Fall 2012

Prelude to a Master Plan: Ware, Massachusetts

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Prelude to a Master Plan: 

Ware, Massachusetts
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The Members of the 2012 Ware Studio Class: Belen Alfaro, Bruno Carneiro, Margaret Engesser, Katie Fox, Evadne Friedman, Timothy Inacio, Anita Locksmith, Christina Mills, Stephanie Molden, Meagen Mulherin, Russell Pandres, Vinicius Pereira, Brian Reid, Pedro Soto, and Jennifer Stromsten.
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Executive Summary

The Town of Ware, Massachusetts engaged the Masters in Regional Planning Students from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to help prepare for a master planning process. Ware’s first Master Plan in 1975 and the most recent update in 1987 were created with UMass faculty and students as well. In the fall of 2012 the town’s first professional planner had been in that position for just over a year. In that short time the Town Planner and the Ware Planning Board had successfully passed significant updates to the zoning bylaw. The Planner, Planning Board and Town Manager perceived that the time was right for Ware to update its Master Plan, and so took this opportunity to have students assist with some of the time-consuming research that would have made doing a Master Plan impossible at this time given the town’s limited resources.

Ware’s new Master Plan will bring together the many plans that have been done in recent years with the help of regional and state agencies. Moreover, it will provide an opportunity for the town to set priorities and integrate the many recommendations of disparate plans.

Ware has many different roles in the region and a varied population and economic base. Planning for them separately has yielded mixed results. It is a car-oriented bedroom community that is also home to many elderly and poor residents without the transportation necessary to access resources outside the town. The two key state roads, routes 9 and 32, once brought customers to a bustling downtown have evolved to move traffic through and away, and to provide a poor pedestrian and cycling environment with no safe alternate routes. Investment in the town’s infrastructure – particularly roads, water and sewer – has enhanced commercial development along route 32 towards Palmer. But since the 1970s an increasing number of homes have been constructed outside these main service areas, in the countryside.

One of the things that people enjoy about Ware is that it has a little bit of everything. It is a small town with a variety of housing, including homes to purchase or rent, in a range of price points and settings. There is a New England Village center, there are suburban neighborhoods, and there are miles of country roads. To the north are some of the most splendid tracts of natural lands Massachusetts has to offer. A
short drive to the east and west are the Springfield and Worcester Metropolitan areas, and 8 miles to the south is the Massachusetts Turnpike.

Ware’s location and varied character bring to the town not just the advantages, but also the challenges of every sort of community. It has urban problems – drugs, poverty and disinvestment. The downtown is full of traffic, but storefronts are half-empty. Ware faces issues of sprawl – land consumption and speculative pressure, and limited roads that serve strip mall traffic and biking teens. And Ware is a truly rural community – scenic roads feature a mix of recently built massive homes, family farms, and a range of modest homes including capes, split-levels and manufactured homes. In each of these environments, Ware has more than its share of obstacles to overcome.

Ware is a classic New England mill town. With 9,860 residents it is only slight larger in population today than it was at the height of manufacturing activities. The textile mills at one time employed as many as 2,500 people. Today Ware’s workers are more likely to work outside of town. The textile industry had left Ware by the 1960s. The jobs in town today are diverse, representative of those typical to the western half the state, and also of Ware’s role as a rural service center. Ware has a hospital, part of the region’s largest Healthcare system, Baystate. Several banks are located in Ware, as are a number of non-profit and social services agencies. There is one remaining large manufacturing concern – Kanzaki Paper. In addition to a struggling downtown and businesses along the highway commercial corridor of Route 32, Ware has one of the larger and more recent retail zones in the area. With Lowes, Wal-Mart and other popular stores, many are employed here in low-wage retail positions, and residents from all over the region come here to shop.

Despite the loss of textile industry jobs, the mills remain and occupy a prominent place in the town. The mill complex is impressive, as is the Ware River which gave rise to the textile industry that built the mills, and the town that the mills built. Today the owners and uses are disparate, but the brick buildings throughout town connect present to past, and suggest a future; the library, the apartments that once housed factory workers, the majestic churches and town hall. Main Street runs parallel to the river, and while the river is often hidden behind buildings, a glimpse of the falls or the riverbank from a dead-end street conveys a startling sense of its continued power and importance.

The river’s strength hints at a component in Ware that is just as important as its industrial heritage – the natural heritage of the area. Entering Ware from any direction, one travels through forests and farmland, up hills that offer breathtaking views, down hills into lowland areas with farms, settlements, or more water. The town’s northwest corner is the Quabbin Reservoir, and while Belchertown has the Welcome Center, and both shoreline recreational use and boating access at the southern end are restricted, Ware’s residents are deeply
attached to this expansive natural area. The rural character of Ware is treasured as much as its small-town community attributes.

Before the mills were built, Ware was an agricultural community with its center and Meeting house further west of the river. The mills brought waves of immigrants to town, seeking opportunity. When the Quabbin Reservoir was constructed in the 1930s, the region’s dead were re-buried in Ware and some of the displaced residents settled there as well. As the mill activity slowed, Ware was marketed far afield as a great place to enjoy small-town rural life in an affordable suburban-style home, while commuting to jobs throughout the region.

The ancestry of Ware’s residents reflect these different eras of economic activity, the waves of European immigration that has formed the culture of central and western Massachusetts. The housing and settlement patterns are manifestations of those eras as well. Today Ware has the same size in population as it was in 1990. But the age composition has shifted and households have changed. There are fewer school-age children, many of whom live in poverty, and many are educated elsewhere using school-choice and other options. The number of single adult and single-parent households has grown, but the number of housing units at an appropriate size or cost for single-income has not kept up. The challenge is worse if one factors in housing quality, given the advanced age of the town’s housing stock and the limited reinvestment in older neighborhoods.

The proportion of residents over 45 has grown significantly in Ware, as in the nation as the baby boomers age. In Ware the number of households with a senior citizen has risen steadily over the past decade, and the town struggles to stay apace with housing and services to facilitate the health and independence of this demographic. Ware has a senior shuttle, hospital and senior center, but is short on assisted living and other necessary options for aging citizens. Moreover, Ware has just begun to see the potential opportunities in catering to the aging boomer demographic. Consumers of culture, fans of walkable communities, and the country’s most entrepreneurial demographic, Ware’s peak age cohort may be one of its best-hidden assets.

As Ware’s economic base has changed, a clear trajectory for economic development has not revealed itself. There is no major industry poised to grow. There is no clear target area for economic development – the industrial park, downtown, highway commercial, mills? Frequent questions about a casino coming to the region demonstrate persistent hope that a single economic factor may materialize to replace the monolithically important textile industry. But the likelihood is that here, as in other mill towns and post-industrial cities across America, economic diversification is unavoidable and will have to be at the core of any planning and development strategies. Ware has a diversified base – local employers,
commuters, jobs requiring a range of skills and education, and it is both residential community and rural service center.

In preparing this report, students identified and researched Ware’s challenges, but work quickly turned to ways in which Ware might build on these and other assets. Due to a combination of efforts to maintain the strength of Ware’s important assets, and also in part to having failed to benefit from significant and sustained development in the past several decades, Ware features:

- “Great bones” – architecture, street layout, river snaking through town
- Beautiful vistas and views in and around the center
- All homes in close proximity to nature
- New school facilities and tech school in next town
- Well-kept infrastructure (just passed a bond to upgrade sewerage plant) & water supply
- Many housing options
- Jobs and services
- “Central” location – lots of traffic moving to and through east-west and north-south
- Strong community, above average number of long-time residents

The Master Plan offers a chance to “envision” the future. The students worked with a variety of scenarios in mind to develop ‘toolkits’ that would be flexible enough to fit whatever path Ware chooses for itself. Ware faced, at the beginning of the 21st century, enough development pressure that there was concern for the consumption of farmland and pressure on infrastructure. This inspired action – school building, affordable housing creation, traffic studies and roadway investment. Such a scenario may re-occur, or Ware may stay in a slow or no-growth phase, particularly if it continues to be on the outside of regional economic development initiatives. But through the Master Plan Ware has a chance to determine some of that role, to define its relationship in the region. No matter what, as a town that is growing older, faster than the state or the nation, the town will experience a great deal of change in the coming decades.

Several important topic areas were identified falling into five general themes addressed by the student teams:

- Data and Mapping
- Natural Resources, Energy and Infrastructure
- Land Use, Housing and Zoning
- Economic Development and the Mill Yard
- Public Participation

Each team developed a scope of work, and throughout the first month of Studio students researched general background information, and sought to identify certain areas of focus. The goal was to be able to identify key issues and provide some information necessary to help the Planner and a Master Plan Steering Committee hit the ground running on a variety of key issues. Students conducted research and on-site observations and assessments. Their work involved qualitative and quantitative study, and particularly the use of case studies in
order to present to Ware a variety of scenarios in which similar towns solved similar problems in a variety of ways.

In the fall of 2012 Steering Committee members began to be recruited and public awareness of the Master Plan raised. At the first annual Ware Fall Fest in October, the Town Planner and students staffed a booth designed to provide information about Master Plans, and also to engage residents in exercises designed to solicit input and to inspire people to begin trying to envision the Ware they hoped for in the future. The event was well-attended and many people visited the planning tent to ask questions, answer surveys, place dots on a map to show their favorite places in Ware, and talk about the future.

The end of this report marks the beginning of Ware’s Master Plan. It is the hope of the Ware Studio that this work offers some fresh viewpoints, provides data necessary to proceed, and probably in many cases affirms that which Ware knows about itself already. There may be a few surprises, but much of what is in this report are recommendations on how Ware can be better at being what it already is. Ware, as a predominantly blue-collar and middle-class community, is having to work harder and smarter to simply stay afloat. This is not because of some unique flaw, poor decisions, or some certain set of factors. The story is the same in towns and cities across the nation, and the success stories that buck the trend are from places with a unique asset, or places that have figured out how to build on every single asset they have. Ware’s business community, institutions, town staff and volunteers, and the residents have demonstrated throughout the semester their commitment to a bright future.

_Prelude to a Master Plan_ offers ideas, recommendations, and a toolkit to help the town chart its own path towards that future. While the teams and individual students worked to ‘drill down’ into specific topic areas, the Studio defined three basic areas in order to think about how the various assets, challenges and ideas undermine or reinforce one another. The report is loosely organized in those terms: addressing the outlying rural areas and issues specific to these places, considering one of the key growth areas that has extended from town and the conflicts that arise from the many uses occurring along a single corridor, and then finishing at the center with the downtown and Mill Yard. This is the order in which most residents express their affection – unmitigated pride in the natural heritage, satisfaction with housing and joy in community, and cautious hope (or disappointment) in the town center. This is also the way in which visitors experience this place. Whether in setting priorities for preservation of resources, or determining ways in which to project the town’s identity to attract visitors and businesses, it is important to keep stepping back to see the Town of Ware, with all of the places and all of the people that comprise its entirety. And so, while this report begins with data and maps and natural resources it ends with identity and public participation, this report is not a Master Plan. It is the prelude to a Master Plan. Ware’s plan will be a success because of the people at the heart of that process and the community.
**Introduction**

In 2013, the Town of Ware will begin work on its first comprehensive plan since 1987. This Master Plan will guide the Town’s physical development over the next couple of decades. By early 2013, a Steering Committee with representatives from the Ware community will be in place to guide the master planning process.

In order to prepare for the Master Plan, Ware asked the University of Massachusetts-Amherst Regional Planning Studio class to identify major issues and actions that Ware should address or include in its Master Plan. The Studio class focused its efforts on several important topics for the town to consider during the master planning process. These topics include: economic development, downtown, housing, zoning, land use, natural resources, energy, infrastructure, and public participation. The class spent the semester collecting and analyzing data on these topics, identifying the most salient issues that Ware faces, researching case studies to learn how similar towns have handled these issues, and formulating recommendations for future actions that Ware could take. This report presents the Studio findings.

**What is a Master Plan?**

A Master Plan is a long-range plan that guides the physical form, growth, and development of a community. It is an opportunity for a town to map out their plans for the future – where, how, and at what pace a community will develop physically, economically, and socially. A Master Plan includes analysis, recommendations, and proposals for a town’s economy, housing, transportation, community facilities, infrastructure, natural resources, and land use. It also defines the steps towards achieving the vision established in the master plan – the short, medium, and long-term actions, as well as who is responsible for each step. These recommendations provide guidance for town decision-making on all matters that will impact the physical development of a community, including budgeting, ordinances, capital improvements, and organizational structure.
The major benefit of a Master Plan is that it creates consistency in decision-making and establishes a basis for informed decision-making. Master Plans assess existing conditions and identify trends in a town so that decision-makers can better understand the impact of their decisions. They also help town officials to wisely allocate town resources by setting short and long-term priorities and goals.

The information in a Master Plan is based on public input, surveys, previous planning initiatives, a town’s regional setting, and its existing development, physical characteristics, and social and economic conditions. The master planning process typically includes significant public involvement to get the public’s visions, ideas, priorities, and preferences for the town’s future. Typically, the first step in a master planning process is to collect data on the town’s existing conditions. From there, town officials and the public work together to develop scenarios for the town’s future development and then to formulate a coherent vision for the town, one which will form the basis of the Master Plan (Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission 2004).

**Why Ware Needs a Master Plan**

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Ware was a booming commercial and cotton textile manufacturing town with a thriving agricultural economy. Workers travelled from around the region to work at Ware’s mills. By the beginning of World War I, the mills employed more than 2,500 people. At the same time, dairy farms surrounding Ware’s center were producing large quantities of cheese, butter, and eggs. These agricultural products contributed significantly to the Town’s economy (Ware Reconnaissance Report 2009).
However, Ware’s economic niche in the region began to dissipate in the 1920s and 1930s when the textile mills closed due to competition with mills in southern states, misjudgments on part of mill owners, and the Great Depression. The creation of the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1920s and national changes in the agricultural economy contributed to the loss of many farms in the northern part of Ware, and the farming sector began to decline as a result (Ware Reconnaissance Report 2009).

Since then, Ware has evolved into a small, bedroom community and rural service center of about 9,800 residents where over half of the population commutes elsewhere to work. For many people in the region, downtown Ware is no longer a destination, but a place they pass through on their way elsewhere. Throughout the past few decades, various town planning efforts have attempted to redefine Ware’s identity and niche in the region, with little success. These planning efforts have taken a piecemeal approach to planning Ware’s development, focusing on specific types of development, such as affordable housing stock and single-family housing, and particular parts of town, such as the Route 32 corridor. Many of these planning efforts have also centered on Ware’s natural resources and open space as the key asset that could set Ware apart from other towns in the region.

The Town is located on the southeastern corner of the Quabbin Reservoir, an especially important natural resource for the town. Ware also has an abundance of parks, agricultural land, and open space. In 2009, just over 65 percent of Ware’s acreage was undeveloped land (Ware Reconnaissance Report 2009). These rural areas of Ware are treasured by current residents and are
attractive to outsiders who are looking for outdoor recreation or a rural community in which to settle down. However, beyond its natural beauty and open space, Ware has a number of other special characteristics that could play important roles in the Town’s future development:

- A central, accessible location in the State. The Town is situated between the two biggest employment centers in the western and central parts of Massachusetts – Worcester and Springfield – and is in close proximity to three major highways (90, 91, and 84).
- Small town character and a close-knit community.
- Its own hospital, one that is part of a major regional healthcare system.
- A downtown with interesting buildings and architecture, including the underutilized mill yard complex.
- A diverse mix of local employers and businesses.
- Versatile land uses – most of Ware’s land is rural; however, the downtown also has “urban” neighborhoods and suburban areas where most of Ware’s residents live.

Developing a Master Plan for the Town will allow Ware to identify all of its needs and assets, and give it a chance to reevaluate its place and role in the region. In doing this, Ware can begin to develop a new, positive identity. This identity will help the town build community pride and increase resident involvement in the town’s future; strengthen the town’s ability to attract people and investment which will improve Ware’s economic self-sufficiency; and enhance the quality of life for Ware’s residents.
The Master Plan will allow Ware to coordinate the disparate planning efforts that have occurred over the past couple of decades, and create a comprehensive vision for the Town’s future that looks holistically at all aspects of Ware. Creating a plan to guide the Town’s physical growth will require the Town to consider everything that may impact development, such as housing, business, water and sewage infrastructure, and transportation, to name a few, and to consider how these issues are interrelated. This process will mean that Ware is not planning for just one aspect of the town or favoring a single form of development, as previous plans have done, but is instead determining how each of these parts of the Town will develop in concert. This holistic planning effort will allow Ware to have a firmer grasp on the spectrum of issues, challenges, and opportunities that the Town may face in the future.

**Introduction References**


Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. 2009. Ware reconnaissance report.
Overview and Context
Overview and Context

A successful Master Plan begins with an understanding of people and place. This chapter offers a brief overview of Ware’s land use, population, housing, labor force and economy. Some information is presented within a comparative or regional context to aid understanding. Recent trends are presented alongside some historical perspectives from previous planning documents. A more detailed treatment of data available has been compiled in a separate document entitled *2010 Socioeconomic Profile of Ware*. Information was selected for inclusion here based on what would provide background relevant to the Ware Studio focus areas.

*Map 1: Ware’s Role in Relation to Three Regional Systems*

**Ware’s Regional role: Many connections, some disconnections**

Ware is the easternmost town in Hampshire County, on the border with Worcester County. It is part of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) regional planning agency’s policy area, which includes both Hampshire and Hampden counties. Ware is also at the southernmost tip of the Quabbin region, and one town removed from the Massachusetts Turnpike 8 miles to the south.

Part of Ware’s versatility, but also a source of complexity when it comes to planning, is due to these many connections or ‘roles’. Ware is part of three regional systems. It is a rural service center, long connected to the communities of the
Quabbin region, providing jobs and housing and amenities. It is a bedroom community connected with employment and educational opportunity to the east and west, and also southwards towards the Mass Pike.

Finally, its policy context is defined by the relationship with the PVPC but it is really on the edge of a policy region and not well-connected with the “knowledge corridor” either culturally or economically. This chapter will highlight some ways in which Ware’s policy context – for instance regarding economic development, workforce training and public transportation – is also so varied that sometimes Ware is overlooked. Included with this report is a “Policy Boundaries Appendix” that provides more detail with related references and maps.

**Land Use**

People once flowed into Ware each day, to Ware’s many factories, shops, social clubs and churches. Now that flow is often outwards - from the center of town towards newer retail and service establishments on the outskirts, or out of Ware altogether for work, education and recreation. As a bedroom community for commuters, a rural service center, and a historic New England mill town, Ware faces the challenges that accompany each of these roles; auto-oriented suburban sprawl, high numbers of vulnerable residents, and a downtown struggling with a legacy of disinvestment. These challenges are exacerbated by the strong presence of each type of area, that is to say there is no single, dominant characteristic in Ware’s land use.
Economic activity within Ware began to shift in the 1970’s, from Main Street to new shopping plazas and employers on the edges of town. These changes in land use patterns are common. The updated Ware Land Use Map shows the patterns of development that reflect these shifts. For the purposes of this report three basic groupings of developed and developable land were identified:

- The historic core and neighborhoods at the center of which are the mills and Main Street - the ‘urban’ village area.
- Outward growth, particularly along Route 32 with a mix of homes and businesses established over the past 50 years, including the newest commercial developments at the Palmer town line. These areas have a suburban feel.
- The rural residential areas – with historic farms, forests, and also many of the ‘new’ homes built since the 1970s.

Today, a bird’s eye view of Ware shows a true mix of development patterns from the past 300 years; rural roads radiating from town with suburban developments and farms intermingled, auto-oriented highway commercial expansion along route 32 intermixed with residential areas, and a rural New England town center whose boundaries have not expanded for 50 years. There are incompatibilities that arise due to these varied patterns, including traffic in residential areas and disinvestment from the downtown. Subsequent chapters in this report address ways to preserve or upgrade important characteristics in each of these different areas in ways that minimize negative impact on different areas. For instance, balancing the convenience of suburban style auto-oriented development with the need to enhance the downtown’s walkability and appeal or preserving the rural character that Ware’s residents treasure while still encouraging the growth and change necessary to accommodate Ware’s future needs.

Much of the data is drawn from the US Census. Ware has two census tracts, but
also a Census Designated Place (CDP) developed with local officials to provide data for “settled concentrations of population”. The Ware CDP data provides the most coherent assessment of the town’s more densely settled areas but is not an official unit of measurement used for policy purposes. For this reason, town-wide, tract-level and CDP measurements are sometimes included here.

Almost 40% of Ware’s homes date from before 1939. The vast majority of the building, commercial and residential, in the ‘downtown’ areas date from this era, and nearly all structures in the CDP were built before 1980. Ware added newer units to its housing stock during a growth era in the 1970s and 1980s - as the Mill Town shifted to being more of a bedroom community. Since the 1970s the vast majority of land developed has been along route 32 and in what are now the “Rural Residential” zoning areas. This shift is typical of national growth patterns – bigger homes and commercial buildings, covering more land, usually constructed on ‘green fields’ rather than ‘infill’ – redevelopment and investment in the existing neighborhoods.

Yet the neighborhoods of Ware’s CDP are home to 65% of Ware’s housing units, and 63% of Ware’s population. New zoning has corrected some of the disincentives to infill development, including removal of bylaws that made it difficult even to replicate the density of existing downtown neighborhoods. The EO418 2004 Community Development Plan (p 77) showed 9,227 acres of land available for development (70.8% of total land in Ware). At that time, concerns were focused on location of, capacity for, quality and quantity of home construction, particularly mitigating the impacts of construction on infrastructure and accelerating
consumption of land and identifying locations for affordable housing units. Building activity has slowed during the recession, but the recent Zoning updates addressed many of concerns raised in the 2004 plan.

The Master Plan will need to take this effort a step further, to identify those characteristics which the town hopes to preserve and to continue to upgrade the zoning with an eye to preserving treasured characteristics: historic neighborhoods, rural roads, scenic vistas, industrial heritage sites, agricultural uses. One of the key attributes of Ware’s growth pattern is that even in the CDP every neighborhood is within a short walk of nature. The plan might prioritize preserving and enhancing this special relationship, for instance, while investing in the quality of those neighborhoods.

The People and Households of Ware

Population Size
Ware’s population size has barely changed for the past 20 years, after growing nearly 10% in the 1980s. Ware’s population growth from 2000 to 2010 was 1.5%, just below the Pioneer Valley overall which grew at a rate of 2%, while the nation overall grew 10%. Twenty-two towns of the sixty-nine Pioneer Valley county subdivisions in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties, lost population during this time. Recent plans created for Ware, including the 1987 Ware Growth Management and Development Plan and the 2004 Community Development Plan projected strong growth and populations in excess of 11,000 people by 2012. In the past, economic changes enhanced Ware’s population size – the attraction of mill jobs brought 6% growth from 1900 to 1910. An influx of commuters increased population 9% from 1960-1970. In the coming decades, new factors may cause a change in population size, but as the Master Planning process begins, no source of imminent population growth has been identified. However, it is still necessary to continue to adapt and plan. For instance, average household size has changed. In the 1950s Ware’s average household size was 3.09 people, now it is 2.39. Lower birth rates and a greater number of single-person households and single-parent households have contributed to this shift. With fewer people occupying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>8,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>8,953</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>9,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>9,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9,860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2:** Ware’s Flat Population 1990-2010, and Changing Age Composition

- 1990
- 2000
- 2010

- 0 to 19
- 20 to 44
- 45 plus
each unit, it takes more units to house the same number of people. Therefore, slow development is a concern even if Ware’s population is not poised to grow in size.

**Ware Population Age Distribution**

Even if household or population size remain unchanged, needs for housing and schools, services and infrastructure shift as the population makeup evolves over time. The biggest change for Ware has been residents’ age distribution. Currently, the largest segment of the US population are the “Baby Boomers” born between 1946 and 1964. This group constitutes the largest cohort in Ware as well. Ware’s age profile is similar to its surrounding towns and the nation overall - nearly half of Ware’s population is over 45 and the smallest cohort is the 20-24 year olds.

But actually, Ware’s median age is higher than the nation and state (Median Age: US 36.9, MA 38.7, Ware 43.7). Today, the size of Ware’s 45-54 cohort is higher than the nation (over 19%). If older residents choose to ‘age in place’, that is to stay in Ware over the next ten and twenty years or more, the proportion of 65+ residents will grow significantly. A key question for the Ware Studio was to consider how this might affect Ware in coming decades. Does Ware have the necessary housing and services? If residents go elsewhere, who will fill the gap? These are key issues in deciding where to invest in future resources. For instance, demand for ‘family’ housing and school capacity have diminished. But the 2004 Comprehensive Plan projected 43.6% growth in the 0-5 range by 2012 - nearly ten times the actual growth. It foresaw 60.6% growth in the 20-24 year olds by 2012.

**Age Distribution & Household Composition**

Another way to look at changes is to examine the shifts in household composition by size, age makeup, and family structure. For instance, since 1980 the number of households with 4 or more residents has decreased from 25% to just 18.8%. This is
a contributing factor in reduced average household size. Today Ware’s average household has 2.39 people, just below the Pioneer Valley (2.42) and the nation (2.58). The trend to smaller household size is influenced by a number of factors, including smaller families. Ware has seen no increase in households with school-age children from 2000 to 2010 (still about 1,200 of Ware’s 4,120 occupied households) but during that same time Ware came to have 500 more households with a resident 65 or older. This is a 12% increase in households with someone 65 years or older (505 more).

In family structure, the composition of Ware’s 4,120 occupied households varies widely, resembling the overall distribution of Hampshire County slightly more than Worcester County or neighboring Belchertown. Only 16% are ‘traditional’ family households (mother and father, and children under 18 at home). Couples without children at home occupy 29% of Ware’s housing units. Another 29% of Ware households have one adult living alone (up from 24% in 1980). Taken with single parents (8%) this means that over a third of Ware has just one adult in the home– this has major implications for income and resources.

The spatial distribution of Ware’s population has special implications for planning. Approximately 65% of Ware’s housing units are in the Census Designated Place (CDP), containing 62.5% of the population. However, a majority of Ware’s oldest residents (70+) live in the CDP where there are also a higher number of children (0-14) and young adults (20-24). As the CDP is a relatively new spatial unit of measure we don’t know if this is a recent trend, but a higher proportion of old and young is a characteristic of urbanized areas i.e. where there is higher density, affordable housing, services, and the social capital a traditional neighborhood can offer (Brookings Institute Report on Metropolitan America 2011).

**Poverty and Public Health**

Ware’s overall poverty rate is 13.8%, higher than the state rate of 11.6%. Ware’s CDP poverty rate is even higher, at 19.2% closer to Springfield’s poverty level. Most surprising is that child poverty in Ware is 27.8% - more than a quarter of Ware’s children live in households at or below the poverty line. Places in Hampshire, Hampden, and Franklin counties with rates above 20% are Greenfield, Heath, Montague, Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, and

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**Figure 5: 2010 Poverty Rates from US Census - Ware and Benchmark Areas**

- **Poverty Rate**
- **Child Poverty Rate**
Cummington. Only Fitchburg and Worcester in Worcester County area above 20%. Recent national reports have highlighted an upwards trend in child poverty, with the US overall at 21% in 2011.

“Demographic Indicators” like poverty are a large component of the state Department of Public Health’s MassCHIP program which provides public health assessment information. Looking at access and medical statistics, Ware demonstrates good access to healthcare, including Baystate MaryLane Hospital and other regional medical centers, leading to positive maternal outcomes. However, MassCHIP reporting for Ware highlights high rates of children born to mothers living in poverty as a negative indicator for public health outcomes. Public Health issues highlighted in the MassCHIP reports on Ware centered upon substance abuse, children in poverty, and the elderly. For instance, Ware has high numbers of substantiated child abuse cases (267 - Ware is the only Hampshire town above state average). Among adults, Ware not only has an aging population and higher median age than the county and state, cardiovascular disease related deaths occur at rates 50% above state levels. This figure is age-adjusted, so Ware’s older population is less healthy than comparable populations elsewhere in the state. Finally, alcohol and drug related hospital discharges are significantly higher than in the County overall, which are also ahead of state levels. Child welfare, the health of seniors, and substance abuse are of critical concern.

Race, Ethnicity and Ancestry

Ware’s population continues to be predominantly Caucasian. In 2000 97.8% of Ware census respondents self-identified as white, 0.9% black, and 2.1% Hispanic or Latino. In 2010, 99.2% of Ware was white, 0.5% black, 3.5% Latino, 0.8% American Indian and 0.4% Asian. Some change may be attributable to the census now allowing selection of multiple racial categories. In Ware’s immediate region only Brookfield has a higher percentage
of single-race white residents. In 2010 Massachusetts was 81.7% white, the nation 74%. In the Pioneer Valley the ‘white alone’ population represents 81%, African American or Black 7%, and multi-racial 3%. The Hispanic or Latino population (of any race) is 15% of the Pioneer Valley residents. Ware’s ethnicity and ancestry is far more varied, with a population that reflects local and regional waves of immigration and economic shifts, such as the move from an agriculturally based economy to water-powered industry in the 19th century.

**Neighborhoods, Homes and Housing**

**Ware’s Diverse Housing Stock**

Ware has an array of residential options including older homes in mature neighborhoods, historic farms and contemporary large-lot housing developments in the rural areas, multi-family homes and apartments in the CDP, and manufactured homes in a wide range of locations. Ware’s housing is nearly as diverse as Springfield’s. For a long time Ware has offered housing choice in a rural region; most of the multi-family homes were built here before 1939. Apartment buildings that were built to house factory workers are still in use decades later. There are special benefits to being in this small community and rural location, and of course, challenges particular to the town’s character and location.

As the local and regional economy changed, the agricultural and mill town character was augmented by a new ‘bedroom community’ component in the 1970s when a growing proportion of residents began commuting to jobs elsewhere in the region. In 1973 the town passed a bylaw allowing only single-family homes.
Subsequent revisions to the bylaw have ensured that a variety of housing types are currently permitted in Ware. Today, compared to neighboring towns Ware has the lowest proportion of single-family detached homes - 54% (compared to 59% in Palmer and 73% in Belchertown). The “Age of Housing Stock” bar-chart shows Ware’s last housing boom in the 1970s as the production of housing units peaked, compared to Palmer’s peak suburban growth period in the 1950s, and Belchertown’s in the 1980s. The proportion of housing units that are manufactured homes is quite similar to national rates. Despite the development during this time, Ware is still one of only six towns in Hampshire and Worcester counties where 10% or less of the housing units were created since 1990.

Home Owners and Renters

The 1975 Master Plan describes renters as young adults in the phase before purchasing their own home - the assumption being that everyone who was employable would eventually marry and buy a home. At that time, a major planning goal was to ensure conditions conducive to the creation of homes to fill demand, homes appropriate to the desired community character.

The 1987 Comprehensive Plan focused on “growth management” - balancing home construction with impacts on natural resources, traffic and infrastructure. By 2004 the Community Development Plan voiced strong concern for housing affordability – with an eye towards fulfilling affordable housing requirements for residents at or below 80% of area median income (AMI), but also as affordability was perceived to be impacting average families.
Ware’s new Master Plan begins at a time with new issues affecting the ‘starter home’ market. A rise in overall housing costs relative to earnings is a problem nationally, not just in Ware. The continuing effects of the mortgage crisis, slow production of housing stock due to the recession, along with tightening credit requirements make it difficult for potential home-buyers. Ongoing changes in household composition - smaller families and older populations - plus evolving preferences such as the increasing value placed on walkable neighborhoods and energy efficiency, are all issues shaping housing demand in the region. Ware’s current home ownership rate is 66.9% nearly two owner-occupied units for every rental. This is typical of the region, but not the rural areas. Ware’s CDP area home ownership is lower – at 52.3%. In contrast, neighboring Belchertown has nearly five times as many home-owners as renters. As we can see in Map 4, highway access, but also historic economic patterns continue to shape the built environment and neighborhoods decades after the industrial base began to fade. The remaining density provides crucial housing variety - Ware, Palmer and Orange stand out as pockets of rental opportunity in the rural region between the Pioneer Valley and Worcester County.

**Figure 9: Home Values in Ware from 2010 Census**

**Affordable Housing and Housing Affordability**

The 2010 median home sale price in Ware was 130,000 – significantly below the Springfield median home price ($190,000) and the figure for the greater Northeast ($243,900) (US Census Construction and Housing sales, figures supplied by National Association of Realtors 2010). Manufactured [mobile] homes values are closer to $50,000 per unit (versus $100,000 -250,000 for a single family detached home). The prevalence of mobile homes in Ware reduces median home price. Traditional homes seem to be closer in price to comparable units in neighboring areas.

Ware’s regional housing ‘niche’ is three-fold – serving low, moderate, and higher-income households. The 1975 plan identified this niche, recognizing the in-migration of bedroom community residents was drawing people from all over the region who found in Ware housing value – cheaper homes than in the metropolitan area suburbs.
around Hartford, Worcester and Springfield, and a great setting in exchange for a little more driving. In 1970 half of the heads of household were recent in-migrants to Ware (1975 Ware Master Plan p 28). Now, as then, Ware provides a variety of options for a large portion of the mid-range housing options for both owners and renters in the region – the region’s moderate income households. The “Home Values” and “Rental Costs” figures compare the number of units, owner or renter occupied, in each price range. Ware has long provided housing for the rural region’s young and poor, seeking housing and opportunity in short supply in the smaller towns or an alternative to the challenges of urban living.

Households earning 80% or less of the AMI qualify for affordable housing (1743 households approximately). There are 446 units of affordable housing in Ware. This figure includes owner-occupied single-family units purchased through the Ware HOR program, apartments such as the 80 units at the Hillside Village apartments, and 29 units at the Church Street School site. Ware must work to fulfill the state’s Chapter 40B requirements for 10% of the municipality’s housing to be affordable. Currently Ware is at 9.7% (442 units of a total 4,539) (DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory 2011).

Presumably, the rest of the households earning below 80% of AMI find housing on the open market or have supplementary resources. However, in comparison with surrounding towns, Ware has the highest proportion of households (owners and renters) who are extremely ‘cost burdened’, paying 35% or more of their income for housing (over 18% of homeowners and over 45% of renters). Housing affordability (and possibly housing insecurity, although for the purposes of this report homelessness was not addressed) is a concern as it likely undermines the self-sufficiency of a significant number of Ware’s households. The situation is exacerbated by low levels of affordable housing stock in adjacent communities (Belchertown 6.4%, Palmer 4.9%, Hardwick 2.7%).

![Figure 10: Rental Costs in Ware from 2010 Census](image-url)
**Stability, Community and Social Capital**

There are reasons to expect that Ware residents might choose to age in place: at least a third of Ware households (35%) have been at the same address since before 1990. In Belchertown three percent of residents have been in their home since before 1970, but in Ware it’s over fourteen percent. This remarkable stability reflects historic development patterns and community characteristics, and is an important factor in Ware’s “social capital”. The sense of community is highly valued by residents according to surveys conducted around previous planning efforts and by the Ware Studio. At the same time, one possible effect of successful planning (and a national economic rebound) could be a rise in home values causing a shift in demand. Residents of all ages may have delayed sales because of depressed home values.

**Transportation**

The shift from mill town to residential community has caused other shifts. Ware was once a town where one could work and live and shop within several blocks. Today, access to a vehicle is necessary to fulfill almost every need as economic activity has shifted away from the center. The Council on Aging and PVPC provide the Ware shuttle that helps aging residents maintain independence, to reach retail and medical facilities that are located far from the center of town. A 2011 PVPC survey on behalf Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) is helping to inform future improvements to this important service. Paratransit service is also available to Ware’s disabled residents.

