



Executive Order 418  
Community Development Plan



# Longmeadow Faces the Future: The Longmeadow Long Range Plan



**Prepared for**  
The Long Range Planning Committee  
*Town of Longmeadow, Massachusetts*

**Prepared by**  
*Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.*



**In Association With**  
RKG Associates, Inc.  
*Durham, New Hampshire*

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
*Springfield, Massachusetts*

April 2004







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**Town of Longmeadow,  
Massachusetts**

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**Prepared for    Longmeadow Long Range Planning Committee  
Town of Longmeadow, Massachusetts**

**Prepared by    VHB/Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.  
Watertown, Massachusetts**

**In Association With    RKG Associates, Inc.  
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**Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
Springfield, Massachusetts**

**April 2004**



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Fiscal Trends, Vision Framework Plan, August 2002
Housing Needs Assessment, June 2003
Housing & Economic Development Elements, September 2003

# Executive Summary

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## Dedication

***To the people of Longmeadow***, who value the exceptional quality of life in our town including our safe and open community, residential and historic character, beautiful parks and open spaces, commitment to academic excellence, and outstanding town services.

The Long Range Planning Committee would especially like to thank all the residents and Town officials who have served on the planning subcommittees, attended public forums and met with consultants. Your wide variety of perspectives, questions and ideas, and love of our community have sustained us in our work over three years, and we hereby present *Longmeadow Faces the Future, the Longmeadow Long Range Plan* to you.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Sommer, Chairperson	(2000-2004)
David Appleman	(2000-2004)
Philip N. Clark	(2000-2004)
Russell Dale	(2001-2004)
Saul Finestone	(2000-2004)
Elizabeth Foote	(2000-2002)
Paula Gallup	(2000-2004)
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Carol A. Leary	(2000-2004)
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Arlene Miller	(2000-2004)
Gerard Nolet <i>ex-officio</i>	(2000-2003)
John Papale <i>ex-officio</i>	(2003-2004)
Mark Schneider	(2000-2004)
Paula Tredeau	(2000-2004)

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## Executive Summary

### **“Longmeadow is happy being Longmeadow”**

“Longmeadow is happy being Longmeadow,” said a consultant early in the planning process after over 120 residents and town officials had looked at our community’s strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats. The challenge for the Long Range Planning Committee has been to develop recommendations that will preserve the exceptional quality of life in our town through good and bad economic cycles, knowing that maintaining our public infrastructure and quality workforce is costly, there are few opportunities for growth, and that meeting the needs of our youth and elders is an emerging issue.



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### Longmeadow Vision Statement

Longmeadow is a community where people value home and family, and the town services and institutions that support this way of life. Longmeadow residents have pride in the historic beauty of our small New England town and want to preserve our residential character. People want well maintained homes, a safe community, tree-lined and well-lit streets and sidewalks, parks and open space close to where people live, and small commercial centers compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Residents care about our children and are concerned about providing high-quality public education and youth recreation opportunities. Residents care about our elders and want to plan for enough affordable housing for our aging population and for access to the services and programs elders need to live either independently or with assistance. Longmeadow people value the exceptional quality of life in our community. There is a strong consensus to maintain and improve what we already have, both today and in the future.



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### The Planning Process

The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) was formed in May, 2000, when the Board of Selectmen appointed 15 citizens to develop a long range plan for Longmeadow to guide the Town's physical development and provision of municipal services. The planning process has included town residents, town officials, and consultants. Three subcommittees, made up of LRPC members and other interested citizens, have studied and made recommendations in three subject areas: Land Use and Conservation; Quality of Life; and, Town Services and Facilities. Consultants Mullin Associates conducted visioning work with town officials and at the Longmeadow Forum of 120 citizens in February, 2001. The team of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), RKG Associates, Inc. (RKG), and Walter Cudnohufsky



Associates prepared the draft vision framework plan. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission did the transportation planning. RKG did the financial analysis and housing and economic development planning. The LRPC created the Town Services and Facilities recommendations based on the report of that subcommittee. VHB prepared the final plan with GIS maps.



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## **Funding**

This project was funded with \$30,000 of Town funds and \$30,000 in consulting services from the Commonwealth's Community Development Planning Program under Executive Order 418. Countless hours of volunteer labor by the LRPC and its subcommittees have also gone into preparing this plan.

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## **Recommendation Highlights**

The Longmeadow Long Range Plan is comprised of five elements: Environmental and Resource Protection; Town Services and Community Life; Housing; Economic Development; and, Transportation. The following sections summarize the recommendations of the LRPC and the three subcommittees, which form the basis of the Long Range Plan implementation schedule.



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## **Environmental and Resource Protection**

We must take bold steps in order to respond to the demands for housing, open space protection and historic preservation while at the same time to create revenue generating solutions for the Town. Most land in Town is already developed, with 74.1 percent in residential use, 0.8 percent in commercial use, 2 percent for highways and 23.1 percent in agricultural or open space. The Town is the largest landowner of open space in Longmeadow.

### **Revenue/Cost Analysis**

According to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Longmeadow is approximately 90 percent built-out. Because of the limited amount of land in Longmeadow available for future development, all requests for development or rezoning must be evaluated on the potential to generate income or in terms of costs to the Town, as well as on the merits of the land use and regulatory issues.

## **Open Space**

To the extent possible, lands that are currently conservation or recreation lands should stay as open space. Efforts should be made to use these lands for passive recreation and outdoor educational opportunities and to inform citizens of Longmeadow about them.

### **The Meadows/Fannie Stebbins**

- Support the Conservation Commission's ongoing efforts to acquire riverfront and floodplain land in order to preserve open space, maintain the natural state of wetlands, the floodplain and other environmentally critical areas, and to provide opportunities for passive recreational use.
- The Conservation Commission and Parks Department should work toward developing passive recreational activities on environmentally sensitive land, including a trail system and educational stations.
- The LRPC recommends the development and maintenance of farming activities, and the development of a forestry management program in conjunction with state and federal programs.
- Ensure the protection of the Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge through establishment of a conservation restriction, zoning action or other appropriate control to help the sanctuary secure the land and protect it from future development.

### **The Riverfront**

The LRPC supports development of a riverfront park on Town owned land (200/216 Anthony Road), including picnic tables, a swing set and a parking area. Public access to the water should be limited to non-motorized craft, due to the shallow depth and environmentally sensitive nature of the area. Planning and development should include close cooperation and coordination with riverfront residents and the Pioneer Valley Yacht Club.

### **Parks**

The LRPC recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department work with the Conservation Commission and other Town boards to update the Parks Master Plan. Bliss, Laurel, Turner and Greenwood Parks should remain as park land. Development of a community center serving elders and teens should be considered for the Greenwood Center area. The LRPC considered conversion of the recreation area at Wolf Swamp fields to senior housing or a flex tech facility, but potential benefits were not large enough to warrant the relocation of the fields and parking. Development of a bike path system linking recreation and park areas around town and with the Springfield bikeway is desirable.

### **Historic Preservation**

The LRPC supports the activities of both the Historic District Commission and the Historical Society in their mission to maintain the architectural characteristics of the Historic District and to foster interest in the Town's past. We recognize the Longmeadow Town Green-- the Historic District-- as a living museum and support efforts for its preservation, and for preserving other historic structures in our town. We should examine zoning bylaws and Historic District Commission mandates to ensure that any renovations are carefully planned and closely monitored. Consider requiring permits from the Zoning Board of Appeals or a moratorium on a town-wide basis for tear-downs. Because of the trend toward mansionization, the Planning Board should study and propose a square foot to area ratio (SAR) zoning bylaw for the entire town. This would also help to preserve the character of the Historic District.

### **Golf Courses**

In the event that a large tract of privately held open space becomes available, we recommend that the Town consider bonding or other funding mechanisms for purchase. Projected uses include recreation, housing, mixed-use office, commercial, light industrial or any combination that would generate net revenues for the town tax base while conforming to the character of the town.



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## **Town Services and Community Life**

Longmeadow residents enjoy excellent town services, but they are concerned about maintaining these services as revenues decline. They also would like better communications between town officials and citizens. People want better facilities and programs to meet the needs of our elders and youth, and have expressed interest in creating a community center to do this.

### **Create Financial Stability / Budgeting**

- Stress to our elected Boards, as well as our residents, the need to lobby our State Representative and State Senator regarding the need to support Local Aid appropriations, based on fair distribution formulas, including the return of 100 percent of lottery money to municipalities.
- Analyze the costs of unfunded mandates such as Special Education and examine options for management and political action.
- The Appropriations Committee, Board of Selectmen and School Committee should develop, and agree on, a policy for the Town regarding what conditions would “trigger” an override recommendation and vote.
- Adopt a town-wide policy freezing all budgetary line item descriptions to enhance year-to-year comparisons of departmental operations.
- Review town budgetary documents to consider alternative formats that might enhance resident understanding of the Town's finances.

### **Increase the Financial Base**

- Study the creation of a “Community Chest” or “Endowment Fund”, seeking donations from residents to support town operations.
- Review the Town’s fees and fines structure.
- Study the advisability/desirability of altering zoning bylaws to permit alternate housing situations and increased density.
- Encourage “New Growth” by supporting additions/renovations of the existing housing stock, coupled with reassessment of such properties.
- Conduct real estate evaluations in a timely manner as required by law to ensure that assessments are accurate.
- Explore the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act of 2000 as a source of funding for historic preservation, housing and conservation land acquisition, subject to voter approval. This revenue is not subject to Proposition 2 ½ limitations and would be eligible for matching funds from the State.

### **Improve Capital Infrastructure**

In the next decade, the Town will need to make significant capital improvements to Longmeadow High School, Glenbrook and Williams Middle Schools, and the Town Yard, and make our municipal facilities fully accessible to people with disabilities. There is interest in building a community center to serve elders and teens.

- Continue to support and improve the process conducted by the Capital Planning Committee. Evaluate and look at other models to improve the process.
- Identify and pursue all grants which might support the acquisition of needed equipment. Chief among these would be the School Department and the Police and Fire Departments, i.e. Homeland Security issues.
- Increase annual budgetary support to fund capital improvements and acquisitions.
- Review options to relocate town offices to a single ADA compliant facility.
- Create a study group to explore the construction of a new community center at Greenwood or another appropriate location. Consider locating affordable senior housing adjacent to the facility.

### **Maintain High Academic Excellence**

- Once the new Superintendent of Schools is chosen, a thorough review of school goals and operations should take place, with recommendations on how to maintain excellence at a level of local spending the townspeople will support.
- Ensure the High School does not lose its accreditation by bringing physical conditions up to state standards. Develop initiatives to provide better equipment and upgrade technological resources for students.
- Support the Longmeadow Educational Excellence Foundation (LEEF), PTOs and other organizations working to enhance our schools.

## **Improve Town Management and Efficiency**

- Study departmental relationships and interdependencies to determine if further departmental consolidations or cross training of staff can be undertaken to achieve efficiencies.
- Study the need for a Chief Financial Officer for the Town, including consolidation of the Collector/Treasurer functions, the Town Accountant and the Director of Business Services.
- Study the role of the IT Department throughout the Town, including the School Department. Study those uses to which technology can be applied to further reduce operating expenses, such as centralized information tracking, online registrations or routine bill paying.
- Support the proposed Charter. If the vote fails, support Bylaw changes to improve the efficiency of Town government, including, but not limited to the appointment (rather than the election) of the Water & Sewer Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Town Clerk, and Town Collector/Treasurer.
- Elected Boards and Town Officials need to actively support the work of the Charter Commission, publicize its findings and support the public debate of its recommendations.

## **Improve Communications**

- Study the usefulness and costs of a community-wide newsletter.
- Utilize web-based meeting minutes, meeting notices, contract documents, departmental plans, etc. to share information on a wider basis than might currently be done. A study to evaluate the advisability of consolidating Town and School Department websites should be included.
- Develop a plan for more intensive, consistent and improved use of Longmeadow Cable Television by Boards, elected officials and department heads to inform residents and disseminate decisions and plans.
- Encourage elected officials and Boards to better utilize available public relations/media vehicles.
- Distribute a survey to town residents to evaluate needs and provision of services. Explore the possibility of including non-binding questions on ballots, or filling out a survey on Election Day.

## **Develop and Pursue Collaborative Relationships**

- Collaborate with Bay Path College and other non-profit institutions on town service usage and demands, support and planning for town functions and services, and other opportunities
- Collaborate with neighboring municipalities on sharing of services where appropriate, joint ventures utilizing the model of the Scantic Valley Health Trust, traffic issues and mutual aid and support agreements for public safety issues.
- Explore the use of grants or partnerships with State, Federal and private agencies for development of park, recreation and conservation lands.

## **Focus on the Needs of Youth and Seniors**

- Address youth issues, including lack of teen job opportunities and public transportation.
- Address senior issues such as affordable housing, educational opportunities, and a new senior center.
- Promote opportunities for multi-generational activities and volunteering.



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## **Housing**

The analysis of housing data shows a need and a market for affordable housing in Longmeadow. Town residents want more affordable housing options for seniors. The LRPC supports creative zoning that would allow for alternate types of housing, such as accessory apartments, housing above commercial buildings, and expansion of existing elderly housing.

### **Senior Housing**

The town should explore various properties in the town for the development of housing that provides opportunities for a diversity of income levels, including affordable housing for seniors. Parcels to be studied include the Water Tower property, Wolf Swamp fields, Greenwood Center, and others that may be identified.

The Water Tower property, owned by the School and Recreation Departments was explored as the site for the development of age-restricted housing. The VHB financial projections show that sale of this property for that purpose could result in a substantial one time payment to the Town (\$11.8 million), and significant increases in property taxes (up to \$1.4 million per year). This project has enough of a financial benefit to the town to be seriously considered. Other options for smaller units of senior housing could be located as an expansion of Emerson Manor, the Bliss Road/Williams Street commercial area, Bay Path College, or Greenwood Center.

### **Accessory Apartment Bylaw**

The Town should revisit the issue of allowing accessory apartments on premises of owner occupied homes. This would create some units of affordable housing for renters, help homeowners receive some income to offset tax increases, and increase safety for elderly homeowners who live alone. A carefully crafted bylaw will protect neighborhood appearance and would have no negative impact on property values.

### **Longmeadow Street Overlay Zone**

In the future, if large houses on Longmeadow Street no longer prove desirable for single family residences, and either do not sell as residences or begin to fall into disrepair, the Town may wish to consider an overlay zone with strict design guidelines to permit some homes to be converted into professional offices, bed & breakfasts, or condominiums. Creative site and design review would preserve the historic character of the area.



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## **Economic Development**

Longmeadow was conceived as a residential suburb of Springfield in the 1920's and has maintained this character ever since. Residents have consistently voted against large commercial development, choosing to rely on their property taxes as the primary source for local revenues. Because opportunities for economic development in town are so limited, Town officials should look favorably on proposals which would generate ongoing revenues to the town. Ultimately, the solutions to Longmeadow's need to produce more revenue to support town services are political. At the state level, citizens could work to amend Proposition 2 ½, change school funding formulas, insist that mandates are fully funded, or support increases in taxes, such as the automobile excise tax, which return significant revenues to the town.

### **Increasing Density of Commercial Areas**

The LRPC recommends increasing density in existing commercial areas rather than developing new commercial districts. This would require changing the height restriction on commercial buildings to accommodate increased density. Also, parking ratios of spaces per square foot should be eased in order to accommodate the size of the building.

### **Longmeadow Street Overlay Zone**

(See previous description under Housing)

### **Economic Impact of Non-Profits**

The town should be cognizant of the economic impact of non-profits and explore:

- An exchange of in-kind services or sharing resources with non-profits;
- Opening a dialog to seek ways for non-profit institutions to assist with sharing municipal service costs in an equitable manner; and
- Monitoring land acquisitions by any tax exempt organization, except when the land is acquired for conservation or the preservation of open space.

We should promote opportunities for partnerships with Bay Path College. Possible areas include: library services/funding, elderly housing, joint recreation facilities, performing arts, educational and training opportunities, school-college partnerships and general use of facilities.



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## Transportation

Residents' transportation concerns are primarily about pedestrian and bicycle safety at many places around town, excessive speeding on Converse Street and other locations, and traffic delays at rush hours, particularly on Longmeadow Street. School traffic and student safety is also a particular concern.

### Traffic Delays

The solution to Longmeadow's traffic delays would have to begin with a regional approach coordinated by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, because much of the traffic is due to drivers from other towns passing through Longmeadow.

### Bliss Williams Commercial Area

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission prepared a detailed study of the Bliss Road/Williams Street commercial area, looking at existing traffic conditions and projections of traffic conditions for two commercial expansion scenarios. The LRPC recommends modest changes in signage and turning lanes and a new crosswalk at Bliss Court to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

### Speeding

The town could consider the use of speed bumps, traffic signals, warning devices, more frequent law enforcement, and other measures in areas where speeding is a problem.

### Route 5 Corridor

The Route 5 Corridor from Forest Glen Road to Williams Street experiences delay and severe congestion in the morning and evening peak travel hours, resulting from heavy volumes of traffic traveling through this location. This roadway provides direct access to East Longmeadow, Springfield, Enfield, Connecticut and I-91. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is performing an analysis of existing conditions as well as forecasted future conditions, including examining timing and phasing plans for signals located throughout the corridor, to propose recommendations to improve traffic flow and increase safety. PVPC will be working with the Town to identify additional concerns and safety hazards located along Route 5 in the center of Town. The Route 5 –Longmeadow Corridor Study will provide short term, low cost alternatives as well as long term strategies to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety conditions.



# Environmental and Resource Protection Element

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## Introduction

The Environmental and Resource Protection Element provides an assessment of future land use suitability in Longmeadow. It is based upon a review of the *2002 Longmeadow Open Space and Recreation Plan*, a comparison of build-out analyses prepared for the Town by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), and input from the Town's Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) and its Land Use and Conservation Subcommittee. The following sections provide an overview of existing land use conditions in Longmeadow and outline future growth patterns with an emphasis given to identifying priorities for land protection and development.

This chapter was prepared in accordance with the guidelines established as part of Executive Order 418 (EO418) and is intended to serve as the Environmental and Resource Protection Element of the Town of Longmeadow Long Range Master Plan. A number of the requirements by EO418 for this Element have already been fulfilled by the Town, including documentation of the Town's Water Resources, descriptions of the findings and recommendations of the Town's open space and resource protection plan, and goals pertaining to preserving open space, recreation and natural resources.

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## Existing Land Use

According to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Build-Out Analysis, prepared by the EOEA in the spring of 2000, Longmeadow is approximately 90 percent built-out. Within the Town, there are approximately 670 acres of developable land, some of which is under partial environmental constraints, including flood plain, wetlands, slopes and river protection buffers. In addition, there are approximately 323 acres of land within three privately held golf-courses in Town, including the Longmeadow Country Club, the Twin Hills Country Club, and the Franconia Golf Club (the majority of which is located in the City of Springfield).

Longmeadow is predominantly a residential bedroom community, with very little land available for commercial or industrial uses. Approximately 74 percent of the land in Town is zoned for housing. Agricultural lands, which also permit development of single-family residential uses, comprise 23 percent of the remaining land in Town. All of the agricultural zoned land is located west of Interstate 91 and is within the 100 year flood plain. Of the approximately three percent of the remaining land in town, two percent is highway, and less than one percent is for professional or business uses. Table 1 provides a summary of land use acreage and percentages in Longmeadow according to zoning.

**Table 1**  
**Land Use Allocation by Zoning Classification**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agricultural	1,419	23.1%
Residential (includes all types)	4,552	74.1%
Professional	23	0.3%
Business	34	0.5%
Highway (unzoned)	121	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,147</b>	



## Open Space and Conservation Lands

The Town is the largest owner of open space and recreational land in Longmeadow. The Parks and Recreation Department controls approximately 210 acres, consisting of five main park locations, numerous playing fields, tennis courts, playground facilities and two ponds. Table 2 lists the major park locations controlled by the Parks and Recreation Department.

**Table 2**  
**Major Park Locations**

<b>Park</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Bliss Park	45
Greenwood Park	13
Wolf Swamp Road Fields	18
Turner Park	84
Laurel Park	38
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>198</b>

In addition to the land controlled by the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Longmeadow Conservation Commission oversees the protection of approximately 600 acres of land, the majority of which is located in the Meadows west of Interstate 91. The Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge, which is also located in the Meadows, consists of approximately 338 acres of prime riverine forest, wet meadows, wetlands and brooks with a number of walking trails and numerous plants and wildlife. The Fannie Stebbins Refuge is listed on the Registry of National Landmarks, and is open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, wildlife observation and educational programs.

From the viewpoint of land and open space/conservation, Longmeadow's principal feature is the nearly 1,700 acres of Connecticut River flood plain in the Meadows, which is comprised of prime agricultural land, the Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge, the lands held by the Conservation Commission, a small number of privately owned year round residences and several undeveloped parcels. This flood plain is host to threatened or endangered species of plants that have been identified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the State's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and is considered by many in the community to be the primary focus for protection initiatives.

In addition to the Meadows, four major brooks and their tributaries provide "green belts" between residential properties in Longmeadow. These brooks generally flow from east to west, down to the Connecticut River, and include Longmeadow Brook, Wheelmeadow Brook, Raspberry Brook and Cooley Brook. Substantial acreage is also in private ownership and exists in a natural state with some gardens and woodlands.

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## **Lands of Conservation and Recreational Interest**

Throughout the process of preparing the Longmeadow Long Range Plan, the general consensus of the participants on the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) and its Subcommittees was to ensure that lands that are currently conservation or recreation lands should stay as open space. The LRPC felt that efforts should be made to use these lands for recreation and outdoor educational opportunities and to inform the citizens of Longmeadow about these resources. The LRPC also recommended that future development for economic development and housing initiatives be generally limited to land already zoned for those purposes.

Two parcels of land were studied for housing and/or economic development. These were the Town owned properties along Frank Smith Road (the Water Tower parcels) and the playing fields along Wolf Swamp Road (which currently has a protected status). Of the alternatives proposed by the Consultant Team for these properties, the LRPC favored future development of senior housing on the Water Tower parcel. The LRPC felt that changing the use of the Wolf Swamp fields to housing or flex tech uses and relocating recreational facilities at this time would not yield enough of an economic benefit to make the change worthwhile.



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## Recommendations for Areas of Vital Interest

The Land Use and Conservation Subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee identified geographic areas of vital interest to the Town of Longmeadow. The Subcommittee examined these areas with reference to four planning topics: Land Use; Housing; Economic Development; and, Zoning. The Subcommittee's recommendations are addressed in each Element of the Long Range Plan. As part of its work, the Subcommittee received input from the following Town representatives:

- Tax Assessors Office
- Town Accountant's Office
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Bay Path College
- Park and Recreation Department
- Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge
- Connecticut River Watershed Council
- Conservation Commission
- School Committee
- Planning Board
- Historical Commission

The Subcommittee also reviewed the following documents:

- *Draft Vision Framework Plan*, dated July 18, 2002;
- Letter from Town Counsel regarding the Town-owned real estate on Frank Smith Road, dated August 15, 2002; and,
- *2002 Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

The results of the Subcommittee's findings indicate that areas of vital interest enjoy varying levels of protection of their character and nature. A greater emphasis is needed to preserve these areas as assets to the Town and for posterity, either for their historical or environmental sensitivity. Of paramount concern for the Subcommittee is the quality of residential life in this bedroom community. Finally, and not the least of concern, is the need for the Town to have sufficient revenue sources to accomplish the preservation of environmental resources and historical assets, and to protect the quality of residential life.

To achieve the goals for sustaining the quality of life in the community, the Subcommittee feels that is of utmost importance that Town leaders and voters take bold steps in order to respond to the demands for housing, open space protection and historical preservation while at the same time to create revenue generating solutions for the Town. The following sections outline the Subcommittee's recommendations for protecting areas of vital natural and environmental interest.



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## Natural Resources

### **Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge**

- The future of the Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge is uncertain, and measures are encouraged to ensure further protection of the Refuge, including establishment of a conservation restriction or other appropriate land protection control.
- Encourage zoning actions that would help the Fannie Stebbins Memorial Wildlife Refuge secure the land and shield it from future development. Portions of the Refuge are currently zoned as agricultural, but higher protection could be achieved through additional regulatory measures, such as an overlay zoning district that would limit allowed uses of the land.

### **Franconia Golf Course**

- If the Springfield Park Department ever discontinues the use of Franconia Golf Course as a golf course, the Town of Longmeadow should consider alternate uses for the 50 acres owned by the Town.

### **Mill Road Property**

- The Mill Road property is an important environmental resource corridor leading to the Connecticut River and the Meadows. Additional protections of this property through conservation restriction and or easements on this environmentally sensitive land should be explored.

### **The Meadows (Riverfront)**

- The Conservation Commission's ongoing efforts to acquire riverfront and floodplain land in order to preserve open space, to maintain the natural state of wetlands, the floodplain and other environmentally critical areas, and to provide for passive recreation use should be supported by the Town.
- The Conservation Commission should work closely with the Park and Recreation Department toward developing passive recreational activities on environmentally sensitive land in the Meadows, including a trail system and educational stations.
- Continue to support the development and maintenance of farming activities, and the development of a forestry management program on properties in the Meadows in conjunction with state and federal programs.

### **Major Park Lands: Turner, Laurel, Bliss, Greenwood and Wolf Swamp Recreational Fields**

- The major parks and recreational fields in Longmeadow should be preserved as parkland.
- The Park and Recreation Department should work with other Town Boards, including the Conservation Commission, to develop a Master Plan to plan for future maintenance and improvement needs for these important community resources.
- Explore measures to access the vastly inaccessible area of Turner Park to expand passive recreation use of the area.
- Update the Longmeadow Bikeway Plan and develop a bike path system linking the recreation and parklands throughout the Town and with the regional Connecticut River Walk & Bikeway.
- In all future park improvements, explore the use of impervious materials for paving parking lots and pedestrian/bike paths to reduce stormwater run-off and maintain a natural appearance.

