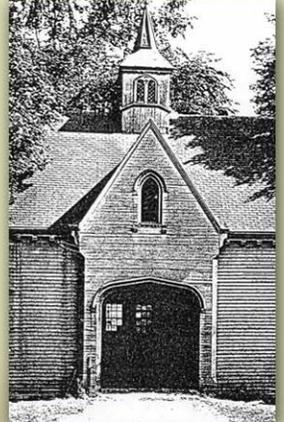


Brookline

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2005-2015



TOWN OF BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS

Brookline

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN | 2005 - 2015



Adopted by the Brookline Board of Selectmen - December 14, 2004
Adopted by the Brookline Planning Board - January 13, 2005

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1

SUMMARY & INTRODUCTION

Summary & Introduction

Brookline's fourth Comprehensive Plan focuses attention on the highest priority and most complex issues Brookline faces. It is the result of a far-reaching and comprehensive public dialogue that has drawn input from every Brookline neighborhood. While focusing on high priority and complex issues, the Plan remains "comprehensive," dealing with all the planning elements defined in Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41, Section 81D. It is also designed to meet the requirements of a Community Development Plan under Executive Order 418.

VISION: BROOKLINE IN 2015

Heir to a rich historic, cultural and landscape legacy, Brookline in 2015 is a vibrant community unique for its complex character. Encompassing urban and suburban neighborhoods, Brookline is a prosperous, diverse, safe, and well-managed residential community with thriving commercial districts.

Brookline in the twenty-first century shapes and guides change to promote the community's environmental, human, and financial sustainability:

- > as a community, protecting environmental, educational and cultural resources and providing excellent, cost-effective services and opportunities for all residents and business owners
- > as a group of residential neighborhoods, maintaining local character and a high quality of life while accommodating change
- > as a diverse place, where individuals enrich community life
- > as a responsible regional partner, actively collaborating with its neighbors to promote regional opportunities and solve regional problems

The Brookline Comprehensive Plan will help Brookline make choices about its future.

How do we want Brookline to look in 2015?

The Brookline Comprehensive Plan process established how residents want Brookline to look and feel in ten years. The Plan calls for balanced and carefully planned growth, accounting for neighborhood conservation and community diversity. It protects neighbor-



hoods and community character and outlines new initiatives such as affordable housing supported by an expanded commercial tax base. It imagines:

- Commercial growth focused primarily in the Route 9 corridor
- Annual creation of at least 25 units of affordable housing town-wide
- Initiatives to enhance community connections and preserve neighborhood character and
- Open space protection and enhancement

At its root, the Plan is based on the idea that the Town will continue to evolve and change. If the Town does not proactively plan for these changes, they will occur due to outside forces and the Town will not have any control over how they occur. On the other hand, taking an active role in shaping new development can improve the quality of life for residents.

How will we get there?

The Brookline Comprehensive Plan, through several rounds of public

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Neighborhoods and districts: *The unique and attractive qualities of Brookline's neighborhoods and districts will be maintained. Town actions and policies should enhance the livability of the Town for residents. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Develop District Plans for Coolidge Corner, Brookline Village and Chestnut Hill
- > Develop Neighborhood Plans in other parts of Town where needed
- > Protect neighborhood character while accommodating change and Town-wide needs
- > Enhance commercial districts for the benefit of residents and visitors

Affordable housing: *To provide for the needs of residents and to help preserve and enhance the diversity of the Brookline community, an appropriate variety of housing by type and cost will be made available. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Promote affordable housing Town-wide
- > Produce 25 affordable housing units a year, preferably through conversion of existing market-rate units
- > Be sensitive to neighborhood character
- > Preserve existing affordable housing units

Route Nine: *Route Nine will not divide Brookline. The Town will work with all appropriate parties to minimize this division, both physically and in terms of perception, and to make the areas Route Nine passes through more attractive for residents. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Develop a Route Nine Plan to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods along the corridor
- > Advance mixed-use development in appropriate locations, including commercial development & affordable housing
- > Create attractive gateways to the Town at the east and west

Historic resources: *Brookline will continue to respect and utilize structures and landscapes with historic significance that are part of its legacy for the future. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Evaluate the potential of a landmarks by-law or single building local historic districts to preserve historic resources
- > Create incentives for adaptive reuse of historic buildings through zoning requirements
- > Make the demolition delay by-law more effective

Natural resources, open space, parks and recreation: *Public open space throughout the Town will be preserved and enhanced, and every opportunity will be taken to add new open spaces and programming. To the extent possible, efforts will be made to preserve and protect private open spaces. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Protect significant, unprotected open spaces such as Allandale Farm
- > Proactively plan for the future through the 2005 *Open Space Plan* and the *Recreational Facilities Management Plan*
- > Adopt a local wetlands by-law
- > Use zoning tools such as Greenway Open Space Residential subdivisions and open space zones to protect open space
- > Adopt a Town conservation restriction program

