

Town of Westborough Strategic Planning Services Summary Report

Final Report

October 2018



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October 18, 2018

Ms. Kristi Williams
Interim Town Manager
34 West Main Street
Westborough, MA 01581

Dear Ms. Williams:

We are pleased to present this report which summarizes the Town of Westborough's strategic planning process and documents all elements of the final Strategic Plan (vision, mission, values, critical success factors, and priority initiatives).

The Town's process allowed for a collaborative effort among Town staff and the Board of Selectmen, which establishes a clear vision for the community and provides a roadmap for policy decisions in the coming years.

Thank you for the opportunity to be of service to Westborough. Please contact me at (513) 309-0444 or jnovak@thenovakconsultinggroup.com should you have any questions or if we can assist further.

Sincerely,

Julia D. Novak
President

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Table of Contents

Strategic Planning Framework	1
Introduction	3
Methodology and Process	3
Using the Strategic Plan	6
Management Team Strategic Planning Retreat Summary	7
Board of Selectmen Strategic Planning Retreat Summary	10
Final Strategic Planning Retreat Summary	17
Attachment A: Environmental Scan	25
Attachment B: Employee Survey Responses	53
Attachment C: Community Summit Input	65
Attachment D: Online Community Engagement Input	79

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Strategic Planning Framework

Westborough Strategic Planning Framework



Mission

An innovative Town Government TRUSTED to provide high-quality municipal and educational services that enhance quality of life and security and provide an inclusive and positive experience for the community.

Vision

Westborough – a vibrant, attractive, safe, inclusive, connected, and engaged community – for a lifetime.

Values

- TTransparent and Accountable
- RResponsive
- UUnderstanding
- SService with Compassion
- TTeamwork
- EEthical Behavior
- D Dedicated to Professionalism

Critical Success Factors



Thoughtfully-Planned Built and Natural Environment

To strike a balance between the built and natural environments which promotes a healthy and prosperous Westborough that nurtures and sustains the mental, physical, and economic well-being of our community.



Access to Diverse Housing Options

Westborough is committed to an environment that fosters the development of a range of affordable housing options and opportunities for a broad spectrum of ages and income levels.



Excellent Educational Environment

Westborough supports an excellent and inclusive educational environment for learners of all ages.



Compassionate Social Services

Westborough supports access to a full range of compassionate, affordable social services by fostering relationships with businesses, volunteers, and nonprofit entities, and providing Town services to respond to the needs of the community.



Proactive Public Safety

Emergency services are both preventative and responsive. Town Departments work collaboratively with one another and the community to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to public safety challenges to ensure safety, health, and well-being.



Effective Governance

Westborough has a collaborative and trusted leadership team that governs and deliberates in a transparent and respectful manner. The team effectively engages with the community through open communication and appropriate public forums that leverage resources and opportunities to further our mission.



Dedicated Workforce and Strong Labor Relations

The Town of Westborough supports and encourages the professional development of all staff to help attract and retain a dedicated workforce with strong labor relations to ensure excellent quality of service to its residents.



Well-Maintained Critical Infrastructure

The Town of Westborough proactively maintains its critical infrastructure to ensure quality of life and to protect the environment.



Fiscally Responsible

Westborough is a community that values strong fiscal management in order to achieve sustainable high-quality services and infrastructure.



Strong Economic Base

Westborough values a strong and diverse business base where innovation and entrepreneurship are encouraged. The Town works collaboratively with prospective and established businesses to identify opportunities for growth, development, and sustainability.



Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities

Westborough offers a wide variety of active and passive recreational and cultural experiences and activities. From trails and facilities to events, commemorations, and festivals, Westborough honors, celebrates, and embraces our past, present, and future.

Facilitated by The Novak Consulting Group



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Introduction

The Town of Westborough engaged The Novak Consulting Group to support the Town with identifying a strategic direction for the future of the organization. This document details the results of this strategic planning process.

A strategic planning process involves articulating a clear vision and mission for the organization, establishing goals, identifying priority strategies, and creating implementation plans. The Town of Westborough's Strategic Plan is intended to represent the Board of Selectmen's vision for the community and those specific initiatives that will help accomplish that vision.

The process of developing a strategic plan explores three specific questions:

1. What do we know to be true today? *Where are we?*
2. What do we hope will be true in the future? *Where do we want to go?*
3. What must go well in order to make it so? *How do we get there?*

In this way, the Town of Westborough's Strategic Plan is a roadmap to move the community toward its intended vision. Ultimately, a strategic plan is a fundamental management tool that exists to help the organization improve its delivery of services to the community.

This report summarizes each phase of the Town of Westborough's strategic planning process.

Methodology and Process

In March 2018, the Town of Westborough retained the services of The Novak Consulting Group to design and facilitate a strategic planning process.

To answer the first strategic planning question – **What do we know to be true today?** – The Novak Consulting Group interviewed members of Board of Selectmen, met with Department Heads and members of advisory boards and commissions, and developed an environmental scan that included quantitative data on trends in local, regional, and national demographics, as well as historical data about Westborough's government organization. This information helps provide the context within which the Town of Westborough operates today and the challenges that the Town organization and community may face in the future.

To supplement this quantitative data, and to begin answering the second question – **What do we hope will be true in the future?** – The Novak Consulting Group solicited qualitative information about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) of Westborough from Board of Selectmen, the Town's Management Team, Town employees, and Town residents.

To gather this information, The Novak Consulting Group facilitated two Management Team Retreats in August and September and a Board of Selectmen Retreat in August and prepared a confidential online survey that was made available to all Town employees. A total of 63 employees completed the survey. Furthermore, the Novak Consulting Group held four community summits with Town residents in August and September and invited residents to comment online through a Bang the Table™ engagement forum. More than 50 residents attended the summits, and 175 participated in the online forum.

This input describes the perceptions that Town leaders and employees have of Westborough. While not always factually based, these perceptions provide critical information to consider in determining the Town's future path.

The environmental scan presented factors that have the potential to influence the direction of Westborough and included a review of the organization's key strengths, areas for improvement, and issues for future planning. This information was then used during both the Management Team and Board of Selectmen Retreats to answer the third strategic planning question – **What must go well in order to make it so?** – and to develop the draft strategic planning framework.

On August 26 and 27, 2018, The Novak Consulting Group facilitated retreats with 20 members of the Town's leadership team and with the Board of Selectmen. The purpose of these retreats was to develop first drafts of each element of the strategic planning framework. This draft was then put forth for review and comment from the public. On September 26, 2018, The Novak Consulting Group facilitated a retreat in which the Board of Selectmen and Town leadership reviewed public comments on the draft strategic plan elements and finalized the Town's Strategic Plan. The group then completed an initiative prioritization exercise to begin identifying future priorities. Town staff will then work to develop implementation plans for each of the identified priorities.

The Town of Westborough strategic planning process is summarized in the following infographic.

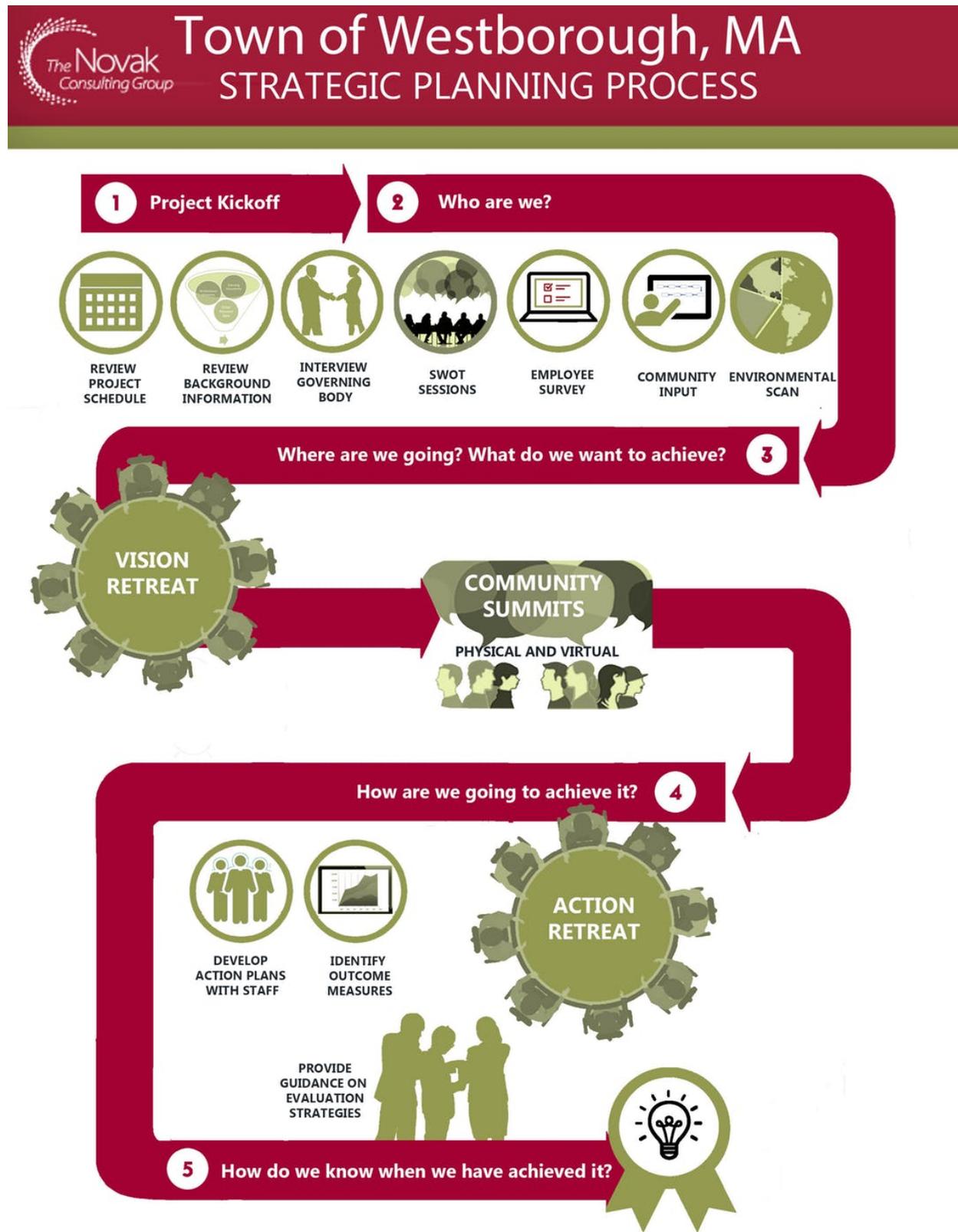


Figure 1: Infographic of Town of Westborough Strategic Planning Process

Using the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan provides a framework for Town activities. The vision, mission, values, and critical success factors are intended to have a long-term view. The vision is a statement of what the Town wishes to become; the mission and values guide Town staff in their service to the community; and the critical success factors are those big buckets of “things that must go well” for the Town to achieve the vision.

The critical success factors provide a lens for viewing and understanding Town business. Within each critical success factor are a series of specific initiatives that, when accomplished, move the Town toward the vision.

There are many things the Town can do to reinforce the strategic plan and truly integrate it into the life and work of the organization including the following examples:

Board of Selectmen Agenda Items

- Town business can be connected to one (or more) of the ten critical success factors. This can be included routinely as part of staff reports. Using the “icons” for the success factor can create a quick visual connection.

Budgeting and Goal Setting

- The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) encourages the inclusion of a strategic planning framework in the public budget document.
- Budget initiatives can be connected to how they support one or more of the critical success factors.
- When the governing body meets to adopt goals, the strategic planning framework can be used to categorize priorities.

Communication

- The Town’s website, social media, and other similar communication tools can include updates on the implementation progress of key initiatives in each critical success area to keep the residents informed.
- Copies of the strategic planning framework can be posted around Town buildings.
- Employees exemplifying the Town’s values can be acknowledged using cards on which behavior can be described and values can be circled. Employees can be rewarded using gift cards, etc.
- The Town’s vision and/or values can be printed on the back of Town employee business cards.

Management Team Strategic Planning Retreat Summary

Westborough held a strategic planning retreat with the Town's management team on August 27, 2018. The retreat was facilitated by Julia Novak of The Novak Consulting Group with visual co-creation provided by Julie Gieseke of Map the Mind. A total of 20 Town staff attended.

The purpose of the retreat was to develop draft mission and values for the organization. The mission defines the role and purpose of Town government. Values are those behaviors that govern the workforce when employees act at their best.

Setting the Stage

The facilitator began by noting that Town Manager Jim Malloy had recently announced that he had taken a new position and would soon be leaving the Town. The facilitator asked staff how they were feeling about undertaking strategic planning during a time of transition. The following topics were discussed:

- Strategic planning is important in order to have a roadmap for the future.
- Although the Town has accomplished a lot, there have been times when it has been on track and times when that has been less true.
- The departure of the Town Manager is a good time to get direction on next steps to help inform the hiring process.
- The Town is continuing to change and grow; good structure and guidance help build a sense of community.
- The Town often has to balance conflicting desires among residents, e.g. wanting low taxes but high-quality public services; it is good to have a cohesive direction tying everything together.
- There are conflicting ideas in the government and the community about how much the Town should grow; a strategic plan will help provide a framework moving forward.
- The strategic plan will help ground the transition and provide a starting place for the new Town Manager.
- A strategic plan will help guide Town work and provide a common language to articulate what the Town is working toward.
- It is important that the strategic plan take financial realities into account.
- Teamwork and collaboration will be important to successfully implementing a strategic plan.
- Strategic planning has to come from the top; the new Town Manager will have to continue to move this plan forward.

In advance of the session, attendees were provided with the results of an employee survey asking staff for their thoughts on their identity, their purpose, and their values. Claire Pritchard of The Novak Consulting Group reviewed the high-level themes with the group to help inform their discussion of the Town's Mission and Values.

Draft Mission Statement

The mission statement defines the role and purpose of the organization. In groups, participants developed mission statements. Staff then convened in a larger group. After reviewing the proposed mission statement, attendees worked as one group to finalize the language, ultimately coming to consensus on the following mission statement:

- An *innovative* Town Government TRUSTED to provide high quality municipal and educational services that enhance quality of life and security and provide an inclusive and positive experience for the community.

Draft Values Statements

Values are those behaviors that govern the workforce when employees act at their best. In small groups, participants developed a list of values. Staff then convened in a larger group. After reviewing the proposed vision statement, attendees worked as one group to finalize the language, ultimately coming to consensus on the following values statement, an acrostic of the word TRUSTED (referencing the draft mission statement):

- Transparent and Accountable
- Responsive
- Understanding
- Service with Compassion
- Teamwork
- Ethical Behavior
- Dedicated to Professionalism



Figure 2: Mission and Values Statements Developed on August 27, 2018

Next Steps

The group then closed the session by providing one word that described how they felt at the end of the session. Each word selected is depicted in the following word cloud.



Figure 3: Word Cloud Showing Sentiments of Participants at the End of the Session

Board of Selectmen Strategic Planning Retreat Summary

The Board of Selectmen and management staff held a strategic planning retreat on August 28, 2018. The retreat was facilitated by Julia Novak from The Novak Consulting Group with visual co-creation provided by Julie Gieseke of Map the Mind. The purpose of the retreat was to develop a vision statement and articulate priorities to focus the energy and resources of the Town organization.

Julia Novak began by reviewing the elements of a strategic planning framework and the work that had been completed to date in support of this effort. The facilitator then shared the day's agenda and the norms that would guide the group's work during the retreat.

Each attendee was asked to provide one word describing their anticipation of the day's events. Each word selected is depicted in the following word cloud.



Figure 4: Word Cloud Showing Anticipation of Participants at the Beginning of the Session

This I Believe – A Visioning Exercise

Each member of the Board of Selectmen was given five to seven minutes to share “what they believe” about the future of the Town, summarized below.

Leigh Emery, Chair

I believe that we are at a critical juncture, balancing the past history and what were seen as core values with the need to serve population not in the majority and the constraints on what can be reasonably provided. I believe that Westborough is positively rated by those who live here but has major shortfalls. I have loved Westborough since I was a child; my family has history here and I respect its old traditions and values. However, I have also lived and worked around the world and realize how diverse the world is. The diverse world is coming to my hometown, and we need to embrace it with practical changes to support a growing community. It is important to listen as carefully and as nonjudgmentally as possible. I also want to go to more diverse places and events than I have in the past.



Ian Johnson, Vice Chair

I believe that the Town of Westborough is in a transition, both in population and in community values. The Town has historically been known for its quality school system; that was true when my parents and I were growing up, but that singular focus on schools has changed. It is important that people be happy in the community for a variety of reasons, and that families remain connected even without children in the school system. When my high school classmates moved away, many of their parents stayed and remained active in the community. I now see my classmates moving back to Town as they are raising their own families.

We need to do more work to keep families here, with or without kids. Affordable housing should be available, appropriately downsized; we should incentivize builders to build smaller houses. We should provide tax incentives to keep people in their homes and in Town. We should hold vibrant community events to attract all ages. Maybe there should be a virtual senior center, offering programs for anyone aged 50 and over. The golf course should be inviting to couples, groups, and businesses. Events should span different ages and areas of interest. Facilities should be used for various events at different times. We should attract more businesses and residents to the downtown.

We also need to focus on the fact that there's a vocal minority and an apathetic majority. We need to figure out how the Town can engage these groups. Services could drive further engagement.

Bruce Tretter

I believe that we value education and the idea of raising educated children in order to be successful in a diverse and competitive world. I believe that we need to manage expenses better for the long term. We are well-located – ideal for active living, with access to cultural sites. It is important to attract businesses that correspond to our future focus. We should be a model for diversity and inclusivity. We should have a workforce capable of goal-oriented and future-focused change. Our residents and businesses are open to progress, evidence-based solutions. We have a positive, engaged constituency.

Shelby Marshall

I believe that we will continue to be an amazing place to live, work, and play. We will continue to be one of the top 20 places to live in Massachusetts because of great schools, safety, families, friendliness, and accessibility. In order to do this, we need to maintain a strong tax base and the school needs to be among the top 10 in the state. We should have a thriving downtown business district beyond the Rotary, with retail, restaurants, and cultural venues. The Town should be a welcoming place for businesses. We need to continue to have a strong development committee that collaborates with key departments.

We should continue to develop pockets throughout the Town of accessible, open green space, including a place where dogs can safely be off-leash. When we have a completed Master Plan, we should be fully engaged in its implementation. We should celebrate diversity and provide a safe community for all. We should have a new recreation center and/or a renovated senior center in order to keep people here. We should explore private-public partnerships and grants. Transportation is critical to a vibrant residential base; people have to come and go. We should continue to have a beautiful Town and make it a descriptor when people drive through. Affordable housing is critical for seniors, singles, and families.

I believe that we need to find meaningful ways to communicate with the public, recognizing that government is always the initiator and repetitive communication is the nature of the beast. We should address public health head on; collaboration is critical on issues like mental health and addiction. We should use e-voting to engage members in the Town Meeting process. Town government should break away from separation between Town government and the school system; it is a critical collaboration that is for the benefit of all.

Honesty, integrity, and trust have to be fundamental and foundational to all that we do. There is a lot of longevity in the Town's staff; we need to focus on succession planning. We need to recognize and support volunteer boards and commissions; they play a critical role in the Town's success. We must be willing to listen to each other and compromise.

I use the four-way test in everything I do; a test developed by Herbert Taylor and adopted by the International Rotary. It is four questions:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
- Is it beneficial to all concerned?

Syed Hashmi

I have been a vagabond most of my life, never with a permanent address. The only reason I moved to Westborough was that I needed to be 30 minutes or less from where I was working; I am the only person in town who did not move because of schools. I have lived in many towns all over the world and never felt part of any one place. In Westborough, my gateway drug was the library, and the way librarians treated me. I then went to a Town Meeting and had the most incredible experience of my life; people were committed to the Town Meeting and had prepared for it. Everyone was treated the same whether they were a Selectman, staff, an immigrant, or a resident. That was my introduction to Town government and also an illustration of the Town's strengths. The Police Chief and the Director of Public Works were taught by the same public school teacher; she walks around town and no one knows who she is, but I think about the impact she has had on the Town.

This is a special town where even a vagabond can find a home. The challenge is that there is a committed group of people who grew up in the Town, and as the Town grows, newer people do not have that connection. Fortunately, I have met people that have allowed me to form a connection with the root of this Town. We cannot let this sense of community go, but that is what is going to make this Town prosperous.



Figure 5: Illustration Summarizing "This I Believe" Statements

The Strategic Planning Framework

Staff then shared with the Board of Selectmen the draft strategic plan elements developed during and after the Management Team retreat. The mission statement and values reflect the input of employees from the survey.

The Board of Selectmen then developed a draft vision statement, based on the information from the Environmental Scan, staff's mission and value statements, and their "This I Believe" discussion. The draft vision statement, intended as a statement of what the Town wishes to become, follows.

- Westborough – a vibrant, attractive, safe, inclusive, connected, and engaged community – for a lifetime.

Draft Priorities

The Selectmen were asked how close they were to achieving their vision today, and how close they would like to be 10 years in the future. They were then asked what areas they should focus on in order to move toward that 10-year goal. Their ideas formed the basis for 11 Critical Success Factors, areas of focus that would help the Town achieve its vision.

The Selectmen and staff then broke into small groups to develop directional statements for the Critical Success Factors that further clarified how the Town should move forward. The draft directional statements were then reviewed and adopted by the group as a whole.

The proposed Critical Success Factors and their Directional Statements are below. They will be shared with the community for input.

- **Thoughtfully-Planned Built and Natural Environment**
To strike a balance between the built and natural environments which promotes a healthy and prosperous Westborough that nurtures and sustains the mental, physical, and economic well-being of our community.
- **Access to Diverse Housing Options**
Westborough is committed to an environment that fosters the development of a range of affordable housing options and opportunities for a broad spectrum of ages and income levels.
- **Excellent Educational Environment**
Westborough supports an excellent and inclusive educational environment for learners of all ages.
- **Compassionate Social Services**
Westborough supports access to a full range of compassionate, affordable social services by fostering relationships with businesses, volunteers, and nonprofit entities, and providing Town services to respond to the needs of the community.
- **Proactive Public Safety**
Emergency services are both preventative and responsive. Town Departments work collaboratively with one another and the community to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to public safety challenges to ensure safety, health, and well-being.
- **Effective Governance**
Westborough has a collaborative and trusted leadership team that governs and deliberates in a transparent and respectful manner. The team effectively engages with the community through open communication and appropriate public forums that leverage resources and opportunities to further our mission.

- **Dedicated Workforce and Strong Labor Relations**
The Town of Westborough supports and encourages the professional development of all staff to help attract and retain a dedicated workforce with strong labor relations to ensure excellent quality of service to its residents.
- **Well-Maintained Critical Infrastructure**
The Town of Westborough proactively maintains its critical infrastructure to ensure quality of life and to protect the environment.
- **Fiscally Responsible**
Westborough is a community that values strong fiscal management in order to achieve sustainable high-quality services and infrastructure.
- **Strong Economic Base**
Westborough values a strong and diverse business base where innovation and entrepreneurship are encouraged. The Town works collaboratively with prospective and established businesses to identify opportunities for growth, development, and sustainability.
- **Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities**
Westborough offers a wide variety of active and passive recreational and cultural experiences and activities. From trails and facilities to events, commemorations, and festivals, Westborough honors, celebrates, and embraces our past, present, and future.



Figure 6: Illustration of the Relationship Between Critical Success Factors and Vision

Next Steps/Closing

The facilitator then closed the retreat by asking everyone to share their thoughts regarding their experience during the day's session. Thoughts from the Board of Selectmen and leadership staff included:

- The best part was the chance for the Board to interact with Town staff; the Board should consider periodic social forums with staff.
- Thank you to staff for taking time out of their busy days and for their candid and open comments.
- This is the first time the Board and the Department Heads have worked together; it is a great way to get started and move forward, and it should be done at least once a year.
- This was revealing.
- A lot of people are passionate about what they do; this was a great learning opportunity.
- The Town has not done anything like this in more than twenty years; it is interesting but a new experience.
- It was a very productive session.
- It was interesting with a lot of good input from participants.
- This was a great example of a collaborative team effort.
- Hopefully the Town follows through with everything.
- It was informative and much more interesting than anticipated.
- This has been years in the making; a lot had to align to make it happen.
- The right people were in the room.
- It was a great opportunity for the Board and staff to work together; we have to challenge ourselves on how our future ideas fit into this plan.
- It was encouraging; we have a place to start.
- It was a positive process; everyone came together with a lot of good ideas.
- The teamwork was great.
- This was a milestone for us and will have an important sustaining effect on community trust.

Final Strategic Planning Retreat Summary

On September 26, 2018, the Town of Westborough held a strategic planning retreat with the Town's Board of Selectmen and management team to review the draft Mission, Vision, Values, and Critical Success Factors developed in previous workshops. Julia Novak of The Novak Consulting Group facilitated the retreat.

Observations from Community Input

Previously, The Novak Consulting Group solicited public feedback on the proposed Vision Statement and Critical Success Factors via two community summits held on September 17 and a Bang the Table™ online forum. During the retreat, the group reviewed the public's input, and their comments are summarized below.