**Public Transportation and Access to Regional Opportunities**

Compared with surrounding towns, Ware has the highest number of households with no car or access to a car; 544 out of 4,352 (12.5%, compared to the next highest in the surrounding towns Palmer 9.5%). For students and workers who commute to Springfield, Amherst or Worcester, public transportation from Ware is unsuitable. Both Palmer and Belchertown have frequent and direct bus service (to Springfield and Amherst respectively). A bus commute to Worcester is possible from neighboring West Brookfield as well. The 2012 PVTA transportation shows a ‘low priority’ project to enhance linkage between Ware and Palmer (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission 2012 Transportation Plan Chapter 14).

The proportion of carless households in Ware is similar to highly urbanized places, but low transit mobility is unique to the town’s rural context. To complement programs that deliver social services to residents, enhancing connections with regional opportunities may yield significant benefits. For example, Ware’s CDP residents have a very low number of high school and bachelors degrees compared to the rest of Ware and to the region overall. The greatest disparity is in the 25-34 year-old cohort, which in Ware overall is the most highly educated age group (25% have bachelors degrees or higher -comparable to Hampshire County overall). But in the
CDP only 14% in this age group have a Bachelor’s Degree or Graduate Degree(s). Despite abundant educational opportunities in the region, particularly within the “Sustainable Knowledge Corridor”, Ware residents without a vehicle have little hope of reliably accessing post-secondary education.

**Transportation Choice**
The vast majority of Ware’s workforce commutes by car, most of them alone. Many of Ware’s residents purchased their home when favorable price and quality of life offset the negative aspects of commuting. Increasing transportation costs now accompany this kind of housing choice. Today transportation costs disproportionately affect low, moderate and middle-income households (most of Ware), particularly alongside housing and energy costs (Center for Neighborhood Technology 2012). Due to the changing economics of housing and transportation, but also to shifting attitudes about public transportation among young people and the aging boomers, and the potential for funding directed towards sustainability efforts that incorporate housing + transportation + energy, Ware may wish to expand transportation planning to include a truly multi-modal approach. As a regional hub, Ware may wish to consider how similar areas have incorporated transportation nodes into mixed-use redevelopment and downtown revitalization.

**Ware’s Economy**
To complement the data regarding population, households, housing and related characteristics, this section presents some economic data. Presented here are wage and employment characteristics of Ware’s residents and an analysis of the economy in Ware; what the labor force looks like; changes in household income; commuting behavior of residents; and some data to convey an idea of the local businesses.

**Changes and Trends in the Economy**
In order to understand some of the current trends and characteristics of Ware’s economy it is useful to recall the history of the town. As mentioned in the report introduction, until the early 20th century Ware was an important industrial center in the region, with a significant presence of textile mills and other manufacturing creating a thriving economy. However, the industrial decline that the town has faced since that period is not a trend exclusive to Ware. Most of the old mill towns in the region, and many post-industrial cities in the nation, are facing the challenges of adapting to the characteristics of the new economy. As a result, the town has been experiencing a transition to other sectors and industries in the economy, as explained in this section.

**Labor Force and Characteristics of Employment**
From the total of Ware’s 9,860 population in 2010, there were 8,064 residents age 16 years or over. From that population sub-group, 5,313 residents were considered part of the labor force while the remaining population was not in the labor force (2,751).
population, the data shows that the highest numbers are in the categories 25-44, 44-55 and 55-64. However, an estimated 100 residents who are 65 years and over are also employed. The total employed residents include people that work in Ware and the residents that travel outside Ware to work. While there are not specific data sources for a count of how many Ware residents work in each town (Ware or other), we can have a sense of those numbers based on information from the US Census Journey to Work data. Roughly, 39% of Ware’s employed residents work in Ware itself, while 51% commute to another town for work. Later in this section, there is an analysis of journey to work data that complements these estimates.

This section summarizes some employment and unemployment characteristics, comparing different spatial levels to have a better idea of Ware’s labor force. Looking at more specific information from the

The segment of population that is younger than 16, or who are for other reasons excluded from the labor force, is represented in dark blue in Figure 10.

The rest of the graph is Ware’s labor force, of which 602 residents are unemployed (orange) and 4,711 residents are employed (yellow). Analyzing the age composition of that employed

Figure 11: Labor Force as a Portion of Ware’s Total Population

Figure 12: Annual Unemployment Rate 1990 -2011. Ware and Surrounding Towns in the Quabbin Region Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. Local Area Unemployment Statistics by Towns and Cities
Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) from the Bureau of Labor Standards (BLS) shows that the unemployment rate for 2011 is still high. At 8.9 percent it is almost double the unemployment rate in 1986 as cited in the 1987 Growth Management and Development Plan of the town. A look at unemployment trends in the surrounding towns of the Quabbin Region shows that Ware has one of the highest unemployment rates compared to Belchertown, Pelham, and New Salem. But Ware, along with most of the towns in the Quabbin Region, has seen a slow decrease in unemployment since 2010.

Analyzing first the characteristics of the employed population of Ware, there appears to be diversity in type of worker. For instance, looking at occupation by 2010 the highest percentage of the workers are in the Management, business, science and arts, followed by Sales and office occupations. In contrast, as the 1987 Ware Growth Management and Development Plan describes, by 1980 the distribution of workers between “white collar” and “blue collar” jobs was more balanced (p 28). At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a predominance of agricultural work, as had long been the case in the region, and also manufacturing jobs because of the industrial and mill boom. As a consequence, we can see how the composition and characteristics of Ware’s labor force have changed with each shift in the economy, moving to a more diverse representation of occupations with a trend to “white collar” jobs added into the mix.

Based on 2010 data from the US Census
American Community Survey (5 year estimates), we see that more than half of the employed population (60%) works in the private sector, while 8% of the labor force are self-employed (3% in their own incorporated business and 5% in unincorporated business and unpaid family workers). While this data refers to all the people that are employed in the labor force regardless of job location, the last category mentioned gives a sense of small local businesses and residents that may work at home.

Taken together with employment information, a representation of income by industry also shows the variety in the type of jobs that the population has. In this data is evidence again of the loss of manufacturing jobs, with new jobs related to the service sector. This is the trend in the region, the state and the nation. Looking at employment by income shows that more than half of Ware’s employed population works in three main sectors; Educational services, and Health Care and Social Assistance (26.6%); Retail Trade (15.2%); and Manufacturing (12.1%). Figure 13 shows how this distribution has changed in the last decade. The industries that have gained employment share are Educational services and health care and Social Assistance; Public administration; Finance and insurance, and real estate and Rental and leasing; and Retail trade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Share Employment</th>
<th>Springfield MSA average weekly wage 2010*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational ss., and Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>$818 $883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>$491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>$1,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, Mgmt. of companies, and Admin. and Waste management services</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>$1,114 $1,460 $543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Source: *US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010. 5 year Estimates


This data confirms again the economic transition that has been explained, not just in terms of what has been happening in Ware, but also at the regional level. Significantly, the industries with the most employees and the ones that are growing are not the ones that have the highest salary and benefits. This shift has had a major impact on household income. For instance, an average weekly wage in the Springfield MSA for Manufacturing is $1,021. The average weekly Retail wage is less than half ($494). The growing jobs sectors often do not require a high-school education or skills training and pay poorly, or they require specialized training or
advanced degrees in order to access employment entirely different from the skills and education related to previously predominant employment sectors. More on education and jobs training will be discussed later.

Household Income

Looking at household income, Ware lags behind the county and the state, but from 2000 to 2010 it made progress. Considering Ware at the Census Tract level allows comparison of the median income in the two different sections of the town. As we mentioned earlier in this section, Tract 8201.01 exhibits a very low density and consists mostly of suburban and rural areas. Conversely, Tract 8201.02 (which covers most of the downtown) exhibits characteristics of rural urban town centers in Massachusetts, and is where much of the developed land is concentrated. Median Income broken down by these two areas shows a sharp contrast. The figure showing income by census tract shows that the median income of the tract including most of the downtown is about $38,000 dollars less than the rest of Ware. Moreover, the comparison of 2010 statistics to the 1999 numbers indicates a widening gap.

The income distribution in Ware matches up with the range of housing options described earlier. In comparison with Ware’s more affluent neighbor Belchertown, the income distribution figure shows that beneath the median income statistic is a pattern that tells more about who lives here. Ware has a high percentage of households in the middle range income, but it also has a high presence of poverty, borne out by comparing it to other places with some of the highest poverty rates in the region as noted before in the Poverty and Public Health section. Finally, looking at this distribution by census tract we
can see the high disparity between these two areas. In both 1999 and 2010, the downtown census tract (8201.02) had a higher percentage of its households in the lower income range, while the suburban and rural areas had a higher percentage of households in the higher income brackets. This income disparity is further evidence of the downtown older neighborhoods and more densely populated areas of the town being more similar to the region’s most urban areas.

Journey to Work
As mentioned at the beginning of this section, a high percentage of the employed population travel outside Ware to work. This commuting behavior shows how the town became an exporter of employment. Based on Journey to Work data from the Census Bureau, 55.5% of Ware’s working residents (16 years and over) commute to work outside the county of residence (Hampshire County). Although there is not specific information of where those commuters go to work, census data on travel time to work shows
that 40% of these workers travel between 30 and 59 minutes to go to work. This gives us a sense of the destination, since in that time you can get to big employment centers in the region, including Springfield, Holyoke, and Worcester, and even outside the state of Massachusetts in the Connecticut area.

From the employed population, 120 people in Ware reported that they work at home in 2010 (45 in the Census Tract 8201.02, which covers most of the downtown, and 75 in the Census Tract 8201.01). Those people that work at home represent 2.8% of the total workers that are 16 years and over in the town, according to the U.S. American Community Survey, 5 year estimates. The data regarding means of transportation to work shows that most of the people go to work by car, truck, or van. This percentage is higher (97.4%) in the census tract that covers most of the rural part of the town (8201.01) than in the other census tract (91.4% 8201.02). In this census tract, which covers most of the downtown and developed area, are more people that use other means of transportation.

From the percentage of workers that commute by car, truck or van, most of them drive alone (2888 people - 91.1% in Census tract 8201.01, and 1031 workers - 85.8% in Census tract 8201.02) and the remaining percentage carpooled.

One of the things that is important to note here is the number of carless households in Ware, as explained in the Transportation section. These are people who do not have a car or reliable access to one, and who therefore have limited options to commute in order to...
pursue a job or training opportunity. There are some job opportunities within Ware. In the next section characteristics of local businesses are presented in order to give a sense of the occupations and opportunities for workers employed within Ware.

Local Employment and Local Businesses Profile

Employment and Wages data from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOWD) shows that the total number of establishments in all industries has increased in the last ten years. Ware has gone from 212 establishments in 2001, to 256 in 2011, which means a stable business base. Growth in the number of establishments does not necessarily mean growth in the economy, but it shows the capability of the local economy to face challenges during the recession, since from 2008 to 2011 fifteen (15) establishments were added to the local economic base.

Regarding the change by industry classification, we see that there has been an increase in the number of local establishments in industries such as Finance and Insurance; Transportation and Warehousing; Retail Trade, Management of companies and enterprises; Administrative and Waste Services; and Other Services (except public administration), following the trend in the region and the state, as already mentioned. Although there is not aggregated data by more detail for industries to explore what “Other Services” covers in Ware, it is interesting to see that this

Figure 20: Change in number of local establishments in Ware by industry classification

US Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2010, 5-year estimates

The following bar chart shows the change in number of local establishments in Ware by industry classification from 2001 to 2011.
classification includes services such as Repair and Maintenance; Personal and Laundry Services; Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations; and Private Households. Most of them are self-employment or small businesses that have between 1 and 5 employees, which in 2010 represents 55% of the establishments in the local economy, based on data from the County Business Pattern from the US Census Bureau.

When looking at the size of establishments in Ware just 10% of the businesses have more than 50 employees, according to the US Census Bureau data. When that information is combined with data regarding the largest town’s employers from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, it seems that most of those establishments are in industries such as Educational services and Health Care and social assistance; Retail trade; Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing; and the large Manufacturing employer (Kanzaki paper manufacturing plant).

Source: Employment and Wage Data (EOWD) US Census Bureau. County Business Pattern 2010
Conclusion & Recommendations

Each section in this report provides some form of ‘toolkit’. These are steps that Ware may consider taking to move towards certain policy objectives. The overview and context information provided here is also a form of toolkit for understanding Ware. The data and mapping related to people, land use, housing and the economy are an essential component in the Master Planning process.

When faced with a great deal of information, the temptation is to seek the single most important data point. Yet, there is not one single characteristic that can describe Ware’s existing ‘niche’, determine Ware’s most important challenge, or define a vision for Ware’s future. Ware is surprisingly complex for a small town. Therefore, alongside the information data and visual information it seemed important to provide some guidelines about how to use this part of the Ware Studio toolkit. Based on the aforementioned information, as well as the site visits and interviews conducted by the entire Ware Studio, three recommendations are offered here to help guide the use of data and visual information throughout the Master Planning process.

Recommendations for Using the Information Toolkit

Number One: Balance as a Guiding Principle

Assess needs that arise from different land use characteristics, varied assets, the needs of various constituencies, and Ware’s different roles within the region in order to ensure that any initiative undertaken works towards multiple goals.

In order to identify conflicts, as well as opportunities, it will be necessary for the Master Planning process to be grounded in a strong understanding of the Ware’s complexity: the wide range of income and education levels, great variety in household composition and neighborhood character, and diverse location and type of employment. For instance, housing in Ware is nearly as varied as any metropolitan area, as are the services and economic activities. There are certainly trends, but whether it’s a shift from mill town to suburban dynamic, or growth in the older population, no trend is predominant and time will continue to bring new adjustments to the demographics and regional economy.

This complexity can be frustrating. It is realistic, however, and can be a source of strength. There is, for example, a low likelihood that Ware or the region will benefit from a single, massive economic factor like manufacturing was in the past. The state’s current approach to economic development in post-industrial cities (“Gateway” cities) translates this hard truth into a more balanced approach to economic development, one that seeks to strengthen each local sector while nurturing regional specialties like knowledge-based industry and cultural sectors. This “Gateway” approach has also become highly focused on the importance of affordable moderate and middle-income housing for the health of individual households, neighborhoods, local and regional economies. Such a model seems appropriate for Ware, particularly because in so many ways this town is like a ‘little city’ in its variety, energy, and role as a regional service center.
Number two: Be Proactive with Regards to Policy

Understand how your Master Plan goals fit with the relevant policy context. Ware’s relationship with relevant agencies and organizations is the key to accessing funding and expertise. Finding policy gaps is a first step in identifying new avenues for support.

Early in the project, the Ware Studio became aware of a key challenge for the town. Based on anecdotal evidence, and then a growing set of specific examples from the students’ research, it became obvious that Ware’s geographic location contributes to a baffling array of complex policy contexts that impact the town. The “Three Ovals” map at the beginning of this section attempts to highlight the main regional systems that Ware exists in relation to. A Master Planning process conducted with an awareness of the policy context can better achieve four outcomes:

- Identify policy conflicts that are causing poor resource allocation,
- Identify potential opportunities to influence policy-making to better serve Ware,
- Clarify benefits Ware can expect to receive from inclusion in large-scale policy, and
- Explore the extent to which Ware may translate its isolation to its benefit, to enjoy a certain level of autonomy.

Some examples of Ware on the edge or outside of a policy region to ill effect, or Ware contained within a policy context that is a poor fit, include the following:

- Ware is not connected to the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor through public transportation appropriate for carless households who wish to commute. Connecting Ware residents with the region’s education and training resources they need to participate in this region’s biggest economic development initiative is an unresolved issue.
- Ware’s most recent housing plan was performed in concert with the EO418 in 2004 (Quabbin Sub-Region Housing Plan 2002). It considers Ware as part of a system of towns stretching from Amherst to Warren, despite the very small number of Ware out-commuters who work within Hampshire County (most commute outside the County, so not to Amherst), and despite the lack of public transit connection in this policy area. As with many housing plans, it begins with a wide concern for affordability - a central issue in Ware – but action items since that time have been narrowly focused on increasing Ware’s Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- Ware’s Economic Target Area connects it southwards, towards the MassPike, which seems neither to define its ‘catchment’ area as a rural service center, nor to describe the area to which a significant number of commuters may be traveling. Instead, it may be based upon a notion of Palmer
as an economic center, perhaps in relation to the question of a casino being located there.

- Ware’s low-income and socially vulnerable populations are spatially disconnected from resources like child-care and employment agencies, but also some other quirks of organizational boundaries. For instance, Ware is the only Pioneer Valley town for which Community Action does not administer WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children), and Ware’s extremely high child poverty seems not to have raised red flags perhaps because environmental justice definitions focus only on overall poverty, sometimes weighted by race or environmental hazards. Ware has little of both. Statistical bias may play a role (i.e. a policy issue originating with the US census) in putting Ware at a distinct disadvantage given that it’s census tract boundaries cut its urban area in half. Promoting use of the Census Designated Place as much as possible would help draw attention to Ware.

- Perhaps one of the greatest challenges is the negative side of one of Ware’s greatest strengths – this town and its people are strongly connected to both east and west. Right now, this puts Ware (like many of its rural neighbors) on the edge of ‘opportunity’ (Kirwan Institute, 2009). With so many residents firmly connected, personally and economically, with the Pioneer Valley and the Worcester region, strengthening ties with the Central Massachusetts region may be just as important as looking to the West.

These are just some examples of policy disconnects that may affect Ware. This report will include a “Policy Boundaries” appendix with a list of the examples found during the studio and illustrations of ways in which Ware sometimes ‘falls off the map’.

A Master Plan will establish a vision for the town. Advocating for resources is a function of connecting that vision with policy frameworks that are overlooking Ware. In order to fulfill the goals of the Master Plan Ware will need to connect with the policy contexts and the resources that follow, or to identify new resources that better fit the town’s needs. These include planning expertise and support from the PVPC, economic development for local businesses through the state Economic Target Area (ETA) programs, or bolstering nature tourism by establishing linkages with the very strong trail and bike organizations in the Pioneer Valley and the Central Massachusetts regions. Sometimes Ware’s goals will not fit with the regional, state or other policy organizations. Identifying these conflicts is another important activity. If workforce training needed in Ware is a poor fit with Pioneer Valley offerings, it may be important to look to Worcester, or to state or federal programs for alternatives. This can focus the town’s effort to fulfill its vision by pursuing resources based on locally defined needs, rather than having the ‘tail
wag the dog’ whereby the town accepts resources offered regardless of whether it moves Ware towards its goals.

**Number three: Benchmark Progress**

*Once the Master Plan vision and goals have been created, identify key data points to use as indicators to benchmark progress during implementation. The indicators can apply to planning processes, as well as outcomes. Continue to use detailed, current information to measure success in moving towards the community’s vision for the future, as defined by the town’s Master Plan.*

In the course of gathering and analyzing data, the Data and Mapping group researched and referred to some indicator ‘frameworks’ in order to interpret the information. An indicator framework provides a way to understand the significance of data points, alone and in relation to one another. Sometimes context alone is sufficient, for instance Ware’s unemployment rate is significant largely in relation to whether it is higher or lower than the region, state and national rates. However, the relevance of unemployment is also related to Ware specifically as a rural location without public transportation and with a small local jobs base.

Therefore, the studio first used a Rural Prosperity model that highlighted ways in which Ware might measure success differently from a metropolitan or densely suburban area (Isserman *et al.* 2007). For instance, in this framework the positives of Ware’s rising median income are strongly offset by rising poverty. Rising education levels in certain age cohorts are an encouraging trend, but Ware’s most ‘urban’ populations are not participating in this path to success, and the very low rates of post-secondary education in the Ware CDP are a contra-indicator of rural prosperity.

This relates to a second framework employed, one which contextualizes the information in terms of access to opportunity. While Ware is well-positioned for a worker to reach several large regional employment centers within an hour’s commute, people who seek educational options but whose transportation options are limited find themselves effectively stranded in Ware. In this context, the high number of carless households *given the rural location*, and that contrast between education levels of young adults residents of Ware’s CDP, and non-CDP residents, can be understood as placing severe limitations on Ware’s labor force. This translates into limitations of household income, and can be seen through other data points such as high levels of housing cost-burden in Ware.

Again, these frameworks were useful for analysis, but going forward, the Master Plan will need to use the information provided and further data collection in a way that is tailored to the goals Ware sets for itself. There are many examples of ways to gather and use information for municipal planning. Given Ware’s unique character it is recommended that an out-of-the-box solution be avoided. However, to get started resources will be provided, including a menu of sample indicators appropriate for small communities that is included in the appendix.
Overview and Context References


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Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Meeting Summaries. Made available by Professor Joseph Krupczynski October 2012.
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Ware Community Development Committee in cooperation with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Ware 2004 Community Development Plan. Retrieved September 15, 2012. https://app2.ocd.state.ma.us/e418portal/Plans.asp?c=W

\[ This data is from the PVPC Ware Community Profile 2011. In most instances the Ware Studio went back to original sources for data, but some information was not available to the students, such as Warren Group housing data. \]

\[ This is the housing rehabilitation program funded through Ware’s CDBG [Community Development] Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. \]

\[ As the Census Bureau explains, Not in labor force as “includes all people 16 years old and over who are not classified as members of the labor force. This category consists mainly of students, housewives, retired workers, seasonal workers interviewed in an off season who were not looking for work, institutionalized people, and people doing only incidental unpaid family work (less than 15 hours during the reference week).” http://factfinder2.census.gov/help/en/american_factfinder_help.htm#glossary/glossary.htm \]
Natural Resources
Natural Resources

Conservation and Recreation
Ware has many natural resources vital to the town's well-being and identity. As development spreads Ware’s natural resources are threatened, most notably farmland. Agricultural and forested lands have decreased in Ware for several decades. Residents expressed a need and desire to preserve Ware's agriculture and natural landscapes in the town’s Five Year Strategic Plan (2001) and it is a concern expressed in the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Active agriculture comprises over 800 acres while forests make up over 16,000 acres. While only 12% of land within the town is developed, it is important to preserve Ware’s rural and agricultural character. The town has also expressed a need to improve and expand its recreational facilities and opportunities in a sustainable manner that will be compatible with the town’s natural resources.

Agriculture
Current statistics show farmland and other open space lands have been decreasing in recent years, threatening the town's agricultural base. The town includes several working and historic farms that are important to the town's landscape and character. Active agricultural land, including working farms, has decreased significantly while pastureland such as areas reserved for livestock grazing has increased. In addition there has been a decrease in forests and recreational lands (see table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Agriculture</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>16,234</td>
<td>16,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Decreasing Open Space Lands Acreage Over Time
(Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Land Use Statistics 2005)
While agriculture is an important facet of Ware’s economy, only a small portion of the town’s population is employed in agricultural related jobs. According to Census 2010 data, the sector that includes agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining accounts for 6.4% of the income of Ware residents. Additionally, 15% of the population is employed in the natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations industry, which is the smallest industry sector in Ware and is a slight decrease from employment in this sector in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Pastureland here excludes cropland and wooded lands.

Ware’s planning documents do not currently include an inventory of farms; therefore, it was difficult to find farming data at the town level that could help inform this report and the Master Plan. While the data acquired is not very detailed and may not be completely representative of Ware’s farming community, it gives a sense of the types of farming activities that occur in town. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s 2007 Agricultural Census data provided in the table below, there are 48 working farms in Ware. Two-thirds of the farms have fewer than 50 acres. The remaining one-third of Ware’s farms consist of 50-1,000 acres. Commodity totals from this census indicated that one farm had sales between $50,000-249,999, while the remaining 47 farms had sales totaling less than $50,000. Hay production accounts for the majority of farming activities, while the most farms are situated within a wooded area.

In several plans the town has identified many goals and objectives for improving and maintaining agricultural land, some of which include zoning changes. The town has in the past considered, but never implemented, an agricultural protection overlay district. This is something that other towns in the area have successfully implemented. The purpose of the agricultural protection district is to further protect agricultural land while in compliance with the town’s zoning, and protect lands that were not previously protected under the existing zoning. The 2012 zoning bylaws identify agricultural uses that are allowed and prohibited based on the existing zoning districts, and is something town officials must consider when developing an overlay district (see table 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farming Activity</th>
<th># Farming Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berries</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut Christmas Trees</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and Nut Trees</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchards</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Farming Activities in Ware

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural Land Type</th>
<th>Number of Farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvested Cropland</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastured Cropland</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmsteads, Buildings, Animal Facilities</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastureland</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: USDA Data on Ware’s Farms
Agricultural Commission
As a method for encouraging and supporting farming activities in Ware, the town should consider establishing an official Agricultural Commission. The Commission would be responsible for agricultural related issues and for supporting farmers. The Commission could also lead the establishment of zoning changes related to farming. The Town of Montague, located about forty-five minutes northwest of Ware and with a population just over 8,000, has implemented an Agricultural Commission that oversees farming related activities and zoning changes. For this report, Montague’s Agricultural Commission serves as a model for Ware. It is recommended that once Ware establishes an Agricultural Commission, it should implement several zoning changes that support farming activities. Examples of changes to the town’s general bylaws and zoning bylaw should include those changes listed below.

Right to Farm Bylaw
The Town of Montague’s Agricultural Commission instituted a Right to Farm bylaw that encourages farming activities to occur with as little conflict as possible with neighbors. The bylaw is a response to development pressures that threaten farmland. It also notifies potential landowners in Montague that farming is an accepted activity that the town supports and nuisances such as noise, dust, and odors are normal effects of farming activities. While nuisances from farming activities may not currently affect many landowners in Ware, a right to farm bylaw might be a good measure for Ware to take for preventing future farming disturbances (Town of Montague 2012).

### Table 4: Town of Ware Zoning Bylaw, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Commercial/ Industrial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm at least 5 acres</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm less than 5 acres</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Greenhouse</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smokehouses</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian Stable</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>SP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Ware Farm on One of the Area’s Rural Roads
**Agricultural Protection District**

It is recommended that Ware implement an agricultural protection district as an amendment to the town’s zoning bylaw. Ware’s residents value the town’s rich farmland and it is crucial to preserve such land for business and food supply efforts. While Ware currently has many properties in the Chapter 61 program that temporarily protects agricultural land, a specific agricultural zoning district would further protect these properties if they are removed from the Chapter 61 program by the landowner. This is another active step that Ware can take towards preserving its farmland and is something many nearby towns have already implemented. A nearby town after which Ware could model its agricultural protection district is Amherst, MA. Amherst established a farmland conservation district with the purpose of protecting the town’s critical farmland areas. Like Ware, Amherst’s character is partly defined by its agricultural activity; the farmland conservation district helps maintain the economic viability of agriculture and its value to Amherst residents (Town of Amherst 2012).

Some of the provisions set forth in Ware’s agricultural protection district might include, based on Amherst’s farmland conservation district, the following stipulations:

1. Residential development within the agricultural protection district must be limited to cluster development. Within the open space in the cluster development, a maximum of 5,000 square feet per home must be set aside as usable open space.
2. All buildings and roads must be located on the part of the property with the soils least suitable for agricultural production or livestock.
3. Common land set aside as permanently preserved open farmland shall have appropriate contiguous acreage and access to enable continued viable farmland operations.
4. All roadways, drainage systems and utilities shall be laid out so they have the least possible impact on adjacent or on-site agricultural lands or uses.
5. Every reasonable effort shall be made to maintain views of open agricultural lands from nearby public roads.
6. Each dwelling unit and structure shall be integrated into the existing landscape through use of building placement, landform treatment and screening.
**Farm Inventory**

Once the Agricultural Commission has been established, it might consider conducting an inventory of the current working farms in Ware. This inventory would help the town develop its agricultural protection district and establish relationships between the Agricultural Commission and local farmers. An inventory would also be useful when advertising Ware’s agricultural efforts and activity, especially if there are farms that promote and offer agri-tourism activities. The inventory would help make farming more visible to Ware’s residents and visitors and further establish it as an important resource for the town. This might also be an important section of the Master Plan and provide a baseline the town can use to plan for the future of its agricultural land.

**Chapter 61 - Protected Open Space**

Ware currently has a strong Chapter 61 base that includes over 800 acres of privately owned open lands protected for agricultural and forest use. Ware has lands in all three Chapter 61 programs. Chapter 61 preserves lands for long-term active forest management, Chapter 61 A is intended for land with agricultural uses, and Chapter 61 B is for lands that will remain natural and open. Most of the Chapter 61 lands are located throughout the center of Ware.

*Map 1: Chapter 61 Lands in Ware, MA*
Ware, in West Ware, along the Ware River Greenway Trails Project, and within the Dougall Range (2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan; Town of Ware Assessor’s Office, 2012). Map 1 identifies the location of all Chapter 61 lands in Ware and includes the proposed agricultural protection overlay district.

Chapter 61 is a tax incentive tool that encourages landowners to classify their property as protected agricultural or forest land. This is an important economic investment for landowners as their land is taxed at a reduced rate. It can be a temporary measure as the landowner can take the property out of Chapter 61 at any time. The town has the first right of refusal when Chapter 61 lands are sold in order to prolong their classification under Chapter 61 (2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan; Town of Ware Assessor’s Office, 2012).

Using the location of Chapter 61A lands as the main determinant, an example agricultural protection overlay district has been created to show a potential area the town should consider protecting through its zoning bylaw. Because the town will not always be able to afford to purchase lands once they are taken out of Chapter 61, the agricultural protection overlay district can be another way to protect farmland. It could help the town prioritize areas for farmland protection and to possibly work with the East Quabbin Land Trust to target lands to
preserve. Based on Ware’s current zoning and the distribution of Chapter 61A lands, an agricultural protection overlay district would be most appropriate in the northeastern and central parts of town within the town’s current zoning of Rural Residential 2. These areas have a high concentration of Chapter 61A lands and are important areas to protect as it would include parts of the water supply protection overlay district.

**Quabbin Reservoir**

The Quabbin Reservoir is a natural resource that is vital to Ware’s rural character and highly valued by its residents. The Quabbin provides an abundance of outdoor recreational activities to Ware residents and visitors. While many Ware residents enjoy the Quabbin, there seems to be little recognition that the Quabbin is located in Ware and part of the town. Ware’s Master Plan should focus on raising awareness of this natural resource and encouraging residents to visit it more frequently.

In order to engage Ware residents more with the Quabbin, the Town should focus on the following aspects to make the Quabbin more attractive to residents:

- Pursue trail development that will connect trails in the Quabbin to trails in Ware, for example trails in the Town Forest. These trails can include sections of roads in order to be continuous.
- Improve signage around the Quabbin and in Ware’s downtown, in order to direct residents and visitors towards the Quabbin.
- Collaborate with the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the EQLT to provide more outdoor activities and events focused on the Quabbin and advertised throughout Ware.

**Forest Management**

Like agriculture, the amount of forest has decreased over the past several years. In 2004 when the Community Development Plan was written, Ware owned 366 acres of permanently protected open space, which includes the town parks and the Town Forest. The State of Massachusetts also owned about 5,500 acres of open space at this time. The town is responsible for the management of the Town Forest which is
comprised of three different non-contiguous parcels. The PVPC helped the town develop a forest management plan with the goal of developing adequate trails while maintaining the forest’s natural resources. A public meeting was held to discuss priorities for forest management and to identify issues that residents had regarding the forest. The major issues the public identified included that the town should establish forest boundaries, increase and improve recreational opportunities, conduct an inventory of resources, do selective cutting to improve forest growth, implement signage for all three properties, and provide maps of the town forest.

The three parcels that comprise the Town Forest (see map 3) include the upper North Street lot, which consists of 5.6 acres of Red Oak forest. Because the lot is so small and there is no available public parking, this lot is only used by neighbors for hiking and walking. The Walker Road property consists of 28 acres about a mile north of downtown. This parcel is surrounded by agricultural land, much of which is included in Chapter 61. There are hiking and cross-country skiing trails and hunting is allowed, however there is not a defined parking area, making it difficult for residents to use this parcel.

The last lot that comprises the Town Forest is Muddy Brook lot, which is about 66 acres located in the northeastern part of Ware. Similar to the Walker Road property, this lot is surrounded by Chapter 61 properties. This lot has two access roads that are mostly maintained by hikers and recreational ATV use, and there are several smaller trails that connect the roads. This lot provides important habitat for many species and has been identified as a priority habitat area by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Map 3: Conservation Lands in Ware, Including State Quabbin Lands and the Town Forest Parcels Located in Eastern Ware.
The Forest Management Plan developed several management recommendations for the three town forest parcels, which included management activities such as thinning, regeneration, tree harvesting, and trail development. There were two priority actions that the plan identified. The first is that the town should do cutting and thinning on the Walker Road lot, which will help maintain the health of the forest and timber sales will help fund invasive species management. The second recommendation was that the town should create a process of retaining funds from timber harvest sales that will then be used for future forest management activities.

Forests also provide valuable economic resources to the community. This includes selling lumber and Class 1 Prime forest species; flood control in upland and lowland areas where trees absorb runoff; water supply protection for public and private sources as trees help filter pollutants; improve air quality; control erosion; recreational opportunities; and scenic views. The forest is also important for maintaining wildlife populations and providing quality habitat (Town of Ware Forest Management Plan: Urban Forest Planning and Education Project 2007).

**East Quabbin Land Trust**
The East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) is a valuable partner for Ware in the protection of forestland and open space. It works with private landowners to protect land from sprawl and strives to protect farmland. The EQLT owns several parcels in Ware, including two key properties. The Frohloff Farm was acquired in 2010 and consists of 90 acres located off Church Street. The Hyde Wood Lot is approximately 100 acres, located off Old Stagecoach Road with frontage on Muddy Brook. The Town of Ware has

**Map 4: East Quabbin Land Trust Properties and Dougal Range**
a conservation restriction on both properties (Henshaw 2012). The EQLT is an important opportunity for Ware and they should continue to work together towards open space and agricultural preservation.

The EQLT focuses much of its efforts on the Dougal Range, which runs from Hardwick to the center of Ware. The Dougal Range is an intact-forested area with over 2,000 acres of woods crucial to maintaining the declining migratory bird population. It includes one farm and several fields. The Dougal Range is a primary focus area for EQLT and an area where there have been major steps towards outreach to private landowners (Henshaw 2012). Several trails have been informally mapped in this region.

Working with the Town of Ware, the EQLT has been able to protect several properties important to the town’s overall conserved landscape. In order to continue protecting land for conservation, Ware should continue to collaborate with the EQLT and pursue further open space protection. The town can help foster communication between the EQLT and private landowners and help Ware residents understand the value of protected open space.

Recreational Facilities and Opportunities

Ware has several recreational facilities that serve the youth and adult populations. There are two main locations where the majority of sports activities occur in town. The William Dearden Memorial Field is mostly used for sporting events. The town has been focused on improving the quality of the park through the use of a Community Development Block Grant, which helped fund new lighting, a new path system and improvements to the fields. These improvements were conducted within the past year and will continue through 2012. According to the director of the Parks and Recreation Department, the town is currently installing a new lighting system and the fields are in great condition. However, the main problem with Memorial Field is that there are not enough fields to support the many sports teams and practices. Therefore, there is competition over when each team gets to play. This park also has the town’s only lit sports fields, so there is a high demand for use of these facilities (Town of Ware 2007; Piechota 2012). Veteran’s Memorial Park, located in downtown Ware across from Town Hall, provides a place for passive recreation.
The concentration of recreational activities taking place in Ware occurs at Grenville Park, located on Church Street. This park comprises over 100 acres around the Ware River Reservoir and was the only substantial park in the town before the Quabbin Reservoir was created. Grenville Park is included in the Church Street Historic District, which is recognized as a historic location under the National Register of Historic Places. There are several sports fields and courts, picnic areas, walking trails through the woods and along the river, skiing, wildlife observation opportunities, boat access, and fishing piers. This park is a very valuable asset of the town and is enjoyed by most residents. The town has addressed several safety issues regarding the park, which included constructing a better fence around a baseball field and planting higher quality grass. However, there have been several issues facing the park as the town has struggled to maintain its quality. Due to town budget cuts, the Parks and Recreation Department does not have a long-term program for landscape maintenance that extends beyond minimal mowing and leaf raking. The bandstand is in need of major repair, which is a main concern for the Parks Department. The town is currently applying for a grant to restore the bandstand, install a new multipurpose field, and make the park ADA compliant. There has also been illegal dumping of waste into the river, which is something the town does not seem to have a plan for deterring (Town of Ware 2009; Piechota 2012).