### **The Pomeroy Tract**

- Maintain the Pomeroy parcel, located adjacent to Longmeadow Street, as open space.
- Explore the potential to acquire property adjacent to the Pomeroy parcel to expand access to the parcel.
- Support and encourage the use of this area as a community garden. Explore the potential to use this parcel to plant seedlings for eventual transplant to other Town owned parks and tree belts.

### **Large Privately Held Open Space and Recreational Lands**

- The approximately 350 acres of privately held open space, which is golf course land, should be monitored for future development activities.
- In the event any of these properties discontinues to be used for private recreational ventures, the Town should consider bonding and other funding mechanisms as a means to purchase it. Projected uses could include recreation, housing, mixed-use, office, commercial, light industrial, or any combination.

### **Town Owned Riverfront Property**

- Continue efforts by the Conservation Commission to acquire land along the Riverfront, particularly 200/216 Anthony Road, for conservation and passive recreational use.
- Support the development of a contiguous Riverfront Park and encourage passive recreation activities, including public recreation and parkland with picnic tables, playgrounds and parking areas.

- Expand opportunities for public access to the River, limited to non-motorized craft. Due to the shallow depth and environmentally sensitive nature of this area, any other type of access to the River is not advisable.
- Promote close cooperation and coordination among Riverfront residents and interests, specifically the Pioneer Valley Yacht Club, to promote ongoing public amenities along the Riverfront.

### **Tree Belt Land**

- The Town should renew its commitment to the care, protection and planting of the tree belt.
- Support the maintenance of zoning frontage setbacks to preserve the green and historical character of the Town.



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### **Historic District and Town Green**

The Town Green is a living museum located along the most historically unspoiled section of Route 5, which runs from its beginning near the Canadian border to its end at the Connecticut shore. Within Longmeadow, the Route 5 Corridor is a local Historic District under the legal auspices of the Historic District Commission.

- Support efforts of the Historic District Commission and the Longmeadow Historical Society to maintain the Town Green in its historic and cultural context, with an emphasis to keep the area “as is.”
- Promote efforts to educate Town residents about the importance of protecting the historical nature of the Town and the unique physical character found along the Town Green.
- Because of the trend toward mansionization, the Planning Board should study and propose a square foot to area ratio (SAR) zoning bylaw for the entire town. This would also help to preserve the character of the Historic District.



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### **Longmeadow School Land**

- Continue to promote school buildings and lands as public space for access by all Town residents.
- Explore the potential to use schools, parks and recreation facilities and fields as a potential revenue source.
- Implement an ongoing program to improve the landscaping of the property surrounding the school buildings. Work closely with the school parent organizations to coordinate the landscaping needs.

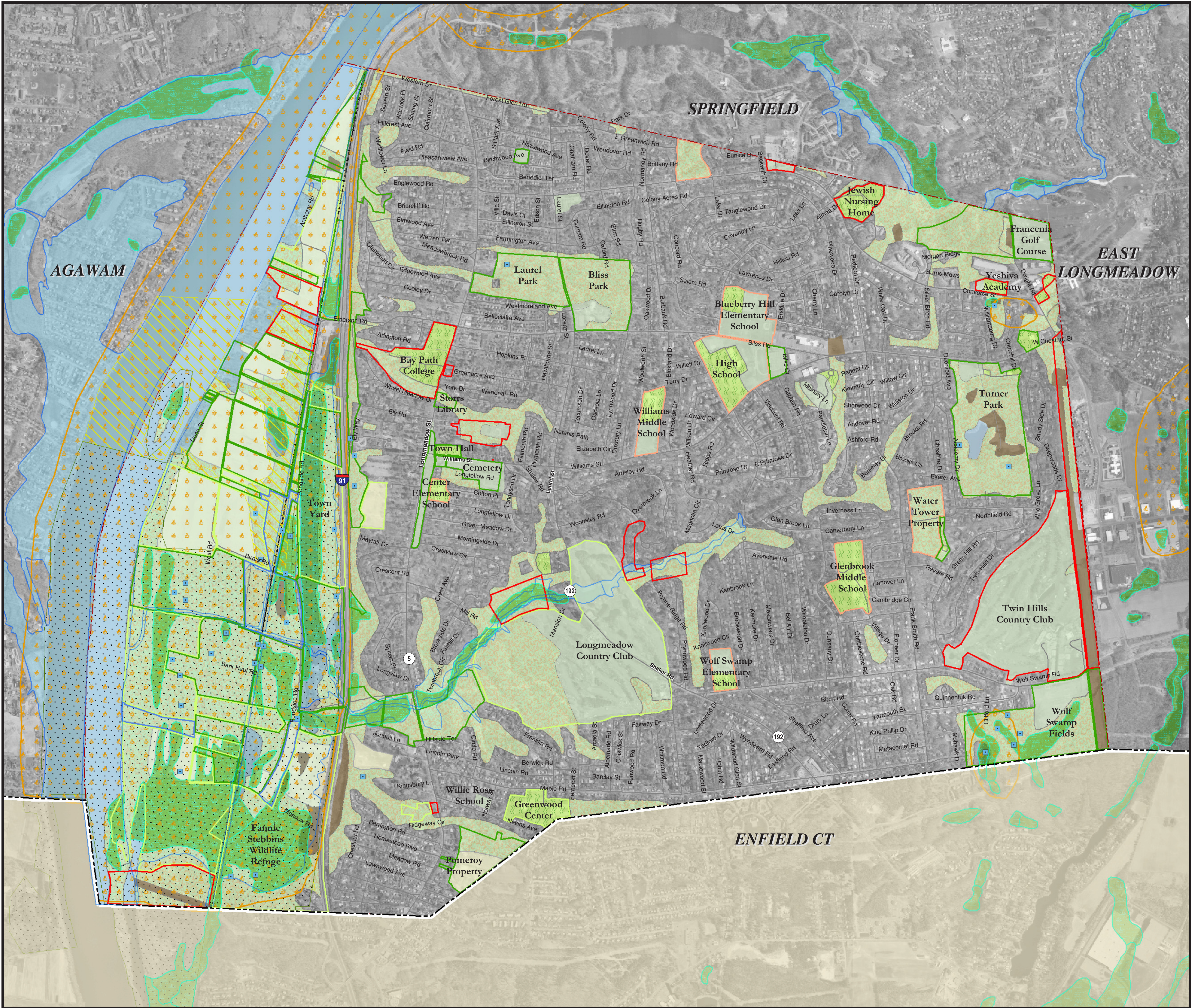
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## Land Use Suitability Map

As part of the *Longmeadow Open Space and Recreation Plan* of 2002, the Town prepared an inventory of all open space/recreation areas within its borders. Of that inventory, 59 percent is protected land, and 41 percent is unprotected. These properties include public and privately held lands, consisting of agricultural uses, open space and recreational areas, public uses and parks, fresh water bodies and forested areas. This inventory was used as the basis for the Land Use Suitability Map included with this Environmental and Resource Protection Element.

The Land Use Suitability Map documents the location and type of open space to be protected in Longmeadow, including environmentally critical unprotected open space, land critical for groundwater quality and quantity, environmental resources, and land suitable for development. The Map highlights the significant public, private and non-profit institutions and land holdings, and the current status of protection of these areas. Significant environmental resources are also identified on the Map which could potentially constrain future land use development, including habitat areas for rare species, potential vernal pools, wetlands and water resource areas.





# Town of Longmeadow

M a s s a c h u s e t t s

**VHB** Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.  
**RKG Associates Inc.**

- Legend:**
- Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP)*
- Potential Vernal Pools
  - NHESP BioMap Core Habitat - the most viable habitat for rare species and natural communities in Massachusetts
  - NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape
  - Priority Sites of Rare Species Habitats
- Open Space*
- Municipal - Protected
  - Municipal - Not Protected
  - Private/Non-Profit - Protected
  - Private/Non-Profit - Not Protected
  - Inholding - unprotected property surrounded by protected property or recreation facility

*National Wetlands Inventory*

- Wetlands

*FEMA Q3 Floodplain*

- 100 Year Floodplain

*Land Use*

- Cropland - Intensive
- Open - Abandoned Agricultural
- Open Space/Recreation
- Public/Parks
- Fresh water
- Forest

Sources: MassGIS, Town of Longmeadow

## Land Use Suitability Map\*

\* Does not include small, vacant or under-utilized residential parcels

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.





# Town Services & Community Life Element

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## Overview

The Town Services and Facilities Subcommittee was charged with reviewing town services, facilities, traffic flow, government and intergovernmental relations. The Quality of Life Subcommittee was charged with reviewing quality of life issues including community image, youth and elder issues, financial issues, community information, and the relationship of the town and nonprofit institutions. The concerns and issues identified by the Town Services and Facilities and Quality of Life Subcommittees were often interrelated, and are being reported together in this Element. These Subcommittees identified the following primary issues:

- Operational/general issues, including:
  - Americans with Disabilities Act compliance at Town Offices;
  - Limited support staff for departments, resulting in limited hours of operation;
  - Limited/non-existent integration between information systems; and,
  - Increased regulatory requirements.
- Financial issues, including:
  - Maintaining a strong tax base to support necessary and desirable public services;
  - Limited Funding Based on Propositions 2 1/2 restrictions;
  - Unfunded/Under funded State/Federal mandates (e.g., Special Education); and,
  - Being more proactive in addressing budget issues.
- Capital issues, including:
  - Improving High School infrastructure in order to keep accreditation;
  - Lack of adequate space for Council on Aging;
  - Need to make Town Offices handicapped accessible;
  - Increased area needed for Recycling Center and Town Yard;
  - Upgrade Community House wiring/adapt to meet Town needs;
  - Update Fire Department equipment; and,
  - Street, sidewalk, and signage improvements to improve traffic flow and pedestrian and bicycle safety.

- Governmental issues, including:
  - Lack of coordination between departments/committees;
  - No ultimate authority for managing town affairs;
  - Lack of resource sharing; and,
  - Under utilization of new technology (Internet).
- Other issues, including:
  - Lack of low and middle income senior housing;
  - Absentee electorate;
  - Lack of information received by residents;
  - Lack of backup for various department heads;
  - Resident dissatisfaction with the structure and process of our present form of Town government;
  - Need for town officials and residents to communicate better, in order to set priorities for the whole community;
  - Preserve and protect town character, including historic properties, open space, and public safety;
  - Need to examine zoning bylaws;
  - Concern for improving the quality of life for youth and seniors;
  - Lack of job opportunities and public transportation for teens; and
  - Desire to explore relationships between Town and non-profit institutions to enhance services, programs, and resources.

In order for the Town to continue providing the quality of life that our residents have come to expect, the Town needs to look creatively at all of these issues. The next steps will require our elected leaders to show true leadership as we proceed towards the next ten to fifteen years.

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## Introduction

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## Town Services and Facilities

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The Town Services and Facilities Subcommittee were charged with six tasks:

- Maintain/improve town services (including schools);
- Maintain/improve town facilities (including schools);
- Review feasibility of additional facilities;
- Address circulation (traffic control, road conditions, sidewalks, bike paths);
- Review town government structure; and,
- Review intergovernmental relations.

The Subcommittee was comprised of representatives from town government, town employees and residents. They began by identifying the various services and facilities that the town provides. Members of the Subcommittee then chose areas that they would review and present to the Subcommittee as a whole. After much research and discussion, the Subcommittee felt that its mission would be better served by inviting representatives from the various town service providers to meet with the Subcommittee to identify their issues. These meetings were conducted during the late spring and early summer of 2002. The town representatives were asked to prepare a one-page summary of their departments services and needs over the next ten to fifteen years. These summaries are attached to this report in the Appendices.



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## Quality of Life

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The Quality of Life Subcommittee was charged with reviewing six areas:

- *Define Quality of Life*, including community image, education, public safety, and other factors;
- *Address Youth Issues*, including in-town places to go, jobs/opportunities, and defining key issues;
- *Address Elder Issues*, including senior housing/assisted living, senior center, maintaining services, defining key issues;
- *Address Financial Issues*, including affordable housing, tax level, non-tax revenue alternatives;
- *Review Community Information*, including improving communications, awareness of community resources; and,
- *Town & Non-profit Institution Relationships*, including opportunities with Bay Path College and other institutions.

The Subcommittee included four members of the Long Range Planning Committee and five town residents. The Subcommittee developed the following vision of Longmeadow based upon their work.

### **Quality of Life Vision**

In the Longmeadow Long Range Plan, quality of life means that Longmeadow maintains its image of a lovely and safe community which values and provides the highest standard of education for its youth and population of all ages. Longmeadow is concerned about and protective of its history, its open/green spaces and its recreational areas in order to provide its citizens with the opportunity to enjoy its natural beauty. Longmeadow assures the safety and well being of its citizens by maintaining a strong financial tax base to support those public services necessary for the town's continuing success.

Longmeadow provides space and encourages development of programs and services that support the health, welfare and dignity of all its citizens, including adequate housing for a broad spectrum of income levels.

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## **Current Conditions and Future Needs**



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### **Town Services**

#### **Public Safety**

Public Safety is comprised of Police, Fire and Board of Health. These services provide the safety net for our community and help to promote the quiet, safe environment in which we live. Since September 11, 2001, these departments have encountered increased training needs and responsibility to respond to terrorist threats.

The Fire Department is staffed with twenty-six firefighters (twenty-one career and five on-call). As the average age of the residents in town rises, the department will need additional, continuing training to provide state-of-the-art paramedic services. Periodic EMT and Firefighter training needs outside of the station are expected to continue at a manageable level.

The Fire Department is housed in a brand new building. The fire apparatus that the department uses is aging rapidly. Two of the engines are twenty-five years old and no longer meet national safety standards. In addition the self-contained breathing apparatus and auto extrication tools are near the end of their life expectancies.

The Board of Health is currently located in the basement of the Community House. This facility is not handicapped accessible, which affects multiple town departments and is an impediment to meeting the needs of many of our aging residents. The Department is staffed with a Health Inspector and a clerk. Neither of these individuals works full-time. There is an opportunity to work with other communities to provide a more regional Health Department. This would facilitate economies of scale and provide trained back-up should the need arise.

The Police Department is staffed with twenty-nine officers (1/2 the level of Springfield on an officer-per-capita basis). Ninety percent of the police budget is personnel. Since September 11, 2001, the police department has been conducting homeland security preparedness training. The State and Federal government fund most “new” equipment that may be needed for homeland security. Cruisers are currently funded through the town budget. These are replaced on a staggered schedule with some cruisers being replaced each year. The headquarters are adequate for the next fifty years.

## **Schools**

The town currently operates three elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. The major issue facing our schools over the next fifteen years is maintaining high academic excellence in the face of fiscal constraints. Short term, the schools expect a continued increase in enrollment of one- to two-percent per year. In combination with expected salary increases, there will be no money available for other areas including maintenance of buildings, technology improvements, and replacing aging instructional materials.

All of the elementary schools have been updated in the last eight years. However, the high school will require immediate attention to address infrastructure concerns including space constraints and technological improvements particularly in the music, science and computer areas. Within the fifteen-year time frame, it is expected that renovations will also be needed at the two middle schools.

Given fiscal constraints, recruiting and retaining outstanding teaching and administrative staff will be a challenge. It is expected that within the next fifteen years many experienced teachers will retire. Longmeadow will need a competitive salary scale to attract new staff.

Overall, a reliable funding stream must be found to support our schools, whether it is for day-to-day operations, special education, or infrastructure. Outstanding schools are necessary to maintain home values. Outside organizations such as Longmeadow Educational Excellence Foundation (LEEF) and the PTO can help, but the town will be required to provide the bulk of the support. The state and federal government cannot over the next fifteen years, be considered a reliable source of funding and are likely to decrease funding.

## **Public Works**

The Streets and Engineering Department and the Water & Sewer Department are all supervised by a single Department Head. The Water & Sewer Department reports directly to the Water Commission and is self-funding. The fees received cover the expenses of the department. Currently, all water is purchased from Springfield. This exposes the Town to price risks should Springfield decide to increase prices. It also exposes the Town to supply risk should something happen to Springfield's water supply (either contamination or break in service).

There was a Master Plan for the Water & Sewer Department produced in 1978. At this point, most of the items from that plan have been completed. Many of the water and sewer lines were put in place during the 1960's and 70's, during a significant growth period for the Town. The majority of the other lines are significantly older than that. There is not currently an inventory of water and sewer lines that include the year they were installed and the materials used in the line. This makes it difficult in planning replacements of existing lines in a timely manner. Currently lines are replaced on an emergency basis.

The Streets and Engineering Department maintains the roads and sidewalks in town. The routine plowing and trash/leaf collection is performed by this department utilizing Town funds. All planned road repairs and replacements are paid with Chapter 90 state funds. Recently, the town's allocation of Chapter 90 funds has decreased 50 percent. The Town Yard will need to be renovated and/or replaced over 10-15 years.

The Recycle Center, operated under the auspices of the Recycling Commission, provides a resource processing items that are not discarded through the curbside pickup. The biggest concern over the next 5-10 years is escalating costs associated with state and federal mandates concerning processing of hazardous waste. In addition, the space on which the Recycle Center is located is becoming inadequate to meet the needs. A new, expanded location will be needed.

## **Town Administration**

Several different departments perform the day-to-day administration of the Town. The Assessors office (reporting to the Board of Assessors) is located on the second floor of Town Hall. The department is staffed by a Department Head and two clerks/secretaries. The office uses a computer-based system for tracking valuation information. This information is updated by the staff on site, instead of being sent to a vendor. The department is currently operating well, but the office is not handicapped accessible, making it difficult to get to for many residents. Its location also limits its ability to call upon other staff for backup.

The Town Clerk, Treasurer and Collector is a single, elected position. The office is responsible for the following:

- Clerk
  - Voter registration
  - Election procedures
  - Dog/hunting/fishing licenses
- Treasurer
  - Maintenance of bank accounts
  - Bond-related disclosures
  - Paying agent for certain bonds
  - Collection of Ambulance fees
  - Various account reconciliations
- Collector
  - Quarterly Real Estate tax collection

The computer system that is used by the office is inadequate and requires a manual reconciliation of accounts receivable. Many functions are currently not being performed timely, or at all. Improvements could be achieved by separating the Town Clerk from Treasurer and Collector.

The Town Accountant's office is staffed with 3.33 full-time-equivalent staff. This is 23 percent less staff than five years ago. The office is responsible for accounting of all Town finances and reporting to State and Federal authorities. The office oversees procurement and employee benefit administration for the Town. The office utilizes an outdated DOS-based computer program that does not interface directly with the Town Collector's system.

Recently, a new accounting standard (GASB 34) has been implemented that requires a change from cash-based to accrual accounting and the recording and depreciating of all fixed assets. There will be significant challenges in moving to compliance with this standard. Additional staff and technology will be needed to meet these needs.

## **Resident Activities and Services**

This category includes Parks & Recreation, Senior Center, Storrs Library and Longmeadow Community Television (LCTV). The Parks & Recreation Department oversees all town parks and playing fields. It also runs the town's Extended Day and Day Care programs. In addition, it coordinates and oversees the youth sport programs and activities for the community. The Parks Department is virtually self-supporting. The only non-fee-reimbursed expenses are the staff.

The Parks & Recreation Department seeks to replace the liner at the Greenwood Park pool (\$300-400k). There is also a desire to develop a skate park. This has received community financial support. The Department also would like to finish development of additional ball fields at Turner Park.



The Senior Center is located in the old Greenwood School. The number of seniors served by the Center is expected to increase dramatically over the next decade. Space and staffing are a major concern for the Center. Currently only \$6,800 is provided by the Town to support the Center, with the balance coming from State and Federal grants. The Center relies heavily upon its volunteer base. If volunteerism were to decline, services would be cut drastically. The Director feels that the Town should address the need to develop housing options for low and middle-income residents and affordable services for seniors desiring to remain in their homes.

At the 2000 Longmeadow Faces the Future Forum, town residents identified providing adequate facilities and programs for youth and seniors as a key concern. There was interest in exploring the creation of a community center to serve both youth and seniors.

The Storrs Library is in very good condition. Insufficient parking at some hours is problematic. There will continue to be future needs in electronics equipment. This need could be handled by normal budgetary expenses. Stable population should not cause any pressures for additional expansion.

Longmeadow Community Television (LCTV) has been a self-supporting service. It provides educational, cultural and governmental programming. Due to a recent FCC ruling, revenues will be reduced by \$25,000 per year. While other grants may possibly be available to cover the shortfall, representatives from LCTV have requested that the Town should consider some sort of contribution.



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## **Town Facilities**

The majority of the town facilities are in good condition. The most notable needed improvements are:

- Town Hall – This building needs to be made handicapped accessible. There is no elevator and many offices are on upper floors.
- Community House – This needs to be made handicapped accessible. Many offices are located in the basement. In addition, the wiring is over 80 years old and should be upgraded.
- Greenwood Center – This facility is becoming inadequate for use as a Senior Center and Day Care. The building either needs to be renovated/expanded, or a new facility should be found.
- Public Works building – There are significant environmental issues at the current location. In addition, the roof needs to be replaced.
- Greenwood Park – The pool liner should be replaced, as was the liner at Bliss Park.
- Sewage Treatment Plant – This facility is currently unused. Should it be demolished?

- Longmeadow High School – Significant renovations are needed to maintain accreditation. Attention should be given to space constraints and technological improvements in the music, science and computer areas.
- Williams and Glenbrook Middle Schools – These facilities will need some significant renovations over the next 10-15 years.



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## **Circulation/Traffic Flow**

Traffic has become a significant issue in the town. Because of Longmeadow's location, it has become the major route to the highway system for the towns of East Longmeadow, MA and Hampden, CT. East Longmeadow has a substantial commercial presence in its town. Several manufacturing plants are located in East Longmeadow, in addition to numerous retail outlets. Consequently, because of its connections to East Longmeadow, Converse Street experiences a significant volume of commercial traffic at all hours of the day.

Longmeadow Street is frequently at a stand still during the morning and afternoon rush hours. This situation has been exacerbated by the installation of traffic signals at the exit to Forest Park. In addition, during the Bright Nights displays, traffic flows even slower than normal.

The roads and sidewalks in town are in fairly good condition. Many of the sidewalks have been replaced in recent years. Road repairs are performed using Chapter 90 funds from the State.

There are currently no formal bike paths in town. Many neighboring towns have added bike paths. The riverfront is a natural place to put a bike path that could be linked with other paths in neighboring towns.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety is a concern. The Bliss Road/Williams street shopping area could be more pedestrian-friendly. Signs are confusing and one-way streets are not well marked. Also, circulation of traffic flow around schools is problematic.



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## **Town Government Structure and Inter-governmental Relations**

Longmeadow utilizes a Town Meeting form of government. All decisions regarding funding and Bylaws need to be approved by a vote of the electorate at a Town Meeting. The town elects a three-person Board of Selectmen to oversee town administration. In addition to the Board of Selectmen, the town elects the following:

- Board of Assessors
- Town Clerk/Treasurer/Collector
- Housing Authority
- Moderator
- Board of Parks Commissioners
- Planning Board
- School Committee
- Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners

All of these Boards are independent and oversee their own areas of town government. The only coordination between these departments comes through the Capital Planning Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

Most of these Boards take the responsibility to contract for their own services and purchases. Many have their own computer systems that are not integrated with other departments. In addition, the support staff is often isolated from other departments, limiting their ability to support each other through cross-training and replacement staffing.

One of the greatest strengths of our town is the dedicated and talented men and women who volunteer their time as public officials. One of the concerns we have about our town government is its limited base of volunteers. Most of the elected positions are either volunteer, or receive meager compensation. While the people we have working for the town in elected capacities have great skills, there are a number of other people who also have great skills that could be offered, but choose not to participate in town government.

There were numerous discussions during Long Range Planning Committee meetings concerning the way decisions are made in the town. Most of the key decisions need to be made at Town Meeting. It is not uncommon for groups with special interests to “pack the house” to get their issue passed.

There are a number of residents who have concerns about how the town is run, but are ill informed about the details of town operations. From speaking with these individuals, they feel that money is routinely wasted, and that the town should tighten its operations. From speaking with town employees, they feel that they are already running lean, and that any further cuts in funding would result in decreases

in services. It appears that despite the efforts of town officials to disseminate information to the residents, many of our residents are not properly educated as to how the town is funded and operated.

The town has been spending its cash reserves to balance the budget for the last three fiscal years. In 2002, the Town approved a \$2 million operating override for FY02-03 to offset the money that had been taken from reserves. Even with this override, cuts in services were needed to balance the budget. Town officials and the voters need to make difficult choices between reducing the services currently offered or seeking new funding sources.



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## Town and Resident Communication

There is a widespread desire among town residents for our town officials to improve communication, curb miscommunication, and make information more accessible to the average, busy citizen. There is no central town communication vehicle or method that everyone uses. Many people do not reliably read the local papers. Accurate coverage in the printed press is spotty, often with misinformation that is too late in coming. Many residents get their news via the internet, radio, television, or New York, Boston, or Hartford papers.

The Town publishes a monthly newsletter for seniors and a quarterly listing of activities for the Parks & Recreation Department. The annual Town Warrant is published as an insert in *The Reminder* and on the web site. Longmeadow has an excellent web site, [www.longmeadow.org](http://www.longmeadow.org), which is very effective when town officials post calendar announcements and summaries of issues or activities, minutes of meetings, and other information. LCTV, the community access cable television station, posts announcements and televises Board of Selectmen and School Committee meetings, and a limited number of special programs on town affairs.

Despite these efforts, there is a need for timely, reliable information from Town Hall, and for improving opportunities for citizens to communicate with their government.

