because housing across the region is increasingly expensive, people who own homes may choose to stay where they are, even in housing that is unsuitable, because they cannot afford to move; people who are renting may not be

Figure 4: Housing Diversity



Source: MHP: DataTown

able to buy the type of house they want in the area they want it. These conditions have the potential to limit growth which is problematic for a community dependent upon the residential property tax for its revenue.

The tables on page 31 and 33 compare Groveland to its neighbors. It shows that the average single-family tax bill has increased more rapidly than that of its neighbors since 2018 while the value of the single-family home has increased in line with its neighbors. (2018 was chosen as the base year because that is the year the Housing Production Plan was completed.) Because of the limitations of Proposition 2½ on the tax levy, the tax bill as a percentage of the value of the house went down.

\*Groveland, Haverhill, Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury, and West Newbury

Groveland’s income per capita, which is the second lowest of the six towns,\* increased by 11% during this same period, which was less than the percentage increase of the average single-family tax bill. This means that taxes increased as a percentage of income per capita, which is difficult to absorb for people with lower incomes. Taxes are not the only pressure on individuals and households with lower incomes.

The increase in housing costs and the current inflationary environment also put pressure on those with lower incomes, which include Groveland’s aging population and the missing younger workers. In addition, concerns expressed during the planning process about the growth in taxes may restrict the ability of the Town to raise or reallocate the funds needed for some of the recommendations of this or earlier planning processes. This pressure is demonstrated in Figure 5: renter households have a much higher cost burden (spending 30% or more of gross income on housing) than owner households, but 25% of owner households in Groveland are also cost burdened.

Often, communities think of increasing their commercial tax base to reduce the pressure on the residential tax base. This can be difficult to do in a community that is primarily residential and mostly built out – the amount of new commercial development required to shift the balance can be quite high. In Groveland, the presence of wetlands and other natural resources puts further pressure on new development. The three focus areas are thus critical in terms of evaluating any potential shifts in the tax base: additional commercial or multifamily in those three areas would enhance Groveland with additional businesses and housing types, protect existing neighborhoods from inappropriate development, and support the tax base.

Comparisons with Adjacent Communities

Table 1. Change in the Value of a Single-Family Home 2018-2022

	2018	2022	5-year Increase
Boxford	\$622,989	\$738,641	16%
Georgetown	\$425,181	\$535,847	21%
<b>Groveland</b>	<b>\$401,997</b>	<b>\$510,212</b>	<b>21%</b>
Haverhill	\$307,907	\$389,474	21%
Merrimac	\$372,513	\$457,946	23%
Newbury	\$493,456	\$638,959	23%
West Newbury	\$539,137	\$672,868	20%

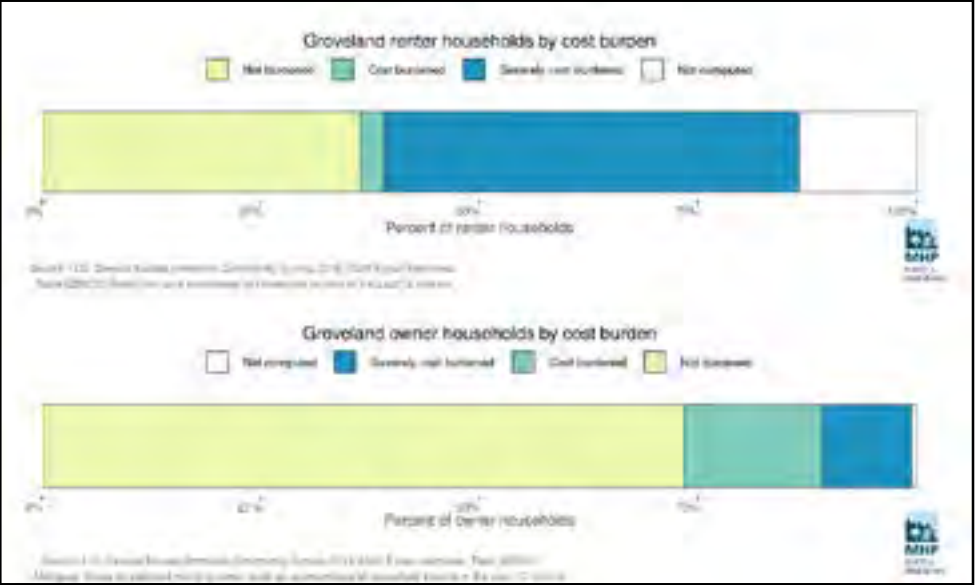
Source: MassDOR, Division of Local Services

Table 2. Change in Single-Family Tax Bills 2018-2022

	2018	2022	5-year Increase
Boxford	\$10,092	\$11,242	11%
Georgetown	\$6,752	\$7,545	12%
<b>Groveland</b>	<b>\$5,905</b>	<b>\$7,383</b>	<b>25%</b>
Haverhill	\$4,391	\$4,954	13%
Merrimac	\$5,871	\$7,483	27%
Newbury	\$5,379	\$6,217	16%
West Newbury	\$7,850	\$8,754	12%

Source: MassDOR, Division of Local Services

Figure 5. Housing Affordability



Source: MHP: DataTown



Table 3. Change in Single-Family Tax Bills as a % of Value 2018-2022

	2018	2022	5-year Change
Boxford	1.62%	1.52%	-7%
Georgetown	1.59%	1.41%	-11%
<b>Groveland</b>	<b>1.47%</b>	<b>1.45%</b>	<b>-1%</b>
Haverhill	1.43%	1.27%	-11%
Merrimac	1.58%	1.63%	3%
Newbury	1.09%	0.97%	-11%
West Newbury	1.46%	1.30%	-11%

Source: MassDOR, Division of Local Services

Table 4. Change in Income per Capita 2018-2022

	2018	2022	5-year Change
Boxford	\$115,037	\$101,339	-14%
Georgetown	\$45,267	\$52,365	14%
<b>Groveland</b>	<b>\$37,596</b>	<b>\$42,413</b>	<b>11%</b>
Haverhill	\$26,767	\$31,363	15%
Merrimac	\$32,938	\$39,810	21%
Newbury	\$56,462	\$73,077	23%
West Newbury	\$62,889	\$70,872	11%

Source: MassDOR, Division of Local Services

Table 5. Change in Tax Bill as a Percentage of Income 2018-2022

	2018	2022	5-year Change
Boxford	8.77%	11.09%	21%
Georgetown	14.92%	14.41%	-4%
<b>Groveland</b>	<b>15.71%</b>	<b>17.41%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Haverhill	16.40%	15.80%	-4%
Merrimac	17.82%	18.80%	5%
Newbury	9.53%	8.51%	-12%
West Newbury	12.48%	12.35%	-1%

Source: MassDOR, Division of Local Services

HOW DIFFICULT CAN IT BE TO SHIFT THE TAX BASE?

Table 6 shows that Groveland's property tax rate for fiscal year 2022 is \$14.47 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Groveland does not have a split rate, which means that commercial and industrial buildings are taxed at the same level as residential.

Table 6. Current Tax Rates (2022)

	Residential	Commercial/Industrial
Boxford	\$15.22	\$15.22
Georgetown	\$14.08	\$14.08
<b>Groveland</b>	<b>\$14.47</b>	<b>\$14.47</b>
Haverhill	\$12.72	\$23.30
Merrimac	\$16.34	\$16.34
Newbury	\$9.73	\$9.73
West Newbury	\$13.01	\$13.01

Source: MassDOR, Division of Local Services

In 2022, the average value of a single-family home in Groveland was \$510,212. The Town will collect \$7,383 from the owner of the average house in 2022.

In 2022, the total value of the residential tax base was \$1,147,095,764 and the total value of the commercial and industrial tax base was \$56,431,243. (Personal property tax was just under \$25 million, but this discussion will just evaluate residential, commercial, and industrial.) Residential, commercial, and industrial tax base together total \$1,203,527,007. This means that residential is 95.3% of the total tax base (excluding personal property) and commercial/industrial is 4.7%. (See Table 7 on page 35.)

To shift the existing residential tax burden to become 90% of the total tax base, the total tax base would increase to \$1,274,550,849 or a 6% increase from 2022. In other words, the residential tax base would hold steady at \$1,147,095,764 and the total tax base would increase such that \$1,147,095,764 is now 90% of the total instead of 95.3%. (See Table 8 on page 35.)

The increase in the tax base would be \$71,023,842. That amount represents the increase required to shift the commercial/industrial tax base to 10% of the total tax base.



This increase would more than double the amount of existing commercial/industrial tax value. At the 2022 tax rate of \$14.47 per \$1,000 of value, the taxes raised by this increase would be \$1,027,715.

That is a substantial annual increase in revenue from property taxes. The next question is to determine what development volume would be required to produce a taxable value of \$71,023,082. The answer to this question requires an understanding of the valuation of residential, commercial, and industrial real estate in Groveland. Table 9 demonstrates one way of analyzing this by grouping the properties in Groveland by land use and calculating the average value per acre of each land use class using the 2023 parcel data downloaded from MassGIS and based on the Town of Groveland's Assessors' data.

There are caveats to the use of this data. For some land use classes, the sample size is small and may not be representative of the true value. For all classes, the age and condition of the buildings may have a positive or negative impact on the value, as will prevailing market conditions for each land use type.

**The purpose of Table 9 is to provide a relative assessment of the value of each land use and to indicate the difficulty of dramatic change in the allocation of land uses when considering the tax base.** Table 9 does not indicate a preferred direction for the Town; one missing element is a market study that would assess the viability of the identified uses.

The Town of Groveland has some unique opportunities to further investigate this shift through its exploration of the redevelopment of land in the three focus areas discussed in this comprehensive plan. The recommended land use studies will help the Town delve more deeply into its options and better understand the impact of preferred land uses on both the quality of life in the town and its tax base.

Data Source for all three tables: MassGIS, Town of Groveland; calculations by Innes Associates.

\*Land area for commercial and residential condominiums are calculated by measurement and may not be precise.

**Table 7. Calculated Change in Percentage of Tax Base by Land Use**

Land Use	2022 Tax Base	%	Calculated New Tax Base	%	Difference
Residential	\$1,147,095,764	95.3%	\$1,147,095,764	90%	0
Commercial + Industrial	\$56,431,243	4.7%	\$127,455,085	10%	\$71,023,842
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,203,527,007</b>		<b>\$ 1,274,550,849</b>		<b>\$71,023,842</b>

**Table 8. Tax Implications of Change in Percentage of Tax Base by Land Use**

Land Use	2022 Taxes Raised	%	Calculated New Tax Base	%	Difference
Residential	\$16,598,475	95.3%	\$16,598,475	90%	0
Commercial + Industrial	\$816,560	4.7%	\$1,844,275	10%	\$1,027,715
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,415,035</b>		<b>\$18,442,750</b>		<b>\$1,027,715</b>

**Table 9. Raising \$1,027,715 in New Taxes by Land Use (2023 Valuations)**

Land Use	Current Acres	Average Value per Unit	Number of Units Required	Number of Acres Required		
				Res. 1	Res. 2	Res. 3
Residential		SF for Single-family SF for Two-family		43,560 SF 60,000 SF	30,000 SF 40,000 SF	20,000 SF 27,000 SF
Single-Family	2,117	\$526,231	134	134	92	62
Two-family/duplex	53	\$795,717	178 (89 duplexes)	123	82	55
Land Use	Current Acres*	Average Value per Acre	Number of Acres Required	Taxes Generated per Acre	Total Taxes Generated	
<b>Residential</b>						
Three-family	4.89	\$944,752	75	\$13,670	\$1,025,250	
Apts (4-8 units)	2.53	\$938,411	76	\$13,578	\$1,031,928	
Condominiums	93.30	\$873,493	81	\$12,639	\$1,023,759	
Apts (8+ units)	52.40	\$819,782	87	\$11,862	\$1,031,994	
<b>Commercial/Indus.</b>						
Office	1.42	\$1,422,114	50	\$20,577	\$1,028,850	
Retail/restaurant	12.15	\$616,783	115	\$8,924	\$1,026,260	
Warehouse/storage	27.72	\$374,995	189	\$5,426	\$1,025,514	
Auto-related	6.54	\$351,195	202	\$5,081	\$1,026,362	
Manufacturing	76.88	\$317,197	224	\$4,589	\$1,027,936	
Comm. recreation	31.89	\$168,670	421	\$2,440	\$1,027,240	
<b>Mixed-use</b>	<b>67.77</b>	<b>\$241,801</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>\$3,498</b>	<b>\$1,028,412</b>	

## LAND USE: DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE GROWTH

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### Development Patterns and Future Build-out

Historic development patterns can explain why the current buildings and uses are where they are. The maps on the next five pages combine the current data for current protected open space, Zone II watershed, wetlands, streams, surface water, and major roads; contemporary street and place names; and the outlines of the three focus areas with building ages based on information from the Town of Groveland's Assessors' Office. Contemporary road and place names should help orient the reader.

Each map shows a century's worth of building, starting with the 1600s and finishing with 2020, which was the date of the last few buildings in the Assessors' database used for this analysis. For each map, the parcels with buildings from that century are shown in brighter colors (see each map for the legend) and the parcels with buildings from a previous century are grayed out. Note that older buildings may have been demolished, or demolished and replaced with a new building on the same site. In that case, the Assessors' data will show only the most recent building for a site. This analysis is not a historical inventory or an accurate record of historical building patterns; it extrapolates the original pattern from the existing buildings.

As the data on the maps progress to the 21st century, clusters of buildings start to define the Elm Square and South Groveland villages and the built-out parcels begin to define the contemporary road layouts. In the 1600s, the buildings represent only a few small farms. More buildings appear in the 1700s, some scattered, consistent with an agricultural community, but some buildings cluster along what will become Main Street and a few begin to appear in what will become South Groveland.

The remaining buildings from the 1800s creates three clusters: a village centered on Elm Square, stretching to what will be The Pines in one direction and to what will become Shanahan Field in the other; a significant cluster in South Groveland; and a third cluster on Main Street, in the general area of the intersection with Broad Street and 7 Star Road. The colors give a better sense of when this development is happening: the orange and yellow parcels are developed earlier in each century, while the pink and green parcels are developed later in each century.

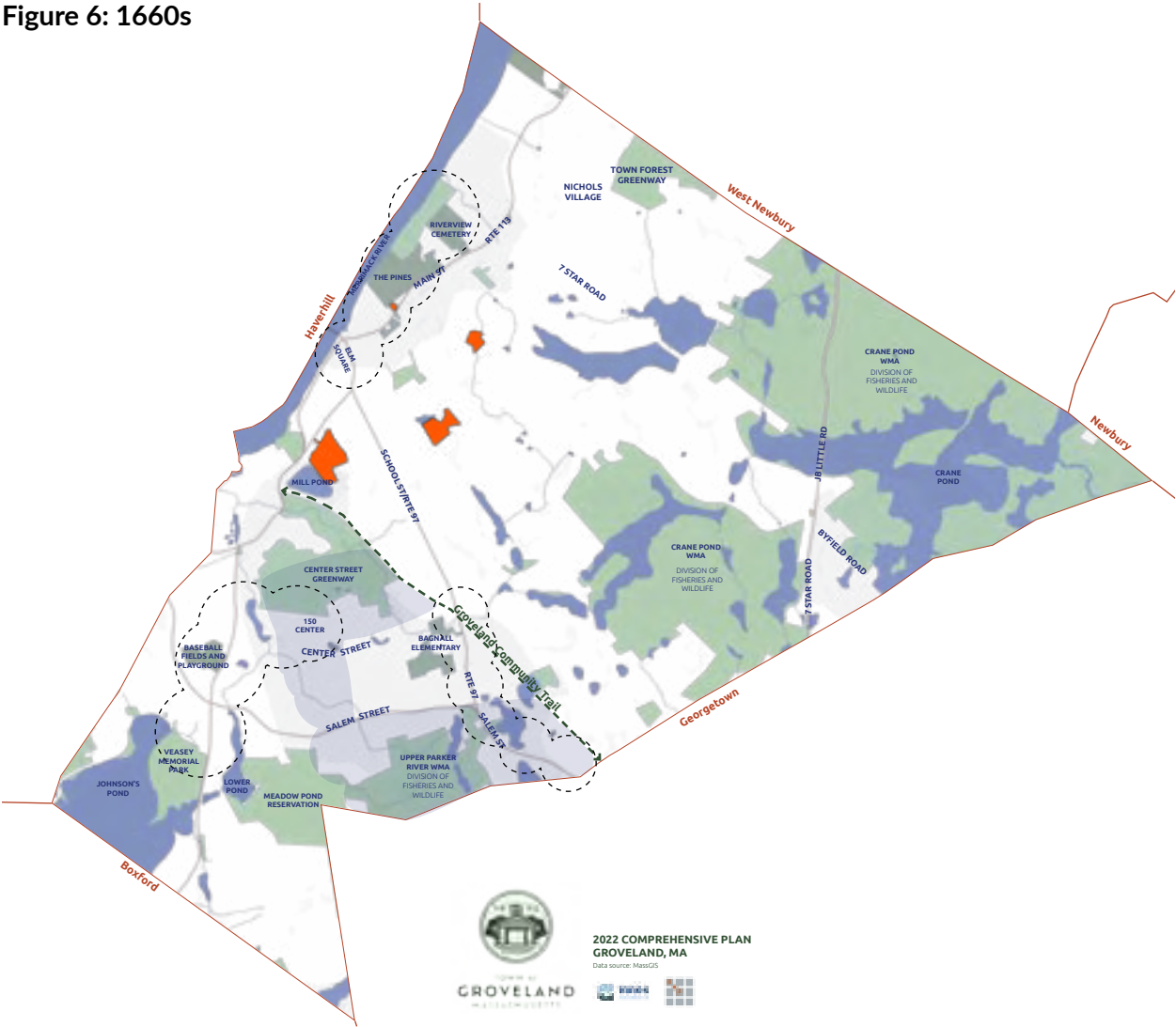
The majority of development in Groveland happens in the 1900s, and the current road patterns are strongly indicated by the additional built parcels. The pattern of subdivisions depends on the decade: those from 1945-1959 tend to be smaller parcels with interconnecting streets while those from 1980-1999 are larger parcels, either with frontage along the road or around a cul-de-sac that extends as an off-shoot from the main road. By 1999, most of the three focus areas are built out. Development in the 2000s shows a similar pattern of cul-de-sac subdivisions as those built in the later part of the 1900s. Additional development in the 2000s includes a few infill parcels in existing neighborhoods.

Note that the Assessors' data is not fully up-to-date; for example, Nichols Village is composed of three parcels and only one is identified as a built parcel. Other parcels have structures which may be out buildings or may not have a year within the database. In general, however, the areas without color in the 2000s map (Figure 10) are available either for development or preservation. Some of those parcels are wetlands and other are within the Zone II watershed protection area.

As the Town considers the potential for future growth, it has two options. The first is to allow the development of existing undeveloped parcels consistent with recent development patterns of infill subdivisions or single buildings. The second is to redevelop existing developed land but at a higher intensity. In some cases, this strategy would require a zoning change for one or more districts.



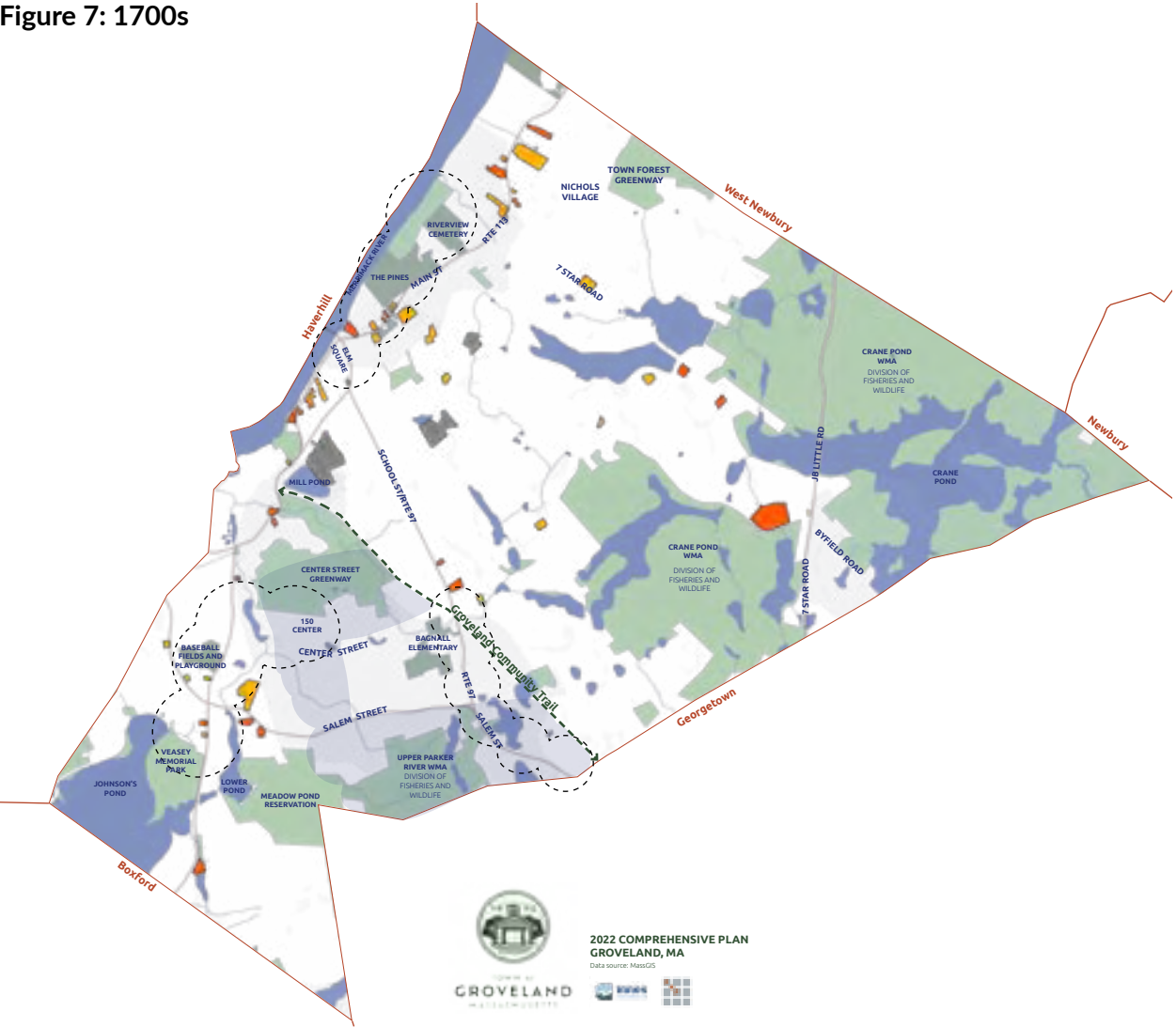
Figure 6: 1660s



Legend	
	Focus area boundary
	Parcels on which buildings were built in the 1600s

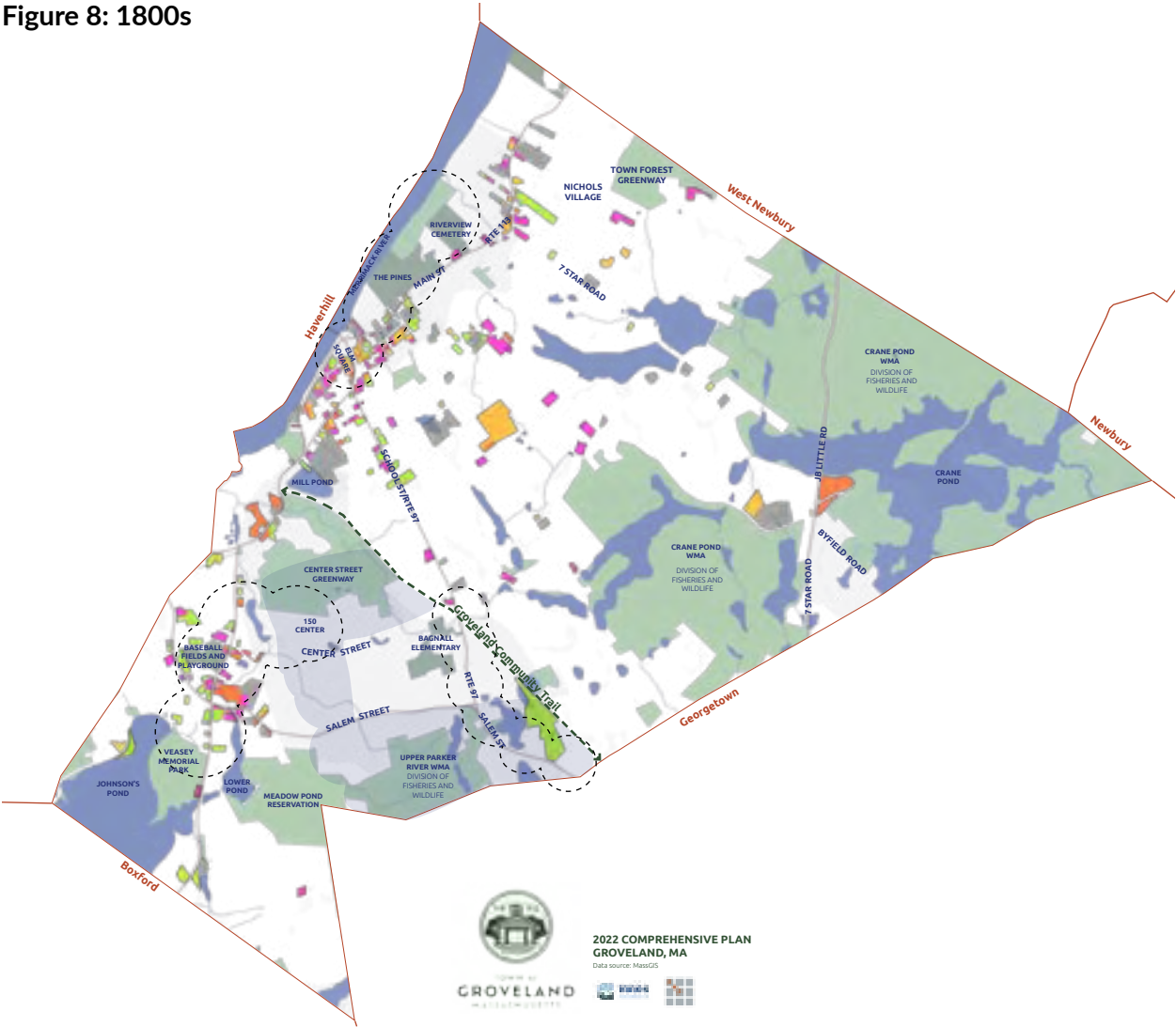
Data Source for Figures 6-12: ESRI, MassGIS, Town of Groveland; analysis by Innes Associates.