- There was nothing too surprising; there were some interesting comments, but the feedback was mostly granular
- There was nothing surprising; it was hard to get accurate input with such low participation
- I am disappointed because it does not feel like the residents got what they were being asked to do
- These were the same responses from the same small group; they do not reflect the opinion of the majority
- We cannot make everyone happy, but we can do the best for what we have; it is a work in progress
- The goal-setting mindset focuses on areas that need improvement; it is no wonder most of the comments were negative
- Summer was a difficult time to solicit feedback
- The resident feedback is similar to the employee comments
- We tried to get information out in a lot of different ways, but people still did not know what was going on
- Someone said that the Vision is too broad because every community in America would want that – that is actually a compliment
- There were a lot of comments about the lack of communication; there was a lot of misinformation also
- We will get more feedback during the implementation stage of this process when people start to be affected
- People want to do more with less
- It would have been more valuable to seek out a cross-section of the community
- We are losing our connection to the community
- People want to be spoon-fed information, but there is only so much we can do
- This project is about getting everyone on the same page with a uniform purpose
- The Town Government is a lot more interested in this process than anyone else
- We will only be able to achieve tax breaks for seniors if we take a hard look at the capital budget

Final Mission, Vision, Values, and Critical Success Factors

After discussing the input from residents, the Board of Selectmen and Town leadership discussed the draft Mission, Vision, Values, and Critical Success Factors developed during previous workshops. The group produced the updated statements below. The number of Critical Success Factors was reduced from 11 to ten.

Mission

An *innovative* Town Government TRUSTED to provide high-quality municipal and educational services that enhance quality of life and provide an inclusive and positive experience for the community.

Vision

Westborough – a vibrant, inclusive, safe, attractive, connected, and engaged community – for a lifetime.

Values

Transparent and Accountable
 Responsive
 Understanding
 Service with Compassion
 Teamwork
 Ethical Behavior
 Dedicated to Professionalism

Critical Success Factors

Thoughtfully-Planned Built and Natural Environment

To strike a balance between the built and natural environments which promotes a healthy and prosperous Westborough that nurtures and sustains the mental, physical, and economic well-being of our community.

Access to Diverse Housing Options

Westborough is committed to an environment that fosters the development of a range of affordable housing options and opportunities for a broad spectrum of ages and income levels.

Excellent Educational Opportunities

Westborough supports and provides excellent and inclusive educational opportunities for learners of all ages.

Compassionate Social Services

Westborough promotes and facilitates access to a full range of compassionate, affordable social services by fostering relationships with businesses, volunteers, and nonprofit entities, and providing Town services to respond to the needs of the community.

Proactive Public Safety

Emergency services are both preventative and responsive. Town Departments work collaboratively with one another and the community to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to public safety challenges to ensure safety, health, and well-being.

Effective Governance

Westborough has collaborative and trusted leadership that governs and deliberates in a transparent and respectful manner. The Town effectively engages with the community through open communication and appropriate public forums that leverage resources and opportunities to further our mission.

Dedicated Workforce and Strong Labor Relations

The Town of Westborough supports and encourages the professional development of all staff to attract and retain a dedicated workforce with collaborative labor relations to ensure excellent quality of service to its residents.

Well-Maintained Critical Infrastructure

The Town of Westborough proactively maintains and invests in its critical infrastructure to ensure quality of life and to protect the environment.

Fiscally Responsible and Business Friendly

Westborough values strong fiscal management to provide sustainable high-quality services and infrastructure. Westborough promotes a strong and diverse business base where innovation and entrepreneurship are encouraged. The Town works collaboratively with prospective and established businesses to identify opportunities for growth, development, and sustainability.

Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities

Westborough offers and supports a wide variety of active and passive recreational activities, events and cultural experiences that engages, celebrates and honors our inclusive community.

Initiatives to Advance Critical Success Factors

The Board of Selectmen were asked to propose initiatives that would help the Town advance its Critical Success Factors. The Selectmen were also asked to vote on which proposals they consider to be the highest priority. The number of votes is indicated in parentheses, if applicable. Items with five votes are considered Top Priority; items with three or four votes are High Priority, and items with two votes are Other Priorities.

The group then discussed the items that emerged as Priorities and assigned a staff person or persons to take the lead on each initiative. These people are indicated in sub-bullets. Other staff, the Board of Selectmen, and outside stakeholders may be involved in the initiatives as well.

Thoughtfully-Planned Built and Natural Environment

- Enhance Lake Chauncey recreation area
- Strategically acquire parcels identified in our Open Space Master Plan by enacting the Community Preservation Act (2) (**Other Priority**)
 - Conservation Agent, Town Planner, Comprehensive Planner
- Develop an inventory and action plan for addressing vacant buildings and dangerous structures

- Create a dog park
- Develop and deliver a master plan, as well as plans to revitalize downtown and a transportation plan (5) **(Top Priority)**
 - Town Planner
- Develop a strategy for expanding recycling and composting options
- Develop a plan for recycling and composting in public facilities and spaces

Access to Diverse Housing Options

- Create an affordable housing fund
- Develop strategies for ensuring a variety of housing types and rehab existing buildings (5) **(Top Priority)**
 - Town Planner

Excellent Educational Opportunities

- Develop lifelong learning initiatives, including school/library/senior center partnership and invite area college staff to give lectures
- Encourage the WPS to transition to relevant, cost-effective education (1)
- Bring back the Citizen Leadership Academy
- Collaborate with Town and School departments to develop collaborative learning opportunities (mutual skillset sharing) (2) **(Other Priority)**
 - School Superintendent
- Support and promote awareness of secondary vo-tech options (ASSABET)
- Encourage businesses to support internships and vocational mentorships; work with WPS to allow them

Compassionate Social Services

- Assess counseling needs at Youth and Family Services (YFS) and fund appropriately
- Better marketing of YFS
- Analyze prioritizing YFS, similar to Shrewsbury
- Ramp up community outreach, especially to diverse groups and organizations (2) **(Other Priority)**
 - YFS Director
- Develop a Senior Needs Assessment to identify opportunities to support senior residents (4) **(High Priority)**
 - Senior Center Director

Proactive Public Safety

- Continue to develop community policing initiatives; evaluate the creation of a citizens' community policing academy
- Evaluate and implement recommendations in public safety needs assessment studies; examine the potential for a satellite fire station (5) **(Top Priority)**
 - Fire Chief; Police Chief

Effective Governance

- Evaluate Town-wide municipal staffing needs for non-public safety departments; expand the use of performance metrics in evaluating Town services (5) **(Top Priority)**
 - Town Manager

- Develop a communications plan (3) **(High Priority)**
 - Town Manager
- Annually assess how many people are living and working in Westborough
- Establish quarterly meetings with Board of Selectmen and Department Heads (4) **(High Priority)**
 - Town Manager
- Repair Board of Selectmen dynamics; continue professional development workshops (2) **(Other Priority)**
 - Board of Selectmen, Town Manager

Dedicated Workforce and Strong Labor Relations

- Develop Departmental Leadership succession plans (2) **(Other Priority)**
 - Assistant Town Manager
- Promote education and development of the workforce; help department heads address unmet needs (3) **(High Priority)**
 - Assistant Town Manager
- Develop strategies for employee retention

Well-Maintained Critical Infrastructure

- Plan for creating bike lands on main roads; explore becoming Complete Streets certified (1)
- Seek grant funding through CMRCP and others for projects (1)
- Analyze traffic improvement options, including for the East/West corridor (2) **(Other Priority)**
- Police Chief
- Partner with private utilities to ensure maintenance and improvements to critical infrastructure of the Town and develop a plan for addressing it (2) **(Other Priority)**
- Fire Chief

Fiscally Responsible and Business Friendly

- Develop fiscal team to replace FinCom (1)
- Convene an annual financial summit with all Town Boards and Departments (4)
 - Finance Director
- Get the Economic Development Committee (EDC) going again with more feedback between the EDC Coordinator and Board of Supervisors (2) **(Other Priority)**
 - EDC Board
- Stronger budgetary alignment between Town and School (3) **(High Priority)**
 - Town Manager; School Superintendent
- Re-evaluate fiscal priorities to attempt to address affordability (2) **(Other Priority)**
 - Finance Director
- Communicate fiscal input and tax rate input for all capital projects

Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities

- Create/build an intergenerational community center with activities for all ages (4) **(High Priority)**
 - Recreation Director
- Accelerate creation of a multi-use trail system; engage the larger community regarding bike and pedestrian trails (3) **(High Priority)**
 - Town Engineer
- Have the BOS reach out to new and diverse temples and mosque populations
- Promote more senior use of school recreation facilities

- Build a new library (2) **(Other Priority)**
 - Library Director

There are a total of four Top Priorities, seven High Priorities, and ten Other Priorities. The following table summarizes the priority initiatives as well as the staff leads.

Table 1: Illustration Priority Initiatives and Staff Leads

Priority	Initiative	Project Lead(s)	Critical Success Factor	
Top	1	Develop and adopt a new Master Plan for Westborough that incorporates transportation and plans to revitalize the downtown.	Town Planner	Thoughtfully-Planned Built and Natural Environment
	2	Develop strategies for ensuring a variety of housing types in Westborough that meet a diversity of needs and consider the use of converting and rehabilitating existing buildings to meet those needs.	Town Planner	Access to Diverse Housing Options
	3	Evaluate and implement recommendations in the public safety needs assessment studies and examine the potential for a satellite public safety facility.	Fire Chief Police Chief	Proactive Public Safety
	4	Evaluate Town-wide municipal staffing needs for non-public safety departments and expand the use of performance metrics in evaluating Town services.	Town Manager	Effective Governance
High	5	Develop a communications plan for Town government.	Town Manager	Effective Governance
	6	Establish quarterly meetings with Board of Selectmen and Department Heads.	Town Manager	Effective Governance
	7	Promote the education and professional development needs of the workforce, and support department heads as they address unmet professional development needs.	Assistant Town Manager	Dedicated Workforce and Strong Labor Relations
	8	Develop a collaborative plan that will ensure stronger budgetary alignment between Municipal and School Department budgets.	Town Manager School Superintendent	Excellent Educational Opportunities
	9	Design and build an intergenerational community center with activities for all ages.	Recreation Director	Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities
	10	Accelerate development of the multi-use trail system and engage the broader community in implementation discussions.	Town Engineer	Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities
	11	Conduct a Needs Assessment for Westborough’s senior population to identify opportunities to support our senior residents.	Senior Center Director	Compassionate Social Services
Other	12	Repair Board of Selectmen dynamics and continue regular workshops that support effective development of Board relations and improve good governance.	Board of Selectmen Town Manager	Effective Governance
	13	Develop Departmental Leadership succession plans.	Assistant Town Manager	Dedicated Workforce and Strong Labor Relations

Priority	Initiative	Project Lead(s)	Critical Success Factor
14	Analyze traffic improvement options, including for the East/West corridor.	Police Chief	Well-Maintained Critical Infrastructure
15	Partner with private utilities to ensure maintenance and improvements to critical infrastructure of the Town and develop a plan for addressing it.	Fire Chief	Well-Maintained Critical Infrastructure
16	Reinvigorate the EDC and develop a structure for ensuring feedback and coordination between the EDC and the Board of Selectmen.	EDC Board	Fiscally Responsible and Business Friendly
17	Re-evaluate fiscal priorities to attempt to address affordability.	Finance Director	Fiscally Responsible and Business Friendly
18	Support the construction of the new library.	Library Director	Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities
19	Strategically acquire parcels identified in our Open Space Master Plan and enact the Community Preservation Act as a mechanism for financing acquisition.	Conservation Agent Town Planner Comprehensive Planner	Thoughtfully- Planned Built and Natural Environment
20	Collaborate with Town and School departments to develop collaborative learning opportunities for residents that tap the skillsets of our workforce.	School Superintendent	Excellent Educational Opportunities
21	Focus on community outreach to diverse groups and organizations.	YFS Director	Compassionate Social Services

Closing Remarks

The Board of Selectmen and Assistant Town Manager were invited to provide some parting thoughts to the group. Their responses are summarized below.

Leigh Emery

Today went well; I appreciate the input. We work best as a group. I worried that I would not be able to come up with next steps, it turned out that it was a good exchange of ideas. It was an adventure.

Bruce Trotter

This was a tremendously good use of time. It was great working together.

Syed Hashmi

It was tremendously beneficial to be in a room with department heads and to learn from open discussion. This Town is changing and growing. We have traditionally had only a small need for Town administration, but we need to start acting like a larger town, and that comes with tradeoffs. We need to communicate that to people.

Ian Johnson

I would like to thank Bruce for introducing this idea to the Board of Selectmen. It went better than anticipated. It gave us the opportunity to work together as a team and that's how we're going to be

effective going forward getting this accomplished and making residents feel like this is the Town they want to live in. It also allows the members of the Board and staff to check in to make sure we are doing what is right for the Town.

Shelby Marshall

It was fortunate for me as a new member of the Board to have been part of this process. Our ability to engage with the people actually doing the work is invaluable. This isn't something that should sit on the shelf. It is incumbent on all of us to refer each other back to it, to check each other, and to communicate out to the community.

Kristi Williams

I did not know what to expect, but it was a great experience. It was a chance to collaborate and to develop an amazing plan for going forward. I appreciate everyone's time and input.

Closing Word from Each Attendee

All attendees were also asked to provide one word or phrase to summarize their thoughts on the Workshop. Their responses are summarized in the following word cloud.



Figure 7: Word Cloud of Closing Thoughts

Attachment A: Environmental Scan

Executive Summary

This environmental scan provides a snapshot of Westborough's demographic trends as well as the Town's historical budget and staffing levels. Although the following sections of this report provide specific insights into these trends, it is useful to summarize these findings to present a broad view of the Town's operating environment. The following statements encapsulate major trends and themes regarding Westborough as they exist today.

Westborough is growing. In 2017, the Town's population was estimated at 19,109. This is an increase of approximately 35% since 1990 and 6% since 2000. The number of housing units increased by 6% to 6,924 between 2000 and 2010.

Westborough residents are young. Residents under 54 years of age make up 75% of the Town's population. Overall, approximately 30% of Westborough residents belong to Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and 20% are Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996). The Town's median age is 40 years. Seniors aged 65 and older make up 13% of the Town's population, compared to 12% in the year 2000.

Westborough is more diverse. A total of 71% of the Town's residents identify as White, 24% identify as Asian, 1% identify as Black or African American, and 3% identify as Two or More Races or Some Other Race. Approximately 4% of the Town's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. The percentage of the population who identify as White has decreased since 2000 (88% to 71%) and the percentage of the population identifying as Asian has increased significantly (8% to 24%).

Westborough residents are educated, employed, and prosperous. A total of 63% of residents have a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree, an increase of 10 percentage points from 2000. The median household income of \$106,915 is 46% higher than the median household income in 2000 (although it has remained steady when inflation is considered). The Town has a low poverty rate of 4.7% of individuals, 2.8% of families, and 4.4% of children.

Westborough is getting safer. The violent crime rate decreased by 25%, and the property crime rate decreased by 54% in 2016 compared to 2007. The only area of crime that was higher in 2016 than 2007 was rape; there were six reported rapes in 2016 compared to three in 2007.

Westborough's government revenues are growing, but so are its expenditures. The number of FTEs has increased by 6% over the past five years. Revenues have also increased, with General Fund revenues, primarily from property taxes, increasing by 13% over the last five years. General Fund expenditures increased by 16% over the same period. The largest increases in expenditures by dollar amount over that period were in Insurance (\$2,484,546), Assessments/Charges (\$1,315,970), and EMS/Fire (\$949,141).

These trends are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Community Characteristics

Westborough is located in Worcester County, Massachusetts. To identify and compare trends relevant to the Town, data presented in this scan was obtained from a variety of sources, including:

- U.S. Census Bureau
 - 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census Results
 - American Community Survey (ACS) Five Year Estimates, 2012-2016
 - 2017 Population Estimates Program (PEP)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
 - Unemployment information for Worcester County
- Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)
 - Uniform Crime Report (UCR)
- Westborough Government
 - Financial data
 - Employment Information

Population

Total Population and Population Characteristics

According to the 2017 PEP, the total population of Westborough is approximately 19,109 persons. This represents an increase of 35% compared to the 1990 Census, 6% compared to the 2000 Census, and 5% compared to the 2010 Census, as illustrated in the following figure.

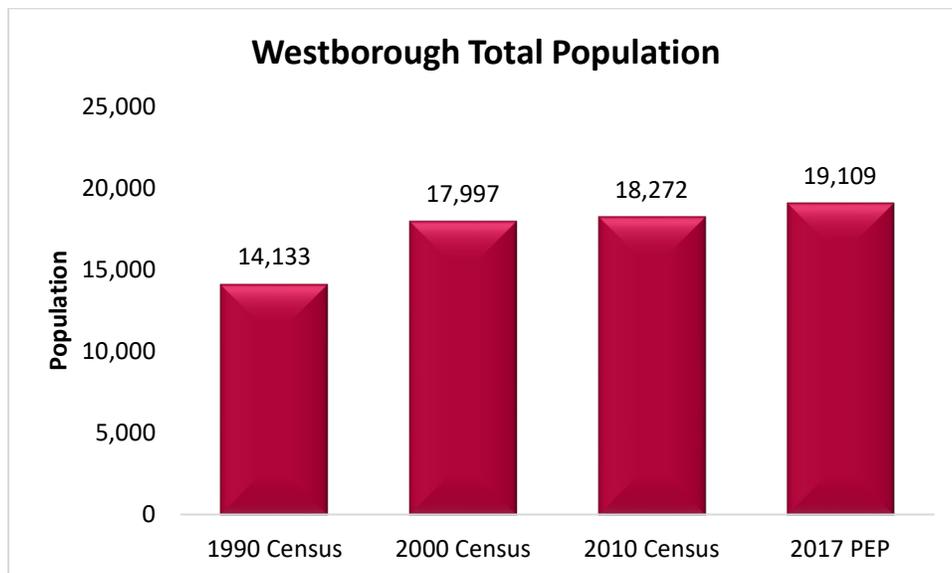


Figure 8: Westborough Total Population, 1990-2017 Estimates

Age of Population

Westborough's median age is 40.1 years, an increase of approximately three years since 2000, when the median age was 36.9. Persons aged 45 to 54 years constitute the largest proportional group in Westborough, followed by persons aged 5 to 14 years. The following figure illustrates the Town's total population by age group according to the 2016 ACS.

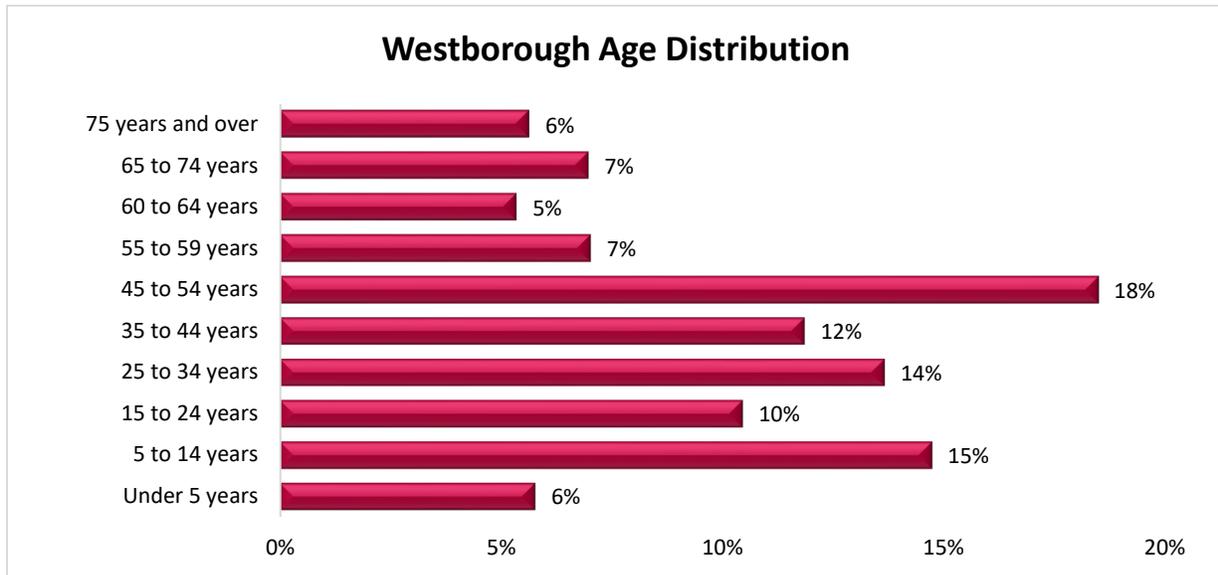


Figure 9: Westborough Age Distribution, 2016 Estimates

Race and Ethnicity

The Town's population largely identifies as either White or Asian. According to the 2016 ACS, 98% of residents identify as one race, with 71% identifying as White and 24% identifying as Asian. No other racial subgroups are significantly represented, as illustrated in the following figure. The Town diversified between 2000 and 2016; the White population proportion decreased from 88% to 71% and the Asian population proportion increased from 8% to 24%. Approximately 4% of Westborough residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, a percentage that has remained stable since 2000.

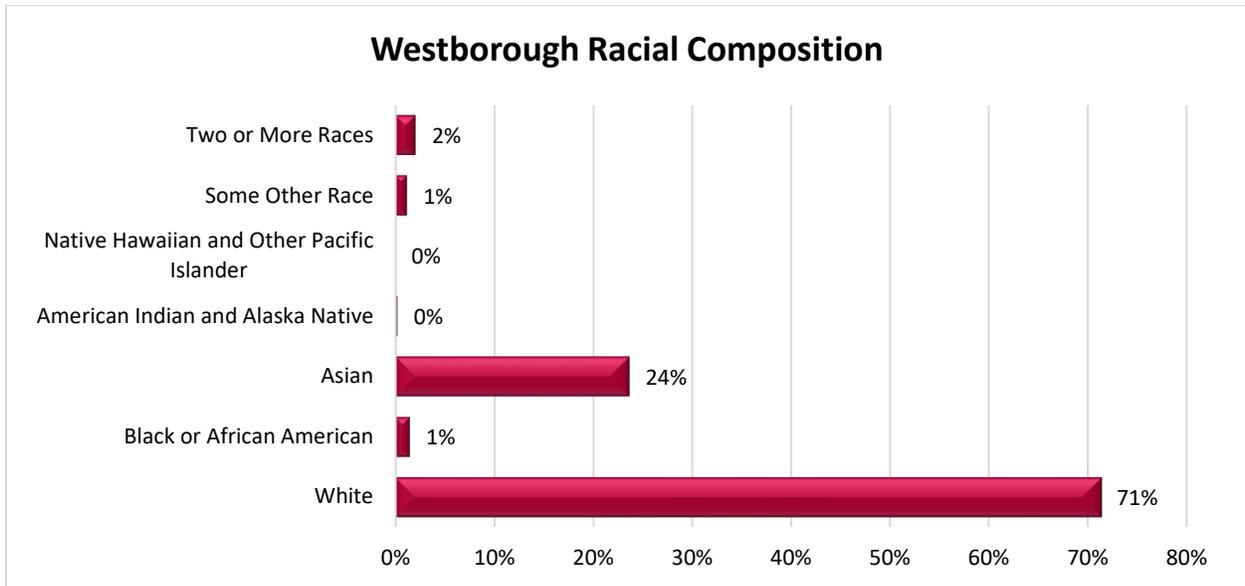


Figure 10: Westborough Racial Composition, 2016 Estimates

Households

The number of housing units in Westborough increased by 6% between the 2000 and 2010 Censuses, from 6,534 units to 6,924 units.

Occupancy

The Town’s occupancy rate is strong, with more than 94% of housing units in the Town occupied according to the 2010 Census and as can be seen in the following figure.

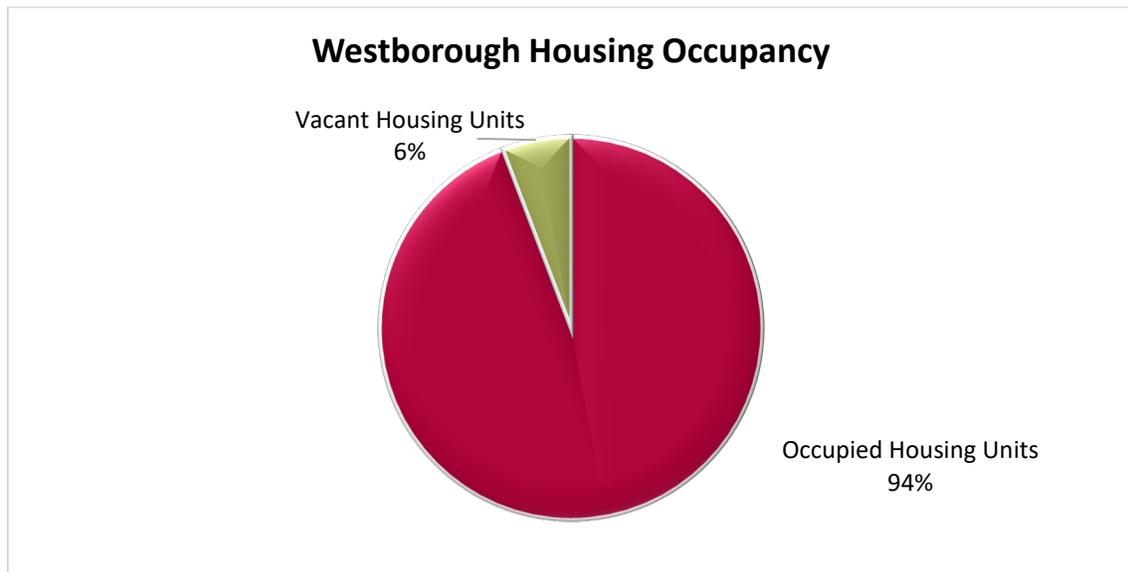


Figure 11: Westborough Housing Occupancy, 2010

Ownership

In addition to comparing occupied and vacant housing, it is useful to examine the proportion of homeowners and renters in the community. Of the Town's occupied housing units, 63% are owner-occupied, while 37% are occupied by renters, as can be seen in the following figure. The percentage of renter-occupied housing units has remained steady since 2000.