The Ware River Rail Trail is a project that has major potential to provide high-quality recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. The town has been working to complete the trail for many years, and only the southern half has been completed. The trail will generally follow the Ware River on the east side of town, linking Ware to Hardwick. The unfinished part of the trail, or the northern section, would go from Grenville Park to the covered bridge bordering Hardwick, and would possibly extend to the north through Hardwick. Only half of the trail has been completed because it is owned by the town, while the other half of the trail would be installed on privately owned land and will require easements that the town has not yet pursued. The goal for this trail is that it will pass through residential areas near the downtown and schools, and will connect to Grenville Park. There is also the potential for this trail to connect with trails coming from Palmer. This rail trail is something residents of the town desire, especially since there are currently no official bike paths in Ware (Town of Ware 2007; Henshaw 2012).
Ware has an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities and potential to expand such activities, in addition to the rail trail. There are a few unmaintained trails in the Town Forest and signage indicating the trailheads is poor, in addition to there being very limited parking for hikers. Much of the Town Forest is also adjacent to residential areas, so it is often difficult for people who live elsewhere in town to access the forest. The town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan identified the Town Forest and other properties under conservation protection as “potential gold mines” for trails and passive recreation. There is clearly a lack of quality hiking trails accessible to Ware residents and according to the town, there needs to be an increase in public awareness of recreational opportunities, which would include signs and more parking (Town of Ware 2007).

There are hiking opportunities in other areas of town, such as at Grenville Park and the Quabbin Reservoir. The Quabbin is managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation which has strict guidelines allowing and restricting certain public uses. Such public access guidelines are important to consider, since part of the Quabbin Reservoir and Park lie within Ware. Activities allowed within the Quabbin include walking and hiking, biking, geocaching, sledding, wildlife observation, and boat fishing. Activities that are prohibited include snowmobiling, ATVs, hunting/trapping, canoeing or kayaking, dog walking, horseback riding, and camping (Department of Conservation and Recreation 2006).

Recreational Facilities for All Ages
The 2007 Open Space Plan states that the town needs to consider age more when planning for new recreational facilities. The plan acknowledges that the number of people age 65 and over increased from 1990-2000. Based on 2010 census data, this age range did not increase much more, however the age-range of 45-64 increased significantly. Additionally, there was a 34% decrease in the population between the ages of 10-19. This supports the town’s goal of accommodating older populations in terms of providing appropriate recreational facilities. Ware has recognized that there are multiple needs for the town’s recreational facilities that include both youth and older populations. The Parks and Recreation Director stated in an interview that this is an issue the town is currently discussing as it decides on which improvements to make in the parks. In addition to creating more parks and fields directed
towards youth, the town should consider providing alternate recreational activities to support an older population, such as hiking trails, bird watching opportunities, and other opportunities for active recreation. The town should not abandon efforts to provide recreation opportunities to youth; however, it should be planning for an aging population and provide appropriate recreation opportunities.

**Funding Assistance**

In past plans, residents of Ware have expressed many needs for expansion and improvement of recreational facilities. While the town has taken steps towards making improvements at Grenville Park, efforts in other recreational facilities seem to have been stalled due to lack of funding or never got off the ground. Recreational opportunities are important for all age groups and it is something the town must consider as a priority for satisfying the needs of its residents (Piechota 2012)

It is recommended that Ware continue to apply to the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant program, funded by the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. This grant program helps cities and towns to acquire and develop lands for parks and other outdoor recreation purposes. This is a reimbursement program, so a town given a grant will receive between 52% to 70% reimbursement for the total cost of the project. Projects considered for this program include the purchase of land for parks, development of a new park, or renovation of an existing park. Properties that receive the grant award must be open to the public and maintained as protected open space, and dedicated to recreation. The eligibility requirements for the PARC funding include the following:

- Towns considered eligible for funding must have an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan filed with the Division of Conservation Services.
- Cities and towns with more than 35,000 residents may receive a maximum grant of $400,000, while towns with less than 35,000 residents may receive a maximum grant of $50,000. Towns with less than 35,000 residents and whose project will be accessible by public transportation or have parking space for more than 100 cars will be eligible to receive the $400,000 grant award.
- The same town can submit multiple applications that cover unrelated renovations or it can submit a single application that covers several renovations of the same type in multiple parks.
As of the writing of this report, it was announced that Ware had received a 2012 PARC grant. Ware would be able to apply again in fiscal year 2014 next July. Ware is eligible to apply for the grant because its open space plan is valid and does not expire until September 2014. Based on Ware’s equalized valuation per capita ranking, it would be eligible to receive reimbursement of up to seventy percent of the total amount spent on the improvement project. This grant would be an important way for Ware to improve its recreational facilities and accomplish many of the goals outlined in the Open Space Plan (PARC 2012).

A number of other state funding opportunities are available for the town to acquire more conservation and passive recreation land, including the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) program. Like PARC, this is a program offered by the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Adding to Ware’s inventory of town-owned lands may be desirable in order to achieve specific goals. For instance, if Ware’s Master Plan places completion of the local trail system high on the list of priorities, it is likely to require a combination of agreements with private landowners and land acquisition.
Natural Resources and Development

Ware's natural resources are a valuable asset to the Town and provide Ware's residents with enjoyable recreational and educational opportunities. Balancing the protection of natural resources with development is one of the many problems that towns through the U.S. must tackle. There are a number of planning practices that, when implemented, can provide protection to a community's natural resources without stifling development. Some practices our studio identified that would be of value to protecting some of Ware's natural resources include identifying and implementing alternatives to conventional septic systems and increasing the use of cluster housing development. These two strategies can help protect Ware's water resources and its open space and recreational areas while still allowing development to proceed.

Alternatives to Conventional Septic Systems

Between 40 and 45% of Ware's population are reliant on individual, privately owned septic systems. This comprises a significant portion of the population. Septic systems can provide a viable alternative to municipal sewer systems with proper maintenance and monitoring and if the systems are located in suitable areas dependent upon soil type, water table levels, and lot sizes. Unfortunately, large parts of Ware that have potential for development are not suitable areas for septic system installation, specifically the Beaver Lake area (Open Space and Recreation Plan 2007). Areas with septic systems increase the likelihood of water pollution due to leakage or malfunctioning systems. A large number of private septic systems compounds the problem of ensuring a safe water supply for homeowners who rely on private wells, as the infrastructure patterns of Ware follow that areas with septic systems also tend to rely on non-municipal well water.

A View Across the Quabbin Reservoir
The Beaver Lake area has seen the conversion of seasonal homes to year-round housing, placing increased strain on individual septic systems. The area is not very suitable for septic systems mainly due to small lot sizes although problems with soil type have also been noted (Martens 2012). Extending the municipal sewer system presents both a high cost, estimated at $10 million, and incentivizes further development in the area (Martens 2012). This increases sprawl rather than encouraging infill of the town center and encounters potential opposition by residents of the community who would like to keep the area less developed. Additionally problematic regarding the Beaver Lake area is the private ownership of the lake, therefore the Town of Ware does not have jurisdiction over this body of water.

While the Beaver Lake area has a number of circumstances that make it difficult for the town to take direct action, not addressing the issue proactively could result in long-term impacts for Ware. Disruption of the ecosystem through leaching of wastewater into Beaver Lake could lead to nitrogen loading, also known as eutrophication, resulting in algae blooms and leading to fish kills. While Beaver Lake is a private body of water, it is still an integral part of Ware’s ecosystem and environmental degradation of even small areas can have vast consequences for the larger community. Unfortunately, the limited scope of this report did not allow the time or resources to perform an analysis of what would happen to Ware’s larger ecosystem if Beaver Lake became eutrophied. But one can assume it would result in reduced desirability of one of Ware’s prime real estate areas.

Septic system leakage resulting in poor water quality and environmental degradation is an issue many communities on Cape Cod are facing and remediation comes at high cost to the communities. While impacts on Cape Cod’s estuaries have larger environmental consequences than an inland lake, proactive actions taken now before the Beaver Lake area suffers from nitrogen loading can save vast sums of money later on in the future. The Barnstable County Wastewater Cost Task Force prepared estimates of alternatives to individual septic systems for the variety of communities on Cape Cod. These range from smaller systems that simply remove nitrogen from individual septic systems to satellite wastewater treatment plants. Listed in Table 1 are the estimated combined fixed and operational costs as well as potential wastewater treatment volume for individual nitrogen-removing septic systems, cluster septic systems, and satellite treatment plants. The Barnstable County Wastewater Cost Task Force bases these estimates on an

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Wastewater Processing Load</th>
<th>Base Case Cost (annual per pound of nitrogen removed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual nitrogen removing</td>
<td>300 gallons per day</td>
<td>$770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster system</td>
<td>8,800 gallons per day</td>
<td>$710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite system (smaller)</td>
<td>50,000 gallons per day</td>
<td>$680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite system (larger)</td>
<td>200,000 gallons per day</td>
<td>$510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Barnstable County Wastewater Cost Task Force
analysis of baseline costs, combining the fixed as well as operation and maintenance costs (Barnstable County Wastewater Cost Task Force 2010). Ware may be able to use the work done by the Barnstable County Wastewater Cost Task Force to assess which of these options would be best depending on the area.

Dwight H. Merriam, Attorney and Founding Partner of Robinson & Cole’s Land Use Group, presents a number of alternatives to traditional septic and sewer systems in his publication The Last Thing that Planners Talk About Should Be the First. While these alternative and community sewage treatment systems have a larger upfront cost estimated at $13,000 to 18,000 and an operating cost of $500 to 1,000, the ability to spread these costs amongst multiple units leads to an operating cost estimated at $150 to 200 per dwelling (Merriam 2010). Individual septic systems vary widely in annual maintenance costs, between $30 to 1,700, depending on labor costs, the quality of the system, and soil suitability (The Costs and Financing of Septic Systems 2010). The reinstatement of the septic system revolving loan program could potentially be able to help finance a project of this scale as well (Ware Community Development Strategy - FY13 Draft 2012).

Therefore, considering alternative wastewater treatment systems could save residents large sums of money in the long-term. Also, protecting the water supply for residents relying on private wells through monitoring for leakage and system failure would improve long-term costs and outcomes. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection maintains a list of both approved alternative and innovative wastewater treatment technologies as well as technologies approved for pilot programs (Summary of Alternative and Innovative Wastewater Treatment Technologies Approved for Use and Under Review Mass DEP 2012).
Recently, a manufactured home community in the rural residential area called the Quabbin Sunrise Cooperative became owners of their land after buying out the previous landowner. As cooperative owners, residents are able to use additional funds to make infrastructure improvements in their community improving the quality of life and potentially lowering the cost of living (Cooperative Development Institute: Northeast Center for Cooperative Business 2010). This presents an opportunity to use alternative sewage or community septic systems. The Quabbin Sunrise Cooperative could be a model community for the rest of town's neighborhoods to follow regarding cooperation among residents in installing cluster septic or alternative and innovative wastewater technologies. The studio contacted the treasurer, Steve Varnum, and the cooperative advisor, Jeremiah Ward, in November 2012. Steve Varnum was asked whether the community had ever considered switching to alternative or innovative wastewater treatment technology or community septic system. He responded that the community had not considered these alternatives and the leeching fields of the current septic system were replaced within the last ten years so the Cooperative would likely not consider replacing the current system in the near future. However, as Treasurer, Steve was open to presenting the idea to the board given further information about alternatives to conventional septic systems and believed the community would be open to pursue the idea in the future (Varnum 2012). The transition to alternative and innovative wastewater treatment technologies would not happen overnight, but making it a priority in Ware’s Master Plan the Town would help ensure this issue continues to be addressed.

However, Ware cannot expect every residence to agree to switch to alternative or community wastewater systems. A municipal ordinance requiring routine inspection of individual septic systems is one option Ware could consider adopting. In a case study of Jamestown, Rhode Island the town was dealing with high seasonal water tables and under-sized lots for the septic loads. The inspection program is financed through annual user fees paid by the homeowner (Environmental Protection Agency 2012). Given the current economic situation in Ware and throughout the country, this option may meet resistance, as it would likely result in increased fees for homeowners.

A less regulatory and yet still proactive option for addressing issues with individual septic systems could be the creation of an education and outreach program. By educating and assisting residents in monitoring their personal water supply, including
recognizing the signs of polluted water and malfunctioning septic systems, the community can increase the likelihood of catching failing septic systems before they become an environmental and health concern. A variety of sources of information have been identified including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, as well as various research institutions such as universities and environmental groups that provide a host of information on this topic. Included with the references below are agency and organization names, the name of the source of information, and links to sources.

Natural Resources and Infrastructure References


2011 Public Water Supply Verification. Ware, MA: The Town of Ware - Department of Public Works, 2011.

Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware, Massachusetts. Ware, MA: Town of Ware, 2011.


Cooperative Development Center: Northeast Center for Cooperative Business 2010.


Henshaw, Steve, interview by Margaret Engesser. Director of East Quabbin Land Trust , 2012.

Martens, Thomas, interview by Russell Pandres. Director of the Ware Department of Public Works (2012 October).


Open Space & Recreation Plan. Ware: Town of Ware, Massachusetts, 2007.

Piechota, John, interview by Margaret Engesser. interview by Margaret Engesser. Director of Ware Parks and Recreation Department, 2012.


*Ware Community Development Strategy - FY13 (Draft)*. Ware, MA: Town of Ware, 2012.

Housing
Housing

This section of the report examines various aspects of the town's existing, housing needs and availability, and related zoning code. While diverse, these topics were chosen with consideration to known issues in the community based on previous plans, with particular attention towards those areas which could be improved in order to help the town meet its goals of increasing affordable housing options while strengthening and protecting the community's assets and identity.

Improving Housing Choice
Ware has made significant findings in the past decade assessing the housing needs of its residents. The findings indicate that Ware must find innovative methods to help increase the affordability of its housing stock (Ware Community Action Plan 2009). Those housing initiatives should also help to diversify the housing stock in order to serve individuals in all stages of life, especially young adults, small families and senior citizens. In order to help address diversity issues in the housing stock, many rural mill towns have enacted Adaptive Reuse Overlay Districts (AROD) to provide guidelines for the redevelopment of underused mills or vacant buildings. The goal of this overview is to provide town administrators with substantive recommendations that, we believe, would be helpful references as Ware prepares to revise its Master Plan. The three housing recommendations are:

1. Improve “Cluster Zoning” by-law
2. Improve the Accessory Apartment Bylaw, [Chapter 4.4.3, Ware Zoning Code]
3. Apply an Adaptive-Reuse Overlay District downtown

Three Examples of Ware Housing: A New Development in the Rural Residential Area, a Split-level in the Suburban-Residential District, and a Downtown Residential Neighborhood.
Cluster Housing

Cluster housing or Flexible Residential Open Space Development (as it is referred to in Ware’s zoning bylaw) is a form of cluster residential development in which the lot size and other dimensional standards may be reduced in exchange for the preservation of permanently protected open space, recreational land, forests, or farmland. It may also allow for increased densities in exchange for preservation of additional open space. Cluster zoning is a tool to reduce the land-consumption of new development and to permanently protect open space. Using land more efficiently can benefit both the economy and the environment. The main benefits of this tool are that it:

*Protects Open Space:* Effective cluster zoning often results in the protection of 50% or more of a site as open space. The town can decide what types of open space it wishes to protect (farms, greenways, etc.), and use cluster zoning to help protect this land permanently through easements or other mechanisms. Allowing for greater flexibility and creativity in the design of residential subdivisions is also one of the main purposes.

*Saves money:* Site development costs for cluster developments can be 25-50% less than for conventional developments, depending on the site. This money represents increased profit for the developer or landowner, or savings for the homebuyer. In addition, costs to the town to maintain public infrastructure will be less over time.

*Amenities:* Cluster zoning can be used to protect scenic vistas, augment regional conservation lands and natural habitats, provide land for new recreational facilities, or create a link in a town wide trail system.

*Environmental compatibility:* By using varied lot sizes and frontages, and by utilizing shared septic facilities, cluster development can be more compatible with the site’s topographic, soil and vegetation characteristics.

*Preserves local character:* Protect the existing rural landscape and scenic views along roads by preserving undeveloped frontage along existing roads and encouraging development that is out of view from the roads. In the case of Ware, this type of development may protect the existing rural landscape and scenic views along roads by preserving undeveloped frontage along existing roads and encouraging development that is out of view from the roads (Tools for Communities Royalston, MA).
Overview of Cluster Housing in the Current Zoning Bylaw

Ware adopted Flexible Residential Open Space Development (FROSD) in 2006 (section 4.8.1 of the current zoning bylaw). This kind of residential development is currently allowed by-right in the RR (Rural Residential), SR (Suburban Residential), DTR (Downtown Residential), and RB (Residential Business) districts. It is intended to provide an alternative to landowners wishing to develop land for residential use in a more efficient manner than a standard subdivision, while preserving open space.

The current FROSD bylaw allows single and two-family dwellings, or multi-family dwellings for residents fifty-five years of age or older. It encourages recreational as well as agricultural and conservation uses. The bylaw outlines allowances for infrastructure elements within common open space areas, such as storm or wastewater management facilities. Therefore, in the FROSD lot size is not related to Title Five requirements. The number of dwelling units permitted overall would be the same as allowed under a standard subdivision for the zoning district in which a proposed FROSD would be located. This allows the FROSD to create housing consistent with the character of each of Ware’s varied residential neighborhoods.

Ware’s cluster zoning bylaw is written to permit flexible site use in order to maximize the area conserved and encourages “creative designs...that respect the natural features and topography of the tract.” Ware’s FROSD bylaw applies to a minimum tract of ten acres, with a minimum 100 feet of contiguous frontage and setback/buffer of 40 feet from all property boundaries. However, there are no minimum lot sizes or setbacks within the development boundaries. Only developments with individual lots have individual lot-line setbacks. These allowances provide much of the “flexible” component in the FROSD, allowing for design creativity that can maximize open space and reduce infrastructure costs and impacts.

Currently the by-law requires 50% of the total tract to be preserved as open space, with a preference for this land to be contiguous. In order to preserve the open space created by the FROSD, or cluster development, the bylaw requires this portion of the land to be deed-restricted. The common open space may be owned by a homeowners association, the Town of Ware Conservation Commission, or a land trust. The bylaw requires only that this land be accessible to all residents of the development.
Current Issues with Ware’s Cluster Zoning

Ware’s Cluster Zoning does not appear to have been successful as of yet. For example, there is a new development, Edgewood Estates, under construction in the Rural Residential zoning district. It employs a typical subdivision design rather than a cluster layout. As the map of the development shows, there are 16 lots, of which 8 were already sold, with the others still available.

This development is adjacent to Grenville Park, the largest town park containing many of its recreational facilities. Using Flexible Residential Open Space Development this subdivision could have been a good opportunity to preserve nearby open space and to connect residents with these facilities. There are a variety of areas in Ware that could be developed for residential purposes with open space features. In particular, the BLR (Beaver Lake Residential) and RQ (Rural Quabbin) are zoning areas which the town may wish to include in the FROSD in the next update of the Zoning Bylaw of Ware because these are large areas with open space that have a great potential to be developed for cluster housing/zoning rather than traditional residential development.

A possible disincentive for developers to use Ware’s cluster housing bylaw is that the requirements may be seen as too difficult or inflexible. The state’s Smart Growth Toolkit was one of the sources of the research conducted to determine ways to improve the FROSD bylaw. One example of an aspect that may be improved is the requirement that 50% of the tract of the property shall be open space. A better incentive might be either a tiered open space requirement based on certain criteria, or to reduce the requirement to 40% but still with regulations that preserve the resources. One example of cluster development, the Canterbury Farms in Amherst, Massachusetts, has some good features that could work in Ware. This development preserved 35% of open space in an area of 26 acres but created public access and trail connections that enhanced the value of the preserved land. Some bylaws have a low minimum open space requirement, but offer incentives such as a density-bonus for more land preserved.
Another Ware bylaw requirement is that the parcel be at least 10 acres, which is on the large size. The town might consider reducing the minimum tract size to allow more flexibility for cluster developments. This would create possibilities for infill development in areas closer to the center of Ware, such as the Suburban Residential zoning districts. A reduced site size would expand the number of potential developers to include smaller firms.

A third disincentive to using Ware’s current cluster zoning is that the bylaw does not provide for increased densities under certain circumstances (such as better or more open space protected, affordable units provided etc.) Having reduced or flexible percentages for open space preservation is a good way to incentivize wider use of cluster zoning in a way that is appropriate to each proposed development area, and a variety of target markets. The bylaw can be adjusted to help the town to achieve multiple goals in a way that is uniquely suited to each project. The developer may use a density bonus to add more units of a certain type, as determined by the town’s housing needs assessment. In exchange for the enhanced profitability for the developer, the town gets more housing as well as more preserved land.

In considering adjustments to the existing FROSD bylaw, it is important to bear in mind the town’s goals. Specifically, if the bylaw were to be adjusted to add density bonuses, Ware needs to consider what kinds of housing the town wishes to add using this tool. Also, if the amount of
conservation land were to be reduced, it would be important to ensure that the quality of the land, or the resource that it provides, is worth such a compromise. In one of the case study examples below, public access to the open space and connectivity with local trail systems adds tremendous value to the cluster development’s conserved area. Any cluster zoning must allow the town to weigh quantity against quality, and provide tools to negotiate for maximum community benefit. Ware may potentially improve the quality of housing by using this kind of development. FROSD has great potential to help the town further its goals of protecting open space and maintaining rural character, while still encouraging growth.

Cluster Housing Case Studies: Amherst and Hopkinton
One of the goals for this report was to research zoning bylaws of other towns to see what may be for possible use in Ware. Case studies of towns in Massachusetts with similar rural character to Ware provide examples of how cluster housing can create better development that provides housing, and also fulfills other community goals. This section examines two towns with rural character similar to Ware in order to help demonstrate cluster housing as a tool that can improve the quality of land use for housing. In both examples the entire community benefited from the use of cluster development.

Canterbury Farms – Amherst, MA
The Canterbury Farms is an example of cluster development located in a low-density residential (LDR) zoning district in Amherst. This development’s cluster design provided infrastructure savings for the developer resulting from reduced road length and width. The developer was also allowed to provide a sidewalk on one side of the roads and to create common driveways.

Some important exceptions to requirements were made to allow this development to move forward. A first example is that yield calculations granted the developer a right to build 19 units on 13 lots. The Amherst cluster density bonus comes in the form of additional units, not additional lots. The developer wanted to build 15 single-family units, but received permission to divide two lots to create four single-family affordable lots. This project did not use a density bonus because the developer did not feel that an increased number of units in this case would have made for a more
profitable subdivision. Instead, the developer gained flexibility on site requirements by the inclusion of affordable units. In addition to the aforementioned infrastructure savings, two of the affordable units feature a common gravel driveway. This helped further increase profitability.

In Amherst, the developer benefited from the incorporation of affordable units into his plan because he was able to pre-sell the affordable units due to high demand. The four single-family affordable units originally sold for $98,000 to $125,000. The pre-sales leveraged help when the developer sought bank financing, a key advantage at the time this subdivision was built. It is often perceived that proximity to designated affordable units will lower the property value of adjacent homes. In this case, the developer believed that single-family affordable units would help to maintain the value of the more expensive homes in this subdivision because their market values, though affordable, are higher than affordable duplex units in the area. In Canterbury Farms that disparity ranged from values of $90,000 to approximately $400,000, a level of disparity that this developer believed was not too great to threaten the marketability of the subdivision.

In keeping with the surrounding rural neighborhood character, the developer wanted to provide single-family affordable units as opposed to duplexes. Had this development been sited closer to downtown Amherst, multifamily units would have been in character. Affordable housing agreements were created to ensure that they remain “affordable” in perpetuity; they will re-sell for 19% less than their appraised market value. The advantages gained by the quick-selling affordable units made the project worthwhile for the developer.

Although the Amherst bylaw states that affordable units must be “geographically
dispersed throughout the development” it was not practical to do so on this small, narrow parcel. Given the small acreage of the affordable lots and the size and character of the other homes it would have had major impacts on the site design. The affordable units built were of similar quality and materials to the surrounding homes.

Aside from the affordable housing units, the major benefit of this cluster development is that it adds to a regional trail system. This amenity serves not only the residents of Canterbury Farms, but also the community’s many users of these trails. The area with protected open space was attached to the State Park, adding to the region’s contiguous open space. The connection was made by a negotiation between the developer and the Department of Environmental Management.

Overall, Canterbury Farms is a good example of the many benefits of cluster housing. Some of the goals achieved include:

- preserving and restoring an old farmhouse;
- creating affordable housing (4 single-family homes);
- providing a variety of house lots sized from approximately one-half to two acres;
- minimizing curb-cuts on a heavily traveled secondary road by utilizing common driveways;
- maximizing view-sheds from several parcels;
- providing infiltrating catch basins to protect farmland at the bottom of the hill from unnecessary stormwater runoff;
- enabling design creativity through reduced frontage and flag lots; and
- preserving contiguous open space and created trail connections from the subdivision to an existing network of trails.
The Old North Mill – Hopkinton, MA

Old North Mill, in the Town of Hopkinton, is another example of cluster housing development (or Open Space and Landscape Preservation Development – OSLPD, as described in its zoning bylaw). It consists of 34 buildable lots on a 100-acre parcel. Protected open space comprises 52% of the parcel area. In this development, building lot prices were driven by their proximity to the open space, with the most expensive building lots abutting the open space. All wetlands on the property are also contained within the protected open space. This case study provides a good example of a developer and the Town doing the "right thing," even though a conventional subdivision was possible.

In 1988 Hopkinton passed its OSLPD bylaw. The goals were to encourage preservation of important site features and to allow development in a way that was “growth neutral”, limiting development impacts on the overall character of the town. Hopkinton’s OSLPD bylaw is very similar to Ware’s in its basic requirements: The OSLPD is applied to sites of 10 acres or more, and requires at least 50% of the tract to be open space of which 50% of that may be wetlands. Similar to Ware, the development’s common open space must be conveyed either to the Town, a non-profit conservation corporation, or a corporation or trust owned by the OSLPD lot owners. If not conveyed to the Town, the open space must have a conservation restriction recorded.

The Hopkinton Bylaw allows the Planning Board to grant by special permit reduction of underlying zoning regulation requirements if such a reduction will improve design and protection of natural and scenic resources.
In the case of Old North Mill, the process consisted of a concept plan development containing 43 buildable lots, and the Planning Board granted a maximum of 43 building lots. However, the developer chose to only build 34 lots. In this situation, maximizing profit did not mean building the number of maximum lots permitted. A major factor in the developer's decision was proximity of the lots to wetlands. Construction on these portions of the site would have required time-consuming and costly Conservation Commission filings. The developer chose to avoid the costs of building infrastructure for the nine additional lots, and to avoid carrying costs based on the extra time needed to permit and complete work in these areas.

The developer promoted the open space as a prime feature, marketing Old North Mill as an open space subdivision. The value of three lots that abutted the open space created by leaving the nine additional lots unbuilt rose significantly ($50,000 each) because of their proximity to permanently preserved natural lands. The Town worked with the developer to permit and develop this property, and to devise the necessary incentives. The developer received added financial incentive to create the open space through a tax credit earned by donating the nine lots to the local land trust. The developer could only claim tax credit for buildable lots, and so the town approved all 43 lots with the understanding that the developer would be donating nine to the land trust. Likewise, the developer was granted a reduction in the percentage of open space requirement, with the understanding that nine lots were not to be built and that the actual open space upon completion of the project would be greater than required.

The main benefits the development provided included:

- Creating a clear example of a cluster development that quantified the value of open space;
- Reducing development impacts on the area’s rural character, from that of a larger, conventional subdivision;
- Preserving 20.24 acres of additional land donated to a local land trust;
- Enabling the developer to build fewer lots and still earn a reasonable profit;
- Placing all of the site’s wetlands within the protected open space; and
- Ensuring public access with a small parking area for the open space.
From a financial perspective the main advantages of this kind of development, as based on the Smart Growth Toolkit, are:

- Saving money for both developers and municipalities by concentrating development and decreasing the necessity of installing and maintaining conventional infrastructure, such as wide paved streets and stormwater management practices that collect and pipe runoff away from the site;
- Decreasing site development costs by designing with the terrain. A minimum amount of clearing and grading is required, since the land with environmental constraints is preserved and removed from the developable area;
- Streamlining the plan review process, forming a creative partnership approach to development design;
- Adding valuable amenities that can enhance marketing and home values, according to the National Association of Home Builders Research Center cluster subdivisions in Massachusetts have appreciated faster and hold resale value more than homes in conventional subdivisions; and
- Increasing property values. Massachusetts examples demonstrate that well-designed cluster developments create higher property values than conventional developments featuring the same type of housing. This increase in value is the direct result of the increased site amenities including open space, views, and preservation of historic resources.

Cluster housing, as seen through the examples in the case studies, can be successful in achieving multiple goals; conservation of open space areas, creating quality housing, enhancing access to affordable housing, and preservation of the area’s valued rural character. It is recommended that Ware look at modifying existing standards in the zoning bylaw to provide more incentives for developers to use the tool and to make it more flexible. For example, changing the bylaw to reduce the required 50% protected open space to 40%, with an additional 10% to recreational facilities would still preserve the natural environment. The town might consider reducing the parcel size requirements, and investigate the allowance of additional densities in exchange for additional public amenities. Also, adding requirements related to design could ensure that quality would not be compromised regardless of adjustments to quantity requirements (number of housing units, open space, or other site). Overall, Ware has potential to develop this tool as a green and cheap alternative for housing in its future.
**Improving Ware’s Accessory Apartment Bylaw**

The second housing recommendation presented here also involves an existing Ware bylaw, and improvements that might help better fulfill the goals it was originally adopted to advance. Accessory Apartment units (AAUs) - commonly referred to as accessory dwellings, second units, granny flats or in-law suites - are additional living quarters on single-family lots that are independent of the primary dwelling unit. The separate living spaces are equipped with kitchen and bathroom facilities, and can be either attached or detached from the main residence (Adaptive Reuse District Overlay Toolkit 2010).

![Accessory Apartment Bylaw Applies to a Wide Variety of Architectural Styles and Neighborhoods](Mass.gov Smartgrowth Toolkit)

Currently, Ware’s Accessory Bylaw (Chapter 4.4.3, Section E) allows for Accessory Apartments, however it does so with limited flexibility and scope. In order to improve this section of the bylaw, we are setting forth the following recommendations:

1. **Increase size limit from 700 to 900 square feet**
   One of the largest segments of the target population in the market for AAU’s are residents in later stages of life and empty-nesters. The increase in square footage would allow for unit designs that could easily incorporate larger door openings and lower counter space. These changes could allow for easier mobility throughout the unit for residents that require a wheelchair or walkers. Additionally, a larger unit could allow for residents to exit the unit with more ease should a medical or fire emergency present itself.
2. Implement an Amnesty Program
The town has not implemented an amnesty program for existing, illegal accessory apartments. Like many communities, it is possible that Ware has accessory units that have been built without proper permitting or building and safety inspections. Implementing a program that waives fines can provide an opportunity for these units to be brought up to code and ensure safety. Please see the Massachusetts Accessory Apartment section of the Smartgrowth Toolkit for model code language for implementing an amnesty program.

3. Allow AAU’s to be constructed on Detached Structures
The planning board should consider adding a provision that would allow for the construction of an AAU within a detached structure such as a barn or garage on the same lot, with appropriate standards to minimize potential impacts. Doing so would increase the number of properties that would be eligible for this type of retrofit. Given the agrarian history of Ware, many properties have farm equipment storage structures or barns. Should they choose, owners of these properties could take advantage of this bylaw.

In order for an AAU program to succeed, it has to be flexible, uncomplicated, include fiscal incentives, and be supported by a public education campaign that increases awareness and generates community support (Mass.gov Smartgrowth Toolkit Pelham, MA).

Consider an Adaptive-Reuse Overlay District
Ware has an abundance of underused mills and vacant buildings. In the Economic Development and Mill Yard sections of this report, potential for business growth and redevelopment in these areas will be addressed in greater detail. However, this final recommendation proposes a way to bring together the goals of redevelopment in the downtown and mill yard with Ware’s housing goals. Mixed-use development – commercial, industrial and residential – is characteristic of this area, and indeed of most thriving town centers in the region. Housing is an essential part of any plan for the center of Ware.
One method of encouraging redevelopment is enacting an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (AROD). An AROD is a predetermined area in which reuse and renovations will be encouraged, particularly related to housing. The town of Hudson, MA has used this method to spur redevelopment in their downtown. The main objectives of the AROD bylaw are to:

- Foster a range of housing opportunities closely integrated, where appropriate, with complementary commercial, civic and other uses, promote compact design, preservation and enhancement of open space and utilization of a variety of transportation options, including pedestrian and bicycle accessibility;
- Promote the health, safety and welfare of residents by encouraging a diversity of housing opportunities;
- Provide for a full range of housing choices for households of all incomes, ages and sizes in order to meet the goal of preserving community character and diversity;
- Increase the production of a range of housing unit types to meet existing and anticipated housing needs;
- Provide a mechanism by which residential development can contribute directly to increasing the supply and diversity of housing;
- Establish reasonable development and urban design standards and for new development to promote context-sensitive design and site planning, and ensure predictable and cost-effective development review and permitting (Adaptive Reuse District Toolkit).
Hudson’s AROD plan was modeled after the Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit. We recommend that Ware consider this toolkit to craft a comprehensive AROD to encourage redevelopment.
Housing References


Ware Community Action Plan 2009
Growth and Development
The Route 32 Corridor

Route 32, along with Route 9, is a primary corridor between Ware and the surrounding communities of Palmer, New Braintree and Hardwick. As a major commuter route, Route 32 is a convenient location for the majority of Ware's residents who commute by car, and for the significant minority of residents who do not have a car. This area is also included in the limited PVTA service to Ware.

Existing development along Route 32 includes a mix of residential and commercial properties, ranging from quiet neighborhoods north of downtown, to strip commercial development in the commercial and industrial district such as the Wal-Mart, and Lowe's developments closer to the Palmer line and Big Y further to the north along the corridor. At points, the Route 32 corridor passes through commercial industrial, highway commercial, residential business, and rural residential zones, and these may be only an approximation of the actual uses occurring at various locations along this corridor, which has a variety of uses, scales, and densities. In particular, the residential business district on Route 32 south is sandwiched between two more commercially oriented zones, although the feeling of these neighborhoods is quiet and residential. Thus, the major challenge in determining the future land uses through this corridor is reconciling the different goals and aesthetics of this mix of residential, small business, and highway commercial uses.

Several previous plans have targeted the Route 32 corridor as a focus area for various kinds of future development. For example, the 2001 plan *Guiding the Future of Ware* identified the Route 32 corridor, along with Route 9, as a potential receiving area for transfer of development rights (pg. 32). While transfer of development rights may not be an appropriate solution for Ware at this time, given a somewhat weak market, it may be a useful tool if development pressure increases. Furthermore, this suggestion indicates
awareness among the community that Route 32 has certain qualities that make it attractive for future commercial growth. In particular, if a casino were to locate in the neighboring community of Palmer, the new Commercial/Industrial zone along Route 32 is ideally situated for increased growth. Given the increasing commercial nature of the area surrounding the Wal-mart & Lowe's on Route 32 south, it is also very likely that some adjacent residential properties will convert to commercial properties in the near future. If an economic rebound occurs, homeowners who wish to relocate may have strong incentives to sell their properties to commercial developers, possibly leading to development on larger, consolidated commercial lots.