Land use and housing: *Any new developments proposed in Brookline will demonstrate that they complement existing uses and the character of the Town as a primarily residential community with a particular range of building types and densities. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Make sure that existing zoning matches the desired land uses and densities throughout Town
- > Include neighborhood residents in the development review process

Economic development: *Appropriate new mixed-use and commercial development will be encouraged. Businesses in commercial areas will be fostered. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Expand commercial tax revenues
- > Promote commercial growth in appropriate areas along Route Nine
- > Enhance existing commercial areas as lively, appealing and functioning community meeting places

Transportation and mobility: *The ability of Town residents and visitors to travel within Brookline and to other parts of the region will be maintained and alternatives to the automobile will be encouraged. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Improve the Town's capacity to develop a proactive transportation planning agenda
- > Support transit-oriented development that will minimize the traffic impact on residential neighborhoods
- > Identify bicycle and pedestrian priority routes

Town, school and cultural facilities: *The Town will continue to maintain and, where needed, improve its public facilities. To accomplish this, the Town will:*

- > Continue to invest in Town capital facilities and infrastructure to address evolving community needs and information technologies
- > Maintain excellent schools

forums, outlined an overall vision for the Town—the *Vision of Brookline 2015*, shown on pages 4 and 5—and then a vision statement for each of nine subject areas, or elements. These visions are ideas of where the Town should be in ten years- with the understanding that the Town may not be able to achieve these visions fully.

The Comprehensive Plan is not just about ideas, however. It is a practical document that recommends actions that will help the Town achieve its preferred future. From each vision statement, the Comprehensive Plan outlines **GOALS, POLICIES** and **STRATEGIES** that provide a framework by which future growth and change might be directed.

GOALS are broad statements on what the Town wants to achieve.

POLICIES are statements of intent that the leaders of the Town, both within government and outside of Town Hall, should use to guide their actions and decision-making.

STRATEGIES are steps the Town should take based on the vision, goals and policies. These strategies are a work program, in a way, for the next ten years. Some strategies are clear actions the Town should take; others are recommendations for additional planning work, more study or further public input.



Kinds of Strategies

There are three main kinds of strategies:

1. Continuation of existing programs. These strategies state that the Town should continue to do what works well.
2. Proposed Zoning By-law amendments. Some issues may require zoning changes to be addressed. In some cases, the Comprehensive Plan recommends a possible zoning change. Since many of the more sweeping changes will require an intensive public process, most often the recommendation is to consider a change, not simply put one forward.

3. **Planning efforts.** Some of the issues that need to be addressed in the next ten years require careful planning and study. For this reason, the Comprehensive Plan recommends several follow-up studies to help address an identified need. In many cases, the Department of Planning and Community Development has the capacity to conduct these studies. In other cases, resources will have to be identified, or a different Town department or state agency is the most appropriate lead organization for a study.

What About Other Town Plans?

The Comprehensive Plan is not the only planning document in Town Hall. The Town has conducted several other planning processes in the last few years, and will conduct more in the future. In these cases, the Comprehensive Plan builds on the work of other plans rather than replacing them. For example, the Town has an Open Space Plan that was drafted in 2000 and is now in the process of being updated. That document provided many of the recommendations in the Natural Resources, Open Space, Parks and Recreation element.

Planning Process

Brookline has had three earlier Comprehensive Plans. The first plan was produced in 1959, the second in 1976 and the third in 1989. Over the years the Town has also produced a number of plans and studies focusing on specific areas, districts and issues. In 1998, nearly ten years after the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, the League of Women Voters held a “Future Search” event to identify residents’ concerns and hopes for the direction the community would take in the future. The Future Search made recommendations for a new Comprehensive Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan differs from those that preceded it in several ways. The focus of this Plan is on detailed strategies for implementing Town-wide goals and policies. At the same time, the Plan remains “comprehensive,” dealing with all the planning elements established in M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 81D, the legal foundation for the authority, objectives, content and application of comprehensive plans.

In August 2000, the Board of Selectmen appointed the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC), made up of 21 representatives of Town boards, commissions, advisory bodies, committees, and citizen groups. The planning process has been directly supported by staff from the Department of Planning and Community Development, with assistance from other key Town departments. In the first phase of the Comprehensive Planning process (2000-2001), Town staff prepared

Issues and Opportunities reports, organized outreach and facilitated discussions in Brookline neighborhoods. For the second phase of the planning process (2002-2003), the Town engaged a consultant team made up of Goody, Clancy & Associates and Community Design Partnership to assist in preparation of a preliminary Plan. For a final phase of the planning process (2004), the Department of Planning and Community Development took the lead, with the assistance of the consultant team, in using public feedback to convert the preliminary Plan into the final document. This process is described in detail in the Appendix.