Newcomers from other areas of the USA or foreign countries are generally unfamiliar with Town Meeting form of government, and would benefit from an orientation or materials provided by town government.

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## Recommendations

Based on the previous findings, the Town Services and Facilities and Quality of Life Subcommittees recommend the following options and actions.

### Create Financial Stability / Budgeting

- Stress to our elected Boards, as well as our residents, the need to lobby our State Representative and State Senator regarding the need to support Local Aid appropriations, based on fair distribution formulas, including the return of 100 percent of lottery money to municipalities.
- Analyze the costs of unfunded mandates, such as Special Education, and examine options for management and political action.
- The Appropriations Committee, Board of Selectmen and School Committee should develop, and agree on, a policy for the Town regarding what conditions would “trigger” an override recommendation and vote.
- Adopt a town-wide policy freezing all budgetary line item descriptions to enhance year-to-year comparisons of departmental operations.
- Review town budgetary documents to consider alternative formats that might enhance resident understanding of the Town’s finances.

### Increase the Financial Base

- Study the creation of a “Community Chest” or “Endowment Fund”, seeking donations from residents to support town operations.
- Review the Town’s fees and fines structure.
- Study the advisability/desirability of altering zoning bylaws to permit alternative housing situations and increased density.
- Encourage “New Growth” by supporting additions/renovations of the existing housing stock, coupled with reassessment of such properties.
- Conduct real estate evaluations in a timely manner as required by law to ensure that assessments are accurate.
- Explore the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act of 2000 as a source of funding for historic preservation, housing and conservation land acquisition, subject to voter approval. This revenue is not subject to Proposition 2 ½ limitations and would be eligible for matching funds from the State.
- Consider the use of the school and park and recreation facilities and fields as a potential revenue source, including fees for service for all groups.

### Improve Capital Infrastructure

In the next decade, the Town will need to make significant capital improvements to Longmeadow High School, Glenbrook and Williams Middle School, and the Town Yard, and make our municipal facilities fully accessible to people with disabilities. There is interest in building a community center to serve elders and teens.

- Continue to support and improve the process conducted by the Capital Planning Committee. Evaluate and look at other models to improve the process.
- Identify and pursue all grants which might support the acquisition of needed equipment. Chief among these would be the School Department and the Police and Fire Departments, i.e. Homeland Security issues.
- Increase annual budgetary support to fund capital improvements and acquisitions.
- Review options to relocate town offices to a single ADA compliant facility.
- Create a study group to explore the construction of a new community center at Greenwood or other appropriate location. Consider locating affordable senior housing adjacent to the facility.

### **Maintain High Academic Excellence**

- Once the new Superintendent of Schools is chosen, a thorough review of school goals and operations should take place, with recommendations on how to maintain excellence at a level of local spending the townspeople will support.
- Ensure the High School does not lose its accreditation by bringing physical conditions up to state standards. Develop initiatives to provide better equipment and upgrade technological resources for students.
- Support the Longmeadow Educational Excellence Foundation (LEEF), PTOs and other organizations working to enhance our schools.

### **Improve Town Management and Efficiency**

- Study departmental relationships and interdependencies to determine if further departmental consolidations or cross training of staff can be undertaken to achieve efficiencies.
- Study the need for a Chief Financial Officer for the Town, including consolidation of the Collector/Treasurer functions, the Town Accountant and the Director of Business Services.
- Study the role of the IT Department throughout the Town, including the School Department. Study those uses to which technology can be applied to further reduce operating expenses, such as online registrations or routine bill paying. Acquire a centralized information system of tracking receipts and accounting systems.
- Elected Boards and Town Officials need to actively support the work of the Charter Commission, publicize its findings and support the public debate of its recommendations. If the vote fails, Town leaders should support Bylaw changes to improve the efficiency of town government, including but not limited to the appointment (rather than election) of the Water & Sewer Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Town Clerk, and Town Collector/Treasurer.

### **Improve Communications**

- Study the usefulness and costs of a community-wide newsletter.
- Utilize web-based meeting minutes, meeting notices, contract documents, departmental plans, etc. to share information on a wider basis than might currently be done. A study to evaluate the advisability of consolidating Town and School Department websites should be included.
- Develop a plan for more intensive, consistent and improved use of Longmeadow Cable Television by Boards, elected officials and department heads to inform residents and disseminate decisions and plans.
- Encourage elected officials and Boards to better utilize available public relations/media vehicles.
- Distribute a survey to town residents to evaluate needs and provision of services. Explore the possibility of including non-binding questions on ballots, or filling out a survey on Election Day.

### **Develop and Pursue Collaborative Relationships**

- Collaborate with Bay Path College and other non-profit institutions on town service usage and demands, support and planning for town functions and services, and other opportunities.
- Collaborate with neighboring municipalities on sharing of services where appropriate, joint ventures utilizing the model of the Scantic Valley Health Trust, traffic issues and mutual aid and support agreements for public safety issues.
- Explore the use of grants or partnerships with State, Federal and private agencies for development of park, recreation and conservation lands.

### **Focus on the Needs of Youth and Seniors**

- Address youth issues, including lack of teen job opportunities and public transportation.
- Address senior issues such as affordable housing, educational opportunities, and a new senior center.
- Promote opportunities for multi-generational activities and volunteering.

# Housing Element

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## Introduction and Overview

The Housing Element of the Community Development Plan presents an overview of housing characteristics and affordability in Longmeadow. The section discusses how well the current housing supply is meeting demand, evaluates housing affordability, and assesses potential locations within Longmeadow that may be suitable for new residential development to address current and projected housing needs. Although the analysis discusses housing trends and conditions in all price ranges, its specific purpose is to recommend a strategy to meet the affordable housing needs of low and moderate income residents.

Housing is generally considered to be “affordable” when households spend no more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing costs. When households are required to spend more than 30 percent of their income for housing, their remaining disposable income can be inadequate to cover other basic expenditures such as food, health care, utilities, and transportation. In recognition of the importance of affordable housing to the State’s economy, Executive Order 418 was issued to encourage local governments to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing.

Executive Order 418, entitled “Assisting Communities in Addressing the Housing Shortage,” was issued in 2000 in order to provide incentives and resources for communities to promote affordable housing development. EO418 offers funding to create Community Development (CD) Plans, such as this one, to help communities consider the ways they would like to grow in the future, and help them establish options and strategies for addressing future development. In addition, EO418 establishes an affordable housing certification process. To receive housing certification, a community must demonstrate that it is taking steps to address the housing needs of its residents and that it is working to expand affordable housing options for individuals and families with low, middle, and moderate incomes. Municipalities must obtain housing certification to become eligible to receive funds through certain discretionary rolling grant programs, and to receive bonus rating points for other grant programs. Communities who are interested in competing for those State funds are thus given an incentive to succeed in accommodating affordable housing within their borders.

In 1969, the Massachusetts Legislature passed the Comprehensive Permit Law (M.G.L., Chapter 40B, Sections 20-23), to promote the creation of affordable housing



statewide. With Chapter 40B, the Legislature streamlined the development permit process for affordable housing projects, and established the goal of increasing the amount of affordable housing in each community to 10 percent of its total housing stock. Under Chapter 40B, and Executive Order 215 which accompanied it, communities in which less than 10 percent of the housing units have guaranteed long-term affordability may face new housing development that overrides local zoning restrictions. In these communities, a developer can submit a comprehensive permit application, known as a Chapter 40B application, for an affordable housing development that does not adhere to local zoning. Because Chapter 40B applications are often opposed by impacted neighborhoods, many communities have chosen to work proactively to increase their stock of affordable housing, rather than face the risk of less desirable solutions being “imposed” upon them, under the Comprehensive Permit Law.

The Chapter 40B definition of “affordable housing” is more restrictive than the general definition, based on housing costs not exceeding 30 percent of household income. In determining a town’s total number of affordable housing units for Chapter 40B, the State has historically included only State or Federally subsidized units with a guaranteed long-term (30 year) affordability for low and moderate-income households. Under this definition, Longmeadow had only 172 units of Chapter 40B “certified” housing as of the latest reporting period, representing less than three percent of the Town’s housing stock. This number is 411 units below the state’s 10 percent affordable housing goal, and nearly 520 units below the estimated number of Longmeadow low and moderate income households who had affordable housing needs according to the 2000 Census.

Although all Massachusetts communities have a responsibility to meet their fair share of regional housing needs, an underlying assumption of this analysis is that Longmeadow should develop housing strategies that are appropriate to the needs of its own low and moderate income population, before attempting to satisfy regional needs. This approach is particularly appropriate in light of the Town’s very limited supply of available/suitable building sites to accommodate new housing development. Absent of a concerted effort on the part of the local government to assemble and offer sites for development of affordable housing, it is unlikely that the private sector could supply significant numbers of affordable units.

The Housing Element focuses on housing construction trends, existing conditions, projected demand growth and estimated current/future housing needs within the Town of Longmeadow. The Element focuses specific attention to estimating current and potential future housing needs among low and moderate income residents. After quantifying the characteristics of households with housing needs, the analysis proceeds to estimate the number and types of housing units that would be appropriate and “affordable” for these households. The chapter then concludes with a series of housing goals and objectives, accompanied by recommended strategies that may be successful in satisfying the Town’s affordable housing needs.

Most of the data reported below was previously presented to the Town in two presentations, delivered in June and September of 2003. Rather than provide an extensive narrative explanation of that same information, findings are summarized in bullet form and accompanied by tables and graphics, which have been updated with new data and information as it became available. This format is used throughout the Housing Element, until the discussion of goals, objectives and housing strategies.

## Trends in Housing Supply

The following section profiles Longmeadow's housing supply by number and type of units, condition and vacancy, tenure, cost, new construction and resale activity, and other related factors. Significant findings are summarized below.



### Change in Housing Supply

- According to the U.S. Census, Longmeadow had 5,879 dwelling units in 2000, as shown in Table 1. Of those units, nearly 89 percent were owner occupied.

**Table 1**  
**Change in Housing Supply by Tenure and Occupancy**

	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	
			Number	Percent
<b>Longmeadow</b>				
Owner Occupied	4,977	5,211	234	4.7%
Renter Occupied	383	523	140	36.6%
Vacant for seasonal, recreational or occasional Use	50	42	(8)	(16.0%)
All Other Vacant	25	103	78	312.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,435</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>8.2%</b>
<b>Hampden County</b>				
Owner Occupied	102,359	108,524	6,165	6.0%
Renter Occupied	67,547	66,764	(783)	(1.2%)
Vacant for seasonal, recreational or occasional Use	1,647	2,060	413	25.1%
All Other Vacant	1,701	8,528	6,827	401.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>173,254</b>	<b>185,876</b>	<b>12,622</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

- Despite minimal population growth, the Town's housing supply grew eight percent (444 units) during the 1990s.

- Housing supply in Longmeadow grew more in percentage terms than Hampden County during the past decade. Unlike the rest of the county, Longmeadow gained rental supply during the 1990's. Over 36 percent of the increase in Longmeadow's housing stock over the period was rental housing.
- Despite a substantial increase in the reported number of vacant units by the end of the decade, the Town's vacancy rate was still below 2.0 percent in 1999.



## Characteristics of Longmeadow Housing Stock

- As shown in Table 2, roughly 98 percent of Longmeadow's total housing stock in 1999 consisted of single-unit detached dwellings or conventional single-family homes.

**Table 2**  
**Dwelling Units by Type of Structure**

Dwelling Unit Type	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant/ Seasonal	Total Units	Percent of Total		
					Owner	Renter	Vacant
Single Family (detached)	5,093	184	145	5,422	97.7%	35.2%	100.0%
Single Family (attached)	65	0	0	65	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
2 Units	9	17	0	26	0.2%	3.3%	0.0%
3 or 4 Units	10	0	0	10	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
5 or more Units	26	322	0	348	0.5%	61.6%	0.0%
Mobile Home	8	0	0	8	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

- More than 35 percent of the Town's rental housing stock also consisted of single-family detached units, indicating that nearly 3.4 percent of the Town's single-family units were renter occupied.
- The majority of the Town's rental housing (61.6 percent) is located in structures with five or more units. Longmeadow has a very limited supply of existing duplexes, housing in 3- or 4-unit structures or mobile homes.
- Nearly 99 percent of Longmeadow's 2000 Census population of 15,240 lived in single-family homes, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Population in Dwelling Units by Type of Structure**

Dwelling Unit Type	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Total Population	Percent of Total	
				Owner	Renter
Single Family (detached)	14,154	465	14,619	98.5%	53.6%
Single Family (attached)	140	0	140	1.0%	0.0%
2 Units	21	52	73	0.1%	6.0%
3 or 4 Units	24	0	24	0.2%	0.0%
5 or more Units	26	350	376	0.2%	40.4%
Mobile Home	8	0	8	0.1%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,373</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>15,240</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

- The average household size among Longmeadow's population living in single-family detached housing was 2.77 persons per household. By contrast, the average household size for the population living in multi-family housing was only 1.2.
- Because most of Longmeadow's housing is comprised of single-family homes, 70 percent of the housing stock has seven or more rooms, and nearly 84 percent of all units have three or more bedrooms. The relatively modest inventory of smaller units in Longmeadow indicates that there are fewer lower-cost housing options for households without children or persons living alone.
- The Town's rental housing stock is unusual in that nearly 57 percent of the total rental supply consists of units with one bedroom or less, while 29 percent have three or more bedrooms, as shown in Table 4. The supply of "conventional" two-bedroom rentals (74) was actually smaller than four-bedroom rented homes (82). The large number of one-bedroom rentals is associated with the recent development of elderly/assisted living units in Longmeadow.
- Longmeadow's housing stock showed significant "turnover" during the late 1990's, as shown in Table 5. Nearly 30 percent of owners and more than 75 percent of renters reported living in their current housing for five years or less at the time of the 2000 Census. At the same time, roughly a third of the Town's households have lived at their current address for 30 years or more.

**Table 4**  
**Number of Room and Bedrooms by Tenure**

Size Distribution	Percent of Total					
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	All Housing	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	All Housing
<b>Units by Number of Rooms</b>						
1 room	9	20	29	0.2%	3.8%	0.5%
2 rooms	-	92	92	0.0%	17.6%	1.6%
3 rooms	8	163	171	0.2%	31.2%	2.9%
4 rooms	119	77	196	2.3%	14.7%	3.3%
5 rooms	279	33	312	5.4%	6.3%	5.3%
6 rooms	903	33	971	17.3%	6.3%	16.5%
7 rooms	1,287	18	1,342	24.7%	3.4%	22.8%
8 or more rooms	2,606	87	2,766	50.0%	16.6%	47.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Units by Number of Bedrooms</b>						
No Bedrooms	9	20	29	0.2%	3.8%	0.5%
1 Bedroom	57	278	335	1.1%	53.2%	5.7%
2 Bedrooms	420	74	525	8.1%	14.1%	8.9%
3 Bedrooms	2,174	59	2,274	41.7%	11.3%	38.7%
4 Bedrooms	1,975	82	2,120	37.9%	15.7%	36.1%
5 or more Bedrooms	576	10	596	11.1%	1.9%	10.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

**Table 5**  
**Distribution of Owners and Renters by Year Householder Moved Into Unit**

Dwelling Units by Year Built	Percent of Total					
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	All Housing	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	All Housing
Moved in 1999 to March 2000	422	151	573	8.1%	28.9%	10.0%
Moved in 1995 to 1998	1,105	242	1,347	21.2%	46.3%	23.5%
Moved in 1990 to 1994	790	58	848	15.2%	11.1%	14.8%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	1,113	27	1,140	21.4%	5.2%	19.9%
Moved in 1970 to 1979	869	25	894	16.7%	4.8%	15.6%
Moved in 1969 or earlier	912	20	932	17.5%	3.8%	16.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>5,734</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Median Year Moved Into Unit	1987	1997	1989			

Source: US Census 2000

- Longmeadow is somewhat unusual in that the median age of its owner-occupied housing (42 years) was significantly older than rentals (19 years) at the time of the 2000 Census. As shown in Table 6, more than half of the Town's rental housing was built after 1980 and more than a third was built within the past decade.

**Table 6**  
**Housing Supply by Age of Structure**

Dwelling Units by Year Built	Percent of Total					
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Total Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	All Housing
1999 to March 2000	17	20	37	0.3%	3.8%	0.6%
1990 to 1998	205	157	362	3.9%	30.0%	6.2%
1980 to 1989	232	97	329	4.5%	18.5%	5.6%
1970 to 1979	759	47	814	14.6%	9.0%	13.8%
1960 to 1969	1,215	40	1,291	23.3%	7.6%	22.0%
1940 to 1959	1,373	73	1,504	26.3%	14.0%	25.6%
1939 or earlier	1,410	89	1,542	27.1%	17.0%	26.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

- In excess of 44 percent of local housing constructed during the 1990's was renter occupied. Much of this relatively new supply is assumed to consist of elderly/assisted living units.



## Housing Price and Cost Trends

- Because more than 1,600 Longmeadow households have no mortgages or pay no cash rent (or live in subsidized rental housing), monthly housing costs are relatively low for many households. At the time of the 2000 Census, half of all renters paid less than \$300/month in gross rent (including heat and utilities) and nearly 30 percent of homeowners had gross housing costs (including taxes, insurance and utilities) of less than \$800/month, as shown in Table 7. Low rental housing costs also reflect the fact that nearly a third of all rental units in the Town are already subsidized.

**Table 7**  
**Monthly Owner and Renter Costs for Selected Housing**

<b>Monthly Owner Costs*</b>	<b>With Mortgage</b>	<b>No Mortgage</b>	<b>All Owners</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Under \$500	24	556	580	11.5%
\$500 to \$799	132	777	909	17.9%
\$800 to \$999	268	162	430	8.5%
\$1,000 or More	3,057	89	3,146	62.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,471</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>5,065</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Gross Rent</b>	<b>With Cash Rent</b>	<b>No Cash Rent</b>	<b>All Renters</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
None	0	51	51	9.8%
Less than \$250	172	0	172	32.9%
\$250 to \$349	68	0	68	13.0%
\$350 to \$449	18	0	18	3.4%
\$450 to \$599	8	0	8	1.5%
\$600 to \$749	8	0	8	1.5%
\$750 to \$999	40	0	40	7.6%
\$1,000 or More	158	0	158	30.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Median Gross Rent</b>			<b>\$297</b>	

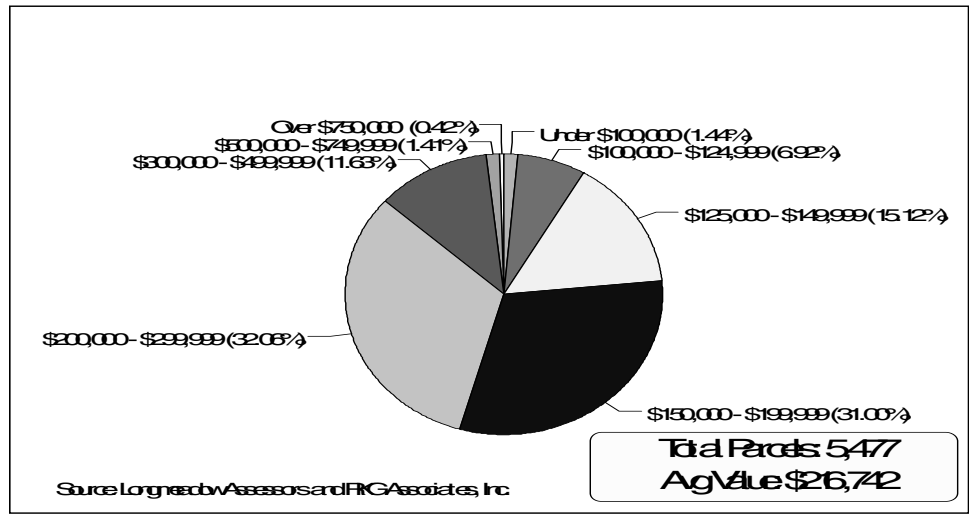
\* Homeowner costs are not calculated for households living on lots greater than 10 acres or in mixed-use buildings.  
Source: US Census 2000

- At the opposite end of the range, nearly 3,150 homeowners and 158 renters incurred gross housing costs in excess of \$1,000 per month. Many of these households are assumed to be recent home buyers with high mortgages, or renters of large single-family homes.

The three graphs on the following pages show (1) the assessed value distribution of Longmeadow single family homes and condominiums as of 2002, (2) the average assessed value of homes by time period of construction and (3) annual sales activity for resale housing. Significant findings from these exhibits include the following:

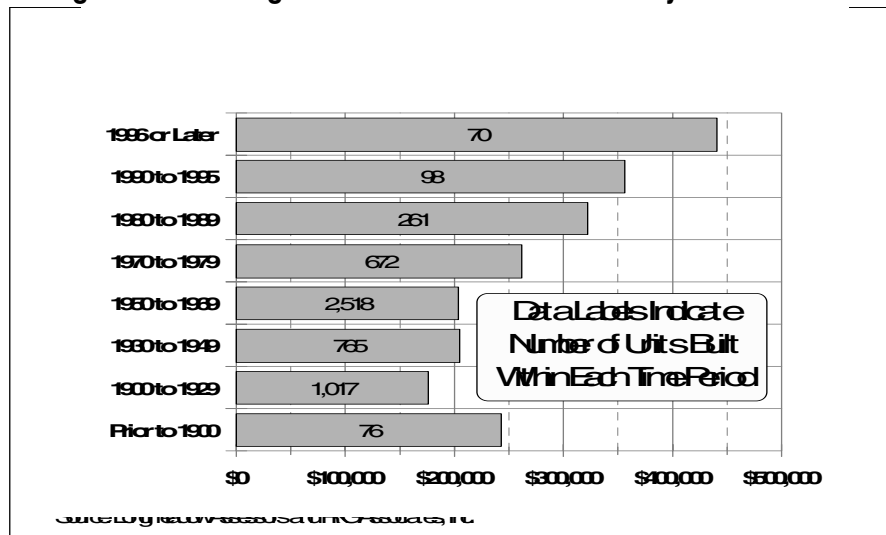
- As of 2002, the median assessed value of 5,477 single-family homes and condominiums in Longmeadow was \$190,800 and the average assessed value was just under \$216,800.
- Despite the perception that housing in Longmeadow is expensive, nearly 460 properties had 2002 assessed values below \$125,000, compared to only 100 properties valued above \$500,000.

**Figure 1**  
**Distribution of Longmeadow Homes and Condos by Value Range**



- As shown in Figure 2, the number of homes built in each decade has been trending downward. A total of 168 units were built from 1990 to 2002, compared to more than 260 units built during the 1980's and 670 units during the 1970's.

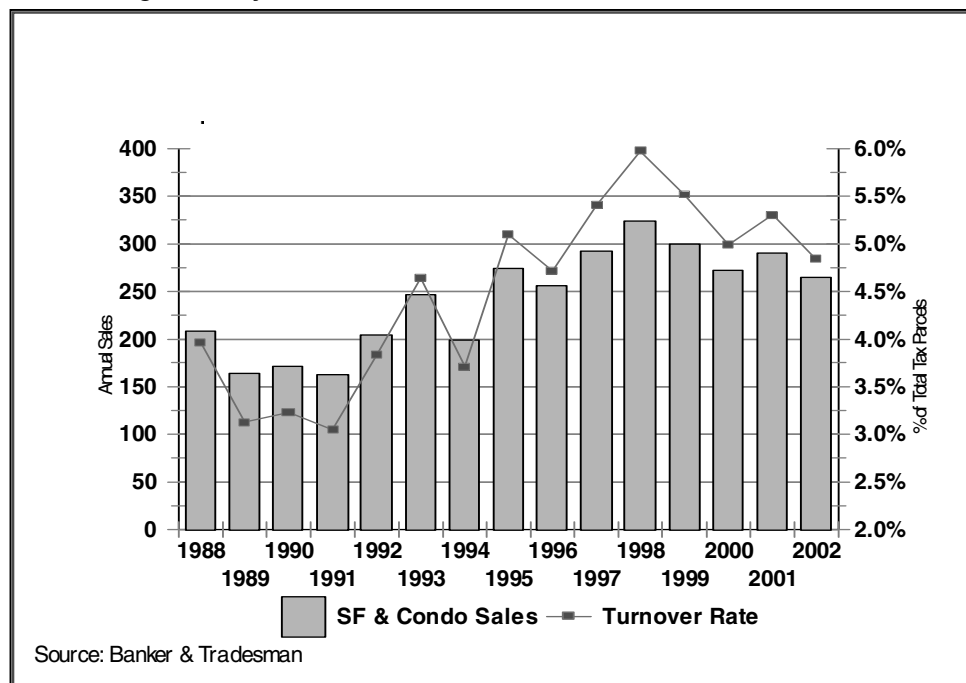
**Figure 2**  
**Average Value of Longmeadow Homes and Condos by Year Built**



- As the volume of residential construction has declined, the average size and value of new homes has increased. The average assessed value of Longmeadow homes built since 1990 exceeds \$390,000, and the value of housing built within the past five years is approaching \$450,000 per unit. Average lot sizes and living area associated with new homes have also steadily increased since 1970.



**Figure 3**  
**Annual Single Family and Condo Sales, 1988 - 2002**



- An average of 250 homes & condos have sold annually in the Town since 1990, dramatically exceeding the rate of new construction over the period. As shown in Figure 3, nearly 32 percent of the Town's owner occupied housing stock changed ownership within the 5-year period between 1997 and 2002.
- The median sale price of all homes sold in Longmeadow rose at a 5.0 percent annual rate from 1994 through 2002, after declining over the previous six years. The number of annual home sales has been trending downward since 1998, but prices have continued to escalate.