However, such an increase in development has the potential to have significant negative impacts. The first are the typical impacts of high traffic areas, including noise, fumes, and congestion, which have already become a nuisance to residents in the Route 32 area. The increase in large-scale commercial growth along Route 32 south of downtown has caused concerns to the business community as well, as noted in the 2004 Community Development Plan, which stated that: “There is a continued interest in retail development and the recent arrival of a Wal-mart is spurring economic growth in the southern part of Town along the Route 32 corridor [...] Though the arrival of the Wal-mart has no doubt benefited many in the community, some small business owners are struggling to compete with the buying power of the superstore” (p 18).

Given that Ware still has a strong base of small businesses, mitigating the impacts of large-scale commercial uses and creating environments that support small businesses is critical to retain a diverse mix of employers and enhance the viability of the town’s commercial areas. Furthermore, the neighborhoods near the Route 32 commercial district provide housing to many of Ware's residents, and while increased commercial development is expected, there are ways to balance commercial growth with the preservation and strengthening of residential uses, thus furthering the ideals of quiet, small-town community while accommodating greater growth to support economic development.
Preliminary Recommendations for the Route 32 Corridor

The study area for this section of the report is a focused area of Route 32 south of downtown (south of Big Y but especially between Teresa's and Wal-mart/Lowe's) which is within the Residential Business district, north of the Commercial/Industrial district, and surrounded by areas zoned Rural/Residential that have primarily suburban residential uses.

This area was chosen as the focus for these recommendations because it appears to be the most likely to have significant impacts from increasing commercial development. In order to protect existing residential areas from negative impacts of increased traffic and support the growth of mixed-use development that provides both housing and businesses, especially smaller businesses, the town should consider changing its regulations to minimize the impacts of auto-oriented commercial uses.

While West Street and Palmer Road (both segments of Route 32) will never be 'just like' the dense, walkable downtown near the mills, this area is uniquely located near neighborhoods, schools, and shopping and should be included as an extension of the community in the future—not just as a limited access highway that passes through Ware. Thus, these recommendations are targeted at improving the aesthetic image of this section of the corridor according to the concept of the “small town aesthetic” identified previously through public outreach, while acknowledging that future commercial growth is both likely and potentially desirable.
To this end, the Studio has identified several potential goals for the future of the southern portion of Route 32, which future Master Planning efforts can refine and change based on community input.

- Protect residential areas from negative impacts of auto-oriented commercial use and increase livability of housing in the Route 32 area
- Prioritize safety for automobiles as well as pedestrians and bicycles
- Improve the aesthetic of the commercial corridor to more accurately reflect the community's small-town character

The following suggested actions are based upon these goals and can be expanded or altered during the Master Planning process.

**Encourage Development ‘Nodes’**

Currently, one of the major difficulties with this section of Route 32 is the mix of various uses including suburban residential homes, larger scale commercial stores, small businesses, and a large quantity of associated parking areas. While a mix of uses can be a strong benefit to continued viability of the area, without coordination problems emerge, which can be observed in areas of Route 32. First, the distance between stand-alone businesses and residences increases total driving distances. Without infrastructure to support pedestrian safety, even a resident who lives within a quarter or half-mile form a destination (for example, a resident of Dugan Rd who wishes to have lunch at Teresa’s) must drive to reach it. Secondly, these distances combined with many separate driveways create traffic safety problems when motorists turn into multiple entrances in heavy traffic. An increased number of turning points also impedes visibility and makes pedestrian crossings unsafe. All of these factors decrease the likelihood that shoppers who visit one location on Route 32 will visit another, which has further effects on economic prosperity as these conditions may favor big box stores rather than smaller, specialized businesses.

Clusters or “nodes” of commercial uses improve traffic flow by reducing turning points through the use of shared driveways and parking. They also provide the opportunity for visitors to park and walk rather than drive between destinations. The distance between businesses, quality of the pedestrian environment, and safety must all be addressed in order for this to work. Rather than
future development occurring randomly at intermittent points throughout the corridor, exacerbating traffic flow problems and increasing amounts of impervious surface, focused nodes of development allow for more extensive site design, including more efficient use of pavement and the application of a cohesive “look and feel” which improves attractiveness and comfort for visitors.

The current pattern of development in the Route 32 focus area is partly commercial, but many residential neighborhoods abut the highway and there are still many residences along Route 32. Ongoing conversion of residential parcels to commercial may be inevitable, and may further economic development objectives. However, another approach is shown here in the corridor redesign from Binghamton, New York. Here traffic and commercial activity are being focused towards one area to create a lively commercial “node” around a key intersection in order to better serve both customers and businesses.

Like Route 32, Conklin Street in Binghamton has industrial, commercial, civic and residential uses. It features an excessive number of curb-cuts and acres of pavement. In addition to making infrastructure and design changes to create an attractive commercial crossroads, the redesign addresses building placement, street trees and sidewalks. An important part of creating a node is to ensure the node is distinguishable from the adjacent areas, and has appropriate connections with surrounding neighborhoods. The redesigned corridor still accommodates mixed uses but improves the visual character and traffic flow using features like shared parking, consolidation of automobile access points, landscaping and sidewalk improvements along the busy corridor. The result is improvement to traffic flow, enhanced ability to entice passing traffic to uses local businesses, and the creation of a safe and pleasant environment connecting residents of the area to the commercial node and other points along the corridor.

One of the main advantages to a well-designed corridor is that it accommodates commercial activity in a way that serves, rather than detracts from, nearby residential areas. Continued low-quality commercial development in the form of sprawl could lead to the
complete loss of residential uses along the commercial areas of Route 32. This could significantly impact the ability of current residents to stay within their community and reduce the availability of housing options. Existing housing can be protected by improvements to the commercial areas to minimize the nuisance impacts on residential landowners.

Additionally, in a weak commercial market there is often continued demand for housing, and Route 32 south of downtown is ideally located for new housing. By locating new housing units alongside or within commercial projects in a mixed-use node, the town can supplement its existing housing stock. In the trio of images to the left, an alternative to existing development patterns shows how mixed-use “New England Traditional” design can create the same number of residential and commercial units while preserving the rural character of the road and surrounding area. Adding housing units to Route 32 would provide future residents with housing that is ideally situated between downtown and commercial units, within the reach of downtown, and within PVTA’s limited service area. In the residential business district where mixed-use projects are allowed without a primary use, creating clustered nodes would provide further incentives to create mixed-use projects that include housing near shopping, thus furthering the goals of increasing and protecting residential uses along Route 32 and protecting rural/residential areas by encouraging infill development.

One way the Master Plan can further the process of infill development is by identifying locations for future nodes, based on existing clusters of uses, traffic flow patterns, market demand, and community opinions on ideal locations of future growth. The town can then support the restructuring of the commercial areas to better accommodate smaller businesses, residential uses, and improve traffic flow and safety by encouraging or requiring future development to locate in clustered nodes, rather than in standalone parcels.
**Improve Aesthetics: Adopt Stronger Design Guidelines Specifically for Commercial Properties.**

Strengthening design regulations for commercial properties may offset some tension between residential and commercial uses, especially in the residential business district. These are criteria that can be included in the development review process, and provide developers with facade elements that can be inexpensive to include on typical steel-frame buildings. Design elements are a diverse mix of qualities ranging from the color of buildings to the style of windows to the need for buffer plantings to reduce impacts on abutting parcels. As a whole, each of these individual elements provide the overall “impression” of the project which has significant impacts on the comfort and safety of users. Guidelines work by ensuring that the visual form and scale of commercial buildings blends well into the existing environment of adjacent properties. Strengthening commercial design guidelines may help prevent the commercial corridor from becoming solely a “big box” center—that is, to encourage the type of mixed-use developments that the Residential Business district allows, and protect the existing diversity of uses.

Many communities in Massachusetts have developed design guidelines. For example, the town of Bedford, MA (population 12,595) has developed a pamphlet with narrative text and photos clearly describing the styles of building elements and site design aspects that are covered by their design guidelines. This guide is written in plain language and available online so that developers may examine it while preparing their site designs. A pamphlet or web page with information can encourage developers to use these elements from the beginning of their process, improving negotiations during the permitting process.

Additionally, Bedford’s design requirements are incorporated into code (7.5.2.2 Design Standards in the Limited Business District and General Business District). This bylaw includes a clear description of the intent of the design requirements, the Planning Board’s orientation towards site design, specific instructions on how site plan designs should be developed, and information about the informal review process.
In addition to other zoning bylaw requirements, the building and site plan design standards shown here are required in the Limited Business District and General Business District. They strongly recommend submitting a preliminary or concept plan for informal review by the Planning Board prior to preparation of a formal site plan. This allows the Planning Board and the applicant to discuss design ideas, understand Planning Board expectations and how the site plan can maximize the standards herein, while promoting economic development or redevelopment of Bedford’s Limited and General Business Districts. The extent of the Planning Board expectations are directly related to the level of site modification, building construction and redevelopment.

(a) Architectural elevation and floor plan drawings shall be submitted. The design of buildings shall enhance the visual character of Bedford’s Business Districts and respect and reflect traditional New England heritage of the area. The scale and massing of buildings shall be compatible with buildings in the vicinity.

(b) Building design shall incorporate features to add visual interest while reducing appearance of bulk or mass. Such features may include varied facades, rooflines (e.g., gable direction, pitch), roof heights, materials, and details such as brick chimneys or shutters. Blank walls are prohibited on the front of buildings that have retail or service shops or similar uses.

(c) Any alteration of or addition to an existing historic structure shall employ materials, colors, and textures as well as massing, size, scale and architectural features that are compatible with the original structure. Distinctive features, finishes, construction techniques and/or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved where feasible […]

(d) Except for windows, building design should generally avoid the appearance of reflective materials such as porcelain, enamel or sheet metal. Predominant wall materials should generally have the appearance of wood, brick or stone painted or coated in a non-metallic finish. Structures should include adequate first floor windows to provide visibility of shop spaces” (Town of Bedford, 2010).
By including design guidelines in the municipal bylaws as a complement to building envelope and setback requirements in zoning, Ware can also make their desired aesthetic legally enforceable and send a clear message to developers about the style, scale, and type of physical environment that the community wishes to see along Route 32. While change occurs incrementally, improving the aesthetics of a single parcel can have an effect on abutting properties, transforming the highway over time.

Create a Public Gateway to Ware
As a bedroom community for residents that work elsewhere in Massachusetts, and as a rural service center for surrounding communities in the Quabbin region, Ware represents a destination in a number of contexts. By definition, highways carry motorists towards their destinations. However, Route 32 lacks a focused sense of place. One way to create a focused sense of place for drivers entering or exiting the community is to create a public gateway that symbolically represents the entrance to the community, and can advertise the community’s identity in ways that can impact travelers’ impression of the town. More importantly, like other signage, the gateway can serve a functional purpose by providing direction to major attractions such as the downtown area or the Quabbin. By placing an attractive gateway sign along Route 32 in a strategic location, the town can encourage economic development and broadcast its community identity in a simple, relatively low-cost way.

Support Multi-Modal Options: Public Investment in Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety
There is evidence that Ware residents desire a variety of transportation options. The PVTA Ware Shuttle survey conducted in 2011 found that there is a strong unmet need for additional service to and from destinations within Ware, including demand for transit service for commuters who both work and live in Ware. The Ware Studio’s “dashboard analysis” also confirms that some cyclists do use Route 32 as a travel route, suggesting that improvements to bicycle amenities along the corridor may be welcome to residents who use this road as a route between homes, shopping, and schools. Given the close proximity of suburban residential properties to commercial destinations such as the Wal-Mart/Lowe’s, Big Y, or Teresa’s, this corridor is in many ways an ideal location for multi-modal transport for Ware residents. Additionally, the relatively short distance (fewer
than three miles) between many locations on West Street and downtown, or adjacent homes, means that if pedestrians and cyclists can be made welcome, even those who have the option to travel by car may be likely to make short trips by foot or bicycle.

Following the recommendations laid out in the 2005 West Street Traffic Operations Study conducted by PVPC, the town will need to pay close attention to pedestrian and bicycling amenities such as buffers, sidewalk maintenance, and installation of bike parking and other similar facilities. While downtown Ware and parts of West Street have sidewalks, most of the Route 32 area south of downtown is not walkable. Installing sidewalks where possible, along with the buffer requirements that already exist in the Town's code, would improve pedestrian connectivity between commercial buildings along West St. and Palmer Rd. and adjacent neighborhoods. Pedestrian crossings could be made safer through improved signage, brighter contrast, raised crossings, or bump-outs. Likewise, the addition of dedicated turning lanes could improve traffic flow in ways that benefit all road users. The 2005 West Street Traffic Operations Study conducted by PVPC “show that driveways at the Big Y plaza, Country Bank, CVS pharmacy, McDonald’s, and Brooks pharmacy experience significant delays during the PM and Saturday peak hours due to the high volume of traffic on the West Street corridor.” (p 12). This report suggests that dedicated left and right turn lanes could reduce delays for drivers traveling along Route 32. Dedicated turning lanes can also increase safety for pedestrians at driveway crossings. While there are now dedicated turn lanes at some of these intersections there are additional areas that might benefit from restriping for both driver and pedestrian safety.

Implementation Suggestions

Creating Nodes: Provide Assistance with Site Design and Lot Consolidation
The town can provide assistance with site design of new projects by requiring or encouraging the use of shared driveways and parking, design elements such as building location, buffering and shared signage. Additionally, as owners of residential lots sell to commercial interests, the town can assist with the consolidation of parcels in a way that furthers the realignment of uses into nodes, and provide facilitation to private landowners to encourage lot consolidation that furthers this goal (EPA 2010, 26, 50).
Consider a Corridor Overlay District
Given that the town has recently revised the zoning ordinances, including a realignment of zoning districts, it may be easier to create a new corridor overlay district specifically tailored to the commercial and mixed-use areas of Route 32. A corridor overlay district would allow the town to target the specific areas of West St. and Palmer Rd. without introducing these regulations on abutters to the corridor in the various districts generally. An overlay district could be used as an alternative to, or alongside, other methods such as requiring design guidelines during the development review process.

Work with MassHighway to Improve Public Roadway Elements
One major concern with a comprehensive retrofitting of Route 32 is its status as a state road. Furthermore, existing Right of Ways are fairly narrow, so creative solutions will be necessary to work within the existing shoulder. Many changes to the streetscape can be made by focusing on changes within parcel boundaries—for example, by locating parking to the side of buildings and replacing lot-line parking with green buffers, street trees and sidewalks (see example below). However, the town may wish to form a subcommittee to look into funding options and other potential avenues for more extensive infrastructure retrofitting by partnering with MassHighway.

From the Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan, Montgomery County, MD.
The Same Highway and Same Lane Width, but Variation in Parking Lot, Site Design Such As Landscape, and Sidewalk Improvements.

Existing:
Parking within the right-of-way

Better:
Parking screened from sidewalk/highway

Best:
Parking located behind or to the side
Water & Wastewater Infrastructure

Water and wastewater infrastructure are crucial to a municipality's development. Community pipelines provide a more simple and efficient means of distributing water to communities than personal wells. The Ware Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for the installation and maintenance of the water piping and sewer system. As of early 2011, the department is under new management with the hiring of a new director, Thomas Martens, and a new deputy director, David Tworek (Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware 2011). The DPW’s two water related divisions, water and wastewater, each have five and three employees respectively. Both divisions each have their own responsibilities but are generally tasked with the treatment, operation, and repair of water and wastewater infrastructure, repair of facilities, investigation of service problems, maintenance of the areas around the flood control dikes, and assistance with the planning of future extensions. An integrated work plan and close cooperation between the DPW and the Planning Department regarding planning of water and wastewater infrastructure is crucial to Ware's success in addressing future business development, housing, and environmental issues.

Water Infrastructure

The current public water system consists of approximately 40 miles of water main, 2,250 service connections, and provides water to 344 public and 59 private hydrants (Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware 2011). The Water Zone Index Map indicates separation of the town into seven zones and has a range of water pipe sizes installed including 12, 10, 8, 6, and 4 or fewer inches (Consultants Tata & Howard Water and Wastewater 2011). There are currently two water supply sources, the Barnes Street Well close to the center of town and the Dismal Swamp well on the east side of town near the border with West Brookfield. These two sources have a combined capacity of 2.5 million gallons of water (Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware, 2011) and as of 2011, there is as 1.3 million gallon surplus (Public Water Supply Verification 2011). The most recent estimates of the municipal water use determined approximately 70% or 6900 of Ware's residents rely on the public water system for their daily water needs while the rest of the population obtains their water needs from private wells. All of Ware's residents and businesses on the public water system have their water usage tracked via water meters (Martens 2012). As of December 2012, the water fee schedule amounted to $30 per quarter base rate including the first 500 cubic feet of water and $3.73 per hundred cubic feet for all subsequent water use (Ware Department of Public Works 2012).
According to the DPW, the main issue facing the current water infrastructure is the aging status of the facilities and equipment and the lack of funds to repair and replace. The majority of piping infrastructure repair and replacement completed has occurred in older neighborhoods around town and while there are not any serious unaddressed issues, continual work is needed on the piping (Martens 2012). Most recently, the staff at the DPW completed a flush of the entire system (Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware 2011).

To address the issue of ageing water infrastructure a variety of trenchless technologies are available that are both cost-saving and allow for less resident and business disruption during repair. In Amherst, MA, the supervisor of the Amherst wastewater treatment plant Jim Jordan has effectively used the PipePatch product from SourceOne Environmental to repair minor cracks and holes in water and wastewater infrastructure. This product uses a resin that does not contain styrene, a chemical that has potential to be banned by the Environmental Protection Agency (Jordan 2012). This product requires the investment of a closed circuit pipe camera to locate damaged infrastructure but allows the Department of Public Works to perform repairs in-house and address problem areas early before they become more costly. Jim Jordan has agreed to be a point of contact for the Ware Department of Public Works if they would like to ask any questions about the PipePatch tool before contacting the supplier as well as provide information on his own experience with the product. The supplier, SourceOne Environmental, provides free on-site training for municipalities who have purchased their product.

For larger repairs requiring replacement of a few hundred feet of infrastructure, trenchless technologies can be used. Trenchless technologies allow for repair of infrastructure while minimizing disruption to businesses and residents. Lining, sliplining, and pipe
bursting are three trenchless technologies used by many municipal departments or contractors to repair water and wastewater infrastructure depending on current deterioration of the pipes. Cured in Place Pipe (CIPP) Lining is often used when long lengths of infrastructure need repair and are not too far deteriorated. Similar to the PipePatch tool, lining uses a hardening resin to repair the water or wastewater infrastructure. Sliplining is a cost effective mechanism that can be used when infrastructure is more severely deteriorated by pulling a new, often PVC, pipe through the old lines. Sliplining reduces the interior diameter of the pipe, therefore is more suitable for areas in which there is excess flow capacity. Slipline repairs also require the process of pipe-lasering to be performed.

Lastly, pipe bursting is another mechanism for repair of infrastructure that is heavily damaged. Pipe bursting is performed by pushing through a new pipe that simultaneous destroys and replaces the old infrastructure. This technique has the advantage that the condition of the old infrastructure does not matter and the flow diameter of the pipe can be increased. Pipe bursting does carry some disadvantages as any connecting infrastructure must be excavated and re-plumbed and the manhole is partially destroyed and must be repaired (Trenchless Pipe Lining). Ware may desire to pursue a combination of all three of these techniques depending on specific conditions of water and wastewater infrastructure but trenchless technologies offer many benefits over conventional excavation such as cost savings and reduced disruption of business and residents. This can be especially advantageous in areas where the business economy is already fragile.

Wastewater Infrastructure

Fewer of Ware's residents rely on the municipal sewer system than the water system, estimated at 55-60% of the population, or approximately 5,400 persons (Martens 2012). The rest of the community uses private septic systems to dispose of wastewater. As of the 2011 Annual Town Report, Ware claims to have 32 miles of public sewer infrastructure installed. Identified problems with the wastewater infrastructure include the wastewater treatment plant and the influent pumps. Sewer hookup fees, as of December 2012, amount to $38.50 per quarter base rate which includes the first 500 cubic feet and $3.93 per hundred cubic feet of subsequent water use (Water and Sewer Fee Schedule). The wastewater treatment plant operates as a secondary treatment facility via an extended aeration process. The last major upgrade on the facility was in 1987, approximately 25 years ago and had an expected mechanical operational lifetime of 20 years. The Department of Public Works has not identified any capacity issues with the wastewater treatment plant and there is room for growth in the usage of the municipal system (Martens 2012).

The wastewater treatment plant and influent pumps are significant users of energy and the DPW management is working with the electric utility provider to obtain rebates for recent energy efficiency improvements (Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware 2011). As of November 14, 2012, Ware received a MassWorks grant that will pay for more than half of the $4.5 million price tag of
upgrading the wastewater treatment plant. A public-private partnership between the Town and Kanzaki Specialty Papers, a heavy user of the municipal system, will split the remaining portion of the upgrade with Ware's portion financed by a temporary tax increase (Russell 2012). For future upgrades to improve the energy, efficiency of the wastewater facilities there may be potential for state funding through Green Communities Act grants. In order to obtain funding from this source Ware will need to take steps and meet the criteria of being a Green Community.

While upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant are planned for completion by late 2013, a proactive approach in treating wastewater at the source could help reduce the need for additional future upgrades and extend the life of the system. Industrial discharge from Kanzaki Specialty Papers, Inc. has caused some collection areas to be prone to blockages and the lack of pre-treatment facilities puts operational strain on the aging plant. The management at the DPW is working with industry to encourage installation of pre-treatment facilities (Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware 2011).

Crucial to sustainable water and wastewater management is treating effluent pollution at its source, which can be a significant method in eliminating water contamination. To reduce strain on the wastewater treatment plant and allow for increased waste detention time, mandatory residential, commercial, or industrial wastewater reduction programs could have a significant impact on improving the effectiveness of the current system. Implemented in Sweden are effective solutions to wastewater treatment problems such as using educational outreach to citizens and industrial regulatory standards. In the first case, the town of Alekulla educated their residents about the harms of chemical products discharged down the drain. Samples of low-phosphate cleaners and detergents were distributed freely and the same products were made available at the local store. Residents began to make the switch to low-phosphate cleaners and detergents when the products were made available. In the second case, Stockholm set regulatory standards for their industrial polluters forcing them to develop new technology to treat their wastewater at the source (Roseland 2005).
Improving the use and reuse of wastewater is also central to sustainability efforts and vital to ensuring Ware enters the 21st century ready to tackle environmental challenges. Reusing nutrient rich wastewater at parks and agricultural areas could be accomplished through the DPW in order to reduce the amount of treated effluent sent into Ware's water resources and reduce the need for chemical fertilizers (Roseland 2005). With a blend of investment, sustainable wastewater practices, and effective management of the wastewater system Ware can leverage their current infrastructure to be an excellent asset for the future growth of the town.

**Targeted Growth**
Crucial to Ware's growth is the effective use of water and wastewater infrastructure to incentivize development in targeted areas. Cooperative and coordinated work between the Planning Department, public outreach and organization programs, and the Department of Public Works can guide future residential, commercial, and industrial growth in areas where residents would most like to see development. A combination of the above recommendations to improve sustainability and continued investment to enhance Ware's water and wastewater infrastructure can help Ware grow in the right ways.

Using the existing infrastructure effectively and efficiently by encouraging (re)development in areas where water and sewer lines are already in place will help curtail infrastructure building and maintenance costs as well as provide revenue for the Town through sewer and water fees. The existing excess capacity of the water supply and wastewater plant provides Ware with a valuable asset the Town can use to encourage infill development of existing areas. This could be especially effective in some of the older portions of town to encourage investment and reuse of older buildings but also in recently targeted growth areas such as the Route 32 corridor.

**Water Supply Protection**
Maintaining the safety of the water supply is a major public health interest. Therefore the DPW has been treating the two wells with potassium hydroxide for corrosion control and the Barnes Street well with sodium hypochlorite, a disinfectant (Annual Town Report of the Town of Ware 2011). Tap water may pick up a number of contaminants due to human and animal activity such as microbial contaminants, inorganic contaminants, pesticides
and herbicides, organic chemical contaminants, and radioactive contaminants. The EPA establishes regulations that set the levels of contaminants allowed in public drinking water system and are determined safe for human consumption (Drinking Water Quality Report 2010). Identified contaminants in the public water system that meet violation levels include iron and manganese although this does not indicate definite health hazards. Potential causes of these contaminants could include the corrosion of cast iron pipes and erosion of natural deposits (Drinking Water Quality Report 2010).

Vital to Ware's public water system is the protection from pollution of aquifer recharging areas. In 2003, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection completed a Source Water Assessment Protection (SWAP) Report for Ware's water department. Following this report, in 2005 a Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) was completed for the Town of Ware through a combined effort between a steering committee of local residents and the Massachusetts Rural Water Association. The completed report of the SWPP describes the current water supply situation, analyzes threats to the public water supply from pollution and current land uses, and makes a number of recommendations. Ware has been very active in protecting the public water system supply by taking action recommended in the SWPP such as removing storage equipment and installing "no parking" signs within the Zone I area of the Barnes Street well (Drinking Water Quality Report 2010). Because the SWPP report was completed in 2005, and many of the recommendations were included in an aquifer protection by-law and zoning overlay, the majority of this report's work did not address protection of the public water supply.
Ware’s Vision: Land Use and Aesthetics

Ware has long-identified itself as a rural, small town where the majority of the town is zoned as Rural Residential (RR), with low-density residential uses, farms, and forests. However, as Ware has grown and developed, particularly along the Route 32 corridor, the town has struggled to maintain an aesthetic that is consistent with the town’s community character. The Suburban Residential (SR), Residential Business (RB), and Commercial Industrial (CI) districts along Route 32 have become increasingly dense and attractive to development with the extension of the sewer lines to these districts. This section of the report makes recommendations for how the Town of Ware can further identify its desired aesthetic(s) and the steps that it could adopt to maintain that aesthetic by identifying the community character that has been articulated by Ware residents in previous public participation processes. It summarizes the recommendations that town plans have made to preserve the identified community character. It then proposes several recommendations for improving the town’s aesthetic image to better represent its identity.

Ware’s Community Character
Understanding Ware’s current and envisioned community character is the first important step in determining what guidelines the town needs in order to support and enhance that character. However, community character is an abstract and value-laden concept that is difficult to articulate in specifics and translate into concrete design guidelines. According to a handbook published in 1988 by the New Hampshire Association of Historic District Commissions, community character is defined as, “What gives a community its identity. It is part imagery, part memory and gathered time, part attitude. Character is whatever gives resonance to a place; whatever references the way life has been, and is, lived there; whatever identifies the community, its history, its resources.” Nonetheless, previous planning efforts in Ware have attempted to identify the town’s community character through public participation processes with its residents. These previous plans have attempted to make recommendations that support and enhance the community character that was identified in the public participation processes.

Community Input From Recent Surveys And Plans
In a 1999 community survey, “Ware Speaks,” Ware residents said that the features they value most in Ware were the small town atmosphere, proximity to the Quabbin Reservoir, and the open spaces. Three-quarters of the respondents said that they preferred the vision of Ware as a “compact New England village.” This type of development was described as:

Development in a compact, traditional pattern around the town center consisting of a common, small shops, schools, a variety of homes, and public buildings interconnected by a system of sidewalks, tree-covered streets and lanes, and small parks...new businesses moving into existing vacant buildings or store fronts or being built on lots near the town
center. New homes and neighborhoods would be located adjacent to existing neighborhoods and would look very much like the existing residential areas in Ware.

The 2001, “Guiding the Future of Ware” plan determined that the valued small-town character was not adequately protected from adverse impacts and that the town’s current land use policies and regulations did not support the compact New England village vision. As such, the plan recommended that Ware:

- Conserve and protect open space and provide high-quality recreation programs.
- Continue revitalization efforts in the downtown by encouraging a diversity of business uses and removing or rehabilitating vacant buildings.
- Foster a sense of community among residents through events and activities.
- Provide tourism and interpretation opportunities that promote the town’s small town character.

The 2004 “Ware Community Development Plan” also used the 2001 community survey results to develop recommendations for Ware to protect their small-town character from encroaching development and urban sprawl. These recommendations included:

- Adopting the Community Preservation Act to fund open space acquisition, protect historical resources, and provide affordable housing options.
- Acquiring open space through grants and local appropriations.
- Adopting Smart Growth practices to control commercial strip development, promote compact development, discourage residential sprawl, adopt growth caps or building permit limits, preserving farm operations, encouraging dedicated open space in new developments, and preserving public waterfront access.

In 2007, a public visioning process was held to identify goals and objectives for the 2007 “Open Space Plan.” As a result of that process, it was determined that an important goal of the plan would be to “preserve the town’s rural character.” This resulted in town recommendations to:

- Work toward a town greenway system.
• Collaborate with non-profits and other organizations on land protection and recreation development.
• Inform the public about protection possibilities for their land; land trusts, conservation restrictions, land gifts, etc.
• Utilize regulatory tools such as zoning strategies for land protection.

2012 Ware Fall Festival Survey
In October 2012, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst Regional Planning Studio class conducted a survey at the Ware Town Fall Festival to ask Ware residents what their favorite thing about Ware is, among other questions. Of the 41 surveys collected, the most common response was that Ware residents like the small-town atmosphere and community. More information about this exercise will be included in the Public Participation Team Section of this report, and analysis of community responses in the final report appendix.

Summary
Throughout these processes, Ware residents have consistently articulated the community character as being a compact New England village—that is, a “small town” or “rural place”—and have emphasized the town’s open spaces and strong downtown as being the cornerstones of that character. In addition, the planning recommendations that have been created to protect the articulated character have also had similarities. The recommendations have overwhelmingly emphasized the need to preserve open spaces in order to maintain Ware’s small town character. Other recommendations have focused on preserving historic resources, rehabilitating old buildings, increasing public education about Ware’s open spaces and small town character, and limiting development.

Preliminary Recommendations for Ware’s Aesthetics and Design
Seek Public Input On Town Aesthetics
In order for Ware to move forward in developing a plan to identify its aesthetics, it will be important for the town to get a more specific and thorough understanding of how Ware residents see small town character being represented in future development, other than simply preserving open space and limiting development. The town needs to engage further with the public to get a
A clearer understanding of what Ware residents would like their town to look like in the future particularly as it relates to new commercial development.

One method of gaining public input could be through a visual preference survey, which can be used to gauge the public's opinion of different styles of development. In Manchester, CT, they distributed a survey online for one year which 600 people responded to, providing valuable information to city staff in creating future design guidelines which can then be incorporated into regulations. More information about visual preference surveys can be found in the public participation section of this report.

Municipalities use design guidelines to unify the aesthetics of public spaces (e.g., streets, sidewalks, parks) and buildings and create a cohesive vision for the town. These guidelines convey how development should support and enhance a town’s unique community character. At the same time, these standards must support and not unnecessarily impede the efforts of those who are proposing development projects. Soliciting community ideas is the first step to translating them into the physical environment.

**Establish a Tree Committee**

Many communities in western and central Massachusetts have municipal bylaws which protect and require public shade trees and have tree commissions or committees, which are responsible for overseeing the planting and maintenance of public shade trees. For
example, Greenfield (which has won the Tree City USA award from the Arbor Day Foundation for 10 years) has a tree committee that has, among other activities, sponsored tree walks for the community and volunteer tree planting days. These kinds of events can help foster community spirit and encourage residents to think about their town's image and community identity.

While Ware has some regulations in the zoning code to prevent the removal of mature trees during construction, the town does not have a program specifically for public trees and has a score of only 1 out of a possible 6 points from the USDA Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry division (2012). Shade trees are a major amenity that improves quality of life in a community for residents and provide habitat, have positive effects on runoff, and reduce urban heat island effects. While a significant percentage of Ware's total area is forested, the downtown area and commercial corridors could be improved with additional trees, including street trees. The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Urban and Community Forestry program provides technical assistance and funding to communities for the creation and maintenance of public forestry programs; the Town should think about recruiting members of the community to form a tree commission during the Master Planning process which can investigate these avenues further.

Begin A Wayfinding Program: Establish Signage To Help Guide People Within Ware

Ware has many strong assets, a rich and interesting history, and major attractions including the Quabbin. A comprehensive strategy to help guide people through the town and towards destinations can be an important part of publicizing the town’s identity as well as an economic development strategy. Goals for a wayfinding program might include:

- Supporting and promoting a distinct identity for Ware
- Directing visitors from outside Ware to stop downtown
- Improve resident and visitor’s ability to navigate between locations in Ware and find their destinations (including parking)

Wayfinding signs in Burlington, Vt
As a first step, erecting signs throughout town to point out important locations (including the most appropriate locations for parking, as discussed in the downtown section of this report) can provide a sense of presence to the town’s built environment and improve the flow of traffic and pedestrians between locations.

**Examine Subdivision Regulations**
The recent revision of Ware's zoning code in 2012 is a strong first step towards shaping the future growth of the community in a way that accurately reflects the needs of current and future residents. However, subdivision requirements also have major impact on the style of growth, particularly in the rural/residential areas. Ware’s own bylaws have been a major contributing factor to the recent loss of sensitive forest and agricultural lands.

In a scenario where Ware's downtown economy improves, along with the recovery of the American housing market, it is likely that many more acres of green space could be converted to low-density residential uses. While there are many options for preserving agricultural and forest land, including agricultural preserve protections and flexible residential open-space development, an examination of Ware's subdivision requirements could also assist in creating residential areas that are sensitive to the cultural and physical context of the town. Subdivision regulations have impacts on the look of the public realm in residential areas—for example, the layout and width of roads, inclusion of open space and sidewalks, and styles of lighting. While it is outside the scope of this report to examine the subdivision code in depth, subdivision requirements have impacts on the style of future development and the town may wish to make an update to the subdivision requirements a priority. By updating the town subdivision requirements to include elements that reflect the community's desired amenities, and which complement zoning controls, Ware can have residential development while preserving its rural character.
Route 32 Corridor References


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Downtown
Economic Development and Downtown Ware

Introduction

Economic Development is an essential component of any community’s plan for prosperity and growth. For many small New England communities, there is growing recognition that a single new economic actor, like the introduction of a large new employer, may not materialize to dramatically transform these towns. Instead, communities are looking to identify their strongest assets for economic stabilization. This means supporting their existing business communities, optimizing their infrastructure and strengthening their workforce with education and training. It also means creating a vision for the future by capitalizing on natural resources and investing in the image that Ware presents to the public; towards establishing an identity that is uniquely Ware.

The business community in the town of Ware has shifted from a once thriving mill town, proud of its robust manufacturing industry - to a town made up of many industries, none of which present an obvious symbol or unifying identity for Ware the way manufacturing once did. But the town of Ware has all of the necessary components for economic revitalization.

Ware has an established downtown with room for new businesses, a millyard complex that is underutilized, the Quabbin Reservoir and the Ware River, hundreds of acres of protected green space, and an able and ready workforce. Business owners whose families have maintained businesses in Ware for generations remember what their downtown looked like in the 1950s and 1960s. They believe that Ware is poised for growth that will help their businesses succeed, with the right planning, marketing, and support from the town.

As Ware prepares to update its Master Plan, it will be critically important to establish that sense of place, and to work with businesses and business institutions to construct a strategy that stabilizes and enriches a business community that is already so much a part of Ware’s culture and character.

This section focuses on Ware’s businesses and business institutions and makes thoughtful recommendations, based on extensive interviews and case studies that incorporate the needs of businesses and the engagement of business institutions in a plan for economic development.
Background
As the Overview and Context Chapter in this report described, the business community in Ware has shifted from a once thriving manufacturing hub, to a town with tremendous industry variety.

Since 2000, the manufacturing industry’s share of employment in Ware (that is, the percentage of people in the town of Ware the manufacturing industry employs) dropped from 20 percent to 12.1 percent in 2010. As manufacturing jobs have left the town, region and state, the other existing industries in town have seen fluctuations in their employment share.