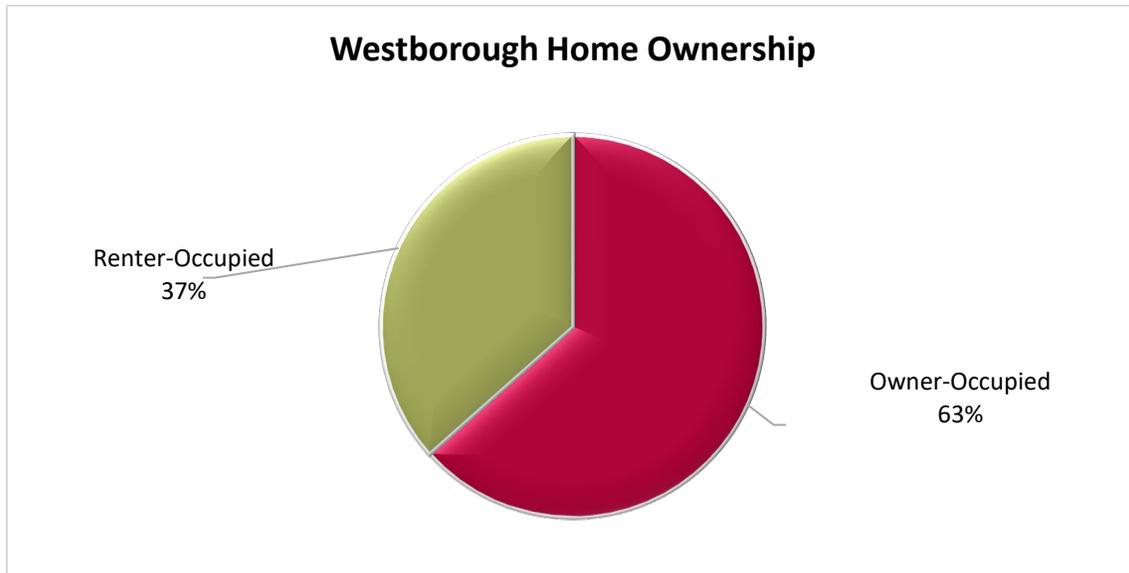


Figure 12: Westborough Home Ownership, 2010

Education

Educational Attainment

Westborough enjoys high educational attainment among residents aged 25 and over, with 63% of residents having earned a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree according to the 2016 ACS. Only 4% of Westborough residents over 25 lack a high school degree. The following figure illustrates the proportion of residents achieving various educational milestones.

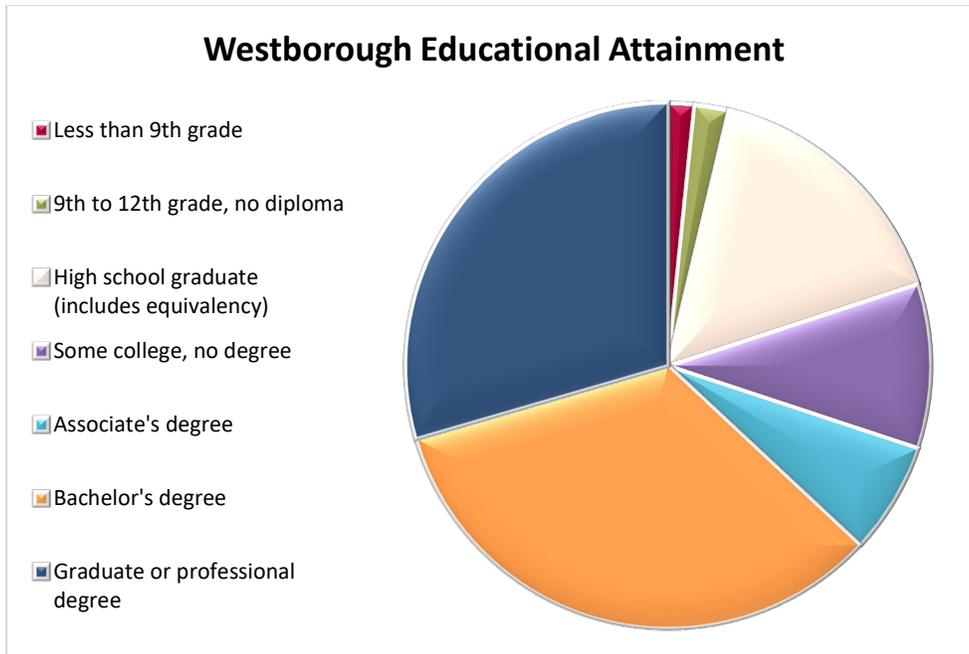


Figure 13: Westborough Educational Attainment for Persons Aged 25 and Over, 2016 ACS

Enrollment

The Town has experienced a greater proportional school enrollment of children aged 3 to 4 years as well as adults aged 18 to 19 years compared to the 2000 Census. The percentage of 3 and 4-year-olds enrolled in school increased from 69% to 81%. The percentage of residents aged 18 and 19 years enrolled in school also increased over the same period, from 70% to 93%. The following table includes the percent of each age group enrolled in school.

Table 2: Percent of Age Group Enrolled in School, 2016 ACS

Age Group	Percent of Population Enrolled
3 and 4 years	81%
5 to 9 years	98%
10 to 14 years	100%
15 to 17 years	100%
18 and 19 years	93%
20 to 24 years	36%
25 to 34 years	8%
35 years and over	3%

Employment

Industry

Employment in Westborough is dominated by two industries: (1) the educational services and health care and social assistance industry employs 24% of residents and (2) the professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services industry employees 23% of residents. Manufacturing is the third largest industry in Westborough, followed by retail trade, as illustrated in the following figure.

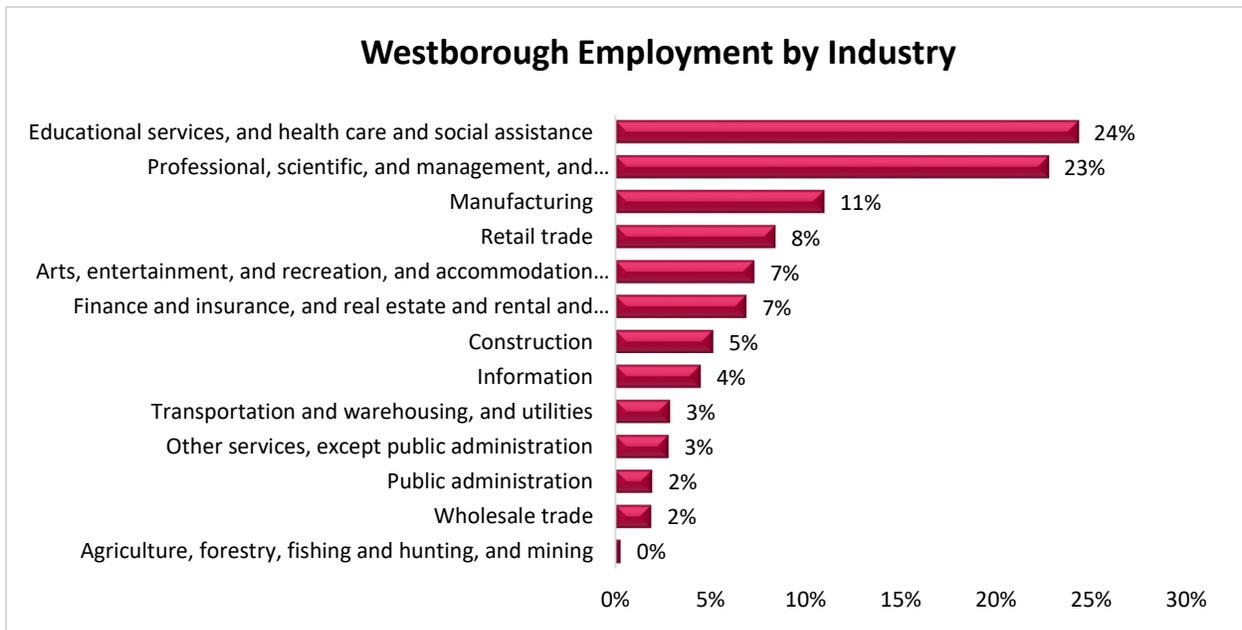


Figure 14: Percent of Westborough Workforce Employed by Industry, 2016 ACS

Unemployment

Based on unemployment data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual unemployment rate of Worcester County (data is unavailable for the Town alone) has consistently been below the national average. After peaking in 2009 and 2010, the County's unemployment rate has been falling ever since, as illustrated in the following figure.

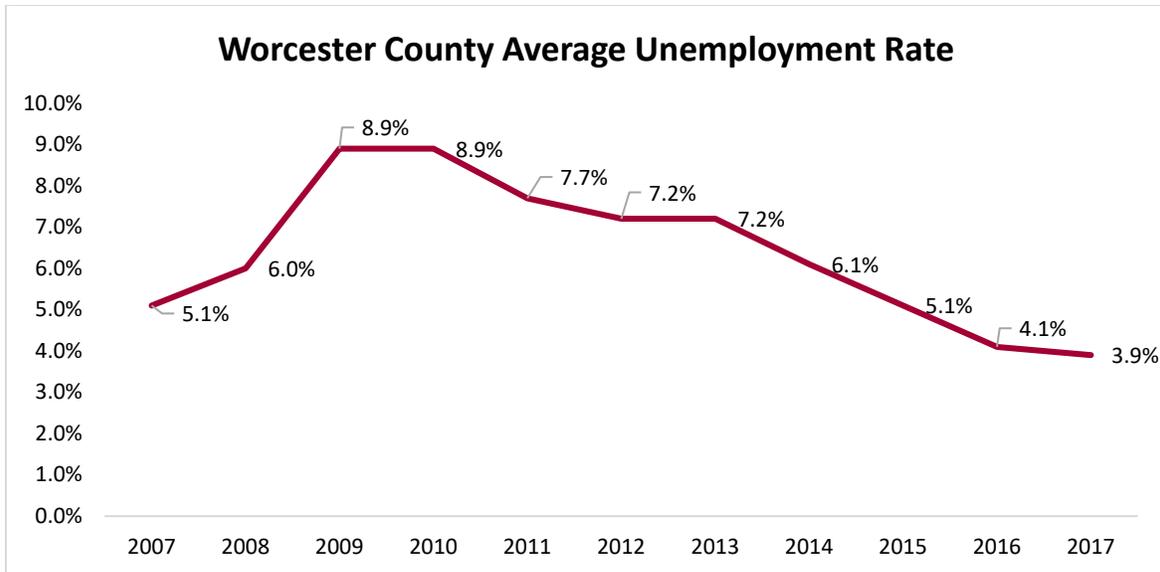


Figure 15: Worcester County Average Unemployment Rate, 2007-2017

Commuting

Westborough residents have an average commute of 31 minutes, and 42% of Town residents work outside of Worcester County. As can be seen in the following table, nearly 90% of residents drive to work, either alone or with others.

Table 3: Westborough Commute Method, 2016 ACS

Commute Method	Percent of Population
Car, truck, or van - drove alone	80%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	8%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	3%
Walked	1%
Other means	0%
Worked at home	7%

Income

Median household income in the Town was \$106,915 as of the 2016 ACS, which is 46% higher than the median household income in 2000. However, when inflation is considered, the median income has remained steady. The following figure includes the historical median household income in Westborough.

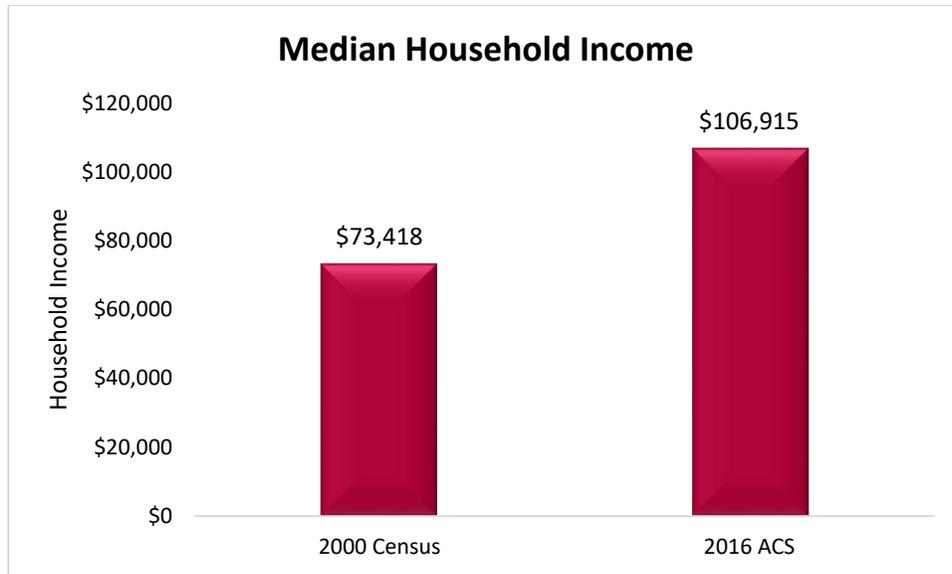


Figure 16: Westborough Median Household Income, 2000-2016 ACS

Examining earnings by educational attainment shows that persons with less than a high school education earn less than one quarter of what college graduates earn, and persons with graduate degrees or higher report the highest earnings. The following table includes the median earnings by education level.

Table 4: Median Earnings by Education Level, 2016 ACS

Education Level	Median Earnings
Less than high school graduate	\$17,200
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	\$41,087
Some college or associate degree	\$42,259
Bachelor's degree	\$74,070
Graduate or professional degree	\$92,566

In Westborough, a total of 4.7% of residents and 2.8% of families meet federal poverty criteria. Poverty rates in 2016 are equivalent to rates in in 2000, as can be seen in the following figure.

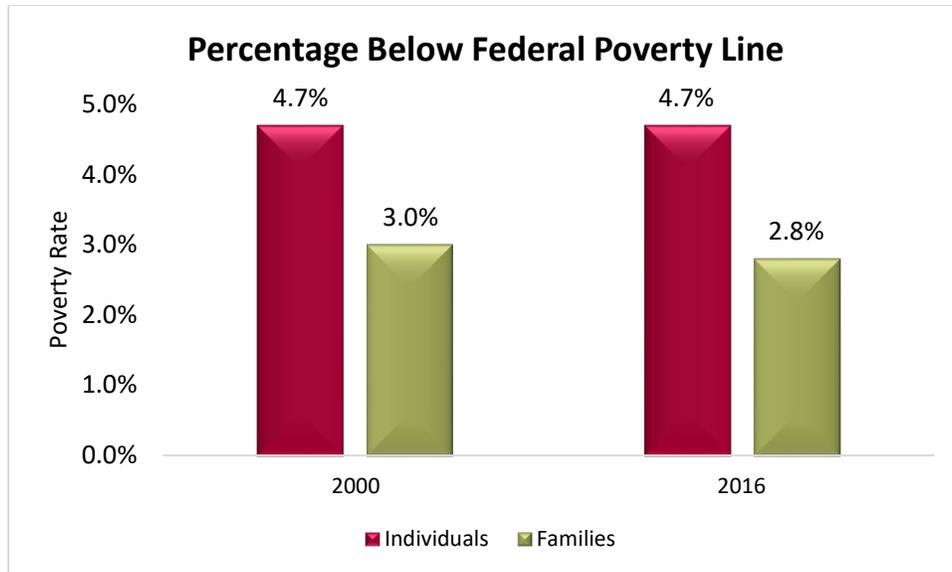


Figure 17: Westborough Poverty Rates, 2000-2016 ACS

Crime

The Westborough Police Department, like many police departments across the country, participates in the FBI's UCR system. This system provides a framework for analyzing crime patterns in a community by organizing incidents according to their kind and severity. UCR Part I crimes include serious crimes which are likely to be reported to police, and which occur with regularity across the country. These crimes include homicide, forcible rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Participating departments report offenses reported, those cleared by arrest or exceptional means, and demographic information regarding those arrested for Part I offenses.

The total number of crimes reported in Westborough decreased by 52% in 2016 compared to 2007; property crime decreased by 54% overall, while violent crime decreased by 25% overall. The following figure shows the total number of violent crimes and property crimes reported each year from 2007 through 2016.

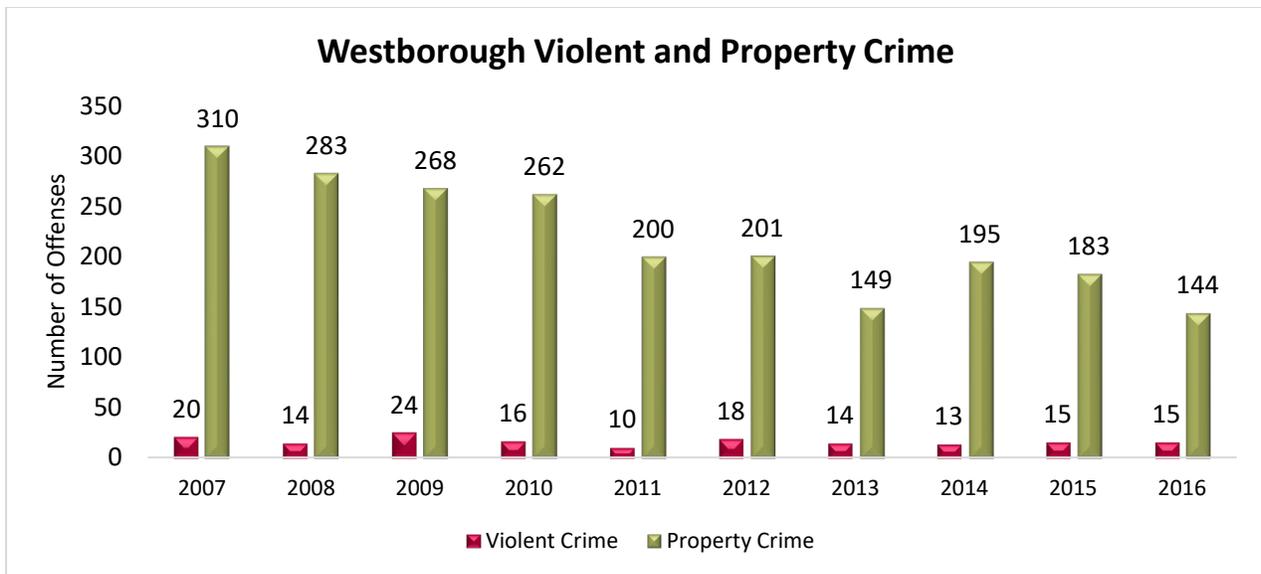


Figure 18: Violent and Property Crime in Westborough, 2007-2016¹

The following table shows crime trends by type. While both property and violent crime decreased in Westborough over the last 10 years, the number of rapes reported in 2016 was double what was reported in 2007. The following table shows the number of violent crimes and property crimes reported by type each year from 2007 through 2016.

Table 5: Violent and Property Crime in Westborough by Type, 2007-2016²

Crime Type	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change
Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not Applicable
Rape	3	3	1	3	0	5	3	1	2	6	100%
Robbery	2	4	0	1	2	3	3	0	2	0	-100%
Aggravated Assault	15	7	23	11	8	10	8	12	11	9	-40%
Violent Crime	20	14	24	16	10	18	14	13	15	15	-25%
Burglary	95	81	61	42	41	42	15	41	24	16	-83%
Larceny-Theft	185	181	184	207	154	148	131	150	148	123	-34%
Motor Vehicle Theft	29	19	21	12	5	10	3	4	10	5	-83%
Arson	1	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	-100%
Property Crime	310	283	268	262	200	201	149	195	183	144	-54%
TOTAL	330	297	292	278	210	219	163	208	198	159	-52%

¹ FBI Uniform Crime Report

² FBI Uniform Crime Report

Town Government Trends

The following categories describe the current and historical trends in the Town organization, including its budget and staffing levels.

Staffing

The number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) employed by the Town has increased by 10.36 FTEs, or 6%, over the last five years. The following figure shows the actual number of FTEs each year.

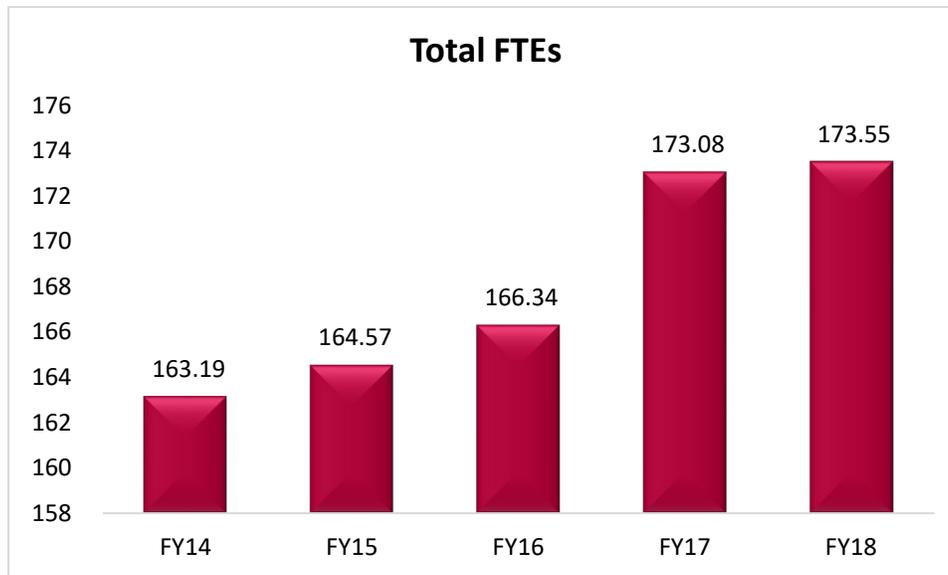


Figure 19: Westborough FTEs, FY 2014 - FY2018

Revenues

Overall, Westborough revenues have increased by 14% over the last five years. During this time, General Fund revenues have increased by 13%, Sewer revenues have increased by 28% (enterprise fund) and 23% (special revenue fund), and Waste Water Treatment Plant revenues have increased by 20%. Water revenues, however, have decreased by 2%.

Table 6: Total Town Revenues by Fund, FY2014-FY2018

Revenue by Fund	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Budgeted	Percent Change
General Fund	\$80,733,601	\$83,395,838	\$86,516,873	\$86,895,040	\$91,240,066	13%
Water	\$4,667,394	\$4,872,184	\$4,609,066	\$4,677,019	\$4,580,982	-2%
Sewer Enterprise Fund	\$2,304,525	\$2,694,465	\$3,024,199	\$3,192,278	\$2,954,963	28%
Waste Water Treatment Plant	\$3,582,079	\$3,639,625	\$4,004,145	\$3,905,586	\$4,305,381	20%

Revenue by Fund	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Budgeted	Percent Change
Sewer Special Revenue Fund	\$5,886,604	\$6,334,090	\$7,028,344	\$7,097,864	\$7,260,344	23%
Total	\$97,174,203	\$100,936,202	\$105,182,627	\$105,767,787	\$110,341,736	14%

The Town's General Fund revenues have increased by 13% over the last five years. Property taxes are the primary source of revenue (78%), followed by State Aid (8%) and a motor vehicle excise tax (4%); this distribution has remained constant over the last five years. Revenue from the Town's primary sources has increased by 11%, 49%, and 8% respectively. The following table summarizes the changes by revenue source.

Table 7: General Fund Revenues by Source, FY2014-FY2018

Revenue Source	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Budgeted	Percent Change
State Aid	\$6,194,509	\$6,333,767	\$6,431,616	\$7,254,286	\$9,259,936	49%
Motor Vehicle Excise Tax	\$3,016,562	\$3,064,357	\$3,299,887	\$3,323,546	\$3,251,625	8%
Hotel/Motel Tax	\$1,022,595	\$1,129,742	\$1,205,814	\$1,238,844	\$1,200,000	17%
Licenses & Permits	\$1,585,432	\$1,183,578	\$1,601,241	\$1,099,444	\$1,049,500	-34%
Other Local Receipts	\$2,595,402	\$3,252,499	\$4,147,962	\$4,067,750	\$3,351,700	29%
Personal Property Taxes	\$5,924,979	\$5,229,246	\$5,373,860	\$5,614,861	\$4,226,672	-29%
Real Estate Taxes	\$55,193,788	\$57,886,567	\$59,596,118	\$59,570,222	\$64,052,859	16%
Other Property Taxes	\$2,216,023	\$2,348,633	\$1,895,806	\$1,749,405	\$1,886,613	-15%
Wastewater Treatment Plant Debt	\$2,984,311	\$2,967,449	\$2,964,569	\$2,976,682	\$2,961,161	-1%
Total	\$80,733,601	\$83,395,838	\$86,516,873	\$86,895,040	\$91,240,066	13%

Expenditures

Revenues have exceeded expenditures every year for the last five years. General Fund expenditures increased by 16% over the last five years, School Department Fund expenditures increased by 17%, Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Plan Funds increased by 15%, and Country Club Enterprise Fund increased by 7%. The only area where spending decreased was the Water Enterprise Fund.

