

## **Maynard's Community Development Strategy 2018**

As a largely developed community, Maynard embraces revitalization projects that incorporate strategies that will make the Town a vibrant, livable and sustainable community. Maynard will work for decent, affordable housing, the vitality of its Downtown, accessible facilities and services, pedestrian-friendly streets, opportunities for educational, cultural, and recreational projects, and a sustainable economy. This Community Development Strategy (CDS) summarizes on-going community development efforts and prioritizes action plan projects. The CDS provides an essential tool for the municipal decision-making process that reflects community values and vision.

The Town will launch a new Master Plan study in 2018. With an extensive public participation process, community development policies and initiatives will be a major focus of the plan. The Town has and will continue to make substantial investments for community development. Sources of funding include private investment, the Business Environment Enhancement Program (BEEP), the Community Preservation Act (CPA), MassDOT Chapter 90 and Complete Streets, the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Program (PARC), the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, and planning assistance of the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC).

### **Community Development Planning and Projects**

#### **Downtown Development**

##### Mill and Main

This 37-acre campus offers 1.1 million square feet of space in a former mill, featuring exposed brick and beams, 16-foot ceilings, and landscaped gardens. Under new ownership, the current developer has plans for minor building demolition and continued substantial renovation. Space is available for office, retail/hospitality, and light manufacturing. Employment at buildout could reach 3,000 jobs; the property is currently about 50% occupied.

##### 129 Parker Street

This "Maynard Crossing" is an approved mixed use development on a 58-acre site. It includes 180 residential units, including 22 affordable units, 143 senior independent living units, and approximately 310,000 square feet of retail/office/commercial space including a supermarket. Maynard was awarded a MassWorks grant in 2017 for infrastructure upgrades to assist this mixed use development.

##### Redevelopment Areas

DHCD has approved redevelopment areas in Maynard under the designation of Slum and Blight. The area designated "Approach to Downtown" is in effect until 2021. Approval of the area "Entrance to Downtown II" occurred in 2017. The revitalization strategy includes improvements to roads, sidewalks, parking surfaces, park facilities, and commercial facades, housing rehabilitation, and social services.

##### Business Environment Enhancement Program (BEEP)

The Town provides funding through BEEP for efforts to spur economic development. Projects may include: aesthetic improvements, investment in infrastructure, and promotional efforts. Recipients of funds may include business owners, boards/committees, community groups, or property owners.

##### Downtown Market Study

This study profiled the Downtown retail market in 2014 and identified new market opportunities. Recommendations included improving the central parking area in the Downtown and working with the developer for the 129 Parker Street site to ensure complementary, not competing, business approaches.

##### Downtown Parking Study

MAPC completed a downtown parking study early in 2018. It identified parking needs, analyzed capacity

and occupancy, and recommended physical and other changes. The study included recommendations for renovating the central parking lot to improve its safety, function and visual character.

### Wayfinding Study

The Town's Economic Development Committee has created a retail and restaurant guide and is coordinating the wayfinding plan to complement the paper and electronic guides. Although a wayfinding effort was launched in 2009, the Town's recent designation as a Cultural District combined with renewed commitment to downtown economic development have made Maynard an increasingly popular regional destination and it is clear that a fresh look at a wayfinding system is needed.

## **Housing**

### Housing Production Plan

MAPC drafted Maynard's Housing Production Plan, which the town adopted in 2015. The report contains an analysis of population, housing conditions, and development constraints, and it compiled current housing market information. Housing goals and implementation strategies for the Town are now in place.

### Housing Production

The Town has issued development agreements and approvals for *129 Parker Street* and *Mill and Main*, to create housing opportunities, including affordable housing. It is currently working with a developer on a 252 unit affordable project. The Town has formed an Affordable Housing Trust to forward the development of affordable housing throughout the community.

### Zoning

The Town will vote in the spring of 2018 on its inclusionary zoning bylaw. The bylaw is expected to mandate provision of affordable housing units for projects exceeding a size threshold, thus increasing units on the affordable housing inventory. This effort is intended to create affordable housing throughout Town but with an emphasis on downtown "mixed-use" opportunities from the existing housing stock.