Structure and Organization

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into six sections:

- **Section 1:** Summary and Introduction.
- **Section 2:** Brookline Yesterday and Today provides a brief overview of the Town’s evolution and provides key facts about today’s Brookline.
- **Section 3:** Brookline Tomorrow represents the core of the Comprehensive Plan. It defines the Town’s vision for the future, highlights major plan initiatives, and describes three key elements of the Plan:
 1. *Neighborhoods and Districts*
 2. *Affordable Housing*
 3. *Route Nine*
- **Section 4:** Other Plan Elements provides information on additional elements that make up the Comprehensive Plan: *Historic Resources; Natural Resources, Open Space, Parks and Recreation; Economic Development; Transportation and Mobility; and Public Facilities.*
- The **Appendix** includes supplemental information
- The **Issues and Opportunities** reports provide background data about the Town. These reports were the foundation of information on current conditions for this planning process.
- The **Action Plan** is a separate document. It identifies specific time-lines and responsibilities for implementing initiatives identified in the Plan.

Action Plan

There are hundreds of recommendations in the Plan, and only ten years to make them happen. The next step will be development of an Action Plan that outlines a conceptual work program over the next ten years.

The Action Plan will be produced in early 2005, and will provide a clear description of how the strategies in the Comprehensive Plan will be completed in the next ten years. The Action Plan will be similar to a Capital Improvement Program, in that it will describe the timeframe, responsible party, and possible funding sources for implementing the strategies. For each strategy the Action Plan will include the following:

1. **Timeframe:** Strategies will be assigned a time period for completion, either **short term** (2005-2006), **medium term** (2007-2010), or **long term** (2011-2015). Some strategies that cannot wait for completion of the Action Plan may be listed as **already under way**. The Action Plan will focus on the **short term** actions, because they are the most pressing.
2. **Responsible Party:** Strategies will be tentatively assigned to a responsible party. This may be an appropriate Town department, a non-profit that agrees to take on the strategy, or, in some cases, Town Meeting or the public.
3. **Funding:** The Action Plan will identify possible funding sources, if needed, to implement strategies. In many cases the only funding required will be staff time. In other cases the Town will need to identify external sources of funding, such as grants.

The Action Plan will require the Town to make a significant commitment to proactive planning for its future. Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require the Town to dedicate resources—both staff and money—to its recommendations. Brookline citizens—both Town Meeting members and others—will also have to commit time and energy to make the ideas in this document a reality.

Plan Updates

From time to time this Comprehensive Plan will need updating to reflect changing circumstances, or, as the Plan itself recommends, in response to follow-up planning and studies. Such updates will undergo a public review and will need to be accepted by the Planning Board.

In addition, it is expected that the entire Plan will undergo an extensive review in five years. Such a process will help keep the document up to date and reflective of current conditions.

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BROOKLINE YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The Evolution of Brookline

Brookline today reflects the range of the Town's landscape and cultural history since European settlement. Brookline's drumlin hills, remaining wetlands and the planted fields at Allandale Farm recall the seventeenth-century hamlet of Muddy River and the agricultural settlement incorporated in 1705 as the Town of Brookline. Since 1635, many land grants had been given to Boston residents for pasture lands, but enough had settled at Muddy River by the end of the seventeenth century to form a new town. During the eighteenth century, Brookline was a farm town and, by 1775, a hotbed of revolutionary sentiment. The center of community life was the Town Green at Walnut and Warren Streets, where travelers going west from Boston passed on the Sherbourne Road. Traffic switched to the new Worcester Turnpike (Route Nine) in 1807 and Brookline's population shifted towards Brookline Village over the course of the nineteenth century.

In the early 1800's, the Town's proximity to Boston made it a prime supplier of fresh produce to the city, but that proximity also made Brookline attractive to wealthy Bostonians looking for weekend and summer country retreats. Two of these early estate owners expanded their lands into small communities for friends and relatives – Longwood and Cottage Farm. These were the first planned neighborhoods in Brookline.

The arrival of the Boston & Worcester Railroad in Brookline Village in 1848 and the extension of Beacon Street through Town helped focus the year-round population at Brookline Village. America's second electric street car line opened on Beacon Street in 1889. The railroad and streetcar drew Brookline closer to Boston, creating a market for the subdivision of many older estates and farms. The first apartment buildings in Brookline were built in the 1880s, and by World War I, Beacon Street was lined with luxury apartments. Brookline was known as the "town of millionaires." Estate development continued in central and southern Brookline, but as car ownership became more widespread by the 1930s much of South Brookline land was subdivided and many of the remaining estates were transferred to institutional owners after 1950.