Figure 7: 1700s



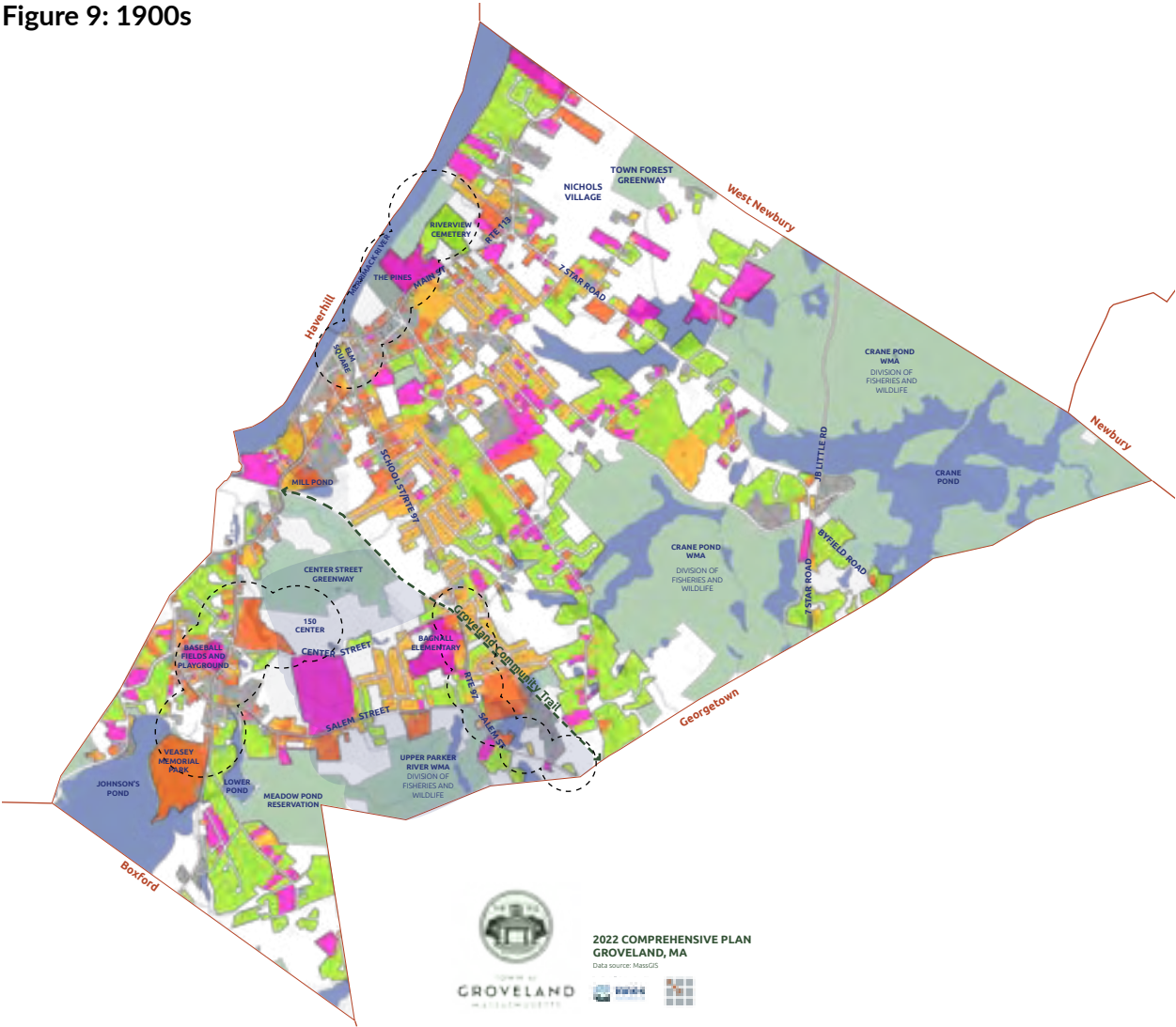
Legend	
	Focus area boundary
	Parcels on which buildings were built in the 1600s
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1700-1774
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1775-1799

Figure 8: 1800s



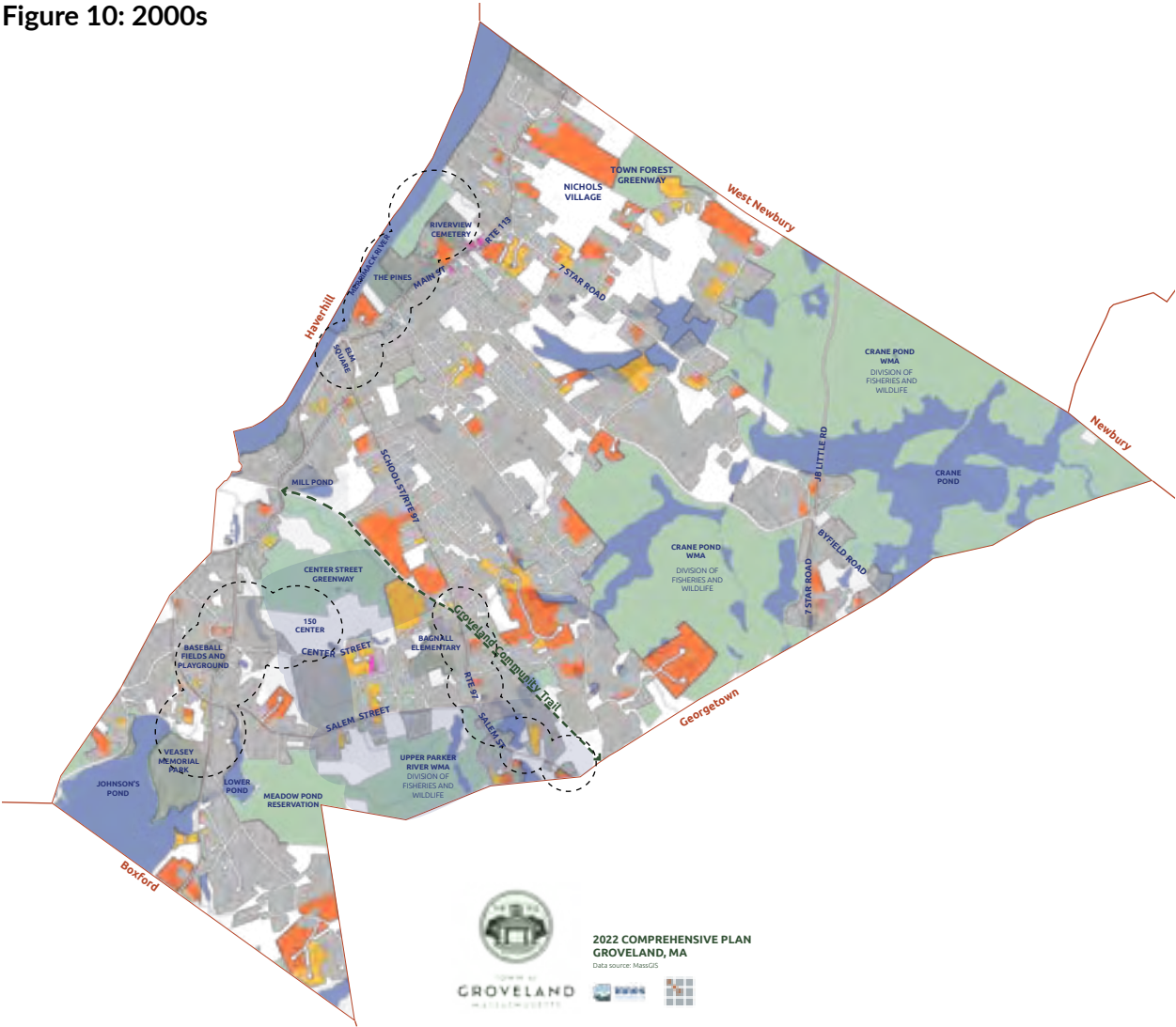
Legend	
	Focus area boundary
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1600-1799
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1800-1824
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1825-1849
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1850-1874
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1875-1899

Figure 9: 1900s



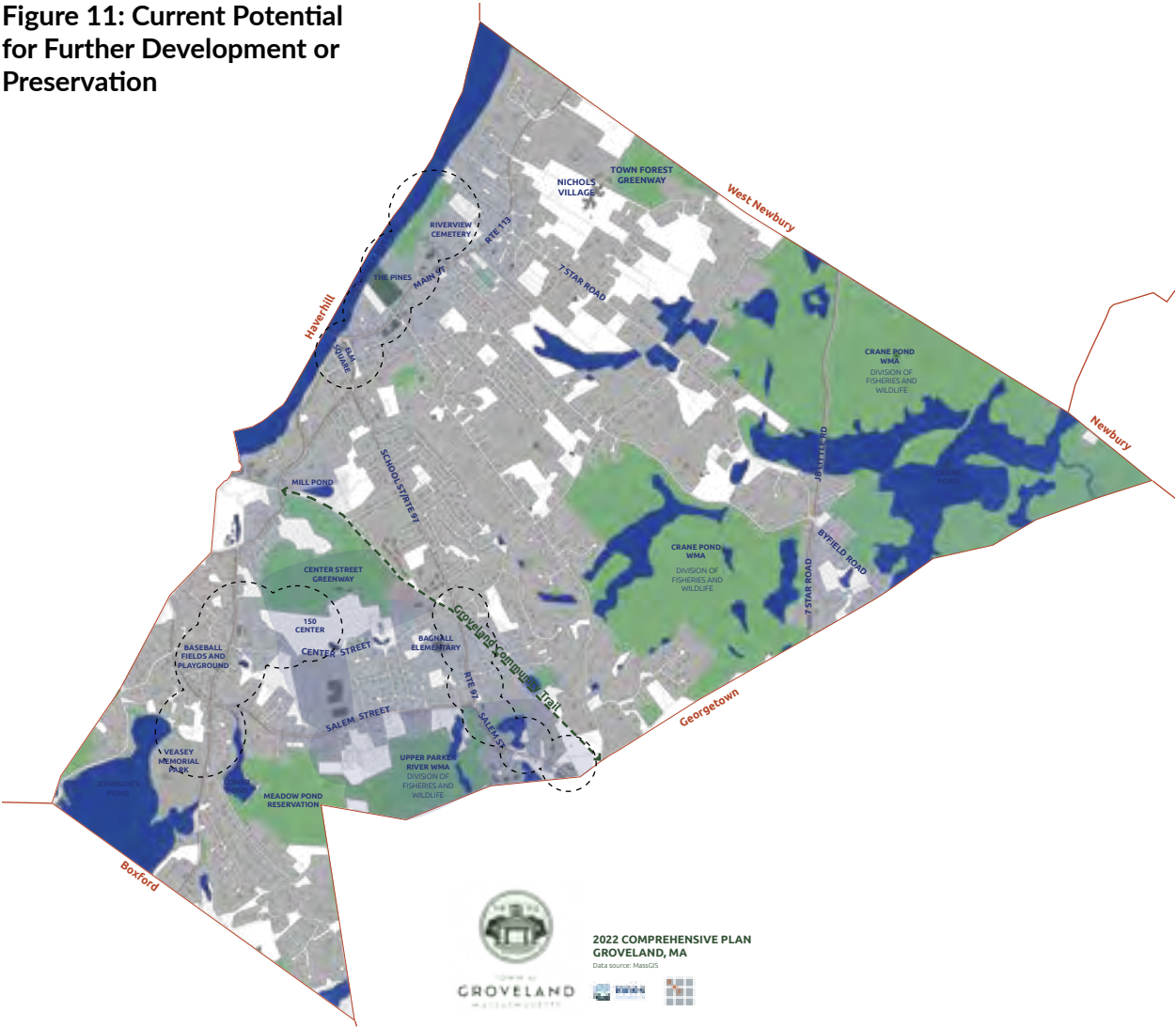
Legend	
	Focus area boundary
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1600-1899
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1900-1944
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1945-1964
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1965-1979
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1980-1999

Figure 10: 2000s



Legend	
	Focus area boundary
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1600-1999
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 2000-2009
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 2010-2019
	Parcels on which buildings were built in 2020

Figure 11: Current Potential for Further Development or Preservation



Legend	
	Focus area boundary
	Parcels on which buildings were built from 1600-2020
	Structures
	Unbuilt parcels



Current Zoning

Based on the Zoning By-Laws approved by the Attorney General on July 2, 2019, The Town of Groveland has six zoning districts:

- R-1, R-2, and R-3 are all residential districts.
- B and LB are Business and Limited Business, respectively
- I is the Industrial District

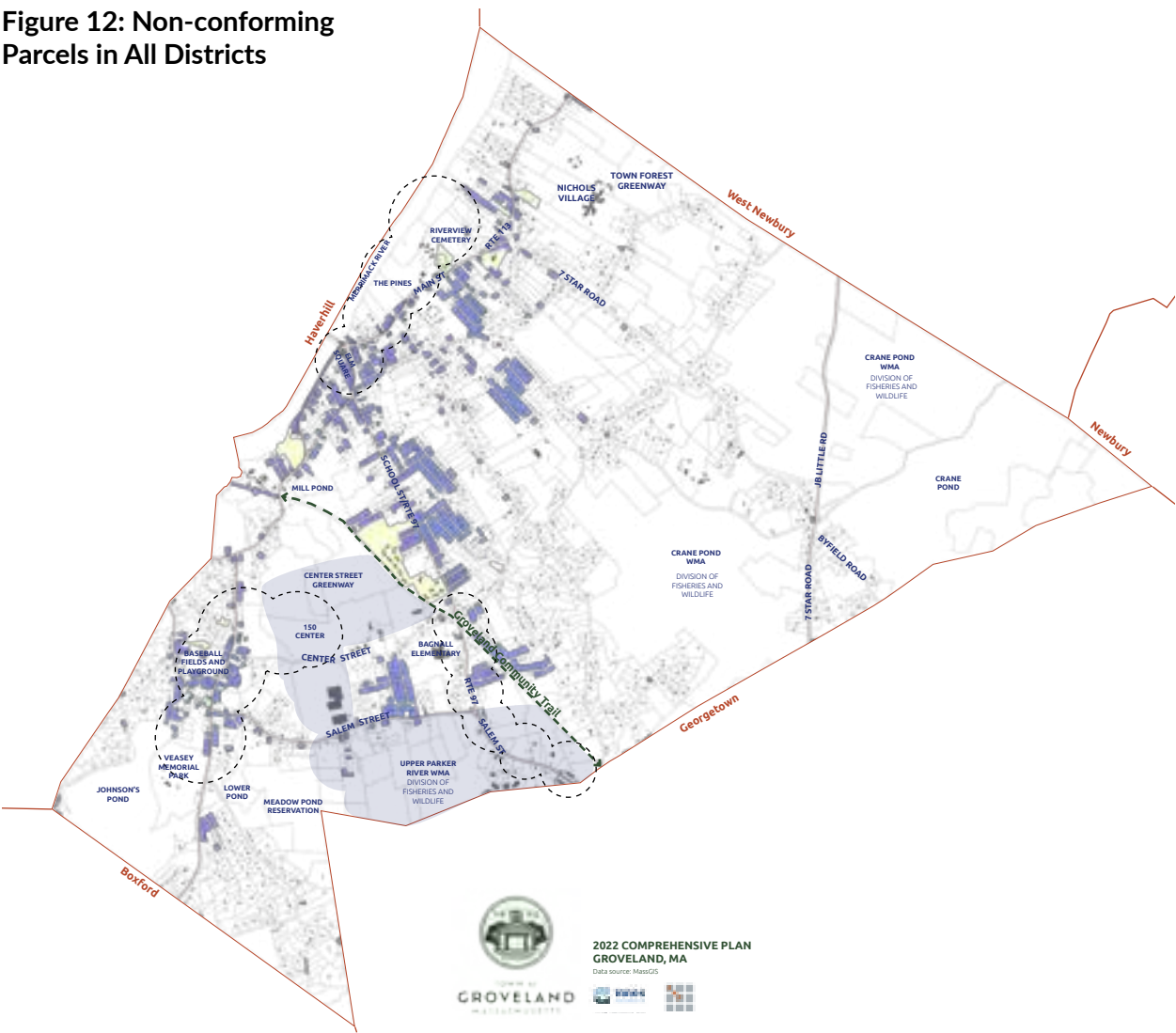
Dimensional Standards and Nonconforming Lots

The differences in the residential districts are based on the minimum lot size. The minimum lot size for R-1 is 43,560 SF or one acre; R-2 has a minimum lot size of 30,000 SF, and R-3 has a minimum lot size of 20,000 SF. All three districts require a higher minimum lot size for two-family or duplex structures. The B and LB districts both have a minimum lot size of 20,000 SF; the differences in those two districts are by use, not by dimensional standards. The I district requires a minimum lot size of one acre. These minimum lot sizes mean that a lot of less than 20,000 SF in any district will be non-conforming under the existing zoning. A 20,000 SF lot is approximately 0.4591 acres. Figure 12 identifies those parcels that are non-conforming; note that many of them are in the post-World War II neighborhoods and the villages of Elm Square and South Groveland. Section 5 of the Zoning By-law identifies the circumstances under which the Zoning Board of Appeals can approve a special permit or grant a variance for non-conforming uses and structures. Property owners, including homeowners, may not be aware that modifying or adding an addition to their home could require a variance. Residents of older neighborhoods may also not be aware that the current zoning rules for their neighborhood will not result in the same pattern of development.

Heights are capped at 35 feet in all districts. This height is low when compared to newer mixed-use buildings and may restrict investment in commercial buildings. Newer buildings have ground floor heights of up to 15 feet to accommodate restaurant uses. A maximum height of 35 feet could result in a three-story flat roofed building, similar to the Stark & Cronk building. A contemporary three-story pitched-roof building would likely require a higher maximum height limit.

Front yard setbacks range from a minimum of twenty feet in the LB district to 50 feet in the I district and 30 feet everywhere else. Setbacks can have a significant impact on the visual and physical experience of an area; for example, the current minimum setback of 30 feet in the B district is not consistent

Figure 12: Non-conforming  
Parcels in All Districts



Legend	
	Focus area boundary
	Parcels that are nonconforming in all districts (lot size less than 20,000 SF)
	Structures
	Parcels with no land area in the Assessors' database

with a village/town center development pattern, such as Elm Square. In such a district, buildings tend to be much closer to the lot line, often with a zero to ten foot setback. The smaller setback creates a more pedestrian-friendly environment, with the buildings framing the street and public space. (A consistent minimal front setback creates what is referred to as a streetwall.)

The maximum lot coverage and maximum impervious areas vary by district but could be considered low for the business and industrial districts. While low maximum lot coverage can restrict new development, it may also be a practical response to the lack of town-wide sewer; a certain amount of land is required for individual wastewater treatment systems. The Town also has a requirement for Contiguous Buildable Area which appears to define the area of the lot in which the building footprint can be placed.

### Overlay Districts

The Zoning By-laws have three overlay districts: Floodplain Overlay District, Aquifer Protection Overlay District, and Wireless Protection Overlay District. One type of district that is becoming more common, especially to communities like Groveland who have significant natural resources, is an Open Space District (sometimes also referred to as an Open Space and Recreation District). This can add an additional layer of protection on land that is designated as open space, parkland, or other recreational land.

In 2020, the Town Meeting updated regulations to govern stormwater management and land disturbance. This is an important step in reducing pollution from nonpoint sources and degradation of surface water quality.

### Use Standards

The Table of Uses in the Zoning By-law identifies the uses allowed in each district.

#### RESIDENTIAL

Single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and duplexes are allowed in all zoning districts except the I district. Multi-family is only allowed as part of Planned Unit Development, which itself is allowed by special permit from the Planning Board in the three residential districts and the I district only. Planned Unit Development is defined in Section 10.3 and applies to any development of three living units or more. Multi-family, which is defined as three or more dwelling units, requires site plan review.

### MBTA COMMUNITIES MULTIFAMILY ZONING

In 2021, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a new Section 3A of the Zoning Act (Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 40A). This new section requires that MBTA communities (also defined in MGL) allow multifamily housing as-of-right in at least one zoning district in their town. The zoning district(s) must meet certain requirements based on geography and unit capacity, with a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre. A town may have more than one multifamily district, and each district may have different characteristics, but each district must have a minimum of five contiguous acres and the density across all multifamily districts must average at least 15 units per acre.

Towns that do not comply with the new requirements are no longer eligible for certain grants, including MassWorks (now part of the Community One Stop for Growth program). Over the past five years, Groveland has received over \$2.9 million in grants.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) issued guidance for compliance with the new laws in 2022. As part of the guidance, DHCD defined the requirements for each town. Groveland is an Adjacent small town under the guidelines and has 2,566 housing units based on the 2020 US Census. Groveland's required minimum multifamily unit capacity is 130 units and there is no required minimum land area or developable station area as Groveland does not have an MBTA station within its border.

130 units is approximately 5% of Groveland's total housing units. The law does not require that Groveland build these units; it requires that Groveland zone for a minimum of 130 units at a minimum density of 15 units per acre.

The guidelines issued by DHCD also provide guidance on how to calculate density and the types of land that, under the law, are included or excluded from those calculations. These land types may have an impact on the calculation of density per acre and thus good planning is required to determine the appropriate location of the multifamily district(s).

In order to meet these requirements, Groveland will have to change its zoning as it does not allow multifamily as of right.

More information is available here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities>

## COMMERCIAL

Most commercial uses are prohibited from the residential districts, with limited exceptions, such as child care and home occupation (both permitted as-of-right) and bed-and-breakfasts, which require a Special Permit from the Board of Appeals.

The difference between the B district and the LB district is that most commercial uses are prohibited in the LB district. In addition to the commercial uses allowed in the residential districts, the LB district allows only business offices, medical or dental offices or clinic, and pharmacy. The LB district could be absorbed into the B district or the permitted uses in the LB district could expanded to allow for neighborhood-supporting retail and services. Such clusters can act as a focus point for individual neighborhoods, providing convenient goods and services that reduce the need for vehicular trips and help define the specific identity of that neighborhood.

The B district allows a much wider range of uses, but many of them require a special permit from the Board of Appeal and site plan review from the Planning Board. A low number of as-of-right uses is less attractive to potential businesses because the multi-step process for special permit and site plan review increases the time required to start operations.

## INDUSTRIAL

Most of the industrial uses also require the same combination of special permit from the Board of Appeal and site plan review from the Planning Board. Light manufacturing is allowed by special permit; manufacturing is not allowed; but sporting goods manufacturing is allowed by special permit. This use is not defined, however.

## AGRICULTURE

Agricultural uses exempt under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 3 are, of course, exempt in all districts. Non-exempt agricultural uses are limited by district and, where permitted, require a Special Permit from the Board of Appeals.

## MISSING USES

Some uses appear to be missing from the table. For example, personal services, which can include salons and barbers, is not in the Table of Uses and does not appear to be covered by the definitions of retail or office in Section 2. Definitions. Newer uses such as boutique manufacturing, where goods are made

and sold on the premises, do not appear to be covered by the definition of light manufacturing, and it is unclear if that definition would extend to food and drink manufacture and sale, such as a bakery, brewery, commercial kitchen. Experiential retail, such as fitness studios, photography studios, art stores, or other places that may offer classes and sell supplies also do not appear to be covered by the definition of retail. Co-working, maker space, and other incubator spaces, which can add activity to town centers, are also not specifically identified as uses in the town.

## PARKING STANDARDS

The Town's parking standards appear to be consistent with other communities of its size and proximity to transit. The ability to share parking in mixed use environments, which the Town provides, is a critical component of the flexibility needed for adapting older buildings to new uses and reducing the amount of impervious surface dedicated to parking as part of both adaptive reuse and new development. Shared parking would be desirable in Elm Square, to provide more support for the businesses, and in any new developments, to reduce the amount of impervious surface area.

## INCLUSIONARY HOUSING

The Town of Groveland has an inclusionary housing by-law (Section 10.1) that requires affordable housing to meet certain criteria for the division of land into four or more lots or any project that results in a new increase of four or more units, including an assisted living facility. The percentage of affordable units required is based on the average sale price of the units relative to the Area Median Income (AMI).

In addition to the demographics of the community and its land use controls, a key component of the planning context is existing planning documents. The next section summarizes these documents and identifies key components that have an impact on this comprehensive plan.



## SUMMARY OF EXISTING PLANS

The Town of Groveland has sponsored many planning efforts, especially over the last few years. Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, the regional planning agency, has been a partner on some of the plans, in addition to sponsoring regional planning efforts that include Groveland as one of the 15 member towns.

This comprehensive plan assumes that the Town will continue to use and update these more specialized plans. This comprehensive plan also adopts the recommendations of each plan, unless superseded by a later update of either this plan or the underlying plans. As the plans are updated, the Town should ensure that new recommendations are consistent with the vision and goals of this comprehensive plan until it too is updated and amended.

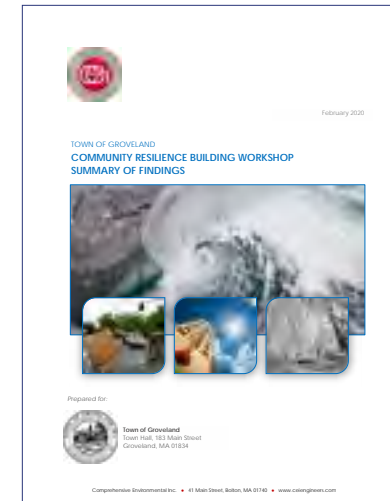
Some plans, such as the [Summary Report on the Comprehensive Plan for Groveland, Massachusetts \(1964\)](#) are included for their historic value. For the most part, the recommendations in these more recent plans have contributed to the planning process for this comprehensive plan. The contributions can be seen in the discussion of each of the focus areas in the following chapters.

### Town of Groveland Plans

#### 2021 Elm Square Parking Management Study (2021) *Stantec*

The goals for this plan were to improve parking in areas of higher demand and develop flexible parking standards, including encouraging shared parking. The study found that parking was available but not clearly identified, leading to a perception of low availability.

Recommendations include adding appropriate signage, connecting Elm Square with improved walking and biking infrastructure, changing the zoning to encourage better parking strategies, and addressing maintenance of public parking facilities.



#### Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings (2020)

*Town of Groveland and Comprehensive Environmental Inc.*

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs sponsors the Municipal Vulnerability Program to assist communities with preparing for the impacts of climate change. Participating in the program helps communities identify local vulnerabilities and provides information to support grant applications for additional planning or specific actions. The new Stormwater Management and Land Disturbance By-law was an outcome of this planning process.

Groveland's top three hazards are flooding, severe storms, and extreme temperatures. Vulnerabilities are categorized as infrastructure, societal, and environmental. Participants in the program identified Groveland's unique strengths and areas of concern. Finally, the report provides recommended actions and strategies. The top three recommendations are as follows:

- Manage the Johnson Creek floodplain. This would include management plans for the Johnson Creek Dam and the Johnson's Pond Dam.
- Perform comprehensive climate change vulnerability and resiliency assessment. This would build on the Town's Hazard mitigation Plan, summarized below.
- Assess the vulnerability/resiliency of the Town's stormwater management system.