## Summary

The preceding information shows that Longmeadow's existing housing stock covers a broad range of values and is relatively affordable to a large majority of local residents. However, as the Town has become more built out and the rate of new construction has slowed, newer homes have become significantly larger and more expensive than existing housing. Consequently, without governmental intervention, prospects for the private sector to build lower-cost housing in Longmeadow, that is affordable to low and moderate income residents, appear to be very limited. The Town's existing supply of resale housing is also appreciating faster than incomes, suggesting that local needs for affordable housing will grow in the future.

Despite the fact that more than 92 percent of Longmeadow's housing stock is comprised of single family dwellings, the Town still has a significant stock of rental housing, exceeding 500 units. Renter affordability issues appear to result from the fact that Longmeadow has a very limited supply of "typical" two-bedroom apartments in multi-family buildings. Longmeadow's rental housing stock consists largely of single family homes that are available for rent, and one-bedroom elderly or assisted living units. Creating a larger supply of conventional two-bedroom apartments could help to satisfy the Town's rental housing needs.

Longmeadow has recently experienced a significant rate of "turnover" in existing housing, as the number of annual resales has been averaging 4.5 percent to 6.0 percent of total housing supply since 1995. The fact that nearly a third of the Town's housing has changed ownership within the past five years may have significant demographic implications for the community that has yet to show up in Census data. Appreciation rates on resale housing also appear to be outpacing the rate of inflation and income growth in the region, suggesting that housing is becoming less affordable to the Town's low and moderate income population.

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## Housing Demand and Needs Assessment

The following section discusses housing demand trends in Longmeadow and calculates housing needs among the Town's low and moderate income population. The section addresses general demographic and growth trends first, followed by a more detailed evaluation of households by type and tenure, who have affordable housing needs. The assessment addresses housing needs among various populations and income levels, including elderly, frail elderly, disabled, single individuals, young professionals, young families and empty nesters among others.

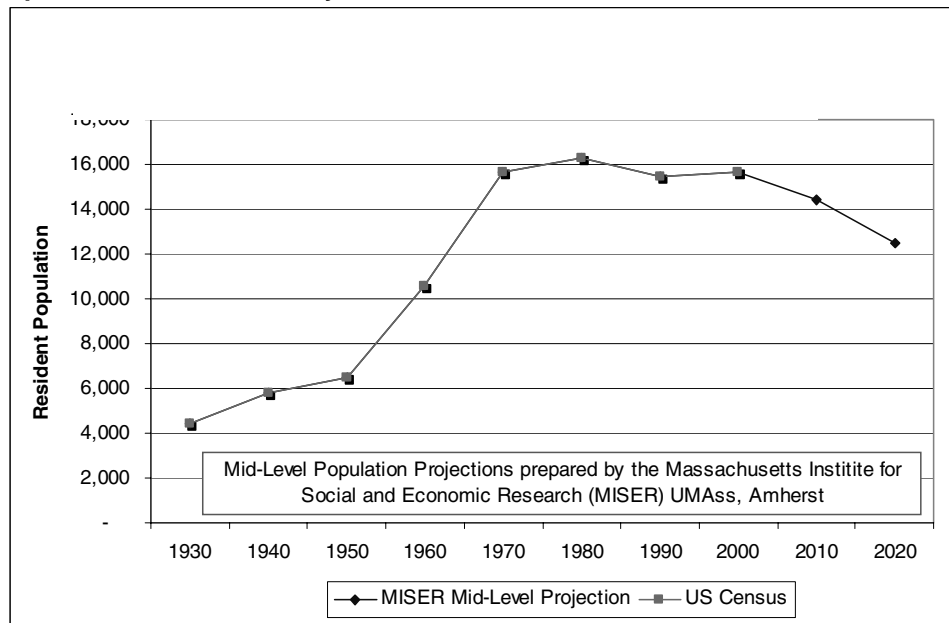


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### Demographic Trends

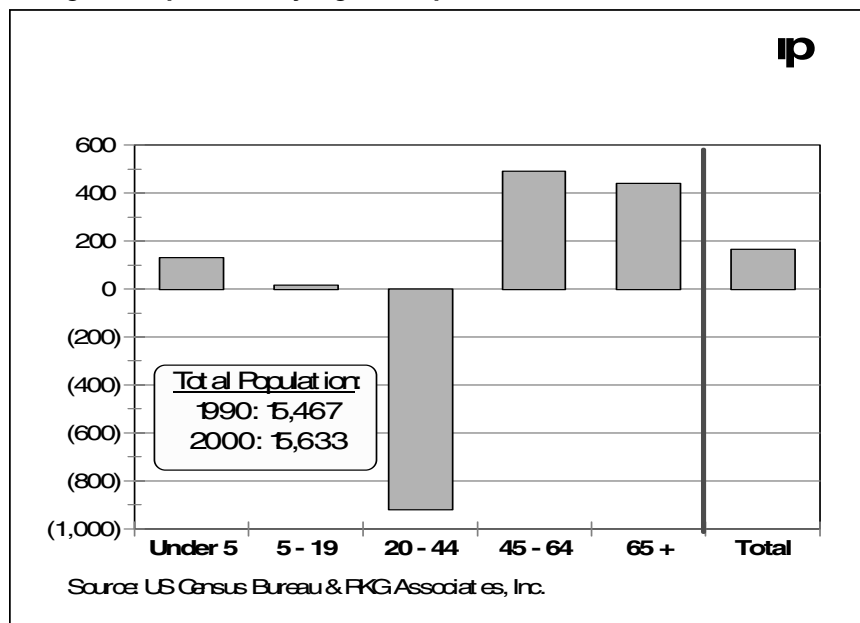
- Longmeadow's 2000 Census population estimate was 15,633. The Town gained a net of 166 residents (1.1 percent) over the past decade, while the State's population grew by 5.5 percent over the same period. As shown in Figure 4, the Town's 2000 Census population was virtually identical to 1970.

**Figure 4**  
**Population Trends and Projections, 1930 - 2020**



- As shown in Figure 5, while the Town's total population grew by 1.1 percent the population under age 5 increased 16 percent during the 1990's. School aged population (ages 5-19) remained stable, while the number of residents between the ages of 20 and 44 decreased by 19 percent. This loss of adults in their child-bearing years was offset by a growth in population in the 45 to 64 (12.3 percent) and elderly (18.9 percent) populations.

**Figure 5**  
**Change in Population by Age Group, 1990 - 2000**



- Based on recent demographic trends, it is reasonable to expect that the number of younger families with children will decline in the future, while empty nester and elderly households will continue to increase as a percentage of the Town's population. Recent population forecasts released by the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) project that Longmeadow's population will decline by more than 1,900 (-13.4 percent) by 2020. This negative growth pattern could have significant implications for school enrollments and other municipal services and suggests that the Town would need to experience a substantial increase in new residential development just to maintain a stable population base.
- The age distribution highlighted above is also reflected in the makeup of Longmeadow households. At the time of the 2000 Census, nearly 49 percent of Longmeadow households were headed by persons over age 55, while only 22 percent were married-couple families that were still of child-bearing age. Less than half (47 percent) of all Longmeadow's families had dependent children under 18, while only nine percent of families had children under 6 years of age. Among families with children under 18, 10.5 percent were headed by a single parent.
- Part of the explanation for Longmeadow's older demographic is the fact that relatively little rental housing is occupied by younger households. Only five percent of the Town's renter householders were under age 35 in 1999, compared to 65 percent who were elderly. About 58 percent of the Town's rental units were also occupied by a single person in 1999. Rental housing is often a starting point for young couples and families who are preparing for home ownership. This demographic appears to be largely missing in Longmeadow.
- Because of the large number of elderly and "empty nesters" living in Longmeadow, more than 55 percent of households were occupied by two persons or less according to the 2000 Census, compared to only 28 percent occupied by four or more people. About 11 percent of the Town's owner occupied units were also headed by persons over age 75. This is partly explained by the presence of elderly/assisted living units in the Town, but may also reflect a large number of older residents occupying single family homes.



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## Poverty and Disability

The US Census does not specifically address the demographic characteristics of persons or households with low or moderate incomes. However, the Census does collect information concerning persons and households with incomes below the poverty level, which represents a significant percentage of all low-income persons. In order to gain insights into the types of housing that may be suitable for low income persons, it is often useful to examine the characteristics of households living in poverty. Census 2000 poverty statistics for Longmeadow are profiled in Table 8.

**Table 8**  
**Characteristics of Households Above and Below Poverty Level, 1999**

Household Characteristic	Income At or Above Poverty	Income Below Poverty	Total Households	Percent Below Poverty
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>5,523</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>5,738</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
Under 25	--	--	--	0.0%
25 to 44	1,463	7	1,470	0.5%
45 to 64	2,449	19	2,468	0.8%
65 and Older	1,611	189	1,800	10.5%
<b>Married Couple Families</b>	<b>3,930</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3,966</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Under 25	--	--	--	0.0%
25 to 44	1,222	--	1,222	0.0%
45 to 64	1,931	--	1,931	0.0%
65 and Older	777	36	813	4.4%
<b>Male Householder, No Wife Present</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Under 25	--	--	--	0.0%
25 to 44	16	--	16	0.0%
45 to 64	40	--	40	0.0%
65 and Older	62	--	62	0.0%
<b>Female Householder, No Husband</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
Under 25	--	--	--	0.0%
25 to 44	119	7	126	5.6%
45 to 64	189	--	189	0.0%
65 and Older	47	--	47	0.0%
<b>Unrelated Individuals</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
Under 25	--	--	--	0.0%
25 to 44	106	--	106	0.0%
45 to 64	289	19	308	6.2%
65 and Older	725	153	878	17.4%

Source: US Census 2000

- More than 300 Longmeadow residents in 215 house-holds lived in poverty in 1999. Roughly 3.7 percent of Longmeadow households had incomes below the poverty level.
- The highest percentages of persons living in poverty were elderly and persons living alone. The poverty rate among the Town's elderly households was 10.5 percent. The poverty rate was substantially higher among elderly living alone (17.4 percent) than elderly couples (4.4 percent).

- Poverty is not a significant issue among families with children. Less than one percent of Longmeadow families lived below the poverty level.
- Persons with physical and self care limitations are another segment of the population that typically has housing needs. According to the Census, about seven percent of the Town's population possesses a disability or self care limitation that may require specialized housing accommodations. More than 67 percent of this group is elderly and a percentage may already be receiving nursing home care. However, it is probable that in 2000, a minimum of 500 Longmeadow residents had a significant physical disability or self care limitations and did not reside in nursing homes or assisted living facilities. A significant percentage of these residents probably require some form of adapted housing to accommodate their physical needs.



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## Summary

The preceding analysis shows that while Longmeadow's total population remained stable during the past decade, there was a substantial internal change in the Town's demographic makeup over the period. Changing demographics, particularly the substantial reduction in residents of child-bearing age, will produce population losses and declining school enrollments over the next two decades, as the Town becomes increasingly comprised of empty nester and elderly households. While the Town's aging demographics reflect statewide and national trends, contributing factors are also rising housing costs and the limited growth in supply of moderately priced single family homes and apartments that are suitable for younger households and families.

Despite the fact that Longmeadow is a more affluent community than the surrounding region as a whole, the local population still contains significant numbers of persons and households living in poverty. Fortunately, few of the Town's children live in poverty. The majority of the Town's poorest residents are elderly and persons living alone. Significant numbers of these people also have physical and self-care limitations that may require specialized housing to accommodate their needs.

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## Estimate of Current and Future Housing Needs

The first step in developing a local affordable housing strategy involves quantifying the number and characteristics of households with affordable housing needs. The following section profiles 2000 Census estimates of owners and renters who paid more than 30 percent of their household incomes for housing, with particular attention paid to low and moderate income persons.

- Generally, applicants must earn incomes that are no more than 80 percent of the “area-wide” median household income (MHI) in order to qualify for most rental assistance programs, and 95 percent of MHI for first-time home buyer programs. In Longmeadow’s case, income qualification would be based on Hampden County. Based on the analysis which appears in Table 9, it is estimated that roughly 1,060 households or about 19 percent of the Town’s households would have met the area-wide definition of low or moderate income in 1999.

**Table 9**  
**Household Income Distribution, 1999**

Household Income	Households	Percent of Total	
Less than \$10,000	263	4.6%	<b>Low Income</b>
\$10,000 to 14,999	209	3.6%	
\$15,000 to 19,999	101	1.8%	
\$20,000 to 24,999	126	2.2%	<b>Moderate Income</b>
\$25,000 to 29,999	265	4.6%	
\$30,000 to 34,999	197	3.4%	
\$35,000 to 39,999	154	2.7%	<b>Middle Income</b>
\$40,000 to 44,999	231	4.0%	
\$45,000 to 49,999	122	2.1%	
\$50,000 to 59,999	459	8.0%	
\$60,000 to 74,999	723	12.6%	<b>Upper Income</b>
\$75,000 to 99,999	839	14.6%	
\$100,000 to \$124,999	617	10.8%	
\$125,000 to \$199,999	842	14.7%	
\$200,000 or More	590	10.3%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,738</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
Hampden County Median Household Income (MHI)			\$39,718
Low Income- 50% MHI			\$19,859
Moderate Income- 80% MHI			\$31,771
Middle Income- 150% MHI			\$59,511
Estimated Longmeadow Low/Moderate Income Households			1,063
Percent of Total Households			19%

Source: US Census 2000



## Homeowner Affordable Housing Needs by Income and Age Group

- Not all low and moderate income households necessarily have affordable housing needs. According to the 2000 US Census, 1,220 Longmeadow homeowners paid more than 30 percent of their monthly income in housing costs in 1999 and thus had affordable housing needs. However, only 550 of those homeowners were also estimated to have low or moderate incomes. This number represents slightly more than half of the Town's low-moderate income population. The remaining populations with high housing costs are middle-upper income households who, presumably, voluntarily choose to pay high housing costs relative to their incomes.

**Table 10**

**Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999  
Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units\* by Household Income Level and Age of Householder**

Monthly Homeowner Costs as a % of Household Income						
Imputed Values for all Owner Occupied Households	Less than 29%	30 – 34%	35% or More	All Owner Households	With Affordable Needs	%with Affordable Needs
Income Category						
Under \$10,000	--	--	88	123	88	71.7%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	17	9	169	195	178	91.1%
\$20,000 - \$34,999	203	68	210	480	278	57.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	298	40	156	495	197	39.7%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	783	105	224	1,112	329	29.6%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	684	12	96	792	108	13.6%
\$100,000 or More	1,970	13	29	2,012	42	2.1%
Total	3,596	248	972	5,211	1,220	23.4%
Age of Householder						
15 – 24	--	--	--	--	--	0.0%
25 – 34	248	51	46	346	98	28.3%
35 – 44	738	72	338	1,148	411	35.8%
45 – 54	1,123	30	188	1,342	218	16.3%
55 – 64	930	26	109	1,065	135	12.7%
65 – 74	578	28	124	741	152	20.6%
75 +	338	41	166	570	207	36.3%
Total	3,956	248	972	5,211	1,220	23.4%

\* Selected owner occupied housing excludes mobile homes, single-family homes on more than 10 acres, owner households in mixed-use developments, and condominiums in multi-unit buildings.

Source: US Census 2000



- Although the Census does not cross-reference household income by age group, roughly 30 percent of all owner households with affordability needs were elderly. Nearly 360 elderly homeowners paid more than 30 percent of their incomes in housing costs in 1999. It is not known how many of these elderly also had low or moderate incomes, but it is reasonable to assume that most did. If true, then the elderly would make up a maximum of 66 percent of the Town's low-moderate income homeowners with affordability needs. The remaining 185 households were non-elderly, low-moderate income homeowners. Many of those may represent single-parent homeowners or individuals living alone.



### Renter Affordable Housing Needs by Age and Income

- Using a similar methodology for rental affordability, an estimated 142 renter households, or 27 percent of Longmeadow renters, had affordable housing needs in 1999, including 96 low or moderate income renters. About 79 percent of these renters with affordable housing needs were elderly, while less than 13 percent were under the age of 55.

**Table 11**  
**Monthly Gross Rental Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999**  
**By Household Income Level and Age of Householder**

Imputed Values for all Renter Occupied Households	Monthly Gross Rent as a % of Household Income			With Affordable Needs	%with Affordable Needs
	Less than 29%	30 – 34%	35% or More		
Income Category					
Under \$10,000	66	--	53	53	44.4%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	94	--	11	11	10.5%
\$20,000 - \$34,999	42	9	23	32	43.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	20	--	10	10	33.3%
\$50,000 +	160	24	11	35	18.2%
Total	381	33	108	141	27.0%
Age of Householder					
15 – 24	--	--	--	--	0.0%
25 – 34	27	--	--	--	0.0%
35 – 44	41	7	--	7	14.9%
45 – 54	24	11	--	11	31.0%
55 – 64	62	--	11	11	15.1%
65 – 74	24	15	10	25	51.0%
75 +	203	--	87	87	30.0%
Total	381	33	108	141	27.0%

Source: US Census 2000

- Not shown in Table 11 is the fact that more than 60 renter households (43 percent of the total) with affordability needs in 1999 rented single-family homes rather than apartments. These factors suggest that a lack of 2-bedroom rental apartment inventory contributes to renter affordability issues and probably prohibits young renters from living in Longmeadow.
- Middle income renters with affordability needs are likely to be renting existing single-family homes in Longmeadow. About 45 households, or 43 percent of renters with affordability needs in 1999, had sufficient incomes to qualify for home ownership.



## Housing Needs Summary

As shown above, an estimated 1,220 homeowners and 141 Longmeadow renters spent more than 30 percent of their household incomes on housing costs in 1999. These numbers represent nearly 24 percent of all households living in the Town at the time of the 2000 Census. While this number has significant policy implications for the Town as a whole, this analysis is primarily concerned with the portion of those households that had low- or moderate-incomes and would be eligible for housing assistance.

**Table 12**  
**Summary of Owner and Renter Housing Needs by Age Group**

Estimated Low-Moderate Income Households with Unmet Housing Needs				
Age Group	Owners	Renters	All Households	Percent of Total
Elderly	350	75	425	65.9%
Non-Elderly	200	20	220	34.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This analysis concludes that approximately 645 households, or 47 percent of all identified Longmeadow households with housing needs, were likely to have earned low or moderate incomes in 1999. This number represents roughly 11 percent of all households in the Town. Table 12 summarizes the composition of these households between elderly and non-elderly and homeowners and renters. Nearly 66 percent of all households with needs were elderly and more than 85 percent already owned their own homes.

Longmeadow currently provides 172 existing Chapter 40B certified units, indicating that less than three percent of the Town's total housing stock is considered "affordable housing". As shown in Table 13, Longmeadow is 411 units short of

meeting its 10 percent goal under Chapter 40B and 473 units short of satisfying the affordable housing needs of the Town's resident households in 2000.

**Table 13**

**Summary of Longmeadow Chapter 40B Status**

Total 2001 Year Round Housing Units	5,832
10% Goal	583
Actual Chapter 40B Certified Units	172
Percent of Goal Satisfied	2.9%
<b>Chapter 40B Deficit (Units)</b>	<b>411</b>



## Summary

Based on the standard criteria used to define housing needs, Longmeadow has a sizeable low and moderate income resident population that is in need of affordable housing. In fact, the estimated actual number of resident households with unmet housing needs (645) exceeds the number of units needed to reach the State-mandated minimum goal under Chapter 40B (411 units) by nearly 57 percent.

Longmeadow is unusual in that 80 percent of its low-moderate income residents with housing needs already own their own homes. Nearly two-thirds of these residents are also elderly and are candidates to trade down into lower-cost housing. Many of the homes that would be vacated by these elderly residents could, in turn, provide suitable lower-cost housing alternatives for younger families. In light of Longmeadow's forecasted loss of population over the next decade, the Town could absorb a modest "turnover" of empty nester to family ownership without adversely impacting schools.

Because Longmeadow's rental housing stock is limited, estimated housing needs among resident renters are also relatively small, at less than 100 units. The majority of low-moderate income renters with housing needs (75 households) are also elderly. Longmeadow also had 40 to 50 existing middle-income renters in 2000, who had high housing costs and were candidates to move into first-time home ownership.

The absence of younger renter households in Longmeadow suggests a need to offer suitable units for this population. Two-bedroom market rate or assisted rentals are under-supplied and the demand could easily fill 200 to 300 units. The key issue is whether there are any suitable locations to accommodate that many units, and whether the Town is willing to allocate/zone any remaining undeveloped land to support multi-family housing or affordable building sites for first time home buyers.

The needs of low-moderate income elderly homeowners and renters with housing affordability issues could be met through a combination of lower cost condominiums, market rate rentals and subsidized/assisted elderly units. Any market rate rental housing considered under this plan, should design a significant portion of units to be suitable for elderly residents.

Finally, the analysis suggests that any assisted elderly housing development should contain a percentage of units that are suitable for persons with physical/self care limitations.

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## Proposed Affordable Housing Strategy



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### Housing Goals

Based on the preceding findings, the following housing goals are recommended for Longmeadow.

The Town of Longmeadow is a nearly built out community with relatively few opportunities to build new housing on a scale that could feasibly accommodate the needs of its entire low and moderate income population. The absence of large parcels and the high cost of land make it particularly difficult to build low-cost new construction for first time home buyers. Recognizing these limitations, it is the Town's goal to work first to meet the affordable housing needs of its own elderly population, who currently represent the majority of the Town's low and moderate income households, and occupy most of the existing moderately-priced housing in the community. By enabling empty nesters and retirees to find suitable, lower-cost housing alternatives in Longmeadow, it is hoped that more existing housing will be offered for resale to younger families.

In addition, it is the Town's goal to offer more opportunities for low and moderate income renters, including younger households who cannot currently find suitable rental housing in Longmeadow. Because the Town lacks larger properties that can feasibly accommodate the construction of new multi-family housing, the only viable strategy is to enable greater numbers of single family home owners to build accessory apartments, or enable existing multi-family properties to expand where appropriate and feasible. The Town should examine locations and conditions where additional "infill" housing can be created without adversely impacting surrounding neighborhoods or the historic character of existing dwellings.

Specific strategies to implement these goals are outlined below.



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## **Recommended Actions**

The analysis of housing data shows a need and a market for affordable housing in Longmeadow. Town residents want more affordable housing options for seniors. The Long Range Planning Committee supports creative zoning that would allow for alternate types of housing, such as accessory apartments, housing above commercial buildings, and expansion of existing elderly housing.

### **Senior Housing at the Water Tower Property**

The two tracts of land off Frank Smith Road were taken by eminent domain in 1959 for use as playground/recreation. The property is under the joint control of the School Department and the Recreation Department. Any change in the use of this land requires a two-thirds vote of the Town. In addition, a further act of the legislature would be required to change the public purpose already specified. This land should be explored as the site for the development of age restricted housing. The VHB financial projections show that sale of this property for that purpose could result in a substantial one time payment to the Town (\$11.8 million), and significant increases in property taxes (up to \$1.4 million per year). This project has enough of a financial benefit to the town to be seriously considered.

Other options for smaller units of senior housing could be an expansion of Emerson Manor, the Bliss /Williams commercial area, Bay Path College, and Greenwood Center.

### **Accessory Apartment Bylaw**

The Town should revisit the issue of allowing accessory apartments on premises of owner occupied homes. This would create some units of affordable housing for renters, help homeowners receive income to offset tax increases, and increase safety for elderly homeowners who now live alone. A carefully crafted bylaw will protect neighborhood appearance and would have no negative impact on property values.

### **Longmeadow Street Overlay Zone**

In the future, if large houses on Longmeadow Street no longer prove desirable for single family residences, and either do not sell as residences or begin to fall into disrepair, the Town may wish to consider an overlay zone with strict design guidelines to permit some homes to be converted into professional offices, bed & breakfasts, or condominiums. Creative site and design review would secure the historic character of the area.

## Golf Courses

In the event that any golf courses or other privately held open spaces become available, consider them for housing, mixed use or other appropriate development for Town needs.

## Other Affordable Housing Options

### Wolf Swamp Road Garden Apartments

It should be noted that the Consultant Team studied the feasibility of new housing development for the Town owned property on Wolf Swamp road. A portion of this property (19.82 acres) is controlled by the Conservation Commission and 19.07 acres is controlled by the Parks and Recreation Department. The use of this land is restricted since it is owned by the Conservation Commission and the Park and Recreation Department. Any change in the use of this land requires a two-thirds vote of the Town. In addition, a further act of the legislature would be required to change the public purpose already specified. The Consultant Team recommendations consisted of development of approximately 125 units of Garden Apartments, with a percentage dedicated for affordable housing needs, on the 13 acres of playing fields on the property and preserving the adjacent wetlands and forested areas. A conceptual plan for this development is provided in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**  
**Conceptual Wolf Swamp Road Garden Apartments**



This recommendation was not supported by the Long Range Planning Committee given the current protected status on the property, and the current demand in Town for playing fields. The recommendation has been included in this report as part of the discussion record to develop the Long Range Master Plan, and as an option for future consideration if the demand for additional housing units is warranted. Potential advantages and disadvantages for development of housing on this property are summarized below.

- Potential Advantages
  - Supplies nearly 90 percent of the Town's rental housing needs
  - All units count as affordable under CH40B
  - Could serve both elderly and non-elderly households
  - Potential \$2.0 million one-time land payment to the Town
  - Annual tax revenues could be in the range of \$240,000+
- Potential Disadvantages
  - Potential municipal service costs could exceed tax revenue if occupied by a large number of families with children
  - Costs of legally changing zoning of the property and relocating athletic fields elsewhere in Town.



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## Housing Suitability Map

The recommendations for potential future housing sites in the Town of Longmeadow, as described above, are provided in the map on the following page.