Brookline's transformation from farm to suburb meant that, unlike many other Massachusetts towns, it never had significant industrial areas. While this transformation was occurring, Brookline retained significant open spaces and preserved ties to its earliest beginnings as a farm settlement. Brookline became a pioneer in the preservation

of land for open space and recreation, creating the nation's first public playgrounds in 1871 and the first country club in 1882. The Muddy River was integrated into Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. Allandale Farm has remained a working farm in the hands of descendants of an early land grant recipient. In addition, the Town retains historic buildings from its early days through Victorian and later eras, many of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The evolution of Brookline has given a distinctive character to the Town's residential neighborhoods and its humanly-scaled commercial districts. The overlays of landscape and history form an intricate and robust network whose fundamental values and quality of life have persisted through change under the stewardship of many generations of Brookline citizens. This Comprehensive Plan will provide the tools to guide Brookline in the 21st century, meeting new challenges and honoring the values that have made Brookline a unique community.

Brookline Today

Brookline today is a good place to live, to work, to visit, and to do business. It is a well-managed town with a strong fiscal position. Brookline residents enjoy an enviable quality of life, with access to vital neighborhood commercial districts, parks and playgrounds, cultural activities, regional transportation, and high-quality public services including schools, police, fire and parks. The Town's neighborhoods offer a variety of residential choices and unique environments. The Town prides itself on a commitment to education and diversity. The key challenge that the Town faces is how best to enhance residents' quality of life and further community values while managing change.

Specific issues and opportunities associated with every aspect of life within the town are fully described in the detailed *Issues & Opportunities Reports* issued in 2001 as the informational foundation for this Comprehensive Plan.

The following tables provide an overall context for understanding key aspects of Town life today:

POPULATION—WHO ARE WE?

TOTAL POPULATION (2000): 57,107

- population peaked at 58,886 in 1970

AGE COMPOSITION

- 17 percent under 18 years old
- 32.3 percent 20–34 years old
- 12.4 percent 65 years and over

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS (2000): 25,594

- 47.8 percent are family households (households with children and married couples without children)
- 21.9 percent are families with own children under 18
- 52.2 percent are nonfamily households (households with unrelated or single persons)
- 36.7 percent are single-person households
- 22.7 percent include people under 18
- 20.2 percent include people 65 and over

POPULATION DIVERSITY

- Racial/Ethnic Composition (race alone or in combination)
 - > 82.9 percent white
 - > 3.3 percent African American
 - > 13.8 percent Asian
 - > 2.4 percent other
 - > 3.5 percent Hispanic/Latino (of any race)
- Language spoken at home
 - > 29 percent speak a language other than English
 - > 9.6 percent speak English less than “very well”
- Disability
 - > 6.4 percent of people 5–20 years
 - > 11.0 percent of people 21–64 years
 - > 36.9 percent of people 65 years and over

INCOME—1999

- median household income: \$66,711; median family income: \$92,993
- 32 percent of households have income \$100,000-plus
- 19.4 percent of households have incomes below \$25,000
- families below poverty level: 4.5 percent
- individuals below poverty level: 9.3 percent

SCHOOL DIVERSITY—2000

- 69 percent of public school children are white, 17.1 percent Asian, 9.7 percent African American, 4.2 percent Hispanic
- 12 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches
- 9.7 percent have limited English proficiency
- 18.5 percent are enrolled in special education classes

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Brookline's population has fluctuated between 54,000 and 59,000 since 1950. Compared to the population of Massachusetts as a whole, Brookline....

- has a smaller proportion of residents under 18 years old and 65 and older.
- has a greater proportion of residents between 20 and 34 years old.
- has a greater proportion of nonfamily and single-person households.
- has more diversity in terms of race and people with limited English proficiency.
- has a smaller proportion of people with a disability.
- has a higher median household and family income.
- has a lower poverty rate for families but the same poverty rate for individuals.
- has a more diverse student body in race/ethnicity.
- has a smaller percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- has a larger percentage of students in special education.

SOURCES: CENSUS 2000; MA DEPT OF EDUCATION

HOUSING—HOW DO WE LIVE?

TOTAL HOUSING UNITS (2000): 26,388

- 21.2 percent single-family homes
- 25.2 percent of units in buildings with 2–4 units
- 22.3 percent of units in buildings with 5–19 units
- 31.3 percent of units in buildings with 20 or more units
- 75% of residential land is zoned for single-family housing

MEDIAN HOUSING PRICES

YEAR	ONE-FAMILY \$	CONDO \$
2001	725,000	329,000
2000	699,000	300,000
1999	590,000	243,000
1998	540,000	208,000
1997	445,000	186,500
1996	408,000	170,000
1995	427,750	152,750
1994	353,250	148,250
1993	350,000	134,100
1992	322,500	132,500
1991	335,000	130,000
1990	374,000	155,000
1989	368,750	165,000
1988	376,250	170,000

SOURCE: WARREN GROUP

AGE OF HOUSING

- 52.7 percent of the residential buildings were built before 1940
- 19.1 percent were built between 1940 and 1959
- 21.9 percent were built between 1960 and 1979
- 6.4 percent were built between 1980 and March 2000

LENGTH OF TIME IN CURRENT RESIDENCE

- 43.5 percent of the population lived in the same house in 1995 and 2000
- 12.2 percent lived in a different house in the same county (some possibly in Brookline)
- 44.3 percent lived somewhere else in 1995