#### 2020-2027 Open Space & Recreation Plan (2020)

*Town of Groveland and Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)*

An open space and recreation plan is a seven-year plan that is required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for eligibility for certain grants. The 2020-2027 OSRP identified four key goals, which have had a direct impact on this planning process:

- GOAL 1.** Protect Groveland's water resources, particularly its aquifers.
- GOAL 2.** Protect the small-town rural character of Groveland.
- GOAL 3.** Preserve natural resources, core habitats, open space, vistas, greenways, trails, especially land that buffers and enhances conservation land.
- GOAL 4.** Protect recreational land and acquire additional land.





### Elm Square Business District: Analysis of Economic and Market Conditions (2020)

*Groveland Planning Department, the Elm Square Committee, and FinePoint Associates; sponsored by the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (DHCD)*

#### Purpose

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD; now the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities or EOHLC) funded this plan as part of its Massachusetts Downtown Initiative program. FinePoint Associates analyzed the economic and market conditions and worked with the Elm Square Committee to evaluate the findings. The plan included a survey of property owners and businesses and interviews with selected stakeholders.



### Affordable Housing Implementation Plan: Creating Affordable Housing in Groveland (2020)

*Groveland Community Preservation Committee*

#### Purpose

This report is a follow-up to the Housing Production Plan and targets specific strategies for the production of affordable housing units. The three strategies are as follows:

- Develop a Homeowner Assistance (Buy-down) Program
- Partner with non-profit/for-profit developers to create affordable housing, including Habitat for Humanity. This would include issuing RFPs for publicly owned properties or rehabilitation of homes purchased with CPA funds.
- Convert single-family homes to multi-family housing or affordable units.

The two main goals are to help people move towards homeownership and to promote affordable housing that is in scale with the existing residential stock.

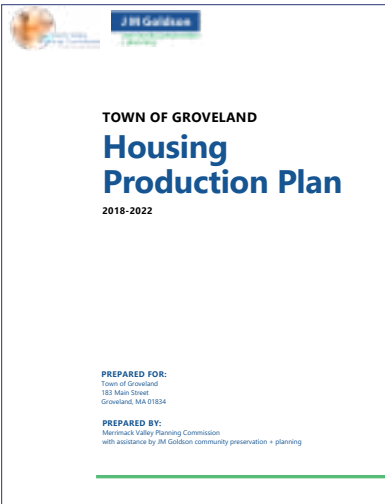


### Complete Streets Needs Assessment (2019)

*Stantec*

#### Purpose

This planning process led to a prioritization plan to improve safety, mobility, and accessibility throughout Groveland. The study also identified gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network. Priorities are roads that have heavy traffic and lack sidewalks and those that connect to schools, shops, and parks.



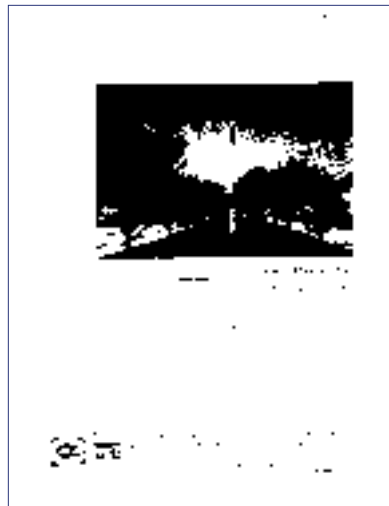
### Town of Groveland Housing Production Plan (2018-2022)

*Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) and JM Goldson*

#### Purpose

A Housing Production Plan (HPP) has two main purposes: a set of strategies and actions to assist a community with developing affordable housing and as a tool for future planning. This HPP was part of a regional effort to prepare plans for all fifteen municipalities in the Merrimack Valley Region. MVPC developed a Regional Housing Plan; the chapters were the individual plans for each community. The process in Groveland included two community workshops and a web-based engagement tool from Co-Urbanize.

The Town is in the process of updating this plan with MVPC.



### Draft 2000 Master Plan (2000-2001) *Cammett Engineering*

#### Purpose

The vision for Groveland as expressed in this draft was to “continue and maintain the Town’s reputation as a pleasant place to live and work.” This included a desire to balance land uses with a focus on the natural environment, historic resources, and benefits to residents.

The introductory chapter lists two basic assumptions:

- Assumption #1. As the northeast urban corridor continues to expand, small towns like Groveland will continue to experience demand for housing and associated community facilities. The Town will continue to be an attractive place to live for young families with school age children who desire a small-town atmosphere.
- Assumption #2. There is sufficient desire among local public officials, review boards and commissions, the business community, and private investors, to enhance and continue Groveland’s reputation as a desirable place to live.

Major features of the plan included the following:

- Continuation of low-density residential uses
- Placing more emphasis on housing for seniors
- Enhancement of downtown and Elm Park
- Continued protection of the Town’s natural resources and open space
- Developing needed parks and recreation areas



### Summary Report on the Comprehensive Plan for Groveland, Massachusetts (1964) *Economic Development Associates, Inc.*

#### Purpose

This document is a summary of the full Master Plan and is mostly of historical interest. At the time, Groveland was recognized as a residential community supporting Haverhill, North Andover, and the Boston region with a low possibility of in-town employment. Haverhill and Lawrence were stable areas of employment while North Andover and the Greater Boston Area were growth areas. Industrial was seen as the prime area of growth with electronics supplanting the textile and shoe manufacturing industries. The development of more housing was seen as critical to the increase in the tax base. However, if a connector between 495 in Haverhill and 95 in Boxford were built, that would change the opportunities for development in the town. At the time, the writers anticipated that the population in 1980 would be 11,000.



Regional Plans Applicable to Groveland



Merrimack Valley Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2016)  
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

Purpose

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 required communities to plan for potential hazards, in the form of a Multiple Hazards Mitigation Plan, in order to qualify for pre-disaster federal mitigation grants. This plan must be updated every five years and submitted to both MEMA and FEMA for review and approval. In 2016, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission assisted fourteen communities in the Merrimack Valley, including Groveland, with a joint **Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update**. The plan describes the risks, the vulnerability of each community to those risks, and the protections each community had at the time. The report also prepared a plan for each community.

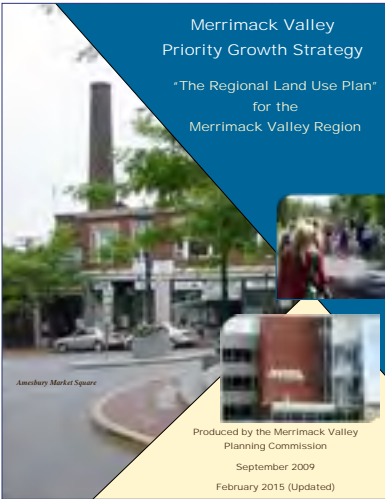
At the time, the Bagnall Elementary School was designated as the primary shelter for Groveland; the secondary shelter was Pentucket Gym. Warming stations at the Housing Authority Senior Community Room, the Fire Station, and Town Hall could assist up to 200 people, with generators at all three locations.

The most critical need was the repair of the Johnson's Creek Dam, which was in the design/permitting stage and drainage improvements, including the outfall replacement at the Main/School Street area.<sup>8</sup>

Groveland is most at risk from floods, winter storms, and Nor'easters.<sup>9</sup>

The recommended implementation actions in the **Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update**, as amended and updated are incorporated as part of this comprehensive plan. Recommendations are on pages 331-332 and focus on preparation for emergencies and mitigating the impact from flooding and high winds.

<sup>8</sup> MVPC, *Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*, 2016. pp. 11-12.  
<sup>9</sup> MVPC, *Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*, 2016. p. 140.



Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy (2015)  
Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

This update to the 2009 plan creates a regional strategy to define areas for economic growth and areas for preservation. The 2015 update includes state-identified areas for growth (Priority Development Areas) and protection (Priority Preservation Areas).

According to the plan, Groveland has no Priority Development Areas of state or regional significance. The two areas identified in the plan as Priority Development Areas are Groveland Village Center and Route 97.<sup>10</sup> The plan notes that the center has "water and sewer service and no environmental constraints."<sup>11</sup> The plan also states that the lack of sewer service along Route 97 will limit light industrial and commercial uses, and recommends considering whether public sewer service is an option.<sup>12</sup> The significant wetlands in this area are also a constraint.

This plan envisions Route 97 as a potential bicycle connection between Groveland's town center and Georgetown's.<sup>13</sup> The Town of Groveland was working on the Groveland Community Trail project at the time of publication; this trail opened in November 2022.

In the section of protected lands and lands suitable for protection, this report only mentions the Crane Pond Wildlife Management Area, missing the many other natural resources in Groveland, some owned by the Town and others by the Commonwealth.<sup>14</sup> The plan categorizes the types of land to be conserved, including Zone A and Zone II water supply recharge areas and prime farmlands and provides criteria for other strategies for the protection of open space and natural resources. These are likely to have been included in the Town's *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, which is more recent.

Other Plans

MVPC also prepared the **2018-2023 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**. This regional plan was completed pre-pandemic and its focus is the larger region rather than specific strategies for each town.

<sup>10</sup> Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, *Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy*, 2015, p. 30.  
<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 46.  
<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-47.  
<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 113.  
<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.81.

# Key Areas


























## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the planning process, Town staff, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and the consultant team identified three geographic focus areas that could be used as a lens to view the seven planning elements in Section 81D. Previous planning efforts and town actions supported the choice of these areas as those that were most likely to change over the next ten years; much of the rest of the town is either established residential neighborhoods or protected open space.

 Vision and Goals	 Land Use	 Housing	 Economic Development	 Natural and Cultural Resources
 Open Space and Recreation	 Services and Facilities	 Transportation	 Implementation	

The concerns below, identified at the beginning of the planning process, capture the interrelationships among the seven elements:

**Figure 13. Key Concerns, Focus Areas, and Section 81D**

Concern	81D Planning Element
Addressing conditions in Elm Square, including vacant or underutilized buildings, negative perceptions about parking availability and building conditions, and appropriate future uses within the area.	    
Providing housing that meets identified needs for affordability and the needs of both young people wanting to live in their community and seniors wanting to remain in their community.	  
Understanding the possibilities for housing and economic development along Route 97, the town's major artery, especially with the draw of the Community Trail.	    
Considering options for the town-owned land at 150 Center Street including protection of the aquifer, recreational opportunities, housing, and economic development.	  
Considering options for Valley Screw and what could happen if the Town acquired the site.	   
Linking the new Groveland Community Trail to these three areas with extended Complete Streets investments so the entire town can benefit from this new resource.	    

The public engagement process refined the options for addressing these concerns and led to the recommendations in the next four sections. The vision that follows is the outcome of that public process and expresses the anticipated future conditions. The four goals that follow the vision support it by addressing each of the focus areas and the rest of the town. The four sections that follow the goals expand upon each goal.



## COMMUNITY VISION

Sixty-eight people responded to the first online public survey, distributed in spring 2022. The survey tested the vision from the 2001 Draft Master Plan, an earlier planning effort, which was drafted as follows:

*The Groveland Master plan aims to continue and maintain the Town's reputation as a pleasant place to live and work. It seeks to do this through mutually supportive leadership, staff, boards, and committees who are committed to this goal. Implementation of the master plan will continue to balance land uses that are complementary to one another, and to surrounding communities in the Merrimack Valley. Existing and new uses should respect the natural environment, protect historic resources, and provide benefits to Groveland's residents.*

Over 70% of the 68 respondents to the survey either agree or strongly agree with the 2001 draft vision. The sentiments in that draft have been updated and incorporated into a new vision for 2035, based on community comment during this planning process.

This new vision establishes an organizing framework for the key goals below and the supporting actions in the Implementation Plan chapter.

In 2035, Groveland is a pleasant place to live, with expanded recreational opportunities at The Pines, connections to the Merrimack River, a revitalized Elm Square, and a new identity for Route 97 that includes a mix of uses. The Community Trail extends from the Merrimack River to the Georgetown line, and Groveland's neighborhoods have safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to the trail. 150 Center Street, also known as Strawberry Fields, and Valley Screw are now part of a mixed-use area that includes new trails, protection for the aquifer, and new uses that support community needs for housing, recreational space, and commercial uses. Existing neighborhoods have some smaller additional housing, and the Town and property owners protected more areas of open space and natural resources.



KEY GOALS

These four goals support the community vision by identifying the most critical areas of Town action and intervention.

**Goal 1. Enhance Elm Square and The Pines as community gathering places with separate identities and purposes, and link both to the Merrimack River and the Community Trail.**

Elm Square and The Pines are adjacent to the Merrimack River, but the river is an underutilized asset in terms of both views and access. Linking Elm Square and The Pines to each other with better pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Main Street creates opportunities for coordinated economic development activities and better access to the Merrimack River. Linking both to the Community Trail opens up significant recreational possibilities for the community and could draw more visitors to Groveland, thus supporting economic development.



Figure 14. Focus Area 1: Elm Square to The Pines

**Goal 2. Integrate Valley Screw site, Washington Street, 150 Center Street ("Strawberry Fields"), and Veasey Memorial Park into a network of open spaces, neighborhoods, and community amenities.**

This goal links four important areas: Valley Screw, 150 Center, the triangle of Washington, Center, and Salem Streets, and Veasey Memorial Park.

- **Valley Screw.** This is a Superfund site. The contaminated land has been cleaned up, but the building is vacant and contains building materials requiring abatement or remediation. The Town has the opportunity to acquire the site and use brownfield grants available to municipalities to demolish the building. This would open the site up to development possibilities.
- **150 Center Street (Strawberry Fields).** The Town already owns this 60-acre site (by comparison, The Pines is 25 acres). The property abuts existing trails in the Town-owned Center Street Greenway to the north and covers an aquifer. Other potential uses for this site that have been discussed are housing, commercial, and recreational. In the long-term, pedestrian and bicycle improvement along Center Street would connect the Groveland Community Trail to Washington Street, providing an important east-west connector in this area.
- **Washington, Center, and Salem Streets.** From an aerial view, these three streets form a triangle that contain a mix of municipal, recreational, historic, cultural, commercial, and residential uses, forming a potential small neighborhood center. The corner of Washington and Salem Streets includes properties that might, over time, change to support the neighborhood center.
- **Veasey Memorial Park.** This park provides access to Johnson's Pond and is an important connector to the Meadow Pond Reservation. Over time, pedestrian and bicycle connections from the park along Washington Street to Main Street would connect the main geographic areas to Shanahan Field, the upper end of the Community Trail, and Elm Square. The park is already the site of community and private events, and the Town is sponsoring a feasibility study for the park to evaluate future uses.

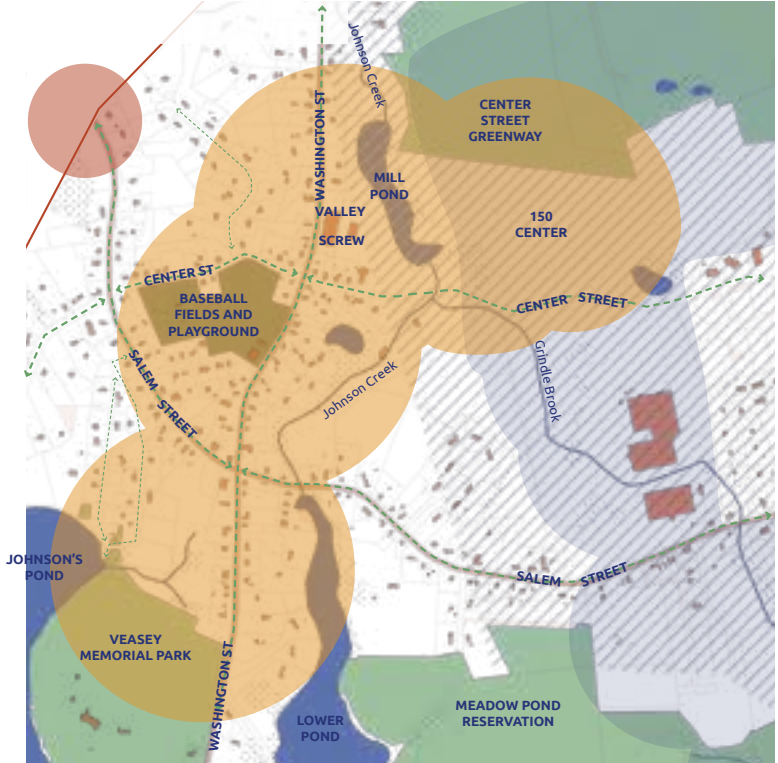


Figure 15. Focus Area 2: Valley Screw to Veasey Memorial Park

**Goal 3. Create a significant gateway to Groveland from Georgetown that balances open space with new mixed-use development along Route 97 and in the Industrial District.**

The Groveland Community Trail is a significant draw for this area. Both the trail and Route 97 link Georgetown and Haverhill. Route 97 is a regional connector: it meets with Route 133 in Georgetown and connects to I-95; in Elm Square it links to Route 113, which connects to Haverhill and West Newbury and eventually to I-495.

The Groveland Community trail will also be a regional connector. Its connection at the Georgetown line will connect to the Border to Boston trail and, with a future extension, will connect to the Bradford Rail Trail at the Haverhill end.

Route 97, already a mixed-use area of commercial, industrial, and residential uses, has potential to support additional commercial and residential uses. The Community Trail will act as a draw, and clustering mixed-use development in this area will address community concerns about larger residential developments in the smaller scale established neighborhoods. Protecting wetlands along Route 97 is important as is establishing development standards and design guidelines to ensure new development enhances the area.

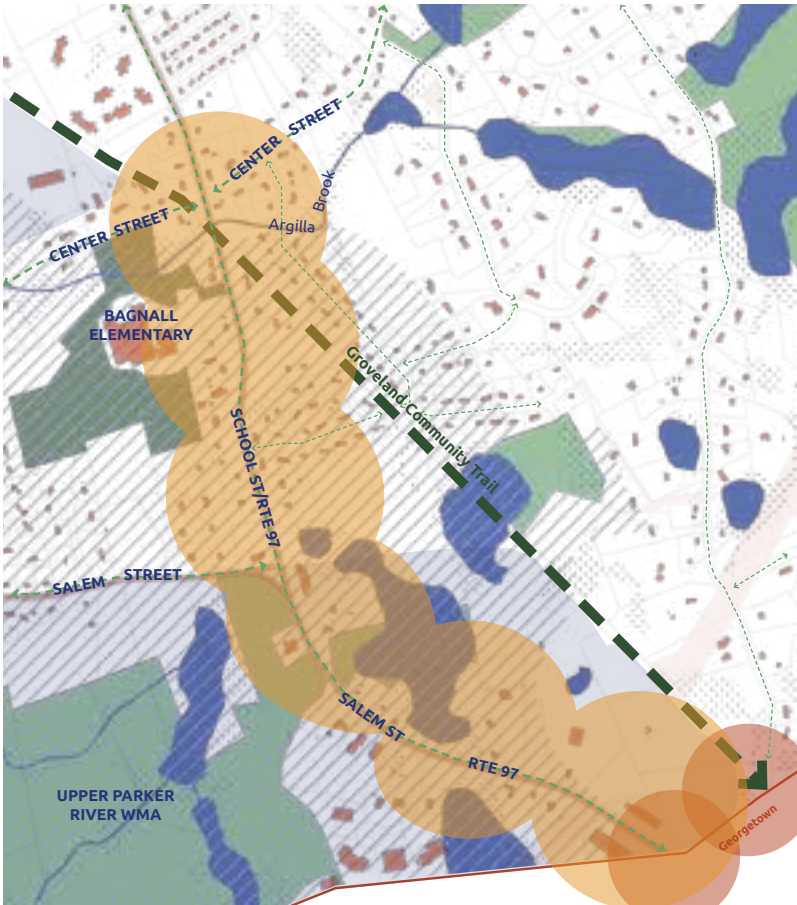


Figure 16. Focus Area 3: Route 97: Georgetown Line to Bagnall Elementary

**Goal 4. Preserve existing smaller-scale neighborhoods and protect open space and natural resources.**

This goal recognizes the established residential neighborhoods and the significant amount of open space within Groveland. Key recommendations include working with property owners to protect areas with natural resources in perpetuity, guiding new development in established neighborhoods to be sensitive to the scale and type of the existing housing, supporting existing small businesses, including home-based businesses, in the neighborhoods, and connecting neighborhoods to the Groveland Community Trail through improvements that make the roads safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

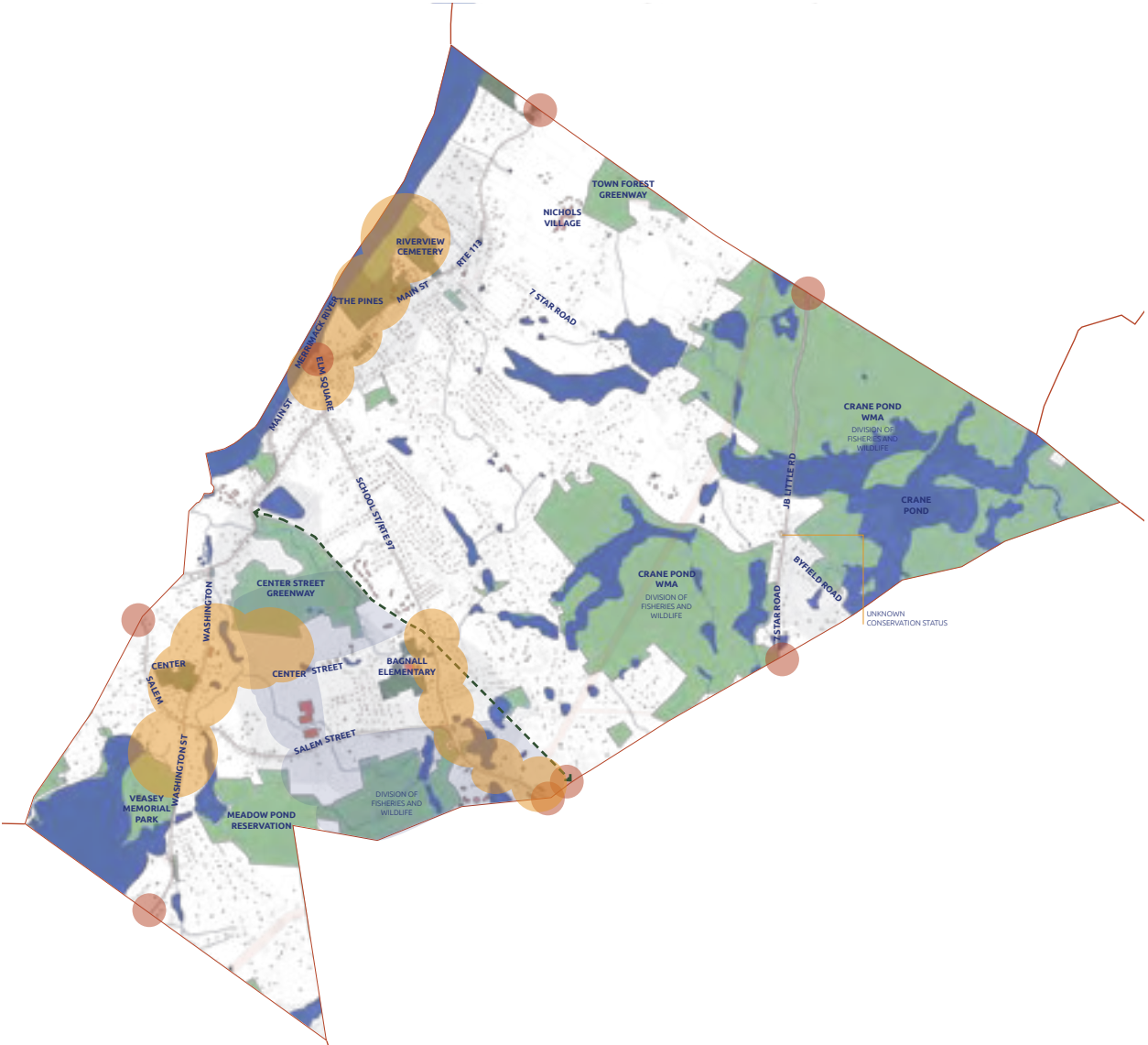
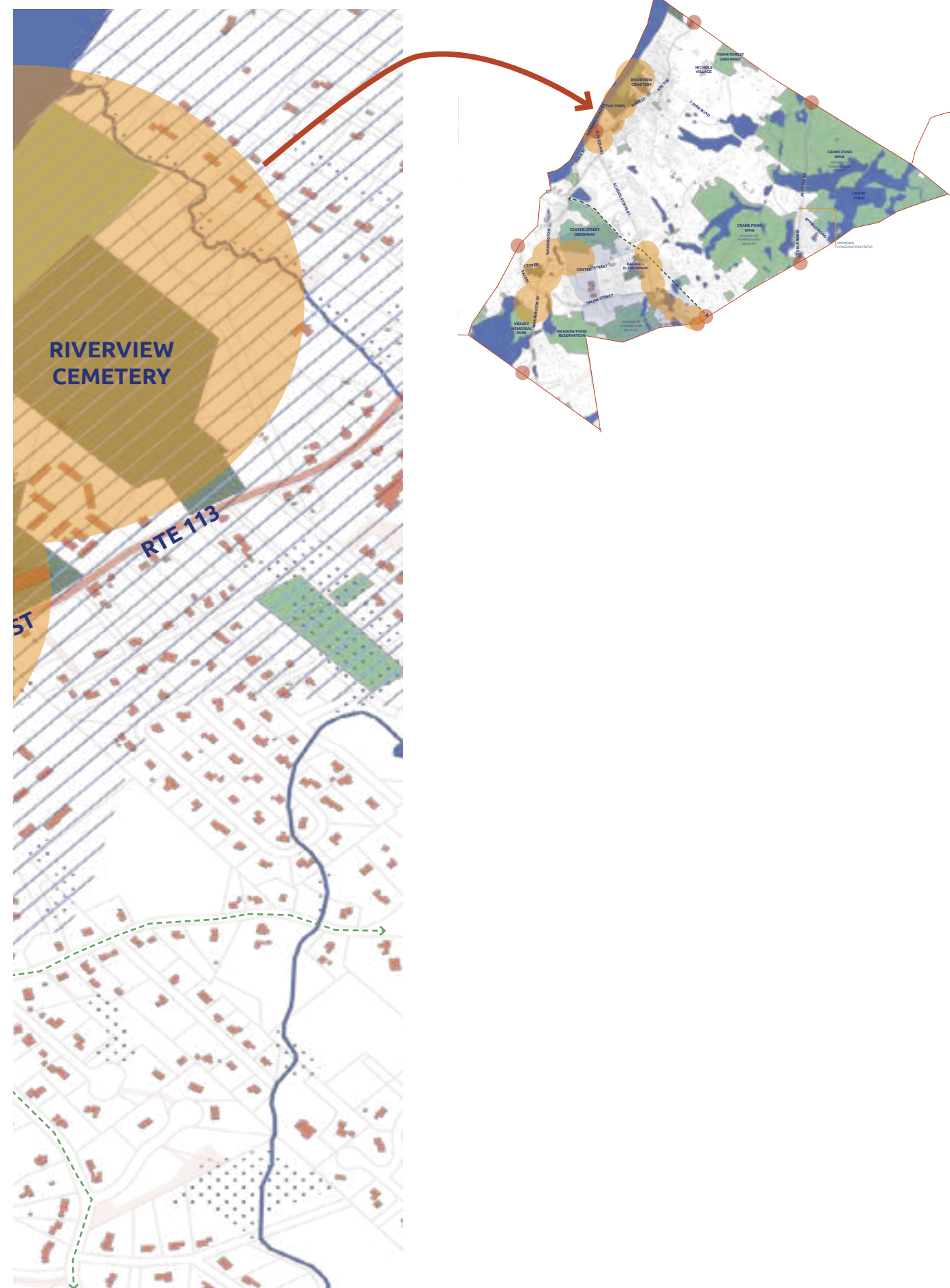


Figure 17. Town of Groveland



# ELM SQUARE AND THE PINES





# Elm Square and The Pines

## INTRODUCTION

Elm Square is considered by many to be representative of Groveland's "identity" as a place. The square embodies characteristics of a traditional town center with historic building stock, active commercial uses, integrated residential properties and distinct tree-lined public green space. Elm Square also serves a unique role as one of the primary gateways into the community and is situated along the Merrimack River at the intersection of two of the most well-traveled arteries in town – Route 113 (Main Street) and Rt 97 (Elm Park), which transition to Groveland Street, connecting across the bridge to Haverhill.