# Town of Longmeadow

M a s s a c h u s e t t s

**VHB** Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.  
**RKG** Associates Inc.

Legend:

Land Use

- Cropland - Intensive
- Open - Abandoned Agricultural
- Open Space/Recreation
- Public/Parks
- Fresh water
- Forest

Sources: MassGIS, Town of Longmeadow

Notes:

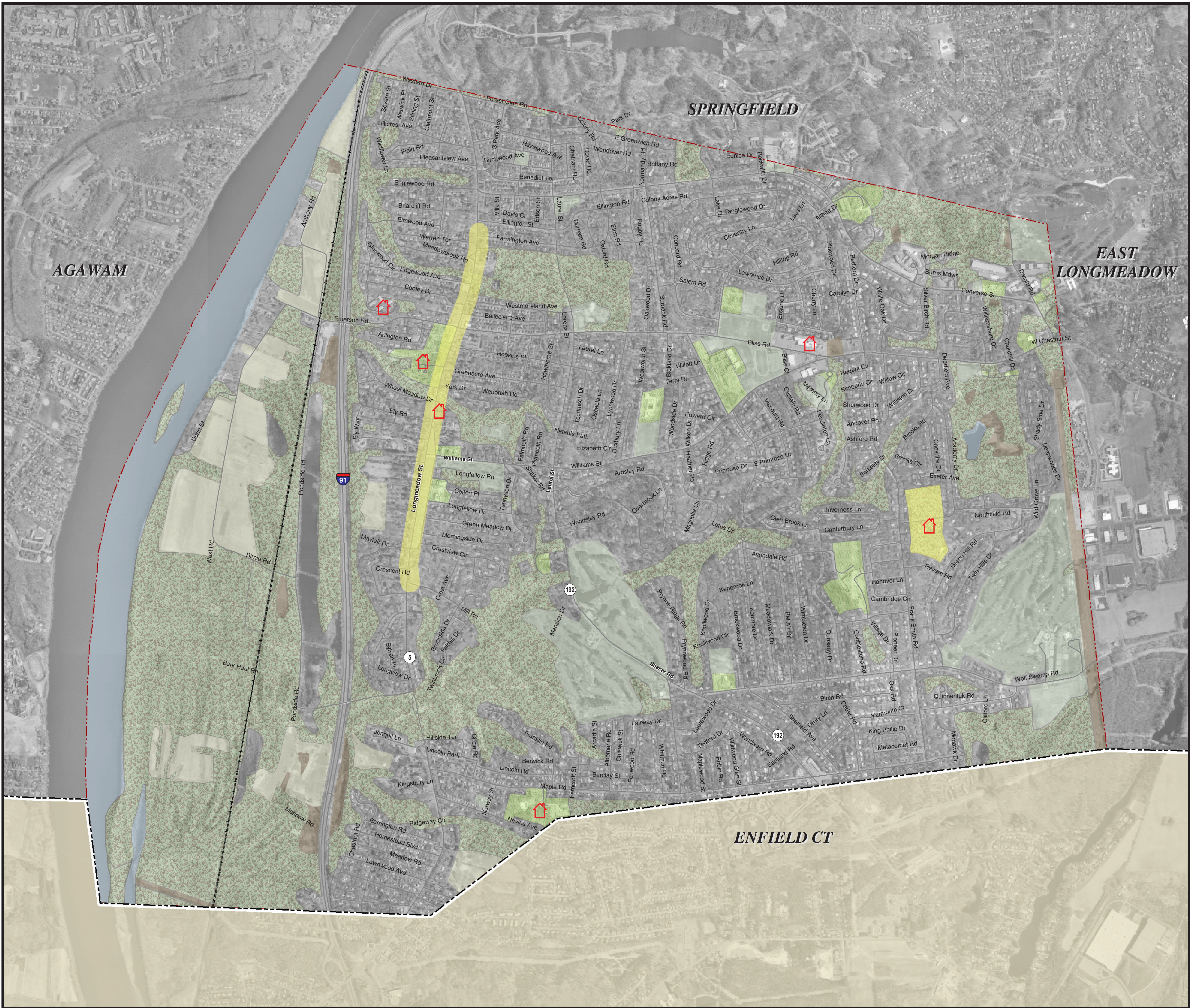
Route 5 Corridor:  
Potential Home Conversions

 Potential Senior Housing Sites:

- Water Tower Property
- Emerson Manner Expansion
- Bliss Road \ Williams Street Commercial Area
- Bay Path College
- Greenwood Center

## Housing Suitability Map

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.





# Economic Development Element

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## Introduction

This Economic Development Element of the Town of Longmeadow Community Development Plan presents a brief overview of economic conditions and discusses strategies for expanding the Town's limited non-residential tax base. The specific purpose of this element is to outline an economic development strategy that is realistic and compatible with the Town's land constraints, that enhances residents' access to convenient goods and services, provides local job opportunities for low and moderate-income residents and contributes to the Town's fiscal stability.

Because Longmeadow possesses very little existing commercial, retail or office development, and has few options for expanding the supply, it is irrelevant to present the type of market analysis or economic base study that is often contained in economic development strategies. As will be shown below, Longmeadow's existing population generates demand for goods and services that far exceeds the current supply of retail or office space in the Town. Existing demand also exceeds any additional space inventory that could be feasibly accommodated. Rather than verify the market feasibility of potential strategies, this element focuses on potential use scenarios for those remaining parcels with economic development potential, and estimates the resulting fiscal impacts from those scenarios.

Most of the data reported below was previously presented to the Town in two presentations, delivered in June and September of 2003. Rather than provide an extensive narrative explanation of that same information, findings are summarized in bullet form and accompanied by tables and graphics. This format is used throughout the element.

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## Economic Development Goals/Vision

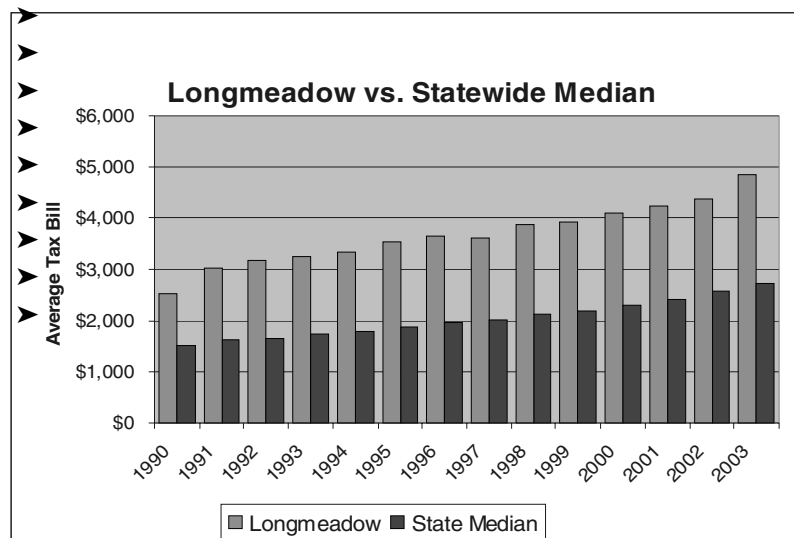
Longmeadow is largely a "bedroom community," and has consistently opposed the development of large-scale retail or industrial development within the Town's borders. Existing non-residential zones are limited in area and nearly built out, but are not developed to their maximum potential in some cases. It is the Town's goal to:

- Encourage existing non-residential areas of Longmeadow to be developed to their highest and best use;
- Provide residents with convenient access to a variety of locally based goods and services;
- Facilitate the ability of residents to work in their homes, with sufficient safeguards to ensure that such businesses do not negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods;
- Provide jobs for low and moderate income residents who may desire or need to work close to home;
- Use economic development as a preservation tool for large historic homes, which are in viable commercial locations, such as along Longmeadow Street. While it is the Town's desire to preserve its historic neighborhoods in their current use and condition, the increasing cost of owning and maintaining these properties may become prohibitive in the future. In those limited cases where it may no longer be economically feasible for owners to maintain their homes as single-family residences, allowing conversion of properties to office or mixed-use may be appropriate, as long as such conversions are strictly controlled.

## Summary Market Findings

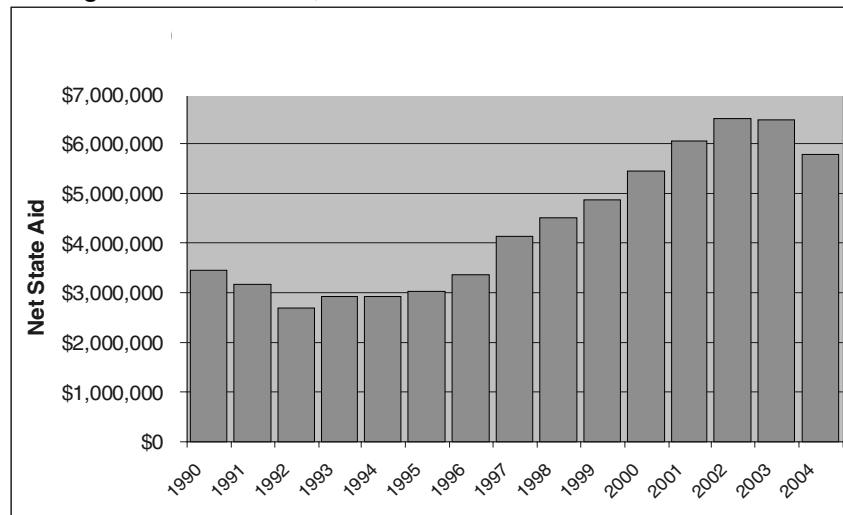
The following section provides a summary overview of findings presented at earlier presentations to the Long Range Planning Committee. These findings focus on the fiscal justifications for pursuing economic development actions and the economic characteristics of the community. Highlights of this analysis include the following:

**Figure 1**  
**Average Homeowner Tax Bill: 1990 - 2003**



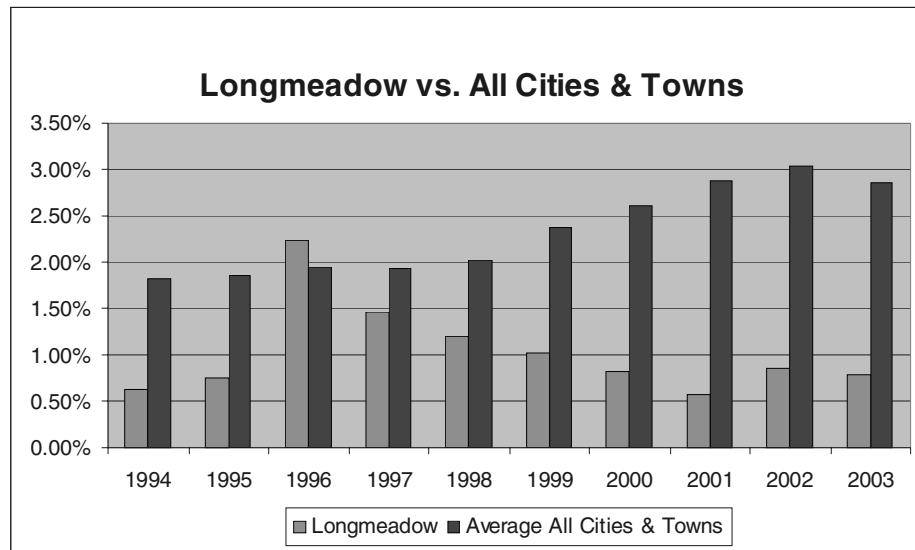
- The average homeowner tax cost in Longmeadow is increasing at an accelerating rate. As shown in Figure 1, the average tax bill for a single-family home was \$4,864 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003. This has increased at a 5.2 percent annual rate (compounded) since 1990 and grew by 11.4 percent in 2003 alone. The Town's average single-family tax bill is 80 percent above the statewide median and the Town ranks 38<sup>th</sup> highest out of 340 communities in residential tax cost.

**Figure 2**  
**Change in Net State Aid, 1990 - 2004**



- The Town's tax cost also increased during a period when State Aid also grew at a rapid rate. Figure 2 illustrates that net State Aid to Longmeadow increased by \$3.8 million (134 percent) from 1992 to 2002, yet homeowner tax bills continued to rise. Net State Aid to the Town has been cut by 11.7 percent (\$780,000) since FY 2002 and "best-case" projections anticipate a stabilization of aid levels. Prospects for a return of State Aid growth in the foreseeable future are very slim and suggest that tax costs for homeowners could rise at an even faster rate.
- The Town's changing tax base is shifting service costs to residential property. Residential property accounts for 95.3 percent of Longmeadow's total assessed valuation, and residential property values have been increasing faster than all other property types. The proportion of the Town's total tax levy that is paid by residential property, increased by 0.4 percent after the last revaluation.
- Longmeadow generates far less "new growth" than most Massachusetts communities. Figure 3 shows that new growth as a source of property tax revenue has been declining steadily in Longmeadow since 1996. New growth has averaged 0.8 percent of prior year levy limit over the past five years. The relative value of new growth to Longmeadow's tax base is less than 30 percent of the average of all Massachusetts cities and towns.

**Figure 3**  
**New Growth as a Percentage of Prior Year Levy Limit**



- The Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training identified 302 Longmeadow employers with payroll in 2002. The total number of workers employed by these employers was 3,309, including public sector employees.

**Table 1**  
**2002 Establishments, Payroll Employment and Wages**

Industry Description	Number of Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wages
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>3,309</b>	<b>\$91,607,984</b>	<b>\$532</b>
23- Construction	12	61	\$1,978,834	\$625
42- Wholesale Trade	15	18	\$1,025,620	\$1,076
44-45- Retail Trade	33	448	\$7,047,878	\$303
52- Finance and Insurance	20	189	\$8,569,721	\$872
53- Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	16	46	\$1,575,629	\$665
54- Professional and Technical Services	40	130	\$7,520,698	\$1,114
56- Administrative and Waste Services	16	83	\$3,582,836	\$828
61- Educational Services	9	755	\$24,362,561	\$621
62- Health Care and Social Assistance	40	828	\$23,300,240	\$541
71- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	7	216	\$3,419,054	\$305
72- Accommodation and Food Services	14	216	\$2,745,793	\$244
81- Other Services, Ex. Public Admin.	67	141	\$2,018,382	\$275

Source: Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training

- As shown in Table 1, the Town's largest industries in terms of employment were health care and social services (with 828 payroll jobs) and educational services (755 jobs). Although Longmeadow has a relatively small commercial base, retail trade is also a significant local industry, with 33 establishments providing 448 payroll jobs in 2002.
- According to Dun & Bradstreet, there are 446 business establishments in the Town's zip code, including businesses with no payroll employees. These businesses had estimated gross sales in 2000 exceeding \$142 million. About 70 percent of these establishments had four or fewer employees and many appear to be self-employed individuals. Address data also suggested that many of these self-employed persons worked out of their homes. The data suggest that Longmeadow based small businesses have significant space demands that may not be adequately accommodated by the limited inventory of commercial and office space in the Town. There appears to be ample demand to support a modest expansion of available commercial or office space, if appropriately located and designed for the needs of the local market.
- Longmeadow residents purchased an estimated \$157.4 million non-automotive retail goods and services in 2002. That spending level is sufficient to support more than 410,000 square feet of retail space. According to property tax assessment records, however, there is only 302,000 square feet of non-tax exempt commercial, retail or office space in the entire Town. Approximately 220,000 square feet of that existing space is commercial or retail in nature, roughly half the amount that is "supportable" by the Town's resident population.
- Significant categories of consumer spending among Longmeadow residents are summarized in Table 2. The obvious implication of this data is that residents make the vast majority of their retail purchases outside of the community. While Longmeadow residents have opposed large-scale commercial development within the Town's borders, a modest amount of retail expansion is obviously "supportable" by the market and could provide greater convenience for consumers.

**Table 2**  
**Consumer Spending Potential among Longmeadow's**  
**Resident Population**

Merchandise Line	Estimated 2002 Spending
Groceries	\$31.5 million
Drugs, personal care & household supplies	\$5.9 million
Apparel	\$29.4 million
Furniture & home furnishings	\$38.9 million

Source: Claritas



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## Summary

The purpose of the preceding section was to (a) demonstrate the fiscal consequences of Longmeadow's current lack of non-residential tax base and absence of new growth, and (b) to outline the range of economic development options that may be supported by available demand. It is clear from the information presented that Longmeadow has a sizeable local economy that includes nearly 450 businesses. The Town's resident population also spends far more on retail goods and services than is necessary to support existing store space in the Town. If the Town was to take action to make it more feasible to develop or expand commercial, retail or office space, there is a high probability that the private sector would respond. The range of supportable demand for such space could be in the range of 100,000 to 150,000 square feet, and is probably in excess of what could be feasibly supplied in the foreseeable future. Available strategies to support economic development in Longmeadow are addressed in the following section.

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## Economic Development Strategies

Longmeadow has very limited options to "grow" its tax base. Feasible options include encouraging the rehabilitation and expansion of existing properties, transitioning residential properties to higher-valued commercial uses or "returning" Town-owned or other tax-exempt property to private ownership. While no single action, or change in land use policy, is likely to provide a solution to the Town's long-term fiscal condition, multiple actions could marginally mitigate future cost impacts on homeowners.

While demand indicators clearly suggest the potential to support a modest expansion of retail, commercial or office space within the Town, available locations to physically accommodate that growth potential are very limited. This analysis focused on examining growth potential associated with three general areas. These areas included the existing concentration of commercial/retail development at the intersection of Williams Street and Bliss Road, a Town-owned parcel located off Wolf Swamp Road, and the potential location of office uses along the Longmeadow Street corridor. Summary findings from the analysis of these strategies are presented in this section.

The extent of this analysis included the preparation of concept plans to verify the physical development potential of each site and estimating the resulting property tax base and tax revenues from projected development, based on current land and building values. It should be noted that this effort addresses real property tax revenues only. No effort was made to forecast other potential Town revenues or expenses from personal property, automobile excise taxes, user fees or other sources.



## Strategy 1: Increase Density of Commercial Areas

As summarized in Table 3, the consultant team evaluated two options for expansion of the Longmeadow Shops property located at the intersection of Williams Street and Bliss Road. The options for shopping center expansion are shown in Figures 4 and 5.

**Table 3:**  
**Development Alternatives Williams Street and Bliss Road**  
**Impact on Longmeadow Tax Base at Build-Out**

Development Program	Net New Square Feet
<b>Option 1: Neighborhood Retail and Office</b>	
Junior Department Store	7,500
Small Shops/Food Service	8,800
2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Professional Office	7,500
<b>Total Square Feet</b>	<b>23,800</b>
Average Value per Square Foot	\$135
Total Assessed Value	\$3,213,000
Tax Rate	\$18.03
Annual Property Taxes*	\$58,000
Potential Land Payment	--
<b>Option 2: Retail, Office &amp; Grocery</b>	
Junior Department Store	7,500
Small Shops/Food Service	8,800
2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Professional Office	7,500
Grocery	70,000
<b>Total Square Feet</b>	<b>93,800</b>
Average Value per Square Foot	\$150
Total Assessed Value	\$12,663,000
Tax Rate	\$18.03
Annual Property Taxes*	\$228,000
Potential Land Payment	\$1,300,000

\* Estimated using 2003 values and Tax Rate

The premise for both options for expansion of the shopping center was based on the goals determined through the consultants work with the Long Range Planning Committee, as follows:

- To plan and promote more density through infill development and land use diversity in the area, including elements to enhance the pedestrian environment and activities and uses that could serve as community focal points.

- To increase density by increasing allowed building heights for development in a mixed-use housing and commercial setting.
- Look for alternative parking patterns and ratios, including shared parking agreements for uses with different peak hour needs, to allow businesses to expand and become more accommodating to pedestrian uses.
- If open space adjacent to this area ever becomes available, the Town should consider purchasing these properties to supplement goals for expanding commercial or mixed-use initiatives.

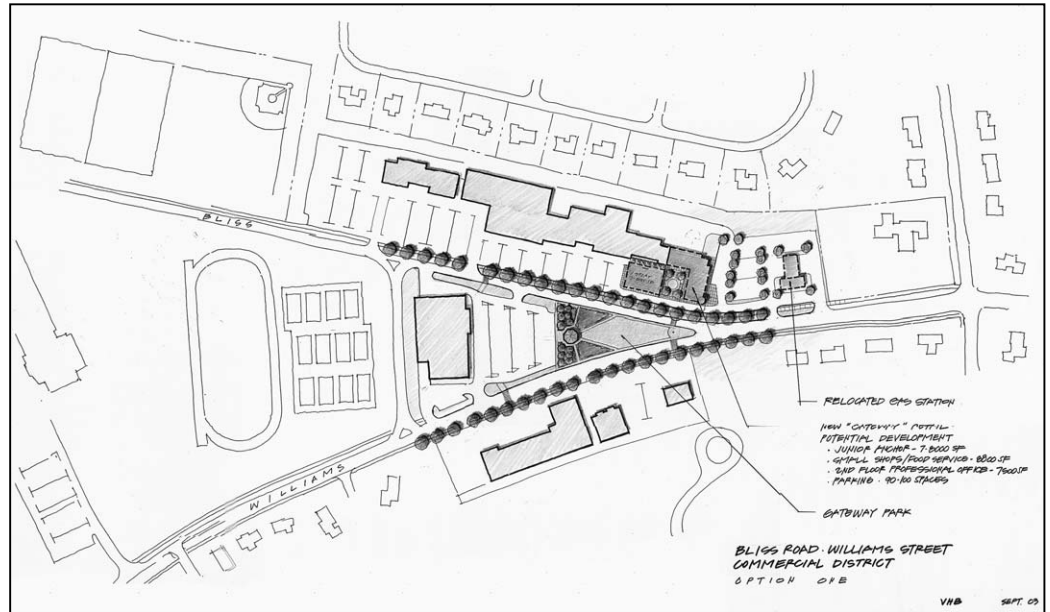
Option 1 looked at expanding the existing shopping center site to its maximum reasonable density based on site constraints rather than existing zoning. Based on the site's physical characteristics, it was determined that the existing shopping center could be expanded by nearly 24,000 square feet, if a second floor was added. The main advantage of this concept is that it consumed less than 15 percent of available retail spending potential generated by the local population, provided added space for both retail and office employers, and could be accomplished with no financial participation on the part of the Town. The disadvantage of Option 1 was that it provided only a minimal incremental gain in real property valuation of roughly \$3.2 million, with a resulting tax levy of less than \$60,000 per year.

Option 2 shows a more ambitious approach, which assumes that the Town would sell the adjacent land for the High School's tennis courts to expand the amount of land available for future expansion of the shopping center. Under this scenario, a reconfigured center could be expanded by nearly 94,000 square feet and include a grocery store (or other anchor tenant), other retail shops and office space. Under this scenario, the Town could receive a one-time land payment of up to \$1.3 million, which could pay for reconstructing the tennis courts on another Town-owned parcel. This concept also generates a much higher incremental gain in real property tax revenue of \$228,000 per year.

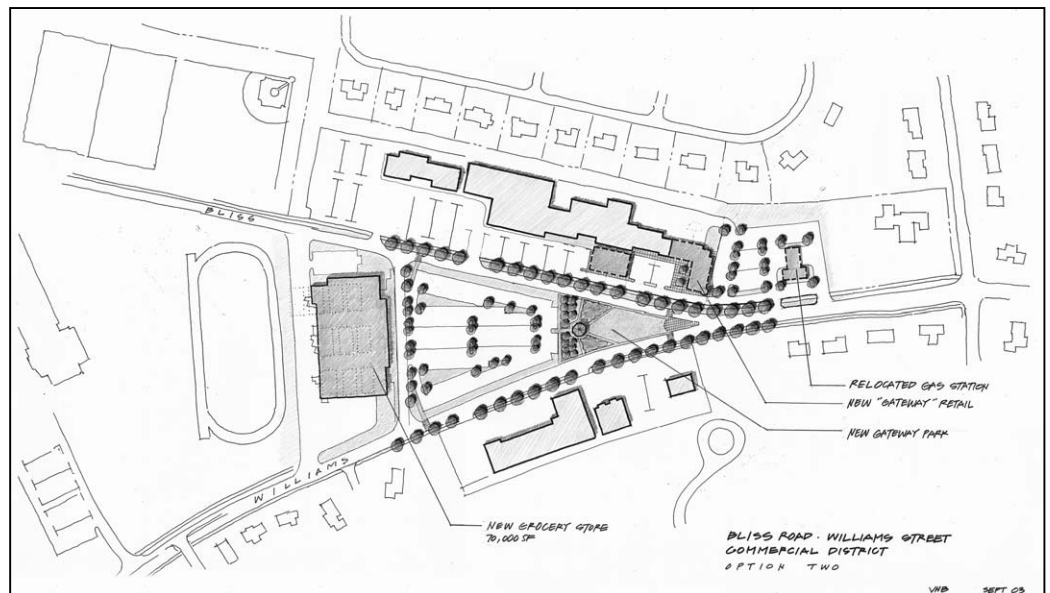
Under either scenario, a Tax Increment Financing or (TIF) District could be used to help finance traffic and landscaping improvements that would make it more attractive for shopping center owners to expand and upgrade. However, use of tax increment financing for landscaping or traffic improvements could sacrifice some or all of the incremental gains in property tax revenue that could result from the commercial redevelopment. It should be noted that this recommendation was not supported by the Long Range Planning Committee given the current demand in Town for recreational amenities, and the potential costs for finding additional space to relocate the tennis courts. The recommendation has been included in this report as part of the discussion record to develop the Long Range Master Plan, and as an option for future consideration if the demand for further economic development needs and initiatives is warranted.



**Figure 4**  
**Bliss Road/Williams Street Expansion, Option 1**



**Figure 5**  
**Bliss Road/Williams Street Expansion, Option 2**





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## **Strategy 2: Explore Selling Town Owned Land for Economic Development Purposes**

The second economic development strategy considered for this analysis involved the siting of a business or “flex/tech” park on a Town owned parcel located on Wolf Swamp Road, as shown in Figure 5. This land is contiguous to high-tension electrical lines and it is near the industrial park in East Longmeadow. This recommendation was not supported by the Long Range Planning Committee given the current protected status on the property, and the current demand in Town for playing fields. The recommendation has been included in this report as part of the discussion record to develop the Long Range Master Plan, and as an option for future consideration if the demand for further economic development needs and initiatives is warranted.