OWNERSHIP AND RENTAL HOUSING

- 45.3 percent of housing units are owner-occupied
- 54.7 percent housing units are renter-occupied

AFFORDABILITY

- 2000 median monthly housing costs for owners: \$2,134
- 23.4 percent of owners pay more than 30 percent of their monthly income for housing
- 2000 median gross monthly rent: \$1,262
- 40.6 percent of renters pay more than 30 percent of monthly income for housing
- 7.1 percent of housing units have affordability restrictions; almost all of these are rental units
- 7.6 percent of housing units are considered affordable by the state for the purposes of Chapter 40B, the “anti-snob zoning” law.
- March 2002 average rent: \$1,902

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Most Brookline households rent and live in multifamily buildings—and nearly a third live in buildings with 20 or more units.
- Most Brookline residents have lived here five years or less.

Housing is very expensive:

- 40 percent of renters pay more than 30 percent of their monthly income in rent.
- Brookline median housing prices are among the highest in Massachusetts.
- Fewer new housing units are being created than in previous years: The number of new units created 1980–2000 was less than one-third the number created 1960–1980.

SOURCES: CENSUS 2000; MA DEPT OF EDUCATION

TRANSPORTATION—GETTING AROUND

GETTING TO WORK (2000)

- 45.3 percent of workers drive alone (46% in 1990)
- 28.7 percent take public transportation (27% in 1990)
- 9.6 percent walk (11% in 1990)
- 7.2 percent carpool (8% in 1990)
- 6.9 percent work at home (5% in 1990)
- average travel time to work is 28 minutes

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP (2000)

- 39,676 vehicles
- 1.5 per household
- 20.4 percent of households have no vehicle
- 51.3 percent of households have one vehicle
- 28.3 percent of households have two or more

STREETS AND PATHS

- 176.25 miles of public roadway (of which 26.5 miles are under the jurisdiction of MassHighway, the MDC, or MassPike)
- One bike path (Riverway) and one bike lane (Harvard Street)
- 11 public footpaths—\$300,000 in improvements scheduled
- More than 150 miles of sidewalks—\$1 million scheduled for reconstruction through FY07
- 10 traffic-calming projects as of 2001—\$1.5 million in traffic calming scheduled through FY07
- 1,343 on-street parking spaces, metered and unmetered
- 482 off-street public parking spaces
- 23 streets have daytime resident-permit parking
- overnight parking ban townwide

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Four bus routes—highest ridership: #66 between Harvard and Dudley stations
- MBTA Green Lines C and D (and access to Boston's B Line)

- MBTA commuter rail station in West Roxbury and Roslindale

TAXIS, LIMOS AND SHARED CARS

- Brookline has 175 taxis, three limos and four shared cars.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

- The unique Brookline Transportation Board, created by the state legislature in 1974, administers parking and transportation matters through the Traffic Rules and Regulations
- Six members appointed by the Board of Selectmen
- Responsible for issues such as handicapped parking, one-way streets, truck exclusions, parking meters, permit parking, turn restrictions, bus stops, stop and yield signs, traffic-calming projects, taxi service, tow zones, and general parking prohibitions.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Nearly half of Brookline residents drive to work alone.
- More than a quarter take public transportation.
- One-fifth of households don't have a vehicle.
- Brookline provides four free parking spaces to a successful and expanding car-sharing company that has many member-customers in town.

SOURCES: CENSUS 2000; ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES REPORT, 2001; TOWN OF BROOKLINE

GREEN BROOKLINE—OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FACTS

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

- 506 acres protected public and private conservation and park land
- The Town Conservation Commission protects 12 parcels and the nonprofit Brookline Conservation Land Trust has protected four parcels

UNPROTECTED OPEN SPACE

- 653 acres unprotected public and private open space
- Allandale Farm—last working farm in Brookline or Boston
- Private unprotected open space includes extensive institutional lands

GREENWAYS

- Emerald Necklace—\$93 million Phase I restoration for Muddy River
- Charles to Charles Corridor—critical lands need protection
- Potential greenways identified by Conservation Commission

WATER RESOURCES

- Muddy River, additional three open streams, plus six streams diverted to underground pipes
- Six ponds and seven major vegetated wetland systems

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

- The Town—US EPA consent agreement on the quality of stormwater discharged into the Charles River watershed; \$7 million through FY06 to implement the plan
- Phase I Muddy River Restoration includes dredging, stormwater management, flood control and maintenance projects, including restoration of three ponds
- Stormwater and Erosion Control By-law under development

TREES: THE URBAN FOREST

- 10,791 street trees—approximately 160 new street trees added annually
- 150-year old European beeches on Longwood Mall
- Eastern hemlocks townwide, including Putterham Woods, Hoar Sanctuary, and Walnut Hill Cemetery—infested by wooly adelgid
- Native woodland trees and shrubs planted in Hoar Pond restoration project
- Tree Protection Ordinance under study