Just up Main Street from Elm Square is the Town Hall complex, the Langley-Adams Library and The Pines Recreation Area, which has a rich and storied history, having served as an amusement park, a dirt-track speedway and now home to variety of athletic facilities, riverfront access and special community events such as Groveland Day and The Pines Speedway Reunion. Photographs of the historic amphitheater, situated in its natural setting, certainly elicit interest in the possibility of creating a new outdoor cultural venue.

While both The Pines and Elm Square have immediate proximity to the Merrimack River, there is little visual connectivity and limited access. With Groveland's focus in recent years on expanding its network of community trails, there seems to be a marvelous opportunity to enhance connections between these two focal points, the riverfront and other surrounding open space assets.

## KEY CONCERNS

Elm Square, The Pines and the Main Street corridor connecting them present numerous opportunities for a more cohesive and enjoyable public realm. A few challenges that exist today that should be addressed include:

- The safety and experiential qualities of the connection for bicyclists and pedestrians between these two nodes, which is currently challenged by a roadway network that places an emphasis on accommodating vehicular traffic.
- The perception that parking is challenging in the Elm Square area, and the impact this has on supporting existing local businesses and the potential for future mixed-use opportunities.
- The overall quality of pedestrian environments in the square and the challenge of taking advantage of the riverfront as an amenity which, if made more accessible, could make Elm Square more of a destination.
- The desire to enhance the historic qualities of the village center area both in terms of preserving traditional building stock and celebrating the qualities of its unique open space.
- Providing the square with an "identity" that includes hosting special events, more opportunities for passive recreation and the accommodation of activities that bring vibrancy to its streetscapes, such as outdoor dining.



## Relationship to History and Culture

Groveland’s identity has long been rooted in the Elm Square area. During the Colonial Period (1675-1775), as settlement increased, Groveland emerged as a Second Parish (or East Parish) of Bradford. Two distinct focal points developed with mills and associated housing constructed in the Johnson’s Creek area and the village of Groveland taking form along the Merrimack River west of the intersection of King and Main Streets. Groveland Village included a meetinghouse (1726) as well as a school, commons and a burial ground. With the onset of the Federal Period (1775-1830) the Main Street corridor, along the southern bank of the river, continued to serve as a major transportation route, while other important links, including School Street and King Street, extended from the village of Groveland to the south, leading to the center of Georgetown. At this time, the civic, commercial and institutional focus of the community was established at Groveland Village.

The Early Industrial Period (1830-1870) brought the railroads and continued prosperity and a network of streets, including Common Street (Elm Park) developed to connect the meetinghouse village to the river’s edge. Direct connection to Haverhill followed, with a chain ferry being supplanted by an iron bridge, but this had little impact on development patterns in Groveland Center.

In the early 1900s, The Pines recreation area was developed by the Bay State Street Railway on Main Street at the east end of the center village, before being purchased by the Town in the 1950s.<sup>15</sup>



Image Credit: Groveland Historical Society  
<https://grovelandhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/pines-amphitheater.jpg>

<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Historical Commission, *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Groveland*, 1997.



## Relationship to Natural Resources

It is evident that the preservation of Groveland’s abundant natural resources remains one of the highest priorities of community stakeholders. The ability to access and enjoy these resources is what has driven recent efforts to expand and enhance the network of community trails. Future development opportunities will undoubtedly be evaluated for their impact on the natural environment as well as their contributions to its preservation and expansion.

The area that encompasses Elm Square and The Pines offers a multitude of opportunities to enhance the appreciation of natural resources. These range from improving connectivity to existing trails to providing greater visual and recreational access to the Merrimack River. Both passive and active recreation activities are certainly present and the refinement, diversification and increase in accessibility to these resources can only create a more holistic and vibrant community experience.



## Relationship to Open Space and Recreation

Part of the effort to protect conservation lands, enhance core habitats and preserve natural resources involves steering future development to areas of town that already have sufficient infrastructure in place. The 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan produced for the Town of Groveland by the Merrimack Valley Planning Association recommends creating incentives for mixed-use development in “downtown” or built-up areas.<sup>16</sup>

That said, this must be appropriately balanced with the widely expressed goal to protect the small-town rural character of Groveland. Controlling growth by focusing on infill development and adaptive reuse can help achieve open space preservation goals while also enhancing the unique character of village centers and surrounding neighborhoods.



Dog Park at The Pines  
Image credit: Innes Associates

<sup>16</sup> MVPC, *2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, 2020.



### Relationship to Economic Development



Elm Square  
Image credit: Innes Associates

Promoting increased opportunities for mixed-use development with more diverse housing options in the Elm Square area could be beneficial for supporting commercial / retail leases. A recent study of economic and market conditions in the Elm Square Business District by FinePoint Associates highlighted some of the barriers to economic development, prioritizing zoning challenges, the approvals process, parking access and a lack of town center activities as concerns to be addressed.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to promoting a more balanced mixed-use focus for the square and immediate surrounds, place-making tenets should be a critical component of rethinking the village. The activation of open space – including connectivity to the river – together with enhancements to pedestrian environments and storefronts, will draw people to the center.

The refinement of cultural and recreational opportunities at The Pines can also drive economic development in the Elm Square area if the synergy between these two proximate nodes is enhanced through efforts such as the integration of Complete Streets along the Main Street corridor.

### Relationship to Housing



Elm Square and its surrounding neighborhoods are ripe for more diverse housing options. Changes to zoning that allow for the thoughtful integration of multi-family dwellings could serve to enliven the village center and provide more affordable opportunities for singles, seniors and other demographic groups that aren’t served adequately by Groveland’s existing housing stock and want to remain in the community.

The repositioning of vacant and underutilized buildings in the square to allow for the incorporation of residential units, particularly on upper floors, would be a “win-win.” This strategy, coupled with allowing for the conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit housing, could compliment appropriately scaled infill housing as a way to address housing needs and support commercial uses.

<sup>17</sup> FinePoint Associates , *Elm Square Business District: Analysis of Economic and Market Conditions*, 2020.



### Relationship to Mobility

As a primary gateway into the community and an historic village center, Elm Square should be celebrated as a “place” that is synonymous with the Town of Groveland. Enhancements to pedestrian environments and bicycle accessibility that come with the integration of Complete Streets would go a long way towards facilitating access and promoting a sense of arrival. A careful management of vehicular movements, the development of a wayfinding signage program and the creative rethinking of parking strategies are all critical pieces of the equation.

Parking availability appears to be adequate. However, the perceived lack of parking may be due to inadequate visual connections between the businesses and available parking. The assumption that there is no parking may discourage potential customers and new development.<sup>18</sup>

Multi-modal connections to surrounding areas, including The Pines and Shanahan Field, via the Community Trail and other modes, as well as direct connection to the riverfront, could make the square a true focal point for the community.

Route 18 provided by Merrimack Valley Transit (MeVa) runs from Town Hall/River Pines Drive along Main Street to the Haverhill Plaza Shopping Plaza, past Riverside Park, Holy Family Hospital at Merrimack Valley, and ends at the Washington Square Transit Center in downtown Haverhill. The Haverhill commuter rail stop is a five-minute walk from the stop. The bus starts at 6 am in Haverhill and runs every hour until 6 pm. The journey takes about 20 minutes.



### Relationship to Town Services and Facilities

Maintaining a long-term Capital Improvement Plan should allow the Town to continue to evaluate and prioritize improvements to Town Services and Facilities. The Town Hall complex includes the Langley-Adams Library and is adjacent to The Pines recreational area. This area could also be a location for accommodating a community center or senior life center and for expanding the library. Having a facility that can host cultural, social, educational programming in close proximity to complexes such as the Groveland Housing Authority’s River Pines and Nichols Village could be beneficial and create synergy with The Pines and Elm Square.

<sup>18</sup> Stantec, *Elm Square Parking Management Study*, 2021.



As part of long-term planning, the Town should continue to evaluate the need to acquire and reserve land for future town facilities. Requiring developers of larger mixed-use projects to help analyze and address this need would be another strategy.



Relationship to Land Use

A review of zoning criteria and the approvals process for Elm Square and abutting neighborhoods would be a good first step to ensure the alignment of current regulations with Land Use goals for the area. Creating incentives for mixed-use to encourage diversification of housing options as well as restaurant uses in Elm Square should be considered.

One specific initiative that continually surfaced in discussions with stakeholders was the desire to relocate the post office and redevelop the gas station site on Main Street at the bridge, facilitating access to the river. In addition, flexible parking standards that incorporate shared parking and reduced parking ratios could create an incentive for both adaptive reuse and infill development in the village center.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Goal

**Enhance Elm Square and The Pines as community gathering places with separate identities and purposes, and link both to the Merrimack River and the Community Trail.**

The second survey tested an earlier iteration of this goal:

Link Elm Square and The Pines to the Merrimack River.  
Enhance access to the river and connections between both spaces and the Community Trail.

Out of 67 respondents, 22 or 33% ranked this goal as their first priority and 25 or 37% ranked the goal as their second priority. This combination (70%) makes this goal the most important goal based on the responses received from the survey.

Note that the survey tested only a limited set of strategies for this action; the results of the survey should indicate the level of interest at the time of the survey. This is a snapshot in time from those who chose to take the survey and is not statistically significant.



## Strategies/Actions

The following strategies and actions are grouped by area of focus (Elm Square, The Pines, and the connections between them). The supporting actions are grouped by time period, which also reflects the priority (short-term, medium-term, and long-term).

### Elm Square

#### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

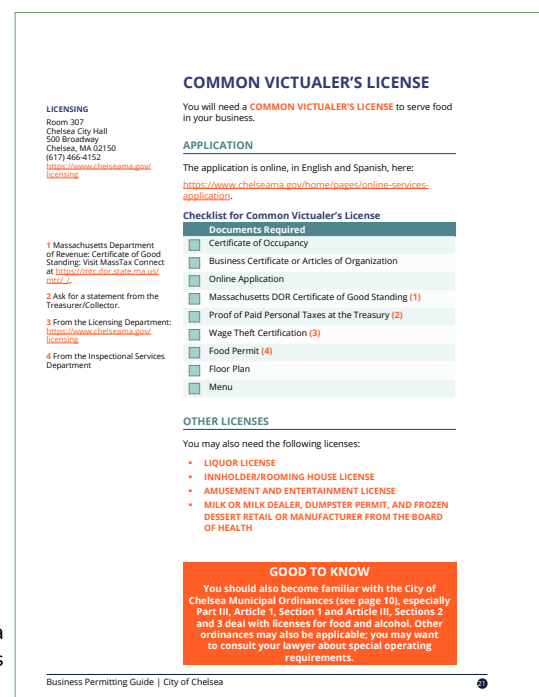
**1.1.** Review existing Business and R-3 Districts to ensure that the Table of Uses, Table of Dimensional Requirements, parking requirements (including shared parking for new construction), and development standards or design guidelines are compatible with the desired economic development and housing activities in this area, including mixed-use buildings (smaller-scale multifamily over commercial). Identify components of the by-law that need to be changed and begin the process for community discussion around zoning changes.

**1.2.** Review the **Town of Groveland Development Permitting Guide** (MVPC, 2016) to evaluate how the existing permitting process can be simplified and communicated to desired new businesses, such as restaurants.

#### PRECEDENT: CITY OF CHELSEA PERMITTING GUIDE

The City of Chelsea sponsored the development of a permitting guide to assist small businesses with the permitting process. The guide focused on the use of checklists and provided links to resources for different types of businesses.

Image credit: City of Chelsea and Innes Associates



Top: gas station (left) and US Post Office (right).  
Middle: Gap between buildings overlooking the Merrimack River.  
Bottom: Rear of gas station and riverbank; Elm Square in distance.

Image credit: Innes Associates

**1.3.** Improve public parking on School Street with striped parking spaces, landscaping, lighting, and signage to encourage people to park there for events at Elm Square.

**1.4.** Identify business and property owners in Elm Square and along Main Street who may be interested in quarterly meetings about Elm Square and possible improvements.

**1.5.** Develop a storefront improvement program to address any combination of storefronts, building façades, signage, lighting, landscaping, outdoor dining, and parking areas. Consider a matching grant or no interest loan to encourage participation.

**1.6.** Begin discussions with the owners of the gas station and US Post Office site about redeveloping those properties to link Elm Square with waterfront views of the Merrimack River. Consider a land use study of the two properties that examines uses (such as a café or restaurant, parking, and green space) that create a defined gateway to Groveland from Haverhill and establishes a continuous link of green space from the Merrimack River to Gardner Street.

**1.7.** Discuss the use of historic tax credits with property owners for the rehabilitation of existing historic buildings.

#### PRECEDENT: TOWN OF ASHLAND STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Ashland established a grant program with an initial appropriation from Town Meeting and the subsequent establishment of a revolving fund. Applicants can receive a grant for up to 50% of the costs, with a cap of \$5,000. The Town developed requirements for the type of work and the criteria for approval.

<https://www.ashlandmass.com/669/Business-Incentive-Programs>

The link includes a description of the program and the application form.



Image credit: Innes Associates





Riverside promenade  
Image credit: Edible Philly/Sarah Maiellano  
<https://ediblephilly.ediblecommunities.com/things-to-do/new-hope-pennsylvania-day>

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 1.8.** Work with property and business owners along Elm Park and Main Street to develop shared parking strategies across adjacent lots.
- 1.9.** Move forward with the recommendations of the land use study for the Elm Square-Merrimack River link. Consider whether the improvements can be undertaken by the private market or require public intervention, such as acquisition of the properties by the Town. Identify a site for the relocation of the US Post Office if it cannot be integrated into the planned redevelopment. If the Town does acquire the properties, develop a Request for Interest/Proposals to identify a private developer as a partner.
- 1.10.** Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.
- 1.11.** If the business group has been meeting regularly, discuss the formation of a Business Improvement District to support programming, seasonal decorations, beautification strategies, and shared marketing.

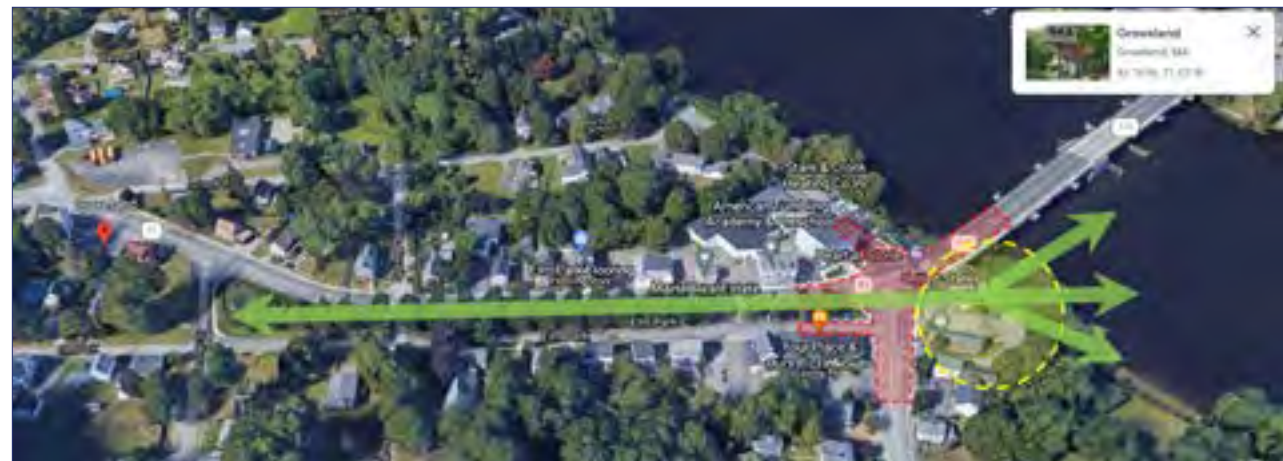


Figure 18. Connecting Elm Square to the Merrimack River

#### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

- 1.12.** Complete redevelopment of the combined gas station and US Post Office parcels based on the recommendations of the land use study. This may include continuing to work with the property owners to coordinate the development of both parcels according to community goals or acquisition of the properties by the Town and disposition via a Request for Proposal to a developer who can complete the project.
- 1.13.** If property owners show interest in the use of historic tax credits, submit an application to place Elm Park on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### The Pines

- 1.14.** Construct the skatepark, splash pad, and tennis and pickleball court, recently approved by the 2023 Town Meeting and funded by the Community Preservation Act.

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 1.15.** Conduct a feasibility study for some of the community desires for the Pines, including walking trails along and new access to the Merrimack River for boating and recreation. The plan should include other components such as the following: signs for existing trails, expanding the trail network, and adding an amphitheater or other performance venue, expanding bathrooms, and parking. Include the availability of grants and a timeline for phasing the improvements in the study.

#### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

- 1.16.** Begin implementing the recommendations of the feasibility study for The Pines.

I think you should consider an “outdoor fitness trail” for the Pines. [Have] numbered fitness obstacles throughout the path along the river for adults (pull up bars, stretching station, small rope climb, etc.)

Quote from Survey 2.

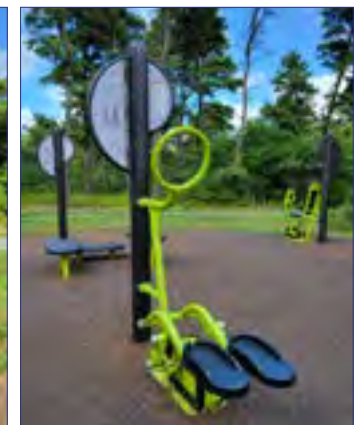


Image credit: Innes Associates



Examples of amphitheaters in park settings

Image credit: City of Laguna Nigel (left) and Swarthmore (right)

<https://www.cityoflagunaniguel.org/Facilities/Facility/Details/Crown-Valley-Park-6> and <https://www.swarthmore.edu/campus-tour/scott-outdoor-amphitheater>



I used to love seeing Christmas/Holiday lights in Elm park 35 years ago when I moved to town. I would love to see that return and brighten everyone's day with a drive through. With the LEDs, this could be affordable, especially with a few sponsors!!

Quote from Survey 2.



Market Square, Newburyport  
Image credit: Innes Associates



Groveland Community Trail at Main Street  
Image credit: Innes Associates

## Connections

### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

**1.17.** Work with the Groveland Recreation Committee to develop goals for programming and events in Elm Square and investigate the potential for linked events between Elm Square and The Pines. Programming for Elm Square could include farmer's markets, seasonal activities, concerts, and game areas (bocce, etc.). The Committee may need additional capacity and resources for this additional task and may consider experimenting with pop-up events and activities as part of a wider community programming effort.

**1.18.** Develop a comprehensive wayfinding signage program that helps "brand" the Elm Square area, including signs welcoming people to the square, informational signage about the history, and directional signage to public parking and the Community Trail. This could include a "Welcome to Groveland" sign on the bridge from Haverhill.

**1.19.** Working with the Town's existing Complete Streets Program, prioritize improvements in Elm Square and along Main Street between Elm Square and The Pines. The focus of improvements should be to make the area more accessible to bicycles, calm vehicular movements, and improve sidewalks and crosswalks to encourage pedestrian activity between The Pines and Elm Square. Improvements could include moving power lines underground between Gardner at Elm Park and Elm Park at Main Street.

**1.20.** Integrate a public street furniture plan for Elm Square into the Complete Streets improvements. This should include bike storage, benches, trash and recycling bins, and continuing the current pedestrian-scaled lighting. The Town could also consider a change of materials as sidewalks are reconstructed to provide an identity for the streetscape that is unique to Groveland.

### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

**1.21.** Implement Complete Streets improvements between Elm Square and The Pines.

### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

**1.22.** Begin to link Complete Streets improvements in Elm Square to Shanahan Field and the Community Trail.

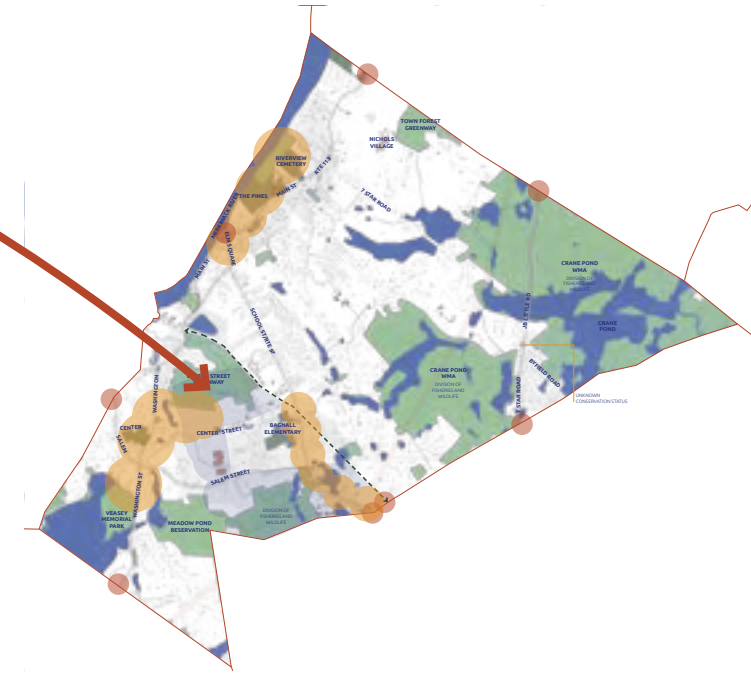
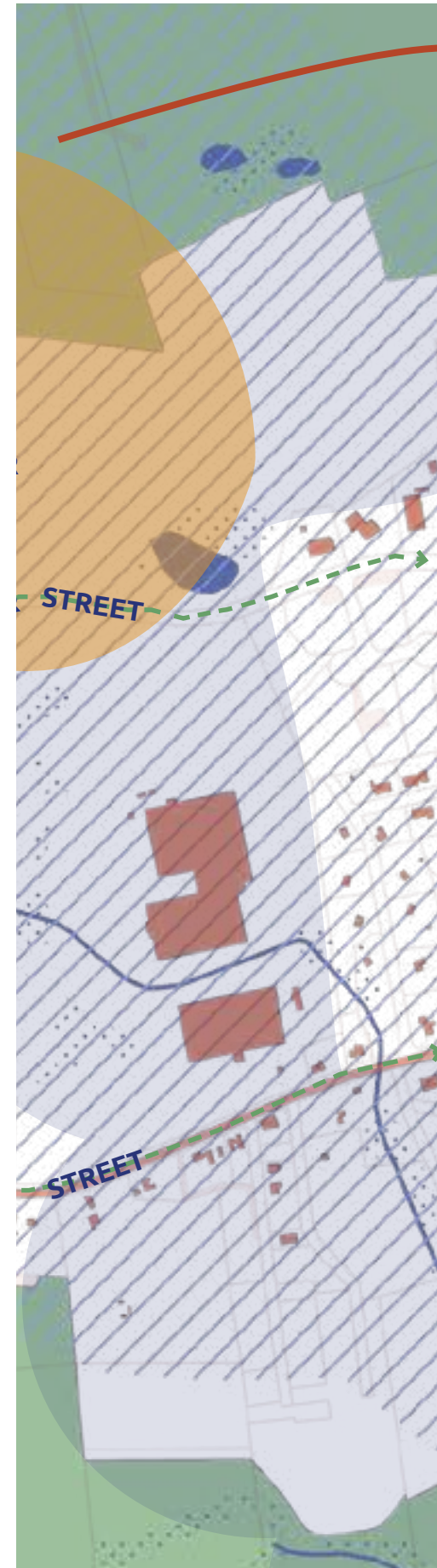
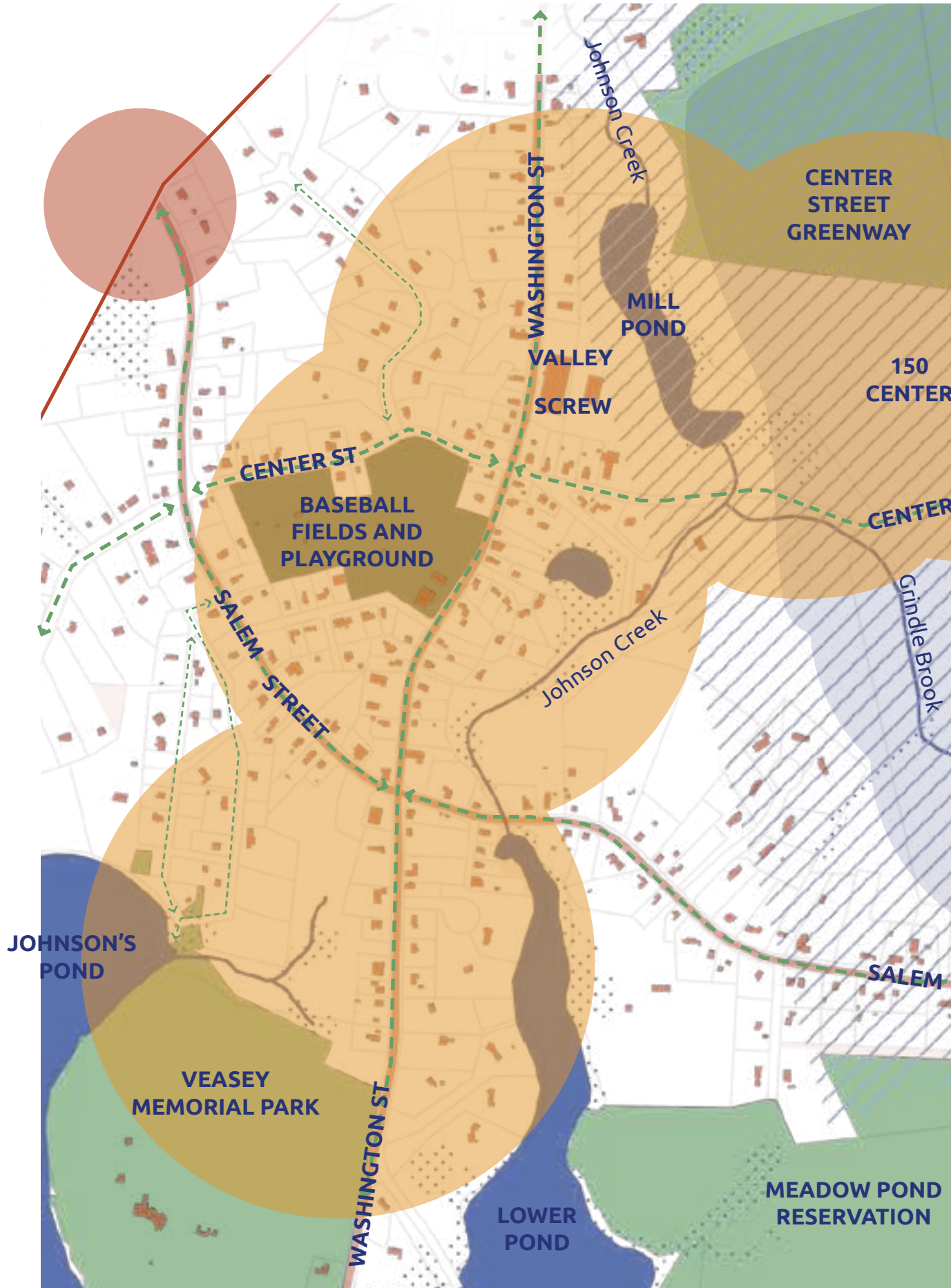


**Figure 19. Gateway**

Entry into Groveland from Haverhill (top) and intersection of Routes 113 and 97 in Elm Square (bottom).  
Image Credit: Google Earth (top), Form + Place (bottom) Note that some of the business locations are no longer accurate.