Two of the three major sectors that employ more than half of Ware’s employed population - Educational Services/Health Care/Social Assistance (26.6%); and Retail Trade (15.2%) - are also among the industries that have seen growth in their employment share: Educational Services/Health Care/Social Assistance; Public Administration; Finance and Insurance; Real Estate/ Rental/Leasing; and Retail Trade.

That is important because the industries with the fastest growing share of employment, are also the industries that pay the least in wages. Jobs in the retail trade industry pay a fraction of the average salary in the manufacturing industry. What this means, is that while box stores like Wal-Mart and Lowes and chains like CVS continue to dot the landscape in Ware, they are not providing the type of sustainable job creation that residents in Ware require. It also means that though the manufacturing industry has less of a presence in
the town of Ware, the jobs it offers continue to be well paid and competitive.

In addition to the introduction of box stores, between 2001 and 2011 the town of Ware welcomed 42 other new businesses to its community, 15 of which opened at the height of the recession, between 2008 and 2011. In 2010, 75 percent of businesses in Ware employed between 1 and 9 employees; 55 percent of those employed between 1 and 5 employees. It is inferred, therefore, based on these data and anecdotal information from the business institutions that support them, that the majority of businesses in Ware are family owned and operated, in addition to being small.

All of these factors contribute to a business community that has changed over the years as much as it has stayed the same. The town of Ware and the business community within it continue to be self-contained. Businesses continue to be opened by families and residents in town, and in some cases, the children and grandchildren of other local business owners. For the most part, the faces are the same, the process is the same, and the size of the businesses is the same: small businesses for a quintessential small New England town.

However, the industries that these small businesses make up have more variety than ever before and it remains unclear if the needs of local businesses have changed as a result, and if those needs are being met by the local and regional business institutions that exist to support them.

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**Methodology for Research**

The UMass Regional Planning Studio for the Town of Ware met with the Town Manager, Stuart Beckley, the Town Planner, Karen Cullen and other members of Ware’s administration. The Studio was briefed on work product expectations, and successes and challenges regarding recent efforts to revitalize the community.

Using the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation and Business Assistance Corporation and an inquiry of the Town Planner as a starting point, other business institutions that support small businesses in the town of Ware were identified: the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, the Ware Business and Civic Association, and the local government offices of the town of Ware. A critical analysis of each of their websites was conducted to determine what services are offered and advertised to local businesses to identify gaps in service.

Following that review, interview questions were assembled, one for the Town Planner that includes the identification of any other institutions that should be incorporated (there were none), one for the business institutions and two of Ware’s banks (Country Bank and Chicopee Savings Bank). Questions were used to guide the interview, but most interviews were conversational and the questions posed were asked spontaneously in response to their answers.

Interviews were conducted throughout October and November with:
• the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce
• the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation and Business Assistance Corporation
• the Ware Business and Civic Association
• one former business owner in the Town of Ware, and
• the Town Planner of the Town of Montague
• Country Bank could not be reached for comment

The local interviews sought to determine:
• how the business institutions have been engaged in broad scale economic development assessments conducted by the town in the past
• to what extent they want to be involved in this process going forward
• if businesses in Ware feel that a business community exists
• where they see economic development opportunities and need
• what needs they identified among the business community
• what strategies they implemented to addresses those needs
• what, if any, services they provide that are not featured on their websites
• if the identified needs of businesses correspond with the current and future services the institutions [seek to] provide

Finally, two case studies for two overarching recommendations were conducted to demonstrate how municipalities successfully engaged their business community and business institutions in their economic development planning process:
1. Turners Falls, MA
2. Worcester, MA

Findings - Who Supports Ware’s Businesses?
Business Institutions, particularly lending institutions and non-profits, have to be involved in any long-term strategic plan for economic revitalization in Ware. Based on conducted interviews, all of them are committed to this effort.

Currently, as is reflected below, a profound disconnect exists between the way Ware’s businesses perceive themselves, each other and the business institutions that exist to support them, and the way in which the business institutions perceive the business community.

Here we examine the regional, lending and local nonprofit entities that provide support for Ware’s businesses; the services they offer and some insight into why they remain underutilized.

Regional Entities
Though the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce and the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation and Business Assistance Corporation are regional entities, the primary territory that their business is conducted in is Ware and Palmer.
The mission of the QHCC is “to be an advocate for economic growth in the region through the development, promotion and advancement of business and to be the leading advocate for business and community development in the Quaboag Hills Region by providing members with a voice in political, social and economical issues” (QHCC, 2012).

The QHCC has a membership of some 280 members and employs two full time staff. Eighty-five percent of their members employ between 1 and 5 employees. Their areas of highest activity represent almost half of their member businesses: Ware (13 percent), Palmer (20 percent) and Monson (12.5 percent).

Their member services include:

- Organized business networking events
- Meetings, seminars, issue forums and workshops designed for improved business performance and opportunity for members to share best practices/challenges/successes.
- Business Exposure
  - Bi-monthly newsletter
  - Annual Resource Directory listing members alphabetically and categorically
  - Online member directory: Searchable online member directory that includes business logo, description, contact information, link to company website, hours of operation, driving directions, and more
- Business promotion through Hot Deals (online coupons) and eligibility to advertise job posting on the Chamber’s website

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*Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce (QHCC)*

The mission of the QHCC is “to be an advocate for economic growth in the region through the development, promotion and advancement of business and to be the leading advocate for business and community development in the Quaboag Hills Region by providing members with a voice in political, social and economical issues” (QHCC, 2012).
• Quaboag Hills Home and Business Showcase: annual trade show held each spring that is open to the public
• New members orientation and formal introduction of all new members at Business After Hours events
• Programs & Events: Annual events including an Annual Meeting & Dinner, Quaboag Hills Expo, Golf Tournament, Awards Dinner, and Legislative Breakfasts
• Legislative Support and Advocacy
• No charge Chamber conference rooms available, discounted membership CD that includes all members contact information, and free subscriptions to Business West (QHCC, 2012)

Institutional Observation of Ware
Unfortunately, the services offered by the QHCC are underutilized, not just by Ware’s businesses but throughout the Quaboag Valley. During an interview with the QHCC President, Lenny Weake, conducted November 8, 2012, three important findings were identified:

1) The services of the QHCC are chronically underutilized. It is believed that this trend is the result of the vast majority of member businesses (throughout the region) being owner-managed, which affords them little time to avail themselves of the networking opportunities the QHCC provides. In addition, many business owners fail to appreciate the importance of networking and partnership to increase their businesses and to coordinate efforts to develop a robust and supportive business community.

The Chamber’s most popular events include the Annual Meeting & Dinner (200 attendees), the Annual Awards Dinner (200 attendees), the Holiday Open House (100 attendees) and the Annual Golf Tournament. However, in recent years, broader attempts to encourage networking (i.e. teaming businesses together, hosting after 5pm networking events in varying locations, enticing businesses to rent stations at the Quaboag Hills Home and Business Showcase and attracting businesses to its Hot Deals online coupon generator) have all been met with mixed or disappointing results.

2. The QHCC specializes in marketing, advertising and creating networking opportunities for its members. They are chronically understaffed and, as a result, lack the ability to work with businesses to capacity build, understand their needs and build relationships with the municipalities in the Quaboag Hills regions to serve as an advocate on their members behalf. Among the QHCCs listed member benefits is legislative support and advocacy, yet the town Planner for the town of Ware has never had contact with them.

3. The Chamber indicated a strong willingness to work with the businesses in Ware to understand their needs, assess how they might be able to fill them, and understand why more of them aren’t currently members. Weake suspects that the lack of attendance by neighboring communities in the Quaboag Hills region to events held in neighboring towns, might be
an indication that businesses in Ware (and other communities) don’t want/have time to engage with business owners in other municipalities which contributes to an attitude that a regional Chamber lacks the capacity to address the specific needs of any of its individual member municipalities.

However, the President also described the after hours networking events being initially successful and finding over time, the same core group of people attending, which suggests either that there is a committed core group of business owners, or that the businesses that were previously engaged did not get what they needed from the networking events.

Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QVCDC) and Business Assistance Corporation (QVBAC) (1997) http://www.qvcdc.com

The QVCDC/BAC, are member-based, non-profit organizations that serve the 15 towns of the Quaboag Valley. Their stated mission is “to improve the quality of life in the Quaboag Valley by addressing the economic, environmental, and social needs of its residents while maintaining the integrity and character of each community in the region” (QVCDC/BAC, 2012).

Their economic development objectives include:

- Loans to area businesses that are micro entrepreneurs or intend to create jobs
- Redevelopment of blighted commercial areas which private investors have traditionally avoided
- Job creation for unemployed or underemployed persons through specialized training programs
- Coordination of public & private resources on regional economic development projects (QVCDC/BAC, 2012)

The goal of the QVCDC/BAC is to bring a regional approach to small business development in the Quaboag Valley. Once located in the same building as the QHCC, they have worked with the Chamber in the past on tourism initiatives to stimulate economic and business development. Since 2009 the QVCDC/BAC have lent $660,000 to 20 small businesses across their region. In addition, they have helped to start 16 businesses and create 46 jobs. They’ve also provided technological assistance to 167 businesses and group trainings to 120 businesses. By utilizing local resources, they feel they’ve made a modest impact on the local economy.

Every year the QVCDC/BAC works closely with 50 to 60 businesses and interacts broadly with an estimated 80-100. They categorize the types of local business people they work with into the following categories:

- Pre-Ventures: Entrepreneurs wanting to start a businesses
- Startups: Small businesses that are open and have a consumer base, but are not yet living off of the profits of their investment
- Established Businesses: Businesses that are open in the community and have been for some time, and are financially prospering or breaking-even
Their efforts principally focus on expanding the capacity of new and existing businesses. Rutherford described the four things that every small business needs to know as:

- Financial management
- Organizational structure that complies with federal guidelines
- Marketing in a niche market
- Management of people and business

Among the offered services are discounts on workshops and trainings, eligibility for financial assistance for courses and programs and access to small business lending programs through the Business Assistance Corporation. Their courses include trainings on networking events, preparing loan packages, bookkeeping, growing your business through marketing and advertising, blogging, ecommerce, understanding finance statements, business assessments and business planning (QVCDC/BAC, 2012).

The Corporation’s revolving loan fund is capitalized by grants from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development through the Town of Palmer, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and by a line of credit from Bank of America, Country Bank for Savings, FamilyFirst Bank, Monson Savings Bank, North Brookfield Savings Bank, Spencer Savings Bank, and Southbridge Savings. Currently, the QVCDC has mini-grants available to assist businesses in their technological development (QVCDC/BAC, 2012).

Institutional Observation of Ware

In her interview, Rutherford described the town of Ware as a subregional commercial center and reminisced about the days when Ware had three competing shoe shops on Main Street, restaurants, a hotel and a vibrant downtown. She described its past, present and future as a proudly self-contained community.

She described underutilized assets like the historic buildings in Ware’s downtown, an underused work force that could work at a “modest skill value”, outdoor recreational opportunities, and a possible eco-tourism brand with Ware’s history and connection to the Revolutionary War that could be exploited.

But above all, Rutherford said that Ware should be looking inside, not outside, for its opportunities for prosperity. Investing in its infrastructure by easing traffic and making parking more accessible. Easing the permitting process - not by relaxing regulations, but by making the process in town easier to navigate: creating check lists and online step-by-step instructions that explain where to start, which offices are involved and in what order they should be visited.

She also advocated for identifying younger entrepreneurs with resources and the attraction of a cottage industry with a renewable resource base that can employ lower-skilled workers, to leverage Ware’s human capital and become an exporter of goods and services.
Lending Institutions
The success of any lending institution depends directly on the success of the businesses it lends to. Ware is lucky to have banks that understand that and are committed to the prosperity and growth of the business community.

Country Bank
Country Bank is a community-focused, state-chartered, mutual savings bank founded in 1850 with 14 branches in 11 municipalities throughout the Pioneer Valley. With a relative monopoly on the banking industry in Ware and housing its headquarters downtown, Country Banks holds 87 percent of the market share. After a fire that caused extensive structural damage to the property on November 21, 2008, the bank invested some $250,000 in building-wide structural and cosmetic repairs including external facade improvements and internal carpeting, wallpaper, etc. The branch location reopened for business in early 2010 and reached its full staffing capacity in 2011.

Chicopee Savings Bank
In 2007, Chicopee Savings Bank expanded its territory by opening its two newest branches in South Hadley and Ware.

The Vice President of Chicopee Savings explained that banks measure their growth and success based on their deposits held. They prefer their branches to hold around $30 million in deposits. The Ware branch of Chicopee Savings currently holds $9 million in deposits, both personal (i.e. home equity) and business lending. They project that they will hit their $30 million goal in the next 5 - 10 years, a strong indication of their long-term commitment to their success and the success of the businesses they lend to in Ware. Through the second quarter of this year, Chicopee Savings had already lent $6 million in personal and business loans in Ware, $3 million of which were in business loans alone. Without a monopolizing competitor like Country Bank, Chicopee Savings’ South Hadley branch has already reached its $30 million goal.

Throughout the interview, the Vice President of Chicopee Savings Bank continued to reiterate their desire to be included in any conversation regarding economic revitalization in Ware. She suggested identifying the population of Ware’s residents who are also business owners in town and including them in the discussion as well as creating incentives to attract new businesses to Ware, not just in facade improvements and streetscaping, but tax breaks and creating a business friendly environment for would-be business owners.

Local Nonprofit Organizations
Ware Business and Civic Association
In early 2010, a group of businesses owners in Ware formed the Ware Business and Civic Association; a nonprofit organization with a stated mission to “maintain a vibrant and productive economic atmosphere that strengthens the community, better serves residents and promotes Ware as an appealing destination point” (WBCA, 2012). Their goal is to “utilize the various talents within the residential and business community and focus them on efficient ways to transform Ware into a destination point for visitors and a resource to residents” (WBCA, 2012).
Though a small organization (their website lists 16 members with contact information), they hosted Ware’s first Fall Festival on October 6, 2012. The event provided a showcase for local businesses and was well attended by residents. Membership dues are $120.00 (prorated). Benefits include listing rights on the WBCA website (with the option to post business contact information and links to business websites), invitation to networking events, and ability to participate in projects “to make Ware a better place to live, work and shop” (WBCA, 2012).

Their stated objectives include:

- Maximize curb-appeal
- Maximize advertising / promotions
- Become a “destination point”
- Become a resource for ALL businesses
- Promote community awareness
- Develop programs & initiatives
- Coordinate supportive partnerships
- Establish innovative enterprise & employment opportunities (WBCA, 2012)

During their November 16, 2012 interview, the president of the board, Bill Brahman and founding member, Joel Harder, shared their perspectives on the potential for Ware to become a thriving economic hub again and some of their recommendations towards that end.

1) The Town should work to proactively create a business environment that encourages strategic business development.

- Ware is prepared to settle for any business development they are offered, including undercapitalized, under-resourced ventures with no business plans. As a property owner of several commercial properties downtown, Harder believes in renting his storefronts to the types of businesses he thinks downtown Ware could benefit from and not leasing his spaces to any prospective business with the means.

2) 112 Main Street, a historic building in Ware’s downtown, has been vacant since its roof caved-in in February 2011. The property has sat idle since and the town has made no effort to work with the owner and local banks to make the property viable again. The WBCA believes that properties should not be allowed to stand vacant and in such neglect for as long as they are currently allowed to.

3) Incorporate Ware’s identity into the built environment.
- Installing brick sidewalks and extending the lantern lights that currently hang in a select region of the downtown through the downtown.
- Harder’s brother coordinates the seasonal holiday decorations that go up every winter. Harder said the people in the community love it; that it’s classic small town New England; but that if his brother didn’t do it, no one would.
- 20 parking spots were lost with the creation of Veterans Park and three more on Main Street. In
addition, the crosswalk in downtown was moved, not because it made the most sense for the current traffic flow, but because of private, well-connected interests who advocated for the move.

- The select board often makes reactive decisions based on the needs of the moment and not in the long-term interest of the town.

4) Businesses feel taken advantage of by the town. They feel the town sees them as entities to get something from and not a community that needs to be supported to grow.

5) The perception of the regional business institutions, and in particular, the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, is that they are big business oriented. The WBCA feels that the Chamber have never done anything for Ware and are not interested in “helping the little guy”. This perception stands in stark contrast to the reality of the QHCC’s current membership and their own perception of their involvement in the town of Ware.

The QVCDC/BAC interview was filled with optimism about Ware’s potential, but when the WBCA asked them to become members of their organization, they allege that the Executive Director attended an early meeting and made a public pronouncement that they were wasting their time. Country Bank has been a tremendous partner to the town and the WBCA but Chicopee Savings Bank was unwilling to join the WBCA and is not one of the QVCDC/BAC’s partner lending institutions.

6. Finally, the WBCA believes firmly that the Select Board should be paid and that younger people, some with business backgrounds, should be encouraged to run. At the present time, they said nobody wants to run for Select Board because the position isn’t paid, it’s a tremendous amount of work and it is often a thankless job. They reiterated, “the town has to spend money, to make money” and it has to demonstrate a commitment to the public servants willing to dedicate their time to the Select Board and the Town by paying them.

Broad Recommendations and Examples of Success

1. Engage commercial property owners and local proprietors

For old New England towns that are steeped in history, the downtown is the heart of the community. This is especially true for Ware, where the town’s identity is linked to its history and its natural and built environments. The mill yard complex, the Ware River, and a main street that maintains a distinctive New England village character are all symbols of community identity and sense of place.

However, there are an increasing number of vacant and rundown commercial properties in Ware, many of which are downtown. Twenty-five percent of the 133 commercially zoned properties in Ware are vacant and 45 percent are
owned by people or entities with addresses outside of town and over a quarter (26.6 percent) of those live out of state, as far away as New Jersey, North and South Carolina, and California.

As the town embarks on a Master Plan, Ware should consider engaging commercial property owners alongside local proprietors, to establish a vision for the downtown that is grounded in Ware’s broader identity, and fill vacant commercial properties, particularly downtown, with the types of businesses the town seeks to attract.

Supporting Case Study - Turner’s Falls, MA
The village of Turners Falls was founded in 1868 as a planned industrial community with the goal of attracting industry to the town by offering cheap hydropower. Apart from the mill complex, the village is laid out in a horizontal grid, with the main commercial district (Avenue A) designed as a grand tree lined avenue (Town of Montague, 2012). Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, many industries were attracted to Turners Falls because of their inexpensive hydropower.

By the early to mid twentieth century, the downtown featured an electric trolley that ran from Greenfield, to Montague and Millers Falls; the Grand Trunk Hotel as well as three other hotels downtown; direct rail from New York City; multiple restaurants and bars; and an opera house and theater.

Today, much of the original architecture of the town remains, in part because of a concerted effort made by the Town of Montague to preserve the village’s architectural heritage as part of its ongoing revitalization effort (Town of Montague, 2012). In addition, the village has sought to leverage its industrial roots and access to natural resources to become a hub of artistic inspiration and recreational adventure (Town of Montague, 2012).

RiverCulture is a collaboration of leaders from the Turners Falls arts, cultural and business communities that work to promote and enhance the wide variety of cultural activities that Turners Falls has to offer residents and visitors. Their mission is to “strengthen the creative and cultural industries in the Turners Falls area ... by highlighting their heritage and local assets to cultivate creative endeavors and engender a strong sense of place” (Turners Fall RiverCulture, 2012). They are funded by local sponsorships, the Town of Montague and through a grant from the Adams Art Program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (Turners Fall RiverCulture, 2012).

RiverCulture represents the intersection of identity and cultural economic development in Turners Falls. Their goals include:

- Build a strong, cultural community that contributes to the success of its partner organizations.
- Establish art and culture as a highly visible element of the region’s identity.
- Establish an environment that attracts businesses, residents and visitors to Turners Falls (Turners Fall RiverCulture, 2012).
They sought to accomplish these goals, in part, by:

- Actively participating in the town's economic development initiatives
- Hosting and promoting cultural events
- Spearheading cooperative marketing efforts
- Collectively branding and presenting their area's best cultural resources to the public
- Maintaining a website as a central resource for event and cultural information
- Serving as a forum for the RiverCulture Partners to convene around shared topics (Turners Fall RiverCulture, 2012).

The Town Planner and Town Manager of the Town of Montague have developed a strategy to solicit the type of business development they want to see in town. When a piece of property is seized by the town for blight or failure to pay taxes, rather than auctioning the property, the town issues a Request for Proposal and works with private developers and business owners to fill the spaces strategically with the type of businesses that promote the cultural identity of the village. One way in which RiverCulture has been able to engage in the town’s economic development initiatives is by fostering live/work/retail space, studios and new arts facilities in available properties in Turners Falls, including the mills. In addition, RiverCulture events now attract tens of thousands of people to Turners Falls annually and had a total regional economic impact of $785,399 in 2007 alone (Turners Fall RiverCulture, 2012).

2. Establish a Business Development Corporation

Ware sits between four counties, three planning regions and two economic development districts. All of the business institutions that support Ware’s businesses, with the exception of the Ware Business and Civic Association, are regional. Ware should consider the establishment of its own Business Development Corporation. One that streamlines and strengthens support to the specific needs of Ware’s local businesses, facilitates private and public-private partnerships and serves as a catalyst for growth and prosperity by working to increase employment opportunities in Ware; an organization that can bring the resources of the town and regional private partners to bear.

The interviews conducted for this section of the report demonstrate important perceptions. For example, the business community feels unsupported by the town and the business institutions that are in place to provide them with essential resources and the business institutions are overcapacity, understaffed and similarly absorbed in long held beliefs. A new institution, whose mission is to serve the exclusive needs of Ware’s businesses, may be exactly what the community needs right now.

Supporting Case Study - Worcester Business Development Corporation

The economic climate of 1965 looked, in many ways, quite like it looks today. There were significant job losses in many industries, including the manufacturing, retail trade, construction, and transportation sectors (WBDC, 2012). The Worcester Business Development Corporation was created by
an act of legislation that year, as a “nonprofit business organization whose mission was to rebuild and revitalize the city of Worcester, by focusing on not only the economic development of Worcester itself, but the surrounding region as well” (WBDC, 2012).

Its original Statement of Purpose is grounded in many of the same principles of economic stabilization that small towns across the country are considering today, including:

1. The improvement of the living standards of the citizens thereof by:
   a. Fostering the improvement of their employment skills and capacities
   b. Creating, encouraging and promoting employment opportunities
   c. Soliciting, encouraging and inducing business organizations to locate in said city or its vicinity
   d. Assisting and promoting the development and expansion of business activity and business organizations in said city and its vicinity (WBDC, 2012).

The Worcester Business Development Corporation operates as the nonprofit development arm of the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce. At the time of its creation, “approximately $617,000 had been pledged by a consortium of industries, including banks, utilities, and other businesses as “working capital” for the new organization and it was granted broad powers, including”:

1. To buy, sell, lease, mortgage, exchange, or hold by bequest any property both real and personal.
2. To acquire improved and unimproved real estate for the purpose of constructing industrial plants or other business establishments thereon or for the purpose of disposing of such real estate to others for the construction of industrial plants or other business establishments.
3. To cooperate with and avail itself of the facilities and programs of the Small Business Administration of the United States, the Massachusetts Business Development Corporation, the State Department of Commerce and Development, the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, the United States Department of Commerce and any other similar governmental agencies, along with any local chambers of commerce, trade organizations, employment agencies and similar organizations; in the City of Worcester and the vicinity thereof in the promotion, assistance, and development of the business prosperity and economic welfare of the area (WBDC, 2012).

In 2011, just a few of the WBDC projects included:

- The purchase of the Worcester Telegram and Gazette Building in downtown Worcester and the launching of the downtown “Theatre District” initiative.
- Partnering with the City of Worcester to prepare a Master Plan and market study for the roughly 30 acres surrounding the Hanover Theatre and abutting
CitySquare II development (both are downtown projects).
- In Berlin, MA, they are assisting with Riverbridge, a 470,000 square foot mixed use development.
- In partnership with the New England Certified Development Corporation, WBDC approved 7 SBA 504 loans, and created approximately 150 jobs (WBDC, 2012).

**Specific Recommendations**
Though certainly within the purview of the town of and other existing institutions, a Business Development Corporation could also serve the following functions:

1) Encourage greater collaboration between the town and the regional and private business institutions, particularly throughout the Master Planning process. All of them have either demonstrated or stated their desire to be a part of any planning process for economic stabilization. Going forward, a Business Development Corporation could work to strengthen those relationships and better utilize the services they provide on behalf of the businesses in Ware.

2) Conduct a Business Census that creates a current demographic profile of Ware’s businesses and assesses their current needs. The goal of the census would be to provide a listing, with complete contact information, to residents and businesses. Businesses can’t be expected to feel a sense of community if they don’t first know who comprises the business community. It will also seek to answer the following questions about individual businesses in order to construct a strategy for economic development that is well informed:

- What type of business are they?
- Who is their customer base?
- How many people do they employ and are those employees residents of Ware?
- How long have they been in business?
- Do they own the building out of which they operate?

3) Make public and accessible the vacant properties list for would-be business owners in the real estate market. This could assist in increasing the opportunities for existing or new businesses to lease or purchase valuable underutilized land and buildings.

4) Work with the Town to simplify the process of opening a business. The administrative offices for the town of Ware are known for being accommodating and helpful, but understanding where to start can be challenging for would-be business owners new to the process. Checklists and online step-by-step instructions can make the process less overwhelming and easier to navigate.

5) Produce a regular Traffic, Parking, and Safety newsletter directed at downtown businesses that contains local opinions as well as various statistics.
about traffic, parking, safety and includes additional economic statistics that relate to accessibility challenges and solutions. For example, it might be useful for downtown businesses to know that on average 949 cars pass by their business per hour on weekends as opposed to only 802 per hour during weekdays. This data, if presented clearly, could allow businesses to make proactive changes to business hours, signage, specials, etc.

Example: The “The Santa Fe Reporter” newspaper in Santa Fe, New Mexico gathered opinions from local business owners who wanted to improve downtown Santa Fe. The publication asked one question: **What’s one thing that Santa Fe can do to improve its own economy?**
The results were included in a newsletter as part of an issue on small businesses.

6) And finally, several of the storefronts in Ware’s downtown are vacant because the buildings are uninhabitable.

The town should work with property owners whose properties are vacant or rundown to find solutions to make those properties economically viable again. Commercial land owners should be required to maintain their properties such that if the building incurs structural damage that renders the property uninhabitable, the owner should be required to make sufficient repairs to bring the property back up to code within an allotted timeframe before the town has grounds to seize it.

If it were the case that a property owner does not take appropriate action, and the town ends up as owner of the property, a Business Development Corporation could be the town’s designee to hold property and work with local businesses to restore it to use based on the prescribed strategy for economic development that the town outlines in its Master Plan.

**Courtesy of The Santa Fe Reporter, Rebeca Cubillo**
Traffic and Parking Assessment

A. Assessment Purpose
The studio had an idea to establish a connection between areas of Economic Development and Traffic and Parking. Research started with several visits to the downtown area in order to get a feel for traffic flow, parking patterns, safety concerns, and existing infrastructure conditions. Though in past decades downtown Ware has experienced economic decline, the busy traffic patterns continue. The area first appears as a high traffic area through Main Street due to its location along two major routes, 9 and 32. Main Street features many traffic signals and crosswalks but the traffic seems to move along with minimal interference for the most part. Pedestrian traffic is also surprisingly active for a town of less than 10,000 people. It appeared at first glance that the busy traffic patterns didn’t correlate with the little amount of cars parked on Main Street.

The team then decided to reference two major studies done in Ware over the last 10 years; the Downtown Signal Coordination and Safety Study (DSC) prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, January 2011 and the Ware Street Traffic Operations Study (STO) prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, March 2005. These studies provided a framework and startup options for the Economic Development team. While the STO provided statistics and recommendations on traffic patterns in and along Route 32, the DSC provided an idea for a detailed traffic count in the downtown corridor. The DSC study used technology to count traffic patterns in and around Main Street, so the team decided that a more micro approach to the assessment would be to distinguish what kind of vehicles were using the area, how frequently, and also to account for pedestrian traffic. These statistics could provide useful information to the Town of Ware, residents, commuters, and business owners accessing downtown.

Looking West Along Main Street, the Downtown including the Traffic Study Area
B. Target Area Selection
The team then decided to focus on a particular high traffic area within the study boundaries for further analysis and recommendations. The aerial map of the study area shows a 1700 foot area of choice between West Main Street to the west and North Street to the east. The target area contains 37 available parking spots located on the north and south sides of Main Street.

C. Assessment Methodology
The team decided on individual and random traffic counts throughout the course of the semester. A team member would be located somewhere within the target area and account for all traffic that passes by. Each count would last for 30 minutes in order to round to hourly increments if need be. Five subgroups were created and organized into east moving elements, west-moving elements, and finally totaled by east and west. This method gave each subgroup three different datasets for further analysis. The subgroups are:

- Vehicles (Private automobiles, motorcycles, trucks)
- Work Trucks (Company trucks, trucks with large toolboxes)
- Buses (Public School or Public transport)
- Tractor-Trailer Trucks (Contains 18 or more wheels)
- Pedestrians (On foot, bicycle, skateboard, etc)

During the traffic count, the individual team member would also account for how many vehicles are utilizing the 37 parking spaces in the target area. A team member counts the total number of occupied spaces prior to starting a traffic count. Once the traffic count reaches its midway point of 15 minutes, a second parking count is made and accounted for. Finally, once the traffic count is completed, a final parking count is collected and both results are entered into a central database for later analysis.
**D. Vantage Point**

Now that the team decided on a methodology, what was needed was to decide on a centralized vantage point. We ultimately decided to use the parking assessment boundaries in order to incorporate the two assessments. We selected the Bank Street crosswalk on Main Street as our vantage point as indicated in the next aerial view of the downtown study area.

This location was seen as the epicenter of the target area falling almost directly dead center. This location would allow for a team member to use the crosswalk as a method of organizing counts. A member would count a given vehicle only when it passed over the crosswalk previously described. This particular vantage point also serves as an ideal location for accounting for pedestrians as well as monitoring the parking spaces within the target area.

**E. Target Area Business Survey**

In order to garner input from local stakeholders, the team incorporated a survey as part of the assessment. This allowed the team to gather quantitative data by way of traffic and parking counts, and compare those results with qualitative data collected by way of public input. It was decided that the team would administer the surveys only to businesses that are located within the target area.

The team created a list of anticipated responses that a business owner in Ware might suggest when asked about outside traffic patterns and parking spaces outside of their businesses. The anticipated responses were entered onto two separate surveys, one for traffic and one for parking. One question for each survey was created although the team was careful to select two questions that would solicit additional verbal responses while also allowing for further discussion and written comments. The questions used for the surveys were:

1) “On an average day, what is the overall feel of traffic that passes by your business?”

2) “How are public parking options on Main Street?”
Business owners were encouraged to select as many or as few options as would apply. They were also given the option of providing additional comments on the back of the survey. The team decided to keep the survey as simple as possible so as not to deter business owners from participating, either because the survey was too complex or the participants did not have the time during business hours. A goal was made to reach out to at least 10 different businesses on each assessment visit.

Results

A. Quantitative Analysis
This section provides the major findings in our data collection. A total of eight counts were administered randomly between September 20th and November 20th, 2012. After totaling up each of the vehicle subgroups (Cars, Work Trucks, Buses, Tractor Trailers), what the data indicates is that during any given hour, 932 total vehicles along with 81 pedestrians are accessing Downtown Ware. This is particularly interesting when you factor in that during that time, only 14 spaces or 37% of the total street spaces within the target area are being occupied.

A major finding was that vehicles traveled eastbound on Main St at a rate of 370 per hour. This was about 200 fewer vehicles per hour than westbound traffic. Two issues that the studio immediately associated with this trend were the two parking spaces directly in front of Town Hall on Main Street and the flashing traffic signal where Main meets Route 32. Also, regardless of direction a large rate of tractor-trailers was observed accessing the target area (12 per hour), and a surprisingly low rate for buses at not even two per hour. With 81 pedestrians accessing the target area at any given time, the lack of public transportation availability was surprising and most of the buses observed were small shuttles or school buses.

The studio also collected additional data weighing weekday vs. weekend averages, parking deviation rates, and further comparisons of eastbound and westbound traffic patterns. These statistics can be found in the appendix section of this report.

B. Qualitative Analysis
This section attempts to compare the Target Area Business Survey findings with the count statistics collected during the assessment. The studio was able to collect responses from a total of fifteen businesses within the target area. This information on participating businesses is included in the appendix section of the report.
Indicated both on the survey and the assessment is the fact that Main St. has a heavy traffic flow, potentially good for economic development. Before any statistics were collected the studio noticed that the busy flow of traffic could be good for business owners. Of the businesses surveyed, 88% agreed with the idea that busy traffic is good, and the statistics show the area as being particularly busy for a town with less than 10,000 people.

On the other hand, 87% of the sample surveyed responded that parking availability was a problem on Main St. This response is adverse to the quantitative findings which indicated that only 37% of the spaces within the target area are occupied at any given time. Businesses however respond overwhelmingly that experimenting with parking meters would be bad for business. This response did match, the quantitative data judging that if only 14 of 37 spaces are occupied at a given time, the consumer demand for parking is low. With such a low demand the monetary rate would also have to be kept low in order not to deter occupancy. For instance, if the 37% occupancy rate was maintained into the foreseeable future that would mean that even if the town charged .25 cents per half hour the net profit per hour would be around $7.00, for all 37 spaces. That figure, if true, would hardly cover the cost of maintaining or enforcing the meters. Further studies could also hypothesize that the 37% occupancy rate could actually decrease with meters due to lack of demand.

C. Traffic Statistics

In the tables shown below, the final traffic data is divided into individual categories and coordinated by color. Each data set is organized by the observation’s date and time while accounting for eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) traffic flow.

**Final Traffic Statistics in 30-Minute Increments for Cars, Work Trucks, Buses, Tractor Trailers and Pedestrians**

**Cars**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>EB Cars</th>
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<td>Time</td>
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<td>------</td>
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### Pedestrians

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**Final Parking Statistics From the Assessment**

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E. Survey Findings
A total of 15 businesses within the target area were surveyed and asked a broad question about traffic, and a broad question about parking. This diagram shows the bottom three and the top three responses for each question in the business survey. The majority of responses demonstrate that businesses enjoy the busy outside traffic but feel that parking is an issue.

Weighted Results from the Target Area Business Survey

- **Traffic Responses**
  - 88% say traffic is busy but good for business
  - 81% feel traffic affects business *positively*
  - 27% say too many cars, not enough pedestrians
  - Top 3: 1140, 1240, 1255
  - Bottom 3: 1310, 1240, 1355

- **Parking Responses**
  - 87% say never enough spaces to park
  - 85% feel meters would be bad for business
  - 55% say parking affects business *negatively*
  - Top 3: 1140, 1240, 1255
  - Bottom 3: 1310, 1240, 1355
F. Recommendations

The studio respectfully recommends the following strategies for improving downtown access and creating additional opportunities for economic development:

The removal or regulation of the two parking spaces located directly in front of Town Hall on Main Street.

Per hour, 12 tractor trailers and 2 buses access downtown at any given time. This improvement can allow for large vehicles to make the sharp turn northbound traveling from Rt. 32 to eastbound Rt. 9. That can also help to open up the eastbound traffic flow. Additional traffic flow into the area can increase downtown accessibility benefiting downtown business.

Aside from removal of the space, the town can also consider regulations such as a “loading area only” zone for town hall or a parking ban during business hours. Decisions like this would be aided by the additional appendix data included in this report. For instance, that data shows that on weekends the average tractor trailer frequency is at 0%. That could serve as useful information for the town in considering a weekday parking regulation.

The installation of a raised crosswalk on Main St, directly between the traffic signals at North and at Church Streets.