It should be noted that this same parcel was evaluated as a potential affordable housing site and obviously cannot be used for both purposes. The following analysis is therefore presented for illustration only, in order to provide an order-of-magnitude estimate of the potential impacts of using this parcel for economic development purposes.

As shown in Table 4, a preliminary analysis of this parcel shows that that the site is capable of supporting 130,500 square feet of commercial, office, and manufacturing or flex space in a suburban business park setting. Based on current market values and tax rates, a development of this magnitude would generate roughly \$271,000 per year in property tax revenues from the real estate. If sold with zoning approvals and permits in place, the land could also have a one-time sale value of roughly \$2.3 million.

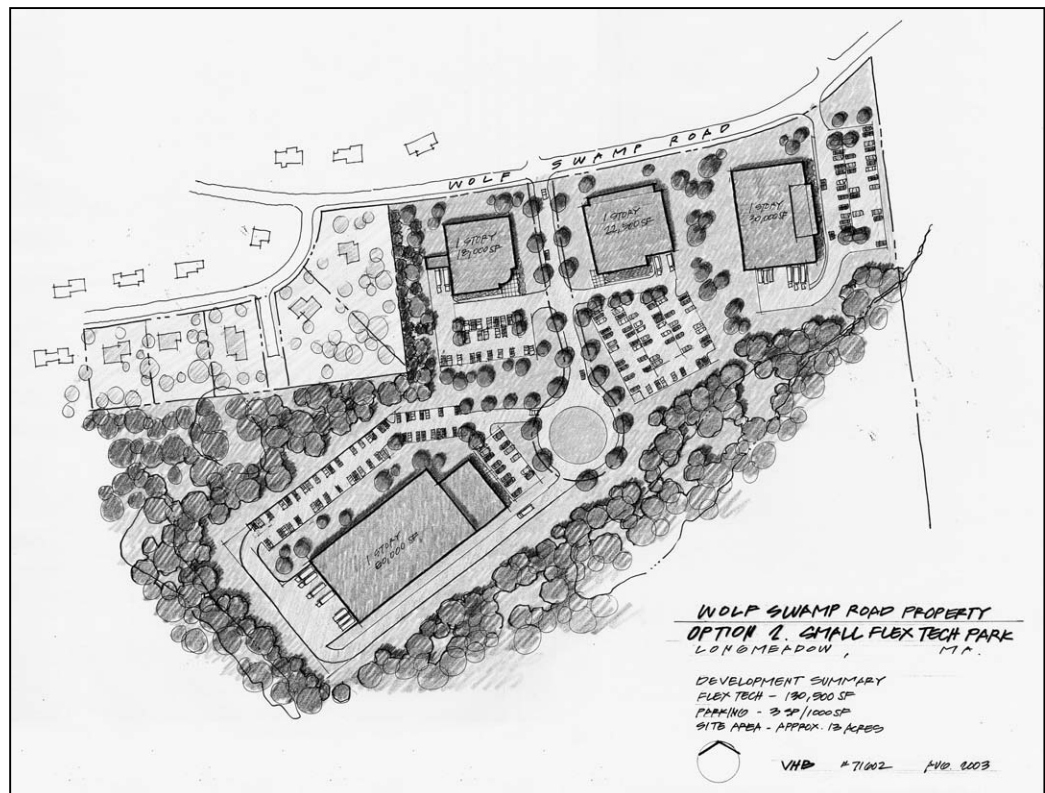
It was beyond the scope of this economic development to estimate how fast a business park at this location could be absorbed by the market, particularly given the availability of competing land and buildings in East Longmeadow. However, a major portion of future occupancy at this location could come from locally based businesses and self-employed persons who have few space alternatives in Longmeadow. If appropriately designed to accommodate a mix of locally based small businesses, it is possible that 130,000 square feet of commercial/flex park space could be absorbed at the proposed location over a multi-year period.

**Table 4**  
**Business Park Development Alternative at Wolf Swamp Road**  
**Impact on Longmeadow Tax Base at Build-Out**

Development Program	Net New Square Feet
<b>Flex Tech Business Park</b>	
Manufacturing/Commercial/Flex (60%)	78,300
Finished Office (40%)	52,200
<b>Total Square Feet</b>	<b>130,500</b>
Average Value per Square Foot	\$115
Total Assessed Value	\$15,007,500
Tax Rate	\$18.03
Annual Property Taxes*	\$271,000
Potential Land Payment	\$2,300,000

\* Estimated using 2003 values and Tax Rate

**Figure 6**  
**Wolf Swamp Road Business Park**





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### Strategy 3: Longmeadow Street Overlay Zone

The third strategy considered for this analysis was to allow certain properties on Longmeadow Street to transition from single family residential to office or mixed-use over time. There are many stately and historic homes located along this corridor, and there is strong support in the community to preserve the historic character of Longmeadow Street. There is also no evidence at this time to indicate that these homes have become too expensive to maintain as single-family residences. Property values on Longmeadow Street are high and the corridor remains a desirable residential location.

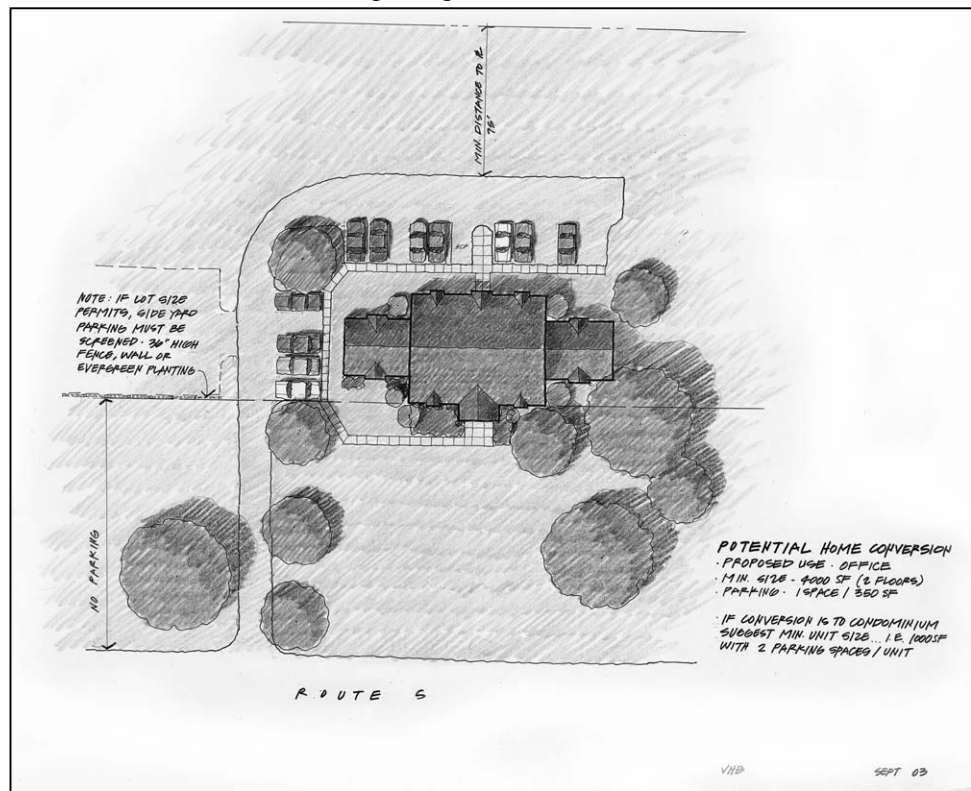
It is not the Town's preference to change Longmeadow Street into a commercial corridor. However, offering property owners the flexibility to locate office uses within larger homes on adequately sized lots may be necessary in the future, if the cost to own and maintain these residences continues to escalate. The consultant team proposes that the Town consider allowing some commercial uses along the corridor, in strictly controlled cases, within larger structures and on lots with sufficient area to accommodate off-street parking.

According to Longmeadow property tax records, there are currently 190 residential properties (including vacant parcels) located on Longmeadow Street. The amount of land area associated with the already developed lots totals approximately 151 acres, compared to only two vacant parcels and 4.4 available acres on the same corridor. More than half of all Longmeadow Street properties are located on lots containing less than a half-acre, and the average lot size for all parcels was only 0.83 acres. In addition, the average home size on Longmeadow Street, measured in terms of finished building area, was 2,700 square feet in 2003, and the assessed value of those 190 homes was roughly \$294,000 per unit. Based on these averages, the majority of existing homes on the corridor would not be suitable to accommodate office or mixed uses because they lack sufficient lot size or building area to support office tenants.

Among the 190 residential properties on the corridor, 37 are located on lots greater than 1.0 acre in size. Buildings located on lots containing an acre or more tend to be substantially larger than typical single-family homes, averaging 3,700 square feet of living space per unit. These parcels were also valued at nearly \$460,000 or \$123 per square foot in 2003, and the average property tax bill for these units was almost \$8,400.

The consultant team considered the potential fiscal impacts associated of establishing an office or mixed-use overlay zone for large homes on Longmeadow Street. The overlay zone should contain specific language that has site design standards and parking requirements to maintain the residential character of the area but allow flexible reuse of the structures for office or limited commercial purposes, as shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**  
**Residential Conversions along Longmeadow Street**



Because a majority of homeowners would probably not wish to exercise this option, relatively few homes are likely to transition in the short term. The economic development effects of such an overlay zone over the long term could be significant. For example: if limited to lots greater than 1.0 acre, an office or mixed-use overlay zone could allow the maximum conversion of 131,000 square feet from residential to office space, if all parcels were eventually used. In reality, a majority of property owners would not participate. A 20 percent to 35 percent conversion rate among eligible properties, resulting in the creation of 25,000 to 45,000 square feet of office space, is probably a realistic maximum over the very long term. The increase in assessed value associated with the transition of 25,000 to 45,000 square feet of space from residential to office or mixed use could be in the range of \$1.3 to \$2.4 million over existing levels, based on current values and tax rates in Longmeadow. This increase assumes that converted office space would have an average assessed value of roughly \$175 per square foot.

The effect of such an overlay zone could also provide an alternative location for the more than 300 Longmeadow small businesses which have fewer than five employees. Many of those small businesses many already be operating out of single-family homes in other residential neighborhoods of the Town.



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#### **Strategy 4: Capitalize on the Economic Impact of Non-Profits**

Non-profit institutions are important land owners and employers in Longmeadow, and contribute significantly to the physical and cultural makeup of the community. The Town should be cognizant of the fiscal and economic impact of non-profits and explore the following:

- An exchange of in-kind services or sharing resources with non-profits;
- Opening a dialog to seek ways for non-profit institutions to assist with sharing municipal service costs in an equitable manner; and
- Monitoring land and building acquisitions by tax-exempt organizations, except when the land is acquired for conservation or the preservation of open space.

In particular, the Town should promote opportunities for partnerships with Bay Path College. Potential resources that could be provided by the College include: library services or funding, elderly housing, joint recreation facilities, performing arts, educational and training opportunities, and general use of facilities.



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#### **Conclusions**

Longmeadow was conceived as a residential suburb of Springfield in the 1920's and has maintained this character ever since. Residents have consistently voted against large commercial development, choosing to rely on their property taxes as the primary source for local revenues. Because opportunities for economic development in the town are so limited, Town officials should look favorably on proposals which would generate ongoing revenues to the town.

The preceding section outlined potential strategies for creating additional non-residential tax revenues and employment within the Town. These strategies represent the most feasible and acceptable approaches among a larger number of alternatives that were considered and eventually dismissed because they were either not practical, were unacceptable to the Town or were more appropriate for other uses, such as affordable housing. If all of the above approaches are accepted and fully implemented, they would, over time, create approximately 270,000 square feet of additional retail, office and flex space. This development would have a total assessed value of \$30.1 million, based on current property values. At current tax rates, this amount of development would generate nearly \$550,000 per year in additional property tax revenues, as well as one-time revenues of \$3.8 million from the sale of Town-owned land.

These strategies are summarized visually in the Economic Development Map that appears on the following page.



# Town of Longmeadow

M a s s a c h u s e t t s

VHB Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

RKG Associates Inc.

Legend:

Land Use

- Cropland - Intensive
- Open - Abandoned Agricultural
- Open Space/Recreation
- Public/Parks
- Fresh water
- Forest

Sources: MassGIS, Town of Longmeadow

Notes:

Route 5 Corridor:

Potential Home Conversions

- Proposed use: Office, Bed + Breakfast
- Design Guidelines
- Min. size: 4000 SF (2 floors)
- Parking: 1 Space/350 SF

Bliss Road - Williams Street

Commercial District: Option 1

- Increased Density
- Ease Parking Requirements
- Relocated gas station
- New "Gateway" retail potential development
  - Junior Anchor: 7-8,000 SF
  - Small shops/food service: 8800 SF
  - 2nd floor professional office: 7500 SF
  - Parking: 90-100 spaces
- New "Gateway" park

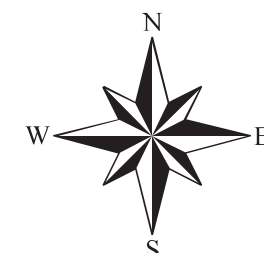
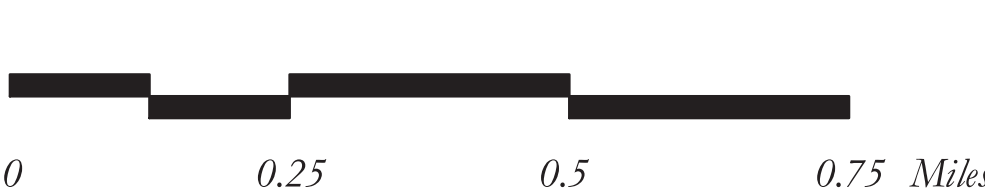
Bliss Road - Williams Street

Commercial District: Option 2

- Increased Density
- Ease Parking Requirements
- Relocated gas station
- New "Gateway" retail
- New "Gateway" park
- New grocery store: 70,000 SF

## Economic Development Map

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.





# Transportation Element

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## Introduction

Longmeadow residents are concerned about pedestrian and bicycle safety at many places around town, excessive speeding on Converse Street and other locations, and traffic delays at rush hours, particularly on Longmeadow Street. School traffic and student safety when traveling are particular concerns. A detailed study of the Bliss Road/Williams Street commercial area, where commercial traffic and school students come together, is included in this element.

### Speeding

The town could consider the use of speed bumps, traffic signals, warning devices, more frequent law enforcement, and other measures in areas where speeding is a problem.

### Traffic Delays

The solution to Longmeadow's traffic delays would have to begin with a regional approach coordinated by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, because much of the traffic is due to drivers from other towns passing through Longmeadow.

### Route 5 Corridor

The Route 5 Corridor from Forest Glen Road to Williams Street experiences delay and severe congestion in the morning and evening peak travel hours, resulting from heavy volumes of traffic traveling through this location. This roadway provides direct access to East Longmeadow, Springfield, Enfield, Connecticut and I-91. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is performing an analysis of existing conditions as well as forecasted future conditions, including examining timing and phasing plans for signals located throughout the corridor, to propose recommendations to improve traffic flow and increase safety. PVPC will be working with the Town to identify additional concerns and safety hazards located along Route 5 in the center of Town. The Route 5 –Longmeadow Corridor Study will provide short term, low cost alternatives as well as long term strategies to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety conditions.



## Bliss/Williams Triangle Study Area

This study provides a detailed analysis of the existing and anticipated traffic demands in the vicinity of the existing triangle comprised by Williams Street, Bliss Road, and Bliss Court in the Town of Longmeadow. The focal points of this study include traffic operations, safety issues, land use concerns, and pedestrian and bicycle concerns throughout the study area. This study was prepared according to guidelines established as part of Executive Order 418 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which provided planning services for this work.

A combination of a high volume of commuter traffic as well as a number of land uses with high trip generating characteristics contribute to strains along all three study area roadways. The study area is characterized by a high concentration of retail and commercial uses and a large number of curb cuts spread out over a relatively small geographic area. This study is designed to identify current and future deficiencies to assist the Town of Longmeadow in the development of projects and strategies to improve safety and traffic flow through the study area.

The traffic study area consists of the existing triangle comprised by Williams Street, Bliss Road, and Bliss Court. In the triangle, Williams Street is a one way street in the eastbound direction with an average width of approximately 27 feet. Williams Street provides two lanes of traffic in the triangle. Pavement marking consists of broken white lane lines in poor condition. There is a sidewalk along the southern part of this roadway with an average width of approximately five feet. There are two entrance/exit curb cuts on Williams Street providing access to the Williams Place shopping plaza. The western entrance/exit is approximately 40 feet wide with a 7.5 feet crosswalk. The eastern entrance/exit is approximately 42 feet wide with a 5.5 feet crosswalk. Outside of the triangle in the eastbound direction, Williams Street becomes a two way street providing one lane in each direction with an approximate width of 18 feet for each lane until it intersects with Redfern Drive.

Bliss Road is a one way roadway in the westbound direction with an average width of approximately 28 feet until it intersects with Bliss Court. Bliss Road provides two lanes of traffic in the triangle. Pavement marking consists of white center line guide dashes in poor condition. There is a sidewalk along the northern part of this roadway with an average width of approximately six feet. Bliss Road can be accessed from the Longmeadow Shops via two curb cuts. The eastern curb cut is approximately 44 feet with a 6.5 feet crosswalk. The western entrance/exit is approximately 42 feet with a six foot crosswalk. A nine foot crosswalk is also provided across Bliss Road in the vicinity of the Big Y Supermarket. The pavement markings of the crosswalks at all locations are quite poor.

Vehicles traveling eastbound on Williams Street have access to either Bliss Road through a U-Turn, or through the Longmeadow Shops (traveling straight) via a connector that is approximately 23 feet wide. This connector is driven as two lanes

although the roadway is not striped and operates under a “STOP” sign control. In the triangle, Bliss Court is a one way street in the southbound direction with an approximate width of 40 feet. This roadway connects Bliss Road to Williams Street with no pavement markings. Traveling southbound on Bliss Court, Longmeadow High School is located on the right side of the roadway and the Big Y Supermarket is located on the left side of the roadway. There are no crosswalks along Bliss Court except at Williams Street where a 4.5 feet wide crosswalk exists.

## Existing Conditions

This section provides a technical evaluation of the transportation components throughout the study area. It includes a presentation of the data collected, analysis of traffic operations, and a series of short term recommendations to improve overall performance and safety.

## Data Collection

### Daily Vehicle Volume

Vehicle volume data was collected for use in the transportation analysis in order to measure the travel demands on an average weekday and on Saturdays. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes were compiled for week long periods at various locations within the study area using Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATRs). Based on factors provided by MassHighway, all ADT volumes were factored to represent Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) levels. Saturday Traffic volumes were not adjusted and reflect the actual traffic conditions on the date of the count. The daily traffic counts conducted by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission are shown in Table 1. The traffic counts are shown in Figure 1.

**Table 1**  
**Average Annual Daily Traffic**

Location	NB/EB	SB/WB	Total	Saturday
Williams Street west of Bliss Court	3517	2619	6136	5711
Williams Street east of Bliss Court	6844	N/A	6844	6242
Williams Street west of Redfern Drive	6465	6122	12587	9436
Williams Street east of Redfern Drive	5699	4013	9712	8924
Bliss Road east of Bliss Court	N/A	6520	6520	6183
Bliss Court Between Bliss Road and Williams Street	N/A	7432	7432	7279

## Hourly Vehicle Volume

Manual Turning Movement Counts (TMC) were conducted at the three intersections within the triangle in the study area during the peak commuter periods. Since the study area is characterized by a high concentration of retail and commercial uses as well as the town's high school, the weekday commuter period occurs during the afternoon hours of 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM and on Saturday during the hours of 11 AM to 1 PM. The TMCs were conducted in 15-minute intervals to identify the peak four consecutive 15-minute periods of traffic through the intersection. These consecutive peak 15-minute periods constitute a location's "Peak Hour Volume." The peak hour of traffic volume represents the most critical period for operations and will be the focus for some of the analyses conducted in this study.

The TMC data also identifies the peak hour factor and vehicle classifications. The peak hour factor (PHF) accounts for variations in demand during the peak hour. The PHF is defined as the ratio of the volume occurring during the peak hour to the maximum rate of flow during a given time period within the peak hour.<sup>1</sup> For traffic engineering analysis the flow rate in the peak 15 minutes of the peak hour is used to determine the operational characteristics of traffic facilities. The flow rate is obtained from the peak hour volume by using the peak hour factor.

As traffic volumes tend to fluctuate over the course of the year, the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) develops traffic volume adjustment factors to reflect monthly variations. These factors were examined to determine how traffic conditions in Longmeadow from April - June compare to average month conditions. Based on the MassHighway data, traffic volumes during all three months are estimated to be slightly higher than the annual average. Therefore, the traffic count data was adjusted to reflect average month conditions.

The complete turning movement count data for the peak hours are summarized on Figures 2 and 3.



<sup>1</sup> Institute of Transportation Engineers, Transportation and Traffic Engineering Handbook,



Longmeadow, Massachusetts

Executive Order 418

# Average Daily Traffic Counts (ADT)

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Feet

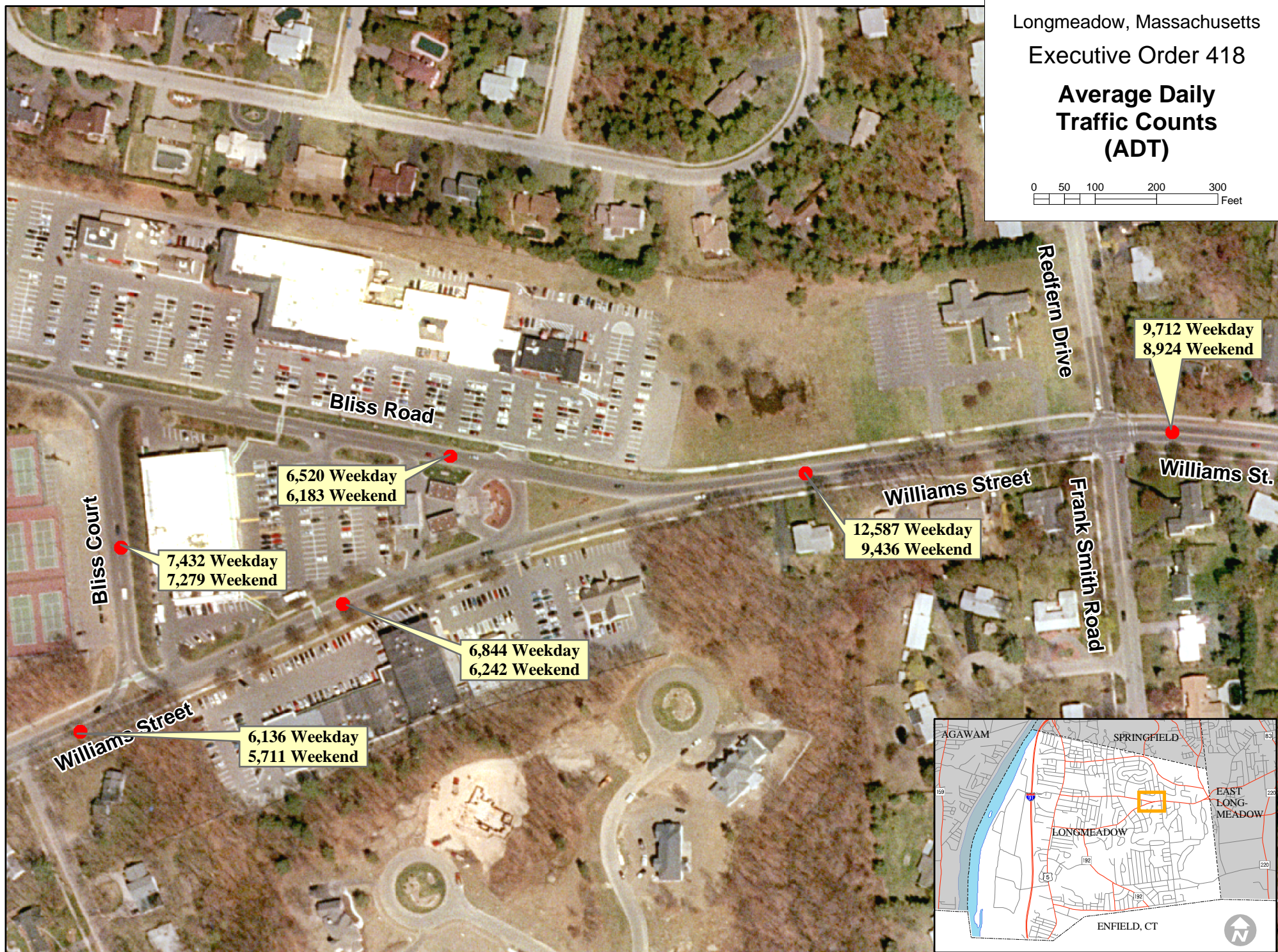


Figure II - 1



Longmeadow, Massachusetts  
Executive Order 418  
**Turning Movement  
Counts  
(Weekday Peak)**