# VALLEY SCREW TO VESEY MEMORIAL PARK



# Valley Screw to Veasey Memorial Park

## INTRODUCTION

Anchored in its storied history as a mill village, South Groveland – more specifically the areas adjacent to the intersection of Washington and Center Streets - holds enormous potential to become a vibrant community node for the surrounding neighborhoods. The area is also home to an important network of open spaces and conservation land, including Johnson’s Creek which collects nearby Brindle Brook and Argilla Brook as part of the Merrimack River watershed. Johnson’s Creek also serves to link the Center Street Greenway with Meadow Pond Reservation, Veasey Memorial Park and Johnson’s Pond to the south, some of Groveland’s most valued recreation areas.

Layered on top of this important watershed is a history of environmental challenges, including the Groveland Wells Superfund Site which impacted the town’s water supply until the EPA built a groundwater pump and treatment system. The main source of contaminants came from the Valley Manufacturing Products Company building (a.k.a. Valley Screw), located along Washington Street near the intersection of Center Street, which now represents a marvelous opportunity for the town in terms of goals to revitalize the area. In conjunction with the adjacent 60(+)-acre town-owned parcel at 150 Center Street, there is the potential for development that can address the town’s needs for increased housing options, public amenities and town facilities, as well as neighborhood commercial uses.

Perhaps most importantly, development must be scaled appropriately for this sensitive context, balancing the need to protect the town’s aquifer – 150 Center Street site is an important recharge area – and working to expand the Community Trail network to connect to the many important open space resources along the Washington Street corridor.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> MVPC, 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2020.

## KEY CONCERNS

If done thoughtfully, the South Groveland focus area, which extends from the 150 Center Street and Valley Screw sites to Veasey Memorial Park, holds great potential for integrating future development with enhancement of the town’s network of open spaces. There are a few key challenges that should be addressed to ensure the appropriate balance is achieved, including:

- Protecting the aquifer by studying the potential impacts of development on recharge areas.
- Demolishing existing building on the Valley Screw site to prepare this key location along the Washington Street corridor for potential redevelopment.
- Investigate purchase of unused church property and former EPA Filtration building for community use.
- Ensuring the meaningful preservation of open space to protect natural resources and increase recreational opportunities, including expanding the Community Trails network.
- Continuing to upgrade important thoroughfares using Complete Streets principles to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians and improve connectivity to the Veasey Park and Johnson’s Pond area.
- Studying the best way to integrate commercial and residential uses into the existing neighborhood in a sensitive way.





## Relationship to History and Culture



South Groveland Fire Station and Washington Hall  
Image credit: Innes Associates



46 Washington Street  
Image credit: Form + Place

In the late 1700's, with the introduction of water power and the inception of industry beyond agriculture-related mills, a mill village consisting of a store, schoolhouse and housing emerged along Washington Street. The Johnson's Creek area, which was characterized by fulling mills, saw and grist mills continued to evolve with the prosperity of manufacturing and the arrival of the railroad in 1852. Early mills were replaced by a brass foundry which was subsequently purchased by E.J.M. Hale of Haverhill in 1859 who converted the existing factory to manufacture flannel and added two additional mills. Hale played a major role in building the "factory village," constructing substantial mill housing and helping to establish two of the three new churches in the area. Additional stores and a post office were established near the intersection of Salem and Washington Streets.

By the 1890's, manufacturing now focused on the expanding woolen mills in South Groveland, and the mill properties were sold to Benjamin Parker Hale and Arthur D. Veasey. Additional commercial and institutional structures were built, including Washington Hall. Major changes, however, occurred in the early 1900's with the closing of the woolen mills (1928) and their demolition or destruction by fire, which led to substantial population loss. Only a brick storage house at 46 Washington Street remains to this day.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Massachusetts Historic Commission, *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Groveland*, 1997.



## Relationship to Natural Resources

South Groveland has an important collection of natural, cultural and historic resources that should be proactively preserved and celebrated. Historic buildings, such as Washington Hall, believed to be one of the first buildings built in the United States as a community center,<sup>21</sup> was endangered until extensive renovations were undertaken in 1999 using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. Other structures of merit, like the brick storage house on Washington Street, which represents the last of the historic mill buildings along Johnson's Creek, should remain a focus of preservation efforts to avoid the fate of Pike's Store, thought to be the oldest continually operated store in the United States until it was closed and demolished in 1982.<sup>22</sup>

Natural resources in the area will continue to require stewardship as well. The 2018 efforts to clean up access at the Johnson's Pond boat launch using CPA funds is an example of the type of effort that should continue to be tracked and prioritized. Another example is the *Watershed Management Plan* completed by the Conservation Commission in 2019 and the *Johnson's Creek Watershed Plan* (Comprehensive Environmental Inc.) in 2020. There are numerous similar opportunities to enhance the appreciation of natural resources in the area, such as Mill Pond, located along Johnson's Creek (behind the brick storage building) that could be cleaned up and made accessible for recreational uses (swimming, etc.).

<sup>21</sup> [grovelandhistoricalsociety.org](http://grovelandhistoricalsociety.org)

<sup>22</sup> [grovelandhistoricalsociety.org](http://grovelandhistoricalsociety.org)



## Relationship to Open Space and Recreation

Open spaces and opportunities for recreation are indeed abundant throughout South Groveland. The recent focus on the development of the Community Trail from the Georgetown line to Main Street, and its planned extension along the river to Bradford, highlights the potential to connect with the many open space assets along Johnson’s Creek. While the Veasey Memorial Park at 48 acres and Meadow Pond Reservation at 78 acres are much smaller than the 2,013-acre Crane’s Pond Wildlife Management Area, these town-owned and managed assets are major amenities accessible to all residents and particularly the nearby neighborhoods along the Washington Street corridor.<sup>23</sup>

Feedback from stakeholders, during the public outreach component of this planning effort, emphasized the importance of creating additional programmable open space for community use. Ideas for integrating town recreational amenities onto the 150 Center Street site ranged from a public pool to a splash pad to an ice-skating rink. The common theme was providing a community “place” for gathering that would complement the facilities found at other Groveland recreational areas such as The Pines.



## Relationship to Economic Development

The Valley Screw and 150 Center Street properties certainly present a unique opportunity for thoughtful development within the Town of Groveland. A new village center featuring commercial uses, including local retail, a small market and restaurants, could complement new residential typologies and integrated public amenities. A mixed-use approach to developing these parcels would present an opportunity for Groveland to diversify its tax base while addressing housing needs.

The centralized location of this potential community node inherently gives it access to so many of Groveland’s existing resources, ranging from the Community Trail and open space assets already noted, to institutional facilities like the Bagnall Elementary School, just a short walk down Center Street. The character of a revitalized South Groveland village would be unique from the Elm Square area, as was the case in Groveland’s early years when two centers thrived – a factory village and a civic / institutional (meetinghouse) village.

<sup>23</sup> MVPC, 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2020.



## Relationship to Housing

Among the specific strategies outlined in the 2020 Affordable Housing Implementation Plan, compiled by the Groveland Community Preservation Committee, was a recommendation to partner with non-profit or for-profit developers, through the issuance of an RFP for publicly owned properties, to create affordable housing. This report built on findings and strategies outlined in the 2018-2022 Housing Production Plan, which noted that Groveland is growing at a rate greater than the region and that the composition of households – more single-person households and fewer households with children – is also evolving. In addition, the age composition of Groveland’s population is anticipated to change with a 136% increase in the number of older (over 65) adults.<sup>24</sup>

These trends are not uncommon in similar communities and should help steer housing policy to ensure the accommodation of a diverse demographic, including those who have lived in Groveland for years and want to remain a part of the community.



## Relationship to Mobility

With the potential for mixed-use development in South Groveland, Complete Streets will be a critical ingredient for the well-traveled corridors in this part of town. Center Street and Salem Street are important connectors to Route 97, Bagnall Elementary School and Georgetown, and the Washington Street corridor essential for safe access to the Veasey Memorial Park / Meadow Pond Reservation area as well as Main Street, Shanahan Park and the Merrimack River. Well-designed roadways promote efficient connections through town and support economic growth and passive recreation.

South Groveland’s geographic location makes it a prime candidate for exploring micro-transit options as well. While enhanced bicycle and pedestrian environments will come with Complete Streets, there is no public bus service to South Groveland. One option might be to connect a service down Washington Street to MEVA’s Route 18 service. Another option would be on-demand rides to specific shopping or service areas, or to the commuter rail in Haverhill. The Groveland Council on Aging provides these services through van transportation for seniors, which helps to combat social isolation for that age group.

<sup>24</sup> MVPC & J.M. Goldson, *Town of Groveland Housing Production Plan (2018-2022)*, 2018.



Johnson’s Pond boat launch at the entrance to Veasey Park (top)  
Kayak storage (bottom)  
Image credit: Innes Associates



### Relationship to Town Services and Facilities

A Senior Community Life Center is a quality of life need that was identified many years ago and was included in the 2001 Draft Master Plan, which identified health, wellness and nutrition goals and called for a Senior Center Feasibility Study. The Center Street / Washington Street area could be an ideal location for this type of facility given its relatively central location and its proximity to other town assets.

If the town chooses to establish a public private partnership with a developer to reposition the 150 Center Street site, or portions thereof, incorporating a facility for the Council on Aging, a community gathering “pavilion” and/or a location for passive or light active recreation should be a high priority.



### Relationship to Land Use

A high percentage of parcels along the Salem Street and Center Street corridors between Route 97 and Washington Street are zoned as industrial. While multi-family and mixed-use developments can be achieved through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay, other housing typologies such as single family and two family / duplex dwellings, as well as accessory apartments, are not permitted. Commercial uses, including certain retail establishments and restaurants, require a special permit and site plan review, which could prove to be a disincentive. A comprehensive review of zoning in this part of town, along with mixed-use feasibility studies on key parcels, could help facilitate the type of development desired through simplifying the approvals process.

The integration of design guidelines into the zoning regulations would help set expectations for architecture, site planning, open space and neighborhood connectivity and have the effect of creating more certainty for both the community and potential developers up front.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As with The Pines / Elm Square area, this geographic focal point has many of the intersecting layers that influence community planning. With abundant historical and natural resources in and around the area and the opportunity to re-vision some rather significant parcels, ensuring the appropriate balance of development and enhanced open space is achieved is essential.



### Goal

**Integrate the Valley Screw site, Washington Street, 150 Center Street (“Strawberry Fields”), and Veasey Memorial Park into a network of open spaces, neighborhoods, and community amenities.**

The second survey tested an earlier iteration of this goal:

Integrate Valley Screw and 150 Center Street into a network of open spaces, neighborhoods, and community amenities..

Out of 68 respondents, 15 or 22% ranked this goal as their first priority and 18 or 26% ranked the goal as their second priority.

This combination (49%) makes this goal the second most important goal based on the responses received from the survey.

Note that the survey tested only a limited set of strategies for this action; the results of the survey should indicate the level of interest at the time of the survey. This is a snapshot in time from those who chose to take the survey and is not statistically significant.





## Strategies/Actions

The following strategies and actions are grouped by area of focus (Valley Screw, 150 Center Street, Washington Street, and Veasey Memorial Park). The supporting actions are grouped by time period, which also reflects the priority (short-term, medium-term, and long-term).



Valley Screw  
Image credit: Form + Place

### The Valley Screw Site

#### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

- 2.1.** Acquire Valley Screw and complete the demolition and removal of the building. Continue to pursue site readiness goals for the Valley Screw site including foreclosure and grants for any additional environmental clean-up related to the demolition of the building.
- 2.2.** Evaluate the acquisition of portions of the land behind St. Patrick's Church – some of which is associated with plans for a new Water Treatment Facility and the potential for a better connection to 150 Center Street.
- 2.3.** Conduct a feasibility study for these parcels and 46 Washington Street to define programmatic goals and possible reuse, including a mix of uses. This feasibility study could be combined with one for 150 Center Street (for which the Town has received a grant). If the two studies are not combined, both studies should consider the connections between the sites, including open space and trail links and the reuse of Mill Pond for recreational use, such as ice skating. Both studies should also include public engagement and input. Identify any zoning changes necessary to implement the recommended land uses.

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 2.4.** Based on community feedback and feasibility study results, develop a Request for Interest/Proposals for disposition of the site(s) to a private developer. Identify desired components within the RFI/RFP, such as infrastructure improvements, enhanced open space, market analysis, traffic study, etc.
- 2.5.** Enter into a development agreement for the site(s) and support the redevelopment of the sites based on the development agreement.



Image credit: Innes Associates

### 150 Center Street

#### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

- 2.6.** Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate options for 150 Center Street, using the grant received in late 2022. Consider protection of the aquifer, connections to existing open space and parks, appropriately scaled housing and mixed use (commercial and industrial), and community amenities, including a trail link to Mill Pond and the existing trail network. Include a community engagement process to build consensus around land use goals for the property. Identify any zoning changes necessary to support the proposed development.
- 2.7.** Hire a hydrologist to document the existing aquifer and examine the potential impact of future development, with one specific goal being to define areas that are critical for recharge and should remain open space.

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 2.8.** Based on community feedback and feasibility study results, develop a Request for Interest/Request for Proposals for disposition of the site(s) to a private developer. Identify desired components within the RFI/RFP such as infrastructure improvements, enhanced open space, market analysis, traffic study, etc.
- 2.9.** Enter into a development agreement for the site(s) and support the redevelopment of the sites based on the development agreement. This may include a public-private partnership for any municipal use of the site (such as maintenance of trails or other community facilities, including a community center.)

#### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

- 2.10.** Support the redevelopment of 150 Center Street based on the development agreement.
- 2.11.** Execute development of expanded network of trails and open space and participate in the planning and development of any town amenities or facilities identified as part of the development agreement.

Consider establishing a town youth center for kids to access after school.  
Quote from Survey 2.

Precedents for 150 Center Street: Mixed-Use Developments

**PRECEDENT**  
**WAYLAND TOWN CENTER**  
**WAYLAND, MA**

Wayland Town Center is a 372,000sf mixed-use development located on a 50-acre site abutting the Sudbury River in the heart of Wayland. The master plan for the Town Center is organized around a “main street” spine which runs along the south edge of a new 2-acre town green and creates a walkable shopping environment with retail stores, restaurants and a small supermarket. The project was permitted to include a 40,000sf municipal building, fronting on the green, as well as second floor office space and 100 units of housing.

The approvals process outlined in a new mixed-use overlay zoning district required the one and two-story buildings to adhere to strict architectural and site planning design guidelines. These guidelines ensured that the project had a New England village aesthetic that was both compatible with the surrounding context and well connected to it.



Image credit: Form + Place



Image credit: Form + Place

**PRECEDENT**  
**CARRIAGE GROVE**  
**BELCHERTOWN, MA**

This mixed-use master plan for the Carriage Grove project in rural Belchertown, MA was undertaken in conjunction with MassDevelopment with the goal of repositioning the former Belchertown State School campus which closed in 1992. The approximately 50-acre campus contained almost 400,000sf of abandoned buildings, many with significant environmental issues that needed to be abated.

In 2014, the town adopted a new Business Neighborhood zoning district designed to provide the flexibility needed to facilitate the implementation of the 581,000sf mixed-use master plan. Significant infrastructure work – roads, utilities and amenities – was undertaken with funding provided by the town and a grant secured through MassWorks.

The site, now home to an 83-unit assisted living facility and an early childhood education center, is permitted for over 250 multi-family residential units as well as light industrial, retail, medical and office uses. Preservation of the former campus framework, including its mature trees, trails and views, and connectivity to the surrounding context were important considerations of the master plan.



Image credit: Form + Place



Image credit: Form + Place



## Washington Street

### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

**2.12.** Evaluate existing zoning along Washington Street and consider whether the Limited Business District should be expanded and/or modified to encourage specific land uses consistent with a village center.

**2.13.** Develop a specific identity for this corridor within the town-wide branding strategy discussed in Goal 4.

### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

**2.14.** Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws for Washington Street, 150 Center, and the Valley Screw site, as needed.

**2.15.** Expand the existing Complete Streets program to connect the Community Trail with Veasey Memorial Park along Washington Street.

**2.16.** Expand the existing Complete Streets program to connect Washington, Center, and Salem Streets to School Street and the Community Trail.

**2.17.** If the storefront improvement program recommended for Elm Square is successful, consider expanding eligibility to businesses on Washington Street.



**Figure 20. Mixed-use Corner**  
Intersection of Salem and Washington Streets in South Groveland  
Image credit: Google Earth

## Veasey Memorial Park

### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

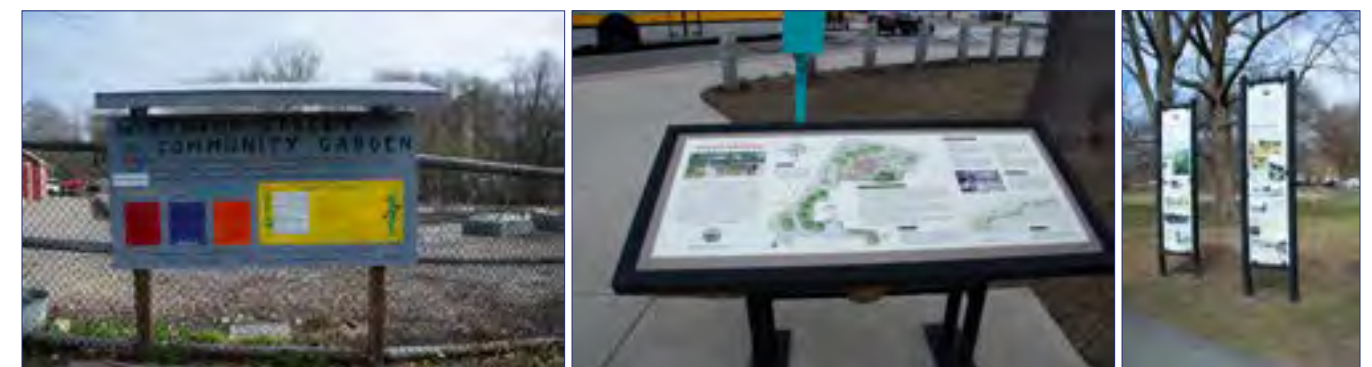
**2.18.** Evaluate the current uses and management of Veasey Memorial Park and identify options for future management and use of the site.

### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

**2.19.** Implement the recommendations of the use and management evaluation.

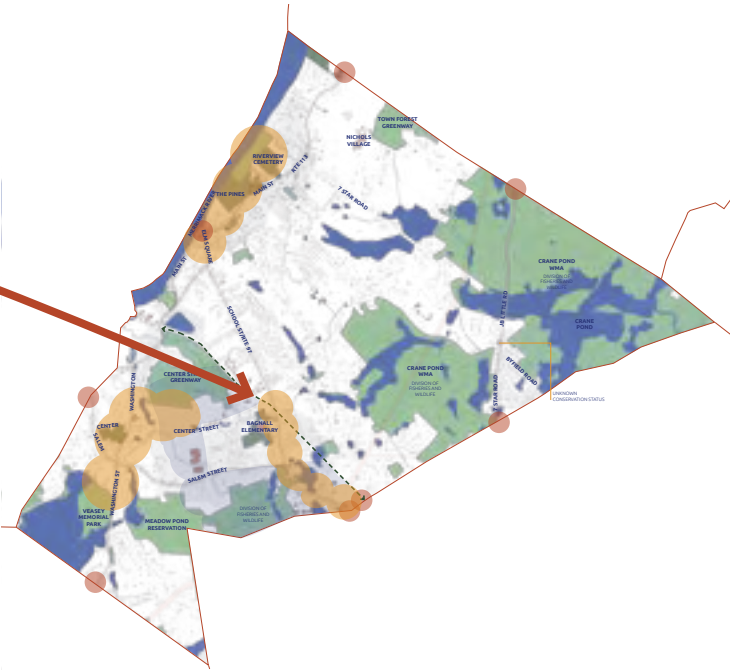
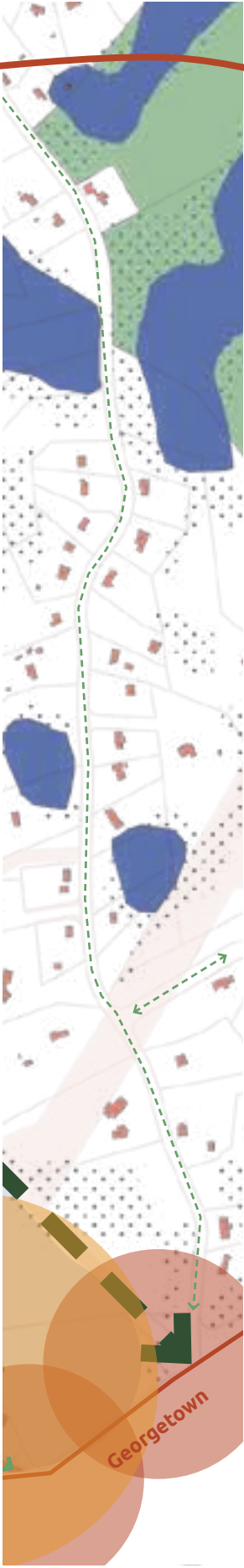
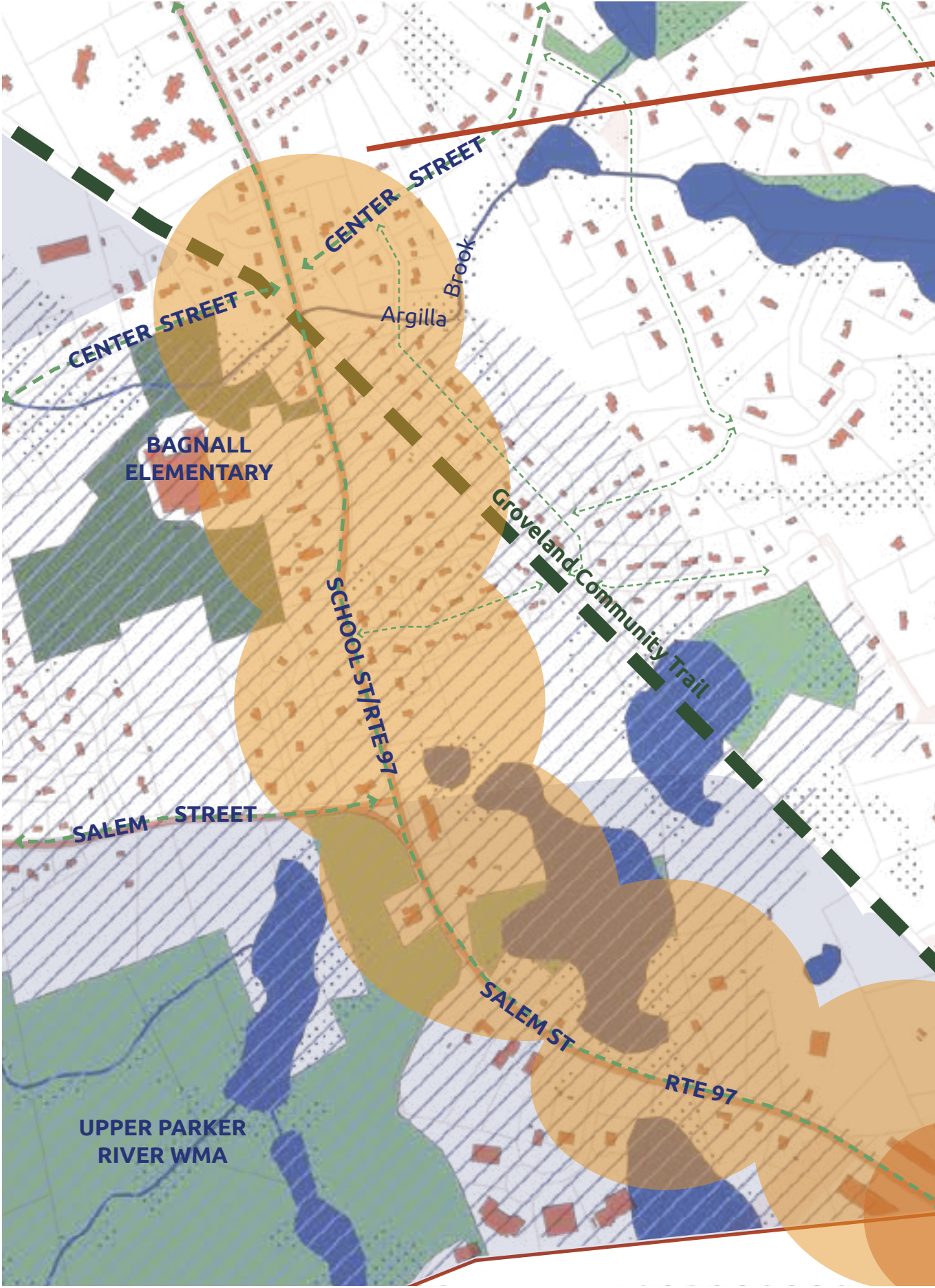
### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

**2.20.** Evaluate the feasibility of and acquire lands for the expansion of town-wide trail network linkages to connect the Community Trail to the Johnson's Creek drainage and the Meadow Pond / Veasey Memorial Park area.