This recommendation has to do with slowing down traffic in the area between North and Church streets. A raised crosswalk would allow for oncoming traffic to slow down before the incline. This can also help visibility in regards to drivers often times not being able to see pedestrians crossing. The photograph on the following page shows an example of a raised crosswalk (Amherst, MA). This is one of several that exist along Route 9. They have functioned well for many years, permitting snow-clearing and reasonable speeds while enhancing pedestrian safety.
Along Ware’s Main Street, between the signals at North and Church Street, the pattern of intersections creates a particularly dangerous situation. Sometimes the outside lane (in either direction) has an obstructed view of the crosswalk. A raised crosswalk increases driver awareness of pedestrian crossings, and allows for the pedestrian to be elevated when crossing Main St. This would increase safety for both drivers and pedestrians. This strategy would also deter vehicles from stopping on the crosswalk during busy traffic periods. During traffic counts, cars and especially tractor-trailers could not anticipate the traffic ahead and so would stop directly on the crosswalk and block pedestrians from crossing. Slowing traffic increases awareness amongst drivers. This “traffic calming” could also allow those same drivers more time to notice and access services in downtown.

Presenting assessment data to the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority for a proposed bus route between Ware and the nearby “Knowledge Corridor”.

The “Palmer Shuttle” is a Pioneer Valley Transit Authority method of transportation which runs between Palmer and Ware. According to the “Ware Transportation Survey and Recommendations” completed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in 2011, the most frequent service request is for more shuttle runs within Ware—requested by more than half of respondents (Ware Transportation Survey and Recommendations, pg 1). The Studio was unable to find the average trip frequency information for the shuttle as well as an updated schedule. We propose that the assessment data be provided for additional bus service directly from Downtown Ware to the Knowledge Corridor. The area in front of Town Hall could serve as a location for a bus stop in the downtown corridor, if in fact the parking spaces were removed. This strategy could also allow for better flow of turning traffic eastbound onto Main Street.
The pedestrian data gathered would be useful in the proposal with possibilities of presenting daily, weekday, and weekend pedestrian averages. Bus averages as part of our assessment solely featured school bus and elderly shuttle data. Not a single public bus was observed during the assessment. A bus route could bring additional foot traffic into the downtown and the proposed bus stop could even help to highlight town hall.

*Looking North Across Main Street - Proposed Bus Stop Replacing the Two Spaces in Front of Town Hall*
The Local Business Community

Supporting a strong business community in Ware is necessary for increasing the economic resiliency of the community as a whole. Who wouldn’t love to see a downtown where kids can walk to dance lessons while parent’s shop for a gift, meet a friend, or go to the library; a town where local businesses thrive and the next big problem is the scarcity of available storefronts? Local business success is the basis for creating good jobs and generating prosperity within a community that seeks a quality of life that is simple and self-reliant. Businesses that are able to provide the goods and services that the community wants, will in turn create the social capital necessary to sustain and protect that business over time. Recognizing the ways in which the community and businesses rely on one another is one path to economic stability. The purpose of examining the local business climate is that it represents an important intersect for demonstrating the broader context of social well-being.

Initial Observations of Ware

In September 2012 the Studio Class first visited Ware. The class met with Karen Cullen, Town Planner and Stuart Beckley, Town Manager and representatives of the Master Plan Steering Committee. The Economic Development Team made a few observations at that time:

- The downtown had great ‘bones’ but looked neglected and underappreciated.
- Traffic downtown was noticeable and moving quickly through the area towards other destinations.
- There seemed to be ample parking.
- The front entrance to the Town Hall appeared to be closed off to ‘visitors.’

In addition, these observations raised a few questions. They included:

- Is Ware interested in change?
- Is the community open to new observations or will such observations be viewed as interfering?
- How will Ware be inspired to protect and improve all that is possible here?
Ware’s Potential

Ware has a distinct downtown area surrounded by closely-knit neighborhoods of single and multi-family housing. Those neighborhoods are infinitely walkable because of the well-proportioned roads, ample sidewalks, and proximity to the downtown. It is not uncommon to see people sitting on porches while children play in the street. These neighborhoods provide easy access to the downtown in one direction and to parks and recreation places in the other direction. Great downtowns are defined by the energy and vibrancy created by pedestrian traffic. Ware can create more opportunities for people to gather downtown, for example by hosting community events. The recent Fall Festival sponsored by the Ware Business and Civic Association was a great example of using the downtown as a venue for bringing the community together. The town and business community can encourage community involvement by opening the downtown to entrepreneurial events like a storefront display competition or a weekly farmers market.

Over the years, the downtown has lost some businesses. Remaining businesses include banks, offices, retail outlets and eateries. But it lacks the range of amenities that might draw people to stop for coffee or to pick-up pastries. Although there are sidewalks and plenty of parking, storefronts look empty and some windows have been shuttered in a way that make buildings appear ‘closed’, even when they are not. The beautiful Town Hall that sits on the corner of Routes 32 and 9, once the location for town meetings and events, has been re-oriented to bring people in the side door. The stairway into the front of the Town Hall offers shelter from rain and ample places to sit while waiting to meet a friend. But signs posted on the doors direct people to the side door and warn against loitering. Main Street has been widened to accommodate traffic patterns designed to move cars quickly through downtown on their way to other places.

Since the disappearance of the mill industry in the 1960s, Ware has lost a number of irreplaceable landmarks. There have been missed opportunities to protect landmarks and historic buildings. The Casino Theater was known as being one of the oldest movie theaters in the country; it was a distinction worth protecting. But until the theater was slated for demolition the community had been ‘hoping’ that something would be
done. Bill Dusty, a local photographer and writer noted that landmarks were being lost while the town of Ware, “... weighed decisions over whether to help preserve the past or sweep it aside in favor of the future.” But one decision should not preclude the other.

Ware can leverage the connections that are unique to Ware as well as protect existing assets from neglect and further disregard.

Ware should focus on goals that can enhance resiliency and economic stability by protecting the mills, downtown storefronts, quality of life and the sense of place that defines the character of Ware; the values that distinguish Ware from any place else.

Protections should be created against further loss of historical landmarks and natural heritage.

Without a master plan there is no framework for decision-making. The Master Planning process allows a community to decide what is important to them; what are the values that will guide decisions moving forward. It will begin to establish the structure for achieving goals that, for years, have been consistently expressed by the community.

Many economic development efforts over the years have identified the need to promote tourism through Ware’s natural resources, redevelop the Mill Complex, improve signage and support small business growth. To date, progress has been slow but there has been some. If Ware is to attract and secure funding, the community must be clear about who they are and what direction they intend to take into their future. Working on a Master Plan is one step towards creating a future they have envisioned together.

**Valuing Assets**

Many of the strategies presented in the 2001 Strategic Plan continue to be relevant and important to the overall economic development picture. “Identify, improve,
and promote local tourism assets” (Ware, 2001). There is an image people hold of the quaint village center along a river’s edge. Many communities can only long for the advantages of a downtown located on the edge of a river. Ware has a beautiful meandering river yet most of the buildings sit with their back to it, separated by cement walls that obscure its presence from daily life.

The Ware River represents an underutilized asset that could contribute to identity of place, economic development, recreation and tourism. “Attachments. . . lead people to care enough to take action to improve their hometown and get involved in the tough decisions required to protect it. Places lacking heart and soul aren’t loved, aren’t cared for, and aren’t going anywhere” (orton.org, 2012). The significance of the Ware River did not pass with manufacturing. Ware needs to rediscover the value of its river by creating views and access.

**Ware has natural resources for recreation, tourism, and identity of place**
- Ware is a gateway to the Quabbin Reservoir – Every year thousands of tourists and outdoor enthusiasts visit the Quabbin to hike, fish, and bird watch or just to spend the day outside with family.
- Ware River – River views and access could make this much more of a central focus.
- Agriculture – Working farms remain in Ware. Citizens have identified farms as an important source of town identity as well as local food.

**Ware has a Downtown District with neighborhoods in close proximity**
- Improve the potential for pedestrian activity
- Encourage locally owned business
- Create incentives for businesses to relocate downtown
- Create incentives for customers walking to and in the downtown

**Ware has the Mill Complex**
- Historic and scenic value
• Potential housing development for locals who want to retire in place
• Potential development of higher learning and job training opportunities

**Ware is Affordable**
• Actively recruit businesses the town would like to see in downtown
• Encourage partnerships with landlords and potential businesses
• Engage local business organizations to keep an updated database of vacant and available spaces

**Sense of Place**
Economic development and local prosperity are inherently linked to sense of place. Placemaking can be used as a tool for bringing communities together around local assets and values in an effort to build stronger communities. Ware might begin by creating better public space downtown. Whether it is a business incubator or a public art project, vacant storefronts downtown can become temporary venues for public events and activities. This can create opportunities for people to use the downtown to meet, socialize, and connect around ways to rebuild a vibrant downtown. Local government alone cannot manage the challenges of rebuilding the downtown. The community must be welcomed and encouraged to take ownership of the process. “The social value of public space is wide ranging and lies in the contribution it makes to ‘people’s attachment to their locality and opportunities for mixing with others, and in people’s memory of places’ (Dines and Cattell et al., 2006). Places can provide opportunities for social interaction, social mixing and social inclusion, and can facilitate the development of community ties” (www.jrf.org.uk 2012).

**Case Study – Putnam, Connecticut**
Putnam Connecticut is a small river town with an industrial past, not unlike Ware. It has built on this industrial heritage to create and convey the town’s identity. It has leveraged similar assets to Ware’s to enhance its own economic development including a vibrant downtown and growing participation in heritage and trails tourism. Located in the northeast corner of Connecticut, Putnam has a population just under 10,000. With the support of their Economic Development Commission and a Redevelopment Authority,
Putnam has been working hard to keep up with the economic development challenges of a contracting local economy. At the center of their strategic planning are historic mill redevelopments, increasing access and use of their riverfront and improving the walkability and pedestrian safety of their downtown.

In 2006, Putnam created an Industrial Heritage Overlay District to attract grants and prevent the loss of their industrial landmarks. In 2010, a $25,750 historic preservation grant was awarded to the town. With matching funds and resources from the property owner, the restoration of the Cargill Falls Mill has become an anchor for downtown development. All of these efforts are an effective attempt to leverage the ‘character of place’ that defines Putnam.

“Putnam’s greatest asset is the Quinebaug River which flows over Cargill Falls and meanders through our Downtown District. The riverscape enhances our community park and our new bandstand, which hosts arts, cultural and recreational events throughout the year. The River Mills Heritage Trail, winner of the 2005 Governor’s Preservation Now Award for Historic Preservation, was designed to showcase our mills’ architectural and historic connection to the Industrial Age. The Putnam River Trail running parallel to the river is a multipurpose pathway including parks, picnic areas, scenic views, historic exhibits and a 200 foot pedestrian bridge across the river.” (Business and Community Guide 2008)

In 2004, a local newspaper called The Putnam Traveler was developed, “to promote tourism, business & community events throughout northeastern Connecticut.” This local marketing journal has doubled in size from its first publication and it has been recognized for excellence by the Northeastern Economic Developers Association. Although the periodical covers the northeast region, its namesake and reputation has become a point of pride that reflects on the Putnam community.

In 2011, a ‘walking audit’ was conducted downtown in an effort to address and encourage the comfort of pedestrians in Putnam’s town center. A number of observations made in that report are easily transferable to the Ware downtown. Traffic calmers, storefronts, street furniture and public space were all mentioned as methods to improve interest in downtown as a place to visit. It was also noted in the report that the local hospital in Putnam is less than half a mile from the downtown but there are no sidewalks to encourage people to make that trip. In Ware, the walk from Mary Lane into the downtown offers great sidewalks and lovely neighborhoods. With the heightened attention on our national health, what would it take to engage staff and visitors at Mary Lane to walk the half mile into town and back to emphasize the importance of exercise and the value of walkable streets? What could downtown businesses do to support and encourage such an effort?
The focus of Putnam’s redevelopment is a matter of highlighting local assets, natural resources and cultural heritage, into a unique sense of place that is at the center of local identity and pride.

**Local Businesses vs. National Chains and Franchises**

In the last 10 years, retail has become the single largest employment industry in the town of Ware. These jobs have been primarily provided by large retailers like Wal-Mart, Lowes and franchise businesses like the Dollar Store. The development of these businesses has occurred along the Route 32 corridor and their presence is responsible for some of the traffic that flows through Ware from other areas. Jobs created by national and international corporations are by their nature, based on business models that are uniformly replicated regardless of location, a driving success for the growth of these businesses but less successful in contributing to the sustainability of local economies. Service sector jobs do not contribute to household prosperity in the same way as the manufacturing jobs that they replaced: poor pay and benefits can contribute to a variety of economic difficulties. Local business owners who are also community members play a vital role in generating the social capital that is essential to the quality of life in small communities.

In conversations with people in Ware, a number of them mentioned that the closing of Friendly’s was indicative of Ware’s inability to support downtown businesses. But the closing of Friendly’s may have had little to do with its location in Ware. The restaurant in Ware was one of 63 Friendly’s that closed in 2011 in an effort to save the overextended Friendly’s corporation. Ware has little capacity to influence corporate retail culture in the community but it can play an important role in supporting and promoting local business success.

The good news for small retailers is that they can more readily respond to the needs and changes of the local market while providing customer services that are not always available in larger stores. The presence of large retail chains is bringing customers into Ware from surrounding communities. It is up to Ware and the local businesses to find ways to entice shoppers
into spending more time in the downtown.

There is a strong local knowledge base that must be leveraged to respond to unmet market potential. A focus on local businesses by a dedicated organization like a Business Development Corporation will help identify strengths and weaknesses for people doing business in Ware. An ongoing dialogue with business owners will assist in defining next steps towards insuring the viability of local businesses as well as preparing Ware for the adoption of zoning, and permitting processes that are efficient and streamlined for attracting new businesses. Then, Ware can begin the process of actively inviting the businesses they would like to see in their community in locations where they would like to see them.

*Small Business Survey, Interviews and Observations*

At the beginning of the economic development process it was decided that a survey of some businesses would be one way of assessing the business climate in Ware. It seemed reasonable to assume that the best indicators for businesses would come from business owners who were new to Ware as well as business owners that have been around for generations. In the process of researching previous economic development efforts in Ware it was clear that this approach to economic development had been used in earlier reports. Although some business owners were generous with their time, others did not see the relevance of participating in the survey or think that it could be helpful. After interviewing businesses based on proximity to the downtown and ease of access, it was apparent that not much had changed since the last survey was conducted in 2004. The table shown here includes the questions that were asked of the businesses.

Some of the observations based on the responses to the survey include:
• Most businesses were in Ware because of family ties or affordability.
• Customer base for retail is local and regional; for larger companies, national and international.
• The economic downturn has affected most businesses in some way.
• Local business and professional organizations were not viewed as helpful or relevant to their needs.
• Increased number of businesses downtown was seen as the economic shot necessary for boosting surrounding businesses.
• Advertising was seen as not necessary for some or out of reach financially for others.
• All of the business owners would like to see more business activity downtown; restaurants, corner store, motel etc.
• The cost of utilities was not a primary concern.

More broadly speaking, business owners seemed to function like ‘lone rangers’ with little connecting them to other business owners; a ‘business community’ per se does not really exist. An examination of all the ‘online’ business listings in Ware would suggest that most businesses are ‘sole proprietor’ or family businesses with few employees. Local entrepreneurs are finding ways to create income without the support of business organizations or even local awareness of their presence in the community. One business owner offered to show us business cards identifying each of the four uniquely independent ‘businesses’ that he was managing.

Evidence of a bustling ‘hidden economy’ would suggest that a downtown business incubator might encourage some business owners to take advantage of business supports while helping to create a physical presence in the downtown.

A question the town should ask going forward is, “What would bring new businesses into Ware?” It would have been helpful to talk to new and established business owners elsewhere in town to find out:

Small Businesses, Cottage Industries, and “Hidden Economies” Are Hard to Measure But Important to Local Economies
Why had they chosen one community over another to start their business
What kinds of business supports were helpful in establishing their businesses
What kinds of ‘incentives’ would be necessary to bring new businesses into Ware
For established businesses, what would entice you to expand or to establish another business in downtown Ware?

Again, these efforts are best achieved by a dedicated Business Development Corporation as suggested in earlier sections of this report.

So who is doing business in Ware? A comprehensive list of all of Ware’s businesses has been created by obtaining and assembling lists provided by the town, local business organizations and an extensive internet search. Information is organized to include: contact information, web information, current business owner, business affiliations, age of business; a local, regional, or national customer base, etc. This list will become a working document for the town and local business organizations for analyzing data, establishing business trends and answering questions about the business climate from many vantage points. It will help to create an ongoing assessment for tracking:

- What services are businesses currently providing and where are the gaps
- What businesses have opened and closed in Ware and why
- Assessments of the downtown business climate against Rt. 32 development
- Ways for businesses to identify and connect with other business people

**Recommendations for Short-term Actions**

In addition to finding ways to understand the needs of Ware’s business community, and ways to attract new businesses to town, there are a number of ways in which towns have helped to ‘kickstart’ downtown revival:

- Sprucing up the downtown in a coordinated manner with the businesses
- Host more community events
- Develop a plan of action to allow for public and interactive art installations for empty storefronts
- Open the Town Hall to town events and meetings on the main floor
- Replace shuttered windows at the library with painted windows or something of interest
- Business owners should host, at least, quarterly events at various restaurants, cafés, and stores as a way to get to know each other, create collaborations, leverage strengths, buy supplies or trade services, etc.
Case Studies – Five Examples of Creative Efforts to Kickstart Downtown Redevelopment

Here are a few examples of community efforts to bring color, interest and funding into downtown improvements. These projects help to get people involved in solving some of the problems of downtown while planting the seeds of a more engaged community.

The Hoosic River Revival Project
In North Adams, MA, extensive investment has been made in the downtown over the course of a decade. The building of MassMOCA in the old Sprague Factory draws tourism and is the hub of an arts community, but reinvigorating the downtown area has been slower than hoped. The Hoosic River Revival Project is the community’s effort to make the river central to local identity and downtown revitalization (hoosicriverrevival.org).

Storefront Art Initiative
The Storefront Art Initiative in South Euclid, home of Notre Dame University, uses vacant storefronts to proudly display the work of local students. It offers a chance for local artists of all ages to have their work seen by thousands of people each day, and livens otherwise empty spaces. This effort is coordinated by the town’s Economic Development Director.

Another Creative Economy program led by an Economic Development Director is Project Storefronts in New Haven, CT, which has facilitated the use of retail spaces for temporary activities. Facilitating flexible and temporary use has become increasingly popular, with ‘pop-up’ stores appearing in towns and cities of all sizes, particularly during the holidays. A temporary use of a space can attract new foot-traffic to an area, and provide a much-needed opportunity for a business or organization that may not yet be in a position to sign a long-term lease for space.

In Raleigh, NC, an artists group takes the lead, transforming unused spaces into gallery and performance spaces. The Beautifying Emerging Spaces Together (BEST) program meets the need of local artists for inexpensive venues, and helps liven and promote neighborhoods that would suffer from extended periods of inactivity. Kulture Klub in Minneapolis, MN provides opportunities for local youth to create public art with the help of local designers and artists.

The Storefront Artists Project in Pittsfield, MA closed shop in 2011 after a decade of work to enliven vacant spaces in the city’s downtown. For years the SAP facilitated art shows, pop-up stores, performances and coffee houses, starting at a time when the majority of downtown retail spaces were unused or under-used. Now downtown Pittsfield has many more permanent businesses, restaurants, cultural events and offices. Although this small city is several times the size of Ware, it has shared the same trajectory as
manufacturing has waned, and this out-of-the-way middle class city has struggled to find a niche. The city has steadily worked to build upon each of its assets in order to become a more attractive, livable and successful small city.

**Conclusion**

Whether speaking historically or today, Ware has been clear about wanting to preserve the independent character of a small, self-reliant community. These are the same values that Ware must engage to build local capacity and create economic stability. The success of the local business community is one path to Ware’s success as a strong and resilient community. “A community needs successful businesses to provide jobs and wealth creation opportunities for its citizens” (Porter & Kramer, 2011). In addition, the natural beauty inherent in the proximity of the Quabbin Reservoir and the Ware River can be enhanced to bring attention and business to the Ware downtown from the community and beyond.

**Economic Development and Downtown Ware References**


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Traffic and Parking Assessment References

Photographs created by Timothy Inacio


Figure (8); Cubillo, Rebeca; Courtesy of : The Santa Fe Reporter.

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Community Partnerships with Colleges and Universities - http://www.umb.edu/ocp/connections/defining_partnerships


One South Euclid, Storefront Arts Initiative, http://www.onesoutheuclid.org/storefront-art-initiative/


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The Mills
The Mill Yard Complex

The Mill Yard Complex serves as a metaphor for the town of Ware. At one time, the Mill was the center of the community’s identity. As time passed, the Mill lost its stately presence as business moved south and overseas. Today, the Mill is ripe for preservation and could be on course to reinstate its role as the town’s symbol of vitality and community spirit.

The future is bright for the preservation of the Complex with grant opportunities, regulatory measures and potential future uses. Yet, in order to become a symbol of Ware’s fortitude, the Mills need to be viewed as an entity that benefits every aspect of a Master Plan, including economic development, housing, land use, and natural resources. Specifically:

Aerial View of Ware’s Mill Yard Complex
• Through adaptive reuse, the Mill Yard Complex has the ability to provide a mixed-use environment that would provide services and housing to the residents of Ware. This benefit would encourage pedestrian and automobile traffic throughout the downtown corridor allowing for growth of the downtown businesses;
• Due to the mill’s integral location along Route 9 and its real estate affordability, preservation and landscaping efforts would entice future investors to use the site as an incubator for business;
• Reuse of available space within the Complex would contribute to preservation of Ware’s agricultural and open spaces;
• As a potential site for green energy production (in the forms of hydropower, wind power, a solar farm, etc.), the Mill Yard Complex could act as a resource to alleviate residents from reliance on other more expensive forms of energy;
• The Mill Yard Complex could serve as a regional haven for historic tourism. Across New England mills are being converted into boutique hotels and museums due to their size and historic legacy; and
• By establishing a college satellite campus, Ware could provide educational access to residents that they would otherwise need to go elsewhere for. Additionally, this lends a possibility to connect the town to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s vision of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor.
These conclusions have been based on review of available secondary sources supplied by the town of Ware, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and documentation provided by the Lake Hitchcock Development Corporation. Site visits to Ware, and to other mills throughout the region including Chicopee, Massachusetts’ former Uniroyal and Facemate Mills, the Whitin Mill in Northbridge, Massachusetts and Quinsigamond Community College’s Southern County’s satellite campus at the former American Optical Plant in Southbridge, Massachusetts, aided in developing case studies for future use. Lastly, the internet was a valuable research tool in discovering other adaptive reuses throughout New England.

This section of the report has been prepared as a pre-redevelopment planning resource. It is intended to provide the town of Ware informed suggestions of continued and future use of the Complex. Efforts presented throughout this section have a focus on defining concepts towards redevelopment/reuse of the Mill Yard Complex in keeping with Ware’s economic development goals, outlined in a meeting with the University of Massachusetts Regional Planning Studio.

**Mill History**

The early history of the Mill in Ware began in 1729 with the grist industry. Later in the 19th century, manufacturing turned to textiles and became known world-wide as the Otis Company Mills. At the height of the Mill’s production, an influx of French, Irish and Polish immigrants came to live and work in the town. At one point, the Mill employed over 2,500 people at all levels. As the years passed, production began to wane and the threat of closing and selling loomed in the air. During the 20th century’s lowest point, the Great Depression, the struggle to maintain the Mill became greater. In spite of this, on the eve of closure, the town’s people came together to purchase shares and eventually bought the mill outright and renamed the Mill site Ware Industries. This fortitude earned a mention in *Life Magazine* where Ware was dubbed “the town that can’t be licked!” In 1967 however, many of the jobs went south and many descendants of the immigrants found themselves unemployed. No longer being able to afford the shares at the empty site, the town’s people sold off parcels of the Mill to individual buyers.
By the 1980s, the industry that had still occupied the mills during the middle part of the century was a fading memory. The Mill’s twenty-two parcels were owned by a number of individual tenants, whose services ranged from retail to light manufacturing. This arrangement proved to be complicated as the tenants did not always see eye to eye with the town’s administration. The situation was evaluated in 1987 by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission which cited the Mill Yard Complex in the Planning Commission’s Growth Management and Development Plan. The document identified that most business leaders throughout Ware saw the mill yard complex as a possible source for increasing industry and commerce. However, it further noted that the town would never move forward unless an agreement between the tenants and the town could be reached. For years to come, the reuse of the site was repeatedly addressed in meetings and publications, yet progress remained at an impasse (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission 1987, 4).

Today, the unique individual parcel ownership continues. Consequently the lack of cohesion or singular ownership has led to deterioration of the infrastructure and historical integrity of the Complex. Sadly, perception of the Mill Yard has been stated in the Ware Mill Yard Site Assessment and Economic Development Plan as “a deteriorating base of old mill properties with little impact to the region.” (Lake Hitchcock Development Corporation 2001, 9)

In an era of limited space, suburban sprawl and declining economy, the Mill Yard Complex needs to be recognized for its potential to address these matters. While current tenants have detached themselves from the issues facing the Mill, the town needs to take steps towards improved maintenance (interior and exterior) and community connectivity. The steps below focus on measures to accomplish these goals.
Inventory of Businesses within the Mill Yard Complex

The Mill Yard Complex is located on the eastern boundary of the downtown of Ware, along the Route 9 corridor. Upon first gaze, the Mill Yard Complex appears to be a series of buildings with varying architectural styles along the waters of the Ware River. This mixture of stone and brick buildings was listed on the National Historic Register in 1982, and has served as a reminder of architectural and historical importance for the town. The complex itself consists of twenty-two parcels that align the banks of each side of the Ware River comprising of 31.902 acres of land (Lake Hitchcock Development Corporation 2001, 28).

After decades of selling off individual parcels, an assortment of tenants continues to provide different services scattered throughout the Complex. As such, this myriad of stand-alone businesses does not lend to one identity and is a source of division amongst tenants. A poignant description of the situation was outlined in the 2001 Ware Mill Yard Site Assessment and Economic Development Planning Project:

The existing manufacturing companies have very little in common with the other businesses in the complex as well as the downtown commercial district. Most of these businesses are stand-alone enterprises contributing little, if anything to the commercial activity of the other non-manufacturing businesses. They have a different customer base, different appearances and different requirements. Their operations are mostly on the edge of the core or the perimeter of the complex. They have their own access and parking area. To grow they must expand on site or outside of the complex. An example, Quabbin Wire & Cable cannot expand on its site and is also unable to provide sufficient parking for their employees (Lake Hitchcock Development Corporation 2001, 24).

The Mill Yard Complex has been touted as having “good bones” by many. Yet further assessment for viable reuse needs to be conducted. A feasibility study would indicate the conditions of the pre-existing engineering, water and soil contamination, and architectural integrity. A study like this is multipurpose. Primarily it enables a project to move forward with design and construction. Also, the study assists investors and/or owner(s) to work with the town’s governing boards to move through any legislation, permitting and zoning issues that arise. The study furthermore allows for positive interaction with state and local historical commissions and any other regulatory services that determine demolitions, Brownfield remediation and any new additions that are attached to the project. Finally, as a public document, the public has the ability to see what is found and determined for site use in their local community. This is key for public meetings that are associated with the project.
Capacity for Viable Reuse

Ware strives to maintain a small-town look and feel in order to provide a certain quality of life. An interview at the first annual Fall Festival from a young resident indicated that he moved to Ware from Springfield because he was looking for the quiet and non-threatening lifestyle of country living. Furthermore, there is an aging population who also enjoys the country lifestyle and as a result is in need of facilities, both in terms of housing and services to support this group of Ware residents. This small-town character applies to the look and feel of parks, scenic roads and cultural amenities as noted in many reports, and this character has the potential to feed into a tourist economy in the future. Moreover, Ware envisions a strong school system as a way to draw and keep younger families within its borders. With that said, many housing options must be provided beyond that of single-family new construction and the aging, dense multi-family structures on opposite ends of the town. Segments or in its entirety, the Mill Yard has potential as a sustainable site for affordable, market-value housing or condominium space. This could become a reality as a result of the new zoning by law passed in 2011 allowing for mixed use.

In 2011, the town of Ware restructured and passed new zoning regulations. One aspect addressed in the new Bylaws was the possibility of different usage within the Mill Yard Complex. It is the hope of the Town Planner that the new flexible regulatory measures end the tenuous situation between the Mill and town Administration, while encouraging a new sense of place and pride that would draw new investors to the Complex. The new zoning will allow for the following uses:

- High density residential;
- Commercial;
- Institutional; and
- Light industrial use
As the new zoning goes into effect, another measure could be implemented. The concept of an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District was mentioned previously in this report’s Housing section. A regulation such as this does not just have to be for housing. In fact, the City of Chicopee recently went through the process of creating an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District for the former Uniroyal Facemate property. As a result, they are redeveloping the site for a new senior living site and a river walk called the RiverMills project. While a tremendous undertaking, the Office of Community Development has worked with the surrounding neighborhood, City Officials and various planning and engineering firms to move forward. (City of Chicopee’s Office of Community Development: (413) 594-1495 https://www.chicopeema.gov/page.php?id=339)

Ware is conveniently situated between Worcester and Amherst along Route 9, a well-traveled road. Currently, there is not a hotel or inn for miles in either direction. An interview conducted by a member of the Economic Development studio team revealed that the owner of Berkshire Blanket has his out-of-town clients stay in Amherst. This is a lost opportunity for investors to make connections with the town of Ware. A situation like this could be easily remedied. An Overlay District would allow for creative uses of the Mill Yard Complex, and a hotel could be a great option. Recently, the Monadnock Mills located in the town of Claremont, New Hampshire, a town similar to Ware in many ways, was converted into a beautiful hotel and restaurant called the Common Man Inn and Restaurant.

**Case Study**
Claremont, New Hampshire seen as down and out for many years and a defunct mill seem like an unlikely combination for an investment opportunity. Nonetheless, Alex Ray and Rusty McLear of Hampshire Hospitality Holdings broke ground in May of 2008 to redevelop the former Monadnock Mills into the Common Man Inn and Restaurant. This was not a new endeavor for the duo as they had already tackled a similar project in an old mill in Plymouth, New Hampshire. For the former Monadnock Mills, Ray and McLear worked tirelessly to create partnerships with Claremont officials, appropriate state agencies, ReArch Company, LLC of South Burlington, Vermont, and major investor Red River Computer, Co. of Lebanon, New Hampshire. This collaboration was integral to
the completion of the project just one year later. John Illick of Sugar River Mills Development, LLC, the company that manages the site today, notes on the Common Man Inn website:

“A project of this scope needs more than a developer interested in renovating a historic building; it also requires businesses to occupy and participate in the process. It would have been very difficult to go through a historic review process to attain the preservation tax credits without knowing the use and architectural interests of the businesses that would operate the Mill. The City of Claremont has also been an important part of this team, providing critical support from many of its departments, as well as the needed public works projects in the mill area. “

Today, the Common Man Inn provides pet-friendly accommodations to travelers passing through on their way to various destinations throughout the Upper Valley Region. Prior to their opening, travelers would have had to make their way to Lebanon, New Hampshire or Woodstock, Vermont, both approximately a half hour away from the town of Claremont. People stop in Claremont now for a nice dinner or an overnight stay in a beautiful redeveloped mill.

Redevelopment and preservation projects tend to scare owners and investors because such measures cost money. Sadly, such projects often never take off since many are unaware of the resources available to interested municipalities and individuals. However, there are private and public funding opportunities at the state and national level to alleviate the fear of investing in such measures. One contributing source of funding may be applicable for the new zoning endeavors:

**MassWorks Infrastructure Program**

This program supports small, rural communities by affording municipalities public infrastructure funding “to support economic development and job creation and retention” as well as “housing development at density of at least four (4) units to the acre (both market and affordable units) and transportation improvements. Monies are allocated by a joint effort from the Massachusetts Office of Housing and Economic Development, Department of Transportation and the Executive Office for Administration and Finance. [http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/infrastructure/massworks/](http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/infrastructure/massworks/)

Ware is also looking to become a Green Community under the state’s Green Community act, as a number of towns in the region have already done. This would allow the town to apply for specific funding sources and be recognized for greater services provided beyond the current situation. The Mill Yard Complex has the ability to fold into this proposed initiative by becoming a power source for the town. Although a feasibility study would assist in determining if the Complex is a Brownfield site and the best green modifications, there are many possibilities for the site. The waters of the Ware River could be a source for hydropower, the roofs of
the Mill’s buildings could serve as a site for a solar farm, and other green concepts could be retrofitted into the existing structure to alleviate wasteful energy consumption.

**Case Study**
The Whitin Mill in Northbridge, Massachusetts recently went through such changes and has won countless awards for their environmental stewardship and preservation of the site. It is also a spectacular example of a mixed-use site. The preservation of the Whitin Mill consisted of the 1772 Old Forge, which would remain a forge for future use by local artisans; the original 1824 Brick Mill, which would provide housing, a museum, retail and other amenities; the 1906 Brick Mill, which would house a public theater and; a three-story outbuilding, which would become the headquarters of Alternatives Unlimited (owners of the complex), as well as a garage. Other minor buildings were deemed blighted and detrimental to the progression of the project. Therefore, they were demolished to make way for a public plaza constructed to run along the Mumford River. Many materials for the new construction efforts came from the demolished sites and trees that were obstructing the new design plans. Finally, the great turbine from the Mill’s heyday would be replaced with a new, similarly designed model for use to serve as the complex’s main power source. (There were conflicting reports of a restored and a new turbine. The BlackstoneDaily.com web site has reported that it was a new piece of equipment.) Preservation efforts were completed in 2007 and hailed as a model for others to follow.