Table 8: Total Town Expenditures by Fund, FY2014-FY2018

Expenditures by Fund	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Budgeted	Percent change
General Fund	\$37,705,464	\$37,571,970	\$39,135,938	\$41,595,289	\$43,729,774	16%
School Department Fund	\$41,962,541	\$43,524,056	\$44,794,161	\$45,890,629	\$49,001,784	17%
Water Enterprise Fund	\$6,484,473	\$6,286,663	\$6,151,321	\$6,168,318	\$6,413,489	-1%
Sewer Enterprise Fund	\$1,714,669	\$1,722,854	\$1,804,095	\$2,019,464	\$1,974,985	15%
Country Club Enterprise Fund	\$386,814	\$374,722	\$401,173	\$380,177	\$415,000	7%
Wastewater Treatment Plan Fund	\$3,625,260	\$3,685,053	\$3,664,338	\$3,789,103	\$4,155,382	15%
Total	\$91,879,221	\$93,165,318	\$95,951,026	\$99,842,980	\$105,690,414	15%

As previously mentioned, the Town's General Fund expenditures have increased by 13% over the last five years. The budget of all Town departments increased during this time. Property/Health/Casualty Insurance is the largest expenditure (28% of the budget), followed by Debt and Interest (21%). Between FY2014 and FY2018, the Conservation Commission, Electricity, and Elections and Registration were the areas with the largest increases (1,340%, 259%, and 247%, respectively). The largest dollar amount increases are in Insurance (\$2,484,546), Assessments/Charges (\$1,315,970), and EMS/Fire (\$949,141). The following table shows the changes in individual department budgets from FY2014 through FY2018.

Table 9: General Fund Expenditures by Department, FY2014-FY2018

Department/Area	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Budgeted	Percent Change
Town Moderator	\$250	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$250	0%
Selectmen/Town Manager	\$375,943	\$380,112	\$403,851	\$417,077	\$458,515	22%
Advisory Finance Committee	\$3,585	\$5,136	\$5,189	\$1,772	\$4,744	32%
Finance Director/Town Accountant	\$136,794	\$142,202	\$147,959	\$161,415	\$175,127	28%
Board of Assessors	\$255,825	\$230,863	\$221,796	\$219,839	\$256,162	0%
Treasurer/Collector	\$277,436	\$283,622	\$291,434	\$262,341	\$272,146	-2%
Legal Services	\$204,490	\$174,471	\$79,348	\$84,829	\$102,500	-50%
Personnel Board	\$24,923	\$6,240	\$25,232	\$27,143	\$ -	Not Applicable
IT Department	\$376,657	\$382,547	\$401,198	\$416,443	\$484,853	29%
Communications	\$46,691	\$44,949	\$44,674	\$42,249	\$48,013	3%
Central Purchasing	\$69,727	\$80,797	\$81,313	\$77,080	\$84,790	22%
Town Clerk	\$176,986	\$204,008	\$215,718	\$229,245	\$243,375	38%

Department/Area	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Budgeted	Percent Change
Elections and Registration	\$21,986	\$38,494	\$71,623	\$86,442	\$76,400	247%
Conservation Commission	\$8,667	\$19,672	\$21,708	\$104,116	\$124,846	1340%
Planning Board	\$222,721	\$228,665	\$235,786	\$159,326	\$152,092	-32%
Zoning Board of Appeals	\$9,562	\$12,617	\$15,268	\$14,574	\$18,815	97%
Economic Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$62,850	\$66,825	\$62,392	Not Applicable
Town Building & Grounds	\$340,067	\$334,516	\$369,951	\$303,578	\$315,964	-7%
Insurance-Health/Property/Casualty	\$9,870,454	\$9,784,510	\$10,670,907	\$11,726,188	\$12,355,000	25%
Police	\$2,783,841	\$2,907,328	\$2,946,037	\$2,980,595	\$3,059,456	10%
EMS/Fire	\$3,532,218	\$3,548,874	\$3,567,077	\$3,912,989	\$4,481,359	27%
Building Commissioner	\$330,938	\$351,557	\$368,837	\$365,806	\$387,622	17%
Sealer of Weights & Measures	\$2,150	\$2,150	\$2,150	\$2,150	\$2,250	5%
Animal Control	\$69,328	\$69,645	\$62,304	\$21,916	\$44,449	-36%
Regional School Assessment	\$630,418	\$646,106	\$574,606	\$714,043	\$694,713	10%
Department of Public Works	\$2,167,277	\$2,191,038	\$2,204,267	\$2,297,610	\$2,548,846	18%
Snow and Ice	\$677,923	\$980,653	\$488,290	\$703,530	\$612,396	-10%
Electricity	\$74,683	\$77,340	\$81,280	\$268,712	\$268,450	259%
Landfill/Recycling	\$690,186	\$701,215	\$673,867	\$654,081	\$712,600	3%
Board of Health	\$278,132	\$286,552	\$297,104	\$308,956	\$328,638	18%
Council on Aging/Senior Center	\$297,914	\$311,610	\$329,012	\$349,974	\$354,407	19%
Youth and Family Services	\$169,236	\$171,404	\$169,305	\$171,296	\$187,274	11%
Veterans Benefits	\$125,492	\$107,918	\$114,030	\$96,026	\$137,686	10%
Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials	\$ -	\$2,406	\$309	\$2,800	\$2,800	Not Applicable
Public Library	\$953,945	\$972,088	\$1,040,762	\$1,060,362	\$1,099,890	15%
Recreation Commission	\$189,216	\$161,615	\$162,118	\$155,921	\$179,117	-5%
Cultural Council - Grants	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	0%
Historical Commission	\$22,656	\$12,653	\$17,263	\$12,621	\$18,193	-20%
Debt & Interest	\$9,558,429	\$8,815,363	\$9,331,123	\$9,243,078	\$9,328,954	-2%
Assessments/Charges	\$2,726,720	\$2,899,033	\$3,338,391	\$3,871,340	\$4,042,690	48%
Total	\$37,705,466	\$37,571,969	\$39,135,937	\$41,595,288	\$43,729,774	16%

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges Analysis

In March 2018, The Novak Consulting Group conducted individual meetings with each member of the Board of Selectmen and facilitated a session with the Town's Management Team. The purpose of these sessions was to gather the ideas and opinions of leadership and staff regarding the Westborough community and Town government. This section summarizes the input received during these conversations. Input received from Board and Commission members is also discussed.

The following word cloud summarizes the words the Board of Selectmen provided when asked to describe the government Westborough.



Figure 20: Words Used to Describe the Town Government

The following word cloud summarizes the words the Town’s Management Team provided when asked to describe Westborough.



Figure 21: Words Used to Describe the Town

Strengths

The Board of Selectmen and the Town’s Management Team believe the Westborough Town Government has the following strengths:

- Town services
 - Police
 - Fire
 - Public works
 - Snow removal
 - Water
 - Cemeteries
 - Daily operations
- Town finances
- Town Hall management
- Board of Health
- Community members
 - Core group of engaged residents participates in Town Meeting
 - High income
 - Highly educated
 - Strong sense of community and civic pride – community is connected and passionate about the Town

- Town staff
 - Efficient
 - Responsive
 - Professional
 - Dedicated
 - Mutual trust and good communication among senior staff
- Stable
- Honest
- Traditional
- Good schools
- Low foreclosure rate
- Low crime rate

Weaknesses

When asked about the Westborough Town Government’s weaknesses, the Board of Selectmen and the Town’s Management Team listed the following:

- Communication
 - Lack of proactive, targeted communication to residents
 - Small number of community members engage with Town
 - Website is difficult to navigate
 - Too much emphasis on transparency
 - Negative comments
 - People don’t want change
 - People unsure of what the Town does
 - Vocal minorities with passion for specific issue can be overly influential
- Town can be slow and bureaucratic, old school
- Town is not up-to-date technologically
- Community
 - People unaware of pockets of poverty
 - Town can feel elitist or divided between “haves” and “have nots”
 - People can feel isolated, not part of the community
- Affordability
 - Many people leave after their children leave the school system
 - Not affordable to age in place
- High taxes
- Infrastructure
 - Lots of traffic
 - Roads are in bad shape
- Governance
 - Different Boards can be pitted against each other
 - Lack of trust between Board of Selectmen and Town Manager
 - Lack of clarity, comfort with relationship between Board of Selectmen and Town Manager
- Diversity/inclusion – Town government can feel insular, closed
- Town government has a difficult time saying no
- Unmotivated workforce

- Few places to swim – no public swimming pool

Opportunities

When asked what opportunities for improvement exist for the Westborough Town Government, the Board of Selectmen and the Town's Management Team noted the following:

- Community engagement
 - Improve transparency and customer service
 - Better tell the story of what the Town does and why
 - Target communication to specific groups (e.g. young people)
- Town is in a time of transition
 - Opportunity to decide what the Town should be
 - Attract more businesses, especially high-tech/biotech
- Embrace diversity without giving up tradition
- Schools – consider how to operate the school system with more financial stability
- Evaluate whether Youth and Family Services should be a function of Town government
- Modernize the Department of Public Works
- Redevelopment of old State Hospital could be an asset if done well
- Explore whether there are more opportunities to use volunteers
- Consider quality of care at the Senior Center and whether it should still be a Town service

Challenges

When asked what challenges or concerns they have for the Town Government's future, the Board of Selectmen and the Town's Management Team listed the following:

- There is some confusion/discontent with the alignment of powers and duties between the Board and Town Manager
- School system is costly, financially unsustainable to continue as-is
- There is competition to attract businesses
- Growth will challenge infrastructure capacity, especially water and wastewater
- People are too busy to remain connected
- Difficult to maintain growth while remaining affordable and reducing the class divide
- Not as many qualified people are going into local government
- Pro-union Town is in conflict with a pro-employee State
- Small businesses struggle dealing with legislation
- Older residents without children are dealing with tax bills they can't afford
- Information security is a concern
- Difficult to balance staffing needs with financial needs

Summary of Board and Commission Input

In June 2018, The Novak Consulting Group facilitated a focus group with representatives from the Town's various Boards and Commissions. The group was asked to consider the strengths and challenges facing the Westborough community and the Town government, and their input is summarized below.

When asked about Town Government strengths, participants highlighted the following:

- The Town government is run well, including the Town meeting
- The Town government is transparent and open to participation

- The Public Works Department does a good job maintaining quality of life
- The schools are excellent

When asked about Town Government weaknesses, the following topics were most discussed:

- The focus is on development and not on preserving open space and Town character
- There is not enough transparency in all areas of Town government, or communication with residents
- There needs to be a focus on civic education for residents

When ask about Town Government challenges, the group discussed the following:

- The high cost of living
- The lack of parking spaces at commuter lots

Finally, when asked about opportunities for the Town Government, the group discussed the following:

- More commercial development and redevelopment of commercial centers
- Learn from what other towns in the region are doing
- Additional resources for affordable housing
- Better walkability

Community Input

To inform the Strategic Planning process, The Novak Consulting Group provided an opportunity for Westborough community members to offer their input through both online means as well as public meetings.

Online Engagement

Online input was gathered through Bang the Table®, a web-based community engagement tool, from June 8 through July 9, 2018. A total of 148 individuals participated. Not all respondents answered every question.

The purpose of the engagement was to gain understanding of how community members perceive Westborough today and where they hope the Town is going in the future, as well as to conduct a SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges) analysis. Raw responses to the open-ended questions are included as Appendix A.

Participants were asked to provide three words describing Westborough today. The most common responses related to the Town's diversity, education system, and emphasis on family and community. The following table includes the most common categories of response.

Table 10: Top Responses to the Question: What three words describe the Westborough community today?

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Diverse	22
Well-Educated	18
Family-Oriented	16
Community	14

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Friendly	13
Growing	10
Safe	8
Engaged	6
Caring	6
Inclusive	6
Vibrant	5
Expensive	5

Participants were also asked to share what they hope the community will be known for 10 years in the future. The most common response was the hope that the school system remains top-quality. Many also expressed a desire for a revitalized downtown, with local businesses and restaurants. Furthermore, many hope the Town will be more walkable and bikeable in the future, with more sidewalks and bike paths. The following table includes the main themes in the responses.

Table 11: Top Responses to the Question: When you hope the community will be known for in ten years?

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Schools	21
Downtown	13
Bike/Ped	10
Diverse	9
Business	7
Recreation	7
Inclusive	7
Historic	5
Community	4

SWOC Analysis

Overall, respondents value the Town’s character, services, and location but are concerned about affordability and the character of the Town changing as businesses leave and development continues. The following table shows what respondents believe Westborough does particularly well.

Table 11: Top Responses to the Question: When you think of the services the Town government provides, what services are you most appreciative/proud of?

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Schools	6
Police/Fire	4
Public Works	3
Recreation	3

When asked about the most significant challenges facing the Town, many respondents discussed issues surrounding the Town’s growth. The most commonly-cited issue was the Town’s traffic challenges, which make it difficult to take advantage of Town amenities. Many also are concerned about the school system;

specifically, that class sizes are increasing, and the quality of education is suffering because of it. Respondents are also concerned about businesses moving out of the Town. They would like to see more local businesses, especially in the downtown area.

Table 12: Top Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Traffic	16
School	12
Business	12
Downtown	8
Development	7
Bike/Ped	6
Transit	4
Housing	4
Growth	3
Community	3
Schools	3

Community Summits

To supplement the Bang the Table online input, The Novak Consulting Group held two community summits in June of 2018. Like the Bang the Table questions, the purpose of the engagement was to gain understanding of how community members perceive Westborough today and where they hope the Town is going in the future, as well as to conduct a SWOC analysis. A summary of the summit input is provided below. Detailed input from the summits is included as Appendix B.

Summit participants were asked about the Town today, including why they live here and what they think are the best things about the Town. Common reasons why participants live here include:

- Good location
- Sense of community
- Good schools

When asked what is best about the Town, common responses included:

- The location
- The schools
- Good people
- Proximity to local farms and local produce
- Safety

Participants were also asked about previous places they had lived, and what they miss from those areas that Westborough lacks. Common responses included:

- Lower tax rates
- Better transit access
- More connectivity between residents
- More representative Town government

The summit participants were also asked about the future, including where they would like to see Westborough in ten years. Common responses included:

- The strong sense of community is retained
- More opportunities and services for seniors
- More recreation facilities and opportunities
- Diverse and inclusive
- A more vibrant downtown
- The schools remain high-quality
- There is better communication between the Town and residents
- There is more green space and focus on the environment
- More jobs and businesses, especially unique small businesses

The participants were also asked what would encourage them to stay in Westborough, as well as why they would leave. Common reasons to stay included:

- Continued strong school system
- Good social services
- Town is a great place for all ages
- More programming; e.g. educational opportunities and an arts center
- Improved library system
- Movie theater in town
- Improved traffic
- Reduced taxes
- More public transportation and parking for commuter rail
- Good jobs nearby, including tech jobs and jobs for youth

When asked why they would leave Westborough, common responses included:

- If the sense of community was lost
- If family was not nearby
- If there were fewer or lower-quality services
- If the school quality declined
- High taxes

SWOC Analysis

The participants at the summit cited many things that they believe the Town does well, including:

- Public works like road and street maintenance, storm drain management, and snow removal
- Police, fire, and emergency services
- The Town's open and welcoming atmosphere
- The library system
- Recreation facilities
- Schools
- Services for seniors

Weaknesses discussed at the summit include:

- A lack of easily-available information about the Town (e.g. on the website)
- A need for better Town planning to preserve aesthetic appeal and ease of living
- A need for improved Senior Center programming and facilities

- A lack of responsiveness from Town government
- A lack of internal Town communication between departments
- A lack of mental health support in the high school
- Poor water quality

Challenges discussed at the summit include:

- High taxes and a high cost of living
- Management of the Town's growth while maintaining Town character
- Vacant commercial space and loss of independent shops
- Growth of the senior population
- Traffic
- Division in community over whether the schools are too expensive
- Lack of efficiency, inclusiveness, and innovation in the Town government
- Lack of nearby jobs, especially for young adults

Finally, opportunities discussed at the summit include:

- Better coordination of community and Town information
- More opportunities for tax relief
- Grant opportunities, like Community Coalition Grants
- Focus Town planning on retaining the community feel
- More community events
- More sidewalks
- Change the Town Meeting system
- Control school costs
- More affordable housing, especially for seniors
- Seek Community Preservation Act funding
- More open space for community use

Employee Input

A strategic planning process involves articulating a clear vision and mission for the organization, defining the organization's values, establishing goals, and identifying priority initiatives and creating implementation plans.

To inform the process, The Novak Consulting Group administered an online employee survey. The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey®, a web-based survey tool, and was open from June 11 to July 9, 2018. A total of 63 employees responded to the survey. Not all respondents answered every question.

The purpose of the survey was two-fold: gather input regarding the mission and values of the Westborough organization and conduct a SWOC analysis. Raw responses to the open-ended questions are included as Appendix C.

Mission Statement

A mission statement typically answers three questions:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?

- Why do we do it?

The following word clouds summarize employees' answers to each of these questions.

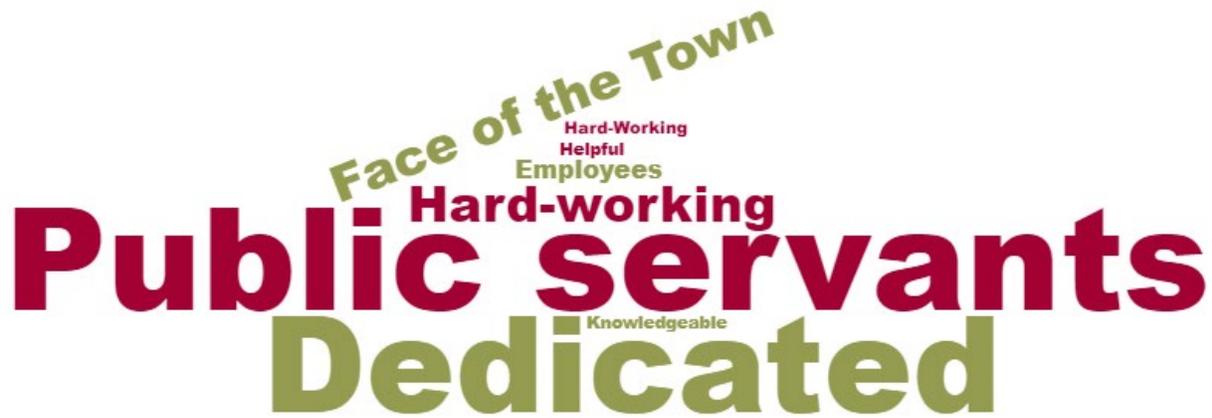


Figure 22: Word Cloud of Employee Responses to the Question: Who are we?



Figure 23: Word Cloud of Employee Responses to the Question: What do we do?



Figure 24: Word Cloud of Employee Responses to the Question: Why do we do it?

Values

All organizations have values, whether they are written down or not. Organizational values guide behavior and some people would say that values are the “essence of organizational culture.” They are the dos and don’ts of the organization. Employees were asked to consider the values that are at play when Town employees operate at their best. They were presented with a list of values (and given space to suggest additional values) and asked to select up to five.

Table 13: Top 25 Most Common Responses to the Question: When Town employees operate at their best, what values are at play?

Value	Number of Responses
Professional	31
Accountable	24
Competence	17
Customer Service	17
Ethical	17
Teamwork	15
Integrity	13
Respect	13
Commitment	11
Courteous	11
Common Sense	9
Caring	8
Communicative	8
Resident-Focused	8
Responsible	8
Calm	6
Character	6
Community	6
Compassion	6
Honesty	6
Consistent	5
Fair	5
Pride	5
Safety	5
Trustworthiness	5

Vision for the Future

Finally, employees were asked to share several distinctive strengths or attributes for which they would like the Westborough organization to be known for 5-10 years in the future. The most common responses related to being a welcoming community for people of all ages and backgrounds. Many respondents also said they want the community to remain a safe and diverse place. Overall, respondents painted a picture of an organization that remains inclusive and service-minded while retaining the Town’s sense of community. The following table includes the most common employee responses.

Table 14: Top Responses to the Question: Please list 2-3 distinctive strengths or attributes for which you'd like the Westborough community to be known 5-10 years in the future.

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Welcoming	9
Safe	8
Diverse	8
Services	7
Progressive	6
Community	6
Communication	6
Great place to live and work	5
Economically-sound	5
Innovative	4
School system	3
Business-friendly	3
Good leadership	3

SWOC Analysis

The survey asked employees to consider the Town’s strengths and the challenges facing the organization. Overall, employees believe Town government provides exceptional customer service and has sound finances. In addition, employees, like community members, are proud of the Town’s excellent schools. The following table summarizes what employees believe Westborough does particularly well.

Table 15: Top Responses to the Question: Name something you believe the Town government does particularly well.

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Customer Service	14
Finances	8
Schools	6
Support for employees	4
Inclusiveness	3

When asked about the most significant challenges facing the Town, many employees discussed the challenges posed by a growing community, and the strain that growth can put on Town infrastructure, including associated traffic challenges. Although many employees are proud of the Town’s school system, many also worry that the school services are expensive and may be financially unsustainable in the long-term. Many employees are also concerned about the Town’s ability to adequately staff the organization

to meet the needs of a growing and changing community. The following table summarizes the challenges respondents believe Westborough is facing.

Table 16: Top Responses to the Question: What do you believe is the most significant challenge facing the Town?

Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Growth	11
Traffic	7
School finances	5
Staffing	5
Communication	4
Diversity	4
Affordability	3

Attachment B: Employee Survey Responses

Table 17: Raw Responses to the Question: Who are we? Please describe the employees of the Town.

Responses to the Question: Who are we? Please describe the employees of the Town.
Hardworking Town employees
We are public servants of the residents of Westborough
Dedicated, knowledgeable, concerned group of professionals
Dedicated, helpful, knowledgeable
Public Employees
Public Servants
We are face of Westborough different departments
We are people who are engaged in helping people get the most of their Town services and are an important pillar in the building of community in our town
We are the reason Westborough is great
In general, we are a group of people who work hard to assist the residents
Dedicated
Employees who serve to Westborough community through a variety of services
People who work for the Town of Westborough
Dedicated, hardworking, and helpful
Employees who are very devoted and hardworking but continuously mistreated and not provided adequate benefits or wages
Hard working individuals with a common goal- to serve the residents of the community
Facilitators of the people of, businesses of, and visitors to the Town
Town employees serving the interests of the Town and its residents
Professional and dedicated public servants
Employees of the Town of Westborough
Police
Public servants for the residents/businesses of Westborough
Public service and local government
We are an organizational structure that partners the community with local government
Advocates of a progressive, diverse community
We provide a service to the taxpayer and other departments
Most of us our very dedicated people who truly care and want to do what's best for residents
Service providers
Varying groups who provide respective services for the Town and citizens
We are a public service provider
A large pool of dedicated public service employees
Community Servants
Municipal Employees
Committed to the cause
Hard workers
The employees of our community are very dedicated to serving the needs of our residents
Town Representatives

Responses to the Question: Who are we? Please describe the employees of the Town.
Dedicated, hardworking to make the community better
A dedicated group of men and woman
We are the people who work for the Town of Westborough and represent Westborough
We represent the Town as we interface with the community
We are here to provide services to the citizens of Westborough
Outsiders
A group of individuals working for the Town of Westborough
The majority of Town Employees are caring residents of the town who are involved in the daily activities of keeping the town running smoothly
We are a group of dedicated, resident-focused, hardworking people who take pride in the work we do
Service providers and leaders to make the Town a better place to live, learn, work and do business
A dedicated group of individuals working together to make the Town run smoothly
Hardworking and dedicated public servants
We are professional employees dedicated to serving the residents of Westborough and those who have an interest in Westborough
We are your neighbors and friends

Table 18: Raw Responses to the Question: What do we do?

Responses to the Question: What do we do?
Keep our Town safe
We administer multiple services through the lens of exceptional customer service
Serve and assist residents and businesses
Maintain and provide services for residents
Inform the public
Serve the public
Serve the residence of Westborough in a professional, caring and efficient manner
We are here to serve the needs of the people who live in our Town in a way that makes people proud of the town in which they live
We show up and get the job done. Any time, place, or condition.
We do a wide variety of services
Serve the Town
Serve our community
Provide essential services to residents
Work for the taxpayers to deliver the best service we can
Everything in our job description and above and beyond
Using our skills, we work to make Westborough a safer/better place
Ensure the needs of the community are met through planning, permitting, safety, and services
Take those actions and perform those tasks that are necessary to keep the Town running as comprehensively and fiscally responsibly as possible
Work to enhance the quality of life in the Town
Provide services to Town residents and the general public
Serve, educate, and protect our citizens and guests

Responses to the Question: What do we do?
Serve in the interest of the public to maintain exceptional infrastructure, services and public order
Provide services to Town taxpayers
We work to assure that the shape of the community that is expected is maintained. This includes, financial, social service, educational, and public safety services.
Serve residents from all walks of life, at all points in life
Provide highway maintenance, water, sewer, tree maintenance, cemetery service to the taxpayer and provide maintenance service for various Town departments
To get the best services for the best price
Provide our departments respective service to the Town and citizens
We provide the best services possible to residents, and with a smile
Serve the public to the best of our ability
We work hard 40 hours a week in order to provide the people of Westborough with the services they require
We provide for the organized delivery of public services
We help townspeople and keep the town functioning smoothly
We strive to provide the best services possible for every Westborough resident
Try to improve the town and its offerings
Work for pay
We provide specific services, dependent on department
We implement the policies of our town department.
When we are at any committee or town meeting, we represent the Town/office for which we work
Serve the citizens of this community
Provide high-quality, almost personalized services
Make the best decisions for the residents & businesses
Provide expertise within our assigned duties
Work
Work together to provide the community a high level of service efficiently
Serve Citizens
Assist and provide a favorable environment for our citizens
Provide a wide range of services to our customers.
Many things. We provide water, sanitary service, and keep roads clear and maintained. In addition, we manage construction, review for Town boards, assist in land issues, provide environmental compliance along with many other things.
We serve the community

Table 20: Raw Responses to the Question: Why do we do it?