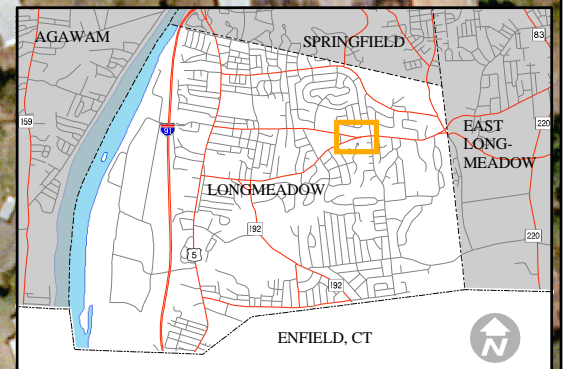
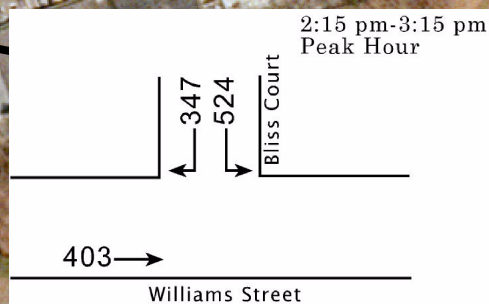
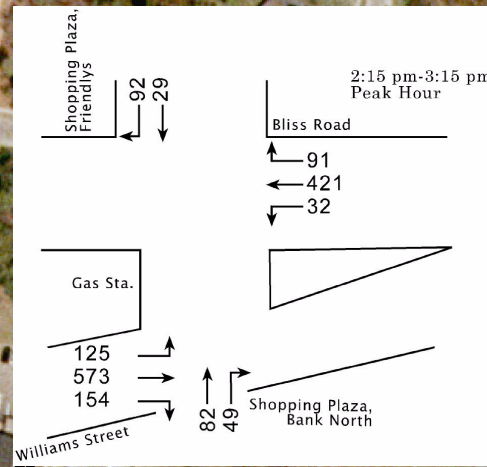
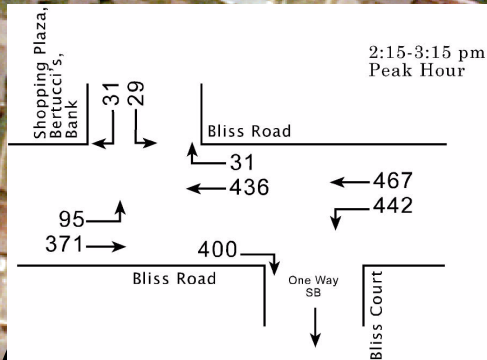
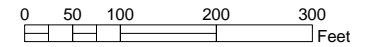


Figure II - 2



Longmeadow, Massachusetts  
Executive Order 418  
**Turning Movement  
Counts  
(Saturday Peak)**

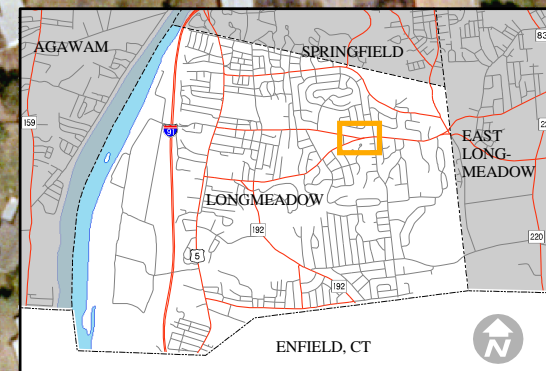
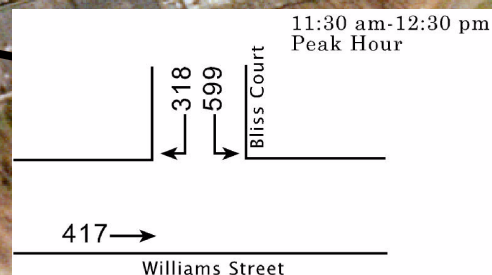
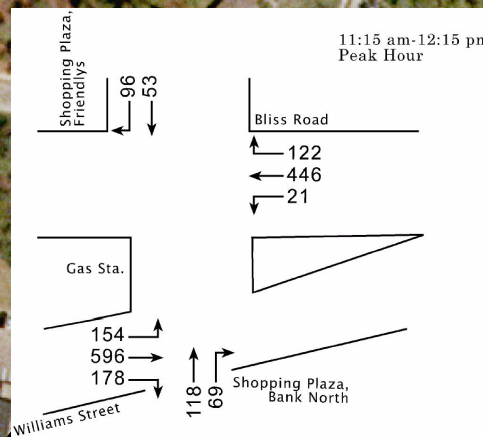
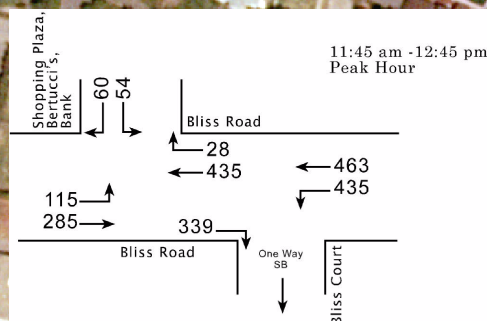
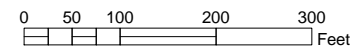


Figure II - 3



## Vehicle Classification

Vehicle classification identifies the percentage of heavy vehicles and passenger cars on the roadway. Heavy vehicles include trucks, recreational vehicles and buses. The percent of heavy vehicles in the traffic flow is an important component in calculating the serviceability of a corridor or intersection. Trucks impact traffic flow because they occupy more roadway space than passenger cars and have poorer operating capabilities with respect to acceleration, deceleration and maneuverability. This information is also an important factor in the pavement design of a roadway.

Classification counts were conducted at all of the daily traffic count locations. Vehicles are classified based on the number of axles and the distance between each axle. Vehicles with three or more axles are classified as a “truck” or heavy vehicle. Table 2 summarizes the truck traffic information in the study area. As can be seen, the study area is not burdened by heavy truck traffic.

**Table 2**  
**Vehicle Classification Summary**

Street	Dir.	Location	Bikes	Cars & Trailers	2 Axle Long	Buses	2 Axle 6 Tire	3 Axle Single	>3 Axles
Bliss Rd.	SB	Betwn. Bliss Rd. & Williams St.	0.8%	88.9%	8.5%	0.2%	0.8%	0.7%	0.2%
Williams St.	EB	East of Bliss Ct.	0.4%	82.4%	15.2%	0.4%	1.1%	0.2%	0.3%
Williams St.	WB	East of Bliss Rd.	0.5%	60.0%	33.7%	2.3%	3.0%	0.1%	0.3%
Bliss Rd.	WB	East of Bliss Ct.	0.3%	74.0%	23.4%	0.2%	1.5%	0.2%	0.3%
Williams St.	WB	East of Redfern Dr.	1.5%	84.9%	9.1%	1.7%	1.2%	0.9%	0.6%
Williams St.	EB	West of Bliss Ct.	0.4%	87.0%	10.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%

## Vehicle Travel Speeds

Travel Speed data was collected at all of the daily traffic count locations. This data was used to establish “bins” of data to summarize the ranges in which vehicles were measured to be traveling. The “Pace Speed” consists of the range in which most vehicles were recorded to travel. Speed data was also used to calculate the “85<sup>th</sup> Percentile” Speed for each direction on the roadway. The 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed is defined as the speed that 85 percent of all traffic is traveling at or below. This method is typically used to establish the posted speed limit on a roadway. By comparing the 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed to the posted speed limit a community can determine how well traffic is complying with the current posted speed limits and if increased enforcement of the posted speed limits is necessary. The speed limit in the study area is 30 mph. Table 3 summarizes the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed information. The shaded locations in the table indicate that vehicles in the study area are, for the most part, traveling over the speed limit.

**Table 3**  
**85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed Summary**

Street	Dir.	Location	85th Percentile Speed (mph)
Bliss Rd.	SB	Btwn. Bliss Rd. & Williams St.	29
Bliss Rd.	WB	East of Bliss Ct.	37
Williams St.	EB	East of Bliss Ct.	36
Williams St.	WB	East of Bliss Rd.	40
Williams St.	EB	East of Bliss Rd.	41
Williams St.	EB	East of Redfern Dr.	38
Williams St.	WB	East of Redfern Dr.	38
Williams St.	EB	West of Bliss Ct.	39
Williams St.	WB	West of Bliss Ct.	30

### Pedestrian Activity

Pedestrian counts were conducted to determine the volume of pedestrians at all corners of the study area. The pedestrian volume data reflects the total number of pedestrians crossing at each intersection. A large percentage of pedestrians ignore the crosswalks and cross the intersections at many different points. Table 4 provides a summary of the weekday as well as weekend pedestrian volume. As can be seen, the intersection of Bliss Road and Bliss Court, on a weekday afternoon, shows a very significant increase in the number of pedestrians and bicycles due to the presence of Longmeadow High School which is located on the west side of Bliss Court. As mentioned in the Study Area section of this report, there are no sidewalks on Bliss Court or on the southern side of Bliss Road between Bliss Court and the High School.

**Table 4**  
**Pedestrian Summary**

Intersection	Pedestrians	Bikes
Bliss Rd. and Williams St. (2-6)	10	3
Bliss Rd. and Williams St. (Sat.)	7	4
Bliss Rd. and Bliss Ct. (2-6)	105	71
Bliss Rd. and Bliss Ct. (Sat.)	11	9
Williams St. and Bliss Ct. (2-6)	5	4
Williams St. and Bliss Ct. (Sat.)	20	4



### Crash Experience

Crash history was used to estimate the safety conditions throughout the study area. Crash information was gathered for the study area based on information provided by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway). Table 5 summarizes the number of crashes by location and type for a period of three years (1997- 1999) to



identify any common conditions and possible causes. As shown in the table, while Bliss Road experienced high numbers of crashes, it is not quite clear from the data source at which entrance/exit of the shopping center that the crashes occurred. The overall totals were lower than expected. A possible explanation for this is that crashes with little or no damage are not always reported. Some of the crashes at the intersection of Bliss Road and Williams Street may be attributed to the fact that many motorists use the Shell Gas Station property as a cut-through from the shopping center on Bliss Road to Williams Street in order to avoid using Bliss Court to get eastbound on Williams Street. Also, any crash that may have occurred on the Gas Station property may not be accounted for in the data.

**Table 5**  
**Crash History Summary**

Location	Year	# Accidents	Type of Accident	Severity of Injury
Williams St. Shopping Plaza	1999	4	Angle	10 PD 9
	1998	5	Rear end	PI 1
	1997	1	Head on	F
Williams St. @ Bliss Rd.	1999	1	Ped/Bike	
	1998	1	Fixed Object	
	1997	2	Angle	4 PD 3
Williams St. @ Bliss Ct.	1999	0	Rear end	PI 1
	1998	0	Head on	F
	1997	3	Ped/Bike	
Williams St. @ Parking Lot	1999	4	Fixed Object	
	1998	1	Angle	1 PD 2
	1997	0	Rear end	2 PI 1
Bliss Rd. Shopping Plaza	1999	8	Head on	F
	1998	12	Ped/Bike	Hit and Run 1
	1997	5	Fixed Object	2 PD 20
Bliss Rd. @ Bliss Ct.	1999	2	Angle	20 PI 4
	1998	1	Rear end	3 F
	1997	1	Head on	1 Hit and Run 1
Bliss Rd. @ Parking Lot	1999	2	Ped/Bike	
	1998	0	Fixed Object	1 PD 3
	1997	1	Angle	2 PI 1
Bliss Ct.	1999	3	Rear end	F
	1998	0	Head on	
	1997	0	Ped/Bike	



## Analysis Procedures

### Intersection Analysis

The efficiency of traffic operations at an intersection is based on the stopped delay per vehicle for a 15-minute analysis period. These conditions are measured using the nationally accepted standard methodology outlined in the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). The HCM's measure of efficiency is quantified in terms of "Level Of Service" (LOS). The LOS refers to the quality of traffic flow along roadways and intersections. It is described in terms of A through F, where A represents the best possible conditions and F represents forced-flow or failing conditions.

This study examined the operations at three unsignalized intersections within the study area. At an unsignalized intersection, LOS is determined by the average total delay which is defined as the total elapsed time from when a vehicle stops at the end of a queue to when the same vehicle departs from the stop line. The basic assumption at an unsignalized intersection is that through moving traffic on the major street is not hindered by other movements. In reality, as minor street delays increase, vehicles are more likely to accept smaller gaps in the traffic stream causing through moving vehicles to reduce speed and suffer some delay. The left turn movement off the minor street approach is the most heavily opposed movement and typically suffers the greatest delay. Therefore this movement is used as a gauge to determine the overall operations at an unsignalized intersection. Table 6 lists the level of service criteria for unsignalized intersections.

**Table 6**  
**Level of Service (LOS) Designations - Unsignalized Intersections**

Average Control Delay (s/veh)	LOS	Expected Delay To Minor Street
0.0 to 10.0	A	Little or no delay
>10.0 to 15.0	B	Short traffic delays
>15.0 to 25.0	C	Average traffic delays
>25.0 to 35.0	D	Long traffic delays
>35.0 to 50.0	E	Very long delays
>50.0	F	Extreme delays

Table 7 summarizes the level of service at the unsignalized intersections within the study area during the weekday PM peak hour and for the Saturday peak period.

**Table 7**  
**Level of Service at Unsignalized Intersection Approaches**

	PM Peak Hour		Saturday Peak Hour	
	LOS*	Delay**	LOS*	Delay**
Williams St. @ Bliss Rd.				
Williams Place Plaza NB Left Turn	C	15.9	C	18.9
Longmeadow Shops Plaza SB Right Turn	B	11.0	B	11.2
Bliss Rd. @ Bliss Ct.				
Longmeadow Shops SB Left Turn	C	21.7	C	20.8
Williams St. @ Bliss Ct				
Bliss Ct. SB Left Turn	C	24.6	D	27.9

\* Level of Service

\*\* In Seconds

Based on the results of the analysis, the intersections appear to operate at acceptable levels. LOS "D" is considered acceptable in an urban area. In addition, as mentioned in the Crash Experience section of this report, the frequent use of the Gas Station property as a cut-through from Bliss Road to Williams Street creates an unsafe traffic environment for the study area.

### Signal Warrant Analysis

The intersection of Bliss Road and Williams Street was examined to determine if the minimum warrants for the installation of a traffic signal are met. The millennium edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) sets forth criteria for eight warrants of which the requirements of one or more should be fully satisfied before a signal is installed. In addition, the installation of a traffic signal must improve the safety and operation of the location under study. Warrant #1, eight hour vehicular volume, is generally considered the most comprehensive as it requires volume criteria to be satisfied for both the major street and minor streets over the course of an average day. The results of this warrant analysis show that this intersection does not currently meet the warrant criteria for a traffic signal installation.

Warrant #5, crash experience signal warrant conditions, is intended for application where the severity and frequency of crashes are the principal reasons to consider installing a traffic control signal. This warrant requires five or more reported crashes, of types susceptible to correction by a traffic control signal, which have occurred within a 12-month period. A trial of less restrictive remedies must be tested and proven ineffective before a signal can be installed under this warrant. Crashes on Bliss Road will be examined in order to learn about the location relative to Williams Street roadway connector.



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## Short-Term Transportation Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the study area is in need of traffic improvements both in terms of traffic flow and pedestrian safety. Throughout the study area, faded pavement markings are very apparent. Many of the pedestrians, mostly high school students, are not using crosswalks where they are available. There are no sidewalks on Bliss Court or on Williams Street adjacent to the Big Y parking lot. Many vehicles exiting the Longmeadow Shops use the Shell Gas Station lot as a cut-through to Williams Street and the entrance to the Williams Place shopping plaza. The Town of Longmeadow should consider the following improvement measures to improve traffic flow and safety, which are also outlined in the Short Term Transportation Recommendations Map:

- The roadway connector from Williams Street to Bliss Road is currently traveled as two unmarked lanes. This connector should be painted for one exclusive left turn lane and one left/through travel lane.
- Consider replacing the “STOP” sign at the approach from Williams Street to Bliss Road with a “YIELD” sign to account for lower volume for the westbound approach on Bliss Road.
- Paint channelization lines to define lanes onto Bliss Court from Bliss Road to direct traffic to the appropriate lane.
- Place a “YIELD” sign on the median at the intersection of Bliss Road and Bliss Court for the left turn movement from Bliss Road onto Bliss Court. This will allow for safer right turns of vehicles traveling eastbound on the two-way section of Bliss Road onto Bliss Court.
- Sidewalks should be constructed on both sides of Bliss Court. This should be accompanied by mid-block crosswalk as many pedestrians were observed to jaywalk across Bliss Court from the Robert Blinn Tennis Courts to the Big Y plaza, especially during after-school hours.
- A crosswalk is required on Bliss Road at the western-most exit of the Longmeadow Shops to allow pedestrian access to Bliss Court. Many students have been observed walking in this area.
- The parking lot of the Big Y plaza on the northern side of Williams Street is not accessed by a sidewalk. There needs to be a sidewalk at this location.
- A “STOP” sign should be installed at the intersection of Bliss Court and Williams Street for the left-turn movements on to Williams Street.

- On Williams Street, at the approach to the roadway connector to Bliss Road, there is a “LEFT TURN MUST TURN LEFT” sign. There should be a corresponding “LEFT TURN” arrow painted on the pavement.
- Many traffic signs are faded and/or not pointed in correct direction. Faded traffic signs are most noticeable around the Shell Gas Station, particularly the “DO NOT ENTER” signs and the “No RIGHT TURN” arrow sign at the Bliss Road entrance. Some “ONE WAY” signs positioned on Bliss Road are pointing slightly off, or are bent. In addition, the “ONE WAY EXIT ONLY” and “NO RIGHT TURNS” signs, located at the western-most exit of the Big Y parking lot on Bliss Road are obstructed by trees, and cannot be seen by motorists. Actions should be taken for corrective measures.
- Many of the pavement markings are faded. This includes, dashed lines on Bliss Road and Williams Street, crosswalk markings across Bliss Road and the entrance/exits of most of the shopping plazas, arrows indicating entrance/exit only (most notably at the four Shell gas station entrances/exits), and stop line at the Big Y entrance/exit on Williams Street. The pavement markings need to be repainted.
- Stop lines are needed at most of the plaza entrances/ exits located on Bliss Road and Williams Street to ensure that motorists stop before crosswalks.
- Speed limit signs are needed around this densely populated study area. Many vehicles are speeding in the study area, despite the presence of crosswalks and pedestrians.
- Efforts need to be placed to discourage motorists exiting the Longmeadow Shops from cutting through the Shell Gas Station to eliminate having to use Bliss Court to get eastbound on Williams Street. This is a very common occurrence and presents a dangerous situation for pedestrians in the gas station parking lot. Also, this requires motorists to cross two lanes of westbound traffic on Bliss Road. Any corrective measure must involve the owner of the gas station.

The owner of the Shell Gas Station and the Longmeadow Shops should be consulted regarding options to discourage cut-through traffic that contributes to congestion and safety problems in the vicinity of the intersection of Bliss Road with Williams Street. Possible solutions include conversions to entrance or exit only operations, speed bumps in the Gas Station, or closure of the curb cuts in the vicinity of the intersection. It is also possible to redesign the intersection to allow the connector road to operate as a two way street, however, this could require widening and possible land takings.





## Short Term Transportation Recommendations

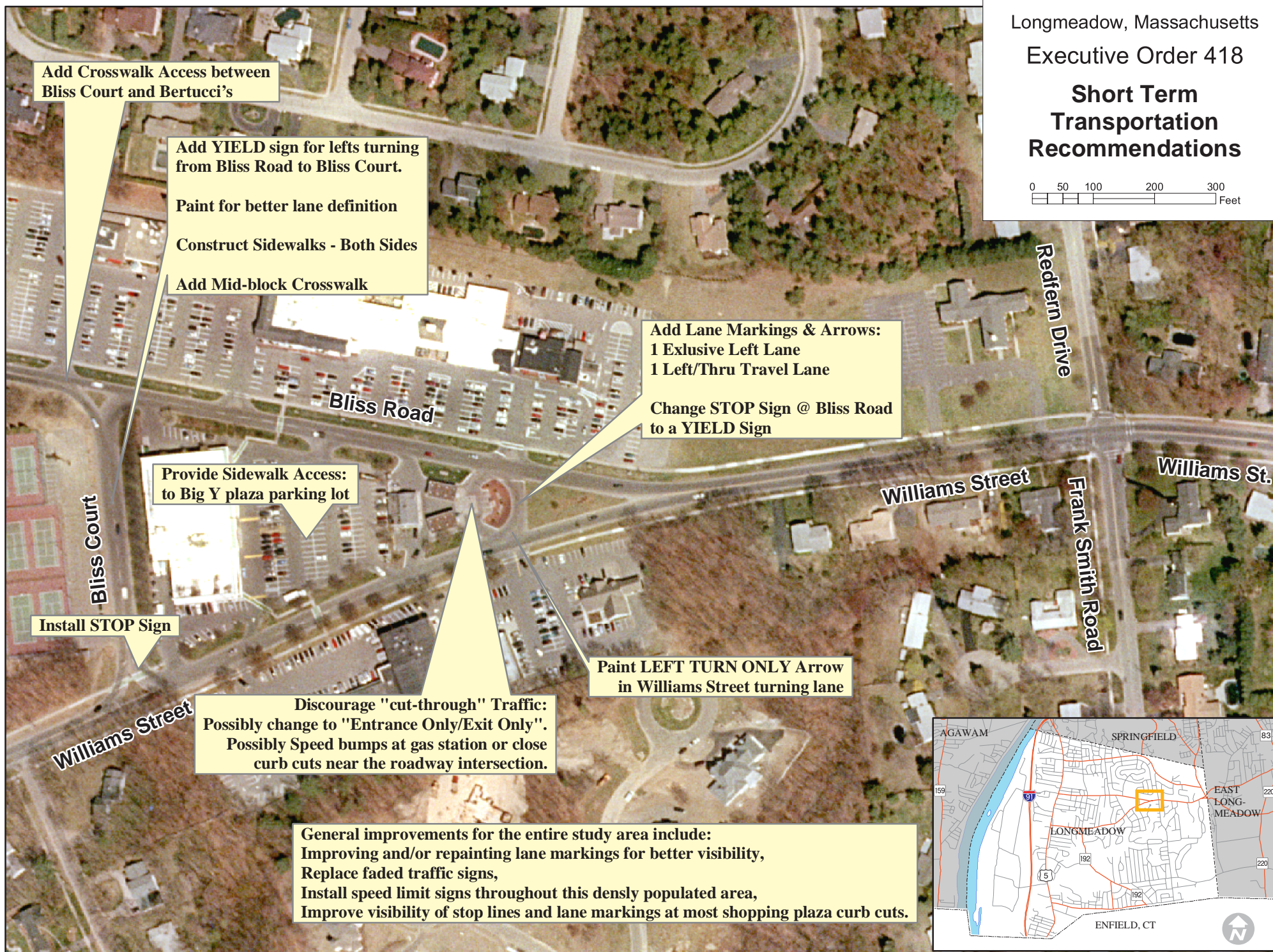


Figure II - 4



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## Future Build-Out

It is important to consider the impact of zoning regulations and future growth in employment, population and residential development on the existing transportation system. Zoning regulations may permit large developments with high trip generation rates in primarily residential areas. Site specific developments can be expected to impact the existing flow of traffic and add to delay throughout the study area. Growth in surrounding communities can also result in an increase in commuter traffic through the Town of Longmeadow. Many potential future deficiencies and problem areas can be eliminated by identifying the problem before it happens.



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## Future Forecasts

The Bureau of Transportation Planning and Development (MassHighway Planning) develops future forecasts of population, households and employment for the state of Massachusetts and the regional planning agencies. Their procedures and preliminary estimates were reviewed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and modifications were made based on comments received.

MassHighway Planning utilizes several sources, such as the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER), Woods & Poole Economics (WPE), and the U.S. Census to forecast population for the state. To determine the number of households at the state and regional level, population in households is divided by average household size.

According to MassHighway Planning, population is projected to steadily increase in Hampden County from 2000 to 2025, whereas the number of households steadily decreases from 2000 to 2025. The total population is projected to increase by six percent from 2000 to 2025 and the total number of households increases by one percent over the same time period. The average occupancy per household is expected to increase from 2.72 residents in 2000 to 3.05 residents in 2025.

Total employment is defined as the number of employed residents plus non-residents who commute into the community to work minus residents who commute out of the community to work. Employed residents are forecast by multiplying persons 16 years and over by the labor force participation rate. Employment was allocated at the community level by regressing past decades with a non-linear growth function, and then the proportion of jobs to population is examined as a check for reasonableness.

Employment has been forecast to steadily increase in the Town of Longmeadow over the next 10 years by 20 percent and then steadily decline from 2010 to 2025 by three percent.

## Maximum Build-out

In 1999, The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) commissioned a build-out analysis for every community in Massachusetts. The build-out analysis provided a preview of the type and location of the maximum future development that could be expected under current zoning and resource protection bylaws. While it is unlikely that maximum build-out will ever be attained, this information is useful to analyze the impact of developing every piece of available land under current regulations on population, demands for public services, and consumption of resources. The estimated impact of a complete build-out of the Town of Longmeadow on population, households and employment is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8**  
**Projected Maximum Build-out Levels**

	2025	Maximum Build-out	Net Increase
Population	16,498	19,824	3,326
Households	5,417	6,489	1,072
Employment	3,642	3,784	142

As can be seen from Table 8 the complete build-out of every piece of currently undeveloped or underutilized parcel has a significant impact on population, household and employment data. The effect of this increase on traffic will be documented in a later section of this report.



## Travel Demand Model

Travel demand models are developed to simulate actual travel patterns and existing transportation conditions. Traffic is generated using socioeconomic data such as household size, automobile availability and employment data. Once the existing conditions are evaluated and adjusted to satisfactorily replicate actual travel patterns and vehicle roadway volumes, the model is then altered to project future year conditions. The preparation of a future year socioeconomic database is the last step in the travel demand forecast process. Forecasts of population and socioeconomic data are used to determine the number of trips that will be made in the future

Travel demand forecasting is a major step in the transportation planning process. By simulating the current roadway conditions and the travel demand on those roadways, deficiencies in the system are identified. This is an important tool in planning future network enhancements and analyzing currently proposed projects. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) uses the TransCAD software to perform transportation forecasts for its base year of 2000 and analysis years of 2003, 2010, 2020, and 2025. All 43 communities within the boundaries of Hampden and

Hampshire Counties are included in the PVPC regional transportation model. Roadway networks are constructed using current information for the higher classified roads. Most local streets are not included in the travel demand model and are represented by centroid connectors that link the major routes to areas of traffic activity.