RECREATION

- 28 parks with active recreation facilities—too few athletic fields
- Share agreements with private institutions to serve recreation and school programs
- Improvements scheduled for the golf course, swimming pool, recreation center, and other parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities through FY07
- Athletic fields proposed for post-closure Newton Street landfill.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Brookline has *significant protected parks and recreation resources*, including some shared with neighboring communities.
- *Valued open spaces remain unprotected.*
- Implementation of *important stormwater management efforts* to improve water quality is underway.
- Demand is high for *town athletic fields and recreation facilities.*

SOURCES: ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES REPORT, 2001

FINANCES—HOW ARE WE DOING?

FINANCIAL POSITION

- Brookline is one of only 12 Massachusetts communities with a bond rating of Aaa from Moody's, the highest rating possible.
- Town fiscal policies guide the budget process and allow the Town to balance operating budget and capital budget needs.
- Deficits are projected to grow from \$2.4 million (1%) in FY 2005 to \$5.6 million (3%) in FY2009 due to a stagnant economy, lower state aid, health insurance and pension cost increases, and collective bargaining agreements.
- Over the last five years, the median tax bill for single-family homes dropped as a percentage of family income by more than 10% cumulatively (2004 data).
- The number of property parcels has increased by 4% since FY1999, driven by 10% growth in condos (to 55% of residential parcels) and despite a 4.6% drop in nonresidential parcels (2004 data).
- "New Growth" in the tax base increased 69% in the last five years, with an average of 29% of new growth generated by commercial properties.

GENERAL FUND SOURCES (FY2005 PLAN)

- 69.2% from property taxes
- 1.0% from local fees/receipts
- 9.9% from state local aid
- 3.8% free cash
- 6.1% other

PROPERTY TAXES

- Brookline has the fifth-highest total property value (EQV) in the state, and the fifth-largest override capacity in total dollars. The Town taxes to the full extent of its current levy limit (2002 data).
- Commercial/industrial/personal property declined from over 11% of assessed value to less than 9% due to faster growth in the value of residential property and a decline in the number of nonresidential parcels (2004 data).
- Brookline shifts the tax burden from residential to commercial property by the maximum amount allowed by the state (i.e., in 2004 C/I/P accounted for 15.6% of taxes levied, but only 8.9% of value).
- Brookline's average single-family tax bill of \$9,214 is the second-highest in the state. However, the average residential tax bill is \$5,898, the 22nd-highest in the state (2003 data).

FY2005 PLAN FULLY ALLOCATED

GENERAL-FUND SPENDING

- 52.3% Education
- 15.8% Public Safety
- 15.5% Town Debt & Benefits
- 6.8% Public Works
- 3.5% General Government
- 2.5% Cultural Resources
- 2.4% Reserves
- 1.2% Community Services

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Brookline's tax base and financial management are among the strongest in the state, as evidenced by the Town's Aaa bond rating and the relative ease with which it has adjusted the budget to a slow economy and reduced local aid.
- Affluent, "revenue-rich" Brookline can afford high-quality services. Yet, revenue increases are limited by Prop 2½, fixed costs are rising, and state aid levels are uncertain. Deficits are projected to grow over the next five years.
- The Town is fully utilizing its tax-levy limit but has considerable capacity to increase revenue by overriding Prop 2½ again. Residential tax bills, however, are already relatively high, and the Town cannot shift any more of the tax burden onto commercial properties.

SOURCES: CENSUS 2000; ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES REPORT, 2001; TOWN OF BROOKLINE

FINANCES—HOW ARE WE DOING?

SPENDING TRENDS (FY1999-2004)

- Operating budget outgrew inflation by 13%, driven by these categories: schools (+16%), debt and interest (+33%), benefits (+17%), and public safety (+5%).
- The number of Town department employees increased by only 20, but by 114 in the schools.

EDUCATION SPENDING

- FY2003 spending of \$11,139/pupil was 16th among 241 nonregional districts in the state, and 6% above the median of the Aaa communities
- Town/School Partnership Agreement commits 50% of revenue above fixed costs to education.
- Since 1995, school funding has increased an average of 5% per year and more than 200 positions have been added while enrollment has remained relatively stable.
- 2005 plan calls for a 3.8% increase in school appropriations.
- Approximately two-thirds of debt service is for schools

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND DEBT

- Capital Improvement Program calls for \$74.6 million in spending over the next six years. Major projects include renovations of the Health Center, Town Hall, Runkle School, and the Devotion School; capping of

the Newton Street landfill and transforming it into a playing field; restoration of the Muddy River; acquisition of the Fisher Hill reservoir and its transformation into a playing field; and the reconstruction of Beacon Street.