Park ideas: Community garden (left), wayfinding (middle), and interpretive signage (right).  
Image credit: Innes Associates





# Route 97: Georgetown to Bagnall Elementary School

## INTRODUCTION

The southernmost section of the Route 97 corridor, from Center Street to the town line, presents a unique opportunity to enhance a community gateway. This well-traveled thoroughfare is anchored to the south by Georgetown Center and connections to Interstate 95 and to the north by the Bagnall Elementary School, the Community Trail and connections to Elm Square, the river and Haverhill. While the corridor does not represent a “place,” in the sense that Elm Square does, or that a potential new village center in South Groveland might, it can be thought of as a series of connected nodes that, if treated more cohesively, could serve as a desirable introduction to the community of Groveland.

The corridor is characterized by a mix of industrial and commercial uses on varied sized parcels, each with a unique relationship to Route 97, ranging from industrial parks organized around cul-de-sacs to “strip” retail centers set back from the street with surface parking in front. The section of the corridor from Salem Street to the town line is zoned industrial, while the more northerly section, including the Bagnall Elementary School, is zoned Residential 2. A significant need in this area is secondary access to Bagnall Elementary, which could be provided through town-owned land off Salem Street.

The corridor also passes through an area mapped as core habitat and includes Division of Fisheries and Wildlife land. Wetlands challenge the potential access and use of some of the larger undeveloped parcels.

## KEY CONCERNS

The Route 97 corridor is an important gateway area that could be enhanced to be more representative of Groveland’s “identity.” Improving the quality of the corridor is challenged by some of the following concerns:

- While the town has received grants to implement the Safe Routes to School program along Center Street, Route 97 as a whole is not a safe bicycle or pedestrian environment.
- The siting of buildings along the corridor – often set back from the street with parking lots in front – suggests a “vehicle-first” approach to planning that does not encourage pedestrian activity.
- Interspersed conservation lands prevent the kind of infill development that might be desirable to create more continuity in commercial storefronts.
- Integrating the Community Trail, which largely parallels the corridor after crossing it at Center Street, will require collaboration with landowners on the east side of Route 97.
- The integration of architectural, site planning and public realm design guidelines on existing properties that could introduce some of the tenets of “place-making” will require a partnership between the town and landowners / business owners.





## Relationship to History and Culture

During the Colonial Period (1675-1775), with the continued growth of the village center in the Main Street area along the river, several important roads reached to the south towards Georgetown (then Rowley) and on to Salem. The network of transportation routes expanded in the early 1800's with Salem Street, School Street and King Street, among others, connecting Main Street and Groveland Village - with its chain ferry across the Merrimack River - to the Main Street corridor in Georgetown.

Throughout Groveland's history, whether stage travel, railroad or automobile, the link from Main Street to Georgetown has remained of the utmost importance. In the Early Modern Period (1915-1940), State Routes 113 (Main Street) and 97 (School Street) were the major routes in town, made more important with the increase in automobile travel and bus use which, in turn, made streetcars obsolete. The gateway to Groveland from Georgetown remains a critical community entry point today, providing a vehicular link to Interstate 95.<sup>25</sup>

## Relationship to Natural Resources



The Route 97 corridor has proximity to a range of natural resources, characteristic of Groveland, and these could be celebrated by integrating more access points and bringing attention to these moments through the introduction of wayfinding and interpretive signage. Access to the Community Trail, including public parking facilities, particularly at the southern end of the corridor, could provide the synergy necessary for additional commercial / retail uses. Bike rental / repair shops, ice cream parlors and general stores are common occurrences along rail trails in other communities, especially at trail access nodes. The current plans for parking at Shanahan Field could be enhanced over time with these other amenities.

A town-wide signage program could help "brand" Groveland as a rural community with access to diverse open spaces and natural resources, seemingly a great source of pride for many residents. Thematic signage, in conjunction with other streetscape improvements, could also clearly denote community gateway moments.

<sup>25</sup> Massachusetts Historical Commission, *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Groveland*, 1997.



## Relationship to Open Space and Recreation

The area around the intersection of Center Street and School Street, which is close to being the geographic center of town, could arguably be one of the most important crossroads in Groveland. With the major institutional presence of the Bagnall Elementary School, and now the location where the Community Trail intersects Route 97, it is certainly an area with a tremendous amount of pedestrian activity. However, the open space in this area, which is mostly passive recreation, is harder to connect.

With proximity to the Center Street Greenway, Argilla Brook and surrounding neighborhoods, the prioritization of Complete Streets upgrades, as well as Community Trail "offshoots," is essential to enhancing connectivity to the varied open space amenities in the area, including along Johnson's Creek.

Bagnall School is an important community node for recreation, events and gatherings and a plan for maintenance of, and upgrades to, its amenities should be carefully tracked and implemented.



## Relationship to Economic Development

The southern end of the Route 97 corridor, in particular, presents a unique opportunity to integrate a wide variety of industrial, commercial / retail and, perhaps, residential uses in a way that does not negatively impact Groveland's neighborhood village centers. Insulated, to a degree, from existing residential neighborhoods by conservation lands, wetlands and the Community Trail, the corridor could be home to an interesting mix of uses including small entertainment venues, outdoor dining, brew pubs and experiential retail (Note: a preference for limiting retail and/or restaurant "chains" was expressed).

These types of establishments can coexist with industrial uses and, if designed cohesively using a framework of corridor design guidelines, can create a walkable synergy and a vibrant sense of place, while providing a welcome introduction to Groveland. Rethinking the quality of streetscapes, purposefully reshaping the character of important nodes, like the Salem Street intersection, and moving away from purely auto-centric prototypes will draw pedestrian and bike activity from nearby sources like the Community Trail.



Image credit: Innes Associates





## Relationship to Housing

While feedback from community stakeholders did not, by and large, indicate a preference for residential development along the Route 97 corridor, there are certain housing typologies that are often found in these types of areas. Multi-family residential and mixed-use residential developments, that could provide some of the diverse housing options that Groveland lacks, are often found outside smaller village centers and along corridors that provide easier mobility, a range of services and access to open space amenities (Community Trail).

Introducing residential options that serve a more diverse demographic into an area like the Route 97 corridor would, in turn, support a mix of uses, including restaurants, and contribute to giving the area a more walkable feel.



## Relationship to Mobility

Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian environments as part of the town's Complete Streets implementation efforts is critical to reshaping this community gateway location. While architectural and site planning design guidelines can help shape the quality of future development, investing in a high-quality right-of-way will not only improve mobility but can provide visual continuity for a corridor or neighborhood.

Redesigned sidewalks and intersections that include bump outs, traffic-calming measures, accommodations for public transit stops, well-marked crosswalks and ADA accessible curb cuts facilitate pedestrian movement along a street but also encourage crossing, resulting in more synergy among adjacent shops. Layer in consistent elements, such as street lighting, paving, urban furniture and landscaping, and this will encourage business owners to engage the streetscape and look for "place-making" opportunities (Note: a Business Improvement District (B.I.D.) can further these goals).



Route 97, heading north  
Image credit: Innes Associates



## Relationship to Town Services and Facilities

While certain communal facilities, such as the library or a community / senior center, seem more appropriately located in village centers, the Route 97 corridor could be a logical future home for other town services and facilities, perhaps next to Groveland Electric (the Groveland Municipal Light Department (GMLD)). Once prioritized as a pending need by long-range capital planning efforts, facilities such as a multi-sector public safety building, or a new home for the Highway Department, could be well-served to be located in an area with easy access to the town's major arterials.

GMLD owns a key property at the gateway between Groveland Georgetown; improving the landscape would send a strong signal about the need to address the current lack of identity along that part of Route 97. GMLD has also indicated a desire to work with the Town to develop parking and trailhead access at its 453 Main Street location, which would support the Community Trail as a link between Shanahan Field in and Route 97.



## Relationship to Land Use

As previously mentioned, the segment of the Route 97 corridor that spans from Bagnall Elementary School to the Georgetown line consists of two distinct zoning districts – Industrial to the south and Residential 2 to the north. While the Bagnall School occupies a significant portion of the Route 97 frontage in the Residential 2 zone along this stretch, there are many residential properties that are not buffered from this highly traveled arterial which continues north all the way to Elm Square through purely residential neighborhoods.

An analysis of the town's zoning regulations could help create incentives for the type of development envisioned for the corridor. Not only might the boundaries of the current industrial district be revisited and consideration given to how this zone transitions to surrounding residential areas, but a more direct approach to the use table that doesn't rely so heavily on special permits and planned unit developments, might be more appealing to developers and landowners alike. More predictability in the approvals process can help unlock the development potential of various parcels that, to date, may have seemed to landowners as though they didn't merit consideration for repositioning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Route 97 corridor between Center Street and the town line with Georgetown is a unique area within Groveland. With its mix of zoning districts, its role as a major gateway into town and its physical isolation from residential neighborhoods at the southern end, it presents an opportunity to thoughtfully incorporate a mix of use typologies that might not be as compatible with other more quaint and bucolic Groveland contexts. The gateway transition from Georgetown to Groveland should introduce the high-quality public realm desired throughout town.



### Goal

**Create a significant gateway to Groveland that balances open space with new mixed-use development along Route 97 and in the Industrial District.**

The second survey tested an earlier iteration of this goal:

Concentrate new development along Route 97 and in the industrial zone with a mix of uses to support the Groveland community.

Out of 68 respondents, 8 or 12% ranked this goal as their first priority and 19 or 28% ranked the goal as their second priority. This combination (40%) makes this goal the fourth most important goal based on the responses received from the survey.

Note that the survey tested only a limited set of strategies for this action; the results of the survey should indicate the level of interest at the time of the survey. This is a snapshot in time from those who chose to take the survey and is not statistically significant.



## Strategies/Actions

The following strategies and actions are grouped by area of focus (Route 97, the Industrial District, and connections to open space). The supporting actions are grouped by time period, which also reflects the priority (short-term, medium-term, and long-term).

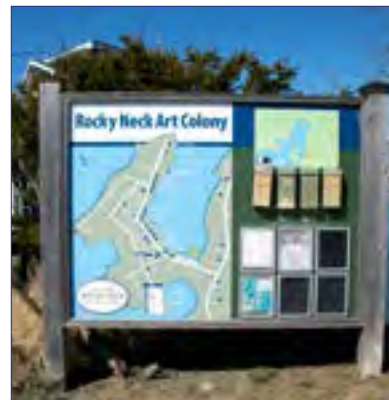
### Route 97/Salem Street to Bagnall Elementary

#### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

- 3.1. Evaluate the current zoning along the corridor and identify changes to create incentives for mixed-use development that would enhance the gateway and supply needed housing and amenities, such as small-scale commercial, retail, restaurant, and outdoor dining. Create development standards and design guidelines for the corridor that will shape the quality of the public realm and support place-making initiatives by property and business owners. Consider impacts of new uses on surrounding neighborhoods and the creation of appropriate buffers or transition zones.
- 3.2. Partner with property owners and businesses along the corridor to encourage simple place-making initiatives, including improvements to landscape, signage, and lighting and amenities such as outdoor seating and dining.
- 3.3. Develop a specific identity for this corridor within the town-wide branding/identity strategy discussed in Goal 4.
- 3.4. Explore the creation of a secondary access to Bagnall Elementary through town-owned land off Salem Street. Evaluating this option should include providing formal pedestrian access from the neighborhoods, additional access for public safety vehicles, and overflow parking for events at the school, including Town Meeting.



**Figure 21. Route 97 Nodes**  
Multimodal connection points between Salem Street and Bagnall Elementary School.  
Image credit: Form + Place



Neighborhood wayfinding/  
informational signage  
Image credit: Innes Associates

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 3.5. Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.
- 3.6. If the storefront improvement program for Elm Street is successful, consider expanding eligibility to Route 97. Continue to work with property owners and businesses to enhance the landscaping, lighting, and signage.
- 3.7. Implement wayfinding signage based on the town-wide branding plan established under Goal 4.

#### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

- 3.8. Support redevelopment options under the revised zoning and evaluate the implementation of development standards within the zoning. Modify zoning or permitting processes as necessary to support desired changes.

### Industrial Zone

#### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

- 3.9. Evaluate the industrial zone for new uses; consider mixing industrial uses with other uses (food, entertainment, experiential retail, multifamily residential). Consider impacts of new uses on surrounding neighborhoods and the creation of appropriate buffers or transition zones. Establish development standards and incentives for desired uses.

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 3.10. Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.

#### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

- 3.11. Support redevelopment options under the revised zoning and evaluate the implementation of development standards within the zoning. Modify zoning or permitting processes as necessary to support desired changes.

### Connections to Open Space

#### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

- 3.12. Begin conversations with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to enhance access to open space for passive recreation and work together to evaluate options for one or more formal trail heads to provide more access, including to residents of the new development on Sewell Street adjacent to the Upper Parker River Wildlife Management Area. Explore options to link the Community Trail to access points.



Trailhead, Brewster  
Image credit: Davenport Realty  
<https://www.davenportrealty.com/listing/21905848/302-underpass-road-brewster-ma-02631/>

- 3.13. Work with the existing Complete Streets program to prioritize safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along the Route 97 corridor. Focus on key nodes, such as the intersections with Center Street, Salem Street, access to the Bagnall Elementary School, access to the Community Trail, and the area around the town line.

- 3.14. Undertake a feasibility study to determine the best location for a Community Trail access point with adequate public parking and a potential mixed-use node at the southern end of the corridor, near the Georgetown line. As part of the study, explore developing other access points along the Community Trail which incorporate public parking and amenities.

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 3.15. Use the existing Complete Streets program to enhance bicycle and pedestrian access from smaller streets to the Community Trail.

- 3.16. Continue to work with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and other owners of conservation lands open to the public for passive recreation to create and link access points.

- 3.17. Add signage to new access points that is consistent with the overall branding/identity program developed in Goal 4.

- 3.18. Acquire land, as necessary, to begin development of a Community Trail access node at the southern end of the corridor.

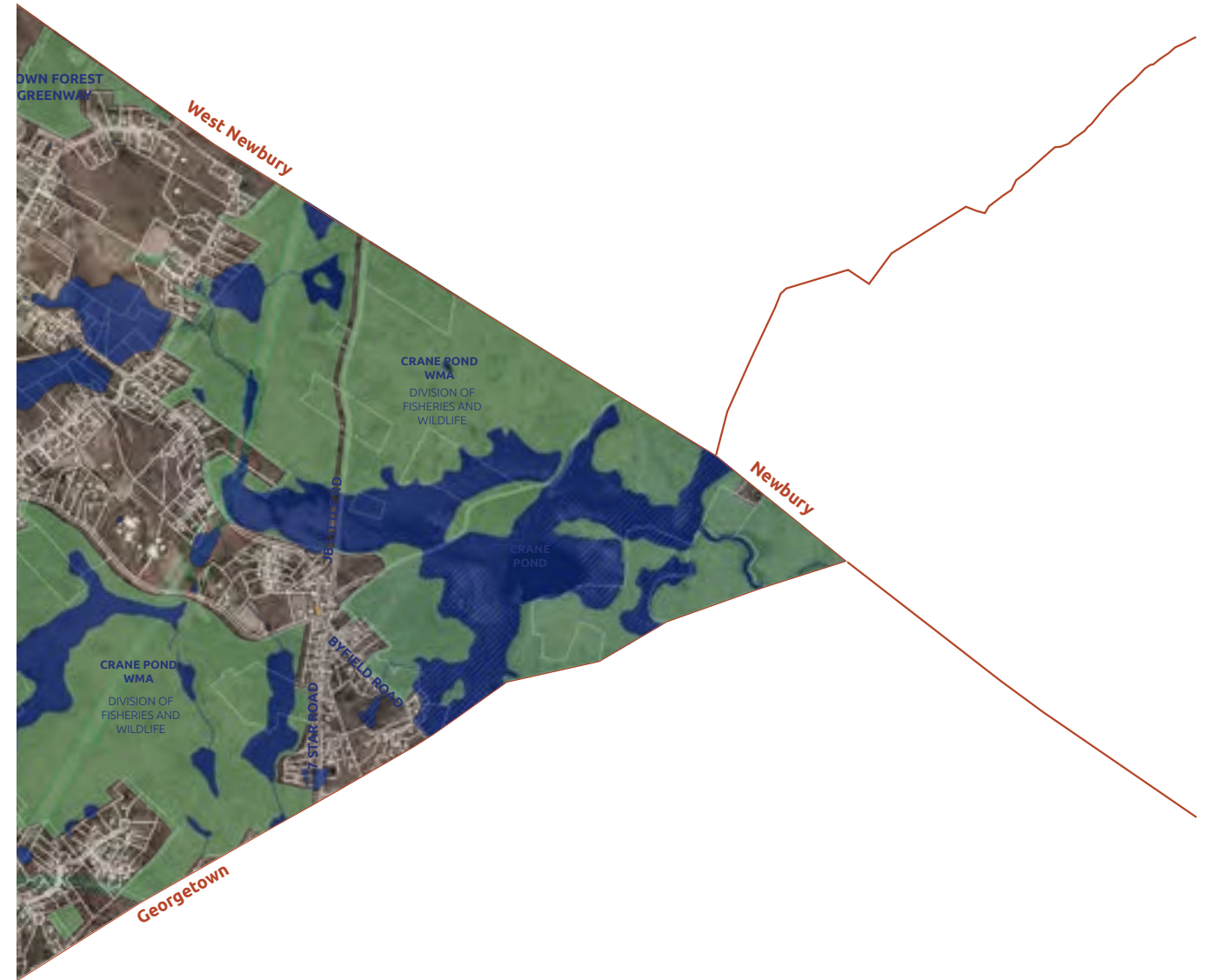
#### LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

- 3.19. Construct the new Community Trail access point with public parking and amenities. Partner with landowners, developers, businesses to design and develop synergistic uses at all potential Community Trail access points.

- 3.20. Evaluate the need to relocate town facilities to the Route 97 corridor and develop a strategy for land acquisition based on evolving long-term capital planning priorities.



# TOWN-WIDE



# Town-Wide Recommendations

## INTRODUCTION

While there are numerous common threads running through the recommendations provided for the three key focus areas, many of these reoccurring themes can be extrapolated to apply town-wide. Protecting the rural character of the community was one of the most reiterated sentiments expressed by stakeholders, and many of our recommendations, therefore, strive to find a balance between enhancements to village nodes and the preservation of open spaces and natural resources.

There is often a “give and take” required since the preservation, and potential expansion, of open spaces suggests that small-scale development occur in areas where existing infrastructure is in place to facilitate strategies such as adaptive reuse and infill. But change in each village center, as well as in well-established residential neighborhoods, must be sensitive to each area’s unique character.

An important piece of the puzzle continues to be enhancing community connectivity. This means expanding the network of Community Trails, building on recent Complete Streets improvements and strategies for how to enhance open spaces and recreational facilities. There are some marvelous opportunities to improve connectivity to some of Groveland’s most cherished natural resources, including celebrating Veasey Memorial Park and Johnson’s Pond, transforming accessibility to the Johnson’s Creek area and creating more engaging visual and physical linkages to the Merrimack Riverfront at Shanahan Field, Elm Square and The Pines.

While the focus on open space is paramount, diversifying housing options must also be a goal not to lose site of, as there are many long-time residents who see this as critical to their ability to remain a part of the Groveland community.

## KEY CONCERNS

All initiatives pursued in a specific locale within Groveland, whether related to development, open space preservation or connectivity, should be considered through a holistic lens for their impact on the larger community. There are concerns that exist today that should be prioritized and addressed in the short-term, including:

- Protecting the town’s water resources, including the aquifer in the Johnson’s Creek area as well as other important natural resources and core habitats.
- Improving the quality and safety of the road network throughout town according to Complete Streets principles.
- Ensuring that development, whether diversifying the housing stock or facilitating more mixed-use opportunities, is undertaken in a context sensitive way.
- Maintaining and enhancing open space and recreational opportunities, including community focal points like The Pines and Veasey Park / Johnson’s Pond, and facilitating access to them through continued development of the Community Trail and pedestrian/bike networks.
- Preserving Groveland’s community character by serving a diverse demographic through providing increased housing options and meaningful services and facilities, such as a new community / senior center.



## Relationship to History and Culture

Groveland has a long and storied history characterized by an evolving settlement pattern which was driven, in large part, by economic transitions from its early agrarian days through an industrial period that saw the advent of the railroads and the development of mills in the Johnson’s Creek area. Throughout history, the relationship to the Merrimack River has remained an important constant and promoting enjoyment of the river through enhanced connectivity and access – on community trails, in recreational areas and in village centers – should be a priority.

The rich layering of natural resources with historic and cultural assets should be celebrated as a part of Groveland’s unique persona. Updating the town-wide inventory (required as part of an Open Space and Recreation Plan, last updated in 2020) and promoting awareness of these assets is an important first step which can lead to initiatives such as designating scenic roads and establishing historic districts.



## Relationship to Natural Resources

Providing incentives for landowners, particularly those who abut conservation land, to put their property into permanent protection programs will continue to ensure the preservation of Groveland’s natural resources. Identifying parcels that the town should prioritize for acquisition can also facilitate the protection of core habitats, wildlife corridors, rare species and other critical natural resources.

In addition, in areas where land disturbance may be planned, it is essential to prevent erosion. Proper stormwater management will reduce impacts on the natural environment, including important water bodies.



## Relationship to Open Space and Recreation

The 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan describes long term development patterns as continuing to trend towards a notable increase in land occupancy. The Plan cites, in particular, the 20-year period leading up to 1971 as a time when developed land increased nearly two-fold. During this same period, it is noted that approximately 22% of wetlands were lost, and more damaged.

The impacts of climate change will continue to threaten town resources and infrastructure and pursuing grants to proactively plan for more serious storm events should be a priority.<sup>26</sup>



## Relationship to Economic Development

Preparing a town-wide economic development plan can help provide the necessary framework for making decisions such as the importance of increasing the diversity of the town’s tax base. Funding for such a plan is available through the Community One Stop for Growth grant program (see Funding Sources, below).

Decisions, such as concentrating development near existing infrastructure, should drive implementation strategies and determine the desire for zoning revisions and the addition of design guidelines. Once a thorough set of parameters are in place to ensure the town that development will be contextual in scale and conducive to the desirable mix of uses, the permitting process should be made as predictable and expeditious as possible.



## Relationship to Housing

A holistic approach to diversifying the housing base often includes providing opportunities for appropriately scaled new construction in selected areas of a community as well as creating incentives for adaptive reuse (conversion) and small-scale infill development in more established neighborhoods.

Partnering with developers and non-profits on private or town-owned sites can be a beneficial approach to creating affordable housing and providing opportunities for seniors and first-time home buyers. In addition, there are numerous programs and designations that can assist in the planning and financing of targeted projects.

<sup>26</sup> MVPC, 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2020.





## Relationship to Mobility

Groveland adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2017 and progress has been incremental, often focusing on single elements in projects. A prioritization plan is in place to improve safety, mobility and accessibility and this should be constantly evaluated to identify gaps in town-wide pedestrian and bicycle networks.

Stantec’s 2019 Complete Streets Needs Assessment report calls for a focus on collector and arterial roads, particularly those that are heavily trafficked and/or lacking sidewalks. Many of their specific recommendations, such as focusing on improving village center sidewalks, wayfinding signage and important thoroughfares, such as Main Street, School Street and Center Street, are consistent with the goals put forward in this Comprehensive Plan.<sup>27</sup>



## Relationship to Town Services and Facilities

Creating and maintaining an updated five-year plan for phased improvements to public services and facilities is an important tool for prioritizing implementation. Coordinating conversations across the departments, including the highway, water and sewer, and other departments with responsibilities for infrastructure, buildings or other physical assets is critical.

Among the town’s most pressing needs is preserving the town’s water resources, including addressing the need for a water treatment plant, and this should continue to be at the top of the list. The Town’s purchase of the 150 Center Street site, a significant recharge area, was an important first step in protecting the aquifer. This current planning effort is a first step to understanding potential uses for the site that will be complementary to the desire to protect the aquifer and habitat.

And, as discussed in early sections, a new community / senior life center with a multi-purpose programmable space – potentially with indoor and outdoor components – could offer an important gathering / event space for all. Partial funding of this type of facility could be tied to a public-private land development agreement for disposition of town-owned property to be used for future mixed-use projects.

<sup>27</sup> Stantec, 2019 Complete Streets Needs Assessment, 2019.



## Relationship to Land Use

A comprehensive review of the town’s zoning map would help reinforce and implement the vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Looking carefully at design criteria for important corridors and key village nodes would inform where, for example, as-of-right zoning for mixed-use development or multi-family residential should be permitted. The current configuration of the Industrial district and its relationship to open space and various residential districts should be revisited and the Business district that is currently corridor-based. The small Limited Business district could be incorporated into the Business district or become a district that focuses on neighborhood nodes.

While expanding allowable uses, such as reconsidering permitting cannabis facilities, could help diversify economic development opportunities, zoning revisions that encourage affordable housing should be a priority.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Elm Square, 150 Center and South Groveland, and Route 97 are the most likely areas for adding a more diversified mix of uses, including commercial, residential, and recreational. Outside those three areas, the goal is to preserve the scale of the existing neighborhoods, protect open space and natural resources, and allow reinvestment into the scattered commercial uses along Main Street (Route 113) and in the neighborhoods. Infill developments that are consistent with the scale and uses of the existing neighborhoods may be appropriate and serve community needs for housing and economic development, but at a lesser scale than that described for the first three focus areas.



### Goal

**Preserve and enhance existing smaller-scale neighborhoods and protect open space and natural resources.**

The second survey tested this goal.

Out of 68 respondents, 23 or 34% ranked this goal as their first priority and 6 or 9% ranked the goal as their second priority. This combination (43%) makes this goal the third most important goal based on the responses received from the survey.

Note that the survey tested only a limited set of strategies for this action; the results of the survey should indicate the level of interest at the time of the survey. This is a snapshot in time from those who chose to take the survey and is not statistically significant.



## Strategies/Actions

The following strategies and actions are grouped by area of focus (neighborhoods, open space, and town-wide strategies). The supporting actions are grouped by time period, which also reflects the priority (short-term, medium-term, and long-term).

### Neighborhoods

#### SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

- 4.1. Develop neighborhood plans to encourage residents to evaluate opportunities for small-scale housing, neighborhood retail/services (such as small stores, personal services, and professional offices), and recreation that are appropriate for each neighborhood. Include an evaluation of the Residential-1, Residential-2, and Residential-3 Districts to ensure that the requirements for each district are consistent with the goals of this plan. Create development standards for infill development with existing infrastructure that supports community needs at a neighborhood scale. Consider zoning strategies to add housing without changing the look of the Town: accessory dwelling units, condominium conversions for large homes, etc.
- 4.2. Implement the Housing Production Plan and the Affordable Housing Implementation Plan to support the needs of seniors, first-time home buyers, and others who require assistance with housing. The CPC could establish a home repair project for those who meet certain income requirements, helping to stabilize affordable housing.
- 4.3. Identify town-owned land in neighborhoods and conduct a series of feasibility studies to determine the best use: municipal needs, housing, open space, commercial, or other uses. Use the disposition process created for Valley Screw and 150 Center to sell or lease land that is surplus to municipal needs to meet other goals of this plan.

#### MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

- 4.4. Explore all funding sources to help produce affordable housing of varying types, including initiatives such as the Massachusetts' Healthy Aging Collaborative's program, Local Initiative Programs, and Community Preservation Act or Affordable Housing Trust funds to create more affordable housing. Groveland may also qualify for assistance as a Rural community.

There has been WAY too much development of open spaces, prior farmland, and wooded areas in this town.

Quote from Survey 2.

Add space for the cemetery; connect the cemetery to the trails. Allow more than in law apartments.

Quote from Survey 2.

4.5. Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.

LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

4.6. Continue to support thoughtful infill development, which may include small-scale commercial and different housing types, in accordance with the revised zoning by-law.

Open Space

SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

4.7. Establish a committee to create or update a sensitive lands inventory with the goal of documenting parcels adjacent to open space or preservation land and developing a strategy for their protection.

4.8. Work with the Groveland Historic Commission to update the Massachusetts Historic Commission's 1985 Reconnaissance Survey and identify which historic assets have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places and which are eligible but not yet listed.

MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

4.9. Work with landowners to put land into permanent protection programs, especially parcels that abut existing conservation land.

4.10. Provide incentives to retain existing agricultural uses and protect agricultural land. Evaluate the zoning by-laws to provide flexibility in accessory uses. Consider whether a right-to-farm by-law or other protections are appropriate.

4.11. Develop a Management Plan for the maintenance, enhancement and potential expansion of open space, especially those with trails, as well as the preservation and enjoyment of historical resources.

4.12. Evaluate opportunities to purchase land that meets the Town's ten Open Space Evaluation Criteria from the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan, including establishing wildlife corridors and protecting the aquifer.

4.13. Amend zoning by-laws to require meaningful open space as part of new developments. Such open space should help connect wildlife corridors or, where feasible, be adjacent to existing protected or open space areas.

4.14. Continue to connect off-street trails to on-street Complete Streets improvements.



Image credit: Innes Associates

PRECEDENT:  
TOWN OF NEWBURY  
RIGHT-TO-FARM BYLAW

Some communities seeking to support active agriculture have adopted a Right to Farm by-law. The Town of Newbury is an example and has several active farms, including Tendercrop and Colby. A model by-law is here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/model-right-to-farm-by-law/download>



Trail sign with history of town  
Image credit: American Trails/Stuart Macdonald  
<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/interpretive-signs-and-displays-along-trails>

Town-wide strategies

SHORT-TERM (0-2 YEARS)

4.15. Develop a community-wide branding program for signage that would include new gateway signs, signs to identify historic resources and areas, directional signs (wayfinding) for public parks, public parking, and Community Trail access, and district-identifiers for Elm Square, South Groveland, and Route 97. Engage the community in the discussions.

MEDIUM TERM (3-5 YEARS)

4.16. Complete design, fabricate, and install community-wide signage to highlight gateways, natural resources, trail networks, historic resources, etc.

4.17. Continue the Complete Streets program and regularly update the prioritization of projects based on criteria such as safety, mobility and accessibility and to respond to Groveland's changing landscape of expanding community trails and place-making goals for evolving village centers. Add new elements, as appropriate, such as consistent streetscape within specific areas, including street lighting and furniture, streetscape materials, signage, and landscaping on public land.

4.18. Begin a plan to evaluate the needs of municipal facilities and set a five-year review process.

4.19. Begin a community-based feasibility study for a new community or senior center, including the needs, potential locations, and possible programming.

LONG-TERM (5+ YEARS)

4.20. Implement phased improvements to public services and facilities based on priorities outlined in the 5-year capital improvement plan, including any necessary land acquisitions.

4.21. Continue work on town-wide Complete Streets priorities and open space enhancements.



# Implementation Plan

## INTRODUCTION

This Implementation Plan is an action plan – it includes the steps required to address the goals that support the community's vision. This chapter contains the main list of actions and should be cross-referenced with the “How-To” section in each of the focus areas under the Key Areas chapter. The “How-To” sections provide more information about immediate next steps (the next 0-2 years).

## HOW TO USE THIS SECTION

The Implementation Plan is presented as a table organized by the goals described earlier in this plan and the relevant actions that support each goal




### Owners/Partners

This list starts with the lead board, committee, or department. However, most actions will require coordination with others. This column lists those partners, including local organizations and state agencies, where applicable.

### Timeline

This column assigns actions to short-term (1-2 years), medium-term (3-5 years), and long-term (5+ years). Some long-term actions may have short- and medium-term components; in other words, in order to achieve the long-term action, initial steps may have to occur first. For the three focus areas, those initial steps are identified in the appropriate “how-to” section.




Icons used to indicate the timeline are as follows:

- Short-term (0-2 years) 
- Medium-term (3-5 years) 
- Long-term (5+ years) 

### Priorities

This column assesses actions by their priority – high, medium, or low. In general, limited town resources (time and money) should be directed to achieving high priority actions first.

Icons use to indicate priority are as follows:

- High priority 
- Medium priority 
- Low priority 

As the Town begins to implement these actions, the timeline and priority may change. Some actions may take longer to implement while others may be completed earlier than expected. Grant applications, economic trends, or other factors may also change the timing or priority of implementation. An annual review of actions completed should reassess the priority of those not yet finished as priorities may change over time.

Planning Elements

This column is used to link the goals with the Section 81D elements. This column ties the components of this plan back to the enabling legislation and demonstrates that all the elements have been discussed during the planning process and in this final document.

As a reminder, the icons for the planning elements are in the table below:

Planning Elements		Goals and Policies Statement (Vision)
		Land Use
		Housing
		Economic Development
		Natural and Cultural Resources (including Historic Resources)
		Open Space and Recreation
		Services and Facilities (municipal services and facilities)
		Circulation (Transportation or Mobility)
		Implementation Plan

Three other sections follow the Implementation Plan:

- **BENCHMARKS.** A discussion of how the Town can develop metrics to understand progress towards the completion of the goals as actions are implemented over time.
- **FUNDING SOURCES.** Grants and other programs that can support the Town's own resources.
- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.** A glossary of terms and links to useful information, including a list of previous planning documents.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER PLANS

The Summary of Existing Plans under Key Areas identifies existing planning documents with their own set of recommendations. As noted earlier, this comprehensive plan focuses on three key areas where changes to current land uses would make a significant contribution to the quality of life in Groveland over time.

This plan recognizes that the existing planning documents and subsequent documents will have more detailed recommendations for certain plan elements. The implementation of the existing plans should be coordinated with the vision and goals of this plan.

Future planning efforts should be consistent with the vision and goals of this plan until it is updated.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

The Town should consider appointing a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) to track progress in implementing the recommendations of this plan and related planning studies conducted by the Town. This committee should have a liaison from the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen, and be staffed by the Economic Development, Planning and Conservation Department (EDPCD).




















The charge of the committee should include monitoring progress, recommending changes to priorities or timeline (based on implementation status) to the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen, and reporting annually on progress to town Meeting. The CPIC could also help departments and committees establish selected appropriate benchmarks and track progress against those benchmarks.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND BUDGETS

Budgets for boards, committees, and departments should integrate the strategies and actions related to their ongoing operations and capital requests into their annual budgets to help the Town prioritize investments in staff and other resources with the vision and goals identified in this plan.



Table 10. Implementation Plan

Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
	Appoint a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board Economic Development, Planning and Conservation Department (EDPCD)	0-2 years	H	ALL!
	Incorporate goals for each department into annual operating budget review and 5-year capital planning. Ask departments to state how their budgets address the relevant goals.	Board of Selectmen Town Administrator Town Treasurer Finance Committee All boards, committees and departments	0-2 years	H	ALL!
Goal 1	Enhance Elm Square and The Pines as community gathering places with separate identities and purposes, and link both to the Merrimack River and the Community Trail.				
	Elm Square				
1.1	Review existing Business and R-3 Districts to ensure that the Table of Uses, Table of Dimensional Requirements, parking requirements (including shared parking for new construction), and development standards or design guidelines are compatible with the desired economic development and housing activities in this area, including mixed-use buildings (smaller-scale multifamily over commercial). Identify components of the by-law that need to be changed and begin the process for community discussion around zoning changes,	Planning Board EDPCD	0-2 years	H	  
1.2	Review the Town of Groveland Development Permitting Guide (MVPC, 2016) to evaluate how the existing permitting process can be simplified and communicated to desired new businesses, such as restaurants. Consider a checklist format for specific business types.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Inspectional Services, Police and Fire Departments	0-2 years	M	 
1.3	Improve public parking on School Street with striped parking spaces, landscaping, lighting, and signage to encourage people to park there for events at Elm Square.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department	0-2 years	H	   
1.4	Identify business and property owners in Elm Square and along Main Street who may be interested in quarterly meetings about the Elm Square and possible improvements.	EDPCD	0-2 years	H	 
1.5	Develop a storefront improvement program to address any combination of storefronts, building façades, signage, lighting, landscaping, outdoor dining, and parking areas. Consider a matching grant or no interest loan to encourage participation.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	0-2 years	H	  
1.6	Begin discussions with the owners of the gas station and US Post Office site about redeveloping those properties to link Elm Square with waterfront views of the Merrimack River. Consider a land use study of the two properties that examines uses (such as a café or restaurant, parking, and green space) that create a defined gateway to Groveland from Haverhill and establishes a continuous link of green space from the Merrimack River to Gardner Street.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Planning Board	0-2 years	H	  
1.7	Discuss the use of historic tax credits with property owners for the rehabilitation of existing historic buildings.	EDPCD Historic Commission	0-2 years	M	 





Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
1.8	Work with property and business owners along Elm Park and Main Street to develop shared parking strategies across adjacent lots.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	<div><div></div>3-5 years</div>	H	
1.9	Move forward with the recommendations of the land study for the Elm Square-Merrimack River link. Consider whether the improvements can be undertaken by the private market or require public intervention, such as acquisition of the properties by the Town. Identify site for the relocation of the US Post Office if it cannot be integrated into the planned redevelopment. If the Town does acquire the properties, develop a Request for Interest/Proposals to identify a private developer as a partner.	Planning Board EDPCD	<div><div></div>3-5 years</div>	H	
1.10	Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.	Planning Board EDPCD Board of Selectmen	<div><div></div>3-5 years</div>	H	
1.11	If the business group has been meeting regularly, discuss the formation of a Business Improvement District to support programming, seasonal decorations, beautification strategies, and shared marketing..	EDPCD	<div><div></div>3-5 years</div>	M	
1.12	Complete redevelopment of the gas station and US Post Office sites based on the recommendations of the land use study. This may include continuing to work with the property owners to develop the sites according to community goals or acquisition of the properties by the Town and disposition via a Request for Proposal.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Planning Board	<div><div></div>5+ yrs</div>	H	
1.13	If property owners show interest in the use of historic tax credits, submit an application to place Elm Park on the National Register of Historic Places.	Historic Commission EDPCD	<div><div></div>5+ yrs</div>	M	
The Pines					
1.14	Construct the skatepark, splash pad, and tennis and pickleball court, recently approved by the 2023 Town Meeting and funded by the Community Preservation Act.	Board of Selectmen Recreation Committee EDPCD	<div><div></div>0-2 years</div>	H	
1.15	Conduct a feasibility study for some of the community desires for the Pines, including walking trails along and new access to the Merrimack River for boating and recreation. The plan should include other components such as the following: signs for existing trails, expanding the trail network, and adding an amphitheater or other performance venue, splash pad, expanding bathrooms, and parking. Include the availability of grants and a timeline for phasing the improvements in the study.	Board of Selectmen Recreation Committee EDPCD	<div><div></div>3-5 years</div>	M	
1.16	Begin implementing the recommendations of the feasibility study for The Pines.	Board of Selectmen Recreation Committee EDPCD	<div><div></div>5+ yrs</div>	M	
Connections					
1.17	Work with the Groveland Recreation Committee to develop goals for programming and events in Elm Square and investigate the potential for linked events between Elm Square and The Pines. Programming for Elm Square could include farmer's markets, seasonal activities, concerts, and game areas (bocce, etc.). The Committee may need additional capacity and resources for this additional task and may consider experimenting with pop-up events and activities as part of a wider community programming effort.	Board of Selectmen Recreation Committee EDPCD	<div><div></div>0-2 years</div>	H	



Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
1.18	Develop a comprehensive wayfinding signage program that helps “brand” the Elm Square area, including signs welcoming people to the square, informational signage about the history, and directional signage to public parking and the Community Trail. This could include a "Welcome to Groveland" sign on the bridge from Haverhill.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department Recreation Committee EDPCD Historic Commission Conservation Commission	0-2 years	H	
1.19	Working with the Town’s existing Complete Streets Program, prioritize improvements in Elm Square and along Main Street between Elm Square and The Pines. The focus of improvements should be to make the area more accessible to bicycles, calm vehicular movements, and improve sidewalks and crosswalks to encourage pedestrian activity between The Pine and Elm Square. Improvements could include moving power lines underground between Gardner at Elm Park and Elm Park at Main Street.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD GMLD	0-2 years	H	
1.20	Integrate a public street furniture plan for Elm Square into the Complete Streets improvements. This should include bike storage, benches, trash and recycling bins, and continuing the current pedestrian-scaled lighting. The Town could also consider a change of materials as sidewalks are reconstructed to provide an identity for the streetscape that is unique to Groveland.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD	0-2 years	H	
1.21	Implement Complete Streets improvements between Elm Square and The Pines.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department	3-5 years	H	
1.22	Begin to link Complete Streets improvements in Elm Square Shanahan Field and to the Community Trail.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department	5+ yrs	H	
Goal 2	Integrate the Valley Screw site, Washington Street, and 150 Center Street (“Strawberry Fields”), and Veasey Memorial Park into a network of open spaces, neighborhoods, and community amenities.				
	The Valley Screw Site				
2.1	Acquire Valley Screw and complete the demolition and removal of the building. Continue to pursue site readiness goals for the Valley Screw site including foreclosure and grants for any additional environmental clean-up related to the demolition of the building.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	0-2 years	H	
2.2	Evaluate the acquisition of portions of the land behind St. Patrick’s Church – some of which is associated with plans for a new Water Treatment Facility.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	0-2 years	H	
2.3	Conduct a feasibility study for these parcels and 46 Washington Street to define programmatic goals and possible reuse, including a mix of uses. This feasibility study could be combined with one for 150 Center Street (for which the Town has received a grant). If the two studies are not combined, both studies should consider the connections between the sites, including open space and trail links and the reuse of Mill Pond for recreational use, such as ice skating. Both studies should also include public engagement and input. Identify any zoning changes necessary to implement the recommended land uses.	Planning Board Board of Selectmen EDPCD	0-2 years	H	



Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
2.4	Based on community feedback and feasibility study results, develop a Request for Interest/Proposals for disposition of the site(s) to a private developer. Identify desired components within the RFI/RFP, such as infrastructure improvements, enhanced open space, market analysis, traffic study, etc.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.5	Enter into a development agreement for the site(s) and support the redevelopment of the sites based on the development agreement.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
150 Center Street					
2.6	Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate options for 150 Center Street, using the grant received in late 2022. Consider protection of the aquifer, connections to existing open space and parks, appropriately scaled housing and mixed use (commercial and industrial), and community amenities, including a trail link to Mill Pond and the existing trail network. Include a community engagement process to build consensus around land use goals for the property. Identify any zoning changes necessary to support the proposed development.	Planning Board Board of Selectmen EDPCD Conservation Commission Water and Sewer Commission	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div></div>		 
2.7	Hire a hydrologist to document the existing aquifer and examine the potential impact of future development, with one specific goal being to define areas that are critical for recharge and should remain open space.	Planning Board Board of Selectmen EDPCD Conservation Commission Water and Sewer Commission	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.8	Based on community feedback and feasibility study results, develop a Request for Interest/Request for Proposals for disposition of the site(s) to a private developer. Identify desired components within the RFI/RFP such as infrastructure improvements, enhanced open space, market analysis, traffic study, etc.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.9	Enter into a development agreement for the site(s) and support the redevelopment of the sites based on the development agreement. This may include a public-private partnership for any municipal use of the site (such as maintenance of trails or other community facilities.)	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.10	Support the redevelopment of 150 Center Street based on the development agreement.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>5+ yrs</div></div>		
2.11	Execute development of expanded network of trails and open space and participate in the planning and development of any town amenities or facilities identified as part of the development agreement.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Conservation Commission	<div><div></div><div>5+ yrs</div></div>		
Washington Street					
2.12	Evaluate existing zoning along Washington Street and consider whether the Limited Business District should be expanded and/or modified to encourage specific land uses consistent with a village center.	Planning Board EDPCD	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.13	Develop a specific identity for this corridor within the town-wide branding strategy discussed in Goal 4.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div></div>		





Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
2.14	Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws for Washington Street, 150 Center, and the Valley Screw site, as needed.	Planning Board EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.15	Expand the existing Complete Streets program to connect the Community Trail with Veasey Memorial Park along Washington Street.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.16	Expand the existing Complete Streets program to connect Washington, Center, and Salem Streets to School Street and the Community Trail.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.17	If the storefront improvement program recommended for Elm Square is successful, consider expanding eligibility to businesses on Washington Street.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
Veasey Memorial Park					
2.18	Evaluate the current uses and management of Veasey Memorial Park and identify options for future management and use of the site.	Board of Selectmen Conservation Commission	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div><div></div></div>		
2.19	Implement the recommendations of the use and management evaluation.	Board of Selectmen Conservation Commission	<div><div></div><div>3-5 years</div><div></div></div>		
2.20	Evaluate the feasibility of and acquire lands for the expansion of town-wide trail network linkages to connect the Community Trail to the Johnson's Creek drainage and the Meadow Pond / Veasey Memorial Park area.	Board of Selectmen Conservation Commission Recreation Committee	<div><div></div><div></div><div>5+ yrs</div></div>		 
Goal 3	Create a significant gateway to Groveland from Georgetown that balances open space with new mixed-use development along Route 97 and in the Industrial District.				
Route 97/Salem Street to Bagnall Elementary					
3.1	Evaluate the current zoning along the corridor and identify changes to create incentives for mixed-use development that would enhance the gateway and supply needed housing and amenities, such as small-scale commercial, retail, restaurant, and outdoor dining. Create development standards and design guidelines for the corridor that will shape the quality of the public realm and support place-making initiatives by property and business owners. Consider impacts of new uses on surrounding neighborhoods and the creation of appropriate buffers or transition zones.	Planning Board EDPCD GMLD	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div><div></div></div>		
3.2	Partner with property owners and businesses along the corridor to encourage simple place-making initiatives, including improvements to landscape, signage, and lighting and amenities such as outdoor seating and dining.	Planning Board EDPCD	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div><div></div></div>		
3.3	Develop a specific identity for this corridor within the town-wide branding/identity strategy discussed in Goal 4.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	<div><div>0-2 years</div><div></div><div></div></div>		



Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
3.4	Explore the creation of a secondary access to Bagnall Elementary through town-owned land off Salem Street. Evaluating this option should include providing formal pedestrian access from the neighborhoods and overflow parking for events at the school, including Town Meeting.	Board of Selectmen Conservation Commission Recreation Committee EDPCD	0-2 years	M	
3.5	Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.	Planning Board EDPCD	3-5 years	H	
3.6	If the storefront improvement program for Elm Street is successful, consider expanding eligibility to Route 97. Continue to work with property owners and businesses to enhance the landscaping, lighting, and signage.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	3-5 years	L	
3.7	Implement wayfinding signage based on the town-wide branding plan established under Goal 4.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
3.8	Support redevelopment options under the revised zoning and evaluate the implementation of development standards within the zoning. Modify zoning or permitting processes as necessary to support desired changes.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD	5+ yrs	H	
Industrial Zone					
3.9	Evaluate the industrial zone for new uses; consider mixing industrial uses with other uses (food, entertainment, experiential retail, multifamily residential). Consider impacts of new uses on surrounding neighborhoods and the creation of appropriate buffers or transition zones. Establish development standards and incentives for desired uses.	Planning Board EDPCD	0-2 years	H	
3.10	Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.	Planning Board EDPCD	3-5 years	H	
3.11	Support redevelopment options under the revised zoning and evaluate the implementation of development standards within the zoning. Modify zoning or permitting processes as necessary to support desired changes.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD	5+ yrs	H	
Connections to Open Space					
3.12	Begin conversations with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to enhance access to open space for passive recreation and work together to evaluate options for one or more formal trail heads to provide more access, including to residents of the new development on Sewell Street adjacent to the Upper Parker River Wildlife Management Area. Explore options to link the Community Trail to access points.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Conservation Commission Recreation Committee	0-2 years	H	
3.13	Work with the existing Complete Streets program to prioritize safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along the Route 97 corridor. Focus on key nodes, such as the intersections with Center Street, Salem Street, access to the Bagnall Elementary School, access to the Community Trail, and the area around the town line.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department	0-2 years	H	



Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
3.14	Undertake a feasibility study to determine the best location for a Community Trail access point with adequate public parking and a potential mixed-use node at the southern end of the corridor, near the Georgetown line. As part of the study, explore developing other access points along the Community Trail which incorporate public parking and amenities.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Conservation Commission Recreation Committee GMLD	0-2 years	H	
3.15	Use the existing Complete Streets program to enhance bicycle and pedestrian access from smaller streets to the Community Trail.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department	3-5 years	M	
3.16	Continue to work with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and other owners of conservation lands open to the public for passive recreation to create and link access points.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Conservation Commission Recreation Committee	3-5 years	M	
3.17	Add signage to new access points that is consistent with the overall branding/identity program developed in Goal 4.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department	3-5 years	M	
3.18	Acquire land, as necessary, to begin development of a Community Trail access node at the southern end of the corridor.	Board of Selectmen	3-5 years	M	
3.19	Construct the new Community Trail access point with public parking and amenities. Partner with landowners, developers, businesses to design and develop synergistic uses at all potential Community Trail access points.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD GMLD	5+ yrs	M	
3.20	Evaluate the need to relocate town facilities to the Route 97 corridor and develop a strategy for land acquisition based on evolving long-term capital planning priorities.	Board of Selectmen GMLD	5+ yrs	L	
Goal 4	Preserve and enhance existing smaller-scale neighborhoods and protect open space and natural resources.				
	Neighborhoods				
4.1	Develop neighborhood plans to encourage residents to evaluate opportunities for small-scale housing, neighborhood retail/services (such as small stores, personal services, and professional offices), and recreation that are appropriate for each neighborhood. Include an evaluation of the Residential-1, Residential-2, and Residential-3 Districts to ensure that the requirements for each district are consistent with the goals of this plan. Create development standards for infill development with existing infrastructure that supports community needs at a neighborhood scale. Consider zoning strategies to add housing without changing the look of the Town: accessory dwelling units, condominium conversions for large homes, etc.	Planning Board EDPCD GMLD	0-2 years	M	
4.2	Implement the Housing Production Plan and the Affordable Housing Implementation Plan to support the needs of seniors, first-time home buyers, and others who require assistance with housing.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD	0-2 years	H	





Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
4.3	Identify town-owned land in neighborhoods and conduct a series of feasibility studies to determine the best use: municipal needs, housing, open space, commercial, or other uses. Use the process for Valley Screw and 150 Center to dispose of land that is surplus to municipal needs to meet other goals of this plan.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD GMLD	0-2 years	M	
4.4	Explore all funding sources to help produce affordable housing of varying types, including initiatives such as the Massachusetts' Healthy Aging Collaborative's program, Local Initiative Programs, and Community Preservation Act or Affordable Housing Trust funds to create more affordable housing. Groveland may also qualify for assistance as a Rural community.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD	3-5 years	H	
4.5	Complete adoption of new zoning by-laws.	Planning Board EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.6	Continue to support thoughtful infill development, which may include small-scale commercial and different housing types, in accordance with the revised zoning by-law.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD	5+ yrs	M	
Open Space					
4.7	Establish a committee to create or update a sensitive lands inventory with the goal of documenting parcels adjacent to open space or preservation land and developing a strategy for their protection.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Conservation Commission	0-2 years	M	
4.8	Work with the Groveland Historic Commission to update the Massachusetts Historic Commission's 1985 Reconnaissance Survey and identify which historic assets have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places and which are eligible but not yet listed.	Board of Selectmen EDPCD Historic Commission	0-2 years	M	
4.9	Work with landowners to put land into permanent protection programs, especially parcels that abut existing conservation land.	Conservation Commission EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.10	Provide incentives to retain existing agricultural uses and protect agricultural land. Evaluate the zoning by-laws to provide flexibility in accessory uses. Consider whether a right-to-farm by-law or other protections are appropriate.	Conservation Commission Planning Board EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.11	Develop a Management Plan for the maintenance, enhancement and potential expansion of open space, especially those with trails, as well as the preservation and enjoyment of historical resources.	Board of Selectmen Conservation Commission EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.12	Evaluate opportunities to purchase land that meets the Town's ten Open Space Evaluation Criteria from the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan, including establishing wildlife corridors and protecting the aquifer.	Board of Selectmen Conservation Commission EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.13	Amend zoning by-laws to require meaningful open space as part of new developments. Such open space should help connect wildlife corridors or, where feasible, be adjacent to existing protected or open space areas.	Planning Board Conservation Commission EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.14	Continue to connect off-street trails to on-street Complete Streets improvements.	Conservation Commission Highway Department	3-5 years	M	



Number	Action	Owners/Partners	Timeline	Priority	Planning Elements
	Town-wide strategies				
4.15	Develop a community-wide branding program for signage that would include new gateway signs, signs to identify historic resources and areas, directional signs (wayfinding) for public parks, public parking, and Community Trail access, and district-identifiers for Elm Square, South Groveland, and Route 97. Engage the community in the discussions.	Board of Selectmen Planning Board EDPCD Conservation Commission Historic Commission Recreation Committee	0-2 years	H	
4.16	Complete design, fabricate, and install community-wide signage to highlight gateways, natural resources, trail networks, historic resources, etc.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.17	Continue the Complete Streets program and regularly update the prioritization of projects based on criteria such as safety, mobility and accessibility and to respond to Groveland's changing landscape of expanding community trails and place-making goals for evolving village centers. Add new elements, as appropriate, such as consistent streetscape within specific areas, including street lighting and furniture, streetscape materials, signage, and landscaping on public land.	Board of Selectmen Highway Department EDPCD	3-5 years	M	
4.18	Begin a plan to evaluate the needs of municipal facilities and set a five-year review process.	Board of Selectmen Town Administrator All Departments with separate physical facilities.	3-5 years	M	
4.19	Begin a community-based feasibility study for a new community or senior center, including the needs, potential locations, and possible programming.	Board of Selectmen Town Administrator Recreation Commission	3-5 years	M	
4.20	Implement phased improvements to public services and facilities based on priorities outlined in the 5-year capital improvement plan, including any necessary land acquisitions.	Board of Selectmen Town Administrator All Departments	5+ yrs	M	
4.21	Continue work on town-wide Complete Streets priorities and open space enhancements.	Board of Selectmen Town Administrator Highway Department Conservation Commission	5+ yrs	M	

Benchmarks

INTRODUCTION

Communities are starting to define benchmarks to assess progress in achieving their goals over time. Benchmarks can include the completion of specific actions or changes in trends.