Responses to the Question: Why do we do it?
Because we care about our community
We do it because that is what we are charged to do as public employees
Enjoy giving back to local community – make a difference in people’s lives – hopefully for the better
That's a good question sometimes
To inform the public about how the Town is being run
To have an effective Town government

Responses to the Question: Why do we do it?
Because it is our job, our mission and what is expected from us
Because we love Westborough and what it is trying to be as a community
We take pride in our work
Aside from the obvious it's our job. I do believe the majority of employees like to help people.
To make our community a better place to live
Work ethic
Some services are mandated by law and others add value to the community
Because we love the Town and the people we work with. Because it's the right thing to do.
We do it because we care
Because it is our job
That is our job
Public service is a calling in the police profession
Meet the needs of Town residents
We love what we do!
For the betterment of all who live, work, and invest in our community
Career and sense of civic pride
Because it's our responsibility
Not just for a paycheck, but for the satisfaction of service to a vibrant town
It needs to be done
Pride and desire to serve. Making a positive impact on the community is very rewarding.
Because we care, and in our hearts we hope that the Town workers in the town we live in feel the same
To serve, to better the community, to make a positive impact
For a better society
Because it's our job
We love our town and the people we serve!
It is our duty
Because we like helping people
To ensure Westborough meets its obligations as a local government and provide stability to our families
We get paid
It is a core function of a public employee
We care
Because we care about quality
We enjoy it
To help others by providing counseling and providing support for those who may not know where to turn
We do this so that residents can have the best services from their Town government
To satisfy legal requirements and/or improve quality of life for our customers
Provide for our families
For the people who live here, work here, or visit
Most of us do it because we care about where and how we live and helping others
To make our town a better place to live and work for all residents

Responses to the Question: Why do we do it?
We are committed to making Westborough a great community
We do it because we enjoy most of our jobs despite sometimes difficult circumstances
Pride in our community and love of the job
Because we are employed by the Town of Westborough

Table 19: Raw Responses to the Question: When Town employees operate at their best, what values are at play?

Responses to the Question: When Town employees operate at their best, what values are at play?	
Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Professional	31
Accountable	24
Competence	17
Customer Service	17
Ethical	17
Teamwork	15
Integrity	13
Respect	13
Commitment	11
Courteous	11
Common Sense	9
Caring	8
Communicative	8
Resident-Focused	8
Responsible	8
Calm	6
Character	6
Community	6
Compassion	6
Honesty	6
Consistent	5
Fair	5
Pride	5
Safety	5
Trustworthiness	5
Effort	4
Empowered	3
Fairness	3
Open-minded	3
Education	2
Effective	2
Engaged	2
Family	2
Innovative	2

Responses to the Question: When Town employees operate at their best, what values are at play?	
Category of Responses	Number of Responses
Proactive	2
Quality	2
Camaraderie	1
Fun	1
Officer safety	1
Planning	1
Progressive	1
Representative	1

Comments
Looking out for what is right for the Town
Everything we do requires teamwork
Most of the above qualities apply
I think I could have checked off this whole list
Serving the needs of others. Not ourselves or our preferred outcome.
I would also add respect and compassion
Hard to just pick 5
Only five? I see no reason why most if not all of these values should be at play since few of them negate the other. I like to think that I approach my work with most, if not all, of these values!
Reliable
Many other things
It's really all of the above except for "laid back"

Table 20: Raw Responses to the Question: Name something you believe the Town government does particularly well.

Responses to the Question: Name something you believe the Town government does particularly well.
Flexible hours and ways to accept payments for the Town residents
Trust in heads of departments to run their departments and Town government supports them
Budgets
Fiscal management
Schools, fire services
The Town staff caters to those who are closest to them
Putting the right people in the right positions
I believe the Town departments are able to get a lot accomplished with what they have
Manages the Town budget
Supports departments when possible
Collaboration among departments and town organizations to serve the needs of residents
They seem to manage the Town's money very well
Provide for an excellent school system which attracts affluent residents; encourages growth
Listens to needs of organizations within the government
Values employees

Responses to the Question: Name something you believe the Town government does particularly well.
Finance
Education
Distributes information to employees in a timely manner
Town government serves people on a local level in ways state and federal government can't
Maintains its infrastructure
Constant overall improvements town-wide. Every department helps in their own way at making Westborough a better place to live, work and play.
Provides service to the needs of the citizens
Assisting Citizens
Approachability
Tailors to the need of our changing demographics
Cater to residents
Make the community an awesome place to live
Funding for Public Safety
The Town has done a good job of saving money by updating and improving certain things, such as going to every-other-week paychecks
Financial stability
Educate
Interact with the public
Respond to citizens
Responding to resident's concerns
I think we come up with new, innovative ways to provide services to residents and save money at the same time
n/a
We provide quality education and quality services. We are professional, caring, sympathetic and responsive.
I believe that the Town hires some very intelligent people who are always working behind the scenes to make things go well
Meets the needs of the public
Provides documents requested or needed by residents

Table 21: Raw Responses to the Question: What do you believe is the most significant challenge facing the Town?

Responses to the Question: What do you believe is the most significant challenge facing the Town?
Using the Town workers instead of outsourcing work
I think the most challenging aspect facing the Town through the lens of my department is the sense of entitlement. Often people think they are above the laws that govern how we do our job.
Continuing to provide (Town-side) services as businesses and residents expect without drastically increasing the cost. I feel we are currently at a point where we have done "more with less" and can't ask any more of ourselves and fellow employees.
Keeping up....
Pay scale to keep brain power around longer.
The rising cost of taxes and maintaining residents that have been in the community for many years but are not able to afford living here anymore.

Responses to the Question: What do you believe is the most significant challenge facing the Town?

Maintaining the delicate balance of the Town's economic character. I am specifically concerned about maintaining the rural/farm character of our town, because I think that it is a differentiator that drives both economics and quality of life.

Hiring good management and decision makers. Putting the right management team in place that value their employees, so we can bring back a sense belonging to something important. The employees of Westborough are what makes it a great community, if we are treated great we will be great. We need to get back to this philosophy.

More and different services are requested by residents but there is not more staffing.

The Town residents are diverse and there are cultural differences that are difficult when Town employees are trying to assist someone. Additionally, Town residents can be very 'entitled'.

Managing expansion and traffic.

Long-term capital projects.

Many departments are understaffed.

Rapid growth, diversity.

Equal treatment for all departments.

Growth.

The largest challenge that the Town faces is keeping up with growth. Many of the Town departments cannot keep up with the rate at which this town is growing.

The current form of government (i.e. Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen) is utterly anachronistic, dysfunctional and inefficient - the current system (unbeknownst to a largely ignorant taxpaying/voting town demographic) enables the diligent and effective performance of Town business to be hijacked by a handful of individuals laboring in the interests of their personal agendas and a deeply dysfunctional Board of Selectmen, where individuals are allowed to re-direct and bog down the focus of important issues off into trivial and/or irrelevant tangents.

Growth & traffic.

Staffing needs are greater than the budget allows.

The numerous families that move into town with children, educate them in our schools, then move away.

Our population has outgrown the infrastructure - rotary / main street traffic, old small library (look at Shrewsbury!), schools undersized/strained, police department...& Town meeting is not a good way to appropriate funds, vote on policy.

Staffing.

Increased population and traffic.

Getting new buildings built.

Competition with the Westborough Public Schools for tax dollars.

Growth.

Increasing departments to proper staffing levels to adequately provide a service to the Town and citizens.

Out-of-control school system spending/budgets

Providing for unfunded mandates

Traffic issues. We need to seriously look at design options and begin planning new roadways from East Main Street at Lyman through Cedar Swamp out to Hopkinton Road before commuters and corporations decide to look elsewhere to do business. We correct a traffic problem, people will stay and do business in Westboro :)

Provide service and good communication to all citizens of all cultures

Responses to the Question: What do you believe is the most significant challenge facing the Town?
Trying to meet everyone's needs
Providing services expected by citizens and controlling costs. If too much burden is transferred to employees, the Town loses its ability to attract and retain quality employees.
School age population increasing
Morale
The current Board of Selectmen's lack of support and trust in staff
No answer
Many people who live here, often come because of our schools. They can't afford to live here afterwards because it is very expensive. We need to explore ways to keep people here, where they want to live.
Housing expenses have risen to an impractical level
Communication and paving the way through regulations
The exodus of employees living in town
Space. the schools are lacking enough classroom space as special ed classrooms have become joint. Other departments are lacking storage space as well as areas to run programs.
Citizens lack of understanding of what Town does
Quickly growing population - too small schools to accommodate
The town as a whole - increasing taxes.
Town government - long-term employees who have lost their enthusiasm for the work they do, which carries over to how they serve residents.
For Town government the biggest challenge is staying in touch with the average citizen. We can't become too big or insulated from the people we serve.
For the Town's future the biggest challenge is achieving a sustainable balance between the needs of the residents and the needs of our growing business community. Good planning, including public involvement, and execution is necessary.
I feel that the traffic in the downtown area is an issue that needs to be looked it and solutions need to be worked on. It gets worse every year.
Controlling the school budget/growth and downtown traffic congestion
Population growth

Table 22: Raw Responses to the Question: Please list 2-3 distinctive strengths or attributes for which you'd like the Westborough community to be known 5-10 years in the future.

Responses to the Question: Please list 2-3 distinctive strengths or attributes for which you'd like the Westborough community to be known 5-10 years in the future.
Good schools, fair taxes and a sense of community
That we are consistent and fair
Openness to others, progressive, and safe
Diverse, reactive, innovative
Smart, clean, crisp and welcoming
Environmentally-friendly, family services and support, safe living
Embrace of diversity. Communal engagement. Knowledge of its history, present, and potential future.
Proud, diverse, respected community

Responses to the Question: Please list 2-3 distinctive strengths or attributes for which you'd like the Westborough community to be known 5-10 years in the future.
1. Safe place to live/work. 2. Solid infrastructure
Community awareness
A great place to live and work, a responsive and progressive Town government, and local policies that support these goals
Cutting-edge, safe, productive
Excellence in responding to the taxpayers, a well-rounded community
A great place to live and work, a responsive and progressive Town government, and local policies that support these goals
Exceptional public services
Unbiased and equal leadership that has a vested interest in our community
Respect, community, unity, safe, happy
The Town will be a strong hub for Bio Tech, the Town is welcoming for big businesses, and the Town is a great community to live in
1) That the Town has progressed past its current form of government (i.e. Town Meeting Vote) and implemented a representative form of government; 2) that the School Department has developed a sense of fiscal responsibility and accountability toward the burden they place upon the taxpayers and mirroring the fiscal corner-cutting and belt-tightening accountability reflected in the Town-side budget; 3) that the Town, having increased commercial interest in Westborough exponentially, and finally recognizing that tax rate is rarely if ever, the deciding factor in a decision to locate a business since it is overhead passed on to the consumer anyway, would have finally moved to a graduated tax structure to provide some relief to the overburdened resident taxpayer, as an offset to what they've sacrificed in gentrification and quiet, pleasant, small-town atmosphere to make room for the increased traffic and burden upon infrastructure, Town maintenance and loss of open space generated by the influx of commercial interest
Professional - forward thinking - innovative
Welcoming, diverse, family-centered
Safe, beautiful, and great customer service from all Town employees
A great community hub/new larger library; representative government - no more Town Meeting; improved traffic flow
Kind, proactive, engaging
Community awareness
Progressive, diverse, welcoming
High quality of life, strong business climate, solid economic conditions
Stability in government
Professional, inclusive, and safe
Financially stable; Common Sense Elected Officials; A place to call Home from birth to death
We are a town rich in history and pride
Working hard for the residents and treating people fairly and respectfully
Friendly, connected, welcoming
Leaders, ahead of the time for wellbeing and helpful to the nation's ongoing crises'
Compassion, quality of life for all citizens
It will always likely be known for schools primarily. In order to avoid people selling out of the town post-graduation there needs to be more offerings to 20-30-year olds.

Responses to the Question: Please list 2-3 distinctive strengths or attributes for which you'd like the Westborough community to be known 5-10 years in the future.

Efficiency

User friendly. Informative

Welcoming and diverse community that continues to have rural charm

This is a caring town and has many services already. It is already known for its schools and should be known for its concern for the people who live here, and the many great events it holds.

Safe, friendly, welcoming

High quality services, innovative, efficient

Diversity, Opportunity, Beauty

Strong environment and fiscally stable

Inclusiveness, financial stability, community bond.

Distinction, quality, balanced

Good communication, transparency, integrity

Town remains strong and competitive in the growth sector while retaining employee talent

Maintaining its character and providing excellent services

Services, opportunities, quality of life

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Attachment C: Community Summit Input

August Community Summits

The following represents the written information participants provided at the community summits held in August of 2018.

Town Government Strengths and Weaknesses

Please focus your response to these questions on your experience with services provided by the Town of Westborough.

- **What does the Town of Westborough excel at as a service provider?**
 - Education
 - Open space agenda
 - Outstanding storm draining management
 - Road and street maintenance
 - Friendly, welcoming Town Hall employees (Clerk, Board of Health)
 - Animal Control
 - Fire, Ambulance, Police – friendly, accessible, convenient
 - Harvey's transfer station
 - Recreation department and library programming
 - Public works
 - Snow plowing
 - Openness to community regarding meetings
 - Elections
 - Police
 - Fire
 - Water quality
 - Meals on wheels
 - Senior center outreach
 - Library Services
 - Snow plowing
 - Police, Fire, Ambulance
 - Surviving Rt. 9
 - Excellent Senior Services
 - Town beautification
 - Garden Club
 - Train maintenance
 - Education – well rounded
 - Openness to resident input
 - Recreation program facilities

- **Have you ever been disappointed by a service you received from the Town?**
 - Not having calls returned by Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager within 30 days
 - Lack of response from former Town Council
 - Website – lack of availability of minutes and awards from boards and committees
 - Aesthetic appeal – needs to be redesigned with user in mind

- The Town Manager handling of Spurr House Sale
 - Lack of care about destroying mailboxes moving snow
 - Lack of good way to learn about town
 - No welcome packages
 - Inadequate senior center facility – space issue
 - Staffing of senior center
 - Police department – gender treatment of women
 - Lack of collaboration
 - Handicap access to public buildings
 - Senior center facility – programs could be improved
 - Our town planning (the execution of) is lacking
 - Disappointment with water quality and response from DPW
 - Taxes are too high!
 - No grief counseling/support in the schools for students
 - Sufficient water
 - Mental health services in high school
 - Lack of communication within the town
 - Retention of good town employees
- **Is there anything you would like to see the Town do MORE of or do DIFFERENTLY in the future?**
 - More community events
 - Communication from town hall to be more accurate and comprehensive
 - Have lost local interest appeal
 - No good resident interface
 - No story to tell
 - School Department does a good job (appropriate, positive, hopeful and vibrant tone and content)
 - Planning with focus on community
 - Better communication from town officials
 - Coordinate community information
 - Bylaws on types of business in town center
 - Recognize different ways people get information
 - More support for seniors to keep them here – tax rate, services
 - More slots for tax relief
 - Walker Meadow resident tax relief – don't use sewer system, plow own, maintain roads
 - Eye on 40B Status
 - Change form of government council mayor
 - Better integration of diversity
 - Increase in sidewalks throughout Town
 - Better communication
 - Do better with open space preserving
 - Town meeting system is dysfunctional
 - More adult education opportunities
 - Improved sidewalks
 - School planning/controlling costs
 - Lower the per student cost
 - More community events
 - More mental health and addiction services and education

- Move utilities underground
- Town website improved
- More transparency in town government
- Development more in character with Town

Our Community

Please focus your response to these questions on the broader Westborough community.

- **As a resident or stakeholder of Westborough, what do you see as the major challenges facing the community?**
 - Flow of traffic
 - Sidewalks in various parts of town – Rte. 30 & Sidewalks
 - Longer range planning is needed
 - School department is oversized in comparison to population – excess taxation on residents
 - Controlling or modifying how we pay for services
 - Manage growth while being inclusive and maintain small town attributes
 - Tension in terms of meeting the diverse needs of our population – with generosity
 - Improved elder program
 - Dealing with people who resent the school system
 - Managing cost of living here
 - Migration of jobs to cities
 - Good jobs for young adults
 - School age population increase
 - Traffic
 - Loss of independent shops
 - Rotary driving rules
 - Traffic
 - Growth effect on school system
 - New senior center for additional activities
 - Senior services increase
 - Vacant commercial space
 - We need to control growth
 - Different, creative ways to lower taxes
 - Constant increase of school costs
 - Growth of the senior community/population
 - Encourage businesses to move to town (commercial – Astra)
 - Continuing quality education with cost effective management and skyrocketing enrollment
 - Keeping residents (seniors) in town
 - Continuing to be business friendly
 - Public transportation
 - Getting too expensive for seniors and others
 - No tax relief for seniors
 - More business to pay taxes and provide jobs

- **Are there opportunities you see in the future that the community needs to be poised to seize?**
 - Grants
 - Finance affordable housing
 - Create more equitable tax structure
 - New perspective of Board of Selectmen
 - Assertion of new members
 - Get people for citizen leadership program
 - Finding a benefactor
 - Community Preservation Act Participation
 - Community Coalition Grants
 - Business attraction
 - Revitalizing downtown
 - Tackling parking and traffic problems
 - Be ready to buy property for targeted use
 - Community Preservation Act Funding
 - Increased affordable housing both for seniors and downsizers
 - More give backs by developers to benefit the community as a whole
 - Acquire more open space/land by Town for community use
 - Investigate public transportation opportunities
 - Anticipate future development/acquisition of larger parcels of land
 - Clean energy opportunities
 - Improve water source
 - Mental health education and services for all ages
 - More parks
 - Look into grant opportunities

- **What do you believe are the top three issues facing this community?**
 - Taxes
 - Maintain growth – school buildings
 - Traffic congestion
 - Rte. 9 as a barrier to the rest of the community
 - Manage past
 - Long term planning
 - Maintain small town attributes
 - Parking in MBTA
 - Affordability
 - Lack of new perspectives on managerial side
 - Attract new or expanding businesses
 - Question whether we should change the form of Town government
 - Safety within the community
 - Need for inclusiveness in the community of our diverse population – outreach from both sides
 - Need of community center for all age groups
 - Traffic
 - Water supply
 - Infrastructure maintenance
 - Managed growth
 - Taxes

- School costs
- Health care/pension costs
- Lack of public participation in Town decision making

The Future

Please think about the future of Westborough ten years from now and beyond.

- **What do you hope Westborough will be known for ten years from now?**
 - Good schools
 - Kind people
 - Inclusive town government
 - Inclusive town
 - Keep our sense of history in tact
 - Good community involvement (volunteering)
 - Community swimming pool/Recreation Center
 - Vibrant Senior community
 - Vibrant town center
 - More visible and central town common
 - Family centered
 - Bike trail
 - Green space – especially Lake Chauncey
 - Unique mom & pop shows rather than chains – artsy
 - Took action related to climate change & the environment
 - Competitive tax rate and equitable
 - Maintain Open Town Meeting
 - Better communication from Town to residents and businesses
 - Quality of public safety
 - More residential options for seniors to age in place
 - Lower taxes
 - Diversity/inclusion
 - Vibrant downtown
 - Recreation department
 - Library
 - Senior center programs
 - Strong education system
 - Something to attract everyone
 - Recreation (Chauncy, trails, golf)
 - Welcoming to all religions
 - Brand new updated Senior Center
 - Public community pool
 - Good social services
 - Support of veterans
 - Elderly teens kids family
 - Mindful, healthy community
 - Caring
 - For downsizers and our adult children
 - Strong sense of community
 - Good place to raise a family

- Jobs/business opportunities
- Good access to medical care

- **What would keep you and/or your family wanting to live in Westborough in the future?**
 - Intergenerational
 - Programming – social and educational
 - A movie theater in Town
 - High Tech Jobs nearby
 - Improved traffic flow – traffic bypass to direct traffic through the Rotary
 - Better sidewalks and crosswalks
 - New library
 - Generous benefactor
 - Safe – low crime and low substance abuse
 - Good value of services vs. cost
 - Good jobs nearby for my kids when adults
 - Strong school systems
 - Community arts center
 - Reduce tax rate
 - Change tax structure
 - Updated senior center (currently 30 years old)
 - Value and appreciate population without children in the public school system
 - Strong community
 - Variety of housing options
 - Recreation opportunities
 - Religious and civic groups
 - Strong education
 - Continuing education
 - Strong library programs and services
 - Traffic solutions
 - Good restaurants
 - Movie theater
 - Small businesses (coffee shop, florist)
 - Rotary downtown
 - Farmers market
 - Innovation
 - Innovation
 - Good social services
 - Convenience of location being able to afford to stay
 - Public transportation
 - Parking for commuter rail for local Town residents
 - Availability of medical services and quality medical care

- **What would make you consider leaving Westborough?**
 - Jobs elsewhere
 - High taxes
 - Grandchildren living a significant distance from Westborough
 - Not having participatory town government
 - Feeling like being just a number

- If Town did not care for our natural environment and natural resources
- Didn't feel safe and healthy
- Divisive climate
- Adult children need to move to find jobs
- Declining housing values
- Declining quality of schools
- Dominant retail chains
- Declining health and community without services, housing, etc.
- If I had to live in a high-rise building
- If my family leaves
- Taxes
- Increasingly large class sizes
- Traffic
- Downsizing
- Decrease or cuts to services
- Loss of services
- If our adult kids and grandkids moved away
- Bad winters!

Why Westborough

- **Why do you choose to live in Westborough?**
 - Schools – music, arts & math
 - Near jobs
 - Rural feel & near the City
 - Affordable housing
 - Mix of historic old and new
 - Family is here
 - Convenient location
 - Small town feel
 - Excellent 55+ community
 - Tax base 40 years ago was excellent
 - Church organizations
 - Commitment to community
 - Location
 - Schools
 - Access to 495
 - Job accessibility/location
 - Commuter rail
 - Diversity of available housing
 - Relatively small town feel
 - Schools
 - Location
 - Public services in the community
 - Business location in Town/short commute for work
 - Community events
 - Local TV access
 - Availability of local restaurants

- Ecumenical nature of community
 - Working together of Town groups to benefit the whole community
 - Diversity
 - Friends in area
 - 4th generation home town
 - Small town feeling – big city resources, services, etc.
 - Community friendliness, historic feeling
 - Community ties
 - Convenient location
 - Good place to downsize
 - Walker Meadow is unique one floor living
 - Availability of goods and services
 - Youth programs
 - Active/passive recreation
 - Neighborhoods
 - Open space trails, farm
 - Access to Boston, Worcester, Providence
 - Walkable downtown
 - Safety
- **If you have ever lived somewhere else, what do you miss about that community?**
 - Charming downtown to walk around
 - More lively
 - Summer evening activities – farmers market, arts
 - Everyone knew everyone
 - Ease of walking places near my house
 - Nothing! Westborough offers what I need
 - Access to Metro Boston was easier
 - Property values appreciated better
 - Tax rates have stayed lower – in control
 - Representative town meeting government – fairer
 - Public swimming pool
 - Community newsletter – news source – feel less connected without it
 - Easy access to favorite ice cream stand
 - Vote on town meeting issues without having to attend town meeting
 - Quietness
 - Ocean
 - Rural
 - Farms
 - Orchards – dairies
 - Lower taxes
 - Miss more sophisticated forms of entertainment in big city like Boston
 - Less expensive to live elsewhere
 - Bigger house with lower taxes
 - Trash and recycling services
 - Public transportation

- **In what ways is Westborough “the best” place you have ever lived?**
 - Small town close to cities
 - Proximity to Ocean and Mountains
 - School system
 - Community pool
 - Combination farmland, neighborhoods
 - Schools embrace diversity
 - Nice, polite people
 - Good schools
 - Town offers what I need
 - Access to cultural events
 - Best senior community
 - Good town relationship with transfer station for all items
 - Town Manager – Financial acumen!
 - Sense of history
 - Beauty
 - High energy citizens
 - 4 seasons
 - Safe community
 - Excellent schools – works for benefit of the town
 - Flashing crosswalk signs
 - Veterans park
 - Local CSAs and local produce available
 - Activities of youth
 - School system
 - Local businesses run by local people
 - Library
 - Emphasis on kindness in school system and community
 - Because of services in town it’s the only place I ever lived!
 - Ethnic diversity without animosity
 - Average income good without snobbery
 - Shopping, church, community groups, lots of things close to home
 - Proximity to major highways
 - Convenience and location
 - Church, community
 - You don’t have to go out to Rt 9 if you don’t want to
 - Community volunteers
 - Neighborhood safety
 - Sum of the parts

September Community Summits

The Novak Consulting Group held two community summits on September 17, 2018, to gather public input on the proposed Vision Statement and Critical Success Factors developed by the Board of Selectmen. Julia Novak of The Novak Consulting Group facilitated the discussion. A summary of the summit discussion is provided below.