- Total debt will peak in FY2007 at about \$105 million, with debt service of \$16 million.
- Brookline has the second-highest debt per capita among the 12 Massachusetts Aaa-rated communities, and it ranks 105th overall in the state (2002 data).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Brookline prides itself on providing high-quality services, but the Town has correspondingly high costs. Fixed costs (debt, pensions, health insurance, etc) are increasing, and operating costs in total are rising faster than inflation and revenue.
- Brookline has made education a key priority. Spending per pupil is among the highest in Massachusetts, and schools account for just over half of Town spending. School operating costs are growing faster than Town revenues and the rest of the Town budget.
- Brookline has a relatively high level of debt, stretching out planned capital improvements in order to stay within the Town's debt guidelines.

SOURCES: CENSUS 2000; ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES REPORT, 2001; TOWN OF BROOKLINE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EMPLOYMENT OF BROOKLINE RESIDENTS

- 2,207 (6.9% of workers) worked at home (Census 2000)
- 2,722 (8.3% of workers) are self-employed in an unincorporated business (Census 2000)
- 69.7 % of the population over 15 is in the labor force (Census 2000)
- 1.2% unemployment rate for Brookline residents in 2000

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES IN BROOKLINE

- Approximately 2,500 businesses, including home businesses
- 1,591 businesses (State Division of Employment & Training data, 2000)
- 16,434 employees (State Division of Employment & Training, 2000)
- 50% of jobs are in the service sector
- 24% of jobs are in the trade sector
- 14% of jobs are in government
- The 2000 average annual wage for Brookline jobs was \$35,871
- 7% of land is zoned commercial

COMMERCIAL AREAS

- approximately 1,300 businesses in commercial districts:
 - > Coolidge Corner 36.5% of businesses
 - > Brookline Village 31.8%
 - > Washington Square 11.6%
 - > St. Mary's Station 9.3%
 - > JFK Crossing 5.6%
 - > Chestnut Hill/Putterham 5.0%
- Coolidge Corner has maintained a low vacancy rate of 7% and low rate of national chain businesses (only 22%).
- Since 1990, there have been five new commercial developments totaling 40,380sf.

COMPARATIVE TAX RATES (PER \$1,000)

	RESIDENTIAL		COMMERCIAL/ INDUSTRIAL	
	1990	2002	1990	2002
BROOKLINE	14.29	12.90	23.22	21.07
CAMBRIDGE	9.51	7.22	18.16	18.16
NEWTON	10.35	9.94	18.94	18.77
BOSTON	8.45	11.01	23.90	30.33
BELMONT	10.58	11.19	10.58	11.19
WELLESLEY	9.13	8.10	9.13	8.10

SOURCE: WARREN GROUP

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Brookline has *many small home businesses and sole proprietorships.*
- Brookline businesses are *mostly service businesses.*
- Most businesses are in *Coolidge Corner and Brookline Village.*
- *83% of real estate tax revenues come from residential property.*
- *17% of real estate tax revenues come from business property.*
- *7% of property is zoned commercial.*

SOURCES: CENSUS 2000; ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES REPORT, 2001; MASS. DET; TOWN OF BROOKLINE

GLOSSARY

This glossary is provided for the reference and convenience of readers and does not supercede any of the text in the main document of the Comprehensive Plan.

Affordable Housing—Housing that is within the means of a low- or moderate-income household, as defined by state or federal legislation.

AHTF—Affordable Housing Task Force, a Town committee appointed by the Selectmen, and charged with increasing the supply of affordable housing in Brookline.

BHA — Brookline Housing Authority, the public housing authority for the Town. The BHA manages much of the affordable housing in Town. BHA members are elected.

CDBG—Community Development Block Grant, a federal program that provides the Town with approximately \$1.9 million a year (as of 2004) to provide low- and moderate-income residents with housing, public facilities, and social services.

Chapter 40B—Also known as the "Comprehensive Permit Law" or the "anti-snob zoning act", a state law that allows developments containing at least 25 percent affordable housing units to waive local zoning requirements. See the Affordable Housing section of the Comprehensive Plan for more information on 40B.

Chapter 40R—A state law passed in 2004 that provides incentives for municipalities to develop affordable housing in areas around transit.

CIP— Capital Improvement Program, the Town's five year plan for capital improvements such as rehabilitation of buildings and roadway repairs. The CIP is updated every year.

Comprehensive Plan— A long-range plan intended to guide the growth and development of a community or region. It typically includes inventory and analysis leading to recommendations for the community's future. Comprehensive Plans cover all issues relating to a community, including housing, land use, transportation, community facilities, open space, and economic development.

CPC— Comprehensive Plan Committee, the group that guided development of the Comprehensive Plan with support from consultants and Town staff.

CPA— Community Preservation Act, a state law that provides matching funds for open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation for municipalities that have agreed to increase their property tax levies by up to 3 percent as a match. To date, Brookline has not adopted the CPA.