**Funding Opportunities For Environmental Cleanup And Green Retrofitting Of Historic Sites**

The Environmental Protection Agency’s Brownfields Assessment Revolving Loan Fund & Clean-Up Grants
Federally funded grants in collaboration with other federal and state agencies supporting the assessment and cleanup of brownfields. Monies can be used as a revolving loan fund for the cleanup of contaminated sites. http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant_info/

**Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI)**

This federally-funded grant is for municipalities looking to revitalize low and moderate-income-based communities. Monies from this grant go toward the redevelopment of abandoned or underused contaminated business and commercial structures. It is important to note that the grant is intended to be used in conjunction with Community Development Block Grants, municipalities (both CDBG entitlement and non-entitlement communities) and private sector agencies. Either sector may apply with the purpose of creating or increasing jobs, businesses that will in return affect the local tax base. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=program_offices/comm_planning/BEDI

**Whitin Mill Complex Redevelopment Completed**

**Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ Energy & Air Quality Grants & Loans**

Though not specifically designated for historic preservation purposes, this grant provides funding to Massachusetts municipalities interested in studying, designing, constructing, and implementing energy efficient activities; which could be incorporated into
historically significant structures. Municipalities must qualify as a “Green Community” under the Green Communities Act and funding must be used to support the designation and construction of renewable and alternative energy project on municipally-owned land. http://www.mass.gov/eea/doer

Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust
This organization is dedicated to providing towns with economic development through the pairing of renewable energy and job creation. To date, this is the only organization in the country committed to bringing the two aspects together. In addition to aiding communities, a number of grant opportunities are available. It is worth investigating. http://www.masscec.com/

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Grant Programs
This next grant could apply to the Ware River, abutting the Mill Yard Complex: Fish and Wildlife has a rich list of grant programs assisting on the conservation of land, waterways and wildlife. While many programs may not be applicable to Massachusetts, multitudes are. http://www.nfwf.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=GrantPrograms

Historic Preservation Funding Possibilities for the Mill Yard and Other Downtown Properties
Ware has several beautiful buildings of historic merit. While some may be in fine condition, many others are in need of care, including the Mill Yard Complex. Unfortunately, there is not a strong push for preservation in Ware. Yet there is a desire to restore Town Hall and revitalize the Downtown area along Route 9 and eliminate blighted areas, as the local Historic Commission has made note of in the town’s 2011 Annual Report. There are Preservation grants and tax credits that could be beneficial to the preservation of historic structures throughout Ware. These could change Ware’s mindset against preservation and be a tool towards reviving the once beautiful downtown and Mill Yard Complex. Preservation grants specifically geared toward such projects include:

Historic Preservation Tax Credits
A state program overseen by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) providing up to twenty percent (20%) of a certified rehabilitation project’s cost in tax credits for “income-producing” properties. The MHC certifies and allocates the tax credits to projects which are deemed having “the most public benefit.” http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhctax/taxidx.htm

Massachusetts Historical Commission’s Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund
The program supports new or continued preservation efforts with properties, landscapes, and cultural resource sites that are faced with “differed maintenance, incompatible use, or are threatened by demolition.” Note that this is a fifty-percent matching or
reimbursable grant for municipalities and non-profit organizations, and is designated for properties representing substantial aspects of Massachusetts heritage and history. http://www.sec.state.a.us/mhc/mhcmmppf/mppfidx.htm

**Massachusetts Historical Commission’s Survey and Planning Grant Program**
A federally funded program designated for Local Historical Commissions, Local Historic District Commissions, planning offices, and other eligible public and non-profit historic preservation organizations. A fifty-percent matching or reimbursable funding program seeking to support preservation activities including cultural resource inventories, nomination of significant properties to the National Register of Historic Places, completion of community-wide preservation plans, studies, reports, publications and projects that relate to the identification and protection of significant historic properties and sites. Contact: Michael Steinitz MichaelSteinitz@state.ma.us http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhchpp/Surveyandplanning.htm

**1772 Foundation’s Matching Grants Program**
This program matches grants of up to $15,000 for organizations that have a 501c3 IRS designation. The program’s focus is on specific preservation programs including: Exterior painting, security and fire detection systems, roof and window restoration, structural sill repair and replacement as well as repair and repointing of foundations and chimneys. Applicants must provide a cyclical maintenance plan, along with a condition assessment, restoration plan or stewardship plan that has been prepared or updated within the past five years. http://www.1772foundation.org

**American Express Partners in Preservation Grant Program with the National Trust for Historic Preservation**
For both non-profit organizations and government agencies looking to develop a “sustainable preservation plan, this grant aims inspire citizenship by way of community support, access, and organizational structure. http://partnersinpreservation.org

**The Champlin Foundation**
The Champlin foundation provides direct grants to tax exempt organizations to provide “hands on” equipment for those being served by these groups. Monies go toward the following: Equipment, construction, renovations, purchase of real property, and reduction of mortgage indebtedness. http://www.champlinfoundations.org

**Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund**
In an effort to increase community investments in the areas of science, arts, and history, funds from this grant may go towards the acquisition, design, repair, rehabilitation, renovation and expansion of non-profit facilities. http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/facilities/facilities.htm
The Victorian Society of America’s Preservation Awards
The Victorian Society of America strives to preserve the material culture, architectural aesthetic, and nature of planning and technology of properties and artifacts during the period between 1837 and 1917. Non-profits with Victorian landscapes, buildings and artifacts may preserve from their property with the stipulation that they must be nationally or regionally significant, represent the Victorian period, and open to the public. Additionally, the property or artifact must be eligible for the National Register for Historic Places or must contribute by being part of a greater historic district. [link]

The Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation
Non-profits and municipalities can receive grants from $2,500-$10,000 for historic preservation efforts seeking to “recapture an authentic sense of space.” Considerations for projects may include “building sustainable communities, reimagining historic sites, promoting diversity and place, and protecting historic places on public lands.” [link]

The National Trust Community Investment Corporation Funding Program
This corporation acts as a brokering service providing equity investments towards the rehabilitation of historic properties that are eligible for the 20 per cent Federal and/or State Tax Credit program, Low Income Housing Tax Credit or the New Markets Tax Credits programs. Non-profits, municipalities and private developers are eligible to take part in this program. [link]

The National Housing Trust Affordable Housing Preservation Lending Program
“For every new affordable apartment created, two are lost due to deterioration, abandonment, or conversion to more expensive housing.” In response, this organization’s dedication affordable housing is also connected to sustainability and preservation by providing funding to save existing structures. Municipalities may choose from a variety of lending opportunities for the preservation of existing historic low-income housing sites. [link]

Historic New England Community Preservation Grants
Small non-profits may receive $1,000 for showcasing their commitment to preservation with an attention to visibility and regional focus. [link]
Aside from preservation initiatives, there is another major issue specifically to be addressed at the Mill Yard Complex. There needs to be a concerted effort to connect all of the current tenants. The fractured ownership and management presumably has gone on since the 1960s. It has been a topic of concern outlined in many town and regional documents as early as 1987. In several documents and through communication with the Town Planner, it has been noted that there is a lack of responsibility among the tenants in terms of the upkeep of current infrastructure and external building maintenance. Ware’s last Master Plan, the 1987 *Growth Management and Development Plan* prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, suggests that the Planning Board seek to ensure that the infrastructure is adequate for potential uses through a permit process. Today, this objective has not been met and the responsibility of infrastructure (including sewage connections) maintenance is still unmapped and unkempt (*Growth Management and Development Plan, 1987, 5*). One source of funding that may be applicable to resolve this issue includes:

**New England Grassroots Environment Fund**

Monies are allotted to projects that promote civic engagement, volunteerism, emerging leaders, and community-based initiatives addressing topics including: Local land and water, local food, local energy, local health and local living. Though not specifically a preservation grant, the New England Grassroots Environment Fund could be geared towards such efforts. [http://grassrootsfund.org](http://grassrootsfund.org).

The 1987 report’s objectives continue with the request to promote cooperation between the Mill’s tenants as well as the downtown merchants. This is where a local strong business organization could assist community building between Ware’s entire merchant-base. With the Mill specifically, it has been suggested on several accounts that a co-op or association between the tenants be instituted. Yet with the long-standing and current resistance, this objective may never be reached. It would take an independent buyer or the town to purchase the Mill Yard complex in its entirety to institute such a cooperative environment at this point.
Case Study
The newly restored Monument Mills in Great Barrington has several tenants, just like Ware’s Mill Yard Complex. What is different is that the complex has one, single owner; the Berkshire Corporation. In 1982, the Berkshire Corporation purchased Monument Mills and took over full ownership of the nine building complex. From then on, Berkshire Corporation paid off all tax liabilities and assumed responsibility of a number of lawsuits left over from the previous owners. Recently, Berkshire began to restore the complex. From the very beginning stages of the redevelopment process, the public was informed with every measure taken. Additionally, the Berkshire Corporation utilized local organizations and companies to complete the work, including a local motorcycle gang.

This group was known as the Monument Mills Revitalization Team or MMR Team for short. Through this process, a sense of pride developed throughout the town and those that worked on the site (Monument Mills Revitalization. http://monumentmills.com/ Accessed 11/13/2012). There was also a sigh of relief from the town because the mill finally had organization and direction.

Today, the Berkshire Corporation is the largest tenant in the Monument Mills Complex, residing in the original restored building. They take responsibility for all maintenance and upkeep. It is their home as it is for others. There is an “amalgam of different businesses,” including: the Berkshire Opera Company, Guarda Services (landscape architectural services), Chemex (a designer, manufacturer and distributor of glass kitchen products), AIC Investment Advisors, Berkshire Motion Picture, and Orion Enterprises and LLC (designers and manufactures of children’s wooden toys). (To see a complete list of tenants, please visit: http://monumentmills.com/monument-mills-in-context/monument-mills-tenants-post-1982/) The landlord/tenant relationship works despite the myriad of businesses, and the town of Great Barrington is thankful for that.

For years, the Ware Mill Yard has not operated at full capacity. One approach is to have a local college invest in the empty space. This would allow the tenants to remain, while also connecting the town to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s Sustainable Knowledge Corridor. Recently, Quinsigamond Community College worked with the town of Southbridge, MA to establish a south county satellite campus.

Case Study:
Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) has a long history of educating the greater Worcester, MA community in the liberal and technical arts. Located at the northern point of the City of Worcester, this public, two-year institution recently expanded its reaches to southern Worcester County by branching out to the town of Southbridge. Southbridge was once seen as an educational desert
where many potential students would opt not to attend college due to cost and transportation limitations. QCC took advantage of this site by reaching out to the greater Southbridge community in order to make a college education accessible to the southern half of the region. QCC set its sights on the former American Optical plant.

Once known as the “Eye of the Commonwealth,” American Optical provided lenses to the country until the plant closed its doors in 1984. Later, the US Military purchased the site but it was subsequently decommissioned. In 2008, QCC announced its intentions to expand and quickly rehabilitated and retrofitted the site to accommodate classroom and technical spaces. In 2009, QCC redeveloped a parcel in the former American Optical complex as a state-of-the-art satellite location.

**Further Steps for the Town to Consider**

Regarding design, the Mill Yard has limited parking and is in need of landscape design. A pedestrian atmosphere that provides a gateway to the Downtown area has been expressed in several documents and would be a great adventure in promoting the town’s very own heritage. The Mill Yard Complex and its surrounds are listed as a National Historic District. Often, people believe that there are restrictions associated with this designation, such as paint color and signage. However, this status is only honorary and structures within the district can be demolished at any time for new development. One of the most respectful measures a town can take in preserving their historic sense of place is by implementing a Local Historic District. Local Historic Districts include regulatory measures for historic areas, such as design guidelines approved by the community and overseen by the municipality’s Historical Commission. Typically, the legislation includes treatments of buildings and landscape within the district. A Local Historic District also strengthens the town’s ability to respond to demolition proposals.

The City of Worcester, Massachusetts has two Local Historic Districts (Massachusetts Avenue and Montville Districts) and is going to City Council vote on the proposed Crown Hill District in 2013. Contacting the Department of Planning and Regulatory Service may
provide expertise on the Local Districting Process. (Worcester Department of Planning and Regulatory Service: (508) 799-1400 x. 260 or planning@ worcesterma.gov.)

Another regulatory measure would be to institute a Demolition Delay Bylaw. Recently the town lost a historically important structure, the theatre, and a Demolition Delay Bylaw could have delayed such a loss while giving the town time to seek alternatives to demolition. A Demolition Delay Bylaw would enable the town’s Historical Commission vote on whether a structure was important to the architectural and historical integrity to the town. The delay is a period of time within which a developer or building’s owner must reconsider demolition and look into preservation through various methods. Typically a 12-month period is instituted. A measure like this would give the town’s Historical Commission a boost to make informed decisions about historical structures throughout town. Furthermore, if the town of Ware was to institute a Local Historic District, the Massachusetts Historical Commission requires a municipality to have an active Historical Commission.

Ware may want to create a local community preservation fund as well. This is part of the greater state-wide Community Preservation Act. The fund is a smart growth tool to preserve open space, provide affordable housing and recreational facilities by way of preserving historic structures throughout a municipality. “Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge of not more than 3% of the tax levy against real property, and municipalities must adopt CPA by ballot referendum.” (Community Preservation Coalition. http://www.communitypreservation.org/. Accessed 12/12/12) For advice and assistance on potentially creating a local community preservation fund, this organization can act as a support system:

**The Community Preservation Coalition**

The Coalition is a resource as well as an advocacy group inclined to assist communities in creating a local community preservation fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. http://www.communitypreservation.org
Recommendations

• Administer a Feasibility Study to see what the site is capable of in terms of redevelopment, including:
  o Green energy
  o Mixed-use development including housing, retail, commercial, and light manufacturing space
  o Heritage tourism
    ▪ Hotel
    ▪ Museum
  o College satellite campus
  o Etc., the possibilities are endless!
• Create a regulatory measures including an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District, and Local Historic District for the Mill Yard Complex and surrounding mill housing area
  o Allow the Ware’s Historical Commission to make informed decisions about the historic upkeep of the overall site
  o Create a Demolition Delay Bylaw to allow twelve (12) months for the research of solutions to preserve the historic and architectural integrity of the site and to the town
• Utilize grant and finding resources for the preservation and restoration of the Mill Yard Complex.
• Visit the sites represented in the case studies.

Conclusion
The town of Ware once saw the Mill Yard Complex as a center for community connectivity. Even though time has not been kind to the Complex, there are opportunities to make a turn-around. Its proximity to downtown, positioning along Route 9 and its setting alongside the beautiful Ware River can provide endless possibilities. The suggestions listed within this section are nothing new to many towns with mills throughout New England. The Mills are Ware’s resources, and while funding is always a difficult matter, there is money available for redevelopment. Now is the time to reconnect the Mill Yard Complex with the community once again and to consider these and other measures for the Master Plan.
Mill Yard References and Resources

Case Study Images

QCC Southbridge Image from Quinsigamond Community College at http://www.qcc.edu/qcc-southbridge

Bibliography

Energy

Energy Creation & Consumption in Massachusetts

Massachusetts is a small state with limited resources to generate its own power. Massachusetts imports most of its energy sources, which are primarily coal and natural gas (US Energy Administration 2011). However, it does have a wide variety of power generation plants, including natural gas, solar, wind, biomass, coal, and nuclear. The state’s rate of adoption of renewable resources for its power has been somewhat slow. As of 2011 only 6.2% of the State’s total electricity generation came from renewable sources—see Figure 1. Offshore wind projects have been approved by the Federal government and will be moving forward in the near future. The Commonwealth has several programs in place to encourage energy efficiency in residential, industrial, and municipal settings. These include Mass Save, a collaboration between the State and private utility companies; Green Communities, a municipal scale grant program; and various initiatives to provide clean energy subsidies and incentives.

Massachusetts has significant opportunities to place itself at the forefront of renewable and clean energy initiatives. The state’s size and relatively stable population allow for existing infrastructure to be upgraded without inhibiting growth. A culture of innovation and a thriving set of educational institutions are providing the base for a transition to a more sustainable economy. Additionally, Massachusetts ranks 45th out of all states in energy consumption - its focus on public/private partnerships seems to be working fairly well. Continuing with this model may require firmer regulations that will allow renewable generation to become more economically competitive.

However, the state’s heavy reliance on natural gas could be a liability. Natural gas is a less expensive, cleaner burning alternative to petroleum, but it is not renewable and the price will certainly rise with limited supply or changes in global demand. Massachusetts has spent a considerable amount of money building a natural gas pipeline through the southern part of the state and terminals for international import in the
Massachusetts Bay. Small towns like Ware, which do not have access to the pipeline, can help the state diversify its energy production capacity.

Energy Creation & Consumption in Ware

Energy usage in Ware has several dimensions; residential, industrial/commercial, and municipal. Residential heating cost is a significant concern, particularly because roughly two-thirds of Ware’s homes rely on fuel oil (see Figure 2), and 46% of its total housing stock was built prior to 1950 (US Census 2010). As of October 2012, home heating oil near Ware cost $3.72 (Sherman Oil) per gallon. Were the average household to purchase the bulk of its oil for the year, 800 gallons, at that price, they would pay about $3000. Direct figures on the percentage of residents receiving heating assistance is not available, but given that the downtown census tract is comprised of 58% renters, has the lowest median incomes (see figure 3), and the oldest housing stock, it can be extrapolated that this is a vulnerable situation for many of Ware’s residents.

Ware’s other main priority at present is the costly burden of supplying its municipal buildings with heat and electricity. The high cost is partly due to the historic nature of its town hall and library, partly due to the aging of its wastewater facility, and partly due to the high cost of providing public works and services for a rural town. Although pursuing energy efficiency has not been Ware’s highest priority, the long term benefits of doing so will be good for the town’s budget as well as its valuable rural and agricultural landscape. Reduction of energy expenses will allow Ware to spend more time and money on other high priority pursuits, such as upgrading its sewer system. If Ware could rely on clean renewables for its municipal energy, it could also reduce carbon emissions, helping to protect its forests, farms, and the Quabbin.
Ware has several opportunities for creating its own power. Firstly, it has a low impact hydroelectric dam, although the dam is privately owned. It has hills that are ideal for wind turbines. Town-owned open space that can be used for solar panels, and wooded areas that are ideal for supplying biomass fuel. The town has recently examined some of these alternatives, submitting an RFP as part of the Hampshire Council of Governments for solar facilities in 2012, conducting a feasibility study for biomass heating of its school district in 2010, and updating its zoning bylaws to accommodate solar and wind development in 2011. The following sections will outline how Ware can integrate renewable energy and municipal needs.

**Green Communities Act**
Ware has the opportunity to apply to be a Green Community. This State program run by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs provides grants for energy efficient projects in individual towns. Towns similar to Ware have received an average of $150,000 in grants for badly needed infrastructure projects. Many of the projects funded have been for municipal upgrades: Montague, for instance, received a total of $227,000 towards the cost of a performance contract for its municipal buildings, as well as for energy efficiency measures for its Water Pollution Control Facility.

Town must meet five criteria to qualify as a Green Community:

1. Provide as-of-right siting in designated locations for renewable/alternative energy generation, research & development, or manufacturing facilities.
2. Adopt an expedited application and permit process for as-of-right energy facilities.
3. Establish an energy use baseline and develop a plan to reduce energy use by twenty percent (20%) within five (5) years.
4. Purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles (exceptions allowed).
5. Set requirements to minimize life-cycle energy costs for new construction; one way to meet these requirements is to adopt the new Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) Stretch Code.

At first glance, these requirements may seem onerous. However, Ware has already worked towards achieving several of them. Firstly, Ware has updated its zoning bylaws to allow by right siting of solar and wind facilities outside of its downtown district. To fully achieve the first two criteria, the town would need to streamline its permitting process. Criterion Four would require
coordination with Ware’s Department of Public Works regarding its vehicle purchases. The Third criterion would require the most work, as it requires a comprehensive inventory of town energy usage. Luckily, 103 communities statewide have applied for and received Green Community status, and there is a wealth of information about how to navigate this process.

Montague’s Green Communities Application is a very good example of an approach Ware could use. Montague has about 8,500 residents, not far behind Ware, and it also has a Mill district - Turner’s Falls. Both towns are faced with the challenge of maintaining their New England character while integrating their rural and downtown districts. An important step for Montague’s GC project was the founding of its Energy Committee, a cooperative group of citizens, business owners, and town employees. Because such committees are somewhat organic, Ware would have to gauge public interest in an Energy Committee before trying to form one. Ways to approach this would be to include a survey about interest in clean energy, solicit members at town meetings, or to reach out to business organizations and schools.

Montague’s Municipal Energy Reduction Plan also has applicability to Ware. Since one of Ware’s primary concerns has been the high cost of its municipal infrastructure, creating a similar energy reduction plan would be a way to outlining ways to save money and update infrastructure. Montague’s plan is divided into short and long-term goals. Conceptualizing energy goals in this way could help Ware examine its current strengths and weaknesses. For example, window replacements in Town Hall, or a photovoltaic installation on the Robbins Road landfill would be short-term improvements in energy efficiency. Long-term improvements could involve deep energy retrofits of municipal buildings, public outreach campaigns, securing grants for mill improvement, or an energy efficient upgrade to the wastewater treatment facility.

Solar Landfill

Another opportunity for Ware to reduce its electric costs is by utilizing town owned open space for solar and wind projects. Solar in particular can have a low investment cost and a high return. Photovoltaic companies such as Axio Power (http://www.axiopower.com/) - which has signed contracts for landfill solar in Greenfield, Pittsfield and Westfield MA - build
facilities at their own cost, and lease the landfill property from the towns. Towns then buy power at a discounted rate from the solar company, or utilize net metering credits from the State. Net metering, as described by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs:

“Customers of a distribution company must install generating facilities such as solar panels on a home or a wind turbine at a school. These facilities must be connected to a meter that measures the amount of electricity the customer uses ("retail meter"). The retail meter spins forward when customers use electricity from the distribution company, but spins backward when customers generate more electricity than they use.”

Net Consumption = (total electricity consumed) - (total electricity generated)

Ware has previously identified a capped landfill and a vacant farm property on Robbins Road as a potential site for solar development. These sites have a combined 56.8 acres of open space, ideal for a ground solar installation (Hampshire Council of Governments 2012). However, net metering credits are currently capped at 2 megawatts, so any capacity beyond 2MW would not be available to the town for electricity credits. Ware would have to work with National Grid, the area’s electric company, to establish this arrangement.

The nearby town of Greenfield has pursued this strategy with great success. Using net metering, the town was able to work with the developer BQ Energy LLC (a subsidiary of Axio Power) to build a 2 MW ground mounted solar on its twenty-three acre capped landfill. In its first year of operation, Greenfield benefited from a $250,000 reduction in its electric bill. Landfill solar would be a win-win situation for Ware.

Energy Efficiency & Economic Development
There is a growing body of research suggesting that retrofitting older buildings for energy efficiency and building new buildings to very high efficiency standards is good for economic development. Investments in green infrastructure can mitigate the
environmental impact of buildings, saving property owners and taxpayers’ money in the long term (Vandermuellen 2011). To that end, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been funding green infrastructure projects across New England, including a grant of $50,000 to Franklin MA for developing a “Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy”. With the Weir River snaking through the center of town, subject to storm water runoff from heavily paved areas, Ware could partner with the EPA as well.

Energy efficiency does not just fall under the umbrella of Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certification for individual buildings. It is also a result of integrative policies to regulate land use, to conserve forest and open space, minimize pavement, and condense development to an administrable area. For example, retrofitting Ware’s mills would save businesses money on utilities, and upgrading Ware’s housing stock would encourage investment in housing. Housing upgrades could be pursued with funding from the MassSave program http://www.masssave.com/, and would depend on the individual owners. However, Ware could lead a campaign to make residents aware of the funding available. For more information about mill upgrades, please see the Mill section of this report.
Energy References


Union Mill Images from RSES HVAC Training Organization web site http://www.rsos.org/rsesjournal/article.aspx?ArticleId=2583


Public Participation
Public Participation

Public participation is typically a critical part of any master planning process. During the master planning process, towns usually seek the public’s ideas, priorities, and preferences for the town’s future. An effective public participation strategy for a Master Plan can help to ensure that the recommendations and strategies identified in the plan will be supported by townspeople in the future.

Ware has a close-knit community with residents who are invested in Ware’s future and are actively engaged in discussions about Ware’s future. However, there are segments of the population who have a stake in Ware’s future but are not yet engaged in conversations about it. Having a wide range of ideas and tools for how to engage diverse publics in the master planning process will be important in ensuring that the Master Plan reflects the wants and needs of Ware’s total population.

The Regional Planning Studio Class has created a public participation toolkit for Ware to use during the master planning process. The toolkit provides the town with guidance on how to implement a variety of public participation methods and advertising techniques. This toolkit will allow Ware to:

- Reach and involve a diverse population during the master planning process.
- Identify the community’s priorities and preferences on key issues that affect Ware’s future.
- Work with the town’s available resources.

The toolkit makes up the majority of this section on public participation. However, first we describe past public participation initiatives in Ware, including the 2012 Ware Fall Festival.

**Past Public Participation in Ware**

Before developing the public participation toolkit for Ware, we first wanted to acquire an understanding of the past initiatives that have taken place in the town. We did this by examining all of Ware’s available plans and documents, specifically looking for any references to public participation or synonymous language (input, engagement, and outreach). The following sections detail the relevant information gathered from the plans.
**1975 Master Plan**
A preliminary document for the 1975 Master Plan mentions the use of a questionnaire to determine the general desires of Ware residents.

**1987 Growth Management and Development Plan**
This Plan mentions the use of public meetings to review a proposed zoning bylaw. There were also public meetings held to review this plan once it was completed to ensure that it met with public approval.

**2001 Ware Strategic Plan**
For the 2001 Strategic Plan (5-year plan), a public outreach campaign was conducted utilizing two methods to determine the most pressing areas of concern in the community. The two methods were a community survey and a two-part series of visioning workshops.

The community survey was made up of 27 questions ranging in type from multiple choice, to open ended. A sample of 1,440 households was given the survey by mail. Over one-fourth of these households (340) responded in time to be tabulated. This response represented about nine percent of the total households in Ware.

The other outreach component undertaken for this Plan was a series of visioning workshops. The series consisted of two workshops that were held at the Ware High School on January 27th and June 6th of 2000. The first was set up to be more informal and allowed residents to come in at their leisure over a three-hour period to share their thoughts and ideas about the future of the town. Seven stations were set up that covered different themes. This allowed residents to both receive information and provide feedback within specific issues and areas. The breakdown of stations was as follows:

- **Stations 1, 2, and 3: Existing Conditions**
  Focused on areas such as community character, historic resources, zoning, land use, and infrastructure.
- **Station 4: What do Ware Youth Think?**
  Focused on comments received by High School students conducted in a previous survey at the High School.
- **Section 5: More Detailed Discussion and Recordation**
  Facilitated discussion on issues such as economic development, infrastructure, and growth and development.
- **Station 6: Buildout Analysis Preview**
• **Section 7: Vote Your Conscience**
  Participants were asked to choose the issues most important to the town’s future well-being.

The Strategic Plan noted that the first workshop was sparsely attended but did result in the identification of several themes. The second workshop was divided into two parts. The first part was a presentation of the strategic planning process as well as some similar planning work being done in the region. This was followed by a presentation of the results of the community survey. The second part of the workshop divided people into five discussion groups focusing on themes including Economic Development, Environment and Natural Resources, Government Services, Small town Character and Livability, and Youth Issues. Each group followed the process of coming up with goals within their topic area, and then identifying and prioritizing action steps to reach those goals.

**2007 Open Space Plan**

In preparation for the Open Space Plan, a Public Visioning Session was held on July 12th, 2007 at the Ware High School Library to identify goals and objectives of the plan. The session included discussion about the goals and objectives listed in the 1998-2003 Open Space and Recreation Plan. They were edited and amended to reflect the current views of the residents.

**Recent Initiatives**

Throughout the past year, the town used a couple of public outreach methods, specifically for the zoning amendments that were being considered and eventually passed. One was a Public Information Forum that, while poorly attended, was considered a success because it got the word out in a friendly way. In addition to the forum, zoning brochures and posters were created to inform residents of the zoning work. The brochures continue to be picked up, and people have been seen reading the posters which are located in Town Hall.

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**Poster Created by Ware Studio for October 2012 Fall Festival**

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Ware Fall Festival
Ware's inaugural Fall Festival on October 6th, 2012 presented an opportunity to introduce the public to the idea of a new Master Plan, obtain general ideas and feedback from the public, and provide information on what a Master Plan entails. To that end, Karen Cullen, the Director of Planning and Community Development, procured a booth to set up posters that provided information about the master planning process along with handouts and sign-up sheets for those who wished to receive additional information as the master planning process proceeds. The Master Plan Poster (created by the Studio Class) used at the event is pictured to the left.

Two public participation methods were utilized at the Festival. One of the methods was a mapping exercise created by the Studio Class to get an idea of what places people like and/or don’t like in Ware. The other component was the circulation of a general survey. Two students from the Studio Class roamed throughout the Festival asking residents and visitors if they would care to answer a few questions about Ware in order to better understand the public’s opinion of the town. There were also surveys available at the booth for residents to fill out.

The following sub-sections will detail the mapping exercise and surveying that occurred at the event with an emphasis on the mechanics of each method and how the public responded to them.

Mapping Exercise
The goal of this exercise was to understand what places in Ware people like or do not like. To indicate these sentiments, participants were asked to place a green sticker on a place in town that they liked, and/or a red sticker on a place that they did not like. If a sticker was placed on a spot without a picture, the participant was asked to specify what that place was and write it directly on the map. Participants had the option to write comments about their sticker placement on an accompanying comment sheet. A map attendant was stationed at the booth to greet interested people and tell them about the exercise as well as the upcoming master planning process.
The Studio Class provided the materials for this exercise. A large map (pictured above) was produced with the goal of being user friendly and interactive. The map included pictures of significant landmarks within the town and featured a blowup of the downtown in the top right corner since this area has the highest concentration of commercial and civic destinations. We provided green and red stickers for members of the public to place directly on the map, as well as writing utensils to specify locations and destinations. A comment sheet that allowed participants to provide further information about the places they indicated on the map was placed out front on the same table with the map.

In general, the mapping exercise was successful in that it attracted people to the booth and encouraged them to participate. There was a consistent flow of people that came by the booth to check out the Master Plan information posters and the mapping exercise. Approximately half of the people that came to the booth participated in the exercise. The pictures of the landmarks on the map may have increased participation because it gave people something to react to. However, they also may have guided responses. Children, in particular, were excited to participate. They especially seemed to gravitate towards the pictured landmarks, while adults occasionally chose and labeled other places that were not pictured. It is important to note that all age groups participated from kids between five and ten to the elderly. Unfortunately, only a few participants utilized the comment sheet to provide further information about the places they marked on the map. The overall reaction to the exercise was positive. People seemed happy about the work being done by the Studio Class as well as the upcoming Master Plan process.

**Summary of Mapping Responses Received**
The majority of the responses we received were positive – people overwhelmingly used green, positive dots as opposed to red dots, indicating that overall, people think positively about Ware (see map below). The places with the highest numbers of green dots included:

- Quabbin Reservoir
- Enfield Lookout
- Mary Lane Hospital
- Lowes
- Town Hall
- Police Department

Members of the Public Participating in the Mapping Exercise at Fall Fest
Some of the places that got more red dots included:

- High school
- Mary Lane Hospital
- Police Department

The majority of the dots were clustered on the spots that were represented by pictures on the maps so it is likely that the results would have been different if participants’ responses had not been guided by the pictures. An aspect of the exercise that we failed to fully implement that would have provided more depth to the responses was the comment form where people could list why they put their dots on particular places. As such, we did not know the reasons why people did or did not like certain places. However, the real benefit of the mapping exercise was that it attracted people to the Master Plan table and got them engaged in thinking about Ware’s physical layout and future.

Surveying

Surveying was also conducted during the Festival in order to better understand the public’s perception of Ware. The survey included the following questions:

1) List three words to describe what you envision Ware to be like in 20 years.
2) What is your favorite thing about Ware?
3) If you were king or queen of Ware, what is the first thing you would change about Ware?
In addition to surveys being available at the booth for people to fill out themselves, two students from the Studio Class roamed amongst the residents and visitors asking if they would care to answer a few questions about Ware. Through this initiative we gained useful knowledge about the use of surveys as a public participation method, as well as feedback from people at the Festival. Overall, people were receptive to the survey questions and happy to provide information and ideas.

**Summary of Survey Responses Received**
Fifty-three people filled out the survey during the Fall Festival. Below are summaries of the responses we received for each question.

1) *List three words to describe what you envision Ware to be like in 20 years.*
As was noted earlier, some people had a hard time answering this question because it was too broad and too far into the future to envision. However, the responses that we did receive were mostly positive – 65 percent of the survey respondents were optimistic about what Ware would look like in the future, 23 percent though it would be about the same or were indifferent, and 12 percent thought Ware would be worse than it is now. The most common responses are below:

- More businesses and jobs and better economically (9 respondents)
- Small town (8 responses)
- Safer (5 respondents)
- The same (4 respondents)
- More recreation and entertainment options (4 respondents)
- Community center (3 respondents)
- Bigger (3 respondents)
- More activities for kids (3 respondents)
- Revitalized Main Street (3 respondents)

2) *What is your favorite thing about Ware?*
By far, the two most common responses were that people like the ability to get to know people well and the relationships they can form in Ware (20 respondents), and the small town feel (17 respondents). These ideas were frequently reflected in people’s responses; people would say that the town’s small town character enabled them to get...
to know people better and develop a closer-knit community.

Other responses that were shared by more than 2 people included:

- Businesses (stores and restaurants) (5 respondents)
- It’s their home, they grew up in Ware (5 respondents)
- Outdoor recreation opportunities (4 respondents)
- Quabbin Reservoir (3 respondents)
- Holiday celebrations (3 respondents)
- Feeling safe (3 respondents)

3) If you were king or queen of Ware, what is the first thing you would change about Ware?

The answers to this question were a mix of responses about either wanting to address an existing problem in Ware or about bringing entirely new services or amenities to Ware. A list of responses that were shared by 5 or more respondents is listed below.

- Making changes to the police and fire departments – these included responses about wanting to improve the police and fire services, rebuilding the fire department, turning the fire department to volunteer, and building respect for the fire department (9 respondents)
- Beautifying and cleaning up the town, particularly the downtown (8 respondents)
- Providing more entertainment options, such as a skating rink, movie theatre, and concerts (7 respondents)
- Making changes to town government, particularly changing leadership (6 respondents)
- Bringing more businesses and jobs to town (6 respondents)
- Addressing the drug and crime problem (6 respondents)
- Revitalizing and addressing traffic issues on Main Street (5 respondents)

Public Participation Toolkit for the Master Plan

The phased plan presented below organizes the public participation tools recommended in this report. The tools are placed in the plan based on the kind of general method they fall under (survey, public gathering, web based), and one of three stages in the master planning process. These stages were generated based on an understanding of planning processes within the context of public participation. In the Visioning phase, the community starts to think very broadly and openly about aspects like the town’s character, identity, and values. The Generating phase is the time that the public starts to come up with ideas, make choices, and prioritize. Finally, the Reacting phase marks the stage of the process when the public can start giving feedback on ideas being produced by
those working on the Master Plan. Note that some tools are listed in more than one phase because they are versatile and would be effective at multiple stages of the planning process.

**Phased Plan**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Visioning</th>
<th>Generating</th>
<th>Reacting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>• General Survey</td>
<td>• General Survey</td>
<td>• Visual Preference Survey</td>
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<td>• Visual Preference Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Gatherings</td>
<td>• SWOT Analysis</td>
<td>• Conversation Cafes</td>
<td>• Conversation Cafes</td>
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<td>• Visioning</td>
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<td>• Design Charrettes</td>
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<td>• Mental Mapping</td>
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<td>• Community Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>• i-Neighbors</td>
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The public participation tools are ordered in this plan so that the town can utilize them at the most appropriate stages of the planning process, and make sure that tools from a variety of methods are used to reach a vast and diverse population.

**Method Guides**

This section of the report includes detailed descriptions and implementation guidance for each tool listed in the phased plan table. The tools are categorized by the methods listed on the left side of the phased plan (survey, public gathering, and web based). It is important to note that while the tools are categorized under one method in this section, some can be utilized in multiple method types. In this section, they are categorized under the method they are most often associated with. Keep in mind that the tools are sometimes similar and involve some overlap, but their value is in their differences in tone and approach. These differences will
derive different kinds of answers from participants. When considering which tools to utilize, consider what you want the public to do:

- Provide basic sentiments about overall identity?
- Discuss particular issues?
- Make choices and rank priorities based on particular situations?

Certain tools in this section are designed to specialize in areas such as these. However, as mentioned in the previous section, some tools are more versatile and could be useful at multiple stages of the planning process. The surveys and web-based tools especially can be adapted to different stages. With the surveys, it depends on the kinds of questions asked; they could be broad and open, or specific and scenario based. The web-based forums provide opportunities for online discussion and idea circulation that can be in any stage, depending on the focus of the topics and issues.

Utilizing a combination of tools from different methods and planning phases will help the town to not only reach a vast and diverse population within the community, but keep them interested and engaged in the planning process.

**Surveys**

**General Survey**

**Description**

General surveys, as referred to in this report, are questionnaires used to assess public thoughts and opinions on a variety of subjects. Questions in a general survey can be presented in several different forms such as:

- Open ended
- Multiple choice (e.g., “choose one, or all that apply”)
- Scaled (e.g., “on a scale of 1 to 10 how much do you like...”)
- Graded response (e.g., “choose one: extremely dislike, dislike, neutral, like, like a lot”)

Effective surveys utilize different forms of questions because these different forms are better in different situations. If the desire is to learn about a community’s identity, it may be best to use an open-ended question so that people can express thoughts that may
not fit within preconceived notions of identity. It may be useful though, once enough thoughts and ideas about identity are collected, to create a multiple choice question that includes the most mentioned identities from an earlier question. This allows the specific set of choices to be quantified. Scaled and graded response questions are good when the survey creators have an understanding of certain options that exist within a certain topic and would like to see how they would be prioritized by the public.