Vision Statement

Summit participants reviewed the draft Vision Statement: Westborough – a vibrant, attractive, safe, inclusive, connected, and engaged community – for a lifetime. They were asked what this Vision conveyed to them. Responses included:

- The “engagement” aspect of the Vision should be strengthened.
- The Town Center is not easy to walk around in, especially near the Rotary. Businesses close due to poor walk-in traffic. Congestion downtown deters food traffic.
- Not sure the Town is “for a lifetime.”
- What does “vibrant” mean? Don’t see a lot of connected community and people involved – not a lot of interaction. Not much shopping downtown. You are only interacting in the community if you have school kids, through sports, etc.
- Our location attracts transient workers, immigrants, H1-B workers, etc. who don’t stay.
- Many people buy a house, use the schools, and then move away. The longer-term residents tend to get stuck with the bills until they must move for financial reasons. At Town meetings, schools get the funding at the expense of seniors and the Senior Center.
- The lack of volunteers on Town committees makes “Connected” and “Engaged” difficult.
- Seniors get priced out, move to Grafton and Shrewsbury. They can’t afford to stay here.
- Young people can’t afford to buy a house here due to high property taxes, high housing prices, and the cost of living.
- Police, Fire, and teachers have problems affording homes here. The last Town Manager couldn’t afford to live in Town.
- We need more affordable housing for seniors and young people.
- There is no town in this country who wouldn’t want this vision – too broad.
- Place I’d want to live.
- People moved here because of this vision, but older people now don’t have that same expectation. There are a lot of people helping the school, but there is not anyone helping the seniors.
- People do want to focus on Westborough being a community “for a lifetime.” A lot of people have moved away after their children have graduated, and people don’t necessarily want that.
- A lot of people want to live here but can’t afford it. Long-term residents are being priced out and being replaced by a more transient population.
- “Attractive” is superficial. What does it matter? Is that the right word, or would something like “Diverse” be a better choice?
- Maybe the Town should focus on being more functional than pretty, having the qualities people want and need.

Participants were also asked if the community described in the Vision sounded like a community they would want to live in. Responses included:

- Yes – 40 plus years for all of us here!
- Yes
- Yes, but the statement is very general
- It sounds like a community that listens to and respects its residents
- The Town should have thoughtful growth policies
- What does “connected” and engaged mean?
- Environmentally Friendly
- Green
- Culturally-Rich
- Diverse
- Focus on keeping seniors over 65 in the community if they want to stay

Participants were also asked if anything was missing from the Vision Statement. Responses included:

- Tax break for seniors
- Culturally-rich
- Vision should note a ten-year timeframe
- There is no reference to families
- Diverse
- Welcoming
- Green
- Affordable

Critical Success Factors

Participants in the Summits also reviewed the 11 draft Critical Success Factors (see Attachment A) that the Board of Selectmen believe are necessary to achieve the Town’s Vision. Participants were asked which of these 11 areas were most important to them, and why. Responses included:

- Fiscal Responsibility
- Social Services
- Effective Governance
- Strong Economic Base
- Excellent Educational Environment
- Our government should be using all 11 points to run the Town. Also, our governance should be developing the strategic plan with some assistance from a professional consultant if necessary.
- Access to Diverse Housing- too many seniors and young people can’t afford to live here.
- Strong Economic Base- since AstraZeneca left taxes have skyrocketed. There are many empty storefronts and retail spaces- we are overbuilding. Traffic congestion downtown is a problem in attracting businesses.
- Fiscally Responsible- schools get a majority of the budget while the Senior Center must beg for a bus and loses residents to fancier Senior Centers in Northborough and Marlborough. There is no equity or balance for different needs in town. Bus routes are not posted at bus stops, which leads to confusion.
- Effective Governance- Town Meetings are ineffective and lead to packed meetings raising taxes. The Town Manager is not elected and the elected Selectmen do not have much power. There is little accountability- costs rise and people move out to afford to live.

- Planned Built and Natural Environment- too much development too fast impacts the water supply. We are worried that the Despres property may cause flooding in the neighborhood due to poor drainage. Overbuilding near the Train Station puts strain on the school population.

Participants were asked whether these Factors accurately described what must go well in order for the Town to achieve its vision. Responses included:

- Yes
- Yes, in a broad sense
- Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities- important to note that the Town should be a good partner to all of the outside organizations providing these opportunities

Participants were also asked whether anything was missing in these Factors. Responses included:

- No specific emphasis on services for the large population of older adults
- “Infrastructure” should specify roads and sidewalks.
- How are you defining “critical” infrastructure?
- General communications with the public (e.g. this meeting wasn’t posted online)
- Sidewalks on Route 9 are not for seniors
- Effective Public Transportation- there is not enough parking at the Train Station, we need shuttles
- Communication: communicating to residents what the Town actually already has to offer and how to access it. It’s mentioned in “Effective Governance” but it is very important and also an area of deficiency. People did not know about this meeting, for the most part. There is also a lack of communication between departments within Town government.
- There should be more emphasis on collaboration.
- There is not enough about fostering creativity, which misses out on a large demographic of students and adults. There should be more collaborative programming across the age span.

Participants were also asked questions based around specific Critical Success Factors. Responses to the questions are summarized below.

Thoughtfully-Planned Built and Natural Environment: What is important about both the built and natural environment?

- Important to preserve the small-town feel by preserving open space and having development, signage etc. be seamless with the historical look of the Town
- The Blueberry Farm property should not be developed
- Hockomock Pond is contaminated and should be addressed; no one talks about the problem
- Bicycle paths are an important amenity
- The Town needs to think about the impact of everything it is doing: is there infrastructure to support it and if not is there a plan to build it?
- Say “Green Spaces” specifically instead of “Natural Environment”

Access to Diverse Housing Options: What can Westborough do that a spectrum of housing types exist to meet the needs of different ages and economic groups in the community?

- Tax those using the school at a different bracket because they are actually using the service

- Consider a tax for renters who aren't contributing directly
- Privatize the sports offered at the school so they aren't subsidized by tax dollars; it would also save the Town money on liability insurance.
- Engage with other nearby towns to find solutions
- Rehab unused buildings to be senior housing

Excellent Educational Environment: What is the Town's role in supporting the public schools?

- The Town supports the schools well in general

Compassionate Social Services: How can Town government better support its residents during difficult times in their lives?

- Youth and Family Services are available to everyone in the Town. However, there are only two part-time counselors and a part-time admin in the Department. The Town can invest more and promoting the resources available.
- The Town could be more proactive in investing resources
- Mental health needs to continue to become more mainstreamed
- Youth and Family Services is the first line of defense and prevents the need for police and ambulances
- There are kids at-risk in the school system; the school has started to be more proactive but they need support from the Town

Proactive Public Safety: What needs do you see in the community?

- They do a fabulous job
- The Town supports them
- Is there a role for the police to monitor where traffic backups are in town?

Effective Governance: How would you like the Town to share information about community events and issues?

- It is difficult to find information on the website
- A community calendar would be helpful, maintained by Town departments. The Public Library is trying to maintain a calendar, but not everything is up yet and many don't know about it (Burbio app).
- Information needs to come to us; people are too busy to go looking for it
- There should be communication tailored to people at different stages in life
- The Town would benefit from hiring a dedicated communication coordinator; there is only a part-time position responsible for updating the website

Dedicated Workforce and Strong Labor Relations: Are there any Town services that are of note, either because they are excellent or need improvement?

- It is difficult to find job postings if you don't know where to look
- The Town does a lot of teachers; they offer a lot of professional development

Well-Maintained Critical Infrastructure: What is the most pressing infrastructure need?

- Community gathering spaces for all seasons
- A recreation center that has appeal beyond just children, with cultural opportunities, etc.
- More sidewalks
- The sidewalks along Route 9 are dangerously close to the road
- Should there be more local transit available in town? Many don't know about existing options. The Senior Center also works to meet seniors' transportation needs.
- Put in more of the crosswalks with solar lights, especially in front of the high school

Fiscally Responsible: What does it mean for Town government to be fiscally responsible?

- Don't spend more money than they have
- Be responsive to the community
- Take impact on future debt into consideration
- Proactive decision making on when and how to spend money
- Continue to attract corporate residents to offset costs (e.g. water bill)

Strong Economic Base: What types of businesses would you want to see in Westborough?

- Add "for all sizes" in the description of the Factor
- Why are we losing so many businesses? What role could the Town have in keeping them?
- If the Town allows something to be built it needs to be feasible that it will be used
- Stores are closing because of the internet; the Town should try to draw businesses that don't have as much online competition
- The Town should try to attract destination retail and businesses offering employment bases
- There should be retail businesses in the Town center, but parking is an issue
- Look at Hudson as a model, and other towns doing well with their downtowns
- There should be walkable business centers

Diverse Cultural and Recreational Opportunities: What cultural attractions, recreation opportunities, or events do you wish you had access to?

- Bike trail
- Live music
- Gallery/art studios
- Annual fireworks
- Focus on events that bring the community together
- Dog-friendly spaces; so many spaces and festivals prohibit dogs
- More development of Lake Chauncey water recreation opportunities; have it be more of a destination
- Support the Recreation Department
- Food trucks at soccer games

Attachment D: Online Community Engagement Input

The community was invited to provide input during three different phases of the process. Phase I took place before the August workshops; residents were asked to give their opinions on the Town’s strengths and challenges. Phase II took place between the August and September workshops; residents were asked to discuss what they value about the Town’s history and how that history can inform the future. Phase III took place after the August workshops; residents were invited to give their opinions on the Town’s draft Vision Statement and Critical Success Factors.

The raw responses provided on Bang the Table™ are detailed below.

Phase I

Table 23: Raw Responses to the Question: What three words describe the Westborough community today?

Responses to the Question: What three words describe the Westborough community today?
Ethnically diverse, well-educated, future-focused
Vibrant, diverse, expensive
Livable, diverse, growing
Community, family-friendly, traffic
Committed, engaging, safe
Engaged, young, optimistic
Traffic, expensive, entitled
Rich, white, bland
Proud, close-knit, growing
Involved, caring, inclusive
Safe, diverse, community
Family, education, amenities
Expensive, safe, family-oriented
Family-oriented, small, community
Optimistic, diverse, social
Smart, Involved, growing
Active, engaged, caring
Disconnected, bland, aspiring
Okay, boring, unremarkable
Education-oriented, diverse, active
Friendly, community-oriented, educated
Pleasant, quintessential, busy
Diverse, welcoming, community-oriented
Young, diverse, active
Family, up-and-coming, run-down
Education, diverse, family
Family, schools, rural
Diverse, small, friendly

Responses to the Question: What three words describe the Westborough community today?
Conservative, straight, settled
Completely over-taxed
Diverse, taxes, schools
Lost its charm
Very, very crowded
Convenient, friendly, enjoyable
Family-oriented, Pleasant, Stepford
Potential, crowded, home
Convenient, Expensive, Friendly
Divided, Non-diverse, Old
Educated, diverse, welcoming
Family, growth, schools
Community, Respect, Accountability
Historic, traffic, sleepy
Family-oriented, Engaged, Enjoyable
Diverse, Growing, Friendly
Education, Open space, Congested
Aging, growing, old-fashioned
Friendly, diverse, education-oriented
Neighborly, Diverse, Accepting
Growing, Integrating, Striving
Families, Community, Schools
Education, tolerance, support
Nothing without schools
Safe, stable, thriving
Safe, family-oriented, diversity
Drastically Changing Demographics
Quiet, safe, family
Complacent, dull, stuffy
Expensive, Diverse, Convenient
Close knit, Kind, Helpful
Young, Educated, Diverse
Diverse, safe, community
Supportive, enthusiastic, concerned
Open, friendly, active
Families, Schools, Children
Community, connected, growing
Diverse, Caring, Community-oriented
Safe, little and quaint
Caring, Sharing, Thriving
Kind, inclusive, forward-thinking
Diverse, Family, Education

Responses to the Question: What three words describe the Westborough community today?
School-oriented, community
Growing, friendly, proud
Active, neighborly, engaging
Friendly, Welcoming, Accommodating
Growing, Educated, Overprotective
Family-friendly, quaint, welcoming

Table 26: Raw Responses to the Question: What do you hope the community will be known for in 10 years?

Responses to the Question: What do you hope the community will be known for in 10 years?
Safe, open-minded community for all to raise their families.
Inclusive, safe community that provides for the needs of all residents - young, old, and in between - regardless of income level. A place that provides the amenities of suburban living while retaining some rural aspects.
Smaller-lot housing should be encouraged, and emphasis should be placed on land conservation.
Locally-owned businesses should be supported in the traditional downtown area with chains and big box stores regulated to the Route 9 Corridor. Walkability and public transportation should be prime considerations.
Leader in developing inclusive community living (employment, housing, and social community) for people with disabilities. An engaged and forward-thinking community.
The most desirable town west of Boston given its community vibrancy, the beauty of its common spaces, and the sense of connection among the people who live here. To achieve this, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin by elevating the inclusion and priority of our kids/students. Give them someplace to go and things to do where they are welcome and can play. Our "town common" at Baystate is a joke. Include student representatives in important town initiatives and let them lead. Our students are diverse, talented, smart and collaborative. Perhaps they could help build our future in the same light. - Have sidewalks and bike paths throughout and connecting the town. Right now, the thousands of residents "on the other side" of Rt 9 are cut off from Westborough. There are no safe walking or biking routes to downtown for us. - Elevate our beauty. More trees and flower boxes along the main roads. - Make it easy to keep the fun coming. The bands and beer tent at the 300th anniversary at Lake Chauncey was the most lively event I've seen in this town in my 25 years here. It showed we have a pulse. We used to do July 4th fireworks over the high school and everyone came with blankets, strollers and picnic baskets. Good stuff. It brought people together.
We can create an active community center where people - young and old can go. Make the downtown a place people want to visit and spend time in - shops and cafes to make it more vibrant. Celebrate our wonderful walking trails - it is a real highlight of Westborough. Continue to share activities that are going on around town so that everyone can join in events and activities and feel a part of the community. We have a wonderful, diverse community with a great educational system. Although we have grown large, we should aim to try to create and maintain a small-town feel.
Think of a beautiful, community-minded place to raise a family, with top notch schools, and a welcoming nature for incoming citizens. A community center would be helpful that engages all populations of our citizens. Keeping schools funded is helpful. Strong leadership that welcomes positive change as the community's needs change.

Responses to the Question: What do you hope the community will be known for in 10 years?

A great place to raise a family with excellent schools, community organizations, and a place where citizens care/support one another. (Westborough Connects is a good start.)

Increase business interest in the greater Westborough area. Bring in more expert advice for that function (economic impact evaluation). Bring a station back into town with the option for more shops and restaurants. More jogging/walking trails (rail trail). Attention to property preservation to maintain/list older properties to keep the charm of downtown.

A hope that Westborough will be known as a community with a diverse economic base that is strong enough to support the key governmental services that make it a great place to live, work, and visit.

A Town that embraces diversity, a good quality of life with affordable prices, thriving local businesses, A Town that embraces modern technology.

Good schools, beautiful restored and lively downtown area, incredible recreation facilities at Chauncy with an area to rent out for events and walking paths (and no hunters), reasonable taxes, kind people, attractive for businesses, improved traffic situation.

Diverse, welcoming community that values education, historical aspects of town while looking to the future.

Preserve historic buildings that are the foundation of our community's history. Promote adaptive reuse of buildings especially in downtown area. Work towards more affordable, entry level housing options (not condos but small houses or town homes). Celebrate our diversity through community events (300th parade was a fantastic example but does not necessarily need to be of that scale).

True diversity, something currently lacking in the community

In ten years I would hope that the community is known for its commitment to maintaining the historical New England feel of the town, while continuing to innovate the downtown setting so that it has a vibrant business base where people go to shop, eat and relax. Sustaining high performing schools and continuing to value diversity and engagement of the community for government and civic support should be essential values to how the community is run. I hope that in ten years we have maintaining open space and purchased even more of it, for further developing walking and biking trails. Lastly, I hope that tackling the big goals - such as road and highway development to diversify the traffic flow through town to alleviate the traffic, are areas for high level planning and work.

Excellent school district. We need to keep funding the schools adequately.

Excellent schools combined with a more economically diverse population, plenty of outdoor recreational activities, and more lively, pedestrian-oriented modes of activity. Schools need to continue to be funded sufficiently, and residential development should be denser and more focused within walking distance to downtown.

I would like Westborough to be known as a racially, culturally & economically diverse town that is pedestrian and bike- friendly with bike lanes & sidewalks linking the entire town. A town with fabulous open space and outdoor recreation opportunities and excellent schools with a vibrant downtown that encourages folks to hang out together.

Westborough should be known as a town offering excellent schools, preserved agricultural charm, recreational opportunities, a sense of history, a vibrant downtown, and a diverse population...all packaged in a location with convenient proximity to shops, restaurants, services, and job opportunities. We are so fortunate that a strong foundation for achieving these goals exists - I feel that if our community remains focused and continues on the excellent path it has taken thus far, the aforementioned list of descriptors is highly achievable.

Lovely accessible downtown, highest quality public schools, and genuine community building activities designed to bring people together. Updating run-down buildings, supporting small business and lots of money to support our schools can help.

Responses to the Question: What do you hope the community will be known for in 10 years?

Great schools, a welcoming community, ever-expanding racial diversity, a lovely community

Outstanding education, support for all intellectual levels, tolerance for all individuals. Beautiful downtown. Chauncy lake

Vibrant town center with destination shops and restaurants. Need planners to focus on incentives to redevelop the tired rotary district.

Great Schools, Chauncey Lake Recreation and Conservation area, revitalized downtown, bike paths, engaged community, lower taxes, good drinking water, downtown train stop.

Reallocating funds from school system to funding senior center would be devastating to Westboro. School ranking and quality of children's education will plummet. Negatively impacting the draw of families that seek quality education to Westborough which has ripple effect to taxes, business and community. Larger classes, staffing reduction, cuts in SPED programming this list goes on.

Great schools and education system. Supporting and encouraging local small businesses. Accessible town center where it is safe and fun to walk around.

Agree with everything below! I also hope we can be known as a community that values residents of all backgrounds and incomes (not to go too far off topic but when we are selling prime seats to high school graduation to the highest bidders while everyone else has to wait in line for worse seats what message does that send to the large portion of the town residents who are not in high income brackets??)

A vibrant mixed-use, transit-oriented downtown that attracts a diverse population with high-quality places to live, shop, work, learn, worship and play. Encourage growth downtown to build upon synergies and make it a bustling place. Improve sidewalks, move rail station downtown and add bike lanes to encourage alternate modes of transit. Design a Commons that is a park destination and not a leftover space between dumpsters and parking lots. Invest in the schools to attract young families. Provide a mix of housing types with affordable options for young adults and empty nesters. Incentivize businesses hiring skilled and professional workers. Lead in environmental stewardship and protection.

Diverse population that supports its community. Top school system that children will want to come back to raise their children.

Excellent schools, diverse community, safe, plenty of recreational activities, vibrant downtown

Great education and programs within rec and schools, stable growth with revitalizing the down town area. We NEED to see investments in the schools and programs surrounding them. Agree with "saywhat" comments. Our recreation department does a great job of organizing events and programs that bring our community together.

Great place to raise a family, excellent schools, recreation, activities and events for children and families. Invest in schools.

A connected community that values families and has a vibrant downtown. The school system is a major draw for young families, so it is important to make sure that the school continues to have smaller class sizes and that the curriculum exceeds the "standards". It would be nice to have events where the town comes together like the 4th of July block party, Holiday Stroll and the 300th celebration. It is also really important to keep our green spaces vibrant and shy away from overdevelopment. I love the hiking trails in Westborough Charm Bracelet, continuing to upkeep that or expand if possible.

That we are an open community that welcomes all people and that celebrates everyone's contribution in making Westborough a place where we all want to live together. That we maintain to the best of our abilities our diversity, which includes ethnicity, class, economic (corporations, small businesses, a vibrant downtown, working farms, etc.). That we are mindful of our history and the

Responses to the Question: What do you hope the community will be known for in 10 years?

need to preserve it, but not to use this history as a barrier to adapting to change in the present. The more we can involve people in shaping our community, the better we will be able to achieve these goals.

That we invested wisely in growing the future of the town by continuing the focus on educating the future generations, and encouraging a vibrant, walkable downtown.

Hopefully - a great school system comes first to mind. Not just high-achieving in test scores, but respected and reputable because of a commitment to small class size and educating the whole child (with attention to social-emotional learning, the arts and sciences as extracurricular offerings, community service, acceptance and promotion of diversity). Also - a vibrant, walkable downtown that offers options for all ages. Outdoor play and engagement, dining, shopping and some culture. We can cultivate this by choosing wisely what goes into the Bay State Commons area as well as other downtown fronts... a coffee shop open in evening with live music, a small local bookstore, a restaurant that opens out toward the playground and green space with outdoor dining. Lastly, the library is in a prominent downtown spot. Investing in that, as is being planned, would be a huge improvement - it could make that space a community hub and gathering place for every demographic.

As seniors who downsized to move to a more convenient community with many higher end amenities, we absolutely made the right choice. We hope Westborough will become more "senior friendly" interns of taxes. The current tax structure offers little or no relief for newcomers.

Table 27: Raw Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

I think there are 2 things that would greatly improve downtown Westborough.

1. More sidewalk accessibility from neighborhoods to each school and/or downtown.
2. More businesses in the rotary area that are open in the evenings that provide a social destination. We need to fill our vacant storefronts and be sure that we are filling them with businesses that will keep our downtown vibrant and lively.

A more vibrant downtown - currently we have middle school/mill pond age kids so busy with school and sports activities. We would like to move closer to downtown but would like to see more businesses there including restaurants, stores, etc.

I would love to see more restaurants downtown. I would also love to see sidewalks all the way down Route 30 to Tufts. This would enhance walkability, access to Nourse Farm and the Tufts dog park, promote community and enhance health.

I would want to see more shops and restaurants downtown; good public transportation options; and to see the Town lead the way in offering meaningful employment and housing opportunities for adults with disabilities. I would also like to see a more colorful range of businesses that offer social spaces, entertainment, arts/culture, etc.

Rotary is too congested; perhaps installing a traffic light, getting rid of the rotary and widening the road wherever possible will help. Need to construct alternate outlets to Routes 9, 30 and 135.

The Charm Bracelet of trails, the multi-use bike path, and the area around Lake Chauncey, and coming renewal of the fields at the high school are excellent elements we can build upon. We could be known for these.

What could keep my family here? A more vibrant and "happening" community. It is pretty sleepy and dull right now. It rarely has a pulse. When I think of places where we could move when we downsize, I think of places where people walk, shop, eat, and meet downtown, where there is beauty, and where

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

there are destination attractions (such as skiing, boating, and thriving arts). Places with things to do and things to see. In Westborough see a line of traffic down Main Street.

The one thing with our desire (mine included) for "more restaurants" is that the seats need to be filled for these restaurants to thrive. My husband used to own a restaurant in town (for decades) and it was tough on him every time the town granted a new liquor license for a new restaurant. It meant more competition and fewer people in seats as an independent restaurant owner. (It is extremely hard to compete with the national chains who have higher buying power/lower food costs and deeper marketing pockets.) I would encourage us to think out of the box. We used to have the Old Vienna Coffeehouse downtown which had bands every weekend on the top floor. People came from all over to have dinner and watch the bands.

I would love to see a more active Commons area. Additionally, to have more sidewalks that connect to the Town (especially West Side). I would like to see more engagement of attracting economic development to our area that supports the budget and reduces our tax rate. More senior citizen programming and community events that are inclusive of whole town celebrations.

A repertory movie theater like the Brattle Street theater in Harvard Square in Cambridge... Let's have a venue for Indie and classic films and how about a place to have homemade ice cream like the old Steve's Ice Cream. There's room at Bay State Commons. I'd love a cool coffee shop to hang out in as well. I guess I'm thinking of Davis Square in Somerville out here in the 'burbs!

I would like to see online voting for Town elections and live streaming of Town meetings etc. Thanks.

The taxes collected to support the Town and schools. A restructuring needs to take place so that the aging community can afford to keep their houses and stay here Westborough. I hear over and over again people saying I can't afford to stay here or I can't afford to live in Westborough where I grew up. With the high cost per student for education, we need to look at a more fair way to pay for it. Maybe a bigger tax break for property owners over the age of 60 or maybe institute a per student fee and reduce the general real estate taxes. It is not only Westborough that needs to look at this issue.

Town meetings are broadcast live on Charter and FiOS. Adding an Internet live stream would be nice.

Would people hang out at Red Barn if it was open in the evenings?

I would love to see:

- Sidewalks all the way down Route 30 to Tufts
- Elimination of the rotary
- Costco
- Movie theater with stadium seating
- Rock-climbing gym
- Greater celebration of seasons and holidays with decorations, parades, events e.g. Oktoberfest in October, Home For The Holidays celebration at Thanksgiving time, fireworks around the 4th of July etc.
- More vibrant downtown
- Large 2 person swings placed around downtown area for people to stop and swing together (similar to waterfront in Burlington VT)
- Live music venue, DJ, dancing; not a "club" atmosphere geared toward teens and college students but something for families, ages 0-100+ to come out and enjoy good music from all eras and dance together (similar to weddings where all generations mix and have a great time)
- Non-chain restaurants
- Quality pizza place
- Authentic Mexican food
- French restaurant

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

- Board game cafe
- Quality, non-chain bakery (breads, croissants, Danish, pastry, pies); what exists now has mainly cakes, cookies and brownies
- Fish market
- Butcher shop
- Antique shop
- Art gallery and studio where community artists and photographers from kids-adults, from no professional experience/training to experienced, could create, showcase and sell art
- Places like "stitched with love" in McKinney, TX with classes and clubs where older generations can feel satisfied/useful and pass down practical skills and talents, that made their own childhood special, to younger generations like quilting, sewing, cooking, knitting, carpentry, gardening, even off-beat skills like baton twirling, marbles etc.