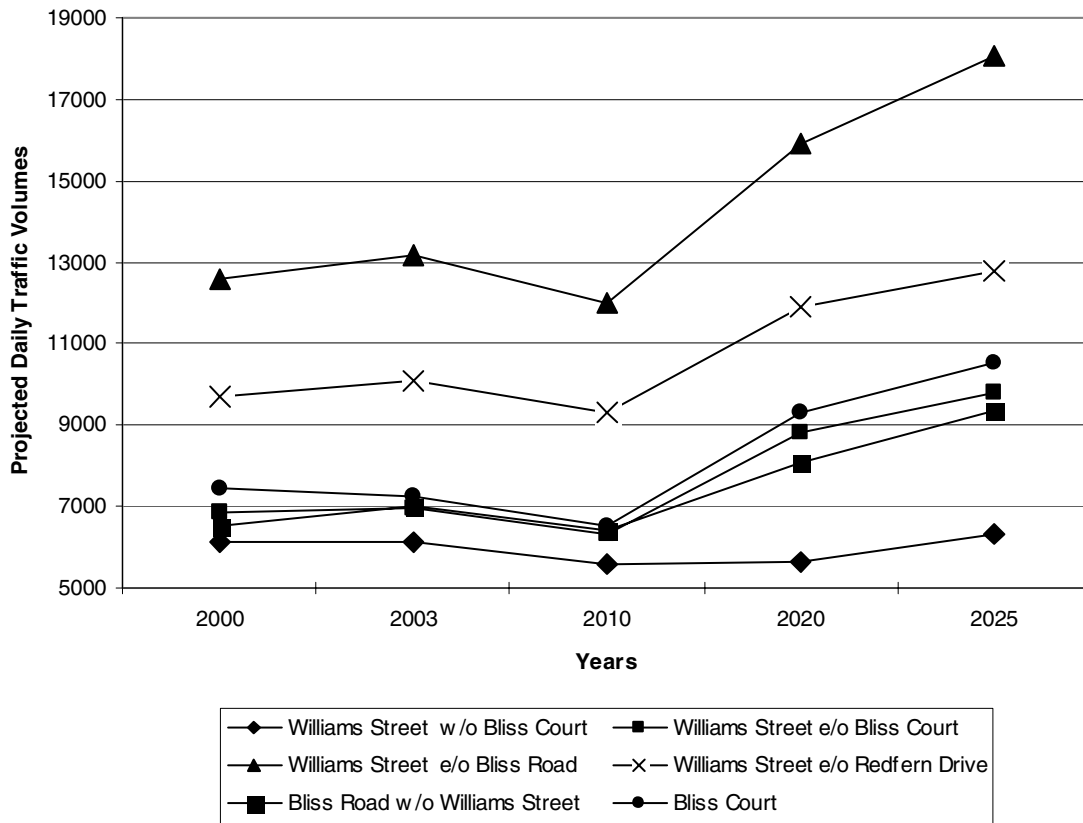


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## Future Volumes

Estimates of average weekday traffic volumes were obtained from the PVPC regional transportation model for each of the analysis years and are presented in Figure 4. As shown in Figure 4, as a result of future development, the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for all locations in the study area are projected to significantly increase from 2000 to 2025 with the exception of Williams Street west of Bliss Court which will experience a slight increase in traffic volume. The ADT in the study area is projected to increase by an average of 30% in 2025. The figure also shows a decrease in ADT for all locations in 2010. This may be attributed to the planned traffic improvements to the East Longmeadow rotary which is expected to draw traffic volumes away from the Town of Longmeadow.

**Figure 4**  
**Future Traffic Volume Forecast**



### Regionally Significant Projects

Major roadway improvement projects such as the widening of an arterial roadway from two lanes to four lanes of travel can have a significant impact on future traffic volumes in the region. Improvements identified in the Short and Long Range Elements of the current Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning organization were incorporated into PVPC's regional transportation model. The roadway projects for each analysis year are listed in Table 9.

No site specific major improvement projects in the Town of Longmeadow have been included in the regional transportation model. Current and proposed projects such as the improvements to the East Longmeadow rotary have regional impacts and could influence current travel patterns for commuter traffic in the Town of Longmeadow.

**Table 9**  
**Projects Included in the Regional Transportation Model**

Analysis Year	Community	Project Description
2003	Hadley, Northampton	Calvin Coolidge Bridge widening from 3 lanes to 4 lanes
2003	Hadley	Route 9 widening to four lanes - from Calvin Coolidge Bridge to West Street
2003	Springfield	Reversal of 4 existing I-91 ramps
2003	Chicopee	Memorial Drive signal coordination
2003	Hadley	Route 9 signal coordination
2003	Westfield	Route 20 signal coordination
2003	Springfield	Reconstruction, widening, and signal coordination on Parker Street
2003	Holyoke, W. Springfield	Route 5 signal coordination. Construct a new collector road to showcase cinema.
2010	Chicopee	Deady Memorial Bridge – widen to 5 lanes.
2010	Chicopee	Traffic coordination and improvements along Broadway
2010	Holyoke	Improvements to Commercial Street corridor
2010	Westfield	Route 10/202 Great River Bridge - two bridges acting as one-way pairs.
2010	Springfield	New slip ramp from I-291 to East Columbus Avenue
2010	Northampton	Road widening on Damon Road from Rte 9 to King St.
2010	Chester	Maple Street bridge restoration as a one-way bridge.
2010	E. Longmeadow	Improvements to the East Longmeadow Rotary.
2020	Agawam	Route 57 Phase II new limited access highway from Route 187 to Southwick Line.
2020	Holyoke	Elmwood Bypass - new roadway from I-391 to Lower Westfield Road, Holyoke
2020	Agawam, Longmeadow, Springfield	Improve the South End Bridge, construct a direct ramp from the South End Bridge to Route 57, and fix existing lane reduction problem on I-91 between Exits 1-3.
2025	Northampton	Connector roadway between Route 10 and Route 66 from Old South Street.
2025	Ludlow, Springfield	Route 21 bridge reconstruction (possible to be widened as well)

### Maximum Build-out

In 1999, The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) commissioned a build-out analysis for every community in Massachusetts. The build-out analysis provided a preview of the type and location of the maximum future development that could be expected under current zoning and resource protection bylaws. While it is unlikely that maximum build-out will ever be attained, this information is useful to analyze the impact of developing every parcel of available land under current regulations on population, demands on public services, and consumption of resources. This information was used as the foundation for preparing the build-out for the study area.

Forecast year of 2025 was selected for the study to be consistent with the horizon years of PVPC's current Regional Transportation Model. Projected ADT volumes for 2025 were compared to ADT volumes for 2025 build-out scenario and the results showed additional increase in ADT in the study area. The additional average increase in ADT in the study area for the 2025 build-out scenario is six percent.

## Future Alternatives

The section of the report presents an analysis of the different alternative scenarios that have been proposed to increase density within the Bliss Road/Williams Street Commercial Area as discussed in the Economic Development Element. The alternative was analyzed using the regional transportation model to forecast its estimated impact on existing traffic and its ability to reduce congestion in the study area. All roadways in the existing triangle in the study area were converted into two way streets providing one lane in each direction as an alternative traffic pattern using the Regional Transportation Model. Projected ADT volumes for 2025, volumes for 2025 with two way traffic, and 2025 build-out with two way traffic were compared. The comparison results are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10**  
**Two-Way Traffic Flow Alternative**

Location	Projected ADT for 2025	Projected ADT for 2025 with two way traffic	Projected ADT for 2025 build-out with two way traffic	Change in ADT from 2025 to 2025 with two way traffic	Change in ADT from 2025 with two way traffic to 2025 build-out with two way traffic
Williams Street W/O Bliss Court	6,303	6,551	7,381	3.78%	11.25%
Williams Street E/O Bliss Court	9,798	10,517	11,671	6.83%	9.89%
Williams Street E/O Bliss Road	18,047	19,218	20,495	6.09%	6.23%
Williams Street E/O Redfern Drive	12,802	13,429	14,083	4.67%	4.64%
Bliss Road W/O Williams Street	9,360	9,890	10,117	5.35%	2.24%
Bliss Court	10,528	0	181	N/A	100%

As shown in Table 10, once Bliss Road and Williams Street operate as two way streets, there may be no reason to utilize Bliss Court as a connector between the two roadways any longer which explains why the projected ADT for Bliss Court in 2025 is zero. Currently vehicles driving westbound on Bliss Road use Bliss Court to gain access to the Williams Place shopping plaza via Williams Street going east with the exception of those drivers who use the Gas Station as a cut-through. With the two way traffic scenario on Bliss Road and Williams Street, both the northern and the southern shopping plazas in the study area would be accessible from both streets.



# Implementation Schedule

## Environmental and Resource Protection Element

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
ERP-1	Protect the Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge through establishment of a conservation restriction or other appropriate land protection control.	Conservation Commsn., Fannie Stebbins WR	1-2 years
ERP-2	Encourage zoning actions for the Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge to secure the land and shield it from future development.	Conservation Commsn., Fannie Stebbins WR, Planning Board	1-2 years
ERP-3	Consider alternate uses for any golf course (Franconia, Twin Hills, and Longmeadow Country Club) in the event the property owner discontinues use of the property. In the event privately held open space areas become available, consider bonding and other funding mechanisms as a means for acquisition. Projected uses for these sites include recreation, housing, mixed – use office, commercial, light industrial or any combination thereof.	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Parks & Recreation	5-10 years
ERP-4	Encourage use of conservation restrictions or easements for the Mill Road property.	Conservation Commsn.	1-2 years
ERP-5	Support the Conservation Commission's ongoing efforts in the Meadows to acquire riverfront and floodplain land in order to preserve open space, maintain the natural state of wetlands, the floodplain and other environmentally critical areas.	Conservation Commsn, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	ongoing
ERP-6	Work with the Park and Recreation Department to develop passive recreational activities in the Meadows on environmentally sensitive land, including a trail system and educational stations.	Conservation Commsn., Parks & Recreation	1-10 years
ERP-7	Support the development and maintenance of farming activities in the Meadows, including the development of a forestry management program in conjunction with state and federal programs.	Conservation Commsn., Board of Selectmen	ongoing

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
ERP-8	Work to update the Parks & Recreation Master Plan for all parks in Town. In all future park improvements consider the use of non-impervious materials for parking lots.	Parks & Recreation, Conservation Commsn., Town Boards	1-3 years
ERP-9	Explore enhanced measures to access the vastly inaccessible area of Turner Park to expand passive recreation use of the area.	Parks & Recreation, Conservation Comm.	1-3 years
ERP-10	Update the Longmeadow Bikeway Plan and develop a bike path system linking the recreation and park lands throughout the Town and with the regional Connecticut River Walk & Bikeway.	Parks & Recreation, Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1-5 years
ERP-11	Support maintenance of the Pomeroy Tract off Longmeadow Street as open space. Acquire additional property to provide access to the site. Encourage the use of this area as a community garden, and consider use of the area to plant seedlings for eventual transplant to Town-owned parks, schools and tree belts.	Conservation Commsn.	ongoing
ERP-12	Support the development of a riverfront park on Town owned riverfront property (Anthony Road) and encourage passive recreation use of the land, including a picnic area and a parking area. Allow public access to the Connecticut River at this location limited to non-motorized craft. Develop cooperative agreements with the other riverfront residents, specifically the Pioneer Valley Yacht Club.	Parks & Recreation, Conservation Commsn., Board of Selectmen, Pioneer Valley Yacht Club	3-5 years
ERP-13	Renew the commitment to the care, protection and planting of the tree belt. Support maintaining larger frontage setback requirements to preserve the Green and the historic character of the Town.	Board of Selectmen	ongoing
ERP-14	Promote preservation of the Green and support efforts of the Historic District Commission and the Longmeadow Historical Society to maintain it "as is." Educate the Town about the historical nature of the Town and the Town Green.	Historic District Comm., Parks & Recreation	ongoing
ERP-15	Because of the trend toward mansionization the Planning Board should study and propose a square foot to area ratio (SAR) zoning bylaw.	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals	1-2 years
ERP-16	Protect all historic structures. Consider a moratorium for demolition of historic structures until adequate zoning bylaw amendments and Historic Commission Mandates can be implemented.	Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board	1 year
ERP-17	Continue to promote school buildings and lands as public space for access by all Town residents. Use schools, parks and recreation facilities and fields as potential revenue sources, including user fees for all groups. Form a committee to develop policy in these areas.	School Committee, Parks & Recreation, Board of Selectmen	1-2 years, then ongoing

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
ERP-18	Implement an ongoing program to improve the landscaping of school properties. Work closely with the school parent organizations to coordinate the landscaping needs.	School Committee	ongoing
ERP-19	Continue to explore grants and potential partnerships with State, Federal and private agencies for development of park, recreation and conservation lands. Cooperation with the City of Springfield Parks department is encouraged.	Parks & Recreation, Board of Selectmen	ongoing
ERP-20	Explore support for the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act as a source of funding for historic preservation, housing and conservation land acquisition.	Board of Selectmen	1-5 years



## Town Services and Community Life Element

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
TSCL-1	Stress to elected Boards and residents the need to lobby our State Representative and State Senator to support Local Aid appropriations, based on fair distribution formulas, including the return of 100% of lottery money to municipalities.	Appropriations Committee, residents	ongoing
TSCL-2	Analyze the costs of unfunded mandates such as Special Education and examine options for management and political action.	Board of Selectmen, School Committee	ongoing
TSCL-3	The Appropriations Committee, Board of Selectmen and School Committee should develop and agree on a policy for the Town regarding what conditions would trigger an override recommendation and vote.	Appropriations Committee, Board of Selectmen, School Committee	1 year
TSCL-4	Adopt a town-wide policy freezing all budgetary line items descriptions to enhance year-to –year comparisons of departmental operations.	Appropriations Committee, Board of Selectmen, School Committee	1 year
TSCL-5	Review town budget documents to consider alternative formats that might enhance resident understanding of the Town's Finances.	Appropriations Committee, Town Accountant	1-2 years
TSCL-6	Study the creation of a "Community Chest or "endowment fund" seeking donations from residents to support town operations.	Study Committee	1-2 years
TSCL-7	Review the Town's fees and fines structure.	Appropriations Committee, Town Accountant	1-2 years
TSCL-8	Study the advisability/desirability of altering zoning bylaws to permit alternate housing situations and increased density.	Board of Assessors, Town Accountant	1-2 years
TSCL-9	Encourage "new growth" by supporting additions/renovations of the existing housing stock, coupled with reassessment of such properties.	Building Dept., Board of Assessors	ongoing
TSCL-10	Conduct real estate evaluations in a timely manner as required by law to ensure that assessments are accurate.	Board of Assessors	ongoing

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
TSCL-11	Explore the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act of 2000 as a source of funding for historic preservation, housing and conservation land acquisition, subject to voter approval.	Board of Selectmen, Appropriations Comm., Historic District Comm., Conservation Comm., Housing Authority	1-2 years
TSCL-12	Continue to support and improve the process conducted by the Capital Planning Committee. Evaluate and look at other models to improve the process.	Capital Planning, Board of Selectmen, Appropriations, School Committee	ongoing
TSCL-13	Identify and pursue all grants which might pursue the acquisition of needed programs or equipment.	Board of Selectmen, Town Departments, School Committee, School Department	ongoing
TSCL-14	Increase annual budgetary support to fund capital improvements and acquisitions.	Board of Selectmen, Voters	ongoing
TSCL-15	Review options to relocate all town offices to a single, ADA-compliant facility.	Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator/Mgr.	2-5 years
TSCL-16	Create a study group to explore the construction of a new community center at Greenwood or another appropriate location. Consider locating affordable senior housing adjacent to the facility.	Board of Selectmen, Study Group	2-3 years
TSCL-17	Once the new Superintendent of Schools is chosen, a thorough review of school goals and operations should take place, with recommendations on how to maintain excellence at a level of local spending the townspeople will support.	School Committee, Superintendent	1-2 years
TSCL-18	Ensure that the High School does not lose its accreditation by bringing physical conditions up to state standards. Develop initiatives to provide better equipment and upgrade technological resources for students.	School Committee	in progress
TSCL-19	Support the Longmeadow Educational Excellence Foundation (LEEF), PTOs, and other organizations working to enhance our schools.	LEEF, PTOs, Citizens	ongoing
TSCL-20	Study departmental relationships and interdependencies to determine if further departmental consolidations or cross training of staff can be undertaken to achieve efficiencies.	Board of Selectmen	ongoing
TSCL-21	Study the need for a Chief Financial Officer for the Town, including consolidation of the	Charter Commission	accomplished

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
	Collector/Treasurer functions, the Town Accountant and the Director of Business Services.		
TSCL-22	Study the Role of the IT Department throughout the Town, including the School Department. Study those uses to which technology can be applied to further reduce operating expenses, such as online registrations or routine bill paying. Acquire a centralized information system of tracking receipts and accounting systems.	Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Town & School Personnel	1-3 years
TSCL-23	Support the proposed Charter. If the vote fails, support Bylaw changes to improve the efficiency of town government, including but not limited to the appointment (rather than election) of the Water & sewer Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Town Clerk, and Town Collector/Treasurer.	Charter Commission, Long Range Planning Committee	2004
TSCL-24	Study the usefulness and costs of a community-wide newsletter, in print and on the web.	Town Administrator/Mgr.	1 year
TSCL-25	Utilize web-based meeting minutes, meeting notices, contract documents, departmental plans, etc. To share information on a wider basis than might currently be done. Study the advisability of consolidating Town and School Department web sites.	Town Administrator/Mgr., School Superintendent, Web Masters	1 year
TSCL-26	Develop a plan for more intensive, consistent and improved use of Longmeadow Cable Television by Boards, elected officials and department heads to inform residents and disseminate decisions and plans.	LCTV, Town officials	1-2 years
TSCL-27	Encourage elected officials and Boards to better utilize available public relations/media vehicles.	Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator/Mgr.	1-2 years
TSCL-28	Distribute a survey to Town residents to evaluate needs and provision of services. Explore the possibility of including non-binding questions on ballots, or filling out a survey on Election Day.	Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator/Mgr.	1-2 years
TSCL-29	Collaborate with Bay Path College and other non-profit institutions on town service usage and demands, and on support and planning for town functions and services and other opportunities	Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Non-Profit Institutions	ongoing
TSCL-30	Collaborate with neighboring municipalities on sharing of services where appropriate, joint ventures utilizing the model of the Scantic Valley Health Trust, traffic issues, and mutual aid and support agreements for public safety issues.	Board of Selectmen	ongoing
TSCL-31	Address youth issues, including lack of teen job opportunities and public transportation.	Board of Selectmen, Youth, Parents	1-3 years
TSCL-32	Address senior issues such as affordable housing, educational opportunities, and a new senior center.	Council on Aging, Parks & Recreation	2-5 years



Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
TSCL-33	Promote opportunities for multi-generational activities and volunteering.	Council on Aging, Parks & Recreation	1-2 years

## Housing Element

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
H-1	Explore various properties for housing for a diversity of income levels, including affordable housing for senior citizens. Parcels to be studied include the Water Tower property, Wolf Swamp fields, Greenwood Center and any others that may be identified. Form a Town committee to oversee future development activities on a chosen site.	Board of Selectmen	1-2 years
H-2	Once a site is identified for housing, pursue grants and partner with state, federal or regional agencies to prepare a plan for its future development. This would include a public involvement process to guide future development of the site that is consistent with community goals. The plan should include exploration of redevelopment alternatives, financial pro-formas that show maximum long-term financial returns for the Town, and design guidelines or performance standards based upon community goals and objectives for the site.	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Planners	1 year
H-3	Prepare and approve amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to ensure that development of future housing sites meets desired standards consistent with Town plans.	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Voters	As appropriate
H-4	Prepare and issue a Request for Proposals to solicit developer interest to develop identified housing sites with requirements that the land use program is consistent with the goals and objectives as outlined in the plan for each particular site.	Board of Selectmen	As appropriate
H-5	Investigate options to develop additional sites for smaller developments of senior housing. Potential sites could include expansion of Emerson Manor, mixed-use developments in the Bliss Road/Williams Street commercial area, Bay Path College or the Greenwood Center.	Board of Selectmen	1-2 years
H-6	Allow accessory apartments on premises of owner-occupied homes to create units of affordable housing. A carefully crafted bylaw that permits accessory apartments in Residential Zones will protect neighborhood appearance and would have no negative impact on property values.	Planning Board	1-2 years
H-7 (with ED-3)	Should conditions warrant, develop an overlay zone for the Longmeadow Street Corridor, with strict design guidelines, to permit some homes to be converted into condominiums, especially for senior/retirement living. Creative site and design review as part of the overlay zone would secure the historic character of the area.	Planning Board	5-10 years

## Economic Development Element

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
ED-1	Evaluate options for expansion of the Williams Street and Bliss Road triangle area through development of an overlay district for the area. As part of the overlay, promote increased density in this area through infill development and a greater diversity of land uses, including a mixed – use housing and commercial setting.	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	1-5 years
ED-2	Require enhancements to the pedestrian environment in the Williams Street and Bliss Road triangle area, and support activities and uses in this area that could serve as community focal points.	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	1-5 years
ED-3	Explore changing the height restrictions on commercial buildings to accommodate increased density, allowing additional stories above ground level retail for office or residential uses.	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	1-5 years
ED-4	Investigate revisions to the required number of parking spaces for uses permitted in Business Zones to allow for increased densities. Promote alternatives to the parking requirements that include provisions that encourage shared parking arrangements among uses with different peak hour needs.	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	1-5 years
ED-5	Include provisions in the parking regulations for landscape design and pedestrian facilities to create a safe and appealing environment in parking areas, which minimizes the visual impacts of a “sea of asphalt.”	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	1-5 years
ED-6	Adopt policy of increasing density in existing commercial districts rather than developing new commercial districts.	Planning Board	1 year
ED-7 (with H-4)	Should conditions warrant, allow certain properties on Longmeadow Street to transition from single family residential to office or mixed-use development. Develop an overlay zone with specific language for site design standards and parking requirements to maintain the residential character of the area but allow for flexible reuse of the structures for office, bed & breakfast or limited commercial purposes.	Planning Board	5-10
ED-8	Monitor land and building acquisitions by tax-exempt organizations to ensure that such activities will not have significant impacts to the Town’s tax rolls. If land acquisitions by non-profit institutions are for open space or recreational purposes, encourage opportunities for shared use of the land between the institutions and the Town.	Board of Selectmen	ongoing
ED-9	Open dialog to seek ways for non-profit institutions to assist with sharing of municipal service costs in an equitable manner.	Board of Selectmen, Non-profit Institutions	ongoing

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
ED-10	Explore avenues that encourage an exchange of in-kind services or of sharing resources with non-profits, especially for programs that benefit youth and schools, senior citizens, and opportunities for social and cultural enrichment for the benefit of all citizens.	Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Parks & Recreation, Non-profits	1-2 years
ED-11	Promote opportunities for partnerships with Bay Path College. Potential resources that could be provided by the College include: library services / funding, elderly housing, joint recreation facilities, performing arts, educational and training opportunities, and general use of facilities.	Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Parks & Recreation, Bay Path College	1-2 years



## Transportation Element

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
T-1	Paint striping and directional arrows on the roadway connector from Williams Street to Bliss Road to provide one exclusive left turn lane and one left-turn/through travel lane.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-2	Replace the stop sign on the roadway connector at the approach from Williams Street to Bliss Road with a yield sign.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-3	Paint channelization lines to define lanes onto Bliss Court from Bliss Road in order to direct traffic to the appropriate lane.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-4	Place a yield sign on the median at the intersection of Bliss Road and Bliss Court for the left turn movement from Bliss Road onto Bliss Court.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-5	Construct sidewalks on both sides of Bliss Court, accompanied by mid-block crosswalks.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	2-3 years
T-6	Construct a crosswalk on Bliss Road at the western-most exit of the Longmeadow Shops to allow pedestrian access to Bliss Court.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	2-3 years
T-7	Construct a sidewalk along the northern side of Williams Street adjacent to the parking lot of the Big Y Plaza.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	2-3 years
T-8	Install a stop sign at the intersection of Bliss Court and Williams Street for the left-turn movements onto Williams Street.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-9	Paint a left-turn arrow on Williams Street, at the approach to the roadway connector to Bliss Road, to supplement the "left turn must turn left" sign.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-10	Replace faded traffic signs, and reposition bent or misdirected signs. Remove obstructions to traffic signs, especially overgrown trees.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-11	Repaint faded pavement markings, including dashed traffic lines, crosswalk markings, arrows indicating entrance/exit only lanes, and stop lines.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-12	Paint stop lines at the entrances/ exits to commercial lots to ensure that motorists stop before entering crosswalks.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year

Number	Strategies and Actions	Responsible Party	Time Frame
T-13	Install speed limit signs throughout the Bliss Road/Williams Street commercial area to create better awareness of speed limits.	Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	1 year
T-14	Work with the owner of the Shell Gas Station to implement site design and access changes to prevent motorists from cutting through the lot rather than using Bliss Court. Examples include: converting site access to entrance or exit only operations, installing speed bumps in parking lots, or closing curb cuts in the vicinity of the intersection.	Planning Board, Property Owner, Board of Selectmen, Highway Department	2-3 years
T-15	Pursue alternatives to traffic concerns with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and with neighboring municipalities.	Board of Selectmen, Police, Traffic Committee	ongoing