DAT— Design Advisory Team, a group appointed as part of the development review process to advise developers, the Planning Board, and Board of Appeals on the physical appearance and layout of proposed developments.

DCR— Division of Conservation and Recreation, the successor agency to the Metropolitan District Commission. DCR owns and manages many regional open spaces and roadway, including the Riverway and Olmsted Park.

Demolition Delay By-law— A local by-law that permits the Preservation Commission to delay the demolition of a building that is considered to have possible historic significance. This delay can be for up to a year, and is designed to allow time for a discussion to occur about possible alternatives to demolition.

EPA— The Environmental Protection Agency, the federal agency responsible for regulating many issues related to clear air and water.

EDAB— Economic Development Advisory Board, a Town board appointed by the Selectmen to provide input on increasing the Town's commercial tax base in a way that is sensitive to the quality of life for residents.

Executive Order 418 (EO 418)— A state program that requires Massachusetts communities to demonstrate that they are taking steps to increase their supply of affordable housing. Municipalities must obtain housing certification to be eligible to receive certain state and federal grant funds. Executive Order 418 also provided funding and guidance for municipalities to complete “Community Development Plans,” plans similar to Comprehensive Plans but only including four elements (transportation, open space, economic development and housing).

FAR— Floor Area Ratio, the gross floor area of all buildings or structures on a lot divided by the total lot area.

FTE— Full-Time Equivalent, a measure of how many full-time jobs that exist, would be created, or are otherwise measured. Part time jobs can be converted into FTE jobs based on a ratio of the number of hours per week in the part time job to the number of hours per week in a full time job (usually 40).

GOSR— Greenway Open Space Residential subdivisions, a tool by which a parcel of land can be developed in a more flexible way. A GOSR subdivision might include the same number of residential units as a conventional subdivision, but would located them in a way that protects that better preserves any sensitive parts of the land.

HAB— Housing Advisory Board, an advisory board created by the Board of Selectmen in 1987 that advises them on the development of affordable housing.

HOME— Home Ownership Made Easy, a program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the purpose of expanding the supply of decent, affordable housing for low-income families. Brookline participates in a consortium of nearby municipalities that work together on HOME programs.

HUD— Department of Housing and Urban Development, a cabinet-level federal agency that promotes housing and urban development in the United States through direct loans, mortgage insurance, and other programs.

Local Historic District— A district designated by the Brookline Preservation Commission within which the building and resources are of basic and vital importance. Local districts usually design review and approval for most exterior building changes or new construction.

MAPC— Metropolitan Area Planning Council, a regional planning agency representing 101 cities and towns in the Boston metropolitan area. Created by an act of the Legislature in 1963, it serves as a forum for state and local officials to address issues of regional importance.

MASCO— Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, Inc., a charitable corporation established in 1972 to plan, develop, and enhance the Longwood Medical and Academic Area (LMA) for the benefit of the general public and its members, and to create and implement programs that assist the institutions and individuals in the LMA.

MBTA— Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the regional transit authority for the metropolitan Boston area. The MBTA provides three heavy rail lines (the Red, Orange, and Blue lines) and two light rail lines (the Green line, including the B, C, D and E branches, and the Mattapan Trolley). It also operates busses throughout the region, trackless trolleys, and one "Bus Rapid Transit" line, which operates large busses in a separate bus lane with limited stops along Washington Street in Boston.

MDC— Metropolitan District Commission, an agency that managed parkways and reservations and other open space resources in the Boston metropolitan area until replaced with the Division of Conservation and Recreation in 2003 (see DCR).

National Register of Historic Places— The official list established by the National Historical Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation's history of whose artistic or architectural value is unique.

Nonpoint-Source Pollution— Pollution discharged over a wide land area, not from one specific location.

Open Space— Any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and set aside, dedicated, or reserved for public or private use.

PDD— Planned Development District, an overlay district that allows more flexible development if the land owner(s) work with the town and other stakeholders to develop a conceptual master plan for development of the district. This tool is intended primarily for use in some of the institutional areas in southern Brookline as a way of ensuring that the land is not developed piecemeal.

SRO— Single Room Occupancy, a housing type consisting of one room, often with cooking facilities and with private or shared bathroom facilities.

TDM— Traffic Demand Management, strategies aimed at reducing the number of vehicle trips, shortening trip lengths, and changing the timing of trips out of peak hours.

TDR— Transfer of Development Rights, the removal of the right to develop or build, expressed in dwelling units per acre or floor area, from land in one zoning district to land in another district where such transfer is permitted.

Zipcar— A car sharing program that provides access to on-demand transportation, complementing other means of mobility. Users typically pay an hourly fee while the company covers the cost of gas and insurance. Members can reserve cars on-line or by phone, and access cars with a membership card. Many municipalities in the Boston area actively support Zipcar by providing public parking spaces for their vehicles.

Zoning ByLaw— A document that delineates zoning districts and the regulations governing the use, placement, spacing, and size of land and buildings.

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