*look into McKinney, TX

"McKinney has one of the oldest thriving historic downtowns in Texas. The downtown commercial district offers more than 120 unique shops and over two dozen restaurants. Art galleries, furniture stores, antique, gift and home décor shops and apparel boutiques offer treasures for your shopping pleasure. Historic Downtown McKinney is a true destination. Stroll the square and see a show, taste a new wine and enjoy the live entertainment. Discover Downtown McKinney with eclectic shopping from independently owned stores and rising culinary scene. This coming together of new and old, historic and trend-setting, daytime festivals and nightlife activities embodies the spirit of McKinney and what makes it unique." (Source: <https://www.mckinneytexas.org/567/Explore-Downtown>)

Overall, I would stay and recommend this town to others if there were more intergenerational activities/experiences, high quality food/dining, and more celebration.

A bike trail/path would be nice, like the Minuteman Bikeway.

I agree with all the "more sidewalks" comments. You can't walk from the neighborhoods around Haskell Street to Chauncy Lake never mind to downtown. The school system is fabulous and should be a priority.

Tax breaks, more transportation options to greater Boston area, more community events bringing diversity awareness.

Totally agree. The other thing that would be wonderful is if the Town boards and committees (BOS, school, planning, etc.) did a better job at communicating what the agenda items will be for upcoming meetings. Syed Hashmi is doing a great job at communication. Other boards should do the same as well. You shouldn't have to drill down into the Town website to get the agendas. Information should be sent out via email blasts, text, and through Facebook. Most people don't have the time to attend or even watch each and every meeting.

The addition of the park at the Commons has been wonderful. My children are grown, and it makes me happy to see so many kids playing at the park behind Ted's. I'd support building it out even further, possibly with the addition of a splash pad and even more playground equipment. It would be nice to have it be a showpiece for the town.

I would love to see the library expand and become more of a community space. They do a great job there now and I know an expansion is under consideration. One thing that would be great there would be a co-working space. Go to the library any day of the week and you'll see people already using it as a workspace. So many people in town work from home full time or a few days a week but it's isolating.

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

A co-working space and additional use of the library would bring more people downtown, and perhaps bring them into the shops and restaurants. The library could charge a small membership fee and provide the space and free Wi-Fi (which they already do).

Also, jobs. We need to do a better job at attracting high paying jobs and making sure our office parks are filled.

I really would like to see an expansion of the downtown area to bring in more businesses, especially those catering to plant based healthy food. We have a growing need to promote healthy eating and more and more people are asking for plant-based protein in restaurants. This is also good for the environment due to the smaller carbon footprint. We also need to make the downtown area more pedestrian friendly, with sidewalks, bike paths, etc. Westborough is also getting to be an expensive place to live in- perhaps looking into how tax breaks can help and what economic incentives can be utilized to make Westborough more affordable and attractive would be tremendously helpful.

A large, cool coffee shop down town, with couches and good music, where the community can gather and where there's a community board, so people can get info about the going's on around town. More artsy, eclectic shops - less chains and insurance agencies. Change up east main so it's cute and walkable. Put shops on west main that are inviting and bring community together and eclectic. A bike path somewhere like in Holliston. Places to sit outside downtown. A Cute cheese shop, coffee, ice cream. Think Hudson. Take away blight like the tufts machine lot and that other decrepit looking house in the middle of downtown.

The downtown area (rotary and west main) needs some mama pop restaurants and shops. Such as a good book store, a nice bar restaurant, ice cream shop, boutique store. Something that will attract everyone to enjoy.

There was an independent FLIX movie theater that was WONDERFUL!! That and Old Vienna Coffeehouse kept me sane when I transitioned from Boston to Westborough.

Yes, there is so much happening with all the boards, commissions and committees it would be helpful to have updated information. That and a Town calendar that listed all events would increase civic engagement and allow for more inclusive planning.

Everyone wants good restaurants downtown, more pedestrian traffic downtown, cafes and other local businesses and destinations downtown, more transportation options, and more of a tax base without a huge increase in the demands on schools and roads. Right? The way to get ALL of these things is to move the commuter rail station back downtown, where it ought to be. Younger people and professionals working in Boston would buy walking distance to downtown and commute by train, patronize businesses downtown, and not drive. Short of that, getting rid of the rotary and reconfiguring the streets downtown to have a bit more public space and make it possible to stop and park without risking getting rear-ended would make a huge difference. It would be worth adding a couple of traffic lights and a few extra minutes there -- it would be the same number of cars; just make it clearer that every road gets its turn. Also, I would love to see more sidewalks and bike paths in the town.

The property taxes will need to be reasonable. I likely won't stay much longer than 10 years if the traffic and taxes continue to be brutal. There will need to be continued evolution of the downtown area. I'm really excited to see what the library can be. Nothing will improve downtown as far as shopping/dining options if people don't stop to shop there. I think the rotary can continue to exist by modifying it to allow for direct right turns to not enter the circle (like you see in newer versions). Also,

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

the real issue is not the rotary, but the missing turn lane on East Main St. A center turn lane would reduce stopping greatly, especially in the Dunkin Donuts, CVS, Shell gas areas.

I think both train stops would be a perfect solution. Keep the cars out at the current stop for Northborough and Shrewsbury, and let the walkers and bikers go to the downtown stop. Keep the car traffic out of downtown and relieve the parking issues at the current stop.

I couldn't agree more! I love the playground for my grandsons. It has been wonderful. I only wish there was more shade over the area. We all know how dangerous the sun is to our skin in terms of sunburns, but mid-afternoon the playground equipment itself gets so hot to the touch. A splash pad like the one we use in Northborough would be amazing! It would add beauty too, because when you see the water rising, and the children laughing, you can't help but smile.

While I love the idea of putting a train station downtown, doing so would make downtown real estate skyrocket way higher than it is even now and would completely change the face of the downtown area. You'd have tons of young professionals, and far fewer mixed income residents and families.

Good schools and family friendly environment will attract people to the town. Our school district used to be in top tier in state. Now other school districts are catching up or getting ahead. It is time for our town to get ahead of the competition.

Also, improving the rotary situation will help town expansion towards west side.

Lower the taxes over ten years, bring more employees living in town, growing up most of the town employees lived in town, I get employees can't afford to live in town, we got Westborough State, let's put up housing for employees.

Wheelchair accessibility and bike/pedestrian paths are essential. While I love downtown, and especially Red Barn, my son is not able to join me at this venue due to lack of accessibility. I would think this would also apply to our aging population as well.

Linking residential neighborhoods to downtown is important. Paths on high traveled roads like Ruggles and Adams will make it less treacherous for families to do walking outings downtown.

Traffic is a real problem that has escalated over the past 11 years I've lived here. I cannot believe the downtown area at rush hour...and before! Alleviating this may help draw patrons to downtown businesses.

The Town needs more downtown access to community recreation space both for families and events. A bike trail would be a great addition.

Bike trails! Sidewalks, bike lanes, where possible. Fill empty office spaces in Bay State Commons and Rotary with coffee house/book shop and sit-down restaurant. Relocate or reopen Movie theatre? Preserve our open green spaces.

Looking forward to a vibrant, fun turnout at the Strategic Plan Community event Monday, June 25, 6 PM at Westborough High School, and Tuesday, June 26, 10 AM, at the Westborough Senior Center. Westborough belongs to all of us. Look forward to broad-based thoughts about what we want our town to become with specific, definable goals!

Preserving open spaces, doing something with old movie theatre space - live music venue perhaps? Vegetarian/vegan restaurants, farmers market that is accessible to those of us who work full time and out of town (12-6 just doesn't work)

I would like to see a more transparent town government. The town website is not user friendly or up to date. We need a town calendar or two. If 'Town' can only post civic events do so, and another group can manage all other town event postings.

We need to focus on our diverse population and being more inclusive in every way.

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

Only my grandchildren who reside in an adjacent community.

The Town Meeting is an anachronistic and Town government unaccountable as a result. The Town Meeting must go or in 10 years nobody will be able afford to live here.

This is a little off topic, because it's something that would keep me or not keep me in Westborough, but it is something that would help me immensely in being more active in town meetings. Something I feel very strongly about. I would love if there was a way to vote remotely. A lot of times I'm unable to physically be at the meetings. Especially when they run late into the evening or the next day. I can however watch online. If I was also able to cast my vote from home, it would be so helpful. I'm not even sure if this is possible, but thought I'd mention it.

My number one concern is that the school system is showing early signs of decline. The student population is skyrocketing, and class sizes have reached unacceptable levels. I strongly support a robust school budget and appreciate the need to increase it to reflect increased enrollment, but it seems that as of late, the money is not being properly distributed. Elementary class sizes should not be in the upper 20s while money is being spent on things like iPads and football fields. If the schools can reestablish their priorities to again focus on basics before frivolities, then I will still be here in 10 years.

Aside from this (and a few less pressing complaints about rising taxes and traffic that plague towns across the state), I really don't feel much is missing from my experience in this wonderful town - though there is of course always room for improvement. I hope the educational issues can be corrected so me, my children, and my grandchildren can live out the rest of our days here!

I would like to see more resources spent on education and enrichment for Westborough kids. Also preserving open spaces/land.

More resources spent on education and enrichment. Sidewalks on all main roads (Main Street, all the way to Grafton, especially). A vibrant downtown with a variety of restaurants and shops.

Excellent school system.

Continue: Investing in the school system and keep class sizes low. Currently Missing: A vibrant, destination town center. Sidewalks and bike lanes to connect the town center to the neighborhoods.

Commitment to supporting the school system. Given the influx of students we need to prioritize small class sizes and robust curriculum and enrichment. Investment in the downtown area-young families want a vibrant and eclectic downtown. Support of culture and the arts. Making the town more walkable with sidewalks and bike paths.

Commitment to schools and enrichment programs and decreasing class size. Conserving open space, sidewalks on E Main St all the way to Southborough. Creating a more vibrant downtown and family centric activity. Would love to see more small businesses and restaurants come to our town too.

Putting a train station downtown would be a traffic nightmare for the rotary and surrounding streets.

In 10 years I will be thinking about retirement, so what would keep me here is some type of housing that I would be able to afford when I'm ready to downsize. In the meantime, filling Bay State Commons would be great, along with improvements to the library, a rec center for all residents, and quick redevelopment of the Regal Cinemas property would be my top priorities for the town.

Would appreciate a focus on smaller classroom size in the schools. We moved here primarily for the quality of the schools and hope to see that commitment continue and enhanced. Nothing ensures the future of a community or a nation more than investing in the kids! Everything else is a distant second.

Continue to maintain elite school system by curtailing massive residential development projects, and through smart long-term school building investments.

Carefully increase retail and corporate tax base to decrease residential tax rate.

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

Curtail unnecessary town spending.

Maintain and improve the Lake Chauncey / State land purchase to improve recreation and conservation opportunities, as well as increase tax base.

Protect drinking water.

Revitalize downtown.

Would love to see a Rt. 135/ 30 alternative road that can move some of the through traffic out of down town and alleviate congestion or make improvements to 135/30. Would like to see downtown revitalization which could make it less dependent on the car. Would a train stop at Bay State Commons help?

Restore Regal Cinemas Property to bring back cinema!

Hocomonco Pond/AstraZeneca area could use some attention. There are opportunities to add bike paths in there and connect Route 9 shops with more communities.

Revitalize down town by supporting small local businesses. Places of interest like coffee shop, pub, restaurant, etc. Make it safer to park and walk around. Keep schools and education as a high priority. Good schools attract young families which in turn help local business.

Appreciating all the great ideas highlighted below. One of the main reasons we chose to move to Westborough was the school system. We are loving our experience at Hastings but want to make sure that we continue to invest in our education system. I also want to balance that with ensuring people can continue to stay in Westborough post-retirement. Economic development will allow us to balance both. Thank you for having this forum!

Senior Citizen Property Relief.

Seniors on fixed or limited income find it hard to keep up with rising property taxes. Downsizing and moving to affordable housing is an option but aging in place should be a serious option.

Several towns (i.e., Hamilton, Sudbury) have instituted a mechanism to provide such relief.

Westborough should investigate this as a possible way to behave as a "senior friendly" community.

That's a good point, I do think that the town needs an influx of younger professionals who would energize and modernize businesses and viewpoints around here, but when we moved back to town the only place we could afford to buy was in the downtown area.

I do want to support Red Barn and make a point to go there... but it's cramped frumpy looking and the selections don't seem to have changed since the 80s - if I want to spend time in a coffee house I go to C'est la Vie or Birchtree Bread out of town

I love all the ideas below about revitalizing downtown and yes that would be a huge incentive to keep me here long term. Regarding the property taxes, I was struck by the comment made at town meeting about "people should do the right thing and stay in their homes for 10 years after their kids graduate high school" to help "pay back" the cost of their children's education - is there any way to use tax rebates or something to encourage people to do that?

Agreed. People are attracted to new and interesting places. C'est la Vie is an excellent example. This also ties into our lack of interesting places for breakfast!

Definitely need to keep the extra cars out so two stops are key.

I don't have a problem with young professionals with money being attracted to Westborough. They become parents with money who can afford a great town to live in. It helps to make Westborough a desirable place to be and separates it from other towns that aren't viewed as highly. Though houses are priced higher in Westborough, there are houses of varying sizes, ages, and locations that offer some different options.

I support this idea. We need to support the elderly that supported this town for so many years!

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

I love the idea of bringing in new and interesting businesses to downtown. My worry is that there isn't enough parking to accommodate. Hudson has done a great job and has provided lots to park in. We need that as it's difficult and dangerous parking in the rotary. I was really hoping Baystate Commons was going to attract these types of businesses as it has parking but unfortunately it has been a disappointment in this area.

I think people today are more interested in non-chains that provide great food and atmosphere. I'd rather stay in town to eat but end up traveling for variety. The establishment you had sounds wonderful to me!

I agree and think the beauty of our town is so important. Adding large scaled building like condos and building on our open spaces takes away from the beauty of our town. Unfortunately, what's already been allowed can't be changed. I also think we need stiffer regulations on homes and businesses downtown to keep that beauty and charm of our old town.

The highest quality school system for our children.

A friend of mine had a business along the rotary and described the tight chain they had to work with on anything that might show personality. She had to remove a cafe table and chairs from outside her business. The awning above her business was only allowed because it was grandfathered (I believe). Signage is unbelievably scrutinized as well. Perhaps the way our town leaders manage our rotary "historical district" is too puritanical. It is causing any initiative to add oomph to our downtown area to be shut down. Wellesley's historical street of shops and restaurants is thriving and is filled with shop personality ... and people!

Please provide more shuttle buses to commuter rail that are geared towards the commuter rail schedule especially at 7:15am to Boston and coming home 6:40pm. There are a lot of folks who commute, and this would increase the shuttle bus ridership if the bus schedule arrives 10 minutes before train arrives and heads into Boston and in the evenings the bus waits 10 minutes after a train.

Also, there is an overflow at commuter rail parking lot. You may want to provide a dedicated shuttle bus from Bay State and allow folks to pay for parking there as well. This should generate some revenue for the town. With a good local public transportation, it will make Westborough even more attractive live because it would be a great jumping point.

There are a lot of empty office space that could be promoted to attract businesses which would create more jobs in town which would boost the economy of the town.

Just a thought.

To solve the parking situation at the commuter rail, is there a way to have a regular shuttle during peak times? Having a commuter stop downtown might also help develop the bay state commons and rotary area because they could walk to the restaurants/shops on their way home from work. I would also like to see some positive development to the area where the Regal Cinema used to be. There's the new Red Heat Tavern and Uno's but other than that I see vacant store fronts which is depressing. I would love to see changes to help ease the traffic congestion in the rotary. I would love to see more community events like the Holiday Stroll and 4th of July Block party on a regular basis because I think that adds to the town's vibrancy. I also think that focusing on making improvements to the education system (class size and space issues as well as making sure the curriculum is up to standards) is extremely important. However, I would like to see the town look at additional revenue sources aside from always raising property taxes since our property taxes are among the highest in the state.

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

My wife and I are planning to stay in Westborough for the foreseeable future. Westborough is a vibrant community. It provides lots of opportunities to be active and have a meaningful impact on our community. The downtown is the heart of our town, and I would like to see more economic development in this area. My wife and I live two miles away from the center, but we love to walk to town to go out to dinner and walk around. But key to our experience is walking through the lush rural side streets that eventually lead to the center. Westborough has an ideal mix of country and city life, and this mix also keeps us here.

Westborough is known as a technology hub and the town should promote that reputation by attracting medical and technology to bring in more businesses and working professionals would commute into Westborough instead ;) and stimulate the local economy versus having town folks commute into Boston.

Continuing to make education a priority is very important to me. We have phenomenal schools and teachers that I consider to be the heart and soul of our community. I'm a big fan of developing the trails for running & biking and connecting to other towns. I would also like to see more retail & restaurants occupying Bay State Commons. Finally, I think diversity in our town is extremely important. I love that my Caucasian kids who attend Westborough schools truly don't see color and have established solid friendships with children from all different racial and ethnic backgrounds. This is going to serve them well throughout their lives.

Westborough should continue to build upon its reputation for quality education, diversity of residents and an enjoyable downtown. The previous years' July 4th block parties on West Main St. as well as holiday celebrations at the rotary have been great events that pull many people together. We should be doing more of this to foster this sense of community and bring people downtown (let's hope moving to Bay State Commons is a one-time trial). The town planning that has kept shopping convenient on Rt 9 with local shops more convenient downtown has provided the best of both worlds.

I would like to see us change from a flat tax (where business and individuals pay at the same rate) to help families offset our rising tax bills.

We need good sidewalk design, right now we prioritize sidewalks entirely on being able to build "something" in the road right of way. While this helps get something relatively quickly it does not necessarily build the right things. We should be investigating the goal of being a Walk Friendly Community <http://walkfriendly.org/>

Unfortunately, most of the sidewalks in town are not handicap accessible. Additionally, the street layout in town does not encourage walking with a large degree of cul-de-sacs and separated subdivisions. The town should be looking at the Massachusetts Municipal Resource Guide for Walking https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/19/PedPlan_MunicipalResourceGuide.pdf that identifies what is needed for handicap accessible sidewalks, safe routes to schools, and ways to alleviate our challenging street layout.

The town is working on a multi-use path like the Minuteman see <https://www.town.westborough.ma.us/bicycle-and-pedestrian-advisory-committee/files/boston-worcester-air-line-trail-bwalt-concept-plan> We need support from community to build it, and to provide on road bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

I wholeheartedly agree with this - there are many areas in town where there are sidewalk ramps, but the crosswalk does not match up with it. In many places you can't traverse the sidewalks due to bumps, dips and uneven pavement of the sidewalk - on side street and main roads. Trying to cross many of the streets in town is hazardous on two feet (due to timing of the lights); try it with a walker

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

or a wheelchair, and you could get killed, especially from 7am to 10am and 2pm until 7 pm. I live off of Rt. 135 -- don't even try to cross that!!

Keeping schools well-staffed and funded is critical and my absolute top priority. I wish there was more walking trails and bike trails available in town. Also, community events like our past 300 celebrations. I am hearing that planning meetings are being held without any advertisement and with little to no representation from working families. I hope the town will not sweep young family's needs under the rug simply because we don't always have the time or information that our retired neighbors may have. I hope very much that decisions about Westborough 10-year plan will not be made by one demographic attending a poorly advertised meeting. Why doesn't the town have a Facebook page with meeting alerts for example?

The problem of communicating what is going on is not just young families, it is everyone. It is ironic that planning for what to do with the Westborough State Hospital had better information, and more chances for input than the towns 10-year plan.

The town does have a good set of walking trails, see <http://westboroughcharm.org/guide/trailmaps.php>

The school system - if we can commit to investing in it to keep class sizes small and retain the high-quality education we have now. Also - the mix of "country" and "city" life is one of Westborough's best features. So nice to see cows grazing, have farms to get food from, and have the lakes/reservoirs/Charm Bracelet. Keep green spaces!! Then, conversely, the downtown area offers a little more. Would be nice if there was a little more "nightlife" and if traffic could be alleviated in that area. But going too far in either direction could make our town lose that special mix.

I am a 30+ year resident of Westborough and I can say without a doubt that the traffic and congestion problems are getting out of control. Beside Rt.30 many of the alternate routes to and from Rt.9 are becoming a nightmare as drivers seek to bypass downtown. I also agree that Westborough needs to find ways to raise revenue in other ways and not rely on property tax increases. I would say that the traffic congestion and tax issues will most likely influence my decision to remain in Westboro over the next 10 yrs.

The school system is what brought us to town and unless it gets the necessary attention to keep it a top system, we will leave. Not paying the tax rate we pay and having overbooked classrooms and having to fight every year for a meager school budget. The fight we've had for the stadium & track renovations and lights is INSANE after all the money spent on fire station and town hall renovations in recent years. Our school facilities are rapidly falling behind 'standard' and it is only so long until our MCAS and academic standards fall to match our aging facilities operating on shoe-string budgets.

We love Westborough's town and love walking around and visiting Red Barn, the library, farmers market, playground, restaurants etc. I would love to see more growth around this area.

However, the traffic, drivers, and congestion through the rotary and town is a huge, huge problem. As parents of young kids and walking with a stroller, it's a huge concern. Many people use Westboro roads as a cut through and/or alternative to main roads. The new pedestrian lights etc. are very appreciated but I want to know how we can cut down on thru traffic.

Agreed! Would love to see the trails around Freedom Park better kept too. We always have to turn around due to flooded trails.

Agreed! The addition of some type of sailcloth for shade would be so great as that playground gets so hot after 10am!

Responses to the Question: What will keep you in Westborough 10 years from now?

A splash pad would be amazing too, but obviously a lot more needed to accomplish!

Active commerce, downtown beautification, PARKS and recreation.

Open land conservation.

It is important for my family that class sizes remain small and not exceed more than low 20's per class. That is what attracted us to this community. If funding is not dedicated to continuing that expectation, we will move out of the area. We pay high taxes and it's justified by the great school system and the support services for students. We'd love for the property around the hospital to be developed with a nice outdoor area soon- not take 10 years to complete. We'd stay here long term if the town were more vibrant. We like living here to raise our family. Right now, I agree with other comments- that it's pretty sleepy. Most of the restaurants in Westborough are chain restaurants with a few unique places. Many more people have moved into this area who want more. We desperately need more interesting restaurants, not one sushi and pizza place after another. We need some new shops and restaurants. Maybe a place where you can catch a band or jazz musicians. We need more interesting shops that would make our downtown desirable to walk around and where anyone would want to spend their money here. We also need a few traffic lights. We are no longer that small country town that it once was, and we need to deal with the traffic issues. We need a light at RT 30 and Flanders. It's horrible for anyone who lives in the neighborhoods off Flanders trying to turn onto Main Street. Also, we need to address the car dealerships and other businesses off Rt 9 (who are encroaching on our neighborhoods and making them feel less quaint and quiet. Right now, I don't think of Westborough as a fun walking destination, but I hope to one day.

Vibrant and accessible downtown. Renovated and expanded library to accommodate a growing community and serve as a destination and hub of community activities/enrichment/education/programming. Continued investment in education. A more active economic development department to attract businesses to the community and fill the vacant spaces (Astra Zen's, Baystate, Regal).

If you have a specific trail problem, the Westborough Community Land Trust does most of the trail maintenance in town. Send an email to stewardship@westboroughlandtrust.org describing in detail where the trail needs work.

I think communication in Westborough is a HUGE issue. Communication from the individual schools is poor and varied, and outbound communication from the various town boards and departments is nonexistent with the exception of Syed Hashmi. In this day and age, you shouldn't have to drill down into the town website and get an agenda from each board to see what will be discussed at a meeting. Most people don't have the time to sit through board meetings and town meetings or even to watch them on TV. Take the sidewalk issue, for example. It's amazing how many people here are asking for sidewalks, but they have no idea that we have a published plan to implement them already in many parts of town. Why is this??

Because of this, the wishes and desires of a few are making critical decisions for the rest of us. I think that the town should consider hiring a communications manager to evaluate, recommend and implement new communications plans designed to get information to and from all residents.

Table 28: Raw Responses to the Question: When you think of the services the Town government provides, what services are you most appreciative/proud of?

Responses to the Question: When you think of the services the Town government provides, what services are you most appreciative/proud of?

Definitely the school system! This town offers an amazing education and opportunities for our kids that I wish I could've had growing up. I grew up in a small Northern Maine town, my husband grew up in Southern Missouri. Neither of us had the opportunities given to us that Westborough Public Schools provides for our daughter.

Also...the police department/fire department. I have noticed an amazing change since the new Chief of Police has been hired. The communication on social media from both departments is outstanding. They show the community what they have been training in, share stories from calls they have taken, show us what they deal with and what hard work they put in keeping our town safe. Again, something I didn't experience growing up. We are very lucky to have both such amazing departments in our town.

Great services all around!

Westborough is a well-run community! I am very proud of the way that our town government runs with engaged boards made up of elected and appointed officials to enhance and guide the hired town employees. The active work of committees and boards supports the open town meeting process with important checks and balances of ensuring that people who live in the community, pay the taxes and use the services can give input to the outcomes of the town.