## **Transportation**

### Complete Streets

Maynard is currently working to redesign roads for walking, biking, accessibility, transit, and vehicle safety. With heavy traffic and high pedestrian activity in the Downtown, Maynard submitted a \$400,000 grant application to MassDOT to construct curb extensions at the intersections of Summer St. with Nason St. and at Main St. with Summer St. to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians.

### CrossTown Connect

CrossTown Connect is a regional transportation management association (TMA) comprised of six towns, including Maynard, and private companies. Its mission is to improve regional transportation for residents and employees. Currently, in addition to the Council on Aging 'Senior' vans by appointment door to door service, Maynard provides a commuter shuttle service to and from a nearby rail station and large employers in Acton and Maynard where conventional fixed route transit is not cost effective.

## **Open Space, Parks, and Recreation; Arts and Culture**

### Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT)

The ARRT is a 12.5 mile trail for bicycle and pedestrian use on a former rail right-of-way across five towns. Construction of the 2.5-mile Maynard section passes through the Downtown and is scheduled to open in 2018. It is expected to bring renewed vitality and increased spending to the area.

### Veterans Memorial Park (VMP)

The VMP is an integral part of the Downtown and is in the Entrance to the Downtown II redevelopment area. It provides open space, recreation facilities, a performance venue, and a memorial to the Town's veterans. The VMP has serious accessibility issues, and aging facilities are now presenting a blighting

influence. The Town is actively planning park improvements. Funding sources include CPA and CDBG.

#### Boys & Girls Club of Assabet Valley, Inc.

The Club is located near the Downtown and Maynard supports its activities to benefit local youth. *Beyond the Bell* is an after-school program for ages 5 to 18 that provides supervised activities after school. It provides an important economic benefit by enabling parents to work when school lets out. Over 55% of the children served live in subsidized housing and/or qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches.

#### Cultural District

In 2017, the Mass. Cultural Council approved Downtown Maynard as a Cultural District. The designation complements revitalization efforts by enhancing the experience for visitors, thereby attracting more spending at local shops and restaurants. The District will harness the energy of the creative economy by drawing artists and entrepreneurs of all kinds, fill vacant space, and enhance the vibrancy of the Downtown.

#### Art Space Maynard

Housed in the former Fowler Middle School, Art Space Maynard offers 50,000 square feet of space devoted to the arts within the Downtown. Art Space has 47 artist studios housing 80 artists, a gallery, community theatre, and a printmaking studio. The Town is planning an “Art Trail” pedestrian path from Art Space to Downtown which will increase economic and community activity.

### **Community Development Principles**

The Board of Selectmen adopted a set of ten Community Development Principles in 2011 to provide an organizing framework for directing municipal actions to a sustainable future. Broadly addressing a wide range of issues, the Community Development Principles are intended to provide a philosophical framework for revitalization and development initiatives within Maynard. The Principles most applicable to this CDS are: 1) Concentrate Development and Integrate Uses; 2) Protect the Village Character of Downtown Maynard; 3) Redevelop and Reuse; 5) Expand Housing Opportunities; 6) Provide Transportation Choices; 7) Respect Cultural and Historic Resources; and 10) Manage Infrastructure Effectively.

#### **Priority Projects**

1. Create ADA compliant accessibility and restore Veterans’ Memorial Park
2. Prepare plans for reconstructing the central parking lot and obtain funding for implementation.
3. Implement Complete Streets Prioritization Projects for motorist, pedestrian and bicycle safety.
4. Create new affordable housing and rehab existing housing for low and moderate income households.
5. Continue work to make sidewalks and public facilities accessible to disabled individuals.
6. Complete construction of the Assabet River Rail Trail in Maynard and participating communities.
7. Complete the Art Trail from Art Space Maynard to the Downtown.
8. Support the Boys and Girls Club to provide recreational and social activities for Maynard families.
9. Support redevelopment projects such as the *Mill and Main* campus as an economic engine and strengthen connections with the Downtown to complement other development activities.
10. Work with the developers of large-scale projects such as *129 Parker Street* to help advance the Town’s sustainability goals.
11. Implement parking strategies to provide safe and convenient spaces for Downtown visitors.
12. Continue the façade improvement program for property owners in the Downtown.
13. Support Cross Town Connect as a low cost transportation alternative for the regional workforce.
14. Identify zoning requirements that might impede Downtown revitalization and modify accordingly.

The Maynard Board of Selectmen reviewed and approved this Community Development Strategy on February 20, 2018.