General surveys are most useful in the first two phases in the phased plan. It is recommended that they be applied early in the planning process, and the tabulated results be presented at public gathering events as a way to spark thought and conversation.

Surveys can be left to pick up at frequented establishments, mailed, posted online through formats such as Survey Monkey, or conducted in person. Utilizing some combination of these approaches would likely increase the response rate.

**Strengths**
- Surveys are inexpensive and straightforward.
- They do not require a lot of time to create.
- Useful in providing quantitative analyses to qualitative questions.

**Limitations**
- Surveys do not allow for any discussion or collaboration.
- The amount of information that can be generated is limited because surveys are usually very short in an effort to encourage people to fill them out.

**Necessary Resources**
- Computer
- Printer

**How to Implement**
1. Decide on a theme or overall topic issue for the survey.
2. Craft questions in several different forms.
3. Disperse copies online and in print.
4. Tabulate the returned surveys.
5. Present results in Town Hall (Bulletin Board), online (town website) and at public gathering events.
**Additional References**

**Visual Preference Survey**

**Description**
Visual preference surveys (VPS) are tools to help communities establish a common vision of what their physical environment should look like by asking participants to rate their preference of selected images. They are comprised of pictures that present contrasting images of the living environment – its streets, houses, stores, office buildings, parks, open space and key civic features. This tool can also be utilized at public gatherings using images presented through a slide show. In each case, images are rated by participants, which yields insight about the types of scenery or subjects that citizens like to see in the community.

**Strengths**
- Visual preference surveys are a fun and straightforward way for the public to provide input.
- They are inexpensive and easy to administer.
- The results can be used to spark discussion in later participation events.
- This tool is particularly useful generating public preferences in areas such as architectural style, street design, and park and open space design.

**Limitations**
- This tool is limited to issues that can be photographed.

**Necessary Resources**
Survey sent out in the mail or on the internet:
- Paper and printing
- Personnel to receive and process results

Survey conducted at a public gathering:
- Technology used to display images (computer, projector)
- Facilitator to run the meeting and process results
How to Implement
1. Gather pictures on a certain topic or issue that show a visual contrast.
2. Instruct participants to rate each picture using some version of a graded scale. For example:
   a) Strongly Dislike
   b) Dislike
   c) Neutral
   d) Like
   e) Strongly Like
3. Process the results by adding up each rating to get a total score, or simply take the average. The higher the score (using the example above) is, the more people liked what they saw in the image.

Additional References
- Architectural Design Review Guidelines - Town of Bedford (pictures that could be used in a VPS that are of similar character as Ware)

Sources
(Orton Family Foundation, 2012)

Public Gatherings

Visioning

Description
Visioning is an approach that has participants think about how they would like their community to be in the future. Components of a vision often include population level, land uses in different parts of a community, differentiation between wanted and unwanted growth, appropriate levels of community services, and perceptions of community identity. A coherent vision will require participants to address the following questions within the context of the components previously mentioned:
- Where are we now? (assessment, values)
• Where are we going? (trends analysis)
• Where do we want to be? (visioning)
• How do we get there? (action planning)

Strengths
• Visioning processes allow communities to think farther ahead than most planning requires.
• Visioning processes can be easily adapted to different timelines, project types, and budgets.

Limitations
• There may be no clear outcome, specific means of implementation and/or little thought surrounding the definition of a vision or community.
• It can be difficult to achieve consensus on a vision.

Necessary Resources
• Materials to record the input shared by participants
  o Easels, flip charts, and markers
• Facilitator to start and sustain discussion
• A scribe to record all input

How to Implement
  1. At the beginning of the event, review the four questions and visioning components listed in the description section.
  2. Get input on each of the four questions one at a time (record on flipcharts).
  3. Allow time at the end for some general discussion reacting to all of the thoughts and opinions provided

Sources
(Orton Family Foundation, 2012)

*Design Charrettes*

Description
Design Charrettes are typically intensive workshops focused on a particular design or planning challenge. They may vary in length between several hours and several days, as well as in the number of people and type of work involved. In nearly all cases, the expected outcome is a specific plan or design. This tool usually requires design and planning professionals to work with groups at the meeting to come up with the products. For example, if a Design Charrette was used to generate mill redevelopment possibilities, the professionals would help members of the community to reflect their ideas in renderings and formal planning language. This allows participants to be creative and see some of their ideas depicted on paper. Moreover, working with professionals would help them to better understand possibilities and limitations given various scenarios.

Charrettes are most useful for planning situations in which a specific plan or outcome is needed, and in which community members are capable of helping to devise it. Broader visioning and community character identification processes could be adapted for charrettes, but do not lend themselves to the tool as well because the many of the outcomes go beyond physical design. Most often, charrettes occur toward the middle or end stages of planning processes, and could be incorporated after initial visioning stages are complete.

**Strengths**
- Charrettes are interactive.
• The charrette itself is a marketing event for the project.
• An extended charrette provides many opportunities for people to participate.
• Participants are likely to support and approve the project.
• Projects are likely to reflect the will and needs of the citizens.

Limitations
• Running an effective charrette requires extensive experience, preparation and resources.
• It can be a large commitment for a citizen to participate in a charrette, which may limit the number and types of community members who do so.

Necessary Resources
• Markers/pens/pencils
• Flip charts
• Easels
• Maps
• Planning professionals
• Design professionals

How to Implement
1. Decide on the project(s) to be worked on at the charrette.
2. Make sure that some planning and design professionals can be there to help craft plans and designs.
3. Conduct charrette. Make sure to allow more time than other public gathering events that only involve discussion.
4. Record the results and present them for the community to see.

Additional References
• National Charrette Institute: http://www.charretteinstitute.org/
Mental Mapping

Description
Mental mapping is an exercise in which participants hand-draw maps of a particular area by memory. The intent of the exercise is to find out how people perceive their town. How do their perceptions differ? Since the maps are drawn from memory, detail will be limited. As a result, the features that are included, or excluded, communicate a lot about how a given person perceives the area regarding identity and importance. The aggregated results from all the maps will help to identify town character from the public viewpoint.

Strengths
• Works well as an ice-breaker and as a way for people to learn a bit more about the values and goals of others.
• Very low-tech and inexpensive, this activity can be carried out anywhere, and with any group of people (different ages, professions, cultures, etc.).

Limitations
• The activity does not typically foster any long-term projects or exhibits.

Necessary Resources
• Facilitator
• Paper
• Pens/pencils/markers

How to Implement
1. Instruct participants within groups, or individually, to draw a map of the Town by memory. Allow at least 20 minutes.
2. Allow time for anyone that would like to show and explain their maps.
3. Collect the maps and scan them so that a digital copy can be kept on file for reference.

Sources
(Orton Family Foundation, 2012)
Community Needs Assessment

Description
A community needs assessment identifies specific problems within communities that need to be addressed and how these problems rank in terms of priority. This tool could be used in a survey in addition to a public gathering. The additional value of conducting this tool in a public gathering is the prioritizing part of the process would be based on open discussion, while the survey version would only be based on the one participant’s perspective.

Strengths
• The more quantitative and practical focus of this process makes it suitable for identifying concrete needs of a community.
• Needs assessments can be more realistic and practical than strength assessments since all communities have needs, regardless of their strengths.

Limitations
• Needs assessments have a less optimistic connotation than other processes since they focus on needs and not strengths.
• It is difficult for needs assessments to capture elements of character (positive or negative) that do not qualify as specific community needs.

Necessary Resources
• Easels/flip charts/markers
• Facilitator
• Map of Ware

How to Implement
1. For surveys:
   a. Ask participants to list the top 10 issues or needs that exist in town that should to be addressed.
   b. Ask participants to assign a number that indicates its level of priority (1 being lowest priority and 10 being highest priority)
2. For public gathering events:
   a. Ask participants to identify issues or needs that exist in town that should to be addressed. The facilitator should record all needs on flip charts.
   b. Take some time as a group to discuss these needs within the context of priority.
   c. Based on the discussion, start categorizing the needs into three different priority categories (Low, Medium, and High).

Sources
(Orton Family Foundation, 2012)

*Conversation Cafes*

Description
'Conversation Cafes' is a generic name for activities that involve informal, hosted, drop-in discussions in cafes, bookshops, and other public places. The idea is to have an informal dialogue with members of the community on topical issues important to the planning process.

Strengths
- Having these discussions at public places allows for a more familiar and inviting experience for members of the public. As a result, there might be a better turnout.
- An informal dialogue may make members of the public feel more comfortable and as a result, more likely to speak at the event.

Limitations
- The unstructured approach may result in the conversation going off on tangents that are less pertinent to the master planning process.
- The only tangible goal or product is the conversation (as opposed to answers to a SWOT analysis or choices made in a growth chip meeting)

Necessary Resources
- A public place to host the event
- Facilitator
• Note Taker

**How to Implement**
1. Decide on some general topics that conversation at the event should revolve around.
2. Choose a public place to host the event such as a café or bookstore. Make sure the owner/manager is ok with having a large group all at once.
3. At the event, have the facilitator start, and then sustain discussion. Ideally, discussion will be directed back to the desired topics.
4. Have one person taking notes so that the discussion can be captured on paper.

**Additional References**
• http://www.conversationcafe.org/

**Sources**
(People and Participation.net)

*Growth Chip Game*

**Description**
The growth chip game (and many variations of it) allows citizens to try their own hands at scenario planning, using Legos™, poker chips, or other symbols to allocate units (of housing, economic development, conservation land, or other attributes). In most cases, citizens are placed into small groups with maps of the planning area and are given some guidelines, such as required amounts of density, a certain number of units to allocate, or restrictions on placement and land uses. Each group must then create a scenario for the area by placing the chips on the map where the group would like to see the future land uses occur.

**Strengths**
• This tool is a fun and engaging way to get public input.
A major advantage of the chip game is that it helps participants to make decisions, understand broad planning principles, and see tradeoffs. If a certain number of housing units must be built in a community, participants can see how density in one area trades off with open space in another.

Limitations

- The growth chip game can be a complicated tool to organize and create.
- The game works best when the planning scenario is simplified or certain issues are abstracted, but doing so reduces the real-life applicability of the process and the results.

Necessary Resources

- ‘Chips’: Blocks, poker chips, dominos, small ‘post-it’ notes or anything similar that could be used to represent structures/development/land uses
- User-friendly maps to place the chips on
- Facilitators
- Camera to record results

How to Implement

1. Decide on the theme for the activity (new residential development, new commercial development, etc.).
2. Create large user friendly maps of either the entire town, or the appropriate portion of the town based on the theme. The maps should include streets, zoning districts, and major geographical features such as rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and mountains.
3. Set up stations that each have a map and set of ‘chips’ (include enough stations so that no more than 5 people are at each station)
4. Divide participants among the stations.
5. Deliver instructions to the groups regarding any limitations to their chip placement (i.e. zoning regulations or available infrastructure)
6. Allow at least 30 minutes for groups to allocate their chips.
7. Use the remaining time to visit each station as an entire group allowing for a brief explanation by each group of their chip placement.
8. Record the results by taking photographs of each station’s map.
**SWOT Analysis**

**Description**
A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool to identify *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats*. It can be very effective for scanning the environment when used as an initial tool in planning. Strengths and weaknesses are usually considered to be “internal factors”—characteristics of the community and planning group. Opportunities and threats are often considered to be “external factors”—circumstances that affect the outcome of the planning process that are not under the direct control of the community or planners. A SWOT analysis helps organize subjective and objective information for review and this information can provide a foundation for decision making that takes into consideration the competitive environment, opportunities that can be exploited, and strengths that will enhance success. The SWOT framework is very basic—it simply involves filling in answers to the four major questions:

- What are the community’s major strengths?
- What are the community’s major weaknesses?
• What are the community’s major threats?
• What are the community’s major opportunities?

Strengths
• A SWOT analysis is extremely flexible in that it can be used to evaluate a position, an idea, an organization, or a strategy. It can be done by a whole team together or by a subcommittee or an individual.
• SWOT analyses help to isolate key issues to identify and resolve barriers to success.
• SWOT analyses focus on activities in areas where communities are strongest and where the greatest opportunities lie so that priorities for action may be developed.
• The SWOT framework helps elicit information from different points of view, allowing factors to be considered from an internal and external standpoint. The more perspectives involved, the more useful the information.
• SWOT analyses support a comprehensive, thoughtful, and strategic approach to information that may have an impact on the identified goals.

Limitations
• The SWOT questions are all rather general and don’t require participants to make choices about any issues. That is why this tool is most useful at the beginning of the planning process.

Necessary Resources
• Easels, flip charts, and markers
• Facilitator to start and sustain discussion
• A scribe to record all participant input
• Map of Ware

How to Implement
1. At the meeting, introduce the questions with some explanation using examples to familiarize participants with the SWOT analysis.
2. Allow about 5 minutes for participants to think about the questions and how they might respond.
3. Go through each question one at a time allowing participants to provide their idea as well as explain their reasoning. The scribe will record each answer.
4. At the end of the meeting, engage the participants in an open discussion about all of the answers given. Should some answers be in other categories?

Sources
(Orton Family Foundation, 2012)

Web-Based

i-Neighbors

Description
i-Neighbors is a free online social networking service that connects residents of geographic neighborhoods. The goal of this site is to help individuals and their communities organize, share information, and work together to address local problems. The 6 year-old website aims to meet people where they are today—online—and encourage them to meet their neighbors and start forging stronger local connections.

Anyone can create an account on i-Neighbors for free and either join an existing neighborhood group or start a new one. i-Neighbors lets users define the neighborhoods themselves by entering a short description and marking the neighborhood on a map. Once launched, the neighborhood platform works and feels a lot like other social media sites. Users can create a profile and upload a photo, there are message boards and email lists, places to add photos, links and files, local reviews and other features like a neighborhood calendar and directory. Groups can also be tailored to specific purposes, like neighborhood watch or crime prevention groups, or community planning processes.

Strengths
• Very low cost. The basic service, which has many useful features, is free.
• Allows the public to continue the discussion with members of their neighborhoods.
  o The ideal result would be continuous discussion about pressing town issues.
• The town can use these neighborhood groups to help advertise for participation events
  o Online discussion about past events may encourage others to go to upcoming events.

Limitations
• Discussion is not directed or regulated at all and as a result, may not focus on desired planning issues.
• Internet access and moderate tech skills are required to utilize this tool.

**Necessary Resources**
- Computer with internet access
- Financial cost:
  - Basic Services: Free
  - EX Service: $39 per month
  - * When local businesses advertise on i-Neighbors, EX service is provided at either a discounted rate or free.

**How to Implement**
This tool could be utilized by the public, independent of the town. Although, simply suggesting it to community members may not be enough to get them to use it. The town (with the help of public input) could decide on certain geographic areas to be separate neighborhood groups on i-Neighbors and work with involved members of the community to set them up. To set up a group, follow these steps:
1. Go to the i-Neighbors web page and click on ‘login/sign-up’.
2. Click on ‘create account’. Create account by providing a first name, email address, zip/postal code, and password for the site.
3. Click on ‘start new group’. Start a new group by providing a group name, an abbreviated version of the group name (for URL purposes), zip/postal code, time zone, name of city/town. Choose whether the group is public or private (we recommend private so that only people from Ware participate). Finally, provide a description of the group.
4. Click ‘create group’.
5. Refer to the top toolbar for engagement options such as the discussion feature, calendar feature, and poll feature.

**Additional Information**
- i-Neighbors Website: [http://www.i-neighbors.org/howitworks.php](http://www.i-neighbors.org/howitworks.php)

**Sources**
(Orton Family Foundation, 2012)
(i-Neighbors Inc., 2012)
MindMixer

Description
MindMixer is a “virtual town hall” providing a forum for communities to share ideas, discuss, and create plans for the future. Without the time and place constraints, citizens can share ideas online, and leaders can gain input from their communities. It allows anyone to contribute from anywhere (with access to a computer and internet), increasing participation in the town planning process by eliminating time and location constraints. First, MindMixer helps identify main focus areas by talking to civic leaders about the most common issues brought up in the community. A custom site is then created for the community, allowing leaders to add information about the issues and citizens to learn more, ask questions, and submit ideas.

This forum is open to anyone with creative, innovative ideas for tackling the pressing topics identified in the community. Citizens can vote on which ideas they think are the most viable for the particular topic, with a rating system completely based on merit. Voters may also give feedback and make comments or suggestions on the submissions. MindMixer then provides ideas, and encourages discussion, for how to implement the ideas generated through the voting process. MindMixer provides the tools for communities to get the most out of their online collaboration forum:

- Site hosting
- Site administration and customer service
- User and client email and texting notifications
• Project reporting  
• Reward systems to successful ideas  

To encourage creative, resourceful solutions to community issues, MindMixer gives rewards to the most highly rated submissions. Also, to encourage ongoing momentum within communities, MindMixer tracks the most involved citizens and reaches out to these individuals for future planning projects.

**Strengths**

• MindMixer, as an online collaboration forum, encourages participation from anywhere at any time, allowing citizens to participate who may otherwise be discouraged by time or location constraints.

• Anyone can submit ideas, regardless of past participation history or social status.

• The simple voting system democratizes the collaboration process and the most salient ideas rise naturally to the top.

**Limitations**

• As with any online forum, participants need a base of knowledge of computers and internet discussion sites which may discourage people who are less technologically oriented.

• Since people can use the website to discuss anything, they could take advantage of the platform and use it counterproductively.

**Necessary Resources**

• Personnel with some knowledge of web-based forums.

• Financial cost:
  - Onboard and implementation fee (one time): $2,500

**Sample Activities From MindMixer – Surveys, Forums, Information**

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*Sample text about sample activities from MindMixer.***
Engagement, support, and maintenance fee (per month):
- $250 for a single project (this is what Ware would pay if just using MindMixer for its master planning process)
- $500 for any and all projects

How to Implement
We communicated with MindMixer through email to find out what steps need to be taken to use MindMixer. They are as follows:

1. Contact MindMixer
   a. MindMixer offers a web demonstration that would help the town decide whether to use this tool or not.
2. Agree on a contract with MindMixer based on the prices laid out above.
3. Schedule and conduct an ‘onboard’ and ‘training’ call with MindMixer staff.
4. Schedule and conduct a project launch call with MindMixer staff.
5. Announce the live site to the community.

Additional Information
- MindMixer website: http://www.mindmixer.com/

Sources
(Orton Family Foundation, 2012)
(MindMixer, 2012)

Advertising Techniques Guides

This section includes guides for a set of advertising techniques that Ware can use to invite and compel the public to participate in the public participation methods. Using a variety of advertising techniques will be important for getting a diverse population to participate in the public participation methods. This will ensure that the public’s feedback is representative of the entire community.

Each guide includes a description of the technique, its target audience, the resources needed to implement the technique, tips on how to implement the technique, and some resources and templates that will help the town get started.
Local Newspaper, Radio, or Television Story or Advertisement

Description
This technique involves getting a story or advertisement included in local newspaper and/or radio or television station. This is a commonly used advertising technique.

Target Audience
• The downside of this technique is that it will only reach a small portion of the population that reads the local newspaper closely and/or listens to local radio or watches local TV stations.

Necessary Resources
• A press release on an upcoming public participation activity – hard or electronic copy.
• Word processing software to create the press release.
• Someone to write and distribute the press release.
• List of media outlets to contact.

How to Implement
• Compile the information on the upcoming public participation activity and create a press release announcing it.
• Email the press release to media outlets and call to follow-up, asking the appropriate reporter or editor to print or announce it.

Templates
• A sample press release is included in the electronic appendices.

Email List

Description
This technique includes distributing information to interested members of the public who want to be personally contacted about upcoming public participation activities via email. This technique will keep the most engaged citizens continuously involved in the master planning process.
**Target Audience**
- People who have come to town meetings and events.

**Necessary Resources**
- Spreadsheet with contact information of interested members of the public, mainly their email addresses.
- Sign-up sheets for town events and meetings that people use to write down their email addresses if they want to be emailed with information about upcoming public participation events.
- Written emails with information about upcoming actions.
- Someone to write emails, update the email list, and send out the emails.

**How to Implement**
- At all town events and meetings, keep a sign-up sheet near the door to meeting asking people to give their email address if they want to be sent information about upcoming public participation actions.
- Compile email addresses in a spreadsheet.
- When an action is forthcoming, write a short, compelling email with information about the upcoming event to send out to the list.
- BCC all the email addresses and send out the email.

**Templates**
- Sample blank spreadsheet and sign-up sheet are included in the electronic appendices.

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**Flyers and Posters**

**Description**
Flyers and posters are easy and versatile advertising materials that are typically a key advertising tactic for successful public participation initiatives. Posters and flyers are short and compelling and include all the information that would people need to start getting involved in an upcoming public participation method. Posters and flyers can be put up or distributed in a number of ways and different place, including:
- town, business, and organization bulletin boards or front windows of businesses
• Business front desks/counters or front windows
• Handed out at town events, organization meetings, or in front of the grocery store

Posters are usually larger and meant to be hung to be seen by many people. Flyers are small sheets of paper that can be distributed to one person at a time.

**Target Audience**

• Because of the versatility of this technique, it can be used to reach almost any audience.

**Necessary Resources**

• Someone to create and distribute the flyers and posters.
• Computer software, such as Microsoft Word, to create the flyers and posters.
• Printer
• Tape and tacks for putting up the posters

**How to Implement**

• Compile all of the information on upcoming public participation opportunities.
• Create the content. Par the information down to just the most necessary information (short and compelling description, date, time, location, contact person if they have questions).
• Layout the poster in Microsoft Word (see template section below).
• Print and distribute the flyers and posters.
• Tips: Grocery stores are a great place to reach out to a broad audience – people from almost every demographic in Ware, including commuters, will shop at the grocery store. They are great places to hang posters or distribute flyers (e.g., handing them out in front of the store at busy hours, leaving a stack of flyers near the front door).

**Templates**

• A sample flyer and poster are included in the electronic appendices.

*Newsletters*
Description
Newsletters can provide updates on the planning process, and information about upcoming events and public participation opportunities. They are typically 1 to 2 pages and can be either electronic or hardcopy.

Target Audience
• Most likely be picked up and read by people who frequent town meetings, events, businesses, or belong to local groups.
• People with a wide range of knowledge about the master planning process – from people who have never heard of the plan before, to those who have been involved from the start.

Necessary Resources
• Computer software for creating the newsletters. A Microsoft Word newsletter template is included in this toolkit but other programs like Microsoft Publisher or Indesign could also be used to create a newsletter.
• Someone to develop the content, create, and distribute the newsletters (estimated 4-6 hours for a basic newsletter).
• Printer
• Email list, mailing list, list of businesses/organizations that will distribute newsletters for you (passively or actively)

How to Implement
• Newsletters could either be created on a regular schedule (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.), or created when there is a critical mass of updates and upcoming opportunities to report on.
• Decide on content for the newsletter. Important criteria for newsletter content includes: interesting to general public, easy for someone with little prior knowledge about the planning process to understand.
• Write the content. Tips: A 2-page newsletter could have up to 4 stories/updates with pictures. Be concise.
• Layout the newsletter. Tips: Keep it simple, include pictures or graphics, make it as readable as possible (bullets, short paragraphs, columns, boxes).
• Print the newsletter and/or create a version that could be uploaded to a website or sent via email (PDF usually works since PDF reader software can be downloaded for free).
• Distribute the newsletter.
  o Electronic–send out to email lists, put on websites, Facebook page, MindMixer.
  o Hard copies–leave at business front desks, library, distribute at organization meetings, town meetings, town events, send via regular mail.
Templates
  • Microsoft Word newsletter templates are included in the electronic appendices.

Community Groups and Businesses

Description
This technique is working with local groups and businesses to get the word out about upcoming public participation opportunities. Help from local organizations and businesses could range from allowing the town to put up posters and flyers in their business, to making announcements at meetings and sending out emails to their listservs about the Master Plan and upcoming public participation opportunities.

Target Audience
  • People who frequent local businesses and/or are involved with local groups.

Necessary Resources
  • List of willing businesses and groups (names, contact information, how they are willing to get the word out).
  • Someone to contact organizations and businesses about helping to get out the word about the Master Plan and public participation activities.
  • Flyers, posters, newsletters, website updates, email updates (whatever materials the town wants groups and businesses to use for advertising).

How to Implement
  • Identify businesses and groups who would be willing to help. Find out who is willing to help advertise and what they’re willing to do. Possible activities businesses and organizations could do include:
    o Hanging posters.
    o Keeping newsletters and/or flyers at their front counter/desk.
    o Sending out an email to their listserv.
    o Posting updates or upcoming events to their website or Facebook page.
    o Making announcements at an organization meeting.
• About 4 weeks before an event: Create all materials that groups/businesses would need to help with advertising (e.g., posters, flyers, newsletters).
• About 3 weeks before an event: Contact businesses/organizations to ask what they would be willing to do to help advertise, distribute materials to them.
• About 1 week before the event: Make sure businesses/organizations have all the materials they need (haven’t run out).

Templates
• Excel business and organization list is included in the electronic appendices.

‘Ready-To-Go’ Content and Materials

The following materials were created so that the town has some content that could be implemented within the recommended public participation tools whenever the town is ready. The content includes a little over 60 survey questions that range from open ended, multiple choice, and scaled (one a scale of 1 to 5 etc.). The questions were generated based on the specific topic areas being studied by the studio class and as a result, cover many different planning issues. These questions could make up a series of surveys that span the duration of the master planning process.

The Topics section lists some topics that could be used as themes in public gathering events. Again, these topics were identified by Studio Class within different areas. Some topics are broken down into different sections or scenarios. This would work well with public gathering events that recommend breaking participants into groups.

Finally, the Studio Class will be handing the town digital copies of the maps that could be used for public participation initiatives. Throughout the process of generating the final report, many maps were created to outline and describe issues and recommendations identified by the Studio Class. These maps could be very useful at public gathering events to show, spatially, many different elements of the town. They could also be used in workshops that require maps for participants to mark and write on. A digital copy (PDF format) of these maps will be turned over to the town to provide them with materials for public participation initiatives. The PDFs were created in a scale that would allow them to be viewed and printed in large, poster sizes. Note that there are several iterations of similar maps. The town should use the maps it thinks are most appropriate.
Survey Questions

Basic Questions
We recommend that each survey begin with the following questions so that results can be analyzed based on people’s age, gender, location of residence in Ware, and overall length of residence in Ware.

- How old are you? (Circle the appropriate age group)
  - 0-13
  - 14-22
  - 23-30
  - 31-50
  - 51-70
  - 70 or above
- What is your gender identification? (Circle the appropriate gender)
  - Male
  - Female
- Do you identify as living in the downtown of Ware? (Circle One)
  - Yes/No
- Please write down how many years you have lived in Ware.

Natural Resources/Recreation
- Would you like more recreational opportunities in town? If so, where and what kind?
- How would you prioritize recreation facility needs in Ware? Rank the following in order of priority. (1: Highest Priority / 6: Lowest Priority)
  - Parks
  - Sports Fields
  - Playgrounds
  - Pool/Gymnasium
  - Bicycle Trails
  - Hiking Trails
• Are you in favor of more farmland protection? If so, why do you support this?
• Would you like to see more hiking trails? If so, where?
• Approximately how many times per year do you visit the Quabbin? (Circle One)
  -1-5
  -5-20
  -20-50
  -50 or more

• Do you consider the Quabbin as part of Ware? How could Ware be more connected to the Quabbin?
• Do you like to visit the Ware River? If so, do you have a favorite spot? If not, why not?

Infrastructure
  • Are you connected to the public water supply?
  • Are you connected to the public sewer system?
  • Have you ever had problems with the quality of your water? If yes, what was the problem?
  • Have you ever had problems with your sewer backing up?
  • Have you ever had problems with your septic system?
  • Do you have a personal septic system?

Energy
  • What energy source(s) do you have for heating and air conditioning?
    ▪ Are these sources cost effective for your home?
  • Are you interested in renewable energy sources such as solar panels or wind turbines for your home?
  • Would you be in favor of the town of Ware adopting energy reduction measures for town buildings?
  • Would you be in favor of the town of Ware adopting energy reduction measures for new construction in town?
  • Would you be interested in being on an Energy Committee?
Housing

Accessory Apartment Units (AAUs)

Commonly referred to as accessory dwellings, second units, and granny flats, Accessory Apartment Units (AAUs) are additional living quarters on single-family lots that are independent of the primary dwelling unit. The separate living spaces are equipped with kitchen and bathroom facilities and can either be attached or detached from the main residence. They are often used to provide smaller housing units for parents or other family members (Adaptive Reuse District Overlay Toolkit, 2010).

- Choose the following living situation that you are in. (Circle One)
  - I own property with an AAU on it
  - I live in an AAU
  - I don’t live in an AAU or own property with one on it
- Would you like to have an AAU on your property?
- Would you like to live in an AAU?
- Do you think the presence of AAUs affect the character of a neighborhood? If so, how?

Mill Complex

For all Residents

- What comes to mind when you think of the mill yard complex?
- Do you see the mill yard complex as an asset to the town? Why?
- Do you utilize the businesses within the complex?
- Would you like to see the site preserved?
- If you could do anything with the mills--money and resources not an issue, what would you do?
- On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is the mill yard complex as a redevelopable space for the town of Ware?
- On a scale of 1 to 5: how is it important for the town to intervene in the maintenance and upkeep of the complex?
• Which of the following options would most like to see the mill complex as in the future? (Circle all that apply)
  - Mixed use
  - Housing
  - Business/office space
  - Commercial/office space
  - Manufacturing space
  - Business incubator space
  - A college satellite campus
  - A generator of green energy
  - Other: ____________________

• How important is the preservation and redevelopment of the space?
  - Not important at all
  - A little important
  - Important
  - Very important

• If the town were to have one investor interested in the complex, would it be worth the town looking into it in order to save the complex?
  - Yes, definitely!
  - Yes, with some reservation
  - Maybe, but really need to know what the investor can bring to the town
  - No, absolutely not

For Mill Building Tenants (these are also economic development questions)
• Why did you establish your business in the mill yard complex?
• How long have you been located at the mill?
• Has the location helped your business?
• What do you like about being located in the millyard complex? Not like?
• Do you own your parcel within the mill? How much space do you own (i.e., 1 floor, entire building)?
**Economic Development**

**For all Residents**

- Do you do most of your grocery shopping inside, or outside of Ware?
  - When you shop for groceries in Ware, which store do you go to?
- For goods other than groceries, do you do most of your shopping inside, or outside of Ware?
  - When you shop for these goods in Ware, what places do you like to go to?
- What kinds of establishments would you like to see in the downtown?
  (Circle all that apply)
  - Groceries
  - Hardware
  - Gifts
  - Clothing
  - Coffee Shops
  - Restaurants
  - Art Galleries
  - Other ____________ (fill in what you think is missing)

- What kinds of establishments would you like to see in the Route 32 commercial area?
  (Circle all that apply)
  - Groceries
  - Hardware
  - Gifts
  - Clothing
  - Coffee Shops
  - Restaurants
  - Art Galleries
  - Other ____________ (fill in what you think is missing)

**For Business Owners**

- What type of business do you operate? (Check all that apply)
Management, Business, Science, Arts
Sales and Office
Health Care
Social Services
Production, Transportation and Material Moving
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance
Retail
Manufacturing
Other

• How long have you owned your current business in Ware? (Check one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&lt; 5 years</th>
<th>5 - 10 years</th>
<th>10 - 15 years</th>
<th>15 - 20 years</th>
<th>20+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

• Who is your customer base? (Are they residents of Ware/the region/the county, age, gender, income bracket, etc.)

• Have market changes affected your business and if so, how? (i.e., the economic recession of 2008, changes in the manufacturing industry, introduction of big box stores, etc.)
• Are you familiar with the resources available to local businesses in the town of Ware? (e.g., courses offered by the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corp., marketing and networking opportunities offered by the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, participating in the Ware Business and Civic Association Fall Festival)

• Are you affiliated with the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce? Yes or No

• Do you know the other business owners in downtown Ware?

• Are you affiliated with the Ware Business and Civic Association?

• Have you ever partnered (i.e. exchange of services, discounts, etc.) with neighboring businesses? Yes or No
  o If yes, please explain.

• Would you be interested in partnering with other local businesses to promote your business and the downtown?

**Design Standards**

• Please circle the appropriate response that reflects how you feel about each design element in the downtown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Element</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street Trees</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine the way it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks Great!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine the way it is</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks Great!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Lights</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine the way it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks Great!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine the way it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks Great!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Façades</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine the way it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks Great!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Please circle the appropriate response that reflects how you feel about each design element in the Route 32 commercial area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Element</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Traffic and Parking**

- What do you think of the level of traffic in the downtown? (Circle One)
  - Too Much
  - A lot, but not a problem
  - Just Right
  - Very little

- Is there enough parking downtown? (Circle One)
  - Not Enough
  - Enough
  - More than enough

- What (if any) changes would improve parking and/or traffic issues in Ware?

**Other Questions**

- What do you like to do in Ware when friends come to visit you?

- What is the best kept secret in Ware?

- On a scale from 1 to 10 how would you rate your quality of life in Ware? (1: Lowest Quality / 10: Highest Quality)
Topics for Public Discussions

Mill Complex Redevelopment Scenarios
- Mixed use (housing/retail/restaurants)
- Heritage tourism (hotel, museum)
- College satellite campus
- Renewable energy site (solar and/or wind farm)

Recreation Opportunities
- Location: Around Quabbin, in parks
- Types of recreation
- Targeted recreation opportunities for different age groups.

Housing Developments
- Subdivisions
- Flexible residential open space
- Accessory dwelling units

Route 32
- Look and feel (what it is now and what it could be)
- Traffic and parking issues
- Bicycling and pedestrian improvements
- Ware Gateway signage (could be a fun, creative engagement activity for adults and children to create ideas signage)

Where do people want growth to happen in town?
- Could be an opportunity to use the growth chip game

Traffic and Parking
- Problem areas for traffic and parking

Downtown
- Improving downtown image and identity
- Improving downtown signage
- Businesses
Maps for Public Gathering Events

- Transition Map
- East West Economic Areas
- Anchor: Quabbin Region
- Ware's residents and beyond
- Ware Census Tracts
- Zoning Map
- Ware's residents and beyond + Census tract
- Trails Map
- Zoning Map: Downtown
- Zoning Map: Downtown + Adaptive Reuse Overlay District
- Route 32 Corridor - Focus Area
- Route 32 Corridor - Overview
- Possible Adaptive Reuse Overlay District
- Agriculture Protection District - Parcels
- Agriculture Protection District - Satellite
- Agriculture Protection District - Zoning
- Public Conservation Lands
- Water and Sewer Lines
- Water and Sewer Lines - Zoom
- Parcels: By year of building
- Fall Festival: Mapping Exercise
- East Quabbin Land Trust
- Chapter 61 Lands
- Wind 30m Map
- Wind 50m Map
- Wind 70m Map
- Wind 100m Map
Public Participation References


Appendix Contents

Overview and Context
Policy Boundaries Appendix
Sample Community Indicators

Energy
Town of Montague Municipal Energy Reduction Plan 2012
Town of Montague Green Communities Application

Economic Development
Downtown Financing and Funding DRAFT
Interview Questions for Institutions
Interview Questions for Planner
Traffic and Parking Data
Ware Business Inventory Description
Ware Business Inventory

Public Participation
1. Press Release Template
2. Email List Sign-up Sheet
3. Email List
4. Flyer Template
5. Poster Template
6a. Newsletter Template Basic
6b. Newsletter Template Complex
7. List of Ware Organizations and Businesses