The schools are effective and benchmark at a solid level of performance that enhance the home values of the community and draw business and families to the area.

The town services of DPW are excellent, with a commitment to keeping the areas clean and safe.

The fire and police are personable and caring and provide strong services. The EMT services of the fire department are one of the reasons we moved here. We also came for the schools and to raise our family and then to age in the community and keep giving back.

Service is a key value of the town. We have vibrant volunteer groups, churches, scout troops, Rotary, Civic Club, Lions, Westborough Connects, In Your Shoes, School community service from students, and the service of boards and committees by people in the community.

Westborough's school system has an excellent reputation. Maintaining adequate school funding will continue to benefit all residents' property values.

Westborough's Youth & Family Services provides important support to the community, while operating on a shoestring. I hope the Selectmen will increase the YFS budget.

Throughout my time in Westborough, I've had many positive encounters with a wide variety of town offices and services. I still, for example, recall the incredulity I experienced the first time I looked out my window to find the DPW fastidiously blowing leaves and dirt off the sidewalks of my downtown neighborhood in preparation for fall street cleaning. And I can't believe our good fortune having the amazing array of options to choose from through our always-innovative Recreation Department. However, when I recently undertook a large project in town that required the support and cooperation of about a half dozen town offices (as well as several town committees), I discovered an area in which Westborough's government truly shines: its cooperative spirit. The heads and staff of

Responses to the Question: When you think of the services the Town government provides, what services are you most appreciative/proud of?

the Town Manager's office, the DPW, the Rec Department, the Building Department, the Planning Department, the Treasurer's Office, and myriad other supporting offices all embodied the concept of collaboration as they went above and beyond to provide knowledge, communication, and support. The strong sense of community that so many of us appreciate about this town is very well reflected among the members of its government, for which I am incredibly grateful.

The schools are the reason we came to Westborough. That and the people, are the reason we stay.

My son is autistic and has always received the best services to guide him through the school years. Many surrounding towns do not have anywhere close to what we provide our students. I will never move away!

The rec department offers wonderful sports programming for pre-school age children, which my son has enjoyed. The Mini Mitts, Little Kickers, and Half Pint Hoops classes were a wonderful introduction to sports. We miss you, Coach Alan!

We also had a wonderful experience with the fire department, which hosted a private tour and touch-a-truck session for my son's birthday. Thank you for sharing your time and passion with a bunch of enthusiastic 3-year-olds!

I've met so many wonderful families through the library and Miss Tanya's Nursery School. My children love seeing the friends they have made at the playground all around town. I too enjoy the newcomer's get togethers and playgroups.

I am most appreciative of quality schools. Excellent schools are important for families, and the entire town benefits from them. I appreciate the police and fire for keeping us safe.

Every fall the DPW comes through the neighborhood to sweep the streets and prep for winter. I was astounded the first year of living here when they also used leaf blowers to clean off the sidewalks and some of the adjacent yard. When they were done the neighborhood looked great. It's a nice touch that helps show we have pride in our town, our homes and our neighbors.

When one chooses a new community, it's for many reasons, so many of which Westborough offers. However, as we age, it's very important to consider how health and housing costs effect the average 65+ individual. We live in a 55+ condo development where we pay for many of our services, like garbage collection, snow plowing, maintenance... even watering our lawns using our own well. We do appreciate the Fire and Police departments who are wonderful, professional and skilled. However, we do not use the school systems and should be considered for tax abatements sooner than the current 20-year residency requirement, which at our age, is quite unfeasible. Many of us won't be here in 15-20 years. Something more equitable would encourage an increase in our population of knowledgeable professionals who choose to live here. Perhaps a 3-5-year residency would be more in line with accommodating the Town's and our needs as well. Perhaps the abatement requirements should consider and include the criteria of where one has moved from. We have lived in Worcester County since 1984... 34 years.

Table 29: Raw Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?

Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?

1. Traffic! The traffic is ridiculous. It doesn't matter if it's the rotary, Fisher, Otis, Rt 9, Lyman, East Main...it's all a nightmare. It needs to be addressed. It's getting worse year after year.

2. Businesses leaving town - thus, residents taxes increase. So many businesses leave...Astra Zeneca,

Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?

BJs, Paper Store, Linens-n-Things, the indoor mini-golf place, Stein Mart, Zinc...so many more. Why are so many businesses leaving and moving to neighboring towns?

Traffic and vacant storefronts.

Transportation. Bus/shuttle service needs to be addressed. If the shuttle was free and the parking expensive or non-existing . . .

Walking and biking should be encouraged by making it safe to do so.

Lack of affordable housing for working and middle-class families; lack of public transportation; lack of sidewalks and safe ways to walk or bike from one area or neighborhood to another.

Traffic - especially the rotary, East Main St, Lyman, and Route 9.

The downtown doesn't encourage people to walk and shop. It would be nice to have a vibrant downtown where people enjoyed walking and stopping to shop.

Debt expenditures, tax rate, building homes/apartments that increase school population that increase school budget, and attracting more commercial business.

A downtown that you can walk around in with more activities and shopping. There are too many parking lot strip malls on Main Street that deter people from walking. More sidewalks through towns particularly on Main Street extending in both directions and Ruggles Street. Public transportation to the train station and Worcester would be nice and could ease congestion.

Keeping suburban sprawl under control. It would be nice if retail space already in existence could be used versus building out. For example, the space on main street where the Tufts building is wasted space.

Large/cheap apartment complexes that put a strain on the schools with increased population, traffic, sad downtown area, need for sidewalks to connect neighborhoods.

Traffic congestion during peak evening hours.

Recycling is not incentivized. It is a paid service for pick up. We are lagging behind neighboring towns in this area.

School facilities are not modern and will require large funds to rebuild infrastructure.

Businesses leaving town is not a good sign.

There are some students that are reserved. Constantly Westborough public school shuffles the students. I see their reasoning, but it doesn't apply to all kids. Those kids that very hardly make friendship is back to square one, miss their friends, no bonding (this has some other good aspect but for those who cannot wire back it is a very tough thing!) and struggle. I know any policy won't be good for all and there would be some suffering from it, but I feel those students should be given some help to mingle, create an atmosphere of small group interaction (When I mentioned only one teacher tried for which I am thankful, but I understand he cannot change the whole curriculum just to accommodate few students when it is not in the policy) and help in making friendship. Research has shown that people that are lonely often fall into a strange situation. This is my greatest concern, I do not blame anyone, and I appreciate school trying to help those kind of students!

Thank you for understanding!

The biggest challenges are how to attract and retain quality jobs, attract and retain those retailers that residents deem valuable, and how to manage associated traffic.

We need to make it easy for both large and small businesses to locate and to grow here. Larger tax base and shorter commutes for residents. For example, many current residents came to Westborough to work for EMC but those jobs there are dwindling, and many people are faced with the horrific possibility of commuting to high tech hubs in Burlington and Cambridge/Boston. Commutes like that

Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?

are what make people leave the town. We need to do a better job at working with those larger or high growth employers who feed the smaller businesses.

I worked for a high growth technology company here a few years ago and they were dying to expand within their existing space but were frustrated with Westborough in part because they had to wait to get town inspections to do the physical work and it hampered their growth. Management even asked me, as a resident, if I knew anyone who could pull strings to make it happen. We should roll out the red carpet for these types of businesses and have liaisons responsible for reaching out and making sure they're happy and have the services they need to grow. This was a company who had high growth potential with great paying jobs and who used the services of many local small businesses. Stronger ties with companies like that garner benefits beyond jobs and support for smaller businesses - donations, partnerships with schools, etc.

People are focused on downtown (which I agree with), but what about Route 9? WHY DO WE HAVE SO MANY CAR DEALERSHIPS?? Why do the marquis retailers choose to locate in other towns? We lost BJ's, and all those stores up at Northborough Crossing and White City is booming. Why is the plaza where Red Heat located half empty (and always has been) with no recognizable retailers?

After reading the previous posts, I agree with some comments mentioned. It is a shame that we have lost chains like BJ's and the Paper Store to other towns. It's a shame that Baystate commons is half full. I would like to see some interesting boutique shopping as well as restaurants move in. I find myself driving to the new complexes at white city or the Apex plaza for their restaurants when I'd much rather stay in Westborough. The building of condos/apartments really frustrates me. I'd rather see our town have beautiful individual homes than these huge complexes that attract people who may not be as invested in our town and over crowd our schools. I want to keep an upscale feeling to our town. Our schools, country- feel, and warm/friendly people are what separates us from other neighboring towns.

Traffic is at the point where I don't go to businesses that require me to make a left turn on E Main. I structure my errands, purchases, and driving patterns against avoiding the rotary and East Main St. Everyone is so stressed about getting through the traffic, no one wants to stop and enjoy the stores. People write that they want this store and that, but most have existed in one form or another in the last 10 years but they all went out of business because NO ONE STOPS to enjoy them.

I'm really concerned about the class size. They are all at 25 and growing. Teachers cannot teach 25 kindergarteners... so this school system won't be good for long if it keeps up. Directly related to this is all the awful apartments and townhouses going up. It's going to drive us bankrupt with all the new service to support the population boom.

Traffic, especially Main St. Bicycle lanes are lacking and those available are scary.

1. Traffic, traffic, traffic. I agree with many commenters that a shuttle to the train station or other forms of public transportation would be a great asset to the community.

2. Economic development of the downtown area. I never hear about anything related to economic development or what the Town is doing to encourage businesses to locate in Westborough, aside from TIFs granted at the Tech Park or other outlying areas. It would be great to see some of the giant plazas on East Main Street - which are awful to walk by - redeveloped with buildings at the street, ground-floor retail, housing or offices above. Why was a new shopping plaza built two towns over in Shrewsbury, but we can't fill Bay State Plaza? I'm a millennial, I live in downtown Westborough

Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?

because I like to be able to walk places, but I always go out to eat in Worcester or Hudson, never Westborough. More of a variety of restaurants/venues would be great.

3. Lack of CPA. A very important tool, especially in a community like Westborough with so many historic buildings and many open space parcels remaining. We could have used CPA for the Town Hall, Forbes Building, high school fields, the list goes on.

4. Citizen connection to government. Town Meeting turnout is always very low. It seems that there is little effort by the administration to notify residents of what is going on around town, both in terms of social events and in terms of government. Everyone uses Facebook these days; the most recent post on the Town's official Facebook page was posted twelve days ago! This disconnect seems to generate a lot of mistrust generally, and a lot of confusion/unnecessary discussion at Town Meeting.

We need a traffic light (or a police officer or an extra lane) at the corner of Flanders Road & Main Street. Particularly at peak traffic times, cars on Flanders Road wait 5+ minutes to turn onto Main Street.

I perceive the biggest challenge facing the town to be maintaining/further enhancing the quality of education in the face of significantly increased enrollment. Class sizes are spiraling out of control, and school construction projects seem designed to barely meet current needs, without regard for proactively preparing for additional increases. So much of Westborough's recent prosperity has, for better or sometimes worse, been tied to its reputation as a family-friendly community with excellent schools. If those schools continue to decline as they have in recent years, property values (and therefore tax revenue and town services) will also decline, and the town will be less attractive to businesses, contributing to further decline. This is exacerbated by the fact that the increasing enrollment coincides with a recent decline in our formerly admirable, fiscally-responsible approach to minimizing debt that had shaped the previous 5-10 years of spending decisions.

Like many others, I agree that traffic is also a significant issue. However, this is problematic throughout the region, and I don't feel the town alone is responsible for fixing it. There needs to be more regional planning and massive improvements in public transportation options (for example, if I want to take the commuter rail into Boston mid-day, I'm unable to do so because the lot fills up from the first couple of very early morning trains, and the middle-of-nowhere station isn't accessible by foot).

In addition, I'd like to see Westborough offer more mid-range housing options. We have so many expensive McMansions, and so many inexpensive apartment units (with resulting high-density impact on the school system). But what about housing for more middle-class families and for our elderly/down-sizing residents? Addressing this problem would go a long way towards attracting diversity (not only cultural, but also age-related), alleviating school overcrowding, and ensuring Westborough is a town where residents have the option to make a lifelong home.

Finally, I feel that marketing our charming downtown needs to be an area of focus. People always seem to have a list of what they wish was downtown, but they first need to patronize the businesses that ARE there to demonstrate to developers/potential small business owners that it's a viable place to open something new. People also complain about parking, but no one seems to realize that there's a large, free lot behind South Street Diner (or, they know about the lot, but the lazy "shopping plaza" mentality has permeated their habits so intensely that the thought of walking 100 feet to a business seems incomprehensible). Until residents make at least a small amount of effort to help make it

Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?
<p>happen, we can never "be more like Hudson," as seems to be a favorite demand. More events held downtown, whether relocating the Block Party back there or holding monthly or quarterly "community stroll" evenings with entertainment and stores open late could be another place to start.</p>
<p>Keeping high quality education Restoring/retaining relevant downtown businesses Supporting community activity</p>
<p>Maintaining excellent schools. Reworking roads so traffic will flow better.</p>
<p>Increased population crowding the schools. Especially the lower grades.</p>
<p>Balancing the demand for more residential units, while keeping the school classroom size to modest levels. Expanding/renovating schools to make modern and stay current with technology/student experience.</p>
<p>Traffic, taxes, poorly planned large residential developments that tax the school system and town resources in general, securing water supply to support community, maintaining diversity and sense of community, revitalizing downtown to make it automobile independent and to create some nightlife / culture.</p>
<p>School system admin not seeing eye to eye with teaching professionals. Teachers need more support from admin recognizing the changing needs of children coming into system. From language, behavioral (social emotional) to developmentally challenged. Being a resident and seeing what is going on in the school system scares me. Children with behavioral needs in crisis absorb time attention of educators. Lengthy process to determine out placement and district not wanting to pay for out placement puts the majority of students at risk on many levels. from teachers' attention, safety of teachers and other students, and quality of education. Secondly, there are students in the system receiving services that do not reside in town. Using town resources to investigate and confirm that students are not residents and still allowed to stay. These students unfairly take from families that pay taxes, students that live in town and teachers providing the needs of non-resident students over children living in town.</p>
<p>High quality education Smaller class room size Traffic, especially on Main St. Attracting and maintaining relevant downtown businesses Supporting community activity</p>
<p>A history of letting developers profit at our expense - turning open land into ginormous homes for the super wealthy or overly large multifamily developments - it may be too late to fix past damage but I hope we will change this pattern with the state hospital development and insist on road/traffic improvements, funding for necessary public safety supports for the new residents, improvements to the senior center/council which may need to accommodate increased clients or maybe a commitment to transport residents not living in the new community to events /services there.</p>
<p>Westborough is not a destination, and our own residents often go to neighboring towns for shopping, restaurants, entertainment, libraries, and parks.</p>
<p>Keeping up with the growing number of young families and school age children.</p>
<p>Large class sizes are concerning. Traffic is a challenge. Attracting businesses to stay in town.</p>
<p>Keeping high quality education and supporting the teachers with challenges, smaller classroom sizes Restoring/retaining relevant downtown businesses- many of us leave town for kid friendly restaurants, Westborough is not a destination as mentioned. Supporting community activity, the rec department does a great job but feel like there needs to be wider support with community events.</p>

Responses to the Question: What are the biggest challenges facing the Town?

100% agree with this comment- Citizen connection to government. Town Meeting turnout is always very low. It seems that there is little effort by the administration to notify residents of what is going on around town, both in terms of social events and in terms of government. Everyone uses Facebook these days; the most recent post on the Town's official Facebook page was posted twelve days ago! This disconnect seems to generate a lot of mistrust generally, and a lot of confusion/unnecessary discussion at Town Meeting

- Large class sizes/potentially insufficient school budget
- traffic on E. Main St.
- non-apartment/condo housing affordability
- shady approvals of some developers' plans that don't properly compensate for the long-term costs that the town will incur

The future of Westborough depends on seniors and millennials. Both of these groups have indicated in multiple surveys they want an active downtown in the community where they live and that they want alternative transportation, i.e. bus, bike and walking. Westborough needs to address the issues of good sidewalks and bike facilities, including passing Complete Streets like over 200 locales in the state have done. The town needs a real Bicycle and Pedestrian plan like many other towns has, our current ad hoc approach to sidewalks, i.e. where we can squeeze them into the current street right of way is not serving the community well. Westborough needs to expand the current shuttle service to cover more areas, not expand the parking at the MBTA which in other communities has damaged the viability of shuttle service. Finally, for the seniors Westborough needs to address the American Disabilities Act (ADA) fully, with things like comply with sidewalk standards, providing handicap accessible parking and facilities at recreation areas and open space, etc.

The fast-growing population is a concern. It is making our schools crowded...and when class sizes grow to 23-25 in the K-3 schools, education suffers. Also, with that growth, I worry that our green spaces are getting lost- and that the town is losing that beautiful country/city mix. Giant apartment complexes, townhouse areas, and big strip malls are not what I picture for Westborough. Westborough has beauty, charm, history, and residents who want more chances to come together and to support their town, whether through celebrations and festivals, or by shopping local. Let's give them that chance. Fill those vacant storefronts with things the community can get behind - i.e. the Sugar Shack is a great idea for downtown - and make it affordable so those stores stay.

The challenges of Westborough's growth taxes the budget. I'm not clear on the community's policies regarding business taxes. Encouraging businesses and streamlining the process of permits and licenses would accordingly increase the income derived from same.

Traffic. Especially truck traffic cutting through town and streets that are used as a cut through to Rt 9.

I think as with almost all towns in the MetroWest that growing population, especially families with school aged children, is the biggest concern. We need to really look at ways to change our zoning bylaws so that there is not so much new development. The town cannot maintain current levels of spending per student if so many houses keep getting built without increasing taxes. Westborough is already developed enough and does not need to turn into Framingham. This would also help to create a more age diverse community. Seniors cannot move into Westborough because the housing is so expensive, and if something affordable does come up someone buys it and doubles the square footage so that it will no longer be a viable home for an older person or couple in the future. Greatly increasing the minimum lot size will help with new development; creating a way to preserve smaller, affordable homes would help seniors look as Westborough as a viable option for retirement.

Phase II

Table 30: Raw Responses to the Question: What do you want future residents of Westborough to know about the community’s past?

Responses to the Question: What do you want future residents of Westborough to know about the community’s past?
Westborough’s rich history in technology has gone largely unnoticed. Eli Whitney - one of the fathers of the industrial revolution - was born here. Tracy Kidder’s book “The Soul of a New Machine” revolves around Data General in Westborough. Westborough companies like Proteon and Banyan pioneered the Local Area Network (LAN). DEC and EMC grew to world class status here. Astra Pharmaceuticals developed ground-breaking drugs (not without controversy). There is a rich history in technology here that’s gone largely unnoticed.
Westborough is a great place to raise a family and continues to be one that supports funding education programs and investment in public schools.
We would like the future residents to know that the Town worked hard to balance historic and environmental protection with vital economic development. The Town also worked hard to incorporate the public education facilities and the municipal administrative facilities (such as the High School and the Town Hall) as part of the vibrant downtown village. We would like them to be thankful that we had the smarts to understand that a strong central municipal management system requires transparency to all constituents and interest groups. Let's make it so!

Table 31: Raw Responses to the Question: How does Westborough’s history influence how you experience living in the community today?

Responses to the Question: How does Westborough’s history influence how you experience living in the community today?
Westborough had a rich history of good communications about Town government. Thirty years ago, you could turn to five different papers to get information about the Town. At present information has dried up. It is ironic that this effort that has been going on for many weeks finally appeared in a paper today.
Westborough has a long reputation of having excellent public schools. This was a key reason why we choose to purchase a home in Westborough and have decided to stay in the area. The continued support and improvement of our education systems directly influences a large population in the community.
Westborough's history is very important to us. It is embodied in the physical environment of the Town - the historic downtown and neighborhoods which include over 500 historic buildings on 400 acres. We live downtown and when we walk into town to go to dinner, or drop off our cleaning, or pick up our dog's license, stop at the library to get a book, attend a church service at one of the earliest congregations, all activities which take place in historic buildings, we marvel at what is still here and mourn what has gone (easy to see from old photos). The Architectural Walking Tours we do are very popular, so obviously citizens are engaged with our history and respond when there are offerings in this area.
The story of how the Town rallied to ensure the MassPike didn't get routed through the middle of town comes to mind lol. I've read "On the Beaten Path" but don't remember most of it and for the most part I don't think that the Town's history is shared/celebrated/showcased in very visible or compelling ways (aside from the 300th celebration but I learned more from that about the 50s and 60s of residents'

Responses to the Question: How does Westborough's history influence how you experience living in the community today?

childhood than earlier eras). We've got a "historic neighborhood" marker on our corner on some lumber that no one really pays attention to.

Table 32: Raw Responses to the Question: What is precious in Westborough's heritage that you want to inform planning for the future?

Responses to the Question: What is precious in Westborough's heritage that you want to inform planning for the future?

The older photos of the Rotary that I've seen show a busy downtown area with pedestrians and shoppers. It seems like once upon a time there was a real community shopping district there before the majority of retail moved to the strip malls and Route 9.

My husband and I value the open green space, sidewalks, classic New England architecture, and Lake Chauncy. Let's keep Westborough's agricultural and architectural history alive in the new Lake Chauncy development projects!

We want to keep historic structures - such the Spurr House, the Blueberry Lady's house, and other buildings that can be easily lost (like the historic High Victorian Fire Station which could have easily been integrated with the current, new fire station site) if we cease to pay attention. The Spurr House could be torn down for parking without even having a formal an understanding of our parking demands. The Blueberry Lady's house and property needs to inspire thoughts of historic preservation of a building and site that might be used for affordable housing and open space instead of yet another field of McMansions. If we are to keep the attractive nature of the downtown we can't give into lack of strategic planning, public investment, and carrots and sticks. We need to provide incentives and disincentives to strengthen and improve the vitality of the downtown and a seamless review process that expatiates the kind of development we want. We live downtown and walk often, so we know what is there. Many people who just drive through do not. This is why it is imperative to have a walkable/bikeable downtown using creative ways of community development. The Community Development group tends to focus too much on Route 9 and 495 and forget about the importance of the downtown. Some recent gains that should be accoladed include the recent (complex) historic rehab of the Arcade Building and Milk Street Extension, and the simple but effective efforts of Westborough TV, exposing the old Westborough Savings Back sign.

Responses to this comment:

- Yes! Please no glass skyscrapers at Lake Chauncy.
- I agree. I would also like to see the town-feel atmosphere remain. It feels like we are turning into Framingham with all the new building of car dealerships and additional for sale of land on Route 9 with car traffic nightmares everywhere during rush hour. I would also like to see better walking access to downtown and to the state wildlife areas on the West/North side with infrastructure to support sidewalks from the Town line at Northborough from Davis Road into the Town for persons to walk safely on Route 135 to access the wild life entrance across from David Rd and to also walk under Route 9 safely on Route 135 into town. We also have a huge car nightmare at the intersections of Westmeadow plaza with Route 135 and at Church St./Route 30/School St. to traverse. Thank you for this consideration.

Phase III

Table 33: Comments on the Draft Vision Statement

Comments on the Draft Vision Statement
<p>Add “welcoming.”</p> <p>Response to this comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like this addition! “Diverse” is another good word that shows we welcome all :)
<p>I wouldn’t say it was vibrant. My concern is the amount of traffic that flows through the center of town. It’s not like anyone is stopping to look around or shop (except for the gas stations - and now we have a new one). These take away from the overall feeling of the Town and do not give an air of pride in the community. Why can’t the traffic be re-routed to avoid the Rotary - or close it off and make a true town center with grass, a bandstand and attractive local shops? The consignment shops have a market on the best realty and does not reflect a thriving town and community. it looks more like Lowell to me. Go to Grafton, or Hingham or Concord or Newburyport. So many towns where the pride shows!! And make the man who owns the liquor store building take the damn siding down!</p>
<p>Prevention is better than cure. The Town should make a concerted effort to establish a proper bike path/walking path that encompasses the Town or at a minimum on Town ways such as the Charm Bracelet Trail System, but it needs asphalt and lighting. This would get the community out more, enjoying the outdoors and engaging with neighbors. Westborough in my opinion is a very segmented and repressed town socially in part because of the structure of it, and lack of amenities that are accessible. A properly-maintained path would encourage residents and visitors alike to spend more time outdoors improving health and the wellbeing. Other projects such as school funding only serve that population whilst those who are single, childless or elderly do not benefit from the use of such resources. It’s time all residents and tax payers get an equal share.</p>

Table 34: Comments on the Draft Critical Success Factors

Comments on the Draft Vision Statement
<p>I would like the Effective Governance section to include clear, honest and timely communication that is consistent in its messaging and that speaks to the many audiences within the Town. Also, perhaps the Strong Economic Base could say something about the historic downtown and small business - so the focus isn't assumed to be just on Route 9 and the office parks.</p>
<p>I think Westborough struggles with being a single access point for some surrounding towns to get from 90/495/Route 9 to their communities. As long as Grafton and Upton have one option- to drive through Westborough center to get home- it causes significant traffic. This creates the vibe to get past the Rotary as quickly as possible, and more of a feeling of dread than wanting to stop. In the future, development will continue west as it always has. Traffic will increase. We need a solution for residents of these towns to get home from work without clogging our roads. I don't think they stop and spend money here other than maybe gas and coffee.</p>
<p>In order to achieve the Critical Success Factor "Westborough is a community that values strong fiscal management in order to achieve sustainable high-quality services and infrastructure" more effort needs to be made in controlling real estate taxes. Without doing so, other Critical Success Factors will fail.</p>