For example, the redevelopment of the Valley Screw site can be a benchmark. Another benchmark could be the number of storefronts in Elm Square improved as a result of a façade improvement program.

Trends can include a change in the production of housing by units or by type; the addition of commercial square footage to Route 97, or the linear feet of bicycle paths installed.

Benchmarks can be identified by the relevant board, committee, or department, perhaps with assistance from the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC). A critical component of establishing benchmarks is ensuring that the data is easy to measure and collect as volunteers and staff rarely have time to do in-depth data collection. The ideal data sets would be either publicly available (from data sets such as the US Census, MHP's Datatown, the Massachusetts Division of Local Services, and others) or already collected by the relevant department (such as the number of building permits filed or seniors assisted with housing requests, for example).

Examples of benchmarks to consider include the following:

- Change in the number of:
  - New businesses in town, by location.
  - Businesses retained.
  - Housing units produced.
  - Affordable units produced.
- Residents (this could be broken down by age, to track long-term trends and need for specific services)
- Number of linear miles installed for trails, bikes lanes, improved sidewalks.
- Number of crosswalks installed.
- Square feet of conservation land placed under permanent protection.
- Square feet of agricultural land placed under permanent protection.

PRECEDENT STUDY  
ESTABLISHING METRICS  
RICHMOND 300: A  
GUIDE FOR GROWTH  
RICHMOND, VA

Metrics

The metrics are not tied to specific goals in the plan but rather are benchmarks to see how the city is changing over time.

Oftentimes, metrics shift due to trends outside of the City's control; therefore, it is problematic to tie metric movement directly to City actions. New data for the metrics should be gathered every other year and shared in the annual report.

TABLE 7 // Metrics

Metric	Desired Trend	Baseline Statistic	Baseline Year	Data Source	Data Notes
Total population	Increase	230,436	2019	Census	Census, 2019 Population Estimates
Total Jobs	Increase	204,125	2020	Census	ESRI Business Analyst Online, Business Summary
% population in poverty	Decrease	21.9%	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table S1701) 47,857 (v/-: 6,758) / 219,006 (v/-: 1,370)
% population with a high-school degree	Increase	85.1%	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table S1801) 137,795 (v/-: 3,294) high school graduate or higher / 161,126 (v/-: 274) population 25 years and over
% of population with a post-secondary degree	Increase	41.9%	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table S1801) 67,516 (v/-: 3,246) bachelor's degree or higher / 161,126 (v/-: 274) population 25 years and over
Median income (adjusted for inflation using 2019 as baseline for inflation)	Increase	\$61,937	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table S1901) \$61,937 (v/-: 94)
City-wide WalkScore	Increase	52	2020	WalkScore	WalkScore.com
% population living within 1/2 mile of high-frequency transit*	Increase	51.7%	2014	Census, GRTC	ESRI Business Analyst Online, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates 115,800 (v/-: 2,720) / 223,782
% of jobs within 1/2 mile of high-frequency transit*	Increase	77.7%	2020	Census, GRTC	ESRI Business Analyst Online, Business Summary 158,644 / 204,125
# of deaths and severe injuries due to transportation crashes	Decrease	193	2019	VDOT	VDOT Crash Data
Miles of bike lanes	Increase	49	2020	City	DPW

Metric	Desired Trend	Baseline Statistic	Baseline Year	Data Source	Data Notes
Miles of sidewalks	Increase	836	2020	City	DPW
% of workers who drive alone to work	Decrease	71.7%	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table B08006) 81,742 (v/-: 4,250) / 116,812 (v/-: 5,875) Workers 16 years and over
% of workers who bike, walk, take transit to work	Increase	14.0%	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table B08006) 7,441 (v/-: 2,027) + 5,734 (v/-: 1,601) + 5,160 (v/-: 1,216) / 116,812 (v/-: 5,875) Workers 16 years and over
% of homes occupied by a homeowner	Increase	42.1%	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table S2302) 36,430 (v/-: 2,233) / 91,359 (v/-: 1,702)
% of Blacks who are homeowners	Increase	31.4%	2018	Census	2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates (Table S2502) 11,825 (v/-: 1,504) / 37,649 (v/-: 1,985)
% population that is housing-cost burdened (housing >= 30% of income)	Decrease	41.4%	2013-2017	HUD, CHAS	CHAS (2013-2017 ACS) 17,790 + 19,130 / 89,240
% population in poverty that are housing-cost burdened	Decrease	74.8%	2013-2017	HUD	CHAS (2013-2017 ACS) 15,990 / 21,370
Annual per capita greenhouse gas emissions (metric tons of CO2)	Decrease	11.81	2018	City	
Daily per capita residential water usage (gallons)	Decrease	34.12	FY19	City	DPLU FY19, Multi-Family Usage + Residential Usage / 2019 Population 2,365
% of population living within a 10-minute walk of a park	Increase	78%		parkscore.org	
% of urban tree canopy	Increase	42%	2010	Virginia Tech	McKee, Jennifer, A Report on the City of Richmond's Existing and Possible Urban Tree Canopy, Virginia Tech 2010

\* High-Frequency Transit = Transit that arrives at least every 15 minutes

<https://www.rva.gov/planning-development-review/master-plan>



# Funding Sources

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a selection of funding sources that are applicable to one or more of the actions listed in the Implementation Plan.

Some of these sources are competitive grants with specific requirements and funding cycles.

### MASSACHUSETTS BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT/US FISH AND WILDLIFE SPORT FISH RESTORATION PROGRAM.

This grant funds facilities for transient recreational boats longer than 26 ft. More information can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/boating-infrastructure-grant-funding-opportunities>

### MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT FUND.

The fund can support improvements to recreational fishing. More information can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/the-marine-recreational-fisheries-development-fund>

### MA DEP S319 AND 604(B) GRANT PROGRAMS

These two grants address water quality, including nonpoint source pollution, management planning, and stormwater management. More information can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality>

### MASS EEA: PARKLAND ACQUISITIONS AND RENOVATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES (PARC) GRANT PROGRAM

This grant can be used by municipalities to acquire parkland, build a new park, or to renovate an existing park. More information can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/parkland-acquisitions-and-renovations-for-communities-parc-grant-program>

### MASSDOT/CHAPTER 90.

Chapter 90 refers to the highway funds in the annual state funding packages provided to municipalities throughout Massachusetts.

### MASSACHUSETTS HISTORIC COMMISSION.

MHC runs the Preservation Projects Fund which helps support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Places. More information can be found here: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcmppf/mppfdx.htm>

### MASSDEVELOPMENT COMMONWEALTH PLACES.

This program supports placemaking projects with the support of the crowd-funding mechanism Patronicity. MassDevelopment matches up to \$50,000 if the community can meet its goal within 60 days. More information can be found here: <https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/real-estate-services/commonwealth-places/>

#### COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth>

In 2021, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts rolled the application process for ten grant programs into a single process. The programs are as follows:

- Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
- MassWorks
- Urban Agenda
- 43D Expedited Permitting
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Housing Choice Community Capital Grants
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- Community Planning Grants
- NEW Rural Development Fund
- MassDevelopment
  - Brownfields
  - Site Readiness
  - Underutilized Properties

#### MASSWORKS

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massworks>

MassWorks provides funding for infrastructure and is particularly useful in supporting private development with public infrastructure improvements. This funding source may be used to leverage some of the longer-term recommendations.

#### MASSACHUSETTS DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE

(\$25,000)

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-downtown-initiative-mdi>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/business-improvement-districts-bid>

The focus of this grant is downtown revitalization. The Technical Assistance program provides a consultant and funding for that consultant's work to communities who need help with specific problems. Project Recommendation for which this grant would be appropriate include the development of design guidelines, revision of a sign code, a wayfinding study, a pilot project or projects for façade improvements, design for streetscape improvements, economic development studies

(including housing), and parking studies. MDI also aids with the development of a Business improvement District, or BID.

#### COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANTS

(\$25,000-\$75,000)

This is a new program and provides funding for planning projects at a larger scale than the MDI program. Project Recommendation for which this grant would be appropriate might include zoning changes, particularly those that support density, studies for development within a 1/2-mile of a commuter rail station or a multi-town corridor that look at both density and multimodal connections, or other similar planning processes.

As with the MassWorks grant, this grant is appropriate for leveraging Project Recommendations as part of longer-term or larger projects.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/planning-and-zoning-grants>

#### DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT (DLTA)

MVPC offers member communities direct technical assistance for planning efforts, including housing, growth and economic development, and support for the Community Compact, which include evaluating regionalization efforts. More information can be found here: <https://mvpc.org/planning-technical-assistance/>

#### REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES AND DHCD

Funds for this program are allocated to the regional planning agencies. These funds may be used for planning projects. Each Regional Planning Agency (RPA) has a different focus on how these funds may be used to meet the state's funding goals. All municipalities are eligible to apply directly to their RPA. The RPA will work with the municipality on the program; a separate consultant is not usually required.

#### URBAN AGENDA

This grant supports both economic development and local leadership development. Priorities focus on community activation and placemaking.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/urban-agenda-grant-program>

#### MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SURVEY AND PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

This grant is a 50/50 matching program that support planning activities that help preserve significant historic resources. For communities, whose target area contains significant resources, this source may help fund design guidelines that include specific requirements for the preservation of significant historic resources. Interested communities are encouraged to reach out to the Massachusetts Historic Commission directly about this grant; it may be tied to the creation of a local historic district.

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhchpp/surveyandplanning.htm>

#### MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, COMPLETE STREETS FUNDING PROGRAM

This program provides funds to municipalities who have adopted a Complete Streets Policy and created a Prioritization Plan. Any street infrastructure recommended in this report should be added to the Prioritization Plan. This grant program can help address recommended improvements for pedestrian and bicyclist mobility, safety, and comfort. However, the program does not cover paving, engineering, or regular maintenance.

This grant can also assist with a design guidelines; these do not have to be limited to the private realm. Creating consistency in a downtown, village, or corridor is an important part of defining its identity both within and beyond the community. As part of a Complete Streets Project, a municipality should identify the specific materials, street furniture, trees, and public signage (including wayfinding) that will be used in the target area. These choices can be incorporated into the overall design guidelines to address both public and private realms.

This program could leverage the municipality's funding under Chapter 90 to ensure that multimodal infrastructure is connected, over time, throughout the community.

<https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program>

#### MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

The Mass Cultural Council has one-year project grants for specific public programming. Projects are for public programming, which Mass Cultural Council defines as activities that engage with the public. The municipality's own Local Cultural Council may have additional grants to support local arts and culture

<https://massculturalcouncil.org/organizations/cultural-investment-portfolio/projects/>

#### MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, SHARED STREETS AND SPACES

This program provides funds to support the improvement of "plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, bus stops, parking areas, and other public spaces." The focus is on public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce.

<https://www.mass.gov/shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program>



# Additional Resources

## INTRODUCTION

This section includes a list of the acronyms used in this document, a glossary, and a list of useful websites for more in-depth reading.

## Glossary

### Acronyms Used in this Document

- **ANRAD.** The Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) provides a procedure for an applicant to confirm the delineation of a Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW). <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/wpa-form-4a-abbreviated-notice-of-resource-area-delineation>
- **NOI.** The Notice of Intent is an application to the local Conservation Commission and MassDEP for a permit (Order of Conditions) to undertake work in or within a specific boundary of a wetlands. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/wpa-form-3-wetlands-notice-of-intent>
- **RDA.** The Request for Determination of Applicability provides applicants with the option of seeking a determination whether the Wetlands Protection Act applies to a proposed site or activity. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/wpa-form-1-request-for-determination-of-applicability>

### General Planning Terms

- **ADAPTIVE REUSE.** The reuse of an existing building for a use that was not originally intended. For example, a school that has been converted to housing.
- **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING.** A process of developing a vision for a community's future and the steps required to realize that future. In Massachusetts, master plan and comprehensive plan may be used interchangeably that is not true in other states.
- **DIVERSE POPULATION.** One that is inclusive of (but not limited to) different ages, races, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identifications, and a wider range of incomes, including those who are economically disadvantaged.
- **VISION VS. GOALS VS. OBJECTIVES VS. ACTIONS.** A community's **vision** is a statement of desired future condition. **Goals** are the high-level paths to achieve that vision and are community wide. Objectives divide the goals into more specific paths that may affect a subset of boards, departments, and committees. **Actions** are the individual steps that must be taken to achieve the goals and implement the vision.
- **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VS. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.** A **comprehensive (master) plan**, in Massachusetts, is enabled by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Section 81D. The plan must include certain elements. The original goal of the master plan is to ensure that the use of land within the municipal boundaries is consistent with community goals. The planning process for a master plan expands beyond that to consider almost all aspects of municipal operations that have an impact on land use. A **comprehensive (master) plan update** is a planning process that reviews the previous master plan(s) and updates them based on current data and goals and expectations for the future of the community.
- **MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT.** A development in which more

than one land use is present on a lot. Mixed use may be any combination of office, residential commercial, and industrial. Some communities do not allow residential in some mixed-use zoning districts.

- **NODE.** A point of connection; in planning, refers to an area of activity, often at a crossroads or central point.
- **NONCONFORMING LOTS.** Lots that do not conform with the zoning of the district in which they are located.
- **PLACEMAKING.** The re-imagination and reinvention of public spaces in a community to create a unique sense of place responsive to the community's understanding of its identity.
- **REVITALIZATION.** Creating incentives for economic growth in an area that has experienced a significant decline in terms of jobs and population. Often accompanies by regulatory changes; the provision of grants or tax incentives; and public infrastructure improvements and/or placemaking initiatives to attract private investment.
- **ROAD CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM.** Defines the purpose of the road in terms of the volume of traffic, traveling speed, and relationship to the total road network. **Arterial Roads** collect traffic from other roads and moves that traffic elsewhere. **Collector Roads** gather traffic from Local Roads and distribute that traffic to other collectors or Arterial Roads. **Local Roads** provide access to properties and buildings and move vehicles to Collector Roads. Local Roads have the lowest traffic speed and volume; Arterial Roads have the highest traffic speed and volume. In some road systems, Arterial Roads may distribute traffic to highways which can accommodate even higher speeds and volume.
- **SMART GROWTH.** Growth that takes advantage of existing development patterns, primarily infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) and access to public transit. The goal is to preserve undeveloped area by encouraging development or rehabilitation and reuse within existing developed areas. Often accompanied by an increase in the allowable square footage or units of land use, often housing, per acre.
- **U. S. CENSUS.** A count of the population of the United States every ten years. The most recent census count was 2020; some of the data from this count will not be available until 2023.

Circulation

- **COMPLETE STREETS.** The design of streets to safely accommodate multiple users (pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers) simultaneously.
- **MULTI-MODAL.** Infrastructure that provides access to more than one mode of transportation, for example, a road that provides safe access, marked access for private vehicles, public transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. May also refer to multiple methods of

providing public transit, such as bus or train.

- **STREETSCAPE.** The design of a street, including the natural and built environment; the quality and components of that design.

Economic Development

- **MAKER SPACE.** A collaborative workspace which provides tools and space for multiple uses. May require a membership and may be used as an incubator for small businesses.

Housing

- **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION.** Policies or practices in which an individual's color, race, sex, religion, or national origin are considered to increase representation in groups and opportunities for (among other aspects of society education, jobs, and housing for an under-represented part of society.
- **AFFORDABLE/WORKFORCE HOUSING.** "Housing that is affordable to households earning 60 to 120 percent of the area median income." (Urban Land Institute)  
Cost Burdened: According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), cost-burdened families pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing.
- **SEVERELY COST BURDENED.** According to the U.S. HUD, severely cost-burdened families pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing.
- **LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.** Defined by U.S. HUD as a four-person family at 1.6 times the very-low income limit and adjusted by family size.
- **VERY-LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.** Defined by U.S. HUD based on a four-person family at 50% of the area median income and then adjusted by specific formulas.

Municipal Finance

- **MUNICIPAL BUDGET PROCESS.** The annual process by which the Town's operating and capital budgets are developed and approved by Town Meeting.
- **TAX BASE.** The total assessed value of all property in the Town, including real estate, motor vehicle, and personal property.
- **NON-TAX BASE REVENUE SOURCES.** All non-tax sources or revenue, including grants, loans, bonds, and gifts.
- **OPERATING FUNDS VS. CAPITAL FUNDS.** **Operating funds** are spent on the day-to-day operations of a municipality, such as staff salaries and supplies. **Capital funds** are investments in long-term physical projects or assets, such as roads, vehicles, and computer equipment.

## Open Space and Recreation

- **ACTIVE/PASSIVE RECREATION.** **Active** recreation includes playgrounds, sports fields, and other areas that have special facilities or equipment. **Passive** recreation, by contrast, does not require such facilities and include such uses as walking, mountain biking, birding, snow shoeing, canoeing, hunting, fishing, and riding.
- **AQUIFER.** A body of permeable rock which can contain or transmit ground water. May be the source of a community's water supply.
- **AQUIFER PROTECTION/ WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION DISTRICT.** Aquifers which serve as the source of a water supply must be protected from contamination and from overuse. In Massachusetts, this is known as Source Water Protection.
- **GREENWAY TRAIL.** A trail within a linear corridor that links water and land to natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- **POCKET PARK.** Small outdoor space (less than 1/4 acre) which may be owned publicly or privately but is open to the public. Often found in urbanized areas to provide a public gathering space and usually a mixture of impervious surfaces (hardscape) and permeable landscaped areas.
- **PROTECTED OPEN SPACE.** Open space that is protected from development by acquiring the land by fee simple (buying the land) or by buying either a conservation or agricultural easement. The acquisition of easements by the state is authorized under M.G.L. Chapter 184, Sections 31-33 and is protected under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution. Chapter 61 programs allow landowners to reduce their property taxes by donating easements on their land for forestry (61), agriculture (61A), or open space and recreation (61B).
- **URBAN FOREST.** All trees and vegetation growing within an urbanized area.
- **VIEWSHED.** The geographic area visible from a specific location, including all elements within sight and excluding those that are blocked from view.

## Regulations and Regulatory Tools

- **40B.** Refers to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B which enables the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve a development providing affordable housing as long as certain standards are met. A community with 10% or more of its housing units in town on the Subsidized Housing Inventory are exempted from certain requirements of this provision.
- **40R SMART GROWTH DISTRICT.** Refers to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40R which allows municipalities to create zoning districts for housing in areas that meet certain criteria and provides a financial benefit from the state to the municipality for permitting housing within those districts. Also allows the

community to enact design standards for development in the 40R district.

- **SECTION 81D.** Refers to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 81D which is the enabling legislation for master plans.
- **DESIGN STANDARDS.** As used in this document, the use of specific requirements to control the visual and construction aspects of a building and site as part of the local approval process for a building or use. May also be used to refer to road or streetscape design.
- **FLOOD PLAIN.** An area defined by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) as susceptible to flooding on a regular basis and at a given level of severity.
- **MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW VS. REGULATIONS VS. BY-LAWS.** **Massachusetts General Laws** provide the enabling legislation for many of the tools mentioned in this plan. **Regulations** are created by state and federal agencies to provide interpretation of legislation and to state how the legislation will be applied. **By-laws** or ordinances are approved by the municipality and govern the functions and authority of the municipality and its departments. Zoning regulations are part of Groveland's by-laws.
- **OVERLAY DISTRICTS.** A zoning district that does not replace the current underlying or base zoning but provides for different land uses or development standards within a specific area as long as the development meets certain conditions.
- **ZONING.** The control of land use by means of a local ordinance.

## Sustainability/Resiliency

- **BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION.** Created in 1983 by the United Nations and formerly known as the World Commission of Environment and Development (WCED) and replaced by the Center for Our Common Future. Developed the standard definition of sustainable development.
- **RENEWABLE ENERGY.** Energy production that does not rely on fossil fuels; for example, energy derived from wind turbines or solar panels.
- **RESILIENCY.** Community resilience is a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. (RAND).
- **SUSTAINABILITY.** Defined as "development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987).



Websites

TOWN OF GROVELAND	
Wetlands Protection Bylaw	<a href="https://ecode360.com/36994673">https://ecode360.com/36994673</a>

DATA SOURCES	
AARP Livable Communities.	<a href="https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/">https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/</a>
Citizen Planner Training Collaborative	<a href="https://masscptc.org/">https://masscptc.org/</a>
This is an excellent resource for Planning Board members and others interested in municipal planning. A recent webinar discussed the development of master plans in Massachusetts.	
Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) formerly Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-housing-and-livable-communities">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-housing-and-livable-communities</a>
MassDevelopment	<a href="https://www.massdevelopment.com/">https://www.massdevelopment.com/</a>
Both EOHLC and MassDevelopment have grant programs and resources for implementation.	
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-environmental-protection">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-environmental-protection</a>
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-transportation">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-transportation</a>
This site provides information about MassDOT programs that may be appropriate for some strategies.	
Massachusetts Division of Local Services	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-local-services">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-local-services</a>
In addition to training for local officials, DLS supports the Municipal Finance Trend Dashboard, which, like MHP's DataTown below, allows communities to compare themselves against others. The Dashboard is here: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/municipal-finance-trend-dashboard">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/municipal-finance-trend-dashboard</a> , and the Community Comparison report is here: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/community-comparison-report">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/community-comparison-report</a> .	
MassGIS	<a href="https://maps.massgis.digital.mass.gov/MassMapper/MassMapper.html">https://maps.massgis.digital.mass.gov/MassMapper/MassMapper.html</a>
MassGIS's MassMapper is an online mapping platform that allows people to view different data layers for their town.	
Massachusetts Historical Commission/ MACRIS	<a href="https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/">https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/</a>
The Massachusetts Historical Commission is under the purview of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. This site provides information about MHC, resources (including grants and tax credits), and a link to the MACRIS database, which provides detailed information about historical assets.	
Massachusetts Housing Partnership	<a href="http://www.mhp.net/datatown">www.mhp.net/datatown</a>
MHP supports a data portal called DataTown, which has information about demographics, housing, jobs, and the labor force. The data can be downloaded as charts or a .csv file, allowing for additional analysis and Comparisons among towns. The data is updated frequently.	

Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program">https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program</a>
This site provides information about the MVP planning program, adaptation strategies, and supporting grants. More information is provided in two tools:	
The ResilientMA map viewer is here:	<a href="https://resilientma.org/map/">https://resilientma.org/map/</a>
The ResilientMA data grapher is here:	<a href="https://resilientma.org/datagrapher/?c=Temp/state/maxt/ANN/MA/">https://resilientma.org/datagrapher/?c=Temp/state/maxt/ANN/MA/</a>

GENERAL PLANNING RESOURCES	
American Planning Association	<a href="http://www.planning.org">www.planning.org</a>
Bloomberg City Lab	<a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/citylab">https://www.bloomberg.com/citylab</a>
Congress for the New Urbanism	<a href="https://www.cnu.org/">https://www.cnu.org/</a>
Cornell Small Farms Program	<a href="https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/">https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/</a>
Curbed	<a href="https://www.curbed.com/">https://www.curbed.com/</a>
Esri	<a href="https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/en/home/">https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/en/home/</a>
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy	<a href="https://www.lincolnst.edu/research-data/data/place-database">https://www.lincolnst.edu/research-data/data/place-database</a>
National Low Income Housing Coalition	<a href="https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/massachusetts">https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/massachusetts</a>
MassWoods	<a href="https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Ch61-v2.pdf">https://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Ch61-v2.pdf</a>
Park Score	<a href="https://www.tpl.org/parkscore">https://www.tpl.org/parkscore</a>
Planetizen	<a href="https://www.planetizen.com/">https://www.planetizen.com/</a>
Project for Public Spaces	<a href="http://www.pps.org">www.pps.org</a>
RAND - Community resilience	<a href="https://www.rand.org/topics/community-resilience.html">https://www.rand.org/topics/community-resilience.html</a>
Route Fifty	<a href="https://www.route-fifty.com/">https://www.route-fifty.com/</a>
Strong Towns	<a href="https://www.strongtowns.org/">https://www.strongtowns.org/</a>
Smart Growth America	<a href="https://smartgrowthamerica.org/">https://smartgrowthamerica.org/</a>
Trust for Public Land	<a href="https://www.tpl.org/">https://www.tpl.org/</a>
Urban Land Institute	<a href="https://uli.org/">https://uli.org/</a>
UMass Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment	<a href="https://ag.umass.edu/">https://ag.umass.edu/</a>
Walk Score	<a href="https://www.walkscore.com/">https://www.walkscore.com/</a>

REGIONAL, STATE, FEDERAL, AND INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES	
Federal Emergency Management Agency	<a href="https://www.fema.gov/">https://www.fema.gov/</a> <a href="https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home">https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home</a>
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-emergency-management-agency">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-emergency-management-agency</a>
East Coast Greenway	<a href="https://www.greenway.org/states/massachusetts">https://www.greenway.org/states/massachusetts</a>
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation</a>
Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2050">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2050</a>
Massachusetts Green Community	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/guides/becoming-a-designated-green-community">https://www.mass.gov/guides/becoming-a-designated-green-community</a>
Massachusetts Housing Partnership	<a href="https://www.mhp.net/">https://www.mhp.net/</a>
MassHousing	<a href="https://www.masshousing.com/">https://www.masshousing.com/</a>
Massachusetts Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/smart-growth-resources">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/smart-growth-resources</a>
Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties	<a href="https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm">https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm</a>
Source Water Protection	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/source-water-protection">https://www.mass.gov/source-water-protection</a>
United Nations - Sustainable Development	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/">https://sdgs.un.org/</a>
U.S. Census	<a href="https://www.census.gov/">https://www.census.gov/</a>
U.S. Census - American Community Survey	<a href="https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs">https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs</a>
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture	<a href="https://www.nifa.usda.gov/topics/sustainable-agriculture">https://www.nifa.usda.gov/topics/sustainable-agriculture</a>
U.S. Economic Development Administrations	<a href="https://www.eda.gov/">https://www.eda.gov/</a>
U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development	<a href="https://www.hud.gov">https://www.hud.gov</a>
U.S. Forest Service	<a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests">https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests</a>
USDA Rural Development	<a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd">https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd</a>
World Economic Forum	<a href="https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/10/what-is-regenerative-agriculture/">https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/10/what-is-regenerative-agriculture/</a>



Groveland Day 2022  
Image credit: Innes Associates Ltd.

